

Activities Log

08/4/15

On Wednesday we met the Laois contingent in the airport in Dublin. Our flight was delayed, as there were strikes going on in Paris in the airports so we caught up with them for a couple hours, before finally catching our flight. We arrived in France with the Laois contingent and both groups rented cars for the week. It was a scenic journey to the guest house where we didn't have much time to settle before heading back out to dinner. Dinner was in a quaint wine-bar/restaurant run by a friend of Fergus and Gaia. The owner/hostess was Belgian and she took great delight in telling us of her wine and beer selection which was fantastic. After we finished our meal, everyone got out their various instruments and we played for hours. We talked to some of the locals while in the restaurant and we enjoyed hearing new songs and old before turning in for the night.

09/04/15

On Thursday morning we arrived at an open air café run by Ben, one of the members of the French contingent. We met some of Ben, Fergus and Gaia's local friends from the area, many ex-pats who had been living in the area for years. We began our meeting but as a lot of it had to do with the website and the projector wasn't working we took the opportunity to catch up with one another. Later, we went for lunch in an open air restaurant; all of us appreciating the warm weather. Later we went to a lovely restaurant run by an Englishman, and we all celebrated Tony's recent 70th birthday with tea and cake.

Later on we returned to the café we had been at the previous night to play music again. The owner had informed some of the locals about the music and there was a small audience to listen to us play this time. There were English as well as French in attendance and one couple even asked if we would play at their wedding, which we unfortunately had to turn down due to the cost of organising flights for all of the members of the delegations. The locals danced and sang as we all played before heading back to the guesthouse to turn in for the night.

10/04/15

On Friday we awoke early, had our breakfast and made our way to Fergus and Gaia's house. Gaia served us up a feast of pasta, French bread and chorizo and we all relaxed in the sunshine. Later a few of us took a scenic trip to a huge cave that went straight through a mountain. The mouth of the cave was over 20 feet high. Usually there were tours running through the mountain but unfortunately this day it was closed. We found a small café at the mouth of the cave and ordered coffee and ice-cream before heading to get some dinner.

Later Mauve of the French delegation had organised a talk, so got some take away food and shared a meal before the talk began. There were Italians, English and some Americans in attendance along with the various countries within our group. The talk's topic was "Is music nowadays only a disposable commodity or it still holds an important role in everyday life and personal development?". Topics ranged from pop music and the xfactor, to live and recorded music; It was a lively discussion all round, with a range of topics and opinions on display. Mauve and one of the Englishmen living in the area were kind enough to translate for us. As the talk finished up we had some time, to play music as always, but the talk had run quite late so we turned in for the night.

11/05/15

On Saturday some of the contingent went to Toulouse with Mauve and others went and others explored the town/village.

Later Fergus had organised a music night in Bens Café with everyone due to join in in various ways. In the afternoon we all practiced each other's songs and Fergus made sure the sound was in order. Sooner than any of us expected, locals and ex-pats streamed to the café, and the place was jam packed before it got dark. Fergus and Gaia began the night with their band and the crowd joined in on some songs they were familiar with. The evenings music was split between Folk and traditional Irish music, to Turkish, pop and Italian songs. The crowd got involved in some of the songs and there was a roaring bonfire in the courtyard outside for those who needed some air. The fire was fuelled by one of Fergus and Gaia's friends who had created a metal sculpture of a dragon that gave the impression that it was breathing fire. Everyone in attendance seemed to know each other and there was a real sense of community within both groups.

As many people as could fit on stage joined in on the final songs of the evening, including "Fishermans Blues" by The Waterboys which at this stage in the motilities is a staple of our set-lists for the trips. In the end we had all played, sung and applauded until we were ready to collapse, as we packed up the instruments and said our goodbyes. We all turned in for the night, and packed up our bags for departure.

12/05/15

The last of the groups left for their various countries, having fully enjoyed the atmosphere and joie de vivre of rural France as we all looked forward to our final meeting in Dublin.

Andrew Lea