

Chalfont St Giles & Graft – De Rijp
Twinning Association

Membership Application

Annual Subscription £6 per person
Special rates for Groups on request

Full Name:

Address:

.....

Post Code:..... Phone:

E-mail:

Additional Names (at same address):

.....

E-mail:

.....

E-mail:

.....

Email:

Please return with remittance (cheques payable to
'Chalfont St Giles Twinning Association') to the
Membership Secretary:

Bert Bowden
42 The Lagger
Chalfont St Giles
Bucks
HP8 4DH

Data Protection Act: Membership information will be stored on a password protected computer unless otherwise requested. It will be used only for the purpose of maintaining membership records and communicating with members. Personal details will not be disclosed to any individual or organization outside the Twinning Association.

BSO/9/2010

What is Twinning?

Twinning is about fostering friendship and understanding between communities.

Twinning between Chalfont St Giles and Graft – De Rijp in North Holland began in 1979 and is still going strong, an indication of its success. During that time we have shared many experiences and formed strong relationships.

Twinning is a good way to get to know people from another country; to learn about their way of life, their interests and traditions and to enjoy their hospitality and they ours.

Twinning between our two communities is not an exchange of representatives but one of local residents. It matters not that we do not speak Dutch; most Dutch people speak excellent English and tolerate our poor attempts at their language which adds to the fun. Hosting in our own homes makes 'getting to know you' very enjoyable and the difference in our habits can be a source of amusement.

Twinning has a busy calendar in Chalfont St Giles including a coffee morning in the Reading Room on the first Saturday of the month. In the summer months there is a barbecue and picnic, there are walks, talks and visits to places of interest throughout the year and a members' dinner in January. We try to ensure that our activities have something for all ages and are attractive to new members as well as those of us who have enjoyed them for years.

Come along to a coffee morning or contact:

Mary Finey 01494 873088

Bert Bowden 01494 872439

Bryan Ogilvie 020 8998 7042

www.csgrtwinning.co.uk



Chalfont St Giles & Graft – De Rijp Twinning Association

(Chartered in 1979)



GRAFT - DE RIJP



Graft-De Rijk is the name of the administrative area of North Holland encompassing the picturesque villages of Graft, De Rijk, Markenbinnen, Noordeinde and Oost- and West-Graftdijk. It is similar in size to Chalfont St Giles but there the similarity ends. The landscape is flat, very, very flat, having been reclaimed from the sea in 1612, and the district forms part of the Unesco world heritage site, De Beemster polder. It is said that God created the earth and the Dutch created Holland.

In tulip time the polders are a riot of colour. For the rest of the year they are carpets of vegetables, grazing for cows and sheep and a haven for birds of every variety. Birds sweep and whirl in the wind, the same wind which turns the windmills which keep the polders dry.



Stroll around the oldest part of De Rijk called De Buurtjes, and one could be in the 17th century. This is a world of canals criss-crossed by little wooden bridges which make lovely reflections in the water. Graft-De Rijk is a photographers' paradise.

At one time Graft-De Rijk was the second largest herring port in Holland and had a large whaling fleet. Ironically it was a local man, Jan Leeghwater, who devised the system of draining the land which over the years caused this way of life to cease. The



remaining legacy is the fishermens' traditional wooden houses which are very desirable. Built alongside the canals they are painted dark green with white window frames and their individually carved gables are characteristic of the area. As in Chalfont St Giles the centre of Graft-De Rijk is a conservation area.

Most of the working population commutes to Amsterdam or the nearby towns of Purmerend, Alkmaar and Zaanstad. The administration of the community is very different to an English village in that the Burgermeister is a royal appointment and is responsible for the fire and ambulance service as well as all other aspects of the local authority.



shop and café has beautiful displays. They also love sailing and there are rowing boats on the canals at the end of the gardens and sailing boats and barges on the larger canals and inland seas.



Everyone, young and old, travels by bike, which is easy since it is so flat. It is not unusual to see a child in front and another on a seat at the back, or even a double buggy arrangement fixed to the back wheel. Wooden clogs are still worn by farmers while others hang them by the door as decoration.

Both De Rijk and Graft have outstanding town halls built in 1613 in the Dutch Renaissance style. The Grote Kerk, built in 1655, has 23 fine stained glass windows and is typical of the huge churches which dominate the skyline throughout Holland.



As we leave Purmerend and see the Church spire piercing the sky we know we are nearly at our Dutch home and that we are sure of a warm welcome from our friends in our twin community, the lovely village of Graft-De Rijk



Driehuizen (Three Households)