



Alton Town Twinning Association NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2026

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20th Anniversary Visit from Pertuis

THURSDAY 21st May

Our French guests were met at Heathrow by committee members Patric and Richard and accompanied to Alton. They were met in Anstey Park by their hosts and other ATTA members before being taken to their homes for the stay. It was good to see our French friends, both old and new.

FRIDAY

Our official welcome, with refreshments, this year took place on Friday morning at the Assembly Rooms where there was a display of some of the gifts Alton has received from the mayors of Pertuis over the years. There were speeches from outgoing Alton mayor, Annette Eyre, and incoming mayor, ATTA member Barbara Tansey. The gifts exchanged this year were an illustrated book about Hampshire, accepted by Emmanuel Ferreira, Vice-President of the Pertuis twinning association, on behalf of his town, and gifts made by local artisans in Pertuis for Alton.



Afterwards, our guests were taken to the Freedom Through Expression art gallery, an enterprise of the Mouth and Foot Painting Association Trust Fund. Trust Fund Chair, Tom Yendell, introduced the party to the work of the gallery which trains children and adults with disabilities in the arts and to the works on display which include those by mouth and foot painters. ATTA member, Marie-Marthe, and Alton Rambler, Cathy Turton, provided the translation. Later, there was a guided walk around the town with Cathy translating again, seeing some fascinating things which even many Altonians don't know about. There was also the opportunity to visit the library to see the display about our 20 years of twinning.



FRIDAY EVENING

In the evening we assembled at Beech Village Hall for a bring-and-share supper, with a picture quiz, a great array of food and some singing. One French guest was heard to say “there are some talented cooks here”. A few Alton Ramblers, who continue to walk with *Les Mille Pattes* from Pertuis, joined us for the evening. After supper we found room to partake of the huge anniversary cake which was iced with the flags of the UK and France. All participants “won” a 20th Anniversary pencil.



SATURDAY

Our busy programme continued on Saturday with a coach journey to visit the Mary Rose Exhibition at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Our guests enjoyed this very much, possibly being amused by the fact that the Mary Rose had been involved in many skirmishes, under King Henry VIII, with the French before sinking in 1545 in her final battle against the French fleet.



Photocall in front of HMS Warrior before proceeding to the Mary Rose

After leaving the exhibition everyone was free to wander around the rest of the dockyard or along to Gunwharf Quays. HMS Victory is currently under wraps whilst undergoing restoration – ironically using timber from France. At the end of a hot and busy day everyone was pleased to return to Alton for dinner with hosts.

SUNDAY

Sunday is traditionally spent with hosts and, whilst some of our visitors preferred to spend the day in our local countryside, others were taken to Stonehenge and Salisbury, and another group to Windsor.

SUNDAY EVENING

Wherever they had been, in the evening everyone gathered at the Rose & Crown in Farringdon for our traditional farewell dinner. We enjoyed a drink in the garden before going indoors for our meal.



Seated at three long tables, we all enjoyed a splendid meal and, afterwards, gifts were exchanged between the two twinning associations.

We gave a commemorative vase, made by local potter Jane Brown, to each individual or family.



Model made by a member of the ESAT du Grand Réal community, where we had a wonderful lunch in 2025



Vase showing St Lawrence Church



Wrapped up for a safe journey home to Pertuis

MONDAY

We waved a sad goodbye to our guests on Bank Holiday Monday but look forward to seeing them again in Pertuis before too long.



We are immensely grateful to the following for their generous grants towards our 20th Anniversary celebrations: Alton Town Council, East Hampshire District Council and Resurrection Furniture. Without their support our anniversary weekend would have been a much more modest affair.

OTHER NEWS

Mayor's Reception

Merula and Pauline E accepted Annette Eyre's invitation to her Mayor's Reception at the Assembly Rooms on Sunday, 17 May. Whilst there, they met with a local teacher who is keen to restart a pen friend scheme with Pertuis at junior school level. They also spoke with representatives of the scouts who, in the past, have been in contact with scouts in Montecchio.

Pauline plans to talk about this with Diego and Carlo when she visits Vicenza in October.

Amery Hill School Pen Friend Scheme

Richard reports that a pen friend scheme is underway between Amery Hill and two schools in Pertuis. We are optimistic that this will develop further.

SUMMER LUNCH

For the third year running, Merula kindly invited us to her garden for our summer lunch on Sunday, 26 July. Once again the weather was hot and sunny, despite a few minutes of much-needed rain in the morning. The food was delicious, the raffle prizes plentiful and the company enjoyable. Barbara won the first prize of a hamper. Some high-value prizes were auctioned, together with three of the same vases that were given to our guests from Pertuis. Altogether we made £290 for our funds.



Remembering Pam Bradford 1934 – 2026

Pam signed the original twinning agreement with Montecchio in 1998 and was our honorary President for many years.



PLANNED FUTURE EVENTS

The committee are currently arranging some social events for the coming months.

We will let you know when these arrangements have been finalised.

With best wishes from the ATTA Committee



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