

# The German Exchange 2023

By Catherine O'Reilly

On Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> of September our German exchange partners arrived in Ireland. They came in a bus to the Loreto, and we met our German partners for the first time. The CBS students came to pick up their partners too. We got to leave school early to bring our partners home and get them settled in. Both me and my sister are going on the exchange, so our partners got to stay in the same house for the week. Once we got home from school, we got to know our partners and described how to play Camogie because we had a Camogie match that evening. After explaining the sport, we brought them outside to try and teach them how to play. Then we let our partners get settled in and unpacked and after we had dinner. The girls decided to come and watch our Camogie match after dinner. There were a few other girls on the team that are doing the exchange so there was a couple of them on the sideline. Unfortunately, it rained for the whole match but fortunately we won so we made a good impression of the sport.

On the second day of the exchange, they headed to the Heritage Park and Johnstown castle to learn about some of Wexford's history. Me and another Loreto girl doing the exchange got to go on the trips with them so we could take pictures for the school. Once everyone was on the bus, we headed to the Heritage Park. We were given a tour of the park and were told the fascinating story of Ireland throughout history. Our German partners got to see many different buildings and monuments there. After the tour was over, we headed to Johnstown Castle. When we got there, we were able to eat our lunch. Split up into groups, we got to complete a scavenger hunt on the grounds of the castle. Once we were finished all the questions, we handed our sheet in and were given sweets. We left Johnstown Castle at 3:00 and arrived back at the school at 3:30 where we got to sit in the GP area and chat until school was over. During this trip I got to learn a lot more about my partner and her friends and we became a lot closer. After school we spent the day at home as both of our partners were tired after the long journey the day before and the trip that day. My friend came over after school with us and we played games together. After dinner we watched a film and then went to bed.



On Wednesday, all the German exchange students, a few of their CBS partners and two of us from Loreto went to the Dunbrody Famine Ship and Hook Head lighthouse. First, we went to the Dunbrody. When we got there, we were told about the Great Famine in Ireland and the lifestyle of people living in that time. Then we were given a tour of the ship. There we were told about the various parts of the ship and what it was like for the different types of people who were on the ship. Two actors performed a show for us which gave us an idea of the different ways the rich and the poor were being treated on the ship. On the way to Hook Head, we stopped off at Duncannon beach so we could eat our lunch. After eating our lunch on the lovely beach, we arrived at Hook Head and set off on our walk along the coast. During this walk we climbed over many stone walls and walked through fields with cows and even bulls in them. This walk along the coast was incredibly beautiful. After a half an hour walk, we arrived at Hook lighthouse. We were there for around another half an hour before we left to go back to the school. After school, a couple of us brought our partners into town where we introduced them to spice bags. We also gave them a little tour of the town. When we got home, we ate dinner. After dinner we decided to go for a walk with our dog and then we watched a film.



On Thursday, the exchange students went on a trip to Kilkenny with their CBS partners. Loreto students could not go on this trip as no Loreto teachers could go with them. When they arrived in Kilkenny, they received a tour of Kilkenny castle. After that they got free time to do some shopping and exploring around the town. They arrived home at around 6:30 after their trip. When our partners arrived home, we ate dinner and played a board game.

On Friday, the German exchange students received a tour of Wexford town. We walked into town from the school and met the others at The Bullring. From The Bullring the tour guide brought us to St. Iberius Church where he told us the interesting history of the church. After that we went to Wexford National Opera House where we went upstairs to look out onto the view of Wexford bridge. Finally, we were shown St. Patricks Church and graveyard. Here we were taught about the fascinating history of the old church and about the mass grave dug there after the 1798 Rebellion. When we were finished with the tour, we were given free time to eat our lunch and explore the town by ourselves. We walked back to the school together once we were done. After school was finished, we walked back into town with our partners and did some more shopping and exploring for a little bit. A few of us went to my rugby match against Enniscorthy in the evening where we got hot chocolates and watched Wexford win the game. This was also their first time watching a rugby match in person.



On Saturday, a group of us decided to go bowling in the evening. Before that we went into town and got some food. After eating we watched a little bit of a football match in Wexford Park. That was the first Gaelic Football match our German partners had ever seen but we had to leave the match early so we could get the bus to bowling. When we got to Leisure Max, we met more of our friends. Even though I had to leave early because I was babysitting, bowling was so much fun, and everyone became so competitive and wanted to be the winner. When the girls got home, they watched a film and played a few games before bed.

On the Germans last full day in Ireland, we woke up and went on a walk on Curracloe beach. It was very windy, and it rained a little bit on our way back but nevertheless the walk was very pleasant, and the scenery was exceptionally beautiful. When we got home, we were drenched from the rain, so we all had hot showers. Once we were all warmed up, we had our dinner and had an incredibly fun and relaxing evening in to celebrate our last night. After

the girls were all packed, we played more boardgames and talked about our week, dreading the following day.

Monday morning was incredibly sad as our partners were saying goodbye to our parents and family. In school we organised a day of fun to celebrate their last day. We did many activities like a céilí, a table quiz and hurling and football drills on the pitch. We also gave them a display of Irish culture through Irish dancing and traditional Irish music. To end out the day we gave everyone Irish treats like Cadbury chocolate and Tayto crisps to enjoy while everyone said their goodbyes. At one o'clock the bus arrived to take the exchange students to the airport. Everyone was terribly upset as we made our way out to the bus to say our final goodbyes. We all miss our German partners so much and cannot wait to see them again in February.

