

Academy ‘friends reunited’

SCHOOL reunions have become popular in recent years but the one in 1995, when former pupils of Carrick Academy celebrated their 50th birthday at the school and afterwards at Carrick Sports Club in Maybole, had special meaning for ten of the “girls”.

They had started Carrick Academy Primary in 1950 and they felt at that reunion that the years since they left school had just vanished and they got on as well as they had done at school.

They have continued to meet four times a year since 1995 and have visited Amsterdam, Paris, Dublin, Liverpool and Yorkshire to tour the Emmerdale set. They also have an annual visit to Largs where one of them now lives.

This time, however, to help celebrate their 60th birthday seven of the “girls” visited Toronto, Niagara and New York.

The Magnificent Seven “girls” are Betty Clark, Irene Cook, Helen Fulton, Betty Jackson, Nan Kelly, Sheila Menzies and Margaret Milroy – to use their maiden names so everyone will know who we are talking about!

They flew from Glasgow via Heathfield to Toronto for two nights, taking in all the sights of Ontario’s capital city. Situated

566 feet above sea level on the northern shore of Lake Ontario, Toronto is Canada’s largest city, with a population of 4.7 million.

One of the biggest attractions was the Canadian National (CN) Tower, which is 1,815 feet high. There was also time to eat out and to visit some of the local markets.

Then they took the train to Niagara Falls where the highlight was a trip behind the Falls. For this trip they were provided with protective rainwear and once they had put on the yellow raincoats they realised that being dressed alike and with seven of them there was only one thing to do – burst into a chorus of “Hi ho, hi ho” just like the Seven Dwarfs!

This immediately attracted the attention of other visitors who promptly took their photo, although a copy has not found its way to us – yet.

They also visited Niagara-on-the-Lake which came under fierce bombardment and was the scene of bloody battles when the United States invaded Canada in 1812. Today the town is still under siege, but by hordes of friendly tourists shooting cameras instead of muskets. Besides having the reputation as one of the prettiest towns in Canada, Niagara-on-the-Lake is

also one of the most fascinating historically.

The next stop was New York which the girls reached by train arriving at Penn Station. They spent three days seeing what the Big Apple had to offer and decided that three days was not long enough.

With 25 million visitors each year to its 843 acres, Central Park is the most frequently visited urban park in the United States so they headed there and also enjoyed a trip on a horse and carriage.

From their hotel on 42nd Street, they also visited Ground Zero (the memorial to September 11, 2001, a day that will forever be remembered), Grand Central Station,

Manhattan, the Bowery, 5th Avenue, St Patrick’s Cathedral, and a cruise round Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. There was also time for the sale at Macy’s – the world’s largest store – and a night at the theatre to see “The Phantom of the Opera”.

The trip of a lifetime had to come to an end, however, and so it was time to head back to Maybole.

The Magnificent Seven intend to continue their meetings four times a year and their trip away each year. They also have plans for a future foreign trip to help celebrate their 65th birthday and hope to retain their enthusiasm for travel for many years to come.



CLEARLY not afraid of heights at the dizzying glass floored CN Tower some 1,815 feet above the city.



THE seven girls were among the 25 million annual visitors to New York’s Central Park.



CARRICK Academy Primary pupils in 1956 - can you spot the Magnificent Seven?



THE CN Tower was a must visit for the Maybole friends.



THE magnificent Niagara Falls was a favourite for the Magnificent Seven.