

Worcester Twinning Association

CONNECTIONS

Summer 2016



Editor Contact Derek Furby



Our visit to the Gasometer at Oberhausen

Kleve Contact: Les Tunley

Once again we have been able to visit our German friends in Kleve & spend five happy days with them.

I will start with the thanks that are due to so many for making this an enjoyable trip again. For the Ryans, 30 years have passed since our first time & we hope for many more trips.

www.worcester-international-link.org.uk

We must thank Les Tunley & Rosemary at this end & Karl-Heinz at the Kleve end for making all our arrangements & Gordon, our driver, for getting us there & back safely & from me, especially, for helping with my extra wheels. Also, a very big thank you to our "Refreshment Ladies", Hazel & Rosemary. I must also thank all the "Twinners" who helped me in & out of the coach & everyone who helped me on the way.

As ever, we were able to stay with German Twinners & three Ryans were able to enjoy food like my mother cooked. A very big "Thank You" to our Host Family once again.

One amazing trip was to the area of Straelen where flowers & vegetables are grown by the million in enormous areas under glass & even in some open, flat fields. Everything is mechanised/automated from filling pots, planting, fertilising & watering, harvesting & packing ready for auction. Glass houses ranging in size from one to four hectares were the "factories" for production on a massive scale. The actual auction house seemed to stretch for kilometres – truly spectacular. We were told how the plants are grown, saw tomato houses hundreds of metres long, told of the way growers recycle water using machinery which "knows" how much water each greenhouse or outside bed needs per day & when required.

I had never realised that flowers could be grown so intensively & that plants in pots or beds could be grown by the thousand to exactly the same size. Large fields were given over to the vegetable Kohlrabi (which was frequently mentioned) & looks a bit like a green hand grenade on little stilts as it grows above the soil. It was a much-loved vegetable when I was a child in Austria & so I felt at home.



I understand the Gasometer exhibition, (to which, unfortunately, we couldn't go) was "out of this world" & extremely interesting. Maybe there will be a "next time".

I hope I have given just a little account of our doings & say that if anyone is thinking about going on a future trip but may worry about lack of German or about the different food.

Please give it a try. Susan doesn't speak German but still manages to make herself understood & go shopping. The host families do a great job in making one welcome & food is never, in our experience, a problem. Why not try Quargel or German Spargel?

I honestly think that we need more Twinning to make the world a better place.

I am sure you will not regret making the trip.

Lena Ryan

My Visit to Kleve, 5th to 11th June 2016.

It was a sunny and dry morning when we left Croft Road to start our journey to Kleve at 6.30am, driven by our extremely competent Astons driver, Gordon Kelly. We arrived in Kleve at about 7.00pm to be warmly greeted by our host families.

I was 'booked in' to stay with old friends Franz Joseph (Franjo) and Mary Bourceau. Back in Worcester, I had decided to take a bicycle with me as my host is a keen cyclist and I knew I would be staying in an area with excellent cycling possibilities. We completed four rides during my stay, totalling 120 miles, cycling through a mainly flat terrain and

enjoying perfect cycling weather, whilst visiting many small towns and villages along the way. Holland is especially cycling friendly; apparently, they don't have school buses, the kids/students ride to school on bicycles!

I joined Friday's excursion, initially, to the Royal Air Force Museum at Laarbruch Weeze, which proved to be a very interesting visit helped by an English speaking guide. We continued our very pleasant journey arriving at Gennepe in Holland for a lunchtime break, which Franjo and I had visited the previous day on our bikes! We then visited Nijmegen on the way home, before being taken directly to the Windmill at Donsbrüggen where our social evening would take place, being greeted by our friends and a 'welcome' drink. We all had a great time together, whilst eating a bountiful supply of home made pizzas and drinking German beer!

Our very successful visit had been organised by the Kleve Twinning Association led by Karl-Heinz Köster, and with a special mention of Petra and Georg Scheike, and of course, members of our own twinning association, led by Les and Rosemary Tunley, to whom we were all very grateful.

All too soon it was time to say goodbye to our host families, and to start our journey home, stopping off at 'The Belgian Chocolate Factory' on the way to Calais.

The rest of our smooth journey home was uneventful, fortunately!

George Milton



George at the highest point above sea level in Kleve (300m)



Franjo & Mary Bourceau with George

Worcester Ma.

There isn't usually much going on between our 2 cities but already this year we have been visited by Peter and JoAn and a few of us met up with them at the Royal Oak in Broadwas for a very pleasant evening meal.

In August we will be visited by Hanna who will be stopping in Worcester for 3 days. Also later in August is the possibility that David and Barbara will also stay a few days to see the sites in our city.

I will email more details as I know them

Derek

Le Chœur d'Annebault in Worcester

In June 2014 the Worcester Male Voice Choir had been invited in Vernon by Le Chœur d'Annebault. In April this year it was the French choir's turn to cross the Channel. 44 choristers, 9 musicians from the Conservatoire (among whom 5 youngsters) and a few "supporters" came to meet their hosts, discover the town and of course sing and play the recorder, the flute, the guitar, the violin among other instruments. The 1st of the 2 concerts was held on the Saturday lunchtime in the Great Malvern Priory which was full. What a prestigious and appropriate venue for music from the Renaissance. The second concert took place in St Martin's church in Worcester on the Sunday afternoon and was shared by the 2 choirs, the musicians and a young talented pianist. Roger Knight, the Mayor of Worcester, and Mrs Knight were present and once again all the seats were taken. The audience at both concerts was very enthusiastic and there was much applause. On the Saturday afternoon the Mayor had received the choir's committee and members of the Worcester Twinning Association in his Parlour and shown them the visitors round



the Guildhall. Of course no such a visit can go without the participants sharing a meal: each choir in turn invited their guests or hosts and it was an opportunity for everyone to get to know one another better and sing more informally. The French choir had a surprise in store: they broke into "Land of Hope and Glory" in honour of Elgar, Worcester and their British friends and everyone joined in. The last song on the Sunday night to say good bye was "Auld Lang Syne", very appropriate, as the WMVC will be back in Vernon in 2 years' time. It was indeed a very successful visit which brought people closer and a good way to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Friendship Pact between the 2 towns. And now all the participants are looking forward to June 2018.

Bénédict Reynolds

Foire aux Cerises 2016

A group of 8 people, led by Rosemary Campbell, the liaison officer, took part in the 33rd Foire aux Cerises from 13th to 16th May. This yearly event always takes place during the long weekend of the Pentecost. This year it was very early in the season. The previous weekend, a 4-day bank holiday weekend, had been scorching hot but it was not exactly the same for the Cherry Fair. It was in turn cool or sunny and it did not really seem to prevent people from milling around and visiting the Fair.

The stall was once again in a prime position on Place De Gaulle, the main square, and passers-by just could not miss it. They were attracted by the wicker baskets filled with goods such as homemade marmalade and chutney,



the colourful labels of the different beer bottles, the artistic fluffy animals painted on the dainty Worcester porcelain mugs, to mention just a few of the articles displayed. There were artistic and eye-catching bunting advertising the stall together with the Worcester coat of arms and British and English flags. The visitors could find a detailed description in French and in English of the different beers on sale so that they could choose the one(s) that would suit their taste, or invite them to discover new ones (all the beer had been sold by the middle of the afternoon on the Sunday!). The stall proved very popular thanks also to the salesmen and –women who were very efficient and tireless. There was not much left on the Monday night when it was time to close and pack.

On the Friday evening all the participants from Worcester, Bad Kissingen and Massa and their host families were invited to share a European Dinner with members of the Twinning Association organized every year by the Vernon Twinning in the presence of the Mayor of Vernon, François Ouzilleau, Sébastien Lecornu, the former-Mayor now President of the Eure Département and 1st Deputy Mayor) and several deputy mayors and councilors. Speeches were given in 4 languages. Rosemary's was particularly appreciated: it was both serious and full of humour, in French but with a few words in German and Italian for the benefit of the other guests. She pointed out 2016 was the 10th Anniversary of the Friendship Pact and that it was an important stage for the 2 towns. Presents were then exchanged as tokens of friendship.

The 2016 Foire aux Cerises was a success for Worcester and the organizers (Jean Jacques Créto, the President in particular and Hugette) worked very hard to make it so. Everyone enjoyed and made the most of the 4 days. Unfortunately the journey back home was not straightforward for 3 of the participants as they were unwittingly involved in the first strikes and demonstrations that started at that time (I am pleased to say they managed to get back home safely, if 24 hours late).

See you next year at the 24th Foire aux Cerises!
Bénédict Reynolds

After the Cherry Fair, the French did not seem to want us to leave!

In spite of the lack of cherries, the Cherry Fair in Vernon was a great success. The hospitality was superb and lots of friendly French people came and chatted to us on the stall – and most of them bought something too! Even the surrounding French traders bought their coffee from us.

Our first hint that things would not end quite as nicely came at breakfast time on our last morning. The bread took rather longer to reach the table than usual because of a road block. French lorry drivers had gone on strike, and were blocking main roads. So our hosts told us to listen to the radio and find a route to the port which avoided blockages. We took to minor roads to do what should have been a 2 hour drive to our ferry.

All went well until we reached the outskirts of le Havre, where a long line of lorries blocked the main road to the port. We managed to squeeze past this line and turn off onto a side road and some very good map reading round the backstreets of le Havre got us to the port in time for our ferry. However, to our surprise, ours was the only car in the queue! Eventually, a Brittany Ferries Official wandered over to ask what we were doing there, since the port was closed for 3 days! When I produced our booking, he looked rather surprised and went off to use the phone. 20 minutes later, he returned to say that he could get us onto a ferry from Cherbourg that night, and Cherbourg was only a 2½ hour drive away. This seemed to be our only option, so we turned round to drive to Cherbourg.

By this time, the working day in le Havre was coming to an end and there was a lot more traffic on the side roads out of the town. In our attempt to leave, we now found some minor roads blocked by burning barricades – we had noticed a burning smell earlier in the day and wondered what it was. Other roads were blocked by police who told us that all the roads out were blocked! We did get out by the same route that we came in, but it took us 3 hours, and we still needed to find an open bridge to cross the river Seine. We were also getting rather hungry by this stage, so we stopped for something to eat, and rang Brittany Ferries to say that we could not get to Cherbourg that night, so needed another crossing. They gave us a booking on the Caen crossing the next day.

Since it was French dinner time, the traffic was thinning out, and some of the lorry drivers were giving up and going home for the night. So, we did find an open bridge and also received a first text from Brittany Ferries about the problems of the day, telling us that the roads around Caen were blocked! It's a shame that they had not thought of

telling us a bit earlier that le Havre was closed and our ferry was cancelled! Having crossed the river, we realised that we had been on the road for 10 hours and only covered about 80 miles, so we booked into a hotel for the night. The next day was easier: the hotel staff helped us in the morning by phoning to find out which roads were open. Armed with this knowledge, we left fast, before any more blockades could be set up, and were relieved to find that this port was open and there was a ferry waiting for us. We did get back to the UK, but 24 hours late and rather fed up with French strikers, French police and a French ferry company. You can imagine some of the correspondence with Brittany Ferries which followed, but maybe not one of the replies – sent to the wrong person about the wrong ferry on the wrong day!

Terry Cole

Vernon Visit

A party of 12 visitors from Vernon Twinning Association will be coming to Worcester on Friday 26th August until Tuesday 30th August to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our Friendship Pact.

If anyone is willing to host any of our guests from Friday evening until Tuesday morning, please would you send an email to Rosemary Campbell, the Liaison Officer for Vernon.

There will of course be a reception for the guests in the Mayor's Parlour. Members might also like to attend a service at the Cathedral, a social evening and dinner at The Ketch in Worcester, a visit to Hanbury Hall, all of which have already been planned.

If you have any questions about the visit, please do not hesitate to contact Rosemary

Le Vésinet Contact Rosemary Campbell

Fêtes de la Marguerite 2016 Le Vésinet, France

A fun, warm and welcoming event was laid on by the Twinning Committee of Le Vésinet, as we all gathered together that first evening to celebrate the 10th Twinning Anniversary of Villanueva de la Cañada (Spain). A wonderful buffet was laid on which we all shared under delights of laughter and multi-national joviality.

The following morning at the "Parc des Ibis" was an outdoor Ceremony where each Twinning Association representing the country where they come from shared words of welcome, interspersed with the playful tunes by the youngsters of the 'Municipal Brass Band'.

In the afternoon was a guided tour of the local Catholic Church 'Sainte Marguerite' famous for its innovative and controversial methods of architecture that were used.

'Le Dîner en Blanc' is an amazing event held outdoors where everyone dresses in formal white clothes, which can almost look quite eerie. Our tables are covered in fresh white damask cloths with candlelit candelabras and small posies of white flowers. The crystal glasses and sparkling white wine and our innovative 'white' picnic food made by our hosts almost leaves you with a feeling of surrealness, especially as the evening wore on and a glorious harvest moon was to be seen.

An outdoor Mass was held the Sunday morning where locals of Le Vésinet were gathered with us under the morning sun and the trumpet blasts of the local trumpeteers. A light-hearted service followed in a spirit of sharing and community, which was followed afterwards by an aperitif and canopies offered by the 'Parish of Sainte Marguerite'.



In the afternoon continuing this spirit of community, a picnic garden-party was held on the lawn by the lake. Our tables were marked by blue and white tablecloths and we shared barbecued chicken and sausages with rice salads

and a variety of other accompaniments, washed down with fruit juices or wine, again provided by our wonderful and generous hosts. As the afternoon progressed there was the opportunity to listen to some Café music presented by wonderful talented musicians young and old, sharing their variety of musical and vocal skills.

On our last day was a coach excursion to the amazing "Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte" at Maincy, which is still preserved in its original form. It is a private estate listed as an Historic Monument of France and was built by Nicolas Fouquet, who was Louis X1V's Superintendent of Finances. This was the day the heavens opened and I had to buy myself a plastic 'poncho' to protect myself from the torrential rain, as I explored the magnificent landscaped gardens. Luckily, a bit of light relief was provided by the appetising lunch at the restaurant "L'Ecureuil" on the castle grounds.

Le Vésinet "Fêtes de la Marguerite" is a wonderful rich and cultural experience and an opportunity to meet up with other nationalities in the Twinning Association. Everyone is so friendly and it's a privilege to be part of such a diverse and important association, where we share and liase with each other as if we were brothers and sisters.

Jane McCawley

Worcester Sea Scouts visit le Vésinet

In May of this year the le Vésinet Scout group (Groupe Charles de Foucauld) hosted a group of sea scouts from Worcester. It appears that the scouting weekend went very well for both scouts and leaders, and future exchanges look very promising.

See pictures for 14th -15th May posted from the group on www.facebook.com/worcesterseascouts

Lithuania contact Terry Coles

For those of you that are interested in classical music, I thought that you would be interested to know that a new musical director for the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra has been appointed. Migra Grazinyté-Tyla was born 29 years ago in Vilnius Lithuania. More details at

www.theguardian.com/music/2016/feb/04/cbso-appoints-mirga-grazinyte-tyla-music-director-birmingham-symphony