



Tunbridge Wells Twinning & Friendship Association

Newsletter

September 2009

Now that autumn is upon us after the "barbecue summer" that never was, it is time to look back on the year so far and also to think about activities for the coming months. 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 highpoint of the Association's year already lies behind us with the celebrations to mark the **20th anniversary of the signing of the twinning charter with Wiesbaden**. We were happy to receive a visit from the current **Lord Mayor of Wiesbaden**, Helmut Müller, with his wife who as guests of our Borough Council attended the Mayor-making ceremony at the Town Hall, but also met with local business people during their short stay. Following in the footsteps of their Lord Mayor were **two other visitors from Wiesbaden Town Council**, Rita Thies, Councillor with special responsibility for cultural affairs and Jörg Funk, head of Wiesbaden's Cultural Affairs Department, who spent several days here meeting the Borough's cultural "movers and shakers" and looking into possibilities for future cooperation. And as those of you who attended some of the events in May will know, we were delighted to welcome back **Christoph Nielbock** and his wonderful **Wiesbaden Symphonic Brass Ensemble**. Besides playing in schools and other venues, they gave a free afternoon concert in glorious sunshine on the Pantiles Bandstand and a fantastic gala concert at St John's Church together with choirs from local schools. Once again, we would like to thank those families who very kindly opened their homes to these young musicians during their stay here.

In connection with the 20th anniversary, a brief photographic overview of the past **10 years of the Association's** history can currently be seen in Tunbridge Wells Library where a small display of photographs and other memorabilia has been put together by **Museum Collections Manager Ian Beavis** to celebrate the anniversary. Do be sure to have a look and see how many faces from the past you recognise! Two similar display cases have been created in the Town Hall, charting the Wiesbaden link over nearly fifty years. If you wish to see it, join us for our private viewing on 29 September (see the enclosed Events Programme).

Nor is that the end of the celebrations, for next year will bring yet another anniversary, this time the **50th anniversary** of that famous trip to Wiesbaden by 4 ex-servicemen (including of course our own President Tom MacAndrew) in a gesture of reconciliation. From that first link has grown the Association as we know it today. We are planning various events and activities to mark the occasion, the main one will be a **trip to Wiesbaden in February by the Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadets** to take part in Wiesbaden's Carnival celebrations, thus reviving a long-standing tradition of earlier years. No doubt you will have seen the article in The Courier of 14 August about the difficulties facing the Sea Cadets in raising funding for the trip. They are planning a fund-raising event in the form of a "Beat Retreat" to help raise the necessary finance on Saturday 26 September at their headquarters, and we would urge

Association members to attend. Details can be obtained from Derek Ireland, tel 01892 837 004. Please also see our separate Appeal in aid of the Sea Cadets. Finally, a coach party is being organised by TWTFa members Alison and Alex Page to travel to Wiesbaden over the Fasching weekend to support the Sea Cadets and to enjoy the colourful spectacle of a Rhineland carnival. Anyone interested in joining the trip should contact Alison and Alex on 01892 537007, email alisonpage61@msn.com.

In a further attempt to promote the Association, to find out more about its history and of course to celebrate the 50th anniversary, we are planning a competition that we hope will awaken memories of the early days of the Association. In 1980, on the 20th anniversary, 50 beautiful engraved crystal goblets were presented to people here and in Wiesbaden who had been instrumental in forging the links between our two towns. We know that Tom MacAndrew has such a goblet, and there is one in the Town Hall exhibition, but we would like to find out if others still exist in the town and to this end want to launch, with the help of the local press, a **"Hunt the Goblet" competition in local schools**, urging children to ask their parents, grandparents etc. if there might be such a goblet in their family. The first 5 children to find a goblet will receive a voucher for a family ticket to the Assembly Hall's Christmas pantomime. Obviously if any of our members know of the existence of a goblet, we would love to hear from them, too. We hope this way to perhaps obtain further memorabilia from the Association's past.

But not all activity between our two towns this year has been anniversary-related. There has been the usual exchange of visits, mainly between schools, music groups and sports clubs as these are the areas where we try to promote links. Over the May bank holiday weekend the **Baroque Singers**, a chamber choir, went to Wiesbaden to give a concert and workshop at Wiesbaden's Anglican church, and they hope to receive a return visit next year. In June a group of 40 pupils and 4 teachers from the **Hermann-Ehlers-Schule**, a comprehensive school in Wiesbaden, came to Tunbridge Wells and spent the day at **Bennett Memorial School** which has specialist language status and teaches German. We hope this visit may lead to further cooperation between the two schools. Finally, in July our local samba band **Bloco Fogo**, who those of you who came to the gala concert in May will have seen giving a warm-up act on the church green before the concert, travelled to Germany to take part in an international samba festival in Coburg. On their return journey they stopped off in Wiesbaden to appear at the **Schierstein Harbour Festival**, a colourful affair with dragon boat races on the river, street processions and a variety of bands playing at open-air venues. Bloco Fogo were received in Wiesbaden Town Hall and were generally a resounding success. They enjoyed their visit so much that they hope to make it a regular feature of their summer season. An event that is happening as I write is a **return visit to Wiesbaden by youth teams from the Royal Tunbridge Wells Hockey Club** from 26 - 30 August to play in a hockey tournament and cement the friendship started in 2007 when the team first went to Wiesbaden.

Back here in Tunbridge Wells, our **annual barbecue lunch** in July courtesy of Margaret Fuller was as always a great success in spite of a rather uncertain weather forecast. We had a record turn-out this year with nearly 50 members and guests attending, though sadly our President Tom MacAndrew was unable to join us and we send him all good wishes for a return to health and strength. The usual **raffle and auction raised nearly £200** for Association funds. Some of this will go towards our 2010 Fund which was established to help raise money for 50th anniversary events, such as the Sea Cadets trip.

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