

PARISH TRIP TO GHENT 2011

As many will know, a group of people went on the annual parish trip, and this year the location chosen was Ghent in Belgium. Rather than have one person write about the trip, it was thought it might add a bit of extra interest if a few people wrote about their own experiences in their own words.

First some words from Margaret Houghton



*When I say I am going away on a group holiday some people are horrified. My brother in particular seems to think it will be strictly regimented and involve walking in crocodile files. In my experience it's not like that at all. Recently I travelled to Ghent for three days with a group mainly from St Faiths but also people like myself from the wider community of Walsworth and Hitchin. At the beginning we met as a group of old friends, acquaintances and strangers. Travelling in a group means forming ever changing mini groups to explore and meeting up by chance with others to share tips on where to go, what to see and where to eat Ghent's wonderful waffles and pancakes or sample the local beers. Its also laughing together despite being drenched in the pouring rain on a river trip, chilling out completely listening to a band at the beautiful Sunday plant and flower market (thanks to Mary G for that tip) and gathering for a very happy communal meal on Saturday night. It also means there is always someone to remind you to double tie your shoelaces as you trip over them for the third time and to extricate you from the coat hangers tangled in your watchstrap or remind you just how close the trams come to the pavements. But there is also always the chance to explore solo or exchange memories of loved ones in quiet places. On our return new friends have been made and our community bonds strengthened. Ghent 2011 was a great trip and I hope very much to be a part of the next trip in 2013. As for the crocodile files - well there was just the one loose, rather badly behaved file as we wended our way to a bridge to sing Happy Birthday and then on to our Saturday night meal. **Margaret Houghton***

Hannah Goose continues:-

The weekend trip to Ghent started at 4.45am. Not being a morning person I was definitely looking forward to having a good breakfast on the ferry. After coming off the ferry we took a slight detour and travelled through Leper to see some of the World War sights. Ghent had lots of different places of interest and historical places to visit. The first day was spent exploring the city and investigating what we wanted to visit. My mum and I ate a waffle by the canal, which was very tasty.

Saturday started with a boat trip down the canal with Joan, Margaret, Elizabeth and Pearl. It soon started to rain and the umbrellas went up! The boat trip was interesting but we were all slightly damp by the end. I spent the rest of the trip on my crutches due to my knee hurting walking around on the cobbles but this and the rain did not spoil the rest of the day.

Mum and I also visited the cathedral and the bell tower which I managed to climb even with crutches, most of it had a lift. After this we went to have chips for our lunch - more popular Belgian food. In the afternoon we spent time going round the shops and buying some chocolates.

Mum and I made our way back to the hotel to meet Patrick, mum's bone marrow recipient. Everyone met to go out for a meal. It was lovely to catch up with Patrick and for him to meet some people he has not seen in quite a few years.



Hannah continues

Our last day was spent exploring the different markets which take place on a Sunday. We visited the flower market which was beautiful with a wide variety of plants and cut flowers, and then we looked around a flea market with antiques and other stalls. There was also a market which sold live fish and birds of all different varieties. They were all very interesting and unlike anything you would find here.



*There was a live band playing and it was a lovely way to spend the morning. After a long journey home we arrived back at St. Faith's car park at about 12.30am ready for a nice long sleep after an enjoyable weekend. **Hannah Goose***

Rose Norris completes the trilogy



I was so excited to be going to Ghent in Belgium with my family and friends from church; the past trips have always been full of fun adventures! The coach made a detour to Ypres, enabling us to see some of the war cemeteries and the Menin Gate Memorial, where a short sombre ceremony of remembrance takes place each evening. I was so glad we were able to go there.

After enjoying a really lovely meal together on both evenings, we went to the Oudburg Feest (festival), where most of us sampled the beers and cocktails etc that were on sale. There was a different band playing each evening, both were so amazing that a few of us felt compelled to dance the night away!



Many of us went on boat trips along the canals; my family and I choose to go on an open-topped boat in the pouring rain. We were armed with rather large umbrellas but even these could not keep us dry, however, the boy steering our boat was very entertaining so the boat trip was great fun, even though we ended up getting very wet!



I loved Ghent as we managed to see and do a lot of things in the few days we were there and as always; just spending a few days away with such nice friends was very enjoyable.

Rose Norris

