



## **Devon Twinning Circle Explained**

The Devon Twinning Circle acts as a kind of forum for member Associations where they can exchange ideas on the development of twinning activities, find and foster contacts in other countries and generally offer mutual support and encouragement.

The Circle meets four times a year, usually on the third Saturday in January, April, July and October with April being the A.G.M. Meetings take place at various venues around the county at the invitation of a local Association. Currently, around eighty Twinning Associations are members of the Circle.

The Circle is also able to negotiate very favourable group insurance rates for its members, of which more in a dedicated section later in this folder.

There is also a quarterly Newsletter circulated to all member Associations and also a website based at County Hall to help people keep in touch.

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The Twinning Associations mentioned above are voluntary organisations which establish and maintain links with other countries. Well over 100 cities, towns and villages in Devon are currently twinned with communities abroad including France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Russia, Hungary, Uganda, New Zealand, Japan and the United States, Some have multiple Twinning: e.g. Exeter and Plymouth; several others, even quite small villages, have at least two “twins”. A full list can be found on the County Twinning website; a sizeable majority are members of the Circle.

Not surprisingly the majority of contacts is concentrated in Europe and some are spasmodic, mainly because of distance and cost, but most are thriving and engage in regular reciprocal visits. Numerous cross-border contacts and family friendships bear witness to the success of twinning in helping people of different nationalities to experience and appreciate each other’s customs and way of life. Language need not be a barrier!

Devon has the reputation of being one of the most “twinned” counties and has long had an official county link with the Calvados region in Normandy going back to the signing of a Charter of Friendship in 1971.