

'Stuff anglaise' goes on sale . . .



At Christmas market . . .

DESPITE our problems on the journeys to and from Houilles for the Christmas Market on the weekend of December 14th, on the whole it was a successful venture, *writes the editor*.

Our produits anglaise – well, it was in France – went down reasonably well. Mince pies, lemon slices, shortbreads, fudge, Christmas puddings large and small, various teas, marmalade (home made), lemon curd, honey, cheeses and Chesham Museum beer were popular with buyers, bringing us in a profit of €125 for association funds.

The day was not as cold as in previous years, and Wyn, Annie and I were

able to take a break for lunch at the home of the Cavadinis and on Saturday evening we all went to dinner at a nearby restaurant, where we met a couple of new members of the Houilles committee – *and they were young people!*

On Sunday, in company with the Forces, Cavadinis and Quois, we spent the afternoon visiting St Germain-en-Laye, a lovely town splendidly decked out for Christmas and very busy.

Then it was back to our respective hosts for dinner and a reasonably early night before setting out on that journey home.

**The story of those journeys—page 4*

. . . And at the braderie

IT has been some years since we had a stand at the Houilles braderie, but this year vice chairman Tina Pearce volunteered to represent us, as she has done on several other occasions recently.

Decked out in her red coat, white blouse and blue skirt, and wearing a bowler hat with a union flag band around it, she proved to be popular with twidders and customers alike.

Writing on the twinning website, the Houilles committee vice president for Chesham, Laurence Force, sang the praises for the “petite dame anglaise de Jumelage de Chesham . . .”

“At 78 years of age, she didn’t hesitate to cross the

Channel, with her car full of ‘stuff anglaise’ to sell on our stand at the braderie . . . She brightened up our stand with her charisma and joie de vivre.

“Thank you again to this adorable British lady who, once again, has given proof of the friendship and strength of the links with our twin towns. Fabulous, isn’t it?”

It was at the meeting of officers of the three towns represented at our Cultural Weekend in September that Tina decided to go, complete with English produce, such as marmalade and fudge, much of which she produced herself.

(turn to page 4)

From the editor's chair

OVER the years, whenever our members discuss in groups, or in ones and twos, the future of our association, one question keeps raising its head: should we be receiving greater financial support, or even physical support, from our town council?

After all, it was a town mayor who set the ball rolling in the move towards

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Editor: Tony White

We face a dilemma and a problem — what do the members think?

finding a twin town, and no twinning with another town has taken place without the approval of the town council.

It was raised again recently by a member who spoke of another UK community, albeit considerably larger than Chesham, receiving something like £15,000 from its council towards its activities, helping it to become one of the most successful of the UK's twin towns. And, of course, we know that certainly the Comité de Jumelage in Houilles is well supported by the council as, perhaps to a lesser extent, is that in Friedrichsdorf.

But our founder, and first chairman, the late Pauline Wilkinson, made it known that she did not wish Chesham's twinning movement to become a burden on the rates, as council tax was then known. And it never has been. We are grateful that the council allows us the use of the Town Hall's facilities for our committee meetings four times a year, and when we have used The Elgiva we have received a grant towards its cost, and even on one occasion had the theatre free of charge.

Is it time for a change? There are those among our members who believe it is. There have been Town Mayors who have been extremely supportive of our activities in cultivating the friendships between Chesham and its three linked towns; and there have been those who have not. The town council has two representatives on our committee – the Town Mayor and a councillor appointed by his or her peers.

Should we encourage our councillors to become more involved in our activities, to attend more of our events, particularly those 'civic' receptions that

we organise, and pay for, when hosting our visitors during International Week-ends?

ANOTHER aspect is causing us some concern, and has done for some time. Nearly all our officers are pensioners, or approaching that time of life. We need younger people to come along and take the reins.

Many of us were much younger when we became involved in town twinning. We, too, had jobs and families, activities which took priority in allocating our time. But we saw the benefits of town twinning as our families became friends with families in Germany and France, and later in Spain.

Many of those friendships have lasted 20 or 30 years and, during that time, we have seen young sportsmen and women from the towns competing against each other in tennis, football, rugby and gymnastics.

We have seen musicians representing their towns in artistic activities.

We saw Chesham High School, as it was then, impressing visitors with their wonderful fashion shows.

We saw students from Lowndes School, then soon to become Chesham Park Community College, making friends with their peers in the Spanish town of Archena and we saw young people from Chesham, at the instigation of the town's youth council, raising money to buy trees to replace those lost in a fierce storm in Houilles; what a great weekend it was when they travelled over to plant those trees, along with students from Friedrichsdorf and Houilles, a lasting memorial to the young people of the three towns.

Can we not revive these activities? We have taken a small step along that road with contacts being made between Chiltern Hills



*... And
from the
REAL
chair*

THIS is the last Twinlink in which I will write as Chairman. My two-year term of office comes to an end in January 2014. I have enjoyed my time as Chair but more than that I have learned just how much time and effort is put into the running of the association by committed members. It is regrettable that the events which are so carefully organised do not get the full support they deserve from all our members. If we are not giving you what you want please tell us what activities you would support. Times have changed since twinning associations were set up but the ethos is still the same: to make friends in our twin towns and to have the special privilege to host and be hosted in each other's homes.

Academy and a similar school in Friedrichsdorf; we hope this will lead to student exchanges like those that take place every year between Houilles and Friedrichsdorf.

Are we going to allow these activities to just stop, to just end. We hope not.

Fewer came but socially it was still a success

“THE committee was so pleased with the result that a similar event will be held this year.” So it was reported in *Twinlink* after our first December Sunday lunch and quiz last year.

That was attended by nearly 60 people . . . so what went wrong this year?

There were fewer than 40 people there, and a fair proportion of those were not members but friends of . . .

Socially it was successful again, with not a single moan that we could hear. Those in the past who felt our quizzes were too hard must have been happy with

this one, with Roger and Chantal Woods hitting the right level with their questions – the scores in each round were proof of this, and the winning team succeeded by just half a point.

The excellent meal was provided by Sylvia Ewington with her team of ladies providing mouth-watering trifles for dessert.

We’re sure they would have felt a greater sense of satisfaction had the attendance been better.

Sadly chairman Patricia Cherrill and husband Terry were not able to attend, having to cry off at the last minute through illness.

Book early for F’dorf

THE International Weekend in 2014 will be hosted by Friedrichsdorf. So if you wish to go, book early with Annie Hinds, who is hoping to arrange tickets in February to obtain the best price.

It will be over the weekend of June 6th to the 9th and, while plans have not yet been finalised, it is expected that they will include a visit to Wies-

baden, followed by dinner, it is hoped, in a vineyard.

Sunday would see the usual activities, both sporting and otherwise, with a return to Chesham on the Monday.

Booking forms will be available at the annual general meeting on January 25th but if you wish to go, contact Annie before then. Numbers will be limited to 25.

We’ve taken our partners

WE are now partners, Town Partners, that is. The necessary forms have been completed and submitted to the town council as part of the scheme launched in October.

Chairman Patricia Cherrill and vice chairman Tina Pearce attended the launch of the scheme at the Town Hall in the middle of October, an occasion

which, according to the council, attracted a significant level of interest from the town’s various organisations.

The association will now be listed on the Partners section of the town council website, along with our aims and contacts.

What follows? Who knows. We will wait and see.

The elusive six that thinks it’s a bus . . . you get the picture

WE All know that saying about buses . . . you wait for ages then three come at once. And this must have crossed the minds of many of those taking part in the 31 Club beetle drive on October 31st.

You need a six to start, you throw the dice, and it’s anything but a six . . . you throw again and again until finally the magic dots appear and you’re off. You have a beetle body.

Now you need a five or a four, three, two or one even . . . but what do you get – a six and another six, and yet another.

There were times when it seemed an age before that pesky insect really took shape.

And when it did there were also times when we felt we were in another type of game as the shouts went up: “Bingo” or

“House”.

The games continued until the winning card was full. And to whom did that card belong? It couldn’t have been engineered could it (if that’s what you do with beetles)? But out in front was chairman Patricia. Last was . . . but the editor will not print that as he likes living a peaceful life.

Yes, the beetle drive took the place of last year’s Hallowe’en witch drive and seemed every bit as successful. Vice chairman Tina organised the game and the catering was in the hands of Sylvia Ewington, who produced a very fine ploughman’s supper and baked apples for dessert.

And three cheers for the venue, Bovingdon Bowls Club, which again proved to be absolutely right for a party of our size.

Students are now in contact

MOVES to further a possible exchange of students from the Chiltern Hills Academy with their counterparts in Friedrichsdorf have taken another step forward.

Letters from the Chesham students arrived

in Friedrichsdorf in the first week of November, 22 in total, 16 from girls and six from boys.

Anja Canenbley allocated them to her students and letters from them were expected back in Chesham in late November.

Events taking place in Houilles

BOTH the European concert and the Cultural Weekend will be hosted by Houilles in 2014.

The concert, postponed from last year because of vandalism to the town’s new music conservatory,

will take place in March and will be restricted to young non-professional musicians.

There has been no news as yet on the Cultural Weekend but it will probably be in September.

No news yet from Archena

THE November meeting of the association committee heard from Archena secretary Robin Ketteringham that our request that the visit to Spain should be postponed until Easter 2015 had not then received a reply. The reason for the suggested postponement was because members were being asked to travel to Friedrichsdorf once and to Houilles, possibly twice, during 2014.

***Fancy yourself as a writer?
Have you an interesting story to tell?
The editor wants to hear from you
Give him a call or send an email***

Tony, Wyn and Annie . . . travelling trio in trouble (again)

TTTT struck again – this time with double trouble.

Yes, I refer to Town Twinning Travel Trouble, the last episode of which was featured in Twinlink of June last year, during the International Weekend in Houilles.

Move forward to December and the journey to Houilles for the Christmas Market, a journey undertaken on many occasions with never a real problem.

On Friday morning Annie Hinds, Wyn and I set off on the drive to Dover, a journey not usually beset with problems, and with sunshine all the way. The same applied to the drive on the other side, with good weather and no traffic problems. In fact, it looked as if we were going to arrive in Houilles at about 6.30pm, an hour or so earlier than our normal time.

(from front page)

It would appear that, in addition to selling items from her stand, she said she seemed to be a sort of Lavatory Lil, as many visitors kept asking her the way to the toilets, which were situated close by!

The braderie, which takes place on the first Sunday in October each year, is a kind of huge jumble sale-cum-car boot sale, with stalls throughout the town centre's streets – hundreds of them – selling everything from clothes to car parts. Some years ago I can also remember seeing a house for sale on one stand, while not far away there was a large motor boat.

The Houilles braderie is said to be the second largest in France – the first being in the city of Lille – and attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year.

One day we may be able to travel without a single problem . . .

Until . . . As we cruised down the A1 autoroute, past Charles de Gaulle Airport, we were warned of possible traffic trouble on the A86, the road we take round to Houilles, via the Stade de France. Once on the A86 it is a journey of about nine kilometres to our exit to Bezons and Houilles – a journey which, on this occasion took two and a half hours, which meant we didn't arrive at our hosts' home until 9pm.*

A quick unloading of luggage, a quick change of clothes and we were off to the home of Jean-Pierre and Laurence Force for dinner with other Houilles committee members. God bless them, they waited for us.

The journey home on the following Monday was going to be OK though.

Until . . . We followed our usual route towards Sartrouville, only to find that the road was closed about a mile or so on. So we turned round, returned and worked on another exit from Houilles.

From then on the journey was delightful, with lovely sunshine and a trouble-free journey to Calais. For some reason (I wasn't paying attention) we missed the turn to the ferry and found ourselves heading towards Belgium. A quick exit up a slip road to reach the other carriageway and a quick drive back was needed to make sure we checked in on time.

We did . . . then the lady in the P & O check-in desk said: "I have some bad news for you. Your ferry has been cancelled."** We had to wait until the next one.

Fine. A cup of coffee, a rest and on to the boat we went. Back in England the weather was awful, fog and rain on the M20 made for a most unpleasant drive.

As we approached the M25 our radio told us that the London Orbital was closed between junctions 10 and 12 clockwise.*** Time for a coffee at Clacket Lane services while we worked out a route off the motorway. It was over to Sonya, the name we have given to our satnav (the lady sometimes gets Sonya nerves!) and she guided us with precision through the Kent and Surrey fog and rain until we found familiar territory at Windsor. It was plain sailing from then on.

One day . . . one day we will travel without trouble and TTTT will be banished for ever.

*We learned when we arrived at the Forces' home that there had been a four-car accident on the A86.

**There was trouble with one of the ferry's lifeboats, which made it non-operational.

***Once again, an accident was to blame for the closure.

It's a punny old world

I went to the cemetery yesterday to lay some flowers on a grave. As I was standing there I noticed four grave diggers walking about with a coffin. Three hours later and they're still walking about with it, so I thought to myself "They've lost the plot."

I start a new job in Seoul next week. I thought it was a good Korea move.

My daughter asked me for a pet spider for her birthday, so I went to our local pet shop and they were £70. Blow this, I thought, I can get them cheaper off the web.

A mate of mine recently admitted to being addicted to brake fluid. When I quizzed him on it he reckoned he could stop at any time . . .

I was driving when I saw an RAC van parked up. The driver was sobbing uncontrollably and looked very miserable. I thought: "He's heading for a breakdown."

The wife has been missing for a week now. Police said to prepare for the worst, so I have been to the charity shop to get all her clothes back.

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