

The 60's Bunch in Paris 2009

Sunday 19th April

For me it was up and away to meet Sandra Leeks, Graham Smith, Eileen Pearson, Alan Bridges and Steve Human at Ipswich train station by 8.00a.m. At Billericay we were joined by Marion Rix. and at St Pancras by Susanne Milligan and Alistair Taylor. Eurostar left on time at 12noon. We enjoyed a picnic lunch on board with wine supplemented by Alan's Tuckshop. Just 2 hours 15 minutes later the train arrived in Paris.

A short trip on the Metro to surface at Blanche only to head in the wrong direction and into the red-light district! Steve and Marion soon had us turning round and heading to the hotel. Ibis. Rooms all fine and overlooked the Montmartre cemetery. Once unpacked we went for a stroll into the cemetery which didn't last long as it soon closed. A short walk around the corner we found a nice bar and after a couple of drinks went round another corner to the Montmartre restaurant for an excellent meal chosen from a beautifully illustrated menu.



The atmosphere in the restaurant was quiet but didn't stay quiet for long!

Monday 20th April

After breakfast, which was very good, we caught the Metro down to the Concorde. The weather was bright and sunny. We strolled beside the Seine to Trocadero and then over to the Eiffel Tower where there were very long queues of visitors waiting to go up the Tower. We decided to give the queuing a miss and have a cup of coffee instead.



Next call was Invalides where Napoleon's coffin can be seen. The building itself is well worth a visit. The army museum must be second to none as regards the armoury and early guns on show.

From there we split up a bit and three of us headed off to the Arc de Triomphe while others went to the art museums. Over 250 steps to the top of the Arc but great views from the top.



A busy day and we all met up again at a bar close to the hotel for sundowners. We tried supper in the hotel but that was rather disappointing. For dessert we went outside and tried the crepes – rather More-ish! It was dark so we went back to the Eiffel Tower and were at the top very quickly. Fantastic views of Paris.

Tuesday 21st April

Another excellent breakfast after which we all went down to Notre Dame. Alan and I went off to look at the Pantheon – an impressive building. The Latin Quarter area was less crowded and it was very pleasant strolling around the market and streets. We eventually ended up in the Luxembourg gardens for a break and rest and watch the world go by.



We then ventured down to the Sorbonne after visiting an exceptional patisserie to buy and try macaroons.

From the Sorbonne we went to Austerlitz. Here you can find the natural history museum and another well laid out garden in which we sat and enjoyed lunch while watching the many joggers and walkers go by.



It was a short stroll to catch the Batobus which is the boat taxi that ploughs its way up and down the Seine. A very relaxing way to see some of the sights like the Louvre. The other boys joined us at Champs Elysee and we cruised round to Notre Dame from where we dropped into The Bombardier– an English pub!



We found our way back to the bar close to the hotel where the girls were enjoying a glass or two. For supper we went into another excellent restaurant which I could visit every night! Tiramisu and crème brulee amongst the best I have ever had.

Wednesday 22nd April

Another large breakfast to see us through the day and then off through the streets of Montmartre to the Basilique du Sacré-Cœur. There were quite a few steps on the way but the climb was well worth it. A candle was lit for Leo and 'Leggy.' Just around the corner is Le Calvaire where street artists work, many doing portraits. More coffee, more street strolling, a final beer and it was time to catch the Eurostar home.



As usual these 'weekends' finish far too soon. But as usual they are full of fun and laughter and make special memories. Now looking forward to the 60th Birthday Get-together on September 11th-13th at the Wensum Valley Hotel in Norfolk.

Philip Wade