

## LÈVES OF COURSE! - MAY 2019

*bright eyed and bushy tailed for the 5am departure!*



This was my 10th year as a member of the Twinning Association and my 7th visit to Leves. Each visit seems to get more enjoyable and this year was really exceptional. The warmth and hospitality of our French hosts always amazes me and travelling with Nailsworth Silver Band this year, who are truly awesome, made it extra special. It was also great to see the Mayors of the two towns together and getting involved. I feel this brings our already close bonds even closer!

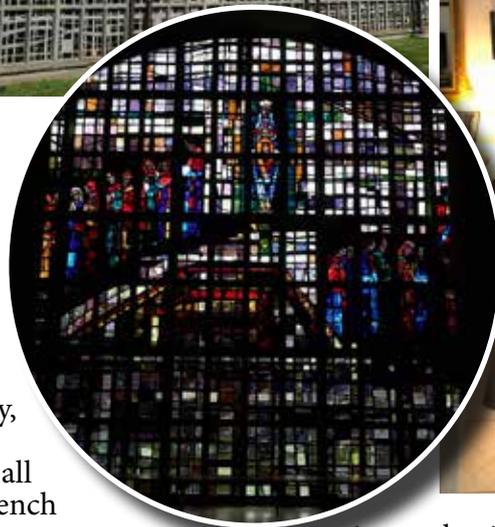
This year I was reminded that no matter how often

you visit a place there is always something new to see or try! I'd never been to the local church before and to be honest, from outside it didn't seem very enticing. My hosts, the Fruchards, kindly offered to show me the inside and talked about



how the original building was burnt down during the war, a week before Marie was born! It was rebuilt in 1956 with the most astonishing wall of coloured glass set in concrete. If you've not seen it before, do put it on your list for the next visit!

I am so pleased that the weekend went well for everyone. We had a really positive response to our survey, the details of which are on the next page. Reading the comments makes all the hard work of the committees, French and English, worthwhile! I hope everyone stays in touch with their French hosts and I'd urge anyone who can to welcome them back to Nailsworth: 21-24 May next year. *Rachael*



in touch with their French hosts and I'd urge anyone who can to welcome them back to Nailsworth: 21-24 May next year. *Rachael*



## FEEDBACK FROM THE TWINNING WEEKEND IN LÈVES 3RD – 6TH MAY 2019

Our 2019 trip to Lèves was organised jointly with the Nailsworth Silver Band to commemorate the band's 100-year anniversary. There were 54 people on the coach and 11 people travelled independently, making a total of 65 visitors from Nailsworth. 36 were members of the band and the rest members of the Twinning Association. In 2017 when Nailsworth last visited France, there were 30 visitors in total. The following charts give a breakdown for age and sex:

A questionnaire was handed out to everyone on the return journey and 41 people completed it.

100% of the sample said the trip had met their expectations or exceeded them.



■ male ■ female



■ child ■ under 60 years ■ over 60 years

100% also said that the trip was affordable, and everyone said they would be likely to keep in touch with the new friends they had made with the host families. Just over half of the respondents said they had improved their understanding/use of the French language. Several noted that they hadn't had the opportunity to improve their French because hosts spoke such good English!

There were very few problems mentioned and these were generally out of the control of the Nailsworth Twinning Association. One person said they would have appreciated a schedule in advance of the weekend, another that their dietary requirements were not acted on, although this was passed to the French organisers. One final problem mentioned was really a request, that next time the Eurotunnel is used rather than a ferry crossing.

### WHAT DID THE VISITORS ENJOY THE MOST?

By far the activity mentioned most often was the music by the Silver Band and the joint concert performance with the Lèves Music School orchestras. Second in popularity was the Chartres light show, particularly the cathedral *lumières*, which is an amazing local attraction. Also mentioned was spending time with host families, eating, drinking and visiting local sights e.g. Chartres Cathedral or the Château de Maintenon. Several mentioned how friendly and welcoming their hosts were.

### DID THE VISITORS TRY ANYTHING NEW?

Yes, plenty of new cultural experiences took place: there was a range of answers to this question from attending mass in the local church to trying something new like snails or French whisky! Some people learnt about the French Resistance movement and French history (Louis XIV)

Many mentioned sampling new food, wine, beer and the experience for the first time of *apéritifs* before a meal.

### HERE ARE A FEW OF THE COMMENTS WHICH WERE MADE BY THE VISITORS:

"Everything was amazing, (hosts) couldn't do enough for us"

"No problems they were fantastic hosts"

"I learnt a lot about the cathedral and the resistance movement"

### THE BEST THING WAS:

"Staying with a French family and being given an insight into the area by them. Too many great trips to mention"

"Spending time with hosts and friends"

"Listening to our wonderful town band"

"Can't single out a thing, the whole weekend was excellent"

### SUM UP THE WEEKEND IN 3 WORDS PER PERSON !

goodwill gourmet **fantastic** comfortable **stimulating** satisfying **friendly fun**

action-packed music *lumières* vin fabulous hosts **family** très bon weekend

full-on **fun family** collaborative musical convivial interesting **exciting**

rewarding **friendly** vin cuisine absolutely wonderful brilliant awesome

entertainment brilliant bonanza **welcoming** memorable musical

formidable opened-eyes interesting **fun** enjoyable **fantastique** superb

bravo amusant **best time ever** just good **fun** musical cultural **friendly**

**fun** affordable warm **friendships renewed** très bien **fantastic**



During our stroll around Chartres by night I spotted this image (left), and was reminded of our early visits to Lèves when everyone was taken to see the Maison Picassiette, a little house covered inside and out by this gentleman in a colourful mosaic of salvaged pieces of broken pottery and glass. Sue S

He ended up in an asylum driven mad by his obsession, apparently. Judith and Les had not been before and went with Philippe and Odile this year.



As on my previous visit two years ago, I was struck by the perfect organisation both this end and by the Lèves, Twinners and Town Council alike. Jannick and Roger made me feel quite at home in Saint Prest and organised lots of outings, including a visit to an art gallery in Chartres, the fabulous illuminations at night and a very interesting tour of the château de Maintenon. Our guided tour of the Atelier Gabriel Loire was fascinating and I was enchanted by the atelier's stained glass in the church during mass on Sunday morning. The entertainment by the Lèves Ecole de Musique and our Nailsworth Silver Band was outstanding. Food was plentiful and delicious as we have come to expect of the French!

During the evening's entertainment, one of the pieces the Silver Band played was "The Bear Necessities" so I took it upon myself to

explain the pun on "bear (*ours*)" and "bare (strict, as in minimum vital)" as Baloo the bear sings the song in the Disney animation. Peter Dillon, the conductor, did his own translation in the final concert by calling it "*les nécessités nues*"! Perhaps he was hinting that I should stick to translating and not add my own comments! He also got me to tell the audience that there's a correlation between how much a band drinks and the quality of their music. If people didn't think the music sounded better than ever, it was because they hadn't had enough to drink. Peter's energy and sense of humour added so much to the success of the entertainment.

We'll have to pull out all the stops next year.

Isobel





On our Sunday morning walk around Chartres with Philippe and Odile, we came across this wonderful mural of Jean Moulin near the Cathedral. There had recently been a street art festival in the city and this was one of the paintings. Moulin was a hero of the French Resistance in World War II and is remembered in Chartres because he became Prefect, or regional administrator, of the city between the wars, and was the youngest holder of the office in France. He died, as a result of torture, on 8th July 1943, on a train taking him into captivity in Germany.

Chartres was a centre of the Resistance and perhaps some of you have seen the memorial just outside Lèves where several of the brave men who took part in the Resistance were shot by the Germans. *Judith*



*The two committees got together for the traditional joint committee meeting*



Another excellent weekend in Lèves. The warmth of the welcome and hospitality made up for the cold and initially wet weather.

The internal cleaning restorations of Chartres Cathedral are so impressive, giving a totally different feeling of light and space as you enter, with much more yet to be done. The contrast between cleaned and not is striking.

Having never seen the Son et Lumière in Chartres, we visited in the dry on our (extra) night there. What a stunning spectacle as we strolled around the many illuminated locations. Voted the best yet by locals. *Sue S*



Although numbers were limited to 20 per group visiting the Gabriel Loire stained glass workshop, the prospect was so enticing that 30 Twinners were allowed to squeeze themselves into the narrow rooms to listen to Hervé Loire, grandson to the founder of the "Atelier", as he explained in great detail the three different methods used to produce the amazing pieces, examples of which can be found in religious edifices on all five continents (including Lèves church).

From traditional techniques to painted glass to glass slabs, new methods are constantly being invented by the Loire family and their 12 master craftsmen (or women? We didn't ask the question!). To find out more about the way they work and see example of the glass, you can visit the website which is also in English, at <https://www.ateliers-loire.fr/page.php>.

As we moved from room to room, we learnt how the windows are put together with glass and lead, learning all sorts of strange terms that Davina was on hand to name in English, like "came" and "glozing", how the colours and shades are chosen, how the shapes are cut out using special tools, how different kilns or ovens are used depending on the method etc. etc. My group was absolutely fascinated and I think Ivy and Millie, our young members, were equally enthralled.

If you happen to be in Lèves, visits are organised on a Friday when you can see the glaziers at work. In Chartres, right next to the Cathedral, the Loire family's "Galerie du Vitrail" has an exhibition of stained glass and items for sale. Use the above website link to see examples. *Isobel*



#### HARRIET'S REPORT AGE 11 (in the red jacket)

In the morning we arrived at the bus station at 5am and after a long day, we got to France at 6pm! We met the Neveu family we were staying with. Elisa was seven and could speak very good English. When it got dark we went to Chartres to watch the lights shine on all the buildings.

On Saturday we walked around the city of Chartres and looked at the shops. In the afternoon we went to a concert and listened to all the bands play music.

Now I'd like to learn the violin! We also went to Happy Land with some other children and ate chocolate cake. Yummy. On our last day we had a delicious BBQ lunch. Lilia and I played swing ball with the French children. After that, we took a little train around Chartres. In the evening



we had a FIVE course meal and listened to the Nailsworth silver band play great music!

On Monday it was unfortunately time to leave. We said our goodbyes and then got back on the bus. We stopped at the beach on the way home and made friends with some people from the band. We then got on a ferry and soon arrived in England. I slept until we got back home. I had a great weekend, thanks!!





The best dinner we've had in all our visits, and perhaps for some, a step too far when they realised they had to eat a snail! I'd eaten mine before I knew what it was, and actually it tasted delicious! The Nailsworth Silver Band had to sing or rather play for their supper and were superb.



They played again after the dinner and nobody wanted them to stop. They were exhausted! One of the old Nailsworth town signs was presented to the Mayor of Lèves by our Mayor, Jonathan Duckworth. They were very pleased with the sign and with Jonathan's speech in French. Once again, Isobel did a brilliant job at translating. All in all, a great end to another weekend of new and renewed friendships.

The weekend was just wonderful, we so much enjoyed the formal and informal parts of the trip, so friendly, so welcoming. Everyone should be very proud of what Twinning with Lèves achieves.  
*Jonathan*

Due to a late ferry booking, we spent four hours in Boulogne. There's plenty to see there, including the old walled town with cathedral, and the aquarium, and we had a very good lunch with a group of twinner in 'Le Welsh Pub' (they're usually Irish!). This sculpture caught our eye on the way back to the coach and symbolises our long and happy twinning relationship with Leves. *Judith*



Note the “Lèves of course!” bags appearing in some of the pictures. This refers to the race Lèves organises every year, so nothing to do with shopping (*les courses*) but running (*la course à pied*). The race around the Chartres area is called “La ReLèves” and takes place this year on 15 June.

No Lèves visit would be complete without a semi al fresco BBQ lunch chez les Fruchard. Lucky are those who get invited!



Thanks again this year to our coach driver Dave from Rover European. Always reliable, calm and good humoured. Thanks for doing a great job



**NEXT YEAR, LEVES WILL VISIT NAILSWORTH**

**WE EXPECT A LARGE GROUP FROM THE LEVES MUSIC SCHOOL SO KEEP 21ST - 24TH MAY 2020 FREE!**

