



Fact-finding questions and responses about Havre de Grace

17 August 2018

1. Does Havre de Grace have a voluntary twinning association equivalent to the Twinning Association of Mumbles? If so, does it have a website? (To make any comparisons, if relevant, you may find it helpful to consult our website, www.mumblestwinning.org.)

Havre De Grace does not have a voluntary twinning association. We've never twinned with another town or city. However, our mayor and city council enthusiastically support this initiative.

2. Please summarise the similarities between the two towns that in your opinion would make a twinning link appropriate.

Havre de Grace and Mumbles both have lighthouses. Both are surrounded on two sides by water. Mumbles has Swansea Bay and the Bristol Channel. Havre de Grace has the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay. Because of their proximity to water, both have been harbors for fishing and hubs of transportation. Both are known for seafood, such as cockles and laver bread in Mumbles, and crabs, oysters, rockfish, and duck in Havre de Grace. Both have traditions of woodcarving: love spoons in Mumbles and duck decoys in Havre de Grace. Havre de Grace has several marinas, a yacht basin, and a two sailing schools. Mumbles, similarly, has boating facilities and enthusiasts.

The population of the two places is similar. The population of Mumbles is about 16,000; the population of Havre de Grace is about 13,000. Much like Mumbles, Havre de Grace has its newcomers, people who've been there less than a generation, and citizens who can trace their families back generations. For Havre de Grace, the beginning is only the 18th century, which is yesterday for Mumbles. Both populations are diverse professionally and economically.

Mumbles and Havre de Grace seem to have similar aspirations. Both are energized by their citizens to celebrate their identities through fairs, festivals, food, lectures, music. Most of our events are organized and run by volunteer organizations and it's these volunteers who energize the city. Both places have rich histories which attract visitors and new citizens. Both places have great restaurants and watering holes. The citizens of both Mumbles and Havre de Grace take pride in their towns and express a desire to share the gifts they have.

Additionally, both places have been recently recognized by national publications as great places to live.

3. Is Havre de Grace currently or has it in the past been twinned with any other towns? If so, please identify them and mention how long the twinning relationships were or have been in place.

No, we've never officially twinned with another city, although mention has been made of Le Havre because we consider ourselves its namesake. But there the similarities end. We've never pursued twinning with Le Havre.

4. If your answer to question 3 is affirmative, please summarise the twinning experience. What worked well / not so well? Have official visits between you and your partner(s) ever been organised? If so, approximately how many people from your town participated in (a) visiting your partner town(s) and (b) hosting them?

N/A

5. At the end of this list of questions I have pasted from our website two short articles about: (a) our most recent visit in 2017 to Hennebont, our existing twin in Brittany, France; and (b) the most recent visit from Hennebont to Mumbles, which took place last month. First, please read both accounts.? Then please assess how much you think the two accounts correspond to what people in Havre de Grace might expect when they visit Mumbles, or when we visit you.

Both visits sounded delightful. Because we are new to twinning, we have no firm expectations. I believe we would use these two accounts, and anything else we can learn from you, as a basis for our hosting. There is much to do in Havre de Grace, so activities abound. What we would want to develop are the personal encounters with school groups and other interested parties. We have a newly renovated Opera House, which has its own theatre group, and beautiful parks that offer outdoor concerts. I am confident that we can offer a rich experience for our Mumbles visitors.

6. One of TAM's most important principles is that the bedrock of any successful twinning relationship is the network of personal friendships that form naturally between individuals and families from the two communities through the simple hospitable practice of staying in each other's homes during official visits. We don't believe in staying in hotels, not ever, and our friends in Hennebont feel exactly the same way! Do you agree? If so, would you be broadly supported in this view by your community?

Since I spoke with you on Monday, I've made a preliminary list of people I think would be willing and happy to host. I believe we could easily accommodate 20 visitors. The key would be to arrange the date for the visit far enough in advance to allow people to lock the dates in. I believe this approach would be broadly supported by the community.

7. Compared to Havre de Grace, Hennebont is relatively near to Mumbles, just a longish drive and a ferry crossing away. This makes it feasible to visit one another on a two-year basis, i.e., they visit us every two years and, in the intervening years, we visit them. Inevitably getting over to Maryland would involve a bigger commitment both physically and financially. Therefore, we think it most practical to plan on a four-year cycle: we would visit you every four years, and vice-versa. So, in

practice every two years there would be an official visit, either in one direction or the other. Does this sound sensible?

I agree with the four-year cycle. We are an ocean – and a longish plane ride away. Another thing that makes Havre Dr Grace an attractive place to visit is that we are on the way to many destinations. We are an hour and a half from Washington and Philadelphia, two and a half hours from New York City, and an hour from Baltimore and Annapolis. Journeys could be extended to make the most of making the twinning trip.

8. Our aspirations for twinning as an activity go well beyond the social aspect – although that is very important (see question 6!). We also try to be proactive in using our contacts with our partners in Hennebont to build working links between other institutions and sectors of our twinned communities: links between schools, cultural and sporting organisations, and so on. Would there be support in Havre de Grace for initiatives such as this?

I love the idea of building bridges. Believe it or not, only a few people in Havre Dr Grace have heard of Wales, let alone Mumbles – though of course that number is growing now! And I doubt that many – if any – people in Mumbles have heard of Havre de Grace. I think if we can get student groups, fishing and boating enthusiasts, leadership and lecturers from our five museums, representatives from the Opera House, and members of our City Council to get to know visitors from Mumbles, we'll all have a greater and valuable connection to one another. Bridges, again!

I also think that you have established a valuable model for twinning in your relationship with Hennebont. It's a good model to follow.