



BASCHURCH GIAT TWINNING ASSOCIATION

'friendship and understanding'

Did you know that BGTA is open to anyone in the area who is in sympathy with our aims?

Baschurch-Giat Twinning Association was created by the community for the community and it is going from strength to strength.

Currently celebrating 25 years of twinning between Baschurch and Giat in the Puy de Dome, we are delighted that our membership is still growing. Local young people are getting involved and are very keen to connect with their French counterparts through the internet.

With whom are we twinned?

We are twinned with Giat, a small town of 1,300 population, in the French department of Puy de Dôme, in the Auvergne. Set in beautiful, hilly and lake-dotted country it is between Clermont Ferrand and Aubusson, some 30 miles from each. Nearby are the mountains of the Puy de Sancy range and the winter skiing resorts of La Bourboule and Le Mont-Dore.

Although the population of Giat is smaller than that of Baschurch, in character it is a small town rather than a village. It is a centre of its area and has important street markets each month. In addition, it provides many services that we tend to expect from a town rather than a village. It has its own chemist shops, several butchers, a supermarket, hotels and restaurants, a furniture store and half-a-dozen café-bars. Once a year it holds an important fête with street processions, bands, fireworks and dances - all the fun of the fair!

What is the Association?

Our Association was formed in 1981. Established by the initiative of the Parish Council, it has always been an independent association, receiving no financial support from 'council tax'. We are proud that the link with the Parish Council has

been maintained through the years, with Councillors taking an active part in its work.

When do we visit each other?

Each year, in July/August, either a party of French friends visits Baschurch or we visit Giat. Our visits normally last about 7—10 days and have, during recent years, included an overnight stay in a hotel in the Paris area. Travel is usually by coach, although some members make their way independently by car, often as a part of their annual holiday.

What happens when we visit each other?

Twinnings from Baschurch, who visit Giat, go as ambassadors of our country and we are all very conscious of the role that we play in encouraging friendship and understanding amongst peoples of different lands. When we visit Giat, there is a programme of visits to places of interest, often of the sort that a tourist would never see. Our French, however weak it might be, improves with use and our understanding and respect for the traditions and customs of France and the Auvergne grow too. There are social functions held in our honour, yet the main value of the twinning lies in the personal contact and friendships developed between individuals from our two communities.

We strive in particular to encourage the contact between young people of our village with the young of Giat. Already, since our formation, more than 250 teenagers from Baschurch have visited Giat, with a similar number visiting us from Giat.

We subsidise the travel costs of young Twinnings from the funds that we raise through our social activities together with a small grant we sometimes receive from the European Union. In addition, for many years we have held a competition amongst teenagers for two free places on our visits and on the last few occasions the Parish Council have kindly contributed towards this cost.

Members are also invited to be hosts to French Twinnings visiting Baschurch. As hosts, we provide bed and board and hospitality to our guests in our own homes. We are twinned with Giat, a small town of 1,300 population, in the French department of Puy de Dôme, in the Auvergne. Set in beautiful, hilly and lake-dotted country it is between Clermont Ferrand and Aubusson, some 30 miles from each.

Many activities are arranged for the group of visitors as a whole, while some time is always reserved for the hosts to make their own arrangements for a day, or a half day. Through these home contacts, guests are introduced to our local way of life.

What do we do for the rest of the year?

Our visits may only last a week, but planning meetings take place throughout the year to make sure that our twinning goes smoothly. We have a variety of fund-

raising events during the year, which enable us to mix socialising with raising money for twinning activities. Typical social events include; the Annual Dinner, Fun Race Nights, Summer Barbecues, French language classes, Quizzes, Cheese and Wine evenings and Fellowship Suppers.

The Association was created by the village for the community and we consider it important that we should take part in as many local events as we are able to. Social links are not only generated across the channel, but also within the local community. We support the church's fete and quiz night, we run the French club at the Corbet School and we value highly our strong links with Oswestry Twinning Association. The Association is always looking for new ways to develop the twinning and takes many opportunities to advertise the links with France. Contacts are maintained with our friends in Giat with many visits taking place between friends outside of the formal twinning visit.

How is it paid for?

We are a completely self-financing organisation. Any monies that we raise by our social activities are used to support the young people travelling to France and to pay for the social activities and visits arranged for our guests whilst they are with us.

Who can become a member?

Anyone who has links with Baschurch may be a Member. There is no membership fee and no commitment on the part of members. We only ask for support in our aims - to promote and foster friendship and understanding and to encourage visits by individuals and groups to and from Giat. The degree of involvement can vary according to members' situations, from support of the fund-raising activities to actually hosting French Twinners.

How do I join?

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