

Worcester Twinning Association

CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2014



Editor Contact Derek Furby

The Mayor of Worcester, Pat Agar greets the Mayor Bernard Grouchko and our other guests from le Vésinet, outside the Guildhall



Le Vésinet Contact Vivien Greenow

What a great weekend we had to celebrate 20 years of twinning with le Vésinet !

35 guests came to Worcester, including their newly-elected Mayor Bernard Grouchko, and a Deputy Mayor and her husband. They were met at St. Pancras by Nevill and Les and escorted to the coach which brought them to Croft Road, where their hosts were eagerly awaiting them.

The first day of their visit was spent in Worcester, beginning with a tour of the Hive, then either the Cathedral or the newly opened sports arena. In the afternoon the group were welcomed to the Guildhall by the Mayor of Worcester, Pat Agar, and the official ceremony took place, but not before a performance of French and English music by the town band of le Vésinet, l'Harmonie Municipale. They had travelled to Worcester independently, and greatly enhanced the celebrations. A small group of them played at the buffet supper at the Rowing Club that evening, where the rest of the band were our guests.

On Saturday there was a coach excursion to Birmingham, beginning with a visit to the Botanical Gardens, where the rhododendrons and azaleas provided a blaze of colour. This was followed by a guided tour, in French, of the area around the new library, repertory theatre and canal basin. Meanwhile the Harmonie Municipale entertained the citizens of Worcester with a concert at the South Quay. Conditions were ideal, there were plenty of people, the sun shone, and the sky was as blue as the shirts of the bandsmen.

Fortunately they were all wearing their boaters, as you will see from the photo.

Sunday began with attendance at the Cathedral Eucharist, including a reading in French by Anne-Marie Laurent, honorary Vice-President of le Vésinet Twinning Association. Our guests were impressed by the beauty of the surroundings and the superb music of the Cathedral Choir. Afterwards the Harmonie again



entertained us with a concert in the Chapter House, where the acoustics meant that no amplification was needed ! The rest of the day provided opportunities for hosts to show their guests some of the rest of Worcestershire which was really at its best at this time of the year.

Our final day's excursion was into Herefordshire, to Hampton Court Castle, where we again had a guided tour in French. In fact the guide very much enhanced the visit; she was English, but spoke excellent French, and coupled her love of the building with

her enthusiasm for her subject. The gardens were delightful, and full of Spring colour, but we had to leave at lunch-time in order to get to Upton-on Severn where we had arranged to meet the Faithful City Morris Men. They were dancing at a folk festival there, and we wanted our guests to know what to expect when we take them to le Vésinet with us in June.

Tuesday morning was bright and sunny as we waved farewell to our guests, or rather 'au revoir' as many of us will be seeing them again soon. All agreed it had been a most successful weekend, and even the weather had been on our side. I must thank everyone who helped to make it so, either in the organisation, or especially by opening their homes, sometimes to strangers, and sharing the joy and friendship of twinning.

Worcester City Chess Club players had an afternoon of chess in France as part of the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the twinning between Le Vésinet and Worcester. The Worcester players were Ray Collett, Pat Greenow and Roger Yates.

The French Club d'échecs du Vésinet arranged an open air consultation match in the garden and a small international Blitz tournament at Le Vésinet's Maison du Combattant, a community hall honouring soldiers who fell in the Franco-Prussian war.

In the consultation game, Worcester players and Gerhard Schmidt, a master of correspondence chess from Le Vésinet's German twin town, Unterhaching in Bavaria joined forces for a European team against Le Vésinet's chess club president Christophe Imbert and strong player Paul Saglier, playing black. The game was overseen by Arbiter (referee) Stephen Jessel, Ireland. In a tough middle game, the French players found a surprising pawn sacrifice to activate an undeveloped knight and destroy white's modest advantage. Eventually the French just beat the Europeans on time.

Stephen Jessel, Ireland, won the international Blitz tournament with 7 points. He was followed by Gerhard Schmidt (6 points) with Ray Collett, the highest scoring English player fourth equal with two French players (4 points).

Ray Collett



left to right: Ray Collett, Gerhard Schmidt, Roger Yates, and Pat Greenow during play in the outdoors consultation game.



In the foreground left to right, Christophe Imbert, President of the French club, presenting Ray Collett with a souvenir of the event for Worcester City Chess Club. In the rear are Worcester players Pat Greenow (left) and Roger Yates (right).

English books from Worcester for Ghana

Kleve Worcester Twinning supports school project in Ghana

The Freundeskreis humanitäre Hilfe in Indien and Ghana is an association of friendship and human support based in Kleve have built a school for about 300 pupils in Ghana. This group runs a shop in Kleve and in the shop window a poster told Karl-Heinz and Gisela (who were window shopping) that the school was desperate for English books for their school library. Via E-mail, Karl-Heinz asked all his friends in Worcester if they could help and collect books for this project.



Recently, the Dionysius-Choir from Krefeld who are close friends of the Oakville Singers stayed in Worcester and had successful concert in Worcester Cathedral. On their trip back they brought 3 boxes with books for this project. The books were transferred to Kleve so that Karl-Heinz could hand them over to Wilhelm Hawerkamp who is the head of the India-Ghana group. Mr. Hawerkamp was very pleased to receive the books.

From Our end a very big thank you for this support.

Karl-Heinz

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Engraved padlock of friendship placed on Sabrina Bridge

Several years ago the Oakville Singers and the Dionysius Choir were brought together by the joint efforts of the Worcester and Kleve Twinning Associations. Since then they have met together on many occasions in Germany, Paris and Worcester. The last time was at the fundraising CLIC concert in the Cathedral on March 15th 2014. As a token of the close friendships that have developed between the two choirs, an engraved padlock was fixed on the Sabrina Bridge on 2nd June by the previous Mayor of Worcester, Pat Agar.



The padlock, which has been inscribed in German with “Best Wishes from Krefeld”, will remain on the bridge and the next time the Oakville Singers visit Kleve, a similar ceremony will take place to put a padlock on a bridge there.

The ceremony was also attended by 4 members of Worcester MA, who are spending a short time at Worcester University, currently involved in recycling and environmental discussions.



This article was sent to us by a member of the choir from Vilnius, Lithuania

WIFYS 2013

"Take me down to the paradise city" - that was the first phrase which came to my mind when I arrived with the choir "Versmė" last summer. The first steps from the bus in Worcester made us feel that we could call this place home. Because we arrived in the evening, we had no time to explore that day, but we had our first impression - this is an amazing place!

We had travelled by coach from Vilnius, Lithuania's capital. Versmė choir has about 25 young people who love to sing. That's reason we came to Worcester- for the Worcester International Festival for Young Singers (WIFYS).

Everything started on Saturday 20th July when we sang to people in Worcester's streets. Later, that evening was the first concert in the Cathedral. When the concert started, all the choirs sounded fantastic in that beautiful cathedral!

Next day, we sang in St. George's Catholic Church and met new people, and we even heard our own language! Each evening of the week we sang in different venues.

This festival was the greatest experience in our choir's history. In Worcester, there were 400 singers from 11 countries, 4 conductors, an amazing admin team and fantastic music. We sang every day and it was real! You're one of those 400 and you are all here because of the same passion - it was a dream come true! During the week, we worked with a German choir under an Icelandic conductor. Practising our program was interesting because we had to pronounce Icelandic sounds which we had never heard before! Working with our new German friends was a big pleasure.

Finally, it was the day when all 400 singers sang together. All I can say about that concert is that that it was the most magical moment in my life! We were singing from all our hearts, in Icelandic, and then in English we sang a specially commissioned work by Bob Chilcott. We all were in euphoria - all together, all as one! That was the end - with a lot of tears and a lot of happiness, because we were a part of this.

So, what was WIFYS? Worcester was the place where we met the world and the world met us - where we met amazing people with the same passion.

Not sure to whom I should say THANK YOU, but if I could- I would say thank you to everybody. Half of my heart will always be in Worcester. Same goes for the other choir singers from "Versme".

"Take me down to the paradise city" ... Worcester - see you again soon, I hope!

Sing UK were hoping to repeat the success of last year's international festival, but a meeting that should have been held on 6th June at the Guildhall had to be cancelled through a lack of support, from last year's supporters.

Hopefully another meeting will be staged, as last year's festival was such a success.

If the Festival does go ahead, I will keep you informed by email.

Derek

TRIBUTE to DOREEN

We were deeply shocked to read news of Doreen's passing and could not have received more disturbing news.

We have always regarded you both with the greatest respect as valued friends and also for your outstanding and unique contribution to the formation and development of twinning both here and in our twin towns abroad.

Doreen will long be remembered for her friendly charm and constancy and she will be sorely missed by all who had the pleasure of meeting her and responding to her disarming smile and friendly charm. The Twinning Association has enjoyed a long period of genuine friendships which makes Doreen's loss a greater sadness for all of us, but we will always be grateful to you for the immense part you played in our success and to Doreen for her constant and loving support.



Please accept our sincere condolences in your sad loss as we share your grief at the loss of such a lovely lady.

Clifford Lord. Vice-President Worcester Twinning Association

I think this tribute to Doreen reflects all our feelings of someone who was a 'Fine English Rose'
Derek

