

Georgian Studies Day 2020

Annual Report - Bristol Tbilisi Twinning Association (BTA)

Derek Pickup, the BTA chairman

"Twinning between Bristol and Tbilisi 2019/2020"

Good morning everyone.

The twinning between Bristol and Tbilisi was signed in 1988 and reaffirmed in 1995. We have always had a busy programme of events and projects and **2019/2020 was meant to be another busy year with two groups going to Tbilisi in October and a wide programme of events planned. Unfortunately, almost everything had to be cancelled because of the coronavirus. We are however pulling ourselves together to cope with the new norm. So what did happen during the year:**

In May Tbilisi City Council unveiled a new twinning sign in a garden situated in Krtsanisi District. The name of the garden is **Tbilisi Twin Cities Garden**. It was the Mayors department's idea to have a garden in the city which would be devoted to twinning. Later, a special commission at Tbilisi Sakrebulo (legislative body of the local authority) gave the official name to the garden. Bristol has also commissioned a new twinning sign by the Bristol based artist Steve Joyce, but completion has been delayed because his workshop has been inaccessible because of Covid.

A number of Georgian writers will be participating in the Bristol Festival of Literature between the 15th and 25th October via zoom. <https://www.bristolliteraturefestival.org/2020-bristol-literature-festival>

There will be two male and one female Georgian author taking part. Eka Kevanishvili, a poet and a journalist <http://tbilisilifest.ge/EN/index.php?do=full&id=5153>
There will also be a playwright Davit Gabunia. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davit_Gabunia
The writer and historian Aka Akhvlediani has also agreed to take part https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aka_Morchiladze

Georgian filmmakers participated in the Encounters International Film Festival which took place between 20th and 26th September As part of its programme it featured a number of **90 second films by Georgian film makers which were made as part of a competition for them to depict Georgia in 90 seconds. The prize for the winner of the competition is a paid visit to the festival in 2021.**

<https://www.encounters.film/2020-guest-programme>

Georgian artists have participated regularly in UPFEST the Bristol International festival of street artists. This year the well-known Georgian artist Tamoonz <https://www.tamoonz.com/> **was due to participate but because of the virus it had to be a virtual event which took place from the 25th to the 27th September.**

https://mailchi.mp/upfest/virtually_upfest?e=4d97135918

The BTA has started to re-engage with a Bristol Tbilisi Quizz over zoom where members from both Bristol and Tbilisi were able to participate.

2021, we are hoping to reorganise the two BTA trips to Tbilisi for September next year. We would like to organise a trade delegation for 2021 but we have to determine with companies if this is viable. We are planning a Georgian Supra and a Georgian film season both of which are always popular. Several talks are planned and if they cannot be held as physical events, they can go ahead online using zoom. We have had a number of Cheveny scholars studying in Bristol and I am pleased to say that despite the difficulties we have a Georgian student who has started her master's degree in education. What twinning has shown us is that working

together with your friends there is always a way forward despite the challenges and problems facing us.

If anyone would like to learn more about the work of the Bristol Tbilisi Association, they can visit us on our website <http://bristoltbilisi.com/>

If you would like a copy of my presentation with hyperlinks to all the events, I have mentioned please e mail me at: derepickup@icloud.com