

CONNECTIONS CONNECTIONS

Winter 2002

BATH'S TWINNING NEWSLETTER

Issue No 2

Bath International Twinning Forum 2003



The Children's lantern procession at Bath's German-style Christmas market.

The four Bath Twinning Associations are planning an International Twinning Forum from Thursday 22 to Sunday 25 May 2003 for people of all ages. This will take place against the background of a rich programme of Bath Festival and Fringe events, some of them arranged especially to celebrate the theme of cultural diversity within an enlarged Europe.

Different groups and societies from Aix-en-Provence, Alkmaar, Braunschweig and Kaposvar can meet their opposite numbers in Bath and set up exchange projects.

The Mayor of Bath, Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst will host a reception, in the Roman Baths. The busy schedule also includes a ceremony of dedication in the newly created Dutch Garden in Orange Grove; formal presentations from the Twinning Associations from each of the five cities; a programme of workshops, seminars and performances focussing on the arts and culture, heritage, sport and education.

We would like to hear from organisations active in these fields, and commerce, who already have links (however tentative) with similar organisations in the twin towns, and from those who would be interested in forming new links. Please contact Jolyon Laycock, Secretary, Aix-en-Provence Twinning Association, phone/fax 01761 490378 or e-mail jolyonlaycock@hotmail.com



Braunschweig Brass Ensemble add to the festive atmosphere at Bath's Christmas Market.

BRAUNSCHWEIG

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The Christmas Market, by Marian McNeir

A second magical German-style Christmas Market with wooden chalets decorated with pine branches and white lights, was held from 28 November to 8 December. Abbey Churchyard and Abbey Green were transformed into a traditional Weihnachtsmarkt as the aroma of Glühwein and Bratwurst wafted through the air.

Braunschweig Brass Ensemble added to the festive atmosphere playing at the Market and in the Abbey. The 12 musicians stayed with members of the Twinning Committee, which turned out to be great fun for all concerned. The Braunschweigers were delighted with their warm reception and with the media coverage, which included an interview on local radio.

On the opening night local primary school children packed the Abbey for the first concert of an extensive music programme which was very popular with the 250,000 visitors to the Market. Pastor Hempel, the Domprediger (Rector) of the Cathedral in Braunschweig preached at the Advent Service in the Abbey. In the true spirit of twinning he gave his blessing in German, "Der Herr segne uns, und behüte uns, und lasse sein Licht leuchten über uns."

Braunschweig Twinning Association took a stall, which sold Christmas Market mugs, locally made specialist candles, wreaths, Advent table decorations and Christmas cards. It was the Committee's first venture into fund-raising and very successful – an experience greatly enhanced by the close proximity of a caterer supplying excellent Glühwein and Bratwurst!

Councillor Gitte Dawson and I have always loved the children's lantern processions, which are a feature of many German Christmas markets, so we were delighted when more than 100 children and their parents followed musicians through the streets of Bath. Not all traditions cross the Channel successfully but this one certainly seems to be firmly established with local children.

The visit by City of Bath Bach Choir to Braunschweig, by Edward Shaw

Sixty choir members led by conductor Nigel Perrin visited Braunschweig on 22 October 2002 to perform a concert at the Dom. The choir was welcomed to Braunschweig by the Mayor at a reception in the Old Town Hall. Many members were guests in hosts' houses. There was a social programme of parties and sightseeing visits to Goslar in the Harz Mountains and to the Volkswagen Neustadt exposition at Wolfsburg.

For the second half of the concert on Saturday, the Dom choir and orchestra joined the City of Bath Bach Choir for a performance of the St Nicholas Mass by Joseph Haydn. This was well received by an appreciative audience. On Sunday morning the Haydn Mass was performed liturgically at the Lutheran morning service.

Teacher Training Exchange, by Philippa Sondheimer

Braunschweig student Martina Schellin was welcomed to Bath on 5 November by the Mayor, who gave her a guided tour of the treasures in the Mayor's Parlour in the Guildhall. Martina is in the final year of a four-year course at the teacher training college in Braunschweig and was in Bath on a six-week placement at Southdown Infants School. She enjoyed working with the six-to-11-year-olds whose class teacher, Jan Ward, also came to meet the Mayor.

Forthcoming Events

We are hoping to hold a 'German Dinner' on 13 March at 7 pm in the Shrubbery Restaurant at the City of Bath College – food and entertainment with a German flavour! Tickets £16 - further details from Philippa Sondheimer on 07889 750545 or e-mail philippa@haringtonglass.co.uk

Two German artists, Nicolette Hansen and Christian Doms, are hoping to hold an exhibition of their art in Bath this year. The Twinning Association is helping them to find a venue.

The City of Braunschweig is holding a Street Theatre Festival between 21 and 24 August – a good time to visit the city. The Twinning Association is arranging for a Bath theatre group to take part.

ALKMAAR

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Tulips on Alkmaar Green

During the International Twinning Forum the Alkmaar Twinning Association plans to rededicate the Dutch Garden in the presence of the Mayor of Bath and the Rector of Bath Abbey. Four-hundred tulip bulbs have been purchased from Alkmaar thanks to Neville Hawken of the Avon Beekeepers who now lives there. Parks Department at Bath and North East Somerset Council has planted the bulbs in the Alkmaar Green/Orange Grove so the tulips will be in full bloom for the ceremony on Friday 23 May.

Bristol Avon Sailing Club

A contingent from Shearwater Sailing Club and Bristol Avon Sailing Club visited Alkmaar from 9 to 11 May last year to take part in the opening of the Alkmaarsche Roei En Zeilvereeniging (ARZV) sailing season. There has been a long-running association between the clubs who usually compete for a trophy, which was donated many years ago by the local jewellers, Gilmers.

There was no competition for the Gilmer Trophy in 2002 but the two English clubs witnessed the ARZV sailing in convoy from their impressive clubhouse across part of a lake and along a canal to the town centre of Alkmaar. Part of this traditional procession involves numerous boats sailing past the Mayor of Alkmaar and other dignitaries.

ARZV has been invited to visit the Bristol Avon Sailing Club this year to enjoy sailing and the usual hospitality of local members. When the Bristol club celebrates its jubilee in 2005 there are plans for all three clubs to compete for the Gilmer Trophy once again.

Art Exhibition

Next year Alkmaar celebrates its 750 anniversary as a city. As part of the celebrations they are planning a cultural exchange programme with their twin cities: Bath, Tata in Hungary, Troyes in France and Darmstadt in Germany. This will involve artists, painters and sculptors from the twin cities providing works of art for a big exhibition in St Lawrence's Church in Alkmaar in June 2004. The event is being co-ordinated by the Gallery Chicory.

Bath Dolphin Swimming Club

During the Easter holiday, Alkmaar Swimming Club will visit Bath Dolphin Swimming Club and, hopefully, stay in members' homes again this year. They have been invited to bring a full team and supporting adults to participate in an inter-club gala. This year will mark the 58 anniversary of the twinning of the two clubs and a full programme has been drawn up to include a visit to the Roman Baths and a farewell disco party at Bath Cricket Club. A full report will follow.

Rotary Club of Bath

A full programme is being planned for the visit of the Alkmaar Rotary Club to Bath on 5 to 8 June, including a reception in the Mayor's Parlour and visit to the Roman Baths. The visitors will stay with local Rotarians. These two clubs have been linked from the very start of city twinning in 1945 – one of the oldest associations in the country.

KAPOSVAR

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In October Bath spent a week celebrating its twinning with the spa town of Kaposvar in Southern Hungary. The City of Bath College hosted a sell-out Grand Hungarian Dinner and musical evening with delicious food prepared by catering students.

More than 500 children at six local schools enjoyed the rare opportunity to attend Hungarian music workshops with the Tomi Boros Gypsy Band. They experienced the unique and evocative sound of the cimbalom blended with violin and double bass, played by musicians conservatoire trained in Hungary. As well as enjoying the lively traditional and gypsy music, the children were allowed to actually 'have a go' on the instruments. The Boros Band also played a well-attended and lively gig at The Bell in Walcot. Their thrilling, passionate music, across a range of moods, has left a lasting impression on Bath audiences.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

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A Visit by The Mayor of Bath, Cllr Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst

I was extremely honoured to have the opportunity to visit Bath's twin town in France last summer to represent the City in the first Mayor's twinning visit for six years. Valuable links were forged and previous contacts enhanced.

I would like to thank Jolyon Laycock, the Secretary of the Aix-en-Provence Twinning Association, for his dedication, both during the visit, and for the work he has carried out since, maintaining contacts to assist groups in the City of Bath to form new links.

We were shown great hospitality throughout our stay and were fortunate to be there during their Heritage Weekend, so it was a great opportunity to sample a diverse range of cultural events. I particularly enjoyed meeting the Mayor, and the official visit to the Ecole de Cuques, where I delivered letters and drawings from Widcombe Infants School in Bath. Another highlight was the trip to the marvellous historical studio of the painter Paul Cézanne.

I wish all four Twinning Associations every success as they move forward in enhancing links with our twin towns - something dear to the heart of the City of Bath.



Outside the Town Hall in Aix-en-Provence (l-r) Jolyon Laycock (Secretary Aix-en-Provence Twinning Association), Charter Trustee Carol Paradise, French Cllr Bruno Genzana, the Mayor of Bath, Cllr Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst, Madame Monique Depaermentier, President of the French Twinning Association, and Charter Trustee David Dixon.

The Night We Hung Up the Tricolor, by Andrew Clarke

To celebrate 25 years since the signing of the Bath-Aix Twinning Agreement in 1977, we held a sell-out 'Soirée' in the Guildhall raising £350 for the twinning fund. With his delightful French accent, David Lesniak of Great Western Wines led the 'degustation' with four unusual wines from Provence. They were an admirable choice to complement the 'grand buffet' of salads, cheeses and patés. Councillor Marian McNeir welcomed the guests and introduced Peter Hawkins, our guest singer. We enjoyed a most informative 'animation' of French chanson from Brel to Brassens. The grand raffle organised by Sylvia Taylor featured star prizes kindly donated by the Beaujolais Restaurant, Milburns Catering and the Holburne Museum. Finally, with great enthusiasm, and in French (of course) Councillor Nicole O-Flaherty auctioned a meal for two at the Bath Spa Hotel – another generous contribution.

Shoscombe Church of England Primary School, by Sylvia Taylor

Sadly many pupils never have the chance to make trips abroad even though they are taught foreign languages and learn about other cultures in school. We became involved in a three-year project with schools in Aix-en-Provence, Coimbra in Portugal and San Sisto in Italy. Children from the three countries met up and worked together face-to-face when a group of 12 Year 4/5 pupils from our school travelled, with an Italian contingent, to Aix-en-Provence and when children from Aix-en-Provence, San Sisto and Romania, visited Bath.

Meeting and working alongside 'real pupils' was an experience the children will never forget. They have produced a CD, a book and are now making a film of the book! One of the pupils said in their diary, 'I now know how to speak a little French but only one word of Italian. I learnt lots on tour, ... but most of all I learnt how to make friends with the Italians and the French and we all got really close.'

Le Gôut des Autres, by Marian McNeir

On 16 January the Aix-en-Provence Twinning Committee, with the BRS LI French Civilization Group, organised a very successful showing of "Le Gôut des Autres", a modern French romantic comedy by Agnès Jaoui (1999). Dr Steve Wharton of Bath University was introduced by Councillor Marian McNeir and led a lively discussion on modern French cinema. By popular demand, we hope to organise another film this year – so watch this space!