

BRISTOL-HANNOVER COUNCIL



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SUMMER 2013

A GREAT VISIT FROM HANNOVER

While Germany was still shivering, with rain and floods, what did they do? Our visitors from Hannover brought us our Summer. Glorious days at the beginning of June. Our Hannover friends from the Gesellschaft, led by their leader, Anne von Thadden-Schmidt, arrived at Bristol's International Airport on Thursday 6 June, were met by their hosts and taken home, and already on the Friday we were led in small groups by the archivists to wonder at the ancient historical documents of Bristol's history in the city's Record Office. It was fascinating. Particularly interesting were the records of the early years of our exchange. After lunch in the Create Centre next door, we made our way to the Cathedral, where we were taken on a detailed tour by BHC member, Frank Clarke, an excellent guide who explained the history and features in both English and German.

On Saturday we spent the day at Tynesfield House. This was a memorable experience. We were able to wander round the rooms at our own pace, as in each room there was a qualified guide to explain all. And isn't it in a wonderful setting, surrounded by glorious hill-side meadows, studded with wild flowers in the beaming sun. We enjoyed the afternoon in the gardens and in the open-air restaurant.

If that was a wonderful day, the Sunday was equally outstanding. We went on a cruise! We sailed from Bristol Bridge, passing much of Bristol's industrial heritage, then meandered along the Netham to rejoin the Avon. Sunday strollers on the banks waved at us. Our destination was Beeses Tea Gardens, where not only cream teas awaited us, but also our dear friends and members Alma and Derek Brockwell who were as delighted to see us as we were to see them.

Monday was more formal. The Lord Mayor received us all most cordially at the Mansion House and stressed how great an importance he attached to our Partnership and said that he hoped to visit Hannover during his year of office. The reception was followed by a working lunch for the two committees, when plans were drawn up for future events and our visit to Hannover next year. In the evening we held a farewell dinner in a delightful Somerset inn.

Certainly a Good Time was had by all. Thanks are due to Ann and her helpers, particularly to Katerina (Treasurer) and Gerard (Secretary) and to the hosts. For the first time we had no bus rides or long trips outside of Bristol. It was a resoundingly successful visit.

Our Return Visit to Hannover 2014

Dates have been confirmed as 22nd-27th May 2014. We shall visit the Tercentenary exhibitions (also in Brunswick) together with other events.

Music Partnership

The Bristol Choir *Exultate Singers* has linked with the Hannover choir *Camerata Vocale* and will join us next May to give concerts in Hannover and Hildesheim. *Camerata* will come to us in September. It is hoped the *Bristol Schools Chamber Choir* will also visit Hannover.

Automotive Academy

Lynne Evans is busy arranging an exchange between the Bristol Academy and the Hannover Berufsschule. Both are leading institutions in the field of mechanics.

Drama Exchange

The Kelvin Players are working on an exchange with the Hannover Mittwoch Theater which has a long link with Bristol.

Junior Chamber

The Bristol Junior Chamber of Commerce has a link with Hannover since 1948 and some of its members intend joining us on our May visit next year.

Senior Readers

We met a group of Hannover Seniors who meet to read English books on their June visit to us, and they would like to meet up with us in May 2014.

South Gloucestershire Twinning Groups

A representative joined us at one of our recent meetings and expressed the wish to join us in May 2014 also.

Rugby Exchange

Horst Josch, a good friend of BHC and former Chair of HBG is keen to arrange a fixture between Hannover's Leibniz University and UWE and also a match between Cotham School and their partners the Goetheschule, which is also planning to stage a play in English. It is hoped these events would take place during our visit.

Brandon Hill Chamber Orchestra

The orchestra is planning a visit to Berlin next April in honour of the 300th Anniversary and has asked us to arrange a venue in Hannover as well.

RIAS Kammerchor

This prestigious chamber choir will be visiting London, hope to sing at Buckingham Palace and Kensington Palace next year in honour of the Hannoverian Succession. The British-German Association has asked us to find a venue for them also in Bristol.

PHOTOGRAPHERS' VISIT

A team of Hannover photo-journalists came to Bristol in July to take photographs for an exhibition in Hannover. They were guided in Bristol by the photographer Alan Russell. The Knowle West Media Centre and UWE digital photography department were also of assistance.

Sustainability Conferences

This conference was held in June by the Schumacher Institute. Speakers included Sir Graham Watson (MEP) on European Climate Change and Sustainability and Ann Kennard, with Ursula Lindenberg on Twinning and Social Learning. Bürgermeister Regine Kramarek, Hannover's Green Party Mayor, was also in Bristol in May as a part of Hannover's official delegation on board the inaugural flight between Bristol and Hannover. [Since Oberbürgermeister Weil's election as Minister President of Lower Saxony, and until after the German elections in September, Hannover has three Bürgermeister, representing the three main parties.] Frau Kramarek was interested in our planned activities, mentioned a sustainability conference to be held in Hannover in September, and promised to try to help with the proposal to have a photographic exhibition of Hannover at the M-Shed.

Daniel Laruelle

Daniel is the Sixth Form student nominated by Bristol Grammar School to be awarded the BHC Neville Osborne Bursary to visit Hannover. He has now booked his tickets and will be travelling to Hannover for three weeks in August. During his time he hopes also to visit Berlin to study the architecture there, as well as that of Hannover in preparation for his future studies. The Gesellschaft has arranged for him to stay with a host family and meetings are being arranged for him with local architects.

So Much Going On

Bristol-Hannover activities are filling our diaries! This means a lot of work for our committee members and particularly for Ann. If members can help in any way with their hidden talents, please give Ann a ring and let her know. (Telephone 942 5860)

Favourite Country

Ann had a call from BBC Radio Somerset. They told her that when BBC World Service conducted a poll of listeners, the result was that their favourite country in the world – wait for it – was Germany! The BBC asked Ann as our Chair what she thought of this.

Ann told them on air that BHC had for many years arranged and taken thousands of people to Hannover, all of whom returned home delighted with their stay and the welcome they had received.

Hannover needs to know in February how many will be going there next May. **THINK IT OVER.**

**THE BRISTOL-HANNOVER PARTNERSHIP
AS SEEN FROM HANNOVER BY HEINZ LAUENROTH**

Two years after the terrible war, when the City of Hannover lay in ruins, most people in that city were short of food and life did not really begin to stir again, until on 31 August 1947, a delegation of Bristol citizens, led by Alderman St John Reade, entered the Rathaus in Hannover. They called themselves the 'Goodwill Mission', and extended the hand of friendship to the representatives of the City of Hannover, declaring that enmity between nations and people must now cease. In support of this they proposed links between Hannover and Bristol which should culminate in a cities' partnership. Alderman Reade justified this proposition with Schiller's words: 'You will never conquer your enemy until you have made him your friend'.

This visit of the Goodwill Mission had been preceded on the English side by one or two preliminaries. Months before, Alderman Reade had been able to convince a number of friends in Bristol that that a friendship-link with a German city was desirable. But with which city? It was at that time that Frau Katharina Petersen, who had lived in England as an emigrant and made many friends there and who was now working in the Ministry of Education and the arts in Lower Saxony, suggested the City of Hannover, which was comparable with Bristol in importance and size. In April 1947 St. John Reade in a letter to Katharina Petersen expresses 'the feeling that the idea of a joint partnership between Bristol and Hannover had begun to find support.' In June of the same year, the Regional Commissioner for Lower Saxony, General Sir Gordon MacReady, also welcomed the idea of a link between Bristol and Hannover, which, in his opinion, should however limit itself to cultural contacts and 'should in no way lend itself to exercising pressure, either direct or indirect, on the Military Government, with reference to political matters.'

And so now the Goodwill Mission found itself in the Rathaus in Hannover, and its five members sat opposite the city representatives. The latter naturally did not know quite how to behave towards their guests, for after all that had happened they were no longer or not yet used to the fact that, in their burnt-out, hungry city, where people had come though a second winter starving after the collapse, with scarcely a hope of any improvement for the next winter, they were being offered the hand of friendship, without ulterior motive, openly and unreservedly. But they soon realised that the people who had come from England were honest in their intentions, and that their real concern was human relations and friendliness towards their fellow-men in trouble, with no wish to talk about crime and punishment. Present were representatives of the City Council of Bristol, the University, the Chamber of Commerce, schools and youth organisations; at their head was Alderman S. John Reade, and the others were Crofton E. Gane, Donald Hughes, Professor Dr. August Closs and E. G. Seath. Their declared aim was the initiation of friendly relations between city and city and between people and people. More especially they had in view the exchange of schoolchildren and of cultural items. The members of the delegation lived in German families and shared their rations with those of their hosts. On the German side we were able to bring in Hannover's Lord Mayor, Wilhelm Weber – who lived outside Hannover – after a written authority for the use of a car and permission for exceeding the 80 kilometers-per-hour speed limit had been obtained. For the reception of the guests in the Rathaus a special permit was issued for the delivery of beef-tea and dry bread rolls as well as for tea and biscuits.

People were then still living in Hannover, which was – as were all destroyed German towns – in ruins, and the food ration-cards left them short of calories. But in England, too, the towns were bombed, and people had to make do as best they could with short food-rations.

At the reception in the Rathaus the wise old Oberstadtdirektor, Gustav Bratke, who in his old age had taken upon his shoulders the burden of starting afresh to bring order out of chaos, said that the danger of a general mood of despair lay like a shadow across our future; nothing more important could have happened to defend the people in the City of Hannover from the cold and hunger of the imminent cold winter after the war: 'We cling to every hope and we know too that we have much to do to overcome mistrust....We thank you for your trust; we pledge ours in return and from the bottom of our hearts we desire that a lasting spiritual bond may grow out of this mutual understanding.'

The first aid from Bristol, after the visit, was of a material nature. Victuals, as well as parcels of clothes and shoes, which had been collected in Bristol, came to Hannover; for it had been noticed that children in Hannover were unable to attend school because they had no shoes.

In autumn, 1947, Bishop Lilje of Hannover visited Bristol, and soon afterwards Senator Emmi Lanzke, Chairman of the Workers' Welfare in Hannover, arranged direct links on the spot. Oberbürgermeister Weber and Oberstadtdirektor Bratke likewise took an early opportunity to pay a visit to the newly-found friends in Bristol. In November 1947 the music circle of the Teachers' Training College – the first private party – journeyed to Bristol and there quickly followed the exchange of students and schoolchildren between the two cities. This soon surpassed, both in variety and numbers, the extent so far recorded in any town or city exchange.

(continued overleaf)

CONTINUATION OF PAGE 3 ARTICLE

In April 1948 in the city of Bristol the BRISTOL-HANNOVER COUNCIL was founded at the instigation of Alderman St. John Reade who became the Chairman, with the Lord Mayor the President. In order to develop the the schools' exchange, Hannover's Chief Education Officer, Professor Oppermann, went to Bristol and on his return he founded the Hannover-Bristol Society, and undertook the duties of executive officer, with the Oberbürgermeister its President. On their retirement, Oberbürgermeister Holweg became President and Stadtdirektor Heinz Lauenroth (the author of these memoirs) Chairman.

These reciprocal relationships were extended still further in succeeding years to embrace leading personalities from the University of Bristol and the colleges in Hannover; groups of teachers; choirs and instrumental groups of young workers; librarians, church representatives; representatives of industry, the chambers of commerce, trade unions and co-operative societies. Groups of housewives exchanged visits, athletes and sportsmen competed against one another, and youth groups have ever since maintained a permanent exchange. Through all these years exhibitions, especially cultural in nature, were exchanged, furthering and deepening the mutual knowledge and understanding of one another. The Chief Ministers of Lower Saxony, Hinrich Kopf and Georg Diedrichs, did not miss the opportunity, when visiting England, to pay an official visit to the sister-city of their Lower Saxony capital.

In March 1950 an official delegation from Bristol, led by Lord Mayor, Alderman P. M. Cann, visited Hannover. The return visit followed in March 1952. From that time on such visits took place and such tangible contacts have made even further ties. In May 1962, St. John Reade, Professor Closs and E. G. Seath were decorated with the Hannover 'Stadtplakette' for their services, conferred by Oberbürgermeister Holweg. In June 1978 the same honour was bestowed on Tom Evans, who had rendered outstanding service to the Youth Exchange. And not least of all, in recognition of his services to the Bristol-Hannover friendship and Anglo-German understanding, Professor Closs was decorated on 9 December 1965 with the cross of the Order of Merit.

The number of Hannoverians who have visited their partner-city now amounts to thousands and equally great is the number of Bristolians who have stayed in Hannover. Many people on both sides are constantly adding to the strength of that bond.

(Translated into English 1986 by Neville Osborne)

DONALD HUGHES

Does this name ring a bell? He is listed among the Famous Five Bristol men of Goodwill who visited Hannover in 1948 and established our partnership. We know of the others, but when his name appears we only get the appendage 'an artist'. Fortunately, our Vice-Chairman, Alderman Michael Withers, has done some research, and as a fellow-Savage (members of the Wigwam who meet at the Red Lodge, aesthetes, artists and poets) he has kindly sent us this entry in *The Savage Spirit*.

Born in 1881, Donald James Hughes was educated at Clifton Hill House...He was one of the most famous Savages. Handsome, clean shaven and with grey hair, he carried lightly his fund of knowledge, love of art and command of the English language. Teetotal and non-smoking, he was a keen cricketer and hockey player in his youth. When first elected to the Savages as a literary member in 1914, he was an auctioneer and estate agent with offices in Unity Street.

He retired early to devote himself to art, in 1914 holding a one-man show at the Clifton Arts Club, where he was chairman at one stage. He was a student of Iain McNab's at Heatherley's School of Fine Arts in London.

Grouse, of which he became editor in 1930, was a natural outlet for his literary talents. He was a celebrated Wigwam entertainer, reciting poems with solemn face and hands clasped before him, and maintained the Savages' tradition of interrupting the minutes with a witty remark.

As an artist he worked primarily in watercolour and crayon, and could work at great speed; during a three-week holiday in Europe he painted 60 pictures. He became an artist member, and the Wigwam has more than 40 of his evening sketches. In 1938 he wrote the text for Kit Gunton's book of lino-cuts of birds, Birdsworth.

He bought the Blaise Hamlet cottages, and when his offer was refused by Bristol Corporation, he donated them to the National Trust. He put a plaque on his Berkeley Square house to commemorate John Loudon MacAdam, the road-making pioneer who had lived there.

Hughes was Savages President in 1934, 1944, 1954 and 1963, and a portrait of him hangs in the Wigwam, as well as a Charles Thomas caricature. He died in 1970, bequeathing £1 to the Imperial Tobacco Company, which he felt he owed them as a lifelong non-smoker.

It is interesting that this noble entry makes little mention of Donald Hughes's other great work, as a poet. Alderman Withers recently came across a volume of his poetry in a second-hand book shop, and speedily snatched it up. The poems are lengthy and witty. One can easily imagine him reciting them to the Savages (Hughes, that is, not Withers) with his hands behind his back and a solemn face.

And there is no mention of his visit to Hannover. For this he will always be remembered.