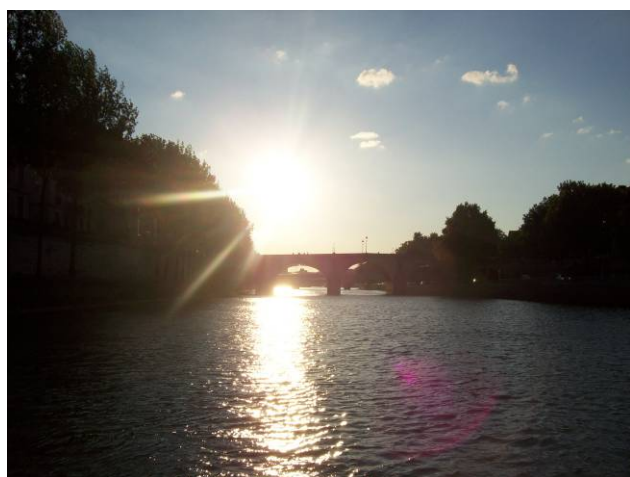


Paris June 2009 by Trisha Plant 13T

Sunday June 21st

Well, this was it! Today was the day everyone had been looking forward to since the start of the year; today was the day we were going to Paris with the school. Despite the early start, everyone was buzzing with excitement and geared up for the day of travelling that lay ahead of us. The coach left the school at the crack of dawn at 5am sharp as our family members and Mr Perry waved us off. The coach was filled with chatter and the faint sound of music playing from iPods as we ventured the 2 hour coach journey down to Dublin Airport. Arriving on time around 7am, we got into our groups, checked in, went up to our gate and grabbed some refreshments as we patiently waited to board our plane. On the plane the excitement was building; and we had a beautifully scenic, smooth flight over to France. We landed in summery, sun-drenched Paris around lunchtime and hunger was getting the better of most of us, so a wee pit stop at the nearby McDonalds on the way to our hotel was much appreciated! After we had refuelled, we hopped back onto our coach and headed to our hotel. Once we arrived at our hotel, the Fiap Jean Monnet, we all gathered in the foyer to listen to the manager's rules and regulations and then we were sorted into our rooms.



Once we were provided with key cards, we went up to our rooms and chilled out for an hour or so before having dinner at 6pm. After dinner, we got ready for the truly stunning and magnificent "Bateau Mouche" boat trip on the River Seine. The boat trip began at approximately 8pm and with the sun just beginning to lower in the sky, the views were absolutely breathtaking. The boat powered on through the waters and we passed the famous Eiffel Tower, Louvre Museum and the Notre Dame Cathedral; to name but a few of the amazing pieces of Architecture Paris has to offer. Once the trip was over, we made our way back to the hotel where we got into our rooms and fell asleep almost instantly from exhaustion.

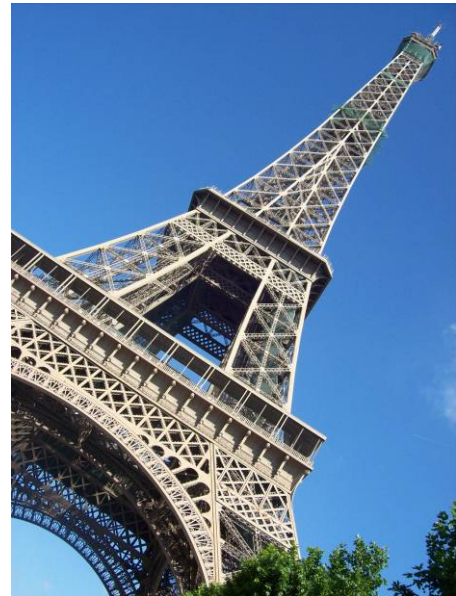
Monday June 22nd

Ok...I'm not going to lie; the early morning wasn't easy to come to terms with. Alarms from our roommates' phones were wailing as early as 6am in order for us to each have time to have a shower and get ready for the extremely long day ahead of us. At 8am we all gathered downstairs to collect our breakfast tokens and grabbed something to eat before collecting some of our belongings to take with us on our day out.

First stop of the day: Eiffel Tower!

One word: Amazing.

Even though I had been to Paris numerous times before, the overwhelming height and structure of the Eiffel Tower still managed to leave me in awe. Everyone shielded their eyes from the piercing sunlight as they strained their necks while looking upward, gawking at the absolutely fantastic and intricately built piece of architecture. The sky was cloudless and brilliantly blue, which caused the contrasting grey structure to proudly stand out for everyone to see. The area underneath the Eiffel Tower was teeming with people and the queues were easily hundreds of people long despite it only being about ten o'clock in the morning. However, we were all able to advance through the long lines of people and made our way up to the second floor in no time. A few of the people from our group (not mentioning anyone, Miss Dougan) were a bit wobbly with being so high up at 115.75 metres, but totally braved it and had a little doddle around the gift shops to calm down. The view from the second floor was absolutely astounding as most of Paris could be seen from it.



Once we had got our feet on the ground we made our way to Montmartre, where we got some delicious French delicacies such as crêpes as we walked around the little area of artists of every style imaginable.



Caricature artists in particular were very popular and seeing them sketch up cartoon versions of their customers was both amazing and hilarious.

After lunch we headed over to the visually stunning Sacre Coeur basilica. The walk up to it was a workout in itself, with over 200 steps to haul ourselves up in the baking heat, but it was, without a doubt, completely worth it. It was absolutely beautiful.

After our visit to the Sacre Coeur, we made our way to the Saint Ouen flea market which was fantastic! It was filled with stalls containing everything under the sun; shoes, clothing, jewellery, make-up, stationary and so much more, great for those wanting to spend pennies on presents to bring back for friends and family or those simply wanting to treat themselves.

After returning to the coach with bags of souvenirs and lighter purses, we finally made our way to the last stop of the day. We were going to the magnificent George Pompidou Centre to view exhibitions hosting famous artwork of the brilliant artists Alexander Calder and Wassily Kandinsky, and I could hardly wait! It was easily one of the most bizarre looking buildings



that I had ever laid my eyes on, but it was fantastic nonetheless! We went to view Alexander Calder's exhibition first and it was so amazing, however it wasn't everybody's cup of tea so a majority of the group went back down the look around the little souvenir shops outside whilst myself, Mrs McGurran and Mr Linden went and viewed the Wassily Kandinsky exhibition and before we knew it, that was the first day over. We arrived back in the evening and had our dinner before our group went for a little stroll around the Montparnasse area. The sun was setting and the temperatures had cooled but it was lovely being able to walk around and see the local area. When we got back to the hotel for the last time that day we went up to our rooms and fell asleep almost instantly, relieved to rest in preparation for tomorrow.

Tuesday June 23rd

Today was the day I think nearly everyone was looking forward to the most; we were heading off to Disneyland! The early morning was easier to cope with today as we were all so looking forward to the magnificent day ahead of us. We left the hotel around 9am and arrived at Disneyland with excitement, accompanied by squealing and loud chatter from students and teachers alike! Entering the park we all felt five years old again – it was amazing! After we were split into groups of the brave (the ones who wanted to go on all the bigger rides) and the terrified (those who preferred to stick to the teacups), we were then split into groups again and were assigned two teachers to lead us around the attractions.



We were so extremely lucky to have had the weather we did, the sky was clear, the sun was beating down and the temperatures were near enough 28°C! Disneyland was gloriously bathed in sunlight and it was a real proper summer's day.

The queues for the rollercoaster's were long but definitely worth the waiting! First of all my group went to Big Thunder Mountain and then to the Indiana Jones before meeting up with the rest of the group for lunch at the Cowboy Cookout Barbeque restaurant. Once we had finished eating we got back into our groups and headed to Space Mountain! When the adrenaline junkies had been on all the rollercoaster's, we went to see the

3D production "Honey, I Shrunk the Audience." Afterwards, we all done some shopping in the gift shops before meeting up at the band stand to watch the parades before we left.

It's safe to say that we were all shattered by the time we arrived back for dinner, and some of the group attended a disco that was on in the hotel that evening, whereas my friends and I relaxed in the Café area as energy levels were low and we couldn't wait to go to sleep!

Wednesday June 24th

Unfortunately, this was our last day in Paris but we were all determined to make the most of it. Another early start to the day meant we were getting all of our belongings packed into our suitcases to put into the coach before we left our hotel. Leaving in our keys and double checking our rooms to make sure we didn't forget anything, we said goodbye to the Fiap Jean Monet hotel and set off for the Notre Dame cathedral. The architecture of this building is so captivating as the amount of detail engraved into it would take hours to look at properly. Inside, the eerie silence and dim lighting is haunting in a way, but the décor and artwork inside of it is totally beautiful.



Next up on our list of things to do on the last day was to visit the Stade de France. To be honest, I didn't really know what to expect as I'm not big into sport, but it was absolutely fantastic! The tour guides were enthusiastic and we learnt some really interesting facts about the stadium as we took the tour around it. When the tour was over, we went to the museum where there was an abundance of

things on display. Along with signed football and rugby jerseys, there was a cymbal from a drum kit signed by AC/DC, a guitar signed by Bruce Springsteen, one signed by The Rolling Stones and another one signed by U2.

The day went in too quickly for everyone's liking and before we knew it we were on the plane back home. We arrived back at the school in the early hours of Thursday morning at 2:30am or so. Paris was absolutely amazing and easily the highlight of my year as myself and a few other of my friends had just completed our GCSEs a couple of weeks before we went on the trip. A big thank you is in order for Miss Dougan, Mrs McGurran, Miss Colton, Mrs Kayes, Mr Linden and Mr Sweeney for making the trip as enjoyable as it was.

It was indeed, the perfect end to my year and to anyone going to Paris in 2010, have a brilliant time, you won't want to leave!