

SHERBORNE

DOUZELAGE



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2008

SPRINGTIME IN TÜRI

May 2008 and in brilliant sunshine we were in Türi the spring capital of Estonia, for the 32nd General Meeting of the Douzelage. And not just for the General Meeting, but also for a Youth Workshop and an Education Meeting, which all together charted a path for the future both for the Douzelage and an ever increasing wider audience.

And so delegates young and old travelled across Europe to the warmest of welcomes from this charming country, determined to show what they had to offer. They were also eager to get ideas from other member towns, as to how they viewed the problems affecting the youth of to-day and the tremendous opportunities that are now on offer through the various European programmes and the initiatives shown by the different member towns.

A more detailed account of the successes of the Education meeting and the Youth Workshop can be found later in this Newsletter. I however was privileged to be a delegate at

the General Meeting. Throughout the action packed two days and an evening, there was a wonderful spirit of bonhomie, of delegates meeting old friends and making new ones, of serious discussions coupled with good country meals and folk dancing and other entertainment, which made us feel part of the land we were visiting.

One of the highlights was a visit to a Hippotherapy Centre, where disadvantaged children learnt exercises enabling them to learn new skills *cont. page 2*



Old walls of Tallinn

SPRINGTIME IN TÜRI

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in a painless way.

There was time also for those staying with families to talk to their hosts and even to enjoy a barbecue. For those staying in hotels we were taken to see some of the many colourful gardens or to visit the old church by the side of a peaceful lake, with a stork nesting on its far side.

21 nations came to Türi, the highest number ever, with only Karkkila unable to attend. And members were pleased to welcome Prienai from nearby Lithuania to join the club.

I, like many others, also had a part to play. This was to help develop the members' websites,

capitalising on the many excellent ideas already in place, so as to make them a source of information to members and newcomers alike as to what each town has to offer. Truly these websites will then be our showcase to the world. It was a great challenge to me, as much effort had already been made and I wanted to emphasise the need for individual diversity within a broad framework.

My suggestions were received with interest and I really look forward to seeing the results. as the weeks go by.

Michael Morrell



Türi Veskisilis Hotel



Türi Museum

A NEWCOMER'S VIEW from Scilla and Tony Copper

Tere! (Hello) – I am writing this note in Tallinn Airport, in the Republic of Estonia, whilst waiting for our plane back to Gatwick and thence on to Sherborne, having spent 4 interesting days in a country neither Tony nor myself have visited before.

If you are also a bit vague on its whereabouts you need to look to the small countries on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea just across from Finland.

Historically Estonia had a rough ride in the latter decades of the 20th century, but it is catching up quickly and became a full Member of the EU in 2004 with Türi joining the Douzelage in 2006.

We chose to fly to Tallinn early in order to be able to see something of the beautiful Medieval City before taking a coach to Türi.

The 32nd Douzelage Symposium took place in the small town of Türi and the overpowering impression was of

the precision of the organisation. Delegates and supporters from 21 European member towns were informed and accommodated in Türi and nearby Paide, so that everything worked like clock-work.

The main part of each day was divided well between the business of presentations and discussions, visits associated with these and others of cultural and general interest.

Because of my work connections, we joined the Education Group under the leadership of Paul Carling, who were tasked with comparison throughout the member towns of educational provision for handicapped children.

We visited the School in Türi for children with disabilities for a presentation by the Headteacher and also saw the Hippotherapy work provided at the Agricultural College.

The outcomes of the meetings were summarised to the General Meeting on Saturday morning.

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A NEWCOMER'S VIEW



Hog Roast

Cont. from page 3

Cultural interest visits were organised to the town Museum featuring Türi's early radio station and an exhibition featuring local history, as well as a visit to the large house of Laupa Manor and the craft exhibition.

We had opted to stay with local hosts rather than in an hotel, to have more contact with the Estonians and we were very lucky to be loaned an apartment, which we shared with Kevin Waterfall, – what luxury to have our own kitchen!

Our hosts joined us for the evening party at the

Veskisilis Hotel for a hog roast and national Estonian dancing.

For our last evening, despite it being the official presentation, our hosts had other ideas and kidnapped us for a barbeque, with their family and pets, in the garden.

Thus we were rather late joining the final festivities of the Symposium, when Ed Weber lead the thanks to everyone concerned for all the work involved and the marvellous welcome extended to us all by our host town.

Nagemiseni!



Laupa Manor

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DISABLED

The theme for the Education part of the Türi Conference was “Disability”.

And at the Riding School just out of town we witnessed a session of hippo-therapy – in which the therapist, Truli Burkland, works with children with disabilities to improve their posture, coordination, balance and motor development. It was very affecting to see such confidence in the students as they waved and trotted before the gallery.

Next stop was the Türi Disabled School, where twenty three children drawn from all over the municipality are cared for in four sets of classes. For nine of the students it is a residential home. The activities at the heart of the school are speech therapy and physio-therapy, in addition to swimming, riding, art and Drama, dance, costume play and a Christmas dinner in a restaurant.

The importance of these two visits was to remind us that we ought to have the disabled themselves in the forefront of our discussions and not to allow ourselves to become too im-

mersed in the theory and management of the provision of facilities and services.

Member towns then presented the different ways, in which they approached the challenges of providing the mentally and physically handicapped with the opportunities and chances to fulfil their potential. All the presentations had been scrupulously researched with a passionate commitment to the task.

We drew out the main concerns, – whether there should be inclusion or specialisation in provision; how the disabled could enjoy normal life activities; understanding a parent’s dilemma in this situation; the encouragement of self reliance; the perceptions of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination in schools and



EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DISABLED

cont. from page 5 communities; the need for a whole life programme after school.

Then began turning ideas into practice. It was proposed that the next host town, Chojna, investigate the possibility of contacting disabled schools in their area with a view to the students producing art work, that could be used to create Christmas cards, to be ordered by other Douzelage towns. Any money raised would be given to the disabled school at Chojna.

This could be an ongoing project, passed like an Olympic torch from one host town to the next. Teaching experiences, and ideas in this area were exchanged, including schemes for PHAB holidays with physically handicapped and able bodied, sharing a vacation experience on a level playing field.

Another idea was for a day designated each year for the Douzelage towns named Hephaistos Day, after the Greek god, the celestial artist who was born lame. This could lead to greater involvement and a deeper inclusiveness in the Douzelage programmes.

Finally each town outlined the work and programmes linked with partner towns. These are many and varied, from sailing and football, to bereavement counselling, conferences, Comenius projects and choral celebrations. Others hosted carnivals, markets or Global Warming seminars. There were cycling trips between Douzelage towns, bird watching and anthologising poetry. The spread and diversity of activity should be a barometer of the activity that is ongoing.

For the coming year it was agreed that Stuart Atkinson from Niederanven would be Secretary, administering business and communication between the towns, as well as energising the education part of the website.

The Sherborne delegation made a valuable contribution. Mike Balfour, with his great experience and sharp ideas (such as the Christmas Card initiative); Kevin Waterfall who worked behind the scenes; Tony and especially Scilla Copper, who reminded us that all future education activities should be inclusive.

Paul Carling

HAVING FUN AT THE GRANVILLE CARNAVAL

The annual Carnaval in Granville is one of the biggest in France. After 5 days it crescendos on Shrove Tuesday, as the Carnival King is burnt on his float. This 136th Carnaval was well attended as the town swells in size from 15,000 to over 100,000. The tradition stems back to Granville's history as a fishing town. Around the beginning of February the fishing fleet would set sail for the north Atlantic.. It was a tough life and the best way to get the fishermen onto the ships was for them to unexpectedly wake them up after a hard night's party.

The Granvillais party just as hard these days, but are more likely to wake up in a bed on dry land. The Carnaval consists of three processions made up of 'chars' (floats) and marching bands. The atmosphere is very welcoming and tolerant. Most chars have some political message – some are fairly obvious, such as those satirising Sarkozy, the President; others are very subtle and you probably need to be on the town council to fully appreciate the underlying mirth. Angélique Pojaghi is on the

Douzelage committee in Granville. She is 22 and training to be a nurse. She thought it would be great to have a char, on which other young people from the Douzelage towns could join her. I took her up on the offer and found myself dressed as a gondolier, as our char attempted to bring a bit of the Venice carnival to Granville.

I stayed with a retired English teacher called André, who welcomed me into his home with great hospitality.

This visit was a great demonstration of what is at the centre of the Douzelage - friendship and having fun.

Will Burnett



TÜRI YOUTH WORKSHOP

The youth workshop began with Gerd Tarand, a 22 year old Estonian, giving an overview of activities and participation in Estonia for those aged between 7 and 26. He also covered some of the European dimensions. In Estonia 5% of those between 14 and 26 take part in some form of youth organisation.

He gave many ideas of sources of information for Europe from Google, including "Youth in Action"; "EC White paper on youth", and "National Youth strategy week."

The Youth Council of the Gymnasium (secondary school), where we were located for the conference, presented their work in the school, which tended to be only of a social nature. At the youth workshop, led by Martin and Mike from Judenburg, plus Kadri-Ann from Türi, there were delegates from 15 of the represented countries. The delegates were aged 15 to 27, plus myself from Sherborne. It was a

great and a relaxed atmosphere.

Presentations of the youth activities and how youth is included in decision making, from their input to parliament to that made at schools level, were made by Estonia and 12 other countries. It was identified that there is a large disparity between their countries for encouraging youth engagement in decision making.

The meeting considered that the Dorset County Council funding scheme for youth projects, that is decided on by young people, is a best practice. Discussion of this will feature strongly in the Douzelage Youth Project meetings in Sherborne in October 2008.

A brainstorming and discussion was held on activities for inclusion in decision making that needed to be pursued. These included the involvement of young people in own councils, youth parliaments and local area funding by youth for youth projects (e.g. DCC).

They also felt that School councils should have power and control / influence over school policy,

TÜRI YOUTH WORKSHOP

that School boards should have student representation and that School/ Youth festivals should be involved with local communities.

A large number of the expectations and wishes for the Youth Committee were expressed for discussion at future youth meetings.

A list will be circulated by e-mail for voting on by youth delegates. Some of the key ones were:

Set up and maintain a lively web site

Provide information on how to start youth projects

Form a youth committee, which would focus on specific

topics, e.g. environment, culture, tolerance and music.

This would aid understanding the youth structure in each other's countries and would motivate young people to take an active part in Douzelage activities. In this way they would meet people and make friends.

It is important that at future Douzelage events the youth delegates should be accommodated together and as an idea for 2009, the Granville Carnival will again be a focus for a youth float.

The whole occasion was a great success and a springboard for the future.

Kevin Waterfall



WESSEX MORRIS MEN VISIT JUDENBURG

The town of Judenburg, Sherborne Douzelage's partner in Austria, has for many years staged a *Singing and Dancing Festival* in May.

This year, however from 19th to 22nd May, it was decided to invite towns from other Douzelage towns to participate as well. Two towns rose to the challenge, Köszeg and Sherborne.

The event itself was a wonderfully entertaining one with all manner of items by people of all ages. But it is probably fair to say that in terms of the standard set, it was the quality of the young dancers and singers from Hungary and of the Morris Men from Sherborne who stole the show. They were uniformly received with rapture!

The visit however was more than that. On the first day, the Morris Men visited both the Primary and the Middle Schools in Judenburg and the children in both were thrilled. It was the same in the afternoon when the group visited an After School Care Class where the children were taught to Morris Dance.

The only difficulty was getting away at the end. It was all wonderful to watch.

In the evenings, there was more singing and dancing in the town's hostleries, more locals met, charmed and befriended. Everything was such good fun! A huge debt of gratitude is owed to the people of Judenburg for the generosity of their hospitality, the warmth of their welcome and super efficiency of Andrea Kober who made all the arrangements.

And how much Sherborne too owes to the Wessex Morris Men, ambassadors of goodwill extraordinary.

Jeremy Barker



FORWARD TO OUR YOUTH CONFERENCE

In little more than three months our Youth Study visit will take place in Sherborne from 16th to 18th October. The theme is "Young Euro Citizens: The Future for Douzelage Member Towns". EU Youth in Action Funding is in place and it is hoped that 15 towns will each be sending a Youth Worker and a young person aged between 18 and 25. Ideally this person has been involved with youth clubs in the town or is part of a group, which has looked at the problems of young people. 12 towns have already indicated that they will come.

We shall be spending a day at County Hall under the guidance of

Tom Corban, the Director of the Youth Community Service as well as visiting Tinneys Youth and Community Centre and the Rendezvous, where many problems are discussed. We shall also be visiting the Jurassic Coast and hearing about the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

We want to exchange ideas and experience between our communities, identifying problems facing our younger generations and possible solutions.

There is so much we can learn from each other.

Michael Peart

FRENCH STUDENTS SEEK ENGLISH PEN FRIENDS

Two French girls from the Granville area are looking for pen friends who are interested in doing an exchange. Marie is 15, enjoys swimming and handball, and would like to be a doctor. Manon is 14, enjoys dancing and would like to be a lawyer. Both also like music, and going to the beach with friends.

I have met both girls as they are well known to the French family with whom we are friendly. I am happy to help and advise prospective families ... I've done the exchange thing and it's great! I'd like to promote the idea of exchanges *en famille* between our two countries and would like to hear from anyone who is interested, as there are plenty of young people in Granville, who are keen to improve their English!

Claire Thompson Tel: 01935 429457 c.f.thompson@btopenworld.com

OUR COMMITTEE IN 2008

Chairman: Chris MacAdie Vice Chairman: Janet Parsons
 Secretary: Mary Clothier Treasurer: John Thompson
 Education Chairman: Paul Carling
 Newsletter Editor: Michael Morrell Publicity: Kevin Waterfall
 Twinning Representative: Scilla Copper
 Other Members: Lin Ashby, Jeremy Barker, Will Burnett, Monica Havard, Natalie House, Michael Morton, Michael Peart, Moira Western, Sarah Whittick

FUTURE EVENTS

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|---|------------------------|
| Barbecue - Sherborne School for Boys | 11th July |
| Global Warming Youth visit to Oxelösund | 1st to 8th August |
| Flaming Flamenco - 21, King's Road, Sherborne | 16th August |
| Chojna Conference | 11th to 14th September |
| Youth Issues - Exchanging ideas and experiences | 16th to 18th October |

For full details contact Mary Clothier on 01963 251255

TWINNING NEWS

Places are still available for anyone wishing to join us for our visit to Granville and the mouth of the Loire from **1st to 6th October**. We shall spend two nights en famille in Granville, before our coach takes us to Nantes and Angers as well as some of the charming towns in that interesting part of France. You will find much to see, as well as good food and wine with plenty of socialising.
 For full details contact Pepys Lordon on 01935 816335