



*President: The Mayor of Malmesbury*  
*Chair: Mrs Julia Bowen*

**Newsletter Special December 2018**

**Trimelage Gien - Malmesbury - Niebüll:**

**Commemoration of the Armistice 2018**

We had a wonderful commemoration of the Armistice in November, with 8 representatives from Malmesbury going to our twin town Gien in France, along with two representatives from Niebüll, and five representatives from Gien along with two representatives from Niebüll joining us here in Malmesbury for our commemorations.

We focussed on the Armistice and the Peace. The end to war between our nations, and our commitment to work together for the future to ensure it never happens again.



**One of the five oak trees with commemorative plaque**



**Town, church, army and twinning representatives at the dedication of the plaque**

On the Friday in Malmesbury we unveiled a plaque in St Aldhelm’s Mead to a circle of oak trees initiated by Cllr Sue Poole during her Mayoral year, to help us remember all five years of the First world War, with a plaque committing our three towns to friendship and co-operation over the next 100 years.

The plaque says, in our three languages:

**“They stand together to remind us that we should always stand together.”**

Altogether in Malmesbury we welcomed Wilfried Bockholt, the Bürgermeister of Niebüll along with Diana Klüger former president of their Partnerschaftskreis (Twinning Association); and from Gien Deputy Mayor Stéphane Cornée, accompanied by Cllr Christiane Damion, and Mr Patrick Dujardin and Mrs & Mrs Patrick and Annie Gaspard representing their Twinning Association and the Mariniers de la Loire Group.

As well as visiting the area our Twin Town guests attended the wreath laying at the St John's memorial Gates on Sunday morning, *the two-minute silence at the Town Hall at 11am*, the Memorial Service at the Abbey in the afternoon, *the Royal British Legion's reception in the Town Hall after the service*, and then the fantastic performance of the play "Dig for the Diggers". Wilfried Bockholt and Stéphane Cornée read short commemorative passages during the Abbey service and laid wreaths to those lost in war from Malmesbury; and made short speeches at the following reception. The following wonderful thought, said during those speeches, will live with us for a very long time:

"I have a dream! But this dream is in danger. It is [our] responsibility to work for it that [our] children and grandchildren may dream the same dream. In peace and freedom. In a healthy world. In which we embrace rather than separate or reject.

"On this little globe in space, which we call "earth", let us all return to the common ground, to the responsibility before God, the creation and the people... *to live together in peace.*"



**The three mayors at the Royal British Legion reception after the Memorial service**



**And our Mayor with Gien and Niebüll colleagues**

And then Poem of Peace read by Cllr Gavin Grant, and the lighting of the beacon:



**The Beacon in the Abbey Churchyard**

***And meanwhile, over in Gien.....***

Malmesbury was brilliantly represented not just by the Town Council and the Twinning Association, but the array of our community. Deputy Mayor Julie Exton represented the Town Council and her husband Phil represented the Royal British Legion. Mike Westmacott, warden of the Old Corporation, represented the Freeman and Warden, and Cllr Catherine Doody the Twinning Association. But the crowning glory was the representation of the young people of Malmesbury by Cadet Ethan Doyley of the Air Training Corps, with his mother Sarah, and Harry Holder, a Year 7 student at Malmesbury School representing the school with his mother Rebecca. We were so proud to have such a wonderful delegation.

What a hairy journey though. All day on a minibus to get there, and then two days in constant ceremonies, before another 1- hour return. On the Sunday morning they attended four different memorials. But with robes and uniforms what a show from our town.



**Malmesbury representatives in uniforms and robes at the Gien War memorial**



**Cadet Ethan Doyley salutes at the wreath laying, alongside Cllr Catherine Doody**

Wreaths were laid on behalf of all organisations commemorating the 401 fallen from Gien during the First World War, and they stood to attention during the sonorous speeches and release of 401 balloons commemorating each one of the lost.

Meanwhile, our bubbly Deputy Mayor lost no time finding an old soldier to share her fondness with!



**Deputy Mayor Julie Exton with 98-year-old Maurice Lenoury, a WW2 veteran**

Harry's and Ethan's memories of the visit are fascinating to read.

***Reminiscences of Armistice Commemoration in Gien***

*By Harry Holder, Year 7 Student at Malmesbury School*

My Remembrance trip to Gien was extraordinary! There were so many different landmarks, like Eiffel's canal and the wildlife along the Loire.

The food was *delicieux*! I like the way French food is served in different courses. My personal favourite was the venison.

Our host Mme Renard was very hospitable and all the people from the Twinning were very helpful and friendly, especially as we were new to this whole twinning.

The Armistice services and ceremonies were interesting, especially when 401 balloons were released, each one representing a soldier from Gien who died. Standing still for so long was tricky, but I was given a good tip: spread out your feet so the pressure is equal on both sides.

It was an honour laying a wreath with the deputy mayor at the war memorial statue.

One of the things I will remember from this trip is talking to a French SAS veteran about what it was like when he helped liberate France from the Germans. He was 98 and still in good health. He was fascinating and he loved England!

Overall, I would recommend Gien because it's interesting and everyone's kind and friendly.

I also recommend checking out Bonny the village where we stayed, it has a lovely church.

**Reflections from Air Cadet Sergeant Ethan Doyley with his mother Sarah.**

*Ethan represented the Air Training Corps.*

We cannot overstate how much we enjoyed Gien. We were humbled to have the opportunity to represent Malmesbury and the Air Training Corps. It was both a wonderful adventure and such a special occasion too.

From the beginning to the end it was really well organised. Our hosts were superb. It was fun as they *had no English*, but between us it all worked out fine. It ran smoothly, time wise to the letter. And Mason, the bus driver from Barnes Coaches, did well to get us to the train in time for returning to Britain. It was a great trip all round.

We enjoyed learning more about the Twinning Association as we really knew very little about it before. This trip showed me the importance of twinning in general, that forging those links are so important, that it actually helps, or has the potential to, unify people in Malmesbury as much as it does with those in our twinned towns.

Ethan, due to the occasion, was seen by the French to represent the RAF as well as the cadet force, which added to his reception. And everyone in Gien seemed genuinely thrilled to have younger people there, while Harry (representing Malmesbury School) certainly brought some life to things. It would be so wonderful if twinning links could be opened up more to the younger generation of Malmesbury, and to those who do not generally get to see twin towns in the normal run of things.

We both benefited so much that this is a privilege to be shared with those that, like us, would never have considered twinning to be so beneficial, or even would have thought to go on a trip like this. The positive repercussions of this trip both will be felt for a long time.