



COOKHAM TWINNING NEWSLETTER

January 2012

Letter from the Chairman

We had a very succesful visit to St Benoit in October and are looking forward to hosting the French in October this year.

On Saturday 4th February 2012, we shall be having lunch at Ayoush in Bourne End, so hope that as many people as possible come along and bring their friends. It is a North African restaurant so we are hoping they will give us a mixture of Moroccan and Egyptian delicacies.

Wishing everyone a very Happy New Year.

POST CHRISTMAS LUNCH PARTY AT AYOUSH, BOURNE END Saturday 4 February 2012



Come along to Ayoush (on the road to Bourne End from Cookham, left hand side) for lunch, bring your friends, everyone is welcome, the more the merrier. The meal is a medley of North African dishes £11.50 a head for the medley. (Coffee and drinks extra)

Please let Liz know if you can come as the restaurant needs numbers. 01628 525130 or liz@cookham.com.

VISIT TO ST BENOIT – October 2011

by Keith le Page

St Benoit is “la ville au fil de l’eau” or the town in the flow. Here the stream is actually a fast moving river, and in October Cookham Twinning made its biennial journey by car, boat and plane to visit its twinned village just outside Poitiers.

Friday evening arrival was the time for old reunions and new introductions at the civic reception hosted by the Mayor of St Benoit. All visiting families were presented with beautifully illustrated books of St Benoit created

following a project in the local primary school.



Everyone was up early on Saturday morning for a drive to the famous town of Cognac. The morning visit took us through the art of barrel making, demonstrating the shaping and shaving of the oak wood that must come from Limousin or Tronçais. Some of us were given

the opportunity to try our hand and learn new skills, although the process remains one for skilled artisans, which most of us were not!

After an excellent lunch at the Globe restaurant that had set up a welcome slide show featuring both the menu and pictures of St Benoit and Cookham, we went on a tour of Cognac on the tourist train. Blessed with brilliant sunshine, there was much to see and enjoy, including rowers on the river and the attractive Town Hall grounds.

The train dropped us off at the Martell distillery, the oldest Cognac house in town, having been founded by Jean Martell in 1715, and which is now owned by Pernod Ricard. More education followed about Ugni Blanc grapes, double distillation methods, types of soil, and transportation on the Charente River that flows through Cognac.

Cellar masters have the job of mixing exactly the right blends of batches to create the perfect taste and flavour, whether for XO (extra old), VSOP (very special old pale) or other qualities. The designations XO, VSOP etc are in English as most of the initial trades and trading posts were created by people from Britain.

The evening concert in St. Benoit church, with Genevieve Usher, Rebecca McGrath and Chris Underhill was a highlight of the trip. We were particularly grateful to Rebecca for making the trip with her harp which added a further dimension to the enjoyment of the evening.



Sunday was a day to spend time with family hosts. Another day of bright sunshine, many took the opportunity to make a walking tour of Poitiers, taking in Notre-Dame-La-Grande cathedral and other sights.

Then our final evening social with lots of conviviality, good food and an entertaining live band. We were given bottles of wine, 'vignifie et mis en bouteille par le comite de jumilage'. The grapes had been grown in St Benoit from vines given to them by the village of Lossch, their German twinning partner.

Monday morning was an early start again for some of us as we set off back to Calais. Another most enjoyable twinning weekend completed with friends old and new, and with links between Cookham and St Benoit strengthened once again.

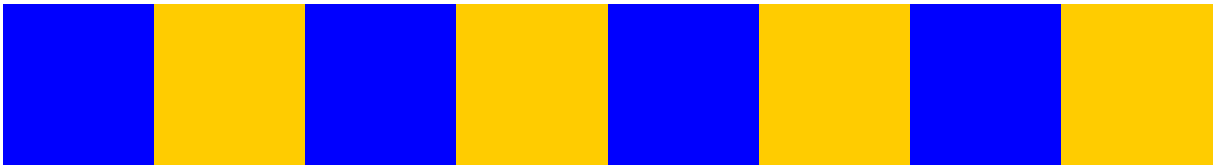
FRENCH CONVERSATION CLASSES

By Penny Bysshe

The French Conversation Group has gone from strength to strength this year. Our numbers have grown and there are now more than twenty names on the mailing list. We generally meet on a Tuesday evening once a month at Pat Cairney's house in Lower Road. Usually at least seven people attend.

Pat starts the evening by giving us a bit of grammar to unravel and then Christine, who helps Pat run the group, introduces us to a poem or a reading in French which we read round the class. After that we have a discussion on an agreed topic or share our news. This year's topics have included recipes, education, holidays, my favourite writer and painter, Christmas traditions and energy conservation. With Pat's cheerful encouragement we are beginning to have the confidence to throw away our notes and just talk in French.

Some of the class visited St Benoit for the first time last year with the Twinning group. They had a wonderful visit and reported back to the group, in French of course, on everything that had happened. continued



..... We have a lot of fun in the group and find that a glass of wine in the middle of the evening greatly improves the flow of French! We are very grateful to Pat for running the group and for all her kindness and encouragement and to Christine for her insight into the language and for the wonderful scripts she shares with us.

Over the past year the French Conversation Group has made a contribution to Twinning Funds and the money will go towards paying for the French visit to Cookham this year.

If you would like to join the French Conversation group please contact Pat Cairney on 01628 523067.

COOKHAM TWINNING MENTIONED ON BBC RADIO 4's YOU AND YOURS

On Thursday 23rd December Radio 4's You and Yours had a discussion on Twinning. The main point seemed to be that Councils felt that money should be made available for their twinning activities. An email from Cookham Twinning was read out saying that Cookham has no financial support at all from the Council and yet has had lots of interesting visits and activities with their French twin, including concerts, art exhibitions, football matches, youth visits and generally having a wonderful time making friends and getting a deeper understanding of our French friends.

If you know anyone who would like to join in with Twinning activities or would even like to join the Committee they would be very welcome. The more the merrier. Twinning is for everyone and is a great opportunity for children and young people to get to know how the French really live.

If you would like to be involved or find out more call Liz on 01628 525130 or e-mail liz@cookham.com.