

SWANAGE FRENCH CIRCLE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010-2011

With one or two exceptions, our meetings and events have been well attended in spite of a reduction in the number of active members. The decision to hold some of our meetings in the afternoon rather than the evening has clearly benefitted some members, and consequently there has been a better attendance at the "Conversation française" meetings. We are as always grateful to Sergei and Rachel Tarassenko for their help with the French language and being flexible about dates and times. Holding the "Fête des Rois" in the afternoon was also appreciated. We have had a very varied programme with some well established favourites, such as the "Quatorze Juillet", the talk by John and Ruth Chaffey on Provence and the "Chasse au Trésor" also organised by John and Ruth. John Barclay gave an interesting talk on his round the world trip, using a variety of surface transport and Toby Hazan spoke of his father's role in the French resistance. We again enjoyed a friendly boules match with our friends from Wareham.

We have been pleased to welcome a number of new members during the year. We urgently need new members if the French Circle is to thrive and continue as some of us become less active. It is a sobering thought that in the last two years three of our members have died and five more have become unable to take part in our activities. There are 25 paid up members at the present time compared with 33 this time last year. It is therefore remarkable that we continue to have quite good attendances at most of our meetings and events. However we need to consider what more we can do to attract more members and to give the French Circle a higher profile in the locality.

We enjoyed our visit to Cerisy-La-Salle last May, 10 members took part and it was a pleasure to welcome David and Sandra Owen to the dinner in Montpinchon, where in addition to the excellent repas, we were entertained by Yannick, the Cantonal animator with guitar and also by Claude Halbecq with saxophone. It was the last weekend of the "Jazz sous les Pommiers" in Coutances, and on the Sunday lunchtime we visited the Parc d'Attractions near Périers with its rural museum and miniature railway.

We look forward to welcoming a return visit from Cerisy-La-Salle probably the weekend of 10/11 September, a weekend when there are a number of attractive events in the Swanage area. This year marks the 20th anniversary of our links with Cerisy-La-Salle which we would like to mark with a special event.

Our annual programme is on the Dorset Twinning Association website, it is our presence on this website which has probably led to the request from "France" magazine to contribute to their series on British/French twin towns. We hope to enter a team in the annual Quiz on 8th April, which is being organised by

Sturminster Newton last years winners. The Association is working to improve the links between Dorset and La Manche which are officially twinned together.

The French circle has a hard working Committee, with most of the work being done by the Chairman, Vice-chairman and Treasurer. Most members of the Committee have served for a number of years and work well together. Nevertheless we would like to see new members on the committee. There is no limit to the number of Committee members. The committee would like to thank all those who have contributed to our meetings during the year, to those who have hosted our meetings, and in particular Barbara Pounder who catered for the "Quatorze Juillet" and the "Jeux de Noël".

JOP