



## The Friendship Force of Derbyshire



### February 2011 Newsletter

If it seems a long time since the last Newsletter that is because it is! Just over six months, to be precise. But during that time we have had three well-attended lunches (it would have been four had the weather not caused the cancellation of the pre-Christmas lunch at Mansfield College), two Policy Meetings, and our AGM. So we have all been seeing each other quite regularly and there has probably been very little going on that hasn't passed round via the grapevine.

But, although the only exchange activity during the last six months has been our long weekend in Hertfordshire, which is briefly reported on below, six of our members travelled to New Zealand with the Oxfordshire club in November, while two others went to Brazil with the Friendship Force of Cornwall at around the same time. David Collard has very kindly written a report of the exchange to New Zealand, while Adrian and Lesley Sumner gave an excellent 'slide show' of their visit to Brazil after the Policy Meeting on 4th February.

Since that Policy Meeting three social events have been organised (all thanks to David Collard) and are detailed later in this Newsletter.

Finally, the arrangements for both incoming and outgoing exchanges for this year are now almost complete, while Atlanta has offered us both outgoing and incoming exchanges for next year which Kath Brydon, as our President, has formally accepted. The final confirmation of these 2012 exchanges should come in the next few weeks.

#### Long Weekend Exchange to Hertfordshire, 12-15 August 2010

Fourteen ambassadors travelled down to Hertfordshire by car on Thursday morning for a return exchange, following their visit to Derbyshire in May 2009. We were welcomed for a barbecue lunch at the home of Kay Allen who was, as it happened, to be Katy's and my host for the exchange, following which everyone else departed with their hosts. There were no organised activities, as such, although many of us visited the same places – even meeting other parties while doing so. Katy and I spent Friday

around St Albans, where Kay lives, and spent some time exploring the magnificent abbey before having lunch in a pub and then visiting the excellent Roman Museum and having a walk through the adjacent park.



*Part of a Roman mosaic floor still in situ. The channel at the top left exposes the underfloor heating!*

On Saturday we travelled to visit Hatfield House, the home of the Cecil family for 400 years and where the Great Hall of the old Royal Palace of Hatfield, where Elizabeth I spent most of her early life, still stands on the opposite side of the formal gardens from the present House.

Then we returned to Hemel Hempstead where Lesley Pratt was hosting a farewell barbecue – despite intermittent showers of rain.



On Sunday morning the various hosts brought their guests to join up with whoever they were travelling home with – and our short exchange was over. Although it was short it was, by

common consent, most enjoyable and enabled us all to find out more about a part of England that most of us were unfamiliar with. Grateful thanks are due to Paula Duro for taking on the duties of ED and organising everything.

*Miles Ellis*

## Friendship Force of Oxfordshire Exchange to New Zealand, November 2010

Frances Pike, the Exchange Director, had stated that “the Exchange starts in Auckland on November 7th. Make your own way there. Just be there!” On the appointed day the eighteen who assembled at the specified hotel only had four members from Oxfordshire, together with members from several other UK clubs, including Sussex, Hertfordshire, Devon, and six from Derbyshire: Allan and Barbara Campbell, David Barker, Norma Way, Pam and David Collard.

Pam and I broke our journey to New Zealand for a two-night stopover in Dubai, where friends gave us an extended day tour of the Palms and other amazing sights. Then, on a sunny spring day in Auckland we were able to enjoy a gentle introduction to New Zealand in the form of a stroll around the Annual Rose Festival being held in the park opposite our hotel. Dance displays, a jazz band, and numerous art/craft stalls evoked a spirit of rural England. The afternoon bus tour of the city presented a rather different image, with road works and traffic hold-ups, much as expected in any large commercial city centre.

The first week of the Exchange was spent with the Western Bay of Plenty club, on the North-East of North Island – an area noted for its fruit growing, especially kiwi and avocados. At the Official Reception the Mayor of Tauranga described a region of economic expansion, with increasing exports of fruit and timber from its port. Our hosts, Isabelle and Alister, had owned a vinery prior to their retirement, and Alister was very proud of having supplied Air New Zealand with wines and liqueurs for many years. They live in Kati-Kati, a town famous for its numerous murals depicting scenes from the early days of settlement. One day we enjoyed a visit to Rotorua to view the geysers, as explained by the knowledgeable Maori guide. A bus tour of the area and a bush walk, before a fish-and-chip supper ensured an interesting day.

The second week commenced with a scenic coach journey across North Island to the South Taranaki F.F. on the west coast. This club has over one hundred members and a very active exchange



programme. The volcanic cone of Mount Taranaki (also known as Mount Egmont) dominates the area, with Hawera being its largest town. Dairy farming is the principal local industry, with milk powder and other dairy products being exported throughout Asia, especially to China.

Our hosts, Diane and Ian, were retired dairy farmers with a wide range of personal interests, including gardening. This area has a fertile soil and many other F.F. members were also enthusiastic gardeners and participated in the local “Open Gardens for Charity Event”. Another busy programme of events had been organised, including visits to a Cattle Auction, a Possum Factory (where a wide range of garments made from possum fur were displayed), an artist’s studio, the Regional Agricultural Show, and a morning reception with the Mayor of Hawera.

The South Taranaki Friendship Force was formed in 1986, and for their 20th Anniversary Project a granite plaque was erected in the park grounds, next to the Information Centre, on which the name and date of each inward exchange is recorded.

Our third host club was Marlborough, on South Island. Our transfer there required a long coach journey to Wellington, where we stayed overnight in a hotel, followed by a ferry crossing



to Picton the following morning. The South Taranaki club had arranged a memorable day for us, with a mid-morning trip on a century-old paddle steamer on the river at Wanganui,



followed by lunch at a fascinating car museum, and finally an evening meal at a fish restaurant overlooking Wellington harbour. It was a splendid day. Even our coach driver was a South Taranaki F.F. member!

We first met our Marlborough hosts, Julie and Leo, in 1990 when their club had visited Derbyshire and we had hosted them, so many happy memories quickly resurfaced. The main commercial activity in Marlborough is wine-making, with large quantities being exported to Britain. It was no surprise, therefore, that a visit to a winery would be on the programme. Yealands Winery is a comparatively new company which has purchased eight former dairy farms since 2002 in order to merge them into a single large-scale winery.



Yealands only employs fifteen staff in its main complex, with such matters as crop spraying and grape picking being dealt with by contractors. A flock of sheep is even used to eat the grass between the rows of vines in order to save the expense of cutting it by machine!

Another surprise was that the supermarket price of local wines was quite high – even higher than in a U.K. supermarket. Moreover, when we took our hosts out for dinner the cost of the recommended bottle of wine was about £28 – and this was in a winery restaurant.

Once again we enjoyed another busy programme of daily events, whereby their pride in local schools, parks and gardens, and scenic viewpoints was observed. The Aviation Heritage Museum in Blenheim was fascinating, with twenty First World War aircraft, usually with appropriate models, displayed in realistic scenes of aerial combat, forced landings, etc.

After the third exchange was completed Pam and I took the coastal train from Blenheim to Christchurch, where we were hosted by Ann and Fred, who we had hosted in 1995 when their club had visited Derbyshire. The centre of Christchurch showed considerable damage to buildings and roads as a result of the September earthquake [*This was written before the massively more devastating February earthquake*], but we still enjoyed several days touring round the city and surrounding area before reluctantly leaving the summer sunshine of New Zealand for the winter temperatures and snow in Derbyshire.

Finally, I must conclude by recording the wonderful variety of beautiful scenery in New Zealand, while its people are so kind and hospitable. We felt privileged to have been able to participate in this Exchange to a remarkable country.

*David Collard*  
(Photographs courtesy of Barbara Campbell)

## Future Exchanges

### May 9-16, Cottbus, Germany – Outgoing

Twelve ambassadors will be travelling to Cottbus on 9th May for a one week official exchange. After the exchange most of the party will be continuing on to Prague for a few days before returning home on 20th May. Graham Duro is the Exchange Director.

### July 26 - August 2, San Diego, USA – Incoming

Sixteen ambassadors will be arriving on 26th July for an official exchange. Following their visit to Derbyshire they will be going on to Cleveland. George and Kath Brydon are heading the Exchange Committee and will be contacting members about hosting in the near future.

### **April 2012, Pécs, Hungary – Incoming**

Subject to confirmation, we shall be hosting ambassadors from Pécs as our official incoming exchange for 2012.

### **September 2012, Greater Denver, CO, and Cheyenne, WY – Outgoing**

Subject to confirmation, we shall be leading an all-UK exchange to the “Golden West” of the United States in September 2012. Greater Denver, of course, visited us in 2010.

### **October 2012, Greater Izmir, Turkey – Outgoing**

Subject to confirmation, our official outgoing exchange for 2012 will be to Greater Izmir. We shall be sharing this exchange with Noord, of the Netherlands, with each club probably being restricted to ten ambassadors.

## **Social Activities**

### **Theatre Visit – Wednesday 6th April, 7.30 pm The Derby Theatre**

#### ***Verdict***

This 1958 play by Agatha Christie is unusual in that it was written as an original play, and not as a stage version of one of her books.

Having been forced to flee persecution in his home country, the brilliant and idealistic Professor Karl Hendryk leads a content and morally upstanding life, but his world is turned upside-down when the prospect of life-saving treatment for his invalid wife persuades him to take on a new pupil against his better judgement – the spoilt, conniving minx Helen who will stop at nothing to get her way. With murderous intentions afoot, it only remains to be seen what verdict will be delivered, and if justice will prevail ....

This touring production by the Agatha Christie Theatre Company, now in its sixth year, features an all-star cast led by Dawn Steele, best known for playing Lexie MacDonald in the BBC's *Monarch of the Glen* and recently starring as Alice Collins in the popular ITV series *Wild at Heart*. She is joined by Robert Duncan (Gus Hedges in the multi award-winning comedy *Drop the Dead Donkey*) and Ali Bastian who shot to fame as Becca Dean in *Hollyoaks* and PC Sally Armstrong in *The Bill*, and reached the semi-finals of *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2009. The cast also includes Peter Byrne (*Dixon of Dock Green*), Matthew Lewis (Neville Longbottom in the

*Harry Potter* film series), Elizabeth Power (*Eastenders*) and 60's pop idol Mark Wynter.

Anyone wishing to join this visit to what should be an entertaining and enthralling evening should contact David Collard (01332 841064) as soon as possible, and certainly *no later than Wednesday 23rd March*.

### **Lunch + Optional Walk – Friday April 15th Old Poet's Corner, Ashover**

David Collard will lead a walk on April 15th, starting from the Village Hall car park in Ashover at 10.30 am, and returning to the Old Poet's Corner public house at around 1.00 for lunch. Anyone wishing to just join us for lunch is most welcome to do so. All those planning to attend the walk, or simply to come for lunch, should let David Collard know (01332 841064) no later than Wednesday April 13th so that he can inform the pub how many will be coming for lunch.

### **Lunch + Optional Walk – Saturday June 18th John Thompson Inn, Ingleby**

David Collard will lead a walk on June 18th, starting from the John Thompson car park at 10.30 am, and returning to the pub at around 12.30 for lunch. Anyone wishing to just join us for lunch is most welcome to do so. All those planning to attend the walk, or simply to come for lunch, should let David Collard know (01332 841064) no later than Thursday June 16th so that he can inform the pub how many will be coming for lunch.

### **Policy Meeting - Friday 3rd June**

The next Policy Meeting will be held, as usual, at Clown's Day Nursery, and will be preceded by a bring-and-share buffet supper starting at 7.00 p.m..

### **Derbyshire Friendship Force Web Site**

Just a reminder that the latest news about the club, including exchanges, social events, and anything else, appears on our web-site at

**[www.derbyshirefriendshipforce.org.uk](http://www.derbyshirefriendshipforce.org.uk)**

You can also link directly from our web-site to both the Friendship Force UK web-site, and to the main (Atlanta) Friendship Force International web-site.