

Worcester Twinning Association

CONNECTIONS

AUTUMN 2014



Editor Contact Derek Furby



One of the many highlights of our visit to Kleve this year was a visit to the Landtag at Dusseldorf. Germany is split-up into different regions, and the Landtag covers the North Rhine Area. We were warmly greeted and guided around by **Dr. Günther Bergmann** (standing on the right of the photo above) who is the MP for the Kleve area. His very detailed explanation on how the German parliamentary system operates, and how it differs from the English parliament, was very interesting for both us and our hosts. Although the Landtag was built in 1985, it has a very modern and open appearance. We were elevated to the main parliamentary chamber by means of a massive central column lift, which could carry all of the people shown in the photograph above.

Kleve Visit 2014

I find it difficult to believe that we are back home – the week's visit was over so quickly. Les excelled himself by organizing a coach fitted with a lift for my buggy which worked miracles as I was able to ride in to the coach sitting on my buggy. As two years ago our fellow voyagers and Gordon, our driver, were so helpful. My thanks to everyone.

It was lovely to see our German Twinners again. Many interesting visits were organized but the highlight for me was the visit to Parliament (Landtag) where the member for the area including Kleve explained the German parliamentary election system. He apologized for his command of English. I would like to be able to talk about a visit to our Parliament so fluently in German!

We originally met our host family the year before the Twinning Protocol was signed as I camped with 8th. Worcester Cub Pack & Kleve Cubs as their interpreter. This was a happy occasion & was repeated for several years, turn & turn about, in Worcester or Kleve.

The camp took place at Hoch Eltern, quite a way from Kleve so the trip with Petra Scheike to Hoch Eltern recalled so many happy memories. Probably a highlight was the whole group cycling to Kleve for a Civic Reception, quite a long ride for all except the smallest Cubs who travelled by minibus. On the return journey someone managed to fall off her bike at the camp entrance to the amusement of everyone except the inept cyclist who sported very large bruises on her sit upon.

The trip on the Rhine was interesting & relaxing. Even more interesting was the visit to Het Loo Palace in Holland. Again I was able to ride my buggy & visit all but one section thanks to the installation of lifts & ramps. Here it was possible to see the wealth owned by the Dutch Royal family & to be further informed about our ex-Dutch King & Queen

The social afternoon/evening in the Donsbrüggen Mill was a very happy event. We heard speeches of welcome from the Mayor of Kleve & Jo's reply in German. Everyone enjoyed the various pizzas & of course, a friendly drink.

The reason for twinning for me is the firm belief that, when people meet face to face through its auspices, one realizes that we have the same hopes & wishes & generally we understand one another even though our language ability is not always A1. I am therefore so glad that, having arrived in this country as a German speaking child, my father insisted we were not to forget the language while learning that of our new home.

I asked Susan what she enjoyed the most. The palace was one of her highlights but she also enjoyed the breakfast party with our host family who invited Ernst & Erika, the family which had hosted Madge Cooper. (Sadly, Madge was not with us this time.) The important thing is that, although Susan does not speak German & Ernst & Erika do not speak English, they all were able to get on wonderfully well. It is about "wanting to" & making the effort & why Twinning succeeds. As a result of the meeting I was able to send Madge messages from her former hosts.

A little aside. On the free Monday we went to Kleve centre by bus. All buses had fold out ramps & designated places for wheelchairs & invalid transport. Without asking, the driver was immediately out of his seat & placing the ramp in position. Here, I have not yet dared to travel anywhere by bus.

I hope that, in two years time, we still will be able to travel to Kleve & once again enjoy the stay with our German friends

Lena Ryan

Worcester to Kleve on a bike

Using quieter roads in England and cycle-ways in the Netherlands and Germany its 320 road miles (500kms) to Worcester's twin town of Kleve.

In memory of his mother Elsie, who died a year ago aged 95, Lyndon Bracewell from Spetchley decided to cycle over to join the recent Worcester twinning visit to Kleve. It was also an opportunity to raise funds for St Richard's Hospice where his partner Caryl is a volunteer. The original plan was for Caryl to join him in the challenge, but unfortunately back problems meant she couldn't walk, let alone cycle.



The ride was self-financed and self-supporting and took 4.5 days. The first day to just south of Milton Keynes was the hardest. It involved a cycle of 83 miles and a total ascent equivalent to climbing Snowdon. It was then 67 miles to the second overnight at Thaxted just north of Stansted Airport. An easier, but wetter, day of over 50 miles ended at Harwich where the overnight ferry was taken to The Hook of Holland. With constant rain for most of the day the route then followed the Rhine through Rotterdam and Dordrecht to a welcome overnight at Rossum. On a foggy morning the last 40 plus miles



were covered with Lyndon passing through Nijmegen and by Kleves' commemorative twinning stones, red phone box and post box before crossing "Worcester Bruche" to arrive at Georg and Elke Hiob's house in plenty of time to meet up with the main party as they arrived by coach.

The following morning Lyndon was officially welcomed to Kleve by Burgermeister Theo Brauer and representatives from the Worcester-Kleve Stadpartnerschaft. He also presented Peter Gote from Kleve's Hospiz with an artwork depicting snowdrops that had been created by a patient at St Richard's Hospice. Snowdrops are symbolic of 'Hope' in both English and German traditions and are the emblem used by St Richard's.



Sponsorship has gone well with over £2,500 being raised by the time the 'Twinners' returned to Worcester. Lyndon & Caryl are hopeful of reaching their £3,000 target and would like to thank Worcester Twinning Association members for their generous contributions. Special thanks go to Les and Rose Tunley and Karl-Heinz and Gisela Koster for their kind help and support in making the charity ride possible. Also, to the Hiob family for being such perfect hosts.

Visit to the Oktoberfest

Dave and I were hosted by Wilhelm and Helga Knechten on our recent twinning visit to Kleve in October and whilst there, we were lucky enough to be their guests at the Oktoberfest celebrations at one of the local hostelrys. I must say that as we sat in the party room at long tables enjoying our beer and lager with about 120 other people, it did remind me of the bierkellers of my youth when as many people as possible crammed into an underground room and waitresses walked between the tables carrying handfuls of beer steins.

Unlike in the bierkellers of my youth, most people there were our age or older and consequently not many, if any, of them spoke English, as it was not customary to learn it at school, as it is nowadays, when they were young. Also the German that was spoken was what Wilhelm described as low German, meaning it was a Bavarian dialect. This however did not deter from the enjoyment of the evening because it didn't seem to matter that we did not speak the same language because the understanding and enjoyment of the evening did not rely on a common language.

We were given a warm welcome by the Chairman of the Male Voice Choir Materborn, with which Wilhelm sings, at the beginning of the evening. Jokes were told and stories shared and we laughed along with the others because they didn't rely on the words to make them funny. Some people, including Wilhelm, stood up and sang for us, some serious music and some comic. As this was Wilhelm's choir hosting the evening, we were treated to some very good singing with Wilhelm being the best. An accordionist came into the throng and we all joined arms and swayed backwards and forwards as we sang.

Then it was time to eat and a spread was laid out which was not for the faint-hearted. When I was young my mother sometimes cooked a hock of ham for the family. Well this feast included a hock of ham each!! Together with mashed potatoes, other meats and a sort of medley of vegetables in a mashed potato base we ate all we could manage.

At the end of the evening many people said how pleased they were that we had joined them for what was a very traditional evening. Hands were shook and warm wishes exchanged with thanks to hosts for a very enjoyable evening.

Jo Hodges

Christmas Fayre Organizer: Jane Wood

Christmas Fayre help needed

If you are able to help on the Christmas Fayre Stall this year, Jane would be pleased to hear from you. Help is needed especially during the times between 3-7pm Thursday and Friday, and between 3-5pm Saturday. Her contact details are above.

The dates for the Fayre are from Thursday 27th November to Sunday 30th November 2014. The stall this year will be located in the Corn Market in front of Worcester Furniture Center.

Gunters house fire

Earlier this year a fire totally consumed the house of Gunter, a member of the Kleve twinning team. Luckily there was no-one else in the house at the time and Gunter managed to escape without harm.

What started the fire was unknown, but it was estimated that it may have caused about €400.000 in damage, and the house will probably have to be demolished.

Gunter has joined us many times at the Christmas Fayre, driving the van from Kleve loaded with Stollen, Chocolates and Gluvine.



Le Vésinet Contact Vivien Greenow

Faithful City Morris Men were delighted to receive an invitation to go to Le Vésinet to celebrate 20 years of the Twinning as many of us had happy memories of going there 10 years ago. However due to a number of us not being able to get time off work we struggled to get sufficient men to go. In the end we had "just enough" which would allow us to put on a show but had little cover for any last minute withdrawals or injuries. So we accepted the invitation. 3 of us decided to travel independently and make a more extended holiday of the trip.

Arriving bleary-eyed at Croft Road we were ready for the long coach trip which passed without anything of note except to note that the Aire de la Baie de Somme was much more civilized than our UK service stations.

Our first dance spot was outside the Théâtre du Vésinet. We nearly caused a car accident when a Le Vésinet resident (who was British) drove past and was astonished to see Morris Dancing in France. Then we enjoyed the official dinner. However that proved a bit of a challenge when we danced after the meal with full stomachs (and a fair bit of wine)!

At the ceremonies by the Lac des Ibis we had to get our "kit on" very quickly and did a short spot and following that we went to Malmaison which was very crowded.

At the Fête de la Marguerite we had a stage to dance on which was very helpful. We finished with our dance "Fanny Frail" which involves the audience and it was the usual mix of organised chaos and great fun. We must thank the hospitality of the Twinning associations in providing lunch for us.

The full day excursion on Monday was enjoyed by all with a splendid lunch.

And then it was the long trip home again.

Faithful City Morris Men and their ladies would like to thank the Twinning Associations on both sides of La Manche for the organisation, hospitality and friendship. Roll on the next 10 years.

Vernon Contact Rosemary Campbell

Comité de Jumelage Vernon

Worcester has been in the limelight this year on several occasions.

1 In 2013, Choeur d'Annebault had been asked to host the Worcester Male Voice Choir that wished to spend a few days here. It took over a year to organise the trip. The WMVC had been invited for Fête de la Musique, which takes place every year on 21st June. It is an opportunity for all musicians to share their love and style of music with the public. They play in the streets, in churches, etc...It is a well-established popular event. So 2 coaches arrived on the previous Thursday, (one was delayed by 2 hours having missed the Shuttle it was booked on, but everyone arrived safely): nearly 100 people with about 50 choristers plus spouses, friends, etc...Most had chosen to stay in a hotel but some were hosted by families.





Their timetable was very busy indeed. On the Friday they sang in the Eglise St Nicolas, in Vernonnet on the other side of the river: they wanted to honour the English soldiers who had fought in 1944 and are buried in the cemetery behind the church. Then they sang in nearby Ecole Pierre Bonnard, a primary school that has links with the Stanley Road School. The children and teachers joined in and young Isabella (8) was quickly adopted by the French kids. Up the hill the WMVC was expected at an establishment for young handicapped people. They were welcomed with enthusiasm by all and there were very moving moments between the adults and the young people. The general director, who came especially for the event, and the local staff were delighted, and refreshments were offered. Meanwhile the non-singers visited the Château de Bizy. Later, the 2 groups met at Fontaine de Tilly, for an official ceremony at the Malvern stone monument in memory of the soldiers of the Worcestershire regiment who contributed to the liberation of Vernon in August 1944. The local Veterans with their standard bearers were present, Alexandre Huau-Armani, the Deputy Mayor in charge of Culture, made a speech in French and English, wreaths were laid, the WMVC sang and the national anthems were played. It was a very fine ceremony also attended by a number of French people wishing to show their respect and gratitude. The day ended on a lighter note as The French choir had invited their guests to share a meal. It was a time for French and English people to break the ice and get to know one another, overcoming the language barrier.

Saturday 21st June was a day to rehearse, relax, visit the local market in the town centre and taste the local food and drinks in a variety of restaurants, "brasseries", etc.... At 5 o'clock, the WMVC opened the day's festivities by giving a short concert in the Jardin des Arts, next to the Tour des Archives (the old dungeon). In the evening both choirs sang in the Collégiale Notre Dame, one of the venues of Fête de la Musique, in front of a large appreciative audience.

Sunday was the day for the joint concert of the WMVC and the Choeur d'Annebault. Of course in the morning our English friends had not failed to visit Claude Monet's House and Gardens in Giverny, a must here of course. The concert took place in the afternoon and the Collégiale was packed. The audience was so enthusiastic that they gave both choirs, directed by Nic Wright and Catherine Tormen, a standing ovation at the end of the concert. What better way to show their appreciation and reward the choristers? Refreshments were served in the Salle des Mariages on the 1st floor of the town hall, just across the street from the church. Then both groups went to Hotel Kyriad where the WMVC had organised an end-of-tour party: we were entertained by the English party that

put on a show and there was a lot of laughter, singing, delicious food and drinks. It was a fitting end to a very successful visit. The language barrier was no longer a problem! On the Monday morning the 2 coaches left Vernon, stopping in Thiepval (Battle of the Somme Memorial) before heading for the Shuttle and Worcester.

It was a really exciting few days, with a lot happening, and friendly exchanges between the 2 groups. Now the Choeur d'Annebault will start planning the return visit in Worcester, but not before 2016 as both schedules for 2015 are already pretty full!

Something to look forward to!

2 The Vernon Twinning Association asked Jean Claude Viel, a former English teacher and keen historian (he has taken groups from Worcester on visits of Vernon) to give a talk on the Vernon family in both France and England. This will be on 19th November. Of course places like Worcester and Hanbury Hall will feature prominently.

Another link between our two towns.

3 In early December, as usual for a few years now, English goods will be sold at the Vernon Christmas Fayre. They are very popular and people come to buy Christmas puddings or crackers among other items that have been brought back from England, especially for the occasion (nothing is bought in France).

4 Last but not least, the Vernon Council with the new Mayor, Sébastien Lecornu, have agreed to name a street "rue de Worcester". It will show that the people here do not forget the part played by the Worcestershires in 1944 and be a testimony to the continuing friendship made official by the Friendship Pact signed in 2006. The street will be in a new part of the town now being built where the old barracks used to be.

This is very good news indeed!

On a more personal note, my husband Barry and I visited Poland in the summer. After touring part of this large country, we stayed for a few days in Poznan with Kasia Flis. We had met her in Worcester in 2012 at the time of the 25th Anniversary celebrations. She and her family made us very welcome and showed us the town. We could experience Polish life at first hand and enjoyed it tremendously. We will now reciprocate and hope she can come to Vernon next year. Many thanks to the Worcester Twinning Association that made this possible!

After all this is what twinning is about.

Now we will start planning events for next year. But before that we wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year.

Bénedicte Reynolds

Ukmerge Contact Terry Coles

You may be interested to know that after his recent operation, Terry is making a slow but steady recovery. Unfortunately he will not be able to join us at the Christmas Fayre this year, so please go along and make the two girls from Ukmerge very welcome.

An Unusual Detective Story

Nevill Swanson, former chairman of the Worcester Twinning Association had recommended a German detective story to Karl-Heinz which was called:-

Inspector Swanson and the Hope diamond - – written by Robert C. Marley.

The story is pure fiction, but the Character of Chief Inspector Swanson refers to a real person of this name. The real inspector Swanson, who was really involved in the Jack the ripper case, was Nevill's great grandfather. Nevill had told me about his ancestor, and

the Jack the Ripper case some time ago. Of course I bought the book and read it straight away, a good story.

Then an idea came to my mind and I thought the author might be interested to know about the living great grandson of his main character. So I got in touch with the editor of the book and told her about Nevill. She forwarded my information to Mr. Marley who was in Scotland on holiday at this time. R. Marley was very pleased and got in touch with me and asked if there would be a chance of meeting Nevill. Thanks to email and modern technique, a meeting could be arranged and took place.

Mr. Marley and Nevill were both pleased for this opportunity.



Mr. Marley, who is a goldsmith, also runs a small private Criminal Museum

Article written by Karl-Heinz

A Kindle version of this book is available at Amazon

The Worcester Black Pear

The Worcester Pear is at present ready to pick, I know because I have a tree in my garden, but it is surprising how few people in Worcester have ever tried them, or know anything about them

The history of the Black Pear is a long and interesting one. It is made all the more intriguing by the fact that our current knowledge on the origins of the Black Pear, and how it became to be incorporated onto the City's crest is still incomplete. The Pear has a long association with Worcestershire, which historically was described as 'the county of pears'.

The County of Worcestershire was created as early as 918AD by the Saxon Kings but the county could not legally have a coat of arms because it was not a 'body corporate'. Not until 1888 when the County Council of Worcestershire was first set up, could an official Coat of Arms be applied for. The application was eventually made in 1936 and granted by the Council of Arms in 1947. This county badge featured a pear tree on a shield laden with black pears with a castellated tower above it.

The new **Worcestershire flag**, was registered with the "Flag Institute" on 8 April 2013 as the winning entry of a BBC Hereford & Worcester competition. It was first flown in a ceremony at Worcester Cathedral on the same day

Designed by Elaine Truby, the flag features the county's famed black pear – a symbol reported to have been used by Worcestershire units at the Battle of Agincourt.



It is known that the Worcester Black Pear is the oldest cultivar of a type of culinary pear known as 'Warden' pears which have been grown since Roman times (Arbury, J 1997). The earliest reference in Britain to this variety is from Warden Abbey, Bedfordshire as early as 1388, where it was raised by the Cistercian monks (Roach, 1985). They are culinary pears which are hard and gritty and ripen slowly, but are long keeping and formed an important source of Vitamin C in the winter diet before the introduction of turnips and other root-crops. The fruit is larger than average, very hard when first picked (Oct/Nov) becoming softer with time (Jan/Feb) and excellent cooked in wine.

The exact date when pears were first emblazoned on the Arms of the City of Worcester is not known, nor is there a record of any such grant from the Herald's office. The earliest reference to pears associated with a crest is in relation to the Worcestershire bowman depicting a pear-tree laden with fruit on their banners at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. Black pears were supposed to have been transported with the troops as part of their food provisions because of their long lasting properties and considering how hard they are they could also have proved a useful extra weapon!

A story goes that when Queen Elizabeth I visited the City of Worcester in August 1575, the City Authorities had a fruit-laden Black Pear tree, taken from the gardens at White Ladies, and transplanted to the Foregate (Forest Gate), the gate by which Her Majesty was to enter the City.

The Queen is said to have noticed the tree with wonder, and admiration at the good management that allowed the fruit to remain unplucked and directed that three pears be added to the Arms of the City as a result of the achievement (Drayton, M 1563-1631). The pears would have been as hard as iron in August so this probably explains why they had not been scrumped!

I hope this has raised your interest in the Worcester Black Pear and that you will try our local delicacy.

Derek

Wife texts husband at work on cold winters morning

``Windows frozen, won't open``

Husband texts back, ``Gently pour some lukewarm water over it``

Wife texts back 5 minutes later, ``Computer really useless now``