

From: alan.mockford
Sent: 08 March 2025 09:52
Subject: Richmond in Europe Association

Dear Fellow Europeans

Please find attached latest newsletter from Fontainebleau which includes details about the forthcoming Reaffirmation, which are being circulated in France. So far 130 of our friends in France & Germany have confirmed their attendance in June, in addition to the members of the European Youth Orchestra, which also includes musicians from Lodi in Italy & Alba Iulia in Romania. Many of our visitors are staying with REA host families & we thank you for your hospitality. It is still not too late to offer to host an individual, couple or family.

Each day further events are being added to the official programme as they are confirmed. For example the bells of St. Mary Magdalene Church in Richmond will be rung on Sunday 8th June & there will be discounted entry to Strawberry Hill House over the reaffirmation weekend plus a special French language tour of this unique Gothic treasure on the Saturday morning.

The full programme is available on the REA website.

<https://richmondineurope.com/2020-reaffirmation/>


Posters advertising the event should now be on display in all borough libraries & public buildings and on community noticeboards. Please could you check your local library & community noticeboard to check that they have not been missed out.




The Reaffirmation long weekend will mark the climax of 6 weeks of celebrations, starting with the European Friendship Concert at St. Mary's Church, Twickenham on Sunday 27th April. Given the outstanding success of last year's concert we are expecting a full house, but tickets are currently still available here.

<https://richmondineurope.com/events/>

At 10 a.m. on Saturday 3rd May the Mayor of Richmond, Cllr. Richard Pyne, will unveil a 5th Information Board about our twin towns in Ham Parade. There will be flags, music & bunting & everyone is invited to attend.

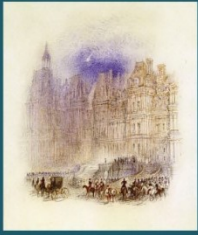


Richmond's Twinned Towns




Fontainebleau lies 60 km south-east of Paris, close to the left bank of the river Seine. It is centred on a magnificent chateau on a site which was inhabited by every French King and emperor over more than 800 years and is now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The first royal residence was a hunting lodge built in the 12th century. In the 16th century François I, contemporary and rival of Henry VIII, replaced the earlier building with a Renaissance-style palace which, in its turn, was modified and enlarged by later monarchs. The chateau was beloved by Napoleon Bonaparte, who restored and completely refurbished it after the French Revolution. It was here that Napoleon bid a tearful farewell to officers of his Old Guard when he abdicated in 1814. With more than 1500 rooms, Fontainebleau remains the most richly furnished of all the French royal chateaux. It also contains one of only two active Real Tennis courts in France.




Fontainebleau: The Departure of Napoleon by J.M.W. Turner



Château de Fontainebleau


Surrounding the town is the Forêt de Fontainebleau, much of which was a royal hunting estate from the 10th century. It is the second largest national forest in France and is recognised for the rich diversity of its flora and fauna. With a vast network of paths for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, it is a popular weekend getaway for Parisians. It is also known for its remarkable rock formations, which attract rock-climbers from around the world.



Forêt de Fontainebleau


Konstanz enjoys an idyllic setting on the shores of Lake Constance (Bodensee in German) at the point where the River Rhine leaves the lake, with the Swiss Alps providing a stunning backdrop. Although most of the modern town lies north of the Rhine, the Old Town lies on the south side of the river, surrounded by Swiss territory. Because of this, the historic centre escaped bombing by the Allies during World War II.

The area around Konstanz was inhabited from prehistoric times. The Romans settled the site in the first century AD and it is from the name of a Roman emperor that the name of the town is derived. In the Middle Ages, Konstanz became an important religious and commercial centre, with the only bridge in the region across the Rhine.




Aerial view of Konstanz, showing the Old Town on the left and the Island of Mainau on the far right

Konstanz is known particularly for the Council which was convened there from 1414 to 1418 to resolve the schism of the Catholic Church between rival claimants to the Papacy. The Council led to the election of a new pope, Martin V, the only time that the election of a pope has taken place north of the Alps. During the course of the Council, the Czech religious reformer Jan Hus was called to Konstanz where he was condemned and burned at the stake. The Council is commemorated satirically by the statue of Imperia, erected in 1993 at the entrance to the harbour.




Statue of Imperia

Today, Konstanz is a lively regional centre with a broad economic base and a thriving university. It has become a popular resort for tourists, and for visitors from neighbouring Switzerland. Amongst its many attractions are the cathedral, dating back partly to the 10th century, the Konzil building, where the Council of Constance was held, and the oldest continuously used theatre in Germany. The town also encompasses the "flower island" of Mainau with its renowned arboretum and gardens.




Konzil building





The town twinning movement started after World War II as part of the process of reconciliation and to contribute to the peaceful development of Europe. Richmond has been twinned with Fontainebleau in France since 1977 and with Konstanz in Germany since 1983.

The twinning of Fontainebleau, Konstanz and Richmond is reaffirmed every five years, with celebrations held in each of the three towns in turn. This information board has been installed to commemorate the reaffirmation celebrations held in Richmond from 6th to 8th June 2025.

Sporting, cultural and educational links between Richmond and its twinned towns are promoted by the Richmond in Europe Association, which has provided this board under a Civic Pride grant. For further information please go to www.richmondineurope.com



Representative photo: Jean-Benoit

From 4th-8th May another Europakonzil will be held in Konstanz. This is an international European youth conference with delegates from Konstanz, Fontainebleau, Lodi, Tabor & **Berdytschiew in Ukraine**. Richmond will be represented by students from Orleans Park School plus a leading member of the council & myself. In these difficult times European gatherings like this have assumed an even greater significance.

The Leader of the council, Gareth Roberts, has authorised the Council of Europe Flag to be flown outside the Civic Centre in Twickenham on Friday 9th May, which is Europe Day.



From 10th May onwards French & German flags will be flown throughout the borough, both outdoors & within public buildings including libraries. If you would like to borrow some please let us know. We have a limited supply for loan.

The Richmond Fair on Saturday 10th May will be taking the Reaffirmation as its theme. The Twickenham Green Fair will be doing likewise on Monday 26th May. REA will be running our gazebo at each event. A special commemorative Reaffirmation canvass bag has also been commissioned & these will be available for sale at the fairs, along with our commemorative mugs. The official programme for the Reaffirmation will be published in April. Thousands of copies are being printed & these will also be available at the fairs.

The forthcoming editions of TW Magazines in Teddington & Twickenham plus the Ham & Petersham Magazine will be featuring articles about REA & the Reaffirmation. They have a combined circulation of over 30,000.

Finally please may I draw your attention to a German literature event at the German School in Petersham on 20th March. Please see the attachment for details.

There is so much to share, but this email is already too long. For further information please go to our website which is updated daily.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at one of the exciting forthcoming events. Thank you for your continued & invaluable support.

Bein cordialement/Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Alan