

Friends of Chaville: Report from the Chair 2014-15

Once again Friends of Chaville have enjoyed a busy and enjoyable year with many events to mention.

Recently we have held more social events during the year particularly for those members who are not necessarily able to be involved with the exchange weekends. In this spirit, we had a well-attended and convivial meal at Alfresco in Whetstone in May and a picnic in Trent Park in June. Unfortunately the latter event fell on an exceedingly rainy day but nevertheless a brave few enjoyed a walk and a hot drink at the cafe afterwards. Petanque games are a regular feature throughout the year, designed to give our enthusiastic players the opportunity to hone their skills for the annual match with Chaville during the exchange weekends.

The autumn of 2014 was a busy time. The last weekend of September, Chaville celebrated 40 years of its twinning with Alsfeld. A large German contingent came to Chaville by coach and Irene and Wilf Nichols were also invited to participate as representatives of the Barnet-Chaville twinning as were two from Italy for their twinning. A lavish programme was laid on - feasts, cultural events and a grand coach tour of the environs. In the new reconstructed centre of Chaville Les Marches d'Alsfeld were dedicated. These lead up to the Rue de Barnet, also within the new area.

In October, Brigitte de Palma and Marie-Jo again brought a group of 10-12 year olds who were hosted here in Barnet. They had a very full programme, the main sights of London including the Olympic Park and a Lego exhibition called 'The Art of the Brick' which aptly enough took place in Brick Lane. Some time was spent locally at Barnet Museum and shopping, but the most popular event - at least amongst the boys - was a visit to the Bentley and other luxury cars showroom, where they were each given a huge, plush catalogue.

In November, an official delegation consisting of Mayor Hugh Rayner, his wife Sue, Cllr John Hart and veteran Fred Harris attended the laying of a wreath from Barnet commemorating 100 years since the outbreak of World War One. A number of other Friends of Chaville members attended and enjoyed hospitality from our Amis de Barnet.

In November there was also a popular evening at the French restaurant Chez Ton Ton in New Barnet.

After a winter lull we all snapped back into action for our annual quiz. It was our best and most successful ever with the hall full to bursting.

Of course then in April came the exchange weekend to Chaville. Our friends there had organised a busy and very interesting programme - a guided tour of les passages de Paris, a visit to the Book Club run by Marie Alice, a trip to Chateaubriand's chateau and the Vallee des Loups, an excellent jazz evening, petanque, and delightful meals with our hosts and also at the restaurant La Douce France in Viroflay and Bouillon Chartier in Paris.

Notably, the petanque attracted a lot of the children who had come over in October and their families, which was wonderful to see. We would very much like to have more young people and families involved on our side of the Channel. We do our best to encourage school links where possible and are always keen to have new members. If you haven't done so yet, give us a try - you will be very welcome.

Irene Nichols, June 2015