

CHELTENHAM ART CLUB

Cheltenham - Göttingen Twinning Festival, 2011.

Two coaches left Cheltenham for Göttingen at 6.00a.m. on Friday 29th July, to celebrate 60 years of twinning. On board were more than 80 people travelling for the festival, including six connected with the art exhibition and twenty six paintings. After the short journey by Eurotunnel we made good time to our overnight hotel near Brussels Airport.

On Saturday we arrived at – Göttingen at 5.00p.m. Paintings were unloaded and taken to the Kunstlerhaus and unpacked ready for hanging. Some 20 or so other visitors made their way from Cheltenham under their own steam, including Carol and Chris Kinchin.

On Sunday morning we hung some pictures then attended the Mayor's welcoming reception,- many speeches - and then a finger buffet at the Old Town Hall. Then back to the Kunstlerhaus to finish setting up the exhibition. At 6.00p.m.the exhibition was attended by about 80 people and officially opened with a speech by the Deputy Mayor, followed by Garth Barnes, Twinning Association Chairman, Rainer Lynen, President of Kreis 34 and yours truly on behalf of Cheltenham Art Club. The exhibition was an eclectic mix of media and styles, including landscapes, portraits and a good proportion of abstracts from both clubs and it invoked many complimentary comments.

Once the exhibition was open we were not required to steward so were able to engage in the very comprehensive programme which had been arranged by the Göttingen Twinning Committee. There were visits to Hann. Munden, (The Three River Town), Eisenach, birthplace of J.S.Bach - and Wartburg, (UNESCO World Heritage Site)where Luther was arrested. Visits were also made to the German Aerospace Research Centre, the Geopark, (Faculty of Earth Science and Geography at the University.) There were also tours - Gauss in Göttingen,- Magic Moments in Mathematics, A tour of the old town and another to the ancient town cellars. There was also a "Guided Tour for Night Owls",-which didn't turn out to be the pub crawl some people had expected! The highlight was the Big Party on Tuesday, with food and a band, for all guests and their hosts at the Kiessee, a rather lovely lake near Göttingen, where the evening was brought to a conclusion by an excellent display of water fireworks by the local fire brigade.

Our return to Cheltenham was completed in one day. Leaving Göttingen at 7.00a.m. we made good time to Calais, enabling us to catch a train an hour earlier than expected. After leaving Folkestone we learned that the M25 was closed. This meant travelling through London on Friday afternoon at rush hour, as did all other traffic diverted from the M25. Thanks to our two drivers of Bennett's Coaches we were still able to reach Cheltenham by 10.30p.m., at least an hour and a half earlier than expected.

This was the first time Cheltenham Art Club had exhibited in Göttingen and it was successful thanks to the wonderful hospitality shown to us by our hosts, Kreis 34. Special thanks go to Rainer Lynen, the club President, Greta Lynen, Christiane Christen and all those member of Kreis 34 who made our stay so enjoyable

Thanks are also due to the Göttingen and Cheltenham Twinning Associations for their excellent organisation and planning. Last but not least I must thank Heather Woodward and Carol, Carolyn, Phillip and Marriane Ward and Carol and Chris Kinchin for taking their paintings to Göttingen and to Joanne Callaghan and Sonja Wray for making their pictures available for the exhibition, which received compliments both from artists and visitors.

Colin Isted