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Productive European cooperation between Britain and Germany: the Swansea-Mannheim town twinning partnership and exchanges between Wales and Baden-Württemberg, 1950-2000

Simon John 

Department of History, Heritage and Classics, Swansea University, Swansea, Wales, UK

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the town twinning partnership between Swansea (South Wales) and Mannheim (Baden-Württemberg, Germany) from its inception in the 1950s to the end of the twentieth century. Its findings contribute to scholarship on post-1945 European town twinning, a subject that has not received the attention it deserves, especially from academics working in Britain. The article's arguments also complicate wider debates surrounding post-war popular relations between Britain and Germany, which have often been cast in existing work as ambivalent or outright hostile. The article adopts a regional approach—emphasising interactions between Wales and Baden-Württemberg rather than at the national level—to offer a new perspective on international relations between Britain and Germany, showing that inhabitants of Swansea and Mannheim forged warm friendships and made efforts to understand each other. The article also highlights the limitations of purely Anglocentric approaches to modern British history, drawing from interactions carried out under the aegis of the Swansea-Mannheim partnership to trace ways in which Welsh identity and the Welsh language shaped external perceptions of the British.

KEYWORDS

Town twinning; British-German relations; Wales; Baden-Württemberg; Swansea; Mannheim; Germany

Introduction

Swansea, a port town in South Wales, rose to prominence in the eighteenth century as a centre of industry and trade, and in the nineteenth century became a world-leading producer of copper. By the early twentieth century Swansea's heavy industry was in decline, and much of the town centre was destroyed by German bombing during the Second World War.¹ In 1969 Swansea was granted city status.² It is Wales' second largest city, after the capital, Cardiff. Mannheim lies at the confluence of the Neckar and Rhine rivers in south-western Germany, in the Bundesland (federal state) of Baden-Württemberg, which was established as part of West Germany in 1952, before becoming part of the reunified Germany in 1990.³ Mannheim remains Baden-Württemberg's second largest city after the capital, Stuttgart. Along with nearby Heidelberg and the surrounding

CONTACT Simon John  simon.a.john@swansea.ac.uk  Department of History, Heritage and Classics, Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea, Wales, UK, SA2 8PP

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region, Mannheim belongs to the historical region known as the Kurpfalz (Palatinate).⁴ That region broadly corresponds to the territory ruled over from the Middle Ages down to the Napoleonic era by the Kurfürsten von der Pfalz (Counts Palatine of the Rhine). Mannheim's importance increased when it replaced Heidelberg as the capital of the Kurpfalz in 1720. By the twentieth century Mannheim (along with Ludwigshafen, which lies just across the Rhine) had become a key industrial centre, particularly for the production of chemicals and automobiles. Most of Mannheim's city centre was damaged or destroyed by Allied bombs during the Second World War.

As part of the wider European town twinning movement that shaped continental culture and politics after the Second World War, Swansea and Mannheim became partner cities. It was the first town twinning agreement for both. Their partnership developed in the context of a broader connection that was established between Wales and Baden-Württemberg from the 1950s. Yet, while this city partnership has been active for over six decades, and played an important role in the post-war histories of both, it has attracted no meaningful scholarly attention. It is covered in a few lines in the comprehensive four-volume history of Mannheim.⁵ It is not mentioned at all in the standard volume on the history of Swansea, and only briefly noted in an important volume on its modern history.⁶ The present article therefore provides the very first study of the partnership, covering the period between its establishment in the 1950s down to the end of the twentieth century.

The article draws from material held in Swansea's West Glamorgan Archives and in the Marchivum, the city archives of Mannheim. The latter preserves a wealth of administrative material relating to the partnership, including records detailing the city's earliest contacts with Swansea in the 1950s.⁷ Both archives hold dossiers containing newspaper articles on the partnership and exchanges carried out under its auspices.⁸ This study also harnesses a range of ephemera and personal material held in both cities. Notably, there were (and are) key differences between the civic administrations of Swansea and Mannheim. Swansea's mayor—elevated to Lord Mayor in 1982—is elected from the members of the city council, and holds office for only twelve months. It is a largely ceremonial position, with appointees essentially acting as Swansea's ambassador during their tenure. In contrast, the civic leader of Mannheim—the Oberbürgermeister—can hold office for far longer periods. Indeed, only six have held the office since 1949.⁹ The city's Oberbürgermeister leads a team of Bürgermeister who variously represent different parts of the city and/or hold different policy briefs. Administrators in both Swansea and Mannheim also played key roles in the partnership. At the outset, Swansea's civic administration was overseen by the Town Clerk, while in Mannheim, the Stadtverwaltung (city administration)—including the Hauptamt (Main Office)—was led by the Stadtdirektor.

By exploring the Swansea-Mannheim city partnership, this article contributes to scholarly debates on town twinning in Europe after the Second World War. Historians, especially those working in Britain, have generally been little interested in this subject. Various factors including the requirement to read languages other than English, a preference in some quarters for top-down political history, and perhaps even a degree of Euroscepticism, have likely stymied interest in it. Yet, the work that has been carried out on partnerships established between cities after 1945 has shed light on vital social, cultural and political dynamics in continental history in the second half of the twentieth century. These studies have shown that not only did forging town twinning links spur a city to engage with wider continental currents and ideas, but that they also served to

bring characteristic features of a city's identity and self-perception into sharper focus, making them more susceptible to historical enquiry.¹⁰ Much of the existing scholarship on town twinning concerns partnerships between French and German cities.¹¹ In contrast, post-1945 partnerships involving British cities have received far less attention.¹² Town twinnings involving Wales have barely been mentioned in scholarship at all.¹³ The present article seeks to redress this historiographical lacuna. On one level, it draws attention to the significance of the Swansea-Mannheim partnership in the post-war histories of both cities, and the potential of examining international exchanges through a civic lens.

Its findings, however, have far wider implications. By investigating town twinning from a regional rather than a national perspective, the article aims to illustrate the insights that can be uncovered by applying a sub-national approach to post-war European city partnerships.¹⁴ Adopting a regional approach also enables the article to move beyond discussions on town twinning to engage with and ultimately complicate scholarly paradigms on the wider subject of international relations between Britain and Germany after 1945. Most of the extant work on this subject centres upon high politics, that is, the diplomatic relations between the British and German governments.¹⁵ Broadly speaking, the consensus is that in this period, state relations between the two 'were generally excellent because they were not primary to either'.¹⁶ More important to the present article are studies of popular British-German relations, that is, interactions beyond the state level between members of wider society in the two nations. Work on this subject has suggested that popular mutual perceptions were characterised by hostility on the one hand and antipathy on the other.¹⁷ It casts British perceptions of Germany as largely hostile, and dominated by memories, traditions and tropes rooted in the Second World War and Germany's National Socialist past. Some scholars have even suggested that the chauvinist practice of 'kraut-bashing' became an integral and accepted part of British discourse concerning Germany.¹⁸ Conversely, scholarship has shown that in the decades after 1945 many Germans had at most only vague ideas about the British. Essentially, Britain did not figure prominently in German popular consciousness in that era. Immediately following the war, this was likely even more the case in Mannheim, since it lies in the northern part of Baden-Württemberg, which belonged to the American-occupied zone. It was not that Germans failed to understand the British after the Second World War, as some observers have suggested, but rather that Germans were simply indifferent to them. As one authority has put it, '[in] the case of German public opinion about Britain, non-understanding would be [a] more appropriate' term to use than 'misunderstanding'.¹⁹

By using the Swansea-Mannheim partnership to explore exchanges between Wales and Baden-Württemberg, this article takes a regional approach to European town twinning, a movement whose impact on continental politics and culture in the second half of the twentieth century has yet to be fully investigated. In doing so, it sheds light on a previously unexplored dimension of the relationship between Britain and Germany after 1945, drawing attention to interactions between members of the two nations that were characterised not by hostility and antipathy, but by warmth and concerted efforts on both sides to understand the other. Moreover, the article not only challenges existing arguments about popular British-German relations, but it also problematises the very approach that most previous scholarship has taken to investigating this subject. Existing work, including studies by British and German scholars alike, largely operates

on the level of the nation state, taking 'Britain' and 'Germany' as given units of historical analysis, and paying little heed to sub-national regional variations that have the potential to nuance the wider picture.²⁰ Moreover, as regards British history, all too often scholars have elided the terms 'British' and 'English', treating them as interchangeable and thus failing to recognise potential differences between them. The term 'English', as a result, is often employed where 'British' is actually meant.²¹ Likewise, some modern scholarship speaks of 'Anglo-German' rather than British-German relations, a practice that the present article eschews for obvious reasons.²² By taking a regional approach, and examining how notions of regional identity among the inhabitants of Swansea and Mannheim shaped interactions between them in the context of the city partnership, this article presents a rather different picture of the post-war international relations between Britain and Germany. In this way, the article circumvents a viewpoint informed by 'methodological nationalism'.²³

The article has four parts. The first traces the establishment of the Swansea-Mannheim partnership, setting it in the context of the links that were forged between Wales and Baden-Württemberg in the 1950s. While its establishment is usually dated to 1957, it is shown here that—in keeping with many post-war town twinings involving British cities—there was in fact no precise foundation date. This part then details milestones in the partnership's development down to the 1990s, before surveying exchanges between individuals and groups from the two cities, especially those between Swansea Male Choir (SMC) and the Liederhalle choir of Mannheim.

The article's second part examines the importance of the Swansea-Mannheim partnership to the inhabitants of both cities. It firstly assesses personal responses to the partnership, showing that while elected officials in both Swansea and Mannheim often spoke rhetorically of intimate links between the cities, their high ideals were matched by the profound emotional ties that some participants did forge. These were epitomised most clearly in relations between SMC and the Liederhalle. Exchanges were characterised not by 'kraut-bashing' or disinterest, but by life-changing encounters and friendships. Drawing from the rhetoric articulated by civic officials and others, this part then assesses the wider significance that inhabitants of Swansea and Mannheim attached to the partnership between their cities. In keeping with how other cities around Europe framed their international partnerships, it was generally interpreted in its early decades as a collaborative effort aimed at healing the wounds of the Second World War and building friendships that would forestall future conflict. Later on, from the 1980s and then especially after the Berlin Wall, figures presented the partnership as a mechanism for displaying European solidarity.²⁴

The third part examines the mutual perceptions that developed between the inhabitants of Swansea and Mannheim in the context of the partnership. It briefly assesses reactions to the consequences of the post-war German *Wirtschaftswunder* ('economic miracle'), showing that figures on both sides came to recognise that Mannheimers had greater financial resources at their disposal to fund initiatives than their counterparts in Swansea. It chiefly traces how figures in both cities perceived the identity of their counterparts. While some in Mannheim—particularly in the early phases of the partnership—mistakenly held that Swansea was a city in England, and that its inhabitants were English, many learned not only to recognise their Welsh identity, but also to identify in them characteristics that they took to be typically Welsh. In contrast, while figures from

Swansea showed interest in their counterparts from Mannheim, they perceived them only as Mannheimers or Germans. There was no recognition that they may have possessed any regional identity or affiliation, whether that be to the Bundesland of Baden-Württemberg or to the historical Kurpfalz. Far from being indifferent to the British, then, on the matter of regional identity, Mannheimers were in fact more understanding of their Swansea partners than *vice versa*.

The article's final part examines the role of language in the Swansea-Mannheim partnership. It shows that while English was the *lingua franca* of most exchanges between the two cities—Mannheimers were simply more proficient in English than participants from Swansea were at German—this does not tell the whole story. Crucially, it is demonstrated here that the partnership prompted some from Swansea to engage with the German language, and some from Mannheim to learn something of the Welsh language. While these linguistic encounters appear to have been superficial, they nonetheless fulfilled an important symbolic function, representing mutual interest and respect. Hence, far from being relevant only inside Wales, in this context the Welsh language played a role in shaping overseas perceptions of Britain. These findings, above all, emphasise the value of looking beyond England to investigate British-German relations after 1945.

The origins and development of the Swansea-Mannheim partnership

In the aftermath of the Second World War an initiative took shape to encourage town twinning partnerships between particular regions of Britain with counterpart regions in West Germany. One connection united the north of England (especially, but not exclusively, Yorkshire) with North Rhine-Westphalia (Nordrhein-Westfalen). This produced partnerships including those between Leeds and Dortmund (1949), Halifax and Aachen (1949), Sunderland and Essen (1949), Sheffield and Bochum (1950), York and Münster (1957), and Bolton and Paderborn (1975). Another regional bond was forged between Scotland and Bavaria. This provided the framework for twinning agreements between the respective capitals Edinburgh and Munich (1954), as well as those between Aberdeen and Regensburg (1955), Dundee and Würzburg (1962), and Glasgow and Nuremberg (1985).

It was this initiative that spurred the creation of ties between Wales and Baden-Württemberg. These were promoted on the ground by the British Consul in Stuttgart, which worked from the 1950s to pair Welsh towns with counterparts in the recently-established Bundesland.²⁵ These efforts were led by Allen Price, the Consul General in that period, and Miss J. F. Wright, a cultural relations officer based initially in Stuttgart and then Karlsruhe. The Consul asserted that the idea originated in Wales. It issued an aide memoire in 1955 affirming that the initial impetus came two years earlier, when 'officials from Wales' ('Vertreter Wales') expressed the desire for a link with Germany, before representatives from education authorities in Wales toured Baden-Württemberg the following year to establish contacts.²⁶ The first partnership to emerge from this link was set up between Cardiff and Stuttgart—the respective capitals of Wales and Baden-Württemberg—in 1955.²⁷ Other partnerships commenced between towns in Wales and Baden-Württemberg include those between Caerphilly and Ludwigsburg (1960), Abergavenny and Östringen (1968), Bridgend and Langenau (1971), Cwmbran and Bruchsal (1979), Newport and Heidenheim (1980), Haverfordwest and Oberkirch (1989) and Pontypool and

Bretten (1994). The regional connection was not exclusive, however, as certain other partnerships established between German and British towns exemplify. Heidelberg (just 20 km away from Mannheim along the Neckar) and Cambridge, both famous for their venerable universities, partnered in 1965. Three years later, Aberystwyth twinned with Kronberg im Taunus, a town in Hesse (Hessen), a Bundesland that neighbours Baden-Württemberg.

It is important to note, though, that the dates conventionally ascribed to partnerships involving British cities—including those just cited—must always be treated with caution. While the dates of formal documents agreed between European twin towns are usually taken as the starting point of partnerships, many British cities, reluctant to sign up to what they regarded as perpetual legal commitments, generally did not agree such documents. The Cardiff-Stuttgart partnership, for example, was sealed by a formal document only in 2005, some fifty years after the date generally given for its foundation.²⁸ There is in this regard a noticeable contrast with continental cities, which were generally readier to agree a formal document when establishing a town twinning partnership.

The incipient links between Wales and Baden-Württemberg provided the basis for the earliest exchanges—visits by school groups—between Swansea and Mannheim. In 1954, a group from Mannheim's Liselotte-Gymnasium travelled to Wales. Later that year, a Swansea schoolmaster took a group to Mannheim.²⁹ A memo drafted in Mannheim's Hauptamt in November 1954 for Oberbürgermeister Hermann Heimerich indicates that the city was already by that time considering the prospect of partnering with a British city.³⁰ This doubtlessly came at the prompting of the British Consul. In Mannheim on 15 January 1955, Consul General Price encouraged Heimerich in person to explore a partnership with Swansea. Heimerich deliberated on the suggestion, and in March replied to Price, saying that Mannheim would contact Swansea.³¹

While Heimerich responded positively to Price's suggestion, not all in Mannheim were overly enamoured at the prospect. The November 1954 Hauptamt memo affirmed that since the distance to Britain was considerable, travel costs would be high, and thus that establishing links with a French town ought to be a higher priority.³² Moreover, after receiving Price's suggestion in January, Heimerich—who knew nothing about Swansea—commissioned a report from his administration on the proposed partner. That report hardly gave Swansea a ringing endorsement, asserting at one point that the prevalence of heavy industry there made it 'one of the most ugly, dirty and polluted cities in the whole of Great Britain'.³³ A revealing memo drawn up in Mannheim's Hauptamt in September 1956 for Heimerich's successor—Hans Reschke—affirms that Heimerich had felt that he could not turn down Price's suggestion to explore a partnership with Swansea.³⁴ The implication, then, is that Heimerich believed that it would have been impolitic to refuse.

While there were some misgivings in Mannheim, however, contemporaries began to point to certain similarities between the German city and Swansea. Shortly before embarking on a trip to England in early 1955, E. F. von Schilling, the editor of the *Mannheimer Morgen*, learned that there was talk of his city partnering with Swansea. He thus arranged to make a detour there, and wrote a detailed report about the Welsh town upon his return. He noted that 'in political terms Swansea has a strong majority of the worker's party (Labour), in economic terms a diverse industry, and in human terms a population that is lively, friendly, and interested in art—like here [in Mannheim]'.³⁵ In 1957 the *Mannheimer Morgen* asserted that both Swansea and Mannheim were built on 'their

industry and their ports, both were heavily damaged by bombing during the war, and both were significantly rebuilt'.³⁶ In its August 1955 aide memoire, the British Consul in Stuttgart—seeking to encourage the partnership—likewise asserted that 'there is no doubt that both cities have a great deal in common'.³⁷

Acting on Heimerich's commitment to Price, Bürgermeister Julius Fehsenbecker led a delegation from Mannheim to Swansea in October 1956. The group, hosted by Swansea's mayor, George Libby, visited schools and several of the town's landmarks, including the Guildhall, the main civic building.³⁸ Soon afterwards, Reschke invited Libby to visit Mannheim.³⁹ Libby accepted, and, accompanied by the town's director of education, Leslie Drew, visited Mannheim from 29 March to 4 April 1957. While there, Libby and Drew toured local schools and businesses, the city's art gallery, and its theatre. On 1 April, Libby, Drew and Reschke held a joint press conference about the partnership.⁴⁰ The next day, Libby and Drew attended a meeting of Mannheim's Gemeinderat (city council).⁴¹ Following their return to Swansea, Libby and Drew helped found a Swansea-Mannheim Committee, which later evolved into the Swansea Twinning Association.⁴² Beginning in late 1957, civic officials in Mannheim orchestrated the foundation of a counterpart association, the Beratungsausschuss für die Städtepartnerschaft Mannheim-Swansea (Advisory Committee for the Mannheim-Swansea city partnership).⁴³ Both committees would help to coordinate exchanges between the cities thereafter.

The few modern studies that do mention the Swansea-Mannheim partnership generally date its foundation to 1957. The one brief reference to the partnership in the four-volume history of Mannheim, for instance, asserts that it was 'officially founded' ('offiziell begründet') in 1957, in connection to Libby's visit that year.⁴⁴ The British Consul in Stuttgart may have anticipated a formal partnership declaration during Libby's visit; just before his arrival, the Stuttgart office of the British Information Service issued a press release asserting that the two cities would attempt to conclude 'a formal partnership' ('eine formelle Partnerschaft') during his time there.⁴⁵ However, Libby and Reschke did not carry out any formalising act in 1957. Critically, contemporaries held that a partnership between Swansea and Mannheim already existed. On 29 March the *Allgemeine Zeitung* affirmed that 'the connections between Swansea and Mannheim were commenced in the early part of the year 1954', and explicitly described the Welsh town as 'Mannheim's partner city Swansea'.⁴⁶ At the Gemeinderat meeting attended by Libby and Drew on 2 April, Reschke himself asserted that 'for a long time there has been contact between the cities of Mannheim and Swansea'.⁴⁷

The lack of a formal document confirming the establishment of the Swansea-Mannheim partnership conforms to the wider pattern of town twinning relationships established by British towns in the post-war decades. A clear contrast can be drawn with the establishment of Mannheim's partnership with the French city of Toulon. That was formally sealed when the mayors of the two cities signed partnership documents on 26 January 1959.⁴⁸

Libby's 1957 visit to Mannheim assumed a greater importance in hindsight. In August 1982, Swansea and Mannheim celebrated what was framed as the partnership's 25th anniversary. Mannheim's press acknowledged that there was uncertainty over precisely when the partnership had been established, and thus that the celebrations were somewhat artificial. *Die Rheinpfalz* asserted that 'there is in fact no official date, but by this year [i.e. 1982] it is at any rate at least 25 years since Swansea and Mannheim forged bonds of

friendship'.⁴⁹ The *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* affirmed that 'the beginning of the city partnership between Swansea and Mannheim can not be precisely dated', but pointed out that 1957—the year of Libby's visit to Mannheim—was generally taken as its start date.⁵⁰ The *Mannheimer Morgen* noted that after Libby's visit, contacts between Mannheim and Swansea had intensified, meaning that 'today looking back it is regarded as the true beginning of the partnership'.⁵¹ The *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* also acknowledged the absence of a formal partnership document from the 1950s, asserting that the 25th anniversary celebrations in 1982—which involved the two cities agreeing a partnership act—'finally sealed the partnership'.⁵² In essence, then, the 1982 celebrations served retrospectively to canonise 1957 as the partnership's start date.

The festivities of 1982 marked a key milestone in the Swansea-Mannheim partnership. 1982 was an important year for Mannheim, encompassing the partnership celebrations, the 375th anniversary of its establishment as a city and the 110th anniversary of the Liederhalle's foundation.⁵³ That August, around 160 SMC singers and family members undertook a major visit to Mannheim as guests of the Liederhalle. In a ceremony on 27 August the city of Mannheim formally renamed one of its central squares Swanseaplatz ('Swansea Square').⁵⁴ In August 1985, several contingents from Mannheim, including 120 members of the Liederhalle, travelled to Swansea. On 9 August, a miniature replica of Mannheim's main landmark, the Wasserturm (Water Tower), was inaugurated in the Welsh city.⁵⁵ The stone sculpture, a 2.6 m high copy of the 60 m original, was unveiled in a ceremony attended by dignitaries including Swansea's Lord Mayor, Trevor Burtonshaw, and Mannheim's Oberbürgermeister, Gerhard Widder.⁵⁶ It was erected in the city's Maritime Quarter, in a new residential area that the city named Mannheim Quay.⁵⁷ By honouring their counterparts with the renaming of these sites, Swansea and Mannheim emulated wider continental practice; countless examples including Cardiff's Stuttgarter Strasse, Regensburg's Aberdeen-Park or Dortmund's Platz von Leeds could be adduced here to illustrate this point. In 1997, Swansea and Mannheim celebrated the 40th anniversary of their partnership, with Swansea's Lord Mayor, Des Thomas, visiting Mannheim that March, and Oberbürgermeister Widder travelling to Swansea later that year.⁵⁸

Milestones including the anniversaries and the creation of Swanseaplatz and the Swansea Wasserturm provided the political framework for exchanges between Swansea and Mannheim. From the outset, though, it was clear that a wider effort by the inhabitants of both was required if the partnership were to have real meaning. As Christoph Andritsky, Mannheim's Stadtdirektor, put it in 1961, city partnerships would be worthless 'if they were not continuously energised and supported through direct action'.⁵⁹ Figures in both cities articulated the importance of civic participation in the partnership. In a speech to Swansea's city council in 1973, Heinz Schmetzer of Mannheim's Liederhalle choir affirmed that 'a true partnership should be between peoples, and not just a matter between administrations or city councils, if it is to last into the future'.⁶⁰ In 1987, during SMC's visit to Mannheim, Schmetzer similarly stated that 'while it was up to official bodies to arrange the skeleton conditions for twinning, it was individual people who kept the links alive'.⁶¹ At the unveiling of the Swansea Wasserturm in August 1985, Lord Mayor Burtonshaw affirmed that authorities could only play a limited role in a city partnership; for it to be successful, 'it had to become infectious in both communities'.⁶²

The school exchanges that formed the earliest links between Swansea and Mannheim from 1954 intensified after Libby's visit to Mannheim in 1957. Thereafter, they became an important driver of the partnership. A broader range of exchanges and interactions took shape. From 1961, Stadtdirektor Andritsky sought to make artistic interchanges a feature of the partnership. He visited Wales that year to establish connections to facilitate this.⁶³ In 1962, Swansea's Glynn Vivian art gallery held an exhibition showcasing the work of 19 Mannheim artists.⁶⁴ In 1979, the Gemeinschaft der Künstlerinnen und Kunstfreundinnen Mannheim-Ludwigshafen (GEDOK) hosted an exhibition in Mannheim's Abendakademie that showcased the work of female artists from Swansea.⁶⁵ In August 1982—as part of the celebrations for the partnership's 25th anniversary—Mannheim's Alte Feuerwache exhibited Frank Brangwyn's studies for his British Empire panels, the completed versions of which hang in Swansea's Guildhall.⁶⁶ The following January, seven Swansea artists exhibited their work at the Alte Feuerwache.⁶⁷ In 1996 Mannheim's Collini-Center hosted the exhibition 'Swansea: eine Bildergeschichte' ('Swansea: A Visual History'), a display of images charting its history, organised by the Welsh city's archivist, John Alban.⁶⁸ In 1985 the two cities agreed a programme of six-month artistic exchange residencies.⁶⁹ Later that year, Uta Molling, an artist from Mannheim, came to Swansea to take up the residency, with Alan Smith, her Swansea counterpart, travelling in the opposite direction. During their residencies, Molling and Smith created work that was displayed at an exhibition in the Glynn Vivian gallery in March 1986.⁷⁰

The partnership also spurred a broad range of groups, associations and institutions in Swansea and Mannheim to establish ties. While some carried out one-off visits to the partner city, others established more long-lasting links. Groups representing different Christian denominations were among those who took part. In 1964, Rev. J. L. John of Swansea's Mount Calvary Baptist Church led a 41-strong group to Mannheim.⁷¹ In 1977, a combined delegation representing members from different denominations travelled to Mannheim to 'foster relations between the Church people of Swansea and Mannheim'.⁷² In 1984, the Anglican Council of Churches made its seventh visit to Mannheim.⁷³ Links developed between University College, Swansea (which later became Swansea University) and the Universität Mannheim after the latter's foundation in 1967. Students and academics alike at both spent time at the respective partner university during this period. In May 1975, a delegation from University College, led by its principal, Prof. R. W. Steel, visited Mannheim with the aim of widening exchange programmes.⁷⁴ In July 1968, Young Liberals from Swansea visited Mannheim's Deutsche Jungdemokraten.⁷⁵ A few months later, a cohort of young members of the Christlich Demokratischen Union Deutschlands (CDU) from Mannheim were hosted by Swansea's branch of the Young Conservatives.⁷⁶ In December 1984, members of the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund in Mannheim and its vicinity expressed solidarity with striking miners and their families in Swansea, and gathered donations of money, clothes, shoes and toys to send to Wales.⁷⁷

A wide range of interests and pursuits were represented in exchanges. In August 1967, Swansea Harriers athletics club visited Mannheim for a tournament against Schwetzingen Leichtathletik.⁷⁸ Similarly, in 1983 a team of ballroom dancers from Mannheim came to Wales to compete against members of the Swansea Amateur Ballroom Dancer's Club.⁷⁹ In 1976, Swansea's Town Clerk, Neil Rees, sent Mannheim's city council a list of fourteen Swansea groups and associations who were looking for partners there.⁸⁰ By 1978, over 20

partnerships had reportedly been established, including those between archery clubs (the Bowmen of Gower and the Schützengesellschaft 1977), groups interested in birds (the Swansea and District Cage Bird society and the Kanarienzucht und Vogelschutzverein e.V.), unions (the National Union of Public Employees and the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund) and chess teams (West Cross Chess Club and the Schachverein 1946 Mannheim—Schönau).⁸¹

Choirs were especially well-represented in links established between Swansea and Mannheim. In 1973, the Côr Plant Waunarlywydd (Waunarlywydd Youth Choir) commenced an exchange partnership with the choir of Mannheim's Musikschule.⁸² By 1983 Swansea's Gwalia Singers and Dunvant Male Voice Choir had respectively twinned with Mannheim's Facco and Aurelia choirs.⁸³ A vibrant and enduring connection was established between SMC—known until 1967 as the Manselton and District Male Choir—and Mannheim's Liederhalle choir.⁸⁴ According to Schmetzer, the first contact between the two choirs was made in 1962, when Mervyn Wallace—later the president of SMC—visited Mannheim in search of a partner choir. There he encountered Schmetzer and other members of the Liederhalle.⁸⁵ SMC visited Mannheim for the first time in 1963, before the Jungliederhalle, the youth branch of the Mannheim choir, made a reciprocal visit the following year.⁸⁶ There was regular contact and frequent exchanges between the two choirs over the following decades. Schmetzer himself asserted in 1985 that the partnership between the two choirs was the strongest of all the ties between Swansea and Mannheim.⁸⁷ Choristers regarded their connection as a vital bastion for the wider partnership. Wallace asserted that on their first trip to Mannheim in 1963 the members of SMC 'did more as ambassadors for Wales in five days than could have been done through normal channels in five years'.⁸⁸ Another member of SMC later recalled that the exchanges with the Liederhalle had been 'very important, for politicians had great difficulty in expressing friendship in legal terms, [while] we could, [and] we did so with singing'.⁸⁹

While the foregoing pages have shown that from the 1950s Swansea and Mannheim developed a multifaceted civic partnership, some qualification is required. Certain figures occasionally voiced opposition to the project for a variety of reasons. Members of Swansea's city council periodically complained about the amount of civic funding that was committed to supporting activities involving Mannheim and other twin towns.⁹⁰ Schmetzer lamented that the Liederhalle's partnership with SMC had faced opposition throughout.⁹¹ Moreover, it is clear that only a minority from both Swansea and Mannheim ever participated in exchanges. The *Evening Post* estimated in 1987 that up to that point—around three decades into the partnership—around 2,000 people had travelled between the two cities under its aegis.⁹² Yet, those participants embodied the wider civic communities to which they belonged. The involvement of civic officials ensured that prevailing political values in both cities were imbued into exchanges. Furthermore, the non-official participants featured groups ranging from school children up to adults of all ages representing different interests. The sustained involvement of choirs—which in Wales especially had a strong tradition of working-class membership—ensured the participation of figures from different social backgrounds. Indeed, the partnership provided the means for working-class participants, who especially in its early decades might not otherwise have had the chance to journey outside their homeland, to embark on international

travel. While only a minority of citizens participated in the Swansea-Mannheim partnership, then, those involved formed a representative cross-section of their wider civic communities.

Personal responses to Swansea-Mannheim exchanges and interpretations of the partnership

From the outset, officials in Swansea and Mannheim regularly used high-minded rhetoric to emphasise the personal ties and links established between the two cities. When welcoming a group from Mannheim to Swansea in 1959, the then ex-mayor Libby joked that he had become friends with everyone in their home city.⁹³ During the 25th anniversary celebrations in Mannheim in 1982, Lord Mayor Lewis paraphrased John F. Kennedy, declaiming: 'Ich bin ein Mannheimer'.⁹⁴ He also observed that he had encountered as many people from Wales that week in Mannheim as he would have had he been in Swansea.⁹⁵ Oberbürgermeister Varnholt stated similarly that he had never seen so many British people in one place as he had in Mannheim that week.⁹⁶ At the unveiling of the Swansea Wasserturm in 1985, Widder affirmed that the people of Mannheim were now so familiar with Swansea, and so used to travelling there, that it seemed that the Welsh city belonged to the Rhein-Neckar region, and that Mannheimers could travel there as easily as if they were going on a Sunday afternoon outing. He also stated that while earlier visitors from Mannheim to Wales were asked upon their return 'tell me a bit about the city of Swansea', the familiarity between the two was now such that returned travellers were asked 'have you seen my old friend so-and-so, how are they?'⁹⁷

While elected representatives unsurprisingly spoke in glowing terms about the partnership—in political terms, all the effort and expense involved in exchanges required justification—there are indications that this rhetoric did mirror the reality of some participants' experiences. The partnership evidently had a meaningful impact on the lives of participants. August 1962 witnessed the marriage of a woman from Mannheim and a man from Swansea who had met while leading school exchanges. Oberbürgermeister Reschke wrote to congratulate the pair, and expressed his satisfaction 'that the very close official contacts between the cities of Swansea and Mannheim now for the first time in the history of this city partnership encompass such a close personal connection'.⁹⁸ By the end of 1961, Frances Matthews, a senior civil servant in Swansea's city council, had made so many friends in the Mannheim that sending New Year's greetings to them all had become too onerous a task. For that reason, she wrote a general letter for all of them to read in the *Mannheimer Morgen*.⁹⁹ In 1982, Joyce Phillips, the head of German at Bishop Gore school in Swansea, reported that through leading exchange trips over twelve years she had become friends with so many people in Mannheim that she found it hard to decide which of them to visit during trips there.¹⁰⁰ In 1996, the *Mannheimer Morgen* paper affirmed that successive generations of Mannheimers had come to know Swansea.¹⁰¹

Sources convey a sense of the personal impact of the partnership. In March 1978, Mrs F. E. Bennett of Swansea told the *Evening Post* of her family's experiences since her daughter first went to Mannheim on a school exchange 21 years earlier. She stated that her daughter went back to Mannheim 'every year' thereafter, and had formed a close bond with her host family. Mrs Bennett thus held that the city partnership had given 'so much

happiness ... to so many citizens of both cities. Our children are grown up now with families of their own. I hope that [our grandchildren] may visit [Mannheim] one day and enjoy it as did their parents'.¹⁰² A few weeks later, Mrs Babs Davies of Swansea recalled her own visits to Mannheim in 1958 and 1959. On both trips, she was hosted by the same family, who had a son named Klaus. Her own family remained in contact with her host family. In 1976 her son made his own trip to Mannheim and met Klaus and his family whilst there. She affirmed that neither she nor her son would forget their 'wonderful holidays in beautiful Mannheim', and stated that the 'exchange movement had brought a great deal of happiness to my family'.¹⁰³

Compelling indications of the partnership's impact on participants are provided in accounts of the emotions that were displayed when exchange visits ended. Reports often recount how moved participants were when bidding farewell to visitors from the partner city. When a group of Mannheim youths began their coach journey home from Swansea's Guildhall in 1957, they and their local hosts waved goodbye to each other; while some fluttered their handkerchiefs, others reportedly needed theirs to dry their tears.¹⁰⁴ When SMC departed Mannheim in 1970, they did so 'not without tears' ('nicht ohne Tränen').¹⁰⁵ In a letter to the *Evening Post*, Ruby Stock of Swansea described the scene as groups from her city took their leave from their friends in Mannheim in August 1982: 'To see men weep like children, and watch the sad, tear stained faces of our German hosts as we bade our last farewell to the sounds of "This is the hour" sung by some of the men of [SMC], was one of the most moving experiences I have ever witnessed'.¹⁰⁶ A member of the Liederhalle described the same scene, stating that among both young and old 'tears flowed—tears of friendship—of gratitude—of heartfelt warmth—in other words, genuine tears!'¹⁰⁷ Likewise, when the members of the Liederhalle said their goodbyes to SMC in Swansea in August 1985, they did so with a mix of joy and sadness.¹⁰⁸

This dimension of the partnership is perhaps best exemplified in the interactions between SMC and the Liederhalle. Major exchange visits formed the mainstay of the link between the two choirs. In carrying them out, choristers and their families forged long-standing friendships with their international partners. In 1982, a member of the Liederhalle wrote that the two choirs had since their first exchanges come together 'from heart to heart, from family to family, [and] from singer to singer'.¹⁰⁹ When welcoming SMC members and their families to Mannheim that year, the Liederhalle's president Heinz Dormbach encouraged them 'to please feel at home among us, for our city is your city, our choir is your choir, and our families are your families'.¹¹⁰ On visits to the partner city, participants often opted to stay with host families rather than in hotels. Schmetzer recorded that of the 152 choristers and family members who took part in a major trip of the Liederhalle to Swansea in 1970, 90% asked to be placed with an SMC family.¹¹¹ The Schmetzer family guestbooks record the sentiments of visitors from Swansea who stayed with them during their time in Mannheim. One SMC guest accommodated by them during the choir's first visit to Mannheim in 1963 inscribed thanks for the way 'our friends of Mannheim have accepted us into their homes and the grand way they have looked after us with every respect'. At the same time, Roy Jones, another member of SMC, wrote to Schmetzer and his family: 'To the number of your many friends, yet another must now be added. For the loveing [*sic*] kindness you have given me this last week, I find I am

unable to think of words to express the thoughts that well up inside me, so I simply say, "For you, in Wales, we shall always keep a welcome". Another chorister, Alfred Thomas, wrote simply: 'We are not friends, we are brothers in music'.¹¹²

It may be, of course, that memories such as those held by Mrs Bennett and Mrs Davies became sentimentalised over time. Likewise, figures like Dormbach or Thomas may have framed their warm words of friendship for guests from their partner city according to conventions that they felt were appropriate for such occasions. Certain unwritten scripts and expectations likely influenced behaviour in this respect. Yet, even if all this were the case, it does not alter the fact that these figures felt that their involvement in Swansea-Mannheim exchanges had had a positive effect on their lives.

As well as articulating the personal impact of the Swansea-Mannheim partnership, participants on both sides regularly discussed its wider meaning and significance. In its early decades, when the shadow of the Second World War still loomed large, officials often affirmed that its purpose was to help heal the war's wounds, and build friendships across national borders that would help prevent conflict in the future. In this regard, the partnership conformed to the wider pattern of European town-twinning in the post-war decades.¹¹³ In his November 1956 letter to Libby, Reschke expressed his hope that 'the contact between Mannheim and Swansea may serve to strengthen friendly relations between Great Britain and Germany'.¹¹⁴ During his visit to Mannheim in March 1959, Swansea's mayor, William Evans, stated that the building of ties between peoples was 'one of the most effective means for preventing a new war'.¹¹⁵ Both sides placed emphasis on involving young people in civic exchanges. Hence, when greeting a group of youths from Mannheim in Swansea's Guildhall in September 1958, Mayor William George stated that it was important for the younger generations to form friendships across borders, so that 'the youth grow up in friendship and with understanding for one another'.¹¹⁶ Likewise, when meeting a group of youths from Swansea in Mannheim in August 1961, Oberbürgermeister Reschke asserted that it was vital 'that the young people of both cities get to know each other'.¹¹⁷

In May 1959, Mannheim's city council acted in the spirit of reconciliation by donating £1,000 (about 12,000DM) towards the rebuilding of Swansea's St Mary's Church, which had suffered heavy bomb damage during the Second World War. In a letter to Swansea's Mayor, William Evans, Oberbürgermeister Reschke stated that he and other members of a Mannheim delegation that had recently visited Swansea had been struck by the efforts to rebuild the church. Reschke affirmed that because Mannheim had also been heavily bombed, its citizens 'have particularly felt with you the severe damages your town had to endure'. Hence, he wrote, Mannheim was making the donation out of the 'wish and the determination that never a time must come again that brings destruction by men to our towns'.¹¹⁸ In reply to Reschke, the vicar of Swansea, Rev. H. C. Williams, wrote that the donation had strengthened the partnership, stating that it 'has had a profound effect upon the people of Swansea. On every hand your great generosity is described as magnificence and your gift is bound to promote a deeper and more lasting friendship between our two towns'.¹¹⁹

Similar sentiments were expressed decades after the commencement of the partnership. As part of the 25th anniversary festivities in 1982, Oberbürgermeister Varnholt and Lord Mayor Lewis issued a joint document—essentially the partnership document that was lacking from the first exchanges in the 1950s—which affirmed that:

[Mannheim and Swansea] and their citizens, both seriously affected by the destruction of the Second World War, wish to learn from each other and help one another ... They share a common purpose in contributing to reconciliation and friendship between peoples by cementing political, social, cultural and economic links.¹²⁰

At the unveiling of the Swansea Wasserturm in 1985, Lord Mayor Burtonshaw related that the partnership between the two cities had begun when the damage inflicted during the Second World War was still visible in both, and at a time at which ‘hostility had not been completely erased from many a grieving heart’. At the same ceremony, Oberbürgermeister Widder asserted that the partnership had succeeded in uniting peoples who had formerly been enemies.¹²¹

Some in both cities ascribed to this notion. A number of figures spoke about their own wartime experiences when affirming the partnership’s importance. On a visit to Mannheim in 1972, Swansea’s mayor Chris Thomas told members of the Liederhalle that he had fought in the First World War and joined the anti-fascist movement during the Second, before praising the friendships that had developed between members of SMC and the Liederhalle: ‘We all noticed and felt that something is taking shape that will make us happy and content for the future, a great hope for the people of our two nations, and beyond that, for Europe’.¹²² When signing the Swansea-Mannheim partnership documents in 1982, Lord Mayor Lewis recalled his experiences as an 18-year-old soldier in Germany at the end of the Second World War.¹²³ In his account of the Liederhalle’s exchanges with SMC, Schmetzer recorded that he had lived through two years of the Second World War as a soldier, had been wounded three times, and then taken as a prisoner of war first to England and then to Egypt, where he caught malaria. He then asserted: ‘I am writing these things only to give a better understanding of my actions and thoughts’ regarding the partnership with Swansea, thus making it clear what motivated him to help drive it.¹²⁴

The memory of the Second World War framed some interactions carried out under the auspices of the partnership. In 1959, a porter in Swansea’s Guildhall showed a group from Mannheim around the building. After taking them to see a series of watercolours depicting the wartime damage to the city, the porter told the Mannheimers that they had come to Swansea so that such events would never happen again.¹²⁵ A member of SMC remembered that when his family accommodated members of the Liederhalle in their home when the German choir visited in 1970, some relatives were critical:

I remember aunts and uncles making uncomplimentary [*sic*] remarks about having a German family in our home. But it was time to forgive, for I know that when you speak to ordinary people, from no matter what country, we all have the same problems, and if our choristers [who accommodated the Jungliederhalle singers] in 1963 [*recte* 1964] can forgive, why not us!¹²⁶

In 1982, Ruby Stock wrote that her recent visit to Mannheim had transformed her own perception of Germany. When told she was to be hosted by a German family,

I was apprehensive to say the least. These people had always represented war and fear to me since I was a child. How far away all the fears and apprehensions seem now. The only memories left are ones of warmth, kindness and love.¹²⁷

The fact that she was initially fearful at the prospect of meeting Germans more than 35 years after the end of the Second World War clearly conveys the severity of the trauma it had inflicted. Behind this testimony is a vital point. Both the SMC chorister and Stock indicate that, long after 1945, there were some in Swansea who, having not met any Germans, were fearful or even hostile towards them. Such attitudes mirrored the wider anti-German sentiments often held by many in Britain after the war. Yet, what is also implied in these accounts is that actually meeting people from Mannheim under the aegis of the town twinning partnership had the potential to nullify that hostility, and even foster positive feelings about Germany. For at least some who took part in exchanges, then, the partnership fulfilled its purpose of healing the wounds of the Second World War.

Members of SMC and the Liederhalle embraced the ethos of the partnership as a reconciliation initiative, indicating that it was not only current among officials. Both choirs held themselves up as acting in the interests of peace and brotherhood, and asserted that they were setting an example for the partnership and for international relations more widely. Following the Jungliederhalle's performance in Swansea in 1964, SMC's president asserted that 'if the British and German nations blended in spirit as well as the two choirs had blended in music it would help to achieve world peace'.¹²⁸ In 1970, Mervyn Wallace affirmed that SMC and the Liederhalle shared a 'common love of singing [that] has given rise to an international brotherhood of Song which has surmounted the barriers of language and race'.¹²⁹ In 1979, the chairman of SMC welcomed the Liederhalle to Swansea by declaiming '[what] better way of bringing together two nations of varying culture and language [could there be] than through the medium of music. How wonderful it would be if the rest of the world would follow the example set by our two choirs, what harmony there could be'.¹³⁰ In 1982, the committee of SMC asserted that the two choirs 'are playing their full part in bringing nearer the day when the world will truly be in harmony'.¹³¹ As high-minded as these sentiments may have been, they convey a firm sense that the aspiration of working towards reconciliation did move members of the choirs to participate in exchanges.

Between about 1960 and 1990, many European city partnerships evolved into mechanisms for expressing shared Western values in the context of the Cold War.¹³² While the wider conditions of the Cold War did have some bearing on the Swansea-Mannheim partnership—SMC, for instance, were invited on the basis of earlier interactions with Mannheim to tour East Germany in 1966—they did not fundamentally shape how figures in either city framed its wider significance.¹³³ From the 1980s, however, many cities began to interpret their international partnerships as a means of expressing European solidarity.¹³⁴ This development certainly did characterise interchanges between Swansea and Mannheim from that time. In 1982, Oberbürgermeister Varnholt asserted that the partnership had stimulated positive exchanges between the two cities, and thus that because of their efforts to uphold it, Mannheimers could 'look back on a quarter century of productive European cooperation'.¹³⁵ When observing the 30th anniversary of the partnership at a ceremony in Mannheim in 1987, Oberbürgermeister Widder declared that exchanges between the two cities embodied 'European solidarity in practice'.¹³⁶ He also warned that

if the people of the two cities did not contribute to exchanges, ‘there would be no united Europe’.¹³⁷ At the same occasion, Swansea’s Lord Mayor, Lilian Hopkin, affirmed that both cities shared the same goal of ‘intensifying political, social, cultural and economic relationships within Europe’.¹³⁸ Such sentiments undoubtedly prompted the positive response in Swansea to the city receiving a European Plaque of Honour from the Council of Europe in September 1989 for its town twinning activities.¹³⁹ Just before the formal presentation of the award that December, a council spokesman affirmed that it had been granted in recognition of Swansea’s ‘contribution towards European unity’.¹⁴⁰

The importance attached to expressing European solidarity intensified after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In a ceremony in Swansea’s Guildhall in 1995, the city council bestowed the Honorary Freedom of the city on Oberbürgermeister Widder, in recognition of his efforts to maintain the city partnership.¹⁴¹ Mannheim’s press recounted that he had been appointed ‘Ehrenbürger’ (‘honorary citizen’) of Swansea.¹⁴² When accepting the award, Widder noted that the first contacts between the two cities had come just a decade after the end of the Second World War, and that if cities like Swansea and Mannheim had not worked together to promote reconciliation and understanding, ‘European cooperation would today be unimaginable’.¹⁴³ Widder clearly had the European project in mind, for he noted that the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht had marked a milestone in the growth of cooperation across the continent.¹⁴⁴ On 18 March 1997, linked to the 40th anniversary of the partnership, Widder issued a document extolling the benefits both of Mannheim’s partnership with Swansea and of town twinning in general. In it, he wrote that the yearning for reconciliation after the Second World War had provided the foundations for the development of European solidarity:

After the end of the Second World War the twinning of towns and cities played an important role in bringing about the reconciliation of the people of Europe. The contacts that were made between many individual towns and cities formed the foundations of European cooperation, a cooperation which is based in mutual trust, friendship and understanding. The common goal is the development of a united, free and strong Europe and fulfilment of the conception of European Union, as we move forward into the 21st century.

He also extolled the Swansea-Mannheim city partnership as ‘one of the building blocks in the “House of Europe”’.¹⁴⁵ This was a recurrent element of international political discourse in this era.¹⁴⁶

The rhetoric of European solidarity articulated by officials appears to have had wider purchase in the two cities. The *Mannheimer Morgen* noted that while one Swansea choir had been hosted by a Mannheim counterpart in 1985, they had worked together in a manner that helped provide ‘the basis for a united Europe’.¹⁴⁷ A member of SCM also interpreted the exchanges between his choir and the Liederhalle in comparable terms, affirming that members of both choirs and their families ‘have become true friends, staying in each other’s homes being as it were Europeans well in advance of the common market, and all thro’ the love of singing’.¹⁴⁸

While elected politicians in Swansea and Mannheim took the lead in articulating the wider meaning of the partnership—a meaning that evolved and shifted over time between the 1950s and 1990s—they voiced ideas that were shared by some who actually participated in exchanges. This serves to underline the broader significance of the

partnership. Far from being the preserve of officials and administrators, then, exchanges did stimulate engagement among both civic communities with wider European currents and ideas.

The partnership and mutual perceptions between Swansea and Mannheim

Over the course of the exchanges that began in the 1950s, inhabitants of Swansea and Mannheim came to know and gain perceptions of their counterparts. At the outset, the results of the German *Wirtschaftswunder* made it apparent to figures in both cities that Mannheim had greater financial resources than Swansea. The first school exchanges in the mid-1950s were financed by the British Foreign Office, as a means of giving the partnership initial momentum.¹⁴⁹ Thereafter, however, other sources of funding had to be found to support exchanges. This was generally easier in Mannheim. As noted above, members of Swansea's city council often criticised the use of civic funds to support exchange activities with its twin towns.¹⁵⁰ At a particularly lavish reception in Mannheim 1974, Swansea's mayor, Eunice Jones, spoke to Oberbürgermeister Ludwig Ratzel of her envy at the funds at his disposal for hospitality.¹⁵¹

Individuals and groups involved in exchanges largely had to finance their own trips. Schmetzer recorded that to support the members of the Jungliederhalle travelling to Swansea in 1964, the choir received a subsidy of 2,000DM from the city of Mannheim. This did not cover the full cost, however, and so the choir members led a 'Sammelaktion'—a fund-raising drive—that lasted from when SMC left Mannheim in June 1963 to the Jungliederhalle's departure for Swansea the following May.¹⁵² Schmetzer also noted that when the Liederhalle was planning its trip to Swansea in 1970, the city initially offered another subsidy of 2,000DM, before doubling it after representations from the choir. Nevertheless, the trip's total cost was 88,536DM, and so the members of the Liederhalle felt 'that the city of Mannheim and its administration have not arrived at the correct calculations in the interests of the Mannheim-Swansea partnership'.¹⁵³

In contrast, there were no civic funds at all available to groups in Swansea to finance trips to Mannheim. In 1977, Mynyddbach Girls' School planned to take forty members of its choir to Mannheim. The school calculated that the total cost would be £2,000, and each chorister was asked to contribute £10. This left £1,600 to raise, which the school sought to secure through a mix of donations, concerts, social evenings, and jumble sales.¹⁵⁴ Some Mannheimers were aware of the financial conditions in Swansea. The *Mannheimer Morgen* noted that a group that came to the city from Swansea in 1967 had had to pay every penny of their own costs.¹⁵⁵ Likewise, one figure in Mannheim involved in organising exchange trips asserted in 1970 that while he was able 'to scrounge up a bit of money from the Hauptamt' to fund group visits to Wales, this was not an option for his Swansea counterparts: 'what by us has to organised and supported with a subsidy from the city is carried out privately in Swansea'.¹⁵⁶ The *Mannheimer Morgen* reported in 1980 that whenever a Welsh choir lacked the funds to make the trip, they simply arranged a lucrative concert and collected the ticket money.¹⁵⁷ One member of SMC recalled the money lavished by the Liederhalle on slap up meals and day-trips during the Welsh choir's visit to Mannheim in 1972, but felt that the hospitality had been repaid in kind: 'I do not think for one moment we could match [the Liederhalle] in cost terms, but we can in friendship, Welsh style'.¹⁵⁸

Critically, the partnership prompted figures in both cities to learn about the identity of their partners. Evidence is especially extensive for how Mannheimers came to think of the inhabitants of Swansea. Their national identity was a matter of interest from the outset. A number of observers in Mannheim—especially in the early years of the partnership—held that Swansea was in England. Hence, when Oberbürgermeister Heimerich requested a report on Swansea in 1955 after it had been suggested as a potential partner town, he asked his Statistische Amt for information concerning ‘the English city of Swansea/Wales’.¹⁵⁹ In 1957, the *Allgemeine Zeitung* spoke of ‘Mannheim’s partner city Swansea (England)’.¹⁶⁰ Two years later, the *Mannheimer Morgen* referred to ‘our English partner city Swansea’.¹⁶¹ This tendency persisted in some quarters decades in to the partnership. Hence, one report in the *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* in 1977—more than twenty years after the first contact with Swansea—referred to it as Mannheim’s ‘English partner city’.¹⁶²

Connected to this, some in Mannheim held the people of Swansea to be English. Hence, when one group of Swansea school children arrived in Mannheim in 1957, their host parents could be heard asking ‘which of them will be “my” Engländer?’¹⁶³ The perspective of the observer was crucial, as reports of the arrival of a Swansea school group in Mannheim in August 1961 demonstrate; whereas the *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* spoke of a group of English guests, the *Mannheimer Morgen* referred to the very same group as ‘the Brits’ (‘die Briten’) and ‘the Welsh’ (‘die Waliser’).¹⁶⁴ That some in Mannheim believed visitors from Swansea to be English was occasionally discerned in the Welsh town. In 1959, the *Evening Post* published a digest of Mannheim press reports on the arrival of a delegation from Swansea in Germany, in which it noted that ‘[there] does not seem to be a recognition of the Welsh origins of the visit, as the Mayor and the deputy Town Clerk are regularly referred to as “English guests”’.¹⁶⁵ A member of SMC who collected newspaper clippings about the choir’s activities obtained a copy of an article in the *Mannheimer Morgen* about its 1968 concert in Mannheim; while the original article spoke at one point of ‘English guests’ (‘englischen Gäste’), in a typewritten translation of the article pasted alongside it in the choirster’s scrapbook, this was rendered instead as ‘Welsh guests’.¹⁶⁶

Several factors must have underpinned the frequent attribution of English identity to the inhabitants of Swansea. Firstly, not all in Mannheim would have grasped the place of Wales in the political framework of Britain. Secondly—as the following part of the article discusses—interchanges between Swansea and Mannheim were largely conducted in the English language, likely spurring some in Mannheim to employ the term ‘English’ as a short-hand for ‘English-speaking’. Thirdly, many from Mannheim who visited Swansea did so specifically to improve their English, perhaps strengthening the link between the English language and the perceived English identity of Swansea’s inhabitants. Moreover, at the outset of the partnership in the 1950s, the British Consul was apt to refer to ‘England’ when discussing Swansea with representatives in Mannheim. When writing in October 1956 to Mannheim’s Stadtdirektor about Bürgermeister Fehsenbecker’s imminent visit to Swansea, for example, Miss Wright referred to his journey to ‘England’.¹⁶⁷

The manner in which the people of Swansea articulated their identity during exchanges also shaped how they were perceived by Mannheimers. The former possessed both Welsh and British identities, and, depending on the setting, could foreground one or other of them. In some scenarios, figures from Swansea emphasised elements of their

British identity, but articulated it alongside aspects of their Welsh identity.¹⁶⁸ Hence, at a formal dinner during the Jungliederhalle's visit to Swansea in 1964, the president of SMC toasted the Queen.¹⁶⁹ At the ceremony held in the Mannheimer Schloß (Mannheim Palace) on 29 August 1982 for the signing of 25th anniversary partnership documents between the cities, SMC and the Liederhalle jointly sang the British, Welsh and German anthems.¹⁷⁰ At the unveiling of the Swansea Wasserturm in August 1985, the two choirs together performed the German and Welsh anthems. While they did not sing the British anthem on that occasion, the British flag flew alongside those of Wales and Germany in the background.¹⁷¹ In German eyes, the Queen, the British anthem and the British flag could all connote England.¹⁷² Expressions of British identity by figures from Swansea therefore boosted the potential for Mannheimers to perceive them as English. Certainly, figures in Mannheim sometimes picked up on elements of British rather than Welsh identity. At a dinner in Mannheim in 1970, Oberbürgermeister Reschke, in honour of guests from the partner town, gave a toast 'in British style' ('nach britischem Stil') to the Queen and Swansea.¹⁷³ The Liederhalle's concert in Swansea the same year commenced with the choir's performance of the German and British anthems, and ended with its rendition of the Welsh anthem.¹⁷⁴

Over time, many in Mannheim learned to discern the Welsh identity of their Swansea counterparts. At the outset of the partnership, at least one figure in Mannheim grasped the difference between Wales and England. In 1956, Werner Braun, a resident of Mannheim, learned of his city's early contacts with Swansea, and so contacted the city council to offer help to develop the link. Between 1944 and 1948, Braun had been held as a prisoner of war near Swansea. He had evidently not found the experience traumatising, for he had made friends and returned to the area several times since. He advised Mannheim's city council 'that the people of Wales do not feel English but Welsh, and that they have certain resentments against the English, and speak their own language'.¹⁷⁵ A press report detailing Mayor Libby's remarks at the press conference in Mannheim in April 1957 affirmed that 'the word "England" never once came from him; "Britain" was used instead, a point upon which the Scots, the Northern Irish and the Welsh are firmly agreed'.¹⁷⁶ In a report on the visit of a delegation of journalists from Swansea in 1967, the *Mannheimer Morgen* explicitly set out why it repeatedly employed the word 'Wales' and not 'England':

Incidentally, anyone who wonders why the talk here is always about Wales and seldom about England must know that the Welsh are very self-confident and independent: [they think] 'the English must be happy that they have us.' The Welsh are proud of their symbols, the leek, a yellow daffodil and a tail-waving dragon.¹⁷⁷

In 1979, the same paper noted that while many in Mannheim had in the early years of the partnership spoken of links to 'England', knowledge 'had in the meantime got around' that the people of Swansea were Welsh.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, in 1982, the paper was critical of adverts in the city for a 'German-English' dance meeting involving a group of ballroom dancers from Swansea, noting that 'what is actually meant is a "German-Welsh" or "German-British" dance meeting, since, as is generally known, Swansea is not in England but in Wales'.¹⁷⁹

In some cases, encounters with visitors from Swansea prompted Mannheimers to comment on the relationship between Welsh and British identities. In 1959, the *Mannheimer Morgen* stated that within hours of one Swansea group arriving, it was apparent that ‘the Welsh have absolutely nothing to do with the tales of “conservative and reserved Britons”’.¹⁸⁰ Nearly a decade later, the same paper asserted firmly that ‘the Welsh are Britons, not English’.¹⁸¹ Mannheimers who had long-term contacts to Swansea were especially astute in the use of national nomenclature. Hence, in the Liederhalle’s newsletter in 1973, Schmetzer spoke of his choir’s ‘walisische Freunde’ (‘Welsh friends’) from Swansea.¹⁸² The Liederhalle dubbed the week during which they hosted SMC in Mannheim in August 1982 as ‘Walisische Woche’ (‘Welsh week’). Likewise, in 1987, Oberbürgermeister Widder described the Swansea Wasserturm as a sign of German-Welsh friendship, making no recourse to the terms ‘English’ or ‘British’.¹⁸³

Some Mannheimers also held that contacts with counterparts from Swansea had led them to discover intrinsic elements of the Welsh character. Reports from figures involved in exchanges affirm that the Welsh were customarily warm-hearted hosts. Hence, German visitors to Swansea spoke of the ‘overpowering’ (‘überwältigende’) or ‘exuberant’ (‘überschäumende’) hospitality of the Welsh.¹⁸⁴ Others described their ‘infectious warmth’ (‘ansteckende Herzlichkeit’) and their ‘inimitable sense of humour’ (‘unnachahmlichen Humor’).¹⁸⁵ One report stated that when Mannheimers who had visited their Welsh twin town ‘hear the name Swansea, they experience feelings of warm friendship’.¹⁸⁶

The characteristic most commonly ascribed to the Welsh by figures from Mannheim was their love of singing. The adjective *sangesfreudig*—literally ‘happy to sing’—appears frequently in reports of encounters with the people of Swansea. In his 1955 report on Swansea for the *Mannheimer Morgen*, E. F. von Schilling described the Welsh as ‘sangesfreudig’, and stated that there were many choirs in Wales ‘because the Welsh are the people who live to sing the most after the Germans’.¹⁸⁷ Reports described Wales as ‘the land of song’ (‘das Land des Gesangs’), and made reference to ‘the rich song tradition of the Welsh’ (‘das reiche Liedgut der Waliser’).¹⁸⁸ Another report related that there was a saying in Wales that its people first began to sing while they were in their cradles.¹⁸⁹ One article asserted that a performance by the Liederhalle in Swansea in September 1979 was well-received because ‘in *sangesfreudigen* Wales people know how to appreciate choir singing’.¹⁹⁰ Certain encounters with officials from Swansea served to underscore these perceptions. At a reception in Swansea in 1973, members of the Liederhalle ‘were once more shown with what spirit our Welsh friends understand singing and making music at a social gathering’, with Mayor Chris Thomas proving himself to be a ‘true Welshman’ (‘echter Waliser’) by taking part in impromptu singalong.¹⁹¹ At a gathering in a Mannheim Bierkeller in 1987, one member of Swansea’s city council, Byron Owen, reportedly ‘entertained the gathering with a few Welsh numbers’.¹⁹²

Visits by choirs from Swansea to Mannheim served to convey messages about Wales and its culture in Germany. To coincide with SMC’s visit in April 1966, Mannheim’s authorities arranged for the melody of ‘Calon Lân’, one of the Welsh-language songs in the choir’s repertoire, to be played for a few weeks on the Glockenspiel in the city’s Altes Rathaus (Old Townhall). One report described ‘Calon Lân’ as a *Heimatmelodie*—translatable only approximately to ‘homeland melody’—while another stated—correctly—that it had been written by a citizen of Swansea, and that it was a well-known song in Wales.¹⁹³ At their concert in the Mannheimer Schloß in 1967, Morrision Orpheus Choir sang the

Welsh song 'Myfanwy'. One local report described it as 'an old Welsh folk tune' ('eine alte walisische Volksweise'), and affirmed that its performance filled the room 'with an unusual sound' ('mit ungewohntem Klang').¹⁹⁴ The *Mannheimer Morgen* stated that another performance by the Orpheus choir had showcased a musical tradition in Wales 'that sadly we are lacking here in Germany'.¹⁹⁵ The *Badische Volkszeitung* effusively praised SMC's performance on its first visit to Mannheim in 1963. The paper related that the choir sang a number of number of 'Welsh folk songs' ('walisischen Volksliedern'), including 'Robin Ddiog'—given the German title 'Das faule Rotkehlchen'—and wondered 'when were such songs ever before sung in Mannheim?'¹⁹⁶ The report asserted that it was possible to learn much about a people from their singing, and affirmed that SMC's performance had shown the Welsh to be a people who were serious at their core, determined in what they say, and moved by deep religious devotion.¹⁹⁷

Mannheimers often invoked familiar precedents to make sense of Swansea and its inhabitants. Hence, one report described Port Talbot—the industrial area that straddles the western end of Swansea Bay—as Swansea's Ludwigshafen.¹⁹⁸ Uta Molling, the artist who came on residency to Swansea in 1985, reported that the Welsh city's centre resembled that of Mannheim: both were full of unsightly new buildings.¹⁹⁹ One reporter who went on an excursion to West Wales during a visit to Swansea in 1959 wrote that the rugged cliffs and mountain ranges there put them in mind of the landscape of the Odenwald or the Schwarzwald, the holiday destinations of many Mannheimers.²⁰⁰ One report invoked a renowned denizen of Mannheim to emphasise the importance of Swansea's most famous son to the city: 'What [Friedrich] Schiller is to Mannheim, Dylan Thomas is to Swansea'.²⁰¹ In 1985, the *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* asserted that the people of Swansea were 'in their own way comparable to the people of the Kurpfalz. They happily open their home to guests and let them take part in "Welsh life"'.²⁰² Mannheimers also occasionally used German terms to characterise officials from Swansea. During the visit of a Swansea delegation to Mannheim in 1959, the local press referred to Mayor William Evans as 'Oberbürgermeister Evans' and deputy Town Clerk Iorwerth Watkins as 'Stadtdirektor Watkins'.²⁰³ In 1987, the *Mannheimer Morgen* ascribed to Swansea's Lord Mayor Lilian Hopkins the title Oberbürgermeisterin, that is, Oberbürgermeister in the female form.²⁰⁴

In contrast, there is decidedly less evidence for how people from Swansea came to perceive their counterparts from Mannheim. One development that is clear, however, is that while many Mannheimers came to learn about Welsh identity, observers from Swansea lacked awareness of any regional identities that may have been felt by the inhabitants of Mannheim. Reports from Swansea made very few references to the Bundesland of Baden-Württemberg in connection to Mannheim. Indeed, one rare mention of it, made in the *Evening Post* in 1991, misspells it as 'Baden Wuttermbury'.²⁰⁵ To some degree, this is not surprising. Since Baden-Württemberg was only constituted as a Bundesland in 1952—shortly before the earliest exchanges with Swansea—it is perhaps understandable that the people of Mannheim might not have developed enough of an affiliation to it for this to be expressed in encounters with figures from their partner city, particularly in the early decades.

Yet, during exchanges with Swansea, Mannheimers did express their affinity to the historical Kurpfalz. At the unveiling of the replica Wasserturm in Swansea in August 1985, for example, one member of the Liederhalle appeared in costume as the dwarf Perkeo to

lead the assembled dignitaries in a wine-drinking ceremony, to the bemusement of the locals. Perkeo, the court jester of Kurfürst Charles III, was a renowned figure who had resided at the court of the Kurpfalz in Heidelberg during the early eighteenth century.²⁰⁶ He remains something of a city mascot in Heidelberg to this day. In 1986, Oberbürgermeister Widder wrote to Swansea to congratulate the city on the 800th anniversary of the granting of its town charter in 1184. In his letter, he referred to the importance of the princes of the Kurpfalz in Mannheim's own history.²⁰⁷ Evocations of the Kurpfalz such as these, however, do not appear to have registered among the intended recipients. When discussing their partners, figures in Swansea resorted to their national identity, describing them simply as German, or speaking of 'the West German town of Mannheim' or similar.²⁰⁸ As a result, then, any regional affiliation that Mannheimers may have felt between their civic and national identities fell by the wayside in exchanges with Swansea.

Evidence for how the people of Swansea generally perceived Germans is slight, and lacks the recurrent characteristics that shaped how Mannheimers thought of the Welsh. A reporter from Mannheim who visited Swansea in 1959 recorded what the average 'Man in the Street' there wanted to know about Germany; most apparently wanted to know about Germany and its living conditions, whether Germans truly only cared about their economic well-being and if political development truly was of no concern to them, and what was actually going in Berlin and East Germany.²⁰⁹ One local reporter who attended the Jungliederhalle's performance in Swansea in 1964 asserted that the choir had exhibited 'Germanic thoroughness and skill', evidently considering both to be national characteristics.²¹⁰

As some Mannheimers did, some from Swansea interpreted Mannheim using familiar precedents. Hence, one group of Swansea school children who visited in Mannheim were reportedly unimpressed by a local swimming pool, which to them was far less appealing than Swansea's beach.²¹¹ Upon the unveiling of the Swansea Wasserturm in 1985, one young Mannheimer explained to a boy of similar age from Swansea the significance of the original Wasserturm to the German city, stating that it was as important a symbol to his town as Tower Bridge was for London.²¹² Observers in Swansea also sometimes used local terminology to refer to officials in the partner city; hence Mannheim's Oberbürgermeister was occasionally referred to as 'Mayor', and sometimes even as 'Lord Mayor'.²¹³

The preceding pages have shown that interactions between Swansea and Mannheim were characterised not by hostility or antipathy, but by a shared interest in learning about each other. In contrast to scholarship that suggests Germans were indifferent to the British in the decades after 1945, this evidence has suggested that during those exchanges, Mannheimers were in fact more adept at discerning the identity of their counterparts than *vice versa*. These are findings that complicate the established scholarly paradigm concerning British-German relations in the second half of the twentieth century. It may of course be that the prominent role of choirs in exchanges between the two cities, coupled with the seemingly perpetual willingness of the Welsh to express their love of singing, likely combined to create a set of circumstances in which they very consciously placed their musicality at the heart of the identity that they presented to Mannheimers. Yet, even if this were the case, it strengthens rather than undermines the argument that

Mannheimers were more adept at grasping the identity of their counterparts. Perceiving the Welsh as the Welsh wanted to be perceived suggests that they were moved by the very opposite of disinterest.

The role of language in exchanges between Swansea and Mannheim

From the outset, language played a key role in exchanges between Swansea and Mannheim. Throughout the period under consideration, the negligible proficiency in German among the citizens of Swansea was recognised on both sides. At the founding meeting of the Beratungsausschuss für die Städtepartnerschaft Mannheim-Swansea in 1958, its members acknowledged that ‘language difficulties will not be easy to overcome’ in exchanges, above all for participants from Swansea, ‘because German is not taught in the schools there’.²¹⁴ In 1990, a figure involved in organising exchange visits from Swansea to Mannheim cautioned that the partnership was in danger of collapse because local schools had replaced German teaching with Welsh tuition.²¹⁵

Mannheimers did sometimes encounter German-speaking representatives from Swansea. Bürgermeister Fehsenbecker recorded that upon his arrival in Swansea in 1956 he was greeted at the rail station by a German-speaking teacher.²¹⁶ During the visit of a delegation from University College, Swansea, to Mannheim in 1975, one of the professors, H. M. Waidson, gave a speech at one function. One press report made a point of noting that Waidson delivered his remarks in German, though omitted to mention that he was professor of German.²¹⁷ In August 1982, General Consul Brian Rose came to Mannheim from Stuttgart to participate in the 25th anniversary celebrations. The *Mannheimer Morgen* noted that Rose could not speak a word of Welsh, but was impressed by his polished German.²¹⁸ When visiting Mannheim for the book launch of his German-language history of Swansea in 1996, John Alban gave a public talk in German.²¹⁹

Nevertheless, encountering German speakers from Swansea remained a rarity. Hence, from the first exchanges, English was the language generally used. Officials from Mannheim were able to communicate in English, albeit with varying levels of proficiency. During his visit to Swansea in 1956, Fehsenbecker attended a dinner at which ‘following the Welsh style, numerous speeches were given. No translator was on hand there, leaving me no option but to give my speech in English’.²²⁰ The *Mannheimer Morgen* praised Oberbürgermeister Reschke for the ‘elegant English’ (‘gepflegtem Englisch’) with which he greeted a Swansea delegation in 1961.²²¹ In 1967, Bürgermeister Erhard Bruche addressed a group from Swansea ‘in their English mother tongue’ (‘in ihrer englischen Muttersprache’).²²² At the unveiling of the Swansea Wasserturm in 1985, Oberbürgermeister Widder did not require the assistance of the translator present at the ceremony, giving his speech in his native tongue before providing his own articulate English translation.²²³

In many scenarios, however, translators were needed. At the April 1957 press conference in Mannheim, Mayor Libby spoke to the city’s press in English, with his remarks translated into German by an interpreter.²²⁴ The *Mannheimer Morgen* reported that at a press conference there attended by Swansea’s mayor, William Evans, in May 1959, ‘the language spoken the most—out of courtesy to the less linguistically-talented guests—was English’. When some German was spoken, officials including Oberbürgermeister

Reschke himself acted as ‘private translators’ (‘Privatdolmetscher’), whispering into the ears of the Swansea officials who could not understand it.²²⁵ When addressing a group from Swansea in August 1982, Oberbürgermeister Varnholt began with a few words of greeting in English, before continuing in German with the aid of a translator. The *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* joked that Varnholt’s English might exhibit a ‘light Welsh influence’ (‘leicht Waliser Einschlag’), since he had practised it on trips to Swansea.²²⁶ In the same month, Swansea’s Lord Mayor Tyssul Lewis spoke at one event in Mannheim, with *Die Rheinpfalz* noting that ‘his German was not strong’—likely a polite euphemism for non-existent—and that he was therefore supported by a translator.²²⁷ During the same visit, Lewis also stated that he was pleased to have met so many Mannheimers who were able to speak English.²²⁸

It was through exchanges with Swansea that some from Mannheim encountered the Welsh language.²²⁹ Several observers commented on how unusual a sound Welsh made to German ears. When a school group from Swansea sang Welsh songs at their departure from Mannheim in 1957, one observer confided that they thought the language sounded like Chinese.²³⁰ In 1963, another reporter stated that ‘for untrained ears [Welsh] is a strangely ancient-sounding language of Celtic origin’.²³¹ A number of Mannheimers who encountered Welsh were befuddled by it. At a concert in Mannheim in 1973, a female soloist from Swansea sang a Welsh song whose title baffled the translator who was on hand that evening.²³² For the 25th anniversary celebrations of the partnership in 1982, a dance troupe named Dawnsyr Treforus—so named because they were from Swansea’s Morriston area, whose name in Welsh is Treforys—travelled to Mannheim. Their name caused particular problems for the city’s press. The *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* misspelled their name as ‘Bawnswyn Treforus’, while the *Mannheimer Morgen* mistakenly rendered it as ‘Dawnsyr Treforus’.²³³ *Die Rheinpfalz* asserted in one edition that the troop had an ‘unpronounceable name’ (‘[die] Tanzgruppe mit dem unaussprechlichen Namen’), and in another described them simply as ‘the folklore dance group Treforus’ (‘die Folklore-Tanzgruppe Treforus’).²³⁴ There are other indications that Welsh caused confusion among Mannheimers. In 1979, the *Mannheimer Morgen* affirmed that there was a greater difference between Welsh and English than there was between High German and ‘Mannermerisch’, that is, the dialect of Mannheim. Yet, the paper failed to make clear that Welsh is a separate language to English rather than a dialect of it, as ‘Mannermerisch’ is of High German.²³⁵ Moreover, details could get lost in translation when the Welsh language was involved. Hence, in 1972, the *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* stated that the theme of the Welsh national anthem was ‘dear little Wales’ (‘Liebes kleines Wales’), an assertion that was only partially correct; while *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* does describe Wales as *annwyl* or ‘dear’, the anthem says nothing about Wales’ size.²³⁶

On the other hand, some in Mannheim had more positive encounters with the Welsh language. A schoolmaster who had had regular contacts with Swansea through the 1970s via choir exchanges impressed one local reporter by being able to pronounce ‘Wauarlwydd’.²³⁷ In his 1984 documentary on Mannheim’s town twinning partnerships, Veit Lennartz interviewed a school teacher who had led one of the first visits to Swansea in the 1950s, and asked him whether he had learned any Welsh. The teacher replied that ‘Welsh is a difficult language’, but that he had memorised one important Welsh phrase: ‘Cymry an byth’ (‘Wales for ever’). He then translated the phrase not into German but into English, a signal that he had likely learned it during an exchange conducted in English.²³⁸ The political

significance of the Welsh language was also discerned in Mannheim. In 1968, the *Mannheimer Morgen* discussed Plaid Cymru, describing it as the 'small but noisy political party' ('kleine, aber lautstarke Partei').²³⁹ A few years later, the same paper reported on the case of three Welsh language activists who were sentenced to prison terms for removing street signs in Swansea because they lacked information in Welsh.²⁴⁰ The visit of a group from Swansea in 1980 prompted the *Mannheimer Morgen* to offer a detailed appraisal of the Welsh language. To write it, the reporter consulted a language scholar, who offered the following assessment:

Looking at its typeface, one is tempted to believe that the Welsh language, *Kymrische*, is unspeakable. The words often consist of consonants: *Cwnc*, the hill; *Bwlch*, the mountain pass; *Dwr*, the water. Place names like *Cwmffwrdd* or *Eglwyswrw* confront travellers wherever they go. Yet, the language is not only speakable, but singable.²⁴¹

The report went on to explain that German holidaymakers in Wales faced a 'phonetical crisis' ('phonetische Krise') when they were asked upon returning home the names of the places that they had visited. Equitably, however, the report acknowledged that the German language posed problems of its own to the uninitiated, confronting non-speakers with words including *Schraubenschlüssel*, *Steuererklärung*, and *Nämlichkeitsbescheinigen*.²⁴²

Participants in exchanges were aware that language difficulties occasionally impeded communication. Striking a positive tone, one member of the Liederhalle asserted based on long-term interactions with SMC that the inability to speak the partner's language was not a major hindrance, asserting that 'at the end of the day one has hands and feet', and that at events like formal dinners 'there's always someone sitting either to the left or the right, or in front or behind, who can translate everything that cannot be gesticulated'.²⁴³ Nevertheless, there were efforts on both sides to address the issue. Reports reached Mannheim in 1959 that early exchanges with Swansea had prompted an upsurge in German-language teaching there.²⁴⁴ While Schmetzer spoke what he described as 'pretty good English' ('leidlich gutes Englisch') at the outset of the Liederhalle's exchanges with SMC in 1962, he nevertheless took English classes a few years later to improve it.²⁴⁵ In 1980, members of the Swansea Twinning Association took both German and Italian lessons in the build up to a twinning festival, to which representatives from Mannheim and Ferrara (Swansea's Italian partner town) had been invited.²⁴⁶

The activities of choirs involved in exchanges between the cities highlight the role of language in the partnership. Some held that music could bring together groups who did not speak the same language. Mervyn Wallace affirmed during SMC's first trip to Mannheim in 1963 that his choir 'had come to ... speak in the internationally-known language of music'.²⁴⁷ The link to Mannheim prompted SMC to add German songs to its repertoire. For their first visit to Mannheim, its members learned the German national anthem as well as two German-language songs.²⁴⁸ The *Badische Volkszeitung* affirmed that the performances of those songs were well-received in Mannheim, and that the choristers had performed them not just in passable German but even in the Swabian dialect.²⁴⁹ One report stated that SMC was invited to tour East Germany in 1966 because, thanks to their connection to Mannheim, they were not 'strangers to the sound of the German language'.²⁵⁰ At a concert in Mannheim in 1968, SMC sang two

German songs—‘Ännchen von Tharau’ and ‘Muß i den, muß i denn zum Städtele hinaus’—and had to perform both in an encore at the ‘urgent demand’ (‘dringendes Verlangen’) of the audience.²⁵¹ Through their interactions with the Liederhalle, some SMC members even picked up Mannheim’s local dialect of German; several were reportedly able to thank the host families who accommodated them in 1982 in English as well as in ‘mannemerisch’.²⁵² Other Swansea choirs engaged with the German language. In 1972 a soloist from Mynyddbach Girls’ School choir sang Böhm’s ‘Still wie die Nacht’ in ‘impeccable German’ (‘in untadeligem Deutsch’).²⁵³ The following year, Waunarlwydd Youth Choir charmed a Mannheim audience with its performance of German songs, ‘even when in otherwise perfect performances of German songs the odd *süßen* was replaced with *sußer*’.²⁵⁴ A 1985 report indicates that SMC’s members learned to sing German songs phonetically, suggesting that they acquired minimal underlying comprehension.²⁵⁵

From the outset, German choirs included English-language songs in their repertoires when performing in Swansea. Yet, several also learned Welsh songs to perform at concerts there. The Liederhalle made a particular effort in this regard. For its visit in August 1970, the choir added two numbers from SMC’s repertoire to their own: the English-language song ‘Lily of the Valley’, but also the Welsh-language ‘Myfanwy’. One report indicates that both were well-received at the concert, before gnomically adding that the choir closed the evening ‘with a most interesting version of the Welsh national anthem’.²⁵⁶ At a joint concert of SMC and the Liederhalle in Swansea’s Brangwyn Hall in August 1985, the Mannheim choir’s repertoire included ‘Welsh folk songs’.²⁵⁷ In 1968, the *Evening Post* interviewed Walter Sauer, an honorary member of SMC from Mannheim who spoke ‘impeccable English’. Sauer had first visited Swansea on a scholarship at University College in 1962–3. On that occasion, and on five further visits to Wales, he had participated in SMC’s rehearsals. The paper reported that ‘[although] he cannot understand it too well, Walter can sing in Welsh’, implying that he learned the language phonetically.²⁵⁸

While singers from Swansea and Mannheim appear to have learned songs in German and Welsh without gaining appreciable proficiency in those languages, in the context of the partnership, it was the gesture that was significant. As the president of SMC put it in 1964, it was ‘most heartening . . . to hear the Germans singing in English, and the Welsh singing in German, for such “exchanges” created an atmosphere of true friendship and brotherliness’.²⁵⁹ As German choirs mastered Welsh-language songs in the years that followed, this sentiment would only have been heightened.

These linguistic encounters, especially those experienced by choirs, open a new window on British-German relations. They create a picture of interactions that were characterised on both sides by warmth and respect. Moreover, they raise an important point about dynamics of British history that are too often overlooked in historiography. In the context of town twinning exchanges, encounters with the Welsh language served to condition external ideas of Wales, and thus shape international perceptions of Britain. This is an insight that would be out of reach of studies that take a purely Anglocentric focus.

Conclusion

This article has explored the Swansea-Mannheim town twinning partnership from its establishment in the 1950s down to the 1990s, investigating the exchanges carried out between them, its significance to the two cities, and its role in shaping mutual perceptions between their citizens. While the partnership's foundation is usually dated to 1957, its origins were in fact not so clear cut, with 1957 acquiring significance in hindsight when the cities celebrated the somewhat contrived 25th anniversary of the partnership in 1982. The partnership developed out of the links that were established between Wales and Baden-Württemberg in the early 1950, which were encouraged by the British Consul office in Stuttgart. Officials in Swansea and Mannheim often asserted the close relationship between the cities, but this was evidently no empty rhetoric; through it, some participants acquired memories and experiences that had a long-lasting impact on their lives. In line with how town twinning was interpreted more widely in Europe, the Swansea-Mannheim partnership was in its first decades framed as a mechanism for salving the wounds of the Second World War and building international friendships to promote peace and mitigate against future conflict. Then, from the 1980s, and particularly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, participants extolled the partnership as a means for displaying European solidarity, just as the political integration of the continent was advancing. Over time, the two cities established a multifaceted partnership, with the political framework created by officials providing the basis for a wide range of interactions between individuals and groups from the two cities, none more durable than that between SMC and the Liederhalle.

Though centred upon one town twinning partnership, the findings of this study have a significance that transcend its immediate focus. It has showcased the value of town twinning as a subject of historical enquiry, drawing attention to its potential as a lens for unlocking new perspectives on post-war European history. City partnerships enabled participants to engage in exchanges with counterparts in other nations, and by investigating those exchanges, historians can interrogate international relations not through high politics but through popular responses. Town twinning initiatives also spurred participants to engage with supranational impulses like the peace and reconciliation movements or efforts to build the 'House of Europe', but to do so as part of a civic rather than a national community. All of this is eminently worthy of historians' attention.

The article has also emphasised the possibilities of adopting a regional rather than a national approach to international exchanges. There is a particular importance in this regard with respect to British history. Studies based wholly on England do of course reveal much about Britain as a whole, but they do not reveal everything. By focussing on developments in Wales—and above all on Mannheimers' perceptions of Welsh identity and their responses to the Welsh language—this article has amassed findings that would have been beyond the reach of a purely Anglocentric study. That elements of Welsh culture served to shape external perceptions of Britain emphasises the deficiency of the notion that what happens in Wales only matters there, and underscores the importance of being alert to the internal diversity and complexity of Britain. Adopting this regional lens of analysis also provides a means of evading the blinkers of 'methodological nationalism'.

These findings also complicate the established historiographical picture of popular relations between Britain and Germany in the decades after 1945. While existing scholarship generally frames the British as hostile to Germans, and casts Germans as indifferent to the British, in the case of exchanges between Swansea and Mannheim, a rather different picture emerges. The Swansea choirs who learned German songs before visiting Mannheim acted not out of hostility but out of respect and fraternity. While anyone who took part in twinning activities was arguably predisposed to speak about their experiences positively, there are hints in the evidence that for some in Swansea the established picture of ideas about Germany does hold true. The relatives who criticised SMC choristers for accommodating German guests in their homes in 1970, or the apprehension and fear of Germans that Ruby Stock felt before travelling to Mannheim in 1982, indicate that at least some did hold anti-German feelings. Yet, by meeting people from Mannheim through the partnership, those choristers and Stock herself gained positive feelings about their German counterparts. The crucial point here is that town twinning evidently does not just illuminate for the historian contexts and scenarios in which British people shared warm exchanges with Germans. If we trust these hints, town twinning also provided a mechanism for actually transforming hostility into warmth.

The present study also challenges the received image of German indifference to Britain. While some Mannheimers, especially in the early years of the partnership, erred in describing the people of Swansea as English—a development to which their own expressions of British identity no doubt contributed—others learned to discern their Welsh identity. Mannheimers came to detect in their Swansea counterparts characteristics that they held to be typically Welsh, namely, a penchant for offering warm hospitality and a love of singing. If it was the case that the Welsh emphasised these elements of their character during exchanges, it only underscores the aptitude of Mannheimers for grasping the identity of the people whom they met. In contrast, while figures in Swansea often developed firm friendships with their counterparts, the Welsh generally framed them as either citizens of Mannheim or simply as Germans. They did not discern any regional identity that may have existed between those two poles of identity, whether that was to the Bundesland of Baden-Württemberg—which was not articulated in exchanges—or to the historical Kurpfalz—which was. Far from being indifferent to their British partners, then, on the matter of identity, the German participants were more in fact more adept at understanding their counterparts than *vice versa*.

In closing, it should be acknowledged that those like Oberbürgermeister Widder who regarded the Swansea-Mannheim partnership as one of the building blocks of the 'House of Europe' have had to revisit their ideas in the 21st century, following the United Kingdom's 2016 referendum on membership of the European Union, in which Swansea voted narrowly in favour of leaving. Yet, recent events do not render insignificant the efforts of people like those in Swansea and Mannheim who after the Second World War sought to recover and rebuild from the devastation it had wrought in solidarity with one another. On the contrary; they arguably make recognising those efforts, and the crucial role that they played in piecing the continent back together after 1945, all the more vital. This article has provided one piece of a far wider picture. There are many more stories still to tell about how the cities of Europe interacted with each other after 1945. It is to be hoped that the preceding pages have shown the value of telling them.

Notes

1. On Swansea's history, see Williams, ed. *Swansea: An Illustrated History*. On its emergence as an industrial centre, see Miskell, *Intelligent Town*. On the reconstruction of the city after 1945, see Evans, *A New, Even Better Abertawe*. For the post-Second World War history of Wales, see Johnes, *Wales since 1939*.
2. Beckett, "City Status for Swansea, 1911–69."
3. Nieß and Caroli, ed. *Geschichte der Stadt Mannheim*. For an overview, see Probst, *Kleine Mannheimer Stadtgeschichte*.
4. On the Kurpfalz, see Kohnle, *Kleine Geschichte der Kurpfalz*.
5. Egler-Huck, "1955–1972: Zwischen Repräsentation, Bürgerbeteiligung und Jugendprotest," 562.
6. Williams, ed. *Swansea: An Illustrated History*; Alban, "The Wider World," 129. Cf. Alban, *Swansea*, 51.
7. Especially important are the documents in MarM, 35/1981_00490 ('Partnerschaft Mannheim-Swansea, 1954–1958').
8. WGlam, SWEP 2/1793 and MarM, Altbestand S 20046. For ease of reference, the present article refers only to the newspapers in which cited reports appear, rather than repeatedly cite the call numbers of these dossiers.
9. These are: Hermann Heimerich (1949–1955); Hans Reschke (1956–1972); Ludwig Ratzel (1972–1980); Wilhelm Varnholt (1980–1983); Gerhard Widder (1983–2007); Peter Kurz (2007-).
10. Key scholarship is neatly summarised in the insightful Defrance and Herrmann, "Städtepartnerschaften als Spiegel der europäischen Geschichte."
11. See, among others, Bautz, "Die Auslandsbeziehungen," Defrance, "Les Jumelages Franco-Allemands," and Meyer, "Deutsch-französische Städtepartnerschaften."
12. The few studies of town twinning partnerships involving British cities include Clarke, "Globalising care?," Clarke, "Town Twinning in Cold-War Britain," Großpietsch, "The changing geographies," and Thießen, "Uneinige Zwillinge." Christoph Laucht (Swansea) and Tom Allbeson (Cardiff) are currently preparing an edited volume on European town twinning after 1945.
13. While Großpietsch, "The changing geographies," considers the Cardiff-Stuttgart city partnership as one of its case studies, it barely mentions the fact that Cardiff is in Wales, and it thus does not probe potential differences with town twinings involving cities elsewhere in Britain.
14. Though note that Wales is approached here as both a region of Great Britain and a nation in its own right.
15. See, among others: Lee, *Victory in Europe?*; Larres, ed. *Uneasy Allies*; Noakes, Wende and Wright, ed. *Britain and Germany in Europe, 1949–1990*; Görtemaker, ed. *Britain and Germany in the 20th Century*.
16. Wright, "The role of Britain in West German foreign policy since 1949," 27. Some of the finer details of governmental relations between Britain and Germany after 1945 are uncovered in Rüger, *Heligoland*, 204–235.
17. For what follows here, see Lee, *Victory in Europe?*, esp. 1–4; Wittlinger, "Perceptions of Germany," Wittlinger, "British-German Relations," Michail, "After the War and after the Wall," and Cowling, "Anglo-German Relations."
18. On 'kraut-bashing', see Wittlinger, "Perceptions of Germany," 458–460. This hostility towards Germans, in turn, speaks to the wider imprint that the memory of the Second World War has exerted on identity and ideas about the past in Britain. On this, see the essays collected in Noakes and Pattinson, ed. *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*.
19. Lee, *An Uneasy Partnership*, 258.
20. For an exception to this, see the stimulating collection of essays in Lloyd-Jones and Scull, ed. *Four Nations Approaches to Modern 'British' History*.

21. For instance, Lee, *Victory in Europe?*, 228, commences an assessment of 'British' character with a quotation from Paxman, *The English*.
22. See, for example, Young, "Two World Wars and One World Cup." While ostensibly about England, the article in fact makes dozens of references to Britain and the British.
23. On the influence of 'methodological nationalism' in historical scholarship, see Vasilev, "Methodological nationalism and the politics of history-writing." On interpreting European history through a civic rather than national lens, see Saunier, "Taking up the Bet on Connections," and the special issue in which it appears.
24. This corresponds with how city partnerships were understood by participants elsewhere across the continent: see Defrance and Herrmann, "Städtepartnerschaften als Spiegel der europäischen Geschichte," 19–21, 30–34. On the development of pro-European sentiments in Britain, see Saunders, *Yes to Europe!*.
25. Großpietsch, "The changing geographies," 160–162.
26. MarM, 35/1981_00490: 'Verbindung zwischen Baden-Württemberg und Wales', Aide Memoire issued by British Consul in Stuttgart, 25 August 1955.
27. This was the same year in which Cardiff attained the status of capital of Wales: see Johnes, "Cardiff."
28. Großpietsch, "The changing geographies," 8–9.
29. MarM, 35/1981_00490: 'Verbindung zwischen Baden-Württemberg und Wales', Aide Memoire issued by British Consul in Stuttgart, 25 August 1955.
30. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Hauptamt to Oberbürgermeister Heimerich, 9 November 1954. The memo cites the 'English' city of Cardiff as an example of a potential partner for Mannheim.
31. Price put the suggestion into writing in a letter he sent to Heimerich a few weeks later: MarM, 35/1981_00490: Allen Price to Oberbürgermeister Heimerich, 28 January 1955; reply, 2 March 1955.
32. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Hauptamt to Oberbürgermeister Heimerich, 9 November 1954.
33. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Statistische Amt report for Oberbürgermeister Heimerich, 17 February 1955; 'eine der häßlichsten, schmutzigsten, übelriechendsten (Abgase) Städte ganz Großbritanniens.'
34. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Mannheimer Hauptamt memo to new mayor [Reschke], 3 September 1956; 'Herr Oberbürgermeister Dr. Heimerich war jedoch der Meinung, daß man das Anerbieten des englischen Generalkonsuls nicht ablehnen könne und hat ... eine Zusage geschickt.'
35. *MM*, 2 April 1955; 'Politisch hat Swansea eine starke Mehrheit der Arbeitspartei (Labour), wirtschaftlich eine vielfältige Industrie und menschlich eine lebhaft, zutrauliche und künstlerisch interessierte Bevölkerung—wie hier bei uns'.
36. *MM*, 30 March 1957; 'leben von der Industrie und vom Hafen, beide wurden im Kriege durch Bomben schwer zerstört, beide wurden großzügig wieder aufgebaut.'
37. MarM, 35/1981_00490: 'Verbindung zwischen Baden-Württemberg und Wales', Aide Memoire issued by British Consul in Stuttgart, 25 August 1955; 'Es besteht kein Zweifel, dass beide Staedte sehr vieles gemeinsam haben'.
38. MarM, 35/1981_00490: report of Mannheim delegation's visit to Swansea by Bürgermeister Fehsenbecker, 6 November 1956.
39. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Oberbürgermeister Reschke to Mayor Libby, 9 November 1956.
40. The conference, held in the Palasthotel Mannheimer Hof, was widely reported by the city's press: *AZ*, 2 April 1957; *RNZ*, 2 April 1957; *BV*, 2 April 1957; *MM*, 2 April 1957.
41. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Minutes of Mannheimer Gemeinderat meeting of 2 April 1957.
42. As noted in MarM, 35/1981_00490: Letter of Drew to R.A. Chaput de Saintonge (British Foreign Office), 2 September 1957.
43. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Mannheimer Hauptamt memos, 18, 28 and 30 December 1957; 20 January 1958.
44. Egler-Huck, "1955-1972: Zwischen Repräsentation, Bürgerbeteiligung und Jugendprotest," 562.
45. MarM, 35/1981_00490: British Information Services press release, 27 March 1957.

46. AZ, 29 March 1957; 30 March 1957; 'Die Verbindungen zwischen Swansea und Mannheim wurden bereits im Frühjahr des Jahres 1954 aufgenommen' ... '[die] Mannheimer Patenstadt Swansea'. Cf. RNZ, 2 April 1956.
47. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Minutes of Mannheimer Gemeinderat meeting of 2 April 1957; '... besteht seit längerer Zeit ein Kontakt zwischen den Städten Mannheim und Swansea'.
48. Parzer, "Die Begründung der Städtepartnerschaft."
49. DR, 21 August 1982; 'Ein offizielles Datum gibt es eigentlich nicht, aber in diesem Jahr ist es auf jeden Fall mindestens 25 Jahre her, daß Swansea ... und Mannheim ... Freundschaftsbande geknüpft haben.'
50. RNZ, 23 August 1982; 'Genau datieren läßt sich der Beginn der Städtepartnerschaft zwischen Swansea ... und Mannheim nicht'.
51. MM, 21–22 August 1982; 'so daß sie heute rückblickend als eigentlicher Beginn der Partnerschaft gewertet werden.'
52. RNZ, 30 August 1982; '[the celebrations of 1982] endlich die Partnerschaft besiegelt'.
53. Mannheim was granted city status in 1607 by Kurfürst Friedrich IV: Kohnle, *Kleine Geschichte der Kurpfalz*, 100.
54. On the naming ceremony for Swanseaplatz, see *Mannheimer Wochenblatt*, 26 August 1982 (which spoke of a 'Taufe bei der Silberhochzeit'); MM, 28–29 August 1982; SWEF, 3 September 1982.
55. The original *Wasserturm* stands in the city's Friedrichplatz, and was built between 1886 and 1889. Though it was damaged during the Second World War, it was rebuilt in 1962–3. On its history, see Weckesser, *Geliebter Wasserturm*. The replica in Swansea is the work of the sculptor Philip Chatfield. He submitted his designs to Swansea's city council in November 1984, and they are preserved as WGLam, DC/S PI 1/9 and DC/S PI 1/19.
56. A video recording of the full ceremony is preserved in WGLam, P/Vid 2/3: 'The Opening of Mannheim Quay by the Lord Mayor, 9 August 1985'. For contemporary reports of the ceremony, see SWEF, 9 August 1985; WM, 10 August 1985; RNZ, 17–19 August 1985; MM, 10–11 August 1985.
57. The Maritime Quarter was built on a site formerly occupied by part of Swansea's docks: Humphrys, "Twentieth-century change," 343.
58. The 40th anniversary plans are detailed in SWEF, 17 March 1997.
59. AZ, 15 November 1961; 'Partnerschaften wären Papier, würden sie nicht ständig durch unmittelbare Aktionen belebt und bekräftigt.'
60. MarM, 42/2003_00008: Heinz Schmetzer, 'Dokumentation: Partnerschaft der Liederhalle Mannheim mit dem Swansea Male Choir von 1960–1988', Part 1: 29; 'eine wirkliche Städtepartnerschaft von Menschen zu Menschen, nicht nur eine Angelegenheit von Verwaltung zu Verwaltung, noch von Stadtrat zu Stadtrat sein darf, sollte die Partnerschaft Bestand haben für die Zukunft.'
61. SWEF, 7 May 1987.
62. WGLam, P/Vid 2/3 (as in n. 56).
63. MM, 15 November 1961; AZ, 15 November 1961.
64. As detailed in RNZ, 25 January 1983.
65. MarM, 31/2010_00105 ('GEDOK MA-LU, Partnerstadt Swansea, 1978–1980'); SWEF, 20 June 1979.
66. RNZ, 23 August 1982.
67. RNZ, 25 January 1983; SWEF, 22 April 1983.
68. MM, 9–10 March 1996; *Mannheim-Illustriert*, March 1996.
69. SWEF, 8 February 1985.
70. Swansea/Mannheim artists exchange.
71. MM, 30 July 1964.
72. SWEF, 14 April 1977; MM, 27 May 1977.
73. DR, 30 May 1984.
74. MM, 16 May 1975.
75. SWEF, 15 July 1968.

76. *RNZ*, 19 November 1968.
77. *MM*, 15–16 December 1984.
78. *MM*, 21 August 1967.
79. *SWEP*, 31 May 1983.
80. *RNZ*, 28 July 1976.
81. *SWEP*, 14 February 1978.
82. *MM*, 1–2 May 1980.
83. *SWEP*, 27 January 1983.
84. On the renaming of SMC: *SWEP*, 30 January 1967.
85. Schmetzer, 'Dokumentation', Part 1: 2.
86. Schmetzer, 'Dokumentation', Part 1: 2–6; WGLam, D/D SMC/37 (Liederhalle, Mannheim, souvenir brochure for 110th anniversary celebrations, 1982), 83.
87. *SWEP*, 27 June 1985.
88. WGLam, D/D SMC/28/2 (SMC newspaper clippings, 1954–1967): *SWEP*[?] clipping, 5 June 1963.
89. WGLam D/D SMC/29/2 (Reminiscences of Clive John, SMC musical director, 1965–1975 [n.d.]), 2 (5).
90. See e.g.: *SWEP*, 17 December 1974 (concerns about £15,000 cost of exhibiting at Mannheim Bundesgartenschau); 25 November 1977 (town twinning described as 'an extravagant waste of money'); 28 January 1978 (complaint about cost of sending mayoral delegation from Swansea to Mannheim).
91. Schmetzer, 'Dokumentation', Vorwort: 3.
92. *SWEP*, 12 November 1987.
93. *MM*, 13 August 1959.
94. *RNZ*, 30 August 1928.
95. *MM*, 30 August 1982.
96. *RNZ*, 26 August 1982.
97. WGLam, P/Vid 2/3 (as in n. 56); MarM, 26/1994_00213 (Partnerschaft Mannheim-Swansea, 1984–1985): German text of Oberbürgermeister Widder's speech at the unveiling of the Swansea Wasserturm, 9 August 1985; 'zurückgekehrter Urlauber nicht mehr gebeten "erzähle mir etwas von der Stadt Swansea" sondern die Frage lautet viel häufiger "Hast du meinen alten Freund X Y gesehen, wie geht es meinen Bekannten" usw.'
98. *MM*, 11 August 1962; '... daß die recht engen offiziellen Kontakte zwischen den Städten Swansea und Mannheim nun zum ersten Mal in der Geschichte dieser Städtepartnerschaft auch eine so enge persönliche Verbindung erfahren.'
99. *MM*, 3 January 1962.
100. *SWEP*, 25 August 1982.
101. *MM*, 9–10 March 1996.
102. *SWEP*, 10 March 1978.
103. *SWEP*, 29 March 1978.
104. *RNZ*, 14 September 1957.
105. *MM*, 22–23 August 1970. The same report affirmed 'Beim Abschied gab es sogar Tränen.'
106. *SWEP*, 29 September 1982.
107. *Liederhalle Nachrichten*, September 1982, 2; 'die Tränen flossen, Tränen der Freunde—der Dankbarkeit—der Herzlichkeit—ehrliche Tränen also!'
108. *RNZ*, 17–18 August 1985; 'Mit einem lachenden und einem weinenden Auge'.
109. WGLam, D/D SMC/37 (as in n. 86), 83; 'von Herz zu Herz, von Familie zu Familie, von Sänger zu Sänger'.
110. *Liederhalle Nachrichten*, September 1982, 3; 'Fühlen Sie sich bitte in unserer Mitte wie zu Hause, denn unsere Stadt ist Ihre Stadt, unser Chor ist Ihr Chor und unsere Familien sind auch Ihre Familien.'
111. Schmetzer, 'Dokumentation', Part 1: 12.
112. MarM, 42/2003_00006 (Gästebuch der Familie Schmetzer, 1961–1970).
113. Defrance and Herrmann, "Städtepartnerschaften als Spiegel der europäischen Geschichte," 19–21.

114. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Oberbürgermeister Reshke to Mayor Libby, 9 November 1956; 'der Kontakt zwischen Mannheim und Swansea der Festigung freundschaftlicher Beziehungen zwischen Großbritannien und Deutschland dienen möge.'
115. *MM*, 14 May 1959; 'eines der wirksamsten Mittel zur Verhinderung eines neuen Krieges.'
116. *AZ*, 4 September 1959; 'die Jugend werde in Freundschaft und Verständnis für einander aufwachsen.'
117. *RNZ*, 2 August 1961; 'daß sich gerade die jungen Leute aus beiden Städten kennen lernen.'
118. WGLam, P/123/CW/943: Oberbürgermeister Reschke to Mayor William Evans, 12 May 1959 (English and German versions).
119. MarM, 35/1981_00491 (Partnerschaft Mannheim-Swansea, 1959–1965 [Akte]): H. C. Williams to Oberbürgermeister Reschke, 19 May 1959. A German translation of Williams' letter to Reschke was published in Mannheim's papers the next day: see e.g. *AZ*, 20 May 1959. Mannheim's generosity contrasts with the attitude of Swansea Town Football Club, which in February that year refused Rev. William's request for a donation towards the cost of rebuilding St Mary's, on the basis that making a contribution 'would open the door to similar appeals.' WGLam, P/123/CW/943: T. L. Hoskins (secretary of Swansea Town Football Club) to Rev. H. C. Williams, 28 February 1959.
120. An English version of the 1982 act, signed by Varnholt and Lewis and others on 29 August, is preserved as WGLam, TC 330/1/1. The German version was printed in full in *RNZ*, 30 August 1982.
121. WGLam, P/Vid 2/3 (as in n. 56); MarM, 26/1994_00213: German text of Oberbürgermeister Widder's speech at the unveiling of the Swansea Wasserturm, 9 August 1985.
122. Thomas' words, translated into German, are recorded in Schmetzer, 'Dokumentation', Part 1: 19; 'Wir alle merken und spüren, daß sich da etwas anbahnt, das uns alle für die Zukunft glücklich und zufrieden werden läßt, eine große Hoffnung für die Menschen unserer beiden Nationen und darüber hinaus für Europa.'
123. *MM*, 30 August 1982; *DR*, 30 August 1982.
124. Schmetzer, 'Dokumentation', Part 1: 7; 'Ich schreibe dies nur mit dazu, zum besseren Verständnis meiner Handlungs- und Denkungsweise in dieser Sache.'
125. *MM*, 13 August 1959.
126. WGLam D/D SMC/29/2 (as in n. 89), 5 (6).
127. *SWEP*, 29 September 1982.
128. WGLam, D/D SMC/28/2 (as in n. 88): *SWEP*[?] clipping, 4 May 1964.
129. WGLam, D/D SMC/34/1 (Programme for performance by Liederhalle at Brangwyn Hall, Swansea, 5 August 1970).
130. MarM, AB05150 (Heinz Schmetzer: Städtepartnerschaft mit Swansea, 1973–1985): Programme by SMC for visit of Liederhalle Choir to Swansea, 22–30 August 1979.
131. WGLam, D/D SMC/37 (as in n. 86), 76.
132. Defrance and Herrmann, "Städtepartnerschaften als Spiegel der europäischen Geschichte," 21–30.
133. On SMC's 1966 visit to East Germany, see WGLam, D/D SMC/5/3 and D/D SMC/28/2 (as in n. 88).
134. Defrance and Herrmann, "Städtepartnerschaften als Spiegel der europäischen Geschichte," 30–34.
135. WGLam, D/D SMC/37 (as in n. 86), 3; 'hierbei auf ein Vierteljahrhundert fruchtbar europäischer Zusammenarbeit zurückblicken.'
136. *RNZ*, 24 March 1987; 'praktizierte Solidarität in Europa'.
137. *RNZ*, 23 March 1987; 'wird es kein geeintes Europa geben'.
138. *RNZ*, 24 March 1987; 'Beide Städte hätten als gemeinsames Ziel, die politischen, gesellschaftlichen, kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen innerhalb Europas zu intensivieren.'
139. *SWEP*, 9 September 1989.
140. *SWEP*, 12 December 1989.
141. *SWEP*, 22 November 1995.
142. See e.g.: *RNZ*, 22 November 1995; *MM*, 21 November 1995; *DR*, 21 November 1995.

143. *MM*, 21 November 1995; 'Ohne den Brückenschlag vieler Städte, die wichtigen Beiträge zur Aussöhnung und Verständigung, wäre die europäische Zusammenarbeit heute nicht darstellbar.'
144. *RNZ*, 22 November 1995.
145. A copy of the English version of the document is preserved as WGLam, CC/S X 26.
146. Schäfer, "Zum "soliden Unterbau" des "europäischen Gebäudes.""
147. *MM*, 17 April 1985; '[die] Basis zu einem geeinten Europa hatten beide Chöre eindrucksvoll bestritten.'
148. WGLam D/D SMC/29/1 (Reminiscences of Emrys Jones, SMC musical director, 1946–1965 [n. d.]), 9.
149. In 1956 the Foreign Office committed to support the full cost of a school exchange, with participants required only to provide 'Taschengeld fuer die privaten Ausgaben': MarM, 35/1981_00490: Miss J.F. Wright to Stadtdirektor Andrisky, 8 October 1956.
150. See above, n. 90.
151. *MM*, 22 March 1974; the paper reported that Jones asked Ratzel 'woher nehmen Sie eigentlich das Geld; ich könnte neidisch werden.'
152. Schmetzer, 'Dokumentation', Part 1: 6.
153. Schmetzer, 'Dokumentation', Part 1: 13; 'fanden wir alle, daß hier die Stadt Mannheim und ihre Verwaltung nicht richtig kalkuliert im Interesse der Städtepartnerschaft Mannheim-Swansea.'
154. *SWEP*, 8 April 1974.
155. *MM*, 21 August 1967.
156. *MM*, 22–23 August 1970; 'beim Hauptamt ein bisschen schnorren' ... 'was bei uns organisiert und mit städtischen Zuschuß unterstützt werden muß, das wird in Swansea privat erreicht.'
157. *MM*, 1–2 May 1980; 'veranstalten sie einfach ein lukratives Dauerkonzert.'
158. WGLam D/D SMC/29/2 (as in n. 89), 6 (9).
159. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Oberbürgermeister Heimerich to Dr Hook, Statistische Amt, 31 January 1955; 'die englische Stadt Swansea/Wales'.
160. *AZ*, 30 March 1957; 'Mannheimer Patenstadt Swansea [England]'
161. *MM*, 12 March 1959; 'unsere englische Patenstadt Swansea'.
162. *RNZ*, 24 March 1987; 'englische Partnerstadt'.
163. *BV*, 20 July 1957; 'Welches wird wohl "mein" Engländer sein? Nun jeder erhielt "seinen" Engländer sehr rasch.'
164. *RNZ*, 2 August 1961; *MM*, 3 August 1961.
165. *SWEP*, 20 May 1959.
166. WGLam, D/D SMC/28/1 (SMC newspaper clippings, 1967–1970): *MM* clipping, September 1968; typewritten translation.
167. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Miss J.F. Wright to Stadtdirektor Andrisky, 8 October 1956.
168. For a broader discussion of the relationship between Welsh and British identities after 1945, see Johns, "Wales, History, and Britishness."
169. WGLam, D/D SMC/32 (Menu and Toast card for Dinner and Dance held in Dolphin Hotel, 5 May 1984).
170. WGLam, D/D SMC/36 (Programme for ceremony: '25 Jahre Städtepartnerschaft/Years Twinningship', Rittersaal, Mannheim Palace, 29 August 1982); *DR*, 30 August 1982; *RNZ*, 20 August 1982.
171. WGLam, P/Vid 2/3 (as in n. 56).
172. *DR*, 30 August 1982, for instance, explicitly refers to 'God Save the Queen' as the English national anthem.
173. *MM*, 21 April 1970; *RNZ*, 22 April 1970.
174. WGLam, D/D SMC/34/1 (as in n. 129).
175. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Mannheimer Hauptamt memo, 18 October 1956; '[Braun] weist darauf hin, daß die Bevölkerung von Wales sich nicht als Engländer sondern als Waliser fühlen und daß sie gewisse Ressentiments gegen die Engländer haben, und ihre eigene Sprache sprechen.'

176. *RNZ*, 2 April 1957; 'Uebrigens, das Wort "England" fiel von seiner Seite nie; es wurde durch "Britannien" ersetzt, den in dem Punkt sind Schotten, Nordiren und Waliser eigen und einig'.
177. *MM*, 29 July 1967; 'Wer sich übrigens wundert, daß hier immer von Wales und ganz selten von England die Rede ist, muß wissen, daß die Waliser sehr selbstbewusst und eigenständig sind: Die Engländer müssen froh sein, daß sie uns haben. Die Waliser sind stolz auf ihre Symbole die Lauchzwiebel, eine gelbe Narzisse und einen schweifwedelnden Drachen.'
178. *MM*, 7–8 July 1979; 'hat sich mittlerweile herumgesprochen'.
179. *MM*, 21–22 August 1982; 'Gemeint ist gewiß ein "Deutsch-Walisischer" oder "Deutsch-Britischer Tanztreff", da Swansea bekanntlich nicht in England sondern in Wales liegt.'
180. *MM*, 3 August 1959; 'die Waliser haben partout nichts mit dem Märchen vom "stockkonservativen und reservierten Briten" zu tun.'
181. *MM*, 19 January 1968; 'Waliser sind Briten, keine Engländer.'
182. *Liederhalle Nachrichten*, June 1973, n. p.
183. *MM*, 23 March 1987.
184. *MM*, 13 September 1979; 15 August 1985.
185. *MM*, 17 April 1985; 12 December 1985.
186. *MM*, 15 August 1985; 'wenn sie den Namen Swansea hören, dann schwingen darin Gefühle warmer Freundschaft'.
187. *MM*, 2 April 1955; 'denn die Waliser sind das sangesfreudigste Völkchen nächst den Deutschen'.
188. *MM*, 1–3 June 1963; 30 March 1980.
189. *MM*, 16 July 1969; 'In Wales, so geht die Sage, fangen die Menschen schon in der Wiege zu singen an.'
190. *MM*, 13 September 1979; 'Im sangesfreudigen Wales weiß man eben Chorgesang zu schätzen.'
191. *Liederhalle Nachrichten*, June 1973, n. p.; 'Dabei offenbarte sich einmal mehr, mit welcher Begeisterung unsere walisischen Freunde im geselligen Kreis zu singen und musizieren verstehen'.
192. *SWEP*, 7 May 1987.
193. *RNZ*, 23 April 1966; *MM*, 25 April 1966; *AZ*, 25 April 1966.
194. *RNZ*, 30 May 1967.
195. *MM*, 2 June 1967; '[a tradition], die uns hier in Deutschland leider fehlt.'
196. *BV*, 1 June 1964; 'wann wurden in Mannheim solche Lieder schon gesungen?'
197. *BV*, 1 June 1964.
198. *MM*, 19 December 1984.
199. *MM*, 14 February 1986.
200. *MM*, 12 August 1959.
201. *MM*, 21–23 April 1981; 'Was Schiller für Mannheim ist Dylan Thomas für Swansea.'
202. *RNZ*, 17–18 August 1985; '[the people] sind in ihrer Art durchaus mit den Kurpfälzern zu vergleichen. Gerne bereit, ihr Heim dem Gast zu öffnen und ihn am "Welsh life" teilhaben zu lassen.'
203. *SWEP*, 20 May 1959. The *Evening Post* affirmed that when Evans and Watkins returned to Swansea they had to resort to 'the less colourful nomenclature of British government.'
204. *MM*, 23 March 1987.
205. *SWEP*, 12 December 1991.
206. *WGlam*, P/Vid 2/3 (as in n. 56); *MM*, 15 August 1985.
207. *WGlam*, TC 330/1/3.
208. *SWEP*, 25 November 1976.
209. *MM*, 13 August 1959.
210. *WGlam*, D/D SMC/28/2 (as in n. 88): *SWEP*[?] clipping, 4 May 1964.
211. *RNZ*, 2 August 1961; 'Ganz begeistert waren sie jedoch nicht davon, denn der Strand in Swansea sei bei weitem schöner.'
212. *MM*, 10–11 August 1985.

213. *SWEP*, 30 October 1978 ('Mayor of Mannheim'); 12 November 1987 (Oberbürgermeister as 'Lord Mayor of Mannheim').
214. MarM, 35/1981_00490: Mannheimer Hauptamt memo, 20 January 1958; 'Die Sprachschwierigkeiten werden bei den einzelnen Vorschlägen nicht immer leicht zu überwinden sein, vor allem von Seiten der Engländer, weil in den dortigen Schulen Deutsch nicht gelehrt wird.' Note the use of 'Engländer' to describe the people of Swansea.
215. *SWEP*, 8 January 1990.
216. MarM, 35/1981_00490: report of Mannheim delegation's visit to Swansea by Bürgermeister Fehsenbecker, 6 November 1956.
217. MM, 16 May 1975; Dykes, *The University College of Swansea*, 225.
218. MM, 30 August 1982.
219. MM, 9–10 March 1996; *SWEP*, 25 March 1996.
220. MarM, 35/1981_00490 (report of Mannheim delegation's visit to Swansea by Bürgermeister Fehsenbecker, 6 November 1956); '... nachdem nach walisischer Art zahlreiche Reden gehalten wurde. Da kein Dolmetscher zur Verfügung stand, blieb mir nichts anderes übrig als meine Ansprache in Englisch zu halten.'
221. *RNZ*, 3 August 1961.
222. *RNZ*, 30 May 1967.
223. Copies of both the German and English texts of Widder's speech at the unveiling of the Swansea Wasserturm are held in MarM, 26/1994_00213.
224. *AZ*, 2 April 1957; *RNZ*, 2 April 1957; *BV*, 2 April 1957; *MM*, 2 April 1957.
225. *MM*, 14 May 1959; 'Gesprochen wurde—aus Höflichkeit den weniger sprachbegabten Gästen gegenüber—meist englisch.'
226. *RNZ*, 23 August 1982. Cf. *DR*, 30 August 1982, *MM*, 30 August 1982.
227. *DR*, 30 August 1982; 'Des Deutschen zwar nicht mächtig und deshalb ebenfalls von einem Dolmetscher unterstützt.'
228. *MM*, 30 August 1982.
229. It must be noted that in the period under consideration here, only a minority of people spoke Welsh in Swansea. Moreover, the proportion of Welsh speakers in the town declined over the post-war decades. In 1951, 20% of its inhabitants spoke Welsh. This fell to 17.5% in 1961, to 12.9% in 1971, and to 10.4% in 1981. Aitchison and Carter, "The Welsh language 1921–1991," 78; Humphrys, "Twentieth-century change," 327. Nevertheless, even to many who did not speak Welsh or had only minimal knowledge of it, it occupied a vital place in Welsh self-perception. It thus held a symbolic importance to many, if not a practical one to all. This was all the more so the case from the 1970s, when more positive views of the Welsh language started to develop. See Johnes, *Wales since 1939*, esp. 285–288.
230. *RNZ*, 10 August 1957.
231. *MM*, 1–3 June 1963; 'für ungeübte Ohren seltsam altertümlich klingenden Sprache keltischen Ursprungs'.
232. *MM*, 3 May 1973; 'mit einem Titel den sich selbst der Dolmetscher verkniff'.
233. *RNZ*, 28–29 August 1982; *MM*, 21–22 August 1982.
234. *DR*, 20 August 1982; *DR*, 30 August 1982.
235. *MM*, 7–8 July 1979.
236. *RNZ*, 25 July 1972.
237. *MM*, 1–2 March 1980.
238. *WGlam*, P/Vid 3/10 (Veit Lennartz documentary on Mannheim's twin towns, Südfunks Stuttgart Badische Fernsehredaktion, Mannheim, 1984); 'Können Sie auch "Welsh"? ... 'Ja, "Welsh" ist eine schwere Sprache.'
239. *MM*, 19 January 1968.
240. *MM*, 29 June 1972.

241. *MM*, 1–2 March 1980; ‘Vom Schriftbild her ist man versucht, die walisische Sprache, Kymrisch, für unaussprechbar zu halten. Die Wörter bestehen oft aus lauter Konsonanten: Cwnc, der Hügel; Bwlch, der Bergpaß; Dwr, das Wasser. Ortsnamen wie Cwmffrwd oder Eglwyswrw begegnen dem Reisenden auf Schritt und Tritt. Doch die Sprache ist sprechbar, sogar singbar.’
242. *MM*, 1–2 March 1980.
243. *Liederhalle Nachrichten*, September 1982, 5; ‘Sprachschwierigkeiten ... ? ... i wo—wozu hat man schließlich “Händ” und “Füß”—und immer sitzt doch da irgend einer, der nach links und rechts, vorn und hinten alles verdolmetscht, was sich nicht gestikulieren läßt.’
244. *MM*, 13 August 1959.
245. Schmetzer, ‘Dokumentation’, Part 1: 2, 7.
246. *SWEP*, 10 March 1980.
247. *WGlam*, D/D SMC/28/2 (as in n. 88): *SWEP*[?] clipping, 5 June 1963.
248. *WGlam*, D/D SMC/28/2 (as in n. 88): *SWEP*[?] clipping, 3 January 1963.
249. *BV*, 1 June 1963; ‘Jawohl, der ... Chor sang auch auf deutsch, sogar auf schwäbisch: “Muß i den, muß i denn zum Städtele hinaus ... ” Diese Freude im Saal!’.
250. *WGlam*, D/D SMC/28/2 (as in n. 88): undated clipping, 1966.
251. *WGlam*, D/D SMC/28/1 (as in n. 166): *SWEP*[?] clipping, 1967.
252. *Liederhalle Nachrichten*, September 1982, 6.
253. *RNZ*, 25 July 1972.
254. *MM*, 3 May 1973; ‘auch dann, wenn im sonst perfekten Vortrag deutscher Lieder aus dem “süßen” ein “sußer” wurde.’
255. *RNZ*, 17–18 August 1985.
256. *WGlam*, D/D SMC/28/1 (as in n. 166): *SWEP*[?] clipping, August 1970; *WGlam*, D/D SMC/34/1 (as in n. 129).
257. *SWEP*, 9 August 1985.
258. *WGlam*, D/D SMC/28/1 (as in n. 166): *SWEP* clipping, September 1968.
259. *WGlam*, D/D SMC/28/2 (as in n. 88): *SWEP*[?] clipping, 4 May 1964.

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Abbreviations

Allgemeine Zeitung = *AZ*; *Badische Volkszeitung* = *BV*; *Die Rheinpfalz* = *DR*; *Mannheimer Morgen* = *MM*; *Marchivum, Mannheim* = *MarM*; *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* = *RNZ*; *South Wales Evening Post* = *SWEP*; *West Glamorgan Archives, Swansea* = *WGlam*; *Western Mail* = *WM*.

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Notes on contributor

Simon John is Senior Lecturer in Medieval History. Alongside his main research interests in medieval history, he has also worked on various subjects in modern history. He has published articles in *Sport in History* and the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, and is currently completing a book entitled *Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Belgium: Godfrey of Bouillon and the Uses of the Medieval Past* (Boydell, forthcoming).

ORCID

Simon John  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0728-0175>

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