



Tunbridge Wells Twinning & Friendship Association

Newsletter

August 2008

With the summer holidays behind us - and I hope that neither the weather nor the credit crunch has cast a shadow over your holiday break - it is time to think about activities for those dark evenings that are inexorably coming. We have put together a varied programme of events, some organised by TWTFa, some by other organisations, that we would like to bring to your attention, and I have pleasure in enclosing it with this Newsletter.

The Association has had a busy spring and summer with a lively exchange of visitors between Tunbridge Wells and our twin town along with a variety of other events.

To start with the visits: in April and May, we were able to arrange a placement at the Town Hall for **Stefanie Wolf**, a young student working in the tourism section of Wiesbaden Council. She stayed with a local family, impressed everyone with her bright personality and excellent English, and thoroughly enjoyed her time here. In June Michael and Dorothea Holman accompanied three young local musicians - one from TWGGS, one from Kent College and one ex-Tonbridge School to Wiesbaden. The musicians, all string players, were selected by TWTFa to take part in a special performance of Karl Jenkins' "**The Armed Man - A Mass for Peace**" by the Orchestra and Choir of Wiesbaden's Music Academy under the baton of Christoph Nielbock in the beautiful basilica of Kloster Eberbach. TWTFa assisted with the cost of fares, while the Academy accommodated the young people in families of students at the Academy. The concert was a very moving experience for all concerned and exemplified the true spirit of twinning, with young musicians from Germany, Britain and many other countries coming together to perform this powerful work of reconciliation. It was favourably reported both in The Courier and the Wiesbaden press. In July, **Christoph Nielbock** paid us a return visit when he came to Tunbridge Wells to attend the biennial Tunbridge Wells International Young Concert Artists Competition (TWIYCA), of which he is now a patron. Those members who came to the barbecue will have had a chance to meet him there. While in Tunbridge Wells, Christoph met music teachers from local schools and discussed with them plans for musical co-operation with the Academy. Then, from the world of sport: **two girls' teams from Wiesbaden Hockey Club** were in Tunbridge Wells from 8 - 13 July to play various matches around the county, including a match against TWGGS at Hawkenbury, matches in Canterbury and games against a variety of local teams in a tournament at the new sports centre at Tonbridge School. During their time here they had a full social programme as well, which included being present at the unveiling of the **new sundial** by Mayor Rusbridge on Saturday 12 July. Members will remember that the original copper and bronze sundial was stolen in 2006, but thanks to the active intervention of TWTFa a replica was made by a Wiesbaden firm - this time in stainless steel which will hopefully prove less attractive to the light-fingered fraternity. The new sundial is now proudly installed on the original plinth outside the police station and looks very fine. All it needs now is some sun!

In August a small group of TWTFa members travelled to Wiesbaden to attend the opening of the **Annual Wine Festival** and to meet up with long-standing friends of the Association in our twin town. We are particularly pleased that TWTFa member and former Mayor Cllr Barbara Cobbold and her husband Douglas were able to fulfil a long-standing wish to visit Wiesbaden. They enjoyed

a full programme which included visits to various places of local interest and a boat trip on the Rhine, and of course had plenty of opportunities to sample the delicious wines of the region. As to the Association's own events, we had an entertaining evening in May with Denise Barnes who talked about her new book "**From Bad to Worst - Adventures of a Veggie Cook**". We hope that those who came to her talk have been practising making "Grüne Soße" and other German delicacies over the summer! (We still have some recipes kindly provided by Denise should you want them!) Staying on the topic of food, we had our **Annual Barbecue** on 20 July in Margaret Fuller's garden and managed to pick a dry sunny afternoon, a pleasant change from last year's very wet event! The barbecue is always popular, as everyone knows they can expect high-quality meat expertly barbecued by Margaret's son, Stephen, while Margaret's desserts, though a threat to waistlines, are irresistible! There was the usual raffle, which yielded £88, while a lovely watercolour of the Rhine, painted and generously donated by Roy Standen, was auctioned for £65. These monies will go towards our recently established anniversary fund. With the **50th anniversary** of the establishment of the link with Wiesbaden coming up in 2010, we are hoping to revive an old tradition by making it possible for a party of the Sea Cadets to go to Wiesbaden in February 2010 to take part in the Fasching parades. We are also hoping to work together with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to celebrate the **20th anniversary** of the signing of the twinning agreement next year, most probably with a return visit from the Wiesbaden Brass Ensemble. Christoph Nielbock has kindly offered us the Ensemble's talents for the period between 19 and 25 May, so watch this space for further news!

Since TWTFa brought the Lithuanian Ambassador, Vygaudas Usackas, to Tunbridge Wells for his first visit in February this year, there have been initial talks between the Council and the Lithuanian Embassy about a possible cooperation between **Tunbridge Wells and Plunge in the western part of Lithuania**, near Klaipeda. As a result, Mayor Mike Rusbridge and his wife Chris have accepted an invitation to visit Plunge for the International Music Festival at the end of August. TWTFa welcomes this active interest in our Central European neighbours and will support the Council's initiative. This will not, however, adversely affect our work with our German twin town. Following his February visit, Ambassador Usackas has made two further visits to Tunbridge Wells, once, in June, for a recital at Trinity by TWIYCA's 2006 winner, the young Lithuanian pianist Martyna Jatkauskaitė, and once more, at the end of July, for a specially arranged round of golf at the Nevill Golf Club. The Ambassador is keen to promote golf in Lithuania, so, once again, watch this space...

Finally, I am sure members will wish to join us in offering our warmest congratulations to our President Tom MacAndrew and his wife Edna on their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 7 August.

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