



The Friends of Marcq-en-Baroeul
Ealing's official French town-twinning organisation

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NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2025

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Thirteen runners, including Christian, came over for the Ealing Half Marathon at the end of September and were hosted by some FOM members and other Ealing runners. They loved it and have already booked for next year! With an allowance from the committee, the organisers provided a Saturday evening "pasta-party" and a post-race Sunday lunch for 25 people held at Belinda's house.

Katherine Keenleyside



Wine Tasting, Thursday 2nd October

It's *Les Vendages* season in France, but for our members it was time for a *degustation* of French organic wines. The tasting was held at the Ealing Wine Co in Northfields Avenue and the seven wines

(one fortified) were chosen by Chris of Vintage Roots and Nick the proprietor of Ealing Wine. It was an eclectic range varying from a Crémant from Alsace to a Pineau de Charente. Chris emphasised the

pairing of wines and food. His most interesting connection was his recommendation of drinking orange wines (the one we tasted was "Arrogant Frog Orange") with curries.



The wines were accompanied by a delicious cheeseboard provided by Frank's Deli. On a show of hands our favourite tipple was the Pineau de Charente. The white pineau is normally served neat but can also be served up as a delicious aperitif "pineau tonic" which, as the name suggests, is a mixture of pineau and tonic water. All in all, it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening and as *la cerise sur le gâteau* we are optimistic that we have recruited some new members. **Derek French**

Walking Weekend, 10th - 12th October

Coast, cliffs and a casino, this October's Walking Weekend in France had them all. We were based in Le Tréport, which nestles along the Channel shoreline,



just beyond the Somme basin and a short hop from Dieppe. For most of our short time there – and even in the casino – we were in sight of the sea. We scaled the cliffs on our first morning – the heroes among us via the steps, others in the free and futuristic funicular – and then made our way along the top of them towards Crielsur-Mer for a hearty déjeuner. That, along with the maritime views and

bilingual chatter, helped to provide the energy needed to complete the walk home.

We were staying in the charming Hotel de Calais, a former posting inn which had also welcomed Victor Hugo in the 19th century and liberating troops in the 20th. Rearing up behind it is the huge 16th century church of St Jacques, in front is the Quai François with its fish and seafood eateries and the long beach. A short walk away is the casino where you can play fruit machines, blackjack and English roulette but where les Amis d'Ealing et Marcq took advantage only of the bar and restaurant for another convivial meal.

Sunday morning's walk was to Mers-les-Bains, one of the first seaside resorts in France. It has retained all its 19th century style, with belle-époque and Art Nouveau villas lining the beach front esplanade, bought originally by wealthy Parisians, damaged during the war and now mostly back to their former glory. This little town



also boasts beautiful white cliffs at the top of which is a statue of Notre-Dame-de-la-Falaise, a beacon for the fishermen at sea and a shrine for mothers of soldiers. Some intrepid members of the group made it up there to enjoy the spectacular view. Others were content to enjoy the pleasures of the promenade, the stunning houses, the little craft stalls and the activities on the beach itself, including “longe-côte”, the French aquatic sport where people walk through waist to chest deep sea water to get low impact-exercise.

To be able to share all these sights and experiences with old and new French friends, to catch up with their news and views and to perhaps practise our French a little, all made for a stimulating and very pleasurable weekend. We are extremely grateful to Edith Duthoy for organising it and to her and Rudolf Standaert for looking after us so well – and for not losing any of us. **Frances King**