

Devon Twinning Circle



Home from Home

Winter 2019

Notice of next General Meeting

The next Devon Twinning Circle Meeting will be held on Saturday 18th January 2020 at 2pm in Brampford Speke Village Hall, Sandy Lane, Brampford Speke, EX5 5HN.

Directions to the venue are enclosed along with agenda and minutes of the last General Meeting.

Lunch at 12:30pm at £7.50 a head will comprise: Sharing platter, chicken/vegetarian casserole and baked potato, choice of desserts, tea and coffee. If there are any other dietary needs, please advise well in advance.

Please make your bookings for lunch by 4th January 2020. Booking form below.

The speaker will be Professor Mark Stoye and the subject: "The Black Legend of Prince Rupert's Dog: Witchcraft and Propaganda during the English Civil War".

We look forward to welcoming you and other members of your Association to the meeting.

If, unfortunately, nobody from your association is able to attend, or if they are only coming after lunch, it would be helpful if you could let us know please.

If you are able to wear a badge showing your name and Association, please do so. It does make for better and easier communication with other members.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Worsfold.



Booking Form

Please send to:-

Mrs Pat Brazil, Little Orchard, Brampford Speke, Exeter, EX5 5DX.
Telephone number: 01392 841475

I would like to book lunch for ____ person/s @ £7.50 pp Total £ ____

Number of Vegetarian meals required ____

Any other special dietary requirements _____

Cheques should be made payable to Brampford Speke Twinning Association.

From _____ Twinning Association

Name/s _____

Contact phone number _____



Annual General Meeting Report Saturday 19th October 2019

: *From the Chairman Josie Mardon:*

Thank you Tiverton for hosting the Devon Twinning Circle's Annual General Meeting. Halberton Village Hall is a very pleasant venue and we always enjoy our meetings there. The committee arrived for their morning meeting and were treated to coffee and biscuits, which certainly helped to set the scene for a pleasant day.

The meeting was quite well attended, but of course we would like to see more representatives from Devon and Somerset.

After a delicious lunch (the mushroom soup was cordon bleu standard) the AGM began with a demonstration of Countdown by John Smith from Tiverton Twinning. We all enjoyed attempting to make words and solving the anagrams. It's a great idea and I'm sure that most groups will be playing it at their future meetings. Thank you John for such a good idea and your excellent presentation. (*Details of how to organize an evening to raise funds follows this report*)

The officers were re-elected en block and Dennis was able to tell us that Pam Bines has agreed to take over as Insurance officer. He will mentor her until after the Spring meeting. Welcome Pam, I'm sure you'll enjoy our meetings.

It was a pleasure to announce Exmouth as the 'Year winner' and Bradninch as this quarter's winner of the Monica Saunders' Trophy. Make sure you send your articles to Jean Aplin for publication in our newsletter. You may win the £50.00 prize.

Thank you again Tiverton for a successful meeting, one thought, perhaps you could print the recipes of your soup and meat pie. I'm sure members would appreciate them.

DTC Chair Josie Mardon

An opportunity to play (easily) the game of Countdown as demonstrated at the recent Twin Circle AGM. (Wi-Fi link required)

I want to start this little reminder with an apology; reading even a 2m x 2m screen through a blinding head cold and through streaming eyes is *NOT* easy. All "*minus*" signs and all "*plus*" signs are virtually impossible to read and I apologise if my answers sounded just too silly.

At Tiverton, you will remember, our approach to the game was via the following link;

[Countdown practice](#)

A quick examination of the click-buttons and a small bit of practice will reveal all of the well known features of the game.....including the button that transforms the game from "Word Game" into "Numbers Game".

Answers can be seen on demand and the "Word Game" has an interesting choice which they call "Conundrum".....simply an all-nine-lettered anagram. The answer sheets provided on the day, or available from me via Jean Aplin, are set for "Conundrum" every third time.....it's amazing how much fun this adds.

For the normal puzzle each individual team/table calls out their request; "*vowel* or *consonant*" until all nine letters are automatically filled by the computer at random. The second puzzle is called by the second team/table until all the boxes are filled. Each team/table sets to in order to find their biggest word.....**EVERY biggest** word attains one point for any team.

I suggest you ignore the 1 minute clock and set up 2 minutes on an iPad countdown timer, perhaps downloading the Countdown music theme into your music file.

One final tip; you will be annoyed by random adverts appearing....as normal. Click them out of the way and click "no interest" and they will cease to annoy.

Have fun and don't hesitate to ask for any help from Tiverton.....at least it saved me from having to cut multi-sets of the alphabet.....especially through a streaming cold!

Best Regards,

John Smith Tiverton

Cream of Mushroom Soup (Serves 4)

275g/10oz button mushrooms (chopped)
15m/1 tbsp sunflower oil
40g/1 ½ Oz/3 tbsp of butter
1 small onion finely chopped
15mls/1 tbsp of plain flour
450mls/ ¼ pint of vegetable stock (I just use a cube)
450mls/ ¼ pint of milk
Pinch of dried basil
Salt and pepper

Heat the sunflower oil and butter in saucepan, add the chopped mushrooms and onions and fry for 1- 2 minutes, stirring frequently and then cover and sweat over gentle heat for 6-7 minutes.

Stir in the flour and cook 1 minute

Gradually add the stock to make a smooth thin sauce, add salt and pepper.

Add the basil and slowly the vegetable stock and milk. Bring to boil and then simmer, partly covered for 15 minutes.

Allow soup to cool slightly and then pour into a food processor or blender.

If you are making this in advance I omit the milk and add it when re-heating.

Sometimes I cut down on the amount of milk as it can make it a bit thin.

**DEVON TWINNING CIRCLE
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN HALBERTON VILLAGE HALL ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 19TH 2019**

- 1. Chairman's opening remarks.** Josie welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Tiverton Twinning Association for their hospitality. She pointed out that item 9, missing from the printed agenda, was the election of officers and committee.
- 2. Attendance and apologies.** There were 33 members present representing 17 associations: Bradninch, Chard, Crewkerne, Cullompton, Dawlish, Exeter Twinning Circle, Exeter Yaroslavl, Exmouth, Honiton, Newton Abbot, Northam, Ottery St Mary, Sampford Peverell, Teignmouth, Tiverton, Torrington, Totnes, Uffculme. Apologies were received from: Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, Clevedon, Crediton, Newton & Noss, Portishead, South Molton.
- 3. Minutes of 2018 AGM.** These were approved: P. Mike Hind, S. Mary Lowther.
- 4. Matters arising.** It was suggested that the minutes should list the associations present as well as those who had sent apologies. A request was made for a list of member associations to be made available. It was agreed that this would be sent out after the meeting to those associations for whom we have email addresses.
- 5. Secretary' report and correspondence.** Jenny reported that she was gradually learning the job and fitting names to faces. She had received little in the way of correspondence but she has been approached by a member of another Somerset association who is interested in joining DTC.
- 6. Treasurer's report and proposal to raise the groups' subscription to DTC.** James presented the accounts and explained that, as the way of paying for insurance has changed, a surplus is showing for this quarter. But from now on, each quarter will show a loss. Even if we cease offering travel insurance, which is now prohibitively expensive, we need to raise the subscription for groups. His report was accepted: P. Dennis Knowles, S. Mike Boyle.
It was proposed that the annual membership fee be raised from the current level of £10 per annum to £15 per annum: P. James Stewart, S. Josie Mardon. The motion was passed unanimously.
- 7. Insurance Officer's report.** Dennis reported that total travel insurance this year has amounted to £1888.00 (£1764 last year) from 26 Associations, with 85 adult members

+ 8 children who have travelled. (Last year 166 adults + 34 children.) There has been one claim this year, and this has been settled
 63 Associations paid their public liability insurance premium last year. This amounted to £7875. The cost is £125 including tax; the cover remains the same at up to £5million for claims. This is still very good value
 Over the year there has been a good improvement in the way that the Insurance has been sent in with correct names and addresses etc.
 On the public liability front he asked us to remember that if you have any out of ordinary risk you must let me know so that I can clear it with Aviva our insurers in plenty of time, preferably in writing stating all the risk factors.
 Pam Bines of Bradninch Twinning has offered to take over from Dennis as Insurance Officer. She will act as Dennis's assistant until the next AGM, starting to be involved when the letters about Public Liability Insurance go out in March 2020.
 The Insurance Officer's report was accepted: P. Maurice Mardon, S. Mike Boyle.

8. Matters arising from committee meeting.

The Monica Saunders cup for 2018-19 was awarded to Exmouth. The award for this quarter was won by Bradninch.

James told us that our bank account has been closed as the bank requires a "safeguarding" form to be completed on line, which has proved impossible to do. He will try to open a new account with NatWest as first choice and Lloyds as an alternative should that be necessary.

9. Election of Officers and Committee. The existing officers and committee were re-elected unanimously: P. Janet Hammond, S. Maggie Gingell.

Officers and committee for 2019-20 are:

Chairman	Josie Mardon	Exeter Twinning Circle
Vice Chairman	Mike Boyle	Totnes
Immediate Past Chairman	Pat Sherwood	Crediton
Secretary	Jenny Worsfold	Sampford Peverell
Treasurer	James Stewart	Newton Abbot
Insurance Officer	Dennis Knowles	Tiverton
Newsletter Editor	Jean Aplin	Tiverton

Committee: Bob Bradshaw, Exeter Yaroslavl; Maurice Mardon, Exeter Twinning Circle; Philip Worsfold, Sampford Peverell; Pauline Knowles, Tiverton; Mary Lowther, Dawlish; Margaret Gough, Newton Abbot.

10. Any other business.

- (a) Michael Hind, from Honiton Twinning, reported on the conference held in Bristol on "Twinning in the 21st Century". The report will be circulated to groups and a summary will appear in Home to Home.
- (b) Dawlish think their amenities may not be adequate for next year's AGM. It will, instead, probably be hosted by Torrington. Torrington to confirm.
- (c) Bradninch are organising First Aid and Food Hygiene courses. They would like to hear from others who may be interested.
- (d) The matter of groups having a safeguarding policy was raised. The committee will consider this and bring any recommendations to the next meeting.

Next General Meeting: Saturday 18th January. 2020 AGM: Saturday 17th October.

Bampton Twinning Association

In this year when Europe has been reminding itself of the D-Day landings and is planning to build new future relationships, it's worth remembering why the "Twinning" movement started. The idea was conceived in 1947 after the Second World War to foster friendship, co-operation and mutual awareness between the peoples of Europe.

Bampton Twinning was formed in the 1970's to promote visits, exchanges and links with Villers-Bocage in the Calvados region of Normandy, France.

The Battle of Villers-Bocage took place on 13th June 1944, one week after the Normandy Landings by the Western Allies, that began the conquest of German occupied France. The town was taken by the allies then lost in a ferocious counter attack by the Germans before being retaken by the invasion forces. Only one farmhouse and half a church remained standing after the onslaught. A modern town has emerged from the ruins, quite unlike Bampton with its 1000 years of history. Bamptonians are always assured of a very warm welcome on our visits which are planned to be great fun and also very interesting for both young and old, learning about local customs and traditions.

Twinning visits are planned annually at the early May Bank Holiday with the French coming to Bampton one year and Bampton members travelling to Normandy the next year by coach and ferry.

These visits are the highlight of the year, meeting old friends, making new ones and giving both communities the opportunity of showing their guests the very best hospitality they can offer.

Fundraising is vital to cover the costs of these biennial visits, on the basis that when the French visit Bampton, they pay for their own travel costs but all expenses during their time in Bampton is paid for by the Association and the host families. The arrangement is reciprocated when we visit France. Costs are approximately £5000 over the two years so fundraising is a very important part of the Associations agenda. Fortunately the team spirit within the Association has always been good so fundraising is great fun, well supported and a very enjoyable way of filling the coffers. Examples of fundraising events are BBQ's, safari suppers, themed evenings, pool parties, race nights, bingo, treasure hunts etc.

The Association meets every 4 to 6 weeks and all members are invited to attend and have their say. The meetings are normally held in member's homes (when possible) on rotation which helps to reduce costs. The Chair keeps the meetings short and they always end in a social atmosphere as we enjoy a supper along with a glass (or two) of French wine.

As mentioned earlier, the highlight of the year is the Twinning Visit itself and this year was no different. Bampton hosted thirty people from Villers-Bocage during the first weekend in May. The French were treated to a welcoming drink in the Community Hall on the Friday before they spent the evening with their respective families.

After a relaxing day with their families on Saturday, everyone enjoyed a fine meal and entertainment in the Riverside Hall. An early start under blue skies on Sunday morning saw everyone head off on coaches to Horner. As we travelled in convoy on two coaches the route to Horner was via Norton Fitzwarren providing wonderful views of the Quantock Hills and the Bristol Channel. Arriving at Horner Farm, we were greeted by Holly who gave us a brief outline of how the new venture of running a family farm was taking shape. Venturing out from the farmyard we sighted the sheep, goats and cattle searching out shelter from the chilling sea breeze coming along the valley. We returned to the farm outbuildings for a wonderful meal of local and seasonal produce. On sitting down to dine we were entertained by musicians local to Bampton, even tempting a few of the chillier folk to have a dance to keep warm. The main course of the farms own Dexter beef was warming on a chilly day. After lunch we moved onto Dunster for the afternoon where everyone visited the castle and ventured into the town before clambering back on the coaches for a sleepy trip back to Bampton, this time via Wheddon Cross. We returned to the Riverside Hall for an Afternoon Tea consisting of sandwiches, scones with jam and cream (what order?) and cakes.

The Association supports local businesses (when possible) and our Chair thanked the Toucan team for the wonderful evening meal on the Saturday evening and the scrumptious Afternoon tea on Sunday.



The following morning our French friends boarded their coach for their journey to Portsmouth to catch the ferry back across the channel. Bampton Twinning will visit France next year.

At the Annual General Meeting in August the retiring Chair, Trish Barthram, thanked the members for their support and organisation of various fund raising events over her 4 years in office. The new Chair of the association is Brian Smith alongside new committee members Mike Coggins (Vice Chair) and Denise Lyons (Secretary) with Claire Benton continuing as Treasurer.

Bruce Benton



Euro Vire 2019 – A week of euro twinning



Euro Vire 2019 a twinning experience involving the towns of Vire, Normandy(Host), Totnes, U.K., Baunatal, Germany, Santa Fe, Spain and Sacele, Romania. Monday 27th May to Sunday 2nd June 2019

The Totnes group did not start their travels until very early on Wednesday 29th May when we left Totnes at 3am to drive by

coach to Portsmouth to catch the Normandy Express to Cherbourg at 9am. After a very uneventful cross we arrived in France at 1pm and then made our way to the French town of Sainte Marie Eglise where we stopped for lunch a quick look at the museums and memorials to the American 101 Airborne who were the first troops to land in France at the start of Operation Overlord. After a short break we made our way to Vire when on arrival we were met by our French hosts

And after a word of welcome from the Mayor of Vire we joined our hosts in light



refreshments.

Then it was off to our hosts home to get unpacked and ready for the evening events. These included folk dancing from Sacele, a guitar ensemble from Sacele made up of young girls and several groups from Vire, and Santa Fe. This was followed by a light supper and then

home.

The following morning two of our members Craig Wensley and Gisella Parkes took part in a baking workshop by the five towns each baking samples of local cuisine, Craig baked a Steak and Kidney pudding and Giselle did a bread and butter pudding. Whilst this was going on the delegation from Baunatal arrived to be met by the local Vire Bagad band. In the town centre the mayor of Vire released hundreds of balloons all with labels on them for the finders to return to Vire. During the day there were films from the twinning town areas and in the Town Hall a discussion on Transition from Totnes and Vire. In the evening the local choir and the children's choir from Sacele put on a concert.

On Friday a party of us went off in coaches to Saint-Germain de Tallevende where the local ecological association is sponsoring a project to develop the construction of dwellings using mud and straw. They also construct beehives from mud and straw. Everyone had a chance to make the hives. This was followed by a picnic lunch and then back to Vire. During the afternoon there were events taking place all over Vire. In the evening we all gathered together in the main assembly hall for the exchange of gifts between towns and then the mayors of each town signed a charter of friendship. This was followed by the official meal to which approximately 800 people sat down. During the meal some of the countries entertained the delegates with song and dance. Before the delegations had left for Vire a painting competition had been arranged for primary school children and the entries were on display during the

meal and then the mayors from the five town judged the paintings. The two entries from Totnes were chosen as prize winner in their age group and the one who won her group received a large box of art equipment. (This was later present to her at school by our President Marion Adams when we returned.)



On Saturday morning some of the Totnes party then held a debate around the theme of mobility, they were joined by a group from Santa Fe. In the afternoon there were performances of national dancing

from the groups

Whilst the events were taking place the representatives of all the twinning groups met in the Marie for a business lunch to discuss the event and if it would be possible to hold it again. It was agreed that for the event to be held in some countries then the local council would have to be able to give more support.

In the evening the Baunatal Brass Band and the Vire Badad entertained the crowds with music both local and from the shows. The bands then led the crowd in procession through the town to the area where the firework display was put on. Sunday morning it was up early and into Vire to join our coach and say our fond farewells to our hosts and then to drive back to Roscoff for the 3pm ferry. We arrived home at about 9.30pm tired but all having had a very enjoyable visit.

Editor:

The first part of this report appeared in the autumn newsletter, somehow, when reducing the photographs I lost (unknown to me) some of the copy. I therefore offered to print the whole article again in the winter newsletter.

Cullompton Twinning welcomes group from Ploudalmezeau Thursday 30th May to Sunday 2nd June 2019

For the 42nd year, Cullompton welcomed a group to spend a weekend with us. This time there were 32 people including 5 young people, ranging in age from 9 – 80+.

Due to Brittany Ferries re-scheduling their service from Roscoff to Plymouth, our French friends had an early morning departure instead of later in the day. Some of them had to get up at 5.30am, to prepare and join the coach from Ploudalmezeau to Roscoff. They arrived at Cullompton around 3.30pm in the afternoon, cheery and chatty as usual, and were whisked away by their host families to enjoy the rest of the day en famille. Host families joined together in several groups to have an evening meal and the opportunity to catch up with old friends and get acquainted with new ones. Suitably refreshed by good food and drink it was off to bed at the end of Day 1.

On Friday we took a trip to Dart's Farm near Exeter, some choosing retail therapy, or visiting the RSPB area, or just relaxing. The Fish Shack provided us with an excellent Fish and Chips lunch enjoyed by all. Our French friends really enjoy this traditional British meal, so much so that they hold Fish and Chip evenings as one of their fund raisers, cooking everything from scratch themselves. They get through 20kgs of fish and the potatoes are grown by one of their twinnings.

Next stop Bicton Gardens – the weather was well and truly set fair, with a blazing sun and gentle breezes and the gardens were looking superb. We took the little train ride which gave us the opportunity to see the magnificent trees and the landscaped estate, with different vistas at every twist and turn of the track. The afternoon continued with a delicious Cream Tea, including two giant scones with clotted cream and strawberry jam. Needless to say, lots of us took one of the scones home to eat later, or even the following day.

Editor: Also part of this report appeared in the Autumn newsletter, my computer-not me! Causing the problems.

Brampford Speke Twinning Association

What a great time we had in France on the twinning weekend at the beginning of June!

It was fascinating to be in Normandy in the run-up to the 6 June D-Day commemorations. Our twin village, Commes, a few kilometres from the sea, had been at the heart of Allied action in 1944. The pretty little harbour town of Port-en-Bessin, our nearest stop for shops, cafes and the Sunday market, is between Omaha Beach, where American forces landed, and the British beach, Gold.

Port-en-Bessin was liberated by 47 Royal Marine Commando after fierce house-to-house fighting on 7 June and General Montgomery, the Allied Ground Forces Commander, visited Chateau du Bosq at Commes, now the home of enthusiastic twinning members Viviane and Dominic. They hosted a gathering for twinnings in the grounds of their beautiful moated chateau together with members of a French re-enactment group, who had travelled to Normandy for 75th anniversary of the landings and arrived in uniform in authentic military vehicles.



Some twinnings visited Pegasus Bridge with their host families on a free day during the weekend. Others went to a stunning local garden, followed by tea and cakes at *Les Volets Roses*, a 40's-style cafe near the cathedral in Bayeux run by former twinner Nathalie. Her welcome was very warm, and we were delighted to hear that she will be moving back to Commes soon and plans to rejoin the twinning. Hopefully we will see her here next year, if she can take time off from her busy cafe. One of the many highlights of the visit was a trip by the whole group to Bagnoles de l'Orne, a thermal spa town in the heart of the Normandie-Maine regional park. After coffee and a stroll by the lake, we went on to *La Michaudiere*, a family-owned attraction dedicated to working horses. After a picnic in the grounds in glorious sunshine, we watched a stunning display by percherons, cobs Normands and Breton horses. Under the control of their young handlers, these gentle giants paraded with precision, walked three abreast with just one rider standing on the middle horse, and thundered past at a gallop which made the ground shake. The bond between horses and riders was apparent, and even extended to a placid black bull, a goat and a donkey that joined in the display. The meals were, as always, memorable – the open air picnic just as much as the fine dining in an ancient former market hall or the seaside fish restaurant in Port-en-Bessin, where we sat and watched fishing boats set out from the harbour as the sun went down.

It was good to see old friends and meet new. Across the group of participating French and English members this time, ages ranged from seven to mid-80s. It is a wonderful way to experience French family life and the friendships made are sincere and long-lasting. We welcome new members – individuals, couples and families – and try to match people appropriately. You don't have to be able to speak French, though if you want to practise, it's a great opportunity. Many of our French friends speak English and language seems to be no barrier to firm friendships



Picnic in the park



Riding a bull

THE BURNHAM-ON-SEA & HIGHBRIDGE-FRITZLAR TWINNING SOCIETY

Just before the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, Burnham & Highbridge were twinned with Fritzlar, near Kassel. This summer we celebrated our 30th Anniversary with a visit to our German friends. Most joined the coach trip staying in Monschau, an enchanting medieval town in the Eiffel region, on the way out, and a final night in Ypres with its poignant reminders of past conflicts.

The rest flew to Frankfurt and met us in Fritzlar. As well as members & friends, we were also joined by the Burnham U3A Concert Party for a series of performances, some with a local German Choir, and most of us were home-hosted.

Aged 13 and new to German, my youngest daughter stayed with Christina. Now 38 and parents themselves, they are still great friends, with numerous family visits in between, and her parents hosted me this time.

Fortunately, we avoided the worst of the heatwave, so were able to enjoy the excellent programme our friends had arranged for us. This included a Reception with the Mayor in the Rathaus, visits to nearby Kassel with a tour of the Planetarium, and to an Organic Herb Garden, all punctuated by convivial meals together and the Farewell Evening, when we presented the Wallhanging depicting local scenes & motifs, expertly created by our Burnham U3A Patchwork & Embroidery Group.

It was wonderful to celebrate 30 years of partnership with our German friends, especially in these uncertain times of Brexit

Portishead join in Operation Market Garden commemorations.

In September 1944, hundreds of airplanes with paratroopers set off from British airfields and were joined by 300 Horsa gliders carrying men and equipment. Their mission, known as Operation Market Garden, was to land behind enemy lines to begin the liberation of Holland. One of the gliders, piloted by Dan Griffiths, was forced to make an emergency landing in enemy territory, close to Den Dungen. The four crew members together with six Americans from another glider went into hiding, first in a haystack for two weeks, where they lived off apples, then in a manure pit until, six weeks after their forced landing, they were liberated and taken back to England. After Dan Griffiths retired in the 1980s he came to live in Portishead and he was instrumental in forming friendship links between Portishead and Den Dungen which thirty years ago led to a formal Twinning of the two towns and the formation of Portishead Twinning Association.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of Operation Market Garden and commemorative events have taken place throughout Holland especially in the area around Arnhem which presented the ideal opportunity for 30 members of Portishead Twinning Association to make their biennial visit to their Dutch twin town.

Many of the group and their Dutch hosts spent the Friday at Basecamp, an exhibition of 1940's vehicles in various scenarios giving a flavour of the lives of the allied forces in Holland at the time of Market Garden, as well as some jiving to the music from a genuine record player of the time much to everyone's enjoyment.

Having raised the Union Jack and the flags of Holland, USA and the Army Air Corps in the morning, a "Silent Wings" Commemoration took place at the Litsberg. This was attended by both Twinning Associations, the Army Air Corps from Yeovilton, the local Mayor and Pastor. The very moving ceremony included speeches, music and the laying of wreaths. Ros Cruse laid a wreath and gave a lovely speech on behalf of Portishead Twinning Association.

On the Saturday there was a trip to an impressive glider collection which gave the group the opportunity to see how gliders were used during Market Garden. The tour also included a visit to a church where soldiers had been kept safe from the enemy. Whilst at the church aircraft flew overhead on their way to drop parachutists over Arnhem as part of the commemoration events. Later, a visit was made to the Arnhem Cemetery at Oosterbeek, which is kept immaculately by the War Graves Commission, and gave people time to reflect on what was happening 75 years ago.

Everyone enjoyed a lively social evening on Sunday which included a presentation by the Chairman of Den Dungen Twinning about the 30 years of Twinning and a reminder of the story of Dan Griffiths being helped by the people of Den Dungen during Operation Market Garden. The highlight of the evening was the performance of the "Star Sisters", three of the hosts dressed like the Andrews Sisters singing a medley of 1940s songs encouraging people to get up and dance.

Monday morning came round all too soon and after the traditional rendition of "Go now in Peace" by the two Twinning Groups the coach left for Schiphol Airport and the flight home.

In 2020 Den Dungen Twinning will come to Portishead in May and the Portishead group will travel to their other twin town of Schweich in Germany in July. If you are interested in joining these enjoyable and interesting exchanges then please contact Keith Fallows on 01275 817258.



A Cautionary Tale/A Case for Blue and Pink Passports
or
I Blame Jeremy Vine
(Lesley Shaw and David Gale. Northam Twinning)

Thursday 03 October saw 22 members of Northam Twinning joined by 11 members of Bideford Pipes and Drums gathered in Bone Hill Car Park, Northam, ready to board a coach bound for Mondeville, a suburb of Caen in Normandy, with whom Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore are twinned. I had had a great week prior to our departure as it was the Appledore Book Festival. Normally our trip to Mondeville coincides with the Book Festival and restricts the number of events I can attend. Not this year! No – I overdosed on all it had to offer and thoroughly enjoyed everything I attended – but in particular my favourite – Jeremy Vine.

We left Northam just before 8.30am and had a lovely smooth run to Portsmouth, stopping for a coffee en route. Once at the port we all disembarked from the coach to take our passports to the Brittany desk for verification. As I strode up to the counter I opened my passport to the main page and was greeted by my husband's photo staring back at me. I quickly closed the passport thinking as I did that I must be really missing him! I re-opened the passport and..... still my husband stared back at me! What a disaster! My husband was due to go away the next day on a 'boys' weekend' to Alicante. I had put both passports on the side and somehow picked up the wrong one. I was sure I had checked but.... What to do? I tried calling my husband but he was at work driving a train and did not answer his mobile. We checked whether Brittany would let me travel with other photo ID as my name did appear on the travel manifest. No.

Only one thing for it. Abandon my planned trip to France, jump on a train, travel to Bristol and leave the passport with one of my husband's friends with whom he was flying the next day. Bye- bye France.

Happily another twinner, David Gale, agreed to write a description of the trip so here it is.

3rd October

Our anticipated twinning visit with our French friends began today with a disappointment at Portsmouth when one of our members had to return home, not having the correct passport. Thankfully the crossing from Portsmouth to Ouistreham (Port de Caen) was very smooth. With us travelled the Mayor of Northam and his wife and 11 members of the Bideford Pipes and Drums.

In France we were pleased to meet up with some of our German friends from Büddenstedt with whom Northam is also twinned who were celebrating their 46th year of twinning with Mondeville. The weekend was tinged with sadness as during the course of the last year one of the Northam Twinners had passed away and two from Büddenstedt and their loss was greatly felt.

4th October

The first full day was with our French families and each had something to interest us, whether a visit to a different town or exhibition or to relax with the family and friends. Two exhibitions that found interest with our group were the

Norman Rockwell exhibition at the Memorial Museum in Caen and the Roman Life exhibition at the University of Caen. Evening found most families entertaining friends and catching up with the news.

5th October

This was the day of the organized trip for all. The visit was to Deauville, a grand seaside town founded in the 1860s by the Duke de Morny.

First we visited Strassburger House, a wonderful small chateau of mixed architectural styles; Arts & Crafts and towers with pinnacles like a Disney castle. This used to be owned by the Rothschild family who had a great interest in horse racing in the area.

A good lunch was then had at the Parasol restaurant followed by a walking tour of the town and the obligatory Marche sur les Planches after. (Nothing to do with pirates!) We were lucky with the weather which had promised rain.

When we returned to Mondeville we all joined together for a supper at the Salle des Fêtes, where the Bideford Pipes and Drums entertained us with tunes old and new played on bagpipes. This was something different and was well received by the French, the German and the British.

6th October

Today, our last full day in France, saw our official luncheon. Before this two trees were planted to commemorate 45 years of twinning between Mondeville and Northam (2019) and Mondeville and Büddenstedt (2018). The Mayors of Mondeville and Northam symbolically shoveled soil over the roots of the commemorative trees accompanied by Bideford Pipes and Drums behind whom everyone then marched into the dining hall. Following the speeches we had a very good feast and then danced the rest of the day away.

7th October

Monday saw an early start to board the ferry back to the UK. A calm crossing and a comfortable drive home saw us back in Northam by early evening. We were all quite tired after our hectic few days but looking forward already to next year.

So thank you David for writing about the trip. It certainly sounds as though you all had a great time.

For my part I must ensure I do not make the same error again. So, is to be blue and pink passport covers or not going to see Jeremy Vine at next year's Book Festival?

By the way when I left university my first job was.....courier/ tour guide for a prestigious tour operator!! I wouldn't have held that job down for very long by picking up the wrong passport!

Here's to 2020!



Honiton Twinning Association

We were delighted to welcome 13 twinnings from our *partnerschaft* town Gronau an der Leine (in North Germany, near Hannover) for a long weekend in mid-July.

Our German friends decided for various reasons to fly into Birmingham, and were duly collected by minibus, and all arrived safe and sound in Honiton on Thursday July 18th. There was initially a reception at the Beehive Community Centre in Honiton, where various town dignitaries, and the Gronau mayor spoke. Then our guests were whisked off to the hosts' homes for the evening and a proper meal.

On the Friday morning we met the guests at the end of Honiton High Street, for a guided tour of parts of the town. We had agreed at the planning stage for this visit, that more time would be devoted to seeing the attractions of Honiton, rather than as in the past transporting guests to places much further afield. Thus we began our perambulation along the High Street at Marwood House, formerly in the hands of the descendants of Queen Elizabeth the First's physician, with a fascinating glimpse into a part of the house and the gardens, by courtesy of the present owners. The walk was under the guidance of Margaret Lewis BEM, the present Curator of Honiton Museum. A local teacher of German, Karen Dell, provided an excellent translation for our guests. The Museum is where the first part of the town walk paused, having passed many sites of historical interest which Margaret pointed out and explained to us. Our German guests were greatly absorbed by the collections in the museum; and eventually we moved on to the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, which houses rotating collections, and commemorates the residence in the town of the celebrated London artist, who retired to Honiton.

Not only our guests, but also Honiton twinnings, had learned much more about town history than they had known at the start of the walk!

The rest of the day was given over to time with families, for resting and excursions. In the evening there was a fully-attended Twinning Dinner at the Hare and Hounds, which all enjoyed.

Saturday dawned thankfully a beautiful sunny morning for the Charter Day celebrations. This day commemorates the granting to the town by Henry III, in the thirteenth century, a charter permitting a weekly market – now twice weekly. The festivities were inaugurated in front of St. Paul's by Dave Retter town crier, and the Gronau mayor Karl-Heinz Giesler – suitably attired in a tricorne hat – and the animation in the streets gave our guests much to see, including a vintage vehicle display, street jazz, and more. We had decided that our friends should sample fish and chips, so later enjoyed a lunch with them sitting on benches in the Fish and Chip Shop at the bottom of the town. In the evening, Honiton Town Band performed one of their best-ever concerts at the Millennium Green, again with twinnings enjoying the occasion.

Sunday allowed guests and hosts to make excursions as they pleased and a number decided to make for Beer Caves and Beer village, which again proved to be a good choice.

We were sorry when the time came to say our farewells at the Beehive, with photographs taken and promises to make a return visit to Gronau made.

One of our number accompanied our guests back to Birmingham Airport. The visit was judged one of the most successful we have ever organised. Thanks are due to numerous helpers but in particular to Roger Sleeman our Secretary, whose initial conception for a town-based visit worked out so well, and also members of the visit planning committee..



The Monica Saunders cup for 2018-19



Was awarded to Exmouth.

The award for the Autumn newsletter was won by Bradninch.

"Twinning in the 21st Century"

Conference held on 20th September 2019 at City Hall, Bristol

Organised by the Bristol International Twinning Association (BITA)

Main topics:- Engaging Young People -Engaging Volunteering
Developing Economic Links – Developing Cultural Links – Use of Social Media

Should anyone be interested in reading the report on this Conference, (4 pages)

Please Email: Jeanaplin@live.co.uk and I will send it to you

This newsletter is coming to via our secretary, unfortunately I have had an accident with my computer, I tried to catch it as it fell to the floor, gashed and broke my finger and at present I don't seem to be able to recover my Devon Twin Circle List plus other files etc. It is my left hand (which I am left handed) and life is a bit difficult at present.

Jean (Editor)


**Merry
Christmas**
