

Worcester Twinning Association

CONNECTIONS

WINTER 2012



Editor- Contact Derek Furby

25 years Twinning with Kleve Our Celebration



Worcester Twinning Association spent a fantastic week in September hosting and entertaining a group of representatives from our 4 twin towns of Kleve, le Vesinet, Ukmerge and Worcester MA., as well as guests from our friendship town of Vernon and from Tarnowo Podgorne in Poland, which is one of Ukmerge's twins. The purpose of the visit was to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Twinning Association and we tried to include as many events as possible which all twinning members could join in with.

We had the opportunity to show our visitors many places of historic, educational and economic interest in Worcester as well as visiting the Houses of Parliament in London. It was a wonderful opportunity to see our beautiful City as a visitor sees it and we enjoyed the experience as much as our visitors.



Our Lithuanian Guests in Westminster Great Hall

One of the highlights of the week was the trip to Parliament which was made possible through the sponsorship of Richard Lord Faulkner who is a member of Worcester's Twinning Association and also our Worcester MA liaison officer. Feedback from our guests also showed that the visit to the newly opened Hive and to the Cathedral and its fascinating Library were also big hits with our visitors.

The visit to Worcester Bosch was very popular and the chance to see how the news is made at Worcester Evening News offices and BBC Hereford and Worcester radio station.

Not surprisingly our visitors had nothing but praise for our education system when they had the chance to see Worcester students of all ages at work in their schools and they came away with very good impressions of all they had seen.



Lord Faulkner waiting for us in Westminster Great Hall

Our visitors enjoyed music at its best in a concert from the Elgar chorale and also entertainment from the young people in our city. The final day was a big event in Worcester city centre when a number of our members dressed as Henry V111 and Anne of Cleves and their retinue, led a procession through the streets. A group of scouts and beavers together with many members of the public followed the king and queen to the Methodist Hall for a free concert from local youth. With the final dinner that evening being an opportunity for all to part ways with warm wishes and promises of future meetings, we sadly ended a very successful week.



Elgar Chorale Concert in Assembly Room of Guildhall

Article by Jo Hodges



A walk through Gheluveld Park

25 YEARS OF TWINNINGS IN WORCESTER

A delegation of 5 people had been invited to represent Vernon at the 25th Anniversary celebrations along with delegates from the other twin towns. The programme was dense, varied, interesting, covering all sorts of fields, and we enjoyed it all.

We were welcomed by the Mayor, Roger Berry, and the Chairman of the Association, Jo Hodges before being entertained by young performers who sang, danced, and played music for us.

Our trip to London and the Houses of Parliament, and our meeting there with Lord Faulkner gave us an insight into the political life of the country. The new library, "The Hive", is an amazing place using the latest technologies for the benefit of the users, the staff and the building itself. The city is very much into renewable energies and recycling, (the Pump Room, industries like Worcester Bosch, and the Sixways Rugby Club).



The Hive

Of course the past was not forgotten: the Commandery, the Tudor House, and the Cathedral, a superb landmark. We had the privilege of climbing up the narrow, winding stone staircase to its priceless library where we even saw a centuries-old map of France with our town of Vernon.



We met people from different backgrounds, whether religious, social, ethnic or other, at the Mosque, in the schools (I personally visited a school for the blind and was most impressed by the pupils - two of whom were proud to show us around- and the staff). We talked of "active ageing" and what our towns were doing for the Elderly. Several of us were interviewed on twinning on the local radio but as it was broadcasted the following morning we did not have the opportunity to hear ourselves. Pity! It was our claim to fame! We also visited the premises of the local paper. We attended a concert by the Elgar Chorale, with pieces by composers from each of the countries present, applauded the Morris Dancers, went on a boat trip on the Severn, some tried their skill at rowing, the Worcester Concert Brass Band played for us, as did a young accordionist, we listened to the Julian Singers and a young pop singer, ...

On the last day we met Henry VIII and Anne of Cleves escorted by their retinue and young scouts and guides. In the evening we all gathered for the Gala Dinner in the Assembly Room. We joined hands to bid farewell to our friends from Worcester and further afield with "Auld Lang Syne" whose words expressed what we were thinking and wishing: we will meet again.

We had shared wonderful moments and many delicious meals either prepared by ladies of the Association (like the beautifully decorated and tasty anniversary cake) or in restaurants, been offered countless cups of tea and coffee and pieces of cakes wherever we went.

What a week that was! Many, many thanks to the organizers, whose dedication and energy enabled us to live these unforgettable moments, the families who hosted us, and all the members of the Association and people from the town for their contribution. I just want to say: we are looking forward to meeting you all again!

Article by Bénédict Reynolds Vernon



Maggie Doyle is Worcestershire's second poet laureate. She has taken over from Theo Theobald for 2012-2013 year of office. Maggie was approached by Jo Hodges to produce this special poem for The City of Worcester Twinning Association, which I'm sure you will agree, puts into words what we feel about Twinning.

TWINNING : OUR 25th ANNIVERSARY

There's a special understanding, nothing written, nothing said,
a mutual respect that links our lives
through our cultures and our heritage, our unique and twinning bond
a warm and very cordial friendship thrives.

Past the barriers of language we communicate with ease
all of us extending open hands,
inviting each and everyone to the cities where we dwell,
glimpses of our lives in different lands.

We transcend the world of politics in accepting that we differ
our history is something we can't change,
so we leave the past behind us plan our future with the youth,
learn from one and other when we exchange.

As we honour well loved countries, those traditions in our hearts,
the friendships which each of us holds dear,
we delight in sharing "twinning" tales as we share a cup of British tea,
and now we celebrate a special year.

So "Wilkommen" Kleve, Germany, "Witamy" Tarnowo Podgorne,
"Bienvenue" Vernon et le Vesinet,
"Sveiki atvke" Ukmerge, I believe you say it twice
"Hi there, how you doing Worcester, USA".

"Bienvenidos" to absent Spanish friends
in Villaneuva de la Canada,
we pass on warmest greetings from our lands,
so let us raise our glasses, our silver anniversary

And the symbol of our friendship - shaking hands.



© Maggie Doyle
Worcestershire Poet Laureate 2012-2013



Fete de la Marguerite 2013

You will all have read about the Fete de la Marguerite, the annual Summer fair at le Vésinet but may not have thought of taking part yourself. Now is your chance!

Next year it takes place on Sunday 16th June, and during the weekend there are various activities to which we are invited. They will be celebrating 35 years of twinning with their German twin town Unterhaching, in Bavaria, and also the 25th anniversary of their friendship pact with Hunter's Hill, near Sydney, Australia, so no doubt there will be events with a Bavarian as well as with an Australian flavour.

In 2014 we shall be celebrating 20 years of the Worcester / le Vésinet twinning, and we hope to organise a coach then to take as many Worcester people as would like to go. In 2013 however a smaller group of a dozen or so will be welcome.

As well as the official ceremonies on the Saturday there is usually the opportunity to go into Paris for a trip on the Seine in a 'bateau-mouche'. Then there is the celebratory dinner, usually on the Saturday evening, before the Fete on the Sunday. This involves an open-air service in the park, followed by apéritifs and a giant picnic where we are the guests of our hosts. There are sideshows and various activities for the entertainment of all the people of the town and their guests.

On the Monday a coach excursion is organized and we are usually asked to make a contribution to the cost of this, which includes lunch. So to enjoy all that is on offer it would mean travelling on Friday 14th June, or even Thursday, and returning home on Tuesday 18th June. If you book well in advance the cost, either by air from Birmingham or train via Eurostar from St.Pancras, should not be more than £100, maybe less. We generally hope to arrange to travel as a group.

So make a note of the date in your new diary and if you would like to be considered as part of the delegation, contact me via email

Hurricane Sandy

News From America

A report by JoAn Giessler

Although Worcester seems to have fared relatively well in the storm, about 6,000 National Grid customers in the city were without power shortly before 10 PM that night . Crews were able to do only limited restoration overnight because of high winds (60 mph)and limited visibility, according to a city spokesman. Out-of-state crews helped with power outages. Tree companies from Michigan were there to help. City's schools were closed. Workers were called in from near and far — Georgia, California, Canada and elsewhere — through mutual aid pacts National Grid has with other companies. All appears to be back on track now.

The winds of Hurricane Sandy resulted in a large pine tree in Elm Park falling late this afternoon, partially blocking Park Avenue. That was in many areas of the city.

Although not at home at the time the manager of our Lodging house in Worcester also said the winds were fierce and tree

limbs from our yard there were flying , leaving quite a mess. Other residents also texted lots of wind, but none of our properties lost power, we were more fortunate than others in the Main South of Worcester.



FIRST VISIT TO THE PERSHORE PLUM FAIR

At the end of August, 5 of us, from the Vernon Comité de Jumelage, spent a few days in Worcester staying with families. We had been invited by the Worcester Twinning Association to have a stall at the 2012 Pershore Plum Fair.

On the Saturday we visited the Great Comberton Flower Show, a typical village fete held in a field, with several stands, a dog contest, a competition to award prizes to the best fruit, vegetables, flowers, cakes, paintings,... I cannot name them all! What a gorgeous, colourful display! We had our own prize-winner, Ray Roberts, whose Austin7 came first in the classic car competition. Unfortunately the heavens opened at 4pm and spoilt it all. Then it was time for a delicious cream tea at the Roberts'. In the evening a buffet had been organized and we had fun reciting limericks or playing sketches and winning prizes at the tombola.

On the Sunday we went back in time to the War of the Roses in Avoncroft. People dressed up as in medieval times re-enacted battles, told us about life then, in old buildings that have been re-erected there, or the tents of the soldiers. It was entertaining.

Monday was the day of the Plum Fair. We were there bright and early at 7 o'clock, and a bit cold, to put up the gazebo lent by Pam and Derek. It took 2 ½ hours to be ready but the result was eye-catching we were told, and in tune with the theme: plum-coloured goods. Many members of the Association purchased items and a lot of visitors stopped to speak to us and buy goods. However at 4 o'clock it started pouring again and we had to pack up in a hurry, like all the other stallholders. This was disappointing of course. In the evening a large group met in a pub in Worcester to have a few drinks, play darts and watch the spectacular fireworks reflecting in the Severn.

Many thanks to everyone, especially Rosemary Campbell, for organizing all these visits and get-togethers. We had a lovely time (in spite of the rain!).

Article by Bénédict Reynolds



Goodbye to an Old Friend

Charlie Box has sadly left us, a few weeks into his 91st year. He was a great-hearted and robust character, well-loved by family and countless friends from twinning and the worlds of football and karting.



Les Tunley, Peter Geissler, Helmi and Charlie

Known universally as Uncle Charlie, he was always a strong and stalwart supporter of twinning. Indeed, by wooing Helmi (in 1947 in Germany) and wedding her (in 1951 in England), he could truly be said to have embodied reconciliation, one of the early driving forces of twinning in Europe.

Well-liked and respected, here and in our twin towns, he made friends in Kleve, Le Vesinet and in Worcester Massachusetts. He was one of the party for our inaugural visit there and I seem to remember that he developed quite a liking for the locally microbrewed Wachusett ale! It was fitting that Peter and JoAn Geissler from Worcester Mass were able to attend his funeral.

He, or rather his garden, was prominent for many years at Worcester's Victorian Xmas Fayre, where our stall (and those of our twin towns) were liberally garlanded with evergreen foliage freshly cut from Charlie's garden.

A "one-off" - we shall all miss Uncle Charlie greatly. Although he is no longer with us, he will never be forgotten. Deepest condolences to Helmi and all the family on behalf of all members of the Twinning Association and our twin towns.

Nevill



Charlie, Helmi and JoAn Geissler

Please remember that subscriptions for 2013 are due on 1st January 2013. As Mike Donovan will be away, please send your cheque to Jane Wood
Subscriptions are £10 for an individual or £20 for a family. If your bank pays your subscription by standing order, please check to ensure that they pay the correct amount.

We will be celebrating the **20th anniversary** of the Worcester Victorian Christmas Fayre from:
Thursday 29th November - Sunday 2nd December 2012.

The Fayre opening times are:

Thursday 4pm - 9pm
Friday 11am - 9pm
Saturday 10am - 8pm
Sunday 11am - 5pm

We would certainly like any of our members to lend a hand to man the stall. Don't worry if you don't have any Victorian costume, usually something appropriate can be found. If you are a new member why not give it a try, but remember to wear something warm.

But if you just prefer to visit The Fayre, make sure you sample a cup of Gluehwein from Kleve or a crepe from le Vésinet and not to forget our friends from Ukmerge who usually have handmade stocking fillers.

