

With Comenius in Poland

Gniezno „History in the Present“ Meeting Report

The work on the project continues. After two successful meetings in the UK and Turkey another group of six students and two teachers travelled to Gniezno (Hnězdno), Poland to meet their peers from our partner schools. The aim of the HISTORY IN THE PRESENT project is to encourage young people to learn more about historical monuments, to be aware of their everyday presence and to help to find ways of making them more attractive.

Before each journey all meeting participants work at their home schools on their parts of the project – usually they prepare power-point presentations about their home towns, schools and chosen historical monuments. At the meeting each party presents their work to the other participants. We exchange ideas and try to find similarities and differences in the results of our research.

In Gniezno we met and worked with the students of two more partner schools, one from Speyer, Germany and the other from Rochefort-sur-la-Mer, France.

Apart from the research we learn about monuments, culture and lifestyle of the host country. And we practise English!

For the meeting in Gniezno we prepared four presentations – Tereza introduced the school with not only key figures about the institution, the school building and its history, but also with many photos from the life of her class. Tomas and Zdenek presented Ceske Budejovice as a town which is not only full of historical monuments, but also a place for several international ventures – banks, companies, educational institutions, hotels, restaurants and cafes housed in historical buildings in the city centre. Nikola and Vitek focused on early Middle-Ages contacts between Poland and Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic) in the person of a prominent Czech patron saint, bishop and missionary St. Adalbert (Svaty Vojtech) who was buried in Gniezno after his martyr death. Nikola and Vitek went to St. Adalbert church in Ceske Budejovice to speak about its patron with the priest, father Frantisek. Marketa's presentation was about Comenius – not the project, but the person named Comenius, that is Jan Amos Komensky, a 17th century Czech scholar.

All four presentations are available at the school website www.stavarna.eu, where you can also see some photos we took during our meeting in Gniezno. Registered project participants can see the other schools' presentations and photos on the Moodle, at <http://srv116.ta-info.net/hip/>

Our stay in Gniezno was eventful. Each of our students got a Polish partner, who took them to school, to the hotel, to places to eat, shop, have coffee and fun. The city is charming, with the cathedral as its main attraction. We could even climb to the top of the tower, but the best thing to admire was the famous bronze door, showing in a comic-book way the life of the Czech and Polish patron saint, St. Adalbert.

The other highlight of our stay was the trip to Ostrow Lednicki, an island in the middle of Lake Lednica, where Polish history began. Once there was a church and palace, the home of the first kings of

the Piast dynasty. It is also a place of the baptism of Poland, where the first historical ruler of Poland, Mieszko I, accepted Christianity in 966. His wife was a Czech Premyslid princess, Doubravka, who is believed to be the key person to make Mieszko become a Christian.

The organizers of the stay, the Polish students and teachers, also cared for our free time, showing us something of the lifestyle of young Poles – we went bowling and spent one evening at the Wigwam, an area for outdoor activities. We listened to live music, performed by a school band, danced and grilled sausages on a campfire.

Thank you for all, our dear hosts!