

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013

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VISIT TO MEYLAN A SUCCESS

AFTER some months of planning, a group of 18 people travelled to Meylan for the weekend of 19th to 22nd September. What made this trip particularly special was that, not only did it include the Mayor and his wife, the deputy Mayor and three previous Mayors of Didcot, in the party there were also 16 children from Ladygrove Park Primary school, on their way to meet counterparts from the Ecole Primaire des Béalières. You can read more about their visit elsewhere in this newsletter. Those travelling from Gatwick airport made an early start from Didcot for their morning departure, but this gave them more time in Meylan. They were collected from Lyon Airport and taken by coach to the school where they were given lunch and looked after for the afternoon.

By early evening, all members of the group had arrived in Meylan where they were officially welcomed by a representative of the Mayor before dispersing to their host families for dinner.

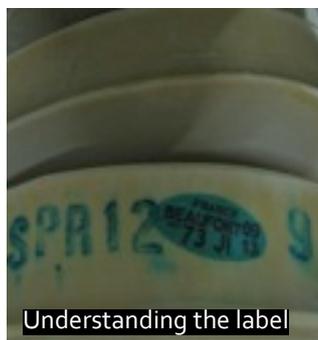
The next morning saw an early start as we had to be ready to board the coach at 08h15. Our drive then took us along the valley towards Albertville and finally into the Savoie region to the town of Beaufort, famous for its cheese. We arrived exactly on time for our visit to the cheese factory (see page 3).



Welcome at the Mairie



Visit to the Beaufort cheese co-operative



Understanding the label



Robot salts & turns cheeses



Maturing the cheese



Wearing the Charlotte hats

Can you help?

We have several families from France and Germany who would like to arrange private exchanges with children in Didcot. Spending a week or so living with a family is a great way to gain confidence in another language and to really learn about other cultures. If you are interested in finding out more, please get in touch.

Didcot Film Club: Wednesday 30 October

DANS LA MAISON A French film directed by François Ozon and based on the play The Boy in the Last Row by Juan Mayorga. The film was awarded the main prize at the 2012 San Sebastián International Film Festival. MORE DETAILS <http://didcotfilmclub.weebly.com/>

SOCIAL EVENING

Cornerstone Cafe **Tuesday 12 November** from 19h30
Come along and have a drink while you meet other twinnings and maybe even speak some French or German.
We are particularly interested in hearing about any fundraising ideas you might have.

Didcot children get to know Meylan

For some, it was their first trip abroad and for many the first without their parents but their exemplary behaviour won them praise on the flights and helped them make new friends in Meylan. Didcot can be proud of its junior ambassadors from Ladygrove Park school. Between their pre-dawn departure from Didcot to their happy reunion with parents four days later, there were many new experiences in terms of school, playtime and meals but they met everything with enthusiasm and a positive outlook. At the same time, host families in Meylan welcomed their guests warmly.

Following their arrival in Lyon, the children were taken by coach to the Ecole des Béalières in Meylan where they were given lunch. They then joined the French children in class and in the playground, where they started to get to know each other. On Friday, the children worked together on a bi-lingual dictionary, learning songs, and athletics. They also shared a cake decorated with the Union Jack to mark the event.

On Saturday the children spent time with their host families, going shopping, visiting the local area and, in one case, attending a wedding. Jointly, in the evening they entertained the hosts and adult guests from Didcot. Finally, everyone assembled for lunch on Sunday before a sad goodbye and promises to stay in touch.

TRIP PHOTOS



THE VISIT A HUGE SUCCESS



A busy schedule

At the cheese cooperative we learnt about how the local dairy industry had been revived and what makes a Beaufort cheese. We were then able to taste some before visiting the shop for cheese to take home.

Then there was just enough time to visit the delightful village of Beaufort itself before meeting again for lunch. Following lunch a short drive took us to the impressive Roselend Dam, one of the largest in France. We first walked out across the dam to see its special construction features and then entered the control room to learn about its role in the local hydroelectric generation capacity. We also heard how the only way to get to work in the winter involves a ride in a snow cat - could be fun! The sun shone for the whole day and we were also able to see the peak of Mont Blanc from the dam.

Friday evening was an opportunity to eat with our hosts. Saturday was also set aside for outings with hosts and these turned out to be quite varied. Some took advantage of the "Flying" weekend in a nearby village, others visited the mountains or other local places of interest but we were all back again in time for some entertainment provided by the children from Meylan and Didcot before our gala dinner. Sunday came too soon and it was time to leave.

...AND THE SUN SHONE



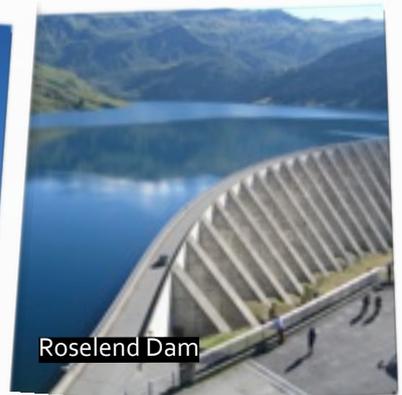
Beaufort Village



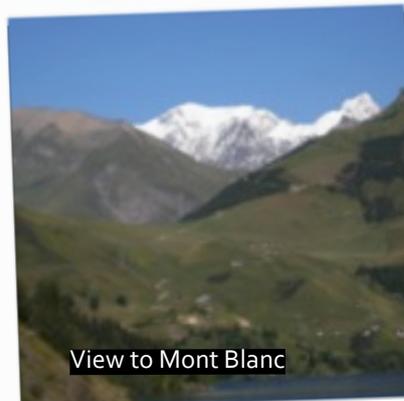
Beaufort Village



Beaufort Church



Roselend Dam



View to Mont Blanc



Parapente

GALA DINNER - SATURDAY EVENING



The children present the songs they have prepared to the people attending the Gala Twinning Dinner.



Didcot's Mayor and Mayoress, Axel and Denise Macdonald, and the chair of Didcot Twinning Association, Phil Hayward, talk to their counterparts from Meylan.



Country dancing, French style.



THE COMMITTEE

Chair: Phil Hayward

Vice Chair: Terry Joslin

Secretary: Geoff Oldham

Treasurer: Keith Beswick

Town Council Rep: Peter Read

Communications: Sue Totterdell

Webmaster: Keith Beswick

Schools: Marilyne Marchal

Members: Scott Wilgrove &

Janet Cockburn

Find us on line

www.didcottwinning.org.uk

In this issue we report the latest visit to Meylan. This included, for the first time, children from a Didcot Primary school, the first of many such contacts we hope. The success of the school visit reflects the hard work and enthusiasm of committee member Marilyne Marchal, who nurtured early contacts and facilitated the connections between schools.

This may be the last of our two-way twinning events, as it has been suggested that in future we may like to coordinate visits from both Planegg and Meylan at the same time. Naturally this will depend on being able to find a time suitable for all three towns, enough host families and a programme to suit everyone. We are exploring a joint visit to Planegg for 2014 - watch this space.

More photos of the weekend



Roselend Dam



Flying Festival



Meylan with the Chartreuse behind



Young people of Meylan & Didcot



Listening to the speeches on Saturday evening



Trying new foods



Telepherique in Grenoble



Cheese making

Clubs & Societies Day

At the recent open day at Didcot Civic Hall the Twinning Association took a stall to highlight its activities on behalf of the town and surrounding villages. The display included a slide show depicting various visits to Planegg and to Meylan as well as leaflets and books about the two towns. A bottle of champagne was offered for a draw of all paid-up members on the day to encourage people to sign up to family membership and this was won by new member Diane Jenkins.

