

Tiverton Town Twinning Association Newsletter



Sept 2024



Visit to Hofheim 2024

THURSDAY: a party of 19 arrived at Frankfurt airport a couple of hours late, to temperatures in the high 20s, and with about a third of us coping with rather wet luggage. But that's another story....



Bembel & Partybag

FRIDAY morning: we met up at a local Apple Wine farm where we were formally welcomed by the German organising team and the Mayor of Hofheim (once he had finished monitoring a political demonstration in the town centre!).

Plentiful jugs (Bembel) of the rather tart wine washed down a substantial buffet of typical local produce. It was good to renew friendships, introduce new members, and enjoy such generous hospitality.



That evening we met again on the banks of the river Main for drinks and snacks provided by our hosts.



We spent a beautiful evening in this peaceful location, relaxing while watching the huge barges inch their way silently past us, to the strains of live Latin American music.

SATURDAY: an hour's drive in glorious weather and through heavy motorway traffic to the Fortuna iron ore mine. It proved to be a fascinating day looking at obsolete locos, visiting the mine via a cramped lift cage and a rudimentary train that took us deep into the cold and darkness of the mountain.

Then back into the sun for a quick Schnitzel and a beer, before a ride around the grounds in refurbished coal trucks. Clean ones, thankfully!





SUNDAY: the weather changed dramatically, so a planned picnic in the park enjoying live music was sadly cancelled. We spent the day with our hosts, competing with each other to find some sunshine. So a pleasant day was had exploring local towns such as Limburg, Rudesheim and Hofheim itself. The sunset over Frankfurt’s skyscrapers was stunning.

MONDAY: the sky frowned upon us once again as we undertook a pleasant coach drive to Bad Schwalbach, a spa town, though its microclimate offered us some sunny respite for a while. We learned from our guides about the illustrious history of the spa (Kurhaus), and the various water therapies developed there.



Bad Langenstahlbach

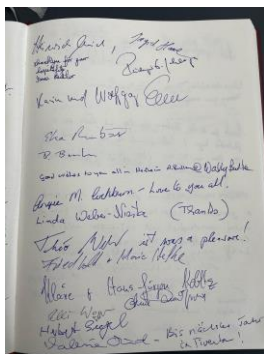


Then we sampled the iron- and carbon dioxide-rich spring water, referred to as “wine” or even “champagne”. Well, let’s just say it was an acquired taste – well, for some of us!



The town itself seemed to have lost the glow of its esteemed heyday. So many shops and cafes were shut, or closed for business – a sad sight amid the persistent drizzle.

In the evening, we were treated to a sumptuous farewell dinner in a modern restaurant on the Main riverbank. This was fine dining indeed, with a buffet offering us a wide variety of dishes to choose from.



The traditional speeches were made by the respective town mayors and twinning officers. Gifts were exchanged, toasts made, tears shed, visitors’ book signed, and some last-chance photos taken for posterity.

That evening was perhaps tinged with the regret that our stay was nearly over, but bolstered by the warmth of our friendship, good humour, and by singing together a few well-known songs, led by a guitar/accordion duo – Roland and Ingrid.



“All good things must” But we will of course look forward to seeing each other again next year.