

Melton Mowbray and District Twinning Association

(*Founded July 1973*)

A SHORT HISTORICAL NOTE

After the Second World War many people, especially Europeans, felt that ordinary folk should get to know each other better, optimistically that future wars might be avoided. Out of this concept grew the international twinning movement (or Sister Cities as it is called in the USA).

Communities in cities, towns and even down to village level made contact with similar locations in other countries. They exchanged information and views by letter and photographs and visited each other. They sent sportsmen and women, choirs and bands, hobby groups, schools and others and formed links between families. The movement has grown until almost every community in the UK is twinned with at least another in a foreign country.

Twinning is fun and teaches us much about the way other people live and think. We find out about similarities and differences, and learn about other people's values.

Melton Mowbray and District first twinned with nearby Dieppe, in France but later severed that relationship. We then formed a new twinning with Kapelle in Holland based on the firm foundations of friendship which had been in place, mainly via music and bands, for some time. Kapelle is a small and pretty town in the centre of an area famous for its fruit growing, particularly apples and pears and its citizens have a strong feeling of civic pride, and the people are very patriotic. They are kind and friendly, and most of them speak English, many of them fluently.

We have many links of friendship with Kapelle. The Toy Soldiers Marching Band has exchanged visits, so have our fire-fighters, our Swimming Club and our Air Training Cadets. We have also had many coach trips of Meltonians going to Kapelle, and we have received visitors from Kapelle in return. We have mutually benefited by exchange visits coinciding with Melton Day and Kapelle Day and the joys of seeing our respective towns *en fête*.

Melton has also forged another twinning link - this one with Sochaczew in Poland. We already had much in common with Sochaczew. Masterfoods (formerly Pedigree Petfoods) has a sister factory there - Masterfoods Poland and of course, very importantly, Melton itself has a strong Polish community. This historic Polish city, like us, is the centre of an important agricultural area. There are strong musical traditions in both areas. The countryside around both is particularly beautiful

We hope that through visits by all kinds of organisations and through the means of modern communication, such as the internet, videos, audio tapes and letters, we shall build up a real network of friendships and also trade links between the citizens of the Borough of Melton Mowbray and our friends in Kapelle and Sochaczew.

Tentative friendship links have been set-up between Melton and Clarksville in Indiana, USA and although the geographical separation between us is perhaps a bar to many frequent exchanges there is a considerable exchange of communications between the two areas via modern global media, notably the internet, which maintains a closeness of a high degree.