

To each Member of the International Relations Committee

3rd January, 2019

TWINNING ACTIVITY REPORT 2018

Rennes:

- The Rennes Tourism Fair took place from February 16th to February 18th, 2018 inclusive. The City Council had a prominent stand in a good location at the fair. The fair provided the opportunity to showcase Cork, and much promotional literature and brochures were sourced and available in French. Over the three days, the fair attracted 38,924 visitors. This represented an increase of 2.84% on 2017 visitor numbers.
- A delegation from Cork visited Rennes to participate in Rennes Mental Health Week. Both the Lord Mayor and Denise Cahill of Cork Healthy Cities made presentations at the conference which were very well received.



Cllr. Tony Fitzgerald presenting at the Rennes Mental Health Week event in Rennes.

- Vivarium Vivarium is a shared studio space in Rennes. 2 no artists there are proposing an exchange project with an artist collective in Cork in Autumn, 2019 and visited Cork in autumn 2018 to discuss the proposal, meet with artists and view exhibition spaces. Committee members will be kept undated on progress.

- **Cologne:**
On 1st October, 2018, a group of three athletes from Cork took part in the Cologne half marathon. Exchanges between athletes from the two cities have been taking place for a number of years now. The group also attended a welcome reception in City Hall, hosted by Vice Mayor Andreas Wolter.
- In June, 2 athletes from Cologne, Maria Knaup & Fabian Schlimgen travelled to Cork to take part in the Cork city marathon.
- The Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr. Fergal Dennehy attended a St. Patrick's Day Reception in Cologne on 16th March, hosted by the Honorary Consul General, Mrs. Brigitte Wagner Halswick. The function was very well attended by a wide spectrum of the business, social and political community of Cologne including the Irish Ambassador, Michael Collins and Mayor of Cologne, Mayor Reker.
- Matthias Welpmann, President of the Cologne Cork Sister City Committee led a 7 person delegation from Cologne to Cork on May 10th/May 11th. During the delegation's visit to Cork, they had meetings with German teachers in Cork schools in the city to discuss beginning new and expanding existing school exchange programmes. They paid a courtesy visit to the Deputy Lord Mayor, visited and had a tour of the Fire Station provided by Alex O'Shea, Cork Fire Brigade, visited the NICHE offices in Knocknaheeny to discuss areas of collaboration, attended a lunch hosted by Cork City Council and took a walking tour of the City provided by Cllr. Kieran McCarthy.
- Exchange students from the Herder Gymnasium Cologne, paid a courtesy visit to the Lord Mayor on May 4th, 2018. This school exchange between Cork and Cologne has been taking place for almost 20 years. Cork students travelled to Cologne in Jan/Feb, 2018 where they spent half of their visit at school, and the remainder on work experience. This project was assisted under the Twinning Grant Programme.
- As part of the 30 year anniversary of the Cork/Cologne twinning the 75 piece Junge Sinfonie Cologne orchestra, played a concert in aid of the Cope Foundation on the 17th October in City Hall. The concert was attended by the German Ambassador to Ireland, Mrs. Deike Potzel and the Lord Mayor.



Photo of the Junge Sinfonie Cologne Orchestra during their performance in City Hall on October 17th. Picture courtesy of Donagh Glavin.

San Francisco

- Following the very successful visit of Mayor Lee who led a delegation of over 90 persons from San Francisco to Cork in September 2017 it was agreed that a return visit would take place to build and expand on the progress made over that week. Following weeks of work and planning a full itinerary was developed and the Lord Mayor led the largest ever delegation from Cork to San Francisco- 62 people in total. The delegation comprised of representatives from all areas of Cork City- Cork City Council, UCC, CIT, ETB, Cork Chamber, Rainbow Cities, Port of Cork, An Garda Siochana, Leo Companies, Economic Development Companies, Developers, Cork Chamber and affiliated companies, San Francisco Committee members, English Market, and It@Cork. The Lord Mayor and main delegation arrived in San Francisco on the 22nd April. Meetings/itinerary for the visit included:
 - Meeting with Mayor Farrell in City Hall.
 - Signing of MOU on lgbtqi+ focused sister city initiatives and exchanges . Exchange information and best practices related to each cities LGBTQI+ programs, policies, and initiatives.
 - Meeting with Consul General Robert O’Driscoll and his staff wherein the economic and political landscape was discussed
 - Meeting with Mr Matt Regan and Mr Sean Randolph, Bay Area Economic Institute who presented on the changes that have taken place in San Francisco over the past 10 years and the challenges that these have brought
 - Boat tour of San Francisco Bay and attend San Francisco giants game in AT&T Park.

- Visit to the PCH Innovation Hub
- Visit to Ferry Building Market for tour of the facility and presentation from the Manager and met several of the operators and producers.
- Meeting with Board of Supervisors.
- Attend reception hosted by the San Francisco-Cork Committee in the United Irish cultural Centre.
- Meetings in Silicon Valley including the IDA, Apple, Flex
- Attend joint Cork Chamber/Irish Network Bay Area network breakfasting event.
- Meeting with Assistant Commissioner Michael Connolly and other members of the police force.
- Meetings held to progress MOU on Lifelong Learning.
- Farwell reception hosted by Lord Mayor of Cork. Invitees included members of the sister city committee, City officials, members of the Irish community and Diaspora.

In addition to the above official itinerary all members of the delegation put new connections made and time available to maximum use and arranged and attended their own side bar meetings.



Cork Delegation on the Steps of City Hall San Francisco.

- Mayor Farrell and family visited Cork on June 10th, 2018 and attended the Defence Forces Open Day in Fitzgerald's Park with the Lord Mayor. San Francisco sub- committee members and members of agencies in the city attended a lunch hosted by the Council for Mayor Farrell in the Park. Mayor Farrell returned to City Hall to sign the visitors book. This was his final overseas visit before he left office.
- The San Francisco Chief Fire Officer, Joanne Hayes White visited Cork in July. She paid a courtesy visit to the Lord Mayor on July 13th where she met with several members of Council and the San Francisco Committee.
- As part of O Bheal's Cork San Francisco sister cities partnership, a group of 16 students and 2 professors from St. Mary's College came to Cork for a three week general arts course, employing a number of Cork artists and venues from all over the city to give workshops to these students.

Coventry

- The Exhibition titled "Irish Heart, Coventry Home" was launched at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum on March 9th. This project was a 15 month history project which was conducted by the Coventry Irish Society where they explored the history of the Irish Community in Coventry. The exhibition ran in the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum until 10th April. Cllr. Kieran McCarthy travelled to the exhibition launch. The Coventry Oral History Project Exhibition then came to Cork in September, and was launched by the Lord Mayor on September 18th in the Atrium City Hall, in the presence of members of the Coventry Irish Society. The exhibition was in situ until October 12th and was very well received.



Picture L to R, Cllr. Kieran McCarthy, Simon McCarthy, Coventry Irish Society, Lord Mayor of Cork, Mick Finn, Kay Forrest, Coventry Irish Society and Ciaran Davis, Project Officer at the Cork Launch of the Irish Heart, Coventry Home exhibition.

- 2 Coventry poets, Jane commane and Peter Raynard traveled to Cork in August. As in previous exchanges the Coventry poets paid a courtesy visit to the Lord Mayor. For the reciprocal event, 2 Cork poets flew to Coventry to read at the Fire and Dust poetry night in Coventry and visited the Lord Mayor of Coventry.
- 2 Coventry athletes, Myshola Kirkham and Nick Bennett travelled to Cork to take part in the half marathon in June.
- Team 109 from Cork paid a courtesy visit to the Lord Mayor of Coventry, John Blundell on September 6th.
-

Swansea

- Four athletes from Swansea travelled to Cork to take part in the Cork City Marathon. Rachel Davies, Llinos Jones and Christine Webb took part in the full Marathon and Vanessa Harragan took part in the half marathon.



2 of the Swansea Harrier athletes with the Lord Mayor, Cllr. Tony Fitzgerald.

I ask the committee to note the report for information.

Noreen Mulcahy
Secretary to International Relations Committee.