

Sawbridgeworth Town Twinning Association

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE AGM ON 2 FEBRUARY 2023

Sawbridgeworth has had town twinning links with Bry-sur-Marne for the last 50 years, starting on 29 September 1973, usually with the support of the Town Council and successive Mayors (we no longer get annual support from the Town Council budget but can apply for grants). We will celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2023. Bry is also twinned with the German town of Moosburg an der Isar, near Munich. In March 2018 the Mayor of Moosburg and our then mayor, Cllr. Ruth Buckmaster, signed a formal twinning declaration in the Council Chamber to establish a formal link with Moosburg. The various oaths and declarations hang in the hallway leading to the Council Chamber and we have two updated town twinning signs on the roads into Sawbridgeworth.

2022 was a good, more 'normal' year post-Covid. Thanks are due to the committee, and especially to Sally Pribul, for combining secretarial and treasurer roles. We had two successful and enjoyable visits, one to Bry and one from Moosburg and a full programme of social events. We had a successful fund-raising quiz in March, a well-attended stall at the May Fayre, a less well-attended Pétanque 'court', as part of the East Herts 'Love Parks' event in July and a very enjoyable garden party kindly hosted by the Avontuurs in the same month. Tim Pribul organised a Wine Challenge fund raiser in November.

Bry-sur-Marne visit in September

A group of 30 travelled to Bry-sur-Marne for the weekend of 16-19 September, our first visit for four years. On the Saturday we went by coach to Moret-sur-Loing, where the English Impressionist painter Alfred Sisley made his home. In the evening we had an official dinner, attended by the Mayor, Charles Aslangul and Deputy Mayor Sophie Robie, who made brief speeches, as did our Deputy Mayor Cllr Ruth Buckmaster and Town Twinning Chairman David Royle. Hosts entertained their guests on Sunday (the huge annual flea market was one option) and Monday morning.

Moosburg visit to us in October

We received a group from Moosburg between Thursday 20 and Sunday 23 October; their first post-Covid visit. On the Friday we went to Bury St Edmunds and enjoyed a tour of the cathedral and grounds before adjourning to the One Bull pub for lunch. In the evening we had a dinner at Villa Italia in Sawbridgeworth, who looked after us very well. Hosts entertained their guests on the Saturday and in the evening we had a bring-and-share meal together, kindly hosted by the Buckmasters, exchanged gifts with brief speeches and posed for photographs.

Presentation to Reedings School Year: I was invited to visit Reedings School once again and gave a short presentation on Town Twinning in November to Year 4 children who had been learning about Europe. They are still hoping to establish a link with a school in Bry.

Town Remembrance Day Service 13 November: I laid a wreath on behalf of the Association.

We continued our French and German monthly conversation groups, usually with representatives from each twin town.

We have been contacted by the organisers of a new initiative to boost town twinning activity between Hertfordshire towns and their partners in Germany, spearheaded by the British-German Association (BGA). The intention is to create opportunities for sharing ideas and spreading good practice. Unfortunately, the first meeting coincides with our AGM. Sally, Ruth Armistead and I will follow up.

2023 visits to Bry and from Moosburg: we expect to send a delegation to visit Bry-sur Marne in May to coincide with the visit from Moosburg to celebrate the 50th anniversary and to receive our friends from Bry-sur-Marne from 15 to 18 September. We will visit Moosburg from 19 to 22 October.

Publicity

We have a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/537455026663868/> and a fine new website, courtesy of Andrew Armistead, which has coverage of our twinning history, and the history of Bry and Moosburg, plus a photo gallery etc:

<https://www.sawbridgeworhtowntwinning.co.uk/>

See also my article on Messrs Poubelle, Silhouette and Daguerre and their connections to Bry:

https://www.sawbridgeworhtowntwinning.co.uk/files/ugd/cde22a_1fbc4521f65e41f69186fa5bb71c6152.p

Twinning is open to all who live in Sawbridgeworth and its environs. It is non-political and based on an interest in experiencing a different culture and in building and maintaining friendships. For further information contact David Royle: david.royle1@gmail.com or Sally Pribul: sally@pribul.co.uk.

David Royle, Chairman STTA