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THE LINK

*A fortnightly Newsletter for the pupils, parents
and staff of St Michael's Catholic College*

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Year 12 Trip to Berlin



Our first experience was at the Treptow Soviet War memorial. Large stone tablets, statues and great marble structures set the scene as at first sight the sheer grandeur of the memorial struck us. Holding deep symbolic meaning it taught us about Soviet attitudes towards their triumph over Germany. As our tour guide talked us through what everything meant, the sombre tone of the bystanders emphasised the importance of the venue and on our way to our hotel we saw fragments of the famous Berlin Wall graffiti.

The following day was busy one. An early morning start saw us visit the Neuer Garten in Potsdam: the site of the Potsdam conference which modern Europe was greatly influenced by. Actually being there gave us

knowledge no revision guide could provide, for example learning that Churchill had to adhere to Soviet protocol whilst staying at the conference, forcing him to view the red soviet star in the centre of the venue before he could enter the conference room letting him know who was in charge. Following the tour of the picturesque Neuer Garten in Potsdam, we then travelled back to Berlin where we learned about life living by the wall and conditions on each side of the wall in order to understand the realities faced by the people of Berlin on each side. This was followed by a tour of nuclear shelters below the Berlin underground, which was of the best parts of the trip. This experience gave us an insight into the provisions in place in the event of nuclear warfare, as well as allowing us to get a real feel for what life could have been like in the fallout shelters. Our day wasn't finished yet. Using the Berliner verkehrsbetriebe, we arrived at Brandenburger Tor where the famous Brandenburg gate was situated in order to walk to the Reichstag, the German parliament. At the Reichstag, we had an informative tour.



On the final day of the trip, we took a tram to an area of Berlin called Alt-Hohenschönhausen to get a tour of a Stasi prison. For me, this was the best experience on the trip as we got an insight into life in Stasi/Soviet prisons as well as hearing anecdotes from museum staff about their experiences - some workers conducting tours were former prisoners. One of these prisoners had been spied on by her husband for 8 years before being arrested. The rest of the day consisted of our visit to an English speaking church in Berlin. It was a great service making us feel at home

as the members of this church were extremely welcoming; they individually welcomed everybody who is new to their parish at the end of their service which was a nice touch. After three fun, information-heavy days, I would say this trip was great. We were able to learn about the Cold War in a dimension that couldn't quite be accessed in the classroom, We were given freedom to explore and room to relax but three days wasn't enough. There was so much to take in that I wish the experience lasted longer.

- OJ S. Year 12



Visit to the Parliament



Westminster is Wicked!

The students of A-level Politics and History visited the Houses of Parliament to get a real grasp of what they are learning, to learn *how* laws are made and *where* laws are made.

Inside we were given a tour of the ornate House of Lords; adorned with gold walls, lush red seats and the Queens throne. You could feel the history in the room. This was a stark contrast to the House of Commons, which had a much more simplistic decor. We saw where the speaker John Bercow sat where our Prime Minister Theresa May and the leader of the Labour Party Mr. Corbyn spoke and where government and the opposition sat. Whilst moving through Parliament we even saw Dennis Skinner who's the longest serving MP and is a very bold character, once calling David Cameron "Dodgy Dave". Dennis Skinner MP came over to us and said how the Lords were taking money and not fulfilling their responsibilities. As a Labour MP he seemed very keen to get rid of the House of Lords.

We moved off to meet with our school's local MP Neil Coyle who booked out a private meeting room for us in Parliament. We quizzed him on why he became an MP and what he was doing to stop crime. He attacked his own leader Jeremy Corbyn for not supporting a second referendum on Brexit. To top it all off we even got to see some real-life action! A live debate on the issue of universal benefits. We sat in the public viewing gallery and watched as the MPs voiced their opinion back and forth.

All in all it was a wonderful trip and the students want to say thank you to Mr Williams and Ms Benson for accompanying us on this trip and giving us the opportunity to go. **Omenwaen O. Year 12A**



History Flash Mob

Competition

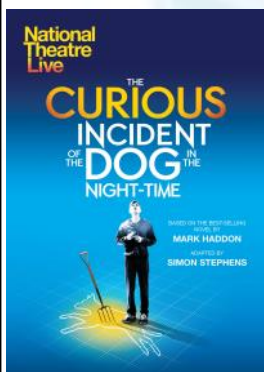
The winners for last week's House Competition are Savio

Each house was tasked with replicating a famous painting via a Flash Mob – Savio were given the Crossing of the Delaware, linked to the American Revolutionary War. Half of the team entered through one side of the hall with blue mats crashing down representing the icy waters that the Americans had to cross. The



other half entered on their boat, represented by the bench. It was a great atmosphere with dramatic background music – the students worked really well together and I'd like to commend them on their efforts. I'd also like to thank all of the students who participated in the event and the teachers that gave their support, it was the first time trialling this competition and we'd certainly like to run it again in the new year! - **Mr A Burton**

Year 12 Drama Evening



On the 12th February, my Year 12 A-Level Drama class went to see 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night time' at the Piccadilly Theatre. It was amazing like nothing I've ever seen before. The play follows the story of a boy who finds his neighbour's dog dead in her garden and how his mission to find the killer leads to multiple discoveries about his own life. It was developed for stage by Frantic Assembly which is one of the theatre company's that we study as part of our course. The play was extremely fun, energetic and eye-catching and took us on a roller coaster of events. The use of multimedia such as a massive screen that covered the back of the stage really immersed us into the world of the play especially a scene set in space that was perfectly put together with the boy being lifted for him to walk the side of the walls as if he was really floating through space and all of this made us all feel as if we were there with him. Overall, the play was "a phenomenal combination of storytelling and spectacle." and I definitely recommend going to see it. **Devonte S. Year 12B**

National Catholic Youth gathering:

THE FLAME 2019

On the 2nd March 2019 St Michael's students joined many more youths around the country in the big gathering called "Flame 2019" at the SSE Arena in Wembley. The theme of the day was "SIGNIFICANCE". We explored what that means on many levels whether it be personal or in how we can be much more significant as a Church community.

We were welcomed with an exciting and energetic song/rap by Guvna B about God and His presence that made us jump and punch the air for the enthusiasm. Later on we heard an amazing story about his life and his wife's also: Emma B from "Girl got Faith". They spoke about their journey through their lives and how God was present, helped them and guided them. After lunch we had an inspirational and engaging speaker,

Robert Madu, who was flown from America to attend Flame 2019. He talked about our values and our significance in this world, most importantly he helped us to understand that we should stay in our own lane and not compare ourselves to others.

We had a small break but when we came back there was a choir that engaged everyone to sing along as Cardinal Vincent Nichols lead The Exposition at the end of the day. Throughout these amazing events and people speaking there was a band playing inspiring worship music that was soothing and very enjoyable. At the end of the day everyone was in an uplifted and joyful mood as Flame 2019 ended with exciting music that gave everyone an adrenaline rush. We had lots of fun jumping around, preaching, listening & watching scenes being performed yet we had our moments of silence listening to the Priests and Archbishops including the moments of prayer & peace

As we headed home with happy thoughts on our minds. It was a great memory to make and we enjoyed every bit of it, and would recommend for the youth of today to attend and see what significance means to them.

Nikoletta V. Year 10



Chaplain's corner

Saint Patrick's Day, or the **Feast of Saint Patrick** (Irish: *Lá Fhéile Pádraig*, "the Day of the Festival of Patrick"), is a cultural and religious celebration held on 17th March, the traditional death date of Saint Patrick (c.AD 385–461), the foremost patron saint of Ireland.

Saint Patrick's Day was made an official Christian feast day in the early 17th century and is observed by the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion (especially the Church of Ireland, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Lutheran Church). The day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and celebrates the heritage and culture of the Irish in general. Celebrations generally involve public parades and festivals, céilidhs, and the wearing of green attire or shamrocks. Christians who belong to liturgical denominations also attend church services and historically the Lenten restrictions on eating and drinking alcohol were lifted for the day, which has encouraged and propagated the holiday's tradition of alcohol consumption.

Safeguarding

Important Notice from the Safeguarding Officer - there is a copy of our Safeguarding Policy on the College Website. A hard copy of this is available in the College Office.



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