

Freundschaft

Chichester's **Friends of Speyer** newsletter



Issue 1 – May 2024

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Photo: Klaus Venus
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Willkommen!

As Chairman of the Friends of Speyer, it gives me pleasure to write a short introduction to our first newsletter.

I was Town Clerk of Chichester City Council from 1998 to 2023 and my final job, prior to retirement in 2023, was to pull together the decision of the City Council to twin with Speyer, something that gave me tremendous satisfaction. Speyer, situated on the Rhine in Germany, has much in common with Chichester, and joins Chartres and Ravenna in our now triumvirate of official city twinnings.

I want to thank our past chairman, Rob Campling, for all the work he did in establishing the

Friends and to wish him and Liz every happiness for the future. I also express thanks to our past Secretary, Peter Evans.

This is your newsletter, so items for inclusion in future editions – which we hope will be published three times a year – will be most welcome. Please contact the Editor (see page 8).

We currently have just under 80 members, but recruiting is everyone's business. I hope that by the end of the year we can see numbers grow to at least 100. If every member recruited two people, this would be possible. Please spread the word through friends, clubs, churches, schools and workplaces to make this possible. It would be encouraging if we could recruit younger people to membership.

We have now produced a leaflet about membership of the Friends of Speyer. We also now have a website (www.FriendsofSpeyer.org) and pages on both Facebook and Instagram. To all those involved, I send a big thank you.

The Executive Committee has a lot of work to do in the coming months, but once this is behind us we can start to consolidate our position and organise a regular programme of activity, so any ideas or guest speakers would be very much appreciated.

A final note – our AGM (and social event) takes place on Wednesday 22 May in the Council Chamber of the Council House in North Street, Chichester.

Rodney Duggua

A short introduction to Speyer

Speyer is located on the left bank of the River Rhine, between Karlsruhe and Mannheim. It has a population of about 50,000 and is one of Germany's oldest towns, dating from the Roman era. Indeed, the original Roman name for Speyer was Noviomagus, as it was for Chichester.

Like Chichester, Speyer has a rich heritage, and tourism plays an important role in the local economy. Its cathedral, founded in 1030, contains a unique crypt with the tombs of Holy Roman emperors and German royalty; in 1981 it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Unlike Chichester, the city still has one of its medieval city gates, the Altpörtal, complete with its 55-metre tower.

Along with Mainz and Worms, Speyer was the hometown of one of the most important Jewish communities in medieval northern Europe. The Jewish courtyard and subterranean baths, dating from 1104, are also World Heritage sites.



Speyer Cathedral

Photo: Karl Hoffmann © Stadt Speyer

Speyer contains electrotechnical industries and an oil refinery. Manufacturing includes metal, machinery, aircraft, textiles and chemicals. Visited by over half a million people a year, the Technik Museum Speyer is a technology museum exhibiting aircraft, spacecraft, trains, cars and more or less anything that moves. It has a sister museum in Sinsheim, 40km away.

Continuing the theme of speed, and drawing comparisons with Goodwood, 12km away is Hockenheimring which, up until 2019, was one of Germany's two Formula 1 racing circuits. Strangely, Germany hasn't held an F1 Grand Prix since 2019, but Hockenheimring still hosts plenty of other races. Outdoor concerts too: Michael Jackson and Pink Floyd have performed there in the past, and AC/DC will do so this July.

The city is adjacent to Pfalz, Germany's second-largest wine producing area, and the world's oldest bottle of wine dating from between 325 and 350 AD can be found in the city's Historical Museum. Former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, whose favourite tippie was a sweet local Riesling, is buried in a small cemetery next to the Cathedral.

There is a carving of a pretzel above the main door of the Cathedral. Dating back to 1910, Speyer's Brezelfest (Pretzel Festival) takes place every July, and inevitably includes plenty of beer, a funfair, fireworks and a parade on the Sunday with about 100 bands, clubs and floats. Ring any bells? It sounds very much like Chichester's Gala Day of yore, currently undergoing a revival.

David Elliott



Gedächtniskirche

Photo: Klaus Landry © Stadt Speyer

The city is famous for the Protestation at Speyer in 1529 when followers of Martin Luther protested against the city's decision to renege on previous concessions made to the Lutherans three years earlier. The word Protestant originated from the incident. Much later, between 1893 and 1904, the Gedächtniskirche (Memorial Church) was constructed in memory of the event. Another significant church, Dreifaltigkeitskirche (Trinity Church) was built in the early 1700s.

How the twinning happened

Speyer, like Chichester, has established twinning links with Chartres and Ravenna, so why not with Chichester? Speyer was formerly twinned with Spalding in Lincolnshire, but as that link was defunct, it provided Chichester with an opportunity to fill a 'civic gap'.

In September 2019, Chichester City Council formally agreed to explore links with Speyer. Nearly three years later, with Covid travel restrictions lifted, Speyer's representatives, their Deputy Mayor and Director of Tourism came on a fact-finding visit to Chichester in August 2022.

The weather held fair to show Chichester and its environs at their very best. There was a packed programme of events including a visit to Fishbourne Roman Palace, an evening at Chichester Festival Theatre, and a tour of the environs. Speyer's representatives fell in love with Chichester and eagerly posed the question, 'When can we sign on the dotted line?' Both Councils had to meet to ratify the formal twinning decision, and this was done within weeks of each other in the autumn of 2022.

A Chichester City Council delegation then travelled to Speyer in December 2022. The Twinning Deed was signed and sealed in the historic Rathaus, where we were treated to a marvellous musical performance by local musicians. The civic party enjoyed several tours that included the historic city centre but also the Cathedral and Jewish Quarter (both UNESCO Heritage Sites), the modern Synagogue, and the wonderful Christmas market.

A Speyer-based Friends of Chichester emerged, who spoke enthusiastically at the twinning signing ceremony. Apparently, there had been an ongoing



Photo: Klaus Venus © Stadt Speyer

Signing the Twinning Agreement in Speyer, December 2022.

Left to right: Rodney Duggua (Town Clerk, Chichester City Council), Councillor Julian Joy (Mayor of Chichester), Monika Kabs (Deputy Mayor of Speyer), Stefanie Seiler (Mayor of Speyer)

discussion for some time in Speyer about a Chichester link, reinforced by their twinning with Chartres and Ravenna.

The reciprocal twinning ceremony took place in our own historic Council House in March 2023 where we were able to showcase talented musicians from The Sleepy Lagoon Orchestra from the University of Chichester and our German guests enjoyed some English sparkling wine.

You may wonder why, other than the letters 'S' and 'P', Speyer had links with Spalding. On enquiry, the answer was, 'Because the Government said that we had to!'

Rodney Duggua



Agreement signed on 8 December 2022 in Speyer



Agreement signed on 6 March 2023 in Chichester

German language classes

I'm delighted to be introducing an innovative German teaching initiative at Chichester College.

In 2020, we were on the point of setting up the first German language teaching at the College for some years, when Covid struck. Teaching at the College, as elsewhere, was greatly disrupted, and plans for those German classes had to be shelved.

In 2022, with the pandemic less threatening, the College set up what were the only German Adult Education classes in the area. An initially small group of students became gradually bigger, as news about the classes spread. In response to student demand, what had been planned as a two-term class extended into a third term.



All students returned in September 2023 for a second year, and Beginners classes were set up in September and in January 2024. Enthusiasm across the classes remains high, as some students begin their sixth term of German.

Each of our classes aims to cover all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), and to combine current communicative teaching with methodical study of language structures. The course is built around a well-known textbook, but 50 per cent of teaching time involves other materials. A class would typically start with a specialist video on the topic of the evening, (perhaps 'Eating Out' or 'Hobbies'), followed by work on some exercises from the textbook chapter under study. We would then usually read, translate and discuss a passage of written German.

Students are interested in seeing cooperation between the College and Friends of Speyer. Still the only (official) provider of German classes in the area, the College has plans for more classes, including one-off taster lessons. Friends of Speyer members would be particularly welcome to join these, and I'll keep you all closely informed of developments. Any ideas that you have for growing provision locally, please also get in touch!

Geoffrey Brome Thompson

geoffbromethompson@gmail.com

Artist in Residency

As part of an artist-in-residency programme run by Speyer Artists Association, local artist Laura Buckle will be spending July and August in the city, developing her practice and with an exhibition at the end of it.

The residency, formally known as International Scholarship Künstlerhaus Speyer, offers two exhibition and studio rooms, and the artist is provided with a bedroom, bathroom and kitchen, all centrally located in the city centre, just 150m from Maximilianstrasse.

Laura Buckle – who also goes by the name of Flora Bucket – describes herself as an 'environmental working-class artist who aims to raise awareness and action on global climate change issues through her artistic work'.



Laura Buckle, artist

Laura: "I'm eager to explore Speyer and absorb as much as I can. As an artist with a keen focus on environmental issues, I feel my practice will benefit greatly from experiencing the world from a different place. I am excited to meet the Künstlerbund team and spend some time responding to my surroundings. Moreover, with an exhibition at the end of my residency, I'm really looking forward to making!"

The opportunity arose when former Speyer Councillor Matthias Nowak contacted Mayor of Chichester Craig Gershater, who in turn talked to the University of Chichester's Fine Art Coordinator, Tim Sandys-Renton. Tim identified a few young local artists who might wish to take up the offer, three applications were received, and Laura Buckle was selected. We wish Laura every success in Speyer and look forward to hearing more about her residency in the next issue of *Freundschaft*.

Mayor of Chichester, Councillor Craig Gershater

Speyer Rotary Club visit

Ten members of the Rotary Club of Speyer visited Chichester on Friday 1 March for a long weekend hosted by the Rotary Club of Chichester. It was a great success and the Rotary Clubs, like the cities, are now twinned, with a reciprocal visit to Speyer at the end of June to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Rotary Club of Speyer.

So how did this come about? It all began at the City Twinning Ceremony in Speyer. After the wonderful twinning ceremony there was a chance to socialise with some of the guests. Almost by coincidence I went over to a table where two men were in conversation. One just happened to be President of the Rotary Club of Speyer, Professor Bernd Helmig. I too have been a past President of the Rotary Club of Chichester and President-Elect for 2024/2025, taking office from July of this year. There seemed great enthusiasm for twinning the clubs, which has now come to fruition with the visit here.

The Speyer group was led by their President-Elect, Hartmut Loos, with his partner Ulricke, and it was good to meet up with Bernd Helmig again for what was going to be a highly enjoyable and very productive visit.



Professor Bernd Helmig
Former President of the Rotary Club
of Speyer



The programme began with a tour of the Cathedral by Mike Evans on Friday afternoon, and in the evening we enjoyed a very simple fish-and-chip supper in the Boys Club.



Richard Plowman addresses Rotarians over dinner.



Mayor, Councillor Craig Gershater with members of both Rotary Clubs on the City Walls in Bishop's Palace Gardens.

On Saturday morning our guests were given a tour of the city in German led by the Mayor, Councillor Craig Gershater, which was very much appreciated despite the accompaniment of the Cathedral bells.

The afternoon was free but at his request Berndt and I took a wonderful trip on the canal. I took the opportunity to introduce Bernd to the culinary delights of Luckes, made a little more special by the induction of our Ukrainian guest Liudmyla Doroshenko into our Rotary Club.

It was also a chance for us to find out more about the impressive Rotary Club of Speyer with its 71 younger active members compared to the Rotary Club of Chichester with just about 30 aging members.

The final day began with brunch in a local pub, the Selsey Arms in West Dean, by which time many new friends and great business contacts had been made.

A reciprocal visit to Speyer is planned for 21–23 June to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Rotary Club of Speyer. Six Chichester Rotarians will be visiting, including myself and Dick Hammond, the current President.

The highlight of the programme will be a ceremony in the Historic Council Chamber with the handover of office from President Oliver Kolb to incoming President Hartmut Loos, followed by a joint dinner and celebration in the town hall courtyard or, in case of rain, in the Ratskeller.

Richard Plowman

The Sleepy Lagoon Orchestra in Speyer



On 6 March 2023, The Sleepy Lagoon Orchestra, one of the University of Chichester's many musical ensembles, was invited to perform in the Assembly Room at the twinning ceremony between Chichester and Speyer. Following a version of the Prelude to Charpentier's *Te Deum*, the orchestra provided music throughout the evening, including *Sussex By The Sea*. However, it was not long before they reverted to their usual repertoire of 1930s swing, and by the end of the evening the orchestra had secured an invitation to visit Speyer the following summer.

Fast forward to 18 June when the orchestra and vocalists departed from the university for foreign shores, surviving border control and a torrential thunderstorm. The journey to Speyer took about eight hours but eventually the orchestra and accompanying van arrived at the hotel. On the following morning we awoke to blue skies which, much to our relief (as we were due to play outside), heralded a beautiful, warm day. The walk from the hotel took us to the centre of the city, and we were treated to our

first view of the Cathedral. Our performances were in a square just off the main street so, once we had set up our equipment and done a sound check, we were free to explore the city sights after indulging in a splendid lunch provided by our hosts.

The afternoon concert was well attended by an appreciative audience who were entertained by a range of music from our standard swing to some more modern big band music. To our pleasant surprise, the evening performance was once again attended by a huge crowd who were packed into the square behind the town hall. They were treated to an evening of music, including swing once again and a

selection of music from the James Bond film franchise.

With our performance over, the next stop was a local hostelry where we managed to replace the liquid lost through our exertion while playing in the heat. (I suspect this may have happened if it had been a lot cooler too.)



Our all too brief visit ended the next day when we left to travel back to France for the rest of our tour to the Dordogne. It had been a truly memorable visit made all the more outstanding by our hosts' generosity.

Simon Growcott
Orchestral Manager
University of Chichester



The Sleepy Lagoon Orchestra performing in the Assembly Room in Chichester, March 2023.

Announcements

Friends of Speyer website (22 May 2024)

Friends of Speyer website www.FriendsofSpeyer.org launches on 22 May. It is the first port of call for news and events, becoming a member, and signing up for the newsletter. It is in English and German, and has been designed to work well for both desktop and mobile phones. In addition, we have set up pages on Facebook and Instagram.

We also have a logo, which incorporates a hybrid spire representing both cathedrals, a river (the Rhine and Lavant!), and a pretzel which has become a symbol of Speyer, also doubling up as a heart.

Tom Brown talk, Four Cities event (24 June 2024)

As part of the Festival of Chichester, the Friends of Chartres, Ravenna, Valetta and now Speyer, organise a regular event to raise awareness of each of the city twinnings. This year's will feature Tom Brown, Head Gardener at West Dean, in conversation with Phil Hewitt at the Assembly Room, North Street, Chichester. The talk starts at 7.30pm; afterwards there will be food from each of the four cities. Tickets are £12, available through The Novium box office, or direct from Stephen Northdale, Four Cities Treasurer stephen.northdale@laposte.net. Stephen will not issue tickets but will keep a list of those who have paid, and supply this at the door at the event.



Tom Brown, Head Gardener at West Dean

We need several members to provide and serve some German-style canapés (Häppchen), as well as a couple of volunteers to serve wine after the talk. If you are willing and available, please contact Anne Scicluna anne@annescic.plus.com.

Twinning stall at Gala Day (29 June 2024)

Friends of Speyer will join Chichester's other twinning associations in sharing a stall at Gala Day which will take place in Priory Park, Chichester, on Saturday 29 June between 10am and 4pm for the stands, followed by the evening entertainment. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Anne Scicluna anne@annescic.plus.com.

Kathrin Kirsch visit (17–21 July 2024)

Kathrin Kirsch, who is Vice-Chair of the Speyer-based Friends of Chichester, will travel together with her daughter to the UK for a holiday and will be staying in Chichester from 17–21 July. Kathrin would like to meet some of the Friends of Speyer during her visit and we are discussing with her a programme of activity, including that most important factor: the opportunity to have some free time! This will, of necessity, be a low-key visit and more details will be made known in due course.

Friends visit to Speyer (29 Nov–2 Dec 2024)

While Speyer has many festivals and special events throughout the year, it has been decided by the Executive Committee that we will go over for the 2024 Christmas Market, from Friday 29 November to Monday 2 December. Speyer have yet to develop a programme for our visit but, from past experience, we will be made very welcome and will have a busy and enjoyable time.

Booking flights and accommodation will be the responsibility of individuals, but it is proposed that we fly to and from Frankfurt with Lufthansa. Transit between Frankfurt and Speyer may be by train or coach, yet to be confirmed.

It might also be possible to stay with host families. If you are interested in this option, please let our Chairman, Rodney Duggua, know and he will ask our friends in Speyer to try to facilitate.

While the end of November may seem a long time away, it is highly advisable to get everything booked as soon as possible. You will appreciate that good communication is essential to make this work, so please inform the Chairman if you are planning to join, how many of you, and the accommodation where you will be staying.

Join Friends of Speyer

Name (1st adult)	
Name (2nd adult)	
Address	
Postcode	
Phone (1st adult)	
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.

☐ I / We **do not** consent to receive details of optional events.

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
- ◆ Account no. 82813960
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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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Design: Liz Elliott

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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Chair: Rodney Duggua

Vice-chair: Anne Scicluna

Secretary: Richard Plowman

Treasurer: Richard New

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