

Littlehampton Twinning Association Newsletter visit to durmersheim

How lucky we were with the weather for our long weekend visit to Durmersheim in May. Many five day weather forecasts had prophesied rain, however we were blessed with sunshine until on the road home. We were not so lucky with our coach and from the outset, a 5 o'clock start on Thursday morning from the Town Hall car park, it rapidly became obvious that neither the heating nor the airconditioning systems functioned properly.

The crossing by ferry from Dover to Calais was very pleasant with many of the members of the Edwin James Festival Choir, who made up half of our contingent, enjoying the morning sunshine on the open deck. For most this could be their first visit to Germany and certainly to Durmersheim.

With no time for a shopping stop in Calais, we were soon on the motorway through France. We made a lunch time stop at a motorway services where our friendly driver, always willing to please when possible, entered the bowels of the coach to partly close a heating valve. This made the rest of the journey via Reims, the outskirts of Strasbourg and through the centre of Rastatt more bearable. We arrived, on time, to be welcomed with drinks and snacks in the Pfarrzentrum opposite the Bürgersaal. Members of the choir would meet their new hosts and soon find themselves in a German house probably for the very first time.



A slight adjustment to the heating



The 'Ganz Gruppe' arrive at Durlach

When we all met up the next morning at the Rheinstetten tram terminus it was apparent that any fears had been put aside. Everyone seemed to be relaxed and enjoying themselves. With Germanic precision and under the watchful eye of Hubert Ganz, the new twinning secretary, we all awaited in our allotted groups for the designated tram for the first leg of the journey to the Europlatz in Karlsruhe. From there we waited for another tram to take us out to Durlach now annexed as a suburb of Karlsruhe. We made a sedate walk to the foot of the Turmberg, literally Tower-hill, where we took the cable driven funicular railway to the top. The maximum slope on the track is 36% and originally the cars were operated by water being pumped into a tank on the upper car to counter balance the lower one and overcome the friction. Since restoration in 1966 it has been



Editorial & Layout

— DC-Design —

dc.design@btinternet.com

Littlehampton Twinning is a self financing Association independent of the local Town Council. New members are most welcome. If you would like more information, or are interested in joining, please contact the secretary.



The Tower

electrically powered. At the summit the more able and adventurous ones climbed up to the viewing platforms of the tower which offered views over the surrounding countryside. As yet the sun had not burned off the mist that clouded the views.



View from the top

After descending the hill, some choosing to walk down, the sun was starting to shine. We were split into groups for guided tours of beautiful old Durlach. We then travelled back to Karlsruhe by tram and after a short walk arrived at our lunch stop in the



Old Durlach



Town fire brigade founder's memorial



Horse & Bull Fountain with extra dog!

Brauhaus, a working brewery. Apart from some very impressive coppers and freshly piped beer, the brewery had installed a helter-skelter that ran between two floors. This was enjoyed by young and not-so-young alike. After a most enjoyable lunch, washed down with the local brew, people drifted off to spend the following hour or so as they wished. On offer were the well manicured gardens of the Schlossgarten with its tearooms and the bustling shopping centre of Karlsruhe. Apart from two people, whose embarrassment we will spare, everyone managed to be back on time for the tram back to Rheinstetten. Friday evening was rounded off with an evening spent with host families.

Saturday was another sunny day and everyone appears to have enjoyed themselves and have the photographs to prove it! In the evening the Pfarrzentrum was host to a Combined Choirs Concert. The Edwin James Choir sang first with a most moving rendition of pieces from 'The Armed Man' by Karl Jenkins; this was followed by performances from the Freundschaft Würmersheim, the 'Soul & More' group Harmonie Durmersheim and the Kantatenchor Durmersheim. Following an interval during which drinks were available at the bar, the choirs performed once more culminating in a final performance by the massed choirs. The concert was a fantastic success and the audience was very appreciative of the wonderful singing they had experienced. Well done the Edwin James Choir your performance will be remembered for a long time. Following the concert, tables were brought out and the chairs rearranged to enable the serving of a tasty supper. Drinks were again available at the bar and the grand piano was put to good use providing further entertainment.

On Sunday morning the Edwin James Choir sang in Maria Bickesheim Church. As well as going to church, Twinning members were free to do what their hosts had arranged for them. Once again we were very fortunate with the weather.

Being a bank holiday weekend we had arranged to leave on Monday morning to give us an extra day. This meant that it was difficult to obtain an afternoon ferry booking. As a compensation, we had decided to leave Durmersheim early and make a stop at Namur, in the Ardennes, on the way home. However this idea had been scuppered on Thursday when it was announced that Diamond coaches were not willing to take the route via Luxembourg and Belgium. So bright an early we assembled outside the Rathaus for the now obligatory Auld Lang Syn this time accompanied by Marilyn Dennis and Jim Hurdwell. The coach was loaded up with pretzels and, courteously of the Dr Koffler farm, a 500gm punnet of the most delicious locally grown strawberries for everyone on board.



With the heating turned down it was still hot in the coach but after several pleas the driver turned on the airconditioning for a few minutes resulting in water pouring from some of the overhead lockers! Even though we were returning by the flattest route possible, a series of inclines tripped the engines over-heat alarms and we pulled off the road at the first available services. Unfortunately this service station had no restaurant facilities, just a shop where we clustered round the refrigerated cabinets to cool down! It was obvious that the engine need the extra cooling offered by the coach heating pipes and so the driver was forced to partly open the valve and cook his passengers, their sandwiches and possessions. After a stop of an hour to allow the engine to cool we were once more on the road; this time accompanied by the horrendous noise of the air brake pressure valve venting off every ten seconds. The coach roof lights had been opened to give some cooling but as we approached Pas de Calais the sky turned grey and it started to rain. At the ferry port there was a palpable sense of relief as we drove up the ramp and into the ship. At Dover a replacement coach was waiting for us. On this vehicle the airconditioning worked perfectly. With the news of a blocked section of the motorway we were forced to take the more picturesque but slower route back to Littlehampton via the A20.



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Apart from the troubles with our transport, everyone seems to agree that it was a most enjoyable visit.

report by choir member june piper

The Choir joined the Twinning Association on their trip to Durmersheim on the 21st May 2009, we had a very warm welcome and were met by our hosts in the town hall. Some of us were a little apprehensive never having been in Germany before with no German vocabulary to speak of, although some of us had varying degrees of the language. Our fears were very soon put aside and we were made so welcome by these warm generous people who opened their homes and hearts to us.

We were entertained and taken on guided tours and we all had varying stories to share with each other.

We had a concert on the Saturday evening in which our choir sang a selection from 'The Armed Man' by Karl Jenkins in the first half. This was very well received and many of the audience came up to us and our musical director, James Rushman, and said they were drawn to tears. (I think they meant they enjoyed it?!) it was very poignant actually as they were remembering the 2nd World War this year and 'The Armed Man' is a mass for peace.

We sang a selection of lighter songs in the second half from Rodgers & Hammerstein's 'You'll Never Walk Alone' to an American spiritual, 'When All the Saints'. We were then joined by the three other choirs performing and we all sang 'Come Again', a well known song for the Germans.

We were very touched by their appreciation of our efforts.



Bürgermeister Andreas Augustin presents gifts to the choir members



The Edwin James Festival Choir in full voice

The evening ended with the very talented Marilyn Dennis from Littlehampton who played the piano and we all sang together in a circle led by Chris Allen doing the Hokey Cokey and Auld Lang Syne.



The choir sang in a moving service on Sunday morning at St. Maria Bickesheim Church, before we were taken on various trips with our hosts.

I speak for James and all the choir and families, when I say this was a most memorable occasion and we have all made such wonderful friendships which will last forever.

We would like to thank the Twinning Association and all the people involved in the planning, for giving us this opportunity.

spanish lunch

Nina and David Twinn are holding another of their very popular Spanish Lunches on Sunday 23rd August. There is always a great selection of 'Iberian delights' to enjoy. Please contact them, or Susan Dyball, if you intend coming so that the catering can be arranged. As usual a prize for the raffle would be most appreciated as it is at such events that we raise the majority of the funds to entertain our guests during twinning exchanges.

All prospective members are most welcome!

surprise visit

As has become the tradition, the sun shone brightly for James Walsh's wine and cheese on 14th June. The event was well attended, including a surprise appearance by Monique and Eric Hayward.



Newer twinning members will probably not know that Monique and Eric were introduced to each other by Dorothy Clevitt during one of the very first twinning exchanges with Chennevières.

Eric, Dorothy and Monique

Following their marriage they lived in Rustington and for many years and Eric was a member of the Committee where his ability with accounting was put to good use.

On retirement Eric and Monique moved to France and for the last few years they have been active in the Chennevières Comité de Jumelage.

As they just happened to be in the country, having celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary a few days before, they thought it would be a good idea to surprise us all by dropping in on the wine and cheese and saying hello. Congratulations to you both!

coming events

Sunday 23rd August — Spanish Lunch - courtesy of David & Nina Twinn - 12pm - £7.50

Saturday 3rd October — Horse Race Evening - 5th Littlehampton Scout HQ

Saturday 7th November — Quiz Night - 5th Littlehampton Scout HQ - *corrected date*

Sunday 13th December — Christmas Party