



## Tunbridge Wells Twinning & Friendship Association

### Newsletter

September 2010

It has been a relatively quiet summer for the Twinning Association compared with last year when we had high-ranking visitors from Wiesbaden to mark 20 years of twinning. This year it was back to business as usual with less pomp and circumstance, more bread and butter twinning activities. But we did celebrate another anniversary this year as it is **50 years since the first contact with Wiesbaden** was established by Tom MacAndrew, whose death we were sad to announce earlier this year, and his three ex-service companions. We marked this anniversary with a **festive summer lunchtime barbecue hosted by Margaret Fuller**. This was very well-attended and we were very pleased to welcome from Wiesbaden our good friend Christoph Nielbock, Director of Wiesbaden's Music Academy, and Johanna and Peter Exel, long-standing supporters of our work in Wiesbaden and well-known to many of our members. The raffle and auction raised £176 for Association funds.

There were other visits in both directions. A group from Wiesbaden's Hermann-Ehlers-Schule came to Paddock Wood in June as part of a **joint media project with Mascalls School**. Due to difficulties finding accommodation for the students, it looked for a time as though this visit might have to be cancelled, but after much emailing and telephoning by our Chairman, the Wiesbaden Cultural Affairs Department agreed to pay for B & B accommodation and the young people were able to travel as planned. Once here, they had a thoroughly rewarding visit and an excellent joint DVD was produced. Normally our policy with such exchanges and visits is to find suitable contacts in our twin town and bring people together, but then to let them make their own arrangements. However, if things threaten to fall apart, we will intervene and help where we can. Our thanks to all who helped make the visit possible.

Coincidentally, there was also a one-day visit from the same school in June. A different group from the school were visiting SE England and came to Tunbridge Wells for a day. They were given a guided tour of the town and took lots of pictures.

For the fourth year running, the link between **Wiesbaden and Royal Tunbridge Wells Hockey Clubs** continued to flourish with a visit from two junior hockey teams, boys and girls, from Wiesbaden in July. The success of such links shows how well twinning can work if the initial contacts are well selected and a first visit goes well. Such contacts can then often lead to regular exchanges.

Another example of a visit that we hope will become a tradition is the July visit to **Wiesbaden's Schierstein Harbour Festival** by our local samba band **Bloco Fogo**. The Harbour Festival is a colourful affair with dragon boat races on the river, street processions and a variety of bands playing at open-air venues, Bloco Fogo played at the festival on the final day and were very well received, even playing in front of Wiesbaden Town Hall. We were immensely grateful to our sister organisation in Wiesbaden, the Wiesbaden/Royal Tunbridge

Wells-Vereinigung and in particular its Chairman, our good friend Claus Rönsch, for their help in organising this visit and their generosity in providing accommodation for the group.

### **Loss of a good friend**

In the same year that we took leave of our President, Tom MacAndrew, we were shocked and saddened to hear from Wiesbaden that, shortly after Bloco Fogo's return home, **Claus Rönsch** had died suddenly of a heart attack. The loss of such a vital and energetic partner with wide-ranging contacts in many spheres of Wiesbaden life will leave an enormous hole, and he will be greatly missed here and in Wiesbaden. Our sincere condolences go to his family.

Here at home we organised a summer outing for members in August with a boat trip on the Medway. Nearly 40 members enjoyed a peaceful and relaxing afternoon cruising gently along the Medway from Allington Lock through Maidstone (which looked almost romantic from the water!) to East Farleigh Lock and back. A delicious cream tea was served on board.

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. Just to whet your appetite, we are planning a German-themed social evening in October which will feature some typical German dishes such as potato salad, red cabbage and, of course, "Würstchen" served with German wine and beer. To keep the price low, we shall be preparing the food ourselves with the help of some of our German members. This is the first time we have attempted something of this nature and we hope it will be fun, so we do hope you will support it. Then in November we are expecting a visit from Albrecht Kurbjuhn to talk to us about holidaying in Mecklenburg. Albrecht and his wife (who incidentally comes from Wiesbaden) bought a hotel in Kühlungsborn after reunification and have turned into one of the finest hotels in this lovely resort. Albrecht has done many presentations abroad on behalf of the Kühlungsborn International Tourism Initiative and is a Board member of the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, not to mention being a senior member of the German Clan McLeod Society, so he is man of many parts and also speaks well-nigh perfect English. Don't miss him!

Early next year, we expect our good friend Friedrich Schrecker of Wiesbaden's Mosbacher Berg Gymnasium to bring 20 students to Tunbridge Wells on a work placement visit from 30 January to 12 February. This will be the 10<sup>th</sup> year of these visits, so quite an achievement.

Finally, I'd also like to remind you of the proposed visit to Wiesbaden's Wine Festival in August 2011 that is being organised by Alex and Alison Page (details were sent out earlier this year). Contact Alex and Alison for more information on 01892 537007 or [alisonpage61@msn.com](mailto:alisonpage61@msn.com).

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