

Choir Exchange December 2018

BG Nonntal - RGS High Wycombe

On the 7th of December 2018 our traditional choir exchange between the school choir of the BG Nonntal and the Royal Grammar School High Wycombe began.

Even before take-off, we used every minute to rehearse with Ms Speer at the airport. In the plane our excitement grew immensely as we wondered who our host families were going to be. After a turbulent landing due to bad weather, we were very happy to have safely reached London Airport Gatwick. During our journey to High Wycombe we extensively discussed our first impressions of England. In the early evening we finally arrived at our destination – High Wycombe, a town about thirty miles west of London. We were warmly welcomed

..... by our host families and taken to their homes. At the ensuing party, which was kindly organized by the host buddies we were able to meet all the other exchange partners from our choir too and we had lots of fun.

The following day we spent in Oxford, the city of dreaming spires, admiring the ancient buildings. No wonder Harry Potter was filmed there! The rest of the afternoon we spent strolling through High Street and Covered Garden, as well as the Christmas Market. Music was being played while we were enjoying a cup of hot punch and a piece of fudge, Christmas spirit was with us. After having returned from Oxford, we changed into our traditional costumes before performing our Austrian Christmas carols. We all were quite nervous, but that nervousness faded completely once we started singing. Later the English choir granted us an insight into their production of the famous musical “Westside Story” (by Leonard Bernstein), we all were completely blown away by their singing skills. Huge slices of pizza and drinks for everyone were the perfect ending for a great evening.

The next day we spent mostly in church, rehearsing the carols with the RGS school choir, and practising our pieces for the annual Christmas carols service. In between breaks we helped ourselves to coffee and tea. Later that day the boys guided us through High Wycombe, we walked through the city centre and went for a walk in Rye Park. After a delicious lunch we had some free time, most of us used this time to prepare themselves mentally for our performance that night. Singing with the school choir was great fun and a new experience. At a reception with mulled wine and mince pies after the carol service we let the evening end joyfully.

On Tuesday, the long-awaited London trip came! And it truly was an adventure. We got up very early to have enough time to explore the metropolitan city. One of the highlights was a guided tour through Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre - not only did we gather new information about Shakespeare and his plays, but we also learned about the theatre’s history. We then went on our way to Covent Garden where we had fun strolling along little market stalls in search of small gifts for our families. Our teachers gave us three hours of free time which we used for more shopping, of course :) It was a real pleasure rummaging in different shops in Oxford Street, trying on new clothes in one of thousands of shops and watching street artists perform. We spent the evening watching the absolutely heart-breaking musical “Les Misérables”. By the end of the day we had done a whopping 30,000 steps - no surprise we nearly passed out on our way home.

Wednesday, was our last day of this wonderful exchange trip.. We got a brief insight into the host buddies’ daily routines at school. In small groups we took part in different lessons and

discovered a new approach to learning. Unfortunately, this already was our last activity of our music trip and we had to pack our bags for the flight home to Salzburg.

This “music exchange” was a truly rewarding experience, we got to sing with a fantastic choir, we experienced a new culture, improved our English skills, and on top of that we made new friends. At this point we want to thank Ms Speer, Mrs Kaaser and Mr Tim Venvell for making this trip such a great experience for us. Also, we want to say thank you to our host families at RGS, who gave us such a warm welcome. And, of course, a big thanks to our parents, who made this remarkable choir exchange possible.

On behalf of the school choir: Anna Ziou 7B

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