

Tenth birthday for twin towns

Report by Martyn Pritchard

MARCHING bands dominated this year's Amersham - Bensheim Society Gala Day at Barn Meadow on Saturday.

The afternoon kicked off with the annual parade from Mill Lane, along High Street, to Barn Meadow.

Leading the way was the Amersham Band, the first time the band had led the parade. The Amersham Band were founded in 1890 by George Ward, an Amersham man with close Methodist links. The band reformed in 1977 after a period of inactivity.

Other bands on parade included the Bürgerwehr, a marching band from Bensheim, who looked splendid in their 1814 military costume; the highly-competent Fehlheim Band, and the Chesham All-Girls Band.

Civic dignitaries figured prominently in the parade. Representing Amersham was Town Mayor Councillor Roy Clarke. From Bensheim there was Bürgermeister Georg Stölle, with Madame Marie-Therese Meurgey, Deputy Mayor of Beaune, also present.

The highlight of the afternoon was, arguably, Mikk Bradley's outstanding performance in the mini-marathon. Bradley took an early lead in the six-mile run and came home well ahead of the rest of the field.

Bradley's win was all the more memorable because it was his third successive victory in the Chiltern Running Club-organised event.

Visitors to Barn Meadow had the option of taking a helicopter ride; sampling traditional German roast pig; or watching a children's gymnastics display, staged by the children of St Mary's School.

Another surprise came in the middle of the afternoon when the Bürgerwehr, the Bensheim Guard, loaded their rifles and fired three volleys into the air in celebration of the occasion.

The arena events were followed by a reception at Amersham Community Centre, in Chiltern Avenue, where the Duchess of Burgundy, Beaune's wine queen for the year, Marie Odile Thevénot, was guest of honour.

On Sunday, the dignitaries attended a civic service at St Mary's Parish Church, con-

ducted by the Rev Anthony Priddis, Rector of St Mary's. Taking twinning as his theme, Mr Priddis spoke about the desirability of the close association between Amersham and Bensheim.

"The service was particularly memorable because this year's weekend was the tenth anniversary of the forging of the link between Amersham and Bensheim," he said.

"Twinning is especially important because we are all God's children, and goodwill amongst people of different nationalities is vital today."

Following the civic service, a civic luncheon was held during which Herr Stölle presented Councillor Clarke and Jean Archer, president of the Amersham-Bensheim Society, with gifts.

The Amersham Band played throughout the lunch, at The Market Hall. The weekend drew to a close on Sunday evening, with another reception at The Drake Hall.

Councillor Jean Archer, president of the Amersham-Bensheim Society, said: "The gala day was a great success, despite the bad weather towards the end of the afternoon."

"Over 200 German visitors attended and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Other civic notables attending this year's occasion were Jean Pierre Galan, secretary-general of Beaune; and Her Karl Pfeiffer, deputy Bürgermeister of Bensheim."

Tony Weedon, chairman of the Amersham-Bensheim Society, added: "I had the responsibility of looking after the Bürgerwehr. They were 60-strong, and 17 of their number were riflemen."

"The Bürgerwehr were accompanied in the gala day parade by a folk group, who were dressed in traditional costume. They are called the Beidermeier, and they were dressed in distinctive dress."

The Chesham All-Girls Band were hosts to the Fehlheim Catholic Church Band. The girls band arranged a full programme for their visitors, which included a trip to Thorpe Park, and Saturday's gala day.

Next week the Chesham All-Girls Band leave the town for an eight-day tour which will include visits to Friedrichsdorf, Darmstadt and Bensheim.

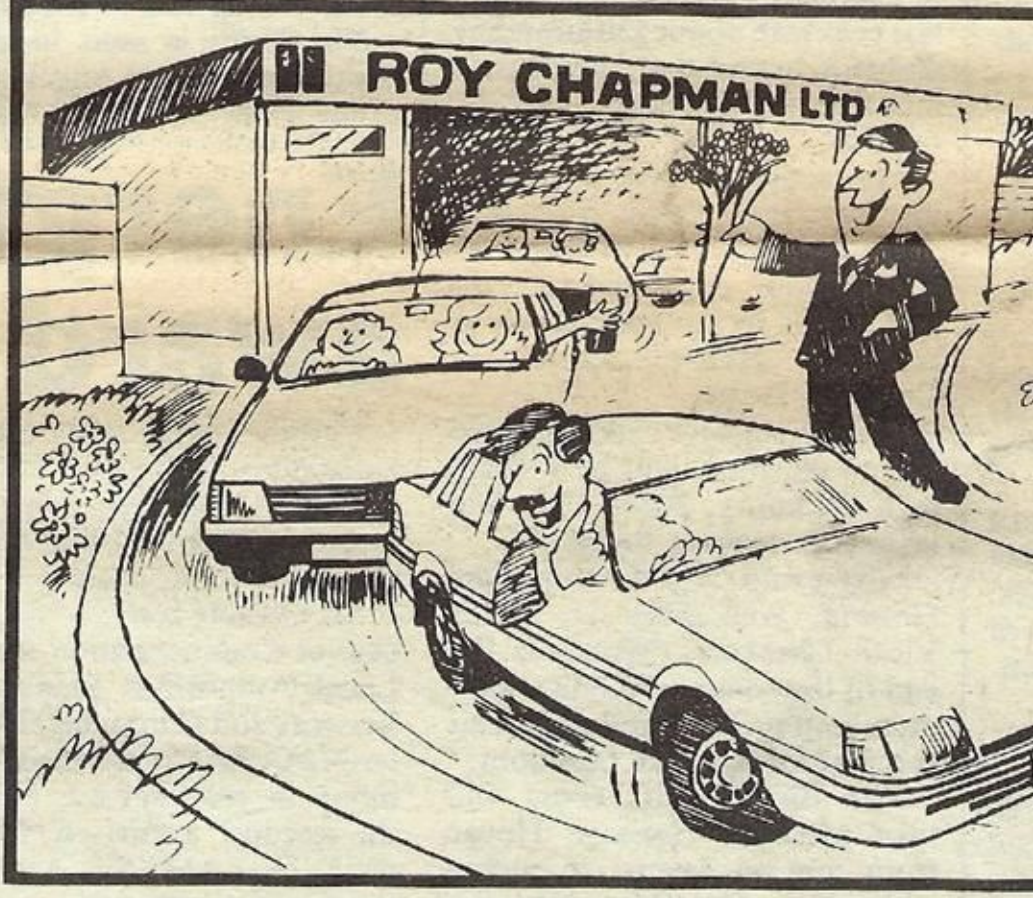
It could be Beaune next

Amersham may twin with Beaune if current negotiations are completed satisfactorily. A civic delegation headed by Marie-Therese Meurgey, deputy Mayor of Beaune, attended the Amersham-Bensheim Gala Day at Barn Meadow and the weekend's festivities.

Further talks are planned, and Madame Meurgey told the Examiner: "This is my first visit to Amersham. I have enjoyed the weekend very much."

A spokesman for the Amersham-Beaune Link Steering Committee said: "We very much hope that a formal twinning will take place." Beaune, near Dijon, is famous for its wine. The town has been twinned with Bensheim for a number of years.

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Maybe — they liked the time we spent with them in the car of their choice over our 25 years

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Mit 23 Kindern und Jugendlichen war der Bensheim-Amersham-Freundeskreis in England. Hier besuchte man die Miniaturstadt BeaconsCourt.

Wimbledon und Staatsbesuch

Mit 23 Jugendlichen nach England geflogen

BENSHEIM. Das erste Mal ermöglichte der Bensheim-Amersham-Freundeskreis seinen jugendlichen Mitgliedern einen Aufenthalt in England. Für Privatquartiere war gesorgt und so konnte man am ersten Ferientag ab Frankfurt nach London fliegen. Unterwegs gab es ein erstes „Beschnuppern“ zwischen den Betreuern und den Jugendlichen.

Ich hatte gleich zu Anfang das Gefühl, daß wir uns gut vertragen würden. Von London-Gatwick machten wir gleich einen Abstecher nach Windsor Castle. Miß Cleary, eine gebürtige Bensheimerin, begleitete uns auf der ersten Fahrt in England. Abends wurden wir von unseren Gasteltern in Amersham erwartet.

Am nächsten Tag besuchten wir in London den Tower. Imposant, diese alte, ehrwürdige Burganlage. Hier war zum erstenmal die englische Tradition deutlich zu spüren. Am Samstag waren die meisten der Jugendlichen mit ihren Gasteltern unterwegs. Die anderen fuhrten mit mir nach Wimbledon. Galt es doch die Chance zu nutzen, Boris Becker live zu sehen. Das Abenteuer Wimbledon war Spitze!!

Abends sorgte der Freundeskreis Amersham mit einer Disco dafür, daß

der Kontakt zu unseren englischen Freunden vertieft wurde. Sonntags besuchten wir die alte Universitätsstadt Oxford.

Der nächste Tag war ausgefüllt mit Schwimmen und einem Besuch in der kleinen Miniaturstadt BeaconsCourt, die in der Nähe liegt. Tags darauf hatte eines der Mädchen Geburtstag und wir fuhrten nach London. Wir wollten die Wachablösung vor dem Buckingham Palast anschauen, doch es wurde ein Staatsempfang daraus.

Ariane konnte an ihrem Geburtstag Richard von Weizsäcker und der Queen aus nächster Nähe zuwinken. Na, Glück muß man haben. Die Stadtfahrt anschließend hat bei uns einen bleibenden Eindruck hinterlassen. Drei Tage blieben uns noch. Die Zeit raste wie im Flug.

Mittwoch lernten wir dank Miß Clea-

ry Amersham kennen. Die herrliche Altstadt, das Museum und einiges mehr. Am nächsten Tag begleiteten uns einige englische Freunde nach Little Hampton, ein sehr hübscher Badeort an der Küste Englands. Es war ein herrlicher Tag am Meer.

Am letzten Tag wurden morgens noch schnell die Koffer gepackt, denn am Nachmittag und Abend wollten wir noch einmal London in aller Ruhe genießen. Einkaufen bei Harrods, durch den Hyde Park schlendern, am Piccadilly Circus das bunte Treiben beobachten (in 5 Minuten 54 Taxis) einen Pup besuchen und sich auch mit dem Bus verfahren, das alles gehörte zu unserem letzten Ferientag in England.

Am anderen Morgen bei der Abfahrt gab es ein paar Tränen. Ich glaube, es hat allen sehr gut gefallen. Besonders für mich war es ein großes Erlebnis. Ich danke, auch im Namen der Jugendlichen, dem Freundeskreis in beiden Städten, der es uns ermöglicht hat, zehn so herrliche Tage zu erleben.

Kristina Oehring