



HEBDEN BRIDGE
Twinning Society

Visit by delegates from Paratico to Hebden Bridge Report

Mrs Mariella Smioldo (Deputy Mayor) and Mrs Leda Liborio (Councillor) visited Hebden Bridge from the 11th to the 12th October as representatives of the town council of Paratico (Brescia, Italy) to discuss the development of friendship links with the possibility of formal twinning in due course.

Mariella Smioldo has special responsibility for politics, social affairs, education and culture. Leda Liborio has a special responsibility for youth politics (reporting to Mariella Smioldo thereon). They are initially interested in encouraging contacts between youth groups in the 2 towns.

Key points from the discussions that took place can be summarised as follows:

- Meetings with youth groups, Sunday 11th October:
 - Hebden Bridge Youth Band (<http://hebdenbrass.com/index.php/info>) – discussion with Anne Bridges and Julia Gravestock who outlined the age range in the Junior Band (7 to 19) and the brass band instruments played. They noted that they tour overseas every 2 to 3 years (for example to Poland); and often join twinning visits to St Pol and Warstein. Leda Liborio described the music school in Paratico and its role in the community in providing lessons in elementary (primary) schools. Their students play individually (not in bands) but it was agreed there could be scope for an exchange. N.B. It was noted that for a direct exchange the 14-16 age group could be suitable. Where younger children were involved the exchange would need to include their families.
 - Hebden Bridge Saints FC (<http://www.hbsaints.com/>)– Vinny Bamford (Treasurer) described the different teams and age ranges (boys teams under 7s to under 17s; girls teams under 9s to under 17s). He noted that a visit to Paratico (for example to a football tournament) would need considerable organisation in advance so the earliest date for this might be Easter 2017. He wondered whether a 5-a-side tournament for girls might be a possibility for such a visit. In addition, in July 2016 the Saints FC will be organising their normal school holiday football activities and this might be a good time for young footballers from Paratico to visit for a tournament.
- Follow up with other youth groups:
 - Hebden Bridge Scout Group (Scout Leader Anastasia Ververidou)– Julia Gravestock very kindly spoke to Anastasia Ververidou about the Paratico visit. She has provided a positive response and advised that we can provide her contact details to the Paratico councillors. A copy of this report will be emailed to Anastasia and hopefully a meeting arranged.

- Hebden Bridge Arts Festival (Helen Meller – Festival Director) – Helen has emailed to confirm an interest in possible cultural links with Paratico. A copy of this report will be sent to Helen and further contact pursued.
- Calder Valley Youth Theatre (Vicky Garrod, Vice Chair of the committee) – Rehearsals would have prevented attendance at the meeting on the 11th. Further contact will be pursued probably once their current production of Flashdance has taken place on the 4th – 7th November.
- Discussions with Hebden Royd TC Mayor & Councillors Sunday 11th October:
 - Those present – James Fearon (Mayor), Christine Davenport, Jonathan Timbers, June Cammack & Robin Dixon; Mariella Smiroldo & Leda Liborio; David Parry, Eleanor Ross, Philip & Maureen Dean, Michael & Joyce Newman, Jane Jackson.
 - Key points raised:
 - Images of Paratico were projected and Mariella and Leda presented information on Paratico. The local industry and economy of Paratico was described. A small number of large manufacturers of specialised rubber components (engineering gaskets) are critical to the local economy along with the production and servicing of small boats. Councillor Jonathan Timbers gave a brief analysis of the economy of Hebden Bridge with particular reference to Calrec and Sweet & Maxwell.
 - Christine Davenport as Chair of the Hebden Royd TC twinning committee promised to report back to the council on their next meeting (10th November). Mariella and Leda will be reporting back to the commune of Paratico.
 - It was agreed that it was essential speak to Calder High in regard to any possibility of a school exchange. Leda felt that it was very important that via the school or youth groups penfriend and Facebook connections should be pursued.
- Final meeting 09.15 Monday 12th October - Those present – June Cammack, Mariella Smiroldo, Leda Liborio, David Parry, Jane Jackson.
 - **Actions agreed:**
 - An exploratory initial visit by adults from Hebden Bridge to Paratico on the 22nd to 25th April 2016. JJ to check flights/costs.
 - HBTS to pursue contacts and exchange possibilities with the local youth groups – and with Calder High.
 - In particular follow up with the discussion with Vinny Bamford on the potential for football exchanges.

Key contacts:

David Parry (President HBTS): davidjohnparry@talktalk.net; 01422 845 632, 07900 318 244.

Jane Jackson (Communications Officer HBTS): janeson79@gmail.com; 01422 846 081, 07770 657 496.

For general information on the HBTS check out our website at

<http://www.hebdenbridgetwinning.org.uk/> or our Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hebden-Bridge-Twinning-Society/759190050773233>)

Jane Jackson

14th October 2015