From the Chairman

What a busy summer we had! Now that the dust has settled after the International Reunion in July it is good to look back and reflect on all our activities. I was very pleased with the success of the Reunion and grateful to all our members who were able to host visitors or help in other ways. Our young people spent an exciting week in Carcaixent and are planning to meet up in Feltre at Christmas because they just can’t wait until next summer to see their European friends again! Groups visited the Palio in Feltre, the Gastronomy Festival in Kiskunfelegyhaza and represented Newbury at the celebrations to mark the 50th Anniversary of the twinning between Braunfels and Bagnols.

Next year promises to be just as busy and I look forward to seeing you at our events.

Best wishes,
Ian Haslam

Social Events

Don’t forget our regular Social Evenings at the Castle Pub in Donnington. These take place on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 8pm and are a chance for members to meet and chat in a relaxed atmosphere.

Our Social Evening on 8th December will be our Christmas Meal so please contact Karen Cameron-Taylor on 07703 497561 by 31st October to book your place.

Would anyone like to attend a Comedy Evening at the New Greenham Arts Centre on Saturday 7th November? Stewart Francis (‘Mock the Week’, ‘Michael McIntyre’s Comedy Roadshow’ and ‘8 out of 10 Cats’) is performing there as part of his UK tour. We have 6 tickets priced at £10.80 each. Please contact our Social Secretary, Karen Cameron-Taylor, on 07703 497561 by 23rd October.

Annual General Meeting

Our 2010 AGM will be held on Saturday 27th February in the Town Hall. We will also host a fundraising coffee morning in the Town Hall on the same day.

Ghent Flower Festival

The Floralis of Ghent will be held from Saturday 17th to Sunday 25th April 2010. This horticultural event is only held every 5 years and is a stunning exhibition of garden landscaping, plants and flowers. The entrance fees for the Floralis is 17.50 EUR per person. Further details can be found on the website: www.floralien.be

Is anyone interested in taking part in a group visit to see this exhibition on 17th/18th April? If so please contact Diane Smith by 31st October on coda75kg@tesco.net or by phone on 01635 552352. Diane will arrange accommodation with our Twin Town families in Eeklo.
Braunfels – May 2009

Our Twin Towns in Germany and France reached a milestone this year and celebrated 50 years of Twinning. A small group from Newbury was invited to attend the two anniversary events.

The group from Newbury included the new Mayor and Mayoress Kuldip and Manjit Singh Kang, Karen Cameron-Taylor, Frank Graham (one of our longest serving members and someone who has many years experience of visiting Braunfels) and me. A large group of cyclists had cycled from Bagnols and were then joined by cyclists from Braunfels for the final leg of the journey.

On our first day we had a tour of the beautiful town and the spectacular castle. After a very meaty lunch (where vegetarian options were hastily arranged for Manjit by Klaus Schmidt, one of the town representatives) we went to a rather ominous sounding Ecumenical Service at the castle which turned out to be a lively musical event. No sooner had that finished than we were put on a coach for a tour of some local places of interest including a Huguenot settlement and a castle. We arrived back in Braunfels for Rock in the Park, good local bands playing live which was curtailed by a very heavy downpour.

On Friday there was a rather dry meeting entitled ‘Europe and the Future of the Twin Town Movement’ almost totally in German. Fortunately Klaus (again coming to our aid) kindly translated the proceedings for us. After lunch my hosts kindly took me to Limbourg and Weilburg, which are nearby beautiful medieval towns. In the evening there was a party and barbecue, the sun came out and the hot air balloons rose towards a perfect sunset.

Saturday started early with the inauguration of a Twin Town roundabout just outside Lidls (don’t ask!) and then we were taken to visit Wetzlar, which is yet another rather nice town nearby with both modern and historic aspects. Back at the castle there was a formal twinning ceremony with the Count and Countess and all towns participating. The evening was taken up with the European Ball at the Haus Des Gastes. For me this is usually the worst part of the weekend, but the food and company were excellent and even I enjoyed myself.

On Sunday we went home and then we rested!

I have been on a number of Twin Town events but this was the best so far. Our hosts were unbelievably kind, generous and welcoming – we were so well looked after. Whilst I will remember the town and the places I visited there, what I will always particularly fondly remember is the kindness of the town’s people and the friends we met, in particular Stefan, Rose, Klaus, Gernot and Cristel.

Stuart Durrant

Bagnols – July 2009

Eight people, including the Mayor and Mayoress, travelled to Bagnols to take part in the varied programme to celebrate the 50th Anniversary. The ‘Midi’ certainly lived up to its reputation for warm hospitality, good food, fine weather and wine! The highlight was a spectacular day out on the Camargue witnessing the horsemen’s skills and enjoying a gourmet lunch al fresco. We had a quick dip in the Mediterranean before returning to Bagnols.

On July 14th, Members of all the Twin Town delegations carried their flags in the National Day parade and together laid a wreath at the war memorial. The day then moved into a more informal tone with drinks in the market place and a lunch reception serenaded by the Braunfels-Bombaden orchestra. We were also able to enjoy the real French atmosphere of our hosts’ private July 14th celebrations while some of us saw the huge fireworks display and the public entertainment. In the afternoon of our last day we visited a chateau before attending the gala dinner dance which paid particular homage to the early founders of the twinning movement. A memorable visit indeed.

Nicola Ferguson
Every seven years it is Newbury’s turn to host the Twin Town International Reunion. Months of preparation culminated in a very busy and enjoyable weekend in July for all 89 visitors and their hosts. We took our visitors on a walking tour of Newbury (stopping to watch the ‘Freedom Parade’ pass through the town) and made visits to The Living Rainforest and The Community Furniture Project as part of our ‘Volunteering’ Theme.

At a Musical Evening on Friday we were entertained by Watership Brass and Harmony Choir who sang a song in each of our Twin Town languages. The Choir included some of our own members and was conducted by Helen Tuck. Our guests enjoyed a tasty Indian buffet meal followed by delicious puddings from our own Twin Town Catering team.

Saturday was the ‘business’ part of the weekend with the International Committee Meeting and lunch at the Town Hall. In the afternoon the guests were able to relax with their hosts before a Barn Dance and Hog Roast in the evening. Everybody certainly threw themselves into the spirit of the occasion and enjoyed the dances. At the end of the evening we presented the ‘Twinning Banner’ to the Mayor of Braunfels, Wolfgang Keller. This beautiful article, produced for us by Geraldine Priest, will be passed from town to town when they host each annual reunion and will come back to Newbury (hopefully!) in six years time.

The Highlight of Sunday was Newbury Carnival with visitors from all of the towns taking part in the parade behind their national flags.

A group of volleyball players from Braunfels visited Newbury during the same weekend and enjoyed a match against Newbury’s own Volleyball Club.

We are sure that all the hosts have their own special memories of the weekend and we would like to thank everyone who helped to make it such a success.

Rachel Haslam
Eleven people attended the annual Palio festival in Feltre last August. We had all hosted visitors during the International Reunion so it was a real pleasure a few weeks later to be the guests and to be spoilt with lovely food and good company. As well as enjoying the Palio races and performances, some people visited Venice and toured the mountains around Feltre. It was a very memorable weekend and one that we hope to repeat again. The photo shows Ian and David Haslam supporting the Port'Oria Quarter during the Festivities.

Rachel Haslam

Youth for Europe - August 2009

Siestas, paella, and lots of glorious sunshine! Which country, anyone? Spain of course!

Held from the 18th-25th August, Youth for Europe 2009 took place in the beautiful town of Carcaixent. The week was full of things to do, places to visit, and many many people to get to know. With a total participation of over 35 people this year, it was a great celebration of the union between our Twin Towns across Europe.

We visited the stunning city of Valencia, with the absolutely spectacular waterfront buildings – the opera house, the science museum and the up-coming aquarium – and also the delightfully charming mountainside town of Xativa, a town with glorious views to behold on all sides. Whilst walking in the nearby hills, we managed to save the lives of two helpless little kittens (who are getting on very well from what I hear.)

We went to a water park (the ‘Thorpe Park’ of the water world) which gave a most hilarious time, with many a country rivalry building as you go down the slow slides in a race to the finish, and also the rides where you have to throw yourself down full pelt to have any chance of winning!

We couldn’t have asked for better weather. It was really warm every day, and among other things, we had a what-started-out-as-a-prank water fight, which got everyone involved!

Every country gave us an insight into the various games and traditions of their culture. The Hungarian game, for example, was one where you had to eliminate people by shouting out their numbers, tagged to their foreheads, and the Italians made us try to take the handkerchief without getting caught by the other team. Newbury gave them a taste of ‘British Bulldogs’.

For the first day or so the members rather kept to their countries, but very quickly people started mixing and getting on with the others as if they’d known each other for years. By the second meal, people were already dining on tables with 4 different countries on it (for tables of 6, that’s not bad at all!)

¡Muchos felicidades! Chris Harper
Families For Europe — August 2009

The Clark-Michalek family represented Newbury at the ‘Families for Europe’ event in Bagnols last summer. Barbara tells us how they got on.

This was a unique experience for our children and a chance to make new friends from different countries for us all. We went on a ‘Go Ape’ climbing type activity on the first day, visited a medieval village and swam in the Ardeche on the second day and visited the Bagnols market on the third day. Apart from that we ate and drank, and ate and drank! The aim was to spend as much time as possible together. The kids spent most of the time in the swimming pools, which every house seemed to have, while the adults socialised. Families from Braunfels and Eeklo took part (as well as the Bagnols hosts) so there were over 30 people eating together each night.

The next encounter is scheduled to be in Braunfels during the February half-term holiday. If any families are interested in taking part, please contact Rachel Haslam.

Help Wanted

The Boyan Ensemble, a fabulous male voice choir from the Ukraine, are visiting Hungerford again as part of their annual UK tour. They will be performing on Tuesday November 3rd at 7:30pm in St Lawrence’s Church, Hungerford. If you are able to accommodate 1 or 2 choir members after the concert, and return them to Hungerford the next day, please contact Alison Mawdsley on 01635 821525.

Language Lessons

Would you like to learn or improve a language? Why not have some lessons from one of our Twin Town members?

Nathalie Danon-Kerr is a Director of the Vici Language Academy in Bartholomew Street, Newbury. The Academy offers lessons in 7 languages. NTTA members can take advantage of a free 30 day, no obligation trial of a language program. Contact Nathalie on 0800 021 718, email info@thevici.com or visit the web site www.thevici.com

Isla Simpson teaches Italian at all levels, tailored to suit your needs. Elementary, intermediate or advanced levels for individuals or small groups. Contact Isla on 01635 40438 or e-mail isla.simpson@tesco.net

Publicity

We have been out and about this year talking to people about the NTTA at a variety of events. We had a stall in Victoria Park for the Crafty Craft Fair in May and at St Bartholomew’s Summer Fair in June. An article about the Association was included in the latest Newsletter published by the Town Council and distributed to most houses in Newbury.

On 18th October we will be taking part in the annual Sunday Funday at Newbury Library. Do come along and say hello and try one of our games.
Come and join the Mayor of Newbury for a Charity...

Diwali Extravaganza

in aid of the Mayor's Benevolent Fund

Newbury Racecourse
Friday 6th November
6:30pm - 10:00pm

Live Performances followed by
An authentic Three Course Indian Meal
DJ & Bollywood/Bhangra Disco

DRESS CODE: SMART/INDIAN STYLE (OPTIONAL)

Advance bookings only:
Adult (14+) £15 • Child £5 • Child under 6 years Free
Available from Reception
Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5AA

Cllr Kuldip Singh Kang and
West Berkshire Minority Ethnic Forum

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