

Guildford-Freiburg Association

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2006



EDITORIAL

There has been no shortage of activities to report on during the past year, a reflection of the health of the twinning. Involvement of young people in exchanges and other activities is a particularly important aspect of this so it is good to be able to report on a range of schools activities, including the important Climate Change conference in Freiburg in July. Another aspect of the involvement of young people is Guildford City Boys Football Club's latest and successful encounters with their Freiburg opponents, marking the 20th anniversary of these matches.

Other contributions describe some of the happenings in our twin city. Outstanding amongst these is Penny Leube's latest "Letter from Freiburg", which again provides an interesting personal account of the year's events. On the environmental front, Freiburg City Councillor McCabe has provided a description of Freiburg's recently-constructed incinerator, which might give some Guildford citizens food for thought.

Among other reports is the account of the latest of Guildford Churches' regular visits from their Freiburg counterparts, which for the first time included a Study Day on a range of environmental and social issues common to our two communities. The enjoyable bus and bike tour to Woking's twin town of Rastatt and to Freiburg was another worthwhile form of collaboration.

My thanks to everyone who has contributed articles this time. Finally, an innovation this year is the introduction of colour pictures which I hope readers will enjoy.

Peter Slade
Editor

JOIN OUR TRIP TO FREIBURG

We are organising a coach tour from September 17-23 to Freiburg and the surrounding area, including the Black Forest and Alsace, with wine-tasting as a theme. The itinerary has been arranged for us by Friendship Travel, a small travel company in Cranleigh, who are experienced in organising specialised tours.

For more information please contact Friendship Travel (Tel. 01483 273355) or Peter Slade (01483 531472)

Message from the Chairman

This year has been quieter than the previous one, when we were celebrating our 25th Anniversary, marked by a Civic visit, but there has nonetheless been much activity. We have held two successful markets, one during the Guildford Summer Festival, and one in December in the Guildhall, when many people bought toys and candles from Freiburg, tasted Baden wines – and enjoyed a glass of Glühwein. There has been a range of contacts with local schools and we have solicited our members' views by means of a questionnaire – Peter Slade has worked very hard throughout the year on all these projects. In addition, many visitors from Freiburg, including some quite large groups, have visited and enjoyed Guildford and all it has to offer.

We welcomed Anne Milton MP as our new Patron, after the General Election in May. I would like to thank Sue Doughty, our former MP, for all her support during her time as Patron.

In June we suffered the very sad loss of our Life Patron and former Chairman, Stanley Roberts OBE. He is greatly missed by all members of the Association, and also by the many friends he made in Freiburg during his 16 years as Chairman. An appreciation of Stanley appears elsewhere in this Newsletter.

At our New Year Party I announced that I would be retiring as Chairman at our Annual General Meeting in June this year. Although many people have asked me not to, I am sticking to my plan, as I had always intended to retire after 10 years as Chairman. I would like to thank all members for their encouragement and support, and also to thank the Mayors of the past decade for their help and hospitality during the Civic Visits and on many other occasions.

Kathy Atkins, our hard-working Honorary Secretary, will also be stepping down in June, and a huge debt of gratitude is owed to her for all she has done. Any members who wish to stand for election to the office of Chairman or Hon Secretary should send their names, together with proposer and seconder, 28 days before our AGM on 8 June 2006.

I wish the Association continued and increasing success in the coming years. I am proud and happy to have served as Chairman, and previously as a member of the Committee since the twinning's inception in 1979.

Mary Lloyd-Jones

ERRATA

In my editorial I refer to an article about the incinerator that has been installed near Freiburg. Unfortunately the article does not appear in the Newsletter because I accidentally omitted it when I produced the final consolidated text on my computer before e-mailing it to the printers. The article will be included in next year's Newsletter but if anyone would like a copy before then please let me know and I will print one and send it to them.

In Penny Leube's "Letter from Freiburg" the Euro signs have been omitted in the 4th and 5th paragraphs. The sums of money raised for Caritas were €332,000 and €600,000 and the cost of the Cathedral repair is €3m. This was an error by the printers – the signs were there in the proof!

My apologies

Peter Slade
Editor

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Letter from Freiburg

2005 was quite a dramatic year for Germany with the election of the first-ever woman chancellor and of a German Pope. In May, Gerhard Schröder surprised everyone by his unexpected call for an early election which led to a very acrimonious election campaign and an inconclusive result. After much horse-trading a coalition government of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats emerged with "trouser-suit Angie", as she has been dubbed, at its head. Freiburg's CDU MP lost her seat and the SPD candidate, Gernot Erler, was returned. Herr Erler had been an outspoken critic of Angela Merkel, both during and immediately after the campaign, but after a job offer in the new coalition he made a sudden "road to Damascus" like conversion and accepted her as his new boss. After initial scepticism and antipathy from some quarters towards the new Chancellor she has weathered her first few months in office well and is generally viewed positively by the electorate.

The coalition is still enjoying a honeymoon period, but with a public workers' strike now into its fifth week faint cracks are beginning to appear. This brings to mind the UK's "winter of discontent" as Freiburgers were confronted with overflowing dustbins not being collected, school caretakers refusing to care take, hospital cleaners not cleaning and traffic wardens not handing out fines. In comparison to other cities Freiburg is coping better with the strike; the union is not so strong here and the town has used private firms to remove the rubbish. In addition there seems to be little sympathy among people for the strikers, who are being asked to work a 40-hour week; they feel that public workers are in secure jobs in a job market where 5 million are unemployed. In mid-March doctors also went on strike in Freiburg and ten other university hospitals. They are demanding an unrealistic 30% pay increase and are objecting to their sometime 60-hour working week and cannot understand what the public workers are making a fuss about.

As I reported last year, Freiburg's finances are stretched, and the finance mayor, Otto Neideck (who represented Freiburg at Guildford's celebration of 25 years of the twinning) reported that the deficit is worse than he thought, and that by 2008 they will be 44 million in the red. Oberbürgermeister Dieter Salomon said that they didn't just have their backs to the wall, they were already sitting in the rubble! Urgent school repairs are needed, a problem that can no longer be deferred, and so ways are to be found to finance this through Dr. Salomon's Public-Private Partnership. This is meeting with approval from the federal government but not from the state government, which sees it as a hidden form of credit. Of course cities always face the delicate balancing act of prioritising their finances, but the long term enormous financial effects of reunification and, up until this year, a sluggish economy have taken their toll, and it will be a while before Freiburg's finances are booming again. However last May Freiburg was ranked as the most dynamic city by the "Initiative for the Social Market Economy" so is on the right path to restore its finances.

In spite of the town's financial difficulties it must have pleased the Lord Mayor recently to hand over a cheque of 321,000 to the charity Caritas, which the "Initiative Southern Baden Helps" had gathered in aid of victims of the Tsunami disaster. 600,000 had already been raised last year through the fund-raising activities of the local newspaper, the Badische Zeitung, and the local TV and radio stations, donations from firms and a charity event at the theatre. It is reassuring to know that even when people are feeling the pinch they are willing to find money to help others. The charity Caritas was originally founded in 1921 as a German charity to help Germans, but is now an international aid agency with 165 offices world-wide and its head office in Freiburg.

Visitors to Freiburg in the next few years are going to be disappointed to find the top 46 metres of the cathedral, with its world-famous lacy-like steeple, hidden from view. Thirty five year-old

Yvonne Faller, recently appointed to be Münsterbaumeisterin (Head of the Cathedral Building Works) finds herself in charge of a very challenging undertaking. On a windy night last June, a stone broke loose from the steeple and fell to the visitor's platform below. The ensuing investigation established that the 700 year-old delicately-constructed steeple was in need of urgent repair. The last repair had been carried out in 1919 and the increased acid rain of the last century had caused considerable damage to the soft sandstone. At a conservative estimate



The Cathedral steeple will be covered in scaffolding while it is repaired

3m is needed and the steeple will be encased in scaffolding for at least the next three years. Some money will be forthcoming from the state of Baden-Württemberg, but other money will have to be found. Dr. Conrad Schröder (known to his friends in Guildford as Conny), honorary president of the 5,000 strong membership of the "Friends of the Cathedral", says that new Friends are sorely needed. A local brewery, Ganter, has stepped in with help for the restoration by donating one euro for every crate of beer sold during the next few months. Let's hope it's a hot summer with lots of thirsty football fans.

The forthcoming football World Cup is occupying a lot of newsprint at the moment and Freiburg is caught up in all the excitement. Freiburg's own football team is now disappointingly in the second division of the Bundesliga and its stadium won't be used for any world cup matches, but the Dutch team will use the pitch to practise in the run up to the cup. They will be living in luxury in nearby Hinterzarten, at the well-known five star Adler Hotel. The English team are a little further away in an equally luxurious hotel in Bühl, near Baden-Baden. Maybe the sunny state of Baden and the civilising effects of drinking all that lovely Baden wine will stand them in good stead! (Incidentally I dismally fail the Norman Tebbit "cricket test" as I shall definitely be rooting for England this summer!)

In April, Freiburg is to be the first to get a chance to see the World Cup trophy at close quarters, as it is going on a tour of Germany and Freiburg is the first port of call. FIFA and other dignitaries will be present on this day of partying, with street events arranged and everyone busy kicking footballs. The way Germany is playing at the moment (they lost 4-1 to Italy recently) this might be their only chance of getting anywhere near that cup.

Last April, Freiburg's second marathon took place, this time with more than 14,000 participants, including two prominent Freiburg figures, the culture mayor, Dr Ulrich von Kirchbach, and the Lord Mayor, Dr Salomon. Having commented in my last letter about the lack of charity sponsorship for this event, I was pleasantly surprised last year to find sponsorship forms in the local newspaper in aid of the Tsunami disaster and this year a charity chip will be placed into every runner's shoe and when he or she passes the 8.5 km mark, 5 will be automatically deducted from the registration fee and donated to the "Southern Baden Helps" charity, mentioned above.

So all this marathon energy is being channelled to good use after all. Perhaps someone got the charity idea from the Guildford newsletter!

Another sports item that dominated our news was coverage of the Winter Olympics in Turin. Germany did very well, coming top of the gold medal league table and Freiburg was especially proud to have its own home-grown Olympic gold medallist, local boy Georg Hettich, winner of the biathlon event. Skiing has certainly been very much in the forefront this winter as we have had ideal conditions, with abundant snow, blue skies and plenty of sunshine. The Feldberg, near Freiburg and the highest mountain (1,493m) in the region, registered a record amount of snow of nearly 5 metres. Freiburg itself came to a near standstill in early March, after the heavy snowfalls prevented the trains, the buses and the trams from running. Passengers returning to the Black Forest had to be given hotel vouchers for the night as it was just impossible to get up those snowbound hills. Most people in these parts get through the snowy winters very well, with cars equipped with winter tyres and snow ploughs sweeping into action as soon as the first snow flakes appear. Fortunately for us (we live in the village of Oberried) we have the parish snow plough at the bottom of our garden and as it starts out every morning it passes by our drive so we have no excuses for not getting to work on time.

As I struggled across our terrace up to my knees in snow to reach our bird-table it was reassuring to know that garden birds are highly unlikely to catch the avian virus which is sweeping across Europe and is already in parts of Germany. Freiburg remains up until now a bird flu-free zone, but it is creeping nearer and with an outbreak on Lake Constance it is probably not long before the swans on the Rhine succumb. All poultry has to be kept under cover, and in the infected areas dogs have to be on leads, and cats kept indoors. Thankfully the hysteria about it has subsided, as after the first alarming news the veterinary institute in Freiburg was inundated with calls from well-meaning citizens reporting finds of dead blackbirds. Of course these had died from the effects of a severe winter as they do every year.

Most of you know that Freiburg is twinned with several other cities world-wide. In May, Besançon, Freiburg's French twin town, very kindly granted honorary citizenship en bloc to Freiburg's 215,000 citizens as a mark of friendship on the sixtieth anniversary of the ending of the Second World War. I don't think this means free bed and breakfast, but it certainly sounds very positive. It is a pity that Mahmud Ahmadineshad, the Iranian president, could not be equally peace-loving, as Freiburg is twinned with the Iranian city of Isfahan. In October, Dr Salomon, at the head of an official delegation was to visit the city, but after the vitriolic, anti-Israeli outburst of the president, the visit was cancelled at the last moment. A low-key cultural visit did take place in January, and an Iranian art exhibition will take place here in the autumn. However, Isfahan continues to be in the spotlight, as the controversial nuclear reactor is sited there. It is rather ironic that Germany's greenest city should be twinned with a city that is causing major nuclear headaches around the world.

Of course, Freiburg continues to have its own nuclear headache with the dodgy nuclear reactor across the border in Fessenheim. Dr Salomon has now proposed, and has obtained agreement with a majority on the city council, that Freiburg should join "TRAS" (Three Nation Atomic Protection League). This organisation consists of 23 towns and councils in northern Switzerland (including the canton of Basle) and Southern Baden, and with committee members from France. Its aim is to put pressure on the French government to get the reactor shut down and perhaps now, together with the newly formed Euro district that took off in January, success is not too far off.

Freiburg has been Germany's "Solar Capital" for the past several years but last year it was beaten into second place in the solar league by Ulm. However Freiburg could still put a feather in its cap as it was one of the few cities to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions, although not as much as had been hoped. Wind energy in Freiburg has also had its problems, as a further planned site was turned down by the court in Mannheim. Freiburg has not given up the battle

and continues to keep this area in its sights. However it is claimed that the existing turbines are decimating Freiburg's bat population. A compromise was reached last summer to turn off two of the turbines on less windy nights between July and October. Now a report suggests that this is not enough, and that all four of them should be turned off at night. The managing director of the wind energy firm has accused the anti-wind lobby of placing dead bats near the sites to bias the report and has had investigators hiding in the bushes to try and prove this. Skulduggery at the Roskopf – next instalment next year.

Freiburg has recently been competing for the title of "The German City of Knowledge". It is down to the last three cities and Freiburg is battling it out with Aachen and Braunschweig. Freiburg is really hoping to win as the University is celebrating its 550th anniversary next year, and this really would be the icing on that celebration cake. So please keep your fingers crossed for us.

A few statistics. At the last count 220,926 people live in Freiburg, 2000 more than the year before. A lot of those have settled in the newly developed areas of Rieselfeld and Vauban. The latter was once an area occupied by French soldiers, but after the end of the cold war and the subsequent withdrawal of the French troops, the former barracks became available and has been imaginatively transformed by an environmental architect, Rolf Disch, into a modern solar and environmentally-friendly housing development. The multi-coloured houses look rather like a picture by Hundertwasser and it is certainly not everyone's cup of tea (not mine!) but it has been very popular with young families choosing to make their homes there.

Young families are a problem in Germany at the moment – there are not enough of them. Germany now has the lowest birth rate since 1945, but Freiburg seems to be bucking that trend with 3,963 bouncing babies having been born last year. The most popular name for girls was Anna and for boys Lucas, but there were also five Benedicts. 1217 couples said "I do" in Freiburg's lovely old "Rathaus" – the oldest was 93! Some grim statistics: every 14 hours someone dies on the roads in Baden-Württemberg. But however bad that sounds, it is an improvement on previous years. 63 died on the autobahn but the autobahns are still the safest roads to drive on. However, without speed limits on certain stretches of them I find this hard to believe, especially with a would-be Michael Schumacher breathing down my neck. Freiburg's new tunnel was named as Germany's safest tunnel in an ADAC (the German equivalent of the AA) report. All very reassuring, but thankfully I haven't been stuck in it yet!

I do hope I have given you some insight into some of the happenings in your twin city last year and hopefully whet your appetite to find out more by coming on the Association's coach trip in September. It was lovely for our club to meet up with the cyclists and others from Woking and Guildford last year and also to hear the wonderful Requiem sung by the choirs of both cities.

Our Club had its AGM recently and the members join me in sending very good wishes to everyone in the Association and to the townspeople of Guildford. We were all very sad to learn of Stanley Robert's death last year. He is remembered with great affection in the Club and the stories of the Anglo German gatherings at his home remain legendary. You will be pleased to learn that Freiburg is contemplating naming a road in honour of dear Dorothy Elchlepp, who did so much for the twinning. If this happens we shall have to have a shared celebration and smash the champagne on the sign together. One other little bit of Club news: I have been elected English president.

We are all looking forward to the September visit and getting to meet you all – and of course, drinking all those Baden Viertele together.

Gute Reise and Auf Wiedersehen in September.

Penny Leube
Freiburg Anglo-German Club

SCHOOLS ACTIVITIES

CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN FREIBURG



*Freiburg's
Oberbürgermeister
Dr. Dieter Salomon
who opened the
conference.*

In November 2004 there was a major conference on Climate Change in Berlin attended by world leaders, including the Queen. It was decided to follow this by holding a conference for young people in July 2005. The objective was to raise their interest in science and technology, using climate change as the focus. Because of the excellence of its environmental activities, Freiburg was selected as the venue for the conference. All expenses were paid by the British Council and Freiburg City Council. The Mayor of Guildford and up to ten young people from Guildford were invited to attend and to join young people from Freiburg. (The Deputy Mayor attended instead of the Mayor, who was unable to be there).

Deputy Mayor's Impressions of the Conference

As Deputy Mayor of Guildford, I was privileged to accompany eight Guildford sixth-form students to the conference. Peter Slade organised the representation from local schools on behalf of the Guildford-Freiburg Association.

The students were amazed and enthralled by talks from researchers about Arctic expeditions to examine how the land below the ice cap, and dissolved gases in the ice, revealed atmospheric changes. There were solar energy equipment demonstrations, showing how it is used for heating and power generation. All the students participated in 'hands-on' workshops. The students were from Christs College, Kings College and St Peters School and were accompanied by science teacher Ian Reed from Kings College. Alongside 80 students from Freiburg, they attended two days of lectures and workshops and also visited some of Freiburg's alternative energy systems.

The conference was held in the Solar Information Centre in Freiburg, a new building with many energy-saving features including solar panels, solar glazing and ventilation designed for optimum energy efficiency. There was a formal welcome from Dr Dieter Saloman, Mayor of Freiburg, coinciding with the opening of an exhibition on the worldwide effects of climate change. The conference was very well-organised, with lots of discussion about important issues relating to climate change.

The event proved just how concerned the younger generation is about its future and I was impressed by their enthusiasm to find out more about how they can make a difference. The Guildford contingent all said they would like to see some of the renewable energy and solar installations, that are 'everyday' in Freiburg, being utilised here. Freiburg is as old as Guildford, with just as many historic buildings, but they have managed to install a range of environmentally sustainable energy solutions.

*Clr Angela Gunning
Deputy Mayor of Guildford*

A Student's Impressions

Last July three 6th form students from St Peters School joined forces with five from Christs College and Kings College for a visit to Freiburg to attend the conference.

After nervous introductions early on Monday morning we made a quick journey to Freiburg via Heathrow and Basel, Switzerland. Having arrived, and now firm friends, we took a tour round the beautiful and historic town using the very efficient public trams.

On Tuesday we were all taken to the Solar Energy Conference Centre to begin the series of talks and discussions which would last for two days. We were given a talk on the Cape Farewell trip to the Arctic. This proved an interesting trip as it not only enabled scientists, geographers and oceanographers to carry out key research into the issue of global warming but provided the art world an opportunity to present the natural world through the media of art, music, poetry and creative writing. We attended workshops over two days which discussed such key issues as "What would happen to the world if we were to continue our present state of destruction on it" to "What can be done to promote the issue in the public eye without boring them — which is what seems to be happening at the moment" and included an interactive workshop on ecological devices which homeowners can use.

The main point that emerged from the two day conference was that no matter what we do to change our lifestyle now, the world will change dramatically within 20 years. However we can take action to prevent it becoming catastrophic.

After a guided tour of our sister town we travelled back to Guildford on Thursday, tired but happy and stimulated by what we had heard.

*Elizabeth Loveder
Sixth former, St Peters School*

THE YEAR IN PICTURES

Climate Change Conference for Young People *(Story on page 4)*



The delegates from 3 Guildford schools' sixth forms



Photovoltaic panels at the railway station, one of Freiburg's many solar installations

Guildford & Freiburg Churches Study Day *(Story on page 6)*



Some of the delegates at the Study Day

Selling Goods from Freiburg We ran two successful markets in 2005



Val Hazelwood (right) & Vicky Slade at the summer market outside the Guildhall

Katie Butcher, Mayor Tamsy Baker, Mary Lloyd-Jones & Wolf Pietrek at the Christmas Market in the Guildhall



Peter Slade demonstrates a Jumping Jack to the Mayor at the Christmas market

George Abbot School exchange with Freiburg

In March 2005 I was one of twenty students from Year 10 at George Abbot School who went to Freiburg on an exchange with the Goethe Gymnasium. We each stayed with a German family for a week. The first day we spent with our exchange partner and their family. It had been snowing but it wasn't too cold, so we all went sledding.

On Monday we went to their school. The school day starts at 7.50 am and ends at midday, so we still had half a day to go to the swimming pool, Laguna Bad. The next day we went to a glassblowing house. The icicles around the village were huge and the snow in the Black Forest was knee deep! We next went to Luzern, in Switzerland with our partners and went up a mountain in a cable car. The view from the mountain was great and you could see people skiing or sledding down the lower part of the mountain.

Friday was "Red Nose Day" in England, so we were set the challenge of raising money for it, which was quite hard because most people in Freiburg hadn't heard of it. This didn't stop some generous people from donating. This ended our trip to Freiburg. The city was really good and we had lots of different things to do there. We all had a great time and had made new friends.

In July our German partners came to stay with us. They went to see a London show, did punting in Oxford and we all went to Brighton, which they thought was great as they don't live near a coast, even though the weather at the time wasn't too good.

I will be going to Freiburg again this Easter as the football team my brother plays for (Guildford City Boys) is also doing an exchange. I'm sure I will enjoy it as much as with our school's exchange and I hope to see more of the town and the surrounding area.

Lauren Beckwith
George Abbot School

Other exchanges

It has been a pleasure to be able to make arrangements for two young Freiburgers to spend time in Guildford.

Cornelia Eberhardt, a student teacher from Freiburg, spent three weeks teaching in Guildford, mainly at George Abbot School, as part of her course. She wrote enthusiastically about her stay:

"It was a great experience. I had a very good time at George Abbot School and I learned a lot. Guildford is a beautiful city and I'm sure I will come back for a visit at some point. I have to write my thesis and I'm going to do that in Geography. While staying in Guildford I had the idea to do something about twinning towns, their meaning and importance, cultural exchange and so on. I also want to try to get in touch with pupils in Freiburg and Guildford who have done a trip to their twin town and to find out to what extent the school visits are the subject of lessons and what the pupils get out of them."

Fridolin Dorwarth, a 14 year old boy from Ihringen, a village in the Kaiserstuhl is to exchange with a boy from Bookham, who attends Howard of Effingham School.

Peter Slade

Guildford and Freiburg Churches get together

In May 2005 members of Guildford Churches Together again welcomed their Freiburg counterparts in one of their annual exchange visits. As well as a variety of social exchanges, an important highlight of the visit was a Study Day, an account of which follows.

Building Communities fit to live and work in

Seventeen visitors from Freiburg churches and nine from Guildford churches and a representative from the Guildford Environmental Forum met at the University of Surrey to discuss this topic. A feature of the day, which was hosted by the Borough Council, was a series of presentations about the way Guildford tackles it. David Williams, the Chief Executive of Guildford Borough Council (GBC) set the scene by describing the Council's role and its fit with central Government, Surrey County Council's Derek Lake spoke about tackling Guildford's serious problems of traffic and transport, Adrian Maunder of GBC outlined Guildford's policy on providing sufficient affordable housing, and James Whiteman of GBC described what is being done to deal with the mounting waste problem here. Jerry Kirkby, Chief Superintendent of Surrey Police, spoke about what the local police are doing to improve community safety. Dr Helen Rose Wilson, from Freiburg's Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems, discussed alternative energy options being employed in Freiburg and public attitudes to them. (Dr Wilson also very nobly translated throughout the day). Finally Reverend David Wellbourn, the work-place Chaplain from Surrey & NE Hampshire Industrial Mission, described his activity on Building Human Work Communities.

A lively exchange of views followed the presentations. Much of the programme concerned environmental matters. Freiburg is of course a world-famous centre of excellence in tackling environmental problems and is often described as the "Green Capital" of Germany, so it was particularly valuable that the visitors shared their opinions on those important subjects with the Guildford group.

Peter Slade, who chaired the Study Day, said that it was an excellent way of contributing to "the aims of mutual liaison and the exchange of experiences" called for in the original deed of partnership between Guildford and Freiburg. He congratulated Guildford Churches Together and their guests from Freiburg for arranging a fine example of twinning in action.

Rev. David Wellbourn
Guildford Churches Together

Note: *The Guildford Freiburg Churches Link is organising a visit to Freiburg next May, staying in local people's homes. If you are interested contact Stanley Hemming-Clark 01483 568197.*

Guildford Vivace Chorus: Visit to Freiburg, 2005

Our 2005 visit to Freiburg was as usual a very enjoyable, exhausting experience as a “choral workshop”, ending in a concert performance of Verdi’s Requiem in the fabulous Freiburg Konzerthaus. We had an audience of more than 2000 who were most appreciative of the combined efforts of the Guildford Vivace Chorus and the Freiburg Bachchor.

The visit was our fourth to Freiburg and as usual we were given a very warm welcome: our hosts could not have done more for us. An interesting development was that this year our relationship has become so “normal” that, for the first time, there was no mention of the War or a need to overcome past wars. This must be a good sign that our link is working and that our singing and living together is highly valued. The Bürgermeister, Ulrich von Kirchbach, in his speech of welcome, said many pleasant things and expressed the hope that our exchanges would continue to link our two towns.

This year we didn’t rely on the usual coach to take us to Freiburg. Instead we flew with EasyJet which turned out to be a much more pleasant mode than we had expected – we were not asked to do any washing up or push starting the aircraft, and it cost less than car parking.

We went thinking we knew the Requiem backwards, but Herr Michael Bürle, the Bachchor’s conductor showed us a totally new view of the work and, with the luxury of three days of rehearsal with full orchestra and soloists, it resulted in a stunning performance which we shall always remember.

We look forward to the Bachchor’s return visit to Guildford when we shall hope to return their hospitality and friendship.

Maxwell New
Vivace Chorus

(Editor’s Note: The Guildford Vivace Chorus was formerly the Guildford Philharmonic Choir)

Last June forty five people from Guildford, Woking and other places in Surrey and London made an eight-day tour by coach to Freiburg via Woking’s twin town of Rastatt. The trip, organised by the West Surrey group of the Cycle Touring Club, was designed to appeal especially, but not exclusively, to cyclists. Some of the Guildford cyclists were from the famous and long-established Charlotteville Cycling Club. Our bikes, including some tandems, were carried in a trailer attached to the coach.

After a couple of days in the small Belgian town of Bouillon in lovely country in the Ardennes, we moved on to spend three days in Rastatt where we were welcomed by the Radsportfreunde – a keen cycling club whose members had visited Woking and established strong links between cyclists in the two towns when the twinning was inaugurated a few years ago. The Chairman of the Rastatt club, Peter Fritz, was an energetic and enthusiastic organiser, proud of his town and its surroundings. Rastatt is a very attractive town with many buildings from the Baroque period, including a magnificent Schloss. Our stay there included a civic reception, a very friendly barbecue with the cycle club, a wine-tasting, an evening in Alsace where we consumed lots of the local speciality, Flammenkuchen, and a trip to nearby and splendid Baden-Baden.

Then it was on to Freiburg with a stop in Strasbourg on the way. We stayed in Lehen on the eastern side of Freiburg which had a hotel with a car-park large enough to take our bus with its trailer. After an enjoyable reception in the Rathaus there was a guided tour of the town and the Münster and, for the keen environmentalists in the group, a visit to the impressive Solar Info Centre. Some of us took the chance to visit old friends and acquaintances in Freiburg and its environs.

A highlight was a visit (which most of the cyclists made by bike) to the von Gleichenstein vineyard at Oberrotweil in the Kaiserstuhl, where we were joined by members of the Anglo-German Club. Under the trees on a beautiful summer Sunday afternoon and evening we enjoyed some excellent wine accompanied by delicious food. A delightful and memorable occasion.

Some of the cyclists were very keen “head-downers”, who resembled participants in the Tour de France when dressed in their kit and were quite happy to tackle 100 km-plus rides in the mountains. Not all were young: indeed some had been drawing their pensions for a number of years. Their *pièce de résistance* (or its equivalent in German) whilst in Freiburg was to cycle up Schauinsland and the Feldberg in a single day, much to the amazement and admiration of the locals. Others, in the “B-team”, were also keen to take long rides. A smaller band of us were quite happy to enjoy shorter rides on some of the wonderful cycle tracks, mainly on the flat, around Freiburg and Rastatt. And a few in the group did not cycle at all.

This was a really enjoyable and well-run trip, with lots of comradeship, and our thanks go to Woking cyclists Geoff Smith and Rico Signore for organising it so well. It seems to me that there is merit in our Association keeping in contact with the Woking-Rastatt twinning activities – Freiburg and Rastatt are after all both in Baden Württemberg and, whilst not quite such near neighbours as Guildford and Woking, are only 90 km apart. There is also merit in cyclists in Guildford forming the same sort of close link with Freiburg cyclists as that which exists between the cyclists from Rastatt and those of Woking. A start was made on this as Walter Scheck, leader of one of the Freiburg cycle groups, led a ride during our visit.

Peter Slade

THE YEAR IN PICTURES

A Bus-Bike Tour to Rastatt & Freiburg *(Story on page 7)*



Loading the bikes on the trailer, helped by the Mayor of Woking



Some of the group at the Schloss at Rastatt, Woking's twin town



Wine-tasting under the trees at Oberrotweil in the Kaiserstuhl



A cycle path through the forest near Freiburg

Young Footballers from Freiburg visit Guildford *(Story on page 10)*



The under-13s line up at Woking football ground (Guildford on the left)



The Freiburg teams relax

What our members think

At the end of last year we asked members for their views on what the Association does and what it might do in the future. This has provided a large amount of useful information.

We received replies from 40 addresses (50 % of the total, although many replies came from addresses where there are two members and it is obviously impossible to know whether those replies represented the views of both people in a couple). This is very satisfactory response to a survey of this kind.

There was a very large range in the number of times members have visited Freiburg – from zero to twelve. For what it is worth, the mean is 2.4 times. People are attracted to Freiburg for a wide variety of reasons: amongst the most frequently-cited were the attractiveness of the town and its surroundings, an interest in German people and culture and Freiburg's environmental achievements.

Analysis of the responses reveals the following:

- There was much support (65% of respondents) for the idea of forging more links between individuals in Guildford and Freiburg, either by compiling a list of potential hosts or facilitating home exchanges.
- A very high level of support was forthcoming for the suggestion of arranging occasional talks for members and the public on German topics. As many as 80% of respondents were in favour of this: a very wide range of possible topics was suggested.
- Many people (65% of respondents) also supported the idea of organised tours to Freiburg on particular themes. The first of these, a wine-tasting trip by coach has been arranged for September.
- The New Year party and the Annual Dinner have been attended "sometimes" or "often" by a majority of members: there were a few suggestions for a change of format.
- Members made a large number of suggestions for new activities for the Association. These will be useful in helping to plan our future programme.
- Several members would like to see more of a German "flavour" in our social activities.
- Seven members said that they would like to be more active in the Association.

Modesty almost prevents me from recording that the Newsletter was universally praised.

Peter Slade

750 years of Freiburg's Holy Ghost Foundation

In 2005 the Heiliggeist Spital Stiftung (the Holy Ghost Foundation) celebrated its 750th jubilee with a ceremony in Freiburg's Guildhall led by the German president, Horst Köhler, who honoured Freiburg with his first official visit for this occasion. When it was founded in the 13th century it served not as a hospital in the modern sense, but as a place of refuge for those in need – the disabled, widows, and even weary travellers. There were also special wings where the insane and other social outcasts of the time were cared for.

From a 1706 plan of the city it is possible to make out the outline of the old building, situated near to the cathedral and built to the same design as the world famous Hotel Dieu in Beaune. Unfortunately the original building was pulled down and only a later altar from the original church can now be seen at the church of St Agatha in Horben (outside Freiburg). There is also a gold-plated chalice, dating from 1270, which is now kept in the Augustiner Museum. It is said that the condemned were allowed to have one last drink from this very special cup before being taken away to the gallows.

The Foundation went on to develop into a medieval old people's home, perhaps similar to Guildford's Abbots Hospital. Freiburg citizens, from the wealthy to the poor (you had to be the owner of at least a wooden dwelling), could buy themselves a "living" (Pfründ) and so secure themselves care in their old age. Once you had taken up residence, you had to obey the rules of the house, dressing accordingly and attending the church services and there were penalties for non-compliance. The wealthy enjoyed a better standard of care with three course meals and one and a half litres of wine a day, whereas the poor received very basic meals and one and a half litres per week. The wine was obviously considered a vital part of every Freiburger's needs – not bad for a nursing home.

The Foundation developed over the centuries into a very wealthy institution, through donations and legacies, gaining much property in and around Freiburg. It survives today in a very different form, but continues to provide care in the community, with six old people's homes, three nursing homes and day-care centres. Thanks to the generosity of its donors, it is able to continue what was started 750 years ago, although I doubt whether that daily ration of one and half litres is still supplied!

Penny Leube
Freiburg Anglo German Club

20 Years of Footballing Exchanges

2005 was the 20th year of cultural and sporting exchanges between the players and families of Guildford City Boys FC and those of the SV Blau Weiss SC of Freiburg. Guildford City was pleased to play host at Easter once again, this time to a 65 strong group from Freiburg, and entertained their guests to a number of events and gatherings which made this 20th exchange a visit to remember. Over the years many friendships have been formed and maintained and it was a pleasure to see many visitors who had come to Guildford for the second or third time.

The wider involvement of families in the visit made it possible to divide the groups for both cultural and sporting events and provide all participants with something to remember this time. We were very grateful for the support of the Guildford families for accommodating the visiting players, and the University of Surrey for providing rooms for the adult group.

Many different types of activities were organised. A group of ladies was taken to Hampton Court and returned to a full Devon Cream Tea. The recipes for the scones were requested by many. A group was taken for their second experience of Dog Racing at Wimbledon, another group went to watch the Guildford Flames and other boys experienced their own Football Film Prize Night. One lucky lad also went with a group to see England play at Old Trafford. On Easter Monday Players of both Clubs were taken to Thorpe Park, allowing the adult group to visit London with free rein for a change.

We were very grateful to the Fairlands Community Club which allowed our group to make full use of the facilities for the entire Easter weekend, allowing GCBFC to benefit from the use of a Clubhouse to treat as its own, and where we enjoyed a welcome Buffet, Lunches and Teas, a BBQ, our Friday practice games and our final night presentations. Once again we were very grateful to the Mayor and the Borough Council for greeting our visitors, and indeed the Guildford Club, with such enthusiasm .

For the players the Sunday challenge games were the highlight as we were very pleased to commemorate the 20th Exchange Matches by playing at the splendid ground of Woking Town FC. Our grateful thanks go to that club and all the staff involved for their kindness and support . The matches were well supported by almost 600 spectators, including past and present members of GCBFC and their families. Our guest of honour was John Prescott, a founding member of GCBFC and who was involved in the first ever exchange between our Clubs. The two matches were both excellent. Guildford won the under-13s game 6-nil and the under 15s was a 2-2 draw at full-time, followed by a gripping penalty shoot-out, which Guildford finally won 7-6. After that, the Dad's match was bound to be less exciting but was enjoyed by all.

All members of the Club were presented with a specially forged medallion to commemorate the visit. On the final evening many presentations were made to thank all parents and others involved in the exchange and in the organisation of such a well-supported and thoroughly enjoyable visit. The Chairman of GCBFC, Phil Dyas, was then given an exceptional award, being made an honorary lifetime member of the Blau Weiss Club to recognise the efforts that have been made, over the years, in organising and promoting this exchange .

GCBFC, its players and families were cordially invited to visit Freiburg in Easter 2006. First indications are that the Guildford group is likely to be over 120 in number, the biggest ever group to visit Germany from the Guildford Club. We are looking forward to it immensely .

Phil Dyas
Chair, Guildford City Boys FC

(Editor's note: The Guildford-Freiburg Association was pleased to donate £50 towards the expenses of the events)

OBITUARY

Stanley Eric Roberts OBE, the Association's first Chairman, died in June at the age of 80. Born in Liverpool, after a distinguished army career in the Gurkha Rifles in India and subsequently in the Royal Artillery he became a successful businessman in West London in 1962. He was a Conservative Borough Councillor for Send for ten years and was much involved in local community work and in energetic fund-raising for many charities.

Stanley knew Germany and spoke German, so he was the obvious choice as Chairman when the Association was founded in 1979 and did the job for 16 years. He was a hospitable, gregarious and warm Chairman: many guests remember visits to his home, where he and Joan looked after them so well. He made dozens of friends in Freiburg, who expressed their very real sadness when he died. After retirement he attended all our functions until his health failed. His family are continuing their connection with Freiburg, and one of his granddaughters recently visited our twin town.

Stanley was a member of the Magic Circle and was ever prepared to entertain those attending private or public events - solemnity could not live long in his company. No one who witnessed them will ever forget his marvellous conjuring tricks (and his lying down on hot coals) which caused amusement and amazement at various functions, not least after rather formal civic banquets.

Send Church was packed for his funeral, testifying to the respect in which he was held by all sections of the community. He is survived by Joan, his wife of 56 years, and four daughters and five grandchildren.

Mary Lloyd-Jones & Roger Marjoribanks

Guildford Soroptimists visit Freiburg

Six members of Guildford and District Soroptimists International visited their counterparts in Freiburg for a weekend in June. Last year was the twentieth anniversary of the links between the two clubs.

The weekend included:

- A guided tour of the city.
- A visit to Luisenhöhe, a hotel and restaurant garden in the village of Horben high above Freiburg, with a wonderful view of the Black Forest and down to the Rhine Valley and over to France.
- A tour through the Black Forest and to the Schwarzwälder Freilichtmuseum Vogtsbauernhof, a Black Forest equivalent of the open air museum at Singleton, with old houses and farms rescued and placed on the site. There were demonstrations of ancient methods of work and people dressed in local costumes.
- Lunch at the Oberkirch Restaurant where the Freiburg Club hold their meetings.

Once again we were royally entertained by our friends and were able to renew our friendship and get fresh insights into Freiburg.

Daphne O'Hanlon
Guildford & District Soroptimists

Editor's note: Soroptimists International is a world-wide organisation for women in business and the professions and works to improve the status of women and advance human rights.

RADIO LINKS WITH FREIBURG

The Guildford & District Radio Society holds weekly radio "skeds" (i.e. scheduled or pre-arranged radio contacts between 2 stations on a specific band and frequency) with the Freiburg Club on Thursday lunchtimes and we enjoy getting updates from them. We had a visit by a member of the Freiburg Club in July. We hope to visit Freiburg as a club in Summer 2007

Stella Whitbourn
Secretary, Guildford &
District Radio Society

FREIBURG BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

Music-loving readers might like to know that our twin town's famous orchestra, often heard on BBC Radio 3 and several times during the "Bach Fest" in December, is playing at the Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music at St John's Smith Square at 7.30 pm on May 27. They will be performing Vivaldi's "La Senna festeggiante" with three soloists – a work described as somewhere between a cantata and an opera.

Enquiries to the Box Office, Tel. 0207 222 1061

The Times newspaper has said of the orchestra: "Their playing is infused with a vitality that never lags, never ceases questing and daring".

Peter Slade

Baden wines available in Shalford

The Wine Odyssey in Shalford is now carrying representative wines from the Baden area which surrounds Freiburg. Good examples are white wines Oberkircher Riesling, Hex vom Dasenstein, Riesling dry Kabinett and the red Burg Ravensburg Pinot Noir. All are in the £6 - £8 bracket.

The Oberkircher Riesling has a typical Riesling nose of flowers with a minerally edge and long stoney fruit taste and finish.

The Hex Vom Dasenstein Riesling Kabinett is the next stage up the German Pradikat quality system and unusually for a Kabinett level wine is fermented dry – it has an intense nose and the taste is a nice blend of grape and sugar (ideal for Chinese style food for example).

The Burg Ravensburg is a light and easy drinking Red Pinot Noir in the same style as its cousins in Burgundy.

All these wines are normally in stock in the shop and discounts are available for any mix of 6 or 12. Local free delivery is also possible.

Peter Cobbett

Wine Odyssey, Kings Road, Shalford, GU4 8JX

Tel: 01483 560647 e-mail: wine_odyssey@fsbdial.co.uk

British German Association

Our Association has become an affiliate of the British German Association (BGA). This organisation was founded in 1951 to strengthen understanding and friendship between the peoples of Britain and Germany: its membership includes individuals, affiliates and companies. Its headquarters is in Belgrave Square, very close to the German Embassy (in fact in the building that housed the former East German Embassy).

Activities of the BGA include lectures, cultural and social events, visits (at the end of April there is a five-day trip to Berlin), a Parliamentary day and an annual conference. During the past year or two the Association has arranged two very useful workshops and conferences on town twinning.

There is also support for exchanges between young people and schools and for professional and business people moving from Britain to Germany and vice versa.

Individual members of our Association can participate in BGA events. We will e-mail details of these to members whose e-mail addresses we have and we will try to keep other members informed by occasional updates.

More information is available on the BGA web-site: www.britishgermanassociation.org

Peter Slade

Contacts in the Association

Chairman:	Mary Lloyd-Jones Tel. 01483 578532
Secretary:	Kathy Atkins Tel. 01483 811005
Membership Secretary:	Michael Gorman Tel. 01483 450036
Newsletter Editor:	Peter Slade Tel. 01483 531472

Our Website

Access to the Association's web-site is via the Borough Council's site. Go to www.guildford.gov.uk click on "tourism" then on "linked towns". Alternatively Google will find it.