

Village plans twinning – just don't tell Sarkozy!

by Gerry Warren

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ANGLO French relations at government level may be decidedly frosty, but a new entente cordiale with our Gallic neighbours is being forged in Bridge.

Plans are underway for the village to twin with the town of St Andre-Lez-Lille in the Nord Pas De Calais which should see the union formally completed in February.

The pairing has been made possible by Bridge parish councillor and Francophile Bill Oakey, who says it will bring social, cultural and economic benefits to both communities.

He said: "Our village school has already forged a close bond with the school in St Andre and there have been several very successful exchange visits.

"Last year the parish council was approached by St Andre but for a variety of reasons did not accept the invitation to twin.

"Now we have a few new parish councillors with a different attitude and St Andre has a 15,000 euro EU fund it can access so it won't cost taxpayers anything.

"I also carried out a poll in the village and 95% of those who responded were in favour of it."

He added: "Although the popu-



BENEFITS: Cllr Bill Oakey has forged French links

lation of the village is just 1,500 compared to the 11,000 of St Andre, I am sure the proximity of Canterbury is also an attraction.

"But the village has already seen the economic benefits of the relationship when a coachload of 60 visitors from St Andre came here for our village fete in the summer."

The chairman of the new twinning committee is Louise Tason who also organises the village fete and is secretary of the diamond jubilee committee.

She and other village repre-



sentatives are due to travel to St Andre next month to meet the mayor and sign a twinning accord.

The French dignitaries are

then due to come to Bridge in February and then travel to Canterbury to sign the agreement at Tower House with the Lord Mayor.

5.5.2011



NEW LANDLORDS: Nicola and Tony Ray at the refurbished pub

Pub returns to the heart of village life

THE White Horse Inn at Bridge has reopened and been given a new lease of life by its new landlords.

Tony and Nicola Ray, from Canterbury, took on the pub with the aim of restoring the 16th century building and returning it to the heart of village life.

It had been empty for six months, but now it has reopened three full-time jobs and eight part-time positions have been created.

Tony said: "We absolutely loved the pub from the first time we saw it although, after being empty for six months, it wasn't in the best shape.

"It's no secret that a lot of pubs have struggled over the last few years, but this one has great potential and is really important to the people of this village.

"In the first week, we were open



The White Horse Inn at Bridge

we had more than 30 emails from local people expressing their support for what we're trying to do here."

The White Horse also includes The Stables Restaurant which will serve fresh food made from local ingredients at lunchtimes and in the evenings.

Nicola said: "We hope the White Horse will become a place where local residents can pop in for a drink and a catch-up, but also somewhere people visiting Canterbury can come to enjoy a meal in a historic, rural setting."

14/4/2011

FROM THE

175 years

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The stream had not failed until within a few months before the last visit of the comet for a period of upwards of 100 years, and on that occasion it preceded the appearance of a comet.

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War diaries prisoner Bill, dies at 98

A MAN who survived a Japanese prisoner of war camp during the Second World War and wrote an extraordinary account of his experiences, has died at the age of 98.

Bill Rose, who lived in Bridge for the last 45 years of his life, spent three-and-a-half years as a PoW after he was captured by the Japanese in Java.

He was one of 180 men packed into the hold of a transport ship and taken to Japan on a 31-day journey which saw 25 men die.

While in a forced labour camp, Mr Rose kept diaries by writing in tiny handwriting on small pieces of paper. They are now kept at the Imperial War Museum, London.

Mr Rose married Joyce Khan who he met while living London before the war. She died in 2002.

In later life, he worked hard to foster Anglo-Japanese relations which involved visits to each other's countries and he helped establish the annual Service of Reconciliation at Canterbury



Bill Rose

Cathedral.

In March 2003, he made the Kentish Gazette's front page when at the age of 90 he beat off a burglar wielding a screwdriver he found in his home in Ford Close, Bridge.

He died on December 27 and is survived by his sons Malcolm, Graham and Jonathan.

A memorial service for him will be held at St Peter's Church, Bridge, at 2pm on Saturday, January 29.

6.1.2015

FORMER JAPANESE PRISONER OF WAR FORGED FRIENDSHIPS AROUND THE WORLD

A fitting send-off for an extraordinary man

by Gerry Warren
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FRIENDS, family and supporters from across the world packed St Peter's Church in Bridge on Saturday afternoon for a service in memory of a former Japanese prisoner of war.

Bill Rose, who lived in the village, died last month aged 98 leaving a legacy of friendship with the Japanese village where he suffered horrifically in a forced labour camp for more than three years in the 1940s

His diaries penned at the time by tiny writing on scraps of paper are now kept in the Imperial War Museum and he also later wrote a book called "You Shook My Hand", describing his return visit to Tenryu, the village where he was held during the war.

He subsequently formed an extraordinary bond of friendship with the villagers which



FRIENDSHIP LEGACY: The Memorial Service at St Peters Church, Bridge, for Bill Rose

led to exchange visits between Bridge school children and their Japanese counterparts.

He also established an annual service of reconcili-

ation at Canterbury Cathedral.

Among the people attending the memorial service was a representative from the Japa-

nese Embassy and friends from Toronto in Canada.

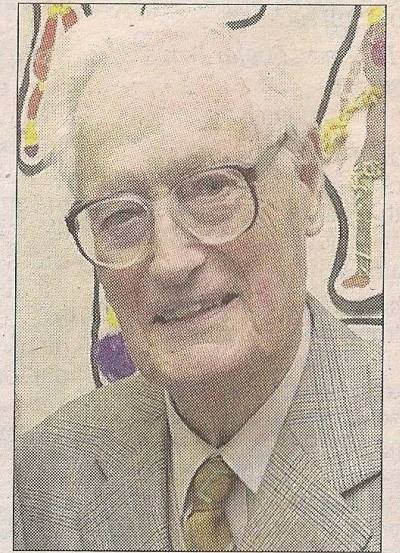
It was organised by his three sons Graham, Malcolm and Jonathan and led by the padre to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the Rev Simon Rowlands.

Graham said: "It was very well supported and just a lovely service in dad's memory.

"There was some beautiful music and singing and it had a very upbeat feel. There was nothing morose about it.

"Representatives from the Imperial War Museum also attended and brought a display and I and others gave talks about my father and his extraordinary life. Afterwards we all went to the Bridge and Patribourne School for afternoon tea."

Graham also revealed that a new book about Bill's life called Bluebell Hill to Kanose Return was due to be published soon.



Bill Rose and, top, during his first year at Mitsushima Camp

Top picture: Mike Gunnill