

## Devon Twinning Circle



# Home from Home

Spring 2023

## DEVON TWINNING CIRCLE

The next Devon Twin Circle General Meeting

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023

2pm. In The Bridge, North End Rd, Yatton. BS49 4AU

Lunch at 12.30 will be a 2 courses £15 per person

**Please send your booking with full payment before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

Link to booking form <https://form.jotform.com/230642570494356>



We are now well into 2023 and hopefully the cold winter weather is behind us. Plans for visit to and from Association's are now in hand, we are finding that prices have increased, my own Association (Tiverton) are expecting 40+ visitors from Germany in July for a 5 day visit. We also have a visit to France in September to celebrate 50years of twinning with them.

Thank you to those that responded to my request and have sent articles in. Can you please send them in **Word and NOT PDF** as I am unable to copy and paste in this format. I hope you have enjoyed reading this Newsletter.

**Please keep the articles coming.**

Ideas being shared, how you have entertained your twinning guests, raised funds etc. and 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 your reports to no more than **two** pages. Including photographs as there really isn't space for more.

Please send articles, reports, photographs by Email to: [Jeanaplin@live.co.uk](mailto:Jeanaplin@live.co.uk)  
by post to Mrs J.Aplin, 13 Crowden Crescent, Tiverton, Devon. EX16 4ET



**The next General Meeting**  
**Saturday April 15<sup>th</sup> 2023**  
**At The Bridge, Clevedon, At 2 PM**

*The business meeting will be followed by a talk from Rob Grimmond, Somerset representative of the British-German Association.*



## **Plain Sailing? Brittany Ferries Celebrates Its Fifty Years With Twinners**

On Monday 2nd January Twinners from all over Devon joined Twinners from Brittany and distinguished guests aboard the 'flagship' of the Brittany Ferries fleet - the Pont-Aven - in Plymouth for a party. The party was to celebrate 50 years of the company's existence. A company which has come a very long way since its original conception and early beginnings. Fifty years ago a group of French farmers in Brittany realised there was an opportunity to export their fresh produce to the UK and they used one ship to transport cauliflowers and artichokes to ports along the south coast. Soon they realised there was a demand for human transport too and that is how they began to grow and became not just a freight line but a passenger line also. Brittany farmers still own 50 per cent of the shares in the company.

Whilst it is true that we as Twinners soaked up the free hospitality of Brittany Ferries, I feel we were all a very good advertisement for the strength of and meaning of Twinning, and it was the most sociable and convivial of events. I felt proud to represent Axminster Twinning Association but I also felt proud of the movement, and the fact that Brittany Ferries reached out to us speaks volumes.

I understand that it happened like this. Brittany Ferries had the idea that to celebrate their 50 years they would transport Breton Twinners from Roscoff to Plymouth and invite their 'homologues' or other Twinning representatives from Devon to join them aboard. However this invitation was undersubscribed and then someone had the excellent idea (I think it is Ann Hallett from Starcross we have to thank for this) that via the Devon Twinning Circle the invitation could be extended to towns in Devon twinned with Normandy. This is how my husband and I got involved. (Axminster is twinned with Douvres la Délivrante in Normandy). There then followed an over-subscription and sadly not everyone who applied could be accommodated.

Even though the Pont-Aven was at anchor in Plymouth we had all the usual check-ins - passport control, body and luggage searches, and a long wait during which we met Twinners from Brecon (is that in Devon??!!) carrying a very heavy package to give to their friends from Gouesnou who they were meeting aboard. Whilst queueing we had also met the retired financial manager who then became the managing director of Brittany Ferries who told us that the cost of building the Pont-Aven twenty years ago was 200 million pounds.

Once in the sumptuous bar as we were not meeting 'homologues' we fell into conversation with others. An elderly man from Brest, Monsieur François Le Breton (coincidental name!) the captain of the Pont-Aven, a current Pilot who'd brought the ferry to Plymouth that day, and a retired Pilot who had worked for Brittany Ferries at Portsmouth for 40 years and who spoke of some of the changes he'd seen: 'when we started the boats were small; now they are huge.'

Moët et Chandon flowed and canapés were carried round by waiters and waitresses. The loud music being played through speakers did make conversation difficult but soon there was a change in the proceedings and there was an announcement about photographs and then the live music began, played by the Breton band Dremmwel, billed on the programme thus: 'whose gentle tunes have been used as wake-up music in our cabins for decades'. This was not a view shared by the partner of the Pilot who told us that these dulcet tones made her feel suicidal first thing in the morning!

While the music played more champagne bottles were uncorked and more platters of canapés were produced. Eventually to the accompaniment of a traditional Breton tune a snake of dancers joined hands spontaneously and threaded their way through the assembled crowd.

We headed towards the restaurant and fell into conversation with two French women who told us that there were 350 guests here this evening. This same pair became our table companions. The younger woman was getting anxious as her brother was one of the chefs and she knew that things were running a bit late and that this was difficult when you were catering for such large numbers. She was 'présidente' of the

We began with the ever-wonderful self-service buffet with no system in place so it became a bit of a scramble! This was followed by chicken cooked in cider with pasta and vegetables in a sage butter, and then a delicate green bombe of fluff and filling on a bed of glistening paper-thin slices of Granny Smith apples. The white wine was Sancerre, the red Noaillac.

After the meal there were speeches but the geography of the dining area prevented us from having sight of the speakers. So we just listened. Eventually the group of seven chefs in their tall hats came out from the kitchen and there was clapping and adulation and more words spoken.

We'd been told that without fail we needed to get off the boat by 9.00pm to avoid being taken back to Roscoff but I overheard as we were leaving that the sailing had been delayed until 11.00pm just to be on the safe side!

Thank you to Brittany Ferries for a wonderful reception and an event that illuminated an otherwise dark winter's night.

*Twinning Committee from Axminster.*

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## **Ideas and List of Places you might like to take your visitors**

*Go on line to obtain up to date information/prices/times of opening etc.*

SS Great Britain	Bristol	Great Day out
The Big Pit National Coal Museum	Wales	Free entry
St Fagans National History Museum	Cardiff, Wales	Free entry
Cheddar Gorge & Caves	Somerset	
Wookey Hole	Wells, Somerset	
Wells Cathedral & Grounds	Wells	See the swan pull the bell for food
Clovelly Village	North Devon	
Babbacombe Model Village	Torquay	
Kents Caverns	Torquay	
Torrington 1646	Torrington	
West Somerset Railway	Bishops Lydeard	
Stuart Line (Boat Trips)	Exmouth	River trips from Exeter/Topsham
Canal Horse Drawn Barge	Tiverton	
The Big Sheep	Bideford	
Willow & Wet Centre	Nr.Taunton	Very enjoyable
Forde Abbey	Chard, Somerset	House & Gardens, Good food
Eden Project	Cornwall	
Fleet Air Arm Museum	Yeovil, Somerset	Aircraft carrier experience

National Marine Aquarium	Plymouth	
National Lifeboat Stations	Burnham on Sea	Donation to their Charity
Hartland Abbey	North Devon	House & Gardens – walk to the sea
Seaton Tramway	Seaton	
Abbotsbury Swannery	Nr Weymouth	
Day in Bath with guide	Bath	
Day in Exeter with Blue coat guide	Exeter	
World of Country Life	Exmouth	
Dingles Fairground Heritage Centre	Lifton, Devon	
Dartmouth Royal Naval College	Dartmouth	
Buckland Abbey	Devon	Free entry
Beer Caves	Beer	Guided Tours
Pecorama (model trains + rides)	Seaton	
Jurassic Coast	Seaton	
War Horse Farm	North Devon	Tractor ride/See the cows milked
Coldharbour Mill	Uffculme	Woollen Mill – Tour – reduced price

*Spaces left for you to inform me of other ideas so that they can be shared by other Associations.*

**Tiverton Town Twinning Association** are visiting their twin town, Chinon, in the lovely Loire valley in September this year. We have hired a coach to take us there and to bring us back (via the Portsmouth-Caen ferry).

We will leave Tiverton in the early hours of Thursday September 14th and return on Monday September 18th. We have a number of spare places on the coach. If you would like a long weekend in Chinon in September, please contact me for further details. Parking available at Tiverton, free of charge.

John Smith (johndorothysmith@gmail.com 01884 257281 07483881191).



**Braunton Twinning Association**

As members of the Braunton Twinning Association (Linda and Dave) were proud to be asked to represent their Group at the recent Brittany Ferries 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations on board the Port Aven in Plymouth. We met up with two of our French friends from Plouescat and were treated to a very special evening of music, wine and food and especially friendship. We also made some new friends along the way.