

Home from Home

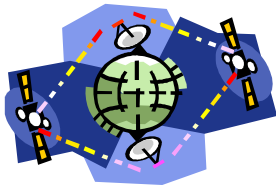
The Newsletter of the Devon Twinning Circle
No. 18. January 2008



Modern Communication

There is no need for us to expand on the way the techniques of communication have improved in our lifetime. We carry small devices in our pockets and, with them, we talk to folks around the world. A certain grandson chooses to talk to us from New Zealand by using his computer. We see him; he sees us and can show us his work at the same time as we look at the good, clear colour picture on the screen. It costs nothing and we like that bit. We can write one Christmas message that can be read by all our friends. (We can, but we feel we shall keep more friends if we don't!)

Yet there are conditions where communication is a problem. We call ourselves the Devon Twinning Circle, but in fact we are a Devon Twinning Splodge. We are splattered all over the county in a random way, each Association with its own committee making decisions which affect its own group. Each committee has some form of contact with the committee of the DTC, but everyone can take it or leave it, depending on how much virtue one sees in the exchange of information.



Do we have in our Twinning activities an accepted channel by which any member of the DTC can discover what is going on elsewhere? The Chairman's new folder is a mine of information. Do you know how to see what is in it? It is on the website; are you able to see it there? This newsletter is intended to aid the communication process, but we know, of course, that not all members see it. The quarterly meetings enable those who attend to compare notes with other groups. Maybe you can't get around to the meetings, but most people seem to find them useful.

Would better communication help us to enlist new, younger members?

We are merely observing and just asking.

Strong Feelings? Dear Sir . . .

Someone suggested at the last meeting that it would be a good idea to have "letters to the editor" in this Newsletter. It would be interesting

to see what are the things that arouse strong feelings around the county. Would you like to write to us? Please keep it short or you will be edited!

Notes from our Chairman

Stewart sends his best wishes for Christmas and the New Year and a successful twinning in 2008. He did realise that, although the kind thoughts were sent to all at the time of writing before the festive season, you would read them afterwards, so he calls them "retrospective greetings". He also said that:

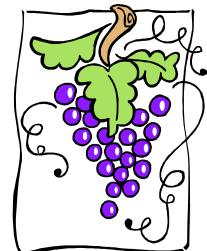
"So far, DTC folders have gone out to 37 Associations, so there are still 42 to be delivered, but I shall wait until after the January meeting to see if we can hand over some to folks who attend.

"I should like to encourage members to come to Bideford for the meeting. The Halsannery Field Centre is just South of Bideford and some may also find the modern Atlantic Village shopping centre of interest just out on the Clovelly Road.

"A feature of the New Year's Eve festivities in Madrid is worth describing. They gather in the Puerta del Sol and buy 12 grapes before midnight. These they must devour whilst the clock strikes 12.

The custom is called "doce a las doce" (twelve at twelve). In Bideford there used to be a mad rush to cross the old bridge to try to beat the church clock as it struck twelve."

Perhaps they prefer grapes now, Stewart.



Our Next Meeting

Our January meeting is at
The Halsannery Field Centre,
Bideford
On Saturday, 19th January 2008
At 2.00 p.m.

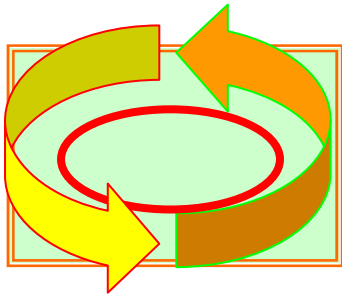
Looking into the Future:-

Get your transport organised now! The other meetings in 2008 will be at:

Bow in April,

Chittlehampton in July

and Newton Abbot in October.



Around The Circle

Golf, Skittles and French Mistakes

The newsletter of the **Exeter Twinning Circle** is yet another mine of information. We have mentioned before the excellent, photo-enhanced nature of this small magazine. The scope of subjects covered this time can be summarized: Chair's Comments (Well, they always do, don't they?), a golfing return visit from Bad Homburg, a visit to Highgrove House, a skittles championship, a visit from some French Army Reservists, a description of the ETC exhibition display and a photo of a Chinese lady reading their newsletter on the Great Wall!

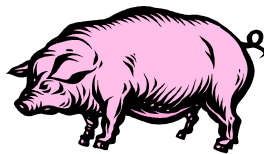
There is also a record of the sort of mistakes one makes with vocabulary when speaking abroad. We offer our sympathies; it is now a long time since we declared (in less-than-perfect French) at a tree-planting in Dinan that we had just planted a goat! (You guess the species.)

Pork Saturday

We have a very smart newsletter from **Yealmpton** with no less than five photos included. They report gleefully how they discovered that their costings with Brittany Ferries dropped from £85 to £10 when they found they had chosen the week for their visit when there was a "special offer". What they did was to maintain the costs for adults, but to use the reduction to let all children go free.

It seems that Mizilac has *Le Samedi du Porc* at this time, so, although some guests had a more sedate time with their hosts, others went to the festivities and a great time was had by all - - except the pigs of course.

Yealmpton are having the common problem of raising the necessary funds to give a proper welcome to their guests next year. We know the problem. This has not stopped them from having an ambitious programme for visits both ways, so we are sure they will find the funds in time.



Fees are Reduced

We have two neat newsletters from **Dolton & District** in which we get a clear picture of the way things are going. We wonder how, from a few years ago, a busy and enthusiastic association has become one where events are badly attended, where the school seems to have lost interest and where they cannot find enough members for a full committee. This is not as bad as it sounds, we hope, and many readers will be saying "so what's new?" However, the fact that group attitudes do

change within just a few years is evident to all of us in one way or another. Let's blame television.

The Secretary, Sandra Pruski, tells us that she is going to India for a while, but she assures us that she is coming back and she will not be looking for a twin village whilst she is there.

They are expecting a group of Primary School children to visit them next year

from Amfreville. Sandra's October letter said it was uncertain if any of the schools would be sending English children to France. The second letter shows the disappointment they feel that none of the four schools want to respond in fact. So it looks as though the French children will come over here and the English members will go there without any school support.

Perhaps the children have to stay in school to be educated.

Dolton are about to *reduce* their fees after a successful year of fund-raising.



Man Gives Birth to Piglets

(We are learning fast about the use of headlines!)

South Molton went to Livarot this year and were there for the Foire aux Fromages. It seems they also have a "crie de cochon" competition which, we suppose, has something to do with cheese. An English lady won the competition, but most attention was gained by a man (the "piggy") who was elaborately dressed and managed to produce a litter of piglets; (as one does in Livarot.)

Headlines in the newsletter from South Molton include a Twinning Walk, a Meal at the old Rectory, Bowling, a Christmas meal and AGM at the George Hotel. They are busy.

40 Years of Twinning

There was a real reunion of friends evident at the recent special anniversary held at Barnstaple. After the success of the Anglo-German Friendship Club in the 1960s, the celebration was to mark 40 years of twinning between **Barnstaple Twinners** and their twin town of Uelzen, near Hanover. **Bideford** and **South Molton** were also parties to the 1967 agreement.

Long Kilometres

We enjoyed the trip to Langerwehe in Germany in 2007 with the **Exmouth Twinners** in August. We have the newsletter from last June when the project was being planned. The trip included a hot and overwhelming visit to a power station and a choice of walks around the vineyards of the Ahr valley. The choice was offered mainly on the basis of the number of Kilometres to be walked. We discovered that German Kilometres are about 1,500 metres. Would you like a Twinning Association T-shirt for a modest price of £7.99? If you paid a penny more it would still be a bargain but make an offer for something to wear in the garden. There will be no discount for advertising Exmouth TA on your chest. They are mostly size M.

Ideas And Information

Bursaries for Travel to Britain

We like to let everyone know what is happening with our Russian twinning (or rather, our twinning with Russia) because they do things a bit differently and they have slightly different objectives.

Their newsletter reports that the committee now has a project to provide funding for the airfare for one Russian visitor who would otherwise find it too costly. This is to take the form of a bursary in memory of Robin Smith who tirelessly worked to encourage links between the two towns of Exeter and Yaroslavl.

This is a good idea for any association that can raise a few spare pounds. We do not suggest that you must wait for an unfortunate member to pass on, but it would be a way of encouraging a new member (in either direction) to visit if the initial cost seemed a bit daunting.

The **Exeter Yaroslavl Twinning Association** now has its website on www.eyta.org.uk if you are interested in its particular activities. We note that, among other things, you can use the site to read Russian newspapers in English, use a free online Russian text translator and listen to Russian Radio in English.

If you would like to go to Russia in 2008, contact Nick Goodwin on 01404 825029.

Attractive Brochure

Our Chairman was unfortunately unable to attend the celebration of the launch of a fine new brochure by **Kingsbridge TA**. However, he passed on to us a copy of the brochure to show what a good job they have done. It is typically done in three sections of a folded

A4-size sheet, but all the information you need is

there. The "outside" faces are eye-catching and the inner pages are directed to newcomers with answers to all the questions they ask first: "What is it?", "Who is it for?", "What is involved?" and so on, with a brief description of their French and German Twin Towns.

Then there is the bit where you apply for information. This is a succinct publication. (It really is! but we like using "succinct" anyway.) We are sure Ann Yates would send you a copy if you rang her on 01548 853366.



What was Discussed Last Time?

At the October meeting there was some talk about people seeking Polish connections. It was realised that Polish communities already exist, but it was hoped that greater integration might be possible through the twinning organisations.

The Committee heard that Brian Gates of **Barnstaple** was proposing the possibility of a great advertising campaign for Twinning which could be moved around the county. The feeling was that it would be too expensive in terms of costs, organisation time and transport. It was an interesting idea though.

The Folder of information about Devon Twinning is now available and the committee discussed its value for some time. Copies were to go to paid-up members only. It was recognised that we may now have the wrong names for secretaries and/or chairmen, so it was hoped TAs would keep the DTC up to date. Particularly, secretaries are urged to correct any inaccurate details in the folder and send the true facts to Stewart Philp. It is recognised that the folder rapidly loses its value if the information is more archival than informative.

It was mentioned at the committee meeting that we do not now have the **reports from Associations** that we used to have at the end of every meeting. We all realise that they took up a lot of time just when we all wanted to go home, but still it was interesting to hear what others were doing. It was decided that it would be good to have a few reports – probably not more than five – and that these should be designated before the meeting started.

In the **General Meeting**, we learned that the BBC (Michael Chequer) was still hoping to go with a TA to France soon. We think none has been chosen yet, so get in your enquiries if you fancy a bit of publicity. Remember that publicity works both ways!

There was some discussion on the involvement of schools and the need to conform to school regulations. Dolton do a school exchange, but they acknowledge that it is hard work. On the question of insurance and accommodation of children, Dennis Knowles said there should be no problem.

Nobody Knows!

At the last October meeting, a casual enquiry revealed that



we are not certain how many actual twinningers there are in the county. It is just possible that you will be asked some time soon to declare your membership numbers.

Well, it would be nice to know.

We know that we have more Twinning Associations in Devon than in any other county (or its equivalent) in Europe, but that's not exactly the same as the number of people involved.

Devon's First Cathedral

When twenty-four visitors from Avranches arrived in **Crediton** for their October visit this year, the Mayor, Cllr. Joyce Harris welcomed them and hoped they would be able to come in 2009 to celebrate the founding of the town as the first Cathedral Town in Devon. M.Bazin, for the visitors replied that he expected a celebration next year of 15 years of Twinning. Celebrations this time were a bit one-sided when Crediton played Avranches at boules in the new Town Square; we suspect that the French have rather more experience at this game than the English!

The first event of the visit had been the dedication service in the Garden of Remembrance, but the events were more musical at the later buffet lunch with music provided by the Vicar, Nigel Guthrie, his wife, family and friends. There was no mention of their offering their musical services (sorry Vicar!) to any other Association.

There was much talk about how to get younger people to join the Twinning Groups.

The Folder Again:

Rob Hooper has let us know that the Handbook is "up and running" on the web, thanks to colleague Joan Baker who "knows about these things". You can see it on

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/twinning.htm>

Do You have a Dog Show?

Una Hobbs has written to us from **Bow & District TA** to say they held their third Annual Dog Show with 11 classes and over 100 entries. Una says it is very popular with people who do not own dogs. They come along to support the event, but she wonders if the cream teas have something to do with the attraction rather than the dogs.

Bow is not a big place, but they manage to organise a Safari Supper by touring around six or more different homes before they all finish in one cottage.

Una takes up the question mentioned in our last Newsletter of what members must do to be "qualified" twinners. Anyone in Bow can be a member; some take guests, but don't go to France, some go to France but can't offer accommodation and some are willing to help, but can't visit or be visited. You just have to pay the sub. There are nice folk in Bow, but it does get a bit draughty up there sometimes.

Please send all material and ideas to the editor:

Don Leech,

34, Green Park Road,
Exmouth EX8 4JN

or to don.leech@tesco.net



Sampford Peverel & District.

Thirty members went off to visit Meulles and Notre Dame de Courson last July, but found the route to Poole closed with a three-vehicle pile-up. They only just caught the ferry, but that was after some brilliant work on a 17-point turn by the driver helped by some lorry drivers.



They must have had a good time; they went to Cerza Zoo and had enough time to go home with their hosts for a chat and dinner. The official dinner was the next day and later they went to L'Aigle where they saw how pins and needles were made. They found some caves (and some Calvados and some Pommeau) and later saw a museum and a forge. They do get a variety!

They all got home in time despite a further hold-up when the coach door wouldn't close. It all sounds like a typical twinners' outing.

Your Committee 2007 - 2008



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