

Classics trip to Rome and Sorrento 23rd to 28th October 2014

As some of you may know, during the October half term, the Classics department ran a trip to Rome and Bay of Naples. I was very lucky to be able to go, and after several months of excitement, it was a truly amazing experience.

Arriving in Rome during the night and seeing the city lit up was gorgeous, though the heavy turbulence was somewhat distracting! After landing and a short drive to the hotel, we arrived at our hotel and went out for some much needed food! We got our first taste of Italian cuisine (and possibly the most vinegary salad ever) before going back to the hotel after an exhausting day.

On our first day we walked through Rome, which was a great opportunity to see random landmarks that are dotted around the city. We went to get lunch, and, happily, got pizza, because let's face it, you cannot go to Italy and not have pizza. In the afternoon we visited the Pantheon and Trevi Foundation, both of which were beautiful, and it was amazing to see a building as old as the Pantheon in such good condition today. We next got to experience the (whatever it was called), which was lots of fun, and it was nice to see some of the stuff we learnt about visualized, like the assassination of Julius Caesar. By this point, we were very tired after hiking around Rome all day, and returned to the hotel.



On the second day, armed with packed lunches and Metro tickets, we were able to visit the Vatican City much to everyone's delight. We got to look inside the basilica, which was beautiful, with so many incredible artist masterpieces inside, it was like being in an art gallery, but even better somehow. We also took the 500(!) steps to the top of the Vatican to the viewing dome, and saw 360 degree views of Rome, which, for me, was the highlight of the trip - the views really were stunning. We then walked along the river towards the Colosseum, enjoyed a picnic lunch, and went for our guided tour. It was very large, and to think that over 2000 years ago it was in use, and it's still here today - amazing! By this point, we were getting very tired, so it was lucky The Forum was just

across the road! The Forum was also incredible, some of the ruins were very well maintained and the sun, beginning to set over them was very picturesque. Thankfully, we returned to the hotel for some much needed rest, went out for dinner, but when we came back, we sadly realized it was our last night in Rome. Luckily, Sorrento was just as great as Rome!

On the third day, we set off early for Sorrento (even with the confusion that setting the clocks back an hour – or two, in some cases – caused). Our bus journey was cut short halfway up Vesuvius, when we had to get out and climb. After experiencing the delight of volcanic plumbing, we started the walk - which proved worthwhile; the views and the sheer size of the volcano were breath-taking





The view from Mount Vesuvius

(much like the climb). It was surreal to think we were stood on something that had caused such a huge disaster.

The next day, after some of us had recovered from the injuries that often accompany running down a volcano, we left for Herculaneum and Pompeii, two ancient Roman towns both destroyed in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79AD. As Herculaneum was mostly affected by



The ruins of Herculaneum

pyroclastic flows, most of the finer details of the buildings have been preserved (it also had the added bonus of Mario the tour-guide, who – if he is to be believed – was actually there in 79AD when Vesuvius erupted), and both towns really gave an insight into what Roman houses and settlements would have been like. Although Pompeii was not sealed quite as well as Herculaneum, and therefore does not have such intricate details, it provided us with an opportunity to see important places in Roman society, such as the baths and the amphitheatre (and Caecilius’ house, of course).

Overall, the trip was a lot of fun, and an incredibly valuable learning experience that gave a deeper understanding of Roman civilisation.

