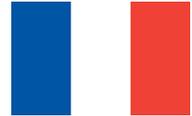




BILLERICAY TWINNING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER No 19 January 2013

FISHERS VISIT

By Trevor Stansfield

Early in the morning of Tuesday 2 October four students and two teachers, from Billericay School and Mayflower School, not forgetting me, boarded a mini-coach bound for Gatwick airport for a flight to our twin town of Fishers, Indiana, USA. We met our hosts in Fishers about 7.00pm and spent the night in their company.

The following day Wednesday 3 October began with a visit to the Police Station which was followed by a visit to the Fire Station and the Town Hall. After lunch we went to Billericay Park obviously named after our home town in England and then to Connor Prairie. Billericay Park is a sporting area boasting 11 baseball diamonds and numerous play areas for young children pleasingly named Lake Meadows and Norsey Wood. In the park there is also a tree planted in memory of my wife Margaret after she died in July 2003, quite a touching gesture, needless to say she was a popular figure with members of organisations in the town.

"In Loving Memory of Margaret"



Connor Prairie is the Smithsonian Museum Institution's only Indiana affiliate and has been granted the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, additionally it has been recognised by the American Association of Museums as a national leader in quality learning. This is a museum with a difference. In summer there is a western town, aptly named Prairietown, with a doctor's surgery, bakeries, a blacksmiths and many other houses and businesses all manned by professional actors who take the role of inhabitants of the town and speak in the idiom of the day. A most interesting experience. In the Lenape Indian Camp one can learn about the Delaware or Lenape Indians or try throwing tomahawks at a wooden target, after which one wonders how the Indians managed to hit anything.



Billericay and Fishers Students in Fishers

On Thursday and Friday the students and teachers visited Fishers High and Hamilton Southeastern High Schools whilst I renewed old acquaintances, made new friends and attended the early morning meeting of the Rotary club.

Saturday and Sunday was spent with the host families and many chose to go to the Renaissance Faire an event which is very popular in Fishers since it represents the Golden Age of Queen

Elizabeth I of England. The theme this year was the year 1579 and the 20th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's coronation. The town of Byllica is hard at work preparing for a celebration of the Queen's Jubilee and additionally Her Majesty's Jester has resigned from his position of Mayor of Byllica and the citizens of the town have decided to hold elections for a new mayor. I think that you will now have some idea of the magnitude of the Faire and it is indeed a massive and entertaining experience.



Mayoral Candidate on Left

On Monday the younger people took energetic exercise and walked around the green areas of Fishers, I spent a more leisurely day attending a meeting of the Service Club of Indiana with my friend, followed by tea and biscuits with an old acquaintance. Later in the evening we had a farewell buffet

On Tuesday we all had a conducted tour of the Colts' football stadium. The Colts is the local team based in Indianapolis and its stadium is magnificent. The roof opens and one side of the building rolls back to make sure that in warm weather both players and spectators are cool. Another awe-inspiring experience.

Indianapolis is home to the Indianapolis International Speedway where the Indy 500 and Brickyard 400 motor races take place. It also has the International Speedway motor museum where many racing cars are kept. An Aladdins Cave for racing enthusiasts. We spent Tuesday afternoon admiring the many exhibits on show.

All too soon it was 7.00pm and time to leave our hosts. We had a remarkable time in Fishers. The people are warm and hospitable, locally it is known as "Hoosier Hospitality" and make you very welcome. Perhaps we will all return one day.

JUBILEE FUN WALK

By Rod Rapley

The Association is dependent on its members raising funds by various means. One of these is the participation in the Annual Fun Walk set up by John Baron our local MP.

Members obtained sponsors and walked the three miles across muddy fields and over stiles to earn their funds. This year the walk was held on Sunday 27th May and it was mild, dry but a little windy on the day. The event started at Barleylands Farm about 12 noon when a barbeque is lit. About 12.45pm speeches of thanks to the sponsors are made and a photoshoot takes place. The walkers then set off, led by the Town Crier, at 1.0pm.

John Baron in advance of the walk said:-

"The Queen has given 60 years of dedicated service to this country whilst on the Throne. In her honour, we are renaming this year's Fun Walk the 'Jubilee Walk'. It is worth reflecting that the very first Fun Walk in 2002 commemorated the Queen's Golden Jubilee with 6 charities participating. This year, 110 charities and good causes are set to benefit. The bonus pot now exceeds £42,000 which breaks all records. Our thanks go to our generous sponsors: Swan Housing Association, NYSE Euronext, Veolia, c2c Rail Ltd, Toomey Motors, Hallmark Care Homes, Ford Motor Company, Stock Brook Country Club, Bellway Homes, SELEX Galileo, Greater Anglia, Mr Barrie Stone, and others."

After the walk and when sponsorship money had been collected, all charities submitted their accounts to John Baron's office and each charity was paid an amount from the bonus pot in proportion to the amount they raised themselves. This event took place at Anisha Grange, Outwood Common Road on 14th September 2012 at 6.0pm.

Our thanks go to all those who sponsored our walkers representing either Fishers or Chauvigny.

Money raised for Fishers:-

Sponsorship £120 Bonus Pot share £72

Money Raised for Chauvigny:-

Sponsorship £320 Bonus Pot share £208

Let's hope that 2013 sees more walkers and sponsors.

MANNING BASILDON CAR PARK

On Saturday, 17th November, the Friends of Chauvigny manned the Basildon Charity car park once again and, with the help of many members, raised a total of £215.00. It proved to be an

interesting occasion as there were many young people taking part in street dancing both outside and inside the Basildon Centre. So a lot of people used the car park and long queues formed from time to time. The local pigeons apparently did not approve of our being there as Patricia was standing under a tree and was bombed by one of them!

Thanks go to all those who helped with this initiative.

CHRISTMAS IN CHAUVIGNY

By Patricia Clark

Annick Ragot has reported on Christmas festivities in Chauvigny. It sounds wonderful:

On 7th, 8th and 9th December there was a market with 60 stalls in the main square. The stalls were selling wine from several different regions, cooked meats, cakes and other sweetmeats, craftwork including wood, glass, leather, art, pottery, perfume, toys and woollen goods.

The Chauvigny District Council, covering all the local area, organises a show every year in the Charles Trenet Hall for retired people and those who have taken early retirement. Refreshments of coffee or hot chocolate with a slice of cake, such as Christmas log or brioche, are served. The show this year was called Paris Palace with dancing and music. It is always a very popular event and a lot of the elderly attend. People from different localities come over a period of several days.

The Chauvigny choirs had their Christmas concerts in November. Christmas carols are played over loudspeakers in the market and the main street on the Saturday before Christmas. All the shopkeepers have Christmas window displays and hold raffles. The Twinning Committee put on a fund-raising show on 4th November with poetry, comedy acts, songs and swing music, which was very well attended and a great success. Home-made cakes were sold and a lot of money was raised.

LA MARCHE DE L'AMITIE

25th Aug – 1st Sep

By Mary Hawkins

The Italians hosted the Marche this year in Asiago, Northern Italy, a town about 2 hours north by bus from the city of Vicenza. Apart from one statue, the town was completely flattened in World War I and was rebuilt (in the 20's and 30's) as a walking, skiing centre. Asiago itself is in a comparatively flat area, on a plateau, the Altopiano, at the foot of a range of mountains bordering on the Dolomites.

I wasn't the only one to feel ashamed at how little I knew about the World War I fighting that had

occurred between the Italians and the Austrians in this area. On Day One, our guide, Romeo, born and bred in Asiago and an authority on the war in the region, took us all to Forte Interrotto, to the trenches cut in stone within the mountains by the Italians, from which they fought the Austrians. We visited an Austro-Hungarian cemetery laid out with wooden crosses. We were told that items from 'la premiere guerre mondiale' could still be found – and, indeed, Romeo found a bullet and Jacky Pinaud a button from an Italian uniform.

All our walks involved quite steep climbs, whichever group we were in. Martin, our hardest and most experienced climber of 'les petits anglais' as we were called (!), was in Group 1 and therefore each day walked more kilometres and climbed to a higher elevation than Maggie and I did in Group 2. Several of the walks were around Monte Ortigara and Larici di Sotto and we were amazed to learn that one of the mountains in the range was now 5 metres lower than it had been in 1914; a bomb had blown 5 metres off its original height! The terrain was quite rocky, becoming more so at the mountain peaks, but on grassy areas we often saw sheep and cows grazing and some very attractive wild flowers, including orchids.



Holding up the Sign Post

Our day at leisure was spent in the Palladian city of Vicenza. A coach took us directly to the Teatro Olimpico, designed by Palladio. It is an indoor theatre, built in the early 16th century, for the local Academicians, in the style of a Greek theatre with a cavea, orchestra pit and a permanent set, supposedly of Thebes, designed in Renaissance

architectural style. We then divided into 3 groups for guided tours of the city in French, German and Italian, concentrating on buildings designed by Palladio. Particularly interesting was the Palazzo Ragione, a 14th century building 'improved' externally by Palladio. After a splendid lunch at Monte Berico, we had a look round the church next door, the Santa Maria dello Berico, before setting off back to our hotel in Asiago.



Well on our way

The next day, Thursday, August 30th, we again walked to an area in the mountains once blessed by Pope John Paul II, where we had lunch. Our last day was a very wet one and in the morning we all went to the local Arc de Triomphe which commemorated the 55,000 who had died fighting in the war in the area – a very sobering experience. Then, after an optional visit to a farm to buy cheese, we went to the nearby town of Canove, also a victim of bombing, to see a most informative war museum. After lunch, we were at the 'mercy' of our hosts and several of us went to the historic towns of Bassano del Grappa (guess what its famous for!) and Marostica, where every September an historic pageant takes place commemorating the defence of the town now built within its walls.



Walk is over and still smiling

We all agreed at the end of the week that we'd had a marvellous time, enhanced by the friendship of

everyone, and the informal gatherings of the Italians, their singing and generous helpings of grappa from Eugenio, Lia's husband! And on the night we all watched a video of an Italian view of the last 25 years of La Marche; we all raised a hearty glass to the next 25. Next year, 2013, there will be 2 Marches – one on the German/Czech border and one, for the first time, in England, in Yorkshire.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's AGM will take place on 18th March 2013. The venue is different from before. It will be held in the meeting room at Anisha Grange, Outwood Common Road, Billericay. Post code is CM11 2LE, for those who like their SatNavs, and is close to the Greenway junction.

Proceedings will begin at 8.00pm. The Agenda and programme will be sent out to all members in due course.

Please put the date in your diary.

WE ARE NOT ALONE WITH OUR BAD WEATHER!

Report from Fishers dated 13 January 2013

Preparations are beginning for predicted ice accumulation in Fishers. The Fishers Department of Public Works overnight closed several roads, a parking lot and four parks due to high water. Crews continue to evaluate the roads while they prepare for the rain to turn into ice, which is expected to fall in Fishers over the next 24 hours.

"Before the rainfall turns to ice over the course of today, Fishers DPW crews will be out in salt trucks on the roads to ensure they are safe for the Monday morning commute," said Fishers Town Manager Scott Fadness. "Approximately eight to ten salt trucks and over four thousand tons of salt are ready to treat the roads tonight."