

## 2023 TWINNING TRIP TO LÈVES : Saturday 27 to Tuesday 30 May

Please see the programme of the weekend. Everything was exactly as described on the tin with the addition of cloudless blue skies and warm sunshine.



**THE MAYOR'S SPEECH OF WELCOME:** Holding up a large poster of King Charles III (1948- ), the Mayor Rémi Martial, asked us to say what the connection was between our monarch and Lèves. We were then shown an equally large picture of Charles III le Simple (879-929), whose army, we were informed, ousted the invading Vikings in 911 in a battle that took place between Chartres and Lèves. Lèves is in fact one league's distance from Chartres and the name Lèves is derived from the Latin leuga (lieu in French). The Vikings (what was left of them as they suffered badly) were sent packing but after negotiations between Charles and Rollon (the Viking leader), the Vikings, or Normans, as they became known, were given the right to establish themselves in a section



of Normandy. So, concluded Rémi Martial, not long after in 1066, William, Duke of Normandy conquered England and the Normans started their long domination over our green and pleasant land.

By this time, I was beginning to panic, wondering when Rémi Martial was going to draw breath and allow me to translate to our English audience, some of whom were intrigued as to what the connection was between the two Charles, Lèves and Nailsworth, and I was wondering what I was going to remember! The link was that French Charles III in 911 created the Norman dynasty in Normandy (via Rollon and the treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte), which led to the Norman dynasty in England, resulting in British King Charles III sitting on the throne today. So, in fact, we owe Lèves the honour of having been the founders of the monarchy in England.

Merci beaucoup Lèves! After some shorter speeches of welcome and thanks from Philippe Vanneau, Steve Robinson, Isobel Hié and Rev'd Caroline Bland, we were invited into the Mairie's sunblest gardens to drink sparkling Vouvray and eat delicious canapés. *Isobel*

### THE NAILSWORTH SILVER BAND

**CONCERT:** As the weather was so beautiful (le soleil était au rendez-vous, as the French expression goes) this took place in the Place de Nailsworth, attended by quite a good number of townsfolk, members and passing onlookers.

There was an important Mass going on in church next door (Profession de Foi) so the band played on until the congregation exited and we were able to unveil the Nailsworth Town Sign, presented as a gift in 2019, our previous



visit (COVID had visited in-between). The sign had been completely cleaned and restored and looked stupendous on the wall next to Place de Nailsworth.

The band played the Marseillaise then God Save the King and pride and mutual friendship were felt by all. What a wonderful Twinning – our hearts swelled.







La Pétanque Lévoise club had invited us to meet at the “boulodrome” in the afternoon to play “pétanque”, commonly known as “boules” chez nous. Lots of teams could play at the same



time so it took some organising – a great time was had by all but I think the English (as they insist on calling us) or more correctly, the British, were seriously defeated by this display of French technical superiority. We were however presented with an “artwork” to thank us for our good-humoured participation but doomed attempts at defeating them in this oh so important national sport.



Having not seen Guy and Anne-Marie since May 2019, we were delighted that they were able to host us with our granddaughter Mollie. We had a lot to catch up on!

Anne-Marie presented us with a surprise dish of Coronation Quiche, which we all agreed was absolutely delicious, contrary to the expectations of most of our British friends! Mollie loved the vegetarian dishes, especially the beautiful starter plate at l'Espace Soutine. Thanks to all who made her so welcome, Twinning weekends are full on but she really rose to the challenge.

We enjoyed lunch with David and Peggy Boyer whilst Thomas played the piano - they have a great view of Chartres Cathedral from their garden! Supper chez

les Cholin's and family was fun as always.

Mollie's top finds were the Bubble Tea shop in Chartres, and a dress from 'Pimkie' (thanks to taxi grandmother Anne-Marie)

After so long it was lovely to see and reminisce with several long term twinners and to meet new ones.

Sue



We thoroughly enjoyed our weekend in Lèves staying with Christophe and Benedicte Chemin. As usual, a lot of time was spent eating and drinking. The photo shows 'Sunday lunchtime chez les Chemin's with guests - Caroline and Martin Bland who were staying with Janine, Claude and Marylene Vedie (members of the Twinning since the very beginning, but who now live in Chartres) and Graham



Inns, who has lived in Léves for many years teaching English. When the original party of eight went over to Lèves to check it out back in 1993, he took us on a tour of the Cathedral. The second photo shows the view from the patio down to the lake. Judith





## MEETING OF THE TWO COMMITTEES

with exchange of news from both towns and decision on dates and organisation for Remembrance Day 2023 in Lèves and next year's visit to Nailsworth (dates and details to be announced). We missed Elisabeth Targett, but Nailsworth was valiantly represented by Judith Haines, Sue Smith, Keith Mansell, Julian Dennis and Isobel Hié, with the 14-strong Lèves Twinning Committee.



This was my fifth visit to Lèves (three times with the full twinning weekend, once to join in the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Lèves and once for the 11th November Remembrance) - I must enjoy it. This time, however, Sharon joined me for the first time, staying with Alain and Maryvonne - not to forget Max as well - he speaks English at almost native level - that does make conversation so much easier as our French is very much to a hotel/restaurant standard. It was her first time back in France for 8 years. Sunday morning, I went to a committee meeting - oh dear! but Sharon was given a personal tour of Chartres cathedral and the town by Alain and Max - it was her first visit and she thought the cathedral was absolutely amazing. Coffee in a café with Alain and Max, then Maryvonne and I joined them for lunch in a 'very French' restaurant in a shady courtyard in the shadow of the cathedral. As one would expect, delicious! Others have mentioned the various communal activities, (so I won't repeat all that) which we joined in with and very much enjoyed. Alain and Maryvonne are the most generous of hosts with wonderful meals and gifts of wine and food to bring home. They also have a full size boules court in their garden and Monday afternoon was spent playing a gentle game of boules in the sunshine. Overall - the generosity of the town of Lèves and our French twinnings was



overwhelming and Sharon and I cannot miss out on highlighting the fabulous BBQ at the Fruchards' on Monday lunchtime - what a beautiful house and garden they have. Nailsworth has a lot to live up to when we welcome Les Français back next year. *Keith and Sharon*

Merci Lèves, merci le Jumelage, merci les amis.

When my hosts invited me to visit an animal rescue centre I was expecting something like a cross between the Battersea Dogs' Home and my local Cats Protection. On arrival at <https://lataniere-zoorefuge.fr> I was astonished to find twenty hectares devoted to rescued animals from all over the world - inc lions, tigers, elephants, bears etc.! I never knew such places existed. Well worth a visit.



Also found the pristine north portal of the cathedral a real knockout. I was told that during cleaning it was discovered that at one time the stonework

had actually been painted. I believe the illuminated version attached indicates the suspected original colouring.

Great weekend. Thanks to everybody but especially Isobel and my hosts Hervé & Marie Pelletier. *Ron*



Rendez-vous in the evening at l'Espace Soutine for a wonderful **CONCERT** performed by the Harmonie Lévoise Vivace. We loved the amusing back and forth (Harry Cook, the conductor translating Paulin Carrière's - head of music school - explanations) and of course the music was lovely, with a pleasant mix of lively pieces and more reflective ones. The Silver Band followed after the interval with another mix of rousing numbers and slower pieces, with solos from Debbie McDougall on the flugelhorn and Ryan Morgan on the trombone. At the end, the two orchestras took the stage together (quite a remarkable feat) and they played a piece written by Harry Cook himself, entitled Gemini - marche du jumelage Lèves-Nailsworth, which had us all clapping.





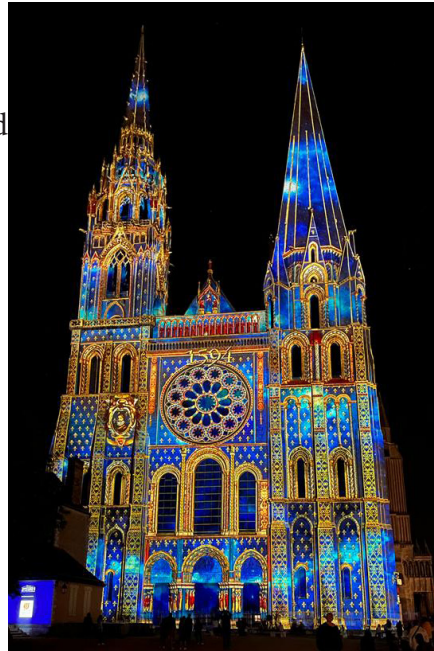
**APIARY AND VINEYARD VISITS:** On Monday, many of us were up bright and early in the glorious sunshine to walk from the cemetery to Lèves' very own apiary. Set up by Hervé Pelletier and his mother Josette, helped by a team of volunteers on a former rifle range and donated by the council some years ago, it produced its first crop of honey this year. We were shown by Hervé and two professional beekeepers, with the help of an educational box of pull-out descriptive boards, the workings of a beehive. In a beautiful wooden chalet, we could see the bees hard at work through transparent screens. We were allowed to stroll through the apiary grounds in their idyllic setting with several beehives, but were not allowed to approach "the mound" as we would have been in danger of being stung.

Then off we all went to visit the Lèves vineyard, also set up on land donated by the

council to the volunteer "association" managed by François Mebs, but on the way, we passed by the fine monument dedicated to the nine resistance fighters rounded up and shot by a Nazi firing squad in 1944.



**THE AFTERNOON** was spent doing various things with our families and some of us enjoyed a sumptuous barbecue hosted by Marie and Michel Fruchard. Other outings included the visit of Chartres by night, shopping sprees and the tour of the château de Maintenon.



**THE FINAL EVENING** was dinner (more of a banquet) in l'Espace Soutine with long tables replacing the concert seating. The Bigband Fairy Feet treated us to a fantastic concert of swing music and the Silver Band was also there to regale us with their fun-filled and sometimes anarchic performance fuelled by bonne humeur and perhaps quite a lot of Bacchus juice. Speeches were made, lots of heartfelt thank yous and two wonderful gifts presented to Nailsworth on behalf of the Mairie and the Jumelage. A brand new town sign (no cleaning required – just somewhere to put it) and a beautiful artwork commissioned from the Gabriel Loire glassworks. We felt so honoured.



Departure day dawned and there were hugs and kisses all round as we said our fond farewells with a "à bientôt" on everyone's lips.