

2013

Small Group Visit to Neukirchen Vluyn, 11-13 October 2013

In the middle of October six members of Buckingham Twinning Association visited Neukirchen Vluyn. The town in Germany is situated near the River Rhine and not far from the Ruhr industrial area being about 4 hours from Calais - assuming there are no hold ups in Antwerp. We travelled over in two cars on the Friday reaching our destination in the early evening.



Our hosts, some of whom we had met before, made us very welcome. There was a visit from a young group of dancers and singers from Ustron, their twin town in Poland that same weekend, and on the Friday evening we were in one of the local churches watching an amazing and energetic display of their skills. The youngest dancer was just seven: she looked so serious for someone so young. In the interval we were entertained by an aboriginal choir from Australia who were also in the area at the time.

On Saturday we went with our hosts to the Archaeological Park near Xanten, a former Roman town about 45 minutes away. The Roman ruins are being rebuilt according to archaeological finds in the area and it was a fascinating place. We had a very informative guide who led our tour in English for the benefit of the non-German speakers. We then looked round the museum before going to a 'Roman' restaurant on the site for lunch. Some of us were brave enough to try Roman food which was quite delicious, while others opted for the safer option of the German dishes on the menu.

In the afternoon we drove into the town of Xanten itself for a stroll round the streets and a visit to the cathedral, before visiting a café dating from 1540, one of the oldest complete buildings still in existence, for coffee and cake. After a brief walk by the Rhine we returned to our hosts for dinner.

On the Sunday morning we all met up at a local potato farm which was celebrating its 300th birthday. We watched a performance by a group of local men who played melodies on an assortment of hunting horns. Some of the group were returning home on the Sunday, so there was time for a quick lunch of sausage with potato salad before their departure.

We then went our various ways much refreshed by some very attentive hospitality from our German friends.

Sue Watkins/30.10.13

Inter-town Youth Football Tournament, 20-24 June 2013



We had three wonderful days in England, albeit with a very football orientated theme, perfectly organised by Mark Chapman and his team from Moretonville Football club in Buckingham. More than 150 teams played for two days on the extensive grounds of our hosts, which lay between meadows and fields. Rain was forecasted on the day we left but, apart from two short showers (one of which was during the night), we had dry, windy, partly cloudy and mostly sunny weather.



Some people were sunburned: they hadn't noticed it was 20 degrees in the strong wind.

On Thursday 20/06 we all met at the Vluyn sports ground at 11.30pm. The mood was good and wasn't dampened when there was a short shower of rain. When the bus finally fought its way through the very crowded streets at 11.55pm, the tour began in earnest. When all the cases were loaded not only in the luggage

compartment (as suspected beforehand the space here was far too small) but piled in the gangways and all the participants (29 girls, 36 boys and 10 adults) had sat down, our coachman Bernd (later also called bus driver and coach) set off. With Bernd we had really struck lucky. He was calm and easy-going, and also happy to help and talk which enlivened the tour. Our C2 team with coach Uwe Tuschke and 3 of the fathers sat downstairs on the double decker bus. At the back upstairs (later also called the rubbish dump) were team D1 with Peter Borinski and Thomas Plinius as well as two of the players mothers. All the girls sat with Monika Kohler and Dirk Albrecht upstairs at the front of the bus.

The journey to Calais and across the Channel passed very quickly and Gitti K used it to dry her underwear. Now the mood rose to 100% including Siggie. At the first sight of the chalk cliffs at Dover one of the girls asked whether it was still winter in England. Of course not - for now we had left the rain (apart from the two showers mentioned above) on the other side of the Channel. It was brilliant sunshine on Friday morning. After a long stop at a motorway service station (also called shopping centre in England) we started on the final stage of our journey to Buckingham. Although we travelled during the night hardly any of us got any sleep, apart from the determined ones.

We arrived at about 11 o'clock local time and first of all explored the area. The playing fields were some way from Buckingham and situated among peaceful fields. In the neighbouring village after a warm snack for lunch we could begin to erect our tents. The C2 team had a friendly match that afternoon. As our driver now had to have a break (he couldn't drive for any longer) Mark Chapman found a snag in his plans. How do I get 75 participants to dinner in the kitchen of a Buckingham primary school - where a wonderful dinner of a big chicken breast, baked potatoes, peas, carrots and a pudding of stewed apple with crumble and cream sauce or ice-cream had been laid on for them. He was helped here by the German professor Michael Dickman who lived in Buckingham with his family of 6. Like many others he spent the whole evening ferrying the whole group from A to B and back again. Thank you very much indeed, that was wonderful!

Unfortunately our Gitti had further problems. For her son Adrian collided head on with another player. After a 4 hour wait at the hospital (fortunately it was nothing serious) they returned to the campsite. Adrian wasn't allowed to play any more football, but otherwise everything was OK. Many thanks to the young lady who accompanied them to the hospital and acted as interpreter.



On Saturday(and Sunday as well) we had an English breakfast ♦ bread rolls, scrambled eggs, sausages, and fried bacon, so we were well fed and ready to play good football. The D1 team had a friendly match on the larger pitch, as did our under13s. The latter lost 0:3 as opposed to the host team ♦s 9:9. The C2 team and the U15 girls played in a competition ♦every one against each other♦ with 8 a side or 10 a side teams.

The C2 team played against players who were 1 - 2 years older in the 8 a side with 4 points, but they had the public's sympathy with their technically sound way of playing. The under 15s were the only team from Vluyn to win anything during the weekend. In the final against the as yet unbeaten Oxford girls team Jacqueline scored the winning goal. Our B team (formerly the U15 with Robert Pergolizzi) was ninth out of ten at the end. As with Uwe's B team they had played well.



For lunch on both days there was a packed lunch consisting of fresh fruit, a small carton of drink, a filled roll, a biscuit and a small packet of crisps. Water was always available. Our under 13 girls' team spent two hours in England's 2nd biggest shopping centre in the morning with Gitti and Elfrun and travelled there in our double decker bus, as their match took place later in the day. That was

something!!!!

In the evening our schedule included an extensive meal served near our campsite. After that it was chilling out and playing, while the adults chatted to the locals. The last of us went to sleep to recover from a long day at about midnight.



Sunday started at 6 o'clock local time. Washing, packing suitcases and cleaning the tents was on the schedule. We left shortly before 8 o'clock in a full and laden bus. After breakfast our under 13 girls had the first match. Ten teams always in the same way. The game for 5th and 8th place was lost after an 8 yard shootout. Our very keen bus driver Bernd coached the teams which he did superbly. The girls were enthusiastic. The C2 team played in a tournament on the large pitch, as did the under 15s, who helped out in the under17 tournament. In this competition we were third out of 4 teams. The results were two wins and two losses. As well as the under13s the D1 team played all day. Two teams started in the tournament on the smaller pitch. Right up until 5 minutes before the departure from Buckingham our youngest players were playing with Peter and Thomas. The reward for this was a good third place. We lost in the 8 yard shoot out in the semi-final. Shame, well played. All the teams had to get used to the rough and energetic way the English played. But it all worked out with us.

After our punctual 4 o'clock departure from the sports grounds it was back to Vluyn. There were no traffic jams on the way round London, so we could fit in a stop at the 'shopping centre' motorway service station. We also had to wait in Dover before we could board the ferry. We passed the time by feeding the seagulls. The crossing wasn't as nice for some people. The sea was rough and choppy and caused some upset stomachs. But we overcame this without any problems.

The remainder of the return journey went without a hitch and so we arrived back at 4.37 German time in Vluyn, where everybody except one parent was waiting. We came back with a sleeping bag with no cover, 2 blue hand towels and a foam mattress. If anybody is missing these please contact Monika Kohler. In summary the group was brilliant. There were no problems with the team spirit and everybody enjoyed themselves. No losses occurred and we met a large number of new friends.

Written by young footballers from N-V (translated by Sue Watkins)/04.07.13

Small Visit to Buckingham, 9-11 May 2013

A group of 11 guests from Neukirchen Vluyn visited Buckingham from 9th to 11th May. Some of them had been over before, but for others it was their first visit to our market town. After a fairly smooth journey, apart from a major traffic jam on the M25, they reached Buckingham in the early evening. They had left home in sunshine, but unfortunately as they got nearer to their destination the weather got worse and they arrived in the rain.



On Friday morning they had a walking tour round Buckingham with Lilian McDonald, who led the walk in German for the benefit of those guests who didn't know much English. They visited the Chantry Chapel, the old churchyard and the parish church of St Peter and St Paul. The highlight of the tour for some was seeing a 40 foot lorry stuck at the top of St Rumbolds Lane! They were made very welcome at the church and had an unexpected bonus of a cup of coffee.

After a bit of retail therapy around the shops in the town, the Woolpack was the venue for lunch. Here we were joined by several other people including Mayor Ruth Newell and some members of the local U3A German groups.

After lunch the group went up to Stowe Landscape Gardens for a guided walk in English led by Geoff Shaw and translated into German by Christian Berges, one of the visitors. After a couple of hours there was just time for a browse in the gift shop and a cup of coffee before returning to Buckingham to re-join their host families for the evening.

On the Saturday morning they left Buckingham at 9.00 am for a guided tour in Oxford followed by lunch and some shopping before returning to Dover to catch the ferry back to Dunkerque from where they drove home reaching Neukirchen Vluyn at 1.30 am on the Sunday.

A good time was had by all and we are looking forward to a return visit back to Germany in October this year.

Sue Watkins/07.06.13

2012

Christmas Market in Neukirchen-Vluyn, 7-9 December 2012

This year for the first time we had a stand at the Christmas market in our partner town Neukirchen Vluyn, which Lisa and Zoe Flinders had very kindly agreed to run for us. The weather was perfect for such an event as there was about 4 inches of snow on the ground which made it all look very pretty.



The market was held in the grounds of Schloss Bloemersheim, owned by Freiherr von der Leyen and his family, and is held over a weekend in early December every other year. Buckingham's stall was in the old fruit store house next to the one from Mouvaux. It was a bit warmer inside than out in the courtyard and castle grounds where some of the stalls were situated.

On the Saturday Paul Hirons, my husband Steve and I helped out enabling Lisa and Zoe to have a break and explore the market. We had several very busy periods when everybody seemed to come at once, then it quietened off before the next rush. We were selling mince pies, Christmas cake, shortbread and tray bakes, along with Christmas crackers. The latter sold out very quickly.

It was good to meet up with Guenter, Gerd and Christian from their twinning committee, and also Ute, Christian's colleague who had come to Buckingham a couple of months ago. The Royal Latin School exchange pupils were also in Germany at the same time and I saw Peter Poniewski who was leading the group from there.

We were all made very welcome by our host families, and enjoyed some delicious food and interesting conversations.

Sue Watkins/09.01.13

Friendship Treaty with Neukirchen-Vluyn, 7 July 2012



The first weekend in July saw the visit of four people from Neukirchen Vluyn, Mouvaux's twin town in Germany, to Buckingham to sign the friendship treaty between them and Buckingham. Our guests flew into Luton airport arriving at Sue and Steve Watkins house late on Friday evening for a light buffet and to meet their hosts. The group consisted of the mayor, Harald Lenssen, accompanied by Franjo Terhart, Gunter Fischer and Christian Berges, who are all members of their twinning committee.

On Saturday morning we had guided tour of the grounds at Stowe on which we were ably

led by Val Shaw. We travelled from the New Inn to our starting point on the land train which was driven by Bill Truscott, who was hosting one of our guests with his wife Sandra. We then adjourned to Boycott Farm for a delicious lunch. In the early afternoon we went on a guided walking tour of Buckingham led by Lilian McDonald, who had translated her commentary into German for the benefit of the visitors.



Later in the afternoon arrangements had been made to sign the Friendship treaty in the Council

Chamber. We were joined by our Mayor Ruth Newell, several councillors and members of the Twinning Committee. After welcome speeches from both mayors, the treaty was signed, small gifts were exchanged and a toast in English sparkling wine rounded off the event.

In the evening a barbecue was held at Sue and Steve Watkins's house for the guests and their hosts, and various other interested parties including some members of the U3A German group. Fortunately by then the rain had stopped for the day. On Sunday morning our guests left for Luton Airport for the flight home. Franjo and Gunter were actually staying on in the UK to go to Scotland for a few days before returning to Germany.

A very enjoyable weekend was had by all and we look forward to future events with our German friends.

Sue Watkins
14.07.12

2011



Visit To Neukirchen-Vluyn, 30-31 July 2011

On 30/31 July we joined the 20th anniversary celebrations of our twin town Mouvaux's partnership with Neukirchen-Vluyn in Germany, and the latter's twinning relationship with Ustron, a spa town in the mountains of southern Poland. This followed an official invitation from the Town Mayor (Bürgermeister) Harald Lenssen to the Buckingham Twinning Association.

Buckingham was represented by Mark Chapman from Moretonville Football Club, Paul Hiron of Buckingham Town Council, Gerry Loftus, a former Buckingham mayor, Jane Mordue, chair of the BTA, Howard Mordue, an AVDC district councillor and Sue Watkins who is responsible for our link with Germany. As we were joined by visitors from Ustron in Poland, who were celebrating 20 years of twinning, we were quite an international group.

We were made very welcome by our host families and thoroughly enjoyed the visit. It also enabled some of us to practise our German, although most people there spoke English. On the Saturday morning we all went to the town hall for the official reception. We were met by the mayor and various members of their twinning committee. After several speeches and the signing the visitors' book, we were taken with the Polish and French guests for a guided coach tour of the town with the mayor giving the commentary.

Neukirchen-Vluyn is situated in a mining area, and our first stop was on top of a slagheap, up which we were led by a police car. We had a wonderful view from the top. Next we stopped at Bloemersheim castle, a landmark on the edge of the town. Here we were invited in by the owners, Baron and Baroness von der Leyen who gave us a warm welcome. They run a thriving orchard business and we learned about the history of the castle.

After a short trip round the school area, which includes 3 secondary schools as well as primary schools, we had lunch at a Croatian restaurant in Neukirchen. After lunch we had a couple of hours free and our hosts took us to a monastery nearby. Here we could admire the gardens and watch a wedding party having their photos taken, before going into the church. We then returned to

Neukirchen for our evening meal - at the oldest restaurant in the town, before returning to our host families to change for the celebrations on Saturday evening.

After a few speeches, which were translated into Polish, French and English for the benefit of the guests, we had German songs, a Polish pianist, a French singer and an 'English' (actually American) band to entertain us. At around midnight feeling rather weary, we returned to our hosts' homes. A lunchtime barbecue preceded our departure for home on the Sunday afternoon.

Sue Watkins/08.08.11

Twinning Junior Football Tournament, June 2011 (Our First German Link Event)

Four teams from Moretonville Junior Football Club travelled to Germany to take part in the Town Twinning Football tournament recently. Held in the town of Neukirchen-Vluyn, the event proved to be a huge success, though we were disappointed that a team from Mouvaux did not take part in Germany. The U14 girls and two U13 boys' teams took part in a Tournament on the Saturday, and we were well supported by travelling family and friends.



The girls were up against some very good German sides in a seven team event and came away with a very respectable mid table finish, turning in some excellent performances with all the games being close. In the afternoon it was the U13 Boys turn. Again it proved to be a very competitive event, with both teams performing very well. The U13 Rangers were just edged out in the group fixtures but were successful in winning their final play off fixture 1-0. The U13 Rovers turned in a great team effort to go all the way and win the tournament with a 1-0 victory in the final, cheered on not just by travelling support but also lots of new German friends that had been made.



The U14 boys & Girls had the bonus of playing Dutch opposition on the same day and with a team made up of both Moretonville & host players came away with a very creditable 2-2 draw. The Girls also played with a mixed team and in a tight game went down 3-1 after their morning efforts started to take a toll. Further fixtures followed on the Sunday with all teams again having success.

There was also a social event on the Saturday evening for all the players, families & officials from all clubs. Great credit must go to our German hosts and their players & supporters for making the trip such a big success as well as to all the boys and girls from Moretonville Football club for the way they represented the football club and the town. The whole event was played in a fantastic spirit with many new friendships being made. Moretonville hope to hold a return event next summer that will see our new German and Dutch friends visit Buckingham. There was also a flying visit on our journey home to our French counterparts in Mouvaux. There were some very tired legs in the two boys fixtures played with a mixed U14/13 team going down 2-0 and the U13's going down 2-1.

Mark Chapman/05.07.11
