

Day three in Ireland

Here is the description of the morning in Belfast (by Mariana Veit, Viola Sinzogan, Daniel Bojtos, Amelie Abdunour, and Philippe Adam):



The day started off, earlier than the last few days, with a very good English breakfast followed by our departure for Belfast. The coach ride went by quickly thanks to the enjoyable music and karaoke.

After arriving in Belfast, we met our tourist guide Paddy. Shortly before, Mr Mansfield told us of an interesting fact about our tourist guide. We were told that he is an Irish republican and that had been in prison because during the

conflict over political identity, between the loyalist and the republican, he was accused of being an IRA member after being arrested outside an 'IRA weapons dump'. He was sentenced to life but, after 16 years he was released.

We drove around Belfast discovering the East and the West side of the city. Paddy explained to us the history of Belfast and the Troubles talking about historical events but also personal experience. We saw monuments, memorials and incredible protest murals.

In the afternoon we visited the Crumlin Road Gaol.

Crumlin Road Prison:

We went to visit the Crumlin road prison this afternoon, also considered as Europe's Alcatraz. At first sight, it looked like a normal building but what we saw inside changed our minds. There were various objects and videos that helped us understand what life inside this prison was like, as well as actually seeing the real holding cells and other parts of the prison. This experience felt very real because of the realistic set ups, we felt like we were there with the prisoners. Getting to go into the holding cells and imagining what it must of been like to live there, seeing officers offices and the parcel office where prisoners could receive a parcel three times a week. We got to have a better understanding of the prison experience, through reenactment videos and videos of actual ex convicts who lived in this prison, and also surprisingly learn that children were imprisoned in this place for petty crimes. Despite being such a higher security prison, there were actually a number of successful escapes, a notable one being a group of people nicknamed the "kangaroos".



We discovered how brutal the conditions and the punishments were like - the punishments cells where prisoners would sleep on a wooden board and even executions, the preferred method being hanging.

Through all of this the prisoners did find some energy and motivation to be creative and there's still some of their art work on the walls.

All in all, this was a very infesting and unique experience that I really enjoyed!