



From the Editor

At the Annual General Meeting a number of appointments were made of officers of the Association, and the changes are detailed in an article in this edition. Changes were also made to the Constitution – again reported below. We are fortunate to have a group of people who give their time and energies enthusiastically so that the Association can continue to thrive, but the Committee is always on the lookout for undiscovered talent. If you feel that you have advice or expertise that could be of use to the Association, please don't be shy; do speak to the Secretary or any of the officers – you know what they say, a volunteer is worth ten pressed men (or women)!

I am always grateful to those who contribute articles for the Newsletter – there are, believe it or not, some visits and events that I don't actually take part in, and those who do take part are my eyes and ears! We particularly welcome Charlotte Hughes's contribution to this issue.

Ray Harrowing

A Memory of Past Times

The following piece was read at the Holocaust Memorial Day event outside St. Mary's Church, Kidderminster on January 24, 2010.

"Mirjam Cohen was the daughter of Dr. Benjamin Cohen, the rabbi of the Jewish congregation in Friedrichstadt, a small town near Husum in Germany. They lived at 24 Westermarktstraße, which was the rabbi's house provided by the Jewish congregation. Cohen was looked upon as a friendly, compassionate man, of whom many old Friedrichstadt people still have good memories. One of them remembers that Cohen always carried an umbrella whenever he left the house, whatever the season.

"Mirjam was born on the 23rd May, 1923 in Berlin, the only daughter of Benjamin and Bertha Cohen.

The family came to Friedrichstadt in 1928 when her father was appointed rabbi there. In fact he was to be the last resident rabbi in Friedrichstadt, because after *Kristalnacht* everything changed in



Mirjam Cohen, from the school photograph of 1936

Germany – even in Friedrichstadt. In the town as many as 13 religions and denominations had lived side by side in harmony, but even little Friedrichstadt was not to escape the horrors of National Socialism.

"She attended primary school in Friedrichstadt and then went on to the *Städtische Oberlyzeum*, the High School, in Husum – students from Friedrichstadt still travel to the Husum schools today, and now the school on that site is the Theodor-Storm-Schule. The Cohen family lived in Friedrichstadt until 1937. The Jewish community had gradually dwindled so that it could no longer reach the minimum number of persons required for a Jewish service. So the family, like many others before them, moved to Hamburg, where they felt that the large city might offer them a place of refuge from the Nazi tide. Dr. Cohen wanted to continue his work as a rabbi. Soon they were on the move again; in 1938 or 1939 they went to Amsterdam, in the Netherlands. But here, in 1942, they were picked up by the Nazis and sent to Westerbork camp, and then, in 1943, they were transferred to

Auschwitz. There, on the 19th November 1943, Bertha and Mirjam Cohen were murdered. Mirjam was 20 years old. Dr. Cohen was murdered on 31st March 1944.

number and variety of stops available to the organist. The work has been carried out over an amazingly short period, and the church was “rededicated” at a festival service on Palm Sunday (March 27).

“Today, in front of number 24 Westermarktstraße, the former Jewish rabbinate, there is a commemorative stone to Mirjam; if there are similar stones commemorating Dr. and Mrs Cohen, their whereabouts is unknown.

“The students and teachers at the Theodor-Storm-Schule do not want the memory of this, the only Jewish child who is known to have attended the school in the 1930s, to be lost. This year they are researching Mirjam’s story, and in June they will present the results of their work, in words, paintings and drama so that this tragic story can come to the attention of people in Husum and beyond.

“We too remember this young lady, and all those others whom she represents.”

The Theodor-Storm-Schule has received a grant to set up a memorial to Mirjam in the school building or grounds, and a prize is being offered to the student whose design is accepted. The students and staff of the school hope to be able to bring their drama production to Kidderminster and to present it both at King Charles School and at the Rose Theatre. More details will be announced as planning progresses.

Marienkirche Renewed

Many visitors from Kidderminster will have visited Husum’s central church, the *Marienkirche*, and will recall the somewhat drab appearance of the pillars, the walls and the seating. That’s not the case now! After much discussion, the interior of the church has been extensively refurbished, and it is now bright and welcoming. The pillars are painted a light cream, to match the one that was painted as a “test” a few years ago, and the walls and seats are now similarly light in colour. Perhaps the biggest change has been to the west balcony, which has been reduced by several feet. This has involved moving the separated section of the organ, which formerly occupied a position on the top edge of the balcony – a decision which caused the greatest controversy as it has reduced the



The changes to the church are intended to restore it to a great extent to what it was when it was first built, to the design of Danish architect C.F. Hansen, in the 1830s. In particular the west balcony was built as late as 1962 to accommodate the then newly-built organ, and this has been seen by many as destroying Hansen’s vision.





The organ now revealed by a transparent balustrade

Before the seating was brought back into the church, two “promenade” concerts took place, one given by the Theodor Storms Chor and the other by the *Rödemisser Spielmannszug*, a local youth band that has made its mark throughout Europe. The atmosphere at both concerts was quite special as the musicians revelled in the unique acoustic of the wide empty space!

The *Husumer Nachrichten*, Husum’s local daily paper, has kept in close touch with the progress of the work, and has published nearly 20 reports on it!

I’m looking forward to joining with the Theodor Storms Chor in October to sing in concert in the renewed *St. Marien*.

Ray Harrowing

On the Horizon

Visits to and from Husum in 2010 will include the visit of the Theodor Storms Chor to sing with the Kidderminster Choral Society over the weekend May 22-23, the visit of Kidderminster golfers to Husum for the week June 6-12, and the visit of representatives of the Kidderminster Horticultural Society to their Husum counterparts on June 18-21. Over that same weekend, when the Kidderminster Carnival will be held, the *Krokusblütenkönigin* will be visiting Kidderminster, and a group of quilters from Husum will visit the Forest Quilters on August 19-22.

A prestigious occasion for Husum will be the opening of the new Kongresszentrum, adjoining the Messehalle, on August 28; Kidderminster will be represented at that ceremony. Representatives of Husum churches will be in Kidderminster on October 22-25.

Twin Town News April 2010

We shall be reporting on these events in future issues of “Twin Town News” and on the website, www.kidderminster-husum-twinning.co.uk. Meanwhile, please watch for further details. If you wish to add events, visits, etc. to this list, please inform the Editor.

Impressions of a Crocus Queen

We thought that readers might be interested to know what the year of office of the Krokusblütenkönigin entails, and what she feels she gets out of it. The following is a translation of an article that ap-

peared in the Husumer Nachrichten, Husum’s daily newspaper, in February:

"It’s been indescribable, almost crazy!" When Catherina Neubauer, Husum’s *Krokusblütenkönigin* (Crocus Queen) speaks of her experiences, she is so enthusiastic. But for the young Nordfries-



Queen Catherina visiting Bewdley

lander the year of office is coming quietly to an end. "I have experienced so many beautiful and interesting things during this year; I wish that it could continue", she says. When Catherina was proclaimed the ninth queen on March 21 last year she could not have expected that this office would

have such a positive effect on her. "I don't know where to begin", she says. Every new date was wonderful. Among the highlights were certainly the visits to Husum's twin towns, Kidderminster and Heiligenstadt. And she would not have missed the carnival procession in Düsseldorf. Also unforgettable was the International Green Week in Berlin.



Catherina meets an SVR veteran

"All those are experiences which will always be with me", says Queen Catherina; she is absolutely sure that without the title she would never have had these positive experiences and made so many new acquaintances. And she is sure that her successor as the *Stormstadt's* queen will have the same fantastic impressions.

In the meantime she has friends everywhere in Europe, and these friendships will last way beyond her term of office. Catherina also says that she's learned to get along with people better, and "I've changed and become more mature". She is convinced that, for whoever is proclaimed queen, this year will be a very special experience. On March 20 the tenth Crocus Queen will be enthroned and, in addition to Catherina and her eight predecessors, other German queens and symbolic figures are being invited. If everything goes to plan, even a "Fair Knight" will come from Poland to Husum – naturally in full armour!

"I wish everyone could have such unforgettable experiences", Catherina Neubauer says. Of course the engagements during the year have taken up a lot of her time, "But it has been well worth it".

Husum Calendar

For the information of any intending visitors to Husum, here are some of the events that will take place in or near Husum during the next few months.

April 21-25 – 6th Festival folkBALTICA

May 16 – International Museums Day

June 30 – July 4 – 20th jazzBALTICA festival

July 9-11 – Matjestage (Herring Festival)

July 17 – Kulturnacht

August 4-8 – Hafentage (Harbour Festival)

August 21-28 – Piano Festival (Raritäten der Klaviermusik)

September 10-19 – Pole Pop-penspäler Tage (International Puppetry Festival)

September 21-25 – Husum WindEnergy

(International Exhibition)

September 30 – October 6 – Husumer Filmtage (Film Festival)

October 16-17 – Krabbentage (Shrimp Festival)

November 22 – December 27 – Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas Market)

A full programme of events, exhibitions, etc. can be found at www.husum-tourismus.de

Quiz Night – March 26

A Quiz Night was a new venture for the Association, and we were not quite sure how it would go, but the event proved very successful, with 67 tickets sold in total. The event took place in the Corn Exchange at the Town Hall, and there were fifteen tables vying for top spot – which was taken by Pat and Ken Garbett, Hilary Boyle and Robin, a friend of the Garbetts.

Net proceeds of the evening amounted to over £300, and we are most grateful to Terry Garbett and others who worked hard to achieve such a good result.

German Film Evening

Members of the Association will know that King Charles I School is putting on a Film Evening on April 27, when the film to be shown will be *Bella Martha* (*Mostly Martha*) – in German, with English sub-titles. Admission is free, but tickets must be booked in advance. Refreshments will be provided by the School's catering students.

Mostly Martha is the tragicomic tale of a professional chef who finds her world turned upside down when she has to care for her newly-orphaned niece Lina (Maxime Foerste). Martha (Martina Gedeck), who is obsessed with gourmet cooking, even discusses recipes with her bewildered psychiatrist (August Zirner) and woe betide any customer who

attempts to send her food back! When she has to include Lina in her life, her enclosed world begins to crumble. Lina - sullen, despondent, and refusing to eat - proves herself more than a match for Martha. A boisterous Italian chef (Sergio Castellitto) who's been hired at the restaurant, turns Martha's life

that fills the *Schlosspark* in Husum every Spring. We are now planning to create our own show of crocuses in Kidderminster – not as many flowers and not as large an acreage, but still a display that we hope will brighten an area of the town. After much discussion we have decided that a suitable



inside out. Sparks fly, and repressed emotions come bubbling to the surface. The acting matches up to the cooking, and both the food and the settings make you hungry for a taste.

A light German supper will be served from 7.00 p.m. until 7.45 p.m., and the film will last for about two hours.

From the Committee

The Association's Committee met in January and again in February, and among the items discussed were:

- Changes to the Association's Constitution;
- The appointment of new officers;
- The possibility of planting purple crocuses in Husum Way.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on June 8.

Crocuses come to Kidderminster

Many readers will know of the magnificent display of purple crocuses - four or five million blooms –

and appropriate location for an initial planting would be the wide grassed areas in Husum Way, on the eastern edge of Kidderminster.

We intend to use the same variety of crocus as is in the *Schlosspark* and we have already got a small supply of corms (bulbs) that can be planted out in the next few months. We also have a large supply of seeds that are being propagated by members of the Kidderminster Horticultural Society, but these will not be ready for planting out for three or four years.

The residents of Husum Way are being consulted about the plans, and we hope also to be able to involve the pupils of Offmore Primary School and King Charles I School (Lower School) at Comberton. Also we have to work with the County Council's Highways Department, who control the land in question, and with the District Council, who mow the grass there.

If you would like to sponsor the planting of the crocuses, or to take part in the project in some other way, please contact the Secretary, Hilary Boyle.

Annual General Meeting 2010

The AGM took place on Wednesday March 30, when 37 members and friends gathered at the Valley Suite, Severn Valley Railway. At one of the busiest meetings for some years, changes to the Constitution of the Association were approved and a number of new officers were appointed.

Most of the changes to the Constitution were of a "tidying up" nature; the biggest change was the creation of the office of Vice-President, which is to be held by the Town Clerk of Kidderminster. As Charles Talbot is the present Town Clerk, this means that he could leave the post of Secretary, and still retain his contacts with the Association, the Charter Trustees and the Town Council of Husum – important jobs, which he knows inside out. I shall put the revised Constitution on the website shortly so that members can read it at leisure!

The post of Secretary has passed on to Hilary Boyle, who has worked hard for twinning over recent years. As readers will know, Dr. Rod Summers stepped down as Chairman earlier in the year, and his place has been taken by Vice-Chairman Terry Garbett; the new Vice-Chairman is Jerry Mayfield, who also retains the job of Membership Secretary.

Alistair Fuller, from KEMP Hospice, received a cheque representing half the proceeds of the Twinning Christmas Concert; the balance will be sent to the *Husumer Hospizdienst*. Representatives of the various groups reported on what has been a very busy and enjoyable year of twinning, and news was given of further visits to and from Husum, as well as possible new contacts.

Charles entertained the meeting with his reminiscences of twinning over the past 50 years – whilst pointing out that looking back was not usually the primary aim of the Association! He was afterwards presented with a pair of engraved cufflinks, and Jean received a bouquet. The meeting ended, as usual, with a German-themed refreshments, and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to chat and exchange experiences.

Hilary has received a lovely letter of thanks from Charles, which says in part: "How pleasant to be taken by surprise and to be made a gift of something symbolic and redolent of happy times past, when an exciting future is there to be grasped! ...

It is so exciting that new connections continue to be made and that another link in the chain of fun is forged. ... Please give my thanks to all who thought up and achieved this lovely gift; cufflinks was an inspired thought and I thank you all for such an insight into one of my frailties – losing them at the wrong moment. No chance with these! Bless you all, moin, moin! Charles."

Ray Harrowing

King Charles I School visit to the Theodor-Storm-Schule (part 2)

On Wednesday September 23 I went, as part of the exchange group from King Charles I school, to Husum to stay with our exchange families over there and learn about their lives and culture. My partner's name was Imke Retzlaff and she and her family - mother Gesa, father Jörg, and brother Nils - welcomed me into their home and made me feel like a member of their family. They - and everyone I met on the exchange - were very understanding and helpful with my German and it has improved so much as a result of the exchange as I was taught



Husum's "Kidderminster Bridge"

an abundance of new words. We did lots of activities while there, both just in our King Charles school group and with the exchange pupils from the Theodor-Storm-Schule.

On the Thursday we took a day trip to Kiel to go with the Year 10s to a science fair, then we had a couple of hours of free time to explore the city in small groups.

On the Friday we learnt about the town of Husum and its heritage by doing a quiz that took us to different areas of the town and asked us questions about them, which I enjoyed immensely, and then we were very privileged to get a meeting with the Deputy *Bürgermeister*, Herr Pletowski, who talked to us about Husum and asked us about Kidderminster. Then we went back to school and

did Jump Style dancing. This was really fun and a good icebreaker for us and the German pupils and a nice change from what we had been doing in the morning. After this we arranged between ourselves to go shopping, watch a film and go out to eat all together. I really enjoyed watching the film even if it was a little hard to understand at times.



On the ferry to Hallig Hooge

The weekend was spent with our host families and on Saturday Imke and I went shopping - something we both enjoy doing - and on the Sunday Imke's family took me to see the sights of the local area and the two different seas that border Schleswig-Holstein. I learnt a lot about the family and their everyday life at this point and I really enjoyed talking with them.

On the Monday we went to Hallig Hooge - a very small island with very few buildings on it - which was a short ferry ride from the coast. There was a short film running there about the history of the island and I was interested to learn about the floods the island had had in the past and the stories it had to tell.

The final activity was on the Tuesday when we went to the Multimar Wattforum - a big aquarium - and completed a questionnaire while there. We also spent some time in lessons with a German class and this was an extremely fascinating new experience and led me to making a lot of friends in that time; they all came to wave us off when we left.

This was a very different experience; their school started a lot earlier than I was used to at home and being constantly surrounded by the German language took a lot of getting used to! However I made lots of friends that I still keep in contact with and I did lots of things that I never would have

done otherwise and all in all it was a very enjoyable, unforgettable experience!

Charlotte Hughes

Worcestershire Forum of Twinning Associations

The Forum held its March meeting in Bewdley, at the Youth Café which has recently been opened in Load Street. The Forum, which is an informal grouping of Associations, does not limit its membership to the County, but welcomes other interested groups from nearby - Kinver is regularly represented, and among those present at this meeting were representatives from Leominster, who gave an interesting résumé of twinning in Herefordshire.

Among matters discussed were: funding from the EU for twinning visits; involvement of local councils in twinning; celebration of Europe Day (May 8); and ways of working with more than one twinned town. The activities of the towns represented were described, and some useful tips were shared. The Forum's next meeting will take place in Tenbury Wells in June.

Krokusfest 2010

Kidderminster's Carnival Queen, Ruth Keenan, joined a party that travelled to Husum for this annual festival, celebrating the wonderful display of purple crocuses in the



Catherina, Ruth and Annika

Castle Park. Unfortunately, this year the crocuses had failed to make an appearance at the appointed time, staying safely underground until all threat from the harsh winter had passed. Nevertheless the festivities went ahead, and after all everyone could visit the town again in a few weeks' time when the flowers had appeared!

This is the tenth year that a *Krokusblütenkönigin* (Crocus Queen) has been chosen, and to celebrate this anniversary

eight of the nine previous queens were present – together with queens (and a knight!) from other



Two of Husum's ten crocus queens

towns. The knight was the “Fair Knight” of Jaroslaw, in Poland, who appeared complete with suit of armour weighing 25 kilograms, and the queens included a Lamb Queen, a “Cabbage Queen”, even a “Jacket Potato Queen” – as well as Ruth from Kidderminster. The new *Krokusblütenkönigin* is Annika Lorenzen, who we anticipate will be visiting Kidderminster in June for the Carnival.

The festivities on the Saturday were followed by a visit on Sunday to the Alternative Energy Fair at the Messehalle, where the Kidderminster guests were treated as celebrities. Ruth was asked to draw the winning ticket in a lottery that saw a couple from Kiel win a five-figure sum for work to make their home “green”.

New Members

We are delighted to welcome four new members. Margaret Lillis visited Husum last September as a member of the churches' group, and obviously enjoyed the experience! Bev Newey's renewed interest in the Association was prompted by reading the website and pieces in the Kidderminster Shuttle, as was that of Geoff and Heather Cox.

We hope that they will all have opportunities to visit Husum and to take part in welcoming visitors to Kidderminster.

Around the County

The Worcestershire Forum of Twinning Associations has invited us to publicise each others' activities in our Newsletters, and the following is a selection from the many visits, etc. that are coming up in the next few months.

April

Droitwich - 23 – Quiz and Ploughman's Supper
Friends of Auxerre (Redditch) – 30-May 3 – Visit from Auxerre (France)

May

Bewdley – 29-June 2 – Visit to Vellmar (Germany)

June

Droitwich – Visit from Bad Ems (Germany)

July

Droitwich – 11 – Garden Party

September

Bewdley – 20-27 (t.b.c.) – Visit from Clarksville (USA)

October

Bewdley – 1-4 (t.b.c.) – Visit from Fort-Mahon-Plage (France)

Droitwich – 16 – Coach trip to Westonbirt Arboretum

Sketchbook

Beginning with the July edition of the Newsletter, we shall include a series of “thumbnail sketches” of our members. Some who may not have had a chance to get to meetings or other events might not know other members of the Association if they passed them in the street, so hopefully we shall be able to put a few faces to names!

Photo credits: Colin Hill, Raina Bossert, Marketta Weßler, Jenny Holmes.

Kidderminster-Husum Twinning Association



Officers

Chairman: Terry Garbett;
Secretary: Mrs Hilary Boyle;
Treasurer: Mrs Christine Dutton;
Membership: Jeremy Mayfield;
Cultural Secretary: Ray Harrowing
Website:
www.kidderminster-husum-twinning.co.uk

Newsletter

The Newsletter is edited and published by Ray Harrowing. Any contributions for the next issue will be welcome. Please post or email copy and photos (jpeg format) to:

Twin Town News
147 Birmingham Road
Kidderminster
Worcs. DY10 2SL
Tel. 01562 822476

(See website - above - for email address)