



A brighter future beckons – Hoffentlich!

** Welcome to a different sort of summer. No-one can look back on the past 18 months with the old sort of assurance about what the next months may bring. This is true for personal, local, national and international relationships. Of course, this is also a factor which enhances the value of city twinnings such as the Bristol-Hannover connection in which both cities should take pride.

The enduring partnership between the cities and its people have been reflected in the renaming of meeting rooms in City Hall (see below) and in discussions already under way both here and in Germany about how we may honour the 75th anniversary of Bristol-Hannover next year.

A first step back into the ‘real world’ here will be, hopefully, the Bristol Hannover Council Reunion Dinner at the Eastfield Inn on July 22.

By next summer travel restrictions and local health precautions should have eased sufficiently for the mutual ‘official’ visits to resume as well as those between our cultural, educational and sporting organisations.

On that sporting theme, some lively exchanges were undertaken across the internet with friends in Hannover before and after the recent European Championship tie between England and Germany at Wembley. On this level the simple fact of the direct engagement itself was a cause for celebration above and beyond the result.

Enjoy the summer and we look forward to seeing you in person at our further events this year.



Renaming ceremony in City Hall rooms for Hannover and Bristol's other twin cities



The name over the door . . . approved by the Lord Mayor Steve Smith and BHC chair Ann Kennard

** A City Hall ceremony on June 24th - presided over by the Lord Mayor, Cllr Steve Smith, who is ex officio President of all Bristol's twinnings – saw him unveil two plaques in the foyer, as well as seven new door signs and framed information panels in each room about Bristol's twin cities.

The two plaques are to accompany the coats of arms of Bordeaux and Hannover, which were hung for the 40th anniversary of the link with those two cities.

The seven meeting rooms are now identified by the twin city to which they are dedicated and the Council's booking system is being upgraded to ensure that they are booked as such for meetings.



The twinnings are extremely grateful to the Guild of Guardians for having funded the large majority of the design and hanging costs, after the twinnings submitted photographs and text about their respective cities.

Bristol International Twinnings Association, with thanks to Alix Hughes for his initiative in taking this forward, is delighted that this will raise the profile of the twinnings both inside the City Council and among visitors to City Hall.



*Witnesses to a significant City Hall moment for Bristol twinnings
Pictures: International Team BCC*



A long, long friendship:

My Bristol-Hannover story – by Ethne Dando

** Something I have never regretted is putting my hand up at school when my German teacher asked if anyone in the class would be interested in a project by the recently-formed Bristol-Hannover Council and become a penfriend to another schoolgirl in Hannover. I was 13 when I began writing to Margret then 12.

More than 60 years later we are still the very best of friends with hundreds of letters and emails having passing between us, but with many more memories of good times spent together, and shared special birthdays and anniversaries.

We first met in Bristol when I was 20, after Margret had completed a year as an au pair in London. Then followed my first visit to Germany which was my very first visit abroad. This was in 1962, just after the Berlin Wall had been erected.

Margret's parents took us to West Berlin for a few days which entailed travelling through Eastern Germany. Mileage was checked to make sure we had not deviated from the road, and the car boot was searched by soldiers with bayonets at the checkpoints.

On the way home, as we passed through the checkpoint once more we were very nearly arrested because of an incident with a passport.

After we both married, we holidayed frequently together with our families - each enjoying each others' countries, seeing parts many tourists never see, and also travelling to meet up in different places in Europe.

Margret loved our beautiful countryside and coastline and I loved the magnificent cities and the cultural life in Germany.

In 1990, the year after the reunification of East and West Germany, we travelled into the East once more and then to Berlin to see what effect the separation had had there. The difference between the two halves of Berlin was staggering but now nobody would be able to tell the difference.



Ethne and Margret on a holiday in the Lake District

One Christmas morning at 9am my doorbell rang and on the step were two people dressed as Father Christmas with beards and strange accents.

Margret and her husband Reini, knowing that both their sons would not be at home, had hired a campervan for two weeks.

Our family had one of the best Christmases ever and the Germans never forgot the kindness of our relations and friends who also welcomed them into their homes during the festive season.

As we grew older, a difficulty arose with organising holidays when Reini developed kidney failure and needed dialysis three times a week.

This did not deter them from coming to England, even though finding hospitals which would take dialysis patients from abroad was not always easy.

Sadly Reini died in 2005 but John and I were very pleased when Margret's partner Manni started to come to England later on.

Once a reporter from the BBC interviewed both Margret and me separately about our long friendship, asking why it had lasted?

I must give Margret great credit for continually trying to improve her love of the English language by any means possible because without that we might not be where we are today and our membership of Bristol-Hannover Council has really helped us to continue with visits and to enhance our enjoyment and knowledge of both Germany and England.

Long may it continue!



From Rathaus to City Hall

** Hannover's Oberbürgermeister Belit Onay sent Marvin Rees a letter of congratulations after his recent re-election for a further three-year term as Bristol Mayor. They agreed to meet online in the near future to discuss a range of possible collaborations on issues such as young people, smart cities, migration, sustainable development and inclusive growth.



Marvin Rees and Belit Onay: time to talk



Meet the committee: Ann Kennard (chair)

How did you become involved?

I came on to the committee in 1996 because I was working at the University of the West of England and we were asked if we would like to take part in the committee. Bristol University had been involved since the very first moment in 1947 but we were asked if we would like to take part and so I said Yes because I was lecturing in German. So that's how I got involved and in 2000 I was asked if I would become chair - and I've been chair ever since.

How did Bristol-Hannover begin?

It started in 1947, one of the first of these twinnings around the country.

We started in the same year as Bristol-Bordeaux and it started because of a need in Hannover for shoes for the children in the very bad winter of 1947 and so a collection was made in Bristol for them . . . They were very surprised in Hannover that this was happening so soon after the war and in the same year there was a visit [to Hannover] from five men who represented different parts of city public life and extended the hand of friendship.

From then on there were [visits by] groups of young people, music groups and later school exchanges – and all sorts of other groups people such as trades unions, police, insurance companies.

What will inquiring visitors find on your Bristol Hannover Council website [http://bristolhannovercouncil.org.uk/]?

They'll see the history of the twinning, events . . . all the newsletters plus of course the chair's report from the annual meetings . . . a lot of information.

What is your favourite part?

That's very easy to answer: My favourite part in being involved is the fact that it's so international . . . I love meeting people from other cultures, other nations, other languages and this is the best way to be able to do that.

*** The interview was recorded for BHC by students from the UWE Broadcast Journalism course during the development of a projected Facebook presence.*



Recent events: Colin Evans on Viennese art

**** BHC member Colin Evans delivered another in his long-running series of talks on German art, taking as his subject *City of Women: Female Artists in Vienna 1900-1938*.**



Olga Wisinger-Florian: The First Frost (1908)

Some 25 members and friends were fascinated this time to hear about and see the work of artists of whom most of us had not heard before. We looked at some outstanding art produced by women in Vienna in the first half of the 20th Century.

Although facing the usual obstacles for women at this time, they chose to not to fight but to work their way around them. Denied entry to the Academy, many took private lessons from the teachers there who recognised their talent and supported their careers.

They formed their own societies and exhibited alongside men. They were at the cutting edge of art in all its forms, won prizes in Vienna and elsewhere and their work was bought for national collections.

They established themselves as a force to be reckoned with in the city but this all ended when the Nazis annexed Austria in 1938. These brilliant artists either slipped quietly into the background or suffered worse fates.

Thanks to the diligence of a team of researchers who scoured private collections and museum store rooms their work, names and stories were rediscovered and exhibited at the Belvedere in Vienna.

Their story is a poignant reminder of the troubled history of the 20th Century, but one that has left a positive legacy. Even though it came too late to benefit their careers, it has enabled us to look at some wonderful art and to wonder what might have been, had politics not so cruelly intervened.



Broncia Koller-Pinell: Silvia Koller with a Bird Cage (1907)



Welcome to a new Lord Mayor – and BHC President

** The new Honorary President of the BHC for the next twelve months is Lord Mayor Steve Smith. Steve was already aware of the links with Hannover from his time with the Junior Chamber of Commerce and their annual exchange with their Hannover counterparts.

Steve said: “I grew up in Birmingham but moved to Bristol in 2005 after marrying my wife and now Lady Mayoress Kath, who was born and brought up in Westbury-on-Trym. We have lived in Westbury for 16 years now, bringing up our two children here, and I’m proud to represent the area as one of the Councillors for Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze.

“One of the joys of being a councillor is learning a huge amount about the ward I represent, its history, people and organisations. I hope during my year as Lord Mayor that I can extend that learning across the whole city by meeting as many people and groups as I possibly can in every part of Bristol”.

Steve has expressed the desire to support the twinning as much as he can including welcoming groups when allowed as well as chairing the annual meeting. Recently he unveiled the renamed “Hannover meeting room” and commemorative plaque at City Hall.



British Ambassador supports twinning associations



Jill Gallard: Making history

** Jill Gallard CMG, HE Ambassador to Germany, commented positively on the significance of twinning in the post-Brexit situation during a webinar organised by the British Chambers of Commerce in Germany.

The first British female ambassador to Germany considered the twinning movement as now more important than ever without the input of the Brussels EU structures. She said no new support funds were yet available but new candidates were in the pipeline.

She felt that personal connections, such as those in the spheres of education and business, were very important, and hoped that a new two-way replacement of the Erasmus scheme would be found (the proposed Turing scheme is only offered to outgoing UK students). Work was under way with the British Council to find new ways to link and new funding.



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

**** Please contribute to what is not only our, but YOUR, newsletter.**

