



**NORTH FERRIBY - LE PELLERIN
TWINNING ASSOCIATION
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010**

The Annual General Meeting - and this is our seventh - is the occasion when the Association's officers report to you on how we have been doing over the year, the successes, and the things that have not gone as well as we had expected, and to answer your questions. As Chairman I'm first in to bat with my report. I shall look forward to your questions in a while, but hope you don't bowl me any googlies.

I think we can describe 2009 as a successful year in many ways, if not such an exciting one as recent years - we can't sign a Friendship Charter every year!

First, a few figures. Your Committee has met eight times to plan and manage our activities. Over the year we organised eight events of which two were cancelled (more about them in a moment). A group of us went on a very enjoyable visit to Le Pellerin in April. Membership numbers have remained almost unchanged, down by just a couple, but we thank you for your continued support and encouragement.

At last year's A.G.M. the idea of organising "chat" sessions, informal conversational evenings, was proposed from the floor. We promised to look at it and I am very pleased to report that since last May we have had two groups running, one for those with less confidence in their French and another for those who are more comfortable with the language. They meet roughly every two weeks in various people's homes, and combine conversational practice with a bit of fun. We try to tailor the content to what the "chatters" want. We have about sixteen or seventeen regular participants and I think they enjoy the sessions. Thanks to Jane and Janet who lead the Alpha Group, while Margaret and I do the same for the A Group.

Also at last year's A.G.M. the question "What is full twinning?" was asked. We had the thought that it somehow went a little further than the relationship enshrined in our Friendship Agreement, but we have taken a three-pronged approach to investigating this. The first prong was to look at the content of other communities' twinning agreements, which showed that there was little difference of substance between the goals and aspirations set out in their twinning agreements on the one hand and our Friendship Agreement on the other - and certainly no glaring omissions from the Friendship Agreement. The second prong was to ask our partners in Le Pellerin for their views on the issue and, in particular, if they saw any missing elements. Because of the close involvement of the Mairie, Valérie Demangeau, their Mayor, and Chantal Auffray are looking into this. Our third line of attack has been to set up a small team - John Holt, Desiree Betts and Bill Deakin - to look at what the E.U. understands by, and wishes to encourage in, twinning relationships. This has been a lengthy job for them but has produced very interesting results, which mean that we could make an application under the "Europe for Citizens" programme for a substantial financial contribution to the costs of travel and organisation of an event to develop our twinning relationship. Because of the lead time required this could be for a trip to Le Pellerin next year which, in addition to what we usually do, would also have to include some activity on one of Europe's current themes such as a joint meeting on renewable energy.

Which brings me to another useful similarity between Le Pellerin and North Ferriby - not only are we both situated on estuaries but the estuaries themselves both have characteristics which make them particularly suitable for the use of tidal power. Here in North Ferriby Glenn and Janet Aitken are involved in the "Neptune" tidal energy project, and when we visited Le Pellerin in the spring they started to explore possible collaboration with bodies over there. If anything does come of this we can be proud of having taken at least a small part at the outset.

Moving from the commercial to the educational sector, our relationship with our local schools continues to thrive, both with the primary school and with South Hunsley. I'd like at this point to welcome Patrick

Sweeney here tonight; Patrick is responsible for modern language teaching in the primary school, and I'd like to thank him for his encouragement and help. Margaret and I go in to Key Stage 1 - the infant section, years 1 and 2 - to give the children four sessions of introductory French every term, which *we* enjoy greatly and they seem to as well. Not too ambitious, we aim to give them a start in understanding a little about France and its culture at the same time as learning some basic vocabulary and phrases. Our aim is to make it fun for them so that they absorb the knowledge willingly, and go into compulsory French in Key Stage 2 remembering a little of what we have started them off with and keen to learn more.

What we have not yet succeeded in is setting up a regular pen-pal type of exchange with the Le Pellerin pupils, not because of any lack of will on either side, but probably because of the pressures of time, SATS and so on which haven't helped continuity. This is true both in the primary school and at South Hunsley, but we understand that the year 9 pupils at South Hunsley will be doing something soon.

An interesting proof of the serious and long-term view taken of our relationship by our friends in Le Pellerin has just come to our attention. One of the staff at the Mairie over there had the idea of giving some of the streets on a new development English names like rue de North Ferriby, l'allée du Humber or l'allée du Yorkshire, and the proposal is due to be discussed at the town council meeting this Thursday evening. They want us to join in the discussion via Skype so, provided we can find someone here who has the necessary webcam etc., we shall do so. This really is a great honour for North Ferriby, and it is a pity that we have no development space in Ferriby so that we could return the honour.

Looking forward to this year, we have decided, in the light of the cancellation of the last two events planned for 2009 due to insufficient ticket sales, to concentrate on just two or three social functions. As you know, one of the reasons why we undertake these activities, quite apart from keeping in touch with each other and enjoying ourselves with a bit of a French flavour, is to make sure that we can support contacts and exchanges, so we have to take a businesslike approach and make sure that our activities are cost-effective. Our French counterparts, on the other hand, are fortunate to have an annual grant from the Mairie so have less need to fundraise.

Jane recently circulated a request for feedback on the kind of thing you would like, which brought in a number of responses but there are still a lot of members who haven't let us know and it is not too late if you want to add your input. We should also like to know if you would like more French content in our activities. However, based on initial results we plan to hold a Wine Bluff on May 8th, a Quiz in late June/early July and a Gourmet Dinner in the autumn. And the chat sessions will continue.

Finally, we are looking forward to welcoming a party - a mix of old friends and new faces - from Le Pellerin who are planning to come here from Tuesday 13th April to Saturday 17th April. We have already started thinking about a suitable programme for our French friends and, since this is the first week of the summer term, we are hoping that we may be able to arrange a visit to South Hunsley for some of the children (unlike two years ago, *all* the young people we know about so far are 12+). One of the things that we are very pleased about, resulting from previous trips in both directions, is that many of the arrangements have led to close friendships and we are seeing more and more families from both sides of the water crossing the Channel to visit each other quite separately from the official group visits.

My final remarks are addressed to my colleagues on our Committee. Without your enthusiastic and constructive participation and support, we could not have had so much to report, nor could we be enjoying such a close and friendly relationship with our opposite numbers in Le Pellerin. So, on behalf of the whole Association, I'd like to say, simply but no less sincerely, "Thank you, all of you."

Chris Swindin, Chairman
9th February, 2010