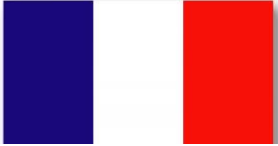


# Reigate & Banstead Twinning Association

Covering the areas of Reigate, Redhill, Banstead and Horley



## Twinning News 2024/2



### 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brunoy Special Edition



#### Important Dates for your 2024/25 Diary

- AGM ----- 7 June
- Summer meal ----- 7 July
- 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Visit to Eschweiler----- 19 - 22 June 2025

#### Message from our President

Greeting to all our readers.

The most recent event in our Twinning calendar was the 30<sup>th</sup> year of knowing our good friends in Brunoy. They came to celebrate for four days ( including travel) and it was a wonderful time. There were six past and present Mayors to share this joyous visit.

In these difficult times it is important that we especially maintain our links with our special Twinners both in France and in Germany. They are now our old friends - so long may we continue to be so!

**Penelope**  
*President Reigate and Banstead Twinning Association*

#### Brunoy Link

Dear friends,

Welcome to a "Special Brunoy" newsletter to remember our weekend celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Twinning with Brunoy. What made it special was not just the badges, the cakes or the speeches but mainly the involvement of so many of you in welcoming our 40 French guests. Quite a few received, at home, old friends, sometimes not seen since Covid but with whom you kept in touch. A few others opened your house and made new friends. New French and English "twinners"... As both Mayors, French and British, said so eloquently in their speeches, what Twinning means is real friendship links woven over the years between our families.

An example of that lasting commitment to friendship across the Channel was very well represented by Laurent Béteille who was the mayor at the origin of our twinning with Brunoy, 30 years ago and is now still very involved as the president of Brunoy Twinning Association. Quite a few of us, British and French were also there at the beginning. Friendship above national policies and politics.

I have received a few thank yous for this "super weekend" but I will only quote a French thank you for "ce beau programme"... "tout le monde était enchanté de ce séjour dont nous nous souviendrons longtemps"

This was a real team effort and we all contributed to its success. I must not forget to mention "the team" at the Town Hall who were involved in the planning of this weekend, from the beginning, to open the art exhibition to us and the visit of Reigate caves especially. An extra thank you goes to Ena who put together this special newsletter.

Last, but not least, our Twinning AGM will take place on 7 June, please come, not just for the drinks and nibbles but for the opportunity to suggest new ideas and discuss together how to make Our Twinning Association work even better. Let's think about the future while celebrating the past.

*Monique*

**Monique Pottage** (Joint Chairman & Brunoy Link) (01737 221073) [mpottage@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mpottage@hotmail.co.uk)

## RECENT EVENTS

### ▪ Visit by Brunoy

Our friends arrived on Thursday evening, later than expected due to the planned ferry crossing being cancelled two week's previously. There was, therefore, a much curtailed town hall welcome from the mayor. The following two days of events are reported below. On the Friday some hosts and their guests 'did their own thing'. On the Sunday morning Reigate caves were opened especially for us and we were split into two groups for the two different caves

➤ Friday 26 April

### Visit to Wallace Collection

Excellent planning had been made by Rosemary and Philip. There were maps, instructions and timetables for our group of sixteen, so negotiating Thameslink and the Elizabeth Line went without a hitch. Nobody can fail to be impressed by imposing Hertford House on Manchester Square, which was the former townhouse of the Seymour family, the Marquesses of Hertford. It is named after Sir Richard Wallace who compiled the extensive collection in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The collection was bequeathed to the nation by his widow and has been open to the public since 1900.

The French visitors particularly appreciated the volume of paintings, ornaments, clocks and furniture which were made during the ancient regime and were purchased by wealthy families in the revolutionary sales. We all felt quite overwhelmed by the volume of exhibits – "Where do we start?" asked one of the party. However, some were able to download the app guide. Others concentrated on the numerous pieces by Boulle, the famous cabinet maker or the huge, flamboyant paintings of Boucher. Many works of Fragonard and Delacroix were also easy to spot. Sitting down for a coffee in the central courtyard was a good way to appreciate the ingenuity of the display and the beauty of the building.



Lunch was booked at The Golden Hind, a nearby restaurant known for its fish and chips. There was the inevitable discussion about French words for cod, haddock, plaice and hake! While we tucked in I asked people what they had liked most in the Wallace Collection. The most frequent response was the armoured horses in the extensive armoury section. These live-sized animals laden with metal protection were indeed impressive.

After an enjoyable meal there was only enough time for 30 minutes on Oxford Street before we had to head for Redhill. Many people went into Selfridges ...just to look round and comment on the high price of all the goods. Thanks to our leaders' impeccable preparation we arrived back on time with a little time in hand before the evening event.

**Jane Manfield**

## Guided walk in London

Friday 26 April 2024 saw a group of energetic French and English people take the day trip to London, for a tour of the sites around Westminster and Southwark. Once we arrived on Westminster Bridge the group spent some time enjoying the spring weather whilst admiring the Houses of Parliament and the views along the Thames. To the delight of the party the clock in Elizabeth tower, chimed and then struck eleven. The richly gilded decorations on the tower looked magnificent bathed in the bright sunshine.

The Burghers of Calais

The next stop on our tour was the Victoria Tower Gardens immediately to the south of the Houses of Parliament. On the way there, several of the party had their photos taken with the Police officers guarding the entrances. We studied several of the statues in the gardens while the historical stories behind their erection were explained to our guests



Knife Edge in Two Pieces.

We then retraced our path back to Parliament Square and walked to take in the view of the highly decorated western façade to the Westminster Abbey. The group then walked along Storey's Gate to St James's Park, passing the old Westminster Arms pub along the way. Whilst in the park we stopped to view Buckingham Palace, at the far end of the lake. The Pelicans, resident on Duck Island, were close by, preening themselves on the lake side.



After crossing Horse Guards parade ground the group passed through the gate to emerge on Whitehall. The mounted guards to either side of the gate looked magnificent and attracted lots of tourists to photograph them. Walking along Whitehall we paused to see the entrance to Downing Street, before continuing on our way back to Parliament Square. We gathered the group together before entering Westminster underground station. After 6 stops, we alighted at Monument Station. Walking down Fish Street Hill we stopped to look at the monument to the Great Fire of London. While crossing over London Bridge, we paused to point out the Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral and HMS Belfast moored just downstream.



The group dispersed in the streets around Southwark Cathedral to rest their legs and find suitable places for lunch. Our group opted for a local pub, where we were able to fulfil the wishes of one of our party to try some British Fish and Chips with beer batter. Not only were the portions frighteningly large but the quality was superb too. We reassembled at a 2:45 pm and wove our way through the narrow streets of Southwark, before reaching the south bank riverside path. This provided us with a direct route to reach Blackfriars Station, where we caught the train to return down the Thameslink line to Redhill and then Reigate.

Superbly arranged by Monique and Edward, the attention to detail and their knowledge of our capital city was impressive. We learned so much about London. The weather, although cold at times was largely perfect for a walking tour, being mostly sunny and more importantly it remained dry all day.

However, the key memory that will stand out was the instant camaraderie and willingness to share friendship between all those participating.

We arrived back at Redhill promptly at 4.30pm in time for a bit of R and R before the interesting Art Exhibition and reception at the Town Hall.

Our day continued into the evening with a short visit to the local pub, The Plough, in order to introduce the French to an old English Public House. This was then followed by an impromptu supper at our house for both English and French, accompanied by lots of laughter and interesting discussions.

### ***Deborah and Nick Sexton***

➤ Saturday 27 April

### **Visit to Fishbourne Roman Villa and Chichester**

Luckily avoiding the previous night's heavy rain and the continuous rain that followed, a coach full of happy explorers set off for Fishbourne Palace beautifully organised by Jo and Peter Lloyd

Fishbourne had a different shoreline and river in pre-Roman times, and the local tribes built a Settlement, Trading Post and Port there. Soon after the Romans arrived in AD 43 a large 4-sided palace and enclosed garden was built for an important owner. It was luxurious with large rooms, underfloor heating, baths and magnificent mosaics. Unfortunately it burnt down and the walls collapsed and the palace abandoned in AD 270.

The area was forgotten and eventually became pasture land, and although many pieces of pottery and coins were found locally nobody knew what was buried beneath their feet. In 1960 the site was bought for housing, and whilst a ditch was being dug numerous Roman items started to appear. Fortunately 2 Archaeologists were on hand to stop the digging. A wealthy benefactor bought the site and famously hordes of local school children, students and assorted hippies were recruited to start unearthing the treasures we see today. The display of the north wing floors with almost complete mosaics, half the garden and excellent museum were well worth the time we spent there.

Next to Chichester, which many of us know well for its History, Abbey, Gardens and many old buildings. There are also more modern places to find, like Poundland, Tesco Express, Wetherspoons and Sweaty Betty. Two questions were on many minds. How am I going to find the bus? and where are we going to eat? Many of us found good, if crowded, eateries but the Abbey Cloisters produced excellent toasties and salads for one group

Too soon our time was over, and surprisingly many fell asleep on the return journey home, perhaps recharging their batteries for the dinner and dance to follow

### ***Reg Foster***

### **Dinner Dance**

It was a cold, wet, miserable Saturday evening but as soon as we entered the brightly decorated Refectory at Reigate College our spirits lifted. Red, white and blue balloons and of course Tricolore and Union Jack flags were everywhere as we gathered for a celebration dinner dance to mark the 30th Anniversary of the Reigate and Banstead Twinning link with Brunoy.

We enjoyed our welcoming drink of Kir, generously sponsored by Frank Kelly, and chatted to friends old and new before we sat down to a delicious 5 course meal prepared by Gavin, the Chef at Reigate College. Our French friends had kindly donated a wheel of Brie which, needless to say, was very much appreciated. Whilst we were eating and chatting the Surrey Hills Big Band played merrily and a convivial time was had by all.

At the end of our feast we listened to speeches first of all by the Mayor of Reigate, Eddy Humphreys, who presented a commemorative scroll produced by some students at East Surrey College to M. Gallier, the Mayor of Brunoy. M. Gallier thanked the Mayor and also Monique and Dominique for organising the weekend as well as the hosts who have made their French guests so welcome.



Dominique spoke and told us that she had decided to step down from her post and hand over the reins to Bernard, who replied that it would be a hard act to follow but he would do his best.



Finally M. Béteille, who was Mayor of Brunoy 30 years ago and had signed the original Twinning Treaty, said that he was very pleased to be present on this special occasion and he was sure that the link would continue to flourish.

After the cutting of the two commemorative cakes the band started to play again and the more energetic and extrovert members of the Twinning Group took to the dance floor, whilst everyone else looked on, tapping their feet and humming or singing along with the music!



The evening flew and before we knew where we were it was time to leave.

We all had a wonderful time and a huge thank you to Monique and her team who worked tirelessly so that we could enjoy ourselves and continue the 'entente cordiale'!

**Judy Bromley**

Sunday 29 April



## AN HISTORICAL NOTE FROM DIANA BOWES OUR FIRST CHAIRMAN OF THE TWINNING ASSOCIATION

### Notes on twinning with Brunoy

In the early 1990s following the success with twinning partnership with Eschweiler in Germany, the Reigate & Banstead Twinning Association (whose founding members were Borough Councillors. Tom Curtis, the first Chairman and later President and Maurice Adams) agreed to explore the possibility of twinning with a town in France. A public meeting was held in the Old Council Chamber at the Town Hall to which representatives of organisations connected with education (schools including Adult Education), sports clubs, churches and musical groups were invited to attend. This meeting generated a great deal of interest, with the support of the Mayor and the Borough Council and it was decided to form a Working Group to explore the matter further.

Two residents in Redhill, Anne and Jim Miller, members of the Reigate Grammar School Parents Choir came forward and suggested a link with Brunoy near Paris. They had met a M and Mme Lejay on their family summer camping holiday in France. They became friends through their mutual interest in music. The Lejays heard that Brunoy was looking for a twin town in the south of England. Mr Lejay was a Town Councillor in Brunoy. Matters progressed from there. The travelling to Brunoy was possible by train by Eurostar to Paris and then by the local train to Brunoy or by coach crossing the channel from Dover to Calais. Members of the Twinning Association including Borough Councillors such as myself visited Brunoy meeting their Mayor, the Town Councillors and members of their twinning association. The friendships flourished and the understanding of the two local authority areas deepened, to the extent that it was agreed that an official partnership would be established.

Anne Miller, Laurent Bêteille and Diana Bowes  
Founder members of Brunoy link



The official events including the signing of the charters were held in the early part of 1994 both in Reigate and in Brunoy (this was just before I became Mayor in May 1994), 30 years ago. Mayors of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council being Patrons of the Association have always been most supportive as has the Borough Council recognising the civic link.

Regular annual exchanges involving individuals from the Twinning Association or from local organisations have taken place with guests staying in people's homes. Each time a delegation visits their partner town there is a weekend of events with sightseeing visits and social events. Each year since there has been a visit in either direction except of course during the Covid pandemic. One most successful exchange has been with the students from Reigate College through the auspices of Monique Pottage, Jo Lloyd and other teachers.

It is pleasing to me that the Twinning Association is still such a successful independent organisation, raising its funds through membership and social events, so that it is possible to cover the costs of visits from our partner towns. The Newsletters is circulated to our members four times a year which is also sent now by e-mail. In the early days this was a typed printed document sent by post. I been involved with Town Twinning since 1983 when I was elected as a Borough Councillor, first as Secretary and as Chairman of the Twinning Association. During my year as Mayor I visited both towns and had visitors here. My husband, Richard, supported me and was an enthusiastic twinning member. He succeeded me as Chairman and after his sudden death, Penelope Horsfall stepped in as Chairman and is now President.

Let us raise a toast to Twinning with Brunoy!

**Diana Bowes**