

A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM EAST GRINSTEAD TWINNERS

EUROPE ON YOUR DOORSTEP



Florence Gonguet-Rey, Mayor John Saull, Ken Averill, Sabine Klaus and Elfriede R thinger at the exhibition

On 2nd December teachers, parents and their children, town councillors and the Mayor, and the Chairman and members of the East Grinstead Town Twinning Association assembled in the Greenstede Gallery at Chequer Mead, together with representatives from Bourg de P age and Mindelheim, for the launch of an exhibition, *Europe on Your Doorstep*, celebrating the work of local schools in promoting foreign languages and links with other countries.

All our schools provided colourful and engrossing exhibits, and the East Grinstead Society and the town library among the contributors.

Included in the many examples of outstanding work done to promote international links was a stand devoted to eTwinning, an initiative sponsored by the British Council, showing lively online exchanges between young people in East Grinstead and Kabul.

The Mayor welcomed our guests from France and Germany, Florence Gonguet-Rey, Elfriede R thinger and Sabine Klaus, and expressed his appreciation of the work which had gone into the exhibition and his admiration of the range of achievement on display.

Ken Averill, Chairman of Town Twinning, thanked everyone who had contributed to the success of the exhibition, especially the teachers and children involved, and our visitors praised the warm welcome they had received when visiting local schools.

Certificates and prizes were awarded to the winners of a poster competition sponsored by Town Twinning, and all were warmly applauded. Guests then enjoyed a buffet and drinks provided by Twinners.



Overall poster competition prizewinner Emilia Stoydin with Mayor John Saull and Florence Gonguet-Rey from Bourg de Péage

LOCAL HOSPITAL LEADS THE NATION

The Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead is the first centre in the country to offer specialist reconstructive hand surgery.

The hospital has started using an injection to treat patients with a common and often debilitating hand condition called Dupuytren's contracture, which leaves people's hands bent and out of shape.

Leading hand surgeon Harry Belcher, who performs the procedure at the QVH, said:

"I have been really impressed with the results from this new treatment." Traditionally, the only treatment has been a surgical procedure. But in April, UK surgeons were given the go-ahead to use a new drug called Xiapex, which works by dissolving the Dupuytren's cord.

Mr Belcher said: "I have performed around 34 of these procedures since August, and there have been some great results." The new injection is proven to be effective with excellent results in suitable patients. It is also much more cost effective for the NHS as it is around 33 per cent cheaper than surgery.

CHARITY FUNDRAISER WINS AWARD

A Horse lover who has dedicated her life to an international equestrian charity has been given an award for her work.

Diane Price, 67, of Ship Street, East Grinstead, has been given the Volunteer of the Year award by equestrian magazine *Your Horse* for her work with international animal welfare charity The Brooke.



Mr Brookie the donkey

The Brooke is dedicated to improving the lives of working horses, donkeys and mules.

Diane said: "It came as an absolute surprise. I had no idea that I had even been nominated."

She has supported the charity for more than 17 years and since becoming a full-time volunteer fundraiser in 2000 has raised more than £100,000.

Diane travelled to Egypt in 2009 to see the mobile veterinary clinic she had raised funds for and said she was inspired by seeing the charity's work in action.

Charlotte Hodivala, Brooke's community fundraising manager, said: "We are incredibly proud of Diane. She is an inspiration to all with her kind-heartedness and unwavering enthusiasm."

LOCAL RESIDENTS' VIEWS SOUGHT

EAST Grinstead residents have until 13th January to submit their views on the draft District plan before a 12-week public consultation closes.

The purpose of the document is to set out in broad terms what, where, when and how development will take place in Mid Sussex over the next 20 years. It has been prepared with the help of town and parish councils in the district so that it reflects the views of local communities. It outlines the existing traffic congestion problems along the A22 and A264.

Mid Sussex District Councillor for Planning and Regeneration Gary Marsh said: "The headline news is that our draft plan proposes a significant reduction in the number of houses to be built in Mid Sussex, compared with the targets

previously imposed on us by the Government."

PLAN TO SELL PARISH HALLS

COMMUNITY groups have reacted with anger to news that East Grinstead's Parish Halls will be sold off. The Town Council says it can no longer afford the upkeep of the declining halls and has decided to sell them to a housing developer. But groups that regularly hire out the space, in De La Warr Road, are furious they will be left without a meeting place.

The Parish Halls trustees voted unanimously to sell the halls and invest the money in Chequer Mead, which the town council oversees. They say it will fund new community rooms for groups to use within the arts centre, which is in the same road.

Meanwhile, the manager of Chequer Mead, Hannah Kester, expressed delight at the news of investment in the theatre. "I think it is very early days, but it is a very exciting idea," she said. "We will use the money to invest in Chequer Mead as a community facility. "The Parish Rooms are a very valuable facility in the town, but it is very exciting to be part of these changes."

Further information

East Grinstead Courier & Observer
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