



COPLY VOICE

Comenius Edition



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Bursa, Turkey

For several years now Copley has been trying to forge wider links with schools across Europe. The school secured funding in July 2013 for a project involving five schools from the UK, Denmark, Turkey, Romania and Greece. The FIFA project (Following In the Footsteps of our Ancestors) is a cultural project and aims to promote the cultural differences and commonalities between participating nations, heighten awareness of what it means to be European and to develop tolerance and co-operation between all those taking part. With these aims in mind Copley embarked on the first leg of an epic adventure back in February this year to Bursa, Turkey.

The intrepid team of six (Kate Oldfield, Ellen Salah, Elyse White, Beth Thompson, Mrs Clifford and Mr Boyle) had a very early morning check-in at Manchester Airport, flying to Istanbul via Zurich. The four youngest members of the group were struggling with such an early start until they realised that Manchester City goalkeeper Joe Hart was travelling on the same flight and sitting just two rows behind. He

turned out to be a very nice man and let us take a picture for the album with the only pity that the skills of the photographer weren't up to the job! We stayed overnight in Istanbul and on Monday morning took a two-hour ferry journey to Bursa where we were met at the port on arrival and taken to the school to meet up with the pupils and teachers from the other four participating countries. On arriving at the school, the four Copley students were very apprehensive about meeting the girls whom they would be staying with for the week. Their fears were proved unfounded as the hosts ran to the Copley students and greeted them warmly as old friends. The ice was well and truly broken and the start of lasting friendships had begun.

Monday evening and the entire group was taken to a Dervish community to witness Sufi Whirling. The Dervishes are famous the world over for their whirling and after witnessing the spectacle at close quarters it was easy to see why. An amazing event! The ritual took place in a small arena where spectators sat at the most five metres from where the action took place. The audience surrounded the musicians, singers and whirlers with male members of the audience seated at ground level and females on the first floor. The music was haunting and the chanting quite hypnotic as the whirling Dervishes began to spin and spin...and spin! Faster and faster as the music and chanting built to a crescendo before fading away. For a full thirty minutes they span and rotated in an amazingly orderly fashion around the auditorium. How they could hold the same posture and spin as fast as they did without stopping once and without a hint of dizziness is beyond belief.



Tuesday night was Henna night and we all knew what to expect for this, tattoos. Wrong! What we actually witnessed was a Turkish wedding and we learned the significance of Henna to the ceremony. The ritual was spectacular as was the singing and the skill of the live band. All those taking part in the demonstration were members of the Comenius project in Bursa. The overriding emotions running throughout this ceremony were those of great joy and happiness. Amazingly this joy and happiness was demonstrated by everyone's willingness and desire to sing. But even more striking was that everyone danced as a real expression of joy. No matter how old or young - you danced.

One morning, as the majority of the group worked in school, ten of us (two from each country) spent time on national television. Turkey's equivalent of This Morning gave up the first third of its programme to interviewing us about the FIFA project. It was quite an experience sitting for half an hour in front of a camera on live TV when you haven't a clue what is being said until someone asks you a question in your own language! One thing that was familiar however was the format of the show with the same type of items being covered that you would find at home. Mr Boyle spent the morning sat next to the celebrity chef who was preparing a meal for later on in the show. Whatever she was cooking smelt fabulous, it's a pity we had to leave before we had the chance to taste it. Maybe next time.

A visit to the ancient town of Iznik was followed by an afternoon experience at Koza Han and the bazaar. Koza Han was built in 1490 and was originally a spice and silk market. It is now a very beautiful shopping area full of cafés and all manner of shops selling top quality silk products and craftware. The visit to the bazaar was an amazing feast for the senses. The smells, the sights, the colours, the sounds; things we'd never seen before and things we may never see again. It seemed everything you could possibly ever wish to buy was available in the hustle and bustle of the bazaar.

The week in Bursa went very quickly and all too soon it was time to say our farewells. We had spent a week living in Asia. A week underpinned by fantastic caring

and generous hospitality. A week that was full of laughter, apprehension at times and great sadness on departure. A week when we learned so much about another culture, so much about our own culture and so much about ourselves but most of all it was a week that saw the creation of lifelong friendships.

Mr Boyle Assistant Head





Hammel, Denmark

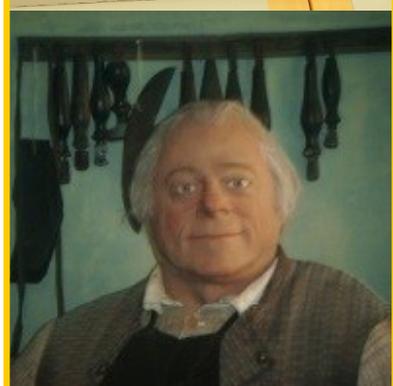
Following the Easter break a team of six including Reece Whittaker, Claudiu Peurt-Stefan, Chloe Ferguson, Florence Brennand, Miss Hartley and Mr Dawson, set off on an adventure to Denmark. We all had a very early morning, meeting at Manchester Airport for our 6:30am flight to Copenhagen via Frankfurt. The first flight to Frankfurt went without a hitch but it was when we arrived in Germany that it all went wrong! With only fifty minutes to catch a connecting flight and a few security hiccups which included two pupils being frisked and a teacher having their bag searched we had missed our flight. However, after a trip to the ticket desk we were quickly transferred onto the next available flight which was four hours later. To pass the time, Miss Hartley along with the four students ventured into the airport to have a look around the various shops. However, on our return to the café where Mr Dawson was waiting we were suddenly stopped by an airport official who requested to see our boarding passes which were on the other side of the airport with Mr Dawson! The men left to find a solution, returning five minutes later with four armed German police officers. After explaining again what had happened, they informed us that Miss Hartley would have to be escorted through security to the café where Mr Dawson was waiting. Luckily, after a tense few minutes, we all managed to return to the café in one piece and waited patiently for our next flight to Copenhagen which was followed by a three hour train ride to Aarhus. After a very, very long day of travelling, we eventually made it to our final destination and were met off the train by all of our host families and the Danish teachers ready to escort us to our new homes for the week to get some rest.

On our first morning in Denmark, after some much needed sleep, we arrived at Søndervangskolen in a small town called Hammel. Here, we were introduced to all the other students and teachers from the three other countries taking part: Turkey, Greece and Romania. We were all shown towards the classrooms that we were going to be in for the day, Florence and Chloe in year 10 and Claudiu and Reece in year 9.

We soon began to notice the differences between their school and Copley. For one, it was the teachers who would move to the different classrooms at the start of each lesson, rather than the students. Also, none of the pupils wore uniform and at break times were allowed to play football and ride their skateboards along the corridors and within their year areas.

Throughout the day, we attended lessons in Danish, English, German, Life Studies, PE and many other subjects. At break and lunch times, we would all meet up and sometimes have lunch together with the other students before having a game of football. It was really interesting to spend time in their English lessons, learning what they knew about our own culture and asking many questions about theirs. The day in school went quickly and soon it was time to head home to spend time getting to know our host families a little better.

The next morning all the staff and pupils left the classroom to explore the nearby city of Aarhus and more specifically the Old Village. It was brilliant reconstruction of varying lifestyles from several eras, this town was a perfect, engaging way to tell people of the history of a country; a true living museum.



First, we were directed to Hans Christian Andersen's mother's house where we were introduced to the simple furniture available to people in poverty and were shown the place where he worked with an old shoemaker. Next, we were directed to the school where the young children studied which was very small and quite cramped when we entered. We were challenged with finding something that was missing besides the teacher and the pupils. Someone eventually figured out that there was no blackboard but there were guns in the corner for the boys to learn how to fight.

After the tour had finished, we were given an hour to roam freely around the town. We bought souvenirs and again entered the interiors of some houses before it was time to leave the old village and travel to our next destination. Himmelbjerget is a small town about an hour drive from where we were staying and offered one of the highest points in Denmark, known locally as 'Sky Mountain' - although it was really just a very big hill! This offered fantastic views of the surrounding Lake District and was a good opportunity for both staff and students to take some photos of the scenery. There were also some nearby shops and cafés that allowed us to stock up on Danish sweets and buy the odd souvenir for our families.

After leaving the brilliant mountain views, we then travelled back down hill to catch a boat across the lake towards Silkeborg. This again provided us with amazing views of the surrounding towns, the island in the centre and of course the very expensive houses on the lake front. We even got to sample one of the famous Danish sweets. After a long day sight-seeing, we left the Lakes and boarded the bus back to Hammel and to our Danish family.

Our last day in Denmark was spent back in the school learning about all of the other countries and their culture, but also about our own traditions. We all spent the day preparing traditional dishes from our own country; we cooked up a lovely cottage pie, followed by a traditional English bakewell tart. After lots of preparing and even more washing up, we changed into traditional costumes and sat down to dine with our fellow students. Each country stood up to introduce their food before we were able to sample delicacies from each culture. The food was amazing and it was great to try new things we had never tasted and in some cases never even seen before. We finished off the evening by taking it in turns to teach each country songs and dances from our own cultures. We learnt traditional dances from Turkey, Greece, Denmark and Romania and then we rounded off the evening by teaching everyone the Hokey Cokey and singing some English songs with Mr Dawson accompanying on the guitar.

After a lovely week in Denmark it was time to go home and so on Friday morning we packed our cases and set off back to the train station ready for our three hour train ride back to Copenhagen. We said our goodbyes and there were lots of hugs and even tears as we thanked our new friends for their generous hospitality and promised that we would stay in touch. We were sad to leave behind all of the people we had spent the last week living with but were happy to know that we had left with fantastic memories and new, lifelong friends.

Miss Hartley Year 11 Learning Mentor





Manchester, England



A blustery and cold Sunday evening saw the start of the third leg of the Comenius Project which was being hosted here in Stalybridge. Everyone was feeling anxious about how the week would go and some had concerns about being away from home for the whole week. First to arrive at The Sea Cadets Centre were pupils and teachers from Greece, who actually arrived in Manchester on the Friday, then Romania, followed by Turkey and then, after a long journey to get here, Denmark.

It was a reunion for those pupils and staff that went to Denmark and Turkey last year and everyone was happy to see each other again. Year 10 pupils were feeling slightly nervous; it was the first time they had come face-to-face with their partners. After a lovely evening meal and ice breaker activities they realised they had nothing to worry about.

Monday morning pupils and staff awoke, still feeling sleepy (thanks to the girls being up half the night chatting!) but excited about the week ahead. A trip to Copley Academy was the first order of the day after a traditional English breakfast. Teachers from the visiting schools were so impressed when they visited our school and loved the bright displays – so much so that it took them two and a half hours to have a tour as they were taking lots of pictures. They were extremely positive about the attitude and behaviour of pupils, commenting how polite and attentive they were, something we should all be very proud of.

The focus of the five day visit was to explore the industry that has helped shape Manchester into what it is today, starting with a trip to Compstall, which is well known for being an old mill village. The afternoon stayed sunny which was perfect for a walk around Etherow Park. Pupils learnt all about the cotton industry, how water was vital in producing clothing and how awful conditions were for children working in the mills all those years ago.

On our return to school, pupils had the opportunity to show their foreign partners how they usually spend evenings here in Stalybridge. Some went bowling, others shopping and some lucky ones got to experience a traditional home cooked roast dinner.

Tuesday meant an early start as there was a busy day lined up. First stop was The Lowry Outlet shopping centre before heading over to Old Trafford for a tour of the football stadium. Pupils were able to try on shirts of past players and some even sniffed David Beckham's old boots!

The afternoon was mostly dry, which was a relief as we had a guided tour of Manchester city centre booked in. This was fascinating, even to those who have visited Manchester many times, as they had never noticed statues or churches before and were interested to learn the relevance of them and the history behind it. The final stop of this tour was at the 5* Radisson Blu Hotel for afternoon tea. Pupils were presented with towers of sandwiches, scones

and cakes which looked and tasted delicious. This was a welcome break after such a busy and tiring day. However, it still wasn't finished as we had tickets to watch the theatre show *Barnum*. This was a spectacular, action packed show which was very colourful and had some amazing circus stunts, including tight rope walking, stilt walking and acrobats. Following the show, everyone was so tired and were very glad to get some sleep after such a hectic day.

Another early start was in store for Wednesday as we were heading over to Liverpool to see the impact the cotton trade had and how the docks had needed to be built for the shipments going in and out of the country. Pupils had a lesson at the International Slavery Museum about the history and conditions of being a slave. They were able to hold the shackles used to imprison slaves and researched the way they were treated. All pupils were very respectful and worked well as teams, teaching each other about what they had found out and how important cotton was.

The final full day we all had together was spent back in school, working with the international dance group, Company Chameleon, choreographing a dance piece that would interpret and reflect the purpose of the visit with the focus being on industry. Some pupils were quite apprehensive about this at first but once they joined in, they realised it was actually good fun and enjoyed themselves. The performance in front of year 7 at the end of the day was fantastic and we even had a visit from a Member of Parliament and a journalist who watched the dance and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Thursday evening was the best night for most of the pupils. The Copley Academy staff weren't as keen on the plans for this evening (except me) which was a night of shopping around The Trafford Centre. All of the Christmas decorations were up and it looked beautiful. Our foreign visitors were taken aback by the size and the amount of shops. Some groups of pupils went to play Laser Quest whilst others chose to do a bit of Christmas shopping and others just bought themselves presents from The Disney Store, which made the journey back a bit of a squeeze on the minibus!



Teachers from the visiting schools were so impressed when they visited our school and loved the bright displays

Friday was a day of goodbyes which was very sad for some pupils as this was their last meeting as part of this project. There were tears and sincere promises to keep in touch, which I'm sure will be kept.

Overall, it was a very tiring but successful week. A huge thanks to all of the pupils who were involved in this visit, you represented Copley Academy incredibly well and you should be proud of yourselves.

Miss Clegg English teacher



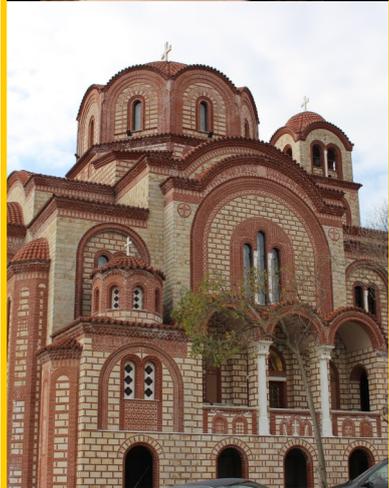


Xanthi, Greece

Think Greece, think hot sun, clear skies, golden beaches and crystal clear waters. Not on this trip. The party of five who arrived at Thessaloniki airport en route for Xanthi were met by gale force winds, driving rain, sleet and snow. Welcome to sunny Greece!

Our freezing cold arrival was soon warmed by the welcome from our host teacher for the week, Aliko. She quickly arranged for our transfer to the spectacular hotel we were staying in for the night, right on the sea front of the ancient city of Thessaloniki. Following a lovely meal in a very stylish and popular restaurant next to the hotel, we retired to

Come morning the views were spectacular with bright sunshine on crystal blue waters for as far as the eye could see. Greece had delivered.



our beds, preparing to take on the world the following day.

Come morning the views from our hotel balconies were spectacular with bright sunshine on crystal blue waters for as far as the eye could see. Greece had delivered. Aliko met us at the hotel reception and took us on a guided tour of this ancient port. What was once a very busy docklands area had been developed into a fantastic promenade environment designed to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors through walking, cycling, fishing, sitting or running. We made the most of it!

In the afternoon, we went by public transport to the town of Xanthi, a journey of two hours through spectacular coastal scenery against a backdrop of snow capped mountains.

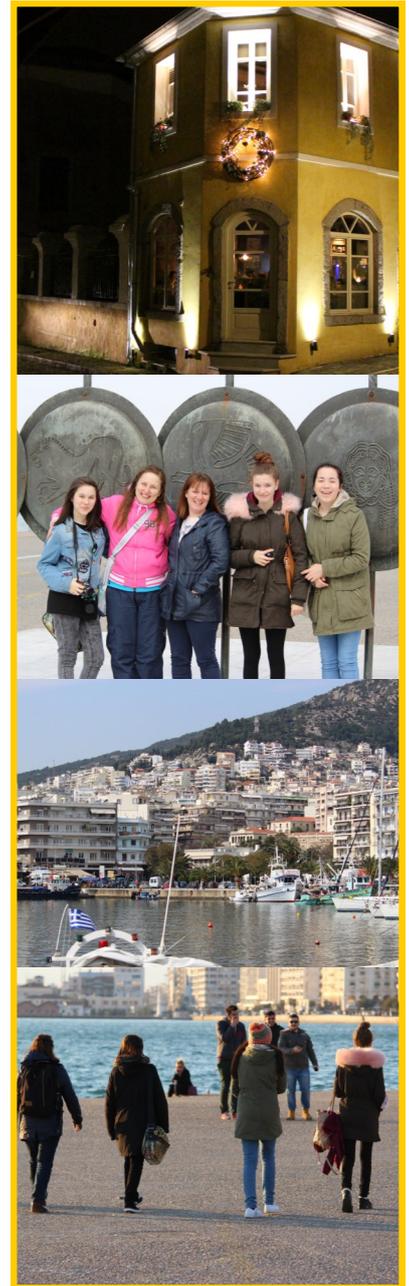
We checked into our lovely hotel in Xanthi and had an evening sampling the delights of this lovely little town. We also discovered a fantastic little tavern at the end of our street.

Sunday saw us doing a bit of sightseeing before meeting up with the other groups of pupils and staff from Turkey, Denmark, Greece and Romania. Following a very warm reception, Copley students departed with their host families. These moments are always tinged with uncertainty and apprehension. This occasion was no different. However, generous hospitality and a real concern to make visitors feel welcome shone through and the seeds were sown for the creation of some strong and trusting friendships.



The programme for the week saw staff and pupils working together on occasion and at other times they followed separate itineraries as they tried to understand the cultural and historical influences that have shaped Xanthi and the school community.

Days were full and busy and so were the evenings, with a wide range of activities being arranged throughout the week. Two activities were particularly memorable. First, a night trek up into the mountains in the company of mountain guides. On arrival at our destination we discovered telescopes had been set up for us all to watch a night sky that we've NEVER seen in the UK. Having access to hot drinks and snacks whilst we watched also made it that extra bit special. Secondly, our final night in Xanthi and closing celebrations was equally memorable. The food, laughter, Greek dancing and to witness how far many individuals had travelled in cementing friendships with people from five countries across Europe, whilst working on the project was exceptional. The fantastic sense of community being shared by parents, stu-



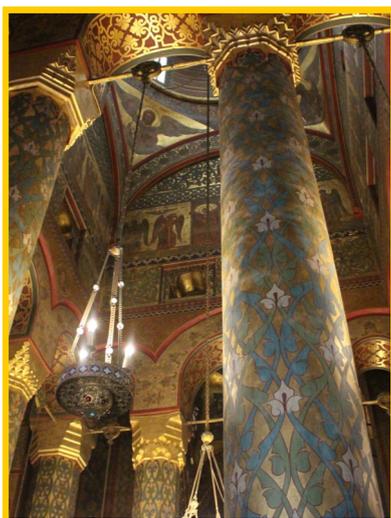
The fantastic sense of community being shared by parents, students, staff and passing locals was great to see.

dents, staff and passing locals was great to see.

All too quickly another fantastic week had come to an end. Tremendous experiences being had by all involved and the boundaries regarding the understanding, tolerance and what it is to be European being extended.

Mr Boyle Assistant Head





Campulung Muscel, Romania

Romania. Not the usual place to visit. Links to communism, dictatorship and oppression are what spring to mind with dull, grey buildings littering the landscape. However, this couldn't have been further from the truth as we found out during our time there.

Bleary eyed, the pupils met at 3am at Manchester Airport to catch an early flight to Amsterdam where we had to wait to board another plane to take us to Romania. Both flights were only a couple of hours and fortunately, without any issues or major delays.

Arriving in the capital of Romania, Bucharest, we set off to Campulung Mus-

The overall impression was that it was a stunning place with a lot of variety and clearly a lot of history



cel, a small city in the mountains in central Romania. The pure air and fine scenery means that Campulung is a popular summer resort for locals, as well as offering skiing in the winter months. In the city there are more than twenty churches, besides the monastery and cathedral. I think we managed to visit the majority of them during our stay!

The journey from the airport was eye opening and surprising. Lush green surroundings enveloped the roads with snow-capped mountains towering in the distance. The weather was pleasant throughout our stay with most days being warm and sunny.

As we got closer to our destination, a world of new verses old was revealed which was intriguing to witness. Brand new Mercedes and BMWs were driving down the roads alongside horses and carts, whilst ladies sold fruit by the roadside and cows and dogs wandered freely. The cost of living is extremely cheap, which means you get more for your money. New housing developments were being built next to houses that were almost derelict and were patched up with any materials available. The overall impression was that it was a stunning place with a lot of variety and clearly a lot of history.

After a two and half hour journey down bumpy roads (no motorways!), we arrived at the beautiful and impressive school and were greeted with hugs from students and staff. A much needed shower and rest was the order for the evening after a 14 hour journey. Pupils set off with their families for the week and were taken to their homes to see how a typical Romanian family live.

The next day we were welcomed to the school and given a tour as well as being treated to a fantastic performance by the school choir. Within the same grounds there is a secondary school, teacher training college and also a



primary school, which the trainee teachers are allowed to go and teach in for practise before qualifying. There is also a museum on site showing the history of the school and the local area, including sculptures and works of art. Everyone was extremely proud of the school and the way it has developed over the years. Pupils had free time to spend as they pleased, either shopping or looking round the town at the various monuments.

Spending time with the Romanian teachers revealed a lot about the history of the country. Only 2% of the population are considered to be wealthy and there is a huge divide between the rich and poor. An education in this country ensures a more secure future, as well as being able to speak English.

During the week we visited the famous Bran Castle which is thought to be linked to the legend of Dracula and could be the castle featured in the story. Turns out, Bram Stoker never visited Romania and his description is purely a coincidence. The castle on top of a craggy hill was a beautiful example of architecture with high ceilings and a gorgeous courtyard which was a perfect suntrap.

Pupils were also taken for a day in the mountains where they took part in a range of activities at a local camp. They completed aerial assault courses, rope walking between trees and also rode a zip wire. This was a great opportunity for pupils to get to know each other and find out about the countries that everyone came from, as well as getting to know their Romanian hosts.

Other places visited included numerous monasteries, mausoleums holding the bodies of soldiers from World War One and also a restaurant in a ski resort. The teachers from all of the countries were also lucky enough to spend three hours looking round a cement factory, learning how cement is made which is a vital export for the region.

On the penultimate evening, the host school performed a showcase of singing traditional Romanian songs and also Romanian dancing. It was fascinating to see the talent of the pupils in the school and how hard they had worked in preparing the performance especially for our visit.



The students were made to feel like they were one of the family and got to experience a very different way of life

Romania has many fantastic sights to offer and the people make everyone feel very welcome. The students were made to feel like they were one of the family and got to experience a very different way of life for the time they were there. We experienced the traditions of Romanian culture such as breaking off bread to dip in salt as a welcoming gesture and also were shown many beautiful places that the country has to offer.

Miss Clegg English teacher





THANK YOU

**to the staff who
contributed to this
Comenius Edition
of the Copley Voice**

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