



CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

A good number of our members attended the traditional New Year Dinner, held this year at the Aqua restaurant in Bromley, and our Annual General Meeting in March. In between the two events we welcomed Oberbürgermeister Nikolaus Roth on an official visit to Bromley at the invitation of our President, the Mayor, Councillor Kim Botting. Nikolaus Roth was also able to spend some time with us, and we heard of the challenges facing Neuwied through the weekly arrival of large numbers of refugees who have to be found accommodation and employment. He told us that of all the town twinning

partnerships that Neuwied has, the twinning with Bromley is the most active. The AGM saw changes in our Management Committee, with several long-serving members standing down – my special thanks go to Ralph Palfrey, whose health no longer allows him to take an active part. In their place we welcome Jane Harding and Jamie Meharg (Head of German at Darrick Wood School). During the year we will be holding social and fundraising events so please look out for notices about these and give them your support. Finally, do come and join us on the visit to Neuwied in September.

Bromley red telephone box that turned into a town mini-library

INGE GÜTLER OF OUR TWIN ORGANISATION
FREUNDESKREIS NEUWIED-BROMLEY
REPORTS ON AN IMAGINATIVE RENOVATION

IN GERMANY, many young people now know only about telephone boxes from old films. The fixed boxes have disappeared from our street scenes. Yellow and rectangular, they were useful in their time – for emergencies and contact with distant friends and relatives.

However, Neuwied has a special telephone box. A red, original English kiosk which functioned for a long time on the square in front of the Castle. There it stood after its yellow brothers and sisters had long gone.

Some 30 years ago this box had come as a present from our twin town in England, Bromley, as a symbol of the close relationship between the two towns. But with phone kiosks becoming redundant, the German Telekom organisation did not want to convert the neat red box to expensive card operation. It stood neglected in the square and from being an eye catcher it became in need of restoration.

For a few months the telephone box disappeared – but not for scrapping. It went to the Alice Salomon School where the career preparation year students under the leadership of their teachers Klaus Mallmann (metalwork) and Wolfram Ernst (carpentry) took on



The students of the Alice Salomon School and their English telephone box. Inge is pictured second to right on the left side of the box

its restoration. For the young people it was their first encounter with a telephone box and they took up their task with great enthusiasm. The kiosk was given new coats of bright red paint and the panes of glass and the complete inside were renewed.

The work was close to the school's heart as part of its educational vocation work. It gave the pupils a chance to develop themselves and their confidence. But the phone box will no longer serve its original purpose. It will become a mini-library in the town centre. Small book shelves have been put inside. Books can be easily borrowed without formality and returned. This mini-library idea has already caught on in many German towns.

Now the kiosk from Bromley will wear a bright new dress and we of the two town twinning associations thank the students and will hope the box brings them all good luck in their careers.

● **Editor's note:** This article has been translated by us from German. Any errors are our own.

