

a winning number their cry of "oui" was rewarded with excellent prizes - DVD players, printer, CD players and loads more! After bingo we returned to our B&B hotel.

Saturday 17th September - We made our way to see the preparation for the parade on Sunday where we met Renée who would be our host for the weekend. It was surprising how many flowers there were and how few were used to make a word. For "Radlett" they used about 35 flowers. We went out for lunch with our French hosts and Birte. We headed off to Versailles. It was lovely to look around the Grand Trianon and its gardens. We had dinner with our hosts and the Mayor of Meersburg. We had a selection of delicious dishes and by the end of them all I was rather full. We then went to a magic show, where Katy (my sister) was asked to do a trick with the magician! We all had a great time!

Sunday 18th September - We looked around the music pavilion of Madame du Barry. This was the first time it had been opened to the public following restoration. The queue was huge but as part of the Mayor's party we got in quickly. It will be opened to the public again, every year on this date. All of our French hosts were there. After lunch at the Town Hall we went to try on our dresses. Mine was blue with a blue cape over it. It was 'fun' getting it on because it didn't fit me and I couldn't breathe in it! Our make up was done and we set off to find our coach. We had the pleasure of sitting on flowers! A lot of confetti was thrown over us as well as silly string! It was lovely to see so many people. After a snack at Renée's house, followed by the best fireworks I've seen, we made our way back to our hotel.

It was an enjoyable, pleasant, sociable weekend!

Patricia Hatter

Social

The Progressive Lunch in August was a great success and thanks are due to Jean Whitham, the organiser, and to the many members who hosted the different courses.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel the Wine and Cheese evening on 22nd October due to the unavailability of some of our committee. Being such a small committee, we need a full team to run each function.

We have repeatedly appealed for new members to join the Social Committee, but to no avail! So we are now asking for people who would be willing to commit themselves to just one event (and we do mean "commit") and act as a full Social Committee member on just one occasion. If this plea is unsuccessful, we may have to abandon RAIFA social events altogether, which would be a great pity.

However, we have been able to fix a new date for a Wine and Cheese Lunch on 26th November, details of which you will already have received. The date for the New Year Party remains unchanged for 21st January. But - unless we can find some new (perhaps temporary) committee members, there may not be a New Year Party.

So **please** think seriously about this and contact me, Joan Doughty (855102), or any other committee member **a.s.a.p.** for further information.

Joan Doughty



Radlett and Aldenham International Friendship Association

Newsletter - November 2005

This has been a busy year for RAIFA, particularly the past few months. Our stall at the Radlett Festival attracted much interest but sadly failed to get many more people to become members (I would welcome any new ideas on how to increase our membership please!).

In early September we had a wonderful time in Lautertal during the glorious Indian Summer weather and coinciding with the annual Wine Festival.

Later that month Patricia Hatter took the role of Maid of Honour to the Queen of the annual Fête des Fleurs in Louveciennes.

In October, a group from Radlett and their counterparts from Louveciennes shared a very enjoyable holiday in Lille.

Finally, APEG are holding their Silver Anniversary Dinner on 25th November in Reichenbach, Lautertal. This will mark the 25 years during which APEG has organised twinning in Lautertal. I am pleased that Philip and Hilary Booth and Fred and Jean Whitham will be there to represent us.

Next year our biggest challenge will be hosting a group from Lautertal, although dates have yet to be agreed (one possibility being in June to coincide with the Radlett Festival). Before then we will have our New Year Party in January. I hope to see you all there!

Clive Glover



German Links



Thoughts on the 25th Anniversary visit to Lautertal

On Thursday, 1st September 2005, all 29 of us (including 3 firemen) assembled on time for a coach departure at 8.45a.m. (Ian had threatened that latecomers would be left behind).

Smooth flight to Frankfurt to a great welcome from Helmut Lechner and Walter Koepff and, after a 45 minute coach drive another great welcome at Radlett Platz, Elmshausen, by our hosts and friends – this just the beginning of an action-packed week-end; official reception at the Rathaus; a tour of Heppenheim with its mediæval, half-timbered buildings and decorated lampposts illustrating local ghosts and legends; twinning ceremony in Reichenbach accompanied by the Hunting Hornblowers followed by lunch of gammon and sauerkraut and then wine tasting at the Staatsweingut at Bensheim. A visit to the Geo-Park at the Felsenmeer and then the main local event, the Winzerfest parade in Bensheim with marching bands in period costume and 80 colourful floats. We were told that during the festival 20,000 litres of wine are consumed!

All this, together with meeting old friends and new from Jarnac and Amersham, exchanging news and views, was achieved only by APEG's hard work in organising it. They entertained us royally, even guaranteeing warm sunshine throughout.

Memories are too numerous to list here, but thank you Ian for all your work in organising this end so efficiently. Nobody was lost but at Frankfurt airport during an unattended holdall bomb scare we got separated and for a few minutes Eileen went missing – it was nearly 'Oh Lack-a-Day!'. (sorry Eileen)

Mary Bolt

An International Youth Camp is to be staged in Lautertal from 24th to 30th July 2006. Young people aged 16 to 21 from Radlett are invited, along with their counterparts in Lautertal's other twin town, Jarnac in France, and in Jarnac's twin towns in Scotland and Italy. Details will be circulated shortly to schools and other local youth organisations. Alternatively anyone interested may contact Ian Macdonald direct on 01923 852140 for further information.

Ian Macdonald

French Links



Trip to Lille and Northern France

Most of us know the Flanders region of Northern France - but only from speeding past the autoroute signs for St Omer, Lille, Dunkerque... whilst on our way, well, to somewhere else! Flanders is simply not a place most of us would choose for a holiday. Interestingly, the view from our friends in Louveciennes was pretty much the same - flat, cold and rainy - not the obvious spot for a long weekend away!

Nevertheless, our group of 23 English and French were all pleasantly surprised by the beauty of Lille. There is a mix of boutique shopping to rival Bond Street and stunning architecture as well as the gastronomique delights of the Flemish "estaminets". Local bars and restaurants serve traditional Flemish food and drink in an ambience reminiscent of the most traditional English pub - bar billiards included. We were treated to a taste of local culture at La Piscine, an art gallery including several works by Picasso, housed in a converted swimming pool. We visited the Cristal D'Arque factory and were reminded of the historical importance of Flanders in the Second World War, as launch pad for the V2 rocket at La Coupole. To cap it all we also visited a double windmill - incorporating an upper level for milling grain and a lower level for grinding seeds to make oil. An action packed few days.

Our French hosts led by the redoubtable Renée Lefebvre du Prey and ably assisted by her team of committee members, Jean-Marie Saunier, Guy Thinion, Gerard Dezeque and their partners arranged not only an excellent long weekend but doubled as chauffeurs, translators and all round charming companions.

The organisation at this end was also impeccable, thanks to the efforts of Paul Marley and Dick Bolt. We travelled in style by Eurostar with a minibus to and from Waterloo.

Miranda Quinney

Diary of a Maid of Honour at the Fête des Fleurs 2005

Friday 16th September - We arrived in Louveciennes at 7.30 p.m. and were greeted by Jean-Marie Saunier. We had a delicious dinner at his house with his wife Annick and their son Cyril. We then made our way to the Town Hall for a game of bingo. I met the French 'Queen', Lara (aged 14) and the German Maid of Honour, Birte (aged 17). We were given the task of picking the numbers and calling them out. When someone had