

Special Feature

My French Experience

Looking for something to fill the long winter evenings I joined a pottery class. I did manage to make an impressive array of pots, jugs and ornaments, only to have bits fall off in the kiln. I decided to look for something less artistic to keep my brain active.



Monet's Water Lilies at Giverny

to notice! They did not speak any English, so with the aid of my dictionary, my French improved rapidly.

Giverny

They took me to many beautiful places but

the highlight was a visit to Giverny to see the house and gardens of Claude Monet. The flowers were beautiful, the colours and perfumes magnificent. I was speechless as I stood on the Lily Bridge; the view was so breath-taking. I was also lucky enough to attend the village party to celebrate Mothers' Day, where I was given a bouquet. I even attended the village dance!

Twinning with France

I settled on French Conversation, never having learnt another language before. This has been much more successful. I soon realised that I needed to talk with 'real' French people so I joined the Chipping Norton and District Town Twinning Association. They are twinned with Magny en Vixen, a town 40km from Paris. I was welcomed into the group and have enjoyed many social evenings and trips. One never to be forgotten event was the Highland Games, where Dr. Bruce Parker and I made a formidable croquet pair.

Parlez Vous Francais?

We travelled together by coach to Magny, where I stayed with a lovely family in the nearby village of Arthies. I had a moment of panic as my hosts took me away from my English group, but they were so friendly that I soon settled in. They live in a large, rambling house that is falling down around them, but they appeared not to be worried or even

Come and make new friends

On reflection I cannot believe I found the courage to set off alone like that, but I am so glad that I was brave enough. I have made so many new friends, not only in 'Chippy' and its surrounding villages but also in France. I write to and phone my new French friends regularly and am looking forward to welcoming them to Milton-under-Wychwood in the spring.

If you would like to join the Twinning Association, ring me on: 01993 831493, or Keith Clandfield, our president, on: 01608 642327. You can join in as much or as little as you choose; there is no pressure. It's not even necessary to speak French, so why not come and join us?

Margaret Hepden