

Wirksworth Twinning Association

August Newsletter 2026

Wirksworth Welcomes Twin Towns

2nd – 6th July 2026

In sunny weather more like the south of France than England, 18 people from Die in France and 25 from Frankenau in Germany, with ages ranging from 9 – 80, enjoyed hospitality in 24 Wirksworth homes at the beginning of July.

Despite long journeys on Thursday 2nd July, guests enjoyed the Friday morning welcome with the chance to meet old friends and new, enjoy home-made biscuits from WTA members and hear a welcome song performed by the Wirksworth hosts and sign on for workshops reflecting the weekend's themes of "nature" and "music".

They enjoyed the options of a ukelele or singing workshop or clay workshop or visits to Wild Maple Field and Stoney Wood on Friday before a civic reception in the evening.



International ukelele workshop



Visiting Stoney Wood

There were over 120 guests providing a convivial atmosphere – as well as the visitors and their hosts, many local organisations were represented as well as the outgoing and incoming Heads of Anthony Gell School, Malcolm Kelly and Helen Smith. The red wine was from the local vineyard, Matlock Wines and cheese from one of our members farm, Smith Hall Organics. Peak Brass played, while Mayor of Wirksworth, Cllr Steve Thompson, put down his instrument to welcome all guests. Steve is well travelled and familiar with the benefits of twinning and he gave an inspirational speech about the opportunities that learning a musical instrument can bring, especially as an international language. Clare Wesson from France handed over a hamper of produce from Die with local Clairette wine. Corinne Bastet from Frankenau presented us with a book about their National Park and said they were

also making a donation to Aquabox. Then everyone enjoyed shared meals - “fuddles” – in the summer evening sun with various host families.



Fuddle at one of the hosts

Wirksworth's monthly Farmers' Market splashed out with bunting and welcomes in French and German, plus live music. Guests could choose a tour of the town, a walk in the countryside around the town ending with a visit to the cinema for a brief history of the building and refreshments or a wildflower walk, before a celebration meal for everyone, catered by local firm Zest. The entertainment was provided by local young sax player Jake McGuire, followed by songs from the Singing Twinners scratch choir and a lively half hour of music from UkeWirks.



A walk through Wirksworth



At the celebration dinner



Benedikt's flower arrangement

Sunday brought the opportunity to visit open gardens in Cromford or Idridgehay or see the Leawood Pumphouse in steam. In the evening, music included a concert for voice, classical guitar and lute and a pub session in the Red Lion.



At the Red Lion

German guests waved goodbye on Monday, Our French visitors on Tuesday visited the Aquabox depot and had a tour of Haddon Hall, led by one of our committee members. In the evening there was an informal sing along music session led by Rob Gill in the Royal Oak.



Visit to Haddon Hall led by Judi Taylor

Farewells were sad, but the three twinning associations plan to meet in Germany next year.

There were a lot of volunteers involved in this weekend who so generously gave their time and we are very grateful to them all and also to Wirksworth Town Council for the support they gave and making the Town Hall available to us.

Some of the feedback we have received includes:

“You put together a fantastic program. Everything was superbly organized; the schedule was relaxed and perfectly coordinated, and everyone in our group felt very comfortable with their host families. One could sense the passion and hospitality with which everything was prepared and carried out. We would like to thank you sincerely for that.”

“Thank you so much for a wonderful visit. We returned to Die in awe at your organisational skills and of your ability to mobilise so many volunteers. It really felt like the whole town rolled out the red carpet for us. We loved the variety of activities and visits as well as the informal times, fuddles, market and pub music”

“This first experience in Wirksworth was enchanting! It was a huge pleasure to exchange ideas, communicate, share and receive emotions, discover a little about English life, and discuss a wide variety of topics!”

See more photos online at <https://www.wirksworthtwinning.org.uk/past-events/visit-to-wirksworth-june-2026>

Witches and Wizards Needed *5th October 2026*



Although this year's visit by our friends from Die and Frankenau has only just ended, we already need to start looking towards the 2029 visit. It seems a long way off, but hosting is expensive and we need to start building up our funds again.

Last year, our most significant fund-raising activity was the Quiz that we put on in the Gothic Hall for Wirksworth's Wizarding Day. So successful and popular was it that we have been asked to do it again on October 5th.

Last year there were six of us on the day and, although we all really enjoyed it, we were rushed off our feet. Ideally, we would like to have a pool of ten people this year, to allow anyone who needs it, to have a break. Not everyone needs to have magical powers, although clearly, they do help! Could anyone who is able to help please contact us using the 'contact' form on the website or directly to Phil Whitney, Pam Taylor or Anna McGuire.

AGM – A Date for Your Diary
20th November 2026

Our AGM is on Friday 20 November

