



Llanwrtyd Twinning Association

Tenth Anniversary of the Twinning of Llanwrtyd Wells and Mériel

Members of Llanwrtyd Twinning Association made their way across the English Channel to Mériel on the outskirts of Paris, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Twinning of our two towns. The party were accompanied by Pat Dryden, Town Clerk to Llanwrtyd Wells and Councillor Reverend John Stocker, who were officially representing Llanwrtyd Town Council on this very special occasion. John takes up the story of the visit:



We set off from Llanwrtyd Wells early on Friday June 25th 2010, three cars heading for Mériel, and arrived there shortly after 6.30pm. About seven other people from our region had already arrived, making a total of 19 visitors. A buffet was laid out in the square and music emanated from a small band which made the whole occasion something special. People greeted others and strangers were introduced warmly. One of the first things that hit me about this twinning was the friendships that had obviously developed and deepened over the years. The people that had arrived earlier than us had spent time with friends from Mériel; and I soon learnt that



there were people from each town that spent holidays together. That surely must be a sign of the success of both our Twinning Associations; and I felt that I wanted to be part of it. Pat's hosts were Jean-Louis Delannoy, the Mayor of Mériel, and his wife, Pascale. My hosts were Philippe and Marie-Pierre Riez. We were taken to their houses and I had a walk along the river with my hosts and their youngest daughter. That night I slept like a log!!

The next morning, after I was taken to [Auvers sur Oise](#) and to see places that the famous impressionist painter [Van-Gogh](#) had painted, there was the formal and official twinning meeting at the town hall, followed by speeches at the ERG ([Espace Rive Gauche](#)). Pat gave a speech on behalf of Llanwrtyd Town Council and various gifts were exchanged. The atmosphere was cordial and after the speeches there was a lovely buffet with champagne, and other drinks. It was also an opportunity for people to meet to get to know each other or resume old acquaintances.

A trip to Paris ensued where we got caught up in a “gay” procession that I later discovered had also taken place in other capitals in Europe. Undeterred we were able to walk along the banks of the River Seine to the [“Jardin des Plantes”](#). Another walk along the Seine took us to a restaurant close to [Notre Dame](#) where we had a lovely meal. After the meal we boarded a coach that took us round the sights of Paris as dusk descended, culminating in a spectacular view of the [Eiffel Tower at night](#) with the moon and clear sky accentuating the wonderful moment and ambience which was highlighted with the flashing lights on the Tower, which come on for five minutes every hour. We got back to Mériel in the early hours of the morning!



Sunday was a time to spend with our host families, and there were three suggestions on offer for the afternoon – a visit to the market at [L'Isle Adam](#), a carnival procession with performances by local school children, and an outdoor play at Château d'Écouen, and I went to the latter. The play lasted about three hours with scenes moving from one area of the grounds to another. The spectacle was set in renaissance age with the actors dressed in authentic costumes appropriate for the time. The weather was very hot and beads of sweat could be seen coming from the poor actors (over 300 of them). It was a truly magnificent performance which was very well orchestrated.



In the evening people met up again at the town fête with plenty to eat and drink and live music. At 7am on Monday the people returning in their cars met up at the ERG to start the voyage home. It was a great weekend and the French people had obviously gone to a lot of trouble and expense to make it a successful one. The whole experience was one I will savour for a long time to come.

John Stocker
July 2010