

Vita Italiana – Italian Life

The WAATI Student Exchange Program is an 8–9 week cultural and academic full immersion program, which runs in partnership with AFS Intercultura (Italy). The program began in 1981 and has grown massively over the last 35 years. Four Trinity College students participated in the 2019 program, departing Perth at the end of November and returning in January 2020. The students used this wonderful opportunity to immerse themselves in the Italian culture and language.

George Hatton (12.3) travelled to Contigliano, a little town in the region of Lazio, living with a family of three – Pietro, Mirella (padre e madre) and Simone (figlio). George feels lucky to have lived with a very loving family with similar interests to his. When first arriving in Italy, George was

hit with a bit of a shock as he realised that he would indeed have to speak complete Italian for two months. The first two weeks were a little difficult to communicate with people, as his Italian wasn't very good. But after the initial two weeks and with the help of Google Translate, George was able to communicate with his family quite easily.

During those two months, there were so many good memories but overall, his favourite experience from the exchange was meeting new people – often while just taking walks through the little town. Whenever they discovered he was Australian, George was kindly given a coffee and biscotti. This welcoming nature of the locals allowed George to make new friendships that he hopes to keep for years.

George highly recommends other students take part in this cultural exchange as it is one of his favourite experiences in life. Also, as George claims, there isn't anything better than eating pasta and gelato for two months!

Prior to leaving for Italy, **Noah Foti** (12.1) was quite sceptical and nervous about meeting his exchange family and his ability to speak Italian. However, once he was in Italy, all doubts disappeared and Noah now considers it one of the best experiences of his life. Noah was placed in Grosseto, a castle town in Tuscany near Florence. Fortunately for Noah, his host-mum was a travel guide, meaning they travelled almost everywhere in Italy including other cities outside of Tuscany. Noah's favourite trip was an exciting



Cameron Pell



White Christmas



Angus McDonald at The Colosseum

journey to Milan where he was lucky enough to watch Inter Milan and Napoli play in the most intense match of soccer he has ever seen. Another memorable trip was visiting paesini (small towns) scattered across Italy. Besides travelling, highlights of the experience included the food (obviously) and the opportunity to meet many new people, from both Italy and across the world. Noah believes "this experience truly granted me more confidence and made me more in touch with my Italian culture. I highly suggest it for anyone who might be considering it. If I could do it all again, I would".

Angus McDonald (11.3) stayed in a small town in Southern Italy called Benevento, which is close to Naples. His hosts were the Zagarese family and included the parents,

Nonna and host brother Matteo. Angus' favourite memory of exchange was the evening he arrived. Stepping off the train in Benevento, Angus was warmly greeted by his host family and exchange volunteers. Once they all returned to the apartment, they had a lovely dinner together and spent the rest of the night discussing where Angus wanted to travel in Italy. This wonderful evening made Angus feel very welcomed. He found it hard to communicate during the first few weeks. Initially, Angus didn't make much of an effort to speak in Italian, therefore didn't improve that much. But over time he became more confident in the Italian language and spoke more, learnt more and could communicate with his host family a lot better.

For **Cameron Pell's** (12.5) exchange program, the 2020 Head Prefect stayed in the south

east of Italy in a city called Barletta in the region of Puglia. His host family was made up of a host mum as well as a host sister and brother. The most memorable experience of Cameron's trip was being able to travel up north to the alps and experience a white Christmas. Going into the program, Cameron was most worried about the language barrier. Fortunately, both his classmates and host family could speak good English; however, this didn't stop Cameron from trying to speak Italian and further develop his language skills. During the exchange Cameron made so many mistakes speaking Italian, but said it was fine, as there was always someone to help with the language barrier when he needed it. Cameron is still in contact with both his friends and host family and, no doubt, will always remember this experience.



Noah Foti's wonderful welcome



Noah Foti in Grosseto



(L-R) Noah Foti, Cameron Pell, Trinity Italian teacher Eliza Knapman, Angus McDonald and George Hatton at the Vatican