

SHERBORNE DOUZELAGE



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2009

ALTEA 35TH CONFERENCE with Janet Parsons

I began writing this article in the vibrant and bustling city of Valencia a few days after the Altea General Meeting, my mind still a cacophony of images and impressions of so much we all shared in the splendid surroundings of the Palau Altea Centre d'Arts. Here are some of them.

Altea, an attractive and delightful small white town, not unlike the 'pueblos blancos' of Andalucia, sits between mountains and orange groves of the Sierra Bernia and the Mediterranean.

Our hotel gave us plenty of scope for informal gatherings and relaxation under the palm trees, where we exchanged views and ideas with delegates and new friends from the 21 towns who travelled to the 34th Douzelage General Meeting.

Words limit the visual impact of the Conference Centre where the formal meetings were held – we descended a flight of stairs into an auditorium bathed in sunlight and enclosed on three sides by glass, with a stunning backdrop of mountains. If inspiration was lacking the setting certainly provided it.

The formal proceedings began with a lecture on Town Planning, an interesting presentation which suggested that towns and cities have lost the link with nature and proposing that safe spaces are needed where people feel at ease.

It set the tone for the meeting, one with a distinctively Mediterranean flavour, led by the warm and engaging style of our President, Ed Weber.

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Our scenic conference hall



ALTEA 35TH CONFERENCE with Janet Parsons

We welcomed a delegation from Marsascala in Malta to their first General Meeting and it was good to see their enthusiasm and obvious pride at being voted into membership of Douzelage. An application had been received from Siret in Romania, who will join us next year, when we meet in Susice in the Czech Republic.

Although there was no Youth Meeting this year, we were joined by a number of young delegates and it was reassuring that there is a clearly an interest and desire in Europe to maintain and secure the future of Douzelage.

As the sun began to set at the end of the first day, we wandered through the cobbled streets of the old town, crowned with its blue domed church reminiscent of the Greek islands, to spend an enjoyable evening at a Pizza Restaurant. Inevitably some of the highlights of our visit were the lunches, 'al fresco', with jugs of Sangria flowing freely and generously, and set in wonderful surroundings with congenial company.

The climax for me was the final dinner when the Palau Altea

Centre d'Arts was transformed into a style and ambience resembling the Dorchester hotel. The tapas kept coming, the wine flowed ... and then the band began to play. They were superb and created the perfect atmosphere for dancing until after midnight. But there was one moment that I think all of us found profoundly moving, when we stood for the EU anthem from Beethoven's Ode to Joy. This perhaps encapsulates the feelings which we were able to take with us from such a memorable occasion.

Janet Parsons

Altea The Descent into town



ALTEA - A SLOVAKIAN PERSPECTIVE

We are the primary school teachers from Zvolen. We had heard a lot about Douzelage, read on a web page and our students have taken part in one of its projects. We arrived at the Douzelage Conference in Altea in order to find contacts for our future partnership with schools from Douzalage countries, as others have done in the past.

So we were very pleased to see and feel the warm welcome from every town delegation, which showed a special spirit flowing everywhere. It was clear that all those people share long friendships and partnership. Pleasant atmosphere of the two working days, interesting people and live discussions made us belong to this happening and suddenly we understood what makes everybody around so proud of Douzelage.

We were offered lots of possibilities of international cooperation. There were many interesting ideas and presentations filled with personal contacts. This unique atmosphere did not cause any barriers or working problems. Although there were varied opinions on many topics, making



The Zvolen girls with our new friend from Malta

results was even more interesting. Discussions did not lead straight to conclusions, but looking for them helped to understand different town situations and different national specifications.

We have taken part in a variety of international projects up till now, and all the enthusiasm, which we could feel in Altea, makes us work even more in this area. We were very much taken and touched by all the Douzelage members' enthusiasm and will to work to make new partnerships and live a life in Douzelage. We believe we gained there the power for our future work, project cooperation and inspiration for organizing some interesting meetings here in Zvolen.

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THE ZVOLEN GIRLS IN ALTEA

The working sessions in the day time were followed by the evening relaxation in Altea with its white narrow streets leading from a magnificent church typical with its blue roof to the seaside with its palm promenade.

The amazing traditional Paella taste as well as cool sangria drink, exotic fruit on trees unbelievably so close to us, we could even pick it up while walking along the road, beautiful flowers, all of this means exotic fantasy for us.

The closing ceremony was filled with enthusiasm, fellowship and friendship.

These wonderful feelings we brought back home and we have it on our minds every time we talk or remember Douzelage.

The Douzelage family, we are in.

Thank you.

Alena Feriancova
Zuzana Laszloova

EURO TRAVEL EVENINGS

A NEW VENTURE FOR SHERBORNE

Thursday evenings @ 7.30 pm
Sherborne House, Newland

September 10 Altea, Spain

October 8 Kőszeg, Hungary

November 12 Oxelösund, Sweden

December 10 Preveza Greece



No need to book

- £5.00 (Students £2.50) on the door
- Includes glass of wine
- Illustrated talks on Douzelage partner towns



COME AND PLAN YOUR TRIP

BASIL IN ALTEA

I was fortunate enough to be invited to a Douzelage meeting in Altea, Spain.

After a short flight and a quick drive through Valencia at midnight we arrived at the hotel. Each morning that followed, had the same ritual of being woken up by the sound of the sea softly touching the beach.

During breakfast on the following morning the first greetings were exchanged. All the British were about to leave, some teambuilding had to be done at the golf course.

Most of us spent the day discovering the twin village of Altea for the first time. The old town is a really idyllic refuge, containing narrow streets, white walls, invitingly looking restaurants and small shops.

As soon as you felt you were on a holiday, work started. Three types of meetings were held, a general meeting, a culture meeting and a IT meeting.

At first I thought that the general meeting was progressing too slowly for my taste. However later I found out that

everybody should have time to understand, think and speak, if you want the best results.

Much happens in a year; you can't rush or postpone things and expect them to turn out alright. You could see clearly that lots of different views were involved, evoked by the national



Brainstorming with delegates from Meerssen

and cultural backgrounds.

The culture meeting was more like a big session of brainstorming. It's subjects ranged from education, culture and integration, to Roman society that binds our history. Also I noticed that if you put education before the word 'meeting', that teachers from all countries will collectively flock to it. I liked hearing all these different ways of thinking and problem solving.

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The meeting made me realize how much we can learn from each other. The IT workshop was hard work, setting up a service that connects us across Europe. You need to make it interesting, up to date, informative, accessible and you need a handful of the right people that can make the effort.

But the thing that I enjoyed most was having just 120 people together from 22 countries. Conversing, listening to stories, sharing food and drinks, having a good laugh about cultural habits and listening to advice.

The Douzelage is a prime example of how important it is for various people to work together. It will take some sweat, but the end result is an enrichment to the lives of every person involved.

For all the people that are sceptical about a Europe, please forget the negatives and think about the possibilities. We have to offer so much for each other, much more than we can imagine. Don't neglect it. However if it goes wrong, remember the following: "Be endlessly patient and endlessly forgiving."

Basil Lange from Meersen



John, Martin and Michael listening to ideas for IT

WHAT NEXT IN IT?

As Basil has said in his article, the IT Workshop in Altea was indeed hard work, but under the leadership of John Petterson, assisted by Martin Six and myself, we received many useful ideas from the 20 or so delegates attending. Since then though it has all gone quiet.

However I know that John is working quietly in the background, finalising his guidance as to how easy it is to keep up to date your websites using Typo 3.

Perhaps also you are one of the member towns, who have not yet told us who is your co-ordinator. This is essential info, if we are to have a consistent informative approach.

Michael Morrell

MAMI AN HUNGARIAN INSPIRATION

Held in Koszeg between 30th June and 6th July the Major Minorities Seminar was aimed at overcoming prejudice and reinforcing the idea that all people are valuable European citizens. Participants did this by working, playing and discussing together. The many activities included sport and games, food and cooking, cultural, especially national dances, visiting Koszeg's historic centre and presenting their own towns, youth in public life including the role of minorities and visiting students in their own homes. Here is what two out of the many students had to say about their very worthwhile trip.

Hannah Phillipson

My trip with the Douzelage to Hungary on the MaMi project was one of the best weeks of my entire life ! I thoroughly enjoyed every second of it ! I have made so many good friends in such a short space of time. I have exchanged cultures and realized that there are differences, but at the end of it how similar all of us are. I think this project has been very beneficial and has played a big part in my life and I hope there will be more projects for youths to partake in, as I think they are very important and the future lies with the youth. I feel very privileged to have taken part in this project; it has widened my horizons and I feel I have become more open minded. An unforgettable experience !!!!

Tom Whitlock

The MAMI trip to Koszeg was one of the best weeks of my life. I had such great fun meeting new people and made some brilliant new friends. The work we did was very beneficial in understanding how other people feel and what we can do to help Major Minorities in Britain. The people there were absolutely fantastic and I would definitely go again if the opportunity arose.



The Sherborne Group

DOUZELAGE YOUTH PROJECTS

What are they? They are what we do for young people involving our partner towns, but mostly they are visits to our European partner towns. These are simply the most rewarding thing that Sherborne Douzelage does.

The stimulation provided to young people and the energy they have about Europe and their new friends is unparalleled. Facebook entries are testimony to the benefits that they provide.

These visits are a success because of the considerable amount of effort put into them by the host town, school teachers, trip leaders and the students who go on them.

The first hurdle is to get a good programme that meets “EU Youth in Action” to allow for funding of the trip.

Most trips are funded to 70% of the travel and 100% of the local costs, but funding is often late in coming through. Then towns cannot be sure that it will go ahead and travel costs more.

Secondly there is the need to match schools, students or other young people to the trip. This includes consideration of their

age and time of year to avoid critical teaching time. The process of selecting students then needs to be seen to be fair.

Organising trips in today’s climate requires focussed effort to ensure adequate risk assessment. Students need to be fit to take part and have the correct travel and insurance papers. Parental approval is an essential step, so they can be confident that their child will not come to harm.

Pre visit planning trips are generally a requirement of the EU and make it easier for trip leaders and student to contribute to the project and to assess that the risks are properly managed.

The trip itself is almost always a wonderful success, as you can read in the article about the MAMI project in Kőszeg.

However afterwards we need to ensure others know about it through press and newsletter articles. If you want to hear about some of our trips then come along to the AGM on 18th November, where some of the students will be talking about their trips.

Kevin Waterfall

OBSERVING CLIMATE CHANGE IN BAVARIA

During the summer holidays, Leweston School were privileged to represent Sherborne Douzelage (town twinning in Europe) at a week's activity and climate change conference held at a wilderness camp in the Bayerische Wald

. Bad Koetzting, Bavaria, one of the towns twinned with Sherborne, organised the event and seven European countries were represented.

Staff and four girls from Years 11 and 12 attended the week long

event, where they climbed two mountains, and hiked in the Bayerische Wald to observe the effects of climate change at first hand.

During the week the students not only saw first hand the effects of climate change, but also gave presentations about climate change and discussed the views of their own politicians and countries.

The week was summarised with a climate change conference, where the students presented views from their own and other international countries and even [cont. page 10](#)



OBSERVING CLIMATE CHANGE IN BAVARIA

Greenpeace.

One of the students who attended this event will also represent Sherborne Douzelage and Leweston School at the next climate change conference, which will be held in Preveza, Greece in November.

Sue Larkin

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Bad Koetzing – the old Rathaus

SHERBORNE'S SUMMER EVENT

A POLISH PIANIST AND THE OISU FOLK BAND

From 15th to 21st July Sherborne played host to guests from our Polish twin town of Chojna and our Estonian twin town of Turi.

Accompanied by the Mayor of Chojna, Adam Fedorowicz and his wife and two other delegates, Maksymilian Stryczek, aged 17, enthralled the over 100 people who crowded into the Cheap St Church to hear him play music by Chopin, Liszt and Debussy.

What struck me was not only the quality and sensitivity of his playing, but also his thrill at being able to play on a top class piano, an opportunity that does not often come his way.

Here you see Maks playing in the Cheap Street Church.

A POLISH PIANIST AND THE OISU FOLK BAND

Over that weekend we also had the pleasure of the Oisu Folk Band from Turi, who despite weather more like late autumn than July, played in several venues around the town including the Abbey Green, Cheap St and the Pageant Gardens in conjunction with the Wessex Morris Men and the Sherborne Town Band.

They also performed on the Saturday at a Ceilidh in the Digby Hall Hound St, alternating with the Group The Reel Thing and the Wessex Morris men

And on the Sunday afternoon

in Sherborne House, Aet Sarv, the leader of the group gave an illustrated talk, showing a film on Turi and her country followed by a delicious cream tea.



The weekend concluded with a barbecue at the Weavers, always a popular venue and where the Oisu Band added greatly to the enjoyment.

All in all it was a very successful visit.

Michael Morrell

OUR COMMITTEE IN 2009

Chairman: Janet Parsons Vice - Chairman Kevin Waterfall
Secretary: Mary Clothier Treasurer: Michael Morrell
Education Chairman: To be decided shortly
Newsletter Editor: Michael Morrell Publicity: Kevin Waterfall
Twinning Representative: Scilla Copper
Other Members: Lin Ashby, Jeremy Barker, Lin Bygrave, Monica Havard, Natalie House, Michael Morton, Michael Peart, Moira Western, Sarah Whittick

FUTURE EVENTS

Euro Travel Evenings - for details see page 4

AGM 18th November Catholic Church Hall in Westbury.
Come and meet some of those both young and old, who have visited other Douzelage towns this past year

Youngsters control climate change - Seminar in Preveza from 4th to 9th November (subject to travel arrangements)

36th International Conference in Susice (Czech Republic) - 29th April to 2nd May 2010

For full details contact Mary Clothier on 01963 251255

TWINNING NEWS

From 25th to 30th September our gallant group are crossing the Channel for their annual visit to France, spending three nights in Granville and two nights near Bayeux, exploring in this year that saw the 65th anniversary of D Day the many fascinating and historic sites for which this region is famous.

And of course you will be sure of a welcome at the Epiphany Party on 9th January 2010

For further details on this and other Twinning activities, contact John Snell on 01935 - 813171.