

Press Release

Twinning Team Enjoy "Yet Another Outstanding Weekend Trip To France"

A delegation from Hailsham has just returned from their trip to Gournay-en-Bray in France where they spent three days with their host families and witnessed the official renewal of the twinning partnership between the two communities.

42 people, including Hailsham & District Twinning Association Chairman Keith Townsend, Town Clerk Liz Jones and Hailsham town councillors John Puttick, Paul Holbrook and Sharon Cottingham visited Gournay-en-Bray last weekend.

A ceremony to re-seal the twinning agreement took place in Gournay-en-Bray's Salle de Fete (similar to our Community Hall) on Friday 25th February. The Mayor of Gournay-en-Bray, Jean-Lou Pain, and Councillor Puttick signed the Twinning Charter – once again affirming the friendship between the two towns – in the presence of guests of honour such as the Mayor of Remshalden (Gournay-en-Bray's twin town in Germany) and the delegation from Hailsham Town Council.

This was followed by an evening Civic Reception at Gournay-en-Bray's nearby Chateau Fleurette de Foret on Saturday 26th February, which showcased a pre-reception guided tour of the Chateau, followed by a 5-course dinner. Entertainment included dancing to a live band and a magician. There was also an impromptu rendition of four traditional songs led by Hailsham & District Twinning Association member Ian Meikle playing an accordion, with everyone joining in.

Other highlights of the trip included a coach trip to Rouen with a guided tour of the city, and an official street naming ceremony, where a road in Gournay-en-Bray newest development was officially named after Hailsham to mark ten years of twinning between the two towns.

The visitors were accommodated in the homes of participating host families – many of whom are old friends from the regular exchanges – and were treated to the warmest of welcomes.

"We would like to thank everyone who made our visitors from Hailsham so welcome last weekend," said Association chairman Keith Townsend. "Thanks in particular must go to the host families who looked after them and made them part of the family during their stay."

"The Twinning Charter was renewed in Gournay with all due ceremony and the programme of events was very impressive and well organised. There can be no doubt that the Hailsham community is really welcomed in the twin-town family!"

Hailsham mayor Robin Kempe said: "Although I was unable to make the trip to Gournay last weekend, I've heard from visitors that the level of hospitality from the people of Gournay-en-Bray was outstanding, and that the French host families went out of their way to ensure their guests were comfortable and entertained."

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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Notes to Editors:

- 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.

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