

# Bourne End (Bucks) Twinning Association Newsletter – May 2006 – No. 16



Group photo taken on the arrival of our Octeville sur Mer visitors and their hosts

## Octeville sur Mer Twinning Visit

It was a wet and cloudy day as the waiting hosts huddled beneath umbrellas or dripped in the foyer of the Community Centre waiting for the coach from Octeville sur Mer to arrive on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May. There was some anxiety as the expected arrival time passed, but a ring on the mobile phone signalling that our guests were on the Marlow by-pass cleared this from our heads and the excitement grew. Then the coach arrived, the hosts came to meet it and the passengers streamed out. Soon it seemed the whole car park was filled with people meeting and embracing. There was just time to take a group photo before the car park cleared. The Official Twinning visit by Octeville sur Mer to Bourne End had begun.

Saturday evening a Soiree was held in the Wye Valley School hall. When setting up the hall it was discovered that there were only 18 tables available which, as we had planned for 6 people per table, was luckily almost exactly right for the 109 people present. As people arrived Bucks Fizz (the nearest we could come to a local drink) was served and then it was time

for the speeches by the Association's Chairman, the CJO President and Dominic Grieve MP. A 3 course dinner was served and this was followed by a barn dance with the live band Jubilation. In spite of the fact that our visitors had had a very early start that morning the large hall was completely filled for every dance right until the end.

On Sunday most of our visitors and a few hosts, took their coach to Oxford. A number of our French visitors had been told of the Red Kites and wanted to see these, and being a dull cloudy day, these birds were not initially to be seen until the last part of the journey. In Oxford, some went shopping while others went sightseeing. During the afternoon a guided walk had been organised which included a visit to New College (founded in 1379) where among other things they saw the splendid chapel and in the gardens part of the old city wall.

In the evening a number of barbeques had been arranged for hosts and guests at the homes of committee members. In typical English fashion, the first cooked food was just coming off the barbeque as it started to rain and our

chef for the night soon found himself alone tending the barbeque with one hand while holding an umbrella with the other. All the hosts had brought food and drink and there was plenty for everyone. Maybe it was the wine and beer, but soon everyone was singing songs we all knew, then a French one, then an English one, great fun, going on late into the night.

It was raining Monday morning as the time approached for our guests to leave. Arrangements had been made to use the small hall at the Community Centre so that guests that were staying with hosts that had to work could be picked up early and have somewhere to wait. However because of the rain the hall provided a dry place for everyone to say goodbye which was appreciated by all. Our friends climbed aboard their coach and waved furiously as the coach departed on its way to Portsmouth and later that evening to their ferry home.

Counting the smiles and laughter of our guests and of the hosts the weekend was a great success. We all have memories we shall cherish and that we can share with our friends when we next meet.

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