

Devon Twinning Circle



Home from Home

Autumn 2023

The next meeting will be the 2023 Annual General Meeting

Saturday 28th October 2023

2pm. in the Village Hall, Halberton EX16 7AF

The lunch, served at 12:30, will be a 3-course meal: Soup, Mediterranean Chicken and Trifle or Cheese & Biscuits at a cost of £12.50 per person.

Please send your booking for lunch no later than 21st October either by email to jeanaplin@live.co.uk with bank transfer to Tiverton Town Twinning Association, 52-30-17 acc no. 32108559 with reference your name and association. Alternatively, by cheque to Jean Aplin, 13 Crowden Crescent, Tiverton, EX16 4ET. Please make your cheque out to Tiverton Town Twinning Association and mention the name of your association with your booking. Please let Jean know of any specific dietary requirements.

Following the meeting we shall have a short session to share our news. We know that most of you have had visits from, or paid visits to, your twin towns and villages this summer. So please come along prepared to tell us briefly about highlights of those visits.

It was great to meet many of you at the recent BBQ at Uplowman.

I hope you have managed to fit in a twinning experience this year, whether entertaining our friends in this country or enjoying hospitality abroad. Please let me have any reports of your visits.

I have included a story about the 25th anniversary gift to Bampton to encourage you to produce something similar. Articles are invited for anything relevant to twinning – how you undertake your fundraising, some historic stories and/or photographs from years gone by or just something you think will be entertaining or useful.

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

Please keep the articles coming.

Please send articles, reports, photographs by email to babenton52@gmail.com
Or by post to Mr B Benton, 5 Silver Street, Bampton, EX16 9NR

30th anniversary weekend for Crediton/Avranches Twinning



THE 30th Anniversary of the Twinning of Crediton and Avranches in France was celebrated in Crediton with a visit by 31 guests from Avranches.

They arrived in the town at 10pm on Friday, May 26, having travelled in a coach from Avranches via Roscoff and Plymouth.

Their hosts were waiting for them and looked after them during the weekend.

On the Saturday a reception was held in the Boniface Centre at 10.30am, hosted by the Mayor of Crediton, Cllr Liz Brookes-Hocking, supported by Cllrs Joyce Harris and Steve Huxtable, with refreshment organised by Town Council Clerk, Mrs Rachel Avery.

Approximately 70 people were present and brief speeches were made by Cllr Liz Brookes-Hocking and Christian Cossec as well as a few words from the three people who signed the Original Twinning Char-

ter in April 1993, Mrs Francine Powell (formerly Francine Richer) Crediton Town Council Chairman, André Bazin, former President of the Avranches Twinning Commission and Senior Deputy Mayor and by Peter Brewer, Chairman of Crediton Twinning Association.

Peter Brewer explained that among the guests from Avranches were 17 members of a choir call Vocal'in who, in the afternoon, met and rehearsed with local Choir, the Crediton Singers in preparation for a free entry joint Concert in the Parish Church at 7pm.

Peter continued: "The concert was well attended (approximately 100 people) who thoroughly enjoyed the event.

"Included in the programme were several pieces sung by both choirs together including the Ukrainian National Anthem and Christian Cossec as well as the audience all stood up.

"Grateful thanks to the Reverend Prebendary Matthew Tre-

genza for allowing the Church to be a perfect venue for the event."

On the Sunday the guests were entertained by their hosts, including trips to Buckfast Abbey, Rosemoor Gardens, Fingle Bridge and Dawlish, to name a few.

Peter continued: "In the afternoon the French Choir sang to residents at Hillbrow Care Home before everyone, hosts and visitors, gathered for a wonderful meal provided and served by Vanessa Nuthall and her team in the Boniface Centre.

"Wine served was a gift from the French visitors, courtesy of Odile Morel Presimidente of CAP (Cities Avranches Partenaire) and Christian Cossec Deputy Mayor of Avranches.

"Flags of Crediton, both countries plus Ukraine were displayed and, once again, the visiting choir sang to all.

"Brief speeches were made by Jeni Pitts, Chairman of

Crediton Twinning Association and Odile Morel."

During the Sunday evening celebration meal Mr Brewer showed, on a projector and screen, 100 or so photographs

he had covering the Twinning between the years of 1989 to 2022.

The French visitors were so pleased to see them that a copy was sent back to France as an histori-

cal record.

On the Monday morning the group gathered to join their coach for a journey to Portsmouth for the return crossing to France.

Mr Brewer con-

cluded: "It was a very successful weekend with new friendships made.

"A similar celebration is taking place in Avranches in September."



Cross-channel friendships in bloom as Normandy welcomes Ilfracombe

Friendships old and new, the D-Day landings, and a slice of Viking history were on the menu for Ilfracombe's Twinning Association on their visit to Iles in Normandy in May 2023.

After the French visited North Devon last year, it was Ilfracombe's turn to take the ferry and spend four days as guests of their host families. Among the highlights were a visit to the British Normandy Memorial at Gold Beach, where the Ilfracombe/Iles French Twinning Association laid a wreath in memory of the fallen.



Terri Woof, whose father, Norman Courtney, had fought his way up the beach on 6 June, 1944 and survived the war, said: "This was a very special moment for me and my family. It was extremely emotional for us, as my Dad had re-enacted this on a previous Twinning visit.



Highlights included a visit to Vieux-La-Romaine, a Roman town excavated in the Normandy countryside

And a visit to Ornavik, a living copy of a Viking settlement, complete with huts, crafts and visitor guides dressed in 10th and 11th century costumes.



“It was everything you could wish for from a Twinning exchange,” said Terrena Howse, Chair of the Association, which was founded in 1991. “Old friends had the chance to meet up again and our new members from Ilfracombe have made friends with their hosts. As ever, it’s been a wonderful experience for both sides.”



There was warm applause for a speech read on behalf of Ilfracombe Mayor Dan Turton, who underlined how twinning and educational exchanges can break down barriers between people from different communities.

“It’s great to see everyone enjoying themselves,” summed up Terrena Howse. “If you’re interested in making new friends and finding out about France, then our Association is for you. And it doesn’t matter if you don’t speak French!”

Her team will be kept busy in the months ahead with fundraising and the preparations for next year’s trip to North Devon by the visitors from Ifs.

Portishead welcomes guests from Schweich

After a 5-year gap caused by the pandemic, members of Portishead Twinning Association were delighted to host guests from its twin town of Schweich in Germany. 32 people from Schweich arrived by coach to be greeted by 15 host families from Portishead prior to a five day stay.

After a late arrival on the Thursday at 9pm we decided that the Friday and Saturday would be local activities. We started Friday by visiting Oakham Treasures at Portbury where all those attending spent two and a half hours reminiscing on all the old exhibits whether it was the grocery store, sweet shop, hardware store, haberdashery, off licence and tobacconist, chemist or tractor and farm museum. It was really interesting, that both our hosts and our visitors could compare stories on 20th Century shopping from the turn of 1900.

We followed this with a buffet lunch at The Poacher in Portishead as we needed some sustenance before taking one of two walks around Portishead. The first walk centered on historical Portishead with properties dating far back into the 17th Century. The second walk was around the marina and it's many new sculptures. Everybody from Portishead learned something new about their town during that Friday.

Gathering back at the Folk Hall, the chairman of Portishead Town Council was presented with an engraved glass bowl from our friends in Schweich celebrating 30 years of twinning exchanges. This is now proudly displayed in the Heritage Centre in the special Twinning display cabinet.



To mark the occasion, we enjoyed prosecco handed out by the Schweich Wine Queen and Princess and a piece of cake which had been decorated with both town's coats of arms.

Saturday was a day spent with hosts to enable at least some rest from the travelling. In the evening over 55 Twinning members and guests enjoyed a meal at the lovely Windmill Inn in Portishead with the scene looking over the Bristol Channel and we all enjoyed the delicious meal and the gently setting sun.

The Sunday highlight was a coach trip to Slimbridge enjoyed by 41 visitors. On the Monday we enjoyed a trip into Wales (Some of our 47 strong group were delighted to step foot into another country!) to visit St Fagans Museum of Welsh Life at Cardiff. This was a most enjoyable but long day and we hadn't finished yet. This enabled us to share our friendship even more. However, this would be sorely tested..... We thought that our visitors would have to leave at 6am the following morning but some careful negotiations between the leaders enabled a more suitable leaving time of 8am.

Back to our host families at about 5.45 pm, we had to eat before getting to The Ship public house for our farewell drinks and presentations. That time soon arrived as we all gathered at The Ship to say our farewells for this trip.



The coach pulled out at exactly 8am with the guests going to rest on the coach and the hosts going home to rest or even sleep after a full 5 days of friendship and fun.



For Suzanne Grallert 48, a primary school teacher, this was a first experience of twinning and her first visit to Portishead. She said “it was a wonderful experience to meet my hosts and discover the beautiful landscape. We did lots of great activities and really enjoyed shopping”

Coming to England was a dream come true for Katherine Gouverneur aged 19. “I was delighted to have my picture taken with a Dalek at Oakham Treasures”. Her mother Sabine 54 enjoyed seeing well-known British icons such as Shaun the Sheep and a Banksy artwork on a trip to Bristol.

Portishead hosts enjoyed themselves too. Alistair Smith 62 was undertaking this role for the first time. “I was looking forward to hosting our German guests. It was fun showing them around Portishead and giving them a taste of English beer”. The beer went down very well in an unusual quarter. Schweich is in a wine growing region in the Moselle Valley and has a Wine Queen and Wine Princess who both came on the trip. Their job is to promote wine traditions of the region. They are also expert wine tasters and turned their skills in Somerset to tasting English craft beer. Wine Queen Nadja Thimm 24 said “your beer was delicious. It smells very fruity with aromas of pineapple, lime and mango.” Wine Princess Annika Hackenruch 26 agreed “it tasted like star fruit, and we enjoyed it very much.”

Chair of the Portishead twinning committee Ros Cruse was delighted with how the visit went. “Twinning is a very positive experience, but it has been difficult maintaining interest after the challenges of the pandemic. After a piece in the North Somerset Times, we were delighted that three new host families came forward to participate. They really enjoyed the experience of acting as hosts and are looking forward to hopefully going to Schweich next year. It shows that the concept of twinning and enthusiasm for welcoming guests is still very much alive in Portishead.”

Steve Pratt

Secretary

Devon Twinning Circle BBQ – 10th September 2023

For the first time in several years Twinning Associations across Devon and Somerset were invited for a social event hosted by Devon Twinning Circle at Uplowman Village Hall.

After a glorious sunny week, the morning was wet and gloomy. However, 71 adults and one child were greeted with a warm welcome at the door with a glass of Pimm's and or an alternative non-alcoholic version.

The weather turned out to be kind to us and the sun popped out to say hello. Brian Smith of Bampton Twinning with the help of Derek Webster, supporter of Bampton Twinning, did a fantastic BBQ. Brian's partner, Julie Zillwood, did an amazing array of salads including a delicious beetroot salad. This was followed by a selection of desserts. I must admit that I cheated and bought them from Last Course Patisserie in Cullompton. I will definitely use them again as everyone commented on how nice they were.



We had decided to do lots of outdoor games but not being sure of the weather we plumped to do some of them indoors just in case. The games included Jenga, What's in the Bag, Play your Cards Right, Hoop a Bottle to name just a few.



The afternoon went very quickly with everyone chatting to each other and swapping ideas as well as having fun playing the games.

I could not finish this piece without saying a huge thank you to all the amazing helpers.

Claire Benton
DTC Treasurer

Here are a couple of the lovely emails I have received.....

“It was lovely to meet you at the Devon Twinning Association BBQ. Such a well organised event - thank you.

The food and the games were amazing - please thank all those involved. Such a lot of hard work that was much appreciated.”

Heather Aplin
Chair of the Ipplepen Twinning Association

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“I would like to thank you and the Devon Twinning Circle for a fantastic day of delicious food, great company, and exciting games. We appreciate how much work must have gone into make this such a successful day. We had a really great time, and we are very grateful that we were given another opportunity to meet other twidders and exchange ideas and experiences in such a friendly and welcoming environment.

It was a great idea to have games which enabled the participants to mingle even more and get to know each other.

Please pass our thanks to the DTC Committee and the Bampton team– their hard work was very appreciated by all of us.”

Marija Lees

Chairperson Exeter Twinning Circle

BAMPTON TWINNING ASSOCIATION – THE SUNDIAL SAGA



To acknowledge the 25th anniversary of Twinning, Villers-Bocage presented a sundial to Bampton.

It was eventually installed.

The saga begins in July 1999 when Peter Bage asked if the Council were aware of a south facing council owned wall where the sundial could be installed, and Chris Ayres investigated the possibility of fixing the sundial on the church.

A year later! In July 2000 a meeting was arranged with Reverend Stone to discuss the siting of the sundial. In November, it was suggested to place the sundial on a south facing wall within the Hollett Garden if permission given by the owner.

Several years later!! In June 2004, a suitable site had still not been found for the sundial. It was suggested that it be placed by the hot flowerbed (Hotbed) near the War Memorial. A photograph of the sundial was sent to the Town Council requesting they suggest somewhere suitable. Jim Goodwin (Original Forgery) was asked if he would make a suitable frame as it was essential that the frame was secure and vandal proof. In July, photographs of the War Memorial Garden, Hollett Garden and Riverside Walk including a depiction of the sundial were taken to the council meeting to get their reaction and to make a decision on a suitable site.

In September, Jim Goodwin produced a sketch of a design with scrolls made of shot blasted zinc, 3 metres from the ground to bar, to be concreted in. The council suggested placing the sundial in the Station Road playground and Bampton in Bloom suggested Castle Lawns, however, it was agreed unanimously to have the design with the scrolls, adapted to take hanging baskets, sited in the hotbed near the War Memorial. Trish Barthram took the proposal to a council meeting and sought Clive Russell's advice on behalf of Bampton in Bloom. The Council felt that the suggested design for the sundial was too high, and Bampton in Bloom did not want it in the hotbed, as they preferred Castle Lawns. The preference of the twinners remained as the hotbed so a mock-up was prepared

for the Council to consider. It was hoped to have the sundial in place for the visit by the French in May.

In January 2005, the council agreed in principle to site the sundial in the hotbed, providing that the height of the support was reduced by 3 feet. The Council sought approval from BT to give permission for the sundial to be placed in front of the telegraph pole plus obtain permission from the electricity and water authorities to erect the sundial in the hotbed. In March, the Council were still waiting for a response from BT regarding the sundial. It was still hoped to install the sundial before the May visit even though Bampton in Bloom did not want hanging baskets on the hotbed.

In April it was thought that the erection of the sundial might be subject to planning permission or permitted development rights plus conservation area consent. The Council suggested that the sundial be temporarily erected in the Hollett Garden however the consensus was the install the sundial in the hotbed before the May visit and then rethink should planning permission be required.

In May, a letter was received from the Principal Planning Officer of Mid Devon advising that the erection of the sundial was a 'permitted development' as the council owned the land, and the works were to be carried out by the twinning.

The French came and returned home without seeing the sundial in place (as it wasn't).

In August, it was agreed that the sundial should not be erected before the autumn to avoid disturbing the hotbed display.

In 2006, a small working party (Philip Barthram, Roy Totterdell, Tony Williams & Peter Bage) was arranged to install the sundial for Sunday 19th March before spring planting took place.

At the Twinning meeting on the 6th April, it was announced that the sundial was now in place and the Bampton in Bloom members were also pleased with the end result. A thank you letter was sent to Jim Goodwin saying how delighted everyone was with the stand.

Later in the year a bronze weatherproof plaque for the sundial was added.



The sundial is still there to tell the time of day!

...and we celebrate 50 years in 2024