

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT – GERLINGEN
STRASSENFEST 6TH SEPTEMBER 2018 – 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2018

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TWINNING PARTNERSHIP

Thursday 6th September, 2018

45 people travelled on the coach from Seaham Town Hall to Manchester Airport. Two people used their own transport and met up with the rest of the party at Manchester Airport Terminal 3.

After a little bumpy plane ride travellers landed safe and well and there was a bus provided by Gerlingen to transfer everyone to the Gerlingen Rathausplatz where they were greeted with refreshments and Mr Georg Brenner (Burgermesiter) welcomed everyone and wished them a pleasant stay in Gerlingen.

Visitors then departed in a massive downpour and thunder and lightning to spend the rest of the evening with their host families. Myself and others within the group were taken to a beautiful restaurant and were treated to a fabulous meal by our hosts.

Friday 7th September, 2018

An early start was made by all for a 2 hour coach trip to Radolfzell which is a beautiful town. A guided tour was offered and the group were split into 3 groups to manage the tour more easily. We were shown around the local church and various tourist attractions within the town. Following the guided tour lunch was provided in the restaurant “Goldener Engle” where I tried my first German Schnitzel (A schnitzel is meat, usually thinned by pounding with a meat tenderizer, that is fried in some kind of oil or fat. The term is most commonly used to refer to meats coated with flour, beaten eggs and bread crumbs, and then fried, but some variants such as Walliser Schnitzel are not breaded) it was very nice.

Following lunch the group took a leisurely walk to the Seemaxx Outlet Shopping Centre where visitors were given free time to browse in the many shops. The bus was then waiting to take the group to the harbour. The group boarded the Bodensee on lake Konstanz for a short boat ride to island Reichenau. The scenery was absolutely breath-taking and the boat did a short stop on the Swiss border. On arrival in Reichenau guests were taken to a restaurant and served with pizza and refreshments.

Following a fabulous day visitors arrived back to the Rathausplatz at 9.30pm where they spent the rest of the evening with their host families or enjoying the quiet night life in Gerlingen.

Saturday, 8th September, 2018

Saturday morning was free time to be spent with host families. My host and myself browsed the small market in Gerlingen which sold such items as plants, flowers, home made jams etc. We then went for lunch at a local pizzeria where other guests and their hosts had also been invited. There were also representatives from Hungary and

France who are also twinned with Gerlingen. I had met some of these people last year and it was nice to chat with them again.

At 2.45pm hosts and guests congregated next to the old post office and followed a brass band through the main street for the opening of the Strassenfest. From then on it was free time for everyone to enjoy the Strassenfest with the many different choices of food and alcohol and lots of good entertainment such as brass bands and the Gerlingen Youth Groups. My friend and I had a very late night singing and dancing along with the live bands in the Rathausplatz square and mixing with other Gerlingen residents.

Sunday, 9th September, 2018

My friend and I attended the Ecumenical service in the Catholic Church St Peter and Paul. Our host Uschi Engl was part of the choir who had been rehearsing a song which was sung in English, French and Hungarian. The music in the church was beautiful.

Following the church service there was free time for the hosts and guests. Following a light snack at the Strassenfest my hosts along with other host families took us on a convoy to Ludzwigburg Venetian Fair. The fair was held in the town square with many people dressed up in fancy dress Venetian outfits. There were acrobat entertainers as well as small plays and a small band. This was a very well attended fair with lots of people in attendance. The weather was glorious 29 degrees and there was a small market at the fair where you could purchase items such as masks, clothes, jewellery and carvings.

On return from Ludzwigburg we went back to the Strassenfest until this ended at 8.00pm. We were then invited to another host family's home where we were entertained by the host playing his accordion in the garden where we all had a good sing-a-long. Our glasses were never allowed to be empty and the hospitality received is second to none, their home is your home. This was a great way to interact with people and make new friends both from Gerlingen and Seaham.

Monday, 10th September, 2018

The bus departed to Markgroningen at 9.00am. This was a short journey from Gerlingen. On arrival visitors were given free time to explore the small town or to have a coffee etc. A guided tour of the town was then offered. Some people took part in the tour while others relaxed in the town square with a coffee.

The group then departed from Markgroningen to Lembergerland Kellerei Rosswag (a local winery). The group were welcomed with a very sweet but non-alcoholic drink. A tour of the winery was given which was followed by wine tasting and vesper (cold buffet). A little quiz took place for us to see if we could detect different flavours by smell only (I wasn't very good at this).

At 7.00pm all visitors and hosts were invited to the Farewell Evening where people enjoyed a hot and cold buffet, refreshments and also a disco. Speeches were made by the Burgermesiter and the Mayor Mrs Barbara Allen. Gifts were presented to the

individuals who had truly made this visit a memorable one. The town of Gerlingen was also presented with a glass bowl and plinth from the people of Seaham to celebrate 30 years of twinning which was gratefully accepted by the Burgermesiter who stated it would take pride of place in the Rathaus for all to see. The Mayor also presented the Burgermeister and Deputy Burgermeister with a framed scroll which replicas were also given to all hosts and visitors as a memento of the visit.

The Farewell Evening was enjoyed by all.

Tuesday, 11th September, 2018

Tuesday morning was free to spend with hosts. My friend and I were taken to Leonberg with our host Uschi where we went shopping in a large mall.

At 1.00pm there was a farewell reception with a speech given by the Burgermeister. This was followed by all hosts and visitors partaking in the traditional circle to sing Auld Lang Syne. Hosts and visitors were genuinely sad to be leaving.

Visitors were transported to Stuttgart airport where visitors had to wait in a rather long queue for Ryan Air to open the check-in desk.

After a pleasant flight back to Manchester the coach was waiting to transport everyone back to Seaham.

SUMMARY

Everyone agreed that they had a fantastic time in Gerlingen and the programme had been very full and extremely enjoyable. Attached are photographs from Parkside Community Centre who follow a different programme with the Youth of Gerlingen and also photographs from the Administration Assistant covering various trips by the group.