

WITNEY & DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2018

In July we were saddened to hear of the death of M. Leonce Deprez, who was Mayor of le Touquet when our Twinning was created. He was a long standing and active supporter of our twin towns.

The new Mayor of Le Touquet is Lilyane Lussignol.

Remembrance Day Weekend 2017

Witney – Le Touquet



Our Remembrance Day commemoration this year was attended by Kate Landry-Madden, Francine Boury, Yvette Debrailleul and Veronique Crae-Pruvot from Le Touquet Paris Plage. They were hosted, with our thanks and appreciation, by Jane Campbell and Lesley Morris.

The French delegation arrived on Friday, 10 November 2017. They were greeted by the Mayor Mr. Chris Woodward during a welcoming reception at the Town Hall. During the evening members of the Twinning Association and our guests, at the invitation of the Town Hall, took part in The Service of Remembrance on the Market Square. The Remembrance Service was organised by The Royal British Legion in conjunction with the Witney Town Council. It was both a sober and emotional service.

Saturday was left free to walk around Witney and Oxford, and we all reconvened at the Cafe Rouge for our annual dinner. As always the food was excellent and everyone seemed very happy and pleased to be able to get together again and renew friendships along the way.

Remembrance Sunday was very cold but despite this a very large crowd gathered at the War Memorial where the wreaths were laid. The Church Service at St. Mary's followed led by the Rev. Toby Wright.

A parting reception was then held at 24 Charter Place during which we said our farewells and expressed our thanks to our guests from Le Touquet and Unterhaching for joining us and taking part in one of our most important yearly events.

Events in 2018

1er Rallye du Jumelage

A first vintage car rally is being organised from Le Touquet to Witney and will take place on the 18th to the 21st of June. This will be a great opportunity to promote both our towns. If you would like to join our organising committee here in Witney please call Eleonore at 01993 862 779 or at 07900 168417 or by email at eleonorebruyere@hotmail.com.

Twin town challenge

The Twin Town Challenge is a car rally from Witney to Le Touquet, to be held this year over the weekend of Friday 5th – Monday 28th May. The cars mustn't cost more than £500, and the rally comprises a series of driving and non driving challenges, for which points will be awarded. The primary objective is to raise money for a brilliant charity, SpecialEffect. This year there will be a team headed by Andy from Café Rouge. Special thanks go to Sportif Suzuki for donating petrol for the journey and Sainsburys for helping with supplies.

SpecialEffect is a charity based in Charlbury which uses adaptive technology to bring a new lease of life to people with physical disabilities through communication, creativity and video games.

For more information on the rally and on SpecialEffect, and to find out how to sponsor a team, or donate to the charity, please look at the website www.twintown.org.uk.

Handmade Poppy Appeal

In 2018 Witney will commemorate the end of WW1 with events, including the unveiling of a brand new memorial on the Leys.

The Town is appealing for help in producing knitted, crocheted and other handmade poppies to festoon the town centre as other towns have successfully done.

The route to be lined with our handmade poppies would follow the route the soldiers would have taken from mustering in the Market Square, along Church Green, through the churchyard and on to the Leys towards the train station. The poppies will be used to adorn bollards, railings and lamp posts along this route.

We cannot have too many poppies as they can be used individually or made into wreaths, crosses and cascades. The more we have, the greater the impact.

More information can be found on the Town's website on the 1918 Centenary Page or by calling 01993 777824. Completed poppies would be gathered by the Witney Twinning Association and would then be taken to the Town Hall in our name. The pattern for the poppy is on the Town website.

Choir visit

Voicebox Choir is planning a trip to Le Touquet in December, with a trip to the Christmas Market in mind!

Letter from the Mayor of Witney, Cllr Chris Woodward

It's been a privilege to have spent some wonderful time with my friends of the Twinning Associations, both here in Witney and over in Unterhaching.

On the Friday evening, we all met for introductions and conversation at the Town Hall and shared many stories and anecdotes about the Twinning, with its ability to engender friendship and community, and to remind each other that language is no barrier when mutual understanding and the common good is what is desired. Having only met a couple of the representatives previously, I was made to feel very welcome in their company.

After a short while, we proceeded down to the Market Square to commemorate the Battle of Passchendaele, a poignant Service of Remembrance organised during former Mayor Chris Holliday's tenure. Here, the local ACF and ATC squadrons marched on, with the Salute being taken by Vice Lord Lieutenant John Harwood. The service was a mixture of readings of poetry, the list of the local fallen read by Robert Courts MP, and the contribution of personnel from Witney who made up squadrons across the globe. After a rousing singing of the national anthem, the various civic dignitaries broke away for light refreshment in the Corn Exchange with all of the guests. It was a wonderful commemoration, with a brilliant turnout.

The following weekend, my wife Jayne and I were the guests of Unterhaching for the annual service of Remembrance. We arrived early on the Saturday morning and met Bernie for a much needed breakfast at the airport. Because Jayne was 7 months pregnant at this time, we were given a bit of rest time before heading out for the day I was delighted to catch up with Peter Woestenbrink, a fantastic host whom we met for the weekend last year. Peter and I went to watch Unterhaching football club play at the home ground. Unfortunately it was a 3-0 walloping, but it was a great game. During the game I met another familiar face from last year, Reinhardt. He's a fantastic man who makes you feel as welcome as family each time to see him. After the game we went inside to have a late lunch and hear the football commentary and interviews, whilst meeting Peter's various and vast connections. After a short break for rest, we got ready and went to dinner with the Twinning members. It was an excellent meal and so amazing to catch up with everyone from last year - my spoken (or broken...) French got better by the evening, as did Jayne's German. The hosting of the evening by Thomas was again as glorious and welcoming as ever. It was a special evening. The next morning, we woke to pack and get ready for the service. Unfortunately the weather wasn't on our side - it poured with rain. However it didn't dampen the spirit of the occasion, with the church service and outside service proceeding as planned. Once the readings and wreath laying had taken place, the cannons were fired and the procession made its way to the warmth of white sausage and beer at the Hall. After a short while, we went for an early lunch before saying our final farewells and heading back to the airport.

There are no words to truly express the gratitude Jayne and I felt for the generosity and hospitality whilst in Unterhaching.

I have been inspired by the whole Twinning experience, so as soon as possible after getting back I asked Council if they would consider raising the grant fund that we usually donate so that the Association can maybe have the ability to do more.

I was delighted to announce that it was approved by Council at the Association meeting recently. My thanks to all in the Association, in a 'brexit-world' it's very heartwarming to know that our little union is very much alive and as strong as ever.

Best wishes

Chris Woodward