



NEWSLETTER



June 2017

Website: <http://exetertwinningcircle.wordpress.com>

In This Month's Issue

1. Your Newsletter
2. Word from the Chair
3. A Living Partnership with Exeter
4. ETC Quiz Evening
5. BGA Conference
6. The Lord Mayor's Charity 2017/2018
7. New Members
8. Dates for Your Diary
9. ETC Twinning Groups Contacts

1. Your Newsletter

Food for Thought:

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.

Albert Einstein

Our well-equipped ETC 'quadruple bicycle' keeps going and now it is on a wonderful journey giving us an opportunity to spend time together, to meet old friends, to make new friends and to see the world!





Unfortunately, the Terracina Twinning Visit has been cancelled!

However, the coach trips to the 'Willows and Wetlands Visitor Centre' and 'Clarks Village' on Saturday, **July 22, 2017** and to 'Rosemoor Gardens' on Monday, **July 24, 2017** will still go ahead!

In view of the expenses incurred the ETC Committee will appreciate your support in joining us on these trips!!!

So, if you would like to come, and you have not already booked, please fill in the Terracina Attendance Form where appropriate and return it together with your remittance to **Josie Mardon, Heimat, 35 Woodwater Lane, Exeter, EX2 5JY ASAP.**

All ETC members are welcome to attend the **DTC Meeting** which will be held on Saturday, **July 15, 2017** in **Newton Abbot**. If you would like to come for the lunch and then stay for the meeting or just to attend the meeting, please contact **Josie Mardon** by email:

mandj@heimat.plus.com_or
telephone: 01392 253469.

Please make a note in your diary that this year's **ETC Autumn Event** is a talk about "Onion Johnnies" by Colin Vosper on Saturday, **October 14, 2017.**

ETC Outbound Visit 2017

ETC members will be visiting Bad Homburg from **November 30 to December 6, 2017.**

We have already booked flights and National Express for our group, so if you are interested in going, please contact John Whitton by email: johnwhitton@yahoo.co.uk or tel. 01392 274778 ASAP.

The date of the next **ETC AGM** has been fixed for Monday, **February 12, 2018** at the Devon Hotel. The ETC Committee has agreed that this will now be a lunchtime function.



Please send items for inclusion in the next newsletter to Julie Parsons, preferably by email on etc.newsletter@yahoo.co.uk or alternatively Tel: 01392 278764

2. Word from the Chair

Firstly, the good news is that we have received our annual grant from the City Council, for which we are as ever most grateful. We did realise from meeting fellow twinnings from all over the country at the recent conference in Bristol how lucky we are in this respect. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Cynthia Thompson until last May Lord Mayor of Exeter for her engagement with ETC. Indeed, she and her husband David are now members!

Our main business recently has been putting the finishing touches to our programme for our guests from Terracina who will be with us from July 20th - 27th. We now know that this will be a group of 9, including the mayor and his wife, so the City Council will also make its own arrangements for their reception. Fuller information on the visit and programme can be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Josie has booked Clyst St George village hall for our autumn event on October 14th which will be Colin Vosper speaking about "Onion Johnnies" (do some of you remember them?) We might make a Breton themed evening so you can come with stripy vests, jumpers, berets or anything else to put yourselves in the mood, and onion soup will probably be on the menu.

Later than usual and hoping to catch those fabled Christmas markets a group of us (20 so far) are going to Bad Homburg from Nov 30th - December 6th. Talking of Bad Homburg, Wolfgang Herder recently sent me a short article he had written and published in a local newspaper on their twinning links with Exeter. I've had a go at translating it and you'll find it in Section 3 of the Newsletter.

With some help from the City Council a group of us from ETC committee went to the British-German Association conference in Bristol on 12th May. This was a most rewarding experience which is very well covered by the article by Alison Sykes and Josie Mardon. The only thing I would like to add to this is the rather moving story of how Bristol's relationship with Hannover arose which dates all the way back to 1947, just 2 years after the War. That winter was especially bitter, and Bristolians had read in the papers

about the plight of children who were going barefoot to school, their families being unable to buy shoes. Money was raised locally to help these families, and from this sprung the first links between the two cities that eventually blossomed into a full twinning partnership.

It's always interesting when you see how our twinning has encouraged various activities not necessarily organized by ETC. Here are two examples:

- From May 20th – 21st ten members of the Exeter Rowing Club went to Rennes to take part in special events celebrating the 150th anniversary of the *Regates Rennaises*. Thérèse tells me she wore her Exeter Chief's cap to cheer on the teams!
- The Erlöserkirchchor (choir of the Bad Homburg Church of the Redeemer) is coming to Exeter in October and a concert is due to take place in the Cathedral. They are the guests of the United Reformed Church with whom they have a longstanding relationship.

Finally, I would like to share with you this lovely message of sympathy and solidarity from Thérèse Kilner in Rennes in the wake of the terrorist attack at Manchester Arena (but before the appalling attacks in London) Indeed many of you have received individual messages from your twinning friends. Our movement is about friendship and understanding across borders which is a world away from the twisted mind of the terrorist.

Dear John, dear friends from the Exeter Twinning Circle,

Once again the flags on all the official buildings in France are at half-mast. The whole of the country is with Manchester, hit with brutal force by terrorists and their cowardly actions. Is this horror going to stop, "Charlie", Paris, Brussels, Nice, Berlin, London, and Manchester? This time it has an added cruelty insofar that the young and very young are touched. It is beyond belief and one cannot imagine what the parents and families are going through for the rest of their lives. One beautiful girl was so young and probably younger than some of our grandchildren. There are simply no words to describe this abomination. It is with immense sadness that I relay my, and all the

members of the "Comité de Jumelage" heartfelt sympathy to all our friends in Exeter.

With kind and sad regards,

Thérèse

Let us nonetheless enjoy ourselves with family and friends - so have a good summer!

John Whitton

Bad Homburger
Sonntags-Zeitung

3. A Living Partnership with Exeter

Article from the *Bad Homburger Sonntagszeitung*
(May 2017)

The referendum result for the UK's departure from the EU caught us unawares. During the night of the 24th June last year John Whitton, the ETC Chair informed his Bad Homburg colleague Wolfgang Herder from the count about the result in our twin city. Exeter voters rejected Brexit by 55%, but despite this good news he warned us at the same time that this result would be in no way representative of the country, and so it turned out. Even now the consequences cannot be foreseen. As far as the Bad Homburg visitor and tourist office (KVV) is concerned our 50 year old relationship must be strengthened. Unlike the broader political scene bridges should not be dismantled; contacts with the UK should be deepened. This very month a British twinning conference is taking place in Bristol in which members of the ETC Committee are taking part. Our guests from Exeter will be in Bad Homburg from 30th November to 6th December to be received as usual by host families. There was a special wish to experience a real German Christmas market. We in Bad Homburg are proud that one of the finest such markets in the region is to be found in the grounds of the Landgrave's castle. However, nobody can guarantee winter snow in the first week of Advent! There is already a promise that the group can visit the British Rolls-Royce turbine works in Oberursel. On one evening Jonas Langer, landlord of the "Alm Stadl" in front of the Bad Homburg Assembly Rooms (Kurhaus) has already reserved seats for our guests and hosts. The music won't

be too loud and you'll be able to understand each other - and that's what our twinning is all about.

Wolfgang Herder

4. ETC quiz Evening

At 5.55pm on Friday 21 April the Village Hall and car park at Clyst St. George were both deserted. Panic! Had we made a mistake with the date or time or place?

At 5.59pm a small fleet of cars screeched into the car park and the committee members exploded out and unloaded everything needed for the ETC Spring event which was, of course, the Quiz evening.

The bare and empty hall was quickly transformed into a welcoming space. Folding tables were clicked into place and chairs arranged to provide seating for six quiz teams of six members each. Meanwhile there was much activity in the kitchen to ensure that previously prepared food and drinks were ready and waiting.



As a warm up, and to help people to get to know each other whilst others were arriving, two sets of quiz questions had been placed on each table.



Then battle commenced. Twinners are known for their keen participation and some of the answers required a firm ruling from our Quizmaster Josie, amid much hilarity.



After four rounds, our brains were flagging and it was time for a break. The food was varied, delicious and plentiful.

Suitably refreshed, a further three rounds of testing questions narrowly produced the winning team. There was just time for prizes and the raffle.



A very good time was had by everyone and we are all grateful to the committee for their organization and hard work. As 11 pm approached an energetic clear-up restored the hall to order, and as we all drove away the Village Hall and car park were once again deserted. Who would have thought that a short time before so many people had enjoyed an evening of fun and friendship!

Michael Beetham

5. **BGA Conference “Challenge and Opportunity in Furthering British-German Understanding”**



The British-German Association in cooperation with Bristol-Hannover Council celebrated their 70th anniversary on Friday,

12 May with a conference at Bristol City Hall followed by a reception at Bristol Harbour Hotel. The conference included plenary sessions and workshops and was introduced by the Mayors of Bristol and Hannover, the chairman of the British German Association as well as senior members of the German Embassy in London.

The event, organised with the kind support of Airbus, Boehringer Ingelheim, The City of Bristol and Burges Salmon, as well as the German Embassy was aimed at town partnership associations and local associations engaged in British-German activities.

The conference opened on a very positive note when the Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees, welcomed delegates from British Twinning Associations across the UK and some representatives from German Associations too. He recalled Bristol’s long tradition of internationalism and cooperation and the many languages and cultures represented in the city. It was invigorating to hear him say that this tradition would continue long after ‘Brexit’! Welcoming words followed from Dr. Charlotte Schwarzer, Director of Culture and Education at the German Embassy and the Hon. Stephen Watson, Chairman of the BGA, both of whom spoke of the desire to support continued British-German friendship.

John Hobley, Vice-Chairman of the British-German Association chaired the conference and introduced the Bürgermeister of the City of Hannover, Thomas Hermann, who talked of the importance of finding new methods to keep memories alive and the continued importance of international links between Eurocities. He spoke of an issue which was to become key in all the workshops: that of attracting younger members to our Associations and also of the importance of support from local politicians. Longer term, he felt each city would need coordinators in order to realise joint projects.

Dr. Ann Kennard, chairperson of the Bristol-Hannover Council, spoke of the way in which BITA (Bristol International Twinning Association) had taken over responsibility for city partnerships and the role of dedicated characters in the history of the partnership between Bristol and Hannover. Dr. Kennard reflected on the very different world in 1947 when it started and the extraordinary courage and foresight of the British and German partners who were its founding members.

Ratsherr Robert Nicholls, Chair of the Hannover-Bristol Gesellschaft rounded up the opening remarks by emphasising the importance of active civic partnerships in sport, music and between universities. These help to keep friendship and understanding alive.

In the forum which followed, it was noted that international partnerships do not seem to interest the press greatly and even city councils can become disinterested. But in today's climate our long-standing links take on an even greater significance.

Dr. Kennard made the point that young people do not tend to join groups. A suggestion was made that a Facebook page might attract interest (some Associations have now started one) and for those groups who felt this was a difficult task, it might be an idea to invite local 6th form students to help teach social media.

The workshops looked at issues ahead, notably the role of city councils and the funding they provide. This varies hugely across the country. Karolina Medwecka-Piasecka from the European and International Affairs Department of Birmingham City Council led Session 1A and said much can be achieved with civic support. We heard examples of sports projects for less advantaged students last year and the possibility of an IT conference next year which might attract young people keen to learn coding from their German counterparts. However, Karolina spoke openly about her own future: her post is far from secure next year as financial burdens increase from the council. Many delegates who contributed had little or no support from the local councils and relied entirely on their own funds and connections. It made us realise how fortunate we are with the financial grant we receive from Exeter City and the regional support from Devon Twinning Circle.

Josie attended Session 1B and reported that in her workshop she had the opportunity to explain the role of Devon Twinning. Her comments were greeted with great interest. It appeared that we were the only group to have such an arrangement. After a delicious buffet lunch with time to talk to other delegates, exchange ideas and plans we headed for the next set of workshops. These covered School and Youth links, Local Authority and Twinning association links, the View from both sides and successful programmes of local events.

At the Plenary Session the group leaders summed up the information collected from each session. In the School and Youth Links workshop we heard from Alison Dolamore, a representative of the UK-German Connection and Dr. Debbie Pinfold, Senior Lecturer in German at the University of Bristol.

Alison explained how schools can get funding and support for a variety of projects concerning German, even if it is not yet taught at the school. However, it is up to the school to apply for such a project. The Goethe Institute will also support events which promote the use of spoken German. One Association said they had had a poetry reading in their public library.

Dr. Pinfold showed us slides of history projects which have been carried out with the help of the university and twinning organisations in Bristol and Hannover, looking at issues such as a 'Berlin' Wall in Bristol and how this might have felt. The final presentation of student work attracted international interest.

Professor Katrin Kohl from Oxford University spoke about the 'Think German Networks' for teachers and schools facing the decline of the teaching of German. Interestingly, she told me during lunch that there was no such network in the South West. She mentioned too that some twinning groups offered German classes as a way to attract new members.

During the final plenary discussion there was a lot of reference to trips and youth projects carried out in other areas. There was a consensus that exchanges were extremely difficult due to the need for DBS reports on host families. Other group visits for music or sport were feasible however, and again over lunch, a spokesman for Bristol council suggested we look for ways to support outward as well as inward visits for young people.

As Josie reported Exeter Twinning Circle and Devon Twinning Circle were held up as an excellent example of Twinning. The Vice-Chair, John Hobley and Delegates were very impressed with our arrangements and the 'umbrella' protection and support provided. They thought that the four meetings a year with Devon Twinning Circle, spread around the county and our Insurance covering Public Liability and Travel was brilliant.

Josie gave a copy of 'Home to Home' to one delegate and sent more copies to the BGA who intend to follow up our ideas and will be in touch.

Conclusions for ETC

- We are fortunate enough to have a dedicated officer on the council (John Street) and a healthy grant from Exeter City.
- German is still taught in one state and two private schools in Exeter but they may not realise the opportunities available through the UK/German Connection. Could we help with information and general support?
- Primary clubs might be a possibility. We could contact one or two local Primary schools and inform them of possible projects available from the UK -German connection.
- 'Think German' does not exist in the South West. Could we collaborate with Exeter University to set one up?
- Should we consider putting aside a sum of money to support young people from music or sports clubs visiting Bad Homburg?
- This would need to be funded by members and not come from our grant, which is specifically intended to support inbound visits.

Alison Sykes and Josie Mardon

6. The Lord Mayor's Charity 2017/2018



The Lord Mayor's chosen Charity for 2017/2018 is **Age UK Exeter**.

They are a local charity serving local people with the help of the Age UK family. They are independent, responsible for their own funding and are governed by a locally elected board of Trustees.

All ETC members and their friends are welcome to come for the Lord Mayor's Charity Coffee Morning at Exeter Guildhall from **10:00 to 14:00** on:

Saturday, **June 10, 2017**

Saturday, **July 8, 2017**

Saturday, **August 12, 2017**

Saturday, **September 9, 2017**

Saturday, **October 28, 2017**

Saturday, **November 18, 2017**

Saturday, **January 20, 2018**

Saturday, **February 17, 2018**

Saturday, **March 17, 2018**

Saturday, **April 20, 2018**

7. New Members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to the following new members:

**John Brooks,
Peter & Helen Cleasby,
David Pryke**

8. Dates for Your Diary

**Every Third Thursday of Each Month -
'Coffee Meet' at Ferns Cafe - from 11:00**

**Saturday, July 15, 2017 - DTC Meeting,
Newton Abbot**

**Saturday, July 22, 2017 - Trip to the Willows
& Wetlands Centre plus Clarks Village**

**Monday, July 24, 2017 - Coach Trip to
Rosemoor Gardens and Bideford**

**Saturday, October 14, 2017 - ETC Autumn
Event, Clyst St. George**

**November 30 – December 6, 2017 - Outbound
Visit to Bad Homburg**

**Saturday, December 16, 2017 - ETC
Christmas Party, Cardinal Newman Centre**

Monday, February 12, 2018 - ETC AGM

9. ETC Twinning Groups Contacts

**Your contact for Bad Homburg
- Alison Sykes alisonSykes14@gmail.com**

**Your contact for Rennes
- John Whitton johnwhitton@yahoo.co.uk**

**Your contact for Terracina
- Beryl Whidden thewhiddens@gmail.com**
