



DEVON & SOMERSET TWINNING CIRCLE

HOME FROM HOME

AUTUMN 2026

The next Devon & Somerset Twinning Circle Meeting and lunch will be hosted by Clevedon Twinning Association and held on **Saturday 17th October 2026** at The Bridge, North End Road, Yatton, BS49 4AU

12:00 Arrival

12:30 Lunch will be served in the Function Room

13:45 Guest Speaker: Clive Sanders, Poet in Residence for Never Such Innocence

14:00 Devon Twinning Circle - Annual General Meeting

Lunch will be two courses, selected from the menu below at a cost of £19 per person.

Main course

- Steak & ale pie served with chips and peas
- Fish & chips served with mushy peas
- Roasted vegetable lasagna and salad

Sweet

- Chocolate fudge cake served warm with vanilla flavour ice cream
- Apple crumble served hot with custard
- Lemon Meringue Pie served with vanilla ice cream and raspberry coulis

Please complete our online booking form and send full payment, by 30th September
[Booking Link](#)

Any questions or problems with the online booking please email
clevedon.twinning@gmail.com and a member of the committee will be happy to help.

Payment by bank transfer: Clevedon Twinning Association
Account Number: 35368460 Sort Code: 30-18-88

Please note that due to banking fees we are no longer accepting cheques. If you are unable to pay by bank transfer please contact Treasurer, Sue Sundstrom to discuss an alternative arrangement.

Please bring some cash with you on the day for a raffle.

Lift Sharing:

We have set up a Facebook Group for people to connect with offers or requests for lift sharing. [Facebook Group](#)

If you don't use Facebook but would like help finding or offering a lift, please contact Clevedon Twinning and we'll add your details on your behalf.

Directions: to The Bridge from Junction 20 of the M5 (Clevedon).

Follow signs to Yatton on the B3133 for approximately 3 miles.

The Bridge is on the right-hand side, before you get to Yatton.

Large car park at the rear.

Directions to The Bridge from the A370 at Congresbury.

At the traffic lights, take the B3133 towards Yatton/Clevedon. You will drive past Cadbury Garden Centre and past Cadbury House Hilton Hotel. Drive down through the centre of Yatton, past the precinct and out the other side past the new housing estates, following signs to Clevedon. Stay on the B3133 until you see The Bridge on your left-hand side. Large car park at the rear.

Future meetings

April 2027 Dawlish

3rd July 2027 Bampton

October 2027 Tiverton

April 2028 Crewkerne

July 2028 Taunton

This newsletter contains

- Member news
- Search for a Secretary
- Newton and Noss trip to Trebeurden
- Ilfracombe's French visitors raise a glass to English wines and dancing
- Braunton now "squarely" established in Brittany
- Brampford Speke - Entente Cordiale
- EES & ETIAS Update
- Ma Crepe Suzette
- Exeter Twinning Circle members visit to Rennes – May 2026
- Art residency, Rennes February 2026
- Thoughts from 1st-time visitors to France on a twinning trip
- Exmouth Twinners head for Brittany
- South Molton joined with Northam to share a coach to visit their partners Livarot and Mondeville.
- Twinning contribution to the South Molton in Bloom 2026

Contributions to the newsletter

Remember you will be entered into the Monica Saunders Competition and could win £50 plus another £50 if judged the overall winner of the year.

Please send articles, reports, photographs by email to babenton52@gmail.com

TWINNING MEMBER'S NEWS

Welcome to Lynton & Lynmouth who have joined the Twinning Circle.

Unfortunately, several associations have not renewed their subscriptions this year

Is this an oversight or have you decided to leave us?

Barnstaple
Broadclyst
Cheriton Fitzpaine
Chudleigh
Cullompton
Holberton
Holsworthy
Kenton
Street

WANTED!

A Secretary for the Twinning Circle

This role is not too time consuming
(honest)

- Maintain the contact list for the Circle
- Liaise with groups hosting a meeting
- Prepare and issue agendas for the Committee and General meetings.
- Take the minutes at the meetings
- Respond to any queries from the website

Please let me know if you wish to take up
the mantle

babenton52@gmail.com

2026 – Newton and Noss trip to Trebeurden

It's always an auspicious sign when a trip to France begins with an absolutely flat crossing. When we got up on Friday morning after a very peaceful night the ferry was so stable it was almost a surprise to see that we were fast approaching Roscoff.

As our first outing of the visit was to a chocolate factory in Morlaix at 10am we set our satnavs and made straight for "Grain de Sail". There was some puzzlement over this name since those among us who thought we spoke French were under the impression it should have been called "Grain de Sel" although we were not sure what a pinch of salt had to do with confectionary. It transpired that because the founders of the "chocolaterie" were determined to make their product in an ecologically sustainable fashion they used wind powered vessels to bring the cocoa from South America to Morlaix. The name was a pun incorporating the English word "sail" and the French word "grain" referring to the cocoa bean.

The enterprise was relatively new and the building, equipment and exhibition were all state of the art. We were divided into two groups, one of which was detailed to follow the exhibition on the manufacture and history of chocolate. Those of us in the other group were going to personalise our own chocolate bars.

First, we were instructed to put on a mask and something called a "charlotte". For a moment we thought we were going to be wearing some kind of cake mould on our heads, but it turned out that "charlotte" is the French word for a hair net. Thus attired, though not exactly feeling like the chocolatier in the Lindt advert, we were introduced to several ingredients lined up in jars along a white worktop. We were allowed to choose up to three ingredients which we put into a little bowl for inspection by our instructor who ensured that we had the right amounts. It was all carefully measured in spoons which had to be kept separate to prevent cross contamination. Our next task was to get the liquid chocolate into the moulds. Those of us with white areas on our clothing, especially near the cuffs, began to look a little anxiously at the taps which were dripping an endless stream of thick brown chocolate into the basins below. They looked like the sort of bathroom accessories children would dream about. Luckily our teacher was very efficient at supervising our efforts, so no clothing was harmed in the making of our confectionary. Once the moulds were full, we sprinkled on our ingredients in a decorative manner and the tablets of chocolate were put into the fridge to set.

Then it was our turn to look at the exhibition. Part of this took the form of a series of questions to which we had to answer "vrai" or "faux". I am sorry to say that we got competitive about this and were quite indignant when we got it wrong.... The history of chocolate was explained and illustrated first. Then the process of making the product we know today was described and we were able to look at the machinery through glass windows. Finally, there were various flavours which we could sniff in the hope of identifying them which was much harder than you might expect.... or perhaps it was just me who only recognised vanilla.

By now it seemed a long time since breakfast and as there were only so many free samples, we could eat without embarrassment, we headed for the nearby bakery for coffee which came, appropriately, with a free chocolate chip cookie.



The "Grain de Sail"

It was a lovely sunny day, so we headed happily on our way with our hand-crafted chocolate tucked into shady parts of the car boots. We travelled along quiet roads between rows of vegetables until we reached Trebeurden and parked by the Maison de la Mer right on the sea front where we were to meet our hosts.

Trebeurden is a small coastal town on the Cote de Granit Rose with a fine view across the water bordered by giant rocks. We first discovered it because it was more or less the nearest place with a marina across the Channel from Newton Ferrers and Noss Mayo so was ideal for a sailing race which still takes place every June.

Our hosts had prepared a snack buffet with drinks which many of us made the most of having mistaken it for lunch. As we were later fed and wined most generously by our hosts this turned out to be a serious mistake. Fortunately, most of us went for a walk along the coast afterwards....

As there were no formal events for the rest of Friday, we spent the evening with our hosts, eating and drinking probably more than we should have done for people who had got up at 5am, eaten patisserie, visited a chocolate factory and had two lunches.

On Saturday we set off early for a visit to Chateau La Roche Jagu at Ploezal. This was a magnificent medieval castle built above the river Trieux. In the days before the roads were built the only access to this castle was from the river which meant that, as it was constructed high above the riverbank, it was extremely difficult to attack. In fact, the precautions taken worked as no attack was ever launched.

Nowadays the interior is used as an exhibition gallery but thanks to an excellent guide who spoke extremely good English, we were able to picture what it would have been like when it was occupied and fully furnished. Among other interesting things, we learnt that the French

word “copain” comes from the medieval custom of sharing a thick slice of bread (or *pain*) with your fellow diner and using it as a trencher. We also learnt that the walls and floors were covered with brightly coloured hangings as being able to afford dyed items was a sign of wealth and status. It was even said that the beef was dyed blue which sounds a bit disconcerting....

We enjoyed the visit so much we were a little late for our lunch in the creperie in Pontrieux. The delay was compounded when the owners, instead of telling us the mushrooms were “off” when they ran out, went out to a nearby shop to buy more supplies. I call that service! We were offered jugs of the local cider which we drank in the traditional way out of china cups. We liked this so much most of us came home with a few bottles. Foot note: none of the food was blue.

Fortified (pun intended!) by our morning visit and a substantial lunch we crossed the road and descended to the River Trieux where we embarked on a short boat trip in small groups to see the “lavoirs”. In the days before washing machines, wealthy folk had their own personal laundrettes by the river where their servants did their washing. Above one of these “lavoirs” a listening post had been constructed so that the rich employers could eavesdrop on their employees, hoping to learn about seditious political movements or, more likely, the latest gossip. Oak ashes were among the curious materials used to shift the dirt from clothing in its biennial visit to the wash house. I think and hope that underwear was laundered more frequently!



The “Lavoirs” on the Trieux River

By this time most of us were ready to go back with our hosts for a hot beverage. Our hosts were keen to offer us tea as they had won a kettle in a raffle. Kettles are not a standard piece of kitchen equipment in France. I was presented with a tea pot of hot water, a teabag on a

saucer and bottle of long-life milk. Having anticipated that something like this might happen my husband wisely opted for coffee.

In the evening we gathered at “La Voile”, on the port, for dinner and entertainment. We started at the back of the restaurant overlooking the sea savouring a glass of Kir while the choir “Chorale Trebeurden du Wap” sang to us, which was lovely. They obviously enjoyed singing as much as we enjoyed listening – in fact, they gave us a second impromptu concert in the restaurant towards the end of the meal just for the fun of it. Our meal comprised fish rillettes, pork in cream sauce with new potatoes and a chocolate dessert. It was all very good and many of us opted to drink cider with it.

During the meal the band “Breizh Iwherzhon” (a name I would rather write than pronounce) played to us on a fiddle, two piccolos, a guitar and a couple of accordions. The repertoire relied heavily on Irish folk music. They were very good even if we didn’t manage to sing along with the tunes despite being given the English version of the lyrics.



“Breizh Iwherzhon”

As it was getting late it was decided that the formalities (or perhaps since it was a very relaxed visit the *informalities*) would take place the following day when we met for an “auberge espagnole” in the Maison de la Mer. The first time we were offered one of these “Spanish inns” I was not sure what to expect. Since I doubted we would be entertained by a Flamenco dancer in Brittany, I anticipated we would be offered things like paella or potato omelette. It turns out that in France an “auberge espagnole” is what we would call a bring and share lunch. Usually this means a great variety of delicious dishes and we were certainly not disappointed this time. It was only a pity we had to leave to get the ferry before we had cleared all the plates.

Yvon Guillot, leader of the Twinning Committee in Trebeurden, said a few words in English and Andrew Matthews, his equivalent in Newton and Noss, responded in French. We presented our hosts with a book on the history of our villages called "Spriit of the Yealm", a substantial well illustrated tome which Yvon assures us he has already started to read! On the ferry we all agreed that we had had an excellent weekend – and that wasn't just the cider talking!

Ilfracombe's French visitors raise a glass to English wines and dancing

A weekend of singing, dancing and English wine-tasting proved a real hit with their French guests when Ilfracombe hosted a group from its twin town of Ifs in Normandy.

Organised by the Ilfracombe Ifs French Twinning Association, the weekend began with an afternoon BBQ and the first evening spent with their families.

Saturday morning saw a boules tournament hosted by the West Down boules club. After a picnic in the sunshine at West Down's Community Park, a nail-biting finale saw the English team victorious against the visitors from Normandy.



A civic reception followed at the Ilfracombe Centre with Mayor Mark Fay and Ifs Deputy Mayor Bernard Musualu exchanging gifts, before a night of barn dancing to the music of local ceilidh band M'Larkey at the Vision Community Centre in Slade.

"It's been a really successful, fun weekend, full of laughter and smiles," says Terrena Howse, Chair of the Ilfracombe Ifs French Twinning Association, which is now celebrating its 35th anniversary.

"Our French friends enjoyed themselves from start to finish in North Devon and next year it will be our turn to visit them in Normandy. If anyone wants to join us, we're ready to welcome new members."

The weekend continued with a guided tour and wine tasting at the award-winning Venn Valley Vineyard at Landkey. Created from grazing land just 10 years ago by Tony and Alina Stankus, the vineyard provided the grapes for gold medal winning still and sparkling wines at last year's Taste of the West awards.



Mark Daniels, Ilfracombe's internationally acclaimed singer, rounded off the weekend with a special performance at The Carlton Hotel dinner on Sunday night, with the tired but happy French leaving Monday morning after a rendition of Auld Lang Syne.

"As usual, we packed a lot in," says Martine Kerguelen, Chair of the Ifs Twinning Association. "We love coming over to see our friends in Ilfracombe and we're already looking forward to welcoming them in Normandy next year."

Braunton now “squarely” established in Brittany



In May, Braunton Twinning Association visited Twin town Plouescat in Brittany. The surprise of the trip this year was the inauguration of "Braunton Square" and a tree-planting as Plouescat and Braunton celebrated 50 years of friendship. The square was unveiled in Poursguen with a blue Braunton Square plaque, " (This)Is much more than a simple geographic locator. It is a symbol of a friendship that has stood the test of time," declared the Mayor of Plouescat, Monsieur Eric Le Bour.

Members of Plouescat twinning and their Chair Patricia Choquer, hosted their Braunton counterparts from Wednesday 13th May until Sunday 17th May. The English contingent was led by Chairman Richard Nobes.

This year's trip was marked by the 50th anniversary celebration on the Saturday.

Plouescatians and Brauntonians gathered with the Mayor of Plouescat and other elected members to officially name Braunton Square.

A Ginkgo tree planted.

Afterwards, the 50th anniversary of exchange, sharing and friendship was celebrated in the central Atelier park, where a Ginkgo Biloba tree had been specially planted, together with a commemorative plaque.

"Ginkgo Biloba is a tree associated with longevity, nicknamed the thousand coin tree for its golden leaves and because it can live up to one thousand years," commented Patricia Choquer.

Cooperation, friendship and understanding.

During the week, the guests from Braunton, including two year 10 students from Braunton Academy, Jaydine Afriye and Millie Legge, enjoyed excursions to a former tobacco factory turned museum, an island castle fortress and a prestigious local tea plantation. Old rivalries were rekindled during the annual beach challenge, and a great time was had by all at the special gala evening including a Parisien cabaret troupe and some enthusiastic audience participation!



A particularly nice touch this year involved the shopkeepers of Plouescat, who had decorated their shop windows with British colours to coincide with the visit, alongside drawings and Union flags made by the children of the two primary schools in Plouescat.

Brampford Speke - Entente Cordiale

The sun shone brilliantly in the sky and in the faces of us all during our fabulous twinning weekend in May.

Our friends from Commes, Normandy were greeted with a smile and very enjoyable reception supper at the home of one of our host couples.

The following day was a free day, and various outings were made around the county, from the fascinating Coldharbour Mill at Uffculme to a boat ride at Dartmouth. We all enjoyed a group dinner together that evening.

On the Sunday we met at Bicton Botanical Gardens, where we enjoyed wandering in the woods and gardens, and took a short train ride to catch extra beautiful hidden glimpses of these perfect grounds. Afterwards trips were made independently to Otterton Mill and Budleigh Salterton before coming together again in the evening where we were kindly welcomed again by one of our hosts for a lovely BBQ evening.

The farewell on Monday morning saw most returning to France but some taking the opportunity to visit London, and one couple went on to visit their daughter now living in Leeds.

Promises were made to see one another again next year before the waving hands disappeared out of view.

Such a good time was enjoyed by us all.

A very special weekend



EES (Entry/Exit System) & ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System UPDATE

The European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) no longer has a launch date.

The [official website](#) has removed its late-2026 target and now says the European Union will announce a start date several months before the system goes live.

The change follows reporting that ETIAS is likely to be delayed until 2027. Until recently, the official timeline still pointed to the last quarter of 2026.

Deadline slipped out of reach

eu-LISA, the EU agency developing ETIAS, has reportedly concluded that a 2026 launch date is no longer feasible. Three people familiar with the discussions reached the same conclusion.

One person described launching this year as “illusory.”

Others were less pessimistic. One EU official suggested that any delay would likely be brief, requiring only an extra quarter or month.

The European Commission will make the final decision after eu-LISA successfully completes system testing.

Border system drags permit down

The delay stems from EES, which ETIAS is meant to follow. Problems with the EES rollout have also pushed back ETIAS.

One person familiar with the discussions pointed to “still some IT issues” with ETIAS. They argued that EES should be fixed before adding another system that could worsen border queues.

EES has repeatedly missed deadlines. Originally scheduled for 2022, it was delayed by procurement issues, technical problems, and slow implementation across member states.

A piece of light relief for you English/French linguists

Kenneth Williams - "Ma Crepe Suzette"

<https://youtu.be/6MbZjzlg5w8?si=qErqDHF-BBCtxW5p>

70th Anniversary of the Partnership between Exeter and Rennes



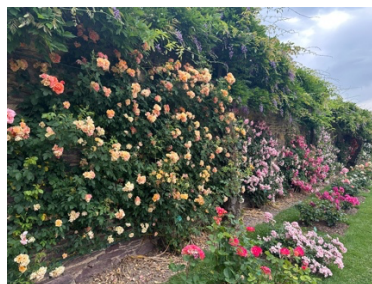
Exeter Twinning Circle members visit to Rennes – May 2026

2026 is the 70th anniversary of the partnership between Exeter and Rennes, established in 1956. Since then, Rennes has gone on to form partnerships with many sister cities across the globe, but as its first partner Exeter always has a special place. The French city has planned several events to mark the anniversary, some of which have been funded by the British Embassy. The year began in February with a visit to Rennes by two Exeter artists, who worked with residents and artists from the Maurepas district, home of the city's Rue d'Exeter, helping them to imagine what life would be like if Rennes was merged with its sister city in Devon.

In the last week of May members of Exeter Twinning Circle visited Rennes. Departing on a Tuesday evening from Plymouth we travelled by overnight ferry to Roscoff, then by bus or taxi to Morlaix, from which we headed to Rennes by highspeed train. Everyone was warmly welcomed at the station by our French hosts, then quickly whisked off to the host accommodation as the first day in Rennes had a full schedule remaining. At 6pm that evening we were officially welcomed, together with members of the Rennes Twinning Association, in the historic Hôtel de Ville. Following welcoming speeches by the Mayor of Rennes and the UK Deputy Ambassador to France we presented a letter from the Lord Mayor of Exeter confirming the association between the cities.

After canapes and renewal of old acquaintances we departed for a welcoming dinner at the Rennes campus of Ferrandi Paris – one of the foremost culinary training centres in France. Here we were treated to a five course dinner, created and served by students on three year Bachelor's Degree programmes in culinary arts, gastronomy and hospitality management. Needless to say, every course was delicious! As was the accompanying wine!

Our second day was just as busy. We gathered in the morning in the Thabor park, in the centre of Rennes. Here we viewed a memorial plaque first presented by Exeter Twinning Circle in 1987, also marking the 50th anniversary visit in 2006. The plaque is surrounded by a rose garden with over 2500 roses planted, displaying more than 950 varieties.



After a picnic provided by the International and European Department of the City of Rennes we moved on to view a very impressive photographic exhibition – ‘Regards Croisés’ (Crossed Perspectives). This was created by the Rennes Twinning Association and featured splendidly stunning of photographs of the sights in both cities. The Exeter images were taken by a very talented member of our Twinning Circle.

Not finished by any means, we moved on to a festive event in the Rue d’Exeter. This was effectively a street party, organised by residents of this newly refurbished part of the city who live in the recently completed apartment blocks on this street. Just as in Exeter, the construction of new accommodation is taking place at a brisk pace in Rennes, and eventually there will be further streets in the area named after other ‘sister cities’. The festival was lively, with enthusiastic children having fun drawing pictures of the Exeter they imagined, and included a stall offering ‘English Afternoon Tea’, musicians and games.



The theme of the anniversary is a comparison of similarities and differences between the two cities, first explored when our artists visited in February. There were paintings that examined this:



All culminating in the unveiling of a plaque depicting the apartment building in Rue d'Exeter if it was merged with prominent buildings from Exeter, including Exeter Cathedral and the House That Moved:



And this was only the second day of the visit!

The next morning the Exeter twinnings were taken by their hosts to Cherruex, on the northern coast of Brittany – part of the Bay of Mont St Michel. There we went for a ride on a 'sea train' deep out into the bay (it was low tide!) which is a 500 square kilometre of coast experiencing Europe's highest tides (up to 14 metres). It is a UNESCO World Heritage site, which has supported fishing industries for centuries, and seen ancient pilgrims picking their

way around the quicksands to visit the Mont. The sea retreats up to 15 km from the shore and it was across this that our 'train' (coaches pulled by a tractor) took us to visit the fishing traps and mussel farms. Our guide showed us how the fishing traps used wicker fences to guide marine life into traps which could be harvested as the tide retreated. Despite the now very low tide our guide was still able to put in her net and pull out jellyfish, sardines, small flatfish and young rays, as well as crabs and cuttlefish. After showing us, these were returned to the ocean.



Bonjour!

After this, and a picnic lunch on the shore, we were off to Dol-de-Bretagne for a guided tour of the cathedral and town. This is a very picturesque town, full of architectural gems, an impressive gothic cathedral and an ancient history of early Christianity in Brittany.

Saturday was left free for shopping, sightseeing and just enjoying Rennes, before we met at Le Grand Huit in the evening. This is a working museum of fairground and roundabout activities, full of families having fun, eating and drinking with children enjoying the many amusements. We were booked in for supper, and an interesting film show of previous twinning visits. A marvellous Saturday night! Sunday was a morning to spend with hosts, and to enjoy lunch, after which we were off to the Château des Rochers-Sévigné for a guided tour of this interesting home of a very early 'grand dame'.

Early on Monday morning, we took a train back to Morlaix and the ferry back to Plymouth arriving on Monday evening. We were tired, but with a wealth of memories and promises to revisit. Who says Twinning isn't fun!

Art residency, Rennes February 2026



To mark the 70th anniversary of Exeter-Rennes twinning, and as part of the Breton city's year-long project to host artists from their twin towns, we, Lynda Powney and Vanessa Cecil, were fortunate to be offered an artists' residency to work with local people of Rennes in February.

We spent a week in the handsome city, arriving in sun at the end of the stormy period that had dogged both Devon and Brittany (but still with an unnervingly bouncy ferry crossing). Our brief was to bring a little of Exeter, in the form of its streets, buildings, flora, fauna and culture, to art workshops with residents of Rue d'Exeter, Maurepas district. These would form the basis for local artists to develop the work through further workshops with the residents to produce a street plaque.

Since 2014 Maurepas has been transformed by an ongoing urban renewal project. It is spacious, leafy and, in February, alight with daffodils. The area is provided with new housing, shops, community centres, cultural programmes, and a monorail Metro line connecting with the city centre in minutes. Moreover, the Musée de beaux-arts last year opened an exhibition space integrated into a housing block (curved and known as "La Banane") where an annual exhibition will be co-created with the residents. We visited with the participants of one of our workshops, local artists and twinning members.

With the immense assistance of representatives of the Service International et Europe and local twinners, who helped organise and translate, we ran workshops in different venues with adults, children, and family groups. These included making prints based on Exeter's buildings with participants who, despite being new to the technique, produced some impressive images; making little booklets based on Exeter Football Club; and making string prints/collages/drawings inspired by Exeter's natural life, with families whose members ranged from a 4 year-old to grandparents. Everyone appeared to enjoy themselves; we certainly did.

The Rennes twinning members were extraordinarily hospitable and guaranteed that our stay was filled with social and cultural experiences – a galette lunch, a tour of street art, meeting local artists, the museum visit, aperitifs. We are grateful. In addition, we appreciate the support of Exeter Football Club, who provided children's backpacks, and Devon Wildlife Trust who provided magazines and stickers.

We are in touch with the Rennes artists involved in the project and are seeing how it is developing through the follow-up workshops.

THOUGHTS FROM FIRST-TIME VISITORS TO FRANCE ON A TWINNING TRIP

Female (61yo)

- I was not apprehensive as I had corresponded with the hostess ahead of the visit which provided me with more confidence, as a single woman, going to a household by myself.
- My french was better than I thought which was quite useful as it was also a second language for my hostess.
- I was glad I booked a cabin on the ferry.
- I was surprised at how many social events we attended rather than time with the hosts, however this wasn't a problem.
- I found everybody in our group were very welcoming, and I really felt as if I was part of a team on my first time away.

Male (68yo)

- My French was worse than I thought and I felt slightly under prepared.
- I liked the mix of events and free time.
- I was a little apprehensive on arriving as unsure of hosting arrangements however, it worked out very well.
- The food and drink were fantastic.
- The weekend was better than expected (don't quite know what I expected) but returned home feeling pretty good.

Couple (74 & 77yo)

- Ahead of the visit, if someone had offered me (wife) a get out of jail card, I would have taken it but I'm glad I went and we couldn't have had better hosts who were on our wavelength, and they made us very welcome.
- We had the whole of the upstairs to ourselves, which was nice, so we had our own facilities.
- We enjoyed the whole of the weekend.
- It really was well organised from our side and from their side as well, and whilst we were apprehensive, we were very happy and thoroughly enjoyed it.
- We got on very well and we're looking forward to hosting next year.

Female (34yo)

- I was a bit nervous at first as I had no idea what to expect (I also don't speak French) however I found that it was not a huge barrier.
- Mum and one of the younger hosts were both great translators (which made a big difference) and they were of immense help.
- I also found French karaoke useful on learning how to pronounce different words which I didn't expect.
- I honestly had a fantastic time. Our host was fantastic and couldn't have been more welcoming. I miss her already and am looking forward to her visit next year.
- I also really enjoyed learning more about the region, with the visit to Caen and learning that some of the stone helped build the tower of London. I have also been trying to learn more about William the Conqueror since our trip.
- My main takeaway from the trip, is that I need to put some serious hours into learning French so I can connect better with our French Twinners. I will also put some thought into how to attract more folk in my age range (mid 30s) into the Twinning group. I think people in my age range would also greatly enjoy this sort of experience.
- Can't wait for next time!

Exmouth Twinners head to Brittany!

In June, 17 Exmouth residents crossed the Channel for a memorable Twinning visit to the beautiful mediaeval town of Dinan.



From the moment they arrived their French hosts entertained them magnificently, organising varied activities including a guided tour, in English, of Dinan's historic old town which had them wandering through the cobbled streets, admiring the timber framed houses, stunning ramparts and learning so much about the history of this Breton town.

One of the many highlights of the visit was the group dinner where a convivial evening was spent enjoying good food, wine, music and the kind of warm French – British friendship that Twinning is all about.



Another day they visited the Museum Mathurin-Meheut in nearby Lamballe, a tribute to a locally born talented artist/ceramicist whose work is varied and exceptional.

There was still plenty of time for the group to explore the beautiful Brittany coastline of rugged cliffs, sandy bays and sample the delights of local restaurants and bars.

The time spent in Dinan reminded everyone just how rewarding these Twinning connections can be, with friendships forged across borders and memories to last a lifetime.

Exmouth Twinners are now looking forward to welcoming the town's German Twinners from Langerwehe in September when a full programme of activities is planned.

**South Molton joined with Northam to share a coach
to visit their partners Livarot and Mondeville.**

South Molton joined with Northam to share a coach to visit our partners Livarot and Mondeville in May. This proved a very successful partnership and on the 14th May, 33 Twinners departed from North Devon at 2.00am in the morning!! arriving in Mondeville by 4.00pm and Livarot by 5.00pm. A long day but all met by our hosts with great enthusiasm.

The coach was available to us for an outing to Rouen on the Friday and this coincided with St Joan of Arc Festival. The town was full of people in costume and stalls outside the cathedral reflecting the wares of the period. Several of our group visited The Cathedral and the museum, enjoyed lunch in the bistros or sandwiches sitting along the Seine.



On the Saturday morning with our hosts, we met at the Manoir de l'Isle in Livarot for the mayor's reception and a bring & share lunch with local jazz band playing - followed by dancing. This was opened to all residents of Livarot and new friendships were made and old ones renewed. It is hoped that members of the jazz band and Town Council will join our regular visitors in May 2027.

Sunday morning was spent quietly with our hosts and departure from Livarot later that morning - picking up our Northam friends in Mondeville on our way back to the port.

Our experience of sharing the coach was a good one and is the way forward if we are to be able to continue our exchanges.

Maureen & Margaret

Twinning contribution to the South Molton in Bloom 2026

South Molton Twinning Association were thanked for making this great model which was installed in the market.

