



It's hard to believe that a year has passed since the UK voted in favour of Brexit, yet with all the difficulties that this inevitably presents, the bonds between ourselves and our Twin Towns seem to be as strong as ever. This was shown during our recent visits to Bagnols and Braunfels, which were very successful and much enjoyed by everyone who attended both of these.

Here at home, after a promising start in June, the hot summer weather took a decided turn for the worse. Just as the school holidays arrived, with far too many wet, cloudy days. However, for our friends in Southern Europe, temperatures soared to around the 40 degree mark. No doubt they would have welcomed our somewhat cooler summer days!

Looking ahead to 2018, we are pleased to report that plans are already well underway for Newbury's hosting of the Thematic Project Meeting over the Easter weekend next year. These particular dates have been purposely chosen to enable more families to be able to attend, as they fall during the school holidays. There are plenty of other events to look forward to, with details of these in the diary section of this Newsletter.

Sunday Lunch and Walk, 14th May, by Des and Sharon Watson

Fifteen NTTA members enjoyed the rhododendron and azalea walk in the grounds of Highclere Castle. It had been raining during the week, so everyone was pleased that the rain held off for the walk. It was a little early for the rhododendrons this year, but the azaleas were in bloom. Despite one or two unexpectedly muddy patches, nobody was lost in quick-sand and all arrived for well-deserved lunch at the Caernarvon Arms in the late afternoon. The restaurant manager and his team made the group very welcome and the Sunday roast was not only delicious but great value for money too. The event gave everyone another chance to enjoy the company of fellow members and to look forward to further NTTA social events.

Visit to Bagnols 11-15 May by Marian Hatfull (Bagnols Secretary)

6 members of the Twin Town Association took part in the Europe Day celebrations, including Zita, Moira, Diane, David & Jill Jessett & myself. The weather did not look promising on our arrival, but fortunately things improved over the course of the visit.

Among the activities arranged, we had a full-day outing to Marseilles on Friday 12th, where we travelled on the mini tourist train to visit Notre Dame de la Garde, the beautiful church perched on a hilltop with stunning views over the city. We then had our own various arrangements for lunch; in our case, delicious food by the harbour-front, complete with matching sunhats provided by the restaurant for those who wished to escape the extremes of the midday heat. This was followed by a couple of hours on a guided visit in the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MUCEM), situated right on the seafront. Despite some issues with there being no English-speaking guide, we would have liked to stay longer to appreciate the wonderful art on show.

On Saturday, the all-day European Market took place, with a choral interlude and aperitif before a shared lunch, followed by a European show of choir and folk dancing, with offerings from Poland, Germany & France. For the main Saturday evening event, following the speeches, after last year's delicious offerings from Newbury (Pimms & Eton Mess, of course) and Hungary (Goulash, what else?), this year it was the turn of our German and Italian counterparts to cook for everyone, featuring sausage and sauerkraut, followed by tiramisu.

Sunday was a free morning, followed by a shared buffet at the Multicultural Room. The afternoon was spent in a variety of activities, such as taking part in various games, playing boules, or following the town trail helped by a series of old photos. After the prize giving and farewell drinks, again, at the Multicultural Room, the evening was spent with our hosts, who, as ever, had gone to such a lot of trouble to look after us and make us feel welcome.



Diary dates for 2017

Visit to Eeklo and the European Parliament 8th -11th October

Visit to Carcaixent 1st - 5th November

Christmas Lunch . Hare and Hounds Speen 17th December

Youth for Europe August 2017 by Theo Durrant (YFE Secretary)

Before Youth for Europe 2017 I would have said that Bagnols was the twin town I knew least about. Having been to each of the other towns over the years, but I had only been to Bagnols briefly in 2013, so I was excited to finally get a chance to experience it at first hand, from its weekly market, to its great museums and cafés. But It was often over 40 degrees in the daytime and even the Spanish members of the YFE group were starting to wilt in the heat. However, that didn't stop us having an amazing time.

The central theme of this year's gathering was art, which gave everyone the chance to do some truly interesting things. Before leaving home, we were each asked to bring one of our own pieces of art along; this could be a painting, a poem or a film, and they would put it on display in the media library in Bagnols. They even held a mini-exhibition in the evening, so we could showcase and appreciate each other's work. A trip to Bagnols' art gallery naturally found itself on the itinerary and later on in the week we were given an opportunity to draw or paint whatever we wanted, while soaking up the gorgeous French weather. Whatever we created then was later added to the museum display.



No trip to France would be complete without sampling the delicious wines from a local vineyard. We each got to try nine different types of wine, which were worlds apart in style and flavour. It was there and then that I finally learned to tell the difference between dry and sweet wines. For information, you may be pleased to know, I prefer the dry ones.)

When we weren't busy drinking wine or appreciating fine art, we went out on day trips, enjoying a wide assortment of activities, among which were travelling 126 meters underground to see one of the biggest and most beautiful caves in Provence, heading out to the beach for a relaxing evening by the sea and even going to see an open air theatre performance, all in French. Back in Bagnols, we took part in a workshop in macaroon-making at a local pâtisserie, where we took part in every aspect of making these sweet treats and made a batch of both chocolate and salmon/mascarpone macaroons. (Yes, you read that right.) Finally, anyone who went this year can proudly say that they went kayaking under the bridge that is on the 5 Euro note, which is a pretty cool thing to drop into conversations whenever possible



In the evenings we took turns cooking and sharing each other's national dishes. While the Polish knocked up some dumplings and Italians rustled up an out-of-this-world Carbonara, we British dished up a classic Cottage Pie, which went down an absolute storm. After eating, drinks and music shortly followed and the Youth for Europe gang got a chance to celebrate our brief but wonderful time together, looking forward to the next one already.



Twin Town Annual Quiz and American Supper Evening

As usual, St Mary's Shaw-cum-Donnington Shaw Church Hall was the venue for this year's Summer quiz, with the event being organised for the first time by June Tung, our new Social Secretary. Although she admitted to being rather nervous, she did a great job. The event was well attended and we all enjoyed a wonderful buffet supper, as well as some rather eclectic questions. Pictured are the winning team, proudly clutching their trophy.



We thought it might be interesting to find out what some of our friends from other Twin Towns say they like coming to Newbury. Here is just a sample of their views.....



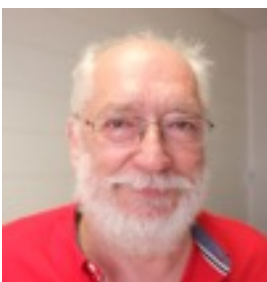
Ghislaine Courbey I love coming to Newbury. It enables me to practise my English and put away all the silly ideas that some people have that the French and English don't get on with each other.

Carmen Duarte I found the town and its people so friendly and enjoyed discovering its rich history and beautifully green countryside.



Gunther Jakob I spent nearly a year in Newbury a long time ago. I love the town and have so many friends in Newbury.

Viviane Selva On a recent visit, my most memorable experience was the wonderful afternoon we spent on the canal boat. So peaceful.



Tamas Szuts
Spending time getting to know so many new friends from all of the Twin Towns.



Vicent Selfa The conference that Newbury organised in 2016 was so well done. A great opportunity to share our opinions. Most memorable.

Seriana Depaepe I love your cosy houses and gardens and enjoy your tradition of afternoon tea. So civilised !!



Ivan Perotto The 2016 Newbury Beer Festival was a real highlight for me..I love traditional English Beer with so many different varieties to try.

Uwe Möglich My family and I love visiting Newbury. Everyone is so friendly and nothing is too much trouble. I love that milk even is delivered to the doorstep !



Braunfels visit – 1 to 5 June 2017 by Elizabeth Anfield (Braunfels Secretary)

12 members of Newbury Twin Town Association took part in this visit, the main purpose of which was the signing of the twinning agreement between Carcaixent and Braunfels.

On the Friday morning, there was a conference, with reports on what the various countries represented by the twin towns are doing to help refugees. This was followed by a presentation from a representative from Seawatch, an organisation that is doing important work rescuing people from the Mediterranean, chiefly from the waters near Lampedusa between Lesbos and the Turkish coast, and also off the coast of Libya. She described some of the harrowing experiences, for example, when the boat was not allowed into territorial waters to rescue people in the sea. She gave a very clear explanation of the situation, such as the hardening of attitudes in Turkey and Libya.

In the afternoon we went to visit the Hessen Park, an open air museum where rescued old timber-framed buildings have been rebuilt in village settings corresponding to different parts of Hesse (the area where Braunfels is situated). Work is still ongoing, with a store of around 100 building still to be constructed.

On the Saturday morning we met again for study sessions, this time with a choice of three workshops based on either the history of the Germans from Russia, or Refugees and exiled Germans after WW2: this included a personal account from Gunter Jakob who left the Sudetenland when he was 3 years old, or Personal Testimony from Syrian refugees who are now living in Braunfels.

After a shared lunch outdoors, we enjoyed some free time during the early afternoon, then we met for a Sekt reception before the signing of the twinning agreement with Carcaixent. In the evening, there was a wonderful social event in the Haus des Gastes, with a most delicious and colourful buffet, followed by a very entertaining musical duo and dancing until midnight.

On Sunday morning, in bright sunshine, we enjoyed sharing all the typical culinary offerings from each of the stalls of the twin towns. There was also some choral singing to enjoy. In the afternoon, we had free time with our hosts, although some people took part in town events, such as a town walk or visit to the castle. In the evening, a farewell drink took place at the Sports Club.



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