



SALISBURY–SAINTES TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Spring 2009



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Chairman's message

These are interesting times as SSTA heads towards its 20th anniversary next year. Events are already being planned to mark two decades of friendship between our two communities.

Whether that friendship has included visits to Saintes or has simply meant supporting SSTA events at home, now is your chance to say how you think two decades of entente cordiale should be celebrated.

Among the plans so far is a guided visit to Saintes for those interested in finding out more about the history and heritage of the town and its surrounding area. Think

Romans, pilgrims, cognac, salt and fighting the English just for starters. In April this year Salisbury Cathedral choir (men and boys) make their first visit to our twin town and in October we hope that artists will head here for the third Salisbury Art Trail.



Contents

Chairman's message	1
Schools Links	2
Annual Dinner	2
Diary Date	2
View from the South West	2
Memories of Salisbury	4

In the mean time don't forget the AGM on Friday 27th February, 7.15 for 7.30pm, at the Cycle Club, Salt Lane, Salisbury.

Following the short business part of the meeting, Gill Anlezark and Jimmy Walker, chairman of COGS Cycling Opportunities Group, are giving an illustrated talk about their cycle trip which took them from Salisbury to Saintes on their way to Barcelona.

Your committee looks forward to welcoming you to the AGM.

Caroline Rippier



Remember this? Sadly the Saintes council decided to replace the twinning signs with pencils.

Schools Links

Pupils in Year 6 at **Greentrees Primary School, Hampton Park** are working hard in their French lessons. Full of enthusiasm, they are looking forward to welcoming a group of pupils from Ecole Paul Bert, Saintes when they come to Salisbury in June. They have corresponded for the past year.

The South Wiltshire children have already tasted gallettes made in Charente Maritime and have looked at maps and photographs of the area where their visitors live.

St Mark's Junior School, Salisbury is in the process of setting up a similar link with another school in Saintes.



Greentrees Primary School Spider Class

Annual Dinner

On Thursday 15th January forty members of the association sat down for a splendid dinner at the Wessex Restaurant at Wiltshire College, Salisbury (the old Salisbury College). The meal, which was prepared and served by students in the catering department, was up to the high standards that we have come to expect. It was a really enjoyable evening; it is always such fun to spend time chatting with old friends over a good meal.

As usual we were honoured to welcome the Mayor, the President of our association, accompanied by the Mayoress, as guests to the occasion. We were also very happy to welcome Bridget Brennan, la Présidente du Comité de jumelage Saintes-Salisbury. Bridget has just taken over her new role and we all look forward to working with her and her committee. She does not come to the job untutored as she has been la Présidente du Comité de jumelage in the past.

Diary date

Friday 27th February 2009: 7.15 for 7.30 pm

Annual General Meeting at the Salisbury Cycling & Social Club

Views Around Saintes



Saint-Pierre Cathedral from the Belvedere.



The Roman Amphitheatre

View from the South West. Saintes Market, part 1

In Salisbury we are very lucky to have a wonderful market twice a week. In Saintes also there is a market every Saturday morning in the square beside the cathedral. As with all French markets it is a colourful affair and usually teeming with local shoppers demanding good value and good quality food.

The items on sale are generally as you would expect. There are cheese stalls, stalls selling vegetables, flower sellers, charcuterie and fish stalls and stalls selling wine and other drinks. Mostly the 'vendeurs' are selling local produce of a very high standard, although the more observant of you will have noticed that Saintes is not on the sea so the fish produce cannot be local. There are of course many fishing harbours about an hour away, from Rochefort at the mouth of the

Charente to smaller fishing ports around Royan and in the Gironde. For shellfish, that great staple of French cuisine, there is the Marennes, one of the main shellfish nursery areas in all of France, located nearby between Rochefort and Royan. Therefore the fish is going to be as fresh as you are ever likely to get it.



Some of the market stalls on a cold and rainy Saturday in November

We last went to the market in early November, a raw and rainy day and not a day to be spending too much time wandering around outside. Other times in the summer the opposite has been the problem and the sun and heat have dampened our desire to linger over the stalls. However, this is not too much of a problem as, along with many other towns in the region, Saintes has a covered market. Often, such as nearby Cognac, these are the original market buildings and are both attractive and interesting. Saintes' market, however, is on the ground floor of a modern block that stands between the cathedral square and the river. What this space lacks in ambience is more than compensated by the sights and smells of the market, along with the bustle and the hubbub. I hope that the pictures give an idea of the range and quality of the produce on sale. When you are visiting Saintes there is no better way to spend part or all of a Saturday morning.



One tip when you go there, go on an empty stomach to leave plenty of room for "dégustation".

Mervyn Pannett

In these dark cold days of winter, think summer



Ugni Blanc vines, confusingly known locally as St Emilion, the grape variety used to produce Cognac and Pineau des Charentes and sunflowers basking in the summer heat of the Charente-Maritime.

Pauline Pelletier, a student from Saintes, has sent us her memories of the time she spent in Salisbury

Last summer I had the opportunity to spend two months in England and particularly in Salisbury. I contacted the SSTA and thanks to the Association I quickly got a job as a waitress in the Red Lion Hotel.

What I first remember about my stay is the kindness of English people. It was such a pleasure for me to spend my two month holiday there. I discovered the British culture, like spending time drinking tea or going down to the closest pub, or organising parties outside hoping it will not rain...! Moreover I went to London, Southampton, Bournemouth and Stonehenge.

Helena Wright gave me a personalised tour of Salisbury, Caroline Rippier took me with her to see an agricultural show, not to mention meeting Arthur Bowden for cups of tea and conversation in town. I was also lucky enough to take part in the SSTA barbecue and I also met young foreign people with whom I enjoyed spending time.

I also have happy memories of regularly jogging along the Town Path and seeing the cathedral wherever I went. In the hotel I enjoyed my time thanks to welcoming colleagues and pleasant customers. That job was the best way to see how people live in England.

Looking back, I consider myself very lucky. Thank you SSTA!

Pauline Pelletier

Thank you, Pauline, for your generous words. It is always good to hear how other people view us, particularly when the comments are so kind.



Pauline on the Town Path



Endpiece.

Let's hope he has something to smile about this year too