Wimborne-Valognes Twinning Association

NEWSLETTER
January 2024

Wimborne: wvta.org.uk
Valognes: sites.google.com/site/cjvalogneswimborne/

President's Message

Dear WVTA members

I hope you have had a very happy Christmas and are looking forward to taking part in the twinning events of 2024! We have an outline of events for you, with some old favourites, and some brand new! The first date on the calendar is the **AGM** at **7.30 pm on Thursday 8 February in St Catherine's Hall**. An AGM sometimes prompts people to run a mile! But stay! Tarry! Do come, enjoy a glass of wine and listen to our reports, and maybe add your own ideas for moving on into the future. On page 4 of this January Newsletter, you will find a photo of your present lovely committee, with names so you will know who is who. We are seeking new committee members and IT help, so please see page 4 for more details of how you could take part.

We feel it is very important to keep the Association going and running successfully, but these are desperate times for many clubs and societies struggling to keep going and we cannot be complacent, so if you have an interest in France, are newly retired, looking for something new, or know someone who might be interested in helping to organise, please let us know! As someone once said, "We Need You"!

Having said all this, you can just come to our events, we do put a lot into each one and have tried to create variety, and it is so rewarding if people come and enjoy what we have devised for them. We have been very happy to have new members sign up in 2023, and we particularly want to see them and give them a very warm welcome.

Our friends in France are due in Wimborne over the weekend of the **17 to 20 May**, and we are lining up some pleasant diversions for them in the town and countryside as well as our special dinner for guests and their hosts. Mike Shapcott will be calling for hosts later, but if you would like to put your name forward now, please let him know, or put your name forward at the AGM. I look forward to seeing you then.

With best wishes to everyone for a very Happy Healthy New Year.

Damaris Eaton

Next meeting

Annual General Meeting
7.30 pm Thursday 8 February at St Catherine's Church Hall.

Proposed events 2024

March - An evening of talks at St Catherine's

April - French dance and "potluck" dining

May 17 - 20 Exchange visit from Valognes

June - Coffee or tea at Walford Mill

July - Member's garden event

August - President's picnic with boules and guided walk

September - Coffee or tea at Walford Mill

October - Entertainment at the Allendale

November - Quiz night

December - Wine tasting

Speakers are invited for the evening of talks

Is there any France-related subject that you would like to research and share with the group? We welcome you to give a talk between 10 and 35 minutes at the meeting in March. Photos or other images and music can be included, as you wish. We will be pleased to hear from you and discuss any ideas.

Please contact Maya on 07342 653775.

Hello! Bonjour!, 18 October

On Wednesday 18 October the Allendale Hall was buzzing with excitement, smiling faces, and appreciative applause when the Wimborne-Valognes Twinning Association presented "Hello! Bonjour!" bringing the community together for a sell-out evening of fantastic French-flavoured entertainment. Talented young singers, dancers and musicians from the local schools and organisations performed for an enthusiastic audience who left the hall wanting more. With singing in French and English, this was a wonderful way to call attention to the friendships existing between Valognes in France and the Wimborne area through the WVTA. Our thanks go to all the hard-working teachers and supportive parents who enabled Hello! Bonjour! to be the great success that it was, and to the Allendale staff for their hard work and interest in the project. Thanks must also go to committee members Barbara and Mike who worked hard over several months organising this event. *Photos: Malcolm Lowe*

Above: Pamphill First School

Above: St Michael's Middle School

Above: the George Scott-Giles Band from Queen Elizabeth's School
Following their performance the band were invited to play at the Wimborne Folk Festival

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Quiz Night, 13 November

The WVTA annual Quiz Night on 13 November at the Royal British Legion in Wimborne was a relaxed and friendly event, thoroughly enjoyed by all. The quiz was split into seven topics with 10 questions each. The competition was keenly contested. Quizmasters Phil and Janet Maul totted up the answers while Maya called the raffle in French and English. The worthy winners of the Norman Payne Cup was the Wimborne in Bloom team. In addition to the trophy, each member of the winning team received a bottle of wine. Pictured here is the winning team, with the WVTA President, Damaris Eaton, on the left, who presented the cup and prizes.

Wine Tasting, 14 December

Another very successful wine tasting evening took place just before Christmas. This year we met at the Wimborne Community Centre, formerly CLARC. This proved to be an excellent venue, being in the centre of town, with an adjacent car park. Our host for the evening was Ted Orchard who runs the Wimborne Fine Wine Society. He was able to share interesting information about each of the wines chosen, without elaborating too greatly for a non-specialist audience. Ted was able to take advantage of the pre-Christmas 25% reduction for six bottles offered by the supermarkets, and thus we were able to enjoy more expensive wines at bargain prices.

We started with a sparkling Cremant d'Alsace, followed by a white Rioja. These were followed by another white. The three reds included a Portuguese, from the Douro Valley and a Côte de Rhone. The favourite wine varied amongst our tasters but it was agreed that none of them were disappointing. As ever, the generous platters of food that accompanied the wine, were extensive and well received.

It was delightful to receive so many positive comments and we look forward to repeating the event next year.

Photos: Top Chris Webb, Right Jenny and Karen Lawrie

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Presenting Your Committee

We do have vacancies on our committee, and we hope that we can attract new committee members who will bring their ideas and gently get involved in some of the running of our social events, this could be helping with a raffle, pouring wine, baking a cake, helping at a publicity event. We meet about once a month, from 7.00 pm to about 9.00 pm, usually at Damaris's house in Wimborne, with easy parking in the road. They are busy meetings, but working together is a wonderful way to make friends while influencing the activities of the Association.

We are also particularly looking for someone to help Graham with our IT commitments: running ticketing, the website and newsletter etc. If this should be of interest, perhaps you could get in touch with myself or Graham to talk about it – the telephone numbers and email addresses are to be found on page 8 of this Newsletter.

WVTA website - can you help?

Our website has been live for around 22 years. Michael Evans did an excellent job of setting it up and maintaining it before handing it over to me (Graham) in July 2019. The website still performs well but it's time to consider moving to more modern website tools which would bring benefits including:

- certification to show that it is a trusted website,
- data encryption for security,
- an integrated booking and payment system.

We're looking for someone to help maintain the website, including the Google booking forms, and to manage the transition to newer tools and possibly do hand coding. Do you have these skills or do you know anyone who has? If so Damaris or I will be pleased to hear from you. Our contact details are on page 8.

Graham Richards, Newsletter and Website Editor

Getting to Valognes

The Barfleur leaves Poole at half past eight every morning, which is acceptable. However, you must arrive at the port an hour before departure. The journey from Wimborne to Hamworthy takes half an hour and if I shower and eat breakfast, I must get up at six, which is not acceptable.

After a pleasant crossing, we arrived in Cherbourg at two o'clock and as our car was on the upper deck it was half an hour before we disembarked and joined the queue for the border police, who worked very precisely and very slowly. There are three queues and after another half hour we are one car from the checkpoint. The car in front of us with the UA (Ukraine) registration had a problem and we did not move. The cars behind switched to the other lanes. We waited and waited until all the other cars had gone and we were the only two cars left. I joined another line, and I saw the police and the Ukrainians shouting and then the police told them to return to England.

For the experience, we decided to change our route to Valognes and take the road via Cherbourg town instead of the longer but quicker motorway. While driving away from the port, my colleague told me to turn left. I thought the street was too small to be the main road to the south. I ignored the instruction and had an interesting half hour driving through many diversions and major road works. We discovered that frustrated French motorists show no courtesy to their foreign visitors. As I went up the hill out of Cherbourg, I noticed that the cars alongside me were going at my speed whilst in the fast lane. They didn't pass for more than a kilometre and then I noticed that the letters BUS were written on the road in my lane! I hastily joined them. The rest of our trip to Valognes was uneventful.

Le Parapluie de Cherbourg (A very Singular name)

During this year's exchange visit Philippe presented Damaris with an umbrella made in Cherbourg. Here is a brief history of the company making these umbrellas.

Capitalising on the fame of the 1964 film Les Parapluies de Cherbourg, in 1986 Jean-Pierre Yvon registered the brand 'Le Véritable Cherbourg' to make and market high quality umbrellas in Cherbourg. His son Charles took over the business and in 2020 he changed the name of the company to Le Parapluie de Cherbourg. The quality of the umbrellas is impressive, as one would expect from being handcrafted and extreme tested in wind tunnels. With a company motto of 'zero fault, zero defect', they claim that the umbrellas in their Classic Collection will withstand wind speeds of 120 to 155 km/hour. They range in colour and size, and although expensive they will repair any umbrella, being able to replace any component to make it as good as new.

Les Parapluies de Cherbourg

The 1964 film Les Parapluies de Cherbourg is a romantic musical where all the dialogue was sung. It was filmed in the streets of Cherbourg and starred the 21 year old Catherine Deneuve, with music by Michel Legrand.

The principal character and her mother have a struggling umbrella boutique. She becomes pregnant with a daughter by her boyfriend who, unaware of this, is drafted to the Algerian war. She marries a wealthy Parisian. The boyfriend returns to Cherbourg, marries, has a son and sets up a garage. Four years later his first love, by now wealthy and sophisticated, calls by chance at the garage for petrol. When she invites him to see his daughter, he declines, and the film concludes with him happily playing with his son.

The film was awarded the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1964 and was nominated for five Academy Awards. In 2018 a critic's poll for BBC Culture, ranked the film in the top 100 Greatest Non-English Films of All Time. It has been suggested that initially, the inhabitants were pleased with the success of the film, but less impressed when the city became renowned for much rainy weather, necessitating the use of umbrellas.

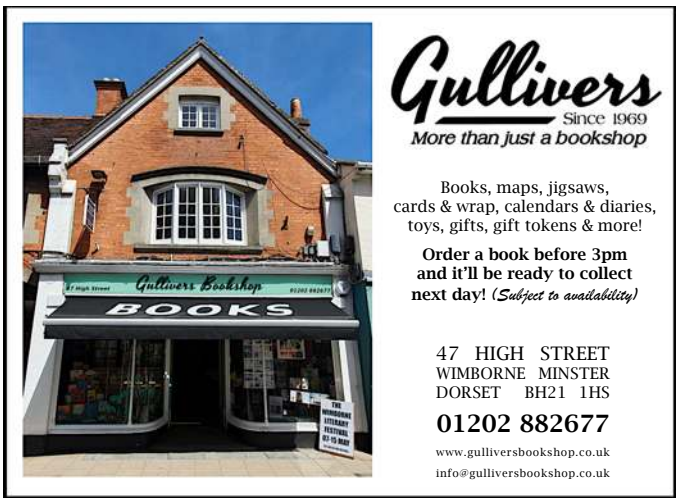
Au clair de la lune – By the light of the moon

This song has for many years been a useful aid for English-speaking children learning French. However, the children's version usually goes only up to verse 4. The rest is for adults only!

The earliest recording of the song was by a French typographer, Édouard-Léon Scott in 1860 i.e.17 years before Thomas Edison recorded "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 1877

(Translation by Michael Evans)

Au clair de la lune Mon ami Pierrot Prête-moi ta plume Pour écrire un mot.	By the light of the moon, Pierrot, my friend Lend me your pen to write a note
Ma chandelle est morte Je n'ai plus de feu Ouvre-moi ta porte Pour l'amour de Dieu.	My candle's gone out, I don't have a light, open your door for the love of God!
Au clair de la lune Pierrot répondit Je n'ai pas de plume Je suis dans mon lit.	By the light of the moon, Pierrot replied I don't have a pen I'm in bed
Va chez la voisine Je crois qu'elle y est Car dans sa cuisine On bat le briquet.	Go to the neighbour's I think she's there Because in her kitchen Someone's striking a match
Au clair de la lune L'aimable Pierrot Frappa chez la brune Elle répondit soudain.	By the light of the moon, the friendly Pierrot knocked on the brunette's door She suddenly answered.
Qui frappe de la sorte? Il dit à son tour Ouvrez votre porte Pour le Dieu d'Amour.	Who's knocking like that? He said in turn, open your door, for the god of Love!
Au clair de la lune On n'y voit qu'un peu On chercha la plume On chercha du feu	By the light of the moon, They couldn't see much They looked for a pen They looked for a light
En cherchant d'la sorte Je ne sais ce qu'on trouva Mais je sais que la porte Sur eux se ferma.	With all that looking, I don't know what they found But I know that the door shut behind them.



Merchandise

We now have shirts, caps and badges in stock to show off our Association.
To order, please contact Graham Richards;
Tel: 01258 857341 e-mail: editor@wvta.co.uk

Badges £2

Short sleeve polo shirts
Sizes: S, M, L, XL
£18

Caps

£8.95

Lavender bags

£3 each

The challenges of communicating in French
by Chris Webb

When I moved up to my high school, I had my introduction to French, which proved to be a mystifying experience. The teacher spoke a little in French, but it was basically a written activity. My mother had no knowledge of the language, apart from an incident when she started working in an office when she was fifteen. A colleague came round at teatime, asking what cakes people would like. One person showed off and instead of saying it did not bother them, they announced “Ce n'a faire rien.” The colleague, a little confused said “Fine, one Saint Fairy Ann cake.”

My mother agreed to help me by helping me work through the vocabulary list in the text book. We regularly tackled the Listes des Mots. Coming from the Ted Heath school of pronunciation, any French word ending in -es had to be sounded as in yES. Mots must be like pOTS. Thus, we worked through the list-ES dES mOTS.

When I was thirteen, I joined the two week school exchange to Versailles, equipped with the essential phrase, “Je ne comprends pas.”. I used this to great effect, but tired of its incessant use my hosts explained that all I need to say was “Comprends pas.”

Eventually GCE loomed and 10% of the marks were for an oral component. A teacher of French from another school interviewed us singly in the library. His opening gambit was to ask if I had ever been to France. I proudly answered, “Je suis allè à Versailles.” His follow up question was to ask which famous person lived there. I promptly responded Louis Quarente. He could not help correcting me, by asking if I meant Louis Quatorze!

As an adult travelling in France, I regularly experienced how the English interpretation of how a word should be pronounced was so different from the French. A small deviation can lead to complete incomprehension. I remember an early mistake. I had heard of the author John Le Carré and when searching for the Carrefour supermarket, I asked a local for directions to Carréfour. He did not understand. Fortunately, over his shoulder, I noticed the huge sign in the distance and pointed to it. With a confused expression, he corrected my pronunciation. Similarly, at a restaurant, I looked at the list of drinks and asked for a bottle of Badoit by demanding Bad Oh It. The waiter did not have a clue, so I settled for Perrier.

For many, the town of Valognes could be said as in Cologne, or simply Val Og Nez. Who would think of Val On Ya?

Subscriptions

Subscriptions fall due for renewal on 1st January.

From 1st January 2023 the rates are £10 for an individual and £15 for a family.

A reminder of the methods of payment:

1. BACS: Sort code: 40-46-37
   Account number: 01403729
2. By cheque, payable to WVTA
3. By Standing Order.
   Please let us know your chosen start date.

If paying by cheque, please send your cheque to the Treasurer at 9 Bourne Court, Wimborne, BH21 1DF

Please advise the Treasurer of any changes to your contact details:

by e-mail to membership@wvta.org.uk

by post to 9 Bourne Court, Wimborne, BH21 1DF.

or by telephone: 01202 619892

Local French language courses

Weekly U3A self-help group

contact Groups Secretary

tel: 01258 840622

or get a U3A leaflet from the library at Colehill, Wimborne or Corfe Mullen,

or visit www.wimborneu3a.org.uk

Beginners, "refreshers", improvers, GCSE

one-to-one, or small groups
contact Christina Phillippo
(fully qualified French teacher)

tel: 01202 699075

Twinning Websites

Wimborne:
www.wvta.org.uk

Valognes:
www.sites.google.com/site/cjvalogneswimborne

Dorset Twinning Association:
www.twinning.org.uk

WVTA Committee

For enquiries regarding membership and exchange visits please contact the President or Treasurer.

President:
Damaris Eaton
01202 939633
president@wvta.org.uk

Treasurer:
Peter Brooks
01202 619892
treasurer@wvta.org.uk

Secretary:
Mike Shapcott
secretary@wvta.org.uk

Town Council Representative:
Louise Hinks

Others:
Maya Chatterjee
Barbara Wathen
Chris Webb

Archivist:
Malcolm Lowe
01202 694037
20 Edwina Drive,
Poole, BH17
archive@wvta.org.uk

Newsletter & Webmaster:
Graham Richards
01258 857341
editor@wvta.org.uk
webmaster@wvta.org.uk

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The newsletter is edited and set by Graham Richards, tel: 01258 857341 e-mail contributions to:
editor@wvta.org.uk
or send clear copy to 10 Jubilee Way, Sturminster Marshall, Wimborne, BH21 4JU
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