

ROMSEY TWINNING



NEWSLETTER

Summer 2023

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Welcome to the Summer edition of the Romsey Twinning Newsletter

It features accounts of our visit to Paimpol at the end of April and the recent visit to Romsey by Treviglio over the Beggars Fair weekend. TAE Teatro, the Treviglio theatre company who came over as guests of RAODS, offer their own perspective on entertaining the crowds that filled the town centre. You will also find reports on an exciting correspondence exchange between pupils at two junior schools in Romsey and Paimpol and the happy outcome of a planting scheme gifted by us to Treviglio for their new Giardini Romsey (Romsey Gardens). We finish with dates for your diary and plans for the rest of the year.

Roland Matthews (Chairman)

Paimpol

On 27th May, a group of twinningers, including several new members, set sail from Portsmouth on the overnight ferry, Romsey Twinning's first post-Covid visit to Paimpol, in Brittany. The highlight of the evening was a celebration of a significant birthday for Jane Bull, former secretary of our association. Refreshments were provided by Julie Brinton and the assembled group sang 'Happy Birthday' to Jane.



Our crossing was a smooth one and we were picked up by a delegation from Paimpol, thence to the town where we met our hosts. After lunch we were shown some of the local sights by our hosts and given time for a bit of a rest before heading to the Mairie for the traditional welcome 'vin d'honneur'. The town's new mayor, Madame Fanny Chappé welcomed the Romsey group and in the course of her speech reminded us all of our twinning history and the importance of cultural exchanges in these difficult times.

Saturday was a free day with our hosts, which enabled members new and old to (re-) acquaint themselves with the sights of the region. We were lucky enough to spend the day on the beautiful car-free Île de Bréhat, a 10 minute ferry ride across the water, where we picnicked and had the chance for a cheeky dip.



Denise and Chris Amery and Bryan Bolton enjoy a picnic with their hosts.



One of many beautiful views on Île de Bréhat, this from the Chapelle Saint-Michel

Other members visited the Abbaye de Beauport, the gardens of the château de La Roche-Jagu, and the town of Tréguier with its fine Gothic cathedral.

On Sunday morning the group and their hosts met at Paimpol's Cinéma Breizh for a screening of the film 'Le Reseau Shelburn', which told of a network active between November 1943 and July 1944 as part of the

French Resistance in order to hide and eventually repatriate Allied airmen. The film had some 'real' actors but a large part of the cast was made up of local people. For more information about the history of this successful network, you can explore this link:



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shelburne_Escape_Line

At the end of the film, we were introduced to a veteran airman who had trained in the UK and whose pride and gratitude to the assembled English was very moving. He had been a young man of 18 and at the age of 98 demonstrated a wicked sense of humour, telling us that he had gone on to be a commercial pilot, flying on Concorde and had only given up his day job a couple of years ago!

After lunch with our families, we met for a walk along the paths used by the Resistance and allied airmen on their way to the Plage Bonaparte, scene of the most perilous part of their escape.

The weekend concluded with a congenial evening at Salle Feutren, where we shared dinner, much chatting with our hosts and some special guests before heading home to prepare for our return journey the following morning. As the group were bidding their farewells the following morning a young French girl did a good trade selling small posies of *muguet*, lily of the valley, to members and hosts, this being a French custom on May Day.



Karen Bolton

Cupernham Junior School – École Sainte Élisabeth, Paimpol

At Cupernham Junior School, our year 6s were keen to write letters to children in Romsey's twin town, Paimpol. So over a few weeks, they crafted their letters in French and wrote them up beautifully on writing paper. They were then taken by our former French teacher, Karen Bolton, to children in Ecole Ste Elisabeth! Very keen to receive their

replies, I was regularly asked during French lessons (and in the school corridors!) when the children would be writing back. Therefore, the pupils were delighted to see the bundle I was carrying to class one sunny June afternoon. The buzz in the classroom, as they read and shared their letters with each other, was magical! Next, the students wanted to be able to see their French friends and put faces to names! With Morgane Donval (headteacher at the school), I arranged a Zoom call a few weeks later. Once again the excitement returned to class! We introduced ourselves in French, gave them a tour of the school and then did our best rendition of "Le Renard et Le Corbeau". Our French friends also introduced themselves, keen to try and find their French penpal in the crowd and then sang us a beautiful version of the song "We are sailing". Our year 6s have now moved onto secondary school but both primary schools are really excited to develop the partnership next year with a new group of children!

Sarah de Zoysa

Treviglio

Four years have gone by since the last visit to Romsey by our counterparts from Treviglio in Italy. We were therefore very pleased to welcome 11 "Amici di Romsey" when they arrived at Southampton Central rail station on Thursday 6th July.

The following morning a large group of guests and hosts gathered in Romsey Town Hall where they were welcomed by Romsey's new Mayor, John Ray. The reception was followed by a guided tour of Romsey Abbey.

With the Italians' visit coinciding with the Beggars' Fair and Romsey Arts Festival, it was decided that the usual excursion would not happen.



Instead, on the Saturday, the Italians were able to sample the various offerings of the Fair and the Festival. Meanwhile, 6 members of TAE Teatro had arrived in Romsey in time to showcase their skills and talents at the Fair.

In the evening the Amici were treated to a concert given by the Michelmersh Silver Band and the Spitfire Sisters at the Abbey.

On the Sunday Romsey Twinning hosts accompanied their guests to various local attractions.



The Mayor of Treviglio, Sig. Juri Imeri, pictured with the Mayor of Romsey and President of Romsey Twinning, Cllr. John Ray, outside the Old Thatched Cottage, Mill Lane

In the past the Italians have tended to come when the days are shorter and often colder. So this year it was decided that we would take the opportunity to replace the usual formal dinner with a hog roast BBQ. The choice of the Woodley Scout Hall proved to be a perfect location for the event. It offered a very attractive rural setting as well as the option of moving into the hall if the weather proved to be inclement. In the event the weather was perfect and the BBQ proved to be a very enjoyable occasion. In the meantime the Mayor of Treviglio, Juri Imeri, along with 4 of his staff had arrived earlier in the day and were able to take part in the event. Prior to the BBQ the Italians and several Twinners had gathered at the

relatively new Treviglio Close on the outskirts of Romsey for a photo opportunity.

Monday morning saw 7 of the Amici and 6 TAE Teatro members gather at Romsey bus station for their transfer by minibus to Gatwick airport. All agreed that the visit had been a great success. *Phil Thomas*



Exciting Reunion and Artistic Collaboration: TAE Teatro Returns to Romsey!



With great pleasure and enthusiasm, TAE Teatro made its return to Romsey after six years, participating in the initiatives of the Romsey-Treviglio twinning. This artistic collaboration finds its roots in 2017 when the Italian theatre company was first invited by RAODS to perform at the Romsey Festival and

the Beggars Fair. The aim was to foster and strengthen the longstanding international exchanges between the two cities through artistic cooperation. In 2019, RAODS reciprocated the invitation and impressed Treviglio with their captivating performances, even acting in English for the Italian audience. This year, TAE Teatro offered to the people in Romsey their 5-actor street parade, titled "Arlecchino and the three coins," inspired by the beloved characters of the Commedia dell'Arte, as well as a children's play, "Frankie and Broccolo," which explored the topic of bullying. Through this production, the importance of collaboration, embracing differences, and cherishing individual uniqueness was emphasized, almost mirroring the spirit of the twinning itself. TAE Teatro also organized a Circus Arts workshop, involving a group of young, talented, and energetic children and teenagers, who highlighted the bright future of both RAODS and the community.



"The warm welcome received from old and new friends was truly overwhelming. While we were already acquainted with the great enthusiasm of Romsonians for live performances, we were deeply moved by the respect and appreciation shown to us as performers," shared the Company. They also added, "We are grateful for the generous and flawless support received from both the RAODS staff and the entire community, which we miss already."

As a symbol of their appreciation, TAE Teatro proudly presented Neil Gwynne, the chairman of RAODS, with their company logo. This gesture not only reciprocated the gift of RAODS' logo - now hanging in TAE Teatro's studio theatre, in Treviglio – back in 2019, but also it signified a

deep hope for continued partnership and artistic co-creation in the years to come. The bond between the two cities has grown stronger, and plans are already underway for ROADS to be hosted in Italy in 2025.



The reunion between TAE Teatro and Romsey represented a valuable opportunity to remind us of the power of artistic expressions to transcend language barriers and unite wonderful, brilliant, and generous people. In this day and age, we firmly believe that these initiatives represent a strong bond between human beings and pave the way for a peaceful, democratic, and participative future in

which art will take centre stage.”

Stefano Rozzoni, TAE Teatro

A note from the Amici di Romsey

Although I have been coming to Romsey now for over 20 years this was the first time I had visited in the summer. It was good to see so many people outside enjoying the warm weather and the many and varied performances and exhibitions on offer at Festival time.

I am sure these celebrations provided opportunities for everyone, old friends and new friends to get together, to entertain, make and share enjoyment.

We thank the Romsey Twinning Committee for the invitation to attend the Beggars' Fair, which was a privilege and a special occasion for us. We know that the people from Treviglio and the members of TAE Teatro will be true ambassadors of the spirit of twinning.

Gian Battista Scrivanti

Springtime in Treviglio

The Giardini Romsey (Romsey Gardens) are a recently landscaped public area in front of the PalaFacchetti sports complex in Treviglio

which were the Mayor of Treviglio twinning visit to the reported in an earlier Twinning of spring bulbs for the in spite of the the local agricultural 2019 was combination of conditions and the lockdowns, which aftercare could not be



inaugurated formally by on the occasion of our town in May 2018. As newsletter Romsey subsequently made a gift new space. Unfortunately, professional help given by college, the planting in late unsuccessful, due to a unfavourable weather onset of Covid and meant that the necessary given. Happily, however,

the *Comune* (local authority) decided to undertake a second planting last autumn which has had a more successful outcome, as you can see from these photographs. One of the pictures features the slate plaque which we commissioned to record the gift. The Italian text reads in translation:

“Bulbs donated by Romsey Twinning Association in 2019 and planted



thanks to the Comune of Treviglio and with the collaboration of the Cantoni Agricultural Institute.” We hope now that a future visit to Treviglio will coincide one year with the spring flowers being in bloom!

Roland Matthews

Romsey Youth Choir to perform in Treviglio

The Romsey Youth Choir, led by Marion Maxey, will be performing in Treviglio as part of their tour to northern Italy this summer. They are also going to perform in Brescia, Bressanone, Verona, Sirmione and Venice and we look forward to hearing about their visit in the next Newsletter.

Battenberg

We are delighted to report that we have received news that our friends in Battenberg will be returning to Romsey in a visit from Friday 27th to Monday 30th October. Further details will be announced in due course.

2023 Diary Dates

27 th September	Annual General Meeting, 7pm Age Concern Hall, Linden Road, Romsey
7 th October	Quiz Night, 7pm for 7.30pm Dr. Peter Centre, Romsey
27 th – 30 th October	Battenberg visit to Romsey (details to be confirmed)