

Bailiff's speech at dinner in Bad Wurzach

Wednesday 28th April 2010

Herr Bürgermeister, Chief Minister, Connétable of St Helier, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Although I have much more grey hair than you, Herr Bürgermeister, you and I are both too young to have been alive during the Second World War. We can only imagine therefore what it must have been like for those families who were told in September 1942 on one day's notice that they were to be deported from Jersey to Germany. 618 of those deportees were brought to the Castle here in Bad Wurzach. I am delighted that a number of those who were brought here are with us today on this 65th Anniversary of the day the gates of the Castle were opened to freedom.
2. Angela Trigg, who has played such an important part in developing the relationship between Bad Wurzach and St Helier, was telling me of a conversation she had on the day of the twinning in 2002. A German lady was telling her that she and her mother would regularly walk past the barbed wire fence containing the internees and, when the guards were not looking, she would throw sweets and fruit to the internees. Internees tell of many other acts of kindness which they received from the local population.
3. It was in this spirit that friendships sprung up after the war but it took a long time for the spirit of reconciliation to mature into the twinning arrangement between our two communities.
Interestingly, many of those most in favour of the reconciliation

were internees. The fact that the twinning was achieved owes much to the efforts of your predecessor Herr Morczinietz and of Herr Herman Bilgeri. They both worked long and hard to achieve it and I am delighted that they are both here today.

4. I had the good fortune to stand in for my predecessor as Bailiff, Sir Philip Bailhache, on the occasion of the twinning ceremony in St Helier in July 2002 and I know, Herr Bürgermeister, that your moving and sincere speech on that occasion played an important part in the success of the twinning arrangements.

5. Since then, the relationship has gone from strength to strength and there have been numerous exchanges, particularly involving young people, which is so important as it forges friendships through to the next generation. I cannot mention all of the various exchanges which have taken place but I would pick out for special mention the participation of bands and dance groups from Bad Wurzach in the Battle of Flowers; visits of the Youth Theatre from Jersey to Bad Wurzach; the exchanges of Rangers involving Franz Reiner from Bad Wurzach Reed and Nature Conservation Centre and Jon Horn from the National Trust of Jersey; the participation of the Band of the Island of Jersey in the Holy Blood Festival week last year; and finally the Sepp Mahler exhibition in Jersey and the Blampied exhibition in Bad Wurzach. But perhaps the highlight was the participation of 5 students from Bad Wurzach in the performance in Liberation Square before Her Majesty the Queen on the 60th Anniversary of Liberation. These events and exchanges do not just happen and I would like to pay tribute to you Herr Bürgermeister and to Constable Simon Crowcroft for your

joint leadership and enthusiasm which has made the twinning arrangement the success that it is. I would also like to pay particular tribute to Angela Trigg who is the Chairman of the Partnerschaft Committee in Jersey and who works so hard in support of the twinning arrangements. The twinning has also paved the way for wider reconciliation in that last year, for the first time, the German Ambassador to the United Kingdom attended our Liberation Day celebrations and his visit was well received by Islanders.

6. Finally, on behalf of all your guests from Jersey, I would like to thank you Herr Bürgermeister and the people of Bad Wurzach for your generosity in inviting us all to celebrate with you this 65th Anniversary of the liberation of internees from the Castle. For the internees, it remains a day of fundamental importance in their lives and, for all of us, events like this are proof that the spirit of reconciliation, which took a while to develop but found tangible form in the twinning arrangement, is flourishing strongly and successfully to the benefit and enjoyment of the people of both Bad Wurzach and Jersey.
7. For the benefit of our friends here in Germany, I would like to repeat that last passage in German although I hope I will be forgiven for my poor German.
8. Zum Schluss möchte ich mich gerne bei Ihnen, sehr geehrter Herr Bürgermeister, und bei allen Bürgern von Bad Wurzach für die großzügige Einladung bedanken, mit Ihnen gemeinsam den 65. Jahrestag der Befreiung der Internierten zu feiern. Den damaligen

Gefangenen wird dieser Tag in unvergesslicher Erinnerung bleiben. Für uns alle sind Veranstaltungen wie diese eine Bestätigung, dass der Geist der Versöhnung, dessen greifbarer Beweis sich in unserer über Jahre hinweg entwickelten Städtepartnerschaft manifestiert, zum Nutzen und zur Freude der Menschen von Bad Wurzach und Jersey immer weiterwächst und gedeiht.