

Civic visit to Bad Munstereifel. Sept 16th to 20th 2010

The recent civic visit was a triumph for the Ashford Twinning Association with another faultless visit to Bad Munstereifel.

As part of our agreement with the Ashford borough council the A T A now take responsibility for arranging all exchanges between the three towns.

Sadly at the very last moment Mayor Allen Wells was forced to drop out due to illness leaving former ABC leader Paul Clokie to be the figurehead for the trip that included only two other councillors. The bonus was that it did allow the invited delegations to include more association members to travel and meet up with our German and French friends.

Those who travelled with Gillian Lines, chairman were Anne Staplehurst, Geoff & Emma Boon, Peter & Doreen Wilcockson, Jim Davies, Marion Brown, & Mike Elvy, Christine Lowry & David Harper, Sue Chapman, John & Gill Holland, Mona Hoveman, William Howard and Mike Bennett.

The five young delegates from Highworth School were Samantha Hedges, Lisa Borthwick, Amy Cooper, Johanna Forssen, and Adam Lally.

The theme for the visit was community volunteering and the five student, led by William Howard, made an impressive presentation in three languages in the town hall on the work carried out by volunteers at the William Harvey Hospital.

Cllr Clokie reserved special praise for their efforts saying how proud he had been that they had clearly been the best youth team during the long weekend.

At the reception on our arrival of the three twinned towns Burgermeister Alexander Buttner praised our understanding between the three nations as the three cities take in turn to host the twinning gathering as an annual exchange of thoughts and ideas.

Friday Sept 17th the party's first visit was to the Alte Schule or "old school" in Rupperath. There Herr Oskar Ferber of the operating company gave the 50 guests a tour of the hand weaving museum giving detailed information on the looms, spinning wheel and spindles. He describes the work which recently invested over 1000 hours of voluntary work in redesigning the paved yard. At 11.45 the guests took part in the so-called "stand-up". The idea was to remind the heads of United Nation states and governments who attended the world summit on poverty and their promise to implement the eight Millenium development goals by 2015.

After lunch the party continues via a scenic route through Michelsberg back to Bad Munstereifel where members of the voluntary fire service led by Karl Bruhl gave an impressive presentation on the duties of the fire service. The working of the fire brigade of 100 years ago and the way the fire brigade works today.

Saturday morning Ashford representatives laid a floral tribute at the grave of Honorary citizen of Ashford, Ferdinand Lethert who died in 2005. Later on all delegates met in the town hall where the young students presented examples of voluntary work from their respective towns. The farewell dinner was held on Sunday at the Otterbach senior citizen's centre to a magnificent buffet.

Monday morning all visiting delegates bade farewell.