

Freundschaft

Chichester's Friends of Speyer newsletter



Willkommen!

Friends of Chichester and Friends of Speyer
gather outside the Council House on North St.
Photo: Paz Limbachia

Issue 3 – October 2025

Since becoming Chair of the Friends of Speyer in late July 2025, I've had the pleasure of meeting many of you during the successful visit to Chichester by thirty-five of our friends from Speyer. They were a charming and fun group, who really seemed to enjoy experiencing our wonderful city and being here with us. I'm sure you'll agree with me that we got along very well. The Fishbourne Mill Morris dancers and the booming bonhomie of our Town Crier at the evening welcome reception certainly helped to get the party going.

My next priority is to meet more of you and to find out more about what you'd like us as a group to be doing, and then to make those things happen. We had a very useful members' meeting in early

September and I'm very pleased to say that events are in the process of being 'rolled out'. You'll read about them in this third issue of *Freundschaft*.

Longer term, we'd obviously like to build our membership and I believe the way to do that is by organising a regular series of meetings and events where members find value in being together and being Friends of Speyer. We must also try and start some 'mini-exchanges' around, for example, culture, food, sport – not every trip has to be a thirty-five-strong tour!

Your Executive Committee is keen to do more, but I must be honest and say that we could certainly do better if we had more members willing to step up and help. So

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don't be shy – I'm sure there are many talents hidden under bushels all around our membership!

Bob Long
Chair, Friends of Speyer

Friends of Chichester welcome reception

Arriving by coach on Saturday afternoon, our friends from Speyer checked in at the Harbour Hotel and then strolled the couple of hundred yards to the Council House. Waiting outside were many of Chichester's Friends of Speyer, Richard Plowman in full Town Crier mode, Fishbourne Mill Morris dancers and some curious bystanders. A traditional welcome on a sunny early evening that showed the city at its best.

Moving inside, both sets of Friends were then formally welcomed with speeches by Friends of Speyer Chair Bob Long, Deputy Mayor James Vivian, and Friends of Chichester Chair Matthias Nowack. Then followed food and drink, including award-winning sparkling wines presented by Ashling Park, and catching up with friends and making new ones. As with the welcome reception in Speyer nine months earlier, an old bell was rung every fifteen minutes, a sign for the hosts to rotate to new tables – 'speed-dating', in modern parlance.

The next two days were filled with a mixture of individual, small and large group visits in and around Chichester. But we all got together again on Monday evening for dinner at Park Tavern and Brasserie Blanc, and on the following morning for a final group photo in front of the Council House.

David Elliott



Fishbourne Mill Morris dancers



Left to right: Bob Long, Matthias Nowack, James Vivian and Richard Plowman



The evening gets under way.



Getting to know each other over a glass of Ashling Park sparkling wine

All photos by David Elliott

At the Races



Goodwood Racecourse from The Trundle

Photo: David Elliott

Among the many activities offered on Sunday, I chose to attend the horse racing at Goodwood. Bob Long, Chairman of the Friends of Speyer, had already sent the Speyer visitors several emails about the importance of this multi-day racing event and its strict dress code.

In glorious weather, we set off late Sunday morning in a large taxi, driving through gentle hills and woodlands straight to the exclusive Richmond Enclosure. Arriving there, Bob proved again to be an attentive guide: with a modest-looking pass he steered us through several checkpoints, where eagle-eyed stewards checked compliance with the dress code. The Speyer visitors passed without remarks – indeed, some of us even received approving compliments on our choice of attire. A few of us had topped up their outfits with elegant hats picked up from Chichester's charity shops, mindful of the sunny forecast.

Armed with the multi-page race programme, it quickly became clear that horse racing is a science of its own. But Bob was ready to coach us through the essentials: first the horses are presented in the Parade Ring, where their condition is inspected. As soon as the jockeys mount and leave the ring, it is time to place bets at the booths (cash or debit card only) before heading to the grandstand.

Bob's urgent advice – "You must place a bet! You'll experience the race differently" – proved absolutely right. After placing my first wager, I found myself swept up in racing fever as the horses thundered down

the final stretch. From afar you can see them galloping in, while a giant screen gives you a close-up view. Wins and losses are decided in an instant.

Almost as fascinating as the races themselves was the people-watching inside the Richmond Enclosure: women almost without exception in elegant dresses, many crowned with daring hats or elaborate hairstyles and high heels – extravagance everywhere. Alongside the surprisingly large number of young women were equally young men in polished leather shoes, jackets and ties – all in line with the unspoken motto: "To see and be seen". Almost unnoticed, the Speyer visitors had stepped into a class society of a kind seldom encountered in Germany.



All dressed up for the Races

Photo: Herbert Lenz

"Did you win?" – "Yes, two pounds seventy-five!" I answered proudly. The two losing bets of five pounds each were easily forgotten; the thrill of a win is intoxicating.

The impressions of this race day will stay with me: noble horses, the sweeping view across the South Downs on one side, the Channel visible on the other side. Sunshine, a soft breeze under a blue sky, colour, elegance, and an open, cheerful friendliness in every encounter.

Claudia Degott-Leitmeyer
Friends of Chichester

A visit to Goodwood Art Foundation

Marion and I love coming to Chichester – not only because it is a beautiful city, but above all because we have found good friends there. This year, in addition to the official programme, a special cultural highlight was on the agenda: a visit to the newly opened Goodwood Art Foundation. Together with Jude and Keith Clouston from Little London, as well as two friends from Speyer, Christel and Ulla, we set off on Sunday to explore this new destination for contemporary art. As art lovers familiar with sculpture parks such as the Louisiana in Copenhagen, the Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands, or the Insel Hombroich in Germany, we were curious – and ended up being surprised twice over.

In the afternoon, we were impressed by the innovative concept of the Goodwood sculpture park, which combines contemporary art, landscape and education in a truly unique way. Two buildings, beautifully integrated into the landscape – an exhibition pavilion and a stylish café with outdoor terrace – welcome visitors. The Goodwood Art Foundation stretches across 70 hectares, carefully designed by the renowned landscape architect Dan Pearson. He has created grounds of wildflower meadows, ancient woodland and winding paths, where you can encounter contemporary art in refreshing ways and let the soul unwind. The rolling



Isamu Noguchi's *Octetra*

Photo: Matthias Nowack

landscape continually reframes the modern sculptures, offering visitors ever-changing perspectives.

The highlight of this year's programme was the major exhibition of British artist Rachel Whiteread – a true discovery for us from Speyer. Her works, placed both in the gallery spaces and outdoors in the open landscape, entered into a fascinating dialogue with nature and architecture.

It was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about Goodwood's cultural ambitions. We are particularly grateful for the time we spent in the park and with our friends in Chichester. It made this Sunday truly special for us.

Matthias Nowack, Friends of Chichester

Visit to Fishbourne Roman Palace

Chichester and Speyer are both Roman cities, so it made sense to offer a tour of Fishbourne Roman Palace. Four of our German friends – Marianne and Reiner Schotthöffer, and Ute and Dieter Wieland – took up the offer, guided by yours truly.

In perfect weather, we took in the palace remains, gardens and museum, along with probably

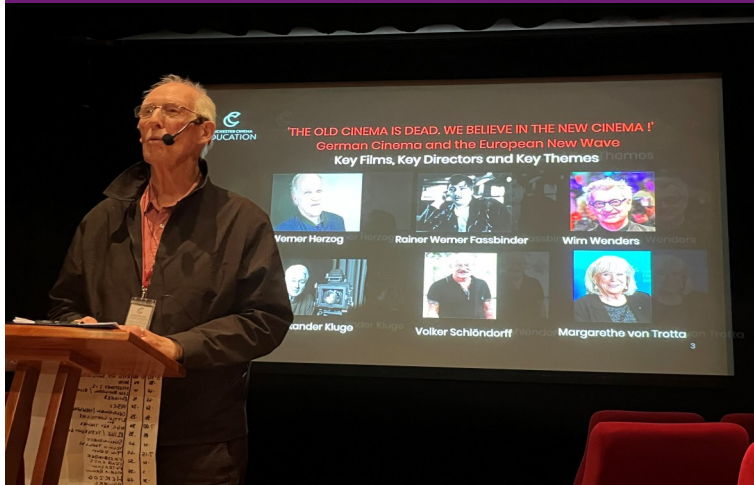
rather too much explanation about its Roman history which was unfortunately all in English.

However, the group seemed to appreciate the visit experience, including the largest collection of mosaics in situ in the UK. As you will see from the photo, 'Centurion' Reiner certainly played up to the spirit of the occasion!

Richard New



Photo: Richard New



Mike Jennings of Chichester Cinema's Education Team in full flow

Photo by David Elliott

On 7 October, the Friends of Speyer collaborated with Chichester Cinema's Education Team to present a German film evening at New Park. It was for both FoS members and the general public alike; indeed, one of the aims was to get more of the latter to join up!

Mike Jennings and John Harte gave us a fascinating 90-minute talk about New German Cinema, sprinkled with snippets of key films. For context, it began with the Weimar era's famous directors like Lang and Murnau, the emigration to Hollywood of many soon-to-be-ones like Wilder and Sirk as well as actors like Dietrich and Lorre, the stagnation of German cinema in the 1950s, and then the dramatic impact of the new wave that swept through European cinema in the early 1960s.

The term New German Cinema was ushered in by the Oberhausen Manifesto, signed in 1962 by a group of young filmmakers. They declared "The old cinema is dead; we believe in the new cinema", championing artistic excellence and social critique over commercial success. The talk focused on the 'big three' – Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog and Wim Wenders – augmented by names that we're perhaps less familiar with: Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff and Margarethe von Trotta. By 1982, it was more or less a case of 'job done'.

Following Q&A and a quick bar break, it was time for the screening of *Fear Eats the Soul* (1974). Difficult, of course, to choose one film to represent this fantastic era, but Fassbinder's study of immigration, bigotry, love and loneliness is peerless, and very topical.

We hope to arrange another German film evening in 2026.

David Elliott

On 28 June, the Friends of Speyer set up a stall at the Chichester City Council's Gala Day in Priory Park. We were accompanied by the stalls of the three other twinning societies – Chartres, Ravenna and Valletta – and by a fairground organ, arranged by the Four Cities group! The weather was good, the other stalls in the park were numerous and varied, and a good time was had by all.

Several members helped out on the day, to spread the load, for which we thank them. Several new members applied on the day or just afterwards, but the main aim was to spread the message of the Friends of Speyer, which I think we achieved.

Richard New

Born in Speyer, plays for Brighton



One of the priorities in the Chichester-Speyer Twinning is to involve young people, and a good way to do that is through sport, football particularly. Both our cities have decent teams with long, convoluted histories of mergers and name changes. Formed in 1919, FV Speyer merged with local rival VfR Speyer in 2009 to form FC Speyer 09. The idea of Chichester City playing Speyer is tantalising, and who knows, maybe one day it will be a possibility.

In the meantime, there is proxy connection, just along the coast and at Premier League level. One of Brighton & Hove Albion's bright young players is Brajan Gruda who was born in Speyer in 2004. He started playing for the city's youth teams from the age of six. When he was eleven he signed for Karlsruhe SC, and a few years later joined Mainz 05, becoming a professional in 2022. In 2024, he moved to Brighton. Gruda is of Albanian-French descent (his father was also a professional footballer) and he has represented Germany at youth international level.

David Elliott

Rotary Club Triangulation in Speyer

In mid-May the Rotary Club of Chichester travelled to Speyer to consolidate not only the existing friendship, but also to expand it with the inclusion of the Rotary Club of Faenza, a small city near Ravenna in Italy. Maria Leitmeyer of the Rotary Club of Speyer had prepared an excellent three-day programme, celebrating the unique Triangulation between the three clubs. It will bring significant benefits to our club, particularly with the student exchange programme.

On the first evening, an informal dinner was arranged at the new VR Bank Building, its terrace offering magnificent panoramic views of Speyer. It quickly became obvious that we would all get on well together. The three presidents, Hartmut Loos of Speyer and Scipione de Alexandra of Faenza and myself, all had common objectives under Rotary.



Dressing up at Hambach Castle!

The second day began with a visit to Speyer Cathedral. As well as a guided tour, there was a special organ recital and a Handel concert in the huge crypt underneath. We then met with Mayor Stephanie Seiler, at the famous UNESCO site of the Judenhof (Jewish quarter) which is believed to have the oldest mikvah or ritual bath north of the Alps.



Visit by Rotary Club members to Hambach Castle, Neustadt an der Weinstrasse

In the afternoon, most people were free, but Howard Bottomley and I met up with Hartmut, Scipione and the other presidents-elect to agree the Triangulation and future programme. The Speyer and Faenza clubs will be visiting Chichester between 5 and 7 June 2026.

It was back to the Cathedral for a very special evening, and a first for Speyer, with a meal being served in the unique Kaisersaal room high up in the tower. There were speeches confirming the Triangulation, and I presented Hartmut with a triangle musical instrument which seemed to go down well with all present. Two of the students gave a very good account of the student exchange scheme. It had been a long day with many steps to climb so we retired back to the Hotel Goldener Engel.

On Sunday morning we visited Hambach Castle in the woods near Neustadt an der Weinstrasse. It was a fascinating tour of what is considered to be a symbol of the start of the German democracy movement in 1832 and where the modern German flag originated. The exhibition was excellent and a chance for some fun dressing-up.

This was the end of the formal programme but we stayed on for an extra night and it was good to relax and spend some more time together.

I think this Triangulation will be a very significant point in our club's long history and bring many benefits as well as friendships.

Richard Plowman

Announcements

German Quiz Night 27 November 2025



The Friends of Speyer are happy to announce a German Quiz Night at The Bell Inn on Thursday 27 November from 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm. The pub is opposite Chichester Festival Theatre on Broyle Road. It will be first and foremost a social occasion, including food and a frisson of competition. Hosted by David Elliott (Quizmeister) and Liz Elliott (organizer), we hope it will be the first of many.

Questions will be about Germany-related general knowledge, including picture and audio questions. They will range from easy to difficult. The maximum number of participants will be eight teams of four to six people on each. There will be fun prizes for the top three teams. The cost will be £12 each (of which £7 will go to The Bell Inn and £5 to Friends of Speyer). The price will include food from a limited set menu, with drinks extra. Look out for an email to members which will set out all the arrangements in more detail.

See you there!

FoS visit to Speyer September 2026

We are planning our next visit to Speyer, from 10–14 September 2026, which will enable us to enjoy Speyer's famous Altstadtfest (Old Town Festival).

We are also working on some additional excursions and activities. It'll be a very busy time in Speyer so hotel rooms will have to be confirmed as soon as possible, hence this early announcement.

Look out for an email from Bob Long with full travel and accommodation proposals in the next few weeks. The confirmed dates for the trip are:

Arrival in Speyer – Thursday 10 September 2026

Departure – Monday 14 September 2026

Please make a note in your calendar and keep that long weekend free!

German language classes at Chichester College

We have started up a new Total Beginners German class on Tuesday evenings, beginning with Greetings and Introductions and moving into basic conversation, with the usual sharing of people's experiences in Germany and Austria.

After half term we plan to restart our Second Year class. We still have places for anyone wishing to join us! Please contact:

geoffbromethompson@gmail.com

or mobile 07827 473330

Geoffrey Brome Thompson

Membership

Membership of Friends of Speyer is open to anyone interested in international friendship. Joining us brings many rewards and opportunities, and membership costs from just £12 per year.

- ◆ Receive *Freundschaft*, the Friends of Speyer newsletter where you can find the latest news and events.
- ◆ Enjoy exchange visits to Speyer and make new friendships.
- ◆ Discover Speyer's rich heritage and experience its culture.
- ◆ Sign up for German language classes and conversation groups.
- ◆ Take part in German cinema and quiz nights.
- ◆ Celebrate the spirit of twinning at Gala Day during the Festival of Chichester.

See overleaf to complete and post a membership form, or go to www.friendsofspeyer.org/membership/ or email Membership@FriendsOfSpeyer.org

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Name (1st adult)	
Name (2nd adult)	
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Phone (2nd adult)	
Email (1st adult)	
Email (2nd adult)	
Name/age of any children under 18 (for family membership up to 2 children)	
Date	Signed

Please indicate (tick box) which membership is required:

☐ Single person £12.00

☐ Joint/Family (up to 2 children) £18.00

☐ Corporate £20.00

Subscriptions are renewable annually on 1 January.

Email addresses are for the sole use of Friends of Speyer and will not be used for any 3rd party communications.

To give you the benefit of the full experience of membership of Friends of Speyer, we would like to send you information about the association's events. Under GDPR requirements, your consent, in the form of a positive opt-in, is required before we can add your details to our mailing lists. Without this consent we can only send information regarding the administration of Friends of Speyer. Please tick as appropriate the agreement sentence below:

☐ I / We **give** consent to receive details of optional events.

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Complete the **membership form** opposite, then scan and email to **Membership@FriendsOfSpeyer.org**

Or post to: Friends of Speyer Membership, 3 Baileys Way, Hambrook, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 8FE

For payment by bank transfer, or for a Standing Order Mandate, please use the following details:

- ◆ Lloyds Bank, Victoria, London
- ◆ Sort Code 30-99-50
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We would prefer it if you could set up a Standing Order Mandate directly with your own bank, but if you would rather post one to us, please request a Standing Order mandate form by email to the contact above.

For payment by cheque, please post your cheque to the address above, made out to 'Friends of Speyer'.

Freundschaft newsletter

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With thanks to this issue's contributors. We welcome articles for future issues of *Freundschaft*. Please email David Elliott at: davidjohnelliott@hotmail.com

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