



## History of Exchange

Birmingham, England  
Chicago's Sister City Since 1993

**Chair:** Rupert Ward

**1993**

### **September**

#### **Focus: Signing Agreement**

Chicago and Birmingham signed a sister cities agreement in September 1993. The Birmingham delegation consisted of the former Lord Mayor Paul Tinsley and Lady Mayoress and 20 other leading citizens from Birmingham.

#### **Focus: Culture**

The Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery loaned a Pre-Raphaelite Painting by Edward Burne-Jones to the Art Institute of Chicago.

#### **Focus: Business**

Birmingham's Lord Mayor and delegation met with the president of South Shore Bank to discuss minority owned banks and to tour the bank's redevelopment projects in the South Shore area. He also met with the president of DePaul University, President of the Newberry Library, WMX Technologies (to discuss recycling programs), Department of Aviation, and the Chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority. The Lady Mayoress toured the School of the Art Institute with Mrs. Maggie Daley.

#### **Focus: Education**

Leonard Dominquez of Chicago's Department of Education traveled to Birmingham and met with the Lady Mayoress, Birmingham City Councilor Byron and the Department of Secondary Schools. Their agenda was to discuss preparation and early childhood programs.

**1994**

#### **Focus: Culture**

Four teenage women from Birmingham participated in the Chicago Bulls 3-on-3 basketball competition.

**Focus: Economic Development**

Minister Lain Sproat M.P., British Department of National Heritage; Lady Cobham; chair of the Heart of England Tourist Board, and Bob Moore; chief executive of Birmingham Chamber discussed tourism, arts and sports exchanges with representatives of the Illinois Bureau of Tourism, Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau, the Chicago Landmarks Commission, the Chicago Park District, Soldiers Field and the Field Museum.

**Focus: Education**

Twenty five teachers from the Titan organization, a partnership of representatives from inner city Birmingham schools working to improve the quality of education, visited classes and met with education experts in Chicago.

**1995****Focus: Economic Development**

The Lord Mayor David Roy and the Lady Mayoress led a delegation composed of members of the Birmingham City Council, business executives and press representatives. The visit focused on Chicago's international marketing efforts, trade initiatives and investment opportunities. The delegation's itinerary included meetings with their Chicago counterparts and business prospects, a tourism address by Mayor Richard M. Daley at Navy Pier, visits to McCormick Place, and the Art Institute of Chicago. The Lord Mayor officially opened the City of Birmingham office in the Merchandise Mart.

**Focus: Economic Development**

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism led a travel and tourism delegation, including a member of the City of Chicago Office of Tourism, to the United Kingdom. Birmingham was one of the cities visited, in which the delegation promoted travel to Chicago and Illinois.

**Focus: Economic Development**

Birmingham City 2000 led a trade mission to Chicago in which representatives of nine companies and The West Midlands Development Company met with Chicago counterparts.

**1996****Focus: Culture**

Birmingham City 2000 led a trade mission to Chicago in which representatives of nine companies and The West Midlands Development Company met with Chicago counterparts.

**1997****Focus: Business**

The British-American Chamber of Commerce for the Midwest hosted the British-American Business Council Fall Conference in Chicago. During the conference, there was a breakfast address by Mayor Richard M. Daley and a luncheon address by Secretary of Commerce, William Daley.

**Focus: Culture**

Tom McNamee, journalist with the Chicago Sun-Times, visited Birmingham as part of an exchange project with a journalist from the Birmingham Post. The International Press Center - Chicago enlisted CSCIP for assistance with the exchange. McNamee's article praised Birmingham as a sister city of Chicago. British journalist Mison McConkey reciprocated with a visit to Chicago.

**Focus: Education**

Ten education administrators came to Chicago to meet with Loyola University Chicago professors. This delegation also included the manager from the Birmingham City Council.

**1998****Focus: Government**

Commissioner of Environment Henry Henderson represented Chicago at Birmingham's Sister Cities Summit which took place during the G-8 Summit.

**Focus: Culture**

The Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performed at Orchestra Hall.

**Focus: Culture**

Chorus 2000 of Birmingham performed at the Chicago Cultural Center and the University of Chicago.

**Focus: Culture**

The Global Threads concert featured youth choirs from Birmingham and South Africa.

**Focus: Business**

A delegation from Black Business Birmingham (BBB) attended Chicago Minority Business Fair and hosted a breakfast for BBB with Chicago business leaders.

**Focus: Business**

The Birmingham Committee coordinated program on the monetary union with the British-American Chamber of Commerce.

**Focus: Education**

The Birmingham Committee coordinated the Conference on School Reform, a three-day seminar, in conjunction with Chicago Public Schools, University of Chicago and the British Consulate General which included 30 high level educators and administrators from Birmingham and 150 from Chicago. The British Ambassador to the United States was a featured speaker.

**Focus: Education**

The Birmingham Committee supported the collaboration between Harold Washington College and Birmingham City Colleges.

**Focus: Government**

The Birmingham Director of International Affairs visited Chicago.

## **1999**

### **Focus: Business**

Joy Okwuadigbo, Manager of the Birmingham City Council Economic Development Program, met with her counterparts in Chicago to discuss future projects.

### **Focus: Business**

The Director of Birmingham Marketing Partnership visited Chicago.

### **Focus: Education**

Harold Washington College and City Colleges Birmingham, established a joint degree program and receive a 10-year accreditation from the North Central Association. This marks the first accredited, 10-year long program between city colleges in the world.

### **Focus: Government**

Birmingham's city planner met with representatives of Morse Diesel and the City of Chicago Department of Planning & Development to discuss the Arena Central project. This project will feature the tallest building in the United Kingdom. Birmingham is using Chicago firms to assist with the project.

### **Focus: Government**

David Prior from Birmingham City Council met with leaders of Chicago's CAPs program to potentially use it as a model for the Birmingham Police Department.

### **Focus: Government**

Lord Mayor Sue Anderson led a delegation to Chicago to officially acknowledge the newly formed relationship between the city colleges.

### **Focus: Medical & Social Service**

The Birmingham Committee, with the National Association of Social Workers, hosted a group of 15 social workers from Birmingham and Hamburg, as part of a three-year, trilateral exchange.

## **2000**

### **Focus: Culture**

The Birmingham Royal Ballet performed at the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago.

## **2001**

### **Focus: Education**

A "Learning City" videoconference between Chicago and Birmingham city colleges focused on continuing education and workplace development.

## **2002**

### **March 2**

#### **Focus: Culture**

In fall 2001, the Birmingham Royal Ballet performed "Still Life at the Penguin Café" in England. Interpretations of this piece were performed simultaneously by three dance groups in Chicago at Gallery 37, and four dance groups in England. These performances were simulcast live to each city via video conference.

#### **Focus: Culture**

A Chicago architecture program will exhibit at Birmingham Convention Centre.

## **2003**

### **October 22-28**

#### **Focus: Government**

City planner and counterpart to our International Program Coordinator position, Michael Murray, visited Chicago and met with Councilmen, Aldermen, and many city programming planners.

### **December 12-15**

#### **Focus: Culture**

The Symphonic Winds performed in Chicago.

## **2004**

### **May 28**

#### **Focus: Education**

Eleven teachers from Birmingham visited Chicago for an educational exchange.

### **September**

#### **Focus: Government**

The counterpart to our International Program Coordinator visited Chicago.

## **2005**

## **2006**

### **June 21-25**

#### **Focus: Business & Culture**

Experience Chicago: Weeklong festival in Birmingham showcasing Chicago. Highlights include: a photo exhibit with 80 large-scale pictures from Chicago's City Hall archive; performances by 500 clown – a troupe of three performers specializing in physical comedy; cooking demonstrations by Michael Pivonet – Head Chef at the Signature Room Restaurant; screenings of *Blues Brothers* and *Space Jam*; visual art workshops through Gallery 37, and a business breakfast hosted by Chair Ellis Goodman and Committee member Rupert Ward.

**November 10-17****Focus: Education**

A visiting delegation of 16 educators from Birmingham held best practices exchange and visitation of schools. A reception was hosted by Joe Seliga, Birmingham Committee member.

**2007****January 9-15****Focus: Sports & Education**

Prosser Career Academy sent their Basketball team to Birmingham to participate in a cultural sports exchange. This exchange provided an opportunity for low-income students in Chicago Public Schools to visit another country and learn about their culture, while teaching the residents and students of Birmingham about their own lives in Chicago.

**February****Focus: Art**

Film premier of *Sister City Sisters* – the CSCIP/Gallery 37 student exchange movie between Chicago and Birmingham – took place at the Cultural Center. The movie highlighted the experience of two students who visited Chicago and Birmingham.

**May 6-13****Focus: Business**

Martin J. Field, chair of the Chicago Committee in Birmingham, visited Chicago with a delegation of five people as part of the Urban Land Institute Conference. Martin also attended a Birmingham Committee meeting and discussed preliminary plans for "Celebrate Birmingham 2008."

**July 22 and October 21****Focus: Fundraising**

The Birmingham Committee partnered with the Chicago Fire to provide limited tickets to two exciting and high-demand soccer games. Chicago Fire played FC Celtic in July and the LA Galaxy in October. A small portion of the ticket price supported fundraising efforts of the Birmingham Committee.

**August 26****Focus: Fundraising**

The Birmingham Committee hosted a successful, first annual *Sunday in the Garden* fundraiser, at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. More than one hundred people attended and the Committee raised more than \$26,000. The elegant evening was highlighted by a Pimm's reception, private tours of the English Walled Garden, children's puppet show and live classical music.

**Focus: Art**

A thirty-eight student performance group "Theatre of the Physical" from Birmingham visited Chicago and engaged in performances around the city and suburbs. As part of their visit, CPS Theater and Literary programs set up an exchange between these 38 young people and their counterparts at the Steppenwolf's youth program, Free Street Youth Theater Project and Association House Youth Theater Project.

**November****Focus: Art**

Professor Joel Kaplan, former Head of the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham, U.K., gave a multimedia presentation examining how Oscar Wilde himself created the larger than life Myth of 'Oscar Wilde' and how the greater part of his career and artistic output was devoted to managing and exploiting this myth.

**2008****February 17-21****Focus: Business**

Heather Law, European Project Officer from Birmingham, and Tim Manson, Marketing Birmingham visited Chicago. While in Chicago, the delegation worked with CSCIP staff and the Committee to discuss plans for the upcoming Birmingham Days. Birmingham Days will include a best practices exchange focused on workforce redevelopment and regeneration, a business forum on "green" economic opportunities and cultural events at the Chicago Sister Cities Festival on Daley Plaza.

**March 1- 8****Focus: Education**

The British Council sponsored a visit from twenty parochial school principals from the Birmingham Catholic Primary Partnership in Birmingham, UK. The theme of the trip was "Leadership in the Twenty-First Century". The group attended presentations by Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of New Schools, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Principal Preparation, New Leaders for New Schools and Roosevelt University. The principals also had the opportunity to shadow a Chicago parochial principal for a school day and visit various Chicago sites such as the teacher resource center at the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Art Institute of Chicago.

**June 2- 6****Focus: Business & Culture**

The week of June 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 6<sup>th</sup> was designated as "Celebrate Birmingham: Big City in the Heart of England" week as Chicago played host to a delegation of government officials and business from Britain's second largest city. Chicago celebrated with a series of business seminars and a full day cultural celebration (Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup>) dedicated to Chicago's Sister City of Birmingham, England during Chicago Sister Cities International Festival.

## **July**

### **Focus: Social Work**

Chicago, Birmingham and Hamburg supported the “2008 Tri-City Social work Exchange Program.”

## **August 24**

### **Focus: Culture**

The Birmingham Committee held their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual fundraiser, “Sunday Tea Time in the Garden”, on August 24<sup>th</sup> at the Chicago Botanical Gardens. The afternoon included private tours of the English Walled Garden, children’s entertainment, musical entertainment, raffle prizes, and hat contest, and traditional English Tea.

## **September 25-27**

### **Focus: Culinary**

The Birmingham Committee welcomed John Penn, the Assistant Dean at the College of Food, University College Birmingham, to Chicago for the inaugural Chicago Gourmet culinary festival. Among other events, John worked alongside Chef Michael Pivoney Marion Street Cheese Market, and Ciaran Gantley from the Galway Bay Hotel in Ireland, to prepare a meal at the Marion Street Cheese Market as part of a “Sister Cities Dine Around” evening. John was also among the featured chefs at the Opening Night Reception of the weekend-long gourmet food festival.

## **September 27-October 4**

### **Focus: Education**

Birmingham students from “The Edge” program visited Chicago.

## **October 2**

### **Focus: Literature**

Birmingham Committee Member Ellis Goodman welcomed all to attend a discussion and book signing of his book, *Bear Any Burden*.

## **November 18**

### **Focus: Education**

Twelve principals and teachers from Birmingham visited Chicago as part of an ongoing exchange program between Chicago and Birmingham schools.

## **2009**

## **March**

### **Focus: Education**

The Birmingham Committee welcomed a group of real estate students from Birmingham City University, lead by course leader Chris Conway. The objective of the trip was to give students exposure to international buildings to build skills in determining valuation costs overseas and how valuation is executed in other environments. The students explored a variety of buildings and had an opportunity to present findings to a real client, gaining “real world” experience.



**May 7****Focus: Theatre**

Performing scenes from George Bernard Shaw's "Widowers' Houses," ShawChicago looked at how Shaw fashioned a new kind of theatre out of the conventions of Victorian melodrama. Following the scenes, Joel Kaplan spoke about Shaw as a socially conscious playwright.

**July****Focus: Education**

Admunsen High School began their Sister School relationship with Shenley Court School.

**August 24****Focus: Culture**

The Birmingham Committee held their second annual *Sunday Brunch in the Garden*. This event featured a traditional British tea time service, private English Garden tours, and live entertainment.

**September****Focus: Education**

Nine principals from Catholic Schools in Birmingham visited the Archdiocese in Chicago and met with CPS's magnet school cluster.

**September 3****Focus: Government**

The Rt. Hon. Alan Johnson, Home Secretary visited Chicago.

**September 30****Focus: Culture**

Lauren Lein and 5p1t by Richard Morse represented Birmingham during the World Fashion Chicago show.

**October 2****Focus: Literature**

Birmingham Committee member Ellis Goodman welcomed the public to attend a discussion and signing of his recent book *Bear Any Burden*. This event was centered on an open question and answer session that included deep analysis into the characters and culture of the book.

**November****Focus: Education**

Teachers from THE EDGE program in Birmingham visited Chicago to learn about Chicago's school system and special needs education.

**Focus: Government**

The Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom visited Chicago with a delegation consisting of Rt. Hon. Geoff Hoon, Secretary of State for Transport visited Chicago, Rt. Hon. Nigel Sheinwald, Lady Julia Sheinwald, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the United States and Councillor Alan Rudge, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources of Birmingham.

## **2010**

### **February**

#### **Focus: Business**

Ambassador of the Court of St James's Louis Sussman visited Birmingham for a series of events.

### **March**

#### **Focus: Business & Education**

A business delegation from Birmingham, led by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce visited Chicago. An event held at the Gleacher Centre showcased three areas of excellence within the Birmingham Science City initiatives -- Advanced Materials, Translational Medicine, and Energy Futures.

Scholars from the University of Birmingham joined a two-symposium on social neuroscience attended by colleagues from Northwestern and the University of Chicago to explore the intersection between psychology, neuroscience, and social care.

### **March**

#### **Focus: Education**

Eight students and two teachers from Charles Prosser Career Academy visit Birmingham. They were hosted by the EDGE Collegiate of schools.

Group of Real Estate Management students from Birmingham City University visited Chicago for a week on their annual international study program.

Chair of Birmingham Science City discussed innovation in visit to Chicago.

### **August**

#### **Focus: Business**

John Kirk, Head of Business Development, Birmingham City University visited Chicago.

### **October**

#### **Focus: Education**

A group of fourteen students from seven Birmingham vocational high schools visited Chicago from September 26 – October 2, 2010. This visit was a part of an ongoing teacher and pupil exchange sponsored by The EDGE Partnership program. The group met with Chicago Public schools and representatives from Chicago Sister Cities International and Mayor's Office of International Relations, as well as engaged in sightseeing and sports games.

### **December**

#### **Focus: Music**

G.F.Handel's *Messiah* performance by the Baroque Band and Bella Voce choir at the Chicago Cultural Center.

## **2011**

### **March 14, 2011**

#### **Focus: Education**

The Birmingham Committee in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Chicago hosted a welcome reception at the Archbishop Quigley Center for a group of principals of Catholic schools from Birmingham, England. This program, initiated in 2001 and supported by the British Council, provides opportunities for teacher exchange for the purpose of developing joint curriculum work, collaborative programs and activities.

### **October**

#### **Focus: Government**

Birmingham City Council, headed by the Leader of the Birmingham City Council Cllr Mike Whitby and Business Birmingham visit Chicago.

### **December 1, 2011**

#### **Focus: Music**

G.F.Handel's *Messiah* performance by the Baroque Band at the Chicago Cultural Center.

## **2012**

### **Ongoing**

Educational links have been established between University of Birmingham and Northwestern University, University of Chicago, UIC and other universities in Chicago. Conferences, scholar exchanges and professional visits are in progress (see Birmingham university links for more information).

### **February 7-13, 2012**

#### **Focus: Music**

Tony Dudley Evans - Art Director of Birmingham Jazz visited Chicago.

### **February 15-19, 2012**

#### **Focus: Government**

Councilor Alan Rudge and Dr. Mashuq Ally visited Chicago.

### **May**

#### **Focus: Culinary**

David Colcombe, chef-director of Opus, was selected to take part in the Culinary Crossroads extravaganza as part of a team of internationally renowned chefs

### **October**

#### **Focus: Government**

Mark Barrow, Strategic Director of Development and Culture, Birmingham City Council and Catherine Staite, Director, Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham visited Chicago to progress ongoing Sister City engagements.

### **August 6-10**

#### **Focus: Culture**

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Sister Cities International Festival transformed Daley Plaza into an international village filled with merchants, food, music, and dance from Chicago's 28 Sister Cities. Jack McNeill and Charlotte Heys, students from Birmingham City University flew in to Chicago and performed traditional and beautiful folk music representing the culture and heritage of Birmingham.

#### **October 4-7**

##### **Focus: Medical**

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Symposium was a professional educational event highlighting the most recent clinical and scientific advances in breast cancer research. Dr. Ravindhi Nathavitharana from University of Birmingham and University Hospital Birmingham participated and represented the City of Birmingham in the 2012 symposium.

### **2013**

#### **February 6-10**

##### **Focus: Culture**

Four jazz musicians from Birmingham spent a week in Chicago playing with leading musicians on the Chicago scene as part of an innovative exchange project between the sister cities. They were drummer Mark Sanders and the Steve Tromans Trio led by pianist Steve Tromans and featuring Chris Mapp on bass and Miles Levin on drums. Together with their Chicago colleagues, the Birmingham musicians played three gigs at clubs in the Windy City: The Hideout on Wednesday, February 6; The Elastic Arts Center on Thursday, February 7; and the Hungry Brain on Sunday February 10. The project is a collaboration between the Chicago Birmingham Contemporary Jazz and Town Hall & Symphony Hall's Jazzlines programme.

#### **August 5-9**

##### **Focus: Culture**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Sister Cities International Festival transformed Daley Plaza into an international village filled with merchants, food, music, and dance from Chicago's 28 Sister Cities. Food vendor Spencer's Jolly Posh served traditional and authentic English food representing the culture and heritage of Birmingham.

#### **September 29**

##### **Focus: Social Services**

Eight social workers from Chicago participated in the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Social Work Tri-City Exchange between Chicago, Birmingham and Hamburg. This year, Birmingham is hosting the delegates.

#### **November 5-8**

##### **Focus: Government, Education and Safety**

The Birmingham Committee of CSCI welcomed a delegation of Birmingham officials at a dinner in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Chicago and Birmingham.

The Birmingham delegation was made up of Birmingham City Council members, West Midlands Police, university officials and others. They were in Chicago to discuss current collaborations between the cities. The delegation made the decision to establish a Chicago Committee in Birmingham of volunteers, similar to the structure of the Birmingham Committee in Chicago.

The delegation was also in Chicago to attend Chicago-Forum48 at McCormick Place from November 5–8. The Chicago-Forum48 brought together leaders from government, higher education, business and the real estate (place-maker) community to share ideas and encourage collaboration. The inaugural forum was held in conjunction with the Urban Land Institute's Fall Meeting.

## **2014**

### **April 9-14**

#### **Focus: Government**

The Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Mike Leddy, led a delegation visit to Chicago from April 9-14, 2014. Pauline Leddy, Lady Mayoress of Birmingham, and Anne Kennedy, Head of the Lord Mayor's Office, Birmingham City Council, were also part of the delegation.

The Lord Mayor attended a number of events and meetings, including a meeting with Deputy Mayor Steven Koch; a visit to Prosser Career Academy High School and Hanson Park Elementary School; a tour of Gallery 37; a luncheon with Consul General Stephen Bridges; a meeting with World Business Chicago; a Chicago Greeter Tour; and a meet-up with the Aston Villa Fan Club – Chicago Chapter.

### **May 7**

#### **Focus: Government**

The Honorable Stephen Bridges, Consul General at the British Consulate General in Chicago visited Birmingham to meet with Sir Albert Bore, Birmingham City Council Leader. He also met with representatives from University of Birmingham and the North America Association, a group equivalent of the Birmingham Committee of CSCI.

### **June 1-14**

#### **Focus: Social Service**

Since its inception in 1998, the tri-city social service exchange has connected social service professionals from Chicago, Birmingham and Hamburg creating important cross-cultural dialogue and best practices between the cities. In 2014, Chicago hosted an exchange that was extended to a two week program and included a political track for visiting politicians, Councillor Brigid Jones and Peter Hay.

The Birmingham Committee of CSCI hosted a reception to welcome Social Service delegates from Birmingham and Hamburg on Tuesday, June 3, 2014.

## **2015**

### **March 16 – 22**

#### **Focus:**

A delegation from Chicago's sister city of Birmingham, United Kingdom, visited Chicago to meet with city officials, organizations and partners to share best practices between the two cities. During their visit they met with the Birmingham Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International and Chicago Sister Cities International staff; officials at the Office of Mayor Emanuel, Chicago Public Schools and the Department of Family and Support Services; and representatives from

the British-American Business Council, DePaul Art Museum, Chicago KICS Cup, Skills for Chicagoland's Future, and Hanson Park Elementary School.

**August 26 - September 6**

**Focus: Social Service**

An eight-person Chicago delegation travelled to Hamburg, Germany to participate in the 19th Tri-City Social Services Exchange between Chicago, Hamburg and Birmingham, U.K. The focus of the exchange was on disengaged youth and Hamburg as an inclusive city.

**October 11**

**Focus: Sports**

In celebration of the Bank of America Chicago Marathon, the Gothenburg, Hamburg, Osaka, Paris and Vilnius Committees of Chicago Sister Cities International joined with international organizations and foreign consulates to cheer on and celebrate international runners at points along the marathon route. The Birmingham, Gothenburg, Hamburg, Mexico City and Paris Committees also hosted welcome receptions for runners from the respective countries they represent.

**2016**

**May 14**

Chicago Sister Cities International hosted a Eurovision Song Contest viewing party at Old Crow Smokehouse. Since 1956, the Eurovision Song Contest has been one of Europe's most popular television programs and one of television's longest running music shows. Over 200 people came to cheer on their country.