



LEDBURY & STRÖMSTAD TWINNING ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER

The Winter Newsletter comes with Christmas messages from both sides of the North Sea.

Greetings from Strömstad - Wishing You A Merry Christmas And A Happy New Year

My best wishes for a healthy and happy Christmas and a Happy New Year! In Strömstad, we are looking forward to a peaceful Christmas. The town is more quiet than usually this time of the year as people and companies still struggle with negative effects due to pandemic-related bordercrossing difficulties, preventing our Norwegian friends and customers to visit us. The border was open in the summer and the beginning of autumn, but today – we are again experiencing the negative impact of our hospitality industry and local companies depending on international trade and foreign visitors.

However, the good news is that the market nearly recovered in summertime, proving that our exclusive products - magnificent nature sceneries, small city charm combined with adventure activities and reasonable commodities are attractive enough to lead the way out of the pandemic once the situation turns back to normal. In addition, new, interesting business ideas are emerging, reducing the dependence on the Norwegian market.

In appreciation of our common concern for the future and the twinning challenges in the light of the pandemic, we extend our very best wishes! May the coming season of joy open doors to new opportunities and pave new paths of sustainable development as well as twinning activities!

Best regards

Kent Hansson

Mayor of Strömstad



Greetings from Ledbury

Although some Covid-19 restrictions have been reintroduced in the UK, the community has not lost its Christmas spirit and continue to help those in need.

Ledbury has continued to host events in the town, including a car rally, the annual Mop Fair and Ledbury Carnival, Ledbury Christmas Light Switch on and the late-night shopping- all well attended!

This weekend we opened the Chapel of Rest to allow residents and visitors to light a candle in memory of their loved ones. Local funeral directors provided free refreshments, including scrumptious mince pies – we raised over £140 for the Veterans Support Association which is my chosen Mayor's charity.

This afternoon our winner of the Christmas card competition, Anya Emery collected her gifts and pack of the cards printed from her design. It was a great honour to meet the family and find out where her inspiration had come from- we have some budding artists in Ledbury (please see picture below)

I would like to wish everybody from Strömstad a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Best wishes,

Andy Manns
Mayor of Ledbury



Message from the Chair of Ledbury Strömstad Twinning Association:

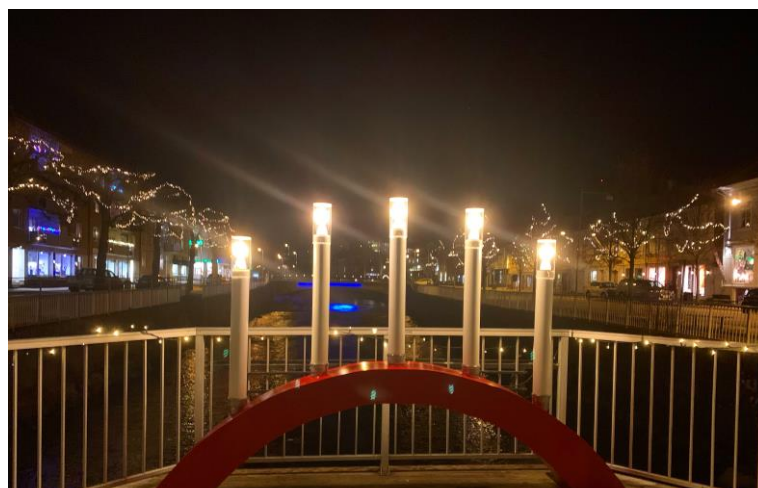
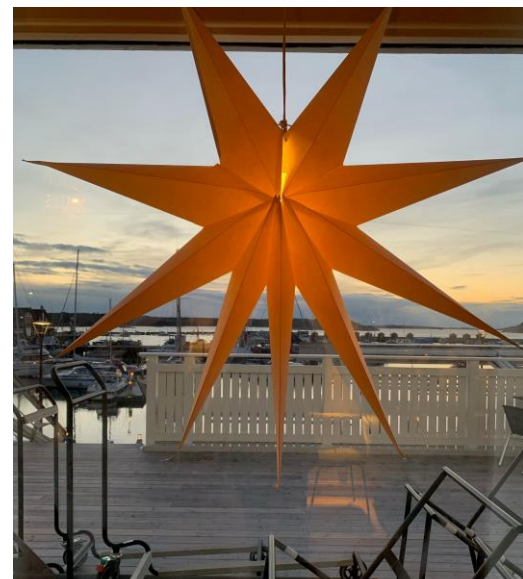
Although the impact of the pandemic has greatly restricted activities with Stromstad, contacts have been maintained on a regular basis, via links with schools, read more about this on Page 4. Contacts have also continued via our footballers and of course personal friendships too.

Both sides of the North Sea are now considering plans to hold delayed Twentieth Anniversary celebrations in the summer of 2022 and we are all looking forward to the recommencement of visits between our two towns.

In the meantime I would like to wish you a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and a good New Year.
God Jul och Gott Nytt År.

Caroline Alexander

Christmas Scenes Around Strömstad:



Student exchange since 2014 for Swedish teenagers at Strömstiernaskolan in Strömstad and students at Whitecross High, Hereford:

It all started when two students from Sweden visited Whitecross High, Hereford, in July 2014. The exchange was introduced by the Ledbury/Strömstad Twinning Association via Jill and Clive Jupp, who had already been visiting schools in Strömstad many times since our exchange started in the summer of 2000.

Throughout the years Swedish students have visited Whitecross High three times, in 2014, in 2017 and in 2019. In 2019 we also visited the Primary School in Ledbury.

In 2020, to enable contact to continue, in spite of COVID-19, the Twinning Association started up digital meetings via Zoom. In the autumn we met up with students from Strömstad and Hereford. The topics were The Environment, Recycling and Leisure Activities.

In 2021 we started up our digital meetings at Teams focusing on Snow White, since the Swedish students had been studying the fairy tale, both the original one by the Grimm brothers and the American version by The Disney Company. They acted it out in class and were graded for speaking. We, 15 students from Strömstad, the English teachers Ninni Liljestrand Qvicklund and Katie Horne, Jill Jupp from the Twinning Association and the very devoted student at Whitecross High, Zac. We compared and discussed the original version to the famous and modern short story by Roald Dahl. It was very interesting and great fun.

Comment from Zac at Whitecross 'I thought the Snow White Swedish Teams meeting was cool, because I got to hear not only other people's views on Snow White but an international view. The pupils were really nice. One of the girls, Sarah, even asked me how my life was going. Their spoken English was great. It was also cool to see their rooms in Sweden with the video chat'.

This was a great experience and we decided to continue our exchange via digital Book Circles using Microsoft Teams.

Since then, the two schools have tried to meet via Teams, although technical difficulties meant that some of the Swedish students were unable to join. A discussion eventually took place. Both schools have read and enjoyed 'The Hunger Games' Suzanne Collins and 'The Boy in Striped Pyjamas' John Boyne. 'The Perks of Being a Wallflower' Stephen Chbosky was also recommended. These experiences have demonstrated to the students the importance of being well prepared and that even 21st Century technology can have problems all of its own.

The Science teachers and the students at Strömstiernaskola are keen to meet again on Teams next term to discuss ways of safeguarding the environment and reducing the use of single use plastics etc. The teachers from the two schools are looking at dates and times to enable this to go ahead. We always have to remember that Sweden is an hour ahead, which brings its own challenges when planning these meetings!

Ninni Liljestrand Qvicklund Teacher at Strömstiernaskolan

Swedish Christmas and New Year Traditions:

The Swedish have their main Christmas Celebration on Christmas Eve, including the exchange of gifts and their Julbord the Christmas Table. As in England, Christmas in Sweden is a time for winding down and relaxing with family and friends. A lot of things are described as 'mysig', the equivalent of Danish 'hygge' meaning cosy and comfortable.

In Sweden it's the Jultomte who hands out Christmas gifts, a figure who's a cross between a traditional Swedish gnome (tomte) and Santa Claus.

On Christmas Eve, the Disney show 'Kalle Anka och hans vänner önskar God Jul' ('Donald Duck and his friends wish you a Merry Christmas') proves so popular year after year that up to 50 percent of the Swedish population sit down to watch it. This has the result that at 3pm on Christmas Eve, when the show begins, there's a spike in electricity usage as everyone settles in front of the TV, a phenomenon known as the Kalle Anka-effekt (Donald Duck effect).

Twelfth Night is 6th January but after this there is there's the 'julgransplundring' (Christmas Tree plundering) to look forward to. This takes place on the 20th day of Christmas (Tjugondag Knut, St Knut's Day on January 13th) and involves dancing around the tree before removing the Christmas decorations, smashing and eating of gingerbread houses, as well as games and music. Finally, the tree is removed from the house; in the past, they were literally thrown out of windows, but these days they are taken to a designated area provided by local authorities.

God Jul and Gott Nytt År



Swedish Recipe Corner: Svenska Scones and Preserves



Swedish Scones are more like Soda Bread. The addition of sunflower seeds and or caraway seeds gives a nice savoury twist. Serve warm and eat with butter and jam such as fig preserve or one with raspberry and blueberries and a slice of cheese. Delicious. Frequently served in Sweden as part of Fika, a social institution in Sweden, which means taking the time to have a break, often a coffee break with friends, colleagues, family etc. "Ska vi ha fika" shall we take a break/spend time together/slow down, a time when everything is put on hold.

Ingredients and Method: Makes two scone rounds, eight individual scones.

1 teaspoon whole caraway seeds	Grease and line a baking sheet.
3 teaspoons of sunflower seeds	Toast the caraway seeds and sunflower seeds in a frying pan over medium heat. When they have coloured and smell nice remove and cool in a separate bowl.
390 grams of self-raising flour	
1.5 teaspoons of baking powder	Sift together the flour, salt and baking powder.
1 teaspoon of salt	Rub in the butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
71 grams of unsalted butter	Mix in the seeds, then stir in the milk and combine to form a sticky dough. Do not knead the dough.
1 cup of milk	Divide the dough into two halves and shape into rounds about 15 centimetres wide. Place onto baking tray, leaving a space of around 8 centimetres between to allow room to spread during the cooking.
	Using a knife, score the dough into quarters and mark with a fork.
	Bake for 20 – 25 minutes at 220 C until scones are golden brown. Allow to cool a little before breaking into quarters. Serve warm as suggested above.

Fikonmarmelad:

Ingredients and Method:	Chop the figs into small pieces and then pour over the Port Wine and leave to soak for 2 hours, to soften the figs.
227 grams of dried figs	
1 cup of Port Wine	Put the mixture into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Lower the heat and cook slowly for 10 minutes, stirring continuously. The figs should begin to fall apart and the Port Wine reduce. If the mixture becomes too dry, add a little more Port Wine or water.
	Allow to cool and then place in a food processor and pulse until the preserve is thick, smooth consistency and may be spread. Keeps in the fridge for up to a week or may be frozen.

Drottningsylt (Queen's Jam):

Ingredients and Method:	Place raspberries, blueberries and sugar into saucepan and bring to boil and continue cooking over medium heat, stirring continuously until the mixture is the appropriate consistency (15 to 30 minutes).
255 grams fresh raspberries	
141 grams fresh blueberries	
148 grams preserving sugar	To test for this, place a small spoonful of the mixture onto a cold saucer, if it gels and the skin wrinkles it is set. If too liquid continue cooking.
	Keeps in the fridge for up to a month or maybe frozen.

Twentieth Anniversary Celebrations:

Plans are now underway for the delayed 20th Anniversary celebrations to take place on both sides of the North Sea in summer 2022.

In Ledbury these will take place towards the end of June, around the date of Swedish Midsummer, We hope to be joined by representatives from Strömstad and events will include a community event in the Recreation Ground, an afternoon tea, burial of a time capsule reflecting the 20 years of engagement etc.

The Swifts Footballers are planning to go over at the end of July for the annual football tournament and to join celebrations in Strömstad.

More details will follow in the March 2022 Newsletter.

Forthcoming Social Occasions:

Quiz – Friday 18 March 2022 7.30 pm: To be held at the Ledbury British Legion Social Club. This is always a fun evening and well supported. More information to follow

Smorgasbord Evening: The return of this popular event will take place during May 2022. Date to be confirmed. Venue The Talbot Hotel

Ledbury Carnival Day August Bank Holiday Monday: As in previous years the Association will participate in whatever form the Carnival takes.

Talks to Local Groups/Schools: We are resuming these in the near future. If your group would like more information, please contact the Secretary on 01531 635129 or jill_jupp@hotmail.co.uk

Swedish Language Group: the Group has continued to meet over the last two years both virtually and in person. We have enjoyed some very entertaining evenings thanks to the endeavours of the Co-ordinator, Paul Knott. Singing a Swedish Carol 'Pepparkaksgubbar' was very amusing in December.

Membership Renewal: Letters regarding membership renewal will be going out in the next few weeks but in the meantime if you have any questions, please contact the Secretary on the above number/email address.