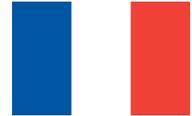




BILLERICAY TWINNING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER No 17 May 2012

PLANS FOR CHAUVIGNY 2012

As this Newsletter is being prepared, our members who will be visiting Chauvigny are packing and getting ready to leave on Friday 4th May. Many are travelling by EuroStar and TGV whilst others have opted for the RyanAir flight from Stansted. Either way, we arrive at Poitiers where we will be met by our welcoming hosts and taken to Chauvigny. A fantastic few days with our friends are anticipated.

A programme has been set:

Saturday 5th - Day in Saumur, visit to old town, chateau, trip on the river and visit to a cellar.

Sunday 6th - Free with host family (church for people who wish to go).

Monday 7th - Committee meeting in the morning. Visit to Saucy Lingerie in Chauvigny! Macaroon Museum in Montmorillon - old typewriters. Official Dinner in the evening.

Tuesday 8th - Ceremony at the War Memorial for the 8th May. 18h30 - sing-a-long.

FISHERS EXCHANGE

By Marion Wilson

Mayflower and Billerica schools have now chosen their students and teachers for this year and we have met with them and their parents after the Easter holidays.



Students and teachers who will be hosting Fishers' visitors in July

Arrangements for this year's programme are well under way. Because of all that is happening this year, there are many more people coming to the country and, in spite of applying just after Christmas, we were unable to secure a visit to the House of Commons this year that fitted in with the programme. But that has given us the opportunity to explore other venues in London. However, we have to bear in mind the restrictions such as the fact that The Mall is closed from June to September which makes going to see Buckingham Palace more difficult. This year too they will be here for Independence Day so we must find some means of celebrating that. Nevertheless I am confident that the programme we are putting together will be a good one.

THE BIRTH OF OUR ASSOCIATION

By Trevor Stansfield

Many occurrences happen by chance. They are usually subject to the law of unintended consequences the results of which are sometimes good and sometimes bad but they are all totally unexpected. So it was with the Billerica District Residents Association (BDRA) in 1996 when the Association was seeking ways of celebrating its 70th anniversary. With the benefit of hindsight it may be said that the idea of setting up a special event radio station in order to talk, in real time, with the people of Billerica, Massachusetts was a bit harebrained. Nevertheless it seemed exciting and unusual, maybe a unique manner in which to celebrate an anniversary at the time.

In spite of the prodigious efforts made to find someone on the other side of the pond with whom contact could be made, even to the point of involving the United States Embassy in London, it was all to no avail and the idea was shelved. The 70th anniversary passed by uneventfully.

Several weeks later, when all this was but a dim memory, I received a letter from the Sister Cities

Association of Fishers, Indiana (SCAFI) - the law of unintended consequences. The writer explained that SCAFI was looking for an English town with which they could twin and having seen Billericay listed on the web, decided to make contact. Surprise. Who had posted us on the web? Certainly not us. We decided to ignore the letter. However the Americans were persistent and wrote again. They made such a persuasive case, extolling the virtues of the town of Fishers and inviting us to visit the town, it would have been churlish to refuse. So my wife, Margaret, and I accepted the invitation on behalf of the BDRA explaining that this was not an official visit, more a reconnaissance trip by two private individuals.

Visiting Fishers was a fantastic experience. I was much impressed by the kindness and hospitality of the people and also by the appearance of the town, its industry, commerce and facilities. Of special interest to me, since I was chairman of Billericay Town Council at the time, was the composition of Fishers' town council, its budget and responsibilities. Here was an interesting example of an American town council from which we could learn.

On returning to Billericay, we put on display in the library the majority of the photos we had taken on the trip to Fishers and during this display many people volunteered to form a twinning association.



Explaining Billericay at Billericay Park, Fishers

So, with the aid of the Local Government Information Bureau (LGIB), a constitution was written and subsequently the Billericay Twinning Association was born.

There followed a period of great activity, learning about and meeting the requirements of the twinning authorities on both sides of the Atlantic until Sister City and Twinning Charters were signed first in Billericay on 7 September 1998, then in Fishers on 24 June 1999. Since this time there have been constant yearly visits of residents, students and teachers between the two towns. From these visits friendships have been formed which are still alive

to this day – a very pleasing and satisfying relationship.

Some time later, in 2003, I was contacted by a teacher from Buttsbury Junior School asking me to talk to a young French girl who was working in the school. Her town was interested in forming a twinning arrangement with a town in England. Following our subsequent conversation, members of Chauvigny visited Billericay and were shown round the town which they found pleasing and expressed a desire to twin. There were several more visits between the towns culminating in a decision to enter into a formal arrangement. Consequently a Declaration of Twinning was signed between Chauvigny and Billericay first in Billericay on 24 April 2004 and then in Chauvigny on 16 July 2005.

This twinning agreement has also worked well. Many visits have taken place between the two towns and many friendships have been made which have lasted to this day.

**LA MARCHE EN ANGLETERRE
MAY 12TH, 2013
By Mary Hawkins**

As regular readers of the Newsletter will be aware, every year there is a 'Marche d'Amitié' or 'Walk of Friendship' involving members of the Twinning Associations in the three towns of Chauvigny, Geisenheim and Trino. Up to 80 or 90 people get together in an attractive area of rural France, Germany or Italy for a week of walking and, inevitably, laughter and friendship. The base is usually a holiday village or ski resort. Members from Billericay were invited to take part for the first time in 2005, when there were a few spaces available at the last minute for the walk in Brittany, and every year since then our association has been represented.

A couple of years ago, we were asked by various enthusiastic members on the walk to organise 'La Marche en Angleterre'. After discussions with the other associations we agreed that this would be in addition to and not instead of the annual event. Plans are still at an early stage but it will take place in the stunning Peak District for five days from 12th May 2013, staying at The New Bath Hotel in Matlock Bath.

We are currently working with the three countries to find out exactly how many people will be coming, after which we will almost certainly be able to offer places to members of this Association. This will be within the next couple of months. The Committee have agreed that we should offer places to the other three associations first. The total cost (including accommodation, all meals and guided walks at 3 levels of difficulty) is £550. A deposit of

£75 has to be paid by July 31st. The walk is being organised by Ramblers Countrywide Holidays, so if you'd like more details, do visit their website at: <http://www.ramblersholidays.co.uk/page/the-peak-district>



High Tor and Matlock Bath

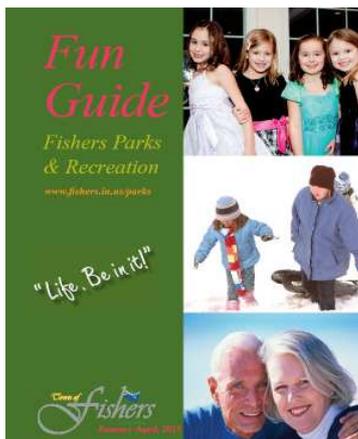
NEWS FROM FISHERS

Fishers is in Hamilton County, Indiana.

A spin-off of the hugely popular television show, *The Amazing Race*, the "Race Across Hamilton County Team Activities Challenge" presented by Community Health Network offers a chance for teams of two ages, 14 and older, to compete in mental, physical, passive, and miscellaneous challenges at five different park sites around the county. Six park and recreation departments throughout Hamilton County are partnering up to offer this exciting new program which offers great prizes including Mastercard gift cards of \$350 for first place, \$300 for second place, and \$250 for third place! Registration is being co-ordinated through Fishers Parks & Recreation.



The Race Across Hamilton County Team Activities Challenge will be held on Saturday, August 25. An awards ceremony will follow the competition promptly at 6:00pm.



Fishers produces a 28 page Fun Guide with details of their parks and recreation. Connect to the Fishers website for full details.

SADDER NEWS FROM FISHERS

By Marion Wilson

On a sadder note we have just heard that Tammy, Mike Kalb's wife has just died after a long battle with cancer. Mike is my counterpart in the Sisters Cities organisation. Tammy was ill when I was out there last year but still invited me to spend an evening with her and her family and I am glad I had a chance to spend that time with them. Mike and Tammy have two teenage children and two young children. I have sent a card from the Association expressing our sympathy.

FRIENDS OF CHAUVIGNY FUN QUIZ

By David Clark

In January, Patricia and David Clark organised the annual quiz which raises the bulk of our income to host our French friends on their bi-annual visits to Billericay. As usual, our genial host was the ever-popular Ray Keilthy. Invaluable help behind the scenes, with scoring and the raffle, was given by youngsters Alex Hurst and Pippa Morton. There were 140 contestants on 19 tables and a total of just over £800 was raised.



Patricia presenting the prize to the winning captain

The quiz is always well attended by members as well as non-members from Billericay, Shenfield and Brentwood. We receive queries as early as October from outsiders who want to know the date in advance so that they do not miss it!

The question which caused most "Oh, nos" was "Which town was called Durolitum in Roman times?" The answer is Romford. The Romans had a fort there long before the Saxons got here! Most of the Old Romfordians knew it.

We all look forward to the Chauvigny Quiz Night next year - date yet to be fixed.