

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This year marks the 5th Anniversary of our Twinning Association with Le Vaudreuil. I think a number of people thought that we would not last, but we have proved them wrong.

I will deal with events in chronological order since my last report a year ago.

In August we again played Boule at the Three Horseshoes. As before this proved to be very popular and enjoyable.

Our annual visit to Le Vaudreuil was made the 19th -21st September when 30 adults and 9 children were involved. Only 37 travelled on the coach as Peter and Barbara were already in France, so there were 14 empty seats on a 51 seater coach, but with the aid of a hefty £853 subsidy from our funds we managed to keep the cost down to a very reasonable £30 per person. (AGM suggestion in 2003) Whilst in Le Vaudreuil we were entertained in the homes of our hosts on the Saturday evening – some having a “Safari” supper. On the Sunday we had a superb river trip on the Seine, followed by an al fresco lunch by a lake. The weather was glorious and after a few drinks some decided to jump into the lake fully clothed. Our bus driver was not too amused as he had visions of them getting on to his coach in the wet clothes. However they all managed to change, some travelling, I understand, in the minimum of clothing, although I have no visual proof of that.

Quiz night. We again held a Quiz night in November to bolster our funds and made a handsome £642. This good profit was made possible by Nerys and her team providing supper and Brenda and Ivan conducted a raffle. Our thanks also to Peter for keeping the scores and of course our Quizmaster. Four came from Le Vaudreuil (Gerard & Brigitte Lebegue and Dominique & Marilyn Le Prince) and they thoroughly enjoyed a new experience. The timing also coincided with our Remembrance weekend and I took our guests, Gerard & Brigitte to watch the parade at the Three Horseshoes. They really enjoyed this and ever since Gerard has been trying to arrange exchanges of war veterans. I went to the AGM of the Royal British Legion last November to put the suggestion to them, but they were not interested. I am having difficulty persuading Gerard of this.

The French held a Quiz night in Le Vaudreuil and Peter & Barbara and Derek & Mary attended it and had an enjoyable time. I was invited, but declined. I have difficulty answering questions when they are in English, so would stand no chance with my lack of French.

School visit. In March this year 20 pupils from Le Vaudreuil visited Comberton Village College on the first half of an exchange. Pupils from CVC go to Le Vaudreuil next week. The visit was very successful but because of the tight budget at CVC teachers could not be released to accompany the French on visits whilst they were here. To overcome this problem Nerys went on two visits and Paula on one.

Donations of Trees. The French had asked if we would like to donate a tree (or trees) for planting along the path named after Comberton (Chemin de Comberton) – along the river. Following my note in Contact for offers and suggestions Brian Worrall donated trees – 13 in

total and these went back to Le Vaudreuil on the coach in March. I understand they are creating a copse (Bosquet de Comberton). The path "Chemin de Comberton" is to be formally opened when we visit in September.

Annual Dinner. A very successful dinner was held at Bourn Golf Club in March attended by 29 members.

Most recent visit . In spite of the difficulties Ann had in hosting all our visitors it was a very enjoyable weekend. They sent 11 families and 5 couples or individuals with no children. Our Association has many more couples and single people, which meant that several families were hosted by couples. I think that Ann deserves a medal for sorting it all out. Thanks to her and all of you who hosted. We really need to attract more families with children – it is on the agenda tonight to discuss.

I do not need to say too much about the activities at the weekend. Guests were entertained in host's homes on the Saturday evening, some on a Safari basis. The planting of the Davida tree (handkerchief tree) at Harbour Avenue green went very well. I would like to thank Mike and Jane for erecting stout supports around the tree so hopefully it will survive wind, footballs and vandalism. Also thanks to Sally Maynard who lives nearby for watering and also Andrew Hollick. Can I also thank the Tree Group of the Parish Council (Robert Cook, Dorothy Morrison and Jane Wakelin) for their help. We only decided on the site for it on Friday afternoon.

Thanks also to Mike for taking photographs. The event was reported in the Cambridge Evening News yesterday, although they did not print all that I had written for them and also only one photograph when they said they would print two.

I hope that you all enjoyed the hog roast at South Farm. It cost the Association £835. The charge by South Farm for everyone, adults and children was £15. We paid for all of the French and subsidised the cost to our own children – hence the high cost to us. However, as you all said last year, funds are to be spent. We are holding another Quiz on October 16th, which will help to replenish our funds.

Next visit 24th – 26th September to Le Vaudreuil. As some of you know Eurotunnel have offered free coach travel for Twinning Associations (worth £620) to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Entente Cordiale. We therefore hope to keep the cost of the visit to Le Vaudreuil to a minimum. During the weekend there is to be a Cabaret based on 1904. We have been asked to contribute to this and Brenda Brown has kindly agreed to co-ordinate our efforts. She will be speaking about this later. We are planning to give to Le Vaudreuil a specially minted £5 coin to commemorate the Anniversary and we will have this mounted.

It only remains for me to thank all of our hard working committee all of you for making our Association work.