

Reigate & Banstead Twinning Association

Covering the areas of Reigate, Redhill, Banstead and Horley



Twinning News 2020/2



Important Date for your 2021 Diary

Anniversary Visit to Eschweiler-----3 - 6 June 2021

Brunoy Link

Dear Friends,

Brunoy, like much of the Paris area and the North of France, was more affected by the Coronavirus than some of the provinces. However, as far as I know, most of our Twinning friends did not suffer. I think that the only people who were affected were Marcelle and Yvan Benattar. They spent a few days in hospital but were back home fairly quickly and are now fine. Life is now returning to a "new normal" and the Brunoy Twinning Committee has even managed a Zoom meeting to start talking about the future of Twinning..

Of course, it is far too early to plan any visit precisely but we may see our Brunoy friends in Reigate in September 2021. Just wait and see.

I hear that there have been some changes on their committee so let's hope that we can move on with renewed energy and carry on with Twinning safely.

Monique and Anne

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Monique Pottage (Joint Chairman & Brunoy Link)
and **Anne Miller**

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Eschweiler Link

THE TIME WITH CORONAVIRUS IN GERMANY

Dear friends in Reigate & Banstead,

I'm pleased to write to write a short report for you.

Since the beginning of March virologists and our federal government and the federal governments have been coordinating the measures to be taken. We too have been informed daily by the media about the situation and the state of research. Our best known virologist published a podcast every day.

But the inevitable shutdown followed. You have experienced for yourselves what it means. Grandparents without grandchildren, home office, short-time work, homeschooling (in many places there was a lack of computer technology). There are also more unemployed people.

Towards the end of the shutdown – in the middle of May – there were demonstrations in large cities against the strict measures and the supposed loss of democracy that was supposedly connected to them. The majority of the Germans did not agree with this, but kept to the rules.

To our joy we noticed that a great friendliness and helpfulness among each other developed. Domestic production was also boosted so that in case of another emergency we would not be too dependent on foreign countries. Many new ideas came up!

Endangered groups (artists, theatres, restaurant owners, companies...) received financial support from the federal government and the federal states.

The capacities of the hospitals were massively expanded. Fortunately there were no bottlenecks. Even patients from Italy and France could be treated.

Last week the government provided a further 130 billion euros in aid money for people whose existence was threatened. Nurses, cashiers, salesmen..received an extra bonus for their efforts. In July families will receive 300€ for each child to boost the economy.

The current issue is the opening of the shutdown. The federal states are going different ways. North-Rhine- Westphalia is going much further than Bavaria. This includes opening up kindergardens, schools, the meeting of friends and many everyday things.

It is assumed that the majority of Germans spend their summer holidays at home or in Germany. There it can get very crowded in popular places. Therefore our family doesn't go to Lake Constance this summer.

In the beginning of the pandemic there was a hotspot in Heinsberg – close to Eschweiler – because of carnival.. There were other hotspots in Bavaria and Baden –Württemberg because of the proximity to borders (France, Italy, Austria..). And in Bavaria because of strong beer festivals! The city region of Aachen – with Eschweiler – was slightly affected.

So much for Corona. Maybe just one more sentence...the further openings are discussed and lived controversially and critically. How will it continue..in autumn, in winter? Who knows..

Currently there are many demos because of racism in the USA and in Germany.

Best regards to Reigate & Banstead! Stay healthy and protected.

Ute Peter

Our Own Lockdown Stories

Hello Everyone

I hope you are all keeping safe and well? Like most of you, we have remained at home apart from a weekly early-morning foray for food shopping. Our allotment down the road has been a great help – it is sheltered and sunnier than our garden, and it's possible to do a bit of exercise and sun bathing whilst battling with the weeds! We are starting to get some good crops of soft fruit and the vegetables are coming on, despite the efforts of the birds and foxes. Graham has been keeping busy renovating our shower room but I have to confess I haven't taken up any major projects except for online Spanish. In some ways, I have found it good to have a step back from all the usual weekly events and time to "potter".

We've been keeping in touch with Michel and Claudine from Brunoy as well as several friends from Eschweiler, who all send their best wishes to you. We are hoping it might still be possible to meet the Rabys at their favourite vineyard in the Mosel at the end of September, for a wander through the area and a bit of wine tasting. It seems healthy enough in the fresh air! It will be lovely to get away in the caravan once that is allowed and we are hoping to take our grandchildren away for a few days as well.

We are really looking forward to seeing all our Twinning friends again – if you have any good ideas for future distanced social events we would love to hear them. In the meantime, take care!

Janet Powell

I write this as we would have been enjoying a weekend with our French friends in Brunoy, but alas, it was not to be! All the talk is of lockdown restrictions and "the virus". So in lieu of a lovely weekend speaking French and eating chocolate, I've been asked to write about life in lockdown.

Lockdown has had its benefits as well as its disappointments. It has meant working from home without the need to commute through London each day and it has also meant less distraction from my Master's studies. (I'm half-way through.) Of course, deliveries from online shopping are the highlight of any day, as is the occasional walk somewhere nearby - the lovely spring weather has been a blessing.

I have also discovered some new ways of communication with family and friends, which usually means meeting by video on Zoom or WhatsApp. Since we are always home, we don't have much excuse for being too busy or being out doing something else. Jim has also been organising online French conversation through Meetup® events every fortnight so we are able to keep up on our language skills. We used to meet in a local pub over a drink, but now we bring our own drinks and are meeting people from further afield (such as Portsmouth and Italy).

I do wonder about life after lockdown and what the new "normal" will hold for us all. I certainly miss eating out at restaurants, catching up with friends in person, and desperately miss travelling abroad and having those plans cancelled. Hoping we can all find some opportunities in the summer to see more of our family and friends. I am missing seeing you all and hope we will be able to meet up again soon.

Tammy Meduna-Scott

Hello all Twinning friends.

If there is one thing we can all agree on it has to be that the year 2020 is one we will never forget. Having been locked-down, or perhaps more accurately locked in, the world has been a different place for me. I have been very lucky. My family are close by but my heart goes out to those who are not so fortunate.

I miss meetings, talks and pub lunches with chat! Especially I miss my Eschweiler and Brunoy friends. No meetings so far this year, so no practicing our actual language skills which, I know many members study for. Thank goodness for the stimulation of long telephone calls!

The year 2021 has to be better and I so much look forward to meeting all our Twinning friends then.

As President I send warmest wishes together with a few hugs all round.

Penelope Horsfall

Like everyone else, I began the lockdown by having a huge sort out, the kitchen, my bedroom, the spare bedroom...I even sorted out my CD collection into categories, jazz, classical, rock etc. But my sanity has been saved by my garden! Luckily I had several unopened packets of seeds, most of which germinated thanks to the lovely May sunshine. It has been very therapeutic to watch the garden grow and blossom.

I've been keeping up with friends and family via text messages and Facebook. I've also discovered the joys of FaceTime, talking regularly to my family. But the biggest help has been Zoom! I've used it to join Rotary talks and for discussing projects with my U3A writing group. I've also been in a play, filmed entirely using Zoom. Lots of rehearsals and learning of lines so that the conversations appeared spontaneous. Quite a challenge but good fun.

Now that lockdown is easing I've been able to hug my granddaughter again. Let's hope that things get back to normal soon.

Sally Baker

The Zoom Kahoots Quiz

Many may have participated in a Zoom quiz. It is a clever way that computer screens can be shared, it is a commercial enterprise and some use of it is chargeable.; I believe our quiz was free. The quiz was of course conducted in French and the questions were about France, French people of note, food, geography or history. Each member submitting four questions on the variety of subjects. It is based upon a multiple choice, so each question was submitted with three alternate answers.

Our leader and question master posed the questions on-screen and each member has a short time to choose the supposed correct answer by ticking their choice with their mouse. The session went well and was easy to conduct. Unfortunately, not being a general knowledge person, I came last in the Quiz.

David Wylie

THOUGHTS!

I have been asked for my thoughts as a State Registered Nurse who worked in theatre and critical care for over 30 years, both in the National Health Service and Private Health Care and as a Volunteer overseas in Sierra Leone.

It has been 10 years this month since I retired from nursing service. Although nursing is a rewarding profession there are times when your personal life is sacrificed so you can support your patients and hospital colleagues.

This brings me to my thoughts of how my colleagues, who are still working in the profession are coping with yet more requests to go the extra mile! As we have always done, they have been unselfishly responding to the need of others in these exceptional times. I, unfortunately, have not been able to personally respond as a person of a certain age with minor medical problems.

In the enthusiasm of the moment they are called Angels and Heroes and told how valuable they are! I do so hope when these difficult times abate and until next time, the enthusiasm and all the promises of support will not be forgotten! It has highlighted how vital their services to our continued wellbeing and survival are!

They are not just SAINTS and SAVIOURS! They are trained dedicated people who perform a vital service to mankind and should NEVER be forgotten or undervalued!

THANK YOU TO THEM ALL!!

Rosemary Jones

Treasurer and Membership

- **Treasurer**

There has been little activity in 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The quiz in February returned a very good profit and this is the only fund raising event in the year to date.

The Association paid the deposit on the coach trip planned for the Brunoy visit in June. At the point when the balance was due, it was decided to cancel the booking as it clearly could not go ahead. Under the terms and conditions of booking, the deposit was non refundable but the company have agreed to hold it over until next year.

Membership subscriptions for the year are around £100 down on 2019 as a number of members did not renew. Nevertheless, the balance sheet still shows good reserves at this time

- **Membership**

We have 72 Memberships of whom 51 are subscription paying – the rest are Honorary Members and members of our twinned clubs. The 72 memberships represents 87 individual members/organisations.

Two members have decided to leave the Association and five members including one organisation have not paid their 2020 subscriptions. Accordingly, their details have been removed from the database.

Robert Bogin

Obituary

Gerda Tomson, originally from north Germany, came to live in England when she married Donald. They moved to live in Banstead from Chelmsford in 1976. Donald was a Scout Leader so Gerda helped with all the activities as a volunteer such as camping and jumble sales with their daughter, Karen. Gerda joined the Twinning Association in its early days when she was member of the Nork WI who twinned with the Landfrauverein in Eschweiler. She made some lasting friendships and visited there on many occasions. The link worked for many years in spite of the lack of farming in our area helped of course by Gerda being a German speaker. She particularly enjoyed the German carnival and was sorry we did not have that tradition in England. She had been ill for a while but even in hospital recently enjoyed looking a photos of the Carnival as the sons of one of Karen's friends are members of the Redhill Corps of Drums. She used to come to Twinning events regularly taking a great interest in all that was going on. Amongst her other skills was cooking and we remember her delicious onion tarts which she contributed to our events.

Diana Bowes