



HENLEY & FALAISE

TWINNING ASSOCIATION

SUPPORTED BY HENLEY-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

HENLEY FALAISE TWINNING ASSOCIATION Town Meeting report, 2018



This Association's Committee here in Henley has experienced an encouraging year, with an increased membership despite the loss of some stalwarts. Among the departed was one of the driving sources of the Association's foundation, Francis Sheppard, who died in January. The Committee in Falaise (seen left) sent an appreciative recognition of his contribution.

And our membership has been refreshed by several new members, now standing at a higher number than last year. The Committee maintains a wide circulation list, and always welcomes guests to our activities. Often these go on to join the Association, and we seek especially young families to secure its future.

During the year a programme of French conversation evenings has been revived and is thriving, with sessions offered twice a month. There is a healthy circulation list, and a differing half dozen or eight of them gather in Café Rouge to chat – with widely ranging degrees of competence – for an hour or so over coffee or a glass, or even two, of wine.

One of our established activities, petanque, encountered an obstacle in the form of the usual venue having been redeveloped, but was saved by finding that the boules club of Wallingford were happy to host us on their superior piste – and to help manage the competition, a massive benefit since their knowledge of the rules and conventions put ours to shame! So a goodly company picnicked and played, the weather was benevolent, and the Peter Lowery memorial shield was competed for with great enjoyment.

Naturally the main event of the year was the exchange visit, it being Henley's turn to play hosts. In late May a party of 30 or so (including a child who interacted delightfully with our Mayor's young daughter) arrived by coach on the evening of May 25th and were met by their hosts. The Normandy flag flew in the market place during their visit.

Though some of our visiting friends had intended to take themselves off to London on the Saturday a terrorist incident the week before resulted in a change of heart and a visit to Oxford was arranged instead, when their coach also took some of the hosts along.

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Our programme for the visitors included a morning reception in the Barn, followed by a visit to Stonor and ploughman's lunch in their café. Stonor's very English setting must have impressed the guests by contrast with the formality of that of this *manoir* to which they had taken us the year before.



And they would have found the garden very different from those they had once shown us at Monet's house. (below)



That evening we all had dinner in Shiplake Memorial Hall, followed by the music of Sam Brown's Ukelele Band which our friends gave every sign of enjoying. Their coach departed for Portsmouth early the next morning.

Joint working with the Leichlingen Twinning Association continues apace, and now includes an ongoing winter programme of French and German film evenings in the Barn, thanks to work by a member from each Association. We had a joint autumn party in the Christ Church Centre (17 November), and during the summer a party in the delightful garden of members of the latter Association.

We have created a calendar combining the fixtures of both Associations, and hope that it may find a place on the Town Council website.

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Denis McCoy, chairman

March 2018

