

# VILLAGE NEWS

## TATSFIELD-VERN D'ANJOU EASTER WEEKEND 2011



On Good Friday, 41 good friends along with some first timers from our French twin town of Vern d'Anjou arrived at the Village Hall, having left the Loire Valley at 11pm the night before! Following introductions to their hosts the tired guests retired for a relaxing afternoon in Tatsfield's glorious Easter sunshine. Many opted to wander up to the bluebell woods on Chestnut Avenue and around the golf course. Following an evening meal when hosts attempted to recall their French language assisted with much gesticulation, they hit the sack for some much needed sleep.



Blazing sunshine complemented the choice to visit Brighton and we were fortunate to avoid the traffic too. Having picked up Francoise our French interpreter in Hove, our guests were able to appreciate the Regency style and history of Brighton. The tour took us past many of the attractions including the Royal Pavilion, the Marina and along as far as the charming village of Rottingdean with Kipling's Gardens before returning along the South Downs and across the racecourse. The tour continued on foot through Brighton's Lanes and North Laine before returning to the beach for a picnic lunch and paddle. The afternoon allowed them some free time to explore the pier and shops.

The Old Ship hosted the evening disco with karaoke along with hearty English fayre. The warm evening allowed us to spill into the pub garden whilst the karaoke enabled both English and French to exercise the vocal chords.

On Easter Sunday morning our visitors were treated to a tour of the new school by Sue White and were charmed by the delightful videos of children practising their French. They were also impressed with the quality of the facilities and the level of technology available which they said was far ahead of that available in France. At midday everyone gathered for the traditional official reception, which was opened by the Tatsfield Singers performing a French folk song and a powerful African song. There was the usual exchange of speeches from the respective Chairmen of the Twinning Associations, and Jon Allbutt and Yannick Maussion on behalf of the Parish Councils. Herve Forveille presented Tatsfield with a slate plaque to commemorate the achievement



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in 2010 of two cyclists, Ian and Fermin, who cycled the 471 km to Vern in aid of Help for Heroes. This was a lovely touch especially as we had visited a slate mine the year before.

There followed the official opening of the new boules pitch where we succumbed to the French skill but only at the last end.



A lovely relaxing afternoon followed and although the BBQ was slightly hampered by a snow storm of seeds blowing from a nearby tree, all had a wonderful time. The French had taken our football challenge seriously, turning up in full kit leaving us looking rather amateur and this played out on the field with the French beating us 3-0. Nonetheless everyone enjoyed the game and appreciated the support from the spectators. It was lovely that other families from the village were able to join us. Putting our two defeats behind us we made a come-back with Tug-of-War, where teams of men, women and children all soundly beat the French. The afternoon was finished off by rounders ahead of an evening at the Botley Hill Farmhouse, where we were treated to Roast Beef and Sticky Toffee pudding. Local rock band Randy and the Rockets had us all up dancing and singing the night away under the marquee.



On Monday morning (with a few ears ringing) the coach collected a French guide at Tower Hill in central London and travelled through the East End of London for a tour around the new Olympic Village at Stratford. The French were provided with lots of information on the history of the area and the fascinating details behind the inception and construction of the site for next year's Olympics. The coach then stopped off at Bluewater, where they were able to picnic in the sunshine alongside the lake before heading inside for some retail therapy.

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Everyone gathered in the village for the final night's Barn Dance, where despite a bi-lingual caller, mayhem ensued creating much hilarity. There were some impromptu speeches to round off the weekend and we were set an unusual challenge by the French: which village can knit the longest scarf? It has to be 20cm wide and will be taken with us to Vern next year where there will be a grand measuring ceremony! **We would like to appeal to anyone in the village who can knit in order for us to succeed in this challenge.** We are happy to collect any contributions over the next year which will be sewn together. Each month we will be displaying a totaliser in the village and will award a bottle of wine to the person contributing the longest section of scarf that month. Let's not leave it to the last minute so get knitting and don't forget the only criteria is that it has to be 20cm wide!



We were spoilt rotten with the superb spring weather which enabled all the outdoor events to be such a success. Sincere thanks for treating the French to a memorable weekend in Tatsfield goes to all the hosts who welcomed guests into their homes and to the hard work of the Tatsfield-Vern Association committee. The success of the weekend will serve to strengthen friendships between our villages and will help to ensure that this 36-year long Twinning tradition continues to thrive. We will be taking a coach load to Vern next Easter, so if you would like to come, please call Pete or Rosie Fuller (573554) or email [peter.fuller@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:peter.fuller@tiscali.co.uk).

**Peter Fuller, Chairman**

PS You can see more photos of the twinning weekend by visiting this site  
<http://s1104.photobucket.com/albums/h322/doubleblind/>