

# East Woodhay Twinning Association

## **What can the Association offer?**

The answer is “Fun and friendship and a cultural experience.”

Members need not feel they have to travel to Normandy, or to host a French family. They may prefer to do just ONE option, or the TWO WAY exchange. However, the experience of staying with a family and sharing their lifestyle is hugely enjoyable, completely different from a conventional holiday in France and even the most nervous of participants have said what a great time they have had. From the other angle, we really enjoy giving our visitors a taste of British life which is fascinating for everyone involved.

## **Some possible concerns:-**

- We don't speak French:

Within both associations there are members who are fluent in the “other” language as well as those who are not. The committees consider carefully so as to match up families because the aim is to have an enjoyable and memorable time. Many of the French members like to speak English and you are not made to feel inadequate if you don't speak French.

- It's not for us, we'd be too nervous.

When we stay in France, around half of the time is spent as a whole group. So if your brain is overloaded you can let someone else do the talking, in whichever language suits! When the French families visit us we also arrange group outings or you can team up with other hosts and visiting families for small get-togethers.

- Our children don't speak French and would feel isolated.

Both associations are eager to encourage young families to take part. In 2010 there were 3 English children and 2 French children in the group from years 2,3 5 and 6. Language didn't get in the way of playing football and “It” in a large field or playing cards at the communal meal! Food never seemed to be a problem either.

## **The following are extracts from our newsletters written by “first timers:-**

“We are so pleased we overcame our apprehensions and joined the East Woodhay Twinning Association and can thoroughly recommend it.” (Val and Jim)

“We have some lovely memories of events and places visited, especially watching my 5 year old, Louise, and a little French girl, Adeline, playing together without speaking a word of each other's language.” (Judy)

“By the second day I was becoming quite fluent and with the help of pen and paper was writing and drawing everything I needed to convey – no problem!” (Patricia).

“How would our two young boys aged 4 and 7 react to a new language and how would my husband cope with his limited French? Well our hosts were wonderful and our 4 year old joined in conversations with his own “brand” of French – we all felt immediately at home My husband spoke in English and listened in French!”(Helen).

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“I was lucky because we stayed with a family who had 3 teenage children and Marie, aged 16, spoke some English. It was nice to see some interesting and scenic places in Normandy. I enjoyed shopping with the family in Caen but the designer shops in Deauville were too expensive.” (Rachel aged 14).

“I felt quite queasy because I was not sure I could speak enough French but once I got to know the family I got a lot better with my French. Dad and I joined in playing bowls and had quite some success for beginners.” (Richard aged 10 )

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