

Freiburg's new Lord Mayor

Freiburg has a new Oberbürgermeister. After 20 years and many achievements, Dr Rolf Böhme retired in May and Dr Dieter Salomon from the Green Party was elected with 65% of the vote. The role of Oberbürgermeister is an important one in German towns. The person elected takes on the job for four years but can be re-elected (as Dr Böhme was, four times). The post is paid and is rather like that of a Chief Executive. In Freiburg's case the Oberbürgermeister is supported by four deputy mayors.

Peter Slade

A Message from the Association's Chairman

Since we published our last Newsletter in September 2001, the work of the Association has continued apace. There have been many sporting, cultural, church and private visits and exchanges and some of these are described in this Newsletter. I am sure you will agree that all the reports on the visits are extremely interesting and everyone seems to have had a wonderful time. Guildford has also greeted many visitors from Freiburg including the official delegation from Freiburg City Council in February 2002.

I would like to encourage all clubs, associations, schools, churches and groups in the Borough, as well as private individuals, to visit Freiburg. It is a beautiful and historic city and you will receive a warm welcome. The Association is able to give help and advice in encouraging visits.

May I urge you all to support the twinning as much as possible.

Hon. Alderman Mary Lloyd-Jones



The busy daily farmers' market in the Münsterplatz

Peter Slade

Visit to the International Youth Summer Camp by St Peter's School, Merrow

The International Youth Summer Camp is an annual event which Freiburg City Council arranges for the benefit of students from its twin cities.

We set off on July 1 with a group of ten 14 year old students (nine girls and one very brave boy). After arrival at Basel Airport we took a shuttle bus to Freiburg and were greeted by our host families and Frau Richter (who looks after Freiburg's twinning arrangements with Guildford) in the town hall. After the first shy contacts with their host families our students were taken home and settled quickly into their new surroundings. For all of them it was the first visit to Germany and naturally they felt nervous and excited at the same time.

During the week we were all fully occupied as the programme was packed with activities and outings. The weather was hot, sunny and Freiburg presented itself from its best side. We particularly admired the public transport system,

which works beautifully and keeps most traffic out of the town centre.

Our students mixed well with the youngsters from Lemberg (Ukraine), Besançon (France), Granada (Spain) and Innsbruck (Austria) – some of Freiburg's other twin cities who also attended the Summer Camp. For us teachers it was a highly interesting experience to exchange views and information about school and school life in different countries of Europe and we can say that we now see many things from a different perspective.

Highlights of the week were the day trip to the EUROPA PARK, a fantastic theme park close to Freiburg, a barbecue in the garden of the town hall and the departure party at the youth centre, where all teachers had to take part in a little concert, much to the delight of their students!

It was a most enjoyable week for all of us — we had fun and learned at the same time. Posters and souvenirs of our visit are exhibited in our classrooms and are admired by many students. They have raised a lot of interest amongst our youngest pupils who have just started school and cannot wait until it is their turn to visit Germany. Needless to say St.Peter's would be delighted to have more opportunities in the future to participate in a similar exchange.

Finally we would like to thank Frau Richter for the uncomplicated and friendly manner in which she tackled many small problems and questions.

*Report by G.Scherer & R.Wareham,
Modern Languages Dept., St Peter's*

*Students from Besançon, Granada &
Guildford in the Freiburg Sports Centre*



The Guildford Philharmonic Choir / Freiburger Bachchor Link

The two choirs sing together every two years, alternating between Freiburg and Guildford. Guildford Philharmonic's November 2002 visit to sing the Dvorak Requiem with the Bachchor started as usual with our meeting at the unearthly hour of 6 am at the Guildford coach park. However, our spirits were soon raised once we were on the move and had got over the shock! We crossed by the Euro Tunnel Shuttle and after a 25 minute run were spewed out at the other end at Calais. Our route across France was across the battlefields of World War 1 with many war grave cemeteries visible from the motorway. After entering Germany at Strasbourg it was only some 90 km to Freiburg where we arrived on time at 8pm and were thrown immediately into a 2 hour rehearsal; rather a shock!

Our hosts then proceeded to cater for our every need for the next 4 days when we weren't involved in the ensuing 12½ hours of rehearsal which we did find a little tiring and even rather long-winded. However, when we came to the final performance we realised that it may have been well worthwhile going into such detail as conductor Hans Buerle had such control over the orchestra that the choir could be heard which, unfortunately, cannot always be said of our UK performances!

The orchestra, and in particular, their leader were really first class and the soloists, two of whom had been students at the Academy of Music at Freiburg University, were also very good. The soprano, Rachel Harnisch, had a voice as clear as a bell and we all think she will have a wonderful future.

The Freiburg Konzerthaus, picture on page 4, which I fear rather puts our Civic Hall into the shade, was well filled. It is a very modern building and has every possible facility, including hydraulic lift stage platforms. We performed the first major concert in the hall after its completion in 1998 with Handel's "Israel in Egypt".

After the concert we were all invited to a reception dinner at a nearby Bierkeller by the Bürgermeister of the city and the Bachchor members; a most generous affair with a wonderful feeling that the past problems between our two countries are now no longer important, even though we should never forget those who lost their lives.

The Bürgermeister Kirchbach, who is the deputy to the Lord Mayor Salomon spoke so warmly of the pleasure that he and all in the city, involved in the twinning, had felt by our visit. He said that friendship and peace could not come alive other than with the meeting together of 'real people' and that these last few days, and the singing of the two choirs as one was a very great help in creating peace both through musical and personal connections.

He sincerely hoped that the partnership, brought about by the twinning of the two towns, would last as long as possible and, likewise, the co-operation between the two choirs. He said that he would do all he could to support the twinning of the towns and he knew he also spoke on behalf of the city as this will lead to closer relations which will be so valuable for the young people and our joint futures.

John Trigg, in an address of thanks, expressed our British feelings as being closely identified with the Bürgermeister's and handed him a letter from Guildford's Mayor. Hans Michael Buerle also confirmed his faith in the good that could come to our two countries by our working and making music together.

Our tour ended with fond farewells to our hosts as we boarded our bus for our return run on Monday morning at the more reasonable time of 8 am. We arrived back in Guildford at 8pm after a really wonderful 5 days.

Maxwell S New (Bass), Guildford Philharmonic Choir

Learning German in Freiburg

I was delighted to be asked if I would like to spend a month at the University of Freiburg last August, on a new scheme which allows one candidate from each of Freiburg's twin cities to acquire a knowledge of German, with a scholarship to cover the tuition fees and some of the costs involved. I had done a small course of German before I took my GCSEs, but it only amounted to around 10 hours, 8 years ago and unsurprisingly I had forgotten everything.

On arrival in Freiburg my fellow students and I were directed to the halls of residence which were to be our home for the next month. Being a city university, Freiburg has student residences located around the town. My comfortable new home was to be in a well-renovated army barracks — eight huge four-storey buildings in the south of the city. The students had been allowed to repaint the interiors as they saw fit, which led to a wonderfully eclectic environment — *Changing Rooms* meets *The Young Ones*.

On day two we met for the introduction (all in German) and a grammar test to help place the 400 students on the course into 24 groups. Have you ever had the nightmare the night before an important exam when you turn over the question paper and nothing makes any sense whatsoever, while everyone else in the room is happily churning out great reams of paper? I was now living it. I didn't know any of the answers, so I wrote my name on the top of the paper, handed it in, and

walked out of the room and into the bar around the corner where I waited for my more scholarly friends to finish the exam. Interestingly, by this point I had learnt to order a beer with an uncanny grasp of the language!

The University gave a wine reception that evening in the old building of the University — in a beautiful courtyard, with sprawling beech trees and some ornamental gardens where we met other students, lecturers and helpers on the course. A city tour followed which ended up at a beer garden halfway up a mountain that overlooks the whole city, and the breathtaking scenery of the surrounding Black Forest. Next day we walked to the nearby beauty spot of Schauinsland, where we took a cable car ride up another mountain and enjoyed an invigorating 6km walk back down.

On the fifth day lessons started — four hours of grammar every morning with optional lectures, seminars and workshops in the afternoon. I was placed, predictably, in group one of the twenty-four, and all lessons were conducted in German. The more we learnt, the more we realised that it is the most efficient way of learning a language;

Freiburg's Concert Hall



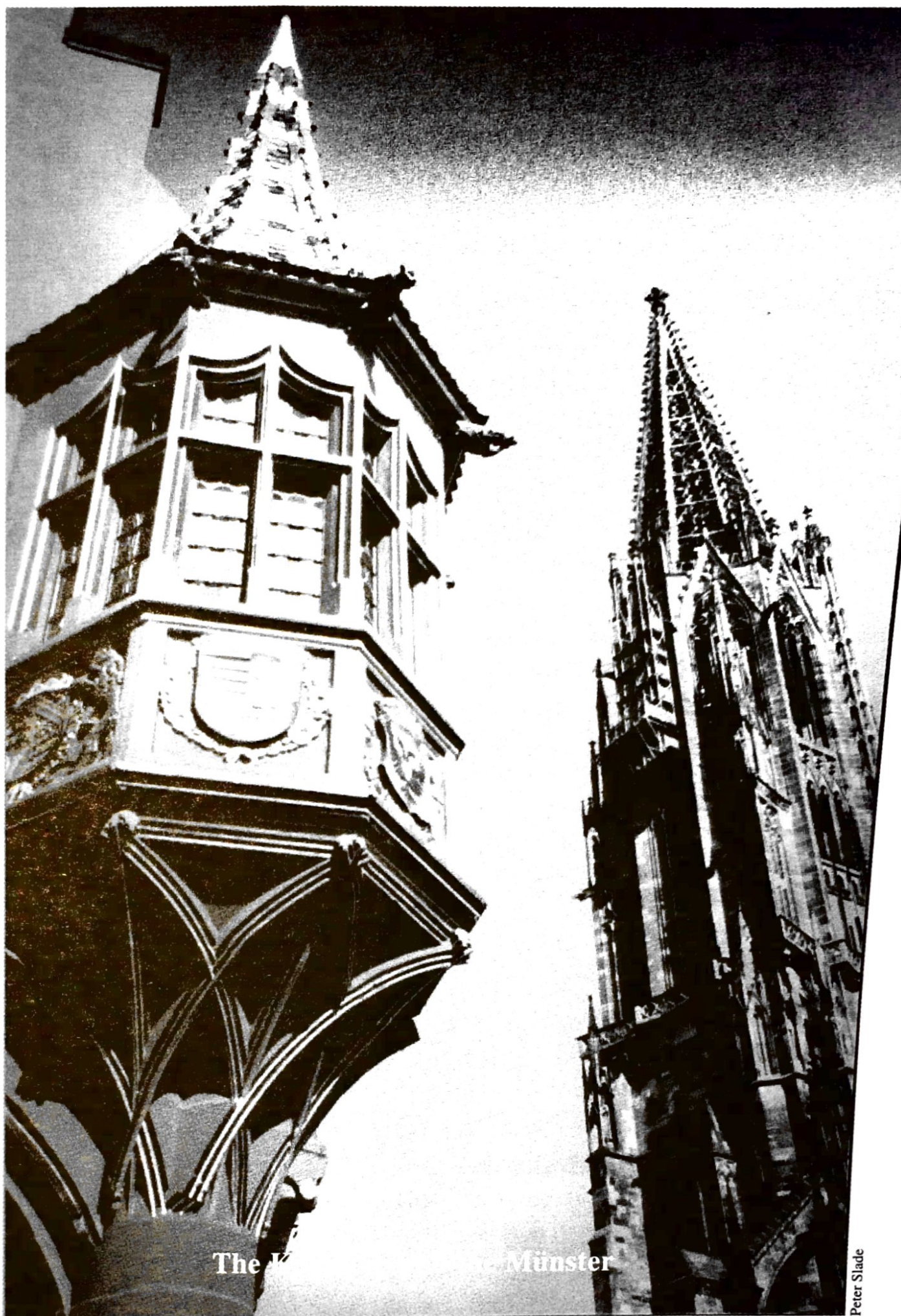
Peter Shade

If something was unclear, it was explained in German using language that we had already covered, or as a last resort, through a perverted form of Pictionary. In my class were students from Venezuela, Sweden, Ecuador, Italy, Mexico, Niger, Brazil, Spain and Japan, so aside from some Spanish-speaking people, the only common language we had was German.

Our free time allowed us to take in the sights of the city: the beautiful gothic Münster, the Historisches Kaufhaus, the Rathaus, numerous art galleries and museums, the Stadttheater, the Konzerthaus, along with cafes, restaurants, bistros and bars that line the streets and were busy yet completely relaxed. On weekends, we went by train to nearby towns and cities — Strasbourg, Heidelberg, Bodensee, Mulhouse, Titisee and Tübingen. One of the most enjoyable things about travelling in Germany is the travelling itself and Deutsche Bahn is one of the most efficient and punctual networks in the world.

Other organised events included a concert given by students from the Hochschule für Musik and a Lesenacht (literally “reading-night”) in which course students read verses of poetry and extracts of prose from Germany’s greatest writers, including Schiller, Nietzsche, Hesse, Heine, and Germany’s favourite children’s writer, Janosch. Three other students from my group and I read Goethe’s poem *Erlkönig*, which went down well, but was then eclipsed by some students reading what seemed to be the entire first act of *Faust*. The evening events were always accompanied by a large consumption of local wine!

This was the 90th year that Albert-Ludwigs Universität had run an Internationale



Sommerkurse, and it was obviously world-renowned. The quality of the teaching and organisation was first class, and I would recommend it to anyone interested in learning German. While many were taking the course to help their degree, a number were there because they always wanted to learn. The age range was roughly 18 to 70 and people really did come from all walks of life in all corners of the globe. Mieko Imanishi, a sixty year-old brush-artist from Japan, had gained a degree from the University of Surrey over thirty years ago!

Certainly a summer to remember.

Oliver Parker, Music Dept, University of Surrey

Learning about Freiburg's environmental achievements

At the end of June 2002, on behalf of the Guildford Environmental Forum, Thames Valley University Law Lecturer Ursula Smartt and I arranged for twenty people from the Guildford area to make a five-day environmental study visit to Freiburg. Our twin city is regarded as Germany's "green capital" because it has put protection of the environment at the heart of its policies for the past twenty five years.

Our group included Borough Councillors Keith Chesterton & Angela Gunning, County Councillor Tom Sharp and Baroness Sharp, Dave Harnett (the Borough's LA21 co-ordinator) and members of the Guildford Environmental Forum and of the Guildford Freiburg Association. We heard talks on transport (as every visitor there knows, Freiburg's car-free town centre and public transport system are a joy to behold and use), on town planning (development pressures and the need to protect the countryside are very similar to those in Guildford), on waste management (Freiburg has an enviable waste collection system and a recycling rate of 57% — in spite of which an incinerator is planned for the area) and on solar energy (the city is the centre of the "Freiburg Solar Region"). We visited a suburb where most of the power comes from solar energy, the International Solar Fair, a controversial wind farm, and took a guided walk in the Black Forest to hear about its changing ecology. We also tasted wine at an organic winery and spent a day at the village festival at nearby Saint Peter — where we watched Germany lose the World Cup Final to Brazil on large TV screens.



The environmental group in the town hall square in front of Guildford's Coat of Arms

The twenty participants were as impressed with our delightful twin city and its environmental achievements as I have always been. I have been urging exchanges on environmental topics with Freiburg ever since my first visit eight years ago and I am pleased to have now arranged one. There is already some co-operation between Guildford and Freiburg on solar energy and collaboration on waste, transport and town planning would be worthwhile. I am sure that there is much to be gained from such experiences, which add real value to the town twinning idea.

Peter Slade, Past Chairman, Guildford Environmental Forum

Guildford City Boys Football Club - Exchange visit to Freiburg

Continuing our annual Sporting and Cultural exchanges with the SV Blau Weiss Club of Freiburg, the Guildford City Boys FC took 42 boys and a further 30 family members to Freiburg at Easter. Whilst the parent group occupied a local hotel, the basis of the exchange is for our boys to stay with the families of our German friends and experience the German way of life and hospitality first hand, whilst also involving the challenge of our common interest in football. In 2002 we took teams from our Under-16 and Under-12 age groups.

In visits over the past 16 years our Club has always been well received and entertained, and Easter 2002 was no exception. As always time was given for personal exploration of the beautiful city of Freiburg, but we were also entertained with visits to the local vineyards and a formal welcome in the old Rathaus from the Mayor-elect and MEP for the region. Our boys were also treated to experiences in Go-Karting and Skittles in the Club's own skittle alley.

On Easter Sunday our Clubs play the now traditional Challenge matches and whilst winning one game convincingly, we lost narrowly (1-0) in each of the other two games. We also have a fun 'Parents' match, although our opposition seem to play one or two (or possibly more) of the Club's semi-professionals. Needless to say, having conceded nine goals in the first half we stemmed the tide in the second half by fielding our entire 17-man squad, in a game always played in fun and friendship .

At Easter 2003 we will be entertaining our friends from Freiburg in Guildford and expect to receive 34 players and 40 parents and officials. We hope that we will have the support of the Town in greeting our friends from our Twin City .

more 

Phil Dyas, Chairperson, Guildford City Boys Football Club

The full GCBFC Group and Friends in front of the superb Blau Weiss. Clubhouse, Restaurant Bar and Skittle Alley.



Guildford City Boys Football Club - Exchange visit to Freiburg



GCBFC U16's at Freiburg



GCBFC Dads' and Manager's Team



GCBFC U13's exchange gifts with Blau Weiss

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Note from the Editor

The Surrey Advertiser's Janet Russell has edited the last few issues of the Newsletter. She has now retired to the West Country and I agreed to take on the task of editing this issue. I should like to thank all the contributors for their excellent articles which give a very good idea of the range of contacts with our splendid twin city.

Whilst I have been happy to compile this Newsletter I hope that another member of the Association will be willing to edit forthcoming issues. The newsletter only appears once a year so editing is not an arduous task, especially for someone with a computer and rudimentary word-processing skills. I look forward to hearing from someone prepared to take it on.

If you want to find out more about events in our twin city, including their twinning with Guildford and eight other towns and their Friendship City arrangements with a town in Nicaragua, visit the excellent and comprehensive web-site: www.freiburg.de. There is an English version.

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