

## Tina: 'It's a very special organisation'

CHAIRMAN Tina Pearce made a pledge in her annual report: "I shall do my best to promote this very special organisation to all I meet and try to encourage them to become members," she said.

"As a result of my pledge when elected last year I have been promoting the twinning association in my own road – not very positive yet but some interest is being shown – and I have given two talks: to a group in Chesham and to a church organisation.

"I have been to speak to a group of Spanish language students and to one of German language students, too.

"I have been networking with the Chesham Town Partners group . . ."

Looking back over the past year she said there had been the usual selection of 31 Club events, which had proved to be very interesting happy occasions.

"I have travelled to Friedrichsdorf and suffered the indignity of borrowing clothing and footwear since our luggage did not catch up with us over the weekend."

She spoke of the Cultural Weekend in Paris in September, "blessed with lovely weather we explored the back views of Paris from the canal . . . and enjoyed guided walks in a man-made park."



## Survival hinges on our finding new and younger members

THREE years from now, May 2018, could see the end of Chesham Town Twinning Association. That was the fate accepted by members at our annual general meeting at the end of January. Unless we can find new – and younger – members in sufficient numbers by January next year, the International Weekend 2018 will be the last of our activities.

This was Plan B put forward by treasurer Andrew Ketteringham, who expressed his concern over the lack of new members and the increasing age of those in office, which did not bode well for the association's future, he said.

He proposed a target of 12 new members by the next annual general meeting.

"Should this not succeed then there should be an orderly reduction in our

activities . . . Should there be a sudden change in our fortunes then we can revert to Plan A and continue our activities."

He added: "I would like to think the formal link with our twin towns can continue at a municipal level, but can we continue to fundraise, host and send members away on trips?"

The 31 Club, he said, was the backbone of the association's activities and he could see no reason why it should not continue.

In her annual report, chairman Tina Pearce said she had been promoting the twinning association.

"Not very positive yet, but some interest is being shown," and she would do

her best to promote what she called "this very special organisation".

Following a brief discussion, a vote was taken which supported Andrew's proposals.

Reports by other officers illustrated the problem. Membership secretary Patricia Cherrill reported 15 family memberships, 15 individual, one business and one association.

And vice chairman Sylvia Ewington, in her role as social and fundraising secretary, quoted low attendances at events.

The meeting also saw the final report of secretary for Houilles, Wyn White, after 25 years in the post and, due to her move to the Isle of Man, the ending of Annie Hinds's term as secretary for Friedrichsdorf.

## Death of Christian Le Chaponnier, a friend of Chesham

SAD news from Houilles: long-standing member of the Comité de Jumelage and for many years vice president for Chesham, Christian Le Chaponnier, died on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

He was 67 years old.

With his wife Chantal, Christian moved from Houilles to Soullans in the Vendée region of France a few years ago after many years of service, not only to twinning, but also to the town, where

he served for a long time as a deputy mayor.

When they lived in Houilles, their rue du Reveil Matin home was well known for hospitality, particularly for visitors from Chesham and Friedrichsdorf during International Weekends when dinners for 20 to 30 people were often held there.

On his many visits to Chesham, and to Friedrichsdorf, he represented the

Mayor of Houilles, Alexander Joly, bringing M Joly's greetings when he was not able to attend personally.

Christian is survived by Chantal, two daughters Karine and Claire and a son Loïc, and seven grandchildren.

A funeral service was held at Soullans on Monday April 20<sup>th</sup>.

There are plans for a ceremony in Houilles at a later date when his ashes will be brought to the town.

## From the editor's chair

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*Twinlink* is published by Chesham Town Twinning Association. Opinions expressed in its pages do not necessarily reflect the views of the association.

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## Two ladies whose service will be missed

TWO of our longest serving officers have retired from their posts – Wyn White after 25 years as secretary for Houilles and Annie Hinds after 14 years in a similar role for Friedrichsdorf. And I feel I cannot let the moment pass without a tribute to them (I can hear you saying to yourselves 'Well, he would say that wouldn't he').

Their service has been unstinting and they will be missed, though Wyn remains on the association committee and I'm sure will give as much help to her successor, Gillian Lee, as is sought. Annie remains a member, although from a distance at her new home on the Isle of Man, and promises to return to Chesham as often as she can, and we hope she will be here for the International Weekend in May. Her successor is Frank Watson.



Both Wyn and Annie have made themselves available to help as often as is required, the two of them manning the Chesham stall at the Houilles Christmas market each year, for instance.

Wyn, in addition to her French role, has been chairman of the association and

was social and fundraising secretary for some years, a role now undertaken by vice chairman Sylvia Ewington.

As the size of our association shrinks, as it appears to be doing year by year now, the service given by these two ladies will be seen in perspective.

### *Reports from the annual general meeting*

## It's 'Goodbye' from her...

IN HER final report as secretary for Houilles Wyn White described the "very smooth and completely uneventful" journey to Houilles for the Cultural Weekend in September and the activities over that weekend.

These included the wonderful boat trip along the Canal St Martin, and the afternoon spent in the Parc Buttes Chaumont, a park constructed from an old limestone quarry and refuse dump. The day ended in Houilles with dinner in a restaurant.

Sunday morning was free for all, apart from those officers who attended the tripartite meeting with their counterparts from the hosts

and Friedrichsdorf. Following lunch it was back to Chesham.

The year ended with the Houilles Christmas market, attended as usual by Wyn, husband Tony and Annie Hinds, again a success.

She ended her report thus: "As most of you know, this is my last report after 25 years as secretary for Houilles."

"Gill Lee is prepared to take on the job so please do give her your approval when it comes to election of officers, and make her job as uncomplicated as possible by offering to host our visitors from France in May this year. Thank you."

## ... and it's 'Hello' from him

BY the time the annual general meeting came round, secretary for Friedrichsdorf, Annie Hinds, was on the Isle of Man, so there was no report from her and her proposed successor Frank Watson was brief: "I have a huge box of papers that Annie left me and I am sorting through them. So I have nothing to report, as yet."

## Not a very good year

DOWNBEAT is the word we could use to describe vice chairman Sylvia Ewington's report as social and fundraising secretary.

"This has not been a very good year for the attendance of members for our 31 Club events, due in part to a lack of members or a lack of interest. Our average attendance was 23 people and mostly the same stalwarts, so thanks to them we raised roughly £1,100."

After listing some of the "tried and tested" events held she thanked all the members that helped with food preparation and helped to serve the food throughout the year.

Sylvia ended: "We also did our normal procession walk on carnival day and, this year again, we had a stall in the park with the hope we would gain new members by offering taster foods from our twinning countries . . . but to no avail."

## More reports from the annual general meeting

### Twenty years Archena link

ROBIN Ketteringham, secretary for Archena, looked forward to the visit to Spain planned for February, postponed from 2014 as the association had two trips abroad that year.

"This fits in well as it is 20 years in April since our twinning with Archena became official," she said.

Robin outlined the programme, which included a visit to a museum in the north-west of Murcia, where "it is colder than Archena so winter clothes are advised."

She said nine members would be going to Archena, three having had to pull out because health problems caused the cost of travel insurance to be prohibitive.

### Memberships not renewed

MEMBERSHIP secretary Patricia Cherrill said memberships not being renewed included one family and one individual, leaving 15 families, 15 individuals, one business and one association.

"Many members pay by standing order and I do appreciate this as it saves in administration costs and keeps your membership up to date," she said.

\*Two visitors to the meeting have since become members, Ken and Ann Austin, who live in Meades Lane, Chesham. Ken is a computer consultant and he and Ann have interests in the environment, wildlife, music, literature and languages. Ann speaks fluent French and some German, while Ken speaks some French.

### Finances are 'just rosy'

"ROSY" was how treasurer Andrew Ketteringham described the association's financial position. There was an excess of income over expenditure of more than £2,113 with a total balance between our two bank accounts of £9,225.81.

He did point out that this was mainly due to Chesham not hosting any international activities in 2014, with the result that the highest expenditure was on insurance.

Social functions during the year brought in £1,136.27, the Christmas market in Houilles showed income of £116.17 and the sale of twinning association pens brought in another £20.

### Tina explains our problems

THE tripartite meeting of officers from Houilles, Friedrichsdorf and Chesham which took place over the cultural weekend was reported on by association secretary Tony White, a meeting where chairman Tina Pearce explained the problems facing our association.

The meeting also heard dates for the coming year as follows:

European concert in Friedrichsdorf: May 9<sup>th</sup> 2015

International Weekend in Chesham: May 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>

Cultural Weekend in Friedrichsdorf: September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Dates were also set for youth exchanges between Houilles and Friedrichsdorf.

## 31 Club

### Some of our members showed their wildest imaginations

IT WAS a sort of 'Would I Lie To You' evening, a whole pack of lies to accompany the delicious tapas provided by Sylvia Ewington.

Stories ranged from spending the night on a park bench in Bayswater, to driving a steam traction engine, tripping David Jason over and into a gutter, dancing on stage to the music of Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames, swimming under water and swimming with turtles in a marine park in Egypt.

Each lie, provided by a member, was accompanied by a couple of true stories, though you would be forgiven for thinking it not so; for instance, when stopped by a policeman and

asked why the driver was speeding, telling said Pc that it was because they were going downhill . . . and being let off; or using a library ticket in place of a passport to enter the UK.

The handful of members who attended the 31 Club tapas evening at the McMinn Centre were asked to guess which stories were not true and the identity of the liar in each case. No prizes, just a lot of fun and a demonstration of the wild imaginations of some of our twinnings.

The next 31 Club event is the annual favourite, boules at the Bellingdon home of Carol and Peter Fletcher, on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Who's who for the next year

THE following officers and committee members were elected for the coming year:

Executive committee: chairman, Tina Pearce; vice chairman, Sylvia Ewington; treasurer, Andrew Ketteringham; association secretary, Tony White; secretary for Friedrichsdorf, Frank Watson; secretary for Houilles, Gillian Lee; secretary for Archena, Robin Ketteringham.

Association committee: executive committee plus membership secretary, Patricia Cherrill; fundraising and social secretary, Sylvia Ewington; 31 Club co-ordinator, Janet Dineen; Wyn White, Audrey Hewitt, Peter Fletcher, Rita Mason, Terry Cherrill, Pat Thompson. Standing members of the committee are the Town Mayor (currently Councillor Mo Fayyaz), and Mora Walker, honorary vice president.

## Waddesdon, Bicester and dinner dance

PLANS are well in hand for this year's International Weekend, here in Chesham, from May 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> when we will welcome visitors from Houilles and Friedrichsdorf.

Arrangements include a full day out on Saturday, with a visit to Waddesdon Manor from morning to early afternoon, fol-

lowed by (one for the ladies) a trip to Bicester Village for a little shopping.

There will be a civic reception at the Town Hall on Sunday morning and, after that, the day is free. Sunday evening sees a dinner and dance at Chartridge Park Golf Club, and our visitors return home on the Monday.

# Twenty years of twinning with Archena—and hopes for future

AFTER an uneventful journey we were met at Alicante Airport by several Archena members and transported by minibus to Archena where we met up with our hosts at 22.30.

At 10.00 on Saturday we all met up, as well as members without guests, and then drove in convoy to Barranda. We passed through barren, rocky countryside with outcrops of mountains, some with castles on top. Despite the dry and rocky appearance of the soil, it was obviously very productive. I have never seen lemon trees so heavily laden with fruit and the countryside was awash with pink and white blossom on peach, apricot and almond trees.

Barranda, high in the mountains, is regularly 5C colder than Archena so we were all well wrapped up.

We were taken on a guided tour of The Ethnic Music Museum, full of musical instruments collected from around the world and some recent inventions eg a xylophone-style instrument made of large, flat stones, an organ made of bamboo and water and hamster wheels used to turn wheels with sticks that hit a bar to make a tune. In other words, unusual musical boxes.

## Fertility goddess

The guide played some of the instruments and you could listen to others being played on headphones. Halfway through the tour we watched a video of many of the instruments being played and then we were all given an angklung from Indonesia, told how to hold it and

then each time the number on your instrument was pointed to on the screen you had to shake it. Not a known tune.

Lunch at a local restaurant was followed by singing along to a guitar being played by David Martinez, Maria Dolores Campoy or Johnny Seabrook.

On the way back to Archena we turned onto a bendy, at times steep, country lane to reach a repaired ruin from 1494. Built on the foundations of a Roman temple from in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> century BC and that had been built on the site of a Spanish sanctuary based on the worship of a fertility goddess.

## Theatre, dinner, disco

Some used the next hour or two to get ready for the evening but we were taken to Archena's new theatre to see a production of a musical called, 'Supercalifragilistic'. In the programme it looked to be loosely based on Mary Poppins and it was in the beginning . . . but then we were completely lost as they became involved in a street dancing competition.

Quick dash home to get ready to leave for the restaurant for dinner and a disco, where we all joined in the dancing.

Sunday morning saw the Mayoral Reception in the Town Hall. Their Mayor, Patricia Fernandez, was represented by Councillor Mario Alcaraz Marmol, a former student of Joaquin Verdu and now a teacher of English, with responsibility for education in the council. Councillor Antonio Jose Palazon Guilamon, whose responsibility in the council is the economy, was also present.

Andrew Ketteringham read out a message from Chesham Mayor, Councillor Mo Fayyaz, followed by a message

from the Archena Mayor read by Mario Alcaraz Marmol. Our chairman Tina Pearce thanked the people of Archena for their hospitality and gave them a gift to mark 20 years of twinning friendship. The chairman of the Archena Twinning Association responded, hoping the friendship would continue.

We then drove in convoy for an hour to Joaquin and Caty Verdu's country home for lunch. Caty took us on a tour of their large, beautiful home which was built in 1860 as a farmhouse by Joaquin's grandfather.

A sea food and chicken paella lunch along with many other tapas dishes and three puddings was eaten in a concrete cave a short distance from the house. The meal was accompanied with beer, red and white wine, sparkling cider and dessert wine.

Suddenly someone realised we should be on our way to the carnival. We missed the first three or four groups but there was still much to see – mainly girls of all ages in dance costumes struggling to keep their headdresses on in the strong wind.

## Tea and Gin bar

We were then taken to a very busy Tea and Gin bar with Shisha pipes on each table. When our tea finally arrived in silver pots it was difficult to work out whose was whose.

Then off to another restaurant for yet more food! So much was left over that the restaurant packaged up the ham and anchovy rolls and pastries for us to take on the plane next day.

Apart from forgetting where to meet up with the minibus on our return to Gatwick we had a good journey home.

***This 'very special organisation' needs new and younger members in order to survive . . . Help us to achieve this and stick with Plan A***

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