



NEWSLETTER

July 2026

Wimborne: wvta.org.uk

Valognes: sites.google.com/site/cjvalogneswimborne/

President's Message

Dear members and friends of the WVTA

Our exchange weekends are always looked forward to by your committee with a certain amount of trepidation as well as pleasure, then a feeling of flatness when they are over. This year's visit was no exception as we had quite an ambitious programme of entertainment for quite large numbers. We were helped by a number of people, but thanks must go to Anthony Oliver who tackled the arrangements for our tours of the wonderful RNLI which were so popularly received. For me it was particularly rewarding to be able to entertain our visitors showcasing just some of the wonderful local organisations which exist in Wimborne and on our doorstep in Poole. Graham will be displaying many photos in this issue taken by our committee members, plus contributions from members and press celebrating the weekend.

I would like to thank our splendid hosts, many of whom have done this many times before, and to those of you who are totally new – a big thank you for taking it on with such enthusiasm. I would also like to warmly thank our committee for all the work and attention to detail that they put into making the exchange so successful.

I want to send thanks to our French visitors for their huge enthusiasm and the bonhomie that they displayed throughout, while being totally unaffected by the rather inclement weather (which did allow me to show off the magnificent green Cherbourg umbrella – their gift to us in 2023). Their enthusiasm and interest was a joy to behold and they were a joy to entertain.

On the subject of gifts, as part of the Dorset Town of Culture we have arranged to make an exhibition of the gifts that have been received by the Association from the Valognes Wimborne Jumelage over the past years since 1968. The date for your diary is 25, 26 and 27 September this year, at Walford Mill. This is an extra date to add to your programme for the year. More details to follow.

Our very next get-together is on 12th July at Peter Rock's house where it will be good to see one another, have some cake and wine, be entertained, throw the odd boule, and chat about our cool exchange weekend.

Damaris

Damaris Eaton

President

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Our 2026 events

Sunday 12 July

Member's garden party

2.30 - 5.00 pm chez Peter Rock

Sunday 30 August

Pique-nique et Randonnée

12 noon - 3 pm at Pamphill

Friday 25 to Sunday 27 Sept

WVTA archive display at

Walford Mill Crafts

10 am - 4 pm

(Open 11 am Sunday)

Saturday 26 September

Afternoon tea party

2.00 pm at Little Pickle Cafe,

Walford Mill

Tuesday 20 October

Quiz night

7:30 pm at the Wimborne

Royal British Legion

Friday 11 December

Wine tasting evening

6.45 for 7.15 pm at the CLARC

Wimborne

2026 exchange visit - Saturday Reception



Our exchange weekend was launched with a civic reception by the Wimborne Town Council at Allendale House on Saturday morning. Mr Mayor Jeff Hart and the lady Mayoress Barbara Hart were there to welcome our visitors and their hosts with a hearty welcome speech by Jeff in English and French. The Mayor of Valognes, Mr Jacques Coquelin, sent sincere apologies on behalf of himself and his wife for being prevented from coming to Wimborne by a family matter, and sent the message that he hopes to come another time. Greetings were exchanged by the two Presidents, Damaris and Philippe, who both made short speeches of welcome and response in English and French, which was very entertaining.

Mayor Jeff Hart presented a gift of a beautiful silk creation of a scene of poppies at Badbury Rings created by local artist Debby Kirby, and in return Mayor Coquelin sent a beautiful picture of The Louvieres Mansion House, an ink and gouache picture by Felix Buhot in 1884.

Morning refreshments were kindly served by members of the East Dorset Heritage Trust as friends met up and greeted one another. At 11.00 am the splendid Quarterjacks of Wimborne Marching Band paraded into the forecourt of Allendale House to give a rousing display of band music and looking wonderful in their marching livery.



Many thanks to the WMTC, the staff of EDHT and to the Quarterjacks of Wimborne Marching Band.



Above: Jeff Hart presents Debby Kirby's silk creation of flowers at Badbury Rings to Philippe.

Right: Jeff receives the print of the 1884 ink and gouache painting of the Louvieres Mansion House in Valognes.



2026 exchange visit - Wimborne Community Garden



On the Saturday afternoon we were welcomed by one of the little jewels in Wimborne's crown – the Wimborne Community Garden in School Lane. Pretty umbrellas went up, and tours were taken to explore the many facets of this delightful, innovative, useful, pretty garden, created as recently as 2022 and now flourishing and established.

The garden is located within the tranquil grounds of the Beaucroft Foundation School and provides a sheltered space for all gardening abilities. It also grows produce for students of Beaucroft College to use in their cafe, as well as supporting other local food initiatives in Wimborne.

A quarter of all produce grown goes directly to Wimborne Foodbank. Growing fruit and vegetables for the Foodbank helps to provide some of the essential nutrition needed, as well as keeping the carbon footprint extremely low.

The garden has raised flower beds which are suitable for wheelchair users and those who are less able to bend.

The rain was only gentle, and an array of cakes were tucked into with a good English cuppa so enjoyment wasn't dampened at all. Many thanks to Jane Benson and her helpers who made us all so welcome and enjoyed the entente cordiale with our French Twinners. Thanks also to Colton Care for supplying the cakes for afternoon tea.



Jane Benson and Damaris chat during the group photo.

2026 exchange visit - Saturday dinner



In the evening the party were well looked after in the new premises of Wimborne Minster Town Football Club, where an excellent dinner of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding was enjoyed, along with wine and Eton Mess. A very relaxed affair with reunions made and company enjoyed. The Presidents exchanged gifts and a panoramic photo was taken of the whole crowd to remember the occasion.



In line with Wimborne town of culture, each table was named after a famous person who had connections with the local area, particularly a French connection. Cards on the tables described their achievements.

Below left: Damaris examines the luxury food produce from the hand crafted handbag.

Below right: Philippe pulls the RNLI teddy bear out of the bag.



2026 exchange visit - the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)



On the Sunday there was an optional tour of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute facility which proved so popular we had to split into two groups, one at 11 am and one at 3 pm. Each group was further divided into two in order to fit everyone into the lifeboat simulator, similar to an aircraft simulator. The effect is so realistic that it feels as though the boat is pitching and rolling under your feet.

In the simulator we moved off, out of the safety of Dover harbour. Soon we encountered a ship on fire with people in the water. There were plenty of distractions to avoid colliding with: various leisure craft and wind surfers plus a low flying rescue helicopter.

Our job was to pick up the people from the water. We slowly approached each person until we were close enough to throw a rope to them. They were then hauled aboard. During these operations the lifeboat is manoeuvred slowly and precisely by using the port and starboard engines against each other.

The other part of the training facility we saw was the pool. This looked calm and inviting, just like your local swimming pool. However, it became less attractive

when we learned that a wave machine generates waves up to 1.8 metres, the wind machine can simulate a storm up to Force 8, and the pool can be sprayed with water cooled to 2 degrees centigrade!

Training commences with dry suit familiarisation. These suits have "Wellington boots" welded to the legs making movement slow and difficult, but keeping the wearer warm and dry. Having mastered the dry suits, the trainees progress to capsize exercises in the pool using a rigid inflatable lifeboat. The training of volunteers takes a week and if successful allows them to serve on their local lifeboat.

The French equivalent of the RNLI is the SNSM (Société Nationale de Sauvetage en Mer). It is the primary non-profit organization responsible for saving lives at sea and providing beach lifeguard services along the French coastlines.

The next generation of british lifeboats are being designed and the RNLI are looking at French developments in propulsion systems that will be more environmentally friendly.

How do you like your steak? - by Jeanne Mills

Lors de vacances, Jeanne et son mari sont allés dans un restaurant à Grenoble. Jeanne a commandé un filet de bœuf bien cuit. Malheureusement, lorsque le steak arriva à table et qu'elle le coupa, du sang s'en échappa. Elle demanda alors au serveur de le faire cuire davantage. À son retour, il était encore saignant et elle redemanda la cuisson. Cette fois, à la grande joie du serveur, il était parfait. Avec un sourire, il lui suggéra de préciser, à l'avenir, qu'il serait judicieux de demander une cuisson "semelle." Croyant qu'il s'agissait d'un terme culinaire, au restaurant suivant en France, près de Cherbourg, elle fit fièrement étalage de sa nouvelle connaissance et demanda une cuisson "semelle." Le serveur sourit à sa demande et, cette fois, son steak fut cuit à son goût. Ce n'est qu'une fois rentrée chez elle et en consultant son dictionnaire qu'elle découvrit que semelle signifiait cuir de chaussure.

During a vacation, Jeanne and her husband went to a restaurant in Grenoble. Jeanne ordered a well-done beef fillet. Unfortunately, when the steak arrived at the table and she cut into it, blood oozed out. She asked the waiter to have it cooked more. When it returned, it was still rare, and she asked again for it to be cooked more. This time, to the waiter's great delight, it was perfect. With a smile, he suggested that in the future, she specify that it would be wise to ask for it to be cooked "semelle." Believing this to be a culinary term, at the next restaurant in France, near Cherbourg, she proudly displayed her newfound knowledge and asked for it to be cooked "semelle." The waiter smiled at her request, and this time, her steak was cooked to her liking. It wasn't until she got home and consulted her dictionary that she discovered that "semelle" actually meant shoe leather.

Jeanne and Chris shared this story with the guests who stayed with them this June, and received the following response:

Pour le steak, la cuisson commence à bleu, puis saignant, puis à point, enfin bien cuit. La semelle c'est... trop cuit ! Cela désigne surtout une viande dure, indépendamment de la cuisson.

For steak, the cooking process starts at rare, then medium-rare, then medium, and finally well-done. "Semelle" means... overcooked! This term primarily refers to tough meat, regardless of how it's cooked.

2026 exchange visit - au revoir

Hosts and guests meet on the Allenvie car park at 6.45 am on the Monday to say au revoir before the guests depart for the ferry.



New Members

We're pleased to welcome the following new members:

Alison & Steve Bussey
Christine Cullen

Note that anyone joining between now and the end of December can pay half price: £5 for a single person and £7.50 for a family.

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House for sale in substantial garden plot with views over valley and including a large barn (mainly demolished after historic fire/storm damage).

4 rooms, kitchen, shower room, toilet plus 3 rooms in the roof for conversion. New windows and Velux throughout. Needs work and TLC. Approx. €45k

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Subscriptions

Subscriptions fall due for renewal on 1st January.

From 1st January 2023 the rates are £10 for an individual and £15 for a family.

A reminder of the methods of payment:

1. BACS: Sort code: 40-46-37
Account number: 01403729
2. By cheque, payable to WVTA
3. By Standing Order.
Please let us know your chosen start date.

If paying by cheque, please send your cheque to the Treasurer at 9 Bourne Court, Wimborne, BH21 1DF

Please advise the Treasurer of any changes to your contact details:

by e-mail to membership@wvta.org.uk

by post to 9 Bourne Court, Wimborne, BH21 1DF.

or by telephone: 01202 619892

Local French language courses

Weekly U3A self-help groups

visit www.wimborneu3a.org.uk

or get a U3A leaflet from the library at Colehill, Wimborne or Corfe Mullen,

Beginners, "refreshers", improvers, GCSE

One-to-one, or small groups
contact Christina Phillippo
(fully qualified French teacher)

tel: 01202 699075

Twinning Websites

Wimborne:

www.wvta.org.uk  [Find us on Facebook](#)

Or follow the QR code links below

Valognes:

www.sites.google.com/site/cjvalogneswimborne

Dorset Twinning Association:

www.twinning.org.uk

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deadlines : 15 Dec, 15 Mar, 15 June, 15 Sept