

GERMANS IN BRITAIN: a new exhibition

'There's more to Anglo-German relations than war and football' (Joanna Lumley)

To mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the first world war, **The Migration Museum Project** has created a new exhibition that explores the rich and fascinating history of German migrants to Britain.

Across the centuries, Germans in Britain have been loved or hated, admired or demonised, but their impact has been immense. The exhibition looks at the many ways in which British sport, science, banks, businesses, music, monarchs, art and design have all been shaped by their German connections, and asks the question: Are we sworn enemies or affectionate siblings?

It is a fascinating story, peppered with both familiar and unfamiliar names. Many people know about Ludwig Guttmann, whose work at Stoke Mandeville hospital in effect founded the Paralympic movement; but what about the Nuremberg engineer who founded Triumph motorbikes in Coventry? Or the early 19th century German chemist whose company eventually became British Gas?

Other famous British brands such as Dr. Martens and Persil are also a product of Anglo-German cooperation. Britain's best-known seaside building, the de la Warr Pavillion in Bexhill, was designed by a German architect, and English art would not be the same without Hans Holbein, who brought Renaissance painting to the court of Henry VIII.

In 2014, the German influence remains as strong as ever – Germany is now the UK's biggest trading partner, while in sport, Arsenal has five German players in its squad.

The exhibition includes a 'cabinet of curiosities' and a video in which Germans in today's Britain reflect on what their heritage means to them. The speakers in the video are Lord Moser, who came to Britain in 1936; Beatrice Behlen, a museum curator, who came to Britain in 1989; and Henning Wehn, Germany's 'Comedy Ambassador' to Britain' who came in 2002.

The exhibition will be curated by Dr Cathy Ross, formerly head of collections at the Museum of London.

Migration Museum Project director Sophie Henderson said: *'We really wanted to look at this*

story because it needs to be better known. In the 19th century, Germans made up the largest group of foreign-born people in Britain, and even today they are the fifth largest. Yet the story of what Germans contributed to Britain is so often overlooked. At a time when the UK's relationship with Europe is very much in the public eye, we thought this would be a timely contribution to the debate.'

Migration Museum supporter **Joanna Lumley** said: *'There's more to Anglo-German relations than war and football! I'm delighted to support this exhibition which shows just how central migration has been in Britain's history.'*

The first showing of the exhibition is at the **German Historical Institute** in Bloomsbury Square, London . The GHIL Director , Prof Dr Andreas Gestrich, said: *'We are delighted to host the exhibition. The German Historical Institute London is itself a result of the rich history of German migration as the project was initiated by German immigrant scholars in Britain and scholars in Germany. And obviously the long and rich history of the two nations and of Anglo-German cooperation is at the very core of the GHIL's research interests and academic exchange programmes. I hope that this exhibition brings this rich history to a wider audience.'*

The exhibition runs from 18 September - 24 October, Monday - Friday: 10am - 5pm (closed 24 September for a schools event). It is also being shown at St John's College Oxford in November (dates tbc) to coincide with an academic conference on Hanoverian Britain.

The Migration Museum Project is compiling a series of photos that capture the essence of the Anglo-German relationship. You can share your best images at our Flickr page (<https://flic.kr/s/aHsk19FSmL>), or via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/MigrationMuseumProject>) or Twitter (@MigrationUK).

See www.migrationmuseum.org.uk for further venues and dates.

- Ends -

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Migration Museum Project plans to create the UK's first dedicated Migration Museum, to tell the story of movement into and out of the UK in a fresh and engaging way. The museum will be an enquiry into who we are, where we came from and where we are going. Britons at home and abroad have a shared cultural history and an exciting future. We aim to

represent the thrilling tales, the emotion and the history that have gone into shaping our national fabric; we aim to be the museum of all our stories.

In the short term we are building the Migration Museum Project through a range of exhibitions and events that we will hold across the country, and through an inspiring education programme. One day we aim to occupy a home of our own and to present a moving and powerful experience that reflects the role that migrants have played in the making of modern Britain.

www.migrationmuseum.org.uk

The German Historical Institute London (GHIL) promotes independent research on British history, the history of the Empire and Commonwealth, and Anglo-German relations. It facilitates communication between German and British historians through its publications, research grants and its programme of conferences, workshops and public lectures. Its public library specializes in German history. The institute is part of the Max Weber Foundation - German Humanities Institutes Abroad

www.ghil.ac.uk

Germans in Britain has been curated by Dr Cathy Ross, Honorary Research Fellow at the Museum of London; designed by Joe Ewart of Society; and has been funded by private and corporate sponsorship, including contributions from Schrodgers Foundation and the Kohn Foundation.

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