



CHANGING OF THE GUARD BUT NOT THE MISSION

** The Bristol-Hannover Council is ending 2024 with a new chair for the first time in more than two decades after Ann Kennard was succeeded at the annual meeting by Ian Turner.

Ann had led Bristol's joint oldest twinning for 24 years. Tributes included an expression of thanks from the German Embassy delivered by the honorary consul, Kai von Pahlen, a member of the BHC committee.

Reflecting on her time in office, Ann noted the council's progress including notable events included hosting 4,000 at the 60th anniversary celebration held at the Zoo plus 2,500 for a repeat 10 years later. Further celebrations marked the 75th anniversary in 2024. Many other organisations had been brought on board the extensive BHC network.

Ian lauded Ann's "immense and conscientious work" while Derek Pickup, chair of BITA, described Ann as "a powerhouse" on behalf of the Hannover twinning. Mark Allinson, on behalf of BAGS, congratulated Ian on his accession and paid his own tribute to Ann and also her husband Tony.

Presentations included a bouquet from Lynne Evans on behalf of the committee and another from the Bristol City Council international team. Ann remains on the committee with special responsibility for liaison with local organisations' exchange projects.



The handover: Ann Kennard to Ian Turner

The work continues at full speed in 2025. The coming year will see two important visits from Hannover to Bristol. Our long-term partners from the Hannover Bristol Gesellschaft will be in Bristol for their biennial visit from August 6-11. September will bring a visit by representatives of several other Hannover-based groups to make connections with their counterparts in Bristol as part of a 'Multiplier' group.



LORD MAYOR JOINS THE CELEBRATION

** An intrepid band of 20 Bristol Hannover members braved the high winds on Sunday, December 8, to once again celebrate Christmas with a German flavour at Bristol's Jaegerbarn.

Our honoured guests were The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Andrew Varney (below), and his consort Robbie Vogelaar.



We were also delighted to be joined by Jona from Hannover, who has recently started as an intern in Bristol City Council, as well as new member Kerstin (Kiki) Eikenberry and her husband John.

The festivities got under way with a glass of warming gluehwein and all enjoyed a hearty meal of bratwurst and sauerkraut.

IAN TURNER



MARTINSTAG TRADITION COMES TO BRISTOL - AGAIN

** November 11 is St Martin's Day in Germany. This day celebrates the Roman soldier turned saint who was such a good guy that he gave half his coat to a beggar during a snowstorm.



St Martin in Bristol . . . aka Kai von Pahlen

The most iconic tradition in Germany is a lantern 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 songs carrying their colourful lanterns.

Once again this year the German Saturday school celebrated the occasion with a lantern parade in Redland Park and play in the church which children and parents enjoyed with mulled wine and other delicacies. The part of St Martin was ably played by BHC committee member Kai von Pahlen. On hand to support were chairman Ian Turner and committee members Frank Titmarsh, Lynne Evans and Anna Turner.



'Saintly supporters' Frank Titmarsh, Ian Turner, Lynda Evans, Anna Turner and the Lord Mayor of Bristol Councillor Andrew Varney.



ALDERMAN MICHAEL WITHERS, FORMER BHC VICE-PRESIDENT

** Alderman Michael Withers, former vice-president of Bristol-Hannover Council, has passed away at 93.

Michael was born in Bath and went to school there, became a member of the Young Conservatives, was given the Freedom of the City of Bath, and later became a Conservative city councillor in Bristol. He always supported the arts in Bristol, became Chair of the Arts and Leisure Committee and was a member of Bristol Savages and Rotary.

He was also always concerned to work to ensure good relations between Britain and Germany, becoming an early member of Bristol-Hannover Council, and was later a founder member of Bristol Anglo-German Society.



Michael Withers: Many years of service

He served on the committee of the London-based British-German Association and was accorded the Order of Merit (Verdienstkreuz). He leaves a son Julian, daughter Helen, and four grandchildren.

In recent years he and his wife Gill lived in the St Monica's residential village at Sandford Station, where Gill continues to reside, and my husband Tony and I were pleased to lunch with them in November 2023. He leaves a son Julian, daughter Helen, and four grandchildren.

ANN KENNARD



ANOTHER GREAT VISIT TO HANNOVER

** Our biennial visit to Hannover this year took place in September, and as luck would have it, our visit coincided with that of Bristol's Ariel Rowing Club, who were visiting their partner rowers, Linden Ruderverein.

Thus we were all treated to a splendid first morning in brilliant sunshine in an unusual and beautiful place, namely the Berggarten, part of the wonderful Herrenhausen Gardens. We split into two groups, and were guided by the Gardens' experts.

We then proceeded to the grandiose Hodlersaal of Hannover's Rathaus, where all of us were received by our good friend, Mayor Thomas Hermann. His warm and eloquent speech praised the partnership and looked forward to many more years of friendship.



Barbecue time courtesy once more of Petra and Martin

In the afternoon there was a visit to the World of Kitchen, a museum devoted to the history of kitchen equipment, and in the evening another great barbecue hosted by Petra and Martin - an enjoyable fixture in our visits.

Saturday brought the first of two train rides, this one to the Steinhuder Meer, a lovely lake with cafés and exhibitions.

The highlight was a trip in an old sailing boat to the tiny island of Wilhelmstein with the former fortress of the Schaumburg princes.

Sunday saw another train ride takes us to Braunschweig, partner city of Bath, where the Bath chair Judy Spencer, accompanied.

A splendid guided tour of the old city ended in the Abbey café behind the old Rathaus with a reception in the Great Hall by Bath's partner organisation, the Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft.

On Monday a guided tour of the beautiful Leineschloss, home to the regional government of Lower Saxony, the Landtag, was followed by a working lunch shared by our two committees at Meiers Lebenslust, opposite Hannover's Neues Rathaus.



All together at the Landtag on the last full day of the visit

This was followed by a presentation in the Kestner Museum of member Michael Bloom's great-uncle's coin collection [<https://bristolhannovercouncil.org.uk/2024/11/michael-bloom-my-hannover-journey-into-family-history/>]. Our friend Katharina Rüniger, spokesperson for the museum's directorate, had arranged for the museum to be opened specially for us.

On our final evening, a large number of members of both associations enjoyed a delightful buffet meal at the Werkhof restaurant with speeches and the exchange of gifts.

ANN KENNARD



TWINNING AT THE HARBOUR FESTIVAL

** The participation of Bristol's twinnings at this year's Harbour Festival was masterminded by our Council Twinnings Officer, Zoe Gibbons, whose idea for artistic activities in the family area on College Green proved a great success.



Spelling out the wide reach of Bristol's twinnings

The twinnings tent displayed huge letters of BRISTOL, each letter signifying one of the seven twinnings with an associated animal. The letters were allocated in order of the establishment of the twinnings, so Hannover was the letter R and our animal was the horse, to show off the Hanoverian horse breed.

The project was aimed at families and the children were invited to draw, copy or colour in, in our case, horses, and then stick their artistic endeavours on the appropriate letter on the stage.

Each twinning had a separate table, all colour-coded (in our case yellow), with lots of information about each twinning on laminated sheets. The crowds of enthusiastic children showed the success of the enterprise.



Bristol-Hannover Council aims to involve as many Bristolians as possible, young and old, in extending the ties which have already enriched the lives of so many people in both cities since 1947. Many exchanges which have been - and continue to be - supported by the Council, include:

- ** *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*

