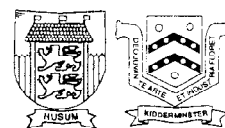




# TWIN TOWN NEWS



Volume 8: Issue 1 May 2005

## Norman Leonard Broome Honorary Life Vice-president



Norman Broome

The unexpected death of Norman on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2005 shocked us all and has created a gap in our lives which will be hard to fill. His extensive knowledge of our twinning with Husum built up over the years both before the creation of the Association and as its Chairman from 1975 to 2002 will be greatly

missed. It is particularly sad that he died in this year of celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Kidderminster's connection with Husum. It was a great mark of respect to Norman that the Town of Husum sent a deputy Mayor, Hans Peter Wulff, to represent the town at the funeral. Rainer Maass, a close family friend and former youth group leader, also travelled from Germany.

The quiet and thorough manner in which Norman conducted our business and his wide-ranging connections ensured a seamless and successful flow of new ideas for extending our activities.

His most recent innovation was the linking of the Kidderminster Carnival Queen with the Husum Crocus Queen which took place for the first time in 2004 with the visit of the Carnival Queen to Husum and the return visit of the Crocus Queen to the Kidderminster Carnival. It was entirely fitting that his final active weekend should be in Husum at the 2005 Crocus Festival again with the Carnival Queen and her delegation.

The unfinished work of arranging the Golden Jubilee Concert, which was Norman's idea, has been taken up by other members of the Association, who have benefited from his leadership and inspiration over the years. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his daughters Florence and Margaret and their families.

## Why Kidderminster and Husum? How did it all begin?

In 1955, the Borough of Kidderminster was invited to take part in a Foreign Office sponsored visit to foster relationships between British Towns and towns in the state of Schleswig-Holstein in the then Western Germany that had been part of the British Zone of Occupation after the War and where Local Government had been remodelled on British Principles. Kidderminster was represented by the Mayor, Alderman Lt Col FDH Burcher OBE and the Town Clerk, Mr John L Evans MA. The visit took place in September 1955.

After a few introductory days in KIEL, the State capital, learning about the Federal Republic and the State of Schleswig-Holstein, the delegates were sent to different towns in the State. The Town Clerk went to HUSUM and the rest you might say, is history.



L-R The 1958 Civic Visit: Alderman Adams, Town Clerk J.L. Evans, Ald. Tolley, Bürgervorsteher Andresen Mayor Cllr Howard Parker, Bürgermeister Dr Fiedler, Cllr Ricketts, Ald. Burcher & Ald. Talbot.

According to his original report he gained a most favourable impression of HUSUM and its people and on his return home he recommended to the Council that Husum Town Council be invited to send a delegation to visit Kidderminster in 1956. The Council agreed and the first delegation from Husum was welcomed in summer 1956. In 1958 the Mayor, Councillor Howard Parker, led Kidderminster Councillors on a most

successful return visit when good relations were established.

It was then agreed to exchange Youth Groups as the best way of carrying the connection forward and the first group from the Worcester Cross Youth Club went to Husum in the summer of 1960. Having been elected a Councillor in 1959,



*The Youth Group of 1960*

I represented the Kidderminster Borough on the Committee of Management of the Worcester Cross Youth Club and I was asked to advise the Club on the visit as the Leader had never been out of the UK.

The Town Clerk John Evans became responsible for twinning and from 1961 to 1973 I led the youth exchanges. Miss Margaret Broome, a daughter of the then Councillor Norman Broome took over from me.



*Norman Broome signing the Twinning Charter*

The majority of the costs were born by the Borough with contributions from the participants but in 1974 following the demise of Kidderminster Borough, the newly formed Wyre Forest District Council felt unable to support town twinning throughout the District and so the Kidderminster/

Husum Town Twinning Association was formed to carry on the Youth Exchanges and to encourage the Kidderminster Charter Trustees in supporting the work. Town Twinning Charters were signed in Kidderminster in 1976 and in 1977 in Husum, to formalise the Twinning partnership which had by then been in existence for some 21 years. The Association started a programme of expansion of its activities with the keen support of the Kidderminster Swimming Club. Council visits were alternated with Association visits and lively contact increased on the formal and private level which has continued to increase ever since.

**Charles Talbot**



*The presentation of a carpet produced by Brintons for the signing of the Twinning Charter in Husum in 1977*

## *A Military Experience*

On 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004, Jean and I paid a private visit to Husum flying from Stansted to Esbjerg where we were collected by car and arrived in Husum at 4.30pm. Within minutes of arrival, having changed, we were taken by our host, Dr.von Hielmcrone MdL, to the Old Town Hall for a reception attended by Frau Heidi Simonis, the Prime Minister of Schleswig-Holstein with other civic and military dignitaries.

Outside in the Market Square in front of the Marienkirche 450 young Army recruits were drawn up in a square formation with an open side against the church where two pavilion tents had been erected for guests to sit and from where we had a good view. A military band marched on parade and played excellent music. Crowds surrounded the square.

The parade was an 'Oath of Loyalty Ceremony'

which is held at the end of all recruits' basic training period following their conscription for National Service and this year Husum was the venue. The Prime Minister made a speech and inspected the soldiers accompanied by senior officers. More speeches followed. The national flags of Schleswig-Holstein and The Federal Republic were paraded and from each of the units on parade six soldiers marched to the middle of the Square and held the flags. A Solemn Oath of Loyalty to the Republic was then sworn while we stood bareheaded. It was a most impressive and moving occasion. The darkness was pierced by a few street lamps and by flaming torches held by soldiers and at solemn moments a searchlight illuminated the scene. It was very cold and later it snowed which added to the atmosphere of the evening.

After the open-air ceremony, we were invited to the Barracks for a reception during which a leading journalist gave a lecture about relations between the Press and the Military. This lasted about 45 minutes and made one grateful for the generous hospitality to follow!!

**Charles Talbot**

## *A Mixture of Master Bakers*

At the beginning of December 2004 there was a unique contact created by the visit to Husum of Tony Ray, Master Baker, whose well-known family bakery is in Plimsoll Street, Kidderminster. With the assistance of Terry Garbett, our Vice-Chairman, Tony met Master Baker Herr Lassen who is the owner of *Conditorei Lassen* in the *Süderstrasse* opposite the *Altes Gymnasium Hotel*. His business consists of a shop selling many kinds of bread and delicious cakes and a café with a modern baking unit at the rear. In the summertime, patrons can enjoy their coffee and cakes sitting on the pavement. Herr Lassen will be retiring next year and intends to pay a return visit to Kidderminster.

## *Kidderminster Horticultural Society*

Our long held ambition to visit Husum became a reality when we volunteered to reconnoitre for a gardening exchange. The plan was to explore an initial visit to Kidderminster to coincide with the

Horticultural Society's "Open Gardens" day in June next year, their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Despite our lack of German, we had enjoyed hosting teenage lads exchanging with our sons, and - guided by Rod Summers & Charles Talbot - eagerly made our plans. It all suddenly seemed a bit daunting as, clutching our phrasebook, we nervously disembarked the Ryanair flight at Hamburg. After a surprisingly smooth journey, but a long day, our hotel, only a short distance from Husum station, was a very welcome sight.

The next three days were wonderful. Thanks to preparatory work by Georg Wessler - an excellent ambassador - we achieved a huge amount. After an introductory tour of Husum town with him, including an art exhibition in the new Town Hall and our first sampling of coffee and cakes, there was time for more independent exploration before walking out to the first *Kleingarten* - sort of like allotments but with a definite philosophy of providing space and opportunity for flat dwelling families to enjoy the land. Large areas were split into good sized plots. Each had to be worked to the rule of thirds - a chalet and flowers; fruit and grass; and vegetables. The wildly diverse results achieved within these guidelines were amazing!

Our hosts, Holger and Annalene Topf, fortified us with refreshments from the excellent castle café before visiting another *Kleingarten*, which included their own plots, complete with a chalet where they spent much of the summer. Georg kindly showed us his superb garden before he and his wife Marketta provided an elegant and tasty German supper - happily their other guests not only spoke English, but had visited Kidderminster!

The following morning found us at an entirely different *Kleingarten*, one run by the local *Friends of the Earth* - organic, part wild, and with numerous children's clubs and activities. We were made most welcome by Rosi Jebens and left very impressed. There was just time for a trip out to one of the windswept islands for a fuller flavour of the poldered landscape - including a warm restoring lunch at a local pottery - before visiting our final garden in a beautiful old village out of Husum.

There is now a small group of gardeners in the region who have, in the English style, a garden around their house, which they open annually, much like our scheme here. Wolfgang and Magritt Wiegers belong to this scheme, and hours flew

by as we enjoyed their hospitality and garden - a worthy match for Kidderminster Horticultural Society's best!

A farewell supper with Georg at Husum's brewery, with compulsory sampling of the produce, was a fitting finale to the day - but not our visit. The town was transformed the next morning for a magnificent bustling outdoor market, which was a wonderful end to our trip. Will an exchange take place next year? Wait and see!!

**Hilary and Geoff Boyle**

*Writing in April 2005...*

Keen to learn from Kidderminster Horticultural Society "how to do it", a party of 18 gardeners from our twin town of Husum will be arriving on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June, to stay with hosts in Kidderminster until Monday 27<sup>th</sup>. Although 2005 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning link with Germany, this visit will be a first - an early step in exploring a regular exchange between gardeners.

The main focus will be the annual Open Gardens Day (this year, proceeds going to the Rhydd Covert appeal) on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>. It will be a challenge to squeeze in all the other possible activities for our guests. Quite apart from the town itself, the Carpet Museum, and an official reception with the Mayor, other visits of horticultural interest will also be arranged. Husum does not (yet!) have a horticultural society, so maybe some seeds will be sown during the weekend ...and, while on a horticultural theme:

## *The famous crocuses of Husum*

Husum is well known throughout Europe for the



*The opening ceremony of the crocus festival*

yearly spectacle of the millions of lilac-coloured crocus blooms in the Park around the Castle. Thousands of people come every year to wander through the sea of colour, to photograph the Park, and to take part in the town's celebration of its unique attraction. The coming of the crocuses is marked with a festival and the choosing of a "Crocus Queen", who has the same role in promoting the town as do many Carnival Queens in this country. But how did it all come about? What's the story behind the carpet of flowers?

Back in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, where the Husum Castle now stands, there was a monastery, and the Castle Park was the monastery garden. The monks needed a source for the colouring of their



*A monk assists the Crocus Queen*

vestments, which at certain times of the year had to be orange, so they hit on the idea of planting the special kind of crocus that yields saffron from the dried flower heads, which could be used as a dye. But they were wrongly advised, and they planted a different strain of crocus! The one they needed was *crocus sativus*, but they planted *crocus napolitanus* - the ones that you can see today.

So the monks lost out on their venture - if they had got it right, they could in fact have made a good living out of their saffron, which was, as it still is, a very valuable commodity.

Later, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the monastery had disappeared and the Castle was standing in its place, the Duchess Marie Elizabeth had the same idea as the monks, and she went ahead with expanding the area for the crocuses, this time, as she thought, to supply saffron for the confectionery makers and bakers who were an important part of the Husum economy. But she

was misled in the same way that the monks had been, and again the venture came to nothing. We often profit in unexpected ways from mistakes made in the past, and the crocuses of Husum are certainly a very spectacular way for a town to have benefited from such a mistake. A final hint to gardeners and cooks: if you want a colourful show that will attract the visitors to your garden, go for *crocus napolitanus*; if you want to get rich on saffron, do remember to plant *crocus sativus* (which won't be quite so easy to find!).

## *Carnival Queen meets Crocus Queen*

Stacey Andrews, Kidderminster's Carnival Queen, with Norman Broome, Colin Hill and Margaret and John Pearsall representing the Carnival Committee travelled to the Husum Crocus Festival returning the visit made by last year's Crocus Queen to Kidderminster Carnival.

The new Crocus Queen is elected by public vote through a newspaper poll and crowned with due ceremony on the steps of the Old Town Hall in front of crowds thronging the town square.



*The royal family: L-R Sabrina Martinsen, Crocus Queen 2004; Stacey Andrews, Kidderminster Carnival Queen; Katharina Kwadrans, Crocus Queen 2005.*

The Crocus Queen then tours the town handing out bunches of deep purple crocus and visits the Castle Park where she is photographed against a backdrop of crocus – though this year the cold weather meant that only patches of crocus were in bloom rather than the usual rich carpet. Stacey joined her for the day's events and the party was entertained for rest of the weekend by members of Husum's Twinning Association.



*Norman Broome and Karin Urbach enjoying the Spring air*

## *Civic visit March 2005*

The Mayor Councillor Siri Hayward, President of the Twinning Association with 11 Councillors and The Mayor's Secretary Mrs Barbara Worton travelled to Husum for the Crocus Festival Weekend at the end of March. Although the weather had been cold and the crocus carpet was not at its peak, the weekend was enjoyed by all.



*Cllr. Lothar Pletowski (R) receiving a commemorative plate from the Mayor of Kidderminster, Cllr. Siri Hayward.*

**Cllr. Anne Hingley writes:**

'Citizens of Husum - Thank you for your friendship and hospitality extended to all of us on the Civic Visit to Husum. From the moment of welcome by the Mayor Frau Encke we were treated to three days of special events and places to visit in Husum.

For me, a new Charter Trustee, a defining moment of what "twinned with Husum" meant was standing among the people watching the Husum Crocus Queen and Kidderminster Carnival Queen waving to the crowd from the balcony of 'The Old Town Hall' at the beginning of the Husum Crocus Festival

2005. It is our younger citizens through their varied interest groups who will assure the next 50 years of friendship between our towns.'

**...and from Cllr. Nathan Desmond:**

"I was so impressed with Husum as a place and its people. The welcome and hospitality we received was fantastic and a real credit to our hosts. These trips are so vital to the continuing and deepening of the relations between the two towns and may they continue"

**Barbara A. Worton,  
Town Mayor's Secretary:**

'I was delighted to be invited to join the delegation to Husum to mark the Golden Jubilee of the twinning with Kidderminster, which also coincided with the Annual Crocus Festival.

Over the years, in my capacity as Mayor's Secretary I have received glowing reports of the hospitality received by various former Mayors and Charter Trustees but nothing could prepare me for the warmth of the welcome and the most generous hospitality we received from this delightful town.

It is clearly evident that Husum Town Council

and its residents are extremely proud of their connection with Kidderminster and do their utmost to make everyone feel at home.

I particularly liked the different coloured houses, the beautiful shops and the cobbled streets, luckily Charles Talbot had warned us that the cobbles could be hard on the feet so we had all taken

"sensible" shoes which were a must as the majority of our visit was spent touring the town on foot enabling us to see all the places of interest and take in the fresh, if slightly "nippy" sea air.

From the formal welcome to the town at the most unusual Rathaus to the formal farewell at the Storm Café we were made to

feel very special, the wonderful, warm hospitality was unbelievable and everyone was extremely sad to be leaving our "friends" in Husum at the end of the visit. I am sure the whole of the party is looking forward most eagerly to the visit of the delegation from Husum in the Autumn when the "Husum Bridge" will be named, somewhat smaller than the Kidderminster Bridge in Husum, but I am sure the gesture will be greatly appreciated by its townspeople.

One memorable event for me will be the visit on Palm Sunday of the Mayor and myself to St. Mary's Church where we joined Charles and Jean Talbot and members of the Carnival Committee including Norman Broome for morning service. Following the service the Mayor and I spent about 20 minutes chatting with Norman and laughing together about past events and he was clearly enjoying his visit. Sadly, only a matter of a week or so later, Norman passed away. Husum had become a special place for Norman and his family and it was fitting that he should spend what were to be almost his final days in the town he had grown to love as a second home.



*The Civic welcome at the new Town Hall*

A few days after our return I received a disc from Cllr. Lothar Pletowski with around 130 photographs which he had taken during our visit, a truly wonderful memento which will be treasured by every member of our party. Long may Kidderminster/Husum Twinning continue.'



L-R Town guide, Gertrude Hansen, introduces Husum to Cllr Arthur Buckley, Mayor Cllr Siri Hayward, and Secretary Barbara Worton

## Churches visiting – again

Kidderminster churches are looking forward eagerly to another visit by members of the churches in Husum, which this year has been timed to coincide with the visit by a group of singers from the *Theodor Storms Chor*.

The church group, consisting of thirteen people, will travel to Kidderminster by various means (rail, air, ferry, car), mostly arriving on Wednesday 4th May, and will leave on or around Monday 9th May. During their visit, they will meet with their hosts and others from our churches to discuss matters of common interest, as well as taking part in visits and church services – Propst Helmut Edelmann, the "dean" of the Husum District, will preach at a special ecumenical service for Ascension Day on 5th May at Trinity Methodist Church, and will also preach at St. Mary's Church on the Sunday morning. The group will include the Rev. John Perry, a British Methodist minister who has lived in Germany for many years, as well as the Chairman of the Husum Twinning Association, Georg Wessler and his wife Marketta.

Among the highlights of the visit will be the group's attendance at three concerts at the Town Hall. The first will be a lunchtime organ recital on the 5th May by Martin Knizia, a former

Husumer who is now the organist of a church in London. Then on the 6th May there will be a recital by the famous bass-baritone, Roderick Williams, promoted by the Kidderminster Choral Society, and on the 7th May the Choral Society, with the group from the *Theodor Storms Chor* and the Wyre Forest Young Voices, will present "A Night at the Opera" – again featuring Roderick Williams, with two other well-known soloists and the Elgar Sinfonia.

A 13-strong group from the *Theodor Storms Chor* will also arrive on the 4th May, and four members of whom are also included among the church visitors, so they will have a particularly hectic time!

The weekend is, of course, the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, and it will be a particularly appropriate time to welcome our German friends in a spirit of remembrance and friendship.

**Ray Harrowing**

## Press in Town

Sonja Wenzel, reporter and her husband will be in Kidderminster for the Churches weekend and Frau Knizia, photographer, will be here for her son's Recital on Thursday 5th May in the Town Hall. Both work on the daily paper, the *Husumer Nachrichten*. ([www.husumer-nachrichten.de](http://www.husumer-nachrichten.de))

## Obituaries

### Reg Wolfe

We heard recently of the death of Reg Wolfe, former treasurer of the Association who was a strong supporter of twinning and who had visited Husum on many occasions. Norman Broome and Charles Talbot represented the Association at his funeral.

### Thomas Günther

Thomas lived in Husum while doing his military service and through an interest in youth work met Rainer Maass who was leader of the youth exchanges with Kidderminster in the 1970s. Thomas came to live and work in Kidderminster for a year as a nurse and lived with Norman and Anne Broome. Their daughter Margaret joined the Husum group becoming its leader in 1974

and she, Rainer and Thomas with their respective partners and families became lifelong friends, meeting up somewhere in Europe every two years for a reunion.

It is with great sadness and shock that we learn of the sudden death of Thomas at the age of 52. Margaret and her husband Phil Corneby attended his funeral and conveyed the condolences of the Association to Renate and her family. It is particularly poignant that the three friends had just started to organise a reunion in Husum for all former members of youth exchange groups, in celebration of this 50<sup>th</sup> year of our partnership.

## *News in Brief*

### ***Kidderminster / Husum Twinning Association***

GOLDEN JUBILEE YEAR 1955 - 2005

### ***\* Don't miss the Golden Jubilee Concert! \****

**It's on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2005 at Kidderminster Town Hall, featuring Kidderminster Male Choir, the Valentines and West Mercia Constabulary Band with Sue Broome of BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester as compère. Ticket £7.50 available from Kidderminster Town Hall, Bewdley Books and Pete's Prints in Stourport.**

## ***The Husum Bridge***

Highstone Estates, the owners of Weavers Wharf, have agreed that the footbridge over the River Stour leading into Weavers Wharf may be named HUSUM BRIDGE in honour of this anniversary. There has been a *Kidderminster Bridge* in Husum across the River Au leading from the station into the town since 1989 and a road on the outskirts called the *Kidderminster Ring* while Kidderminster has had a *Husum Way* for many years.

A naming ceremony will take place on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October at which civic dignitaries from Husum will be present and to which the German Ambassador has been invited. Look out for more details of this event later in the year.

## ***Race Night***

A second successful Race Night was held in February - great fun, a good fundraiser and hard work for the Social Committee – our thanks to Ken, Pat, Liz, Keith and Terry.

## ***Subscriptions***

At the AGM an increase to the Joint subscription was agreed. Membership is £5 single, £8 joint and £25 group. Subscriptions are now due for the current year. If you haven't yet renewed please send a cheque payable to The Kidderminster/Husum Twinning Association, to the Membership Secretary, Phil Austin, 12 Mayfield Close, Kidderminster DY11 5NG.

### ***Kidderminster/Husum Twinning Association***



#### **Committee**

Chairman, Dr R Summers; Secretary, Charles Talbot; Cultural Secretary, Ray Harrowing; Membership, Phil Austin.

#### **Newsletter**

The Twin Town Newsletter is edited by Jean Talbot. Any contributions for the next newsletter will be welcome. Please post, fax or email copy and photos (jpeg format) to :

Twin Town News,  
Barratts Court,  
Rectory Lane, ROCK,  
Kidderminster DY14 9RR.

Tel 01299 832797 Fax 01299 832923  
Email [charles@talbotkidder.demon.co.uk](mailto:charles@talbotkidder.demon.co.uk)