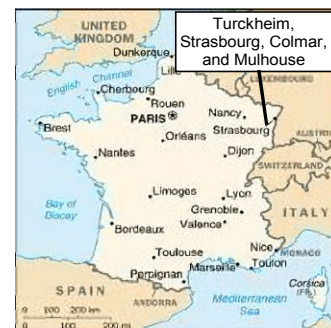


A visit to alsace - Sept-Oct 2008

For the past several years, the members of the Winchester Jumelage and the St. Germain-en-Laye Jumelage have participated in a joint adventure – alternating between France and the USA. This year it was Winchester's turn to journey to France and the venue for this trip was Alsace.

At the risk of assuming a certain lack of appreciation for geography, we open up this newsletter for the readers [not of course for the travelers] with a quick look at “where is Alsace”. It is the most north-eastern region of France – divided into two departments Haut Rhin [upper Rhine in the south with Colmar as its capital] and Bas Rhin [lower Rhine, in the north with Strasbourg as its capital]. It has both suffered and benefited from a shift in nationality – most recently beginning in the 1870's from France to Germany to France to Germany and now finally France. Hence, the culture, the architecture, the food, the dialect [Alsatian is in fact a dialect of German, not French] are a delightful and full mixture of both.



For this trip we were housed in L'Hotel de Deux Clefs. [Two Keys Hotel] Each morning we started with a grand breakfast table and the camaraderie of the 30 participants – 15 from Winchester – 15 from St. Germain-en-Laye.

The Tour

Every Jumelage tour is enhanced by the quality of the tour guides and of the leadership. This trip was no exception. Here is Muriel our guide suggesting that we proceed quickly – ie, get going!! The leadership was provided by Jean Vidal, president of the Jumelage St. Germain – being very pensive and considering the next stop on the itinerary.



The Red Sox



All during the trip we folks from Winchester were trying to figure out what the Red Sox were doing. Our French friends may have been wondering what's the big deal. During our final wrap up dinner, we presented our French friends Red Sox caps – so now they are part of the frenzy [perhaps?]. Here is our guide Muriel [right] and Annick [left] one of the Gernmainois – difficult to see, but they are wearing the Red Sox caps.

While we could go on for several pages and describe every day and nite, it may be better to let each picture be worth a thousand words and keep it simple. So lets take a picture tour:

It's **Monday** and it must be **Colmar** -- ② Muriel and part of the group next to the old market along the canal near the *Petit Venice* -- ③ the smallest home in downtown Colmar [the little red apartment] – ④ the “new wine has arrived” [although we did not find any in the restaurants we visited in all of Alsace]

②



③



④



⑤

On **Tuesday** we visited the traditional wine villages at the foot of the Les Vosges Mountains – ⑤ here in **Riquewihr** we are looking up a street from the center of the town into the vineyards on the nearby slope-- ⑥ Jack and Peggy on the main street in Riquewihr.



⑥



Wednesday was all **Mulhouse** – the automobile museum in the morning ⑦⑦ [a truly gee whiz display] – the date on the old steam driven vehicle is 1878. Then the Ecomuseum in the afternoon ⑧ [something like old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts or Greenfield Village in Detroit] – the barn shown here was taken from the Sundgau, the region in the south of Alsace.

⑦



⑦



⑧



Thursday we journeyed to **Strasbourg** for a tour of the city, the Petit France ②, the Cathedral, visit to the EU Parliament ③ [that is not the EU delegation, its the Jumelage delegation – deliberating the fate of western Europe perhaps?], dinner at the Kammerzell, and shopping.

②



③



④



⑤



Friday we traveled east into the **Vosges** mountains ④, stopping at the memorial to the great battle between the French and German forces during WW I ⑤. On this day we actually experienced a brief snow flurry. Of course, none of the snow stayed on the ground – it's still too early for real winter



d'Alsacian ⑦.



⑥

⑦

That evening we were back in Turckheim for the wrap up pre-dinner gathering – and the Red Sox caps -- and then went into Colmar for a special private dinner at the Bartholdi museum – complete with entertainment in traditional Alsatian dress ⑥and, of course, the Choucroute Garnie

Saturday was up and about – breakfast and packing – then the bus to the Strasbourg Gare where we parted company with the group. And throughout the week, everyone took lots of pictures

