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Twin Towns Citizen Workshop hosted by Kaposvár City Council

The Mayor of Kaposvár invited the Bath-Kaposvár Twinning Association (BKTA) to take part in a 3-day Citizenship Workshop with four of their 11 Twin Towns. We were delighted, honoured and set about planning our contribution.

Our delegation made it to Kaposvár for the 5 September start. Quickly they met and joined with Csíkszereda Romania, Glinda Germany, Koprivnica Croatia and Saint-Sebastien-sur-Loire France to learn about each other, explore citizenship and the twinning role.

The BKTA fielded a strong team. It included the Chair of the City of Bath College, the Head of Music from Hayesfield Girls' School, the Bath Central Library Reader Development Officer, and our liaison member nurturing the library's link between Bath and Kaposvár.

The Bath library delegates said, "We love the town centre, tree-lined streets, the sculpture of a woman outside the Kaposvár library celebrating the work of the mainly female staff who work there. Making personal contact will truly help us to build this most vital link between Bath and Kaposvár".

Our core theme 'Connecting the People of Bath with the People of Kaposvár since 1989' caught the mood. The emphasis given to education, youth, culture, hands-on sharing exchanges and being respectful of national traditions and customs was also replicated in a myriad of ways by the other twins, although civic resources to support twinning did vary.

There was plenty of hospitality with the Twinning Association in Kaposvár laying on an enormous picnic by Lake Deseda with large bowls of steaming paprika goulash, followed by



Preparing paprika goulash at the picnic.



Ani Pytel from The Music Lovers (left) with Rosie from the Walcot State Choir who designed the banner.

delicious pastries from Glinde Germany, all washed down with jugs full of local wines. Bath performed 16th Century music, 'Greensleeves', coupled with a 20th Century rock anthem - Queen's "We Will Rock You" with all the picnickers belting out the chorus.

At the invitation of the Music Lovers, 42 members of the Bath Walcot State Choir were on an exchange in Kaposvár. Here cultural diversity truly came into its own at their superb concert. It received thunderous applause.

The three days with the four twins were remarkable, contact details were swapped and everyone agreed the importance of keeping in touch. Our thanks go to the Mayor and the people of the City of Kaposvár for initiating and leading the creation of this workshop. It showed twinning does raise wider awareness of European cultural traditions and contemporary life.

Mayor of Bath Visits Painters' Festival

The Mayor of Bath (2012-13) Councillor Andrew Furse, his Mayoress Mei-Ling and the Chairman of the Standing Committee of Charter Trustees, Councillor Gerry Curran, travelled for an important civic visit to our Hungarian twin town, Kaposvár located 140km south-west of Budapest. The Mayor of Kaposvár, Mr Károly Szita had invited them to celebrate with him the City's Annual Festival of Painters in May.

During an intense three-day programme, they attended the official opening of the festival, went to see the Memorial Exhibition of Tibor Boromisza at the new gallery and met with regional business people from the Somogy region's Chamber of Commerce. Cllr Furse talked about the creation of business connections between the twinned cities and found time to meet many of the market stallholders. The sun shone and on the last evening, the civic party enjoyed a concert given by the Kaposvár Military Brass Band in the superbly restored Rainbow Cultural Palace.

One of our members, Valerie Inwood teaches English at a school in Kaposvár and she ensured the Mayor left knowing that our Twinning Association is fully engaged in the life of the city.



The Mayor of Bath (2012-13), Councillor Andrew Furse and his Mayoress, Mei-Ling choosing what to buy at the market stalls.

Aix-En-Provence

International Twinning Conference

The Mayor, Councillor Malcolm Lees, led a delegation to a conference on the role of International Relations in economic development in Aix from 10-12 October 2013.

The Bath presentation was given by Councillor Ben Stevens (Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development) and John Wilkinson (Acting Divisional Director, Skills and Employment, B&NES Council).

There were also contributions from Aix's other Twin Cities: Perugia (Italy), Pecs (Hungary), Baalbeck (Lebanon), Bamako (Bali), Kumamoto (Japan), and Oujda (Morocco). Delegates explored ways of promoting international business opportunities throughout the twin cities and decided to set up an interactive website.

They attended a review and tour of the new developments in Aix city centre and a World Business Event investigating how public image can influence international business development.



At the official dinner (left to right) Ann Tipper (Clerk), Cllr Ben Stevens (B&NES Cabinet Member), Martine Fenestraz (Aix Deputy Mayor International Affairs), Cllr Malcolm Lees (Mayor of Bath), John Wilkinson (B&NES Director), Reine Merger (Aix Deputy Mayor European Affairs).

The Mayor and Clerk to the Charter Trustees, Ann Tipper, had meetings with the President of the Twinning Association in Aix, Isabel de Castro and their Vice Chairman Claude Laurens. They also discussed promoting tourism between Bath and Aix with a Professor at Aix University who teaches Marketing there as well as at Marseilles and Bordeaux Business Schools.

A trip to Aix-en-Provence would not be complete without a visit to the Musée Granet and a memorable evening was spent at the Cézanne and Matisse exhibition there.

Before they left for the airport Isabel de Castro gave up her Saturday morning to take the Mayor and Clerk on a tour of the extensive weekly market in the city centre and to visit Cézanne's studio.

Supermarket French Event

This summer, in the hospitality area of the newly refurbished Waitrose superstore, in the Podium, Bath, The Aix-en-Provence Twinning Association, held a social event to celebrate French food and wine.

Despite their policy of championing British produce, Waitrose was pleased to provide a gourmet evening of French food and wine tasting, with in-house specialists on hand to offer informal but valuable information and advice on all produce offered for tasting that evening and others available at the store.



Fe Lye, (Waitrose Marketing Team), with Chris Garratt (event organiser) and Peter Ostli-East (winner best French costume competition).

After an introduction and welcome greeting in fluent French by a member of the Waitrose staff, 60 members of the Aix Twinning Association, many dressed in French costumes, soaked up the café-style atmosphere as they enjoyed learning about the produce, particularly from the Provencal region.

Musique dans les rues

Marian McNeir, Chairman of the Aix-en-Provence Twinning Association, organised for the Bath Camerata to participate in an exciting musical initiative for three days in September when 20 members sang in the streets of Aix. Marian congratulated the choir, under conductor Nigel Perrin, on being perfect ambassadors for the City of Bath and added that she would be interested to hear from other musical groups in Bath who would like to perform in Aix next year.

Our Twinning Association is an extremely active group. Apart from offering a social and cultural events programme for its members, there are many specialist interest groups, which, through the association, are able to develop beneficial links with French counterparts.

The Boules Clubs of Bath and Aix have enjoyed long-standing exchanges and there will be another visit next year. Aix Seniors will come to Bath in 2014 and, by popular demand, Marian McNeir is organising her second tour of the Gardens of Aix and Provence in June. For details of these and other events such as our regular French films at BRSLLI please contact our Secretary whose details are given on the front page.

Bath Bach Choir

Singers from the City of Bath Bach Choir visited Aix-en-Provence from 25th to 28th October, at the invitation of the Darius Milhaud Choir and the Twinning Association in Aix. They performed in the Cathedral. The concert included music by English composers, along with Bruckner, Faure, Bach and Mozart. The Bach Choir enjoyed singing with the Aix Choir and their recital was very enthusiastically received by a large audience.



At the Civic Reception for the City of Bath Bach Choir their Chairman, Annelisa Eccles, holds a gift for the Mayor of Aix from the Mayor of Bath as Louis Faulconnier, Treasurer of the Twinning Association in Aix, welcomes them to the city, to his right is Isabel de Castro, President of the Twinning Association in Aix.

A delicious pot d'amitie was enjoyed afterwards in Cave aux Huiles, courtesy of the Aix choir and twinning association.

The CBBC sang Mass in the Cathedral on Sunday morning. This was followed by a wonderful picnic in the woods under cloudless skies near Mont Saint Victoire. Boules was played, walks were taken and the afternoon was a total delight for all concerned.

The Mayor of Aix arranged a civic reception for the CBBC. Gifts were exchanged and tributes paid to all the hard-working participants who organised such a memorable and enjoyable weekend. The entente cordiale was very much in evidence and was heartily enjoyed by everyone.

Braunschweig



St Andrew's School Choir perform in Braunschweig Cathedral.

The undisputed highlight during my role as Chairman of the Braunschweig Twinning Association, writes Bryan Chalker, has been the triumphant visit to this enchanting German city by the young choir of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School from 4th-7th June this year, when they literally took Braunschweig by storm.

My wife Glenys and I travelled to Braunschweig during this time in support of this delightful group of youngsters, whose ages ranged from six to eleven, and were captivated by their outstanding performance at the city's historic and beautiful Dom (Cathedral) where they received the first ever standing ovation in that historic setting.



The Choir with The Lord Mayor of Braunschweig on the steps of Richmond Castle.

This amazing choir, brainchild of Head Teacher Sue East and headed by Shean Bowers (of Bath Abbey), delighted people wherever they went. They gave impromptu performances at airports, on planes, trams and bridges – and charmed the staff in the newsroom of the local newspaper, the Braunschweiger Zeitung.

It became abundantly clear from my first encounter with the St Andrew's Choir during my year as Mayor of Bath that these children loved to sing and were natural entertainers, a fact borne out by the rapturous welcome they received in Braunschweig in response to their delightful harmonies and charming manners. Here was a small choir with a big voice!

Some may question the value of twinning but after the visit I was approached by a man who said, "Until I read your letter in the Chronicle about the Choir's visit to Germany and how well they did, I thought twinning was a waste of time and effort. I have now changed my mind". I believe, that says it all about what was achieved during those four days in June. Relationships between our two cities have always been extremely good, as former Chairman Don Withers will readily testify, but the young choir of St Andrew's Primary School has taken this rapport to a new level and won hearts and minds of a whole swathe of new admirers in this wonderful German city.

The Choir has been in great demand – they performed at the Mayor Making ceremony in Bath Abbey, and again at the Bath-Braunschweig Twinning Association's AGM in the Mayor's Parlour. Now they have now recorded a CD of the songs they performed in Braunschweig under the musical directorship of Shean Bowers (Assistant Director of Music and Choral Director for Schools) and accompanied by Gary Desmond on piano. The CD, 'Singing All Together', features 10 songs, including 'Don't Build Your House On The Sandy Land', 'I'm Gonna Sing', 'Si, Si, Si', 'Amani Utupe' and 'Danny Boy'. It is interesting to note that the latter was composed by Frederick Weatherly, who was born in Portishead, Somerset, but in his later years lived in Penn Lea Road, Lower Weston, Bath, and also wrote 'The Holy City' and 'Roses of Picardy'. 'Danny Boy', set to the traditional tune of 'Londonderry Air', is known the world over – but local to Bath!

I have promoted the CD on my 'Same Roots, Different Fruits' radio programme on Somer Valley 97.5FM and recorded the show so the children can listen to it during their morning assembly. The show is aired each Monday between 7pm – 9pm, with the first hour being carried by a Leeds, Yorkshire station, UK Country Radio.com, every two weeks. Thanks to the internet the whole presentation is listened to as far away as Australia, America, Austria, Germany and, of course, the whole United Kingdom.

Finally, I should like to express my gratitude to the people of Braunschweig for their warmth, generosity and kindness in making us all feel so welcome and to the Lord Mayor of

Petanque Club's Visit

The City of Bath Petanque Club's trip to Braunschweig from 1st to 3rd October, proved a delight. We met up with the Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft (Anglo-German Association). Their President Treve Erdmenger gave us a warm welcome and invited us to help ourselves to a wonderful table spread with a fantastic variety of food and drink. Our Captain, Don Grimes, held back just long enough to greet everyone and present gifts from Bath.

As well as being enjoyable, the evening proved to be very useful. We sat at several different tables to get to know as many members as possible and ensure that they receive just as hearty a welcome when the team visits Bath next year. Developing new contacts is important to continue to strengthen the links, which unite our beautiful cities.



Members of the City of Bath Petanque club gather round as Treve Erdmenger, presents Don Grimes, with a Braunschweig Lion. Lutz Rudiger Busse, President of the Magni Bouler is on the far right.

Braunschweig, Dr Hoffmann, and his staff for hosting such a memorable visit by this delightful group of Bath children.

Thanks must also go to Vicki Messam for showing us various historic aspects of Braunschweig, Barbara Heck and Treve Erdmenger, President of the DEG, all of whom have visited Bath on many occasions, and to all those who made the trip such a magical experience. We can't wait to visit Braunschweig again.

Alkmaar

During last summer we were delighted that the Mayor honoured Alan Gwynn who retired as Chairman of the Twinning Committee after 10 years of outstanding service. We are pleased that Alan has agreed to continue as a member of the Committee.

We are delighted to be able to support in a small way groups like the Petanque Club and the Rowing Club as they make exchange visits to Alkmaar and we hope to continue to do this. We want to put more emphasis on making it possible for young people to share in some form of visit to Alkmaar so that they can experience a different country and culture. Our Chairman and the Chairmen of the Aix Committee met Head Teachers of the local state Secondary Schools to ask what would be the most helpful things we could do to help them, and in particular the pupils who have little opportunity to travel abroad.

We have recognised that we need to form a much closer link with Dutch people who are resident in Bath. At the moment we have no idea how many there are and we are planning to find ways of inviting them to make contact with us. We feel they could be an enormous asset in fostering and developing the relationship between Alkmaar and Bath.

The Bath/Alkmaar link is the oldest in the country, started by members of the Rotary Club of Bath after the Second World War. Nearly 40 members of the Rotary Club visited Alkmaar at the end of May, a visit which takes place every four years.

So, we are looking for an emphasis on encouraging young people to share in an exchange and it would be good if groups that have never been to Alkmaar looked at the possibility of sharing in what would be a wonderful experience.