

Les Amis du Chateau de Condette

Report by Terry Sutton

The Dover Society has accepted an invitation from the French group Les Amis du Chateau in Condette near Boulogne to "twin."

Already progress is being made for exchange links and other cultural activities. The aim is to create a partnership between our two organisations in line with the twinning projects between Kent and Pas-de-Calais programmed by local authorities in accordance with a protocol signed in November 2005.

Les Amis du Chateau de Condette, currently with about 150 members, was created in 1993 and is run by a committee of around a dozen members. The President is Daniel Dutertre, the secretary Philippe Wallois and the treasurer Marc Neuville. The stated objects of the "Amis" are to further cultural, artistic and historic interests in Condette and the region around Boulogne by gaining greater knowledge.

One aspect of their programme is to commemorate historic events in the area and personalities who have lived in the Condette region. Their annual programme includes outings to chateaux, sites, gardens and ancient monuments in their area.

A spokesman for Les Amis says: "We also take part in local fetes and we are interested in the refurbishment of the Chateau d'Hardelot, in its classified site and in the development of marshes and ponds in the area. Our programme also includes gastronomic interests, with wine tasting and an annual meal together." Recent talks enjoyed by Les Amis have included a conference on Christopher Columbus, impressionist painters, Napoleon III, Jules Verne and Indochina.

A delegation from The Dover Society executive met representatives of Les Amis in Boulogne in November to discuss a reception in Dover of some 50 members of the French group.

Below is the original contact e-mail received by Mr Farnell concerning links with France.

Les Amis du Chateau

My father who lives in Condette, a village near Boulogne-sur-mer in France, has asked me if I could contact an English association with a view to twin the two associations.

Les amis du chateau in Condette meet regularly, organise evening conferences on a wide range of given topics ranging from history to wine tasting or art and also short excursions. Last year they visited a chateau in Dieppe and went to many exhibitions. The year before I remember that they came to visit Hever castle. The association is very popular and has social as well as cultural events. The members are usually 45 plus but membership is open to all and it is a non profit organisation.

My father Philippe is the vice-president. The chateau in Condette is currently being reorganised, refurbished and the surrounding grounds are being landscaped.

The desire of the committee would be to have close links with an English similar association and perhaps organise joint events. As Dover is so close to Condette, when I saw your website, I thought it might be ideal. I would be very grateful if you could let me know whether a project like this may interest you. I am married to an English man, live in England and could be the initial link.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sabine Chalk