



Italy 2012

29th May- 2nd June 2012

We were greeted at the airport in Bari by the Italian team and taken to our hotel. We dined at a local restaurant, a short walk from the hotel in Ruvo.

Wednesday 30th June 2012

The next morning we walked to the Italian school building that had the youngest children from four years to eight years old. We were greeted by children dressed in smocks: white for the girls and dark blue for the boys. The children congregated in the school hall and with much excitement we awaited the arrival of the President of the area. The children entertained us by dancing and singing and playing musical instruments to Italian classical music. The chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from Nabucco by Verdi was particularly moving. The children also sang the Italian National Anthem. The president gave his address to the children and spoke to them about how friendship between countries helped to promote understanding of the cultures of others and to avoid war. The visiting teachers toured the school and we took photos of the children with our Barnaby Bear to show the children in England.

We walked to the second school building and were greeted outside with dances with some children dressed as Pinocchios from the traditional tale.

We then left this school and walked to the next school building for the oldest pupils, up to 11 years old. All the pupils were standing on the steps to the entrance of the school. They were holding balloons and were dressed in their smocks with badges made from the flag colors of the countries represented. The children sang songs to greet us and then we were taken on a tour of this school and we were welcomed by the head teacher. The school was decorated with flags of the six countries and we had the opportunity to speak in English to some of the oldest children. They asked us questions about our countries and the weather.

We left the schools to go to the town hall and meet the Mayor. We were given books about local artists and the archaeological museum we were to visit.

That evening we returned to the school to see the dancing show that told The International Story created by the children of the six Comenius countries. Each country was represented and the capital cities, traditional dress and dance culture was demonstrated. Love and friendship was celebrated in the story. This was a highlight of the visit. Each country was given a published copy of the story to take back to their schools and pupils.

31st May

Cultural visits followed to a UNESCO World Heritage site at Alberobello and the 'trulli houses' and church. We also visited beautiful Polignano and saw the coast and beach at Ostuni.

1st June

This was our final day. We visited the local museum and saw valuable Greek vases collected by a local family. After this we travelled to the High school and met the Principal and some students. They spoke to us in English about the school and we met a pupil who was taking part in the International Mathematical Olympiad. We toured the library and met some teachers. The school had won many awards.

Finally, we visited Bari, the capital city of the region and a local castle, Castel del Monte. We had the opportunity to see the agriculture of the area and sample locally grown food at a farm.

We were honored to take part in the final visit and to see the culmination of two years of sharing ideas, developing professionally and most of all introducing our pupils to the friendship of schools in many countries.

Dorothy Box and Julie Field