

Peter Christoforou

## Jonathan Radnedge

'There wasn't enough interest', Radnedge explained, when asked why he joined the Bristol-Hannover Exchange programme in 1966. Perhaps a lesson to us all, even the most flippant decisions can have impactful, life-changing consequences for the better.

Established in 1947, the Bristol-Hannover council was formed as a result of the bond the two communities created, when the city of Bristol sent over hundreds of shoes for Hanoverian children, who were incapable of walking to school otherwise. Since then, the two cities have held events, exchanges and ceremonies in honour of the relationship, leading to connections and friendships that have lasted generations over.



On his first trip to Germany, Radnedge experienced the stark difference between each side of the iron curtain. East Berlin, initially controlled by Soviet Russia, he referred to as 'calm and quiet', when compared to the West side, formally controlled by the British, with all of its 'sudden glitz'. On these visits, Radnedge described how he and his friends were able to 'let loose', exploring Germany as they pleased. He especially enjoyed the sense of 'discovery' the exchange offered.

The one element of tension to his youth exchange, only 20 years after World War II, was around the innocent staging of a football match between the youth groups of Bristolians and Hanoverians. They competed in Hannover in the summer of 1966, shortly after England had defeated West Germany in the World Cup Final. The youth 'replay' ended in a 'diplomatic' 2-2 draw. In reply to a question about any general tension, Radnedge responded: "There was no elephant in the room. If anything, any elephant was at the back of the room, on the skirting board."

Bristolians having visited Hannover, and the Hanoverians having visited Bristol many times over, lifelong friendships were bound to blossom across their borders. Radnedge has kept in touch with his friends for decades via regular reunions and events. He described how, recently, some will have passed away with each new meeting, but that, despite this, 'We pick up each year as if we'd never left'. Now easier than ever, Radnedge told me how their organisation has improved with the use of new technology like email and text messaging.

In 2006 Radnedge and one of his sons, both sports journalists, covered the World Cup in Germany, an event which brought back fond memories born of the Bristol-Hannover exchange. He was delighted to share the volumes of pictures and letters collated down the years, hoping that we might be inspired to follow his path, keeping the bond between our two cities alive and well with the younger generations.