

Twinning – the Origins



Bubry



Macroom



Marcallo con Casone

The concept of twinning was first addressed by a group from Macroom in the late '70s, with Martin Fitzgerald and the late Denis Murphy at the helm, helped by Tom Counihan and Pat O'Connell. Twinning, now a widespread phenomenon, was then in its infancy and Macroom is believed to be one of the first 4 Irish towns to have embraced it in 1980. Martin Fitzgerald and the late Anicet Le Floch chaired the Twinning Associations in Macroom and Bubry for the next 20 years. Much credit must also go to Macroom U.D.C. and its Cathaoirleach, the late Mr. Martin McCarthy and the late Monsieur Louis Onorati, Mayor of Bubry.



The twins became triplets in 2002, when Macroom twinned with Marcallo con Casone, Italy. Chris Lucey, a native of the Lee Valley and now resident in Lombardia, was the first contact. Bubry and Marcallo con Casone then went on to establish a similar relationship.

Bubry



Bubry is a Breton rural community in the Blavet Valley, 35 minutes from Lorient and 20 minutes from Pontivy. As in many rural communities in Brittany, the church is situated at the centre of the town. The groups and associations are very dynamic and, throughout the year, 'Fêtes & Pardons' take place in the surrounding villages.

Bubry is a haven of peace and tranquillity and, as a result, attracts a lot of visitors, looking for a restful, nature-orientated holiday.

Bubry can be easily accessed by air (airports in Lorient, Rennes & Nantes) and by ferry (ferry-port in Roscoff).

<http://www.cc-plouay.fr/ccplouay.nsf?Opendatabase> (site under construction).

[Marcallo con Casone](#)

Marcallo con Casone is situated in the Ticino Valley, only 25 km from Milan. It may be accessed by air from Malpensa and Bergamo and by rail to Magenta Station.

Marcallo con Casone is an agricultural area, producing wine, cereals and dairy products.

Marcallo con Casone is within easy reach of Milano (San Siro soccer stadium), Venice, Lakes Como and Maggiore, Verona and the Alps are visible in the distance. (www.marcallo.it)

[Twinning Activities](#)

The last 27 years have been very active: exchanges of secondary school students, visits by adult groups, visits by soccer clubs, members of the Fire-Brigades, groups of scouts, visits by Musicians, English language classes for students from Bubry and Marcallo.

At least one marriage resulted from the 'twinning' – that of Mireille and Paul Kingston, now Secretary and Treasurer of Macroom Twinning Association.





Twinning Diary 1979

The twinning of Macroom and Bubry could well have come to grief at the first hurdle in May 1979, as the deputation from Bubry missed the members of the Mountain Dew Festival Committee who had gone to meet them at Ringaskiddy. The intrepid Breton quartet - Mayor Louis Onorati, Louis Bevan, Jean Francois Le Stunff and Anicet Le Floch – made their own way to Macroom, where Garda Raymond Quinn put them in touch with Councillor John Browne. They went on to have a most enjoyable week, with M. Onorati becoming the first Freeman of Macroom. They attended a G.A.A. match, Millstreet v U.C.C.; they visited Papersacks and Bunzel Adhesives and Killarney Races. Martin FitzGerald and Tom Counihan paid a return visit to Bubry later in 1979.

1980

The Twinning Charter (in 4 languages) was signed by Martin McCarthy, Chairman Macroom U.D.C. and M. Onorati, firstly in Bubry March 8, 1980 and again during the Mountain Dew Festival in Macroom on June 24. These ceremonies were marked with parades and the singing of the Irish and Breton National Anthems. Special twinning signs were erected and the flags of the twin towns were flown prominently in each location.

Twinning was primarily for the benefit of children learning an European language; annual exchanges of about 20 students became the norm during the '80s. Macroom Soccer Club, Anglers, Scouts and Aghinagh Heritage Group all visited Bubry. Martin FitzGerald, Denis Kelleher and Noel O'Driscoll were guests of Bubry at the 200th anniversary of the Fall of the Bastille on July 14 1989.



1988

1989 – '90

The 10th anniversary of the Twinning movement started on St. Patrick's Day 1989, with a Breton deputation attending the parade. Tom Murphy, Ted Browne, Martin FitzGerald and Paul Kingston were the officers of Macroom Twinning Association. Celebrations continued throughout 1990, with a group again coming for the St. Patrick's Day festivities. Mireille le Gouallec, representing the Mayor of Bubry, was presented with a hand carving of Macroom Coat of Arms by U.D.C. Chairman, John Browne. Bubry's main square was re-named Place de Macroom. In September 1994, a 20-strong group went from Macroom to Bubry for 5 days, during which they visited Quiberon, La Trinité sur Mer, Carnac, Auray, Saint Malo and Nantes. Exchanges went ahead during the 90s.



1992 was a special year with the relationship between Macroom and Bubry being cemented with the marriage in Brittany of Paul Kingston and Mireille le Gouallec. In recognition of 12 years service to twinning, Martin FitzGerald and Anicet Le Floch were awarded medals of honour Bretagne-Irlande. Paddy Moloney of the Chieftains, who holidays in Bubry, also received a medal.



1994

Eleven firefighters, accompanied by their wives, came from Bubry and were feted in the town. They presented their Macroom colleagues with the European standard Golden Helmet.

1997

Macroom Soccer Club visited Bubry



1999 – 2000 – Twenty years of Twinning.

A deputation of 42, including 3 firemen, came from Bubry May 8 - 16 1999 to help the local Fire Brigade celebrate 55 years of service. It was stated that more than 500 had visited in the 20 years since the first visit in 1979. M. Le Floch said it was his 15th visit to Macroom, and he remarked

on the huge progress the town had made over the years. Pat O'Connell, Chairman Macroom U.D.C. and Jean Yves Nicolas planted an oak tree in the Castle Grounds. 26 schoolchildren, aged 7 – 9, came from Bubry in June 2000 and 36 adult Macrompians made the return trip June 3 – 10. They visited Rennes, Saint Malo, Plouay, Quimper, Concarneau, Hennebont and Lorient.



2002 – '03 Twinning with Marcallo con Casone



Christopher Lucey, whose parents and grandparents came from Ballingeary, first made contact with Macrompians in 2001, with a view to establishing a twinning arrangement between his hometown, Marcallo con Casone, in Northern Italy, and Macroom. Some members of the

Town Council in Marcallo con Casone paid a visit in June 2001. They visited local enterprises, including G.I.; they went to the Munster Final and did a lot of shopping. Later that year a group of 8 from Macroom went to Marcallo con Casone on a fact-finding mission. In March 2002, the Italians arranged a chartered flight for 150 passengers to attend the St. Patrick's Day ceremony in Macroom. The initial Twinning Ceremony took place in Macroom and the Charter was signed at the Town Hall. The final signing of the charter took place in Marcallo con Casone in Septemeber 2002. Paul Kingston was Mayor at the time and a delegation from Macroom attended.



Marcallo con Casone also invited the people of Bubry, Macroom's other twin, and they decided to enter into a twinning arrangement also. The Marcallo con Casone band came for the St. Patrick's Day parade in 2003. A group from Macroom traveled to Bubry to witness the first leg of the signing of the Twinning between Bubry and Marcallo con Casone in May 2003. The signing was completed in April 2004 during the San Marco Festival in Marcallo con Casone: 19 people from Macroom traveled to Italy to celebrate the tri-partite agreement.



2004

The three way twinning with Marcallo and Macroom was signed in Bubry in September 2004.

Children from the second level school in Marcallo con Casone started coming to Macroom in 2003, staying at Coolcower House and visiting local schools, families, historical sites and tourist attractions. English

Language classes were also run 2003 – 2007, with students staying with local families.



2005 marked the 25th anniversary of the Twinning of Macroom and Bubry and the silver jubilee was celebrated in style in both towns. Bagad San Ewan and the Melrand Dancers had pride of place at Macroom's St. Patrick's day Parade and Bubry Mayor, Jean Yves Nicolas, was guest of honour. The official 25th anniversary ceremonies were held in the Town Hall and hosted by Macroom Town Council. Mayors and twinning Association members from Macroom, Bubry and Marcallo con Casone were present and Martin McCarthy, Cathaoirleach Macroom Urban District Council 1980 and Martin FitzGerald, life-long supporter of twinning, were honoured. Dinner followed in the Castle and Lee Valley Hotels.



At Silver Jubilee Twinning Celebration in Macroom Town Hall, From left, Massimo Garavaglia, Mayor of Marcallo con Casone; Martin McCarthy, Cathaoirleach Macroom U.D.C. 1980; Jean Yves Nicolas, Mayor of Bubry, Evelyn McSweeney, Mayor of Macroom and Martin Fitzgerald, President of Macroom Twinning Association



At Macroom St. Patrick's Day Parade:- arriving in style, Jean Yves Nicolas, Mayor of Bubry and Macroom Mayor, Evelyn McSweeney driven by Dan Joe Crowley

In October 2005, a 35-strong delegation from Macroom attended the Silver Jubilee celebrations in Bubry, led by Mayor, Tom Counihan and Chairman of Macroom Twinning Association, Martin FitzGerald. An Italian delegation also attended.

Official ceremonies in the Town Hall, Bubry were hosted by Mayor, Jean Yves Nicolas and M. Anicet le Floch, one of the original twinning group, was awarded the Bubry Medal of Honour. Paddy Moloney of the Chieftains joined in the after dinner celebrations. The group toured Auray, Lorient, Hennebont and enjoyed a Crêpe night.



Official group from Bubry, Macroom and Marcallo con Casone at 25th anniversary celebration



In Bubry for 25th anniversary celebrations, Martin McCarthy, founder member, Tom Counihan, Mayor of Macroom, Jean Yves Nicolas, Bubry and Massimo Garavaglia, Marcallo con Casone

2006

The first twinning school exchange was initiated in 2006, thanks to the enthusiasm and co-operation of Principals, Mr. Noel Dunne and Sig. Flavio Pellegrin. 38 students from Marcallo's Middle School came to De la Salle, Macroom for a week. They were hosted by De la Salle students' families. They attended class, visited local tourist sites and were coached in hurling skills. Macroom G.A.A. and Twinning Association presented Instituto E. de Amici with hurleys and sliotars.



Presentation of hurleys and sliotars by Pat O'Connell, Macroom G.A.A. and Martin FitzGerald, Macroom Twinning Association, to Signora Carla Ferri, Marcallo con Casone. On right Mr. Noel Dunne, Principal De la Salle. In background, students and teachers from Italy and Macroom.



Daniela Sattas demonstrates the correct way to use a hurley at De la Salle College, Macroom.

32 Irish students and 3 teachers made the return trip in late April and enjoyed visiting Venice, Milan and the San Siro stadium.



Students and teachers from De la Salle Macroom and Istituto E. de Amicis, Marcallo at Castello Sforzesco, Milano



Students from De la Salle College meet up with Lee Valley neighbours at S. Marco Fair in Marcallo



Students from Macroom who played Marcallo in a friendly football match. Also included, Mr. Noel Dunne, Principal and Signora Carla Ferri and on left the President of U.S. Marcallese and right, the superintendent of U.S. Marcallese, Mr. Tullio Oldani

During the St. Patrick's Day celebrations 2006, a twinning summit was held, at which it was decided to limit adult visits. The three towns will act as host in consecutive years – Macroom 2007, Bubry 2008 and Marcallo 2009. The advisability of publishing multilingual everyday phrases on town websites was also encouraged.

Nineteen Macrompians went to Marcallo con Casone for the San Marco Festival in late April.



Pipers from the foothills of the Alps at the Insubre Festival in Marcallo con Casone

The group included the Town Clerk, Mr. Kevin Curran, four town councillors and four musicians. Sig. Massimo Garavaglia, Mayor of Marcallo con Casone 1999 – 2009 received a presentation to mark his election to the Italian Parliament as Lega Nord representative for Lombardia. The Macroom group later visited Venice, and 'Mountmassey' resounded along the Canal Grande.

At the 2006 A.G.M. of Macroom Twinning Association, Martin FitzGerald was elected first President and Pádraig O'Driscoll took over as Chairman.

21 adult and youth students from Marcallo and one from Bubry attended the E.F.L. course in July, when Italy also won the World Cup and Zidane was declared Player of the Championship.

2007

De la Salle College and students hosted 28 Italians for a week in February. 41 visitors came from Marcallo and 12 from Bubry for St. Patrick's Day.



Flag bearers from Northern Italy go through their paces at Macroom St. Patrick's Day Parade

The Italians included their Mayor and Flag Bearers, who added much to the colour of the parade. The Bretons were led by their Mayor and included 4 members of the Bagad. The international twinning meeting made plans for exchanges in the year ahead and queried the desirability of having language classes in other countries too.



International Twinning Meeting 2007 with representatives from Bubry, Marcallo con Casone and Macroom

28 First Year students and 3 teachers from De la Salle flew to Bergamo on April 20. During their week-long stay, they had a close encounter with the Pope at Vigevano, saw A.C. Milan defeat Cagliari 3 – 0 at San Siro stadium and visited Venice.

Officerships remained the same at the 2007 A.G. M.

9 Bretons and 2 Italians attended the E.F.L. course in McEgan College: the feedback was excellent both on the part of the students who attended the course and on the part of the families who hosted the students.



2007 EFL group at concert at Murrays

2008

Bubry is host town in 2008, but we are hoping to have delegations from Bubry and Marcallo visiting Macroom for St. Patrick's Day again this year and school exchanges are also under way.

Student reports on their visit to Italy

Italian Diary

by Andrew Golden

Friday 20th April: Having left Macroom at 2 a.m., we flew Shannon –Bergamo at 6.45 and reached our destination, Marcallo con Casone at 11 a.m. Wrecked and cranky, we survived the school day, when we met our host students and travelled to their homes to meet the rest of the family. My family was sound and all of the other Irish students said their families were sound as well.

Saturday 21st: This whole day was probably the highlight of the trip. First we visited a monastery in the countryside. Then we went to a huge monastery outside Pavia, where we also saw a famous roofed bridge. Then on to Vigevano and, just our luck, the Pope was there! Then we hurried back to Milan to the San Siro soccer stadium to watch AC Milan playing Cagliari. AC Milan won 3-0.

Sunday 22nd: A badly needed free day and an opportunity to get to know the family better.

Monday 23rd : We went to school in Marcallo and took part in 3 classes. We then went to the gym, where Edward Burgoyne gave a display of Irish dancing and most of the students took part in a crazy céili dancing session. This was followed by a soccer match - which was good except that the referee could have been better!

Tuesday 24th: We woke up at 5.30 am and took the train from Magenta to Venice, arriving around 11.30. We admired the buildings, the canals, bridges and gondolas. It was very late when we eventually arrived back in Marcallo.

Wednesday 25th: St. Marco's day with stalls and entertainment around the town. We bought lots of bits and pieces to bring home to Ireland.

Thursday 26th: We headed for Genoa, 2 hours by bus, but it was worth it as we visited the second biggest aquarium in Europe, complete with dolphins, penguins and sharks. Afterwards we walked along the seaside promenade.

Friday 27th: We left Marcallo at 5.45, Bergamo at 10.45 and arrived in Shannon at 1.30 and finally Macroom, at 4 o'clock. It was an absolutely fantastic, brilliant experience!

Book Early for Italia 2008!

by Kevin O'Connell

Notice to future De la Salle students: Go to Italy, You'll have the best fun ever! That's my advice because I've just been on the Italian exchange with the school and it was fantastic!

It started very early on Friday, April 20th, with 28 First Years packed into a bus and headed for Shannon airport. What happened over the next week was brilliant, with trips to see the Pope, the San Siro stadium and AC Milan, Venice, St. Marco's Fair, our host students' school, Genoa and Pavia, not to mention the laughs and craic on the buses and train, Edward Burgoyne's Irish dancing demonstration in front of the whole school and meeting up in

the local funfair at night, but my highlight of the week was the soccer match we played against our Italian host students. I captained our team and felt proud to lead the team out. Despite inspirational team talks before the match and at half-time from our coach Miss Groome, the Italians proved slightly better and won 2-0. What I enjoyed most was that both teams went at it hammer-and-tongs, with no holds barred. There were a few hot-headed moments between the players, but all of that was forgotten when the match was over – they even presented us with medals, a gesture that summed up our hosts, friendly and helpful. So De la Salle First Years of 2007/2008, go on the exchange, it's absolutely fantastic!

De la Salle Papal Visit

by Kieran O'Sullivan

When we arrived in Vigevano we were so far back that we thought we wouldn't even see the Pope on the massive television screen. But, the luck of the Irish, one of the Italian teachers spoke to the police and we were given a place at the very front. The sun was splitting the stones and it was very hot, about 30 C, as we waited for the arrival of the Pope. Everyone was shoved up to the barrier as the Pope came around the corner in the "Popemobile". We were only about 3 feet from the Pope as he passed by. People were cheering so loud their lungs were close to bursting! A man next to me was shouting "Papa, Papa" and was waving a flag with the Vatican colours of yellow and white. The main chant "Benedetto, Benedetto" almost made the ground shake, but when the Pope appeared on the balcony to talk to the people it went very quiet until he paused, when screams filled the air. Finally he went to the church to say Mass, but we had to leave early to go to the San Siro stadium to see the soccer! It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Picture Gallery



At Macroom St. Patrick's Day Parade:- Melrand Dancers, Bubry



Martin FitzGerald meets a supporter in Bubry.



International group in Bubry.



International Twinning meeting of delegates from Macroom, Marcallo con Casone, Italy and Bubry, France in the conference centre at the E Park, Macroom.

2006



Pat O'Connell sings 'Mountmassey', accompanied by Pádraig O'Driscoll, Dan O'Callaghan, Paddy O'Donovan and Dermot O'Leary at the Insubre Festival in Marcallo con Casone.



Pádraig O'Driscoll and friends sing of the joys of 'Mountmassey, the Flower of Macroom' at the Rialto Bridge on Venezia's Canal Grande.



Members of Town Councils and Twinning Associations from Macroom and Marcallo at presentation to Massimo Garavaglia, newly-elected member of the Italian Parliament.



Officers and committee of Macroom Twinning Association at A.G.M.



Viva Italia – visitors from Marcallo con Casone celebrate in Macroom



Twinning Céilí 2006 in Macroom.

2007



Mayors from Marcallo con Casone, Macroom and Bury arrive for Macroom's St. Patrick's Day Parade



Bagad de Bubry serenade Shrek and Co. at Ballinagree St. Patrick's Day Parade



Students from Marcallo con Casone, Milano, on exchange with De la Salle College Macroom, pictured at Bealick Mill



Martin FitzGerald, President Macroom Twinning Association, presenting sponsorship cheque to Tracy Groome, De la Salle College, Macroom. Also included, students who visited Marcallo con Casone, Italy and Principal, Noel Dunne, Pat Walsh and Eric Graham

De la Salle in Italy



Students from De la Salle College Macroom on visit to San Siro Stadium, Milano, to see Inter Milan play Cagliari. (P. Walsh)



Adam Gray, Michael McCarthy and Conor Caldwell, De la Salle, Macroom outside St. Mark's basilica in Venice. (P. Walsh)



Patrick Grainger, De la Salle, taking a photo of Pope Benedict XVI as he passes by in the "Popemobile" during his visit to Vigevano, near Milan. (P. Walsh)

