

25 years

1980 - 2005

Alswede – Sheffield

The history of friendship between a German village football club and a team in Sheffield.

Visits

1980	in Alswede
1981	in Alswede
1982	in Sheffield
1986	in Alswede
1987	in Sheffield
1992	in Alswede
1996	in Sheffield
1997	in Alswede
2002	in Alswede
2003	in Sheffield
2005	in Alswede

Visitors

Between 1980 and 2003 approximately 60 members and friends from Alswede visited Sheffield. Similarly during that period 70 from Sheffield went as guests to Alswede.

Don Rudston and Uwe Gülker attended all of these visits.

Most of the visits were also attended by
Wolfgang Blaschke, Benno Kuske and Karlheinz Schlüter.

Adrian Gilmour has been involved in every visit since 1992.

How it all began

In 1954 a young British soldier (Don) was posted to the town of Lübbecke and it was not long before he began meeting local people. A very close relationship soon formed between Don and an equally young 'Lübbeckerin', Ruth Bartels, and despite opposition from Ruth's stepfather they married in October 1955 in 'St.Andreas' church in Alswede the best man being Uwe's dad Wilfried who was married to Ruth's sister.



The next posting for Don along with Ruth and their first offspring was to Hong Kong in 1958 and for a while contact other than by letters was not a possibility.

In 1961 Don left the Army and became a teacher. Family visits to Alswede restarted and the conversations between Wilfried and Don were often about football

Out of this love of football, eventually, came the idea for a football weekend in Alswede with matches between the 'Old League' section of HSC Alswede and Don's school staff team at Park House. It was then began 25 years of friendship between the two 'Nations'.

This friendship faced a severe test in 1966. Don was in Alswede and he and Wilfried watched the World Cup final. Wilfried declared, in a rather impolite form of German, that

IN NO WAY WAS THAT 3RD GOAL VALID.

1980

First game in Alswede

The Sheffielders came in 3 cars and were met by the Gülker family (Wilfried-who organised all- is 4th from left).

They were immediately refreshed, after their long journey, with Bratwurst and Barre and shortly after, the first game was played.



Photo shows the first visit in 1980

In the Summer of that year Don and a colleague took eight 15 year olds to Alswede for a week. They camped in Uwe's back garden and enjoyed them selves thoroughly.

1981



Team Sheffield 1981

The Sheffielders did a tour of the village.



A call in at the local pub was an essential after the Alswede match.



An invitation to HSC Alswede was extended and warmly accepted.

The Sheffield team played a British Army team the next day. That match was also drawn.

1982

1982 saw the HSC visiting Sheffield. The journey from Alswede had its' moments.



Oben von links: Blaschke, Becker, Steinkamp, Gülker, Irie, Usler, Arndt
Unten von links: Schlüter, Mischkat, Grabowski, Grabenkamp, Kuske, Böschmeier



While on the train in Holland the party ran out of 'refreshments'. When the train stopped at a station the conductor held up the train in order that more could be taken on board. He even went to the trouble of changing their Deutschmarks for Guilders and buying a coolbag for them!



A surprise awaited the team at the port. The Falklands war had broken out and some ferries had been commandeered as troop carriers. Twice the number of intended passengers were squeezed on board and though reclining seats had been booked they were not available.

(This apparently had little effect because when I met them on the platform at the Midland station the accordion was playing, they were singing and some of them were dancing with the railway compartment cleaning ladies!)



After a match that day there was square dancing in the evening and the Alswede group entertained everyone with their singing

1986

1986 again saw the Sheffielders visiting Alswede.

A hugely successful event was a 'covered wagon' ride. The photographs show a little of what it was like.



What it does not show was what happened when we got to the county border of Niedersachsen which has a relationship with Westphalia similar to that of Yorkshire and Lancashire. We were all invited to 'bless' Niedersachsen with beer which had been drunk an hour or two earlier! Benno can be seen dispensing Schnapps in order, as he put it, that our 'throats could be lubricated' for the singing which was to follow.



1987

There was a return visit to Park House and in addition to the two football matches there were a number of excursions.



An anecdote

follows in which, on one of the excursions, 'one of the Alswede lads' who apparently was not enamoured of english cooking, stopped the bus, went to a cooked meats shop and bought two pork cutlets.(Despite knowing no english)

Next morning at the pub where the buffet had been ordered the said lad stayed at the bar while everyone else was eating. It was assumed he still had doubts about english food. When they told him how wonderful the food had been he raced to the buffet room.

The food had all gone.

1988

On this visit to Alswede the Park House team were accompanied by wives, partners and female staff. There were two matches and three excursions with the usual evening entertainments.



On arrival a meal consisting of a local dish was served - it was a kind of pancake called 'pickert' - the party thought it was a starter and thus did not eat very much of it. The German lads thought this was because they did not particularly like it. A big misunderstanding!

1992

The photos show the german lads waiting for the arrival which was now three hours overdue. The Sheffielders had been held up on the Autobahn and not having mobiles were unable to let them know.



Barre beer on the way to Sheffield

1996

In 1996 the European Championship was played in England and some of the lads came over to watch Germany play Russia and Italy at Maine Road.



German Team with Don



They also had golf lessons from one of the keen golfers followed by an evening meal.



As they said:

'IT WAS ESPECIALLY PLEASING THAT GERMANY WON THE EUROPEAN CUP IN ENGLAND'.

1997

The 1997 visit was innovative in that it was a three-sided tournament.

A team from the former DDR (East Germany) Kirchchain, were there alongside Sheffield

The Kirchainer area is known for its gherkins and these were given out in abundance by the Kirchchain lads. Alswede managed to accommodate fifty guests that year.

The Sheffield lads sang a german tune 'Rosamunde' which is in fact 'Roll out the Barrel'

The partying went on till the early hours of the morning.

On the Sunday we were all shocked to hear on the radio that
Princess Diana had died in a car accident.



2002

2002 and the Sheffielders were back in Alswede.

They won a game and we won a game so honours were even.



Conundrum:

How can you tell that Don and Adrian are the longest serving members?

The answer:

They've got a head on their beer the way it is served in Germany (Incidentally it's called a 'sergeant major')



2003

2003 in Sheffield.

The Alswede lads brought a 15ft oak tree as a present and as a long-living token of friendship. They brought forty litres, plus a barrel, of Barre Bräu. The lads too were very welcome.



HSC Team 2003



The caption of the presentation of the scarves reads "Despite our giving them presents they still won".



Regular bulletins are sent to Alswede informing them of the tree's state.



Visit Sheffield United