**Paris October 2015**

What an amazing trip! Everybody had lots of fun and did extremely well in the competition. Thanks to all the coaches and in particular Guy and Gina for organising such an amazing and successful tour.

Day 1 – Journey Begins

Despite an early start on Monday morning, the girls were all very excited, making lots of noise and barely catching any sleep on the coach; which was unfortunate for some very tired coaches.

We arrived at our hotel about 1:00 French time and everybody was given room keys and allowed to settle in before meeting downstairs to receive their tour clothes.

Soon after this we all went to a local pizza restaurant to get some food before then heading to the Rosny gymnastics centre for training.

It took a while for the gymnasts to adapt to the different equipment and setup but within 15 minutes all the girls were training with great enthusiasm and flare. The French gymnasts warmed up and trained alongside the charisma gymnasts creating a vibrant atmosphere, many of the girls becoming immediate friends with their French counterparts.

After three hours training, the girls were now beginning to finally feel tired! Which also meant the coaches could now also get some much needed sleep.

Day 2 – Park, national training centre and Competition.

After an early start and breakfast, we headed off to one of Paris’s nicest parks. To begin with the girls did some early morning condition which started off with two 500m jogs around the park lead by the twin coaches Nick and Dan. This was by far the least popular event of the whole trip, clearly demonstrating that most of the girls had little love for running. After this they did some stretching and body conditioning.

As a reward for the conditioning the girls were then able to spend an hour in the adventure part of the park which had slides, swings, climbing frames and other adventurous stuff. Unfortunately, we didn’t have time to explore the zip lining part of the park, but of course the fearless group of gymnasts all wanted to have go.

We then went to the National Training centre, the place where all of France’s top international athletes of any sport train. The gymnasts shared a building with Judo and wrestlers. The facilities here were incredible and we were lucky enough to watch the French women’s junior national gymnasts train for an hour. This was really inspiring stuff for our gymnasts, to see such a high level of gymnastics first hand.

After this was our competition with the French gym club in Rosny. Despite having little time to warm up all the girls did extremely well! Many girls ended up taking medals home with them. During the competition the Rosny gym club treated us to a parkour display lead by their parkour club which was great to see. At the end of the competition the French club treated us with food and drinks and we exchanged gifts. It was a nice end to a wonderful evening, which I’m sure the girls will never forget.

Just before bed there was a quick room inspection by the female coaches, (some of the rooms being substantially cleaner than others!) whilst the male coaches explored some of the bars in Paris.

Day 3 - Sightseeing

Today Charisma set out to explore Paris. Our first destination was the Sacre Cour. In front of the Sacre Cour, all of the girls did handstands or helped others do handstands (much to fascination of other tourists) to ensure that we got a good gymnastics style photo. Walking back from the Sacre Cour, we walked passed an incredible opera singer, which we stopped for a brief moment to listen to. Many of the girls would have bought her album if not for the price! Around the Sacre cour there were also many shops where many girls stopped to get souvenirs.

Next, we was given a quick coach tour of the arc de triumph and the chaos of the traffic that surrounds it. (Our coach driver Karl did well not to get a scratch on the brand new £330,000 Mercedes coach!). After this we drove down the Champs-Elysees giving some of the girls a sudden urge for shopping! We then drove passed the Louvre, whilst being giving an in depth history of Modern France (including bits on the Louvre) by our history book, Guy.

Afterwards, we visited the Eiffel Tower, where the girls took many photos of Paris’s most iconic landmark. The girls didn’t go up the Eiffel tower, but many girls were pretty confident they could have run to the top and back down which was hard to believe given the lack of enthusiasm from the park run. It was here that also many girls bought selfie sticks to capture top quality selfie’s with the Eiffel tower in the background.

Last on our grand tour was the Notre Dame. After again being given a brief history lesson by Guy about the building and the hunch back of Notre Dame, the girls were allowed to explore the area around the Notre Dame for food and to take lots of photos of the impressive building. In particular the girls were intrigued by the gargoyles.

Despite a long day sightseeing, the girls still had three hours of gym to do! So after a quick pasta meal to boost energy levels, Charisma was off to the closest pitted gym facility. The facility was amazing with lots of equipment and space. At the same time the French girls from the Rosny club joined us for training and to our surprise as well there were regional men’s gymnasts training which was a treat for us to watch. Many of the girls were able to learn and practice new moves in this environment including some of the coaches! Furthermore, Fab despite wearing tracksuit bottoms and not warming up showed us what an excellent gymnast he still is by showing us his standing front somersault.

Day 4 – Disneyland Paris

Although an early wake up call, the excitement of Disney was enough to make sure all the girls were awake on time. The girls were split into groups, those tall enough and brave enough to do the big rides went in one group, and the others were split into two smaller groups. Our coach driver Karl had to spend his birthday listening to high pitched screams as the girls were accelerated from 0 to 60 mph on the Rock n Roller rollercoaster.

Many of the girls and coaches had never been to Disneyland before and were amazed by the sheer size of it (most of the girls were tired of walking by the end of the day).

After experiencing all the thrill rides and exploring the Disney shops for gifts and souvenirs, everybody took to the streets to see the Disney parade and in the evening the Disney firework display, which was the highlight of the day for most of the gymnasts. The show was awe-inspiring despite some of the classic Disney songs being sung in French!

When it had finished none of the girls wanted to leave, especially as they knew they were going home the next day. On the way back to the hotel the girls finished watching the rest of finding Nemo, and by the time we got back it was nearly 01:00.

Day 5 – Return Journey

Unfortunately, a very early start for everybody. Despite getting back late, the majority of the girls had all their stuff ready on time, although there were a few rooms that needed a wakeup call and a bit of encouragement to get moving (some of them being coaches rooms). A last minute check of rooms made by Nick and Guy, ensured that any left items were picked up. We left the hotel at about 07:45, and arrived at the tunnel at about 11:30 watching various Disney films to pass the time.

Also on the coach journey back, Guy gave a “short” speech about the trip and then each coach and gymnast was given a souvenir by Gina and Guy each for a different reason such as most helpful, tidiest room or the best floor routine etc.

Head girl Megan then gave a speech to thank the coaches especially Guy and Gina for organising an outstanding tour and also our driver Karl on behalf of the girls.

When arriving in England, all of the girls were asking about going on tour again back to Paris or even as far afield as the USA. What is clear is that everybody had an amazing time and has a load of incredible memories.

Thanks to Gina and Guy for all your work in organising the trip and to all of the coaches for giving up their time to come and coach us in Paris!

Nick and Dan