

Alexandra's "Diary"

May 21th – The First Day for the Czech Students

My day could indeed have had a better start. Yesterday I forgot my schedule for the coming days, so I had no idea which time I was supposed to be in school. I guessed the right time, so I wasn't late. When I arrived I met Frantisek and Zbyněk. There stood also "Bettan" and Pontus. Frantisek and Zbyněk seemed really nice, and at once I was sure that at least I would enjoy every minute the pupils from Czech Republic and Poland were here. So interesting it can be to meet new people with different habits, origins and so on!

I'm not a host student (oh, how much I wanted to! But I had to face that we haven't got an extra room for someone) but I had the advantage to bake together with the Czech students. I and Bettan were baking with Frantisek, a 15 year old boy interested in history and so on. It was pretty hard to understand him at first, but during the day it became easier. I had heard that he was really shy, but he was just nice.

Thomas, the home economic teacher, had a "briefing" about what we learn in the subject. Can you believe that only the girls have home economics in Czech Republic??? And guess what the guys have instead? Technique! That's not exactly what I call equality between the sexes.

After the baking we guided them a bit in the school. We went to the youth center, the library, some of our classrooms, the computerrooms and so on. I told them a little bit about every room, after which Hana (one of the teacher's daughter) translated into Czech, for those who hadn't understood everything. There were some really funny discussions, about that we had desks or drawers instead of lockers, the black board and that there were no chairs in the 7th grade's computerroom. After the lunch we showed them the music room, and they actually seemed impressed of what they saw. They told us about their music rooms, and said it was a normal classroom, but with a piano in the front, which the teacher played on. The pupils mostly sang. It seemed to me like they learn more theory than we do in subjects like music and chemistry, that we have a little more practical.

Then we left for "Dalskär" and I'm so happy I could come along! Even though it was ice cold it was immense fun. I was on the first boat (which was Gödde's) to the island together with Moa, Frida, Petra and Katka. It was fun to ride in the boat, and we screamed a lot when the water splashed on us. On the beach of the island Katka was so fun! You should have seen her! She was just exploding in energy and happiness, and when she saw me wading in the ocean she followed. She sprang into the water, and sprang as fast up again, screaming because it had been so cold. As quickly as she had sprang up she jumped back into the ocean (all the time smiling) and filled her hands with the water and tasted. "Oh, it is Ocean!", she said. She spoke very good English bearing in mind she goes in the 6th grade. Or I don't know, maybe I just got that impression because of her great charisma and liveliness!?

It was very cold on the island, but it was still fun. Bettan and I spoke even more to Frantisek and the longer we spoke the more I was impressed. That guy really knows a lot! He knew a good deal about not only his own country's history, but also a lot of the Swedish history (he seemed to know much more than I know indeed, and I've lived here my entire life!).

It felt like we, the Swedish pupils, spoke better English than our guest students. The most of them were younger than me, and I think that that is one of the reasons why we probably knew a little bit more English. In some of the schools in Czech Republic, they don't even need to learn English! They told us that in some schools, you could choose between English and German for example. I didn't know that there were student not learning English in Europe! I've always thought that was an obvious thing to do.

I've learned a great deal today, and it has been great fun. I've learned very much about Czech republic and their habits, and also a bit about their language. "Ahoj" means "hello" and "goodbye". "Dík" (or "díky") means "thanks". "Jak se máte" means "How are you". It's so fun to see them laugh every time I try to say something in Czech, before I get it at least a little bit correct.

May 22th – The First Day with the Polish Students

The day started with a sort of welcome meeting for our guest students. We performed a part of our show and some pupils had power-point presentations about Torsås, Sweden, Sweden's traditions, what you can do in Torsås in your spare time and about the music addition the students can choose in our school. We also heard a little about Czech Republic, and some of their famous buildings (mostly beautiful castles) and famous people. For example I had no idea that Peter Czech (the goalkeeper in Chelsea that had a head injury and now wears a kind of "helmet") was from Czech Republic. Now it's pretty obvious, bearing the name in mind. I sat with Frantisek and Zbyněk. Both of them thought our performances were very good, and said that Swedes are good at singing.

After the welcome meeting I left to show some of the teachers the art room. We showed them some (unfinished) paintings that the students are doing, and the art teacher from Czech Republic was very interested, so she asked a lot of questions to "Bosse bild". She couldn't speak English, so Hana had to translate everything. I showed them around the school some more minutes, and then we ate lunch.

Frantisek both ate and spent the lunch together with me, Jonna and Malin P. It's so interesting to learn about other cultures! After lunch we went to guide Frantisek in Torsås, before we ran into the other guest students and their host students. We went to the church no one knew the name of in English, "Missionskyrkan". Then we went to the bus that would take us to Bergkvara. I spoke with Zbyněk about football, floorball, school and so on. I find that he's really nice. There is something about him, he's so funny, without intending to, and he seems so... well, pleasant! I don't know how many misunderstandings we had, ending with me smiling and saying: "Yes, that what I meant".

We went by bus to Bergkvara, and from Bergkvara to Skeppevik by tractor. Well, tractor is not my favourite way of traveling! After some "lovely" singing from me, Malin P and Jonna we arrived in Skeppevik. I *think* the other pupils survived our little singing. Then we played "Simon says", a game that I don't think our guest students had ever played before. Then we had a "tipsrunda", that is to say we walked a short round and answered questions that were placed along the way. It was questions about Sweden, and the pupils from Sweden weren't allowed to help. I went with Frantisek and he actually knew a lot of Sweden. I thought it was funny hearing Frantisek, Zbyněk and Hana discuss what food it was on one of the pictures. "I think it's 'Köttbullar'. That sounds Swedish", they said and pointed at "kroppkakorna". After the round, Zbyněk played a lot with the things in the playground and I thought he looked really funny. He just laughed when I explained that those things were meant for small children.

We walked from Skeppevik to Bergkvara, to a place near "Badudden", to grill some sausages. When we came there the most of the students (in other words almost all guest students and I) waded in the water, and some of the students collected "moschla" (well, I'm "quite" sure it *isn't* spelled like that) that laid on the sea bed. That was very funny to say, I and was delighted that I knew another word in Czech. I even learned that one shell is called "moschle" and if you have more than one you say "moschle".

After the wading I arranged the game “The little red hen”, a version of “Familjen Olsson” as we call it in Sweden, that I had written. It was funny to see them all running like if they were crazy, in a big, hysterical lump of chaos, every time I said “friends”. When I said “friends”, all of them were supposed to run around their line. But when everybody did that at the same time... Well, think yourself. I think they enjoyed it too.

We ate some sausages, and then we went home. During the day I had also spoken a bit with two students from Poland, Aina and Vimala. They were so nice! Believe me when I say it was hard to say “hello” in Polish! By the way, “havno” means poop in Czech and “my name is” sounded a bit like “emenuise”. Czech is a really funny language, you don’t hear a word of what they are saying!

May 23th – My Last Day with our Guest Students

I was just able to join to 12 p.m, because I was going to Ullared for a few days.

First I saw like the ten last minutes of 9 d’s P.E. lesson, which today meant dance. I saw the Czech folk dance, and I saw Tereza tap dancing too. Fun to see, it was so different from our kind of dances.

After that we showed them a bit from our show, and I introduced the most of the numbers. Katka sang totally alone, with Petra on the piano and Lenka on the flute. She had a wonderful voice. Tereza showed us her tap dancing too. The Czech group were singing some songs too, “songs that every Czech knows”. Again, it was very fun to see.

I found the Czech students before I left, so I was able to say goodbye (likely *for ever!* Imagine!) and get their e-mail-addresses to, at least everyone’s without Petr’s and Tereza’s. I hope that I can get theirs to. When I said goodbye to them, and told them that we were never going to see each other again, I almost began to cry. I haven’t even known them for three days, and I almost cried. Does that show that I *loved* having them here? Unfortunately, I couldn’t find the Polish students, so I couldn’t say goodbye to them. Oh, I miss them all, already!

I can’t believe I’m never going to see anyone of them again! I want them to stay in at least a week longer! Those two (OK, two and a half) days has been so amazingly fun. I don’t think that a person that wasn’t involved, I mean really involved, could ever imagine how fun this was! I mean, just to have to speak English, because if not the other person won’t understand is so fun. And how fun isn’t it to hear inhabitants of another country tell about themselves, or about the country or city that they are from? I was hoping this to be fun, but I could never had imagine how it would fill my whole body with happy feelings and desire to be an even bigger part of it. It was the first time ever I was in Ullared, wishing I were somewhere else.

To talk to them, to know about their language, their country, themselves or tell them about me, Torsås or Sweden... Well, I know I’m never going to forget this. I’m so happy that I got this opportunity! I just can’t explain how much I miss them, neither can I explain how fun it has been to have them here. I’ve learned so much!

So I’ll end this by saying Thank you to everybody that has done this possible!