

History of the Friends of Bönningstedt

Beginning

In 1979 Dignitaries from Bönningstedt visited East Sussex and were brought to Seaford to meet members of our community. The association of the Friends of Bönningstedt was subsequently formed at a public meeting in November 1983, and the formal signing of the Twinning Charter took place in Bönningstedt in May 1984 and in Seaford in November 1984. The Association is run by an elected committee who hold an Annual General Meeting every November.

Bönningstedt and Crivitz were twinned in 1991 on the reunification of Germany. Since that date exchanges between Crivitz and Seaford have been included in the visit programmes to and from Bönningstedt. Crivitz and Seaford have developed a "Partnerschaft" as part of the twinning arrangements.

Aims

The aims of the Association are to promote and foster friendship and understanding between the peoples of Bönningstedt, Crivitz and Seaford and to encourage visits by groups and individuals of all three towns with the aim of broadening the understanding of the cultural, recreational, educational and commercial activities of the towns and to promote a network of Citizens within the European Community which will enhance the understanding of European Citizenship.

Location

Bönningstedt is a small rural town of about 4200 inhabitants and is situated in Kreis Pinneberg which is a County in Schleswig Holstein in North Germany. Kreis Pinneberg is also twinned with East Sussex in South East England.

Crivitz is a small rural town of about 5000 inhabitants and is situated in the district of Schwerin in the County of Mecklenburg in North East Germany.

Seaford is a medium size seaside town of about 26000 inhabitants and is situated in the county of East Sussex in the South East of England.

Exchanges

Many individuals of all three towns have formed lasting friendships with members of each others communities and regularly make exchange visits both through the organised visits and privately. The Seaford Silver Band took part in the first official visit to Bönningstedt in 1984 and has continued to support all three towns in their visits and festivals. Close links have also been established between the Fire Brigades of Bönningstedt and Seaford. Seaford's Town Crier has been appointed as "Stadtausrufer" (Town Crier) of both Bönningstedt in 1983 and Crivitz in 2002 on the 10th anniversary of the first visit by Seaford to Crivitz. Several other organisations such as schools and clubs have established firm links with their counterparts in the three towns.

Activities

Regular exchange visits are organised by the Association between Bönningstedt & Crivitz and Seaford on alternate years. Visits by Seaford to Bönningstedt and Crivitz are organised whenever possible to coincide with festivities in those towns, for instance, in June 2001 a delegation from Seaford took part in the celebrations of the 750th Anniversary of the founding of Crivitz. Seaford reciprocate by arranging social events and participation in local activities and festivals to enable our friends in all three towns to get to know each other better and to improve their knowledge of each others culture, language and environment. We also invite friends from other twinning associations in East Sussex to take part in our events and celebrations. The Seaford Association raises a regular English language newsletter which is distributed to all members, friends, local councils and other bodies who take an interest in our planned activities. Our newsletter contains details of all the current news, activities and events.

The Seaford Association receives no funding from corporate bodies in England so fund raising activities are regularly held to ensure we can meet our monetary commitments.

List of Events of Note

1979. First visit by Bönningstedt to Seaford

1980. Formal Partnership link between East Sussex County Council and Kreis Pinneburg established

1982. Reciprocal visit by Seaford to Bönningstedt

1983. Formal visit by Bönningstedt dignitaries to Seaford to set up the Association of the "Friends of Bönningstedt"

May 1984 (in Bönningstedt) and November 1984 (in Seaford) signing of the official twinning charter between Bönningstedt and Seaford

1984. East Sussex County Council sent a fire engine to Bönningstedt to take part in their Fire Brigades 50th Anniversary celebrations

1985. Seaford was presented with a Europe Flag by East Sussex County Council in recognition of Seaford's efforts to strengthen ties with Europe

1985. "Twin Town of Bönningstedt" signs were erected on all 3 entrance roads into Seaford

1987. Red British Telephone Box presented to Bönningstedt. It is in daily use and is still located in the Bönningstedt shopping centre

1987. Bönningstedt makes a donation to Seaford to restore trees lost during the "Great Gale". These trees are planted in various locations in Seaford

1991. Bönningstedt twins with Crivitz on the reunification of Germany. Seaford establishes a "Partnerschaft" link with Crivitz. Bönningstedt Twins with Racconi on the Greek Island of Thassos. Seaford establishes "Friendship Links" with Racconi

1992. Seaford presents Crivitz with a red British Telephone Box. It is in daily use and still stands opposite the Crivitz Town Hall in the town centre

1993. Seaford's Seafront Promenade renamed as Bönningstedt Promenade and a plaque depicting the Twinning Links was erected on the promenade wall

2000. A Road in Bönningstedt named Seafordkehre in honour of our links. During a twinning visit to Bönningstedt Seaford members visit the German Bundestag in Berlin which has a dome designed by British architect Sir Norman Foster

2002. UK - Germany Twinning Conference takes place in Birmingham

2001. Seaford members attend the 750th Anniversary Celebrations of the founding of Crivitz

2002. Crivitz appoints the Seaford Town Crier, John White, as their official Stadtsausrufer. Ceremony takes place by the Red Telephone Box in Crivitz

2004. 20th Anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Twinning Charter take place in Bönningstedt