

# Bristol Archives

## Bristol's twin cities



Bristol's twin city relationships began with new relationships with Hannover and Bordeaux in 1947 and Bristol Archives holds various sources related to these and other associations. Selected collections and papers are described here, although this list is not comprehensive.

Further material is listed in our online catalogue. To search thoroughly, try different search terms. Using a wildcard asterisk will find more results - for example, 'twin\*'.

Note that Hannover may also be spelt *Hanover*. Bordeaux has various spellings in earlier documents, including *Bourdeaux*, *Bourdiaux*, *Burdegalia*, *Burdeaux*, *Burdeaus* and *Burdes*.

---

Online catalogue	<a href="http://archives.bristol.gov.uk">archives.bristol.gov.uk</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-archives">www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-archives</a>
Email	<a href="mailto:archives@bristol.gov.uk">archives@bristol.gov.uk</a>
Telephone	0117 922 4224

---

### Cross-city records

- Records of Bristol International Twinning Association, 1991-1999 ([Ref. 41882](#))
- Records of the Bristol City Council Twinning Committee, 2001-2004 (Ref. 44596/unlisted/1) [These papers are uncatalogued; please contact Bristol Archives if you wish to consult them]
- Records of Artspace/Spike Island artistic exchanges, 1986-1995 ([Ref. 45338/1/D/4](#))
- *A common humanity: the story of Bristol's twinning*, by Marmaduke Alderson - published booklet with details of Bristol's twin cities, 1997 ([Ref. 42118/PM/2/6](#))
- The George Gallop photographic collection: browse or search by city within this collection, particularly /MH (Mansion House) and /PEF (Projects and events) ([Ref. 42069](#))

## Bordeaux, France (1947)

Maritime connections between Bristol and Bordeaux have existed since Roman times and the wine trade between the two cities dates back to the twelfth century. Bristol's Great Red Book bears testimony to trade between the cities in the late middle ages, with Bristol the main port (after London) for imports of Bordeaux wine.

The modern twinning began through a connection between Bristol University and Bordeaux University. In February 1947, a committee was formed to foster links between the cities. This became the Bristol Bordeaux Association in 1953 when a constitution was drawn up.

From the outset, school exchanges were central to the association's activities. The first exchange involved pupils and staff from Bristol's Fairfield Grammar School in September 1947. Over the first 25 years, this developed into exchanges of up to 1,000 students

Other exchange activities have included an annual boat race between Bristol University and Bordeaux's naval school (1950s to 1960s), as well as football, tennis, hockey and rugby matches. Further exchanges have related to the arts, Bordeaux's grape harvest, an annual Bristol Bordeaux Ball (1948 to 1963) and regular civic visits.

### Historic trade connections

Various records contain references to links between Bristol and Bordeaux. Many early records related to trade have been transcribed by the [Bristol Record Society](#) and now published online as searchable PDFs, free of charge. Relevant volumes include:

- *The Great Red Book of Bristol, 1380-1546*. E. W. Veale (ed), vols 2, 4, 8, 16, 18, 1931-1953
- *The Overseas Trade of Bristol (In the Later Middle Ages)*. E. M. Carus-Wilson (ed), vol 7, 1937
- *The Ledger of John Smythe, 1538-1550*. Jean Vanes (ed), vol 28, 1975

For later references to trade with Bordeaux, see:

- Records of Harveys of Bristol, wine and spirit merchants, 1815-1996 ([Ref. 40913](#))

Published histories:

- *Bordeaux: Les relations de Bordeaux et de Bristol au moyen age* (Relations between Bordeaux and Bristol in the Middle Ages), published by Le Revue historique de Bordeaux et du department de la Gironde, 1957 ([Ref. Pamphlet/827](#))
- *The merchants of Bristol in the eighteenth century*, published by the Bordeaux federation historique du Sud-Ouest, 1979 ([Pamphlet/911](#))

### Twinning

- Records of the Bristol-Bordeaux Association, 1957-1977 ([Ref. 37396](#))
- Photographs of a Bristol-Bordeaux Association visit to Bristol, 1969 ([Ref. PicBox/5/EvPh/21a](#))
- Film of a visit to Bordeaux by Lord Mayor Helen Bloom, 1972 ([Ref. BROFA/0009](#))
- Bristol-Bordeaux twinning charter, 1987 ([Ref. 39935/1-2](#))
- Material from Bristol Bach Choir's tour to Bordeaux, 1991 ([Ref. 40856/AM/T/2](#))
- Bristol-Bordeaux oral history recordings, 2007 ([Ref. 44050/HM/1](#))
- Records of the Bristol-Bordeaux Student Exchange, c1950-1987 (Ref. 43693)  
[This collection is uncatalogued; please contact Bristol Archives if you wish to consult it].

## Hannover, Germany (1947)

In August 1947, five 'men of goodwill' from Bristol visited Hannover to explore a potential relationship between the two cities, which both suffered serious damage during the Second World War.

The men were Alderman St John Reade (Vice-Chairman of Bristol's Education Committee), Professor Dr August Closs (Professor of German, Bristol University), Edward G Seath (secretary of the city's Youth Committee), Croften E Gane (businessman) and Donald Hughes (artist).



This was the first post-war twinning between British and German cities. Their message of peace laid the foundation for over 500 more twinings between British and German communities.

After the visit, Bristol's city council set up a working committee to plan further contact with Hannover. The first meeting of the Bristol-Hannover Council was held in April 1948. Around that time, Bristol sent 'relief goods' to post-war Hannover, such as shoes, clothes and food.

Bristol's first official visit to Hannover took place in 1950, with a Hannover visit to Bristol in 1952. There have been many school exchanges over the years. In 1977, the first sporting exchange to Hannover marked the 30th anniversary of the twinning. In 1983, the city of Hannover was awarded the Freedom of the City of Bristol.

- Records of the Bristol-Hannover Council, 1948-2005 ([Ref. 42118](#))
- Photographs of Lord Mayor's visit to Hannover, 26-30 March 1950 ([Ref. 33292/7](#))
- Press cuttings and photographs related to the Bristol-Hannover (Exchange) Council, 1959-1977 ([Ref. 38216](#))
- Records related to granting Freedom of the City of Bristol to Hannover, 1983 ([Ref. 38535](#))

### 40th anniversary, 1987

- Bristol-Hannover twinning charter, 1987 ([Ref. 40016](#))
- *Bristol-Hannover: how it began*, 1987 ([Ref. Pamphlet/1375](#)). Also in German at [Ref. 41180/3](#))
- Videos of 40th anniversary celebrations, 1987 (Ref. 44788/8)  
[This collection is uncatalogued; please contact Bristol Archives if you wish to consult it].

### 50th anniversary, 1997

- *A celebration of twinning: a personal recollection: Bristol-Hannover 1947-1997*, by Neville Osborne, 1997 ([Ref. Pamphlet/1806](#))

### 60th anniversary, 2007

- Bristol-Hannover oral history recordings, 2007 ([Ref. 44050/HM/1](#))

## Oporto, Portugal (1984)

- Treaty of friendship between Bristol and Oporto, Portugal, 1984 ([Ref. 39533/a](#))
- Records of the Bristol - Oporto Association, 1984-2005 ([Ref. 40943](#))
- Papers on the inauguration of a trade and cultural union between Bristol and Oporto, 1984 ([Ref. 38753](#)) and ([Ref. 40338](#))
- Records of Harveys of Bristol, wine and spirit merchants, 1815-1996 ([Ref. 40913](#))



## Tbilisi, Georgia (1988)

- Bristol City Council correspondence on twinning with Tbilisi, 1986-1987 ([Ref. 41779/1](#))
- Papers regarding twinning, including twinning agreements, c1987-2004 ([Ref. 40086](#)) and 1996-2006 ([Ref. 40964](#))
- Records of the Bristol Tbilisi Association, c1989-2002 (Ref. 43674)  
[This collection is uncatalogued; please contact Bristol Archives if you wish to consult it].

## Puerto Morazan, Nicaragua (1989)

- Records of Bristol Link with Nicaragua (BLINC), 1985-2000 ([Ref. 41883](#))

## Beira, Mozambique (1990)

- Declaration of friendship between Bristol and Beira, 1990 ([Ref. 44997/1](#))
- Papers within the records of Bristol Action for Southern Africa ([Ref. 41242/IM/H/16](#))

## Guangzhou, China (sister city agreement in 2001, bilateral agreement in 2013)

- See cross-city records listed at the start of this guide.

---

### Images shown

- A visit to Hannover, 1950 ([Ref. 33292/7](#))
  - Bristol-Bordeaux coat of arms ([Ref. 37396/13](#))
  - Lord Mayor Percy Cann at an exhibition of German industry in Hannover, 1950 ([Ref. 33292/7](#))
  - Visitors from Oporto at the Council House with the Lord Mayor, 1984 (Ref. 42069/MH/365)
-