

## ***OUR EXPERIENCE IN DUBLIN***

The last week of February, from the 20th to the 27th, we, the classes 3<sup>A</sup> B and 3<sup>A</sup> C 'linguistico', left for Dublin, the capital of Ireland. We didn't stay in an hotel. We were hosted by different families in various districts which were all located around 15 minutes from the centre of Dublin.

First impressions always matter: when we arrived we saw this beautiful place where everything was green, but it was really windy and cold. The school, the journey and the stay were as we expected; maybe the food was the only thing that could have been better, but it wasn't a big problem as there were many restaurants or takeaway places.

We attended lessons at the ATC Language School, which is situated in the centre of Dublin, in South William Street, where we improved our English, learn new words and how to speak it more fluently. But we also learnt about Irish culture, traditions and lifestyles that are very different from ours, and we also could spend a week without our parents, and took advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Before going we were sure it would be a wonderful experience and it turned out it actually was!

In the morning we usually got up at 7 o'clock, it depended on where we had to go, and had breakfast with the family. Then we caught the bus and we went to the place or the museum we had to visit that day. At around half past twelve we had lunch, eating the packed lunch that the host families had given us, and we had also some free time. At 2 pm we had to be at school, because every day lessons started at 2.15 pm, until 5.30. After the course we went home and had dinner with our host families at 6.00 pm, because the Irish usually have dinner earlier than the Italians. After dinner, we were allowed to go out on our own, but we had to be at home before 10 or half past 10, it depended on the host family's rules.

At school we learnt to communicate in the workplace, write a curriculum vitae and present our skills. During the week we also worked on a business project in groups and presented it in the final lesson of the course while learning new business terminology. We also learnt how to visit a big city like Dublin: catch the bus, request information, walk through the city, use timetables and identify typical dishes. Overall, we also learnt how to approach another culture using its language.

We went sightseeing, each day a different destination: we went on a guided tour of Trinity College and had the opportunity to enter the Library and see the Book of Kells, we visited Dublinia, a museum on the Viking history of the city, Christchurch Cathedral and the James Joyce Centre.

We visited the **Dublin Castle**, with the state apartments that were built as the residential and public quarters of the Viceregal court with also the Viceregal throne. We entered Saint Patrick's Hall, that is the grandest room of the state apartments and contains one of the most important decorative interiors in Ireland. We also visited Dublin Gardens which were completed in 1680 and are located adjacent to Dublin Castle. The Castle was the seat of the United Kingdom government's administration in Ireland until 1922, and is now a major Irish government complex.

On Saturday we went to Howth, which originally was a small fishing village and now is a lovely coastal resort near Dublin. It takes only 30 minutes by train. In Howth there were so many things to see: the Howth Market is located beside the station and is home to an array of Irish crafts, delicate handmade jewellery and vintage antiques. After eating fish and chips or other typical food, a group went to Howth Castle and the others walked on the pier and along the seafront.

On Sunday, the last day, our teachers offered us different places to visit during the day: in the morning, there were three different groups; one went to the Guinness Storehouse, one to the Croke Stadium and the last one to the Modern Art Gallery. In the early afternoon, we were divided into two groups: One visited the Dublin Castle and the other the Chester Beatty Library. Later some of us went home while the rest visited either the Irish Rock 'n' Roll Museum or the Natural History Museum.

**Drawing conclusions** - Our discoveries? The food, for example, is completely different from Italian food. Also, the way of driving, the weather, and the houses were typical, so every day we got to know a new aspect of Dublin life. Before going to Dublin we were very excited because it was our first study-trip. Above all we expected to have fun with our classmates and to have a good relationship with our host families. Since the very beginning, we immediately noticed the difference between Dublin and Italian cities. The weather was cloudy and rainy and also the atmosphere was different.

We all would repeat this experience again immediately. From the main monuments and attractions to the Castle and the museums, from the parks to the main neighbourhoods, like Temple Bar, and the most famous streets, like Grafton Street and O'Connell Street, it was an experience that helped us explore a new city, find out how Irish people live, eat, work and play. Not only that, but it also helped us get to know our classmates better: we got to know each other in ways that we didn't expect. We learnt how to spend time together without arguing about everything.

Thanks to this experience we've grown; we have become more independent, more self-assured and confident in our capabilities. Another reason we would have this experience again is because of the Irish people: our "host-mums" were very kind and supportive and they always helped us when we were in trouble, especially during the first days. In conclusion, we would do it all again above all because of the beautiful memories that we have that will last us a lifetime.

*Watch our photo gallery and  
our slideshow on our page:*

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