

## Friendship Weekend 2016

**Thursday June 16 to Sunday 19 June**

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June four sisters from SI Almelo, Holland, six from Kristiansand, Norway, five from Munsterlandsud, Germany and five from Silkeborg, Denmark met members of SI Weybridge at the Holiday Inn, Shepperton for a Friendship Weekend. Five members of Weybridge were staying at the hotel and during the weekend other Weybridge members arrived and went on the outings.



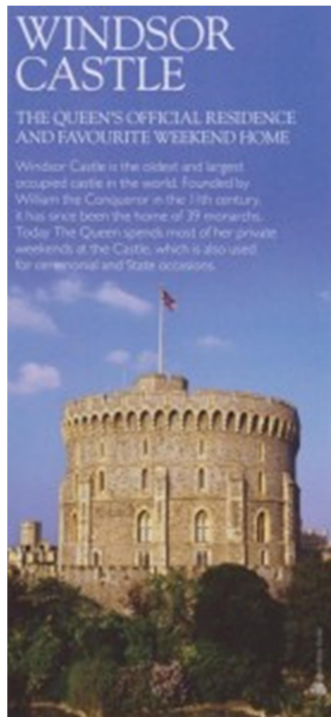
## Group Photo Walton and District

Almelo (Netherlands), Silkeborg (Denmark) and Munsterland Sud (Germany)



On Friday morning everyone was taken by car to Runnymede to board a boat to Windsor. On arrival at Runnymede some members walked across the rather muddy field to the site of The JFK Memorial.

On the way upstream everyone was treated to the sight of ducklings, cygnets, herons and cormorants as well as many beautiful riverside properties and boats. There was also an on-board commentary and the opportunity to buy drinks and snacks. There are 2 very low bridges en route and the roof of the boat had to be lowered which caused quite a lot of amusement. The weather was dry but cloudy but on arrival at Windsor the sun came out as we walked through the town to the Castle.



On arrival at Windsor Castle everyone walked around the State Apartments and saw the Dolls House at and there was time to stroll around the town at their own pace and those that wanted to had the opportunity to shop for souvenirs. Eventually everyone met up again on the river bank ready for the trip back to Runnymede. The Royal Standard was flying over the castle but as the Ascot races were on it was assumed that the Queen would be at Ascot as she is a very keen horsewomen and owner.



Back at the hotel there was time to freshen up and then it was off again and this time to a riverside pub where everyone enjoyed fish and chips and their choice of dessert and drinks after which everyone was ready for a good night's sleep.

On Saturday morning a coach picked everyone up at 9.30 for a trip to Polesden Lacey. On the way Jeannie gave a quick talk explaining who the house had belonged to and how it got in to the hands of the National Trust. On arrival, the house was yet to open so everyone took the opportunity to visit the grounds and the rose garden especially delighted the visitors as did the surrounding countryside. Once inside the house everyone admired the beautiful rooms and the music which was being played on the grand piano. A short time was left to visit the gift shop and then it was back on the coach to:

### **Watts Gallery Artists' Village**

On arrival everyone enjoyed a very good lunch of quiche, a variety of salads and a drink in the Old Kiln building after which there was time to explore the Gallery, The De Morgan Collection, the Studio, the Watts Chapel and Limnerslease at leisure. At 3pm everyone returned to the Old Kiln building and was given a cup of tea and biscuits. The curator of the museum gave a talk with pictures about their new collection of early photographs and the progression of photography in the Victorian era. It became all the rage especially after it was possible to print multiple copies of "carte de visite" and there were many familiar names, but maybe not faces, to see including Charles Dickens, Charles Darwin, Ford Maddox Brown and many other celebrities of the time including one of Queen Victoria with a son, a grandson and a great-grandson all of whom would later be king in their turn as Edward VII, George V and Edward VIII.

Back on the coach and it was off to Guildford Cathedral. The purpose of the visit was to see the Soroptimist stained glass window. Unfortunately the Cathedral is undergoing a major repair and cleaning operation and there was scaffolding up inside so the window was obscured somewhat. However, with a bit of bending and stretching it could be seen quite well.

Throughout the weekend the weather had been very variable but luckily the sun shone just at the right times.



That evening the Club hosted a Gala Dinner and we were joined by Ruth Healey, Regional President and four “Soroptimists” . One member of each of the visiting clubs thanked Weybridge for the great visit and hoped that they would do as good a job when it was their turn. They also all gave a donation to the Club to be used to help any cause that was chosen.

Sunday morning saw the departure of most of our visitors and Margaret Sears kindly offered a brunch at her house for those who were not leaving first thing.

We were all very sorry to say goodbye to our new and old friends but with promises that it wouldn't be long before were all back together again.

## **Below are some emails of thanks from our sisters.**

*Dear Soroptimist Club of Weybridge,*

*You arranged a wonderful friendship meeting, and it was so good to see old and new friends.*

*Everything was perfect and interesting! The hotel was very comfortable in nice surroundings. And to do sightseeing with local friends is much better than being a lonely tourist!!*

*The boat trip on the Thames River was an adventure, and so was Windsor with its impressive castle. We also got a good impression of your fertile, green country! Fish and chips is my favourite eating, and it was a lovely pub and good company.*

*The coach tour to the National Trust property with the lovely flower garden and museum and on to the Watts gallery and the chapel was all something you do not get as a regular tourist.*

*And luckily for Betten and me, we did not leave after the farewell party on Sunday night, so we got the wonderful invitation to brunch in Margaret's huge and beautiful garden! That was a real treat! Thank you, Margaret!!*

*I am very grateful for my Soroptimist membership. That has given me friends both at home and abroad. Hopefully we shall all see each other in Silkeborg, Denmark next year.*

*Ingrid*

*Dear all,*

*Thank you so much for some great days together and such a successful meeting.*

*I enjoyed every minute!*

*And a special thank you to the five of you from me for all your driving around with me! Also it was a special welcome to be met at Heathrow on arrival, much appreciated!*

*The days were so well organized and made it possible to meet with everyone and have a good visit. Well thought. And everywhere you made sure to have everyone with you!*

*Thank you – and welcome in Silkeborg next year.*

*Love from Hanne*

Yet another 'thank you' from one of our visitors.

*Dear Danny*

*Thank you so much for wonderful days and a very successful Friendship Meeting. Special thank you, for all our talk together. I am very pleased, that I have met you.*

*Give my regards to all the members in the club*

*Hope to see you in Silkeborg next year.*

*All the best*

*Ulla*

More thanks

*Dear Alexis,*

*Thank you very much for sending the nice Photos of the Chapel and many thanks for you and your "best sisters" for offering us those unforgettable impressions of your country and for the dear hospitality in these days. Hope to see you in Germany next time. We also try to do our best.*

*With kind regards*

*Hildegard*

*Dear Alexis,*

*Thank you very much for the splendid meeting! Everything went so well, even the weather didn't disappoint us. Now you'll need a rest and I hope that you can enjoy a nice summer.*

*Please give my regards to all your club-members, and thanks to all those who helped with the organisation of the successful event.*

*We had a good journey back in spite of a delay of one hour.*

*Love Maria*

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