

Oliver Lindsell diary

Germany Feb 2019

Day 1

I woke up at 2:30a.m. to meet at the airport at 3:00a.m. We landed in The Netherlands and then got a minibus to Ubach Palenburg where we met and exchanged. I then went back to Fabian's and played a German board game and PS4 which was fun. Fabian's parents were funny.

Day 2

We had to meet at school 8a.m. which was not fun. We then had a Maths lesson then a chemistry lesson. In chemistry we made a battery with a piece of apple. Then later that day we played Ultimate Frisbee. I was good at catching but I was terrible at throwing. Then in the evening we went to Eric's for a party.

Day 3

We took a minibus to The Netherlands early in the morning. First we went ice-skating; we had a lesson so now I am a better ice-skater. Then we played football; the Spanish would try and do skill all game but they were terrible in reality apart from one boy who was crazy good. There I played a bit of floor-ball against Rory. My team was terrible but it was ok because we still beat Rory's team. Then in the evening we went to Kristina's for another party which was more fun.

Day 4

We went down to the train station and took a train to Aachen. While we were there we saw many historical features for the city like the dome. I also went shopping for a bit and we went in a technology shop and messed about with the speakers. Then we went and did an escape room which was fun because I had never done one of them before.

Day 5

We took a train again but this time to Cologne. We saw more history like the dome which was absolutely massive and incredibly detailed. I also went shopping today and bought a t shirt from a German shop, a belt and some nice cookies. I was also late meeting up because I was far away in a Starbuck's. We went to another party at Eric's which was fun because it was like a farewell party.

Day 6

We met up at school in the morning to do an evaluation of the trip before we got a minibus to the airport. We said goodbye to our exchange partners and then got in a minibus. Once at the airport I realized that the wheels on my suitcase had fallen off so I had to drag my bag to the airport doors. Unfortunately, the last day was the first day it had been warm. We got home quickly which was good.

If I could explain the trip in one sentence it would be 'A series of fun and crazy events'.

Luca Taylor diary

Germany Feb 2019

Sunday

After getting up in the middle of the night we arrived at Eindhoven Airport around 8am. It didn't take long to pass through customs and jump on the minibus to CMG school in Germany. We didn't notice that we'd crossed the Dutch/German Border as the roads seemed very similar. We were met by the German exchange students and taken back to their homes. I was with Joel, who showed me around his house and introduced me to his Mum, Dad and younger brother. I ate with them that evening and went to bed at 10pm feeling very exhausted.

• Monday

It was another early start and I had my first German breakfast, which included ham, sausages and bread, washed down with a fruit tea. Some new flavours for me. It was a ten minute walk to the school from Joel's house. Upon arrival we went straight into our first German lesson, which was a struggle, as we didn't understand anything. It was interesting to see the German ways of teaching though. During the afternoon we did orienteering and ultimate frisbee, which was especially fun as it was a new sport to me. That night we walked home and had some food before going to bed.

• Tuesday

Joel and I arrived at school around 8am where a coach was waiting for us. We then had an hour's ride to an ice rink in the Netherlands. We met with the Spanish and Dutch pupils, who are also part of the exchange trip. We had some ice skating lessons followed by some free time on the ice. After food we entered the main sports hall to play football and hockey for a few hours. I really enjoyed the afternoon. Then it was a coach ride back to Germany, where I ate with Joel's family again.

• Wednesday

We met at the school before walking to Ubach Palenberg train station. We caught a train to Aachen, a German town south of where we were staying. We had some free time to explore the shops and look at the old water baths, followed by a visit to an escape room, which was a new experience for me. We caught a train back to Ubach Palenberg and then I was driven

back to Joel's house. I started to feel more at home and settled at this point.

- **Thursday**

Today was much the same as yesterday with another train trip. This time we headed to Cologne where we were shown around the amazing Cathedral in the centre of the city. Then we headed along a bridge that was covered in love locks, padlocks of all shapes and sizes attached to the bridge railings. During our free time we looked around many shops, many of which had huge brightly lit signs. Like Wednesday, we caught the train home and I ate with Joel's family again.

- **Friday**

In the morning we walked to the school after I said goodbye and thank you to Joel's family. We took part in a quiz before catching the minibus back to the airport. The flight was quick and before I knew it I was back at Stansted being met by my Dad. It was good to be home after such a great trip. Since I've got home I've stayed in touch with Joel.

Clare Graves diary

Germany Feb 2019

Tagbücher

Sunday

2:23 – First alarm went off.

2:28 – Second alarm went off.

2:33 – Third alarm went off.

By that time, I was awake and getting ready for my early morning flight to Eindhoven in the Netherlands. My Mum, brother and his girlfriend and I had set off for the airport at just gone 3 in the morning, to catch the plane that would leave at 6:10am; we arrived there at about 3:30 and were surprised not to see Mr Rumsey and Mrs Vincent at the Ryan air check-in area as we would have expected. I am still not sure who got there first my family or Rory and his Mum because I didn't notice them there straight away, but they could have been there for a while. Other people arrived between 3:30 and 4:00 but there was still no sign of Mr Rumsey or Mrs Vincent. Rory's Mum came over to my Mum asking her to keep an eye on Rory because she was getting worried about the car parking and needed to go at which stage my Mum decided that she needed to go as well leaving me with my brother and his girlfriend. At 4:04 Mr Rumsey and Mrs Vincent finally appeared, and they expected to be the first there (only 1 or 2 people were still missing by this time)!

When we went on to customs, I was having everything checked at one desk but then the person on the desk found out that something wasn't working properly, so she sent me to the person on the next desk and that took a while because it had registered that the person at the other desk was doing me. It eventually got sorted.

Then we had to have our hand luggage checked and go through a machine to make sure that we weren't carrying anything that we shouldn't.

Then we had a wait while looking around the shops. I wanted to wait at the meeting place (which was outside my brother's girlfriend's favourite shop—Superdry) and read my book; however, I had to go round the shops with Nadia and Jess (we weren't allowed to go anywhere on our own). I didn't have any English money, but Nadia and Jess did, so they brought whatever it was that they wanted.

On the way to the que for the plane, there was a walking escalator thing, which was a thing that I hadn't seen before. In the plane que we had to wait a little while before we got to go on (one of the teachers had priority boarding so that teacher went on before us). I don't know quite what I thought

the interior of a plane would be, but I am not sure that what I saw was really what I expected a plane to be like. There were 3 seats on either side of the aisle, and I was lucky enough to get the window seat with a view of the back of the wing. I sat next to Tilly with Tilda on the other side of her. I found it quite exciting being on a plane and taking off and landing. On the plane, I read my book and looked out of the window.

When we got off the plane we had to go through the Dutch customs. I was slightly worried about going through another country's customs, but it turned out to be fine because all they did was check that I was who my passport said I am. After that we had to collect our bags from the machine and go through a door and wait for the bus. On my way through the door I noticed something about PSV football club, and I mentioned to Nadia that that was the football club that I am halfway through the league in my FIFA game.

We had to wait a little while for the bus, so Mr Rumsey called the driver who claimed that he was about 10 minutes away. Over 20 minutes later we caught sight of the bus driver. We then went out and got on the bus. On the journey I read my book and other people were on their phones.

When we reached Carolus Magnus Gymnasium, I realised that I had no clue what my exchange partner looked like and I was therefore confused when I got off of the bus at the school. Luckily my partner found out who I was relatively quickly. Next, I travelled to my exchange partner's house in a car with Tilly and her exchange partner (only my exchange partner and I got out at her house).

When we were in the house, I put my stuff upstairs in her room and then went downstairs for lunch. Probably due to nerves, I only had a croissant. Ricarda's (my exchange partner) little brother was scared of meeting me so he hid somewhere in the house—the Mum put it down to the fact that he didn't think that I would be able to communicate at all with him.

Later in the afternoon, we went over to Nadia's exchange partners house before going trampolining. I didn't really see much point in going trampolining, but I would be lying if I said that I hated it. In one part of the trampoline place there were ramps where you jump from the top into a pit of spongy things (to help prevent you from hurting yourself). The ramps weren't that high but I was a bit nervous of actually jumping off of the top. I managed to do both of them and both times before I had jumped off of them, I asked Ricarda, "Why am I doing this?"

In the evening Ricarda and I went to see Tilly and her exchange partner. When we were there Tilly decided that I would not be able to read a whole book in German; resulting in me borrowing a book from her exchange partner's book shelf and reading the first few pages. Reading part of the book reminded me of the ways that German is different to English, e.g. »speech« (in some books) but more commonly; „speech“.

When we had to leave to go back home, I accidentally fell down the stairs. I pretended that it hadn't hurt at all but in reality, it really did. After falling down one flight of stairs, I then had to walk down another set of stairs in the same house!

When I got back to Ricarda's I set an alarm for 6:30 the next morning.

Montag

On Monday, the first thing that we did when we got to school—not including the wait for the teachers and finding out where to go—was to have a tour of the school. Jess' exchange partner was ill so Jess tagged along with Nadia and her exchange partner for the day. On the tour of the school (which was broken up into groups—student choice groups) it was Ricarda, Nadia and her exchange partner, Jess and me walking around together.

Their school is different to ours. Most of their school is lumped together and there are approximately 3 floors; however, our school is more spread out and there are blocks A through E and Peak block as well as sports block, the old gym, the main-hall and drama and music (the library is included in A block).

Another difference is that they have rooms and the teachers move about; except when they have subjects like music or science. Another difference is that they have a break after every lesson; however, at our school we have to go straight to the next lesson after 1st period, 3rd period and form. Another difference is that each of their lessons last 45 minutes.

In their second lesson of the day we went to their 'musik' class (this was because we were doing lessons in Germany to see what lessons over there are like). Ricarda's class had been doing a project on reggae music which meant that they already had a lot of notes on it.

The other English girls in our class (me included) had no clue what to do so it was a while before we were told that we could join one of the music class' groups and help them or alternatively we could make our own group and do the work. We chose to join another group. The group that we joined seemed to be going over what they had done and trying to choose an example of reggae music.

In the break between the 2nd and 3rd lessons we went to the library and some of the Germans had their photo taken for the local newspaper because of the protest that they were staging.

When we eventually go to the 'mathe' class, we were asked by the teacher to introduce ourselves. Nadia, Jess and Tilly went before me, and when it came to my turn I said "Ich heisse Clare und Ich bin vierzehn Jahre alt." I was the only one that introduced them-self in German, I wonder why... After I introduced myself Mr. Rumsey and Mrs. Vincent introduced themselves and Mr. Rumsey asked if there

were any questions (some of these questions were down to the age that he had pretended to be when he introduced himself).

When we got on to doing some maths work, the teacher quickly went over something on the board and then she told people to choose one of three sheets on offer at the back of the classroom. Some of the other people from England took what they thought was the easiest sheet on offer, but I decided to instead do one of the other sheets. Unfortunately, I didn't understand that much of the sheet, but I kept trying to do the sheet even after the lesson had ended. At one point (after the lesson) I even asked the teacher to check it for me; she corrected one of the mistakes that I made but for all I know there could be more mistakes that I have made. The maths sheet was on shapes which isn't my strong point.

After the Maths lesson we got to do our first organised sport—orienteeing. This meant that we walked round the town looking for stuff; however, the Germans in our group (teacher selected) already knew most of the answers. One of the questions involved counting how many trees there were in a certain place (24). There was also something that lead us to subway to buy a cookie.

When we got back to the school, the Germans handed us the worksheet and told us to do the part related to their school. One of the questions was to find out how many teachers taught at their school and annoyingly enough I didn't realise the error that I made on my counting until that evening. There were 3 full rows and a 4th uncomplete row. So, I counted how many teachers were in the 1st row and multiplied it by three; however, 14×3 doesn't equal 52 (it equals 42) which means that when I added the bottom row (with ten teachers on) on to the other 3 rows, I got 62 instead of 52. One of the other questions on the worksheet involved me going through and naming all of the teachers that taught French.

A question that confused us was where we had to name all of the flags outside the Sekretariat. The reason that this confused us was that we didn't know which lot of flags to name. The last direction lead, us on to the bistro to find the price of something. When we got there, we found one of the other groups was already there. We stayed in there for a while and the other group got back with news of something to do with a guy with a baseball bat. While we were in there, one of the German boys thought that it would be amusing to tell Rory a word or phrase to shout at one of the German girls at the other end of the table. Rory would after shouting these words ask the boy who was telling him what to say for a definition of the words that he had just shouted. Matilda's exchange partner (Sophie) told him that he shouldn't say words that he didn't know. One of the other English boys decided to find out if something that he had just looked up was a good insult in German. Now there is one seemingly innocent phrase that I don't want mentioned in front of me ever again.

We had to meet at the meeting place at a certain time; so, after being in the bistro for a while we set off to find the classroom that we had to meet in. We decided that we didn't need to go over the sheet and we soon got told that we could go for lunch. For lunch we went over to Nadia's exchange partner's house. I didn't want whatever it was that they had. So, I got offered toast. The person's Mum then

asked me if I wanted it toasted or not toasted. This confused me because in England we call 'bread', 'bread' not 'toast' and we only call it 'toast' if it has been toasted. Due to my being confused, the person's Mum took me into the kitchen, and I ended up with toasted 'toast' (plain toast with nothing on it—not that I can complain because I didn't ask for any spreads). There is another thing that seems weird in Germany and that is how they always have bottled water instead of getting it out of the tap and also how expensive it is to buy some water in a bottle. After my piece of toast there was an option of cake. I did try part of the cake and I did eat my whole piece of cake but, it isn't the kind of cake that I would have out of choice under normal circumstances. After lunch we went upstairs to her bedroom before going back to Carolus Magnus Gymnasium.

The sport that we had to go to play at Carolus Magnus Gymnasium was Ultimate Frisbee. After going through the changing rooms, we went into their sports hall. Their sports hall is different to ours because it is quite a bit bigger and down one side of it there were some stands which can be pulled down to watch a game being played. They also had a scoreboard with home and away on it. At JFAN we do have a scoreboard for the astro but not for the sports hall.

The first activity that we did was one where we had to throw balls at people and if we get hit, we have to sit down until the person who got us got hit. It was quite a fun game to play but at one stage I had been hiding a ball behind my back so that no one could see, and I managed to miss someone right in front of me (so annoying). Unfortunately, I got hit 3 times and ended up falling over all 3 times. The first time that I got hit it was full in the face and one of the other times that I got hit I fell over in front of the teachers with no clue who had hit me. In that game whether or not someone was my friend made no difference because if I had a ball I would throw it at them and if someone near me had a ball I would do a runner; except on one occasion where I got near someone with a ball because there was a ball near there and fortunately he missed me and I got the ball.

After the ball game, we had to practise throwing a frisbee in pairs. As per usual I didn't get a pair, so I ended up with Mr Rumsey. While throwing the frisbee he accidentally threw it on top of the stand and told me something along the lines of 'don't tell them it was me'. When one of the German teachers got it down, we carried on playing.

After going over how to throw a frisbee, we all sat round the centre circle and got given a sash, which was either: red, yellow or blue. I got given a red sash; however, Ricarda got given a blue sash. In England we usually have bibs not sashes so that was a bit surprising.

The reds played the first match and the second match and rested on the third. With our team there was quite a good mix of passes between male and female members and it got passed to most people on our team.

The blue team was a slightly different matter. 3 boys liked to throw it long to each other and keep the ball to themselves. The yellow team seemed to be fair with their passing.

After the first round of games we did a competitive round and I think that the reds probably won.

When most of the frisbees had been packed away, Mr Rumsey decided that it would be a good idea to have a group photo. This meant that we had to get the frisbees back out again!

Later that day, Tilly's exchange partner and my exchange partner had handball practise. Tilly and I went with them to handball practise. We had to walk over to the handball place from Tilly's exchange partner's house and we were a little on the late side. When we got there, we went into the changing rooms and then we took all of our stuff into the handball room. I found this slightly odd because in England we usually leave our stuff in the changing rooms while we do sport so that we don't clutter up the space in the sports hall (except in netball club where we don't even go into the changing rooms and we just take our blazers off and change our shoes for trainers).

When we went in, we had to do a warm-up. For the warm-up we had to run around the place more times than I would like to recall. I haven't got very good stamina and I am not the fastest and I ended up falling behind. The warm up was different to what we do in England because in England we run around the sports hall but in this handball club they run lots of laps round almost the entire building. After the running around part of the warm-up we had to do various types of movements around the D which were surprisingly hard.

After the warm-up Tilly and I ended up sitting out for the remainder of the session. Tilly wanted to play on her phone; and I wanted to read my book but neither of us did that. We watched them training and talked instead. One of the things that got a mention was that normally Tilly has a big appetite (her words not mine) however in Germany she hasn't had that big an appetite. That was something that throughout the trip I found weird because we generally would eat more in England than we would in Germany.

At their handball club they seem to have a lot of 'Trink pauses'. I would have loved to have joined in with them after a drink break but, unfortunately, I didn't. The person who seemed to be in charge seemed quite imposing however the person who helped the goalkeeper train seemed like the kind of person that doesn't mind having a joke.

Near the end of their session they played a game. In England we would usually play games at the end of a sports session. At the end of the session I went back to Ricarda's house.

Dienstag

We met up near to where we got dropped off by the bus on Sunday because we had to get a bus to the Netherlands (while on the trip I learnt the difference between the Netherlands and Holland. The Netherlands is the whole country; however, Holland is a triangle of area in the middle containing some

of the big cities—including the capital) where we were doing sport with the Dutch and the Spanish who were doing an exchange (we are all in the same exchange group).

Strangely enough when the bus came it was a slightly bigger one to the one, we had when we arrived on Sunday. I was going to read my book, but I didn't because I didn't know how long the journey would take.

We beat the Dutch half of the exchange to the sports building. The first sport that we had to do on Tuesday was ice-skating. To do ice-skating you need to have gloves, ice-skates and helmets (Mr. Roberts didn't have any gloves and I had a spare pair so Mr. Rumsey suggested that I could do a deal of: I let Mr. Roberts borrow my spare pair of gloves in exchange for various amounts of green cards—school's reward system for good work, red and yellow cards are bad—e.g. 50 and then it was suggested double; unfortunately, that deal did not happen).

When the Dutch and Spanish schools appeared, we went to get our skates. My feet are a size 7 in sports shoes and when I got to the hatch, I asked for size 7 because I had seen that the ice-skates had numbers on the heel; unfortunately, what I hadn't realised was that the numbers were the American size and that mine were actually a size 6 British size (European size 39). Even though I thought that my ice-skates were too small, I didn't ask anyone to change them for a better size.

When we got to the ice-skating rink, Jess found out that her skates were too small, so she had to change them. We changed into our ice-skates at the side of the rink on what appeared to be a place for spectators to watch what was going on. After we had put our ice-skates and our gloves on, we had to go down some stairs. I was not looking forward to the prospect of trying to walk down stairs and this was probably enhanced by the fact that on the previous 2 days I had fallen down stairs and also, I didn't know how to walk in ice-skates let alone get down-stairs. A few years ago, at my friend's house, I had tried to put on skates but all I managed to do was to fall over (and I probably got hurt). My tactic for getting down the stairs was to have my hands and feet on the stairs, my hands were almost behind me and my back was above the ground and I was pretty much walking like a crab or something (this is too hard to explain but I made it down stairs without falling over but probably looking like an idiot.

After getting down the stairs, I actually had to start walking in ice-skates. It turned out that trying to walk in ice-skates isn't as bad as it seems. The next piece of equipment needed was a helmet. I expected that it would be hard to try and get a helmet to fit my head because my head seems to be quite large. Luckily it fitted me alright, but Mr. Rumsey had a problem trying to get his helmet on, so I handed him a helmet marked large and complimented that it must be all that brain he has in there.

I am quite prone to falling over, so I asked people how many times they thought that I would fall over:

- Nadia thought that I would fall over 55 times;
- Mr. Rumsey thought that I would fall over 25 times;

- Jess guessed that I would fall over 20 times;
- and Mr. Roberts guessed that I would fall over 10 times.

(Mr. Rumsey would have guessed 20 but that had already been guessed and when Mr. Roberts guessed he said about how he was afraid that it would have to be a guess in double figures).

The ice rink was divided into 4 sections. The different sections represented levels and I was in the first level with Mr. Rumsey. Mr. Rumsey was quite good at ice-skating (even if he did take down one of the instructors at one stage and 3 students later on—even the instructors fall over at times), but on the other hand I was not very good, and I had to use a Zimmer-frame like thing or hold the instructor's hand. When I was holding someone's hand, I managed to get the whole way round (the quarter). After 1 hour, I decided to take a break and ended up sitting the other hour out. My ice-skates were too small and starting to make my feet sore and when I had fallen over on the ice, I had got myself a massive bruise (I only fell over 4 times). Most of the other English girls sat out the second hour—which was doing what you wanted on the ice (within reason). I noticed that the teachers (for the second hour) were sitting inside the café (with a wall between the rooms—and a window). Nadia (the group photographer) wouldn't take a photo of them.

After the ice-skating, we had lunch. For lunch we had chips and ketchup in a box. I managed to eat all of mine but some of the others didn't. While I waited to go to the next place, I watched a cartoon Spider-man on the TV screen there.

We went into a sports-hall like place and they decided to split up the girls and the boys. The boys had to play football; the girls had to play floorball (similar to indoor hockey).

I got put into group 3 with Ricarda and some other people. We didn't need bibs or sashes because the sticks are coloured to show which team you are in. I ended up in a goal-keeper position (before we got grouped, I checked that goal-keepers can kick the ball). When I was playing, I was slightly aggressive—in the sense that I try to get the ball and stop other people getting it and I can hit the ball hard. We did alright in the first match but not very well in the other match.

We were then given a choice over whether we wanted to do football or floorball. The reason that we didn't get a choice at the start, was to show gender inclusivity. Needless to say, I chose football (one of my favourite sentences in German is 'Oft spiele Ich Fussball' because it is a complex sentence structure and easy to use).

We narrowly lost the first match. We were drawing then it turned into next goal wins (I scored one of our goals). In the next match we were losing 2-0 and then we ended up winning something along the lines of 5-2 (I scored one of those goals too).

The football was the last sport of the day, so we helped pack up and went on the bus back to Germany.

That evening at Tilly's exchange partner's house, Ricarda and Tilly and her exchange partner were putting make-up on before going over to Erik's. Tilly was quickly finished, but on the other hand the two Germans took ages. They asked me what the time was at one stage and it was 2 minutes to the hour and by the time they were finished it was 13 minutes passed—this meant that they had spent at least 15 minutes putting on make-up and Ricarda took off her make-up 3 hours and 38 minutes later. While they were still putting on their make-up, they asked me if I wanted to put on any make-up and I said it was "Doof, nutzlose zeitverschwendung" (stupid, useless, and a waste of time) and then Ricarda asks me "And if you have time?". Stupid make-up!!!

When we eventually got to Erik's house we went downstairs. It was quite squashed downstairs because it was a small room and all of us were there. They decided to play 'truth or dare' and at that stage Matilda's partner Sophie went upstairs claiming that it would just end in drama. I was originally going to play but I decided that Sophie was probably right, and I went upstairs too. The other English girls followed me upstairs. There were two adjoining rooms and the Germans that weren't playing 'truth or dare' and I were in one room and the other English girls were in the other part of the room (without moving we couldn't see the others and vice-versa). I preferred it upstairs—even though I couldn't understand everything that the Germans said. At one point I did go over to the other English girls, but it was a bit anti-social because they were on their phones most of the time. They did raise some interesting points though, but I got a bit bored of their company and went back to the Germans.

Mittwoch

On Wednesday we went to Aachen. The teachers stayed in Aachen, so we met up with them later. We went to Aachen via train—I hadn't ever been on a proper train (only a steam train thing which was a fun ride a few years ago).

In Aachen the German teachers did a tour of the place. One of the first places that we visited was a shop selling gingerbread. I decided to go in and I got my brother a piece of expensive gingerbread (it was all very expensive stuff in that shop). The gingerbread said on it something that looked like: Groß aus Aachen. After that I learnt that the stained glass with the pointy top is gothic style and also that the cathedral in Aachen has an interesting story behind it about how it was being constructed when the people ran out of money, so they made a pact with the devil. The pact ensured that they would be able to finish constructing the cathedral; however, the first soul that entered when construction was finished would belong to the devil. This meant that when it was finished, no one wanted to enter. The townsfolk then decided to capture a wolf and chuck it into the cathedral. This made the devil angry and he charged out leaving a thumb mark in the door knocker.

We all had lunch at the same place (Viel Harmonie). I would have had the kids-meal because I didn't seem to have that big of an appetite in Germany; however, the kids-meal is only for kids younger than 12. This meant that I had to have something similar but bigger (luckily, I managed to eat all of mine even though not everyone else did). I was originally confused as to how we were all going to pay separately and luckily Ricarda paid for me (I didn't ask her to, she offered to).

After lunch we did the escape room. I was in the first group (we went with our partners in groups of 6—teacher choice). We did the escape room based on the Mafia. That was where we were the reporter trying to uncover the Mafia and we have ended up locked in this hotel room where this member of the Mafia is being given a test to see if he can be trusted again by his father (high up person in the Mafia). In one hours-time, the Father would return and find us unless we escaped.

Almost as soon as the door closed, I had started to look for stuff and the first thing that I found was a tube under the pillowcase (it was quite obviously there). One of the Germans didn't think that we had actually started yet, but the timer had started to tick. There were pieces of paper with drawings on and one of them had a picture of a letterbox and another one had a drawing of the bed. In the letterbox there was something that none of us could make sense of to start with and we later found out that the bed support thing under the mattress had a key for deciphering the pins inside the letterbox (we couldn't actually see inside the letterbox).

When we were searching the room for clues, Oliver and I were looking on the wardrobe and I jokingly asked if there was a false back to it—but there wasn't. We latter found out that the mirror in the room wasn't just a mirror it was actually a door into another room (the tubes—4 in all that we found contributed to unlocking the draw with the switch in to open the door).

At one stage I worked out that for a 4-digit padlock there are 10,000 possible combinations!!

The screen that said how much time we had left could also show us clues (most of them were in English but some of them were in German). One of the clues was 'for a large Mafia family that is a small table' and I remarked later that you would have to be Sherlock Holmes to be able to crack the escape room.

When we got to the last dregs of time Ricarda guessed the two remaining guesses we had left, unfortunately they we wrong (we originally had 3 guesses but a few minutes in when somebody learned a code, they decided to key it in, and they were wrong). It turned out that we weren't that far off completing it. All we had left to do was to unlock the padlock that we had the key for how to unlock it (but still hadn't—I didn't attempt it) get what was in the box out of the box and line up the domino pieces with their symbols on with the symbols and use the colour code (the symbols had colours on) to find out the four numbers to put into the escape box (if something had happened to one of us there was an emergency escape button).

After we did the escape room, we had some free time to go shopping. As we were walking, we ended up split into 3 different groups. Tilly's partner and 2 of the boys were in the 1st group; Ricarda, Tilly

and I were in the middle group; the other German boys were in the last group. We lost sight of the group ahead of us, but we waited for the boys behind us and when we found them, we ended up going into a shop with them. While the boys were shopping, I was looking at some caps but unfortunately, they were a bit expensive. That led on to me having to guess how much Tilly's most expensive pair of trainers cost (way too much). I told her that that was a "Geldverschwendung," and Ricarda had to translate that into English for Tilly (I found that quite amusing because it was the wrong way round—it means waste of money in case you don't know). The boys must have spent about 20 minutes shopping—who says girls shop longer than boys?

When we got back to the escape room place, we had to wait upstairs for the groups to finish. When we met the teachers coming out of their escape room, Mr. Rumsey claimed that they had completed it in 20 minutes and gone back in for another go!! Unfortunately, none of us actually managed to complete it.

The English teachers stayed in Aachen and we went back to Übach-Palenburg via train. When we got off the train, I had to go with Ricarda to Tilly's exchange partners house. Later that evening, other people came round—almost everyone except a few people. I wasn't feeling that well and I wanted to go back to Ricarda's.

Donnerstag

I was woken up by light being switched on—which is never the best way to wake up.

On Thursday we also had to go via train—but, this time to Köln (Cologne in English). This time when we were walking down, we didn't go into the shop that we passed on Wednesday. Another difference was that we had to change lines halfway. On trains they always announce what the next station is so now I just have "Nächste Station" stuck in my head (when on a train back in England I was fully expecting to hear "Nächste Station" instead of the English).

When we got to Köln, I was surprised to see the amount of homeless people that were there begging (I did give a few loose coins to some of the people there begging).

An interesting feature of Köln is the padlock bridge there. People put padlocks on the bridge of two people that like each other—which meant that we tried to find our names or other people's names.

We also saw the cathedral in Köln. We knew that the cathedral must be Gothic from Mrs. Vincent told us on Wednesday.

We were allowed to go off for a few hours to look round Köln (with our exchange partners of course!). It was suggested that we should go up all of the cathedral steps to the top (I don't think that anyone—except possibly the teachers—actually went up there). It was great to see that the Germans knew exactly where we were going (we definitely didn't get lost at all or not know where we were going). The first place that we went to was Starbucks—I was relieved about that because I didn't have a drink with me. I brought a bottle of water.

After that we went to a lot of clothes shops. I was never intending on buying anything for my oldest brother because he doesn't live at home (and probably because he is really mean to me); however, when I saw a certain garment in one of the clothes shops, I just couldn't resist. My brother likes his funny tops with writing on (one of my least favourites being something along the lines of— “If you saw my family you would understand”) so I thought that I would add to his collection with a top saying: “All superheroes are single. Maybe I'm a superhero.”

The top theoretically cost 9 euros 99 but it was a two for 10 euros. I brought two. I had to look all through the pile to find what I thought might be the appropriate sizes. The only problem while paying was that I didn't have a clue what the cashier was saying, so I had to ask her, „Sprechenst du Englisch?“ (do you speak English?)—and it is probably one of the most embarrassing things that I have ever said.

Later, it was time to get lunch. I fully intended on actually having lunch, but I didn't. I was going to have a Subway, but I decided against it and then I was going to have Mc Donald's—but I didn't.

When we got back to our meeting place in front of the cathedral, there were still some people missing. We saw them a few minutes later walking around oblivious of the time and just walking round. When the group was complete, we headed off to catch the train.

On Thursday evening we went back to Erik's house (I notice that this time they didn't bother putting make-up on). When we got in, we went downstairs to where everybody else was. In the downstairs room, they were playing Mario Kart (2 people could play at a time). I watched eagerly hoping for a chance to play. Some of the people were good, but some of the people weren't so good. I was eventually rewarded with a chance to play—now the only trouble was that I didn't know the controls. I have played a version of Mario Kart before—a different one—but only on the computer, not on whatever other thing we were playing on. During the game my player was really unsteady, but at least I didn't come last and I bettered the position that I started from.

Later on, we played a ball game downstairs. I did end up going upstairs at some stage and apparently one of the German boys wanted me to go back downstairs (I didn't particularly want to go downstairs though) so when—after the week in Germany—I got back to normal school, I had people saying to me “Clare, come downstairs!” in mock German accents (very annoying).

Später (later), we went back to Ricarda's house.

Freitag

I stupidly left packing until Friday, this meant that I spent a while on Friday morning trying to cram my stuff into my suitcase. I couldn't really fit everything into my suitcase, this meant that I had to put on what I thought was probably my biggest top and I had to put one of my fleeces in my bag.

I still, luckily, had time for breakfast—which was Jogurt the same as what I had had every other day there.

When we got to school, we had to finish off the project with an evaluation. For the evaluation we had to think about what would make Ultimate Frisbee more gender inclusive. Some of the ways that we thought of were:

- Make the passing boy-girl or vice-versa.
- If a boy starts the move, then a girl has to be the one to score.
- There has to be at least a certain number of boys and girls on each team.
- You are allowed to take 3 steps while holding the frisbee—which will help speed the game up
- It has to be passed to girls and boys a certain amount of times before a team can score.
- Some of the people wanted to include rugby tackling—but that probably isn't such a good idea.

For the evaluation we also had to fill in a sheet with a hand on. For each of the fingers there was something that we had to write about. The fingers were on stuff like what was good and what can be improved (one of the German girls thought that it would be better to have it when it isn't as cold). On the back of the piece of paper with the hand on, I decided to work out all the lesson that I had missed/ was missing. I also worked out what lessons I have on both Mondays because if we do something when they come back over which is similar, I would then know that I am missing period 1 to show them the school and periods 2 and 3 they will be in our lessons.

There was a bit of a break at one stage and I decided to try and work out what week it would be when they come over to England. I came to the conclusion that it would probably be a week 1 and if it is and we adopt the afore mentioned way, then I will show Ricarda round in PE and she will be with me when I have German and Spanish lessons.

After that we took a group photo outside of the school and we were then allowed to go into town for a little while. I went with Ricarda and Leoni back to Ricarda's house. We had something to eat and then we went back to the school.

All of the English kids then got onto the bus and after saying goodbyes we left. I read my book (The woman who rides like a man) on the bus and considering that I started it from the beginning I got quite far with it.

The boys had a football with them that they had found, and they wanted to put it in my bag for somewhere to put it. But I didn't allow them to do this because I couldn't fit in everything that I wanted to put in there (it is so much easier packing when Mum is helping). At this point Tilda decided to point out that it looked like I had enough room in there.

When we got into the airport, we found out that we were a bit early and we would have to wait a few minutes before we could send our bags through. At this point in time, the boys were trying to pop the football to deflate it so that they could take it home.

In England, we had had someone at the airport sending the bag through; however, in Eindhoven we did self-service to send the bag through. We had to press the correct things on the screen and stick the sticker onto our bags so that they went on to the correct plane.

We then had to go through the Dutch customs. Originally, it looked like there was a long que, but we got through soon enough.

When we had cleared that, we went into the shop section of the airport. We (Nadia, Jess and I) looked around for a while, and then I persuaded them to go with me (we had to stay in groups—we couldn't just walk around on our own). I had already brought both of my brothers a present, but I hadn't brought my parents anything at this point. My Dad likes Ferrero Rocher, so I brought him two packs of three (theoretically costing 83p per Ferrero Rocher). I also brought my Mum a bar of chocolate (named on the receipt as Choco swing biscuit tablet) that was approximately 300 grams. I also brought myself something. There were tubes of hot and spicy pringles. I hadn't seen a hot and spicy pringles tube that big in a long time—so I brought it (it is a shame that it was only the new reduced pringles tube size). When I paid, I had to show my flight pass.

After this, we went and sat down somewhere to wait for our assembly time. During this time Nadia started a chocolate bar that she had just brought and because I didn't think that I would have enough room in my bag for a pringles tube, she put the tube in her bag. Tilda and Tilly ended up joining us there.

At the assembly point, there was a weird phone charger; if your phone has a glass back you can put it over the charger, and it will charge. When we were all at the assembly point, we went through something which takes you to the gates.

There must have been a delay because we had to wait quite a while. During this wait, I was asked what new words I had learnt and if memory serves me correctly I said “Handschuhe” meaning glove (after further thought I actually learned more words than that—null [0], tschüss [bye] ausflug [excursion—this was useful because on the German work that I had missed this came up on the 40-50 word question that I had to do when I got home] and probably some other ones that don’t want to come to mind because I am trying to think of them.

Eventually we got onto the plane to go home. I had the window seat like before and I was sitting next to Tilda and Tilly like before (the only difference seemed to be that we were on the other side). On the plane I continued to read my book.

When we had just landed, I texted Mum (time on my phone 16:15 because it must have been an hour wrong still—we were supposed to land at 15:15 A.K.A. the end of the school day) to tell her that we had landed but it would probably take a while before we would go anywhere. When we were walking back there was the walking escalator thing again.

When we got back, we had to go through customs. The English customs are more thorough than the Dutch customs. After I had got through customs and collected my bag, I found that Mum was the person who had come to pick me up. I thought that we would be going home in the car and I would be able to talk to Mum about everything that had happened—but, it turned out that we were going home on the bus. I was a bit annoyed about that (yes, I know that it is great to use public transport and everything) but when we got on the bus and we were travelling home it didn’t seem as bad.

Eventually I got home!

By Clare Graves