

WINTER 2010

Worcester Twinning Association

www.worcester-international-link.org.uk



CONNECTIONS

FOUR ISSUES ANNUALLY

Editor: George Milton

The Worcester Twining Association would like to congratulate our French Friendship town Vernon and their German twin town Bad Kissingen on the 50th anniversary of their being twinned together. Long may this happy partnership continue.



Vernon



Bad Kissingen

Félicitations à Vernon et Bad Kissingen de 50 années de jumelage. Nous vous souhaitons une bonne année des célébrations.

Wir gratulieren Vernon und Bad Kissingen zu 50 Jahren Städtepartnerschaft und wünschen Ihnen ein fröhliches Jubiläum.

Message from the Chairman – Nevill Swanson



I am conscious that this is my last slot in "Connections" as Chairman. It may well however not be my last contribution because, as many of us have found, the Editor is very adept at twisting arms! In any event, I intend to be active in the Twinning Association even though relinquishing the Chairmanship.

We, like all the communities with whom we have links, are living through hard times but, being human, we continue to have hope. Among our hopes for this year, I would like to draw attention to three.

Firstly (and I hope I am not taken to task again for mentioning it again) is "The Vernon Question" concerning participation at our Victorian Christmas Street Fayre. All I will say is that, thanks to some goodwill, I detect the palest of green shoots that there is a glimmer of an amicable resolution in prospect.

Secondly, I am also more optimistic that we will, during the course of this year, see the City Council agree to a formal link with Ukmerge in Lithuania.

A link for which there is a very good rationale and which would bring positives of many kinds to both places.

The third area where I see hope is in developing the link with Worcester Massachusetts. In early January we had a second visit from Jaime Flores, from the Spanish language newspaper in Worcester Mass, who, as two years ago on his first visit, is indefatigable in pushing to make the link succeed.

This coincides with the advent of a new Mayor (Joe O'Brien) in Worcester Mass and the strong support of our Mayor Andy Roberts, who, as is well known, is very keen to capitalise on the very real historic connections we have with two of America's early Presidents (Adams & Jefferson) and other Historical American figures.

One change, already achieved and widely acclaimed, is the new position, outside the Guildhall for the twinning stalls at the Xmas Fayre, given us by VisitWorcester (to whom grateful thanks) and enjoyed by us, our friends from Germany & France and, this time, Spain and Lithuania too.

Finally I wish my successor well and hope they will draw from the role as much enjoyment, satisfaction and pride in Worcester as I have over the years.

PS Nevill wrote this article before the news broke that I would be retiring from the Editorship. Ed.

George Milton - *How I became a Newsletter Editor.....*



The opportunity to take on the editorship of our Association's newsletter happened just when I was thinking about retiring from the committee. David Clark expressed his wish to vacate his position as Newsletter Editor, and I was on the look-out for a word-processing project in order to enhance my computer expertise. Three years and 12 issues later I had improved my keyboard skills and with the added satisfaction of having produced a much acclaimed and influential newsletter. I am not guilty of praising myself with this remark, on the contrary, I am referring to the many messages of appreciation that I received from far and near.

So, how did I get started? First of all I saw this as an opportunity to be creative. The title and format came together quickly, then I made certain editorial decisions such as; not to use columns or wide margins, thereby increasing the amount of text that could be printed; standardising on one font, and using a second one sparingly; to use 'Clip Art' sparingly; banning the word 'newsletter'

from the newsletter and to make up for my own perceived lack of writing skills by inviting contributions from willing sources.

I was aware that previous occupants of this position on our committee had struggled to fill three or four pages, so I started out by aiming to produce a four page first issue, but soon found that I could fill eight pages easily, and so "Connections" became a regular eight page newsletter, now circulated in five countries.

Having completed my self imposed three years in office as Editor, I would like to thank all the many contributors over the past three years, and Bryan and Nicky Neville-Lee, who gave me my first computer, and got me started, five years ago. I would also like to wish my, as yet un-named successor, a useful and fulfilling editorship.

Kleve - Contact: Les Tunley

The news you've all been waiting for!! Our next visit to Kleve will be on the following dates; 6th to 12th September 2010
Please make a note of these dates in your diary. Further information will be forthcoming as soon as Les has more details.

Le Vésinet – Contact: Vivien Greenow

Le Vésinet Marché des Jumelages

Everyone knows that in the Worcester Christmas Fayre our stalls had a new position – outside the Guildhall – and this seems to have met with general approval, particularly from our French friends. Their team of 12 this year contained 8 newcomers, and several of them told me how much they had enjoyed their experience. They found Worcester people particularly friendly and the general atmosphere really 'sympathique'.

When 12 of us went to le Vésinet two weeks later we found that the Marché des Jumelages also had a new site. What had for some years been a derelict open space, after the skating rink had burnt down, is now a splendid new market place which on Saturdays is filled with stalls



selling a variety of goods from food to clothes and bric-a-brac. The marquees which housed the stalls of the various twin towns were at the side of this market-place, and though we had a steady flow of customers on the Friday afternoon, on Saturday we benefited from the crowds attending the weekly market. We sold nearly all our stock, though I must admit the French do not always appreciate that Christmas pudding must be reheated to be enjoyed at its best. The raffle for a hamper containing a selection of all our wares, and more besides, was a great success, and was in fact won by Alain Prieur, one of the team who had come to Worcester.

↳ **Alain Prieur**

We enjoyed a hot lunch on both days at the restaurant "Coté Marché " and on Saturday evening the dinner for all visitors and hosts was at the "Pergola". As ever, we enjoyed home accommodation with host families, many of whom were also working on their stall. Several of us managed to fit in a concert on the Sunday afternoon and others visited Paris to admire the Christmas lights.

Hearty thanks are due to our host families for looking after us so well, and also to all our team who worked so well together setting up and manning our stall. I should particularly like to thank the drivers of the minibus, Les, Louis and David, who ensured we had a safe and comfortable journey there and back.

Victorian Christmas Fayre – contact: Jane Wood

The Victorian Christmas Fayre 2009 was to be a move forward into a new era for Worcester Twinning Association and their friends from Kleve and Le Vésinet. After many years of being in New Street we were allocated new positions in front of the Guildhall for our stalls, not the usual three but five as we were welcoming friends from Villanueva de la Cañada, Spain and Ukmergė - Lithuania to join us.

It was with an open mind and some reservation as we set up our stalls, wondering, if regular customers would find us. We had no need to worry, our new positions proved to be very successful. We had more room around the stalls which made it easier for folk to purchase the Glühwein and Crepes and felt more involved in the Fayre atmosphere than we had been in New Street.

Thanks to everyone who helped on the stall, this year's event was an improvement on last year's which was all down to your support.

Thanks to Rosemary for organising the excellent lunches, and also the enjoyable meal and evening at the Berkeley Arms.

Looking forward to doing all again this year !

Worcester, MA - Contact Lucy Hodgson ☎+44 (0)1905 351382 or email: lucy.hodgson@btinternet.com



A welcome visitor to our Mayor's Parlour on Monday 4th January was Jaime Flores from Worcester, Massachusetts.

Mr Flores works for the hispanic newspaper 'Vocero Hispano' and was planning to write an article about his latest trip to England, where he has relatives living in London, and fairly new friends in Worcester!

Unfortunately, there persists a feeling within our Association that our relationship with our American twin/sister town just isn't working the way we would like it to work, underlined by the fact that few of us, if any, have personal relationships with possible friends who live in Worcester, MA. We would like to thank Jaime, in advance, for any beneficial publicity he may bring to the attention of his readers on our

Mayor, Andy Roberts greets Jaime Flores behalf.

picture supplied by Susan O'Kane, Mayor's PA

Deborah Nurse sent a message to the members of Worcester Twin City Committee, by email;

Subject: Worcester Twin City Committee

"Worcester, Massachusetts: Singers from Worcester Academy will be travelling to Worcester England in March, 2010 and will be in residence at the Royal Grammar School. They will be singing at local venues and later in London. They are under the direction of Donald Irving."

May 8th 1945/2010 - Peter Rogers writes..... ☎ 07718894181 email: Peter_hRogers@yahoo.co.uk

The country erupted into celebration on May 8th 1945. At last it was over, and the feared for knock at the door by the Telegram Boy to announce that a next of kin was dead or missing in action in Europe, would never happen again. The killing and destruction of our cities and ancient monuments was over. We breathed a sigh of relief.

Across Britain street parties were spontaneously held, bonfires were lit, and in London huge crowds celebrated in the Mall before the Palace and in Piccadilly. We all had a party.

But Europe was in a mess, food was short, factories, roads and railways had been destroyed. Populations had been uprooted, refugees were crowded into camps, the concentration and extermination camps were revealing their secrets, bitterness was in the air. Retribution was sought.

And why not, a ghastly regime had distorted values and beliefs beyond recognition, and the hunt was on to destroy all remaining vestiges of it.

But then something extraordinary happened. After 1918 a mood of vengeance had laid the seeds of fascism and mutual hatred. But today, 65 years after the end of WW2, Europe has emerged, as a humane and peaceful continent and we, as winning Associations, have played our modest part in that.

We have stood for the belief that friendship and understanding are possible at the individual level, and deep seated enmities can be replaced by respect and collaboration. This is why May 8th 2010 is so important. It is Europe Day, and the Twinning Association will be celebrating it too.

We have invited guests from our Twinned and Friendship towns to join us for the weekend to celebrate, not in a spirit of triumph, but of thanksgiving, remembrance.

We will link with the other local Associations in the area. First of all there will be a pub lunch, we are not sure exactly where, possibly Holt Fleet between the various towns. In the evening there will be a concert in the Cathedral. We didn't exactly plan the concert, but it so happens that on that very same day the Bromsgrove Music Festival is celebrating its 50th Year, and they have said why not celebrate together. It will be an impressive event; a performance of Elgar's Dream of Gerontius with Donald Hunt conducting the English Symphony Orchestra, the Elgar Chorale, the St. Peter's Singers of Leeds and the Bromsgrove School Chamber Choir. Before that our European guests are invited to a Guildhall reception. The County hierarchy will be there too; the County Lieutenant, The Bishop and Dean of the Cathedral, the Mayors.

Too often we hear it said that Twinning is dying. It is not. It is as important today as ever before. Peace and goodwill are fragile, mutual respect can so easily be replaced by arrogant assertion of cultural certainties.

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Which is why the very rarely performed 'With proud Thanksgiving' will help us collect our thoughts. It was dedicated by Elgar to the Worcestershire Regiment and contains Laurence Binyon's immortal words:

'They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the sun nor the years condemn,
At the going down of the sun

Villanueva de la Cañada, Spain

After coming from the Victorian Christmas Fayre of Worcester I was asked by George Milton to write an article about the visit of the Town Twinning Association of Villanueva de la Cañada to your city. I replied that I would be delighted to do it. I started to think about it and a lot of ideas came to my mind. However I reached the conclusion that since I had been told that people at the twinning dinner liked the little speech I gave I thought I should share it with all the readers of Worcester Twinning Association's newsletter. This is it:

Dear friends of Worcester,

On behalf of the Town twinning Association of Villanueva de la Cañada I would like to thank you for your invitation to your wonderful and unique Victorian Christmas Fayre. We very much appreciate your hospitality and we hope that the town twinning flame that you lighted many years ago, continues active for many more years to come.



L to R; M. José García; Angelus Pueyo; Marina Arcos; Maribel Castelló & Isabel Conesa (picture supplied by Clifford Lord)

English food and weather. And it is no joke. I did a cookery course while I was living in Bath where I learnt a lot about cooking. And since I was born in the South of Spain, I had enough sun, sand and beaches when I was a child. What I really like now is to see the cows in the green fields eating buttercups and going to Gloucester, even better Worcester, in a shower of rain.

Well, to finish off, I would just like to say on behalf of the Spanish delegation that we are having a great time, that the atmosphere at the Christmas Fayre has been very friendly and warm, in spite of the cold weather, and, that we are going back home with our suitcases full of unforgettable memories.

Thank you for your invitation and for being such fantastic hosts.

And thank you Mr Chairman, thank you Nevill, for making it possible in the first place.

When we got back home we excitedly removed our memories from our suitcases and shared them with other members of our association. Now a lot of people know about your kindness, generosity and friendliness and about your beautiful city. Pictures have helped a lot to put faces to feelings of gratitude and joy.

Thank you ever so much to the Town Twinning Association of Worcester, its Town Council, especially its Mayor, Mr Roberts, and VisitWorcester for letting us take part in such an exceptionally well organised event.

Marina Arcos

President of the Town Twinning Association of Villanueva de la Cañada, Spain.

I'm the President of a very young town twinning association; we are just two years old. Nevertheless, we are very keen and committed to extend the philosophy of getting to know people from other countries and cultures. This is, without a doubt, very enriching and rewarding. By learning about others we learn about ourselves. By finding out what others think and do we realise that there are more than one way to think and do things.

I lived in England on several occasions and I have always felt at home here. I love English punctuality, English sense of individual responsibility, and also

The Social Scene

Lunches and our Annual Dinner – Rosemary Reports.....

This year we catered for around 40 guests on the Friday and Saturday lunches at Berkeley Court during the Christmas Fayre, a lot of hard work, but a lovely location and our guests really do appreciate what we do for them.

Thank you to Hazel, Nicky, Margaret, Vivien for all the help in serving food, washing up and clearing away.

Our annual Christmas dinner this year was a huge success, for the first time we went to a proper restaurant, at the Berkeley Arms at Spetchley, food was excellent, lovely room with a great atmosphere and a lot less work for me. And for those members who did not join us, you missed a really great evening.

Christmas Cheer – a Concert presented by The Elgar Chorale directed by Donald Hunt Thursday 17th December 2010 in the Guildhall

David Wright reports.....

We are rapidly approaching the time when no traditional Worcester Christmas will be complete without a visit to the Guildhall for seasonal entertainment care of The Elgar Chorale and the Twinning Association – courtesy of the Mayor.

This year, the Twinning Association's organising flair and the Chorale's felicity of voice produced a happy, memorable and varied evening.

The more serious side of things focussed on some stylish arrangements of Christmas carols by Donald Hunt; it being a mere coincidence that the Chorale had just brought out a CD of "DH" arrangements and that these were on sale. These included two Welsh Christmas songs involving, in one of them, the Chorale taking on the Welsh language. The Welsh language lost and it is thought that Anglo Welsh relations have been put back to the days of Owen Glendower.

One other arranger was allowed, Malcolm Sargent, whose *Cowboy Carol* was "accompanied" by some of the men of the choir on banjos. They have agreed to stick to the day job in future. There was singing for the audience to do, including a slightly chaotic rendering of *The Twelve Days of Christmas* – none of those present are being offered auditions with the Chorale.

Then, there were the readings. Among several impressive contributions, Judith Holden gave us the correct version of *A Visit from St Nicholas* which was countered by Tim Watson with a shameless and hysterical parody by Frank Jacobs. Both are well known as local amateur actors, apart from being members of the Chorale; the same could not be said for Peter Rogers, compulsive twinner and now a vice president of the Chorale. His reading, in what he claimed was a North London accent (well, it was certainly an accent), would have made any scout from the RSC sign him up on the spot – but probably not as an actor.

As the evening drew to an end and the wine ran out, there was reference to *chestnuts roasting on an open fire* and advance news that *Santa Claus was coming to town*; but before we were able to *dream of a white Christmas*, Donald Hunt decided that he needed a volunteer from the audience to sing the solo. As most of us hid beneath our tables feigning laryngitis, up stepped that well known opera singer Alan Fairs, who just happened to be in the audience and who just happened to have brought his music with him

Membership – Contact: Jane Wood

We offer a warm welcome to; Lord Faulkner of Worcester

The Millionaire's Wife

"I'm responsible for making my husband a millionaire" a woman proudly told her friend. "Oh really?" the friend said. "And what was he before he met you?" "a billionaire," the woman replied.

Joyful moments for Lithuanians in Worcester

Indrė Sinkevičiūtė Reports.....

The 4 of us, Lolita, Vilija, Daiva and Indrė, came from Ukmergė to Worcester for the Christmas Fayre in November. We brought Lithuanian goods made by ourselves and our associates in Ukmergė (e.g. scarves, socks, gloves and table linen) as well as jewellery designed and made by Vilija, a well-known Lithuanian designer – her shoes with the turned up toes attracted lots of interest on the stall! After our first ever flights, Nevill and Terry welcomed us at Birmingham Airport and drove us back to Worcester. Then, two of us stayed with Keith Stokes-Smith and the other two stayed with Margaret and Terry. We would like to thank everyone for everything they did for us.

It was the first time we had been in the UK, let alone Worcester, so our hosts began by showing us around, especially the magnificent cathedral and some old houses. Vilija took a lot of photographs. Then they gave us lunch in the beautiful Guildhall.

The position of our stall, outside the Guildhall was great, since we saw lots of British culture there, like singing, dancing and bands performing right next to us. The people we met were all very kind to us – people in the street were happy to talk to us, the Twinning Association helped us with things to decorate our stall, and the Mayor entertained us in the parlour and let us try on his gold chain! We not only felt at home in Worcester, but also met kind, generous, joyful people, and some of them gave us ideas for improving our products. We experienced a new culture and new traditions and certainly learned how to help each other. We hope to see you again next year!

The Lithuanian Ladies with the Mayor in his Parlour ⇒

L to R; George Milton; Lolita Gerulskienė, Andy Roberts, Indrė Sinkevičiūtė, Daiva Kalinauskienė; front row (crouching): Vilija Poškienė



"A Passion for Jazz" with Fred Stone Friday 6th November – a Report by Nevill Swanson.....



We broke new ground on November 6th - a social evening at Worcester Arts Workshop devoted to jazz in the hands of Worcester's Mr. Jazz - Fred Stone. Fred knows his stuff (was that ever doubted!?) and indeed has literally rubbed shoulders with some of the greats (well Humphrey Lyttelton at least!). Initially Fred and his (captive) audience were a little wary of each other. Would we appreciate the fare on offer? Would Fred feel his time wasted? He began by addressing some popular myths and misconceptions. Was jazz raucous? Was jazz too loud? Were there any tunes in jazz? His first piece answered the latter as recognition of the Londonderry Air (Danny Boy) slowly spread over peoples' faces (& it wasn't raucous or too loud either!).

Fred then pointed out that jazz musicians were "proper" musicians, many of them classically trained, who abhorred pop tunes. We were soon into some of the jazz legends with pieces by the likes of Jelly Roll Morton, Bix Beiderbecke, Oscar Peterson, Django Reinhardt. By now eyes were closed (but in concentration), feet were tapping, heads nodding (I saw you Clifford!).

We learnt about Bing Crosby's brother Bob (a question for pub quizzes?).

We heard Ella Fitzgerald and Eva Cassidy ("Somewhere Over the Rainbow" - another tune!). We went through "Underneath the Arches" (Daryl Sherman) and "Roses of Picardy" (Bruce Turner) and of course we had Humph.

Fred's quiet erudition and laid-back enthusiasm had proved his point, demonstrated the outstanding virtuosity and improvisational skills of the performers and provided us with a memorable evening.

A big thank-you to Fred (please do a repeat sometime) and to Rosemary who organised the evening with her customary expertise.

Pictures from the Archives



The Kleve Party about to leave Worcester after having participated in the fairly new Christmas Fayre early December 1996?

Left to right; Petra Scheike; Mrs. Massam; Edith Bleney; Harold Massam; Les & Rosemary Tunley, Ottmar Kretzer; Bryan Neville-Lee; Karl-Heinz Köster; Gisela Köster; George Milton; Nicky Neville-Lee; Sheila & John Cave; John Bleney



Cycling we will go! L to R; Hazel Lawrance; Rita Newby; George Milton & John Cave c. 1996?

at the Kleve Stadtfest September 1996 ⇔
L to R; Iain 'The Piper'; Doreen & George Milton;
Steve Baker; Gisela Köster; & Jenny.

