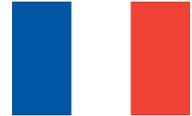




# BILLERICAY TWINNING ASSOCIATION



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## NEWSLETTER No 12 February 2010

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### TWINNING AS WE KNOW IT

Twinning with a town, village or city in another part of the world is an exciting experience. It brings the opportunity to meet new people which can lead to lifelong friendships being formed; the opportunity to learn a new language, to understand a different society, its customs and culture, the manner in which the local government works and its authority and responsibilities. More often than not students from local schools enjoy exchange visits and in so doing make friends and gain a knowledge of the education system, a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

However, as in all things, there is a cost for these activities and twinning associations have to work to raise sufficient funds. For example the sub-committee responsible for twinning with Fishers in the USA has over the past twelve months organised Quiz nights, taken part in a Fun Run and Fun Day, held car boot and High Street sales. It has also run successful coach trips to Bluewater and to the Christmas Spectacular Show at Thursford. The trip to Bluewater provides the opportunity to make those last minute purchases for Christmas picking up passengers at various points in Billericay going to the shopping centre and returning home to Billericay some hours later.

The Christmas Spectacular at Thursford (the largest Christmas show in England) is a truly marvellous experience, caters for every taste and is produced in a professional manner. Unfortunately trying to obtain tickets is something of a lottery and the allocation is on a first come, first served basis with a "drop dead" date of the beginning of January. We were successful in December 2009 and we, who were lucky enough to get a ticket, enjoyed a particularly exceptional performance.

Next year we will be running more trips to raise money for Fishers. If you have suggestions of



*From the Thursford Christmas Show*

where to go or what to see, contact Trevor Stansfield. The trips will be advertised in The Resident as well as via this Newsletter.

### CHARITY CAR PARK

The Friends of Chauvigny have been invited once again to man the Charity Car Park in Basildon on Saturday, 6 March, from 8.30 am till 4 pm. This is a good fund-raiser and not at all onerous. It is two and a half years since we last did so and it must therefore be more popular than ever with local organisations. A rota with one-hour slots is being drawn up and any offers of help from members would be extremely welcome. We aim to have two people collecting money at the entrance to the car park and two people directing traffic in the car park itself. Please contact Patricia on 01277 625448 or by e-mail to [patriciaclark37@talktalk.net](mailto:patriciaclark37@talktalk.net).

### FRENCH STUDENTS AT STOCKBROOK

Our very successful business link between Chauvigny and Billericay is continuing, thanks to the co-operation of Gerard Amiel, the General Manager at Stockbrook Country Club. Two young male students from the Rural Institute in Chauvigny will be spending a month on work experience at Stockbrook from 24 April to 22 May this year. If anyone would like to offer accommodation for one or both of them during their stay, please contact Patricia on 01277 625448 or by e-mail at [patriciaclark37@talktalk.net](mailto:patriciaclark37@talktalk.net).

## JOHN BARON'S FUN WALK

The date for the very popular Fun Walk, in which many of us participate in May each year, has been postponed to 18 July 2010 this time as the General Election could be held in May or June. So put this date in your diaries now and you will receive more information nearer the time.

## FISHERS TWINNING LINKS CONTINUE

Apart from our regular visits by the American students and teachers to us in the summer and our return visits to them in the autumn, it is pleasing to note that individuals are maintaining contacts between our two towns.

Last summer one of our Billericay students, Kieran Page, who went to Fishers in 2008, hosted the sister, Krissie Moyer, of the American student he stayed with out there. The daughter of the family, Kristeena, got on so well with Krissie that she is now going out to Fishers later this year.



*Kieran, Kristeena and Krissie enjoying Cambridge*

Over the Christmas period this year, Carol Kerrigan, Head of Mayflower Lower School welcomed Bill Reed and his wife and two sons. Bill is a Maths teacher at Hamilton High School and looked after Carol when she went there in 2008.

They packed a lot into their time in England. Two shopping and sight-seeing trips to London, ranging from Harrods to Selfridges and taking in the Science and Natural History museums not forgetting the usual places such as Trafalgar Square and the like.

Carol and her visitors were booked to go to Paris on Eurostar just when they had all the trouble with the snow. This meant a postponement to the following week which happily coincided with Bill and his wife Carolyn's silver wedding anniversary. What a romantic happening provided you didn't mind sharing it with several others!

Zack, the younger son, was 20 on Christmas Eve and thoroughly enjoyed being allowed to go to our British pubs as in the States you have to be 21 to drink (though you can drive at 16).



*The Kerrigans and Reeds in London*

Visits to Cambridge and the Duxford Air Museum completed a hectic ten days over here. It's good to know that these contacts are continuing. After all, that's what twinning is all about and we are looking forward to meeting our next batch of Americans in July.

## CHRISTMAS FAMILY FAYRE

On Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009 as part of the Billericay Christmas Family Fayre, the Association joined with other organisations at the Coach House, Crown Yard, to display exhibits relevant to their organisation. We had two comprehensive displays; one for Fishers and the other for Chauvigny depicting the signing of the Charters and subsequent exchange visits. Both of these were set up by Sue and Rod Rapley. Sue and Rod stayed throughout the evening to talk to people about Fishers and Chauvigny. Our thanks to them for doing that.

A lot of interest was expressed in both of our exhibits and many visitors took away membership leaflets. Approximately 60 residents took the opportunity to view the exhibits as well as the displays from the Town Council, Youth Town Council, Mayflower Twinning Association, Billericay Society, Billericay Design Statement Association and Fairtrade.

The evening was wet with periodic showers which may have caused many of the visitors to call in but it may also have been the free mulled wine served by the Town Council that attracted them! Our thanks go to the Town Council for arranging the opportunity to publicise our Association and its activities.

## CHAUVINOIS VISIT IN MAY

We are very much looking forward to the forthcoming visit of our friends from Chauvigny around the weekend of 15 and 16 May. A group of twenty-five people will be visiting Billericay. A day's outing to Cambridge is being arranged and we are also planning a trip to Cressing Temple. In addition, we hope to include a social event when all our members will have the opportunity to come along and meet our French guests.

## LA MARCHE IN ITALY - by Mary Hawkins

The 22nd Marche de l'Amitie last August (involving the three twinned towns of Chauvigny, Trino and Geisenheim and, as a special privilege, Billericay), was based in the ski resort of Abetone in the Appennino Toscana-Emilio Romagna. For several reasons, I was the sole Billericay representative but never found myself alone. Last year in our newsletter, Maggie Kingston, in her article on La Marche in August 2008, explained why it's called The Walk of Friendship and my experience only confirmed this.

Each day, the group of 100 divided into three, depending on the level of walking ability, but the mountainous nature of the terrain meant that, in general, the group was less adventurous. Group 3 each day with their guide, Giordano, enjoyed mainly comfortable walks at lower levels during which he identified plants and their medicinal properties; while Group 1, with Davide, did the most demanding climbs, each day climbing to 1900 metres, culminating on the last day in a climb to the summit of Monte Cimone, at 2165 metres the highest mountain in the Apennines, followed by a ridge walk with the most spectacular of views.



*On the Marche*

Group 2 with Claudia often took less demanding routes to the same peaks as Group 1, but at a slower pace. Nonetheless, the views across the mountainous scenery were equally dramatic and we all felt a sense of achievement as we looked back at

our routes through woodland at the lower levels and the steeper rocky, grassy slopes higher up. And each evening altogether, we happily tucked into our pasta and Tuscan wine, etc, etc.

On the Wednesday, we had a coach trip to Pisa and Lucca. In Pisa, we visited the well-known campanile (still leaning!), the cathedral and the baptistery, with their magnificent 13th century pulpits, and some of us admired what survives of the dramatic 14th century frescoes in the Campo Santo, the cloistered cemetery heavily bombed during World War II. After a brief shopping scurry, we drove on to Lucca, a small medieval walled city, where we had a wonderfully chaotic lunch, followed by fascinating tours of Lucca's walls, narrow streets and churches, led by town guides, each speaking one of the three languages. We were delighted that the heat in these cities did not penetrate the Apennines!

As last year, I came home feeling I belonged to a very special organisation which had provided the chance to participate once again in a not-to-be forgotten experience. Many people from the three towns now know one another well and each morning greetings of hugs and kisses were exchanged by everyone. Sadly, the Italian Chairperson couldn't be there, but our thanks go to her and the Italian team and Lia Favero who organised us all in Abetone. This experience of 'camaraderie' or 'Gemutlichkeit' or 'amicizia' that develops as we all share moments of elation, the occasional mishap, the singing, the dancing, eating, drinking AND walking together is very, very special.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's Annual General Meeting of the Association will take place on 15<sup>th</sup> March at the Coach House, Town Council Offices, Crown Yard, High Street, Billericay. The evening will start with a presentation by the students from Billericay and Mayflower Schools who represented us in Fishers in October 2009 and I'm sure this will be an interesting experience. The AGM will follow thereafter.

Although originally planned for the Canon Roche Halls as in previous years, we were advised that the Halls will be busy with events celebrating the centenary of the Holy Redeemer Church and it was not advisable for the AGM to be held at the same time. The Town Council have kindly made available their large meeting room.

The start of proceedings will be at 8:00 so please be there in time. Light refreshments and nibbles will be available. We look forward to a good turnout.