



**BRISTOL  
HANNOVER  
COUNCIL**



**TWIN TOWNS  
SINCE 1947**



*Welcome to the Bristol – Hannover Council Newsletter*  
**THIRTEENTH EDITION – NOVEMBER 2020**

Have we got your correct contact details?  
Phone / address / email? Let us know so we can  
keep you informed of what's happening!

## **UPCOMING EVENTS / NEWS**

### Autumnal greetings!

So, we're well into part two of this new word we found ourselves hearing quite often this year "lock-down". If it helps, our friends in Germany started this second situation a little earlier than England. I find it most interesting when I hear people saying "other countries are dealing with this situation far better"! Well... are they? Are they really? From my experience of the country we're twinned with it's a "not really, no"! There are things they've done well (getting on with it quicker) areas that are similar (some people give you space / social distancing while others don't) and the not so good (as here) people buying up bulk loads of toilet rolls after the media sends out worrying messages! Whatever you do, do "stay safe" (another one-liner we've heard so many times) keep calm and drink a cup of tea...or coffee.... or whatever is your drink of fancy!

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December – 7pm:** Allie Dunnington - The fascinating and beautiful world of hot-air ballooning. This will be available on a Zoom meeting, with details / links sent out closer to the date – please register your interest asap (not on the evening)!

**2021 – Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January:** Colin Evans - Socialist Realist Art. If you've not yet listened to one of Colin's talks, you've missed out! No excuse this time, as it will be brought to your door via a Zoom meeting – details closer to the date.

# AGM

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> October our AGM went ahead, online of course as meeting in person was not an option. A fine number of attendees totalling 24 approximately I believe! We also had the pleasure of welcoming friends from our partnership twinning, Robert and Helga. The meeting was chaired at the start by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Jos Clark in full Mayoral regalia (very impressive). The Lord Mayor had to depart swiftly after the meeting as she had another meeting to attend.



Once the AGM was complete, we had the pleasure of listening to a fascinating illustrated talk given by Joanna Mathers, the Maritime Curator of the SS Great Britain Trust.

She spoke of the ship's history from construction through to floating around for a considerable time in Argentina being used as a place of storage. Following being scuppered for many years, the story continued from the re-floating in April 1970 to the amazing long-length voyage across the Atlantic with stories of an on-board swimming pool being constructed to entertain the crew!

Bristol welcomed her home on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1970 and so began the long restoration project. In 2017 our Hannoverian friends visited us and a tour of the fine ship formed part of the long weekend of entertainments.....a fine ship..... and a great informative presentation.

On behalf of all associated with BHC, thank you again Joanna!

## Memories of the Goodwill Mission of 1947

In our last Newsletter, we reported on Paul Seath's 80th birthday party in January, attended by BHC Chair Ann Kennard. It was a lively occasion and Paul was in good form, son of Edward Seath, one of the five brave men who went to Hannover in 1947 to extend the hand of friendship. Sadly Paul died in September after a short illness, and again Ann represented BHC at the socially distanced funeral. Some of you will also have visited the Bauhaus exhibition at the Stradling Gallery on Park Row, which was in part to show the furniture designed by Crofton Gane, another of the five men who went to Hannover in 1947. The sequel to this is that a blue plaque honouring Crofton Gane is to be put up on College Green on the building which replaced his furniture showroom. It was originally to be put up on his former residence in Westbury Park, but the current owner did not agree with the placing, and so the latest idea will of course make it much more public. The plaque will refer to Crofton Gane as a pioneer of the Bristol-Hannover city twinning, founder of the Folk House and of the Gane Trust. At the time of writing, there is no date yet for the plaque to be put up and unveiled, due to the pandemic, but we will keep a close eye on events!

## Germany's National Day of Mourning (Volkstrauertag)

This year, Germany's National Day of Mourning or Volkstrauertag was held on Sunday November 15th, to commemorate the bombing of Coventry on that date in 1940. The remembrance ceremony was held in the Bundestag in Berlin, and there was a photograph of Coventry's bombed-out cathedral in the background.

We were alerted to this by our friend Thomas Hermann, mayor of Hannover, telling us that it would be broadcast on ZDF, so it was possible to watch it via satellite TV. Prince Charles was the guest of honour and gave a full and heartfelt speech on British-German friendship, alternating between German and English.

The ceremony, attended by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Bundestagspräsident Wolfgang Schäuble, was organised by the German War Graves Commission. The President of the Commission opened the proceedings and mentioned the many city twinnings between Germany and Britain.

A number of young people made statements, a young German peace activist, a young Israeli lawyer, and a student of Bristol Grammar School! Jasleen Singh referred to a creative project, Never Such Innocence, a poetry and art competition for young people, prizes to be awarded in London in 2021. Jasleen said we should never forget the suffering and loss of war, and should somehow achieve peace between nations. It was a proud moment for her and for Bristol to be present at the ceremony.

## German Ambassador visits Bristol

Picture right: HE Andreas Michaelis & his wife Heike stand in front of The SS Great Britain.



The new German Ambassador to the UK, HE Andreas Michaelis, made Bristol his first official visit outside London in early September. He is originally from Hannover and had been invited to Bristol by Mayor Rees. Accompanied by his wife Heike who is a secondary school teacher of English and German, and the German Consul General Hans-Guenther Loeffler, the ambassador undertook a packed programme. He visited Airbus in the morning and then indulged his passion for maritime history with a guided tour of the SS Great Britain thanks to Joanna Mathers, the head curator who speaks fluent German. Germans are now the biggest group visiting the ship from abroad, more than Americans now. Herr Michaelis also met with Ann Kennard from the BHC and Jon Darch from BAGS to discuss the Foreign Ministry's support for civil society initiatives. Later he had dinner in Brunel's former boathouse with the WECA Mayor Tim Bowles and Sarah Hildesley from Business West while the Consul General met with City Council officials, the Honorary Consul and a representative from the Law Centre dealing with the EU Settlement Scheme. The key issue was how to reach perhaps more vulnerable or older German Nationals so they know about the scheme before the deadline. Day two included a meeting with Mayor Rees and the official inauguration of Kai von Pahlen as the new German Honorary Consul for Bristol. The Ambassador is a keen rugby fan and used to play in Hannover so we arranged for Mayor Rees to present him with a Bears shirt. Following that our Youth Mayors gave the German delegation a presentation about the Youth Democracy project which was an Erasmus Plus funded collaboration with Politik zum Anfassen ("Politics you can grasp") in Hannover. Lunch was with four academics from the University of Bristol followed by a visit to the Max Planck Centre at the UoB which receives German funding. The delegation returned to London and has subsequently been following up on several of the initiatives which were discussed including a possible project for young people.

The Embassy encouraged the Vice President of the German Bundestag Herr Robert Oppermann, to include Bristol in his short UK tour. Herr Oppermann had been a Minister in the Lower Saxony parliament, knew Hannover well and was close friends with former Mayor of Hannover Stephan Weil and other supporters of the twinning within the SPD. It is very rare for a senior German politician to undertake such a visit which included meeting City Leaders in Liverpool, London, Oxford, Cardiff and Birmingham. It showed the German commitment to its relationship with the UK and that it is a priority after BREXIT. Herr Oppermann met with Deputy Mayor Craig and Councillor Kye Dudd to discuss the main issues facing the City Council and how core UK cities can have a dialogue with the German government in the future. The Vice President had dinner with Mayor Bowles and Ann Kennard the evening before. Sadly we learnt later that Herr Oppermann had passed away suddenly and unexpectedly while preparing for a live TV debate. Mayor Rees has sent condolences on behalf of the city to his family, colleagues in the Bundestag and also to his constituency team in Goettingen. Ann Kennard sent a similar letter on behalf of BHC to Herr Oppermann's partner Petra Kirchhoff.



Elected Mayor Marvin Rees  
& HE Andreas Michaelis



(Left to right): Councillor Kye Dudd,  
Deputy Mayor Craig and Bundestag Vice-President  
Robert Oppermann



## Quiz Night



Pubs maybe closed at the moment and gatherings of friends not possible but that doesn't stop a good old fashioned quiz night! Two events took place on evenings where drinks could be served at any moment (without a queue) because the quiz was brought to you....in your very own abode, sat in your favourite comfy chair if you wanted to!



*Congratulations* to the winners:  
Mark Allinson & Vivien Brown

Special thanks to  
Jonathan "Quizmaster" Keir Radnedge!

## City of culture 2025

Chemnitz 1 Hannover 0. Sounds like a football score doesn't it? Well... not quite! Hannover made it through various rounds together with other German cities Hildesheim, Magdeburg and Nürnberg to compete to become the European Capital of Culture in 2025. Bristol assisted its German-twinning city with its bid and hoped to be able to play a part with various roles helping Hannover should they win the title, but alas they were beaten to the post.

The chairperson of the European Capitals of Culture Expert panel announced on 28 October that the city of Chemnitz has been recommended for the European Capital of Culture 2025. A panel of 12 independent experts assessing applications from the five short-listed German cities recommended Chemnitz after a two and a half day long online meeting. Congratulations Chemnitz... Hannover, you have many areas of talent and expertise and I'm sure will excel in many other areas!

## The Poetry of War

On November 12th, in Remembrance week, we had a moving and appropriate online event, which actually should have taken place at the end of the Mayors for Peace exhibition in February, but had to be postponed.

Bristol actor David Collins read poems based on recent conflicts: "What War Does to Us: 1914 until now". David started the programme with poems from the First World War (the so-called 'Great War'), the horrific starting point of modern total war, with poems of Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and others, and then went on, with new voices, some well-known and some not, continuing the same themes on what has happened since in Vietnam, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and on how we try to survive and live with ever-present conflict. David read from poems by poets as diverse as W.H.Auden, Robert Lowell and Michael Rosen, and 'Jerusalem' by James Fenton had particular resonance for many who dialled in. We were delighted that Helga Wawra and Wilhelm Knicker joined in from Hannover, and hope that after Hannover participation also in the online AGM, this will become a regular feature.

Bristol-Hannover Council aims to involve as many Bristolians as possible, young and old, in extending these ties which have already enriched the lives of so many people in both cities. Many exchanges have been supported by the Council, including:

- Schools exchanges
- Exchanges of citizens
- Sports exchanges
- University student exchanges
- Band, choir, orchestra and drama visits
- Youth club visits and exchanges
- Church exchanges
- Reuniting old friends

[www.bristolhannovercouncil.org.uk](http://www.bristolhannovercouncil.org.uk)



If you think *you* might have something interesting to contribute to our (*your!*) news-letter, please feel free to contact us!

***Bis zum nächsten Mal!***