

Ivybridge Twinning Association
Bi-Annual Visit to St Pierre-sur-Dives
30 April-3 May 2010

Every two years the Ivybridge Twinning Association look forward to our visit to St Pierre-sur-Dives in Normandy, France. These visits have occurred since the signing of the Charter between the two Towns in 1972. We are hosted by our Twinning friends. Every time we visit there seems to be something slightly different visiting different attractions, but always we are met with warm friendship.

This year we started to plan in January using a coach booked through an agent called 'Brittany Awaits' this booking ended in an acrimonious exchange and in the end the party of 14 travelled to France in their own cars. The crossing was smooth and the sun shone on our arrival.

Equipped with mobile phones and tom-tom satnav's we communicated en route and rendezvoused in Dinan the half way point for lunch.

Having enjoyed a brief look at this historic French city we arrived at the St Pierre-sur-Dives Marie (town hall) and greeted by the Mayor followed by a small reception. Having been greeted by our hosts with the customary cheek kisses (not the men!) we proceeded to our host's homes to enjoy a good glass of French wine and in some cases something a little stronger. Some members with clear heads gathered the following morning near 'Halles du X1' for our guided tour of a very exquisite attraction known as 'Jardin des Plantes ('Bird Hill')'. This is a horticultural park with superb flower displays and small vignettes of the cities of France depicting a specific theme about the cities. On the top there were superb views of the city of Caen and a small animal farm for the children (big & small). If we had any doubts we were in France they were dispelled when we witnessed a Peacock making amorous advances to a Cockerel. At midday we all gathered for a picnic in the park where the members produced table clothes etc and of course being true British our Chairman his 'cup of tea'. In the afternoon our hosts took us to Pegasus Bridge the site of the WW2 British Airborne landing on 5/6 June 1944 where we visited the Museum and saw two interesting West Country connections, a Royal Marine green beret displayed in a cabinet with the famous bagpipes of Lord Lovat and a Royal Marine tank on a plinth with its compass graduated markings around the turret outside. After we extracted ourselves from the hordes of Canadian tourists we made our way back to our host's houses for the evening reception given by Le Comite de Jumelage (St Pierre twinning committee) during which our chairman Geoff Gibbs read out the message from Ivybridge Town Mayor. On Sunday we were taken

individually to many attractive sites, some of our members went for a walk in an area known as ' Swiss Normandy' followed up with a picnic near the 'Pont D'oilly' (bridge over the river oily), interesting because the good old English umbrella came in very handy!! That night we had dinner with our hosts and regretfully had to leave the following morning. We had our customary send off by our hosts looking forward to their visit to Ivybridge next year in our 39th year of twinning. However some of us managed to visit the French Market with livestock for sale etc before leaving St Pierre. In addition because we went by car a couple of us went to Disney World Paris and The Palace of Versailles before returning via visiting our grandfather's graves on the Somme (WW1). We now look forward to the summer with our various events which are planned among which are a walk, B-B-Q and participating in The Lions Fun Day at Ivybridge Rugby Club on 3 July 10. If you are interested in our activities and would like to discuss them or joining us please ring Clive Hunter 01752 893726. Thank You.

Clive Hunter
For Committee