BIG PARTY VISIT TO GÖTTINGEN - JULY 2015

Thank you for your interest in this year’s visit to Cheltenham’s twin town of Göttingen, Germany.

The Big Party is a visit that only happens every four years and it provides the perfect opportunity to get to know Cheltenham’s German twin town of Göttingen, to learn about the German way of life, to make new friends, develop cultural links between clubs, societies and various interest groups, as well as giving the opportunity to develop business and professional contacts.

Göttingen, it is a very pretty German town, full of character, charm and friendly people. Göttingen’s website is www.goettingen.de for those who may wish to have a further browse.

Cheltenham has been twinned with the town of Göttingen since 1951 and following the very successful visit to Cheltenham in 2013 of over 120 people from Göttingen, plans are now in hand for a ‘Big Party’ of people from Cheltenham to visit Göttingen.

The dates for the visit are Friday 24 July – Friday 31 July 2015

All travel arrangements by coach will be organised for you, as well as accommodation with families or in hotels and my colleagues in Göttingen provide a programme of events for the week.

Travel
This year the group will travel by coach using a new 53 seater executive Marchants coach fully equipped with air conditioning, reclining seats, toilet, fridge, coffee machine, DVD and Radio / PA.

On the outward journey the group will leave Cheltenham around 7am on the 24th and will stay overnight in Belgium, arriving in Göttingen during the afternoon of Saturday 25 July. On the return journey the group will return without an overnight stop, leaving Göttingen 7/8am on the 31st and arriving in Cheltenham around 10/11pm that evening.

The Cost will be £195 per person. This includes:
- Use of Marchants Executive coach for the duration of the visit
- Outward crossing by ferry Dover/Calais and return crossing by Eurotunnel Calais/ Folkestone.
- One night’s half board accommodation including breakfast in the 4 star Novotel in Leuven, Belgium on outward journey. Dinner not included.
- The price is based on a person sharing a twin / double room in Belgium – a single room supplement is £29.

It does NOT include insurance and excursions in Göttingen. Unfortunately there is no reduction for children, unless the overnight hotel will offer a reduction for a child sharing with 2 paying adults. Enquiries will be made where necessary.

Own Transport
If you prefer to fly, go by train or take your own car, you are more than welcome to do so and once in Göttingen, we would be delighted to include you in the programme of events for the week. If you do fly, may I point out that you are also responsible for your own onward travel from the airport to Göttingen. Do please still send in the booking form with your details so that further information can continue to be sent to you and you can sign up for the various trips and events. Events in Göttingen start on Sunday morning so I would advise arriving on Saturday 25 July.
Accommodation in Belgium
This will be at the 4 star Novotel Leuven Centrum Hotel, Leuven in Belgium. http://www.novotel.com/gb/hotel-3153-novotel-leuven-centrum/index.shtml

The hotel has a bar, restaurant and fitness suite and all rooms are non-smoking. The price includes buffet breakfast, but not dinner which will be up to individuals to purchase at the hotel or by walking into the nearby town. Please indicate on the form which type of room you prefer. The single supplement is £29 per person (double room for sole occupancy). Please note that this hotel does not have true twin bedded rooms – the standard twin room consists of one double bed and one sofa bed. If you are a single traveller and would wish to share a room with someone else then please note this.

Accommodation in Göttingen
If you already have friends in Göttingen, you may wish to make arrangements to stay with them. For others, there is a choice between accommodation with families or in hotels. Göttingen people are very hospitable and there are a large number of people wishing to offer family accommodation to visitors from Cheltenham which I can help organise. If you feel like accepting their offer, you will be assured of a warm welcome and an opportunity to learn about and become part of the German way of life.

Family accommodation is free of charge, but it is hoped that all those accepting the offer of such accommodation, will be able to offer reciprocal accommodation to visitors from Göttingen at a future date or assist in looking after them should they visit Cheltenham. As there is no payment to the host families, we like to suggest guests eat out on occasion or offer to take their hosts out for a meal.

If you are seeking family accommodation, please complete the section on the booking form requesting a few personal details. This will enable us to pair you as best we can with a suitable family.

Hotels in Göttingen
For those wishing to have hotel accommodation, Göttingen has negotiated prices with the following hotels:

Eden Hotel, Reinhäuser Landstr, central and near the Neues Rathaus, www.eden-hotel.de
Hotel Stadt Hannover, Goethallee 21, central www.hotelstadthannover.de/english/
Hotel Kasseler Hof, Rosdorfer Weg 20 – central, www.kasselerhof.de
Hotel Rennschuh, Kasseler Landstr 93, not central but regular busses go to the town centre www.rennschuh.de

Prices for single, twin and double rooms with shower and WC, including breakfast, can be found on the attached hotel reservation form. These discounted prices negotiated by the Göttingen Tourist Office, are in EUROS and are per room per night.

If you wish to stay in a hotel please complete the separate hotel reservation form and return to me together with the main booking form before 31 March. Please ensure you state any special requests and note that you are responsible for settling your own hotel bill when you are in Göttingen.

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Programme
Göttingen is well known for its hospitality and a full programme of events and activities is being organised for the group. A copy of the outline draft programme is attached and includes a welcome reception by the Mayor of Göttingen and a twinning party for all participants and hosts. The options for the full day trip will be a visit to Berlin, travelling by train, or a visit to the Marienburg castle and Herrenhausen gardens in Hannover.

All events/trips are optional and there will be additional charges for the excursions to cover any entrance fees, tour guides etc, and for the use of coaches for those who travelled separately. The cost of the return train fare to Berlin will be approximately 70 euros. There will also be a charge for the twinning party. Further details will be sent to everyone going on the trip at a later date.

Reservation of Places
Attached to this letter is a booking form which, if you wish to go on the trip, should be completed and returned to me by 31 March 2015 at the latest together with a deposit of £50 per person or the full amount of £195. The deposit is non-returnable, unless I am able to fill your place from a waiting list. Bookings will be accepted in order of receipt of deposits and thus early booking is advisable.

Please return the form even if you are making your own travel arrangements as we can still arrange accommodation for you or, if you are staying with friends, we need to know this so you can still be included in the programme of events.

Final Payment
If you have only paid the deposit initially, the outstanding balance of £145 per adult (plus any single supplements) must be paid by Friday 8 May 2015 at the very latest. Any cancellation after this date would have to be covered by your insurance.

All cheques should be made payable to ‘Cheltenham Twinning Association’ OR pay online by bank transfer to:
Cheltenham Twinning Association (Royal Bank of Scotland, 45 Promenade, Cheltenham)
Sort Code : 16 16 13
Account No : 10155423 Ref : Gottingen

Insurance
It is strongly advised that insurance should be taken out and it is YOUR responsibility to ensure you are adequately covered. At a later date you will be asked to provide your insurance details together with next of kin details.

Passport / EHIC
Please ensure that you are in possession of a valid passport and an European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). You can apply for an EHIC online at https://www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card
These cards are free of charge and entitle you to free or reduced cost, medical treatment should you require it whilst in Germany. If you travel without an EHIC and claim against your medical travel insurance, it could adversely affect your claim. You should still purchase travel insurance regardless of whether you obtain an EHIC.
**Contacts**
This trip to Cheltenham’s twin town of Göttingen is an ideal opportunity to make new friends and establish contacts in any area that you might have an interest. Therefore, if you represent a particular club, society, or wish to make business contacts whilst in Göttingen, please include this on the booking form, or speak to me separately about it.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, Annette Wight, on 01242 264311 or email annette.wight@cheltenham.gov.uk if you have any queries about the journey or stay in Göttingen, or would like more booking forms for friends. As I work on twinning on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays do please leave me a voice message or send an email if I am not at my desk. Do please promote the visit to anyone who may be interested.

Deposits / full payment and places on the coach will be confirmed and further details and information will be sent out to participants in due course.

Hoping that you will join us on what I am sure will be a memorable trip.