



Friends of Triel

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Newsletter of the Leatherhead & District Twinning Association

Summer 2024

Welcome to our 20th Anniversary Edition

20 years ago Bridget Lewis-Carr and Jean-Pierre Houlemare, representing Leatherhead and District and Triel-sur-Seine respectively, signed a partnership agreement on behalf of our 2 towns. In that time many twinings have succumbed to the challenges of Covid and Brexit and sadly just due to loss of energy and enthusiasm for the vision of uniting communities in friendship across national boundaries and frontiers. We are thrilled to report that our twinning is going strong, with new energy being injected by younger members. This newsletter will share what we have done to celebrate, and highlight the many people around the area who have contributed. Enjoy reading!

Elaine

Preparation

The committee started working on the weekend events with our Triel friends back in the autumn. At the suggestion of Bridget Kendrick, our Mole Valley council rep, we applied for a grant from the Thomas Flack Trust, with the specific aim of creating a piece of artwork that would symbolise our friendship and would be visible in both Leatherhead and Triel. In the spring we started to arrange the visit and, thanks to you, our members and friends, we received many offers of hospitality. Paula worked hard to link you with French visitors and we are so grateful for the way in which you welcomed and cared for everyone. This weekend could not have happened without you. Thank you.

The 20th anniversary visit weekend



Reception at the Leatherhead Parish Hall on Saturday.

Did you know that we were nearly foiled by politicians on both sides of the Channel? Macron's surprise election meant that Cedric Aoun, Mayor of Triel was unable to join the group. He was ably represented by Gilles Gaillard and Berangere Voillot. Rishi Sunak called an early election which meant that many were busy with election preparation and the Chairman of Mole Valley Council, Elizabeth Daly, had to leave the civic reception early to attend an election event.

The French contingent arrived at St Pancras International on Thursday afternoon 2 hours late due to Eurostar electric fault which meant a rather long coach journey back to Leatherhead through rush hour traffic. We were all grateful to arrive back in Leatherhead, where hosts were waiting to welcome our visitors into our homes. That first evening is a special time to get to know new friends or to catch up with "old" ones. After all, this was the first visit to Leatherhead since 2018.

Friday was our day out in Oxford – a walking tour had been booked for 11.30, but the M40 did its best to prevent this with a closure between Junction 3 and 4. Stuck in a jam and a great retinue of VIP card swept past us – who got preferential treatment? All will be revealed ... Only 15 minutes late we were put into 2 groups – a French speaking guide for 1 group – and taken on a fascinating walk around Oxford, peering into college quads and learning about the

antics of famous alumnae. Lunch was eating our picnic on Broad Street. Afterwards we scattered – some exploring Magdalen and its magnificent gardens, the Botanic Garden and Arboretum (did you know it is the oldest botanic garden in the UK?), the Ashmolean Museum, the Bodleian, or just enjoying the sights from the top of an open air bus. Bridget and Hubert even had a royal encounter – those cars sweeping past us were not politicians heading to the next hustings but the Emperor and Empress of Japan! We gathered together for an evening meal at the Turf Tavern, a pub which started life as a tavern back in 1381, and which nestles against part of the mediaeval city wall. The journey back was straightforward, so there was plenty of time, if you wanted it, for a good night's sleep, to be ready for a very busy Saturday.

The Civic Reception and Exchange of gifts

First the speeches – Juliana welcomed us all in French and English. Elizabeth Daly spoke on behalf of Mole Valley DC with Bridget Kendrick translating into French. Gilles Gaillard spoke on behalf of Triel and Nicole Jusserand for the AET with Claire Muff translating. An addition this year to the formal speeches was a talk by Anna Brereton in French and English on memories of twinning visits, memories which are the basis of friendships that develop as part of the exchange programme.

The gifts



We were so thrilled with the artwork designed and made at The Fire and Iron Gallery. Lucy Quinnell has worked closely with us and designed duplicate pieces of iron work, which were beautifully executed by her son, Tom. Here is Lucy with Gilles and Elizabeth, displaying these two pieces.

We hope to let members know very soon where the artwork for Leatherhead will be hung. The Triel piece has already been hung over a doorway in the Town Hall.

We are grateful to the Thomas Flack Trust for their contribution which made this work possible.

Let me quote Lucy's words on the postcard portraying her work.

Congratulations to our friends at Triel on the twentieth anniversary of our twinning. Blacksmiths who live and work in our town have specially created for you , by hand, this work of art in steel and bronze. It depicts the two towns as a pair of swans gliding on the water, with their two rivers flowing towards a central sea channel where they unite. Acorns are symbols of hope and growth, and reflect the strength of our two towns and their friendship today and in the future



The gift to Leatherhead from Triel was this painting of Triel executed by a local artist – Paul Bissierier – depicting the centre of Triel with its significant buildings. Thanks to Nadine for displaying it for us.

The Friends of Triel gave the Triellois a book about the Castles of Britain. In return we received a gift of bottles of champagne, which we will be sharing at the Summer Garden party (we hope to see you there to share the pleasure of drinking it). Afterwards there was an excellent buffet and a lot of mingling and chatting. Thank you to all who contributed cakes and savouries. A big thank you to The Downsmen, a local Barber Shop Group, who entertained us with their harmonious and humorous acapella singing. A final thank you to John Leonard who

came and took photos for us. His pictures can be seen at [Triel Reception 2024 \(photoscribe.co.uk\)](https://photoscribe.co.uk). Other pictures are posted on the website.

Visit to the Iron and Fire Gallery



Saturday afternoon saw us visiting the very place where the artwork was made. Lucy and Tom treated us to a tour of the Fire and Iron Gallery with all its amazing exhibits, to the forge itself and to a visit to “Rowhurst” – the family home for many years and the oldest house in the area, dating back to 1346, with a “modern” extension built in 1632. The side door you see in this picture takes you into a basement which is much older – could it have been a Roman

temple? The jury is still out. Lucy regaled us with history, archaeology, ecology and her passion to retell the story of our town and district – the sort of history that comes alive for me. I also spoke to Tom who did much of the forging of our iron and bronze art work. I saw how many pieces he had forged that did not come up to the grade and were discarded. It made me realise that we had received a labour of love. Thank you so much Family Quinnell.

Dinner at Tyrrell’s Wood

Saturday evening was one of those June evenings where you are bathed in soft golden sun. We gathered on the terrace overlooking the wooded valley through which the golf links meander. Drinks were served and then we were feasted indeed with a delicious meal – a perfect ending to a special weekend.



And now for the rest of the news

Just a quick run down of events and a look to the future of the twinning.

March saw us hosting our annual quiz night. Due to the efforts of Juliana and friends there were around seventy people present in the Parish Hall. In previous years we have been upstairs but this time in the main hall we were able to fit everyone in, although we had some problems with logistics, which we will be able to iron out for future events. Juliana

persuaded local traders to donate prizes and members also gave gifts for a raffle which raised over £432. This was such a help towards the anniversary celebrations. Thank you to those who helped to make this a stand out evening.

Early May found us at Claremont for a spring walk. Fewer in number but enjoyable as it is an opportunity to get to know each other better. We had a few younger ones with us who explored the wilder areas and introduced us to the skittle alley at the top of the hill. Afterwards we moved onto Gasson Farm for lunch.



Family News

Joyce Marshall, a long standing member since the inception of the Twinning, celebrated her 100th birthday on the 16th August. Congratulations Joyce on a fantastic life achievement.

Sadly another long standing member, Sonya Grove, died earlier this year. She was a loyal member of the Friends of Triel and my lasting memory is of an elegantly dressed lady in sky blue eating scones at Polesden Lacey in 2023.

Heather Ward has not been well but is improving now. We send her our thoughts and prayers for full recovery.



Notes from the Treasurer

In October I will prepare a full financial account for the year 2023 -2024 to present at the AGM on November 12th. I will be seeking agreement at the AGM to raise the annual subscription from £10 per person to £15 per person (under 18s will still be free). This will be the first increase for some years. We have provided food and drink for members for at least three events in the past year, but costs are forever rising, not least the cost of hiring accommodation for our events. So with funds decreasing a modest increase in the annual subscription is warranted.

David

Champagne Garden Party

**Friends of Triel
invite you, your
friends and family
to our annual
Summer event
on Sunday 8th
September from 2-
5pm**

You will have received a couple of emails about this upcoming event which will be held in Gill Northcott's garden at 16 Oakfield Road, Ashted, kt21 2RE. If you have decided to come and not let us know please let us know immediately. We are asking for a contribution of food and it really helps to know what people are bringing so we don't serve just sandwiches or green salads! We always have a great time together, catching up with friends and playing games. If possible bring your own garden chair. And of course this year we will be sharing the generous gift of champagne that they gave us during our weekend together.

The AGM and cheese and wine event

This year will be held on **November 12th at 7.30pm at the Letherhead Institute.** We will start formal proceedings at 8pm. This is an opportunity to give the committee feedback on how the past year has gone and to share with you plans for 2025. We are excited that we will be introducing new committee members, with some of the ideas that are bubbling up that will build on the last 20 years and take us onto a new era in our twinning. After a short AGM there will be plenty of cheese and wine to enjoy.

A final view of the postcard designed by Lucy



TRIEL-SUR-SEINE 2004-2024 LEATHERHEAD