

Connections

BATH'S TWINNING NEWSLETTER

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St Andrew's School Choir perform in Braunschweig Cathedral.

The undisputed highlight during my role as Chairman of the Braunschweig Twinning Association, writes Bryan Chalker, has been the triumphant visit to this enchanting German city by the young choir of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School from 4th-7th June this year, when they literally took Braunschweig by storm.

My wife Glenys and I travelled to Braunschweig during this time in support of this delightful group of youngsters, whose ages ranged from six to eleven, and were captivated by their outstanding performance at the city's historic and beautiful Dom (Cathedral) where they received the first ever standing ovation in that historic setting.

Some may question the value of twinning but after the visit I was approached by a man who said, "Until I read your letter in the Chronicle about the Choir's visit to Germany and how well they did, I thought twinning was a waste of time and effort. I have now changed my mind". I believe, that says it all about what was achieved during those four days in June. Relationships between our two cities have always been extremely good, as former Chairman Don Withers will readily testify, but the young choir of St Andrew's Primary School has taken this rapport to a new level and won hearts and minds of a whole swathe of new admirers in this wonderful German city.

The Choir has been in great demand – they performed at the Mayor Making ceremony in Bath Abbey, and again at the Bath-Braunschweig Twinning Association's AGM in the Mayor's Parlour. Now they have now recorded a CD of the songs they performed in Braunschweig under the musical directorship of Shean Bowers (Assistant Director of Music and Choral Director for Schools) and accompanied by Gary Desmond on piano. The CD, 'Singing All Together', features 10 songs, including 'Don't Build Your House On The Sandy Land', 'I'm Gonna Sing', 'Si, Si, Si', 'Amani Utupe' and 'Danny Boy'. It is interesting to note that the latter was composed by Frederick Weatherly, who was born in Portishead, Somerset, but in his later years lived in Penn Lea Road, Lower Weston, Bath, and also wrote 'The Holy City' and 'Roses of Picardy'. 'Danny Boy', set to the traditional tune of 'Londonderry Air', is known the world over – but local to Bath!

I have promoted the CD on my 'Same Roots, Different Fruits' radio programme on Somer Valley 97.5FM and recorded the show so the children can listen to it during their morning assembly. The show is aired each Monday between 7pm – 9pm, with the first hour being carried by a Leeds, Yorkshire station, UK Country Radio.com, every two weeks. Thanks to the internet the whole presentation is listened to as far away as Australia, America, Austria, Germany and, of course, the whole United Kingdom.

Braunschweig



The Choir with The Lord Mayor of Braunschweig on the steps of Richmond Castle.

This amazing choir, brainchild of Head Teacher Sue East and headed by Shean Bowers (of Bath Abbey), delighted people wherever they went. They gave impromptu performances at airports, on planes, trams and bridges – and charmed the staff in the newsroom of the local newspaper, the Braunschweiger Zeitung.

It became abundantly clear from my first encounter with the St Andrew's Choir during my year as Mayor of Bath that these children loved to sing and were natural entertainers, a fact borne out by the rapturous welcome they received in Braunschweig in response to their delightful harmonies and charming manners. Here was a small choir with a big voice!

Petanque Club's Visit

The City of Bath Petanque Club's trip to Braunschweig from 1st to 3rd October, proved a delight. We met up with the Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft (Anglo-German Association). Their President Treve Erdmenger gave us a warm welcome and invited us to help ourselves to a wonderful table spread with a fantastic variety of food and drink. Our Captain, Don Grimes, held back just long enough to greet everyone and present gifts from Bath.

As well as being enjoyable, the evening proved to be very useful. We sat at several different tables to get to know as many members as possible and ensure that they receive just as hearty a welcome when the team visits Bath next year. Developing new contacts is important to continue to strengthen the links, which unite our beautiful cities.



Members of the City of Bath Petanque club gathered around as Treve Erdmenger, presents Don Grimes, with a Braunschweig Lion. Lutz Rudiger Busse, President of the Magni Boule is on the far right.

Braunschweig, Dr Hoffmann, and his staff for hosting such a memorable visit by this delightful group of Bath children.

Thanks must also go to Vicki Messam for showing us various historic aspects of Braunschweig, Barbara Heck and Treve Erdmenger, President of the DEG, all of whom have visited Bath on many occasions, and to all those who made the trip such a magical experience. We can't wait to visit Braunschweig again!