

Erasmus+ Fair Trade

Slovakia, April 2017

In April 2017 two members of staff and five students made the journey from Peterborough, England to Handlova, Slovakia for the next stage of the Fair Trade project.

After a very early start and a long, but comfortable journey, the English team arrived in Handlova where the students were met by their host families. One by one, the remaining partner schools arrived from Italy, Germany, Denmark and Austria.



On the morning of day one the project teams met at the Town Hall for a welcome presentation from the Mayor of Handlova. After a brief presentation the Mayor invited everyone up in person to present them with a gift bag from the people of Handlova and the opportunity to sign the Handlova Town guest book.

Our next stop was the Gymnasium Ivana Bellu, our Slovakian partner school. During our visit to the school we received a tour of the building and watched the student presentations.



After enjoying lunch at the school we made our way to mining museum to learn about the heritage and history of Handlova, before moving on to the art gallery for a spot of creativity, sewing felt hearts, which we were able to keep as a reminder of the day.



Day two saw us travelling by coach by the town of Trencin for a tour of the castle and the opportunity to climb the tower. The castle was situated high above Trencin providing fantastic views of the town, river and surrounding countryside. Climbing to the top of the tower only served to make the views even more stunning!

After some fun and games with the stocks and a picnic lunch in the castle grounds the students were split into groups and set the challenge of producing the most imaginative Fair Trade photograph. With two hours to capture the winning pose the students made their way around the town of Trencin.



Day three was a real treat. Once again, we travelled by coach but this time up to the mountains to a remote livestock farm. Upon arrival, the group was split in two, with group one visiting the sheep barn and group two learning how to make the traditional Slovakian cheese, Korbáčiky. The students loved being around the animals, particularly milking the sheep and holding the lambs who were more than happy to have a cuddle or two.

After swapping activities, the groups came together to watch the farmers cook a mountain side lunch of Bryndzove halushky - potato dumplings, sheep cheese and roasted bacon, followed by dessert of berries with

cream cheese.

After lunch the students were given free time to explore the farm while they waited for the arrival of the horses. As the horses made their way over the hills, it was clear to see that this was going to be the highlight for our students. One by one the students were given the opportunity to ride the horses, guided by one of the farmers. As predicted the English students went back for more, enjoying a second ride around the hill. This was a lovely experience for our students.





On the journey back to Handlova we stopped at a small, purpose built glass workshop. During our visit we were able to watch how glass is heated, manipulated and blown to create beautiful glassworks. After learning the basics, the students were invited to have a go at glass blowing themselves. We didn't have quite as many volunteers as with the horses but we are pleased to say that Luke, one of the English students, was up for the challenge.

Day four was the one we had all been looking forward to, the beautiful, fairytale castle of Bojnice. We travelled by coach to the town of Bojnice which did not disappoint with its tree lined main street leading up the castle. Unfortunately, the weather wasn't on our side, but that didn't dampen our spirits (just our hair!).

After receiving a very informative tour of the castle, with lots of photo opportunities, we made our way to one of the local restaurants for lunch where we treated to some traditional Slovak cuisine. After a delicious lunch, the winners of the photography competition were announced. We are proud to say that our students were in the groups that placed 2nd and 3rd.



After lunch we walked back up the hill to Bojnice Zoo, which is situated opposite the castle. The students enjoyed seeing the animals and the stunning views from the tree top view point.

It was difficult to believe that day five had come round so quickly. With our bags packed, the English group boarded the coach for the final time as we prepared to depart at lunchtime. Before our journey home there was just enough time for one more visit, this time to the town of Kremnica and home of the Mint.



It was another chilly day and on our approach to Kremnica we could see snow on top of the mountains....in April! (we don't get much snow in England).

Our itinerary for the morning was a tour of the Mint factory where the coins are produced in their thousands and the Mint museum which had its own secret mine! After the tours,

and with just an hour to spare, the students were given some free time to explore the pretty town of Kremnica and of course, make snowballs out of the huge snow block covering the town square! After our time in Kremnica, it was time to say good bye.



Farewell Slovakia, we had a blast!