



TWINNING WITH LES HERMITES, FRANCE

A small and informal project is underway to twin Hermitage with the town of Les Hermites in the Loire region of France.

The proposal is to build friendly ties as well as a cultural link between Hermitage and Les Hermites. This could offer a wonderful opportunity to see parts of France, experience French culture and family life, learn a little French and also create a chance to widen our own horizons through exchange visits with Les Hermites residents.

Since summer 2015 when a small group of interested individuals got together (as published on Facebook) there have been a few informal meetings to move the project forward. Information about these has been published in the parish magazine Pathfinder. It is hoped that a small party from Les Hermites, will visit Hermitage in the Spring.

In Les Hermites the project is being led by the mayor M. Guy de Brantes.

If you would like to know more about the Hermitage-Les Hermites twinning project please contact the secretary, Amanda Russell Robbins, at hermitagetwinning@gmail.com

How it all started

In November 2014 our District Councillors were approached by M. Jean-Marc Fouques who proposed the idea of twinning Hermitage with Les Hermites. He had been driving north on the A34 and saw the signpost for Hermitage. After some initial investigation he spoke to the Mayor of Les Hermites who encouraged the project. Based on the similarity of the names he wrote:

"... would it be nice and rewarding for both our communities to twin Hermitage with Les Hermites? Our names themselves are an invitation do to so, aren't they?"

Since then, members of the group holidaying in the region have taken the opportunity to take up the open invitation to visit Les Hermites and meet some of its residents.

About Les Hermites

Les Hermites is a small village in the Indre et Loire Département in the region of Centre with a population of approximately 600. It is 20 miles from Tours Airport and 50 minutes from Paris by train. Le Mans is about an hour's drive away and Orleans about an hour and a half. (See map on page five.)

There is a football team, hiking association, gym, riding association and a band. Also a library, café-restaurant and a church dating from the 12th century. There is a hairdresser, chemist, dental surgeon, mini-market, small garden centre and a post office. There are farms around the village and a local lake for people to enjoy social events or just walking and fishing.



Throughout the year Les Hermites' residents have various entertainments. These include:

- a music festival (August),
- Commemoration Day festivities (September),
- a son et lumière in the church square in (September),
- a tea dance in the village hall (November), - a Christmas lotto and petanque/boules competition

- as well as various community meals.

In support of the project M Fouques wrote:

"Our region, as yours, has much to offer: The Châteaux de la Loire, of course; Pierre de Ronsard and Balzac's birthplaces; local products

(one of our most famous proprietors is Sir Mick Jagger, who owns 'La Fourchette' in Amboise, 20 miles from Les Hermites). By the way, Leonardo Da Vinci died in Amboise in 1519 and numerous tourists come and visit the Château du Clos at Lucé, the Tuscan artist's

last residence."Being a former teacher, I compared the curricula and I think it would be very rewarding for our children and ourselves to establish



a link involving pen-pals, and why not, later on, some kind of language exchanges.

"Many people, including farmers of course, would thus have views and experiences to share, over a pint of beer or a glass of wine - or both!"

This letter was sent from the Mayor of Les Hermites in November 2015:



"After the Second World War the twinning of cities and villages was meant initially to foster reconciliation then to strengthen bonds of friendship among European citizens of the Allied Countries. It is clearly in this latter context that Les Hermites wish to engage in a "twinning" with Hermitage. Furthermore, what is more natural for a Hermit than to seek the comfort of a Hermitage, and

for a Hermitage to welcome Hermits !

"This is why I strongly endorsed Jean-Marc Fouques's initiative and encouraged him to pursue this endeavour. We were happy to welcome officially Nick Burraston and Angela this summer in our (modest) City Hall with a glass of bubbly which I must confess, we, Hermits, drink more often than tea ... while Jean-Marc and his son Marc were on the other side of the Channel. Now that our ambassadors have exchanged mutual interest I have put on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of our Municipal Council the "rapprochement" of our two communities and this will be in the minutes of the meeting. More may remain to be more or less formalized according to our respective operating procedures, but whatever form it takes as we move forward, we heartily look forward to twinning with Hermitage.

"On behalf of the citizens of Les Hermites I extend our warmest wishes for a Happy 2016 to all in Hermitage and its surroundings. May this project bring over the years many rewarding exchanges for the young people of both our communities and strengthen bonds of friendship between us."

Yours sincerely,

Guy de Brantes, Mayor of Les Hermites

To find out more about Les Hermites, visit their website at www.villeleshermites.fr

For views of Les Hermites see next page.



LES HERMITES IN RELATION TO LE MANS, TOURS & ORLEANS

