

Visitors from Hamelin

Did you know that Torbay is twinned with the German town of Hamelin? The connection began in 1973 as a youth exchange, and has continued since then. This year, Torbay welcomed a party of about 25 visitors from Hamelin, and PHS were delighted to entertain them with a guided tour of Kirkham House, followed by a visit to the Clink and Bishop's Tower before they moved on to a mayoral reception.

There is a tenuous story that links Hamelin with Torbay. A man called Percy Stow co-founded the Clarendon Film Company, and in 1907 he directed the first film ever made about the Pied Piper of Hamelin. In 1919, Percy came to Torquay to recover from illness, but sadly he died during his stay. He was buried in Victoria Cemetery in Torquay, and the two towns agreed to tend his grave and give him a proper headstone.

Part of the A380 Ring Road is named Hamelin Way in honour of the twin status – further on it becomes Hellevoetsluis Way in honour of our second twin town which is in the Western

Netherlands. A Devon Live article tells that William of Orange is the reason for this twinning link. The future King of England set sail in Holland from the port of Hellevoetsluis at the invitation of Parliament and landed in England at Brixham on 5th November 1688 to claim the throne of James II through his English wife Mary.



Pictured is Adrian giving a guided tour of Kirkham House to our German visitors. Fortunately they all spoke excellent English!