

Article report written by Gilbert H (U6th)

Sing muse, of those great travellers, from that sodden clump of earth, who embarked on that mighty odyssey which brought them to the sun-baked plains of Greece.

2.00am Friday - Day had yet to begin, gathered outside the main school yard a humming of excitement could be heard, largely smothered by the tiredness which was infused into this dozy crowd of classicists. Our coach arrived, the cohort was counted and we embarked on our journey to the great city of Luton. Arriving at Luton airport we bumped through security and before we knew it we were in the air, our destination, Athens.

Once our wheels hit the ground we were immediately greeted by sunnier skies than the ones we left as we boarded our coach bound for the first of the great Grecian Theatres we were to admire, this being the oldest - Thorikos a rectangular theatre that stares out to a backdrop of the glistening Aegean a stunning start to our trip, yet this was to only be a mouse-bouche of our classical wonders as next we were to be enamoured by the glorious temple of Poseidon at cape Sounion, where we peered out to the sea after hearing the story of king Aegeas who jumped to his death off the outcrop on which we stood thinking his son had died, his name washing out into the sea which bears his name to this day. We made it to our hotel around 8pm, tired and hungry, here we bumped into another school who like the unruly suitors in Homer's Odyssey who disgraced the halls of noble Odysseus, had left the dining hall in disarray...We were sure to emulate far greater manners than them.

The next day we awoke early as dawn rose to sit upon her golden throne, her rosy fingers emerging over the mighty acropolis of Athens bathing it in magenta beams of light. It was that very acropolis that we were to summit that morning. Once we arrived at the base of the acropolis, we met up with our tour guide, with the headsets provided granting a crackling of static as a backdrop for our ascent. Walking up the well-worn path to the sheer sided home of the Parthenon walking through the groves of olive trees and made our way through the propylaea revealing the Parthenon in its full magnificence, a true marvel and testament to the architectural brilliance of the ancient Athenians. We then made our way down to the side of the acropolis to see the next of our Greek theatres now taking in the remains of the theatre of Dionysus before making our way to the Acropolis Museum. The museum displayed to us a range of the beautiful metopes and pediments of the Acropolis which were

interwoven with signs commenting on the many missing marbles which were back at

home in the British museum... Feeling sufficiently antagonised we now had built up a decent appetite and fuelled up, being sure to grab some Greek dishes tucking into some Tzatziki, Zucchini and of course Olives. Bellies full we chose to part with the Greek tradition of spending multiple hours eating lunch as we had places to go. We marched over to the Athenian Agora where we saw the beautifully preserved Temple of Hephaestus, the intact nature of the temple giving a great image of a Greek temple without much need of the imagination.

Day three saw us wave goodbye to Athens after a quick visit to the Keramikos and the National Museum. For now we were to begin our next pilgrimage a 3 hour journey that took us into the mountains and the verdant prophetic slopes of Delphi, we booked into the hotel and then before heading off for dinner we took a chance to look out to the breath taking view of the sun dipping behind a Delphic mountain its last rays skimming over the gulf of Corinth, to this immense backdrop Mr Carroll and Mrs Morrice like the great bards of old, recited to us the story of Arion stories which were seasoned with some unexpected yet highly appreciated Dolphin impressions.

The next day gave us the opportunity to explore the ancient city of Delphi in depth. Some small disappointment that the Oracle had closed up shop and was no longer giving prophecies were quickly forgotten as we walked through this wondrous sight nestled into such a glorious landscape. After taking it all in and admiring (from a safe distance) some adorable dogs and cats which were roaming the area we boarded our trusty coach once more as we headed off to Olympia. Peering out the window we could take one final glance of the wondrous landscape of Delphi one could only ponder upon the myth of the two eagles sent by Zeus to travel round the world as to meet in the middle marking the centre of the earth, they had met in Delphi, it certainly carried a feeling of the magical.

After arriving late in Olympia we had booked into the hotel and spent the evening buying lots of Olympic memorabilia. The next day we ventured to the site of the first Olympic games, the city of Olympia. We first visited the Olympia museum where we found the wonderful pediments and metopes of the temple of Zues which had Mr Carroll and Miss Morrice as two kids in a sweet shop as they zoomed around the room meticulously describing the marbles in front of us. After this we made our way to the site of Olympia where we to emulate the many Olympians before us as we set out to race on the original track which Olympians would have raced on, 3,2,1 and a cloud of dust was sent into the air as competitive spirits were put to the test, yet none could outshine that of Massimo Mi who with the mettle of a true Olympian poured his whole being into his legs winning the race by a country mile only to pass

out shortly after his victory marking his true commitment to 1st place, his bruises were quickly to be soothed by a crown of laurels which were duly placed upon his head.

We now had to bid Olympia adieu as we headed to Tolo, a town surrounded by the ancient city of Mycenae and the acropolis of Tiryns. On our way we stopped off at the secluded temple of Apollo at Bassae, a lone temple upon the top of a mountain with a view to challenge that of Delphi. We arrived at Tolo and banked a good night's sleep in preparation for another busy day ahead.

The next day we made our way to the ancient acropolis of Tiryns, the mighty stone walls of which were thought to be made by Cyclops due to the huge size of the boulders which were piled up to create these fortifications. We were then to explore the mighty citadel of Mycenae, home of the famed king Agamemnon who sailed the Greeks to war with Troy. Looking out upon the site of the palace and the fields and mountains which stretched out below it the tales of Agamemnon's murder at the hands of his wife Clytemnestra upon his return, beaten to death by a stool in his own bathtub, the blood splattered tub is unfortunately yet to be found. We returned to the hotel for our last evening in Greece where our tour guide was kind enough to teach us some traditional Greek dancing which after some stumbling around we had nailed, moves which Mr Carroll is sure to break out if you ask him. Limbs tired from dancing we hit the hay.

Dawn once again greeted us, however for the last time in Greece. Our last day saw us visit the ancient city of Corinth and then Epidaurus where we saw the last of our Greek theatres with the theatre of Epidaurus being by far the best preserved and the greatest spectacle, seating around 14,000 this stunning semi-circular theatre was a wonder to gaze upon and walking up to the top row we were able to hear a penny drop in the centre of the stage at the bottom - a masterpiece of engineering from the Greeks and a highlight of the trip.

We now headed off the airport being sure to take in the last of the Greek weather before returning to the cloudy skies of England. Unlike the last Classics trip our plane was not cancelled much to the relief of Mr Carroll and was in fact on time marking a successful end to an unbelievably successful trip.