



## Festival de courses pour tous

Du 8 au 10 juin 2012 à Caen, en Normandie



Four members of staff from Portsmouth City Council participated in the annual Les Courants de la Liberté (10km race) in Caen, Normandy on 10 June. The photo (below) is of the team upon their arrival in Caen (left to right, Sharon Idir, Darin McCloud, Gavin Brett and Tania Almond).



The team greatly enjoyed their weekend, and commented on a number of occasions about the generous and kind hospitality that they received.

I thought it worth quoting directly from Darin McCloud, who acted as team leader for the weekend, and include in this report:

*“Team Portsmouth was small but very willing and looking forward to what will hopefully be an annual event that will hopefully grow over the next few years. The Team was Sharon Idir, Tania Almond, Gavin Brett and Darin McCloud. We travelled across to Caen on the 9th June to be met by Camille Varin our host for the weekend. Enough cannot be said about the time and effort that Camille had put into organizing this event and spending 2 days looking after us and sorting out a problem with one of our numbers. We visited the finishing area of the race with all the stalls for the runners to look around and also visited Le Memorial.*

*We were picked up by Camille to be taken to City Hall for the pasta party and to watch the La Rochambelle (The race for life in England) to watch over 15,000 women and girls run and walk in the grounds of City Hall was amazing. We are also given a short tour of City Hall.*

## REPORT FOR THE PORTSMOUTH – CAEN COMMITTEE 14 JUNE 2012

*Race day arrived along with the bad weather heavy rain just might have undersold the weather a little bit, within 30 seconds of leaving the hotel we were soaked, character building is the best way to describe the day. We were met by a couple of the Caen team who looked after us and made sure we arrived safely at the shuttle buses to the start, they wore bin bags to keep warm but in true bulldog spirit we were all in all running gear gently ribbing them for wearing bin bags. This broke the ice and set us up for a wonderful day ahead.*

*We arrive at the start area and hand our bags in we met a few more of the Caen team we have about 40 minutes in the rain and cold before race time the atmosphere was excellent we were all made welcome and involved we had a warm up together which was nice and then it was race time. We wished each other good luck and off we went.*

*The course was excellent it was a shame the weather was not better but as runners we still see the beauty in the surroundings we run in. The race itself was a mixture of heavy rain light rain and no rain then light rain again the coldness disappeared once we had started running as it does.*

*The times for the race were in finishing order Gavin Brett 48:55 and finished in 2nd place in the Caen V Portsmouth team event, Tania Almond 1:02:24, Sharon Idir 1:10:26, Darin McCloud 1:18:18 and last place in the team event. We all meet up after the race to go back to the hotel to shower change and be picked up by Camilla for lunch in the Castle area with the Caen running team.*

*We were presented with a very nice trophy for taking part in the event on behalf of Portsmouth City Council as a team we presented Camille Varin with a book about Portsmouth a plate with images of the City on and a paper weight with the city logo inlaid as a thank you from us for all the hard work Camille had put in. I also gave a small thank you speech saying that we looked forward to meeting up again for the Great South Run in October and a return visit next year. We also visited the museum of fine art in the Castle before sadly leaving for the journey home.*

*Simon as a group we were amazed with how Caen encourages sport and exercise with their staff and whilst not fully understanding how it works we all feel strongly that Portsmouth could take lessons from Caen we would like to speak to Councillor's or the Chief Executive or whoever to discuss ways forward we also think that plans should be put in place now for next year to help avoid some of the problems encountered this year plus allow staff to plan this run in to year and maybe find a way forward with the medical certificate's. I will send some photo's tomorrow for you as I have not yet downloaded them.*

*Darin McCloud*



*Darin finishing the race!*

#### **ISSUES WE NEED TO DISCUSS**

As a member of the Committee, may I suggest that we consider the following:

- Acknowledging the hospitality and support for our runners last weekend in the form of a letter to Caen City Council
- Support we may be able to provide in reciprocation at the Great South Run in October 2012
- Putting into place plans for next year's participation in Les Courants de la Liberte (increasing the number of participants, medical certificates etc).

#### **FINALLY, THANK YOU.....**

....To Caen City Council for their kind hospitality (especially Camille Varin and Gregory Houdusse); for the free places in Les Courants de la Liberte, food and assistance with accommodation and transport....

.... To Brittany Ferries for their free travel tickets....

.... To Peter Smith-Parkyn of Portsmouth City Council for his support in planning this project

....And to **each of the four runners**, for agreeing to run in the race this year. I am delighted that they enjoyed it.

Simon Frost/Darin McCloud

June 2012