



Hartley Wintney Twinning

youth!

Malle youth visit Hartley Wintney!

Over the weekend 11-14th April the Hartley Wintney Twinning Youth were extremely happy to welcome to our village a group of 25 children and young leaders from the KLJ (a youth organisation based in our twinned town of Malle, Belgium).

Along with a few adults from both twinning organisations, our party of 60 all stayed at the excellent Gordon Brown Centre near Rotherwick where we spent Friday evening breaking the ice by playing group games on the fields behind the centre.

On Saturday we travelled to London by coach, starting in Greenwich at the Meridian Line. As we entered Greenwich Park work was well under way preparing for the London Marathon and we were amazed by the number of portaloos being installed as we drove through the start line – “all this for us?” I heard some of the children say!!

From Greenwich we caught a Clipper river taxi to central London, the highlight of which was passing under Tower Bridge. After disembarking at Waterloo we surprised all of the children (and leaders) by announcing we had purchased tickets to travel on the London Eye, which was a great success.

From the London Eye we walked to Westminster, along Whitehall to Trafalgar Square and then down The Mall – which looked fantastic decorated ready for the marathon – to Buckingham Palace. Unfortunately the Queen wasn't in to offer us tea and sandwiches so we had to catch the coach home!



When we got back to the centre, a group of volunteer parents had been busily preparing a BBQ which certainly went down a treat. This was followed by our very own disco party night with everything from limbo dancing to pass-the-parcel!

Sunday morning was time to come and explore the village with a treasure hunt organised by our young leaders, followed by lunch and games on the cricket green.



In the afternoon we went back to the Gordon Brown Centre where all the children enjoyed activities run by the centre staff. It was great to see everybody from both Hartley Wintney and Malle interacting so well despite the language differences. In the evening we had traditional fish and chips delivered to the centre – I am not sure what the Belgium children thought of “real” chips!

We spent our final morning enjoying breakfast in the garden of The Waggon and Horses. Then around 10am many of the children swapped contact details before it was time to wave our guests goodbye – let’s hope they all stay in touch.

When we asked for feedback later in the week, the main comments were “when can we do it again” and “can it be longer next time” – praise indeed!

This trip would not have been possible without the support of many local people and organisations. We would like to thank; the Malle Twinning Association and KLJ parents, staff of the Gordon Brown Centre, all our parents who helped with logistics, Hartley Wintney Parish Council, Hart Youth Partnership Events (HYPE), Hartley’s fish and chip shop, Hartley Wintney Traditional Butchers, Niall and Linda from the Waggon and Horses, Hartley Wintney Cricket Club, DJ Mac, The Viceroy, A.W. Porter & Son, Warings, Triple fff Brewery, and everybody else who supported us and said hello around the village.

Thank you from all the Hartley Wintney Twinning Youth children and young leaders; Tom, Vicky, Owen, Maddy, Chris, Caroline, Hannah, Ellie, Sam, Oliver, Isla, Ollie, George, Ben, Katie, Lucy, Emma, Jessica, Daniel, Aidan, Kitty, Spencer and JP

... and us old timers; Warren, Andrew, Louise, Fiona and Steve.