Rivers of the World - Hungary

Szentendre 2009 & 2010
Balazs Laar

The river flows eastwards (uniquely for a major European river) for a distance of some 2,857 km (1,771 miles) before emptying into the Black Sea via a delta system. The Danube, the second largest river in Europe after the Volga, collects the waters from some 300 tributaries and runs through the most capital cities of any river: Vienna (Austria), Bratislava (Slovakia), Budapest (Hungary) and Belgrade (Serbia).
Ten European Countries

No other river in the world is so international in its reach. The Danube flows through, or forms a part of the borders of, ten countries: Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine. In addition, the Danube’s drainage basin includes parts of nine more countries: Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Albania.

More than 80% of the length of the Danube has been embanked, there are three major dams and fifty-eight locks and weirs along its length. But in the middle and lower stretches of the river, and in the spectacular Danube Delta, it is still largely untamed. Here are some of the richest wetland areas in Europe and these support unique habitats and globally important species of flora and fauna.
Danube Cycle Path

The old river towpath has been developed into the Danube Cycle Path, which is reputed to be the most beautiful cycle path in Europe. Originally, the towpath was used by teams of up to sixty horses to drag ships laden with salt and other highly valuable commodities up against the current of the river. These days, cyclists pedal the 335 km from the German border town of Passau (km 2227) to the Austrian capital of Vienna. The trip is a leisurely six to eight day ride on well-maintained, traffic-free paths that slope gently downhill. You can continue on by bike from Vienna to Budapest. The 340 km ride is generally done in seven days. The cycling gets tougher from here, but Budapest to the Black Sea, some 1,200 km, is also possible and this can take a further three weeks.
Szentendre

Even though some 300,000 international passengers arrive in Hungary each year on luxury riverboats, most travelling south via Vienna and Bratislava, and many smaller cruisers take thousands tourists from Budapest to the towns upstream along the Danube Bend like Szentendre, well known for its local arts and crafts, tourism on the Danube Bend is down. People tend to flit in and out whereas the locals want tourists, both foreign and domestic, to stay in the region for longer. While low cost airlines are bringing more foreigners into Budapest, local businesses on the Danube Bend argue that doesn’t mean more tourists are visiting them since most just come to Hungary for one or two days. Businessmen from the picturesque town of Szentendre are looking carefully at their near neighbours in Esztergom who have invested in a modern, luxury spa and health centre near the riverfront. The hope is that initiatives like this will capitalise on Budapest’s spa reputation and encourage tourists to visit the area for longer.
**Danube Day**

Even more important than the size of the Danube basin, which is nearly 10% of the total surface of the European Continent, is the fact that it comprises nineteen different countries, which makes it the world’s most international river basin. Held annually on 29 June, Danube Day is an international day honouring the Danube and the rivers that flow into it, paying tribute to the vital role they play in providing water, food, power, recreation and livelihood. It aims to raise awareness about the Danube through festivals on the riverbanks, public meetings and educational events. Holding events across all its member countries demonstrates the need for countries and organizations to join forces and work together. Celebrating Danube Day helps to ensure that the Danube and its tributaries are protected, so that they can be used and enjoyed by generations to come.
**Spa City**

Budapest is one of the richest cities in the world in terms of thermal and spa waters. Some hot spring facilities on the Buda side date back to the Roman times. The 150-year Ottoman rule left its mark in bathing culture too, when real hamams were built for Ottoman pashas and bashas (high-ranking leaders). The number of baths increased again in the middle of the 19th century and Budapest became a destination for those seeking a treatment for arthritis, circulation problems, asthma, chronic bronchitis and other complaints. Today, there are 118 natural thermal springs within the boundaries of the capital. Hungary is working rapidly to develop health tourism since it is not subject to the vagaries of seasonal weather and tourists tend to stay longer and have time to visit other places. These days, there are some 25 four-star hotels with spa facilities in Hungary whereas six years ago, there were only four.
Ferences Gimnazium was partnered with Brentside High School on the border between Hanwell and Greenford in the LB Ealing. Mike Roddy, the Art Teacher, participated in the R&D trip.
What do you expect to gain from your participation in this project?
The establishment of professional partnership and cooperation between teachers; advancement of our students’ language skills and acquaintance with foreign places, people and culture.
"Like in the case of our previous work of art, now we took another well-known painting which shows a 20th century Tower of Babel under construction on the bank of the river Thames. Well-known novel heroine, Mary Poppins, picks up children of various nationalities, flies her famous umbrella and lands on top of the tower.

There are several reasons for this kind of appearance. In a biblical sense the Tower of Babel is the cause of the diversity of nations and languages. However, London is a melting pot of people of different cultures and colours. This friendly novel character breaks the ‘curse’ that divides nations."
Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2009) 
River City

The students combined their own models of Szentendre with a famous Hungarian painting *Jajce Power Plant at Night* by Csonthvary to create their final artwork.

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Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2010) 
River City

We took a well-known painting which shows a 20th century Tower of Babel under construction on the bank of the River Thames. Well-known novel heroine, Mary Poppins, picks up children of various nationalities, flies her famous umbrella and lands on top of the tower. We used pastel and Photoshop.
Il Rakoczi Ferenc Altalanos Iskola es Gimnazium was partnered with Valentines High School in Ilford in LB Redbridge. Salma Begum, the Geography teacher, participated in the R&D trip.

What do you expect to gain from your participation in this project?

We hope to give our students the opportunity to get to know other cultures; to practise English; to develop personal contacts with foreign students and to build partnership with foreign schools.
It was great fun, to make a new - and I think - better artwork. We enjoyed working together again, something different from the usual school routine and we are really satisfied with the outcome.

Heim Andrea
Kertai Nikolett
Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2009)
Resourceful River

The students depicted the strong connection which exists between Szentendre, the Danube Bend and Szentendre Island, all linked together by the river.

Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2010)
Resourceful River

For our artwork we took many photos in England and we selected the best ones and with the help of Balázs and Zsolt and in Photoshop we created the new work. We were having a very good time while working on the project and it brought us closer to each other.
Petzelt Jozsef Vocational Secondary School was partnered with Mount Carmel Technology College, a Roman Catholic, girls-only secondary school in LB Islington. Cathy Lee, Art teacher, participated in the R&D trip.

What do you expect to gain from your participation in this project?

*We have very good experiences. These partnerships are an important part of our school. We are ready to have other partnerships.*
We have produced the second work in our school for the Project Thames. The previous applicants are completing their job. As we would like to build up a long-term relationship with our partner school, we were chosen from year 9 (the school entering classes). We are glad to have applied for the Danube, our school, drawing, writing, creating things. The title of this year’s project is „The River Thames and Life”. We wanted our new work fit to the previous one in atmosphere, colours and techniques. We got a lot of help from our teacher Antal Aladics and from the artist Balázs Lázár.
Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2009) 
River Culture

The group depicted the openness of historical Szentendre and its people.

Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2010) 
River Culture

The water is the place of parties, summer, youth and freedom, illustrated in the students' artwork made using chalk pastel.
Moricz Zsigmond Gimnazium was partnered with Fortismere School in Tetherdown in LB Haringey. Susannah Keay, Art teacher, participated in the R&D trip.

We are sure that through this cooperation our students will develop both intellectually and in their character. It would be an excellent opportunity for us to share our ideas about a common issue, with getting acquainted with each other’s culture and way of thinking. Finally, our students could experience the importance of solidarity, tolerance, mutual respect and mobility in the European dimension. It would be great to go on working together in the future, in the form of student exchange programmes and further common projects.
“We were looking forward to working again on our art project. We planned beforehand what we were going to do and we took a lot of ideas from our London trip. For our artwork we took many photos in England and we selected the best ones and with the help of Balázs and Zsolt and the Photoshop we created the new work. We were having a very good time while working on the project and it brought us closer to each other.” (Fanny & Zita)

“I wanted to create something different though related to our previous work. I think we succeeded in doing so. Now we used digital technology most of the time, there was only one drawing in it. I made the video. “(Frommi)
Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2009)
River of Life

The students' artwork illustrates parties, the summer, youth and freedom, which all reflect life by the River Danube in Szentendre.

Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2010)
River of Life

The students selected photographs from their trip to London, showing everyday situations as well as typical British icons, based on their own experiences.
Szentendrei Reformatus Gimnázium was partnered with Bishop Challoner School, an independent coeducational Catholic day school in Shortlands in LB Bromley. Caroline Crisp, Art teacher, participated in the R&D trip.

What do you expect to gain from your participation in this project?

To encourage our students to work in groups on their own projects while they use English as a second language; to get to know other countries’ culture, history and arts through more enjoyable way than than regular old-fashioned classwork.
"This year we have learnt many things about the Thames. It was good because our Geography teacher allowed us to use the net during his classes and we could collect as many interesting things as we could about the river. We have also learnt a lot about our river, the Danube, as well. It was sad to see how dirty our river is. I can't beleive in some of the pictures on the Internet!"

Korpos Dávid

“I really liked this year again, because we could continue the special art lessons. It was also good to learn about a different culture.”

Juhász Dina
Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2009) Polluted River

The painting reflects the pupils' thoughts on finding a way to stop environmental pollution.

Balazs Laar & Bence Zarubay (2010) Polluted River

The group used lino cut printing to give a vibrant and impressionistic aspect to the Thames and its riverside buildings.