



**Patron: The Lord Mayor of Bristol**

## *NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2019*

### **YOUR 'NEW LOOK' NEWSLETTER**

Unfortunately due to various reasons, a Newsletter has not been produced for some time and it has not been possible to report on events that have been undertaken by BFF in the last few months. I offered to undertake production of the Newsletter and the Executive Committee ratified this position at the last committee meeting. I will continue to act as editor until the next AGM in November. However, in this production I will endeavor to at least bring members up-to-date with reports on events that have taken place in the last few months.

You will probably notice a change in the layout of the of the Newsletter; this is because I have tried to bring it into line with the layout of our website - <http://bristol.friendshipforce.org.uk/> - as far as possible.

As this is the start of a New Year, a new Executive Committee and several New Members, let us look forward to the challenges that face our club in 2019. The Committee will be organising a programme, various aspects of which, hopefully, will contain elements of interest to all members and we will be looking to the membership to support some, if not all, events arranged.

I would also ask members to email me, or tell me about things that have happened to them, funny or serious, not just in the course of their BFF membership, but perhaps in their travels locally or worldwide. For instance, I could tell you about the time I was ordered of the 'plane in San Francisco en-route to Hawaii (not funny at the time) or my experiences when travelling interstate via Chicago, or even what happened when sailing to Australia - I could write a book ! This Newsletter is not about me, but about all of us. Please think about what you can contribute - I will put it together.

In finishing this editorial I would just like to say thank you to Wendy (Tyrrell) on behalf of the Members of Bristol Friendship Force. Wendy has been responsible for producing the Newsletter for several years, but having moved to the Forest of Dean to live and spending several months a year in France, production and circulation has become rather difficult for her.

*Gloria Woodman - Editor*





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### President's Report on the AGM

The 2018 AGM was held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at Oldland Common Village Hall. I started the meeting by warmly welcoming those members who were able to attend and thanking them for their contribution to the 'sharing' lunch. Sadly this was the lowest number of members attending an AGM for some years.

BFF remembered a special friend – **Viv Seward**. Her family asked me to thank all members for the support and friendship given to Viv over the years and for the donation made by BFF to help build better accommodation at the hospice. Perhaps in the future Viv's family may become members.

Thanks were extended to Jill for having articles on BFF published in her local newsletter in Salford, to Gerry our founding member, for an advertisement published in The Bristol Magazine, and also to Gloria who assisted me with an article published in The Voice newspapers and circulated in six or seven areas of Bristol. This publicity did succeed in bringing in several new members, some of whom I was able to welcome to the AGM.

I was able to inform those present that BFF have put forward the names of two members to Friendship Force International to hopefully receive an award:

Namely **Gerry** for starting BFF over 40 years ago, and who is still working hard for our club, and **Sylvia**, who after 30 years plus remains our Journey Co-ordinator.

I think both Gerry and Sylvia are hard acts to follow; they are committed BFF members. I sincerely hope that FFI will look favourably upon both of them and they receive an award.

Voting for the new committee then took place with the following outcome:

#### Executive Committee Members for 2019

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
<b>Carole Duckett</b>	<b>President</b>
<b>Pat Homer</b>	<b>Vice President</b>
<b>Sylvia Dando</b>	<b>Journey Co-ordinator</b>
<b>Bernard Duckett</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Jo Weston</b>

#### Members without Portfolio

(positions were decided at first committee meeting)

<b>Shirley Lowe</b>	<b>Membership Secretary/ Almoner</b>
<b>Gloria Woodman</b>	<b>Newsletter/Website/ Facebook Co-ordinator</b>
<b>Fi Wisloff</b>	<b>Publicity Officer</b>
<b>Lesley Morris</b>	<b>(position to be discussed)</b>



Cont/d



I thanked the outgoing committee members for their work and Gerry for her work as nominations chair.

I closed the AGM by telling those present that I have a great belief in Friendship Force ethos and values; however, I would ask all members to be active and take every opportunity to talk to friends, relatives, people you may meet out and about, and talk to them about FF, its incoming and outgoing journeys; chatting to people is just one of a very few things that can be done which does not cost any money.

Bristol FF has a great reputation around the UK and in fact around the World, if we all work in the same united direction, we can make BFF even stronger for the future.

*Carole Duckett*  
President

### UK FIELD REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

In my role as UK Field Representative I attended along with Bernard the Leuven Belgium conference. Another couple from Bristol FF, Barbara and Alan Beaman, also attended. At the first workshop I attended I was given a very warm welcome by Jeremi Snook, FFI CEO – however as the meeting was held totally in German – neither of us had a clue what was being discussed!

Barbara, Alan, Bernard and I had great fun during the Welcome Dinner, which included Jeremi - CEO, in telling how in Barbara and Alan's village in Devon, tar barrels are set alight and rolled down a very steep hill which has thatched cottages on either side of the road !! Those at the dinner table were in total disbelief - Bernard and I were also able to confirm this as we had attended one of these events a few years ago. After the conference I sent some photos proving that Barbara's story about all this was very true.

The conference and meeting representatives from around Europe enhanced my understanding of FF. During the conference I was also asked by Jeremi, if I would be a member of the European Action Group – I now have regular meetings via my computer !



Photograph taken at a Bristol Friendship Force coffee morning in 2018

During the past year I also made trips to Durham Club and Cleveland County - actually on St George's Day - this was a good meeting and everyone received a beautiful fresh red rose.

Very recently I attended Leicestershire FF Club's AGM, which was also a good meeting. Leicestershire will be celebrating 20 years as a club during Spring-time. I have almost secured dates to visit the remaining UK clubs during the coming year.

*Carole Duckett*





## **Mexico City FF joins Bristol FF** **Sunday 8th - Sunday 15th April- Journey** **14048**

Today I am sitting in my cottage garden in brilliant sunshine. The flower beds are bursting with colour and the bumble bees are buzzing low searching for suitable nesting holes. I am reflecting on the recent happy, lively Mexican visit and wondering why we had had such wet, wild and windy weather? Interestingly it was the weather that our ambassadors had expected!

The wide-ranging programme ran with only minor flaws. Eugenia (Maru) was the Mexican Journey Co-ordinator. Maru lead her ambassadors with calm assurance. Lesley and I were joint Bristol Journey Co-ordinators with Sylvia in our team as an adviser and Reg as a conscientious treasurer. As our club has grown, with the inclusion of valued members from a 50 mile radius, it becomes more of a challenge to provide a programme for everybody. As well as venues to be chosen and planned for there are the logistics of travel that take into account distance, reluctance to drive at night, unwillingness to drive in some towns, distribution of passengers and time. This was somewhat overcome by using trains. The credit goes to Lesley for organising the internal travel and the airport transfers and to Ann who navigated several train journeys from Marlborough. Well done!

The venues all came up to expectation. Who can fail with Bath, Bristol and Wells on our doorstep. We added Cardiff with our Welsh member Jen in charge and Wadworth's Brewery and Avebury in Ann and Jeff and Ritva's neck of the woods.. The Bristol Day is coming up for review as for several reasons it became disorganised

The Bristol FF Hosts returned evaluation forms promptly with reasoned remarks and suggestions for changes. We realise that with the changing nature of the club this journey provided a template for future visits. Using train travel was a good idea and so might be the use of all day bus passes for travel in Bristol on future exchanges (this idea came from the evaluation meeting) It was sad that for one reason or another more club members were not able to join in. Those who did were most welcome as were the dinner hosts.

The Farewell Party was a roaring success. Thanks go to Sylvia, Peter and Gloria.as well as those who came and helped in every way Peter was resplendent in his Village Crier outfit and Sylvia presented a great meal Gloria, thank you for organising the Ukulele Group (the Ukeaholics). They were wonderful and we will surely use them again.

The Mexican group were friendly, generous and flexible and I know are already a part of our ever extending group of friends across the world. I know that future visits and other communication will take place between us.

One personal moment has to be shared. It came from our ambassador Jorge one morning at breakfast "I love your simple way of life. You seem the ideal couple. My life in Mexico is complicated I always want to be the best". There was no answer to that! Thank you Maru and Jorge for bringing with you such a delightful group.

### **Jill Williams - HC**





**Report on the Bristol Friendship Force Journey to Calgary and Medicine Hat, Canada**

**20th June to 4th July 2018**

Nine Bristol members, plus one member from the Derbyshire Friendship Force took part in this Journey, together with nine members from the Friendship Force of Cheyenne. For many this was the first experience of two clubs on a joint journey and generally the arrangement worked well.

**Preparation:** Was considered satisfactory by all Ambassadors. Although the Bristol Journey Coordinators were at times confused by some of the communications with regard to currency and responsibilities.

**First week in Calgary:**

All hosts were extremely welcoming and accommodation very satisfactory. Transport to and from events went well.

The programme was much appreciated, particularly the chuck wagon races at Heritage Park.



The City of Calgary tour would have benefitted from closer shepherding of such a large group in a crowded city.

**Second week in Medicine Hat:**

Again all hosts were welcoming and accommodation very satisfactory.

The programme was much appreciated, particularly the Rodeo and Hemp Farm.



**General Comments:**

We would like to thank both clubs for a most enjoyable Journey and an interesting insight into life in and around Southern Alberta.

**Reg Williams - JC for Calgary**

**Pat Homer - JC for Medicine Hat**



**BFF COFFEE MORNINGS - 2019**

The first coffee morning of the year was held at Mary (Gray's) home in Pucklechurch and was extremely well attended, followed by an excellent pub lunch. Thank you Mary for your hospitality.

The second coffee morning -

**2nd February 2019**

will be held at Carole and Bernard's home

More information on coffee mornings and events will follow due course; however it is more than likely the coffee morning in **April** will be held at Wendy (Tyrell's) home in the Forest of Dean.



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To keep up to date if I am unable to publish events in the Newsletter, which will only be distributed about every three months, please look on our website -

<http://bristol.friendshipforce.org.uk/>





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**REPORT ON THE VISIT OF THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO TO BRISTOL  
26<sup>TH</sup> September 2018 – 2<sup>ND</sup> October 2018**

**Host Co-ordinator:  
Gloria Woodman  
Ambassador Co-ordinator:  
Ken Weaver**

The majority of comments received in respect of this exchange have been positive. Members of both clubs expressed satisfaction not only with the organisation of the week but also the events.

The week started on **Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2018** with a coach from Bristol travelling to the south terminal at Gatwick airport, 40 miles south of London, (approximately a 280 mile round trip), accompanied by myself and Carole Duckett, President of the Bristol Friendship Force. On arrival at Gatwick the coach driver dropped us off and then proceeded to the security compound, where he had to await a 'phone call from the security manager informing him that we had located our visitors.

This in itself proved somewhat difficult, as we had no photographs of any NC members who were actually arriving at Gatwick from various points of the globe, i.e. four members coming in on an overnight flight from Northern Colorado, five coming from London by minibus, two arriving by the Gatwick Express and one travelling directly to Bristol from the Isle of Wight. We located the four ladies who had flown in early that morning quite easily, had a little more difficulty in finding the five who had arrived by minibus, but once they were found Carole and the

Ambassador Co-ordinator had to go and find the two members who had arrived by train whilst I kept the rest of the group together near the coach pickup point.

Having found all members we quickly located the coach and were soon on our way west to Bristol. Fortunately the volume of traffic on the motorways was not as envisaged and the journey of 3½ hours saw us arrive safely at Easter Compton Village Hall just outside of Bristol where the Ambassadors met their hosts and enjoyed a light **Welcome** lunch.

**Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018:** It was decided to leave the morning free, thus allowing the four ladies who had only arrived in the UK early the morning before to rest if they wished; however everyone was up early and ready to undertake a sightseeing tour of Bristol with their hosts. At 12.45 pm everyone met at the ARC Café in the undercroft of St. Mary Redcliffe Church for lunch, after which those who wished had a look at the very old, famous church and then walked back through old Bristol to the Lord Mayor's Chapel on College Green, where they were met by Marek, the Verger, who gave a short talk on the history of the Chapel, founded in 1220.

At 3.30 pm members walked across

College Green to City Hall to meet the Lord Mayor of Bristol (Patron of the Bristol Friendship Force), enjoy a cup of tea, have a chat with her and inspect the Regalia of Office.



**Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2018:** Saw hosts and Ambassadors arrive at Stourhead in Wiltshire, one of England's greatest landscape gardens and now owned by the National Trust. Fortunately England experienced a beautiful 'Indian Summer' during the last week or two of September and this made the short walk to tour the house very pleasant. The weather also made it possible to sit out in the picnic area and enjoy the picnics that hosts had provided, as well as undertaking the 1½ mile walk around the lake in the world famous gardens.

**Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018:** Flexible day.

**Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018:** Hosts and Ambassadors in the east of Bristol boarded a coach at 9.30 am and those in north Bristol boarded at 10.00 am for a 1½ hour drive across the Second Severn Crossing to St. Fagan's Open Air Museum, near Cardiff in Wales. St. Fagans is one of Wales most popular .....





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visitor attractions.

A two course Sunday lunch had been arranged in the large dining room at the Castle, and after this hosts and ambassadors were able to walk around the parkland, visiting many of the exhibits and watch traditional crafts and activities bring St. Fagans alive. The coach left at 5.00 p.m for the return journey to Bristol via the Severn Bridge, very much like the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, except that it is silver, not red!

**Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018:**  
Flexible day - **until the Farewell at 5.00 p.m**

The Farewell was held in the Coalpit Heath Village Hall. Everyone enjoyed drinks, a fish and chip supper, followed by various desserts. During the evening guests were entertained by a well-known Ukulele Group from Thornbury in North Bristol, song sheets were handed out and everyone was able to join in with many of the songs.

The Friendship Force of Northern Colorado undertook to entertain not only the Bristol Friendship Force but the Ukulele group as well. Speeches were made and the evening finished at 9.00 pm in order for Ambassadors to return to their hosts homes and prepare for their onward journey to Germany at 11.00 am the next morning.

Gloria Woodman



*Paulette and Ken Weaver from Colorado with Gloria and Cathie, her Ambassador*



*The Castle at St. Fagans*





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**INCOMING AND OUTGOING JOURNEYS - 2019**

**INCOMING:**

**3-10th July 2019** - Incoming visit from Blue Mountains Friendship Force (Australia) who will arrive at Bristol airport after their week with the Toulouse FF.

*Lesley Morris and Jill Williams have agreed to be joint Host Co-ordinators*

*(Lesley is looking for one or two other members to be on her hosting committee)*

**Mid September 2019** - Incoming visit from Cheyenne Friendship Force (USA).

*Pat Homer has agreed to be Host Co-ordinator*

*assisted by Gloria Woodman*

*(Pat is looking for one or two other members to be on her hosting committee)*



We have also received a request for visits from Albuquerque, New Mexico to visit Bristol from  
9-16th September 2020

FFI will soon be advising where our 2020 Outgoing Journey will be.

**OUTGOING:**

**Late July 2019:** Visit to Boulder, Northern Colorado, for 4 day FFI World Conference, accommodation available at Boulder University where Conference is to be held, followed by a few days of home hosting by the Friendship Force of Northern Colorado.

Second week to be spent with the FF of Richmond, Virginia.

FFI will soon be advising where our 2020 Outgoing Journey will be.

***Please contact Sylvia Dando urgently if you wish to take part in any of the above Journeys.***

**Closing message from the President**

I would like to remind all members that coffee mornings are an important part of BFF ! If you would be willing to organise one in your home, ***please let me know as soon as possible.***

However we need your support not just for coffee mornings.....

Sylvia works tirelessly trying to get support for the journeys, I am aware that many of the UK clubs are also finding difficulty in filling journeys, but if you would like to travel on our next anticipated visit to the USA in July, or if you can **host**, be a **dinner host** or **day host** for incoming journeys in July or September,

please contact Sylvia.

I am also asking, as another way of supporting BFF, if a member or hopefully members, would be interested in organising some other social events – can you assist with good ideas for social events - eg walks, lunches, visits to local attractions etc., etc !!!!! . Again, waiting to hear from you - BFF needs to make some radical changes if we want to survive! We all need to work hard to keep our club alive and productive for our future, surely not one of us wishes Bristol Club, one of the longest running in the UK to close ?

*Carole*

**We need you!**

