

**Swidnica and Biberach celebrate 25
Years of Twinning
8-10 September 2016**

Our wonderful weekend began by being picked up from Wroclaw Airport by Lukasz and a car with a driver: my husband, Adrian and I were delighted to be returning to Swidnica, and we were even more enchanted by the town than we were on our first visit three years ago. We were there to celebrate the 25 years of twinning between our twin towns of Biberach and Swidnica, and it was certainly an unforgettable weekend packed with so many sights, sounds, smells and tastes. On the Thursday evening we went to a concert which was the inauguration of a new auditorium – formerly a Soviet building.



Grupa

MoCarta entertained us with their talent and comedy; they are well worth seeing if they come to England. I will be sure to let you know!

After the concert all the visitors were invited to a meal with the president and vice-president of Swidnica so that we could all meet one another: as well as our Polish hosts and the German delegation, we met Ukrainians, Hungarians, Lithuanians and Czech. It was fortunate that we had a very capable interpreter so that we understood what was going on.

A very pleasant surprise was that the president spoke French, so I was able to speak to her directly – this made our communication during the weekend particularly good.



Friday was the day for all the formalities: gifts were exchanged between the different countries. Tendring District Council sent a useful gift which we presented and the twinning association



had decided to give something a little different. Parker's Garden Centre put together, at our request, the most beautiful gift arrangement of spring bulbs. It was most enthusiastically received – and it will provide a happy souvenir of our weekend next spring after the winter has finished.



Next our party was taken to visit a beautifully renovated complex which is dedicated to peace and after lunch we were taken to Swidnica's only vineyard where we had a tasting session not only of the wines, but also many local products. As it was over 30 degrees, we lingered over our tasting session under the trees – getting to know others in our group better.



After visiting a city centre photographic exhibition, we ate dinner in a lovely restaurant where we experienced so many different tastes and traditional food – definitely no diet this weekend!



Saturday, and another action-packed day that included a visit to an impressive castle with a warren of underground tunnels where the Germans had been during WWII; it is rumoured that Hitler visited here.

The formal terraced gardens were magnificent, but we opted for a cool drink with the Ukrainian and Lithuanian contingents – accompanied of course by our interpreter, Gosia.



After another delicious lunch in the town square, we went to the top of the tower to get a panoramic view of Swidnica – well worth overcoming my dislike of heights to be rewarded with such picturesque scenery. Adrian and I then did some shopping at the market – to purchase some of the wine and sausage we had tasted the day before and to take a good look at all the different artisanal products. We then re-joined the others at a mock battle before our final dinner. This was a smaller event as some folk had already had to leave – it was a great way to finish the weekend with the president and another vice-president, and definitely made us feel that we were amongst friends.

Sunday morning, although our flight wasn't until the evening, we got up early to say 'au revoir' to our new-found friends; we had time with Aleksandra, my counterpart in the twinning society – then the rest of the day was a bonus for us. We wandered around the town, watching

families, dressed in their Sunday best, out eating ice-cream together at the pavement cafes; listening to the music being played by a small band, eating pierogis outside a small restaurant.

We arrived home on Sunday feeling that we had packed a whole week into three days. Our hosts were incredibly welcoming and we do hope we have the opportunity to show them some of our hospitality sometime soon.

Joy Phillips

Valence Twinning Market, Saturday 24 September 2016

Bert Foster and Carol Oleggini drove the TTA van and stock to the market, whilst Adrian and I travelled by car: Saturday morning began bright and early with a crisp, autumnal feel: our stand was longer



than usual as we were not able to do English breakfasts this year. We did, however, manage to fill our stand with a plethora of traditional products.



Carol, Bert, Adrian and I manned the stall – Bert, as can be seen above acted as advisor to our potential clientele – a tactic which clearly paid off!

At 9.30 on the dot, the Mayor of Valence, Nicolas Daragon came round to greet all the twinneders on the market.



Our morning was very busy, although for me it was a steep learning curve, trying to remember prices, add them up and give the correct change.



Fortunately the others knew what they were doing and very efficiently ensured that we had a very successful event.

This picture I took on a more sombre note. It reminded me that we cannot take anything for granted – and in particular our own safety.



These soldiers passed behind us as we were serving our customers. Twinning has, at its foundation, a desire for a lasting peace between nations; a tolerance of our differences and an acceptance of each other that enriches each one of our communities. A reminder, if we needed one, of why we were there.

Our early start and busy market was followed by an evening meal put on by the Valence Twinning Association. They worked very hard to make the market a real celebration of twinning and then went the extra mile to provide us with their inimitable Valentinian hospitality.



A huge thank you to Francois, Olivier and Martine and their entire team for making the whole day a huge success – you are truly much appreciated.

We took great pleasure in an evening of convivial company, wonderful food and melodic, Israeli music.

Of course, it was difficult to leave Valence, so we took time on the Sunday to take in the beauty and majesty of this lovely place.



And this remarkable bandstand, with the heart displayed on the front ... inspirational.



Writing this short article about our recent market trip to Valence is a bit of a challenge: this was my first ever experience of doing a market of any sort, so I have nothing to compare it with. Therefore my comments are my own impressions, and not necessarily those of the people who have years of retail experience. I must also apologise for some of the photos – many thanks to our friends in Valence for providing the quality images, my apologies for the rest - taken with my mobile phone.

Joy Phillips

It's Christmas!

Well, nearly. Held on Saturday 12th November at the Princes' Theatre,

Clacton, the annual CVST Victorian Christmas Market took on an international feel with stalls from our three twin towns. Our guests had arrived by air and rail during the preceding three days, and bringing with them produce from their own countries. Some items on sale had a distinctly Christmas flavour to them, like the chocolate Advent calendars, whilst the ever-popular gluwein gave imbibers a taste to warm them against the cold winter days ahead. Other temptations, such as the Cotes du Rhone wine, the Ardeche walnuts and the chocolate marzipans were laid out on the festively decorated stalls, and attracted good numbers of buyers. By the market's close, there was little left unsold.

With the stalls finally cleared away, our guests were given a reception in the Chairman's Parlour of the Town Hall, hosted by the Chairman, Cllr Jayne Chapman. To be made so welcome by the Chairman was greatly appreciated by our visitors, who had the opportunity to talk with Cllr Chapman, and to see some of the memorabilia associated with Tendring's long history of twinning. By way of a small 'thank you' to our guests for having made the long journey to the market, a fish and chips supper had been arranged for the Saturday evening. This was held at the hall in Great Holland, and we were pleased to see not only the



hosts, without whom such events could not happen, but also several other

members of the association. In a most convivial atmosphere, everyone made the most of their opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones.



In a marvellous example of collaboration, Joy Philips had arranged for her catering team to produce the desserts, so we were treated to a wide choice ranging from 'healthy option' to 'my diet starts



tomorrow.' We were also entertained by local musicians, and whilst there were only two of them, their virtuosity and wide repertoire more than compensated for any lack of number.



Thanks are also extended to the members of the association who fetched our guests from Stansted airport, and particularly to those who took them back at an hour when most sensible people are still fast asleep.

Report from Swidnica on the Clacton Christmas Market Weekend – written by Ola Rokicka, Maryla Harazina with the invaluable help of Donna Paydowska

Over the last few years the Tendring Twinning Association (TTA) has invited us to take part in Clacton's Christmas Market. This year there was an additional reason we wanted to come together, to strengthen our relationship with the newly-appointed TTA Chairman, Joy Phillips.

We arrived on Wednesday 9 November and received a warm welcome at Stansted from Adrian Phillips who took us to our hostess, Donna Paydowska's home. The weather on that day wasn't good, but we managed to take a long walk along the sea front, looking at the newly-opened beaches in Holland-on-Sea. We don't have a sea in Swidnica, so it's an attraction for us. Holland-on-Sea is quite a nice village and we also walked to the local Tesco and Coop. The rest of the day was spent chatting with our hostess, Donna.

On Thursday the weather wasn't bad and Joy Phillips took us and Donna out: at first for a three-course lunch in Frinton's Cafe 19, and thereafter on a long trip around the Tendring District. We saw some interesting places in Harwich, a small picturesque port and Manningtree, also the Tendring District 'capital' the small village called Tendring. Then Joy took us to the sea front in Walton-on-the-Naze and the pier and finally to her home for

tea, cakes and a long chat. Later Adrian gave us lift back to Donna's

On Friday the weather was very nice and sunny so we decided to walk along the sea front to the centre of Clacton to do some shopping, which was successful as we bought presents for our relatives.

Because Donna doesn't drive, John and Judith Wolton took care of our lifts. On Friday afternoon John took us to the Town Hall to prepare our stand, and on Saturday morning Judith took us to the Christmas market. Every year, after the Christmas Market closes the Chairman of Tendring District Council invites the Twinning participants for a little party, just coffee, tea and cake.

In the evening the TTA served dinner: this year Joy and the committee successfully organised dinner for over forty people. Aleksandra speaks fluent German and was happy to meet her friends from Biberach; Maryla tried her English. In the end we sat with French and English ladies. Dinner consisted of a very tasty treat, the traditional English dish of fish and chips, and English cakes. The food was accompanied by good French wine, from Valence. Again John and Judith gave us lifts.

Early on Sunday morning, Joy Phillips took us back to Stansted. We enjoyed our visit. Our friends in TTA are warm and easy-going.

Many thanks
Ola Rokicka & Maryla Harazina

CVST Market – Free time!

With some guests arriving here three days before the market, and others not leaving until after the weekend, it was a great

opportunity to discover a little more about Britain and the British way of life.

For Sarah and Petra from Biberach, a visit to the seaside was a pleasure they could not experience in their land-locked town. They picked seashells from the beach at Frinton, and watched the bustle of boats from the banks of the estuary in Brightlingsea.

A number of guests attended the concert given by the Tendring Brass Band. Its title was the Best of British, so included many works by British composers, or with a British theme, although as the conductor freely admitted, some of the British connections were quite tenuous.

Few could resist the lure of the shops, and with the relative strength of the euro against the pound, they must have picked up a few bargains. Whether that was in the large stores in Colchester or the charity shops in Frinton, many must have found themselves near to their baggage allowance on their flights home.

Biberach Christmas Market



John and Judith Wolton and a fully stocked stall

Could the Christmas market of 2016 be our best ever in terms of sales? It is still too early to be able to give an answer, but

with almost all of the stock which was taken out being sold, the indications are very promising. Some lines had disappeared from our shelves long before the final weekend, with customers being disappointed not to be able to buy brandy butter, lemon curd, English Breakfast tea, certain types of marmalade, and chocolate orange. Every mince pie and Christmas pudding were sold, and with nine hundred Christmas crackers being snapped up, there are bound to be a large number of 'English' Christmas tables this year.

And although the profit made at the market is essential to keep a healthy balance in the TTA funds, our presence there is much more than about making money. It is a visible symbol of our commitment to twinning, and many of our customers are long standing friends. Our stall is large and shared with twinners from Asti and Valence. Each town brings products from its own country, so festoons of dried sausages hung above bottles of wine in the French part, whilst boxes of Panatone and Parmesan cheese featured prominently with the Italians. It must have been a rare 'stallholder' who did not buy something from their twin towns' offerings.



Michaela from the Partnerschaft gives our members a break

For those of you who have not been to the market, it is a treat in store. Held in the market square in the centre of the

town, it looks especially attractive after dark. The shops surrounding the square are tall, and their steeply pitched roofs are outlined in white lights.



All the stalls are brightly lit too, and twinkle whenever there is frost or snow about. Throughout the day, tempting aromas drift from those selling a range of hot German foods like wurst or knabberfleisch, or the seasonal speciality of glwein. Other stalls sell jewellery, hats and scarves, sheepskin rugs, chocolates and sweets, and Christmas decorations. Indeed, it would be possible to buy Christmas gifts for everyone without leaving the market square.

For our association to take part in the market requires the support of many of our members in buying, transporting and selling our goods. It also needs the cooperation, organisation and hosting of our friends in the Partnerschaft in Biberach, so to everyone involved, a big thank-you!

Coming Shortly



Burns' Night Supper – TTA style Saturday 28th January 2017 7.00 – 11.00

Please make a note in your diary and support this event. Further details will be on our website shortly, or contact Joy Phillips at joyphillips@hotmail.co.uk

Annual General Meeting Wednesday 3rd May 2017. 7.30pm Imperial House, Clacton on Sea

**English Language course
22nd – 28th June 2017**
Hosts and helpers will be needed, so please make a note of the dates.

**Annual Garden Party
16th July 2017**