



ISSUE 9, WINTER 2018

SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL FRIENDS

I imagine that we are all frantically involved in last-minute preparations for the festive season and are busily decking halls between baking mince-pies and wrapping presents. Or perhaps not – maybe you are serenely organised and will glide effortlessly into the activities of Yuletide, coping magnificently with every challenge...

Whatever your approach to the Christmas season, may I convey to you all on behalf of the MBTA committee our grateful thanks for your support over this past, exciting year.

AUTUMNAL FRENZY!

After a leisurely summer interspersed with gentle sessions of 'boules' the MBTA calendar of events really swung into action with the arrival of September. The interesting talk and presentation given by **Cora Weaver** on "*Malverns Worldwide*" proved to be a popular evening, which benefited from the generous support of our local Waitrose who provided a great range of tasty buffet food.

It seemed that every week of the month of October had a French theme; first there was the excellent *Murder Mystery* evening, presented by the splendid Malvern Wells Players. Few of us turned out to be budding Inspector Morses but we thoroughly enjoyed pretending to be and in sampling the first-rate boeuf bourguignon which helped coax the brain cells into action.

Thereafter it was all systems go for the visit of the 27 French students from Bagnères and their teachers. This was a major operation for MBTA and it was thanks to so many of you who were actively involved in hosting, in ferrying to and fro and in entertaining our young visitors that the visit was adjudged a resounding success. Our school partners – Malvern College, Hanley Castle and RGS Worcester offered an entire day of in-school experience which the French youngsters absolutely lapped up.

The reaction from Bagnères was euphoric – the activities the students packed into their 5 night stay was recognised as outstandingly rich, offering insights into British heritage, culture and way of life and excellent linguistic opportunities. Some very warm friendships were established between hosts and visitors. The two photos below show the group outside the gates of Windsor Castle gardens and at work in a Shakespeare workshop on the theme of “*Romeo & Juliet*” at the RSC in Stratford.



Just before half-term it was the turn of our partner school *Somers Park* to be centre-stage. They welcomed 9 teachers from the *Ecole Jules Ferry* in Bagnères (a primary school specialising in teaching English) into their classrooms for a week. The visitors participated with 100% commitment in the intensely busy life of the school. It proved a fascinating exchange of educational experience and professional debate, with all concerned deriving immense benefit from this rare opportunity to share working practice. **Anita Marsh** and her Somers Park colleagues were exceptional hosts.

GET OUT YOUR DIARIES FOR 2019!

Your MBTA Committee met last night and drafted out a provisional programme for 2019. Two events in the first part of the year need you to book yourself in just as soon as the chimes of Big Ben have ended (assuming they will be in action)!

Coming up in...February this year (for operational reasons, as they say) and by popular request, we shall once more be inviting you to the ...

GREAT BAGNERES BAKE-OFF

To be held on Saturday, 16th February

At Apt. 1, The Revue, 2, Orchard Rd

The theme this year will take account of the date and your challenge will be a '**gâteau St. Valentin**'. My research shows endless possibilities for creative interpretations, so contestants have full licence to go completely crazy!

Early in January, Denise will be writing to you with full details of the event but make sure you note down the date NOW!

Exactly one month later we shall be holding our third Twinning Association Quiz, along the same lines as last year. We have secured the services of our inimitable Quiz Pro **Kate Moore** and hope to be repeating the food offering of quiche, baked potato and salad within the price of your ticket. So add this date too to your diary before you tuck into the turkey.

QUIZ NIGHT: Saturday, 16th March at 7.30 p.m.

We are hoping to welcome as participants to this event a contingent from the Malvern Rugby Club and they will no doubt be competitive quizzers. You may have seen from the local press how the club is really working at full pelt on their fund-raising activities in support of the visit they will make to Bagnères in mid-April. The interest in this trip has been well beyond the expectations of MBTA and of club organisers **Shaun Robinson and Neil Preece** – 22 youngsters (under 15s), plus coaches and families are eagerly looking forward to their mini Six Nations Contest with the best of Bagnères young bears! (Pyrenees reference). The whole party will number 49 in total – a phenomenal response.

SUMMER ACTIVITY IDEAS

Later on in the year we will focus more on alfresco activities (hopefully sessions of boules and beer) and we hope to add to our ‘sporting’ repertoire a Taste of Croquet, which **Ken Potts** has kindly volunteered to organise for us. More information on these events will follow in due course.

A FINAL REFLECTION ON 2018

We hope you will be prepared to remain in touch and support our events enthusiastically in the coming year.

Events such as those reported here offer tangible proof of the genuinely enriching benefits which derive from a successful twinning organisation. That is our constant aspiration and we feel modestly pleased with our successes this year. Well over 100 people/ families/ individuals from the Malvern community have shared in our activities over the past 12 months. In our first full year of existence that number was around 25! We want to build on that level of participation and extend a warm welcome to everyone to join us.

***A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR TO ALL!
JOYEUSES FÊTES A TOUS ET A TOUTES!***

Gina Butler, Chair