

School Holiday Visits

Paris in the Spring 1953

Paris! The city of bright lights and gay music. Such were our expectations of the fabulous city, and to a certain extent we were correct. The city seemed to throb with excitement, and an air of gaiety pulsed through the atmosphere.



There were five girls and six boys in our party, but we were only a very small part of a contingent of 800 pupils from schools all over England. Our own particular group was conducted down to London by Miss Carter, whom I should like to thank, together with Miss Smith who was responsible for organising the trip, on behalf of the eleven of us. We joined the rest of the party at the barrier of the Newhaven Boat-train at 7-15 on the morning of April 9th. At 7-50 we set out for Newhaven where we had to pass through the Customs before being allowed to embark. The good ship S.S. Worthing conveyed us safely across the Channel to Dieppe. From Dieppe we travelled by train to Paris, where we arrived at approximately 5-20 p.m. at the St. Lazare station. After a short walk we were met by motor-coaches which took us to our respective "Lycées".

That evening we took our first good look at Paris when we walked along the boulevard where we stopped at one of the cafés for a "limonade." After dinner on the following day our visit to Paris really commenced. In the morning we visited the famous museum, the Louvre, where we saw, amongst other things, the Mona Lisa. Here we met the girls for the first time since our arrival. At 1-30 the 54 boys who comprised Group A all piled into motor-coaches (which had folding seats in the aisles) and were taken for a drive all round Paris. We were conducted round many buildings, Notre Dame, Sacre Coeur, Madeline and Les Invalides, where Napoleon's tomb is installed. We also visited the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs Elysees and the Palais de Chaillot.

Our primary object in visiting Paris was not sightseeing. Ours was an educational trip and we began attending lectures on French authors, and also practical courses, on the morning of the 11th. From then until our holiday came to an end, these lectures were held each morning in the Sorbonne, the great University of Paris. There were, however, other sight-seeing tours, arranged because of their educational value. Probably the most interesting of these was the trip to the famous palace of Louis XIV at Versailles. The two most important days of the trip were Tuesday, 15th and Thursday 17th, when we were taken to a reception at the Town Hall, and when we visited the British Embassy in Paris. For this latter event only one member from each school was allowed to go and so we drew lots, and the result was that I visited the Embassy together with about 70 other pupils. Also on Thursday we went to a Ball at the Cite Universitaire, which was very entertaining.

For myself, the greatest pleasure came from visiting the cinemas, theatres and cafes, and from comparing the French customs and way of life with our own. In our free time we could indulge in such pastimes as playing on billiard tables without pockets, or in playing ping-pong. All these things helped us to get to know the average Frenchman better. Our holiday came to an end all too quickly on the 19th April. Most of us were sorry to leave and privately vowed to return some day. All of us had some little souvenirs which would bring back memories of the gay French capital.

Maurice Poole, U6A Talbot

Italy 1958



A party of 52 senior pupils led by Mr. Leonard and five members of staff will leave Hemsworth on August 20th for a cultural tour of Italy. The total cost of the tour is estimated at £38-10s per pupil, and this includes transport, accommodation, meals, First Class travel between London and Basle and a full day's excursion from Rome to Naples and Pompeii. The party will travel through London, Folkestone, Boulogne, Basle and the St. Gothard Pass to Venice, and after visiting Florence, will spend five days in Rome. On the thirteenth day of the tour we shall leave for Hemsworth again, to complete a journey of nearly 3,000 miles.

P.A. Makings, 5A.



The photo above has been provided by Elaine Barker. Thanks, Elaine. The photo was taken on Hemsworth Station 20/08/1958.

From the School Magazine 1959.

As the chalk cliffs receded into the distance, we really felt that our continental holiday had begun. The first night was spent travelling through France and few of us had any sleep. Arriving at Basle, we eagerly sampled our Swiss breakfasts. The journey through Switzerland took us through the famous St. Gotthard tunnel and we enjoyed the glorious mountain and lake scenery of Switzerland which looked like a kaleidoscope of white and blue. In the morning, we crossed into Italy and by the evening, we were in Venice among the lovely coloured lights, the canals and the legendary gondolas.



Our first morning in Venice was exciting and interesting: we went up the Grand Canal, under the famous Rialto Bridge and on to the Piazza San Marco with its thousands of pigeons. We went into St. Mark's Cathedral with its beautiful stained glass windows and into the Doge's Palace, where we saw a fine collection of paintings. We walked over the Bridge of Sighs, which connects the palace to the dreadful prisons over the narrow canal. It was over this bridge that prisoners who were tried in the palace, would go on their way to the cramped, ill-ventilated cells - hence its name.

Our stay in Venice was brief but memorable. Well equipped with trinkets and souvenirs bought from the shops in the Piazza and on the Rialto Bridge, we reluctantly said goodbye to this beautiful city of water as we set off for Florence. We arrived early in the evening and were busy next morning exploring its wonders. About eight of us went to the English Church, while the others visited the Church of Santa Maria del Fiore with its high-pointed dome and melodious organs. Adjoining this dome is the high belfry tower which some of us climbed. In the afternoon, we visited the Uffizzi Gallery where we saw many masterpieces of painting and sculpture, and later walked up to the Piazza Michelangelo - a square which gives one a bird's eye view of the town: nearly every landmark of this splendid old place can be seen from here, with the dome and belfry tower of Santa Maria dominating. The bells were ringing and their liquid tones floated across to us in this idyllic setting - Florence lay at our feet and the mountains were in the background. Coming back from the Piazza, we crossed the Ponte Vecchio - the oldest bridge in Florence - with its gold and silverware shops on either side. We went on to visit the Pitti Gallery where we saw more magnificent pictures: the rooms here were furnished in their traditional manner, with gold and red chairs, highly polished tables and beautiful chandeliers.

After lunch on the following day, we left Florence for Rome, where we arrived in the early evening. The Foro Italico, where we stayed, is a large, modern, marble building which accommodates touring parties in Rome. There was much to see in this great city and its environs, and the following morning we had a chance to satisfy our curiosity. Among the places we visited was the Church of St. John Lateran where we saw the Holy Stairs which Christ is said to have climbed for his trial. At the foot of these stairs are two statues - one depicts Judas' kiss of betrayal and the other Pilate's appeal to the crowd as he shows Christ to them after the scourging. We went across to St. Peter's Square and to St. Peter's Church, which is the largest in the world. The mosaic work in the church was something to remember. The stones used were minute and the designs had the effect of beautiful paintings in stone. Later, we went by special bus along the Appian Way to see the Catacombs. A priest showed us some of the underground tombs of the early martyrs. These tombs were like a series of shelves cut away into the side of the narrow passage walls; the bones and skulls in some places created an eerie atmosphere.

In the afternoon we visited the impressive ruins of the Colosseum. The huge, stone structure where the Romans watched the struggles of the gladiators, was once covered with marble. We climbed to the top and had a splendid view of the city. On the way back to the Foro Italico, we saw Trojan's Column on which battles are commemorated in carvings. Most of the party spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying the blue waters of the Mediterranean at the Rome Lido, and at night we sampled some of the cafe bars around the Foro Italico. Two of the boys had brought their guitars with them, and they entertained us on the large roof of the building, while we sang and talked in the moonlight.

The group of Miss Ward and Miss Wimpenny



On the following day, we went by train to Naples and Pompeii. Of Naples we only had a glimpse - we saw the glorious Bay with the town clustered around its shores. Pompeii was steeped in history. Its narrow streets had stepping stones across the middle and chariot wheels were said to have just fitted in these groves, which also served for drainage purposes, as the town was built on a hillside. As we explored the ruins in the hot sunshine (the temperature was about 104° F in the shade!) we tried to picture what the town was like, thronged as it was with people of the past, before it was buried by the ashes from Vesuvius. In the museum we saw, among other things, blackened loaves of bread which were about two thousand years old.

We spent our last two days in and around Rome. We visited the Vatican Museum where we saw the lovely Sistine Chapel; at Tivoli, outside Rome, we went round the Villa d'Este with its hundreds of fountains and then on to Hadrian's villa where we saw the ruins of the emperor's palace, the Baths and Guard Houses. They are still excavating in one part. Our last day in Rome was confined mainly to promenading the streets and gazing at the shops and monuments. On our last evening we were allowed to go right into the city around the Victor Emmanuel monument. We enjoyed seeing the coloured lights and the fountains, as we had done our last-minute shopping for souvenirs and presents earlier on. We said our final goodbyes to various parts of Rome as we passed them on the bus which took us back to the Foro Italico.

We woke early next morning, having breakfast at about 6-30, and left Rome station at about 9-30 on the first stage of our long journey across Europe. It had been an unforgettable holiday, and we were all grateful for the wonderful opportunity which had been ours. We all thank Mr. Leonard and the other group leaders for all their hard work and patient supervision, and for making the holiday a successful and enjoyable one.



Jacqueline Leonard, 5A.



Carol Johns, 5A



Wilson, R. 5S.



L-R: Mr Leonard, Mrs. Leonard, Mr. Wharton, Miss. Wimpenny, Miss. Harris, Miss. Ward, Mr. Swinbank

School Holiday in France 1959
Paris, July 29th-August 10th 1959

From the School Magazine 1960



This summer a school party led by Mr. Leonard and five staff (Mrs. Leonard, Miss Metcalfe, Miss Ward, Mr. Wharton and Mr. Fuller) will be spending the first part of the holiday in France. The first day will include sight-seeing in London followed by a theatre party to see the musical show, "My Fair Lady." We cross to France on July 29th to spend five and a half days in Nice. Here, as well as bathing in the Mediterranean, excursions are arranged to Monte Carlo, the Grande Corniche, the Gorges du Loup and Grasse. The party will then spend five days in Paris. Our programme in Paris includes visits to Versailles and to such famous places as Notre Dame, Sacré-Coeur, the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower and many others. We also hope to take a boat trip on the Seine and to make an evening tour of the Paris illuminations. The party will return to Hemsworth on Monday, August 10th.

Ann Kilvington, L6A



This was a very enjoyable holiday and I am sure that many of us were left with a desire to return and explore the country in a more leisurely way. Our sincere thanks are due to Mr. Leonard and all those members of staff who helped to organise such a memorable and rewarding holiday.

Roger Toft, L6A

After an uncomfortable journey in the night train from Paris to Nice, after the rattling progress hour after hour towards the Mediterranean coast, with tempers frayed and nerves on edge, we found at last that the end did indeed justify the means. Our sleepless night was forgotten and everyone felt the thrill of adventure at the first glimpse of the tideless, blue midland sea.

We stayed in a school just out of Nice, on the hill slopes overlooking the town which we had ample opportunity of seeing in all its aspects. I was immediately struck by the great difference there between rich and poor. There are splendid hotels on the sea front contrasting strongly with the dark hovels and filthy, narrow streets of the poorer section.

The most memorable visit from Nice was, I think, the trip along the Grand Corniche to Monaco. We saw this tiny state from the mountains above it. The quaint houses, the blue sea and the harbour were breathtaking from our vantage point and the palace of Monte Carlo looked like something out of a fairy tale. We came down into Monaco itself, a state complete with its own radio station, police and currency, as well as many luxury yachts and American cars.

All too, soon we had to leave for Paris, again by the night train. Here there was always something new to see which was beautiful and interesting. At Les Invalides there was the tomb of Napoleon, plain and severe, made of rare red granite from Finland. Another reminder of Napoleon is the universally famous Arc de Triomphe with its great friezes and bas-reliefs representing the departure and return of the French armies of Napoleon. **Beneath the Arch is the tomb of the Unknown Soldier with a small flame burning in its centre.** While in Paris we visited also the Chateau of Versailles, the Sacre Coeur, Notre Dame and the Louvre, as well as the zoo at Vincennes. We saw the sights of Paris at night, touring the illuminations, and a trip up the Seine allowed us to see the city from the river.