



HENLEY LEICHLINGEN TWINNING ASSOCIATION Report 2020



We have had another successful year without a Chairman. The committee have shared tasks and this is working well. We welcome people wishing to join the Association to take part in our activities and also to serve on the committee.

Membership

By the end of 2019 we had 24 personal members, this is six less than last year and represents about 37 people involved with the association. We also had all five group members renew. Of these, two of the the group members relate to use of the marquees.

Films

In 2019 we continued with a the episodes of Heimat 2, set in Munich in the 1960s. We also had a good combined programme with the Henley Falaise Twinning Association. Watching: Manon des Sources, Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis, L'Ascenseur pour L'Echafaud and The Guardians. These were all appreciated by the sizeable audience in the Kings Arms Barn.

Football

AFC Henley was one of the first Henley groups to establish a twinning link with Leichlingen over 40 years ago in 1978. Football exchanges have taken place twice annually ever since and we have failed only once to send a team to SC Leichlingen's Easter Tournament (Osterturnier).

The past year was no exception. In March 2019 a party of 11 U13 players and accompanying family members flew out from Heathrow to Düsseldorf. The players were dispatched to their host families and the adults to their hostel. There was trip to Cologne on the Friday, followed by the annual 11v11 match in the evening on SC Leichlingen's artificial 3G grass pitch. The team did well, losing by only a small margin.

Easter Saturday was taken up with the annual 9v9 tournament involving up to 12 local teams, including our own. The AFC Henley team acquitted itself exceptionally well, reaching the semi-final after some hard-fought games.

Later in 2019, on a Thursday evening during October half term, over 20 players, with accompanying coaches and adults, arrived by coach as guests of AFC Henley. On the Friday they travelled to London and visited Buckingham Palace and the Emirates Stadium, home to Arsenal. They returned in time for the annual match under lights at Henley Town Football Club in Mill Lane, attended by Deputy Mayor David Eggleton. AFC Henley won 4-1. The Dukes Shield was presented to the winning team and every player was given a medal.

More football followed the following morning, with matches at Jubilee Park and Harpsden.

In the afternoon players from both camps went to Reading's home match and a farewell party followed in the evening at Henley Cricket Club. The Leichlingers left on the Sunday.

Plans for this year's exchanges at Easter and in October are well in hand.

Report on our 40th anniversary trip to Leichlingen – 2019

A party of 16 people, including Mayor Ken Arlett and his wife Dorothy, took part in a four-day trip to Leichlingen on Thursday 4th October. This visit marked the 40th anniversary of twinning between the two towns. (A small group added a few days in the beautiful city of Aachen to the beginning of their trip.)

On arrival, we received a warm welcome from our hosts, with a drink at the local brewery and

welcome speeches. We were all hosted by members of the “Henley Club” – the equivalent organisation to our Henley-Leichlingen Twinning Association.

On Friday 5th October, accompanied by some of our hosts, we visited Schloss Burg, the site of a medieval castle at nearby Solingen, which has been extensively rebuilt and furnished to give an authentic idea of life during medieval times. We had a guided tour, followed by a special lunch, an authentic “Bergische Kaffee Tafel” - a meal including waffles with warm cherries and whipped cream, very typical from this area. On our way back to Leichlingen, we stopped at the Munster Bridge, the highest railway bridge in Germany. This is a magnificent iron structure spanning the river Wupper, which is the river that flows through Leichlingen.

On Saturday 6th October, we took part in the highlight of the visit – a parade of vintage cars, known as “Old Timers”, through Leichlingen and the surrounding area. An accompanying booklet gave detailed information about interesting local landmarks and the beautiful countryside around the town. Many magnificent cars took part, including a Bugatti, a 1921 Peugeot, a British-built Bristol, and a fabulous Mercedes convertible from 1951, in which the Mayor and his wife were transported. The cars were decorated with German and British flags, and ladies were encouraged to dress smartly for the occasion (hats were essential!). This was an exciting event for local people, who smiled and waved as the procession passed by. Our final stop at the end of the parade was at the “Obstmarkt” - an annual festival to display and sell fruit and vegetable produce from the area, for which Leichlingen is very well-known.

On Sunday 7th October, we took part in a short ceremony in the morning to re-dedicate an oak tree in the Town Park. The tree was originally a gift from Henley to Leichlingen to mark 25 years of twinning between the towns. A new plaque now marks the 40th Anniversary. The mayors of both towns gave short speeches. In the afternoon, we visited the neighbouring village of Witzhelden to watch the annual Harvest Festival parade. This is a traditional event like a carnival procession with decorated tractors and trailers celebrating the harvest. Unfortunately the weather was not kind, but it was fun nonetheless to admire the wonderful costumes and decorated floats.

On Sunday evening there was a splendid reception and dinner at the local Schloss Eicherhof to celebrate our 40 years of twinning. This was attended by many people who have been active in twinning over the years. The evening began with a champagne reception to music from a saxophone group of the Leichlingen music school, followed by a fabulous display by the local dance school. Both mayors gave speeches, as did the Chairs of both twinning associations (HLTA represented by Trevor Howell on behalf of Patrick Fleming), and gifts were exchanged. During all speeches there was an emphasis on our enduring friendship, which would continue irrespective of future political decisions.

This was yet another fun and friendly visit to our German twin town.

Autumn Party – 16th November 2019

We held our regular party at the Christchurch centre with the Henley Falaise Twinning Association. This was a great success with French and German-themed food, and the now obligatory quiz. We will be returning in 2020.

Music Workshops

Sadly the music workshops did not take place this year. This has been run for the last few years by the Eureka Organisation a Saturday morning music school based at Christchurch. It is unlikely that we will be able to continue to run the workshops without an organisation in Henley to act as the nucleus.

Patrick Fleming – Secretary
Sue Fitzsimons – Events
Trevor Howell – AFC Henley

6th March 2020