

by Lorcan Duignan

ON the 25th of September, 27 students (including myself) and 9 adults visited Locquirec in Brittany, the twin town of Drumshanbo.

At 3:00 in the morning I got a coach by the Mayflower car-park in Drumshanbo to Dublin Airport, there we got a plane to Southampton Airport. The view from the plane was brilliant with all the colourful meadows and the picturesque Irish Sea.

When we arrived at Southampton, we weren't there too long before we had to board the plane to Brest. The view from that plane was extraordinary too, the coast of Brittany was very impressive. Once we arrived in Brest, we got our luggage and then we went to a cafe in the airport and got something to eat.

Some of the French families we were staying with arrived at the airport and some French teachers too. After everyone had something to eat/drink, we left the airport and got on a coach to the college in Lanmeur.

We waited at the college for a half an hour, before the French children had a break and when we met our pen-pals. Delphine, the English teacher at the school, gathered all the French pen-pals and introduced them to us.

I met my pen-pal, Pierre Le Dorner and not too long after we went to his house. His house is very nice, with lots of brand new furniture. Pierre also had a German girl staying at his house with the name Jules, she was very friendly and she spoke very good English. I got on well with Pierre almost immediately and his family were very nice too.

His mother Isabelle is a Spanish teacher at the college and she spoke relatively good English. Pierre's father, who's name I believe to be Leon, was very funny, but I didn't see that much of him. Pierre also has a little sister called Lilou, who is ten years old, she likes listening to American pop music and playing the piano.

There were also three dogs living in the house too, two big brown dogs, one is called Edgar and I didn't find out the name of the other dog, the third dog, a small fluffy white one with the name Linnet was very playful and she often urged me to play fetch with her.

On the first full day of the trip, we went to the hall and learnt how to sing a traditional French song. When we went back to the house, Pierre, Jules and I watched the Simpson's movie in French subtitles in the living room and then we had a delicious dinner and then we went to bed.

On the second full day, we took a coach to Morlaix (a large town near Lanmeur) in the morning to go shopping. Morlaix is a really nice town with a beautiful town hall and a tremendous viaduct that towers over the town. I bought postcards and other souvenirs and I looked around an Irish shop with all sorts of Irish products in it.

In the afternoon, we returned to the college in Lanmeur and we went home with the French

pen-pals and had dinner. Then at night Pierre, Jules and I went to a Farewell Party for the Germans leaving the day after next.

The next day we went to the community hall and participated in Breton folk dancing. That night Pierre, Jules and I talked about the differences between France, Germany and the Republic of Ireland (and also Wales).

I also explained to them that Ireland also has a native language and that children in school learn Irish as well as French or Spanish. Jules went back to Germany the following day.

On the Friday, we went sailing to Locquirec Harbour, and I was paired with Lisa, Nicole and Ella and we all had to control a sailing boat. The wind was fierce and Lisa, Ella, Nicole and I got stranded in-between lots of small boats and the wind forced our sailing boat to collide into them! But we were all okay, and it was certainly a great experience that I will never forget!

Then in the afternoon we went to the Locquirec town-hall and had a drink and all the adults chatted amongst each other. Whilst that was going on Ella, Nicole and I walked down to the beach and I remember the moon being extra bright and the sea reflecting it.

Then at night, we went to a banquet in Plouegat-Guerand, where we had a meal and listened to traditional music. After the banquet, I was very tired and I went straight to bed.

On the Saturday, I slept in until ten o'clock and then Pierre and I got a coach to Morlaix. Matthew, Nicole, Caoimhe, Ciara, Rachel, Mark, Fergal, Tara and Lisa came with their pen-pals also.

The day was good, we went shopping, we watched a group of Thai street-dancers and we watched Tara's pen-pal play basketball in a Sports Centre.

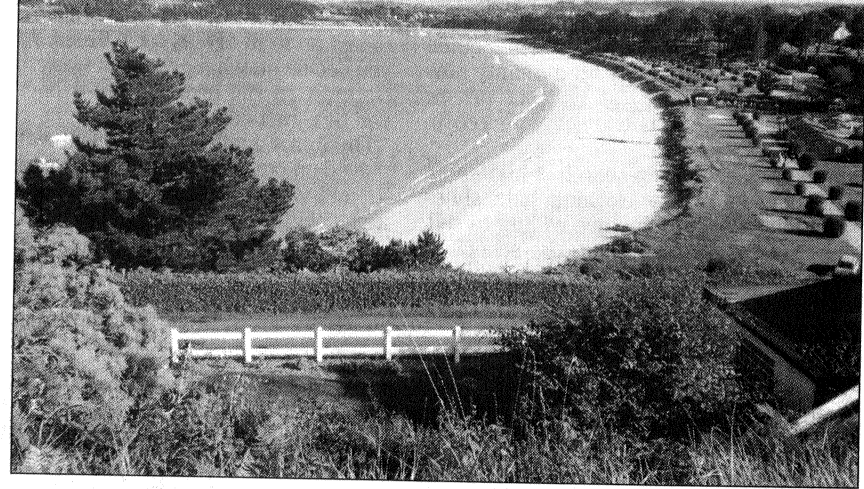
On the Sunday, we travelled to the port of Diben in Locquirec at 3 p.m. to get a boat to the important historical castle-island of Chateau du Taurau (Bull Island) and we had a tour around it.

On the last day, we were educated about the local environment and we visited Base du Douron. We then had a picnic in Locquirec, Pierre's mother gave me a lot of nice food to eat.

Then at night there was the Irish Farewell Party in the college in Lanmeur. There was lots of nice food to eat at it and I had a great time and because of the French people's great hospitality and kindness. I am very grateful. I would like it if Pierre could come stay with me in May 2013.



Students from Drumshanbo Vocational School who enjoyed a visit to Drumshanbo's twin town of Locquirec in Brittany, France.



The scenic beach and harbour in Locquirec where the students enjoyed sailing during their visit.

Questions & Answers

Interview with Betty McManus from the Drumshanbo Town Twinning Committee and Francis La Scour from Locquirec Town Twinning Committee.

*by Mark McMahon, Rhys Morse, Lisa Wynne and Sean Prior in Locquirec.
(2nd year students in the Vocational School in Drumshanbo)*

Drumshanbo is twinned with with French town of Locquirec in the North West of France, 1,000 km. south of Drumshanbo. Locquirec is located in the Brittany region of France, the closest airport is in Brest (63 km).

Locquirec is a pretty port and fishing village, with cafes and sandy beaches. The twinning has been going on for the past fifteen years.

The Drumshanbo Town Twinning Committee is presently made up of Chairman: Sean Nolan, Secretary: Betty McManus, Treasurer: Sheila Mooney and Mary Logan.

How did it all start?

It started in 1997, Francis Le Scour travelled to Ireland with the idea of town twinning and the first place that was of interest was Kilbeggan.

Francis continues the story: "I met with a group of people there and we went to the Distillery to meet with the management and staff. Kilbeggan is near a busy motorway going to Dublin so I decided to go to visit Drumshanbo, a town with the same population as Locquirec."

"I first visited Paddy Macs on the High Street in Drumshanbo in 1997 and met

with Betty McManus and her husband Paddy. It was an easy choice: Drumshanbo was the place that we would choose as our town twin."

What are the functions of the Committee?

To promote and develop contact between Drumshanbo town twinning committee and Locquirec town twinning committee.

When was the first visit by students and committee members to Drumshanbo?

They first came in 1998 and most recently in 2010 with several group visits in between.

What are the plans for the future?

To promote future exchanges with the French coming in April, 2013 and to keep exchanging and developing language skills between students. Teachers exchange and develop contacts and to understand different cultures and common heritage.

Thank you to the Committee for taking the time in answering the above questions and on behalf of all the students a sincere thank you for making it all possible.

Who are the members of Locquirec Town Twinning Committee?

Francis Le Scour, Yves Paris, Gwenole Guyomarc'h, The Mayor of Locquirec and John St. Paul.

Where else do you go on holidays?

Francis said, "I go to Drumshanbo as often as I can, sometimes on cycling tours with the committee members and that is the only place that I want to go", which is a lovely sentiment."