



# Home from Home



Number 25

The Newsletter of the Devon Twinning Circle

December 2009

Well where is the year gone, as I put this, the last newsletter of 2009 together and looking out of the window at the winter storms and rain, thinking of the good times I've have had through twinning over the past 12 months, before we get into the swing of the "Party Season" with our thoughts turning to Christmas and New year celebrations. From looking at various group newsletters Christmas Dinners and Parties are all organised, I look forward to hearing about your activities over the festive season and the twinning events planned for next year, many articles can be sent to me for the next Newsletter.

Looking forwards:-

## General Meeting

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January

St Brannocks Church Rooms  
Braunton

14:00 hrs

Guest Speaker

Peter Little

"Shelter Box"

We hope that you all can attend.

Luncheon is served at 12:30 but reservations and payment are required by 3<sup>rd</sup> January at a cost of £6.50 per head. Please contact the Secretary at Braunton twinning Association if you are interested in participating in the meal before the meeting.

Diary Dates for next years meetings are:-

January 9<sup>th</sup> 2010 hosted by Braunton Association  
April 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 (AGM) by Kingsteignton Association  
July 10<sup>th</sup> 2010 hosted by Okehampton Association  
October 9<sup>th</sup> 2010 hosted by Teignmouth Association

Just to remind future hosts to consult the Devon Twinning Circle "blue folders" for more details regarding hosting our quarterly meetings.

Please contact Pat Sherwood if your Association are considering hosting any of the meetings in 2011.

Lastly to all fellow twinner's,

Just to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Hazel.  
Chairperson

### Report of the Twinning conference held at Barrington Court on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2009 by invitation of the Somerset County Council.

Natalie House Somerset County Council welcomed everyone. The Chairman of the Council said "it was clear that twinning is good in Somerset. The Council is aware of twinning especially at family level and with young people. Long may it continue. The day is four fold to provide net-working, clarify aspects of twinning, friends from Devon a model for them to follow how to do things."

He then wished everyone a lovely and helpful day.

Geoffrey Brown EUCLID explained what they are all about. They will help fill in forms for grants. He talked about the main aims of Europe for Citizens. Budget for 2007 – 2013 is 215million Euros. The fixed dates for grants until 2013 are:- Feb 1<sup>st</sup>. Apr 1<sup>st</sup>. June 1<sup>st</sup>.Sept

30<sup>th</sup>. There are 30 countries taking part. (Web site [www.citizensfund.eu](http://www.citizensfund.eu)).

Dennis asked why was there only 6 grants for the whole of England? (No proper reply) Contact EUCLID for guidelines.\*

Susan Handley LGA gave her top ten tips for twinning. She thanked Somerset CC for setting up the conference and sang the praises of the Devon Twinning Circle. The bad news is there's not enough money for funding. She reckons all twin towns should apply for grants as we don't portray our potential.

Hazel did a brilliant job of speaking about the Devon Twinning Circle. How it was founded in 1977, our quarterly meetings and how they are run. She had printed out some copies of the letter she had received on the "Vetting and Barring Scheme" and that was a winner as a lot didn't understand it. Dennis referred to as the Scarlet Pimpernel excelled in his talk about insurance. His unique role is well known.

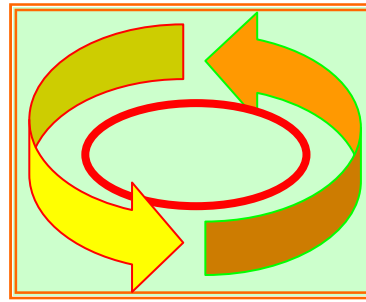
Natalie House thanked them and said "they were good Speakers."

All in all it was a good day out. We were treated like VIP's. After lunch we were given a tour of the house. We met a lot of people all eager to talk to us. Devon Twinning Circle is a role model for Somerset to follow.

If you were at the meeting in Exeter in July all the information about EUCLD is on the leaflet that was given out. If you haven't got one and would like one let me know and I will get you one contact me at [sherwoodpuk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sherwoodpuk@yahoo.co.uk)

A strange thing it took Dennis and Sat nav 45 minutes to go from Tiverton to Barrington Court but the man from Cheddar and his Sat nav took 1 hour 45 minutes!

Pat Sherwood.  
Secretary



## Around The Circle

### Brest Twinning Panel

We have recently had our annual visit to Brest. Unlike most twinning organisations, we actually have a visit to and a visit from within the one year. I am delighted to say we now have 4 new families with children coming along – for the time being! The French are always much keener than we appear to be to get our children to speak another language! I have had a great deal of trouble trying to find families to link up – even putting an article in the local paper. From this we trawled a very nice retired teacher who had recently been widowed. I have pestered schools and friends with children, to little avail. Fingers crossed the families bring in others.

So.....a few years ago, I approached some local secondary schools with a view to taking students with us on our exchanges. We are all over 60 pretty well, and desperately needed an influx of youth! It has been a successful arrangement to date, and the young people have very much benefited from their visits to French families. Since this takes place in term time, one of the members of staff comes too and those who are/have been teachers will know only too well what an onerous task it is filling out the endless risk assessment forms, et etc. Now this brings me on to the subject of CRB checks which raises its ugly head in your newsletter. Exchanging families do not appear to need any such checks from either side, but obviously unaccompanied school children do. This year, my counterpart in Brest "housed" a single gentleman alongside two school pupils (male 15 and 17) in the same household. This was picked up by a member of the school staff with responsibility for health and safety/CRTs etc. A minor panic took place. The gentleman concerned actually had a CRB check from the organisation he works for BUT this does not count. Each establishment has to give its own CRB clearance. I have several, through work I do with young people and church groups. I am pleased to say that we were able to find another host family, but it led to a very embarrassing situation, although luckily the

gentleman understood the problem but the French family were totally bemused, having never experienced anything like it.

Language schools receiving young foreign students have to vouch for the English families hosting them, and they are asked to obtain CRB checks nowadays. I found a work placement for a young French nurse here in Plymouth, and she had to produce their equivalent, which appears to be something called a "cassier judiciaire! - unsure about spelling.

### **Club Wesseling Twinning Association**

Recently Club Wesseling returned to West Devon after celebrating 25 years with its German friends.

The group enjoyed a five day visit to Wesseling in Germany to meet with their German counterparts, "Club West Devon" taking with them some West country beer and cider as gifts.

Whilst there they were treated to some interesting excursions, these included the Regierungsbunker in Ahrweiler which is a government bunker used in the cold war which is built deep into the surrounding countryside. Whilst in Ahrweiler they also had a tour of a winery followed by a wine tasting in its cellars.

One day they were taken to an Archeological park at Xanton in the north of Germany where they visited the remains of a roman town which is being excavated and partially rebuilt and where they have a very new and modern Romer Museum. Afterwards they were treated to lunch in one of the very old restaurants in the town.

In the morning of the last day the two groups attended a civic reception with the newly appointed Mayor of Wesseling, Herr Haupt who was presented with a framed photograph of the quilt which was given to Club West Devon in 2008 when they visited West Devon. There were also framed photographs for the members of Club Wesseling to take back home with them. Later on that day both clubs met up at "The Wirtshaus" in Wesseling for an enjoyable social evening.

The following morning the English guests left Wesseling to travel back to England via Calais where they did some last minute shopping before catching the ferry home.

**Exeter Twinning Circle** reports they have been busy with their Novembers Newsletter reporting that their Musical Evening at the Guildhall in aid of "Dream-A-Way" was very successful from every aspect. The evening was a sell-out and the audience was entertained by a varied and scintillating programme of classical, folk and popular music all performed by the Students from St Margaret's School. It is commented that the evening was a most memorable one for many reasons: the historical setting, the talent of the

performers, the warmth and enjoyment of the performers and audience led by the Lord Mayor of Exeter and his wife. As a result of all the volunteers, the Exeter Twinning Association was able to send the charity, Dream-A-Way, a total donation of £1551.43.

During September Exeter hosted a two day visit from Rotarians Rennes. It is over 40 years since the twinning began between the two clubs began and many real and lasting friendships have resulted. As flights between Exeter and Rennes were not convenient, they travelled on the overnight Brittany Ferries from Roscoffe to Plymouth. All who participated seemed delighted by the reception and hospitality that they received. The programme for the Saturday included visits to Fingle Bridge, the Drew Arms in Drewsteignton, Caslte Drogo and dinner at the Fisherman's Cott at Bickleigh. On the Sunday started with a train ride from Topsham to Exmouth followed by a cruise bound for Exeter along the canal top Topsham Lock, then took the foot ferry back to Topsham for lunch, shopping then a visit to Topsham Museum before enjoying supper at the Church House Inn, Rattery then finally returning their guests to Plymouth for their overnight sail to Roscoff.

The Club also held their Annual Twinning Exhibition in the Exeter Central Library to advertise and promote the concept of Twinning.

### **30 years of NEWTON ABBOT TWINNING ASSOCIATION**

Way back in 1979, a group of people were anxiously asking each other, "what do you think they will eat and will they speak English?", whilst waiting for a delegation from somewhere in the south of Germany to arrive.

Now members of N.A.T.A. (Newton Abbot twinning Association) can easily answer those questions, for on a weekend in June 2009 Newton Abbot celebrated thirty years of their twinning link with Besigheim, Germany. Two coaches came from Besigheim, and others flew over, so in total over 80 people came, (including their town band), all staying with families in the area.

Our association arranged an extensive programme for their visitors. There was a "Sell Out" concert in Stover school attended by over 300 people, at which their town band played. Also taking part were the school's choir, part of their orchestra and the "Chordettes" an all female close harmony choir. On Saturday morning with the sun shining Newton's shoppers were entertained by the town band's of Newton Abbot & Besigheim, playing in the centre of the town in Besigheim Place, situated in front of Newton's historic Tower.

In September a large delegation of N.A.T.A. members returned to Germany, for Besigheim's celebration of the 30-year link. This coincided with their biennial wine festival during which there is an historic festival

parade with over 50 groups participating, including a Newton Abbot float. It's theme this year was a birthday party, with a 7ft high 3 tiered cake on it (which did give some transport problems to Germany), the lady's in flapper costumes and the men in D.J's amongst the gifts given to our German friends were, a Lucombe oak, which is a variety bred over 200yrs ago in Devon, a perpetual shield to be award annually by one of their schools, and some Devon wine.

As the Association's charter states the real object of "twinning" is the establishment through exchange visits of long term contacts and friendships with residents of the twin towns. Over the years, there have been many such exchanges to each other's countries and many private visits have subsequently been made, as a result of contacts made. Certainly during these two weekends many friendships, some spanning 30 years, were renewed and new ones established.

Recently N.A.T.A. past Chairman Mrs. Persis Stewart, who holds the Cross of Merit from the German Federal Republic, (for her services to twinning), attended a Vin d'Honneur, at the German Ambassador's London Residence, on the occasion of the Day of German Unity.

Members have already started extensive planning for an English week to be held in their French twin town Ay in March 2010.

#### **And lastly an update on the Vetting and Baring Scheme Case Reference 2009/0072158.**

At the meeting of the Devon Twinning Circle in July at Exeter, It was brought up that the Department for Children, Schools and Families, are bringing in a new/change law with working with children or hosting children in your home.

I was ask to write a letter to the Department as how this will affect Twinning visits as this is only a yearly or perhaps every other year occurrence.

And as you can read in the reply to my letter, which is on the last page of this newsletter. When you receive Children from abroad you don't need an ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority), But if you are going over with a Group of children then you have to be Vetted and Barred which will cost £64. I know there has been a lot of inquiries to the Department and they have been unable to answer the questions.

I went to Somerset County Council meeting in October and the twinning Association there were asking the same question, so I read out the reply (as below) and also they were advise by Susan Handley, Communication Officer, Local Government Association and Geoffrey Brown, Director, EUCLID to write to your local MP's.

If you require a copy of this letter, please don't hesitate to email me, also you will see at the bottom of the letter there is a Reference Number if you want to write to the department, please do so.

Hope this will be of some help to you all, but please do get in contact with me, if you feel we must do more.

On the weekend of 12th December 2009, the Department of children, schools and Families, have scaled down the vetting and barring of adults who are working with children, and if an adult is going abroad with a group of children less than 28 days, they don't have to be vetted and barred and majority of twinning visits are less than this.

I think it is called watch this space.

HAZEL EVELY

Chairperson

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Just a reminder of the details for sending your news and updates. The editors address is "Fuchsia House" 18 West View Road, Bere Alston, Yelverton, W Devon PL20 7DD. Tel/fax 01822 840862. Thank you all for sending your Club Newsletters and news to me over the past few months, please accept my apologies if they do not appear in this issue but I still have had some IT (Computer) problems as I am updating my software, but please keep sending your items to me. If you can send items to me electronically all the better, my email, as always, is [peter@pdennis8.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:peter@pdennis8.wanadoo.co.uk) as this will help me edit your news, even when I am away on business.



Lastly may I take this opportunity to thank you all for your contributions to the Newsletters this year and wish you all Seasons Greetings for the Festive Season and great twinning adventures in 2010.

Devon Twinning Circle  
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Crediton  
Devon

EX17 6HT

Dear Mrs Evelyn,

Thank you for your letter of 09 August 2009 with regards to the introduction of the Vetting and Barring Scheme in the UK.

The purpose of the Vetting and Barring Scheme is to regulate specified types of work with children and/or vulnerable adults; as such, trips organised by twinning associations would only fall within the remit of the Vetting and Barring Scheme if they involved interaction with children. For example, twinning volunteers going into schools to hold workshops or set up video conferences on a regular basis would need to register with the Scheme.

In addition, the Scheme only requires individuals to be registered when they are in contact with children that either; occurs once a month or more, 3 or more times in a 30 day period or involves an overnight stay (which is defined as the period from 2am to 6am). However, the Scheme does not apply to groups visiting from abroad that are solely responsible for children from their own country. Therefore twinning associations visiting the UK looking after children from their own country would not need to be registered.

There is one-off fee of £64 for individuals in paid employment registering from July 2010, which will be waived for volunteers. Therefore, volunteer twinning will not be charged for their registration.

Annual visits or visits that occur no more than twice a year will not, as mentioned, be classified as frequent enough to warrant registration under the Scheme. However, the duration of stay could impact on this, as an overnight stay would fall under the Scheme and would require the volunteers involved to be registered.

I hope this information has addressed your queries on the remit of the Scheme and how it will impact on the work of your member associations.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Andrew

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act Implementation Division