

# Twining Association visit to Wassenberg

Ten representatives visited Wassenberg (NordRhein Westfalen) on 1st to 3rd May to join in the celebration of 40 years of twinning between Wassenberg and Pontorson (Highworth's twin town in France) and the celebration of Europe Day. In all 90 adults and children travelled from Pontorson by coach.

We were welcomed on Thursday evening at the local secondary school (Betty-Reis-Gesamtschule) with a champagne reception and an introduction to our hosts for the weekend.

On Friday we were treated to a coach trip and sightseeing tour of the famous spa town of Aachen (Aix-la-Chappelle in French) Multilingual guides had been arranged; ours happened to be a Dutchman who had some amusing anecdotes. On Friday evening we were entertained, in the town's Pontorsonplatz, by a number of local bands, followed, as it got dark, by a disco and finally by a spectacular firework display.

Typical German food and beers and wines were available throughout the evening from stalls

manned by several Wassenberg organisations, in particular the fire service.

Saturday was the day for the formalities, with speeches by the mayors of Pontorson and Wassenberg, representatives of the three Twining Associations and the local MEP, followed by a magnificent

lunch. In the evening we had a Festkonzert, consisting of contemporary music and singing, and the Mayors and Twining Presidents planted a commemorative tree in the School grounds. The evening then continued with a festive soirée of lighter music, singing and dancing and conversation into the small hours.

Once again we have been amazed by the warmth and depth of the hospitality and friendship shown by

our continental friends.

*Dave Worsnip*



## Barbara remembers when...

**I came to Highworth during the Second World War (WWII) in the 1940s, with my mother, little brother, gran and step granddad. We had been bombed out in Teddington, Middlesex.**

We first moved into a little cottage in Wrag Barn, and then we moved to the MAP bungalows in Newburg Road.

Dad was now out of the army, after serving in the Middle East Desert Rats, so we moved to an old army camp in Stanton Fitzwarren while Gran and granddad stayed in Highworth. After a short return to Middlesex, we came to a new house, 34 Park Avenue, Highworth.

In the 1950s, when I was a teenager, I was run over on the Fox Corner. I was taken to the old Great Western Hospital (in the Railway Village) and then to the Victoria Hospital in Old Town. I was in hospital for about three months. I had been working as a clerk in Vickers Armstrong getting £1 and 10 shillings a week (£1.50).

At the age of 19 I was married to Michael Greening and went on to have 5 children, 3 boys and 2 girls.

We bought our first house in Dockle Way, Upper Stratton, for £1,500, at £11 a month for 25 years.

One of my daughters and I have been looking on the internet to find the army camp at Stanton Fitzwarren, but there is no trace of it. There are houses and bungalows here now. It's called The Avenue, and my children say "Are you sure mum", and I say, "Yes I do know where it was, my sister Jackie was born there."

I have three of my children now living in Highworth, one son and two daughters, another son in Marlborough and one son in Upper Stratton .

My ghost story will be in the new book "Haunted Swindon" (May Link). The Stanton ghost dog came into my bedroom when I was a little girl. I was told it belonged to a soldier on the camp. It often came back looking for him.

In the picture of the last train from Highworth to Swindon (March Link) is my brother, Peter Humphries (now deceased), Gerald Williams, Roy Gibbs and David Harris. They were all on the Fox Corner when I was knocked down in the 1950s.

*Barbara Ann Belcher, nee Humphries, later Mrs Greening*