

2015 Exchange

This year it was the turn of Lymm residents to host our guests from Meung-Sur-Loire in our homes. The French people arrived on Saturday, 27th April and stayed until the following Wednesday. Fortunately despite the weather being cool the sun generally shone and the rain held off and so all the events we had organised went smoothly.

This year the Cotrill family kindly agreed to us using Lymm Hall for our initial reception. So after picking up our 66 French guests from the airport we served drinks and nibbles at the Hall. This "Hidden Gem of Lymm" proved to be an excellent venue. It allowed almost 150 people not only to meet and talk but to see inside the hall and when the various reception rooms filled up, spill outside and use the whole grounds. Several tours of the "Ice House" and the "Cockpits" were organised by the family.

Sunday was a day for each family to organise something for their guests and Monday was the day of the organised trip. This year we took 128 people to Chester. We were delighted by how well each venue looked after us. The first stop was the cathedral. They organised 4 tours for us, all running at the same time. The tour was a little bit of history but it was mostly about the unusual objects that you would miss if you simply walked round the cathedral yourself. A special thanks to the 4 volunteers from the twin town who translated everything into French for our guests. After that it was a short walk to the 1539 racecourse restaurant and an excellent meal to get us ready for the next event. Finally the Chester Bus & Boat Company picked us up from the racecourse, gave us a guided tour of Chester and dropped us at the boat stage for a trip down the river. As they say, we arrived home tired but happy.

Tuesday was the day when the French children could spend a day in an English school. There were 10 children who took advantage of that and they could be found either in Ravenbank, Cherry Tree or Lymm High. The final event was a farewell dinner dance that night at the Statham Lodge Hotel. This year we were able to book Lucy Barlow to entertain us. You may well have heard her at the recent Lymm Festival music events. Her masterstroke was to distribute the words of "Non, Je ne regrette rien" and invite all of us to sing along with her. It brought the house down.

Wednesday was the day for a lift to the airport and final goodbyes. Next year, 1st – 5th June 2016, we go to France and take advantage of the hospitality of our friends in Meung.

It's a real pleasure for the society not only to receive our guests and entertain them well but also to see other links grow between the two places. The two Rugby Clubs are in touch and may be arranging visits and matches soon. The two Festival committees are also in touch and may be able to exchange ideas and events. On an individual level we have a French Girl (14) for whom we would like to find an English teenager as a penpal. If you are interested then please contact the committee.