



## ***A GLORIOUS YEAR OF TWINNING***

\*\* We can look back on a glorious year, not just from the point of view of the weather, but mainly due to the wonderful series of events, meetings and future plans which we have been fortunate enough to enjoy and set in train.

Our last Newsletter in April was looking forward to the summer, and it did not disappoint: after the wine-tasting at Avery's in June, July brought our friends from Hannover, with the official and civic groups enjoying the fun of the Harbour Festival, as well as the celebratory ceremony at City Hall, the advent of the boat with the barrel of Hannover Gin, also carrying the tree to be planted in the Botanic Gardens.

In August, having seen the cancellation of the mega-choral event because of Covid, two singers took part in the singing at the Hiroshima Day of Peace in Hannover, and later in the month, an official group of BHC members, led by Deputy Mayor Asher Craig, visited Hannover and enjoyed an intense series of events.

These included a wonderful ceremony in the Rathaus, with a dance performance by Bristol's RISE Dance group with their Hannover counterparts, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, and also the planting of a Peace Tree in the Palais Garden of Herrenhausen.

In October, Bristol Choral Society sang the Brahms German Requiem in the Marktkirche with the Hannoverscher Oratorienchor.

One of the most exciting elements of the year has been the participation of a number of youth groups in the anniversary celebrations: apart from RISE Dance, a Hannover youth football team played Ashton FC's boys and girls' teams, Young Bristol finally managed a return visit after their Hannoverian counterparts had visited in 2019, and Circomedia students visited Hannover to take part in the *Nuit du Cirque*.

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Ariel Rowing Club continue their long relationship with Linden Ruderverein, and we are hopeful of a youth rugby exchange restarting in Spring 2023.

So anyone who says twinning is dead hasn't been looking very hard! We thank everyone who has been involved in making 2022 such a special year, and we look forward to exciting times ahead!

**Ann Kennard, November 2022**



## ***AMBASSADOR MIGUEL BERGER'S ANNIVERSARY VISIT***



\*\* Ambassador Miguel Berger, above, only in post in London since May 2022, made one of his first regional visits to Bristol, to help us celebrate our 75th anniversary along with the 40th anniversary of the Bristol Anglo-German Society.

First Herr Berger visited Airbus, which is an international company with important operations in Germany. He then proceeded into Bristol to City Hall, where he had a series of discussions.

As Mayor Marvin Rees was in Egypt for COP27, he met Deputy Mayor Asher Craig, which was a serendipitous chance, since she had led the official anniversary visit to Hannover in August where a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the mayors and chairs of the two associations, setting out plans for future cooperation.

He also met Caroline Twigg, Head of the International Office, representatives of Investment Bristol and Bath, and members of the City Council Economic Development team. Subsequently he had a lively meeting with the Youth Mayors and members of the Youth Council, who presented their three main campaigns – Inclusive Bristol, Your Health Matters and Youth Safety Support – but were happy also to respond to the Ambassador’s suggestion to bring the issue of climate change into their programme.

The evening saw an elaborate celebratory dinner at the Bristol Golf Club, with 50 guests, presided over by the Ambassador, alongside the Lord Lieutenant Peaches Golding and the Lord Mayor Paula O’Rourke. Herr Berger gave an inspiring after-dinner speech, emphasising the importance of citizen links between the countries of Europe and beyond, especially in these difficult times. The vote of thanks was given by Dr Ann Kennard, chair of Bristol-Hannover Council.

On Friday the Ambassador visited various departments of the University of Bristol, accompanied by Dr Mark Allinson, Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor and President of Bristol Anglo-German Society.

He met the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of Science, before being hosted for a coffee interval by the Modern Languages Department and students. The visit was rounded off by a visit to the Max Planck Centre for Minimal Biology.

All in all it was a packed 24 hours, but we hope that the Ambassador gained a good flavour of what Bristol has to offer and that he will visit us again soon.

**Ann Kennard**



## ***SHINING A LIGHT ON THE TRADITION OF ST MARTIN***

\*\* The German Saturday School Bristol organised a children's lantern procession for Saint Martin's Day which is marked in many German cities on or around November 11. This day celebrates the Roman soldier turned saint who, according to the legend, gave half of his coat to a beggar to save him from freezing to death during a snow storm.



The procession tradition involves a procession, for which children make their own paper lanterns in school. After the sun sets, young and old come together to walk through town and sing Martin songs carrying their colourful lanterns. The German Saturday School Bristol organised its own parade, *above*, in the grounds of Redland Parish Church on the evening of November 12.



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Children were accompanied by one of the school's teachers portraying St Martin, dressed in full Roman soldier gear, *above*.

The German Saturday School Bristol was founded in 2007 by members of the German Playgroup in Bristol. It is a registered charity run by volunteer members. To find out more about the School, please visit [www.schule-bristol.org](http://www.schule-bristol.org)

**Kai von Pahlen**



### ***IN TUNE WITH THE ANNIVERSARY***

\*\* I belong to Bristol Choral Society and during a conversation last year with Ann I agreed to ask our choir if any singers would be interested in an exchange with a Hannover choir to mark the 75th anniversary of the twinning.

The response was enthusiastic and in early October 30 members of Bristol Choral Society travelled to Hannover. We joined the Hannoverscher Oratorienchor for their two performances of Brahms' The German Requiem in the majestic Marktkirche in the centre of Hannover.

It seemed entirely appropriate to share a musical experience as music has played an important part in the relationship of the two cities since the beginning. Most of the singers stayed with members of the Hannover choir and were made to feel very welcome.

We look forward to reciprocating in organising a return visit in the not-too-distant future.

**Carla Murray**



### ***NEW CRISIS THREATENS FUTURE OF MERZ BARN***

\*\* Uncertainty once more hangs over the future of the Kurt Schwitters Merz Barn in Cumbria which was due to close its doors for the last time on December 12.

Schwitters created his art-studio-as-artwork on a rural Cumbrian hillside 75 years ago in 1947. The structure – while open to the elements – has stood the test of time as a symbol of pioneering Modernist work, and anti-fascist protest.

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Schwitters had been born in Hannover in 1887 and became a foremost exponent of the Dada art movement, thus becoming an enemy of the Nazi regime. He left Germany in 1937 after he and other members of the 'Modernist diaspora' were labelled as 'degenerate' and forced into exile in the US and UK.



The Elterwater Merz Barn was a third such art experiment by Schwitters but the only surviving example after his Merzbau in Hannover and another near Oslo, Norway, were destroyed.

A failure to win public funding to keep the studio open, led its custodians to warn that it is at risk of being lost for good. The alternative could mean private developers will purchase the barn and surrounding estate at a public auction next spring.

Architect Daniel Libeskind, in an interview with *The Architects' Journal*, expressed his disappointment at the situation. The Merz Barn's custodians had failed nine times in appeals to Arts Council England for funding. In the absence of public funding, architects and artists such as the late Zaha Hadid had provided funding.

The barn has been owned since 2006 by Celia Larner and Ian Hunter under the banner of the Littoral Arts Trust but they have concluded that their age (85 and 75 respectively) plus Arts Council advice to sell the site makes the auction unavoidable.

Libeskind said: 'It's a real pity (and a sign of the times) that the Schwitters life-affirming [Merz Barn] is possibly about to be destroyed. As one of the only art "shrines" to freedom in a world increasingly threatened with authoritarianism, it should be preserved as a warning against propaganda and conformity.'



## ***HONOURS EVEN OUT ON THE PITCH***

\*\* A Hannover boys football club, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the twinning, travelled to Bristol from August 18 to 21, to play Ashton FC's boys and girls teams at Greville Smyth Park, near Ashton Gate Stadium. The German boys football club is part of the Polizei-Sportverein Hannover, which had been founded by police officers in 1920.

Organisers of the trip were pleased to see that both clubs won and lost matches against each other, but celebrated as one afterwards.

On Friday, August 19, the Lord Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Paula O'Rourke, met the young players and their coaches at Bristol City Hall and gave them the tour, including the Council Chamber which is based on the House of Commons and its spectacular painted ceiling which shows Bristol throughout its history.

Also present were Ashton FC's safeguarding officer Sarah Maddox and Bristol's German Honorary Consul Kai von Pahlen.

Sarah Maddox said "Everyone had a really good time. The kids now have a strong bond, numbers exchanged and talks are already starting on when we are to visit them next year."

Kai von Pahlen added: "Sports exchanges, especially between the young people of Bristol and Hannover, have always been at the heart of the link between Bristol and Hannover.

"There has also been a close link between the Lord Mayors of the two cities, so we are very grateful to the Lord Mayor Paula O'Rourke for taking time to meet our young friends from Hannover and share with them a part of Bristol's history."

**Kai von Pahlen**



## ***READ ALL ABOUT OUR 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY EXCHANGES:***

Happily, after all the recent years' cancellations enforced by the Covid pandemic, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year exchanges were able to go ahead successfully – despite some travel problems and health issues.

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Full reports on both the Hannover visit to Bristol and our own return visit can be found on the website at:

<https://bristolhannovercouncil.org.uk/2022/08/whirlwind-harbour-festival-weekend-celebrates-our-75th-anniversary/>

**and**

<https://bristolhannovercouncil.org.uk/2022/09/how-we-beat-travel-chaos-to-enjoy-exchange-return-celebrations-in-hannover/>



*Frohe Weihnachten und ein glückliches Neues Jahr!*

