



**Bailey**  
**from**  
**Oakville-Trafalgar**  
**to**  
**France**

***“Each person may leave a small hole that can never be filled”***

So much of the world can be seen in a span of 3 months and I feel like I have done that. Though I did not attend Eurotour I still managed to make my own way around Europe, creating memories and friends along the way. In February I had written about my trip to Spain. This time I will be writing to you while on a boat back from Scotland.

Though very few large events happened in March it is one of the happiest months of my exchange. March started off with a change in families. A sad start I will say but also a happy beginning, saying goodbye to one amazing family but being welcomed into a new loving family made for a bittersweet start. Most of March was spent with my new hosts, attending many Rotary dinners filled with amazing meals, and hanging out in Lille surrounded by my closest friends that have become family. March was a month filled with laughs in the grass, soaking up every bit of sun we could get after a long rainy grey winter. Sadly, March was also the first of our goodbyes. Knowing that her exchange was coming to an end motivated everyone to try and make the most of what time we had left with her. Saying goodbye to one of my closest friends capped off the amazing month leaving a bitter taste in all our mouths but a taste that began to fade as April's promise of fun began to near.

April for me promised a trip to Germany, Paris, a tour of Northern France and more than one trip to the coast. Kicking off the first week of April with a trip to Germany can be hard to beat but the rest of April rose to the challenge. Each year my school organizes trips throughout the months of April and May, I was lucky enough to be allowed on not one but two of these trips. Germany being the first, it was the first time that my French friends found themselves relying on me to help them speak and not me relying on them. I was unaware how much I would be using English over French throughout my trip. Changing between French and English is not something I normally need to do and throughout the trip I learned that my mind is not a fan of it. Helping my friends order food in restaurants and asking for help getting around often ended in me speaking to the waiter or kind civilian in French and my French friends in English. This helped nobody but always ended in everyone laughing as they watched my mind trying to shift from language to language. The amount of English was not the last surprise Germany held for us, our trip was also created by snow, and not the amount

of snow that was seen in France over the winter but a snow fall that felt more like our Canadian winters that I had missed. While my friends complained about the snow and the cold I found myself looking out the window and smiling as it fell. After I returned from Germany school let out for our Spring break leaving my family and I with 2 weeks of holidays to fill with adventures. This kicked off with a trip to the coast to see a kite festival. When my family told me that we were going to be able to see the kite dance competition I thought they were joking because my only experience with kites involves no control and lots of running to keep them in the air but I am happy to say that I was amazed at the control they had and was in awe at the tricks they were able to pull off. A magical day in Paris was next of my long list of things to do, the Louvre, an art gallery and an evening with the Eiffel tower will never stop amazing me.

As Easter approached I began to pack for my long weekend on the coast in cottage country. A Rotarian kindly invited me to join him and his family on their annual Easter weekend vacation; my days were filled with the beach, games and food. The nights came with more food than I could eat and board games with all the family. It was a simple weekend but it's been one of my most cherished memories, a little weekend vacation filled with laughs and a welcoming family that reminded me so much of a home I have missed.

May, though we are only half way through, I have already managed to make the most of it as I could. With the help of my school and host club I was able to finally see Scotland, a country that I have dreamed of seeing for as long as I can remember! I learnt many things during my week, the first being I am no fan of boats, but more importantly never trust a French person to drive on English soil. The amount of traffic our tour disturbed made everyone laugh but people honking could be heard following our bus throughout the entire trip. All jokes aside, it felt amazing stepping back onto soil where your first language is spoken by everyone, though my French is alright and I can communicate just fine, the change in languages was refreshing and a very welcomed one. Though I found myself still speaking more French than English throughout the trip. The ability to speak with everyone and not need to worry about any language barrier has been something I didn't realize I missed. It was sad saying goodbye and I will admit when I was stopped trying to return to France I was slightly ok with the idea of being sent back to Scotland but just as equally afraid of not being let back into France where all my friends awaited me.

Since my last report in February I've seen and done so much, but as my exchange comes to an end and my departure date nears it seems that one month is just not as much time as it used to be. Each day needs to have a purpose, needs to have something that makes it special because I don't have much time left. This past week alone has been filled with so many bittersweet memories, memories of fun adventures with friends that I can't believe I have only known for 9 months, last adventures, and the first of many goodbyes. Normally I only speak about what has happened throughout exchange and leave my future adventures for a future story but I will say that this last month of my exchange will be both the best and worst month of it all. It will be filled with as many adventures as someone can shove into 30 days but with as many memories that I make there will be just as many goodbyes that need to be said. Most people I've talked to say that the big districts are fun but don't create the same family feel that a smaller district would, but I have been happy to say that has not been the case in my district. 1520 and our overlapping sister district ( ) have been one large family with over ( ) members since the beginning and each goodbye is gonna hurt as much as it did saying goodbye to my friends and family back home. Many tears have been shed and many more

May 2019

will be shed in the upcoming days, each person may leave a small hole that can never be filled again in the same way but they will also take a place in my most cherished memories a spot specially for my exchange and the family we have formed along the way.

*Bailey*