



KONTAKT Newsletter

February 2016

NORFOLK & NORWICH / KOBLENZ FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

“Understanding and Friendship” our motto.

Welcome to the February 2016 edition of KONTAKT, which covers events since our last edition in August 2015, and looks ahead to this year’s programme.

35th Anniversary Lunch was held on Sunday September 13th at Park Farm Hotel, Hethersett, and by tradition the welcome drink was a Winningen Riesling wine. We were very pleased to welcome the Lord Mayor the Sheriff of Norwich and the Chairman of the County Council with their consorts, and seated at round tables there was lively conversation, while we were well looked after by the staff of the hotel. Our civic guests expressed their thanks both verbally and in writing.

Probus Clubs of Norwich visited Koblenz, leaving Norwich on 13 September, their first visit, and on a programme suggested by Waltraud and Richard, who were pleased to join them. Their programme included NNKFA old favourites, including a walking tour of Koblenz, the Loreley and Rüdesheim, returning to Koblenz by boat, with dinner on board, and the next day the Geysir at Andernach, and lunch followed by a wine tasting in Winningen.



NNKFA visit to Koblenz took place the following week leaving Norwich on the over-night boat from Harwich on Sunday 20th September. The following report has been kindly provided by Bob Young.

Our first visit to Koblenz had been in 1971, when my wife and I moved there as newly –weds, intending to study and work for a year. The city has changed incredibly since then, and so we were really looking forward to the journey to Germany. Once on the boat, there was time for a quick beer before we retired to our cabins. The night crossing from Harwich to the Hook was smooth and uneventful, and very soon we were cruising through the traffic jams of Holland, amusing ourselves by counting the number of Dutch drivers who steer with one hand while clutching their mobile phone in the other.



When we crossed into Germany, we stopped seeing greenhouses as far as the horizon, and soon hills and forests appeared. It was great not to have to be driving, and after a brief stop for refreshment-(no need to worry about drinking and driving!), our chauffeur, Mark, was reversing the coach down the narrow drive to the rear of the Hotel Morjan; I couldn’t have done that in a million years. Having checked in, we were really chuffed to find that we had been allocated one of the bedrooms with a balcony looking out over the Rhein. The only things between us and the river were a wide pedestrian walkway, and carefully tended gardens, possibly left over from BUGA. Directly opposite, on the other side of the river, we could see the fortress of





Ehrenbreitstein at the top of a very steep hill- or was it actually a mountain? It took us about five minutes only to stroll to the Deutsches Eck, the confluence of the Rhine and the Moselle, passing the cable car which now stretches across the river. Sufficient exertion to warrant a relaxing beer at the café next to the hotel.

It was drizzling gently as we got onto the coach the next morning, and set off towards the vineyards of Winningen. This dampened no-one's spirits, however, and we were welcomed at Vinotek with brief speeches followed by glasses of wine. The small museum was very interesting to look around, and there were opportunities to buy wine. After a super lunch in the nearby restaurant, we found ourselves being loaded into trailers behind two mighty tractors. Our tour of the vineyards was beginning!

In each trailer, we had bottles of wine to sample, as we wound our way through the narrow streets of Winningen, under the vine-covered arches which span between the houses. Waltraud was happy to be able to point out her family house, before we left the village and began to climb into the vineyards. The views down into the valley of the Moselle were fantastic; the rows of vines seemed to cling to the vertical sides of the mountains, and we learned that the only way to get up and down these hills was by walking sideways- one foot down followed by the other. (Which explains why so many of the inhabitants of Winningen have one leg longer than the other). Fortunately it stopped raining, as forecast by Fred Knebel the owner of our tractors, "the sun will shine by 2.00pm, and it did, shortly after we came into the vineyards, so that the rain protection could be rolled up so that we had a better view. As we got back to the hotel later, the rain which had bothered us, off and on, all day provided a final treat- a spectacular full rainbow over Ehrenbreitstein.



Wednesday saw us in Cochem, taking a river boat to Beilstein, a delightful little village on the Moselle, where we were all able to lunch in a choice of charming small restaurants and explore the village and church with its Black Madonna.



The Rathaus was our starting venue on Thursday morning, where we were welcomed by the Kultur-Dezernent of Koblenz, Detlef Knopp, Günther Hahn and other members of the Freundschaftskreis. Waltraud gave a speech celebrating the many years of the twinning; after which, some members of the group took the opportunity for a guided walking tour of Koblenz in the afternoon, while others relaxed with a beer. In the evening, we travelled to nearby Lahnstein, for a wonderful meal with members of the Koblenz Norwich Freundschaft Kreis, organised by Günter Hahn.

If it's Friday, it must be Frankfurt. Heavy traffic as we left Koblenz meant it was a toss-up whether to go the pretty way- alongside the Rhein, and risk a late arrival, or to stick to the motorway. We risked it, and as a result had a very pleasant journey to the city of Frankfurt, where we met Jill's daughter, Anne, for a personal guided tour of some of the highlights, and a swift beer before taking to a boat for a trip on the Main.

A rest day on Saturday allowed us to explore a little more on our own. During a brief visit to Ehrenbreitstein, we saw the flood gates under the railway line whose installation has changed the suburb tremendously. The area, which 40 years ago had been very run down and subject



to frequent flooding, has been transformed into a charming place to sit and have a coffee or a beer outside one of the many cafes. Even crossing the river to the Festung Ehrenbreitstein is easier now, thanks to the cable car.

Checkout time- late Saturday afternoon, to allow for an early start on Sunday morning. As I settled the bill, I had to confess to the receptionist that I had drunk a beer from the fridge, and needed to pay for it. He gave me a long hard stare, then said, "One whole week... and only one beer?" I nodded. "We English aren't big drinkers." I said.



For such a smoothly organised and efficiently managed trip, our thanks go to Richard and Waltraud, to Jill, to Sandra and John, and of course to Mark, without whose driving skills, we would still be in Notcutts car park!

Looking forward to 2017 already.



Advent Evening on December 1st at the Great Hospital

More than 70 members and guests of NNKFA gathered at the Great Hospital to celebrate both Advent and the 35 years since the founding of the Association. Not only that, but also Waltraud reminded us that "Feed the Minds" is now 50 years old. As we indulged in coffee and Stollen (a German Christmas cake), we sang carols in both English and German, before being entertained by Cathedral choristers, whose performance included a super version of "O Come All Ye Faithful". The choir was also given a donation towards expenses for when some members travel to Koblenz to sing in our twin city. It was interesting to hear that much of the twinning memorabilia is now housed at County Hall, although the famous window remains at Dragon Hall. The Reverend Christopher Mallett and Christa Wood brought the evening to a close with readings in English and German from St. Luke's Gospel Chapter 2, and then we headed off into the night, clutching our souvenir bookmarks and bags of leckere Lebkuchen!

Bob Young

The various **Twinning Links** between Norwich and Koblenz continue to flourish, with renewed interest between City College Norwich and the Handwerkskammer Koblenz (HWK) for Apprentice Exchanges for Work Experience. This will be enhanced by contact between the Guild of Stonemasons, now established at St. Clements Church in Magdalen Street and HWK. Other links include, Norwich Phil Choir and the Musik Institut Koblenz, Rotary Club of Norwich and Rotary Club Koblenz Ehrenbreitstein, Norwich and District Photographic Society and Foto Club Koblenz, with a joint exhibition in Norwich each year, 20 Group of Artists in Norwich, and AKM Koblenz (an artists' group based on Koblenz), a Diocesan link with the churches of Koblenz Mitte.

Programme for 2016

Friday 11th March **Annual General Meeting**, County Hall

Friday 27th May to Sunday 29th May **Visit to Norwich of Oberburgermeister Koblenz**

Saturday 18th June **Summer Outing to Wrest Park Bedfordshire** (English Heritage)

Friday 15th July to Tuesday 19th July **Winningen Tanzgruppe** to celebrate 60th Anniversary of **Kemp's Men**

Thursday 21st to Wednesday 27th July **Triorca Orchestra** of Young Musicians from Twin Regions of Norwich, Koblenz and Novi Sad, Residential Course at Schloss Engers near Koblenz, with concerts at Schloss Engers and Philharmonie, Koblenz.

Sunday 18th September **Annual Birthday Lunch**, Park Farm Hotel, Hethersett

Monday 28th November **Advent Evening**, Great Hospital

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