



## January 2026 Newsletter

### Chelmsford Cathedral Christmas Market



On Saturday 6th December, Twinning was well represented at the Chelmsford Cathedral Christmas Market. As always the German beers, wines, liqueurs and other Schwabian specialities which the Chelmsford Verein brought over from Backnang proved very popular, while CTP ran a very successful tombola. Everyone involved in the two stalls were the able to enjoy a meal together in the evening. Thanks to everyone who supported us.

# **Saturday 14th March, 7pm, Spring Quiz,**

We are holding our Annual Quiz on the 14th March at Springfield Parish Centre, CM1 6GX on the 14th March 2026 with Gloria Nichols officiating. 7 o'clock start.

Bring your Friends, drinks and nibbles and make up a table of up to eight. Don't worry if you are just one or two, we will find you a team!

£10 per head,

Book your place with Pam Forrester on 07956 324175. We look forward to welcoming you.

## **BACKNANG SPEAKERS at CHELMSFORD GERMAN CIRCLE (on Zoom)**

Backnang is well represented on the German Circle programme for the spring. On Thursday February 19th, Dorothee Ziesik will talk about Friedrich Schiller, his birthplace in Marbach (close to Backnang), and his play 'Die Räuber'.



On April 16th, David Whitehead will take us on an exploration of Swabian food and drink, including local beer, wine and specialities such as *Spätzle* and *Maultaschen*. This will include cookery demonstrations.



All German Circle talks are in German, so if you have a basic understanding of the language and would like to join us, please contact Frank Gill on 01376 571629 or at, [gillfrank3@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gillfrank3@yahoo.co.uk) who will add you to the mailing list and send you the zoom link. There is a charge of £5 per meeting.



## **Chelmsford artist, Candy Joyce talks about her experiences in Backnang**

I'm an artist and arts organiser from Chelmsford. In 2023, I joined my fellow artists Demane from Essex Rockerz and Brave Arts in painting the Stadtwerke Tower for the Mitten in Europa Partnerstadt festival. I learned all about the legendary Goose Wars for that project, so I was thrilled to be invited back to Backnang in October 2025 for the Goose Market.

This time, I was paired with students from the Schillerschule, and together we planned two murals. The first was a burst of colourful hands surrounded by hearts, representing the 300+ children from 26 nations who attend the school. And of course, the second mural had to be a beautiful goose, how could it not?



On the morning of the Goose Market, I arrived early to find members of the twinning association setting up the wooden boards for us. The school's art team had already primed the boards (thank you, heroes!), and I'm really grateful to everyone who helped get things ready.

I sketched the designs onto the boards, then grabbed a quick break with Dorothee and some of the students from the radio club. Naturally, I *had* to try a goose-shaped cookie - and it was absolutely delicious! The radio club then whisked me away for a short interview. Their English was brilliant, and they were so professional that I forgot they were students!



Once the Schillerschule students arrived, the real fun began. We started on a spare practice board, playing noughts and crosses and trying simple shapes to help everyone get used to the spray cans - most of them had never held one before. We even had a nozzle adapter for those with very small hands, because spray cans can be surprisingly tricky for children to use. Then we moved on to the murals. The students were enthusiastic, curious, and quick to pick things up. We experimented with stencils too, and their excitement when the first heart appeared clean and crisp on the board was priceless. Even with my questionable German, we managed to communicate, paint, and laugh together.

After the school session finished, other children visiting the Goose Market were invited to join in. Together, we completed the first mural and brought the Goose to life. Both murals are now proudly displayed in the school corridors. I always love teaching children how to spray paint. There are always drips, splashes and "mistakes", but I adore the idea that every child who joins in can see the finished mural and point to their contribution.

I'm so grateful to everyone who picked up a spray can and got involved, and to David Whtehead and all the wonderful people in Backnang who made the project happen. A very special thank you to Sabrina Moser and her family for welcoming me into their home. I felt instantly at ease, completely looked after, and had such a fun, interesting, laughter-filled stay. Backnang is a beautiful town, full of generous and creative people, and I hope I am invited back to pick up a spray can and make more colourful memories together.

## A visit to Annonay by our Annonay lead, Gloria Nichols

As the new Annonay lead for Chelmsford Twinning Partnership, I decided to pay a visit to Annonay in November this year to try to encourage the twinning between our two towns which had during recent times gone a bit 'flat'. My visit coincided with the Gourmandises Festival that weekend. I was accompanied on the visit by Edith Miller, a CTP member, and her husband, Kevin. Edith and Kevin have a property in Le Puy which is not too far from Annonay.



As they were already in France, Edith and Kevin offered to pick me up at Lyon airport on the Friday evening and we all stayed at a hotel close to the airport for the first night. The following morning after a continental breakfast at the hotel, we drove to Annonay and arrived at the Gourmandises where we were met by four members of the Jumelage d'Annonay, Maurice, Maria, Patrick LARGERON and Bernard, who showed us around the food market.

During our visit we met a Councillor who will be standing for Mayor in the next election in Annonay who was very positive about town twinning and said he looked forward to the future with Chelmsford, if he is 'first past the post' in the election. At lunchtime we had an impromptu meal of cheese, meats, pickles and bread, with Patrick, Maurice and Maria in the town square, when we were able to discuss the way ahead for our twinning together. Later in the day we met with Francoise Mauchaud, Patrick Charrier, and others from the Jumelage in Annonay in a pleasant restaurant in town.

I was able to pass on a request from Mildmay Rotary in Chelmsford to Francoise for onward transmission to the Rotary Club in Annonay. Edith was able to meet up with the artists group in Annonay to progress a link with them. As Edith is of French origin, she was so helpful in all our conversations with the group from the Jumelage. We discussed several possible links to pursue next year, young people (and with the Erasmus programme being reinstated, this could be a bonus for us to help young people travel and learn new languages and cultures), canoeing links, and a place at the Gourmandises selling English foodstuffs which we used to do years ago, making 700 mince pies on our stand.

The following day, after a good nights sleep in an Air b&b, we headed out to the Sunday morning market, a briquant, a bit like our boot fairs. We stopped at a local cafe for coffee and croissant before meeting our hosts again. Edith was able to purchase a few items at the market for her house in Le Puy, before we headed off to view a local park which had been recently updated and redesigned. It included a children's play area which had been recently constructed.

We were then whisked off to lunch at a local hostelry just outside town for a delightful gathering together. Then, unfortunately, I had to leave for my flight back to Gatwick. We had a very successful weekend with lots of talking together, ideas, and suggestions on the way forward for our twinning together. Edith and Kevin were amazing and I was so glad they were able to join me for the visit. I think their presence and their fluent French helped enormously and I thank them so much for their support.

So, watch this space folks. Edith and I will be letting you know what the future holds for us with our regenerated twinning with Annonay.

Gloria



We would love to hear about all your twinning experiences and include them in this newsletter. Please send to Margaret Campbell at [chelmsfordtwinning@yahoo.com](mailto:chelmsfordtwinning@yahoo.com)