

Newsletter April 2007

30 years of Friendship Force

As many of you may know the Friendship Force organisation celebrates its 30 th birthday in 2007. Since its establishment with the support & endorsement of President Jimmy Carter, FFI has continued to foster positive relations between diverse people & cultures in more than 60 countries. In 1992 it was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The organisation is expanding into many new countries & here in the UK we now have 20 clubs since the creation of a club in Oxfordshire earlier this year.

Your committee is planning activities to celebrate this special event in early March 2007. More details will follow shortly so watch out for them but if you have any ideas of how you wish to celebrate please contact any committee member as soon as possible.

Outgoing Exchange to Vogtland, Germany

Our 2007 visit to Zwickau, the home of the beloved Trabant motor vehicle(!), has been confirmed. The East German club are looking forward to seeing us between 13th & 20th June. It is likely that we will fly with Easy Jet from Bristol to either Berlin or Prague & then onward for 2½ to 3 hrs by road. Depending on what people prefer, this could permit an extension, for those who are interested, of a few days in one of these capitals. As with all Easy Jet bookings, the return flight costs can vary enormously (maybe from £50 to as much as £380 return depending on the day of the week and how full the flight is when booked) Flight booking and thus the exact definition of dates, is unlikely to be possible before the beginning of 2007 but all those with an interest are asked to contact Gavin before the AGM. The present scheduled flight times to and from Bristol are good and, if they do not change, it should not be necessary to overnight en route. It is too early to be definite but it is hoped that the complete exchange, without the extension and providing that we can book early enough, may be possible for as little as £250 to £300 per person.

Incoming Exchange from Manawatu, New Zealand

Firm dates are still awaited but it is likely that our antipodean friends will be with us in the 3rd week of May. We will need lots of support from hosts, day hosts & helpers for the many events planned so if you can help in any way, please keep this time free! More details of this & the trip to Vogtland will be presented at the AGM.

Annual General Meeting

Notice is given that this year's AGM will be held on Sunday 19 th November at 13:30 at Jo Pollock's house (20 Epworth Close, Truro). As happened last year, food and drink will be available from 12 noon on but, this year, it will all be provided so bring nothing but yourselves.

This is your club and your chance to say what you want regarding changes, social activities or whatever. Don't feel that you have to wait until the AGM however, as any committee member will be pleased to know your thoughts at any time.

The AGM will deal with the accounts, auditors, the election of officers, constitutional matters and consider agenda items for next year's UK conference. Immediately following the AGM we will have an informal discussion about the club, its activities and exchanges. Any proposals for amendments to our constitution must be sent to the Secretary and President by 29 th October.

If you are unable to attend the AGM in person but would like to make comments or send apologies for absence, please let me know by Sunday 12 th November. Under the constitution, all committee members will resign at the AGM and all may stand for re-election. Positions are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and up to eight committee members. We hope that members not currently involved will agree to stand for election.

John Baughan - Secretary

Social Events

Christmas Dinner - Friday 8 th December

As last year, Margie has booked the Carlton Hotel. The menu is on the enclosed sheet (back of the AGM agenda) so please decide on your choices and return the tear off part to her with your payment.

Bowling at Porth – Sunday, 28 th January.

Following this year's very successful outing, the same venue has been booked for 12 noon. The cost will be £9.50 with bowling or £6.50 for the lunch only. Please contact Liz

Quiz Night – Friday, 16 th February

This is provisionally programmed for the evening of Friday 16 th February, probably in Truro but the exact details have yet to be confirmed – partly because it will depend on the numbers who want to come. We will discuss this and decide what to do at Jo's after the AGM.

30 th Anniversary of FFI – March 2007

Again, exact details have yet to be fixed but likely to be early in the month.

Report on Friendship Force UK Conference 23-25 th March 2007

The Isle of Wight was the venue for the UK conference for which Peter and I were privileged to be the FF Cornwall delegates. It proved a valuable opportunity to gain fresh ideas and learn more about the organisation, particularly within the Atlanta headquarters. Most important was the reinforcing of links with other clubs. With FFI President George Brown in attendance, we were able to get information straight from the horse's mouth! There are a number of initiatives coming on stream, such as bridge building exchanges and discovery programmes.

It seems that short exchanges within the UK and Europe are becoming very popular, since they are relatively inexpensive and offer a taster experience to new members. Your committee is actively exploring the possibilities, in particular with FF Limburg in Belgium.

Terry Hopkins, the UK representative on the European Advisory Committee, gave advance notice of its next conference to be held May 2008 in Bratislava, with add ons in the Tatra mountains – could be very enjoyable. We will keep members informed.

It was encouraging to learn that FF Cornwall is one of only a few clubs steadily increasing its membership. We should make it our aim to emulate FF IOW, who have boosted their membership to 75 in a few years. The final workshops centred on ideas to stimulate interest, including a National campaign. However, it appears that word of mouth remains the most reliable, so do keep on talking about Friendship Force to your friends, colleagues and acquaintances!

Vogtland Exchange

We are about to embark upon yet another fantastic Friendship Force adventure! Our party of 20 departs from Bristol airport for Prague on June 12th. We travel on by coach to Zwickau in Germany to be home hosted by their club members for a week. Then we return for a short stay in Prague before returning back to Cornwall. Details of our hosts have been received & we are in communication with friends old & new in Germany. As ED, it really is exciting to see for the first time the list of hosts & ambassadors when they arrive by e-mail. You know then that it is definitely all systems go! A draft programme for our stay has also been received & the final one will be known shortly.

Gavin

The hotel, a boat trip and seats for Swan Lake Ballet have been booked. I am concerned that ambassadors have every chance to decide what other sights we visit and that we do not organise something which is more or less intensive than people feel happy with. Accordingly I persuaded Brian Smedley, who is an expert on Prague and is helping me with the organisation, to agree to visit us on 13th May so that he can tell us more, show us pictures and we can make final decisions on exactly what we want to do when there. Please do make every effort to attend. Maureen and Michael Cole have very kindly agreed to host this. You are welcome to bring a picnic lunch to eat in their magnificent garden from 12:30 on. If you prefer, simply turn up to listen to Brian at about 2:30. After that we will have the pleasure (?) of practising our singing and dancing!

Robin

Outgoing to Central Arizona, USA and Comitán, Mexico , suggested October 2008

The clubs are situated in Phoenix and near the Guatemalan border. Both offer exciting opportunities for new experiences. The first step is to appoint an exchange director and small committee to progress the exchange. If there is anyone willing to help with this, we would be delighted to hear from you and give you all the support needed. Quite a number of members have expressed a keen interest in participating and we will keep everyone informed as things develop. It is anticipated that the cost will be in the region of £1600-1800pp for 17 to 18 days, door to door.

Incoming from the Sunshine Coast, Australia April. 2008

The club will also exchange with **Izmir in Turkey.**

In September **Lake Hartwell, USA** will spend a week with us.

In order for all these exchanges to be successful, we will need Exchange Directors, so please give it a thought!

Visit to the Minack 2pm Wednesday 25 th July

The New Cornwall Opera will be performing Bizet's Carmen. This is proving very popular and group bookings (which give you the best seats and at a discount) are already possible only for three of the seven performances. We therefore decided to reserve 20 seats for the afternoon of Wednesday the 25 th July. This production is traditionally staged and features the very best of Cornish soloists: Louise Merrifield will take the title role and be joined by Matthew Eva, Gary Tucker, Kate Wood and John Hobbs. Brian Odgers leads a production team which promises the use of innovative design aimed at capturing the very essence of Spain.

Tickets will cost £7.65 each and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Please contact Robin or Josie (01726 75339) as soon as possible if you would like to go.

China Clay Country Park. Saturday, 5 th May. 6pm

Meet at 6pm for a guided tour, approx one hour. The facility and museum have been revamped of late. The tour will be followed by a two course meal in the restaurant. As there is an Italian chef, we have decided to go with the Italian option. Cost £12 to include tour and meal.

The Park is at Wheal Martyn, on the B3274 St. Austell to Bugle road. Please book your place with Margie and send payment by Tuesday 2 nd May.