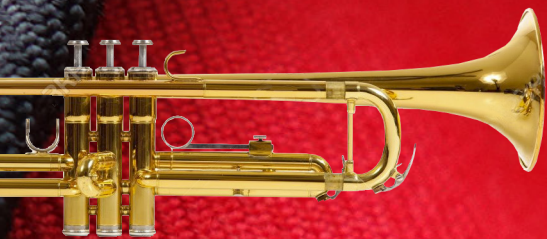


GERMAN TOUR MARKS REED BAND'S MILESTONE



As part of their milestone 60th anniversary celebrations, 54 members and friends of Linlithgow Reed Band were recently involved in a ten-day tour of West Lothian's German twin region of Hochsauerlandkreis. This was the band's sixth visit to the picturesque region of lakes and hills in North-Rhine/Westphalia, the first one in 1981 at the time of the 25th Anniversary.

During the visit, the band played at some of the famous Schützenfests – three day local festivals, whose origins are centuries old. On each day, there is at least one parade through the town, followed by celebrations in the community hall. The Reed Band has long-established links with the Schützenfest in the Arnsberg district of Niedereimer, and the locals were delighted to welcome the Linlithgow musicians for the fifth time.

One of the highlights of the tour was an informal joint concert with the band from the village of Herdringen, near Neheim, which first established a friendship with the Reed Band in 1992. The visitors from Linlithgow stayed in a family-run hotel in Herdringen, which they have used on the last two trips; their influence has been such that the hotel owner is now learning to play the trumpet! He made his debut performance along with other adult learners at the joint concert.

On sightseeing trips, the Scots visited a number of local attractions including the Möhne Dam (of Dambusters fame), and one of the biggest bobsleigh tracks in the world at the ski resort of Winterberg. A trip to Warsteiner Brewery and the Fort Fun theme park, a night at Starlight Express in a theatre specially built for it, and a tour of nearby Paderborn were also on the itinerary.

Commenting on the visit, the trip organiser and Reed Band vice-president,

Seonaid Scott said:

"We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the hospitality we received from our German hosts and it was tremendous to strengthen old friendships and establish new ones. Everyone was very keen to assure us that they would be happy to adopt us if we had any problems following the Brexit referendum!"

"It was fantastic to see such a diverse group, including many of our younger members from Linlithgow Academy, enjoy themselves and represent Linlithgow and Scotland with such acclaim. We are looking forward to returning the amazing hospitality we received when friends from Niedereimer come over for the Riding of the Marches in June, and when the Herdringen band pay us a return visit – hopefully in October 2017!"

Murdoch Kennedy

