

Wortham and Burgate Twinning Association Chairman's Report

2014

First of all, I would like to thank the committee for their work over the past year, each of whom has contributed significantly to the continuing success of the Association. Secondly I would like to thank all the members for their support of our activities and for bringing along friends to our social events which helps to spread the word about our existence and to encourage new members to join.

The highlight of the year was clearly the visit of our friends from Hédé-Bazouges for the weekend at the beginning of July. The reception we gave them through our hosts and the activities of the weekend, coupled with their obvious enjoyment of it all, showed that the original ideals of the twinning charter are still alive in our two communities. Again, I would like to thank and congratulate you all for your commitment to the concept of international friendship and understanding which underpins our Twinning Charter.

We had two very successful social events between the AGM in March last year and the present, namely the afternoon party at Oak Tree Farm, courtesy of Christina and Mike Odams and the Christmas meal at the village hall in December.

Other activities which featured this year included the Art Show in the Wortham tea rooms of paintings, textiles, ceramics and hand painted porcelain from members in Hédé-Bazouges.

Conversation groups (to try and save our rusty French from disappearing altogether): a beginners group has started with Lynn Clark and we shall fix a date to recommence Maggie Hale's group.

Thanks to Hans Verkroost, a calendar was produced recording the events of the twinning weekend which was put on sale both here and in Hédé-Bazouges.

The Garden lovers group has been formed and blossomed during the weekend in July. School links are developing, albeit rather slowly, but we are continuing to help where there is enthusiasm to make connections.

We were a significant presence at the Hédé Christmas market in December, which unfortunately clashed with the market here in Wortham so we were unable to be represented at both.

On an administrative note in line with current requirements, we now have insurance in place for the Association and policies for safeguarding children and a vulnerable adults protection policy, both of which can be viewed on our website.

Plans for 2015

'Top of the Bill' for this year will be our visit to Hédé-Bazouges in April. Secondly, thanks to our extremely committed and efficient secretary Linda Simpson, it was felt that a programme of activities for the year would help us all. Details of both these have already been circulated.

Other activities proposed for the coming year include the production of a book of favourite recipes from our members. We hope that a similar edition will be produced from our twinneders. [translated of course]

A calendar for 2016 produced this time by the committee in Hédé-Bazouges.

An Art show in Hédé-Bazouges organised by Bernadette Sarlat.

Established groups to continue with the revival of the conversation group with Maggie Hale.

Promotion of other links, interest groups, sports teams, businesses.

Encouragement to visit and host at other times of the year apart from the twinning weekend.

The Future.

Our membership now illustrates that our association is no longer exclusive to residents of Wortham and Burgate, indeed we welcome anyone who wishes to become involved from the surrounding area. A similar situation occurs in Hédé-Bazouges also where the name of the town has now officially changed as well.

The recent visit of the French, which included quite a number of young people showed the interest and enthusiasm of young French people to learn English and to visit England. In connection with this, we should continue to encourage those families who have young people studying French here at school to become involved, whether they live in Wortham or not. If you know of such people, please let them know that they would be welcome in our association.

Finally, we would like to encourage and enable other groups to benefit from our successful twinning arrangement. We have good communication systems in place now both within our association and also with the committee in Hédé-Bazouges. We have the capacity and there is the willingness on both sides to expand our organisation, thus enabling more people to benefit from the initiative begun over 24 years ago.

Nick Beasley January 2015.