

CONNECTIONS CONNECTIONS

Autumn 2003

BATH'S TWINNING NEWSLETTER

Issue No 4

ALKMAAR

The very successful Bath International Twinning Forum took place from 22 – 25 May. The event was generously supported by the European Union Town Twinning Fund. The Mayor of Alkmaar, Marie van Rossen, the Chief Executive, Joost Cox, and the Twinning Officer, Hanneke Schrijen were among the 38 Dutch delegates. During the Conference the Dutch Cultural Attaché, Christine Jansen, joined us from London. Thanks to arrangements by our Chairman, Bill Bloomfield, local families hosted most of the delegates and so many new contacts were made.

One of the highlights of the long weekend was the re-dedication of the Alkmaar Garden in Orange Grove with a new plaque placed beside the original which dates from 1945. The Mayors of Bath and Alkmaar took part in this moving ceremony, conducted by the Rector of Bath Abbey, Rev Simon Oberst. Other highlights were the two excellent joint sessions in the Council Chamber with presentations from all four of Bath's twin towns, a Civic Reception hosted by the Mayor of Bath in the Roman Baths, and a visit to Prior Park.

Next year is the 750 anniversary of the founding of Alkmaar as a city and many people from Bath hope to be there to join in the celebrations. The original twinning link was set up with the Rotary Club of Bath and Eli Prins - a refugee from Alkmaar who escaped from the city during the Second World War. The club used a barrel organ to raise money so food and toys could be sent over to occupied Alkmaar. This is celebrated every four years and from 5 – 8 June, 26 Dutch Rotarians and their wives came to Bath for a full programme of events. There was a presentation by Peter Rollins about the new Thermae Spa (which is being run by a Dutch company), a reception in the Mayor's Parlour hosted by the Mayor of Bath, Councillor David

Hawkins who also attended the lunch at the Rugby Ground with the Presidents of both Rotary Clubs. Old friends met and some new friends were made at a barn dance in the Englishcombe Tithe Barn and at a dinner and concert at Kingswood School. The Bath Club is already looking forward to the return trip to Alkmaar in 2005.



The Rector of Bath Abbey, Rev Simon Oberst re-dedicates the Alkmaar Garden with (left to right) Bill Bloomfield, Chairman Bath-Alkmaar Twinning Association, Cllr Leslie Kew, Chairman of B&NES, Cllr Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst, Mayor of Bath 2002-2003, Marie van Rossen, Mayor of Alkmaar and Christine Jansen, the Dutch Cultural Attaché.

Thanks to generous sponsorship from local businesses we have been able to make grants to three local groups in the last few months. The City of Bath Hockey Club took part in a tournament at Easter in Alkmaar, which they won. Their trophy is now on display in the Mayor's Parlour. More than 40 young players and their parents from Bath Arsenal Junior Football Club went on their third trip to Alkmaar for a football tournament from 30 May to 2 June. The Aquae Sulis Volleyball Club also took part in a tournament in Alkmaar from 6 to 8 June and four of their members travelled assisted by money from the Association.

To help raise money so that we can award more grants the Silver Ring Choir of Bath will be performing at the Guildhall on Friday 13 February 2004. We are greatly indebted to them, so please put the date in your diary.

The second Annual General Meeting of the Association took place on 15 July 2003 in the Guildhall. Copies of the Minutes are available from the Secretary, **Alan Gwynn, Park House, Pipehouse Lane, Freshford, Bath, BA2 7UH, telephone 01225 723270.** Alan, or members of the Committee, would be very happy to answer any questions about Alkmaar Twinning.

KAPOSVAR

For information about the Association contact the Chairman Jeff Manning, Beech Cottage, 32 Combe Road, Bath BA2 5HY. Telephone 01225 840040

BRAUNSCHWEIG

Seven members of the Deutsch Englische Gesellschaft of Braunschweig and the Honourable President of Kolleg88 attended the very successful Bath International Twinning Forum in May. Treve Erdmenger, the President of the DEG, gave a presentation on the attractions and delights of Braunschweig. Our visitors were hosted by committee members who enjoyed making their guests feel at home and showing them our beautiful City.

There were 'networking visits' to explore the opportunities for learning from each other and working together in the future with the City of Bath College, Bath University Engineering Department, Dorothy House Hospice, the Hot Bath Gallery, and Avon and Somerset Police. There was also a lively, enjoyable exchange of experiences of organisations for senior citizens attended by U3A, AUITA, B&NES Action for Pensioners members, two Dutch ladies, and Johannes Wiese. The work of senior citizens in the Netherlands working with local and community concepts, proved to be very similar to the German concept but more decentralised. There were many common issues – recruitment, publicity and finding affordable rooms.

The busy timetable included the HoffFest of the Bath German Society, and a party of three, including Johannes Wiese visited Newnham-on-Severn, where Braunschweig Spargel (asparagus) was cooked to perfection by John Varnom of the Ship Inn, with fried

eggs as starter, followed by roast lamb, cabbage and a dry burgundy. The car had to be towed back because of exhaust pipe problems – a first for all!

The twinning spirit is very much 'alive' with a commitment towards having permanent memorials in our twin cities: Henry the Lion and the Bath Fountain. Contacts have continued since the Conference and we are thinking of a visit to Braunschweig in August next year to join in their Kulturfest – especially the celebrations on 24 August.

We hope to have copies of the 'Wiese Video' available for viewing. Anyone interested in seeing it or joining the Association please contact **Hilary Elms on 01225 837790 or e-mail Hilaryelms@aol.com**



Pre-conference entertainment at Woods restaurant as Don Withers, Chairman of the Bath-Braunschweig Association and Johannes Wiese (who videoed the Conference) improvise duets.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

For information about the Association contact the Secretary - Jolyon Laycock Tel 01761 490378, e-mail – jolyonlaycock@hotmail.com

On a sunny Saturday at the end of June four boulists from the Aix Twinning Association took on the might of Bath at the Bath Boules 2003. Alas, the might was too mighty and we conceded defeat after seven gruelling rounds which tried our stamina, demanded our dexterity and pushed us to the limit of our fitness. Nevertheless a good time was had by all involved and the excellent refreshments calmed nerves and restored us all to good health and rationality. We look forward to taking on the crème de la crème next year and doing a 'might' better.

We are delighted that the Mayor of Bath, Cllr David Hawkins, has invited members of the Aix Twinning Association to a 'chez nous vins et fromages' evening at 6 pm on Thursday 13 November in the Mayor's Parlour. All members are warmly invited.

There will be a French Film Evening at the BRSLI in Queen's Square at 7 pm on Friday 24 October. This follows our very successful evening earlier this year. Come along, enjoy a glass of wine and hear Dr Steve Wharton from the University of Bath introduce 'Le

Placard' which has English sub-titles. This takes a light-hearted look at 'coming out of the closet'.

Visits to Aix

Soroptomists – Sheila Geach represented the Bath group at the 30 Anniversary Celebrations of the Aix Soroptomists at the end of September. They have had good twinning links for many years.

le Club - Sylvie Grenier and her ladies from le Club visited Bath in May and would like to offer hospitality to Bath members. Marian McNeir is organising a visit next year from 12 – 17 April. For further information contact Marian on 01225 865066.



Brave boulists from the Aix Twinning Association (left to right) Alistair Vass, Sylvia Taylor, Andrew Clarke, and Brian Hamlen.