

## **Farewell to Old England for Ever! [Well 6 days at least]**

A really early start this morning for our trip across the Channel and into France. The boys were all packed last night ready for a quick trip downstairs with their luggage, breakfast, brush of the teeth and on to the coach.

Driving down through the south of England to Dover was a pleasant journey. Miss Barman and Mrs Woodger had sung some 'Sound of Music' favourites to the coach driver the day before and he had gone out and purchased the DVD for them, and the boys to enjoy on the trip. In between practising the French national anthem for our performance at the Arc de Triomphe tomorrow, we sang about our Favourite Things, What we could do about Maria and about a lonely goatherd who lives high on the hill. Good fun, and the chance to sit and relax for a day was welcomed.

The ferry ride across the Channel was enjoyed by all - even those who had professed some worry about sea sickness traveled well. The water was glasslike and the sun was shining. The white cliffs receding into the distance as we sailed away from England were a wonderful sight and as an added bonus our P&O ferry managed to catch and overtake the Sea France vessel which had left about 10 minutes before us. The boys being boys managed to turn the journey into a competition to see who would dock first and while neither crew realised they were involved in a race for national pride, we were elated to beat them in by about 15 minutes!

Driving down to Paris the boys again alternated between practice, watching the 'Sound of Music' and looking out of the window. We stopped at a large service station along the highway and tried our hand at food purchasing in French. We were OK, although Sam Pender-Bayne is getting good practise for his HSC French exams. He communicated beautifully!

By mid-afternoon we were in Paris - traffic chaos and the outskirts disappointed as they were industrial and not at all the beautiful city we were expecting. However, by the time we had reached our hotel in Montparnasse we felt in real French territory. The hotel is very good and located in what seems to us a very French location.

After a good dinner and brief meeting about tomorrow the boys went up to bed. Myself, Mr Evans, Mr Keenan and Mr Guthrie went out to find a bank from which we could withdraw some Euros for tomorrow's activities and I got to try out my French [learnt from a phrase book during the ride from London]. The lady I asked for directions to the bank surprisingly understood! I consider myself fluent.

The boys have a big day tomorrow with their concert at La Madeleine and ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe in the afternoon which will be attended by the Ambassador to France. We're looking forward to it.