



Erlensee
Hessen, Germany



Biggleswade
Beds. England



BIGGLESWADE TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Newsletter 78 April May June 2017

Hi,

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. We recently held a review and have incorporated the decisions made.

Firstly the format that we have used in the past has received a revamp to give it a fresh new look. It will be distributed electronically but printed copies are available to members on request.

Secondly rather than remain as a member's newsletter on limited circulation it is now being made available to all.

Finally from now on our content will be more focused on items about our twin towns and twinning our activities. As well as current and forward looking items we will include a little history, to remember what we have done as an association and allow new and prospective members to learn a little about how we got to this point.

I hope that you enjoy this newsletter and feel inspired to contribute you articles and photos in future.

Best Wishes

Alan Dansey, Newsletter Editor.

Twinnings on the town

The Biggleswade Twinnings have been enjoying some entertaining get-togethers in recent months.

In April the Courtyard Café time travelled back to 1942 and was transformed into the dining room of the Deputy Mayor of Casablanca, Monsieur Huges le Grandbutte (aka Stuart Galloway) to hold a dinner party for eleven guests. Huges was aided and abetted by his charming wife, Edith, (disgracefully portrayed by the new Co-Chair of the BTA – we won't mention which one).



It seems there had been a murder and as the evening unfolded the characters revealed the secrets of their past. As we enjoyed a delicious three course meal we did our best to keep a grip on the unfolding plot with, it must be admitted, little success!

Somewhat more civilised (although not a lot!) was BTA Co-Chair Sue's invitation to a Mad Hatters Tea Party in her lovely garden with an impressive choice of homemade cakes, scones and jam tarts. It was going well until the other Chair lowered the tone once again by turning up as the Queen of Hearts, quick to give death sentences at the slightest offence. First victim was the previous Chair Fran Sharp,



condemned for his inconsiderate parking. With a saw slung round the Red Queen's waist there were shivers as that famous line rang out: 'Off with their heads'.



And it seems there was not just one but two Queens, echoing the murder mystery when it turned out that there were two murderers.

Our most recent jaunt was a summer evening voyage along the Great Ouse enjoying views of Bedford as we glided along the river on the



John Bunyan Canal Boat accompanied by three young jazz musicians. It was a relaxing and extremely enjoyable evening eating, drinking and chatting while the river banks drifted by to a great mix of both modern and classic jazz with Tom on trumpet, Edwin on double bass and Jack on keyboards.

As Twinners we enjoy celebrating community and friendship and look forward to our upcoming visit to Erlensee to share their celebration of five years as a 'Stadt'.



Let's hope there are no murders, no-one gets their head cut off and no-one goes overboard J Dianne – behave! Dianne Kenny

How it started

In a recent meeting I happened to mention that I was in the party that made the initial visit to Erlensee and recommended going ahead with the twinning.. I was challenged to write an article on the topic and after much rummaging through dusty paperwork and dusty corners of my mind I am struggling. Neither my memory or my office filing system are adequate for the task in the time available. So here are a few jottings for now and we can continue in a future newsletter.

I believe that it was in 1998 that Jim Stewart, Editor of Biggleswade Chronicle together with Ellie Wilson published an article calling a meeting to float the idea of a twinning. I was not at that first meeting but the idea was welcomed and soon the Twinning Association was formed. I remember that we searched a "dating site" that lists towns seeking a twinning partner. We spotted Erlensee and agreed that it looked ideal, so got in touch.

We were invited to go over for our first visit; about 8 of us went I think. I stayed with Peter and Wilma Farnsworth. They made me very welcome throwing their son out of his bedroom for me. I do not speak German so a priority was to learn enough to command and reassure 2 large dogs if I met them on the landing in the middle of the night.

On the second day Burgomaster Manfred Heller was my guide. He drove me all around the town and proudly showed me everything including the sewage works! I was impressed with the amenities such as halls and parks.

OK this is where I am struggling but I think it was on that first trip that we were taken to the fishing club for dinner. Erlensee has lovely lake. Erlensee translates as Alder trees by the lake. Anyway we had no idea what to expect but we were greeted on a lovely lakeside patio and club house. Our meal was trout cooked on a barbeque washed down with ample quantities of beer and wine.

We really felt at home and found that we had so much in common with our hosts The town is a similar size to Biggleswade and we decided it was our ideal twin. It is in lovely countryside with woods, castles and



lakes etc. We came back and our enthusiasm led to our proposal to go ahead being endorsed. There were necessary formalities so it took until 2000 for the charter to be signed.

Sorry that is it for now. Perhaps I or another member of that first party can continue the story next time.

Alan Dansey

Why Biggleswade Twinning Association?

For me, and for my family, the original connection came at a time when my daughter was studying for her German 'A' level and the opportunity arose to host a student coming from Georg Buchner Schule in Erlensee for the very first Work Experience group coming to Biggleswade. It wasn't long before we were invited to join a group of people in our town who, at the time, were working very hard to establish the Town Twinning and were entertaining a small group from Erlensee. The interesting thing that evening was that we met not only German visitors to Biggleswade but also people who were living and working in our own town whose paths we might never have crossed. That was a surprising, and pleasant aspect to town twinning which I had not expected; not only were our horizons widened by meeting, visiting and hosting people from a European town, but it also opened our eyes to people and experiences much closer to home. It is good to see, to share and to gain insight into the lives and environments of people outside of our own little bubble. It is remarkable and an absolute joy to realise that, no matter how different our lives may seem, people can be amazingly similar! The German 'A' level is way back in the mists of time now but the friendships which were established then, continue - with just as much fun and pleasure as ever.

Sue Cleghorn, June 3 2017

My Twinning Journey

I got involved with Twinning when a group of young people from Biggleswade, spoke to a local Sandy resident who had supported young people in getting the Sandy Skate Park. The young people wanted a skate park in Biggleswade. I was a Biggleswade Town Councillor at the time and involved with the youth club so got involved. The young people were great and did lots of presentations to the Town and Council, Mid Beds Council and in the community. It took a number of years and after lots of fund raising Biggleswade eventually got a state of the art skate park.

As part of the lead up to the build the young people and youth leaders visited a number of skate parks including one in the twin town of Erlensee. They visited Erlensee twice and we had a return visit from



the young skaters of Erlensee. The second visit was my first to the twin town. We were treated so well staying with host families and being taken on outings and meeting other youngsters.

Friendships were made and it was a wonderful experience for our young people. I consider that this is the value of twinning, FRIENDSHIP.

Margaret Bracey

Wusterwitz

Wusterwitz is a town situated about 60 miles from Berlin and located in the State (*Bundesland*) of Brandenburg. The town is only about 8 miles from the principal city (*Hauptstadt*) of that State (also called Brandenburg). We are lucky enough to be acquainted with many friends in Wusterwitz through the twinning of that town with Erlensee. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, and subsequently the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1991, many towns and villages in the Western part of Germany twinned with towns in the old Eastern part of Germany in order to enhance and cement the re-unification of that remarkable country.

One of the most picturesque aspects of Wusterwitz is the fact that it lies on the shores of a large lake named the *Großer Wusterwitzer See*



which leads into several other lakes and rivers, including the *Plauer See* and the *River Havel*. We have been invited to several beach parties on the edge of the lake as well as glorious boat trips on those



beautiful lakes and rivers. Visits to local monasteries and churches have highlighted the spectacular, but totally different architecture, in this part of Germany compared to the magnificent splendour of the areas around Erlensee and Frankfurt. To be able to visit the superb capital city of Germany, Berlin, on several occasions has also been very interesting and rewarding; a city so full of history and wonderful, interesting places to visit.

We have made many friends in Erlensee through the Twinning arrangements ever since 2000, but to be able to share the friendship that exists between that town and Wusterwitz has been a real added bonus. Long may our Twinning organisations live on!

Stuart Galloway

Biggleswade Update

Biggleswade continues to grow and evolve. We have lost a few town centre shops such as Charlie's greengrocers. Also The Lounge Restaurant. We still have a variety of local shops, cafes etc though. Also quite a few pubs



Surfin cafe was a popular meeting point during the work experience visits and continues to be a place where people gather. It is in the Market Square, home of the Saturday and Tuesday Markets,. On Good Friday there was an open air service there.

The Crown Hotel is being restored by Weatherspoons and will soon be trading again. It is one of the oldest buildings in the town.



The new development of King's Reach is growing fast. As well as housing there is a new Lower School and a square with local shops.

There is a brand new community centre which will be opening soon. We are looking forward to booking it for events.

One of the roads nearby is named after our twin town.



Membership is not expensive!

If you have not joined yet what are you waiting for?
Who do you know who should join? Have you told them?

Chair: Sue Cleghorn & Dianne Kenny
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A big thank you to our contributors that make this magazine and our Web site possible. Please keep the items coming. Photos are good.!

Next Deadline is Monday July 31 2017

If you would like extra copies or back issues let me know, - Alan

Articles should be sent to:

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