



September 2026 Newsletter

Electronique at the Backnanger Strassenfest 2026



For the third year in a row Chelmsford's very own Electro Pop band Electronique performed on the Biegle Stage at this year's Backnanger Strassenfest. Over the last two years we have built up an audience and I think we are pretty well known now in Backnang!

We arrived on the Thursday before our Saturday gig. The heat was intense with temperatures in the late 30s. We rehearsed in nearby Steinbach on the Friday so that we were all systems go for our 7pm slot on the Saturday evening. A new guitarist Ed had joined us this year as Tom was busy with professional work back in England. We were keen to give him the full Backnang experience, so what a great start to witness the wonderful opening ceremony. Numbers were slightly down due to the heat but it made it much more comfortable for everyone.

After the opening ceremony we attended a lovely open air drinks reception where we met up with old friends and made new ones. Saturday morning took us to the official Twinning reception where representatives from all of Backnang's twin towns gathered for speeches, accompanied by a cooling glass of sekt. The band then headed back to Steinbach where we packed up all our equipment in preparation for our 7pm show. Worryingly, we heard that all daytime events had been cancelled due to the extreme heat, but thankfully the evening shows were to go ahead, with canvas shade covers and water mist machines for the audience.

Sound check done and I think I can safely say I've never performed in heat like this before with the on stage temperature at 40 degrees, but we all had a job to do and pulled off our best performance of the three years. Two hours of 80s hits, and the German football song, 'Major Tom', which went down a treat. People started to turn up as we played and it got quite packed into our set. The highlight of the gig for me was to see PJ, our lead singer, run over mid song to cool down in one of the water mist machines. What a wonderful evening it was!

The band then headed to a barbecue which was truly wonderful. Our host, Dorothee Ziesik, had also set up a giant screen ready for us to watch the England game later that evening.

For the first time we were able to witness the poignant Strassenfest closing ceremony on the Monday evening. A wonderful moving event with beautiful music which is all it needed. The solo trumpeter played from the tower accompanied by a wind band on stage. Superbly done and a fitting end to our time there.

It was so special to meet up with so many friends we have there now. It feels like my second home. As always it was a truly memorable trip and Electronique excelled on stage. Will we be back? Who knows! We hope so!

Thank you Chelmsford/Backnang Twinning!

Andy Smith



Backnang visitors to Chelmsford

I have been to Backnang on many occasions where my original hosts were Gerald and Elderheit Ruopp. They gave me amazing times while there, out and about in the area. When I wasn't at planned twinning events or on the Chelmsford stand selling English tea and orange marmalade, I visited the Christmas shop in Rothenberg, Neuschwanstein castle on the Austrian border, some wonderful caves and a boating lake with loads of dragonflies. Their kindness was amazing and friendship overwhelming, they even invited me to one of their daughter's weddings fifteen years ago.

They came to stay with me while doing a walking tour around Devon and Cornwall and we got on like a house on fire. Ill health had made it impossible for me to be hosted by them any longer so their daughter Sabine, her husband Weiner and daughter Amelie then took on the role, and I've stayed with them for the past few years.

Three years ago, Sabine, Weiner and Amelie stayed with me for a week, and had a very busy time in London, Maldon and Southend and getting to know Chelmsford. This month they have just returned to Backnang after nine days with me. They had a good flight here on the Tuesday 11th August, when the flight from Baden, Baden only took an hour and a quarter, but a bit of a rocky landing!! Wednesday was spent in Chelmsford, and in the evening they were able to witness the partial eclipse. The following day they spent in London, had a trip to Southend on the Friday and would you believe it, went for a swim!!!. On the Saturday evening they had a chance to meet some twinning members over an informal meal.

They went to Chelmsford Cathedral for the 11.15am service on the Sunday. They were very interested as Weiner is a deacon in a Catholic church in Backnang, could that be another link?? On Monday they visited Cambridge and found out that the cheapest way to go was to Stansted



airport by X30 bus then by the train to Cambridge. Tuesday was another trip to London. Wednesday was the highlight of Sabine's visit as my daughter, Amber, had managed to contact Julie Belemore from Chelmsford Gymnastics Club. We all met Julie in SONGS restaurant in town, when Sabine and Julie were able to talk for about an hour and a half on whether there would be a possibility to have a link between the gym clubs, we do hope so.

Such a busy few days but great fun and enjoyment, they are not treated like visitors but family.... They did some watering in the garden for me and picked blackberries so I could make a blackberry and apple (from the garden) crumble.....I gave them cooked breakfasts every day, provided a packed lunch and cooked meals at night.

We had such an amazing time together.

Liz Sutton

Les Gourmandises d'Ardèche in Annonay



The annual Gourmandises festival in Annonay takes place on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th November 2026, featuring a large gourmet market with a wide range of regional products and representatives of Annonay's three twin towns of Chelmsford, Barge and Backnang.

We will be running an 'Olde English Sweet' stand. If anyone would like to join Gloria and Edith in Annonay, please contact Gloria on 07798 687046

German Christmas Markets 2026?



Backnang at Advent

Are you thinking about a visit to a German Christmas Market this year? If so, why not consider Southern Germany and include a visit to our twin town of Backnang.

Backnang has its own picturesque Advent Market, with many stalls run by local organisations, and is close to a number of major, well known, Christmas Markets, including the Nürnberger Christinglesmarkt, one of the oldest, largest and best known in the world (two hours from Backnang by train). Stuttgart (30 minutes away by train) also boasts a large Christmas Market and Ludwigsburg's Baroque Christmas Market is not to be missed.



Pictured above, Stuttgart, and below, Nürnberg

If you would like to include a visit to Backnang during the Advent Market, 28th / 29th November, or make it your base to explore, please contact me, Margaret Campbell, at chelfordtwinning@yahoo.com.

We will arrange for you to meet members of the Backnang twinning association to enjoy a chat and a Gluhwein as well as a tour of the town. If you wish to stay in Backnang, we can help with advice on accommodation and travel arrangements.



Ludwigsburg



Dates for your Diary

7th / 8th November, Les Gourmandises d'Ardèche in Annonay. If you are interested in going, please contact Gloria on 07798 687046.

Wednesday 11th November, Visit to Meadowcroft Garden Centre Christmas Market. Meet at 1pm to explore their market, enjoy a gluhwein and bratwurst and perhaps even have a game of Bavarian Curling.

28th / 29th November, Advent Market in Backnang. Please contact Margaret if you are interested in finding out more at chelmsfordtwinning@yahoo.com.

Saturday 5th December, Chelmsford Cathedral Christmas Market. Come and meet the Backnang contingent and browse their range of local specialties. CTP does not have a stand this year but will be there supporting our Backnang friends. Please try to support.

The Caprice Wind Orchestra are long term supporters of Twinning and regularly visit both Annonay and Backnang. Please try to support their concerts:

10th October, Caprice at Chelmsford County High School for Girls

7th November, Young Caprice at St Andrew's Church Hall.

12th December, Caprice and Young Caprice at Chelmsford Cathedral

Sunday 17th January, New Year meal - details to follow (still being finalised).

March, date to be confirmed – Spring Quiz

May, Backnang visitors to Chelmsford

Advance warning! **AGM 2027, Saturday August 21st**, Galleywood Heritage Centre.

Round up of the Year 2025/26

After the official business of the AGM, committee members updated members on the activities which had taken place over the last year. Here is the list:

- Gloria and Edith attended the Gourmandises in Annonay to meet members of the Comité de Jumelage' and rekindle links with Annonay.
- Electronique played at Strassenfest.
- Closer links have been established between the twinning committees in Backnang with Margaret attending a meeting with their officers at Strassenfest, leading to joint planning.
- Membership visit to Meadowcroft Garden Centre Christmas Market for Gluhwein and Bratwurst.
- CTP ran a tombola at the Cathedral Christmas Market and promoted twinning.
- An Advent Candle, a gift from the Stiftskirche in Backnang, was presented to Chelmsford Cathedral during the morning service the day after the Christmas Market.
- Our New Year lunch was held in February at Cote Brasserie in Chelmsford.
- Round Table link with both Backnang and Annonay is being pursued.

- A new walking group link was established with members of Chelmer and Blackwater Ramblers visiting the Schwäbischer Albverein, Backnang at Easter.
- Caprice concerts were attended by CTP members (Caprice is twinned with both Annonay and Backnang).
- A Rotary link with Annonay is being pursued by Mildmay Rotary.
- Our annual quiz was held at Springfield Parish Centre, our main fundraising event of the year.
- Springfield Football Club Juniors visited Backnang at Easter - a number of the boys playing now are the sons of the original players to visit.
- During the Civic visit of the Oberbürgermeister and councillors to Chelmsford, some CTP committee members were invited to join them for a 'Victorian' tour of Chelmsford Museum. Members were also invited to join the group for drinks in the County Hotel the following evening.
- An Essex YMCA link with the YMCA in both Annonay and Backnang is being pursued
- Members attended the Mayor's Strawberry and Prosecco evening.
- Members attended the Fete de la Musique in June at the Quaker Centre in Chelmsford.
- Members of CTP attended the French Circle Bastille Day event in June.
- Boule / bowls club link with Annonay being explored.
- An artist from Annonay visited Chelmsford for the Concrete Canvas event and painted a mural of the Montgolfier Brothers.
- The link between Chelmsford Community Radio and the Max Born Gymnasium continues with students broadcasting to Chelmsford weekly. A young volunteer from Chelmsford CR visited Backnang in September and the students are visiting Chelmsford in October.
- A call between Chelmsford Amateur Radio Club and the the students from Max Born will be taking place as part of an Intercultural week in Backnang on 4th October. This will follow a tour of the telecommunications technology section of the museum, which reflects the Marconi connection between the Backnang and Chelmsford

So now,

OVER TO YOU

What would you like to see during this coming year?

*Please email all suggestions to
chelmsfordtwinning@yahoo.com*

Janet Rauch, 1931 - 2026

Janet was a member of the Chelmsford Town Twinning Association from the very beginning. A number of members attended the Celebration of her Life in July.

Janet was born in 1931 and lived with her parents together with her sister and brother in West Avenue, Chelmsford. She attended Kings Road Junior School and, from the age of 11, Chelmsford High School, where she excelled in the sciences and French.

Janet knew from an early age that she wanted to be a nurse and as soon as possible joined the St John Ambulance nursing cadets and learned about First Aid, Home Nursing and Childcare, amongst other things. Her competitive nature came to the fore when her team, who had won the annual competition at County level, went on to win at Regional level and progress to the National Competition, where they came second and her prize was presented by Princess Margaret.

Janet then started her nursing training. At the same time a chance meeting with a young Swiss man working at Marconi blossomed into romance and Christopher and Janet married in 1953. Together they purchased a property in Baddow Road, which was to be her home for the next 71 years. They were then blessed with two children, Carolyn and Jennifer.

Annual holidays were spent visiting Christopher's sister and his family in Europe. Her marriage to Christopher meant that Janet automatically gained Swiss nationality and from that came a real fascination with Swiss costumes. She became a member of the Basel Costume Society and attended many festivals and events. She made her own costumes and gave talks to Essex groups duly dressed in one of her Basel costumes with a set of 26 dolls dressed in Cantonal costumes.

Janet and Christopher were devastated when just 13 months after marrying Phil, their daughter Carolyn very sadly collapsed and died. Four years later Christopher also died at just 57 years old.

Janet was a member of MENSA and the Chelmsford Folk Dance Club. She also became totally involved with Chelmsford Town Twinning Association when it first started participating in many visits to Backnang and Annonay, most times in national costume, and involving the Folk Dance Club in twinning activities. She also hosted many visitors on return trips. She was greatly regarded by her friends and acquaintances.

Unfortunately towards the end of 2024 Janet was admitted to hospital in what became a five week stay. The sad decision was made that she could not return home and she moved to Grove Park Residential Care Home in Leeds to be close to her daughter Jennifer.

Janet died earlier this year.