

Eye & District Twinning Association 30th Anniversary Weekend

It has been a busy year for Eye Twinning Association, having recently hosted 33 guests from Pouzauges in France and 5 guests from Meitingen in Germany at our thirtieth anniversary weekend.

Planning started early in the year, having offered the French the opportunity to visit in May or June, they came back with April and October, the later was chosen –showing we can compromise and make deals with Europe after all!

So on Thursday 24th October we gather with anticipation at the Bowls Club for the welcoming reception, not once but twice. Due to heavy traffic our guests who were travelling up by coach from Gatwick Airport estimated arrival was put back from 5.00 pm to 7.30 pm, and they were as pleased to arrive as we were to see them. Introductions were made and goody bags containing specially designed 30th anniversary lanyards and pens, and postcards decorated by the pupils of Palgrave School for our guests handed out, before swift departures were made with their hosts.

A relaxed start to Friday was dictated by the cancellation of the Cranswick Site visit, giving guests and hosts a chance to chat over a leisurely breakfast prior to meeting at either Station 119 Brewery or Hartismere Place, both provided interesting visits, together with tasty offerings in the form of cream teas, sandwiches, sausage rolls and crisps washed down with a swift half of the local brew.

The main event was the official ceremony held in the Lines Hall at Hartismere School on Friday afternoon. Special thanks must go to Desmond and Teresa and their subcommittee who organized the ceremony, liaised with the School and created a running order with military precision. George Trudgill and his team were exceptionally helpful, compiling some wonderful montages of previous twinning visits, as well as taking care of lighting and sound at the actual ceremony. The Lines Hall looked wonderful decorated with flags and colourful pots of flowers, along with Gislingham Silver band playing in all there finery, and two talented sixth form pianists. The official charters were signed by the Mayors of Eye and Pouzauges and gifts exchanged, before a reception in the Library rounded off the afternoon.

Saturday was free until the dinner for hosts to entertain there guests. The Town Hall looked resplendent with its red white and blue flowers and the flags of our visitors adorning the tables, a highly enjoyable meal was served by Leigh and his staff, and a good time was had dancing to the music. Sunday morning arrived all too quickly (even with the extra hour due to the clocks going back) and we fondly waved off our visitors on their coach.

Much planning went into the weekend, thank you to the Committee for their hard work in organizing the receptions, visits, the official ceremony and dinner. All the work was carried out on a voluntary basis with very professional results. My thanks also go to Paddie who translated from English to French, our host families who accommodated and entertained our guests and finally, the local businesses that supported and assisted the Association. A real team effort.

If you are interested in becoming involved or finding out more about the Eye Twinning Association please contact our secretary, Anne on msanneradford@yahoo.co.uk.