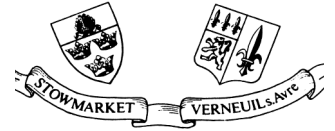


# bonjour!



newsletter of the stowmarket twinning association

July 2019

by dennis morley

## in this issue:

- ◆ intro
- ◆ l'anniversaire
- ◆ gallery
- ◆ now, where were we?
- ◆ the duke of marlborough
- ◆ murder in stowmarket
- ◆ worrying trend
- ◆ on the subject of hanging
- ◆ l'agm
- ◆ le comité

## intro

Welcome to the 2019 edition of the Stowmarket Twinning Association newsletter.

Almost another year has ticked by and it's time to dust off the computer keyboard and put a few words together.

Well, we said it would be an Extravaganza - and it was! The planning was meticulous, the weather was brilliant and the cake ... more about that later.

We also held some of our favourite events to help with fundraising, namely a Safari Lunch, a Murder Mystery, which revealed a disturbing revelation, and of course, the occasional raffle draw!

We held our AGM last month, which passed off without incident, although there was a minor "cabinet re-shuffle" just to keep people on their toes.

## l'anniversaire

There was more than the normal level of excitement in the air above our hallowed car park on Good Friday, as we eagerly awaited the *arrivée*. Then before you knew it the doors of the buses with the strange number plates were thrown open and a riotous "bises fest" ensued, bringing unsuspecting shoppers to a standstill!

We all whisked *nos amis* off for tea & scones, to catch up on the news and to prepare for the *grande réception*, which we had all been waiting for.

There was a feeling of intense anticipation in the reception barn on Saturday morning. Final adjustments were being made to the décor, glasses were carefully lined up ready for the first guests and the cake was slowly being lowered onto its specially adapted table.

Everyone was wearing a commemorative red, white and blue scarf, kindly supplied by our *visiteurs* and then we all set to and made plenty of noise and enjoyed the *canapés* and drink.

It wasn't long before someone realised the time, so we quietened down for the speeches, which were eloquently delivered in both languages and reaffirmed our lasting friendship. Our thanks go to those people (French & English), who started this wonderful relationship 40 years ago, and also to those who have worked tirelessly ever since to maintain the special *amitié* we share.

No sooner had the last sentence been uttered when a jostling *frénétique* indicated that the cake was about to be cut. Gigi and Gerard had joined forces and were about to thrust the knife into said cake, which was then deftly divided and disseminated with cool impartiality.

Many thanks go to Linda for her fine mayoral speech and for supplying such a fine *gâteau*. (Well, to be fair, it was more than just "a cake"!)

Round 2 was held at Edmunds Restaurant in Bury in the early evening. The months of planning were now being put to the test as the bused-in guests arrived, many still wearing their scarves, ready for a night of banqueting.

We didn't have any minstrels, but we did have 3 courses of delicious food followed by coffee and *petit fours*. We had a flat-screen displaying a slide-show of photos taken over the years of various events and scenes, including some grainy black and white images from the early days.

The dangerously high level of background noise only abated slightly as the next course of food interrupted animated conversation, although even this was reduced to whispers as *la tombola* was taking place.

The next thing we knew it was time to go home and those that needed it were guided onto the bus and returned to downtown Stowmarket, where they were let loose but reminded to be back in a few hours for the trip to London.

Hampton Court Palace was a great idea for a day out. It is a wonderful place with something for everyone. Another day of fine weather brought with it a holiday spirit, and apart from the "short walk" to and from the bus park, it seemed to tick all the boxes.

Easter Monday for most was another day of glorious laziness, punctuated by more eating and drinking (responsibly, of course!) some went to the coast or just chilled, reminiscing of times past, but then getting out the rucksacks in preparation for the early *rendez-vous* in the usual car-park.

Following the heart-breaking "*bises frenzy*" the buses with those strange number-plates disappeared whence they came and we returned to "*chez nous*" for more tea and telly. Nice job, me thinks.

# gallery

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Now for some digital imagery which captured the weekend as it unfolded. The press were quick on the scene on the Saturday morning, and got in with this shot of the “Kop end” just before kick-off!



Language is no barrier! “Rousing and well rehearsed” - the speeches by the dignitaries provided a reminder of the strength of our friendship with the citizens of Verneuil-sur-Avre and added great meaning to the occasion.

Left to right: Annie Collard, Gigi Morenne (Verneuil President), Marilyn Finbow, Françoise Ayrault and Linda Baxter (Stowmarket Mayor).

(You may have noticed the unattended cake on the table in the background!)



To mark the 40th anniversary of our twinning we each exchanged a present; we gave an etched glass plate showing the dates and coats of arms of our respective towns, and we received a “*coq magnifique*”, which now resides in a “place of honour” in the council offices. (We cannot give the precise location for security and data protection reasons. )



and that leaves just the cake ...

Thanks Linda!



## now, where were we?

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The focus of this year was clearly the aforementioned Easter event, but we held fundraising events prior to that. So let's rewind to 2018 for a catch-up. It was in November when we repeated the very popular Safari Lunch. This is where certain members like to show off their "Masterchef" skills on the rest of us - and we love it! This was the magical piece of advertising that did the trick ...

# Sunday Lunch on the Twinning Line



We generally have a half-hour stop at each "station", where we are waited on by our hosts. Sometimes we may have to ~~kick~~ coax out the previous party, who are still lingering, but they usually leave without fuss in the end.

Do you remember that carrot and coriander soup with crusty bread, and the Chermoula salmon, and the Moroccan roast vegetables, and the apple strudel and to finish off, tea, coffee and good company (+ raffle!)?

Many thanks to the hosts Marilyn, Linda, Jan, Eve and numerous others who unselfishly provided such a great treat!

## the duke of marlborough

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Much of what we do in this "twinning" thing involves eating and drinking. It is quite important therefore that we don't "lose our edge"; hence this training event one Saturday evening in January. It is really a glorified committee meeting (including partners) but it is nice to meet "informally" and not have to take minutes! There wasn't even a raffle, but knowing Jan, we might not get off so lightly the next time.

It was a cold winter's evening, but inside the woodburner was fair chucking out some heat! We were fed and watered relentlessly the whole evening and we may have to go back there sometime for a further review.

## worrying trend ...

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Alongside the canals of Venice, Italy (er... well the Stowmarket Scout's hut) was the setting for another entertaining evening dealing with the intricacies of a Murder Mystery. There was skulduggery for starters, manipulation for mains and deception for dessert.

It would appear that some amongst us can use their natural talents and instincts to evade and confuse, but probably the most worrying trend that became evident was that someone (you know who you are) is making a habit of terminating the lives of others.

To get straight to the point, we have a serial killer in our midst! Some of us were surprised at the finding, others not ...

Many thanks to those industrious organisers and chefs and washers of pots for all the hard work in the kitchen - but please ... make sure you don't leave any knives out!

## ... and on the subject of hanging !

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Many thanks to Keith for his work in preparing hanging baskets earlier this year. He generously donated the takings to our kitty for which we are very grateful. If anyone would like to send in a picture of their basket(s) in situ, I will look to include it in the next edition of Bonjour. Great work Keith!

## l'agm

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'Cos we like to do things proper, around mid-summer we have our AGM at which we have reports from the chairperson and treasurer and elect the officers and committee members for the future.

This time Marilyn stood down as chairperson and was replaced by Jon Pattle. Jan Rooks stood down as Treasurer and was replaced by Dennis Morley. Both Marilyn and Jan have put in massive amounts of effort over the years and we thank them for their dedication and hard work.

You may recall that we have urged members to pay their membership by Standing Order/electronic transfer/BACS to reduce the administrative effort required in both banking the funds and chasing non/late payments.

As (most of) our banking will now be done online, we would like payments to be as "cashless" as possible. We hope you will understand the benefits of this and comply wherever possible (We don't really want to get the "heavies" involved). If you have any queries please contact Dennis (01449 711306).

## le comité

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The line-up now looks like this ... (it's called the 4, 6, -1 system)

Jon Pattle	Chairperson
Marilyn Finbow	Vice Chairperson
Dennis Morley	Treasurer & Bonjour secretary
Sue Smith	Membership secretary
Keith Scarff	(Council rep.)
Eve Paton	
Paul Ekpenyong	
Linda Baxter	
Miles Row	
Dave Muller	(Council rep.)

Look forward to seeing you at our future events - email to follow soon!

We like your support !

