

Worcester Twinning Association

CONNECTIONS

SUMMER 2019



Membership Contact: Malcolm Campbell

Editor Contact: Derek Furby

CELEBRATION OF 25 YEARS OF TWINNING WITH LE VÉSINET

In June, 24 Twinning members from Worcester were hosted in Le Vésinet to take part in their celebrations commemorating 25 years of twinning between the two towns. It was a very full weekend of events.



Le Vésinet Contact: Rosemary Campbell

Rosemary organised a most interesting full day visit to Chantilly Château on the first day, where we had time to look round the magnificent château and exquisite paintings displayed throughout, and also the extremely palatial stable block. We enjoyed our picnic lunches in the beautiful grounds before making our way to the indoor arena for a demonstration of equestrian dressage training.

After returning to our host families, we had a short time to prepare before attending a celebration buffet dinner at the theatre restaurant. Representatives of two of Le Vésinet's other twin towns Germany and Spain, were also present. We all enjoyed an excellent meal with champagne and wine in a happy, friendly atmosphere. The speeches summed up the last 25 years, and also confirmed that Brexit won't harm our close relationship in the future. The beautifully displayed celebration cake was cut by Anne-Marie Borderie and Jo.



We all came together again on Saturday morning for a short Civic Ceremony in the hot sunshine outside the town hall followed by aperitifs and buffet provided by the Council. A fashion show and Elgar concert took place in the afternoon.

For me, the highlight of the visit was the *Diner en Blanc* where about 300 people, all dressed in white, gathered together in the park beside *lac des Ibis* for dinner. It was a magical evening, especially when candles were lit as the light faded.

Many took part in a celebration of Mass in the park on Sunday morning followed by aperitifs provided by the two Churches which led the service. We then all joined local people for a garden party in the park and the *Fete de la Marguerite*, the town's annual fete. Fortunately tables were set up for us in the shade as it was a very hot day – we had a 'posh picnic' with plenty of food and wine, and also BBQ facilities for those feeling like cooking on such a hot day.



We set off for home on Monday, but the entertainment wasn't over as we made a detour to the coastal town of Honfleur where we had a tour of the historic town, together with the Germans and Spanish, and were given a 3-course lunch in a very quaint restaurant with, of course, more wine!

We were all tired when we finally arrived home at 1am, but it had been a most enjoyable, interesting and happy four days with our French friends. Thanks to the *Comite de Jumelages du Vésinet* for entertaining us so well, to our wonderful host families for their warm hospitality and to Rosemary for all the time she spent organising the trip.

Sue Collins

www.worcestertwinning.org.uk

Sponsored Cycle Ride. Paris To Worcester For Alzheimer's Society.

This year was Caryl Bracewell's 60th. Keen to set herself a challenge, the idea of a sponsored cycle ride soon developed. With two small wheeled bikes packed in suitcases Caryl and Lyndon headed off with the Worcester Twinning group to join in the 25th anniversary celebrations of the City's twinning with our French partner Le Vesinet, Paris.



In memory of her father, Cliff, who died in January aged 94 and specifically for her mother Pam (who has been a long time sufferer), the ride raised funds for Alzheimer's Society.

After enjoying the wonderful weather and hospitality Le Vesinet offered, the intrepid two started their ride at the same time as the rest of the group departed on Monday 24th June for a trip to Honfleur before their return to Worcester.



With overnights at Conches-en-Ouche, on the Caen-Portsmouth night ferry and at Marlborough, Lyndon and Caryl rode a total of 281 miles (70 miles a day) and climbed nearly 13,00ft (9 times the height of the Malverns).

The previous day Caryl and Lyndon paid 'homage' at the plaque on Le Vesinet 'high street', Boulevard Carnot that commemorated the spot where a remarkable 15 'Grand Departs' for the Tour de France have started. This was all down to Julien Rudolphe, a successful track runner and mid-distance cyclist who was recruited to organise starts for the Tour De France.

Ever the entrepreneur, he did this from immediately outside the cycle shop in Le Vesinet he had established in 1917.



Sponsorship has gone exceptionally well with over £4,000 expected to be raised for the charity.

Caryl and Lyndon are particularly grateful to all those who have sponsored them, Worcester Twinning Association and Le Vesinet Comite de Jumelages for making their sponsored ride possible.

Special thanks go to Rosemary Campbell, our stalwart French liaison officer and to Alain and Helene Audibert for being such perfect hosts during their memorable stay in Le Vesinet.

Ukmergė Festival 2019

What do you do when you are asked to go to 2 different events on the same weekend? This year's Ukmergė Festival, in Lithuania, was at the same time as the Foire de Vernon, in France! It was a difficult decision since I have very good friends in Vernon, but I don't often get the chance to visit Lithuania, so I went to Ukmergė.

The Lithuanians never disappoint. Though it was late in the evening, the Mayor's car met me at Vilnius airport, and 30 minutes later I was in Ukmergė, being treated to a late but welcome meal.

There was a little free time before the Festival, so I spent this in my favourite Ukmergė school, giving the students a chance to practise their English. They really do not need me, since the English teaching is first class, and most of the children speak English with confidence, but they enjoyed throwing questions at me, and testing my knowledge of Lithuania. They watch our Parliament on TV, and the Speaker seems to be a European celebrity, though the Lithuanians wonder why our Parliament cannot make decisions! I tried to explain the problem facing the UK at the moment.

Before the Festival, the Mayor hosted a dinner to greet the representatives from 10 twin towns. I spoke for Worcester, and presented the Ukmergė Mayor with a gift from our Mayor. I don't know quite what I've done to deserve it, but the Mayor is always incredibly friendly towards me, and calls me the number one ambassador for England! However, I do get embarrassed about the amount of present giving on these occasions, since the East European twins appear with presents for every other twin town! My case is just not that large, though the Germans suggested that I bring a bottle of Worcestershire sauce for everyone next year! After the formal part of the evening, the dancing went on until 3 a.m. though I did not last that long!

On the day of the festival, there was an interesting organised tour of the town, before the long procession, in which I represented "Great Britain". Just before the formal opening ceremony, I was approached by a local man who said "I know you", to which I replied "I know you too". He was the former Lithuanian Ambassador to the UK, who came to Worcester in 2008 and, in the Mayor's Parlour, rang the Mayor of Ukmergė to ask about the possibility of twinning. We had only met this once, so he has a very good memory!

At the next formal dinner, I had the chance of renewing old acquaintances, and talking about the future of our partnership. Then there were yet more presents from the Ukmergė Mayor: a large loaf of Ukmergė



black bread, cheese, and the local “water”, for our journeys home! They really are overwhelmingly generous, but my case was already bulging! Once it was dark, we went outside to watch the fireworks, and then admired a spectacular fountain, illuminated by coloured lights which changed in time to the music!

On the final day, a visit to Trakai, the ancient capital of Lithuania, was organised. This is a very picturesque medieval castle in the middle of a lake, and a wonderful way to end another memorable visit to Lithuania.

Worcester Ma. Contact: Jo Hodges

Our twinning association was informed that another church based choir from Worcester, Massachusetts, would be visiting our City for a two night stay during July and August.

We received a request to provide accommodation for some of the choir members. We managed to find hosts for 12 of the sixty strong choir, the rest stayed at the Premier Inn. The highlights of their stay was a luncheon held at the Graeme Hick Pavilion attended by our Mayor, Alla Ditta, and our Madam Chairman, Liz Smith and Derek Prodger, former Mayor of Worcester who initiated the twinning of the two Worcesters. The choir’s sixty members were joined by about twenty non-Americans, mostly twinning members. A most convivial atmosphere prevailed during the lunch, short speeches were made by the choir leader, Paul Dexter and our Mayor, with city to city presents being exchanged Your committee felt that we ought to give them a memento of their short visit to our city. Accordingly, it was arranged to present the choir with a David Bertwhistle picture looking across the River Severn, with swans in the foreground and the Cathedral in the background, framed in what was a convenient size and weight. Our gift was warmly received.

Later on, the same day, the choir performed Evensong in the Cathedral with many twinning members in the congregation. The choir actually had a free evening and many of them were able to spend ‘quality time’ with their hosts. The next morning was time for the choir to leave.

They left in three coaches with the option of going directly to Bristol, being driven to Broadway to do a 9 mile walk or to go direct to Gloucester, where they would all be spending the night. They were due to finish their rather hectic tour by singing Evensong in St. Paul’s Cathedral.

I would like to think that they will cherish the warm welcome and hospitality they received during their short stay in Worcester.

This is the wording that was inserted below the picture;

“Presented to the visiting members of Worcester Masterworks Chorale to commemorate their visit to Worcester UK during July/August 2019 and also to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the two Worcesters’ being twinned.”

George Milton



Vernon Contact: Rosemary Campbell

The next visit to Worcester of our friends from Vernon will be in April 2020. Le Choeur de Amebault will be arriving and performing in Worcester next year. The sixty or more visitors will be here from Friday evening 17th April and leaving on Monday morning 20th April.

Arrangements are being made to join forces with Worcester Male Voice Choir. The last time the two choirs sang together in Worcester was in 2016.

It is hoped that a good proportion of the choir will stay at Fownes Hotel, but some prefer to stay with host families, so if anyone can help by offering accommodation please let me know.

Derek

Kleve Contact: Margaret Tyas

Our next planned visit to Kleve will be by coach, leaving from Croft Road on Monday 30th September, for a full programme of events that always turns out to be a very enjoyable experience.

Editor Contact: Derek Furby

You may have noticed that the website address in the footer bar in this newsletter has changed. This is the address of our new website, which has been up and running for some time now.

We hope that you will enjoy and find it a lot easier to navigate for information about our Twinning Association.

In the MENU section you will find information on all our twin towns and recent events held there.

In the INFORMATION section, apart from the less interesting things, like cookie and data policies, you will find the upcoming events, which I think speaks for itself.

There is also an ARCHIVE area containing old issues of Connections and other past events.

We will be gradually building the website with more photos and information as time goes by, so please look in from time to time to see what new items have been added

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Derek