



ISSUE 10, SPRING 2019

WELCOME TO SPRING

Having emerged from the winter months without onslaughts from beasts from the East or other compass points, it's a good moment to reflect on a positive start to the MBTA year and to share plans for the summer months. It has been quite an eventful year already!

GBBO "MARK III"

Our third *Great Bagnères Bake-Off* evening was once more a great success. This year's theme being a Gâteau St. Valentin, it was only to be expected that chocolate and other sumptuous ingredients would find their way to the judges' table. Without exception all the cakes were delicious, making life unbearable difficult for the judges (!) and interpretations of the theme were very creative.

In the end the winning cake was, by a chocolate whisker, one made by **Sally Fallon**, who incorporated a chocolate arrow through her heart-shaped cake.



QUIZ NIGHT

Just over 40 eager quizzers joined us in March to pit their wits against each other over tricky sets of questions devised by quiz supremo **Kate Moore**. On this occasion we were delighted to welcome two tables of quiz enthusiasts from Malvern Rugby Club and to be supported on the bar by **Neil Preece**, one of the organisers of their April visit to Bagnères. We donated the proceeds of the evening towards this project and presented the cheque on the home ground of Bagnères Rugby Club just a couple of weeks ago.

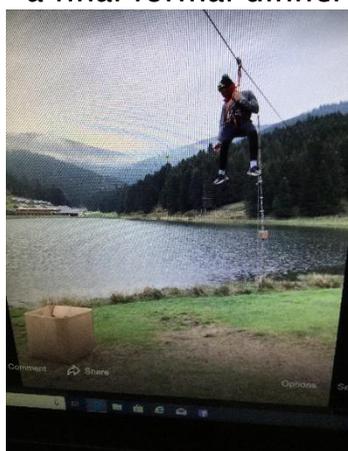
MALVERN GOES TO BAGNERES!



VISIT OF MALVERN RFC U15s RUGBY TEAM AND SUPPORTERS TO BAGNERES

Where to begin in summarising this wonderful trip? More than two years in the planning, it really was a major expedition – a group of 48 (23 players, plus coaches, family members and me) being welcomed to Bagnères and enjoying extraordinary hospitality offered by the town's Mayor, twinning committee and local visitor venues. An official Town Hall reception

with lunch-time buffet, a BBQ hosted by the Stade Bagnérais Rugby Club and a final formal dinner at the town's Casino were just some of the highlights of the programme.



A morning of competitive adventure activities organised at the stunning Lac de Payolle (mountain bike racing, zip-wire



crossing of the lake, laser-guided target-practice)

would probably count as the boys' favourite along with a visit to the superb Aquensis spa.

Two games (described in the local press as 'musclé'! – a splendid euphemism) were played against local teams, who triumphed on both

occasions but there were good moments for the Malvern lads to remember too. On the return trip to Toulouse airport, we stopped off to see a closely fought rugby match of the French national league.

An extract from the report written by **Sian Groves** (one of the accompanying parents) is worth quoting here to convey the atmosphere of the trip. *“The final night in Bagnères summed up the spirit of the trip fantastically. A gala dinner was held for the Malvern contingent at the Casino..... It was remarkable how well everyone scrubbed up! Glamorous dresses and smart suits matched the setting and there was an effervescent feel to the whole night. As one parent said, “We have been treated like royalty.” The boys looked elegant and composed as they stood and listened enthusiastically to the many speeches The Mayor was in attendance and actually remarked in his speech that he would love the group to return again!”*

(Left picture shows Bagnères Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Shaun Robinson, one of the trip organisers, deep in conversation)



Without any doubt this was the most memorable and rewarding twinning enterprise so far, particularly so as it involved a wide range of fellow Malvernians of different



age-ranges. For many boys this offered totally new life-experiences beyond rugby and for the adults this was an opportunity to enjoy first-hand the joys of being so closely associated with generous twinning hosts. We very much hope that this will spawn wider interest in our activities throughout the town and engender support and enthusiasm for our future activities, which will most certainly include a return visit from our rugby contacts in Bagnères. Come and join us!

“SUMER IS ICUMIN IN! “

... so why not come along again to one of our two planned **‘Boules + bistro’** (i.e. Morgan pub) fun sessions to be held during the long, lazy evenings of summer. We shall once more benefit from the expert guidance of Friends member **Peter Tooke** – we really should be better at this game by now!

Further details will be sent out by Denise later on but here are the dates for your diaries: **Friday, 12th July** (the closest date to La Fête Nationale) and **Friday, 2nd August**. We have space for 12 people on each evening and there will be a small charge to participate.

Now how about croquet? Another Friend (**Ken Potts**) is a demon member of Norton Croquet Club and he tells me it might be possible to organise for MBTA members a session of instruction by club players, followed by an informal 'match' sometime during the coming summer months. Again this would involve a charge, probably around £5 p.p. and we are looking into how we could incorporate a lunch (probably BYO) into the occasion and thereby create an enjoyable social occasion too.

PLEASE LET EITHER DENISE OR ME KNOW IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THIS IDEA FURTHER. Obviously we would need firm expressions of interest if we were to carry the idea forward.

PLANNING AHEAD

The recent trip to Bagnères has set off initial ideas in many people's heads on how we can offer a reciprocal visit to those dozens of people who offered us such a five-star welcome this Easter. It seems likely that a rugby flavour would be in the mix for at least one future visit but, (given the length of planning time required for such an undertaking) this would probably not be within the next year).

But we on the MBTA Committee would also like to extend a general invitation to our French friends to visit us sometime next summer – we are suggesting the end of May or during June, 2020. We are hoping that you, our loyal supporters and Francophiles, may wish to help us organise this. If you think you may have time and/or practical help to offer in anticipation of a visit we would be so pleased to have you join us. It might be willingness to offer accommodation or to help with transport or to plan visits – or whatever ideas spring to mind. As MBTA grows, there is inevitably more work to be done to make things happen! We hope to hear from you at any time.

For now, enjoy the summer and here's to boules and croquet!

Gina Butler, Chair