

Quel Merveilleux Séjour Juin 2-6 !

What a super time we had in Meung-sur-Loire at the beginning of June! Almost sixty Twin Towners enjoyed a warm welcome, family hospitality and group events in splendid weather in the beautiful Loire Valley. One third of our party travelled by coach, taking the overnight Hull-Zeebrugge ferry on the outward run and staying over in Compiègne on the way back.

Wednesday

They met up with the two thirds who had travelled independently for a welcoming aperitif in the beautiful garden of Meung's Town Hall. Madame le Maire Pauline Martin expressed her personal delight in seeing so many "Anglais" in 2010, the town's "English Year", the first in a sequence of English, German and Polish years, reflecting Meung's three Twin Towns.



Caves and Animals



Next day, Thursday, was spent with host families in a variety of ways then on Friday English visitors and French hosts joined up for a coach outing westward, past Tours to the vineyards and the rocky river cliffs near Amboise. In deference to the senior citizens of both nationalities, our hosts had arranged two short trips on mini-trains. The first, a tour of the extensive vineyards of Montlouis, was followed by a

descent into the natural "caves", stacked with thousands of bottles of Touraine wines, where we helped ourselves in tasting seven or eight different vintages, dry whites, demi-secs, rosés, sparkling and an impressive pinot-noir red, accompanied by the local delicacy, "rillettes" with crusty bread. Time to buy a few bottles to bring home.

After that it was back on board for the short run to an impressive cave restaurant, carved into the soft limestone cliff-face, where we were treated to a superb three-course lunch, accompanied of course by more Touraine wines.



The afternoon was also something for the younger ones amongst us. A second mini-train took us round an impressive "parc animalier", where deer of various types, emu, ostrich, bison and other species roamed free and came alongside to be fed. After that we could choose between a film show, a cafe or the playground until it was time for home. All-in-all a highly enjoyable and effortless day out, and a contented, sleepy ride back to Meung in good time for dinner with our host families.

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The Official Reception

Saturday morning brought a welcome "grasse matinee" (lie-in), but it was soon time to put on best bib and tucker for the Official Reception at the Salle des Fêtes. Half an hour's friendly conversation in the hot sunshine prepared us for speeches, toasts and exchange of presents in the Foyer before an excellent four-course lunch.

Entertainment during and after the lunch was provided by "Les Baladins de l'Arc en Ciel" a female duo who performed some classic French songs with a sprinkling of Anglo-American numbers. The two girls expressed interest in coming to a future Lymm Festival.

Evening was upon us by the time the "Lunch" ended, so bravo to all those who moved on to an evening session elsewhere.



The Morning After

Meung's Sunday morning market was, as usual, a great attraction to all us visitors, though the hot and sunny weather was breaking and the streets and stalls less crowded than usual. The pedestrianised, floral and beautifully paved streets, criss-crossed by the mill-stream branches of the Mauves flowing down to the Loire, were as pleasant as ever to stroll, and so it was with many a sigh of nostalgia that we boarded the coach or prepared to load up our cars at the end of another unforgettable visit to our French friends.

Vive Lymm! Vive Meung-sur-Loire! Vive le Jumelage!

Peter Birchall, Chairman