

Press Release

Mayor Of Hailsham To Send Off Twinning Association Members Next Week [25 February]

Preparations are underway for members of the Hailsham & District Twinning Association to take a trip across the English Channel for a long weekend to mark Gournay-en-Bray's tenth anniversary of its link with Hailsham.

The Twinning Charter between the two towns was signed in Hailsham in October 2000, and Gournay-en-Bray in February 2001. Visitors from Gournay-en-Bray were welcomed to Hailsham last October to celebrate the twinning anniversary, having attended an official twinning renewal ceremony at the Hailsham Pavilion and a civic reception/party at Michelham Priory during their visit.

Events organised as part of the Gournay-en-Bray Twinning Association's Tenth Anniversary weekend include the official re-signing of the town twinning charter and the naming of a street after Hailsham on Friday 25th February. There will also be a coach trip to Rouen on Saturday 26th February, and the weekend extravaganza will culminate in a Civic Reception on the Saturday evening, with guests of honour including the mayor of Gournay-en-Bray, Jean Lou Pain, and Norbert Zeidler, mayor of Remshalden in Germany, Gournay-en-Bray's other twin town.

"We all look forward to celebrating the twinning anniversary in Gournay-en-Bray next month, and there are some marvellous activities scheduled to supplement the official charter renewal ceremony," said Keith Townsend, chairman of the Hailsham & District Twinning Association.

Mr Townsend, who recently stepped into the role as Chairman following the retirement of Paul Simmons, looks forward to helping to further develop relations between Hailsham and Gournay-en-Bray in coming years: "Over the past ten years, Hailsham and Gournay-en-Bray have become close friends, learned more about each others families and way of living, and in doing so have realised that people from both towns are more or less the same, separated only by differences in language."

"By engaging in further reciprocal cultural visits in the future, we can ensure that our ties become even closer as the years progress. We hope that potential new members will be able to join us in our special celebrations next month."

Town Mayor Councillor Robin Kempe, who will attend the official send-off to France on Friday 25th February, said: "Since October 2010, I have been looking forward to a reciprocal visit to Gournay-en-Bray. But unfortunately, whilst I am waiting for major heart surgery, I have been told that I would be ill-advised to travel outside the UK."

"However, I very much hope that my wife Carolyn and I will be able to visit Gournay in July for their annual St Clare Festival. We are both extremely envious of those people who are leaving for France next week!"

The Hailsham & District Twinning Association is currently looking for new members, who can be as much or as little involved as they want to be in the group's various activities. Through membership, a myriad of opportunities exist to take part in hosting exchanges, and to meet other people at various social events organised throughout the year, such as quiz nights, open evenings, and annual trips to Gournay-en-Bray.

Annual membership for 2011 costs £7.50, rising to £10 in 2012. Anyone interested in becoming a member should contact John Puttick on 01323 441787 (evenings). Alternatively, log on to www.hailsham-gournay.org for further details.

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