

PARTNERPLAN

David Sinclair - Czech Republic. July 2018

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Dear Friends,

Life here in Prague has suddenly gone quiet in July! Most people have gone on holiday and I am the only one left in the Ecumenical and International Relations Department. It's a big contrast to June, which was very busy indeed.



The international visitors to the ECCB Synod at the Unity of Brethren Museum in Kunvald

The ECCB held its annual Synod meeting in Litomyšl and the guests from other churches and other countries were hosted by our department, attending the opening service (in the local Catholic Church, which was the only building of sufficient size), having a day touring churches in the area, attending an evening social, and being present for a morning of the business. Steve Flower represented the Church of Scotland at this event.

This event was swiftly followed by the visit to Hradec Králové Seniorát by a group of 12 from the Presbytery of Wigtown and Stranraer, who were wonderfully hosted by Marek Bárta and his colleagues – who were, I think, left happy but exhausted at the end of the week. The Scots were left grateful, tired, and full – the theme of food will recur. And more on Marek later as well.



Three of the Wigtown and Stranraer visitors after the Sunday service in Šonov

The next group to visit came from Sewickley, a suburb of Pittsburgh, USA. This group had 15 people, ranging in age from the four teenagers to those who were quite a bit older than that. They were hosted by Eva Grollová and her colleagues from the ECCB Diakonie, who had put together a programme that combined entertainment, culture, education, sightseeing, and food – always lots of food. Whenever visitors are around, the Czechs like to provide typical Czech food, and so inevitably there are dumplings; and the result is that the visitors end up eating far more dumplings than most Czechs would ever think of doing themselves.

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Five of the visitors from Sewickley at the Diakonie project in Litoměřice

The Sewickley visit ended up at Přerov, the congregation with which they are twinned – and thoughts began to turn to the Partnership Conference, planned for Atlanta next April, where many of them will meet again. We are hoping that there will be some Church of Scotland representation at that event as well.

June also included a chance for David to preach (in English) at the church in Dejvice where we worship most

Sundays. And we went to Pardubice to talk about the idea of twinning with a congregation in Scotland – and that discussion is, we hope, now underway. Of course,

Pardubice provided yet more fantastic food.

The month, however, was brought to a disappointing end (to put it at its absolute mildest), when we had to admit defeat in finding a parish in Scotland where Marek Bárta might serve for a year. Marek and his family had been looking forward to this, planning for this, hoping that the Church of Scotland would arrange this, for the best part of three years. To reach the point where we had to admit that we as a church could not deliver has been a real upset. For Marek it was now or never, and so their visit will not happen after all. We will have to do better in the future – and we trust that we as a church will find ways to do that. If we cannot, then trust is going to become a scarce commodity.

This city and country remain delightful, and it is a privilege for us to be learning to walk with new friends in new ways. We are always pleased to hear from or to welcome old friends, who would like to discover the place and the people, the past and the present of Prague, the Czech Republic and the ECCB. Next on the calendar are the events to mark the ECCB centenary – and we look forward to welcoming Church of Scotland folk to the celebrations in September and in December.

s každým dobrým přáním (with every good wish),

David and Mary Sinclair



Mary and David in Nové Město nad Metují