



Brentwood
Borough Council

The French Connection

Brentwood/Montbazon Town Twinning Association

Issue No 26



EVENTS OF 2011

A Message from our Chairman – Valerie Fletcher

Seen here with her French counterpart
Laurence Leblevec



Since I wrote last year's message it has been a challenging year one way and another and I would like to thank everyone for their support and good wishes during my period of 'inactivity'. I am pleased to say that by the time you read this I should be much more mobile than I have been for some months and hopefully discharged from the care of the neurologist.

Brian and I have been to Montbazon twice this year and I have particular poignant memories of our visit at the beginning of May for the Journée de l'Europe. Joining the parade to follow the Mayor and the band, we marched from the Mairie up the hill to the Cemetery. There I was taken by surprise to be beckoned up by Jean Geay to join the official party to help to lay a wreath at the War Memorial in memory of the dead of the 1st and 2nd World Wars. It was a very proud moment and a very evocative time listening to Jean read each name individually and the young people of Montbazon respond with 'Mort pour la France'. It was not something that I was expecting to be a part of and I hope that my loss of composure was not too embarrassing, but I found the whole ceremony very moving and felt very privileged to have been asked to be a part of it.

We visited again in July for the official bi-annual Town Twinning visit and a great time was had by everyone. It was a pleasure to have Deputy Mayor Ann Coe and her husband Paul Barrell with us too.

We have since been fundraising again to fund the visit from our French guests, which incidentally is from **18 July – 23 July, 2012** avoiding the Jubilee and Olympic dates. Sheila Hornsby and the Social Committee are working hard to put together a programme we hope they will enjoy and as soon as we have finalised it we shall let you all know what is happening.

I hope you will enjoy reading about the things we have taken part in as an association this year and thank all the contributors, especially Rosemary Smith and Margaret Streather for putting the material together to make it such an enjoyable read. It is no mean task and I know that when we see Rosemary approaching with her notebook we try to appear invisible but without her tenacity and Margaret's skills the newsletter would not get published. My grateful thanks to you all, well done.

Lastly I would like to wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year, and look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Various enjoyable social events are constantly being held to raise funds to allow us to provide some group trips and meals for our French visitors in 2012. The traditional 12th Night celebrations which started this year resulted in a brilliant £ 525

Fête des Rois – January 2011



Three cheers for the Kings



Coffee Morning in March

What better way to spend a bright Spring Saturday morning than enjoying coffee and a selection of delicious cakes in the convivial atmosphere of Margaret Hogan's house.

This was a chance to catch up with other twinning friends and an occasion to meet three new members who came to 'look us over'. After the usual raffle proceeds were added, the funds benefited by £150.

More news of our fund raising activities later

La Journée de L'Europe

Saturday by Rosemary Smith

On the Saturday nearest to 8th. May (Commemoration of V.E. Day) there is an opportunity to celebrate Europe with a 'themed' day for local communities to enjoy together with their European 'twins'. Each year one of the Val de l'Indre group of eight small towns takes its turn to organise events.

This year the theme was 'Children's Games' and seven of us from Brentwood went over to support our Montbazon hosts with our dart boards, Monopoly etc. A variety of English food products enticed customers to their sales stall. The field at the Grange Rouge was set out with decorated stands and rustic games. The sun shone, the orchestra played, youngsters danced, Gary Houpert's crêpe stall did good business and local families enjoyed the day.



In the evening the Grand Repas was held in a large marquee up at the Donjon. The theme this time was Spanish with paella as the main course and entertainment by two Spanish flamenco dancers. (It is rumoured that Montbazon is looking for a Spanish twin.)

The Montbazon committee and their Brentwood guests worked very hard with the preparation and clearing up for this event. Finally the tired but happy participants staggered down the rough paths in the moonlight to find their cars, or to walk home to catch a few hours sleep before Commemoration Day Parades.

Sunday – by Valerie Fletcher



Having been excused by Laurence from the clearing up after the Saturday evening event Brian and I woke fresh eyed and bushy tailed to be at the Mairie at 10am on Sunday morning. The salute and inspection of the fire brigade was made by Mayor Bernard Riveche, Deputy Sylvie Giner and the Chief of the Fire Service.



After the flag was raised we joined the parade to the Cemetery together with the Veterans and the many Montbazonnais who had turned out for the very moving ceremony.

A Working Holiday for Francesca by Sue Sanders

"Dear Sue

I have been given your email address as the person to contact regarding town twinning. I live in Kelvedon Hatch and I'm studying my 3rd year of French and Spanish at Lancaster University. I am currently in Pamplona and I would love to spend my summer in Montbazon. It is a great link for people like myself to throw themselves into a different culture and represent Brentwood. Would the council in Montbazon have any work opportunities for this summer?"

So began my contact with Francesca last January. . . .

After approaching Annie Catusse and Sylvie Giner at the Mairie in Montbazon a work placement was found. M. Hubert Giblet at the Office de Tourisme du Val de l'Indre was willing to provide work experience for 8 weeks in the summer. As well as this, the warm and willing hospitality of our friends in Montbazon meant that Michelle Garbet also found host families for Francesca for the whole of her stay.

'Elle est charmante et très heureuse d'être à Montbazon, je crois qu'elle passera un bon séjour avec les familles Montbazonnaises.' I was told in July. We first met face to face at the reception that Jumelage in Montbazon gave the party from Brentwood when we arrived there for Bastille Day. During her free time Francesca joined us whenever possible, having 'a brilliant week'. On her return home after 8 busy weeks working in the Tourist Office we were all pleased to read an excellent account of her 'wonderful experiences' in our twin town which was published in the Brentwood Gazette.

She was an excellent ambassador for the youth of today, for Town Twinning and for Brentwood.

En Famille by Monica Donegan

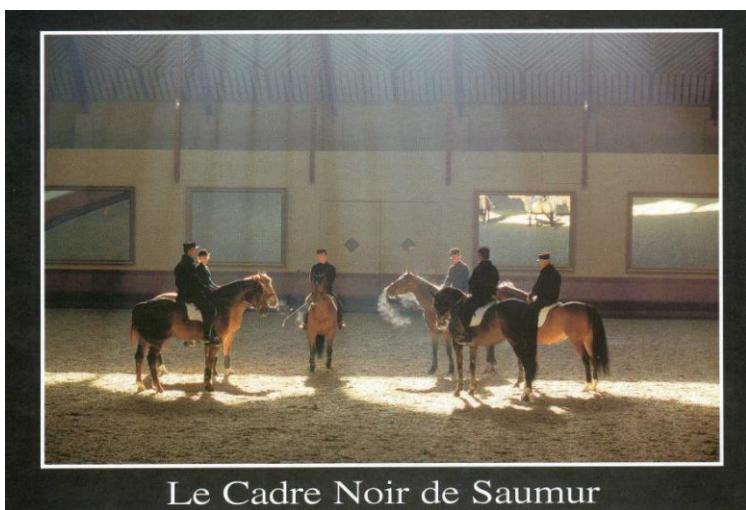
During my stay with Elisabeth, I met her son Jean Claud and his wife Sylvette, for the first time when they, and ancient Yorkshire terrier Scottie came to enjoy the fireworks on the eve of 14 juillet. We ate roast chicken served with lettuce and vinaigrette dressing. This was followed by a delicious tarte aux abricots accompanied by wine, goat's cheese and the home made Dundee cake that I had brought from Brentwood. Friends Jacqueline and Daniele joined us towards the end of this feast - an excuse for yet another glass of wine, cider and even more cake. The conversation ranged from house prices in Britain to the Royal wedding and of course "THE DRESS"

Next day we went with Jean Claud and Sylvette to meet their son Nicole, wife Natasha and son Matthieu aged 10 months. Le Tour de France was on television and proved a good talking point as my late husband was a keen cyclist and some years ago we had visited many of the famous climbs in the Pyrenees. We discussed the current leaders with Mark Cavendish the British rider wearing the Maillot Vert.

We sat down to dinner on the terrace and then came the words I least expected "Monica, aimez-vous les huîtres? " I must admit that I have never tasted oysters and I was a little unsure. However -"When in Rome (or Montbazon in this case-----)" I ate three oysters and was a little disappointed to find that they tasted only of salt water. I suffered no ill effects and went on to enjoy tomates farcies and a cornetto.

Baby Matthieu was a constant source of amusement. He had a very sunny disposition and kept us all entertained. He wore an amber necklace which was intended to ease the pain of teething. Nicole and Natasha had visited West London last year and expressed their surprise at the cost of living in the UK.

As we prepared to leave I thought what a pleasure it had been to be a part of the genuine French way of life. This is Town Twinning at its best.



Le Cadre Noir de Saumur

During a morning performance in the indoor dressage arena, which can seat up to 1200 spectators, we watched and appreciated the work and skill of riders when training the horses. Demonstrations included classical academic riding and the famous "airs above the ground" all accompanied by an informative commentary and a well chosen selection of classical music.



After lunch it was time to hear about the history of the school which was founded in 1828 to provide training for officers of the French Cavalry. The name comes from the black uniforms that are still worn today. Now under the umbrella of the Ministry of Sports the school has stabling for over 40 horses, a large outdoor arena and all the modern facilities that one would expect of such a prestigious riding establishment.

We were able to ask plenty of questions of our excellent guide and pat some of the horses when they could be persuaded to leave their mangers.

Le Château Villandry by Pam Richards

One of the highlights of this year's visit to the Loire Valley was our time spent at Villandry. I had visited the château before but now took advantage of an extremely informative audio tour. Although built by Jean Le Breton in 1536, and redesigned in 1754 by the Marquis de Castellane, the splendid château and gardens, as we know them today was the result of the vision and money of a Spaniard, Joachim Carvallo and his wife, an American, Ann Coleman. They were living in Paris and needed somewhere to house their growing collection of paintings and found Villandry in a very poor state. They spent their time and money restoring the château and the gardens from the original plans. After exploring we met up for a delicious **3 tier 'fast food' lunch**. The shop contained many lovely things. I purchased a Château DVD, a permanent souvenir of a very enjoyable day.



Les Jardins de Villandry by Sheila Hornsby

The visit to Villandry fulfilled a long held desire to see the celebrated gardens. The design we see today was recreated during the early 20th century by Dr Joachim Carvallo, seeking to catch the spirit of the original 1530's, Renaissance garden design by Jean le Breton using ideas from his time spent as ambassador to Italy. This had mainly been lost beneath the English style landscape park developed on the site in the late 18th century. The gardens are famed for the decorative kitchen garden or potager which combines the use of flowers and vegetables to provide an ever changing aspect through the seasons. It is made up of nine squares each sub divided into geometric beds edged in box arranged around a central fountain with another pool and fountain where four squares meet. Two plantings a year require in total many thousands of plants in spring and summer.

The pleasure gardens devoted to love and music can best be appreciated from the windows of the château or viewed from the belvedere. Many hours of pruning create the intricate shapes of hearts, scrolls and butterflies from kilometres of box hedges. Four aspects of love - tender, passionate, fickle and tragic are reflected in the designs and a Renaissance viewer would have found it highly symbolic! The colour of the planting in between the box shapes provides a vivid contrast and serves to highlight the expertly manicured design. Approached from a raised, lime tree edged walkway the water gardens provide a complete contrast with a wide open space both restful and uncluttered. The water from the lake has a practical use feeding as it does the fountains and other water features in the gardens. The visitor is then led through to the newest addition - the sun garden which displays a fascinating range of colour co-ordinated flowering plants to inspire you upon your return to your own garden! No garden would be complete without herbs and so sure enough there is an area devoted to medicinal and aromatic plants. And if you are feeling energetic how about playing a few sets on the tennis court?



Henri Carvallo, Joachim's grandson is the current owner of Villandry and it is good to know that like his forbear he takes a keen interest in the maintenance and development of this fascinating garden in the heart of the Loire Valley. Many thanks to the *Comité du Jumelage* for arranging this very special visit!

A Day to Remember - enjoyed by Christine & David Minns

A car ride and a river trip was the plan for our free day. The car ride was certainly a ride with a difference. Our host, Eric, whose interest is cars, especially Rolls Royces, had taken off the cover and charged the battery of his 30-year-old light metallic blue Rolls Royce Corniche convertible and so, together with Sylvie, off we went in style.



Going along the lanes through Balzac country, seeing the countryside close up with the hood down with the birds singing and the perfume from the wild flowers was an experience not to be forgotten – especially reclining on white leather upholstery. However, the five-minute stretch of motorway, still with the hood down was also an experience not to be forgotten.

The highlight of the morning was arriving at Langeais where a small flat-bottomed

traditional Loire motorised river boat awaited us which we boarded for a trip down the river. We joined another couple, so we were a party of six for the trip. The boatman-owner who had built the craft himself gave an informative commentary in French (Sylvie providing a translation) on what we were seeing as we went along and how the river changed with the seasons. The water level was low so much skill was required in navigation. It was perfectly still and calm apart from the swirl of the water and quiet chugging of the outboard engine. This meant we could get quite close to the many birds we saw on the river.

After our trip we then drove to lunch near Villandry to ‘une étape gourmande’, a restaurant on a 17th century farm, serving specialities of the region and dishes from food grown on the farm. It was a working farm where one had to pass the goats in their ‘chevrerie’ on the way to the toilets.

After a very enjoyable meal we proceeded to visit a small privately owned château ‘L’Islette’, only open to the public in July and August. Its name reflects its idyllic setting on a small island in the river Indre with its own watermill (now converted into a dwelling). It dates from the 15th century, possibly even earlier, with additions and modifications carried out from the 17th century. Rodin rented some rooms there at the time he obtained the commission for his famous statue of Balzac, and the château became a haven for him and his lover, Camille Claudel. Our conducted tour was led by the twenty-year-old eldest son of the family. We saw the family’s private quarters – even their bedrooms - and there was a female member of staff arranging flowers in the kitchen.



Our final journey in the Rolls wafted us home to afternoon tea on the terrace (the Giners are great tea lovers) served with cake, baked by Eric, our host.

Messing about in boats by Christine Seymour

When we first arrived in Montbazon my hostess, Claude Dousset, told me that on the night before Bastille Day there would be fireworks and that we would be watching them from a boat on the river. I vaguely assumed that we were talking about our whole group going on a sizeable craft. In fact she was referring to the rowing boat and the canoe which she keeps at the bottom of her riverside garden. The council had asked all the people who owned boats to float about on the river during the firework display, holding paper lanterns, supplied by the council – no cuts there!



All was revealed when we crept down to the bottom of Claude's garden at 10.00pm on the 13th July. "We" by this time included Claude's son and three grandchildren as well as Francesca Cripps, who was lodging with Claude at the time. One grandson had built himself a little raft, using the inner tube from a large tyre. This floated all right, but when he tried to paddle it just

went round in circles. His father solved this problem by attaching the raft to the rowing boat so that it could be towed. I noticed that the smaller children were wearing life jackets, but was assured that the rest of us were tall enough to stand on the bottom if necessary, as the river was not deep. Hmm.



Access to the boats was gained by lowering a ladder into the water. As I was about to transfer my considerable weight into the canoe Claude started to give useful tips like "Put your foot in the middle not on the side". I sought to reassure her by telling her that both my grandfathers were sailors, which she thought was quite exotic. Claude paddled the canoe, Francesca kept the lanterns dry and lit and I sat at the front pushing weeds out of the way.

I am told that the lanterns bobbing about on the river did look very pretty, but of course none of the other town twinnings realised that it was us. We got a fantastic view of the fireworks, being directly below them. By the next evening Francesca and I were quite blasé about canoeing across the river to a party. Our host produced a very long ladder when we arrived and lowered it a very long way down.



At the party I belatedly gave Sue my next of kin details. . . .

Les Lampions et Les Feux d' Artifice

A party of some 15 Brentwood / Montbazon twinnings and hosts decided to eat at the Guinguette (ex Marlene's) on the evening of 13th. July.



The food was excellent but the service left a lot to be desired, so although we sat down at 7.30 p.m., by 10 p.m. some had not been served with their puddings. Pam Richards and I had not ordered any, so off we went to the Town Hall square.



As we arrived there I met our first Montbazonnais hosts, the Rousseaus, and then Neil Hornsby thrust a lantern into my hands. He was acting as supplier of the lanterns to all and sundry. The lanterns were very smart, with good candles in them, looked good when lit and did not get blown out in a moderate breeze. At 10.30 p.m. the Pompiers Band and the Mayor led the assembled multitude out of the square, the traffic on the Route Nationale was stopped by the Gendarmes, and we headed off along the road to the bridge and over the River Indre.

by John Smith

Like a trail of glow-worms the 'lampions' came (we recognised some of the bearers) and everyone crowded along the river bank at the Guinguette awaiting the firework display. Those enjoying themselves on the dance floor took a breather and we noticed some small boats approaching from under the bridge. The occupants had their own lampions and the boats anchored opposite Illette — front seats for the show!



Suddenly a voice over the tannoy was welcoming everyone (in English and in French) to the spectacle for 13th./ 14th. July celebrations. (We felt honoured by the special mention of the 'visitors from Brentwood') A fantastic show began with the coloured cascades of stars falling from above the tree-tops down to the river. I love fireworks displays and get quite carried away with the whooshes and bangs and eruptions of colours in the night sky. The warm summer night and the French accents around us gave a completely different atmosphere compared to our own 5th. November celebrations. After the grande finale some people returned to the dance floor, some to the bar, and others to find friends and vehicles and join the slow trail home.

by Rosemary Smith



Eating out in Tours by Helen Jackman

When I was taken to Tours for dinner one evening I was told I would be amazed at the decor. I suppose I expected a smart restaurant or bistro and was ready to be suitably impressed. I certainly couldn't have imagined the restaurant "Mamie Bigoude" which serves Breton fare in a small town house and for which you have to book at least a week in advance. The menus are within 1950s Paris Match covers but that is only the beginning of the fun.

In this house you eat in the garishly decorated living room or the antiquated kitchen downstairs, or, upstairs, you enjoy dining in the less formal surroundings of the bathroom or a gaudy bedroom! The table in the tiled bathroom is a glass top over a bath. The bathrobes and long handled brushes provided added atmosphere. In the bedrooms the tables are set between the headboards so that diners appear to be eating in bed.

The atmosphere was truly bizarre – but such fun, and the food was delicious.



Town Twinning Newbie by Gill Miers

I did not know what to expect when Dad and I boarded the bus at some unknown hour that morning but I was pleasantly surprised by what I found. A little worried that as newbies everyone might have already bonded on previous trips and it would be "clicky". Instead I found everyone to be incredibly welcoming and friendly.



The trip was very well organised with something for everyone. Activities included a tour round a winery finishing with a wine tasting, a self guided tour around a beautiful château and gardens (some members of the tour group got so carried away with the beauty of the place that they almost missed lunch!). Being a horse lover and spending the majority of my life around horses the pièce de resistance of the trip was the visit to Cadre Noir.

To be accepted as part of a group and welcomed into the family home of our hosts was a very humbling experience and we cannot wait to return the hospitality shown to us.

Bastille Day



In the morning we attended the formal parade of "Sapeurs et Pompiers". Outside the Town Hall progress medals were presented to the firemen by our Deputy Mayor.



Picnic in the Park by Anne Long

Under the trees, as it was a hot, sunny day, the Mayor of Montbazon, who was his usual charming self, welcomed us all to the Montbazon Bastille Day celebrations. This was followed by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Ann Coe who, with Sheila Hornsby translating, thanked him and all the residents of Montbazon for making us all feel included and very much part of this French National occasion.



Then came the scramble for the tables and benches, the first to be occupied were the ones in the shade. We English, with our pale complexions, are experts at this and were the first to get organised. From then on it was wine to accompany the savoury food followed by wine with delicious cheeses and finally more wine with sumptuous desserts. The conversation was lively and flowed in French and English, back and forth until after a few glasses of wine it didn't matter what language you were speaking as we were all just having a great time.

The entertainment of the group of Folklore Dancers accompanied by an accordion, so French, was excellent. Dressed in black and white costumes, especially the ladies with delicate lace hats and mittens were charming and even more exciting we were also able to join in the serious business of the dance. It was good practice for the following evening at the 'Festnoz'.



At the end of the afternoon when all the usual clearing up was under way the Brentwood Committee met with the French Committee members to discuss next year's visit. For the people not on the committees there was an extra bonus as we again moved our tables into the shade and feasted on the last of the cheese, desserts, fruit and of course, the wine.

Thank goodness our hosts were driving us home!!

The Last night of our visit by Valerie Fletcher



We were coming to the end of our second visit to Montbazon this year and Brian and I had thoroughly enjoyed the programme that had been arranged for us all. The final evening gave us an opportunity of exchanging gifts both from the Borough, presented by Deputy Mayor Ann Coe and by myself on behalf of the Association to express our gratitude.

After the speeches (at last my first words in French after some translating and coaching from Monica Donegan and Valerie Milcent) and the group photograph we all moved inside for a Breton themed evening with dancing which was enjoyed by one and all, participants and spectators alike. I hadn't realised that a crêpe could be served in so many ways, until we experienced that evening's 3 course meal!

Like all good parties it was difficult bringing the evening to a close and as we had a long journey home the next day people started to drift away at about 11pm, with the usual hugs and kisses all round.

Did anyone spot the new Montbazon logo on the cover of this issue?
Here's a (slightly) larger version for you to look out for on your next trip!



Return to Montbazon by Barbara Staines

A few weeks after our return from the town twinning visit to Montbazon, Robin and I went back to spend a week with Michele and Claude Gallon.

This time we flew to Tours airport where our friends were waiting for us. We went back to their home where we were pleased to meet their son, daughter in law and their young family; they were charming. I had a very pleasant time playing with the three grand-daughters, Pauline, Lucie and Clemence. Later that evening we all went out for a family meal in a Chinese restaurant which was very similar to Izumi, in Brentwood.

The next morning the family returned home to Lyon and we went with our hosts to Brittany, to stay in their holiday cottage. Whilst we were there we travelled several times to Lorient for the Inter-Celtique Folk Festival. It had been at least twenty years since Rob and I had been to this festival, so we were really looking forward to it. We are so lucky to have found French friends with similar interests to us. It's not every day that you find companions who like Celtic music and trains !

We share a love for the music of Carlos Nunez, a Galician piper, who came to prominence when he performed as a young and very talented musician with the famous Irish group The Chieftains. We had seen Carlos when he played with his band at the Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow two years ago. In fact, as luck would have it, we stayed in the same hotel, so we were able to get him to autograph a C.D. for Michele and Claude. Well, you can imagine the excitement when all four of us were able to attend a concert with the Chieftains and Carlos Nunez. I felt extremely happy and could not stop smiling.

We made some wonderful visits in this week and we also enjoyed some really relaxing times at their cottage. We had some great French home cooking, but best of all we had lots of time to relax and talk. Michele and Claude were superb hosts and I feel that we really came to know them so much better.

***Editor note.** Thank you Barbara – this interesting report on such a great result from a Town Twinning friendship inspired me to seek this photo and more info in Wikipedia)*



Carlos Núñez live at the [Festival Interceltique de Lorient](#), Brittany

Carlos (born 1971) is a Galician musician who plays the gaita, the traditional Galician bagpipe

Walk and Cream Tea - Saturday 20th August

By Cllr. Mike Le-Surf and Julie Morrissey

After a sunny morning in Brentwood, members of the association gathered in the car park adjacent to St. Peter's Church, South Weald as the heavens opened. Undeterred we set off for a walk around South Weald Park led by Brian Davis. It was lovely to spend some time appreciating South Weald Park and exploring areas off the beaten track.



Seasoned walkers had the appropriate clothing and footwear while some of us had to rely on our brollies in an attempt to keep dry. Regardless of the rain we had a wonderful walk around the park and lakes via the memorial trees planted in memory of local residents no longer with us. A wonderful way to remember our loved ones and to maintain the green environment we hold so dear in Brentwood.

As we arrived back at the church for our cream tea the sun inevitably came out and the rain stopped. The new facilities behind the church are absolutely wonderful and a great addition to the church I attended as a pupil of St. Peter's School and also as a chorister, and a bell-ringer, in my younger days.

We would like to thank all who were involved in the organisation of this fund raising event, especially those on the hospitality side. The scones, cream and jam were wonderful as were the cakes and the tea. A truly delicious Saturday afternoon feast and we look forward to the exercise (and the calories) in 2012!



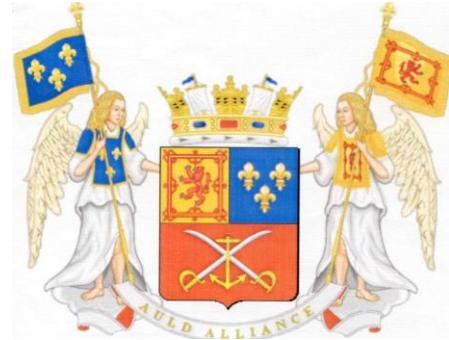
Editor note Another £141 raised for the funds

Auld Alliance Evening by Margaret Hogan

On 29th October 40 members and friends met at the Belli Centre for an evening celebrating the historic Auld Alliance of Scotland and France which dates back to the 13th Century. As someone whose roots are definitely Anglo Saxon this was fascinating for me .

The subtle threads of this alliance shone through the evening in every way; the room decorated with the national flags and. tables adorned with Scottish heather and French lavender and the most incredible menu, so beautifully cooked and served. An aperitif, then French onion soup or cock-a-leekie soup, followed by Balmoral chicken stuffed with haggis brought directly down from Scotland, desserts Cranachan and Crème Caramel, then cheese and biscuits and coffee with shortbread.

Rosemary gave us a very interesting talk about the history of the Alliance. On the whole the purpose seemed to me for Scotland and France to protect themselves from the English! In 1429 Scots came to the aid of Joan of Arc in her famous relief of Orleans. In 1558 the alliance was strengthened by the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to the future Francis II of France. However in 1560 formal treaties were officially ended by the Treaty of Edinburgh when Scotland was declared Protestant and allied itself with Protestant England instead.



This brings me to one of the highlights of the evening - the sampling of 8 whiskies, whilst John gave a most interesting talk about each of them and their various standards- No. 3 being "el cheapo" from a supermarket at Montbazon! With our meal we had claret because the Scots were for centuries major importers.

We held our usual raffle, made £153 (£20 of which due to the auction of a picture, by a local Artist, of Honfleur) making a final boost to the funds this evening of £ 544. Altogether a truly magnificent evening and our thanks go to Rosemary and John Smith for organising it and for their talks, also to Katrina and her assistant chefs and all the members who helped with the serving and clearing up.



Notes from a native

Scots : *the people*

Scotch : *whisky*

Scottish : *(adjective) anything else from Scotland*

Whisky : *origin - Scotland*

Whiskey : *from Ireland and the U.S.A.*

MONTBAZON – 2011 MEMORIES

Lighting the lanterns before the parade and trying to persuade the gentlemen in our party that it was OK to carry one

Cadre Noir – quite spectacular! How do they train those horses?

BBQ cooked successfully on Jean-Pierre's "Emmett" construction of bits from an old washing machine, hair dryer, car etc.

Lunch under the shade of a large tree, accompanied by traditional folk music, gave a real insight into the way of life in a warmer climate

Black and white country dancing Breton style

Viewing Claud Gallon's fantastic model railway

Renewing wonderful friendships over the years

A delightful Free Day at Château Montpoupon

The open friendliness of the French locals I met while we waited for the Bastille Day celebrations to get underway

Our host for an evening dinner demonstrating his unbreakable wine glasses by spectacularly shattering one

A birthday to remember:
delicious meal with my hosts, rousing choruses of "Happy Birthday, lantern procession and fireworks (though some of it may have had something to do with Bastille Day!!)

On the last night – low sun, little tables under the trees and such an array of colourful aperitifs and nibbles

Veigne market
100 cheeses,
50 fishes, pigs trotters

A complete surprise for us – being taken for drinks and canapés at the beautiful home of the host family with whom we stayed four years ago

The wonderful welcome in front of the Mairie – and then the Blançelle de Veau which Michele had prepared for us

Giant brioche
WOW!

The view from Francoise and Jean's garden, my dream location

The wonderful view over the formal gardens at Villandry, as seen from the top of the château's tower – before I noticed that this tower is cracked massively from top to bottom!

The tearful delight of my daughter's erstwhile hostess on meeting me after 29 years

I found my wallet – just before departure!