

Germany - Sam Bain

Well here I am, sitting at my computer and thinking to myself...

'Oh god!' Only 5 weeks of school left before the Christmas holidays. Which means my last five weeks of school in Germany. Which means my time is running out!

Yes, I am another Rotary exchange student wondering how the hell almost a whole year just snuck past. I can remember being 10 years old, which is the age where life is all about waiting. It's the age when one waits for their birthday, waits for Christmas, waits for the Easter Bunny to come and hide its eggs, and when one says 'Oh I can't **wait** until I finish school!' Well the days of waiting are well and truly past and since then each year seems to get faster, this year being the faster yet!

The last 3 or so months have been pretty action packed! The arrival of the new exchange students was great. Being able to meet a whole group of new faces who come from a whole group of other countries was amazing! I got to meet most of them on the Germany Tour, or better know as the Berlin Tour, as it is the place where we spent most of our week. It was a rapidly moving week, where along with 30 other exchange students, I saw and learnt about the history of east and West Germany during the division of the two parts. It was extremely interesting, and having visited a concentration camp used in WWII and a large guard post used to guard the wall until 1989, I was really given an opportunity to glimpse what it may have been like back in those times.

Well not only have I seen a bit more of Germany in my last couple of months or so, but I've also been to Spain! Yes that's right, my English class field trip to Spain! Much better than year 10's trip to the Taxation Office... We spent a total of one week in Spain, where we stayed at Loret De Mar, about 40 minutes drive from Barcelona. Most of our time was spent soaking up the heat (of which I had been missing) the sun and the beach! It was not all beach and plugga's though, we did make our way to the Barcelona Football Stadium which serves as the largest stadium in Europe and 3rd largest in the world, and we also got to see the heart of Barcelona and visited the Salvador Dali museum. And did you know that a Cheeseburger from Maccas costs €2.10 (AUD\$3.50) in Loret De Mar!

A few weeks before leaving on my Germany Tour, I was visited by a really good Aussie mate of mine who came and stayed for 2 weeks while on leave from Iraq. It was great to have had him here, and to have been able to speak Australian again! The problem with the Australian accent here is the Germans have trouble understanding it, which my mate found out quick enough, later relying on me to translate for him :P

I celebrated my 18th birthday in October, which was something really special and a little strange too. Special that I was celebrating my 18th birthday and that I was in Germany doing it! But strange in that I wasn't with my real family, or in Australia for that fact! Although aside from being in another country, 23 hours from home I was still with friends and family.

Well Christmas is also rapidly approaching as I write this email, which means the Chrissy stands and markets are beginning to set up! Now when a town in Germany decides to get into the Christmas spirit, I can tell you that they don't make a half-hearted effort, they walk the whole nine yards! Although Targets annual 30 metre fake tree is pretty impressive, it doesn't compare to thousands of people walking the main street at night, roaming the hundreds of beer and food stalls (which are really really spectacular! Most of which are more restaurant style than stall style.), hearing the (slightly drunk) Germans singing folk songs to the music being played on every corner, all wrapped up nicely with some snow (hopefully!). I'm being continuously told by my mates here how much fun it is during Christmas time, so it's something I'm really looking forward to!

Well after Christmas comes New Years, and after New Years comes about the time where they tell me to get on a plane and go home...which I'm not really sure I'm looking forward to. It will be great to see family and friends again and of course see my beautiful Australia again, but ill also be leaving a great chunk of new family and friends behind.

All I can say is that ill live my last few months in German to their fullest! And ill see you all soon I suppose!

Hau rein!

Sam