



DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

NEW YEAR LUNCH – Sunday, 5 January, at the White Hart, Holybourne. Further details and menu are being sent separately.

PERTUIS 2025



The proposed month for our visit to Pertuis next year is May. We will let you know when dates have been finalised.

MONTECCHIO MAGGIORE 2024



A report of our visit to Montecchio in October begins on page 2.

ART TALK

ATTA member Michael Fawcett gave a talk on 8 November about French artist Henri Rousseau. Rousseau worked as a toll collector (and was therefore known as Le Douanier) and was untrained as an artist – but became one full time at the age of 41. His jungle works are well known and loved, and are all the more remarkable as he never left France but took his inspiration from the zoo and Jardin des Plantes in Paris. Less familiar to the audience were the strange and surreal paintings he did beforehand.

The talk was enjoyed by all, and cheese and wine afterwards ensured a convivial evening for members.



Tiger in a Tropical Storm - 1891

REMINDER As agreed at the AGM, membership fees, which are due on 1 January 2025, are now £18 for individual members and £25 for a family.

ALTON RAMBLERS

In August, Alton Ramblers (including some ATTA members) joined with Pertuis Randonneurs to walk around Dovedale in the Peak District. If you would like to know more, please check their website.

www.altonramblers.org.uk



VISIT TO MONTECCHIO MAGGIORE 10 – 14 OCTOBER 2024

THURSDAY This was our first visit since 2018 when we celebrated our 20th anniversary. Helen & Eric Smith, Marie-Marthe Gervais, Hilary Vaill and Pauline & Dave Esland arrived at Verona airport on the evening of Thursday 10 October where we were met by Diego who drove us to the Castagna Palace Hotel in Montecchio in a minibus. Merula Frankel had arrived earlier from Milan. At the hotel, where Helen, Eric and Merula would be staying, we were met by host families and taken to their homes for dinner.



Helen, Eric and Marie-Marthe have dinner with Silva and Carlo

The committee in Montecchio had organised a full programme for us as you can see below.

FRIDAY The day started with a walk in beautiful sunshine around the extensive market in Piazza Duomo before proceeding to the *Municipio* for a welcome from Sindaco Silvio Parise, Vice-Sindaco Gianfranco Trapula, other councillors and the twinning committee. ATTA Chair, Merula, thanked them in Italian on behalf of our association and also read out a letter from Alton Mayor, Annette Eyre, who was unable to participate in the visit. Pauline, who had translated Annette's letter, read the Italian version. After the speeches, mayoral gifts were exchanged – a book for our mayor, plus other books for ATTA, and a framed picture of Regency people for Sindaco Parise from our mayor.



After some refreshments Helen and Eric visited an old friend for lunch while the rest of us, together with Diego and Carlo, went to a local pizzeria where the average price of a pizza was €6 and an Aperol Spritz was only €3.50.

In the afternoon we visited the Museum of the Armed Forces where we were given a guided tour in English. Many of the exhibits had been donated by local residents who felt that their families' military possessions deserved to be seen by the wider public. The uniform on the right belonged to Silva's father, Antonio Curti. Carlo says that he was a Lieutenant Paratrooper in the Second World War and was made an honorary citizen of the town of Jesi (Marche) because it was he, with his unit, who liberated it from the Nazis



Friday was completed by supper at Montecchio's first *Festa dea Poenta e Scopeton* (Herring Festival). Pasta was also on the menu, as was musical entertainment.



Hilary with her host family



SATURDAY In the morning Diego drove us to Vicenza where he took us on a walk around the historic centre. Some of us had visited Vicenza before but, for the first time, we also went underground to explore the archaeological area beneath the *Basilica* followed by the *Roman Cryptoporticus*. After a coffee break Diego continued our tour with a walk to see a bridge built from stone from Montecchio.



Market day in Vicenza



Beneath the Basilica



*Merula, Diego & Anna
enjoy a break in the sunshine*



In the Roman Cryptoporticus



*Bridge made of stone
from Montecchio*

Lunch on Saturday was at the self-service restaurant *Al Pellegrino* in Monte Berico where we were able to enjoy a magnificent panorama from the terrace. After lunch Diego drove us to view the Villa Capra "La Rotunda", one of the most famous buildings designed by Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio.



View from terrace



"La Rotunda"

On Saturday evening we had a delicious dinner at the *Alla Campagna* restaurant in Trissino. Sadly, Vice-President, Almuth, was unable to join us as she had broken her collar bone and Carlo was also absent as he was ill with flu. We wish them both well. However, over the weekend we were delighted to meet committee members Sara (Carlo's daughter) and Anna and they joined us for dinner along with Sindaco Parise, other councillors and members of the twinning association. We would love to see them all in Alton next time. Diego emphasised how, when visiting Alton, they would be meeting not just people... but friends!



Ready for dinner



Exchange of twinning gifts

After dinner there were some short speeches and an exchange of twinning gifts: Alton received an illustrated book about Vicenza, in both Italian and English, and there were individual Alton-themed gifts for the Montecchio committee (still in a gift bag in the photo above).



ATA's gifts from the Sindaco on Friday



and from the Gemellaggio



Our gifts to the Gemellaggio

SUNDAY On our traditional "family day" Hilary went for a walk in the mountains with her hosts and had lunch in a lovely restaurant. Pauline and Dave were taken to the mountain holiday home of Annalisa and Luciano where trout, caught by Luciano, was on the lunch menu. Everyone else visited Villa Pisani near Padua and, in the evening, met up with former sindaco Milena Cecchetto in a pizzeria.



Sabrina, Andrea and Hilary



Dave & Annalisa at her mountain retreat



The group meet with Milena

On **Monday** morning our kind hosts drove us to our next destinations – Verona airport, Verona town and Vicenza station. We were most grateful for their hospitality over the weekend.

The visit was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and, after the hiatus of the Covid pandemic, there is a real desire to "keep the twinning fires burning".

A report of the visit has been published in the Alton Herald

**With our very best wishes for the Christmas season
We look forward to seeing you at the New Year Lunch
From the Twinning Committee**



See us on Facebook

altontwinning.org.uk