

## Collation of responses to Questionnaire on 2023 Exchange

### Cardiff visits.

Overall the programme was very much enjoyed with almost everyone classifying most visits “good”, Nantgarw had one “mixed” response but people appreciated having lunch included and therefore able to eat together. While Llantrisant scored “good”, 2 commented the guide was unhelpful, though this didn’t spoil enjoyment of the day. On the whole people appreciated having some time on a visit to explore on their own, as well as part of the time being guided. As we couldn’t have a guide or introductory talk at St. Fagans, advance info on what was there would have been appreciated (mentioned by 2 people). People seemed to appreciate being able to lunch together and having a mix of some time to do their own thing on a visit even if it is guided.

Generally on visits in both Nantes and here – with technical visits, useful to have info in advance esp specialist vocab and if possible have visual support: on all visits where there is no guide, helpful to give out information about what is there beforehand. Also translators useful (2 separate groups, 1 in English, 1 in French). Need to brief professional guides not to go into too much detail (Art museum in France) and speak slowly (Castle in Cardiff)

Balance of the programme. Generally people liked the balance of short and longer visits, thought it was well planned. One person thought one long day during the week was enough and that a bit more free time would be good. Having the free time on Friday was appreciated. Excursions were sufficiently varied, though there was a suggestion we should have a visit about contemporary life in Cardiff (see suggestions under that section). One person was happy with one visit to England, but thought for the most part, we should concentrate on showing Welsh culture and beauty!

Start and finish times – everyone was ok with these in Cardiff

Pick-up points – both were appreciated and thought to be necessary.

Discretionary visit on Sunday. It was thought day **and** evening activities were too much but to have an optional event was helpful. Something in Cardiff itself helpful for new participants – guided walk around Cardiff, hop on/ off bus, boat trip would help them get to know city. Other suggestions were get together at pub, with or without skittles, or maybe someone’s house or garden (Judi’s get together was greatly enjoyed, so much so that one of Nantais did something similar, acknowledging that Judi gave him the idea), a twmpath. Maybe 2 or 3 hosts could get together and arrange a trip with their guests. A traditional Sunday Lunch at a nice venue was suggested by one. Generally good to have something on Sunday, one person commented she found Sunday difficult to fill, but needs to be optional because of the fatigue factor and also some appreciate having a day with nothing organised

Festive dinner The venue was thought to be excellent. Choice of food – generally thought to be good, though one person commented the non-Indian choice was less so. Most people thought standard of food was good but other comments were “only ok”, “not as good as previous years”, “not overly impressed” “moderate”. Someone commented good to have Lord Mayor and twinning officer there and previous Exchange members. Several commented service was too slow – apparently they had last minute staffing diffs. Entertainment – generally thought to be good, though some couldn’t remember (? A good sign as it didn’t overwhelm the conviviality of event) Some requests for more from professional singer. Singalong enjoyed – perhaps choose more well known songs?

Other plusses or minuses? Coach company excellent.

Comment that schedule was very busy (3 people) and a couple thought more free time would be an advantage. However, as someone else commented that would be ok if host and guest were relaxed

with each other but would be difficult otherwise, and someone else preferred to do things in a group in Cardiff. More information on matching form may help better pairings? Also to have info re peoples mobility.

Suggested that we encourage participants to organise mini soirées among themselves – could do on Sunday or evenings – easier if they have contact details of other participants in advance. Also make it easier to arrange meet-ups and lift shares in the vicinity.

Visits in France. Generally, the programme was enjoyed with Vannes, Cordemais being classed as excellent with a good balance of guided visit and free time. Vineyard had mixed response, several thought it was very good, though one person didn't go to the vineyard and another commented while the visit was fine, she wouldn't have chosen to go to a vineyard. Likewise, the Musee des Arts, while most people thought it was good, some classed it as mixed, a couple of people thought the guide went into too much detail, and a 3<sup>rd</sup> person thought it was a beautiful building, enjoyed being there but was not interested in the art. Sion Les Mines was mixed – explanation very technical, would have been better with handout or video, one person classed it as excellent

Overall balance of programme Almost everyone happy with the balance of the programme but one person thought there were too many long days for visits in a hot June, whereas someone else would be happy to go on a long trip everyday to be able to see more, and was happy with coach journeys up to 2 hours long. A couple of people would like more time to get to know Nantes itself - visit to the Île des Machines suggested, the lovely parks and gardens, different areas of Nantes (Île de Nantes) tour of city. Excursions were sufficiently varied, pick up points ok though a bit far to travel to get to them for one or two, and there was some confusion on arrival in Nantes and with the pickup for the vineyard. Some thought start times were a bit early. There was a suggestion for more trips in Brittany.

Other comments about experience in France.

"Everyone in Nantes is incredibly welcoming and Nantes itself is a lovely city".

"I love the Exchange and everything about it".

"A very enjoyable week"

## Planning the Future

Timing of next year's Exchange. Everyone was fine with the dates for next year, though obviously too early to make a commitment.

Pattern of visits. General approval for change in our usual pattern – liked idea of Nantais coming here in June and us going to Nantes in September - good to see each other's city in different seasons, good for each to have share of good weather. Good to alternate visits with the group that visits 1<sup>st</sup> one year, visiting 2<sup>nd</sup> the following year.

Cardiff Singer of the World – most thought good idea, others pointed out long time listening to classical music may be a step too far for some

Suggestions for next year's visits. New synagogue in Moira Place. National Botanic Gardens. Castell Coch, Tredegar House, Newport transporter bridge combined with Wetlands and museum, medieval ship. Brecon Beacons and the town itself, new museum there. Brecon Mountain Railway, Penderyn distillery, Usk, Abergavenny, Cowbridge – physic garden etc, Royal Mint, Bute town – walking tour, explanation of multi - cultural inheritance of this area. Betty Campbell School, Greek Orthodox church, Norwegian church, WMC –behind scenes tour, maybe rehearsal. Swansea/ Mumbles: Oystermouth Castle, Lifeboat Centre, Dylan Thomas birthplace. Male voice Choir rehearsal. Bristol

and SS Great Britain. Walking tour of Cardiff (Carol O'Byrne has offered to lead). National Collections Centre Nantgarw ( a number of exhibits not currently on show in the Museums are stored there – guided tours are available) Black Gold, Rhondda. Heritage houses and Gardens.

Can you help organise a visit – some positive responses

Hosting/pairing All who filled in this section reported that hosting had worked for them.

Questions which would make pairing easier. Some thought question to enable better matching re fluency would be helpful, question re mobility would be helpful. Helpful to know about individuals preparedness to use public transport on own

Anything that would make Exchange more attractive for you – some thought more free time – another “lovely as it is”

Events throughout the year – this was generally thought to be a good idea, would help group bonding, could also help recruit new members. Suggestions- French film at Chapter, concert with music by French composers, quiz about France/Cardiff/Nantes, Informal get togethers, meals out, pétanque.