

Amitié

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NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BAGNÈRES-DE-BIGORRE, MALVERN

The horrific attack in Nice on Bastille Day has affected all of us who love France. On behalf of the Friends of Bagnères-de-Bigorre we have sent our condolences to our counterparts. This first issue of L'Amitié will remain what it was intended to be – a celebration of those things that unite us. In a world that seems ever more factionalised, Twinning has more relevance than ever. Through our activities we hope to be a positive example of international friendship and understanding. Our mission is to add something to the lives and economies of all the communities of Malvern and Bagnères.

Graham Dimmock, President, MBTA

A WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR OF MALVERN

When I was introduced to Stéphane Barthe, the Deputy Mayor of Bagnères, in March 2015, I never imagined that a year later Councillor Julian l'Anson, then-Mayor of Malvern Town Council, would be signing a Twinning Agreement with Mayor Jean Bernard Sempastous. This joining of our two towns has brought many people together, forging new friendships and surprising us in discovering the many things we have in common.

However none of this would have come about without the hard work and dedication of the MBTA led by Graham Dimmock. With the help of Cathy Millar and Gina Butler, a strong committee has been formed and several visits to Bagnères have already been made. I am sure that our friendship will continue to grow and I am so pleased that I have been able to play my part.

Thank you for joining us.

Cllr Cynthia Palmer, Mayor

THE FRIENDS OF BAGNÈRES-DE-BIGORRE

The Friends of Bagnères-de-Bigorre is the social part of the Malvern-Bagnères Twinning Association (MBTA). MBTA was created by Malvern Town Council in late 2015 to administer all aspects of the ambitious Twinning Agreement that was signed in Malvern in April. The Friends has been created for people who want to be mainly involved with the social side of twinning. In the medium term, we hope that The Friends will help to develop their own agenda but for the next few months the MBTA Committee will develop a programme aimed at getting to know each

other better. Friends who want to help with the wider organisation of the Twinning Association should talk with one of the Trustees.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- JULY** **Tuesday 26th 7:30pm – 9:30pm**
GETTING TO KNOW YOU
Foley Arms, 14 Worcester Road, Malvern, WR14 4QS
An informal get-together in the main bar.
Buy your own drinks and get to know other members. Look out for the French flags!
- AUGUST** *No event*
- SEPTEMBER** **THE WATER CURE: DR. JOHN HARCUP OBE**
Details and dates to be confirmed.
- OCTOBER** **Friday 14th – Monday 17th (optional extensions)**
BAGNÈRES-DE-BIGORRE SIGNING CELEBRATION
Bagnères-de-Bigorre
A chance to visit Bagnères-de-Bigorre with Malvern's Mayor, and to participate in the celebrations surrounding the French Twinning Agreement signing ceremony. Bagnères is also twinning with the Scottish town of Inverurie, so expect a multicultural event(!).

Provisional plans are to fly from Bristol to Toulouse on Thursday with returns on Monday 17th. We will need to book flights individually but transport from Toulouse to Bagnères will be organised if you wish to take advantage of it.
PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE – Call Graham on 01684 892 036.
- NOVEMBER** **Saturday 12th: 12 noon – 2:30pm**
BAGNÈRES BLONDE AND OTHER BEERS
Friday Beer Company, Link Business Centre, Malvern
Come along to taste The Friday Beer Co's new French-style lager. Traditional local ales will also be available for tasting and purchase.
- DECEMBER** **DÎNER DE NOËL (date tbc)**
We would like to organise a Christmas Dinner at a local restaurant provided that there is a sufficient take-up. This is something we can discuss over the next couple of months.

WORKING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

One of the aims of MBTA is to help local businesses profit from our Twinning, thereby adding to the economy of Malvern. We engaged with The Friday Beer Company at an early stage and they are now well advanced in a project to deliver a new continental style lager to the French and UK markets. Below is a short article from Dr. Gerald Williams, their Marketing Director:



The Friday Beer Co uses Malvern Water for its new Bagnères Beer

Malvern's Friday Beer Co started brewing in 2011 and was the brainchild of three local scientists. The business grew very rapidly, and it is now selling to over 55 outlets across the region and also into Harrods in London.

Most of our production is sold bottled to hotels, restaurants, theatres, wine bars, farm shops and wine shops, although some casked ale goes to a small number of local pubs, and to private events.

We are currently producing five different types of ale ranging from a Blonde Ale to a Stout. Our best-selling bottled product is Friday Gold, which is a 5.6% ABV citrus flavoured golden ale; very smooth and full of flavour.

The advent of the Malvern Twinning organisation and its relationship with the French town of Bagnères-de-Bigorre has led us to develop a new product. Bagnères is a small town, but benefits from an international ski resort called La Mongie, which is run by the local council. The Pilsner-style lager we are developing will feature Malvern water and French hops, and will sell to both the resort and local hotels and bars. It will also be available in England and the company has agreed to support the Twinning Association with donations based on total sales.

The Friday Beer Co Directors have visited Bagnères and met with both the local Distributor and the resort outlets. The response is extremely positive and we are planning for a launch in Bagnères on 14th October.

REFLECTIONS FROM BAGNÈRES-DE-BIGORRE by Gina Butler

My first visit to Bagnères-de-Bigorre turned out to be both rewarding for the twinning partnership and also great fun. My 'mission' was to secure partnerships between schools in the two towns and to explore possibilities for joint eco/conservation projects in our respective Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Prior to my trip, I had already been encouraged by the enthusiasm shown by staff

at Northleigh Primary, Somers Park Primary and Malvern College for being associated with the twinning project, and also by the interest shown by the AONB Office.

Our partners in Bagnères had organised a full programme of visits and meetings with potential partners, all of which gave my French language skills a serious work-out! The outcome was secure partnerships established with two Primary Schools in Bagnères and with the Lycée.

Meeting with the heads of two environmental agencies in Bagnères revealed considerable interest in a potential collaborative enterprise with Malvern conservationists. Watch this space for further developments!

Outside the 'business agenda' opportunities were plentiful for interaction with members of the Comité de Jumelage – a wonderfully welcoming crowd led by the irrepressible Stéphane Barthe. The highlight of my stay was being whisked to the summit of the Pic du Midi by cable-car on a peerlessly limpid day to enjoy sublime views of endless peaks – still snow-bedecked in mid-June.

Bagnères is a small, delightful French town, set in a luscious landscape; we in Malvern are fortunate to be joined in partnership with such a positive, friendly group of people. What next? On my second visit I hope to explore the town's musical scene – a Twinning Choir, anyone? And – guess what! – I've heard the Bridge Club there is keen to set up a few contracts!

LA PYRÉNÉENNE

The Tour de France regularly goes close to Bagnères-de-Bigorre, and among his many other duties, Deputy Mayor Stéphane Barthe makes sure that the necessary local infrastructure is in place and working perfectly for all involved. Shortly before the Tour, a local cycling event takes place starting from Bagnères – La Pyrénéenne. The event overlaps parts of the Tour de France route and has options to suit cyclists of most abilities. This year's event marks the 10th anniversary of La Pyrénéenne and cyclists from Malvern were invited to join for the first time. MBTA committee member and "veteran" cyclist Bill Douglas, together with Matt and Janine Burrows (owners of Detour Cycles, Malvern), took up the challenge.

Bill started his trip camping near Luz St Sauveur on the other side of the mountains from Bagnères. While there he made his fourth ascent of the Col du Tourmalet (a frequent feature of the Tour de France and a mere 7,000ft above sea level). On Friday 1st July Bill moved on to Bagnères to join up with Matt and Janine and to lunch with the Mayor and his colleagues on Saturday. For Sunday's leg of La Pyrénéenne, Matt took on the longest and hilliest of the three options (180km), while Janine and Bill opted for a lesser, but still demanding, challenge, particularly for Janine as she was accompanied by her three-year-old daughter, Erica.

A week later, Bill got to see the riders in the Tour de France on their climb into the Pyrénées. If you are interested in next year's event please get in touch.

TRUSTEES

Graham Dimmock (President)	01 684 892 036
Annaëlle Bolton (Treasurer)	
Gina Butler	01 684 569 235
Joe Mearns	01 684 892 465