

HEATHFIELD & WALDRON TWINNING ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024

2024 followed what is now a well-established annual pattern with a number of social occasions, taking stalls at local events and an exchange visit. This year we reintroduced a French Film evening with a showing of “Tatie Danielle”, a black comedy, organised by Isabelle and Stephen Barkway. These had previously been popular and it was good to be able to start them again. Our Bastille Day BBQ hosted by Richard and Wendy was as ever an enjoyable occasion and this year we were blessed with much better weather to the great relief of all who attended. The Royal Oak at Barcombe has now re-opened and so a large group of us was able to return in October for a skittles competition and lunch. The last event of the year was our quiz, very well attended by our own members and members of the public.

The two local events where we had stalls were the Parish General Assembly and Le Marché. It is important for us to have a presence at such events as it serves to keep the Association in the public eye. It does generate a good deal of interest, particularly at Le Marché which is a full day event and generally results in new members.

This year it was the turn of Forges to host the exchange visit and a group of 9 of us travelled over for a long weekend in September. We decided to stay in hotels on this occasion rather than with host families but on the Friday evening we

were invited in small groups for dinner by several members in their homes. On the Saturday we visited St Germain de Fly for a guided tour of the Abbey which dates from the 640s followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant. In the afternoon we visited the village of Gerberoy which is regarded as one of the most beautiful villages in France and is the home of the gardens of the painter Henri Le Sidaner. In the evening the Mayor of Forges hosted a drinks reception which was followed by an informal supper. On Sunday we visited the Jardin du Mesnil which was founded in the 1980s for lunch and then a tour of the gardens and in the evening Catherine and Philippe invited everyone to supper at their home. Overall a successful visit as always.

In May I attended the East Sussex Women of the Year Luncheon. This is a biennial event to which women from across the county who are involved with organisations and charities are invited. It was a compliment to the Association to have been included and it was very interesting to meet such a wide cross section of people.

The Association remains on a strong footing with 43 members and a closing bank balance of almost £2800. However, at present our future remains uncertain as the Forges Chairman has resigned and currently there is no replacement. They hope that they will have resolved the situation at their AGM scheduled for 31 March 2025. Naturally we hope that a positive solution will be found enabling the relationship to continue.

Sadly, I have to report that two of our members died in 2024 – Maurice Locke and Robin Nicholson - both of whom will be greatly missed. Donations have been made to the charities chosen by their families.

In concluding I would like to thank the other members of the committee and of course the membership for their invaluable support which is greatly appreciated.

Sheila Drennan

March 2025.