

NEWSLETTER

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Next twinning visits

The next twinning association event will be to welcome a party from Planegg, our twin town in Germany. We are at present looking for a mutually suitable date but it looks as though it will be in autumn 2017. After that, in 2018 we hope to return to Meylan, followed by a trip to Planegg in 2019.

Oktoberfest

After the positive response to Didcot's own Oktoberfest in 2015, there will be another event this autumn.

Put Sat October 15th in your diaries.

The Oktoberfest will run between 1 pm and 11 pm at the Civic Hall



Mayoral gift

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Membership payments

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Twinning Association

Arrival and Reception

The group from Meylan tried a new route to get to Didcot this year, from Lyon to Southampton with FlyBe. Sadly this involved a 2 h delay on the outbound flight and led to cancellation of the welcome lunch. Nevertheless, the group finally arrived at about 15h30 and were soon lodged with their hosts.



On that Thursday evening there was a reception to welcome our visitors to which other friends from the community were invited. We were delighted to see Steve Connel, Mayor of Didcot who

warmly greeted Damien Guiguet, Mayor of Meylan. This event also provided a chance for Hagbourne school to give a booklet that they had made about their school into the keeping of Jean-Yves Delacoux, to deliver to their partner school in Monbonnot, near Meylan. Finally we were entertained by Didcot Choral Society, singing in French in honour of our guests.



Thanks to Keith and Kate Beswick for hosting us on that sunny evening.

Council visits

Chaza Hanna, visiting from Meylan, is in charge of urban planning in her district. Both she and the mayor Damien Guiguet, were interested to learn about urban planning here in the UK. We arranged for two experienced councillors to meet with them at Cornerstone Café on Friday morning, whilst the rest of the party visited Diamond at Harwell. Nick Hards, who is still a councillor and Bernard Cooper, who is a recently retired councillor kindly joined us. (I went along solely as interpreter, having no experience of urban planning!).

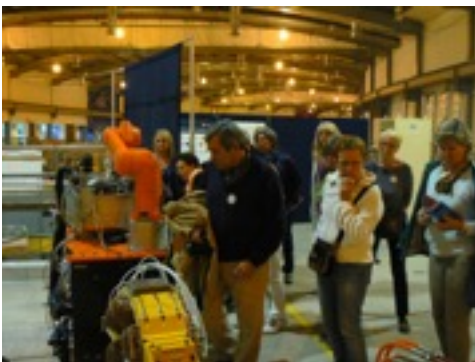
Over a cup of coffee we looked at past and present plans for urban development in the greater Didcot area. Chazza and Damien were surprised that, unlike in France, roads, drainage and utilities were not in place before building began. Bernard very kindly drove us around the new housing developments, Great Western Park and The Greenaway, where we visited one of the show houses. We also looked at various in-fill developments in the town and surrounding areas. The French visitors explained that, to limit land use and make housing affordable, their future developments would largely be small apartment blocks. The morning passed very quickly and all too soon I had to deliver our guests to their luncheon venue. (Penny Wilder)



Restored train carriage



Axel and Jean-Yves



Synchrotron visit



Railway visit

School contacts

M. et Mme Delacoux and myself visited 3 of the Didcot schools which are linked with schools in Meylan. Starting at DGS, we met Nicky Warnock and Valerie Morris. Positive and enthusiastic ideas and opinions all round and hoping the link can develop to mirror the DGS/Planegg link. Jean-Yves and Marie Chantal were amazed by the amount of green space around the school. Secondly at SBS, a brief meeting with John Marston (Head) who was very enthusiastic in supporting the developing link with Collège Lionel Terray. Mrs Rachel Warwick (DGS Head) joined us and endorsed the aims of her staff. A short guided tour led by 2 Y10 students took us to meet Mr Walker (music) who is keen to repeat a music-based exchange in 2000.

Finally, to Hagbourne Primary School where we met Cheryl Sanchez (Deputy Head). We were taken to visit every classroom in the school and the children seemed very excited about meeting real French people. Most classes welcomed us in French, with older pupils able to add their names and ages.

It was a most enjoyable and rewarding morning, with Jean-Yves and Marie-Chantal impressed by the IT facilities available at each of the schools and their green spaces and optimistic about the future of these embryonic links (Diane Jenkins)

Friday activities

On the Friday morning a group of about 25 (including the majority of our visitors from Meylan plus a few hosts) visited the Diamond Light Source (DLS). This was perhaps a bit like taking coals to Newcastle as Meylan also has a synchrotron in its neighbourhood but ours is newer and does some different science (theirs is more powerful). The visit started with a presentation not only explaining how a synchrotron works and the sorts of science that it enables but also helping us to get a handle on what the scientists at DLS mean by small! The presentation was followed by a walk around the synchrotron along the roof and a look in one of the beam line stations. Everyone had an enjoyable and interesting time.

On Friday afternoon the whole party came together for lunch and to visit the Didcot Railway Centre to experience an important part of our local and national heritage and history. The enthusiasm of Ann Middleton (Commercial Manager, Didcot Railway Centre) as she led the tour was contagious! They laid on a diesel engine and took us up and down the line in a couple of beautifully restored carriages. We had the chance to wander around the site and see the fantastic engines and carriages either already restored or in the process of being restored by the dedicated volunteers. Even those who aren't especially interested in trains had a great time and for those who do love trains they were in heaven and had to be almost dragged out at the end of the afternoon! (Geoff Oldham)

Gala dinner

The Gala dinner, attended by 43 people, including the mayors of Didcot & Meylan, their wives, the deputy mayors and the party of 17 from Meylan, was held at Drayton Park Golf Club. The evening began informally with a welcome drink, followed by a delicious 3-course meal. The speeches from the two mayors, the chair of Didcot Twinning Association and the President of the Twinning Committee of Meylan had a common theme - the importance and value of links between schools, clubs, associations, individuals and at the civic level. Maire Damien Guiguet was presented with the No 1 shirt for the Didcot Rugby Club by rugby enthusiast Mayor Steve Connel.

A convivial evening was enjoyed by all. New friendships were made, not only between the French and English, but also within the groups, some of whom were new to twinning. We hope their positive experience will ensure they play a part in future exchanges. (Diane Jenkins)

More photos on our web site