

Worcester Twinning Association

CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2013



Editor Contact Derek Furby

CHRISTMAS FAYRE 2012



Farewells at the Guildhall before the long journey back to France

It is hard to believe that several months have passed since the Christmas Fayre. Where does the time go?

Going back to the fayre, for once the weather was kind to us, which proved to our friends from Kleve, Le Vesinet and Ukmerge that Worcester is not always wet and cold.

This year there seemed to be many more visitors to the Fayre, which meant sales on our four stalls were an improvement on previous years. Siting more stalls along the High Street certainly made a difference.

Thanks to Hazel for decorating the stall. Thank you to Judy and David for your presence on the stall all day and every day which was much appreciated and to the others of you who came and helped. Thank you once again.

Unsure as to whether we and our Twin towns will be at the Fayre this year. The Chamber of Commerce have taken over from Visit Worcester, so we await their decision. I do hope we do continue as the time spent with our friends at this time of year is very important.

Watch this space

Jane Wood

www.worcester-international-link.org.uk

A Meeting of Councillors

It was a cold Thursday morning when I crept out of bed and hurriedly dressed to be sure to be at The Diglis Hotel in time to meet our guests from Kleve. It may have seemed early for me, but Les Tunley and Karl-Heinz had already driven to Birmingham Airport and back to meet our guests by the time I arrived at The Diglis. It is not often that we are able to welcome 14 visitors from the Kleve Town Council, a group made up of the Burgermeister, Councillors and a few partners, and I did not want to be late for their arrival.

Worcester had been deluged with rain for several days before the arrival of our guests and so The Diglis was experiencing some difficulties caused by flood water. The most immediate was no heating in the Conservatory which meant that breakfast, for which all our guests were ready, was taken with coats and scarves on. The view from the Conservatory however, was beautiful, with the river high and flooding the area around the hotel and the winter sun and haze adding to the atmosphere.

After many good wishes and sharing of coffee we left them to settle in to their rooms with a promise to meet later at 2.00pm for a tour of the Cathedral building and its Library. The tour was enjoyed immensely and much praise was given to our fantastic Cathedral and the hidden gem of its Library. The Cathedral Librarian was very obliging and was able to find old documents and maps which relate to Kleve, which was obviously of great interest to our guests. Karl-Heinz was on hand to help with any language difficulties, but I never fail to be amazed at the skill of our visitors from Kleve, le Vesinet, Vernon and Ukmerge and their command of the English language, which puts my feeble efforts to shame.



That evening was the opening of the Victorian Christmas Fayre, which was enjoyed by all our visitors and an opportunity to see Worcester at one of its best moments, when it is decked out ready for Christmas.

On Friday we enjoyed a later start to the day, meeting at 11.00am to visit Worcester's unique building, the Hive. Love or loathe its gold exterior, it is a building of immense pride to the people of Worcester and our German Councillor friends were very impressed. Lunch at the Berkeley Almshouses was a welcome break before the afternoon's meetings, firstly with some of Worcester's councillors and then with our Mayor, Roger Berry.

The meeting of Councillors from Worcester and Kleve was a departure from the usual activities of Worcester Twinning Association in as much as it involved some discussion about the way that our two towns/cities are run by their Councils. It was particularly interesting to hear how Kleve Councillors agree their annual budget with no dissent when I compare it to the sometimes heated debate and discussions we have in the Council Chamber here in Worcester.

Politics discussed and mayoral chains tried on, we moved on with the Kleve party to the Saffron Kitchen in the Foregate for a buffet meal. The food and sharing of each other's company was enjoyed by all and we were all sad when the time came to go home.

Saturday was a free day for our Councillor guests and they spent it at the twinning stalls outside the Guildhall and seeing Worcester at its best. The day ended of course with our Christmas dinner, once again enjoyed at the Worcs Cricket Club in the Graham Hick Suite and attended by many of our members. The traditional singing of Auld Lang Syne at the end of a very enjoyable evening was a very fitting way to say goodbye to our Kleve Councillors and hope that they take back to Kleve a positive impression of Worcester and our Twinning Association.



Jo Hodges

Gisela Returns home

As some of you may already know, Gisela Koster, while taking down Christmas decorations, fell from the chair that she was standing on and sustained serious spinal damage. She has spent several weeks in hospital where she underwent surgery to fit a metal plate to her spine. This completed she was moved to Aachen, some 160Km away from Kleve, where she had spa therapy to help her walk and recover again. But unfortunately further surgery became necessary to reinstate the plate. She is now back home again, but going through a long and painful recovery

Derek Furby

Vernon Contact Rosemary Campbell

The Vernon Family

Worcester's Friendship Pact with the town of Vernon in Normandy is based on the fact that, in 1944, The Worcestershire Regiment liberated the town.

However the links between Vernon and Worcestershire go back much further, in fact to 1066 and the Battle of Hastings, but are centred on Hanbury and Hanbury Hall and their connection with the Vernon family.

The first "Vernon" was Richard de Reviers (anglicised to Redvers). He was a loyal officer of William, later to be known as William the Conqueror, who gave him the town of Vernon-sur-Seine, whereupon he changed his name to Richard de Vernon. At least two Vernons came with William in 1066.

The name Vernon itself could derive from a celtic word "verno" meaning alder or from "vert" the French for green (the area was it seems a green and pleasant land with many alders on its marshy land).

The present motto of the town is "Vernon Semper Viret" (Vernon always green).



After 1066 the family was rewarded with lands in Cheshire and developed connections with many parts of England including Haddon Hall in Derbyshire. There were also links with the Wedgwoods and, by marriage, the Penn family (to whom the King gave Pennsylvania to settle a debt!). This was not their only American connection; there being also the famous Mount Vernon of George Washington.

The nickname of one Vernon has entered into the language. Admiral Edward Vernon, born in Westminster in 1684, always dressed in a thick silk cloth known as "grog", so he was known in the Navy as "old grog". He gained a fearsome reputation and was responsible for the edict to dilute the rum ration with hot water to cut down drunkenness. Hence the grog which we still enjoy to this day!

Now to the Vernons of Hanbury.

They came from the Cheshire branch of the family.

In 1584, Richard Vernon of Audley in Staffordshire married Frances Wylde the heiress of Hanbury Hall. However, it seems that the first Vernon to come to Hanbury was the Reverend Richard Vernon (1549-1628). His Great Grandson, a Chancery lawyer Thomas Vernon, rebuilt Hanbury Hall in its present grand style in about 1700. The baronetcy of Hanbury was created in 1885 for Harry Foley Vernon and became extinct in 1940. The last member of the family to live in Hanbury Hall until her death in 1962 was Lady Vernon, widow of Sir George Vernon.

So the 1944 connection between Worcestershire, Hanbury and Vernon was but the continuation of a long story.

Nevill Swanson

Le Vésinet Contact Vivien Greenow

Christmas Market in Le Vésinet 2012

I flew to Paris with Les, Rosemary and their son Stephen to participate in the Marché de Noël des Jumelages. We received a very warm welcome from our host families, who were waiting at the station in Le Vésinet to greet us.

On Friday morning, all the delegations met at the "Mairie" to set up and decorate the stalls. The "Salle des Conférences" looked very festive and it was so nice to meet the visitors from Unterhaching and Villanueva de la Cañada, as well as our friends from Le Vésinet. Merchandise had been sent in advance by Oakwood in Ohio, Outremont in Quebec and Hunter's Hill in Australia for their stands, which were manned by members from Le Vésinet.



After lunch at "Le Village" nearby, the Christmas Market was duly opened and we worked hard perfecting our sales technique in the Salle des Conférences until 7pm. Outside, there was always at least one brave Weihnachtsmann from Unterhaching, tempting passers-by with Glühwein and the sweet aroma of delicious freshly made crêpes, prepared by our hosts filled the bitter cold air.

Later that evening, we were greeted at the brasserie "Côté Marché" by the Mayor. We enjoyed a wonderful dinner and welcomed the opportunity to relax, meet new friends and renew old acquaintances. On Saturday, we worked on the stall until 6pm, with a break for lunch and a chat once more at "le Village". However, I managed to steal some time to join the crowds watching the children singing carols on the steps of the Mairie.

Afterwards we were invited to a truly delightful "Soirée Musicale" at the Conservatoire. Twenty two young musicians and four dancers from Villanueva de la Cañada joined the young musicians from the Conservatoire in Le Vésinet to put on a spectacular concert. A buffet and drinks followed.

On Sunday, we went into Paris to visit "Le Marché de Noël des Champs-Élysées", Notre Dame and some of the other famous landmarks. In the evening, I attended the Edward Hopper Exposition at the Grand Palais.

We would again like to thank our host families for their hospitality and Annie Serin and her superb team for organising this event. The warmth and friendliness extended to us was overwhelming and the weekend was a huge success!

Rosemary Campbell

Ukmerge Contact Terry Coles

As a member of the Polish delegation who took part in Worcester's celebrations of 25 years of twinning, I would like to thank the organisers for the chance to see such a beautiful place as Worcester, and enjoy the excellent programme of events which they prepared. Our visit was an unforgettable time full of interesting chats, trips (the one to the Houses of Parliament in London was really amazing) and local attractions.

We were very impressed by Worcester Cathedral and its library; we had never seen such old books at such close quarters before. It was like touching history. The modern City and University Library also made a big impression on us. In a golden-roofed house there was a "magic space" with high technology solutions.

Apart from admiring more or less historical places, we had the opportunity to see wonderful views, try tasty English dishes and talk to the members of the other delegations which were in Worcester with us. It is surprising how much we have in common.

As teachers we were especially interested in the visits to Worcester schools. Exchanging experiences with Worcester teachers and, having a look at a different educational system is a source of inspiration. We saw how new ideas can be introduced in a different educational environment. We are still hoping to form a link between our school in Poland and a Worcester school.

We are grateful for the great time we spent in Worcester and thank the organisers for the warm atmosphere created and the hospitality which we could feel each day. Most of all we would like to thank Terry Coles for his personal involvement in arranging our visit and Margaret and Maurice Holloway for being great hosts.

Report by Kasia Flis



Dates for your Diary

There Will Be A Visit From Our Kleve Twinning Members

From Sunday 1st September Until Sunday 8th September.

Host Families Will Be Needed For This Visit. If You Are Interested In Hosting Our Kleve Guests

Forthcoming Visit to our Twin Town in the USA

A SMALL DELEGATION HAVE BEEN INVITED BY JOAN AND PETER GEISSLER TO VISIT WORCESTER MASS for 10 DAYS THIS YEAR TO STRENGTHEN OUR TWINNING LINK

JOAN WILL BE ARRANGING HOST FAMILIES FOR THE GROUP, AND A PROGRAMME FOR OUR VISIT.

WIFYS (Worcester International Festival of Young Singers) 2013 www.singuk.org/wifys

This year, for the first time, the UK will be hosting an international festival of youth choirs, in Worcester from 19th to 27th July. It promises to be a week of wonderful music. The event is organised by SingUK, which has selected some of the best youth choirs from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Hong Kong, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Spain. The young people from these countries will work with young singers from Worcestershire. The choirs will perform in various venues in the city, but will start with a "Welcome Concert" in the Cathedral on Saturday 20 July, when each choir will sing an item of their own choice. On the final evening (Friday 26 July), they will perform again in the Cathedral; this concert will focus on Bob Chilcott's specially commissioned "Five Days that Changed the World", written to make use of the Cathedral's excellent acoustics. The five "days" relate to: the invention of printing, the abolition of slavery, the first powered flight, the discovery of penicillin and the first man in space.

We had hoped that a choir from one of our twin towns would be involved, and the Antano Smetonas Gimnazija Choir from Ukmergė was very interested but, in the end, it proved just too costly for them to attend. However, another youth choir, the Versme Girls Choir from Vilnius is able to come and represent Lithuania.

Terry Coles

Public Meeting in The Guildhall

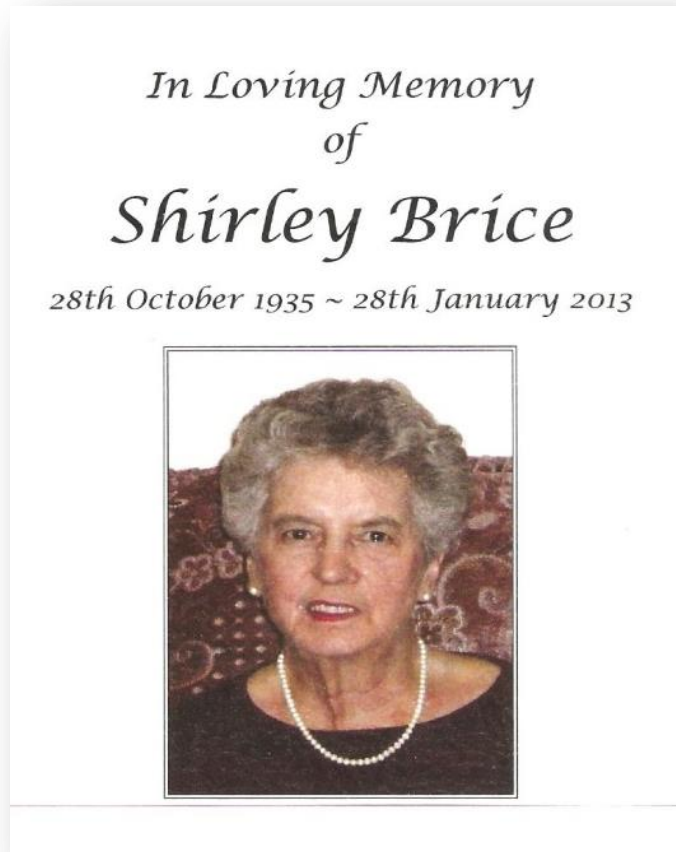
On the **9th April at 2 pm** there will be a Stakeholder Meeting of the World War 1 Commemoration Committee.

The meeting, at the Guildhall, is open to the public and it is to discuss arrangements and put forward ideas on how the city commemorates the hundredth anniversary of World War I in 2014.

There are also suggestion forms to be put in a box on the ground floor of The Guildhall, adjacent to the lift.

VILLAGE OF THE ARTS OF LE VÉSINET

On the 25th and 26th of May there will be an Art Exhibition held in Le Vésinet by the IBIS Lake. Several Artists from Worcester will be exhibiting there, including Patrick Greenow and David Birtwhistle. Several members of Worcester Camera Club will also be displaying photographs. The exhibition hopes to attract artists from around the World, including Le Vésinet's other twin towns.



Twinning Association member Shirley Brice sadly passed away on 28th January 2013, aged 77 years. Shirley had been a member for many years and enjoyed participating in visits to Kleve and Le Vésinet and the hospitality events here in Worcester.

Shirley was born in India but her family moved back to Worcester when she was 12 years old. This probably sparked a lifelong love of travel and a sense of adventure, which she was able to indulge with trips to Australia, New Zealand, China, and Canada as well as Europe and many parts of England. However Shirley's greatest achievement was bringing up her 5 children, taking great pride in their achievements and their families.

Before retirement, Shirley worked at the Worcester City Museum where she enjoyed meeting and conversing with the public.

Jean Bull