

Didcot-Meylan Twinning Association

NEWSLETTER

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Christmas is approaching fast with snow reported in the French Alps.

The past few months have been a busy time for Twinning. In September we welcomed friends from Meylan for a 3-night stay whilst in October a small group of young people spent a few days getting to know Meylan. You can read more about both of these events elsewhere in this newsletter.

We would like to take this opportunity of thanking those wonderful people who offered to host our visitors. Twinning cannot function without your generosity and feedback from our visitors is always full of praise for their warm welcome into your homes.

Naturally our thoughts now turn to our next trip from Didcot to Meylan. We hope that the group from Didcot might include some new faces



www.didcotwinning.org.uk

COMING SOON
Returning by popular demand, another chance to enjoy an *Evening with Anne-Marie*. Music and songs in the French Style.



ABOUT OUR ORGANISATION

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Treasurer	Erin Goff
Web Editor	Jerry Goff
Other Members	Sheralyn Hares Nick Hards



The Diamond Project

VISITORS OPEN UP NEW TRAVEL ROUTES

For this visit the French party explored the option of flying from Lyon to Stansted with EasyJet. This undoubtedly offered convenient flight times and good prices and avoided Heathrow during the recent period of heightened security.

What they had not anticipated was the journey round the M25 at rush hour! Nevertheless, welcomed by Nick Hards and fortified by sandwiches, their journey by luxury coach was soon over and they were being welcomed into their host families. The twinning association will be looking closely at departures from smaller, regional airports for the next Didcot to Meylan visit to identify the best deals available.



Diamonds are a girl's best friend

This was certainly the case for our visit to the new Diamond Light Source at Harwell. We were welcomed with a much needed coffee in the magnificent atrium and then introduced to the scientific capabilities of the new Diamond facility. Our visitors were delighted to find that French scientists working on the project had been co-opted to provide a translation to accompany the slide presentation. During lunch, generously provided by the Diamond project, small groups were taken to view the building that houses the accelerator.



Coffee at the Diamond Project

A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

Our arrival in Wantage coincided with a minor cloudburst, so it was a rather bedraggled group that arrived into the welcoming warmth of the Vale and Downland Museum. After a welcome in French provided by one of the friends of the Museum, we were divided into groups to tour the exhibits. These range from prehistoric



artefacts to up to the minute racing car and include a 'ride' along the old Wantage tramway. Between the visitors, hosts and guides we shared some rather specialised vocabulary (anyone know the word for iron age hill fort?). Translation was also difficult when welcomed into the home of a local bigwig by a very talkative housekeeper, with a strong Berkshire accent, who wanted to tell us about the exploits of the young master on one of Nelson's ships. After an opportunity for a restorative cup of tea and some retail therapy, the group returned to Didcot in time to visit the Art Exhibition before dinner.



Reception at Home Start

Art in the Library

Works by artists from both Didcot and Meylan were on display in Didcot Library, by kind permission of the Chief Librarian. Arrangements were made by Jenny Kuca for the displays to be mounted on Friday morning and to remain on show until Saturday afternoon. Visitors to the library were able to see a range of local scenes (both French and English) as well as a range of other canvasses.

In conjunction with the Art Exhibition, a reception was held in the Offices of Home Start for members of the twinning organisation and civic dignitaries. Over a glass of wine, friendships were renewed and plans made for further community interactions. Our thanks to Doreen McNulty for her help in arranging this event.



Reception at Home Start



This visit received sponsorship from Milton Park, Grainger Properties Ltd., Diamond Project, UKAEA Harwell, Power Station (RWE Npower), and Didcot Town Council

JOIN THE ASSOCIATION

Our thanks to all those members who have paid their subscription for 2006/2007. The rate remains at £5 per household. Cheques or cash to the secretary or treasurer.



Didcot-Meylan Twinning Association

Oxford Castle visit



Unlocking Oxford's History

A visit to the new tourist attraction in Oxford's Castle development took visitors and hosts into the old prison. After climbing the Saxon Tower for a view over the city, there was a visit to the crypt of the church originally on the site where education pre-dates the establishment of the university. Visitors then explored the old cells before emerging into the sunlight for lunch and some free time in Oxford



Aline Cuvecle's speech

Wined and Dined on Local Produce

Saturday evening saw the culmination of all of the hard work coming together for a dinner in the stylish 'Brookes on the Park' restaurant. An aperitif of prosecco and elderflower cordial tested the vocabulary of many hosts but finally the word went round that the flavouring was 'sirop de sureau'. There followed an excellent dinner based on the best of local ingredients and, if the beer with the pate was a shock to some, the rest of the meal went down very well.



Leaving in the rain

THANKS TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

Saturday's splendid dinner ended with an exchange of gifts and words of support for the Twinning associations of Meylan and Didcot. Meylan was represented by two councillors, Joel de Leiris and Marie-Pia Coustans as well as Aline Cuvecle while Didcot was represented by the Mayor, Mike McNulty and by Terry Joslin. Also present at the dinner was John Bateman, whose generosity via Milton Park Estates and Grainger Properties Ltd, had funded the evening. We offer our thanks to him and to the other local businesses who provided the means to entertain our visitors so well.



Joel De Leiris' speech



Youth Visit to Meylan



Local businesses support young people from Didcot in their visit to twin town, Meylan.

Two years ago a group of 13 young people from Meylan visited Didcot and last half term saw the return visit. After a very early start from Didcot, the group arrived at Lyon airport in glorious weather - 30C. They were taken for lunch and a visit to the 'Antésite' soft drinks factory at Voiron. After being introduced to their host families in Meylan, there was a buffet reception and music. The Didcot children received souvenir twinning pens and pocket torches and delivered gifts from local businesses including the Power Station (Npower), the Diamond Project, Grondon, CCLRC (Rutherford Appleton Laboratory), UKAEA (United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority) as well as street maps of Didcot and a commemorative certificate from the mayor, Mike McNulty.

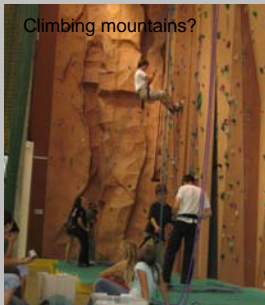


Picnic in the mountains

The following day a tour of Meylan highlighted its impressive local facilities (theatre, music school, senior school, parks, halls), including a sundial (used to tell the time in Didcot) and a large mural of Didcot in a pedestrian underpass. A coach ride along hairpin bends took everyone into the mountains for a picnic and orienteering at le Sappey. The French and English children were put into teams, had to follow a route on a map, answer nature questions and get back to base as quickly as possible. The day was rounded off with an evening of games and challenges testing skills, creativity, taste, and knowledge of Europe.



The Didcot Mural



Climbing mountains?

Saturday was spent at a gym at Charlaix where the young people played table tennis, badminton and took advantage of the magnificent climbing wall. New friendships were cemented as they helped each other with the challenges. In the afternoon there was a brief opportunity to meet a party from Meylan's twin town of Planegg. After an official reception from the mayor and councillors, with more gifts to all the young people, the final evening meal with music took place at Décibelonne.

All were sad to leave their host families on Sunday and agreed they would love to visit Meylan again. The trip was a wonderful way in which to experience the French way of life, the town of Meylan and the lovely surrounding countryside. It was also a chance to make new friends and have fun. The young people were such good ambassadors for Didcot and as a result of their successful visit we hope to welcome even more visitors from Meylan on future exchanges.



Do you want to establish links with Germany? Meylan's twin town in Bavaria is keen to twin with Didcot, and has approached the twinning committee. We need a small group of enthusiastic people to take this forward. Perhaps a short visit by a small group from Didcot could get this project underway. Contact Sue Totterdell if you would like to get involved.



Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année

Still available: Tea-Towels with local scenes around Didcot. These make excellent presents. On sale at £4.50