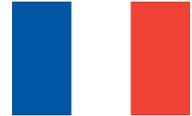




BILLERICAY TWINNING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER No 13 September 2010

THE CHAUVINOIS VISIT BILLERICAY

On Wednesday May 12th the Friends of Chauvigny section of the Association welcomed twenty-two guests from our twin town in France for a five-day stay in Billericay. This was the fourth time that we had hosted them. We wanted to return the compliment which they always pay us by flying the French Tricolour from the only public flagstaff in Billericay outside the Police Station but unfortunately this was not possible.

Nevertheless, we welcomed old friends and some new ones. The programme for their stay started off on the Thursday with a visit to Cressing Temple Barns, organised by Mary Hawkins. As usual, our guests were most interested to see the actual place from where the English Crusaders started, as the Order was founded by the French nobleman, Hugue de Payens. We took our guests for lunch at various pubs and restaurants around the area, which had been recommended (after exhaustive research!) by Peter and Roberta Copsey, and then on to individual places of interest during the free afternoon.

Friday was a free day. Terry Gandy had kindly opened his beautiful garden to our visitors, and



Cheers Marie-Christine - At Brown's, Cambridge

undeterred by bureaucratic edicts, flew the French flag in his front garden! In the evening the official dinner, organised by Janet Cosgrove and Patricia Clark, was held in the Canon Roche Hall, preceded by a reception for all Association members. This gave those who were not hosting an opportunity to meet old friends. Dinner included lamb shank which was unfamiliar to the French and were pronounced excellent. After dinner, we introduced our guests to English country dancing with the aid of a caller. This proved very successful and everybody had a great evening.

On Saturday, there was a coach outing to Cambridge organised by Grace Herbert. We had guided tours of the colleges in French and English. We were particularly fortunate as the colleges were presenting their master's degrees that day in brilliant sunshine. Our guests were impressed by the university's ancient pageantry. In the afternoon, after lunch at Brown's Restaurant, we were free to explore Cambridge, when some of the more adventurous souls went punting on The Backs.



Punting on The Backs - Cambridge

Sunday was another free day which was preceded by Mass at the Most Holy Redeemer. At the invitation of Father John McGrath, Mme Nelly Teyant, the President of the Chauvigny Twinning Association, gave the first reading in French.

Father John presented her with booklets commemorating the church's centenary, which is being celebrated this year. For the rest of the day, hosts entertained their guests. Some of those who went to London met for a traditional Sunday lunch of roast beef at the Victory Services Club, hosted by David and Patricia Clark.

In the evening, the visit ended with a general get-together for all members in the Reading Rooms. Mary Hawkins organised the buffet and the evening was rounded off with the now-traditional rendering of French and British songs.

When the French and English committees held a joint meeting on the morning of departure, it was unanimously agreed that visits should now take place every two years instead of annually. This means that we will go to Chauvigny in 2012 and the Chauvinois will return in 2014. The reason is that, as most people prefer to fly between Stansted and Poitiers, the lengths of stays are dependent upon Ryanair's schedules. This means that visits, at the moment, are four full days long plus two for travelling. As both committees are feeling the economic pinch, longer breaks will allow for sufficient funds to be raised to finance these highly enjoyable but costly visits.

ANOTHER YEAR; ANOTHER SUMMER; ANOTHER VISIT FROM FISHERS

This year's party of 4 students and a teacher were met at Heathrow by Trevor Stansfield when their plane landed at 9.25 a.m. on Wednesday 7th July. They were taken to Billericay school where they were given a lunch and then met their hosts who took them off for a quiet evening at home.

Thursday saw the Americans join Allen and Leila Evans on their narrow boat as they made their way down from Paper Mill Lock. They took turns in steering the boat and opening the locks before landing for lunch near to All Saints Church, Utling. There has been a church on this site since 1150 A.D.



At Paper Mill Lock

On their return they were entertained to an "English Afternoon Tea" at the Coach House. Drinking tea in china cups and saucers poured from china teapots and eating home made cakes was a novel experience for them, though we did pander to those who can't stand the sight or smell of tea in providing some coffee too.

The Heads of the two schools, Sue Hammond and Lee Brumby came along as did the Chair of the Town Council and our Honorary President, Peter Bowditch. The Youth Town Council was also represented and we were delighted to welcome back Alison Yates who came over from Fishers in 2008. We also learnt that Shelley Tang who came in 2009 had been here but had dashed off to Ireland for a few days. It's really good to know the links we have established continue.



At the Town Council Offices

Friday was spent in Billericay school so they could get to know our educational system. Previous students who had visited Fishers were roped in to escort the youngsters around

The weekend was spent with the hosts. Many visited London and went to the War Chambers and other sights of interest. Some were taken to Southend; a novel experience for them as they had never seen the sea!

Monday saw them off to London, again by minibus,



At Westminster Hall

escorted by Sue and Rod Rapley. First stop was the Houses of Parliament courtesy of John Baron. They all found this most impressive especially the very ornate House of Lords. It was of especial interest to their teacher Jeremiah Follis who majored in European History. He was particularly interested in the history of Billericay with reference to the Wat Tyler Peasants Revolt and the Pilgrim fathers.



Outside Buckingham palace

A tour of London preceded a trip on the Millennium Eye and, although the day had been overcast earlier, it had cleared up to give good views all around.

Their last day, Tuesday, was spent in Mayflower school though Jeremiah joined a school outing to Hedingham Castle which he found fascinating.

The visit finished with an excellent evening at The Hoop. All the families were there plus some of our host students from 2008. We were well looked after by the staff who provide superb food. The wonderful old oak beams in the restaurant proved a fitting venue to end their visit. We felt we had shown them something of old and new England.



At The Hoop

Alas, all good things come to an end and they departed at 5 a.m. the next morning on their way home.

We continue to be pleased and surprised at how well these exchanges are going and in particular the links which continue. We have already booked the flight for our youngster to go to Fishers at the end of September and we will ask them to make a presentation to us as in previous years

JOHN BARON'S FUN WALK

Marion Wilson and Sue Rapley walked for the Fishers section and Patricia Clark, Janet Cosgrove, Grace and Gareth Herbert, Peter and Roberta Copsey walked for the Chauvigny section on 18th July. David Clark acted as marshal. The walk of about 3 miles started and ended at Barleylands and took the same route as previous years. The weather was fine and the walk was enjoyed by all.



Sue and Marion at Barlylands

Our thanks go to all our sponsors. The sponsorship money raised by our members was supplemented by money from local corporate sponsors and we received a bonus cheque in proportion to the amount raised.

TWINNING ROAD SIGNS AT LAST

After years of waiting the two last twinning road signs are now in position.

The sign that went missing on the London Road in early 2009 has now been erected beneath a new town sign. Thanks go to Billericay Town Council who have paid for the sign after a joint application for funds were submitted by Billericay Mayflower Twinning Association and ourselves back in September 2009.

The second sign at the Kennel Road Roundabout completes a twinning sign on every main road entering Billericay. This sign was purchased many years ago when the first signs were ordered and has been held in readiness ever since.