

## PARISH OF ST HELIER /BAD WURZACH PARTNERSCHAFT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2025 / 2026

2025 represented a most significant year for Jersey, being the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Island's Liberation but also that of Jersey's internees and their families after 2.1/2 years in the Wurzach camp. Over the previous winter, together with a team of talented young artists and musicians from ArtHouse Jersey, the Partnerschaft Committee had kept extremely busy preparing for an Exhibition entitled *Structures & Memory (A Place called Wurzach)*. The formal exhibition opening by the then Bailiff Sir Tim Le Cocq took place on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 and was well attended by the media and important guests, running during the whole month of May 2025.

The weather was kind to us during Liberation Day week 2025 when we hosted a delegation of visitors from Bad Wurzach, including Frau Alexandra Scherer, the Mayor who, in her official capacity, fulfilled numerous ceremonies while the rest of the BW group enjoyed a more relaxing schedule, including visiting the Ecréhous with Jersey Seafaris, a seaside buffet supper and what has become a traditional Indian dinner hosted by Simon on behalf of the Parish of St Helier. Our German guests attended the Liberation Day morning ceremony in Liberation Square, with their week's visit concluding in style on May 10<sup>th</sup> with a fascinating talk by Dr Gilly Carr at the Occupation Tapestry Gallery, representing the launch of the paperback version of her book *A Materiality of Internment*, an in-depth analysis of internee artwork, objects and diaries.

At the beginning of July, it was our turn to visit Germany, with the main group flying with Blue Islands to Zurich and from there by minibus to Konstanz for a 3 day stay at the Hotel Waldhaus Jacob on Lake Konstanz, where other members of the group joined us. We then travelled by coach to Bad Wurzach where a lively delegation of our German friends was waiting to greet us. Wasting no time, Gisela then guided us on a most interesting historical tour of the town. Robert MacRae, the new Bailiff had by then joined us and immediately warmed to the wonderful hospitality of the German Partnerschaft team, including of course BW's Mayor, Frau Alexandra Scherer.

A special feature of the trip for most was a long awaited visit to Biberach. After a guided city tour, we visited the site of the internment and POW camp including a fascinating exhibition. As dusk fell we squeezed in an atmospheric visit to the cemetery where several Jersey internees are buried. The next day, after a guided tour of the "reeds", a moving ceremony took place at the cemetery's wall of remembrance with active participation by Partnerschaft members and internee families, followed by a service in the Schlosskapelle. Gisela then escorted a large group around some of the significant rooms in the Schloss.

The highlight of the visit took place on the last day, with the Heilig-Blut-Fest procession of 1000 horses with their colourful riders and marching bands through the town. On Saturday, a large group of our German friends together with Simon and Angela Crowcroft waved the coach goodbye waving a large Jersey flag, as we left for Zurich airport and home.

The Partnerschaft's 2025-2026 season terminated on 26 April 2026 with a most successful internee liberation commemoration ceremony at the War Tunnels where the Bailiff, Mr Robert MacRae joined us, recalling in his speech the highlights of his visit to BW the previous July. The ceremony was once again well attended and, all agreed, suitably capped what had been a most successful, albeit busy year, for the Partnerschaft.

Lola Garvin