

Annual Report to the Bristol Tbilisi Association by Derek Pickup

2022 marked the end of covid restrictions but many people still had concerns regarding socialising in large groups and the BTA limited the number of live events.

2022 started with a very informative online talk by Nino Beglarishvili on Christmas traditions in Georgia. [Bristol Tbilisi Association - Nino Beglarishvili about Christmas in Georgia](#)

In March there was a Georgian poetry reading by three Georgian women poets held at the BookHaus bookshop on the docks. A copy of some of the poems was placed in the Central Library. [Bristol Tbilisi Association - Georgian Poet in Bristol 2022](#)

This was followed by a very interesting talk in May 2022. In this virtual lecture Nina Mdivani, looked at twelve women artists of Georgia, who left an indelible mark on art history. This was a very engaging talk by Nina, an art curator who is based in New York. The wonders of Zoom made this possible.

[Bristol Tbilisi Association - Georgian born and New York-based independent art curator Nina Mdivani's online talk "GEORGIAN FEMALE ARTISTS: A LOOK BACK AND ACROSS"](#)

At the end of May, the BTA hosted the Georgian street artist Tamoonz, who represented Georgia at the Bristol International Festival of Street Art, UPFEST. After some wonderful street art Tamoonz headed up to London and spent several weeks painting the streets of London.

Towards the end of June, the Georgian Ambassador and her team came to Bristol for two days to promote the link between Bristol and Tbilisi. During her visit the Ambassador met with representatives of both Universities to discuss how we could promote studying opportunities in Bristol for Georgian students. As a result of the meeting with Bristol University, they agreed to consider applications from Georgian students for help with fees and two Georgian students have directly benefitted from this initiative to date.

A meeting was held with Business West, and this led to them agreeing to promote investment opportunities in Georgia to their members plus they agreed to support a Georgian wine tasting event at Leigh Court in 2023.

Meetings also took place with the Mayor, Marvin Rees and with the Lord Lieutenant, the Guild of Guardians, and the Lord Mayor to discuss the twinning and how it could be even more promoted. Thanks to Esther we also had a Georgian Supra at the Station with Georgian wine supplied by Gardabani Wines and music by the Georgian Pianist Salome Chitaia. The Supra was very well attended with the guests of honour being the Lord Mayor of Bristol, the Lord Lieutenant of Bristol, the High Sheriff of Bristol, and the Georgian Ambassador.

A trip for BTA members was planned for 2019 but had to be postponed because of Covid and with the end of restrictions the trip was put back on the agenda and six members of the BTA headed for a week's visit to Tbilisi. A full account of what was a very successful visit can be found on the BTA website written by Marian Lieberman [Bristol Tbilisi Association - Tbilisi Twinning Visit October 2022](#)

During the 2021/22 academic year the BTA helped to provide support to five Georgian students who were studying at Bristol University and some of you will have met them. Three of the students completed their master's degrees and two have now gone into the second year of their undergraduate courses and have been joined by three new master's students. The BTA has been continuing to provide support as and when requested. These young people are the future leaders of Georgia and the students have been very grateful for our support.

2023 will mark the 35th anniversary of the twinning g between Bristol and Tbilisi and we are already starting to plan what we hope will be a very successful programme of events in which I hope that as many BTA members as possible will participate.

Finally, I would like to thank the BTA committee for all their efforts during the year to make the year of BTA events so successful.