

Worcester Twinning Association

CONNECTIONS



Summer 2011

Editor- Contact Derek Furby



VISIT OF WILLIAM O'BRIEN TO WORCESTER

30 AND 31 MAY 2011

We were delighted to receive a visit – his first ever to the UK – from William O'Brien, our principal friend and contact in Worcester, Massachusetts at the end of May. Bill had played a major part in my visit to our twin US city in August last year, and it was a pleasure to look after him during the short time he was here.

He arrived from Germany on Saturday 28 May, and stayed with my wife and me in London that night. I drove him to Worcester on the Sunday, taking in Oxford and Moreton-in-Marsh en route. I delivered him to Nicky and Bryan Neville-Lee in time for supper that evening. They were kind and generous hosts and Bill stayed three nights with them.

Bill's programme started in earnest on the Monday with a visit to the Warriors' home at Sixways, where we were looked after

splendidly by Charlie Little and Louise Brook, who described some of the admirable ways the rugby club works with the community.

The Wanderers – Worcester’s amateur rugby club – were on tour in Massachusetts that very week. Robin and Charlotte Walker joined us there, and we all went on to New Road, hoping to see some cricket. Sadly incessant rain meant that there was to be no play that day, but we were able to enjoy an excellent lunch with Duncan Fearnley and his colleagues.

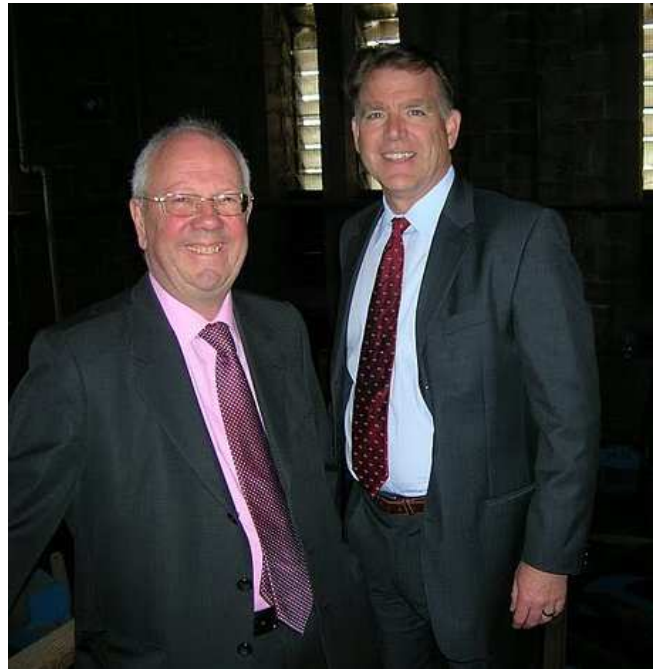
Leaving New Road, we walked to the Worcester Rowing Club. Bill is an active rower, and he is keen to see our rowers participate in future Quinsigamond regattas, and theirs in ours. There was a good meeting of minds there.

We visited the Tudor House Museum later that afternoon, and Bill was able to learn about some of our history from Jim Panter, who generously opened up specially for us.

The evening was spent at the King’s Head, where members of the twinning committee kindly entertained Bill to dinner.

Tuesday was an equally busy day. It started in the Mayor’s Parlour at the Guildhall, where Bill signed the visitors’ book and was shown some of the city’s marvellous civic regalia. The Mayor was also able to show us the original twinning document, signed by the mayors of both Worcesters. From there we walked to the Cathedral; we were met by the Dean, and then taken on a marvellous tour, which included the medieval library and the tower. Then it was on to the University St John’s campus for lunch, a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor and tours of the pollen laboratory and the sports science centre.

Later that afternoon we crossed the river again, went on a tour of the university’s city centre campus, and then met Iain



Rutherford at the city museum and art gallery. He took Bill down to the Commandery, and described some of the many roles this remarkable building has played in the life of the city. We are continuing to explore the possibility of reciprocal displays from their museums coming here, and vice versa.

We squeezed in a visit to the *Worcester News* office, where Bill was interviewed by the editor and David Paine, saying many positive things about his visit.

From there it was on to Huntingdon Hall, to watch part of the rehearsal for this year’s open air Shakespeare production of *Twelfth Night*, and a private performance of Ben Humphrey and Rob Leatham’s fantastic “Worcester – City of Liberty” show, which will be going live in schools later this summer. We were wondering whether we could take

this to the States, bearing in mind that Thomas Jefferson and John Adams are key elements in it; Bill advised us that it would have to be extensively rewritten as American schoolchildren would find the story of the execution of Charles I too gory and upsetting. During the evening we took a break to have a drink and a chat with Ann Renshaw and Mark Regan about “Sing UK” and other possible music-based exchanges.

We finished the evening with supper chez Chris Jaeger and Liz Grand – it was a lovely meal, and many thanks to them.

On the Wednesday morning I picked Bill up from the Neville-Lees, and drove him to Heathrow for his plane home. He gave every impression of having thoroughly enjoyed his visit, and he went back full of ideas for taking the relationship forward.

Richard Faulkner



We extend a very warm welcome to Worcester's new Mayor, Councillor David Tibbutt and to his wife Jane. David, who is Councillor for Battenhall was formally welcomed at the Civic Service in the Cathedral on Sunday 19th June. The photograph was taken at the reception afterward in the Mayors parlour in the Guildhall.



Photo by Pam Furby

Where the Neville-Lees go, Presidents follow!

Bryan & I finally managed on May 24th. to take up the offer made by Richard, Lord Faulkner, to visit the Houses of Parliament, for which we had bid at the Twinning Christmas Party last December.

We caught the train to London and made our way to the Peers' Entrance of the Houses of Parliament where we were photographed and checked by security before Richard arrived to start our tour. He took us through the various rooms of the House of Lords, pointing out the wonderful work of Pugin and varied paintings and frescos. Exiting the Queen's Robing Room, Richard found someone trying to open the door from the other side. With a tug, the doors opened and through came the Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow, along with the Speaker of the House of Lords, Baroness Hayman, and many other worthy ladies and gentlemen. At this point we realised that they were having a 'dry-run' for the next day when President Barack Obama was to visit the Houses of Parliament.

Off to Westminster Hall, the oldest part of the building, where we saw it set up for Obama's speech. The red carpet was laid out and hoovered - so who could resist a quick walk where the President would stand the next day !

A cup of tea on the balcony overlooking the Thames and we were off again. This time we found ourselves watching Question Time in the Lords'. The Chamber of the House of Lords is absolutely magnificent and to see the Throne and Woolsack were history lessons coming alive. All too soon Richard collected us and we were off again to have tea in the Lords Dining Room - cream cakes containing at least a thousand calories each!

After bidding Richard goodbye we sat up in the Visitors' Gallery of the House of Commons watching the debate going on there and playing 'Spot the MP'.

Train back to Worcester feeling like Cinderella. A wonderful day out made extra special watching TV next day and seeing President Obama make his speech. Thank you Richard for a wonderful tour of your place of work.



Trip to Ukmerge, Lithuania 25th to 29th May 2011

4.30am is early by anyone's standards, but not too early for us intrepid explorers, Terry, Nevill, Vivien and I, to set off for Ukmergė to celebrate this year's town festival and also to get the Twinning Charter signed by Algirdas Kopustas, the Mayor of Ukmergė. Dave, my husband, volunteered to take us to Birmingham Airport and all went smoothly thanks to Terry's excellent planning and electronic checking in before we left. There was much debate about whether our cases would fit in the cage which Ryanair insists on using to check the size of cabin luggage, but with a little bit of jiggling about with whisky bottles, not for our consumption I hasten to add, but to offer to delegates from the other countries who would be at the festival, we boarded the flight to Kaunas.

This was Vivien and my first visit to Lithuania and a prompt arrival at Kaunas and easy transfer to the Metropolis Hotel made us feel very positive about our trip. We checked in quickly and we were ready to eat lunch and explore Kaunas. On Nevill's request that evening we made our way to Žalias Ratas, a favourite local restaurant where we shared the venue with Swedish, Swiss and Italian students who were celebrating the end of their university studies. The lecturers who were hosting the evening needed to be persuaded to let us stay, but it was well worth the effort and we enjoyed the food and drink.

The next day we were met by Rasa, who was to be our escort to Ukmergė. The journey gave us the opportunity to see some of the countryside, much of which is wooded and explains why wooden products are one of the main exports of Lithuania. On arrival at Big Stone Hotel which was to be our home for the next 3 days we checked in and went straight to meet Daiva, the Headteacher of a local school. Daiva was also to be our interpreter, friend and main source of help when we were failing to make our intentions understood by the Ukmergė town officials.

Several hours were spent at her school where we had the opportunity to see pupils in lessons and performing, and also to meet and ask questions of the members of staff at the school. We were especially impressed when they produced a birthday cake, sparkling wine and a group of older girls to sing Happy Birthday to Vivien whose birthday it was. I am sure it was an occasion Vivien will always remember.

We met Daiva again in the evening when we joined the Vice Mayor for dinner and had the opportunity to explain to him what twinning means to us and what we expect from this new relationship.

The next morning we all went to the Mayor's office for the official signing of 2 copies of the Twinning Charter, one for the Mayor of Ukmerge ,Algirdas Kopustas, to keep and one to bring back to Worcester for framing and display at the Guildhall. From there we were very privileged to be taken to one of the two sixth form colleges in Ukmergė for their "Last Bell" Ceremony. This event involved students who are leaving school to go to work or to University and it is a final assembly with various customs and traditions which we were able to be part of. It was a wonderful experience for me to be able to address these students and to wish them good luck for the future and I felt very honoured to be invited to do this.



Children in national costume at Festival opening ceremony



Mayor Algirdas Kopustas, Nevill Swanson, Vice-Mayor Regimantas Baravykas

At lunch, back in the centre of town, we met the delegates from the other countries who were joining the festival and this is where negotiations on projects began for many of them. Our twinning is conducted on different terms from many of the other twins, for whom it is big business and leads to joint projects.

In the evening, after attending a charity concert, we had the chance to get to know those other delegates better when we all joined together for presentations on the customs and culture of our different countries. Terry gave an excellent powerpoint presentation on the best of Great Britain such as "fish and chips" and "morris dancing" and all delegates think we spend our time eating sandwiches and drinking whisky, both of which went down very well with our new friends.

The presentations were followed by much eating, drinking and dancing and it was certainly an opportunity for friends to be made and business to be discussed. Rather a late night for us all.

On Saturday which was the actual day of the festival we woke to rain and we felt for the stall holders who were trying to set up their stalls and keep their goods dry. I joined the other delegates to hear the Mayor and Vice-Mayor talk about Ukmergė and it was a chance for each delegate to say what they could do to further the partnership between us. Worcester offers friendship and exchanges between young



Worcester group at opening ceremony the sign says 'Great Britain'

people and groups sharing common interests but I couldn't help feeling that they were looking for a little more than that.

The opening ceremony followed and it was an opportunity to address the people of Ukmergė and to make ourselves and our good intentions known. The firing of the town cannon signalled



Traditional Lithuanian singers and dancers

the beginning of the festival and after another wonderful lunch when we exchanged presents with the other countries, we had the chance to walk around the stalls and see and buy some of the local produce. We felt we had really been accepted as friends by Daiva, when she invited us into her home for tea and cake in the afternoon, something which is quite unusual for Lithuanian people. We had the chance to hear two famous singers, one of whom originates from Ukmergė, at an open air concert

in the evening, before we were treated to another dinner with further opportunity to speak with other delegates and with the Mayor and Councillors. The evening concluded for us all with a firework display but for many young people it continued into the night with dancing and music.

Morning came far too early and with it we had to say our goodbyes to our friends in Ukmergė. The journey home was once again a smooth one thanks to Terry's fine organisation and we arrived home full of anticipation for the success of the relationship with this our newest twin.

Written by Jo Hodges

*****8

'The Ripper'

Superintendent Uncovered

An enlightening piece of history by Nevill Swanson



Readers may have seen in Worcester's very own electronic magazine (www.WorcesterOnLineNewsMag.Co.UK) something about my family's involvement in the "Jack-the-Ripper" murders in Victorian times. I have now been prevailed upon to give some details here of this ever fascinating case.

My Great Grandfather Donald Sutherland Swanson was born on 5th August 1848 near Thurso in the extreme North of Scotland. He was the 8th and last child of John & Mary Swanson. John was described at the time as a "distillery man" and in a later census as a "brewer" (I do my best to maintain the familial interest in the products of both breweries and distilleries!).

Donald was apparently a brilliant scholar, especially of Latin and Greek. He began his career as a dominie (teacher) in Thurso. However he was either bored or ambitious, or both, and before the age of 20 left for London. He started work as a clerk in the City but on 27th April 1868 joined the Metropolitan Police. He already had family connections with both The Met and the police in Thurso.

He progressed rapidly and by November 1887 he was a Chief Inspector in the CID and in 1896 became Superintendent i.e. Scotland Yard's top detective. Before that, in 1888, the Commissioner, Sir Charles Warren, had approved Donald's appointment as the officer in overall charge of investigating the "Whitechapel Murders", subsequently and seemingly for ever dubbed the "Jack-the-Ripper" murders.

Part of his duties was to be the "eyes and ears" of the Commissioner. Freed from all other duties, it was decreed that Donald was to see "every paper, every document, every report, every telegram", to be consulted on every subject and to be given complete responsibility. So no one, not even his superiors, knew more about the case than he did and, to his own satisfaction at the very least, he solved the case and positively identified Jack the Ripper.

This information came into the public domain in 1987. Donald's last surviving daughter had died. My father was executor to her will and amongst her effects he found a copy of the reminiscences of Sir Robert Anderson, Donald's old boss as Assistant Commissioner at Scotland Yard and a close personal friend. In Anderson's book, my Great Grandfather had made some pencilled notes, which identified the murderer as a Polish Jew called Aaron Kosminski.

I have loaned this book and others of my great grandfather's papers to the so-called "Black Museum" at New Scotland Yard. I think my ancestor would not have been impressed with the way that a Jack the Ripper "industry" has grown up, abounding in sensational conspiracy theories.

He never regarded the Ripper case as his most important. He set greater store by a number of his other successes. For example, preventing Fenian terrorist attacks in London in the 1870s and 1880s; recovering Lady Dysart's jewels, of huge value even in those days; recovering a stolen Gainsborough painting; preventing the Jamieson Raid in South Africa from starting a war; and arresting the notorious "Railway Murderer" Percy Lefroy Mapleton in 1881 to name but a few.



Kleve - Contact: Les Tunley

This year we are hosting a coach party from our twin town of Kleve in Germany.

They will arrive on Monday 22nd August and will leave on Sunday 28th August.

Our social evening, which we hope you will be able to join us, and our guests from Kleve, will take place at St Georges Catholic Church Hall on Friday the 26th August

Details nearer the time.

Next year is the 25th Anniversary with Kleve, the dates of our visit will be around the 12th May 2012 (this is the date booked for the social evening)

Exact dates nearer the time. We hope you can join us for this special occasion.



Rheinische Post 02.04.2011

Last Thursday a group of 11 female pupils + 2 teachers came to Kleve and had a reception at the Rathaus, welcomed by our deputy mayor. I was invited too ,and during the meeting I had a chance to explain about our twinning.

Pictures were taken and published in our local papers.

Article sent to us by:-Karl-Heinz Koster



Kleve Austauschschüler aus Worcester besuchen das Klever Rathaus

Austauschschüler aus der Partnerstadt Worcester besuchten das Rathaus der Stadt Kleve. Der stellvertretende Bürgermeister Joachim Schmidt begrüßte die Jugendlichen und ihre Lehrer. Die englischen Schüler nehmen an einem Austauschprogramm gemeinsam mit dem Konrad Adenauer Gymnasium Kellen teil. Die beiden Städte Kleve und Worcester sind schon seit 1987 Partnerstädte.
RP-FOTO: GOTTFRIED EVERS

I am pleased to announce that 2011 is the 5th anniversary of the Friendship Pact between Worcester and Vernon.

In order to mark this occasion, a small group of members will be travelling to Vernon in October to take part in the official celebrations.

French tour success for Oakville Singers

A popular Worcestershire choir has just returned from a week-long tour of France.

During their tour the Oakville Singers sang in Notre Dame Cathedral and La Madeleine in Paris as well as Chartres Cathedral. Part of the programme, which included Faure's 'Requiem', at La Madeleine was sung with Dionysius-Chor, a choir who had specially travelled to Paris from Germany where they have strong links with Kleve, Worcester's twin town .

There was also a special visit to Le Vesinet, Worcester's twin town in France where the choir sung to very appreciative audiences. To finish a varied concert programme they were joined by 'O Musica', a local choir to sing 'Cantique de Jean Racine' by Fauré.

"Oakville Singers were also very pleased to meet and work with the choirs from France and Germany and to build links with our twin towns and we hope that this will lead to further performances together whether in their home towns, or in Worcester" said Brian Boswell, the Tour Manager.

The 42 members of the choir live in Worcestershire including Droitwich and Redditch.



My first visit to le Vésinet by Rosemary Campbell

My first visit to le Vésinet was during les Fetes de la Marguerite in June, which coincided with a special celebration, marking their 5th anniversary of twinning with Villanueva de la Cañada in Spain. Vivien and Patrick Greenow and Nicky and Bryan Neville-Lee also represented Worcester. There were 22 guests from Villanueva de la Cañada and 11 from Unterhaching, Le Vésinet's twin in Bavaria, together with 4 visitors from Unterhaching's twin town, Zywiec in Poland. It was a very colourful, lively and exciting weekend, despite the changeable weather!

The official dinner took place on Friday evening, preceded by a champagne reception and entertainment by the the groupe Coro-Rociero-Almancer from Spain. I received a very warm welcome from our French hosts and was impressed by the attention to detail to ensure that the atmosphere in the parish hall of the Eglise Sainte-Pauline paid homage to the 5th anniversary of the Spanish friendship. Speeches were made and presents exchanged.

On Saturday morning under increasingly threatening grey skies, there was another official celebration at the Lac des Ibis. We sat in gazebos, listening to the cheerful music of the Harmonie municipale du Vésinet ringing out above the sound of the swirling wind. The Coro-Rociero Almancer performed again and suddenly the heavens opened! The Mayor announced that due to the weather, the traditional firework display would not take place that evening. There were more speeches and again presents were exchanged. In the afternoon we were treated to a trip on the Seine "en bateau mouche", which was a wonderful way to see many of the famous landmarks in Paris within a short space of time. The Spaniards, whose energy knew no bounds, sang enthusiastically throughout the afternoon in order to deter the rain! My hosts, Annie and Xavier, live in nearby Croissy-sur-Seine and in the evening I was lucky enough to be able to join in the festivities in this village as well!

On Sunday, we were all invited to Lac des Ibis once more to continue the Fete de la Marguerite celebrations. Our hosts prepared wonderful picnics for us and this time there were also dancers from the Consertavoire de Villanueva de la Cañada! It was nice to watch the local families enjoying themselves in this wonderful lakeside setting.

On Monday we set off from the town hall at 7 am on a coach trip to the Loire, for a visit to the chateaux at Blois and Chambord. Our hosts kindly arranged a guided tour of Blois in English for us and a superb lunch in a hotel overlooking the chateau at Chambord, where we were also given free time to visit this impressive French Renaissance style palace with it's unusual double helix staircase.

Ann-Marie Laurent and her team worked so hard to ensure that everyone enjoyed their time in le Vésinet and the organisation was impeccable. The hospitality provided by our host families was also very much appreciated! Bravo à tous!



Dates for your diary

Cheese and Wine Evening

Please come and join the fun at Bryan and Nicky Neville- Lees, on Saturday 30th July at 7pm.

Cost is £10 00 per person.

The place to be is

Please bring along a garden chair, weather permitting, and if you can contribute a raffle prize, it would be very much appreciated.

Alternative arrangements if raining, we will have the use of the United Reformed Church Hall. Which is just across the road.

Please send cheques made out to City of Worcester Twinning to Rosemary Tunley,

Please reply by 26th July.