

# HUCKLOW AND DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION

## Secretary's Annual Report for 2009-2010

The Hucklow and District Twinning Association was formally constituted at its inaugural AGM on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2009, at the offices of Conformance. The founder membership comprised 52 individuals (30 adults, 22 children/young people) representing 15 households, and 1 group (Great Hucklow CE Primary School). The constitution was adopted and officers and a committee elected by those members present. The new association was toasted, and we were treated to presentations produced by the children of both schools.

**Meetings** have taken place regularly every other month and sometimes more frequently. Attendance has been solid, typically ranging between 7 and 10 members. It has been particularly pleasing to see members and not just people on the committee attending and taking an active part in these meetings. The twinning declaration, which is to be read out and signed at next week's signing ceremony was discussed and agreed. It was hoped to have a twinning social but this hit scheduling problems and had to be shelved. French conversation and visits have therefore formed the main thrust of our meetings.

**French conversation:** In response to several requests for French conversation practice, we have enjoyed a handful of such sessions. For one of these we were very fortunate to have guidance and encouragement from Joanna Green, a French teacher from Bradwell. Otherwise, we have muddled through with some assistance from Michel Thomas, whose audio CD course is available for loan to members on request.

**Visits:** Following Tania's visit ahead of the last AGM, there have been 2 further visits to Parisot in the past year and one here. Nolwenn, the mayor's 19 year-old stepdaughter spent two weeks in July staying with the Persey Butchers, improving her English and working as au pair. During that time she saw a variety of our local "sights", met several Hucklovians, experienced Hucklow in warm sun as well as at its wettest and windiest (?), inevitably the day of the twinning walk, which went ahead anyway albeit in a shortened form with a longer stay at the pub! She also spent some time up at school and recorded her visit in the form of a PowerPoint-style presentation, which was subsequently screened both here and in Parisot. Richard and Dinah Johnson dropped into Parisot en route for Portugal in September and met briefly with the mayor and others. Liz and Tony Greenfield and the Persey Butcher family travelled over for a few days during the October half-term for an informal visit. Both parties combined the Parisot stay with a couple of days in Toulouse and would heartily recommend this structure to others. There were opportunities to explore Parisot and its surrounding area, and on the Saturday night, we were entertained to dinner by the mayor and some 25-30 Parisotains and Parisotaines, at the mayor's house. Apparently he had suggested pizza, but fortunately for us he was shouted down and we were treated to a splendid French meal, put together as a communal effort by those present. We were made to feel very welcome and there was a clear enthusiasm for the twinning project. Two further visits are in prospect – firstly, next week's signing visit in Hucklow and secondly, the return signing visit to Parisot, which is timed to coincide with their "festilac" music festival over the weekend 31 July/1 August.

**School links:** The opportunities presented by twinning for our young people have been an important consideration from the outset. In this context, it has been heartening to see the efforts invested by the children and staff of the primary schools in Hucklow and Parisot. The juniors here have written letters and made photo-

presentations. A DVD and letters have been sent from Parisot. Thanks are due to Jan Harrison, Rachel Purvis and Isobel Board for their enthusiasm and support.

**Publicity:** With the aim of informing people in the area about the twinning and encouraging new members, Tony Greenfield put together a leaflet, which has been distributed around the parish. Additional copies are available on request. This has also been sent to Lafarge, with whom it is hoped to forge links (in the interests of Anglo-French relations!). Details of the forthcoming twinning visit have been circulated with the leaflet and the ceilidh is listed in the Peak Advertiser. Gillian Beer has done sterling work on creating a twinning website, which is ready to go live. Many thanks go to Tony and to Gillian for their time and commitment.

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All in all, it has been a good first year, with real progress having been made. The twinning enjoys the support of the school, Community Spirit and the Nightingale Centre, as well as the parish council. With the official signing now imminent, our challenge is to keep interest in the twinning alive by:

- Consolidating and broadening our membership base
- Supporting the schools in developing their links
- Identifying ways of involving young people more generally – having particular regard to those who are beyond primary school age
- Encouraging more visits in both directions
- Arranging social events
- Developing the French conversation sessions
- Following up on ideas already suggested but not yet implemented, e.g. recipe exchanges.

May 2010