

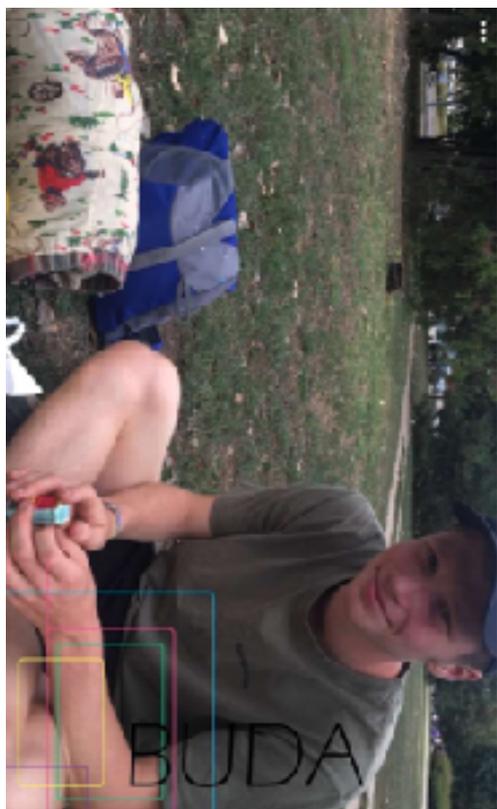
# *Our trip to Budapest, Vienna and Amsterdam*

*Rosa Altarelli and Edward McCann*

*- Thank you so much to the Henry Morris Trust for allowing us to partake in such an enriching and amazing trip.*

## *Budapest (12th-15th Aug)*

On the morning Sunday of the twelfth of August, Edward and I left our houses at six o'clock in order to catch our plane to begin our adventure. Rosa in particular was so excited for our trip because she has only been outside of Europe once, therefore was about to experience different cultures for the first time. We landed in Budapest and as we stepped off the plane were instantly hit by the rush of warm air. Coming from England where it had been furiously raining, we spent our travels in over thirty degrees which was a lovely part of our summer. We entered Budapest in the Afternoon and after dropping our bags, we began to walk into the centre of Budapest. Here, we found food to eat as we had not eaten since breakfast. The food and most items were generally a lot cheaper in Budapest compared to England, however, the Hungarian forints took a lot of time to get used to as we were paying in multiples of a thousand! Whilst walking around the city, we encountered and decided on what we would do on the following days.



We were both very tired after travelling and so decided, in order to begin with a calm day, to visit the museum which we had planned to see. The

Budapest History Museum, castle museum is one of the most important places to experience and learn about the culture and history of Hungary. We spent our afternoon walking around and beginning to learn about Hungary especially in the 20th century. We found many links to our current history course which we are studying at A level as well as greater detail specifically to Hungary. It was very interesting to learn about a specific aspect of our course in much greater detail and gave us a much deeper understanding of what we have already learned.

We decided that one of the best ways to experience Hungarian culture was the food. Therefore, the food we indulged in for our dinner was very out of our comfort zone. We ate many different types of meat, our favourite was a Hungarian sausage and paprika which seemed common to the majority of the dishes.

Before going back to sleep, we once again walked through the city looking and admiring the buildings and architecture as the heat was a lot more bearable and al-



lowed us to appreciate the buildings on the mountainous and the river running through the city.

We woke up surprisingly early for our second day of our travels. We had planned a busy day in which we would visit parliament due to our mutual love of politics and the political side of history as well as visiting the baths which are a very important part of the culture of Budapest. We took the tram to the buildings of parliament. The



side of history which interests Edward the most is the political side. Therefore, seeing the, very beautiful, buildings of parliament was something we were very excited to experience when traveling to Budapest. The parliament is located on the Danube and this combined with the stunning building it was made it such a mesmerising sight. It is the largest building the the entirety of Hungary and the tallest of Budapest. We were very typical curious tourists and spent

our morning taking pictures and admiring the building.

Following this trip, it was a quick walk into close to the centre of the city where we decided to eat lunch. We found an independent cafe which served delicious brunch food which we decided on.

We were very excited for our trip to the Budapest spas. We had already purchased our tickets and researched for which one would be the greatest. We decided to visit the most famous bath, Szechenyi thermal bath. It really did live up to its expectations. To begin with, we experienced the baths inside. These ranged in temperature and ensured to experience every single bath. In the stifling heat it was very nice to cool off in the colder baths. Outside was so beautiful. There were three temperates of pools surrounded by the amazing yellow building. Inside the warmest pool was a chess board which we spend just under thirty minutes enjoying playing (Edward won). After lying in the sun and dipping into the pools, it came to time for us to leave which was very sad. The trip to the spas was such a success and we were so happy on our decision to go there because the roman baths are very central to the Hungarian culture and we were able to experience this.



In the evening, we ate dinner in a

restaurant and ordered pizza, not as Hungarian as the night before.



Our final full day in Budapest began with another early start. We took the tram to the centre of Budapest and began by walking down the river. We witnessed all the old buildings across the river which were put into perspective after learning about the history of Budapest in the castle museum. After around an hour we walked to the bus station and took the bus up to the castle. It was a very striking and beautiful building. All the buildings we saw in Hungary were of very high importance

and were a very big part of the culture. As we entered, there was a row of flags and cannons.

Our first activity in the surroundings of the castle was an art museum. We had tickets to visit the art gallery. This was located very near the castle and art, being a hobby of ours, was very interesting to the both of us and we loved the realism of the art. We walked around the gallery for a couple of hours before returning to the castle grounds to look and explore the castle and the history it depicted.

Lunch here was more expensive compared to what we had already experienced in the country, however we shared a healthy salad and sandwich. We had arranged a tour for the afternoon with a man called Benjamin. First of all, he took us on a walk around the whole castle and explained the meaning of every building and its importance. This part of the



tour continued for roughly an hour and a half. Following this, we sat on one of the benches next to the grounds. We went through a book of the history of Hungary and for the next hour and a half, Benjamin explained the formation of the country and the wars and battles it experienced through the years.

It was the final day in Budapest. We had to get up very early in order to catch our first train. Therefore, we did not have time to experience any more of Hungary. However, in the previous three days we learned a lot about a completely new culture and grew a love of Hungarian pastries and the gorgeous weather.

## *Vienna (15th-16th Aug)*



On the morning of 15th of August, we continued our adventure, with a very early start, and took the train to the station located in Vienna. We bought four pastries for our breakfast from Budapest for our journey, the last traditional pogacsa we would be able to eat. After, what seemed like a very quick journey, we arrived in the second country of our travels, Austria. It was a short walk to our hostel from the station in which we dropped our heavy backpacks off before deciding how we should explore the city best.

The thing that we found the most striking from when we first arrived in Vienna, was the buildings and the architecture. The elegant and clean style throughout the city appealed to us the most and therefore we spent our first couple of hours exploring and walking around the city.

The 15th of August is more commonly known as the Assumption of Mary and is a Catholic holiday. Therefore, there was a limited number of people around and places that were open. The celebrated holiday is a very important one and is usually celebrated with a feast.

After walking into the centre of the city and experiencing the expensive culture of Vienna, we decided to eat. Trying the cuisines of different countries is one of our favourite ways to experience the culture of them. Therefore, we chose to eat in an Austrian beer garden and sample some of the most common food. After seeing 'the cheapest and best Schnitzel,' advertised on the majority of restaurants we decided we would have to try the traditional Austrian dish. We were very tired after and decided to plan where we would visit the following day and then sleep in order to recover.

We woke up early and began our second day in Vienna with breakfast supplied by the hostel. We were both in agreement that, before our flight to Amsterdam, we would best utilise our time by visiting the beautiful and very interesting churches or, 'kirche,' in Vienna. St. Peter's Church, which was the first that we visited, clearly stood out of the both



of us as the most intricate and beautiful. It is a Catholic Church which was opened in the early 18th century. Neither of us had experienced a church as detailed and we were both equally amazed by the gold statues located on all the walls. We both took religious studies for GCSE and share our interest in this topic. Therefore, experiencing the religious culture was very rewarding for us both and we decided to visit the, 'Votivkirche,' after we discovered our interest in it due to prior research. This church differed to the previous due to less decoration and intricate design, however, the building was still very mesmerising and the ceiling and stained glass designs were both very beautiful.

Wolfgang Mozart, the Austrian composer, spent a lot of his life in Vienna and died in the city. Rosa, who takes music as an A level and has a very keen interest in this, found it very enriching to explore the city and witness the concert halls and listen to people playing his music on the streets. Another connection of the city to classical

music is the blue Danube.

The 'Blue Danube Waltz,' composed by another Austrian composer, Johann Strauss, was influenced by the river which runs through Vienna. After our lunch, we walked through the city to the Danube. It was a very magical and unforgettable moment, due to our love for music, as we sat watching the river, in

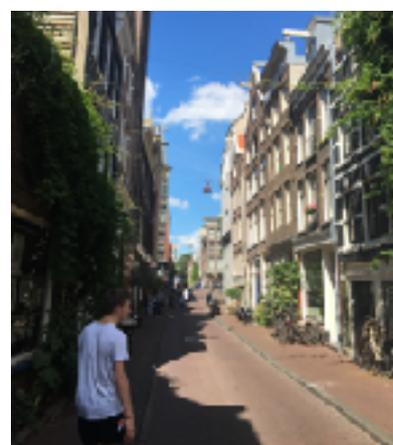


the sun whilst listening to the 'Blue Danube Waltz' in the place it was influenced by. Sadly, this was our last experience in Vienna and we walked to the train station from which we took the train to the airport and left for our third and final destination.

## *Amsterdam (16th-18th Aug)*

Our flight to Amsterdam arrived in the Afternoon and we discovered both of our favourite city. Amsterdam is such a beautiful city with so much culture and a stunning river running through the streets.

As soon as we dropped off our bags, we could not wait to walk around and explore our new favourite destination. For the first couple of hours we walked through the streets. Of course, nearly being hit by bikes every time we crossed the road. Compared to Budapest and Vienna, Amsterdam was not unbearably hot and therefore we were able to walk around comfortably. Because of

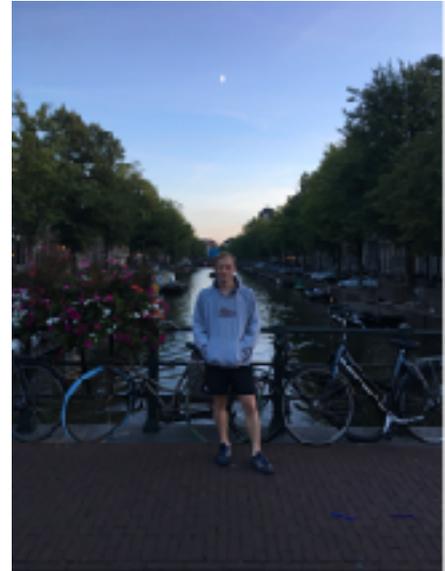


our common keen interest in the buildings and architecture of places, admiring these is the best insight into the culture of the Netherlands. From the independent cafes and art shops to the canals on the river to the food and drink culture, Amsterdam had so much to explore and experience.

Towards the evening we decided to experience some more culture and visited the Museumplein. This holds some of Holland's most famous and important art in the



Rijksmuseum, the Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art and the Van Gogh museum. It has been recently renovated and therefore had a beautiful and modern taste with carefully placed plants and a small pool. This square was profoundly stunning and very impressive. Art is a very important part in the culture of Amsterdam and is very prominent



throughout the city and experiencing this was a huge insight into the culture.

We ate dinner in an outside restaurant which watched over the river before returning to our room which was located in the very centre of Amsterdam.

In order to make the most of our final full day, we decided that the best way to experience the city was to visit both two famous museums. In the morning, after eating pancakes for breakfast, we booked tickets and visited the Rijksmuseum which contained many famous art pieces. The building itself was intricate and delicately designed.



Amsterdam showed the both of us our love of art and the culture of the city. It was very exciting when we both recognised the painting by Van Gogh names, the 'self portrait' and the 'milkmaid.' This art museum was a very central part to our trip as we realised the value and interest we had in these art pieces and the insight it gave us into the culture. Overall, the differing cultures of the

three cities, that we visited, from what we were used to as well as from each other is what we found so interesting and gave us such interest in exploring more destinations in the world and their histories.

On our way out of the museum, we watched a group of four accordion players who were playing some classical pieces including toccata and fugue composed by J.S. Bach which is also commonly recognised as Dracula's theme. Due to our very keen

interest in music, we found this to be very culturally enriching and another unforgettable experience.

We ate our lunch in an independent cafe as we did not allow ourselves to visit any chain restaurants whilst travelling and experiencing new countries and their cultures.

Following our lunch we decided to visit another museum, 'The Van Gogh Museum.'

The day before we visited the sight but did not enter this museum. As we discovered our love for more modern art, this museum appealed to us very much. The modern structure of the building represents the style of art that it holds and we quickly became so much more familiar with his works by viewing many famous pieces. It was so fulfilling to be able to visit so many art galleries and see so many different styles of art. This is because neither of us take art as an A level and it is a subject that offers a high interest to both of us which we were able to experience first hand in so much variety and detail. Additionally, it helped to learn about the Dutch culture and specifically the Dutch painter, Vincent Van Gogh.



Once again, we spent our evening walking around the city experiencing both its modern city centre and the beautiful architecture and rivers which pass through the streets. We sat on a wall watching the river and the canal boats passing and the flowers surrounding us.

On our third and final day we, of course, visited the Anne Frank house. Both of us take history as an A level and want to continue it into the future, therefore the rich and interesting history of the city is what drew us into visiting it. We therefore, had to visit the house in which Anne Frank lived in her final years. This part of history



offers a particular interest to both of us and reaches further in depth in a part of history which we study in order to find greater understanding.

While it was so interesting to visit this destination and taught us in greater depth about the life of this girl, it was, of course, a very solemn and touching experience. It made the both of

us very speechless as what we have learnt about for many years became a reality. We have both read the diary of Anne Frank which gave even more meaning to the

trip and it was unforgettable seeing this come to a reality. Overall, our visit here was unforgettable and the best way to end our final day visiting and experiencing the cultures of the three cities. The Anne Frank house was a very important experience to both of us and looking at the normality of the furniture and bookcase really put history into a reality.

After eating lunch we did not have a very long time to spend in Amsterdam and utilised our time by walking for the final time through our favourite city and walking across all the rivers and looking at all the beautiful plants and architecture. Finally, we had to walk to the train station and then the Airport from which we returned to England after such a cultural and unforgettable trip.