



Myers-Insole Local Learning CIC  
www.locallearning.org.uk



**1947 - 2017**  
**70 YEARS OF**  
**FRIENDSHIP**

**BRISTOL and HANNOVER**

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In Someone Else's Shoes logo created by artist Carmen Garaghan.

# Introduction

**It was in the wake of the Second World War, when a defeated and demoralised Germany were emerging from the devastation, many people destitute, having little food or clothing, some even without footwear, that the first tentative footsteps were taken *In Someone Else's Shoes*.**

*In Someone Else's Shoes* celebrates the 70 year friendship between Bristol and Hannover, the first English and German cities to twin post Second World War.

Using collected personal memories, school students from both cities came together to create a performance at Bristol's Colston Hall in December 2017. Following the performance, a touring exhibition explored the roots of the twinning and tells the stories of some of the enduring friendships through first hand accounts.

The project name, *In Someone Else's Shoes* plays on the events of 1947, when children from Bristol sent shoes to the poverty-stricken children of Hannover. Having no money, Hannover 'paid' for the shoes with music. The production at Colston Hall explored this theme of wearing someone else's shoes, reflecting on issues around migration. To highlight the empathy of this initial gesture, both German and English students performed literally in each other's shoes.

Myers-Insole Local Learning (MILL) received generous funding from Arts Council, Heritage Lottery, Heritage Schools and Bristol-Hannover Council (BHC) to deliver a multi-faceted project involving members of the Bristol-Hannover community and beyond to a wider audience.

Partners and artists involved in making this project successful:

- Roly Porter (music composer)
- Helen Brown (Kecks clothing – upcycling artist)
- Sylvia Rimat (performance maker)
- Wildman and Herring Ltd multi-media production company
- Sarah Knight (exhibition curator)
- Carmen Garaghon (artist and graphic designer)
- Emily Tiplady (German teacher and artist)
- Jess Hoffmann (performance maker)
- Bristol-Hannover Council
- Fairfield High School
- Cotham Secondary School
- IGS Kronsberg Secondary School, Hannover
- Bristol University's German Department
- Colston Hall
- City Hall Vestibules
- Bristol Central Library
- The University of the West of England's (UWE) History department
- Ashton Gatehouse



Volunteers: Tanya Tribbell, Barbara Cowell, Josh Hitt, Macauley Bridgeman, Prof Peter Fleming, Dr Lucy Norris, Dr Ann Kennard, Alix Hughes, Lynne and Frank Evans, Alan Russell, Dawn Dyer, Jane Bradley, Phil Castang, Judith Furse, Mayor Marvin Rees,

Aimee Campanella, Ben Meller, Sharon Barnes, Ben Campbell, Dan Warner-Meanwell, Neil Humphrey, Jens Bludau, Bea Landsbek, Lisa Adler, Izaak Labelle, Graham Knight, Margaret Knight, Jonathan Radnedge

### Aims

- Participatory historical research and curation
- Oral history collection and make existing audio recordings in Bristol Archives accessible to the public
- Bespoke musical compositions reflecting the seven decades of the twinning
- Upcycled footwear to also reflect the seven decades
- Public performance
- Theatre programme
- Touring exhibition
- Website for the project

Due to the project and all of its elements being so well received across the city, and this little known story capturing the interest of the public *In Someone Else's Shoes* has gone beyond our initial concept and as well as the original activities we have a number of additional outcomes:

- Written correspondence between English and German pen friends spanning 70 years
- Original stitched artwork from our graphic designer, Carmen Garaghon that helped to create a unique brand and style for our exhibition and theatre programme
- Artwork based on the story featuring in Colston Primary School's 70 year celebrations
- The exhibition telling an even lesser known story of people across the UK, taking in German children whose families were unable to support them in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War
- Interest from BBC Points West and BBC Radio 4 to pursue this story further and follow up on some of the contributors to the oral histories

The exhibition was always intended to tour the city beginning with City Hall Vestibules, but we were delighted that Mayor Marvin Rees agreed to deliver an address at the launch event for our exhibition recognising the significance of this international relationship and helping to raise the profile of the twinning.

From October 2017 MILL have also had two 3rd year History undergraduates, Josh Hitt and Macauley Bridgeman on placement as part of the *History in the Public Realm* module who have been heavily involved in this project. They have supported us in school workshops, carried out research tailored to Colston's Primary and promoted the project through a dedicated Facebook page that was specifically created for our project by last year's UWE student, Tanya Tribbell.

A number of stories were contributed by Mary Fowler and Joan Clifford from Southmead who had participated in our previous HLF/ACE funded project *Meadows to Meaders* and together with Southmead resident and Fairfield alumni, Madge Horseman were special guests at our exhibition launch.

### Engagement

A series of activities had taken place with Heritage Schools funding to engage Fairfield and Cotham school students in the project and promote the exchange and its continuation into the next generation.

MILL delivered a series of workshops in preparation and anticipation of *In Someone Else's Shoes*.



Inter-generational event with Bristol-Hannover alumni sharing experiences at Fairfield School

Fairfield visited Bristol Textiles Recyclers (BTR) in St Philips Marsh trading estate to explore issues around recycling and sustainability. Activities included a tour of the factory, watching a documentary about responsible attitudes within the fashion industry and creating upcycled garments from discarded items of clothing.

**26 Year 9 Fairfield German students + 2 members of staff + Helen Brown (Upcycler artist) + 1 member of MILL + Aimee Campanella (BTR coordinator - volunteered time and 28 items of clothing to be upcycled) BTR also donated 14 pairs of boots to In Someone Else's Shoes project.**

Together with Dr Debbie Pinfold, senior lecturer in German, Bristol University Fairfield students designed questionnaires and learned about interview techniques in preparation for an inter-generational sharing memories event at Fairfield High School with Bristol-Hannover exchange alumni.

**40 Year 9 Fairfield German students + 2 members of staff + 25 visitors from the Bristol-Hannover community (including archivists from both Hannover and Bristol, Bristol International Twinning Officer, Bristol University representatives and members of Bristol-Hannover Council inc. chair)) + UWE History student (volunteer) + catering by Travelling Kitchen + 2 members of MILL**

With additional funding from Cotham School musical composer, Roly Porter introduced the project to every Music class across Cotham Secondary School (including all Key Stage 3, Year 11 BTEC and Year 12 'A' Level as well as lunchtime music clubs) providing opportunities for all students to sample music from a variety of decades and create their own piece of music, promoting the music element for the performance.

This was part of the school's equality and diversity plan and their agenda to make extra curricular Arts activities more inclusive and a truer reflection of the school demographics, by timetabling taster sessions into the school timetable ensuring that all students had an opportunity to learn and engage with the project before committing to the after school composing sessions.

**700 Cotham Music students + 4 members of staff + 1 member of MILL**



Bristol-Hannover alumni sharing memories activity at Fairfield School

# Activities

## Community research

Building on the successful events with Fairfield School, where members of Bristol-Hannover Council and exchange alumni were invited to share their memories with school students we took volunteers and partners to Bristol Archives to research the original Goodwill Mission of 1947.

Local historian, Clive Burlton assisted volunteers with their research.

## Aims

- To involve members of Bristol-Hannover Council community in researching the history of the twinning
- To use the community research to inform the performance and the exhibition
- To make the current oral history archive more accessible to a wider audience
- To use the community research to inform the drama and documentary films
- To increase the number of points on the community layer of Bristol City Council's online mapping resource Know Your Place

**Volunteers: UWE History students, Josh Hitt and Macauley Bridgeman, 3 x Bristol-Hannover community, Barbara Cowell, Lyne Evans, Frank Evans (and documentation volunteered for use by the group by Marina Dolman, former president of Bristol City FC with links to Hannover)**

## Performance

### Music preparation - Cotham

10 x students from Cotham worked with composer, Roly Porter to create their own original score to accompany the presenting of the shoes and help convey the chronology of the twinning over a 10 week programme of after school sessions.

**Volunteers: Ben Campbell, Cotham head of Music and Performing Arts), Bertel Martin (researching Bristol sound)**



Roly Porter working on the music compositions with Cotham School student

### Shoe design and drama preparation - Fairfield

We arranged after school sessions so all Year 10 German students (the same Year 9 students from the previous year who had participated in the engagement activities) would be able to participate. Fairfield wanted this to help formalise an official exchange with IGS Kronsberg School, and wanted there to be no financial obstacle for anyone wishing to participate in the project, but also for it to be possible for students to be a part of this experience if they were not going to be going to Hannover.

Bristol-Hannover Council and Fairfield School have provided financial support to students for the return visit to Hannover (May 2018).

19 x students from Fairfield worked with upcycling artist, Helen Brown, and Ruth Myers (MILL) over a 10 week programme of after school sessions designing boot decorations to reflect the 7 decades of the twinning.

Performance makers, Sylvia Rimat and Jess Hoffmann (brought in later to support Sylvia) attended the later sessions to begin to explore ideas for the production and students' contributions to the script, drawing on many of the themes from Bristol and Hannover's shared history.

A very successful Skype session (made possible by Fairfield ICT technician) was held between students from Fairfield and IGS Kronsberg during Fairfield class time, but it was too difficult to arrange to coincide with IGS class time – so a selection of students volunteered to remain after school for this first coming together. All of the students were very excited to be making visual contact and the energy in the room was almost palpable.

Sylvia created a script, drawing on the research and the sharing memories event and letters and writings contributed by the Fairfield and Hannover students.



Shoe design workshops at Fairfield



Fairfield - IGS Kronsberg Skype session

### IGS Kronsberg Hannover - preparation

14 students from Hannover accompanied by 4 members of staff (including their headteacher) arrived in Bristol on 6th December 2017 to prepare for their performance with Fairfield and Cotham students in the foyer of Colston Hall on 12th December.

Itinerary: Ruth Myers from MILL was present at all activities:

- Tour of Bristol City football grounds at Ashton Gate
- Design boots with Helen (supported by Emily Tiplady – German translator) at the Folk House. Sylvia present as well to practise movement
- Guided history tour on ferry courtesy of Pete Insole (MILL)
- Screening at Spike Island of film of previous collaboration with IGS Kronsberg (Calling the Shots film and media production company) and to watch 55 second film from 1947 about the twinning.
- Tour of Spike Island galleries and exhibition
- Fairfield and Hannover design boots together. Students paired up according to shoe size with BBC Points West filming
- Hannover and Fairfield visit SS Great Britain decked out as Dickensian Winter theme
- UWE History students deliver their devised interactive history/ mystery trail around the Old City and Castle Park allowing our visitors to learn about the city's heritage
- Rehearsals with Fairfield and Hannover at Fairfield School (with Sylvia and Jess)
- Radio Bristol live interviews with Hannover students to promote the performance

- Dress rehearsals at Colston Hall with all 3 schools, photographed by Alan Russell (to be used in the exhibition)
- Performance at Colston Hall Foyer. BBC Points West filming and collecting interviews for live broadcast at BBC1 Local evening News

**Volunteers: UWE History student, Josh Hitt, Fairfield German teacher, Sharon Barnes and head of Modern Foreign Languages, Neil Humphrey, and ICT technician, BTR donated materials, Colston Hall (partly in kind – reduced rates and technical support in kind), The Folk House Prof Peter Fleming, Bristol City FC, Steve Gear (Calling the Shots), Alix Hughes, Jens Bludau, Jessica Schlicht, Petronilla Zullo, Kathleen Sleer (as part of engagement activities in Hannover; artists Lisa Adler and Bea Landsbek).**



Tour of Bristol City's Ashton Gate stadium where the club donated a shirt to IGS Kronsberg



IGS Kronsberg intensive preparations for the performance

# Performance at Colston Hall December 12th, 2017

Students from Bristol and Hannover came together in a performance at Colston Hall to tell the story of the 70 year friendship through dance, decorated boots and bespoke musical compositions.

## Promotion

The performance was promoted on air by BBC Radio Bristol twice; a live interview with Hannover students and a previous interview with MILL members to discuss the project at its inception.

The project was also featured in Bristol Times (Bristol Post supplement).

It was also included in a 3 minute broadcast for BBC Points West and shown live with interviews on the day of the performance.



The Hannover team meeting BBC Radio Bristol (above) and scenes from the performance (right)



# Audience and participants feedback

There was a wonderful atmosphere of cooperation and friendship.

The music, the dance, the readings, everything! Fantastic show, so much talent.

It would be nice to keep the friendship growing.

Seeing all the kids performing together. The way the performance celebrated the way we are bound as a European society.

The band was great and the children worked well together.

I really enjoyed spending time with the British students and I got to know a lot about their culture, school etc.

Great to see the different schools working together in such a creative way!

Twinning is important and opens doors.

It's been amazing and I'm more motivated to learn German.



In Someone Else's Shoes  
Project Report 2018

## Theatre programme

The theatre programme offered an opportunity to provide more of the background story to the Goodwill Mission and convey the process leading up to the performance.

Graphic designer, Carmen Garaghon specialises in stitched art textiles and added her own artistic interpretations of the text.



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# Oral Histories

32 people shared their memories over the course of the project.

We aimed to collect and edit a series of interviews that could be used to inform the exhibition and to ensure that living memories were preserved and could be accessed by the general public.

To gather more material for the performance and the touring exhibition, multi-media producer, Tot Foster trained up exchange alumni volunteers, Barbara Cowell, Lynne and Frank Evans to collect more stories as well as sharing their own.



Volunteer Barbara Cowell (right) working with Tot Foster on the oral histories

Barbara's connections with one of the original pioneers of the Goodwill Mission, her German tutor Professor Closs at the University of Bristol and her experience working for the BBC World Service in Germany in the 1950s brought fascinating insights to the project.

It was Barbara that first alerted us to the fact that it was not just Bristolians who were reaching out to a country who had so recently been the enemy, but that after the war, all across the country, many British families hosted German children whilst rebuilding their lives.

This was further confirmed by 2 Southmead residents, Mary Fowler and Joan Clifford who had participated in a previous Heritage Lottery and Arts Council funded Local Learning project, *Meadows to Meaders* who shared their stories of hosting children from 1948. Mary Fowler is still friends with Gretchen.

Tot Foster, edited the oral histories into 7 themes, providing further insights into the issues identified for the exhibition.



Children from Hamburg with their host families, Southmead, Bristol, March 1949

**We knew they had come from homes that had lost a lot and we were only too pleased to welcome them into our homes. I think it did us good to realise there were people far worse off than us. My own house had had the doors and windows blown off during the war.**

*Southmead resident, Joan Clifford*



Mary Fowler and Gretchen in Southmead, Bristol, 1949 (left) and in Bristol with Grethchen's daughter in 1990 (above)

# Exhibition

**Volunteers: Alan Russell (photographing launch event), Mayor Marvin Rees (address at launch), Jonathan Radnedge writing review of launch for Bristol Hannover Council, 2 x UWE students, Graham and Margaret Knight, Izaak Labelle, Barbara Cowell, Lynne and Frank Evans, Dr. Ann Kennard, Alix Hughes, Ashton Gatehouse and Ben Meller, Bristol Central Library and Dawn Dyer and Jane Bradley, Colston's Primary Year 6 teachers x 4, UWE Business School staff x 3, Dr Debbie Pinfold.**

It was initially intended that the exhibition would tell the story chronologically, however through discussions with partners and volunteers it was decided early on that a thematic approach would be more appropriate and engaging.

The following themes emerged:

- Introducing In Someone Else's Shoes
- Offering the hand of friendship – early in 1947, just two years after the war, two men in Bristol were thinking the unthinkable: that Bristol should consider a friendship with a city in Germany.
- The bigger picture – across the country, there were many who saw beyond the propaganda aimed at dehumanising and demonising the enemy, to the real people on the other side.
- Lingua Franca – a language used for communication between groups of people who speak different languages. The years since the exchange of music for shoes have seen exchanges of a different type taking place between groups from all areas of society.
- Performing In Someone Else's Shoes – students from Bristol and Hannover came together in a performance at Colston Hall to tell the story of the 70 year friendship through dance, decorated boots and bespoke musical compositions.
- Footsteps into the future – “The initial reasons for the twinning were obviously peace and friendship and understanding, cooperation and all of those reasons are still very valid today” Lynne McAleavey, member of the Bristol-Hannover Council.

The panels captured thoughts from the late Dr John Veale (exchange 1949) and made the existing archive documents and oral histories more accessible to a wider audience.

*“[The friendship] is still flourishing today because we are no longer saying sorry to each other for the bombing or the war. What we are doing now is building up a bond of friendship and creating for us all a European awareness.”* Dr John Veale

Graphic designer, Carmen Garaghon designed the panels, building on artistic themes developed for the theatre programme.

Sarah Knight curated the exhibition and co-wrote the panels with Ruth Myers (MILL) with contributions from volunteers, Barbara Cowell, Dr Ann Kennard and Alix Hughes.

BRISTOL EVENING POST, SATURDAY NOV 15 1947

## Boy's Letter to Hanover Children

A letter “to cheer up the dear children of Hanover,” written by a nine-year-old boy, was discovered in a heap of gifts received by the Lutheran Bishop of Hanover today from Bristol schoolchildren.

**W**e are sorry that your town was badly bombed, and we know that in winter you have very bad weather, so we have collected many gifts so that you can go to school and perhaps to Sunday School,” wrote Robert Burfoot, of Hillfields Park Junior School.

“We hope it will soon be repaired and gradually built up again, and, when we grow up and you grow up, there will be peace between Germany and our Isles.”

Replica newspaper article courtesy of Bristol Post

Each of the panels corresponded to oral histories cut and edited by Tot Foster to complement the themes. The following are available at [www.locallearning.org.uk/in-someone-elses-shoes-2](http://www.locallearning.org.uk/in-someone-elses-shoes-2)

- The relationship between Bristol and Hannover originated from a recognition of the terrible suffering brought about by the Second World War.
- Bristol-Hannover Council has been the heart of the cities' twinning. Over the years many people have been involved.
- After the war many British families hosted German children whilst their parents rebuilt their lives. This generosity was a precursor to the more formal twinning arrangements.
- German prisoner of war, Harald Gorling was befriended by Gilbert Dicks whilst at a camp in Bristol during the Second World War. After he returned to Hannover, he wrote to Gilbert and his family thanking them for their kindness. It is clear that they had become good friends.
- In the middle years of the twinning a huge range of groups exchanged with their counterparts in Hannover.
- Two Bristol secondary schools are taking part in a creative project based on the history of the twinning, and the latest Bristol Hannover exchange.
- The twinning has endured for 70 years bringing huge benefits to those involved and our cities. What might be the future for the relationship?

Volunteer Lynne Evans (secretary of BHC) organised collecting written correspondence and photos between Bristol-Hannover exchange alumni from between the 1940s to the 1960s and these were presented in an album available for visitors to peruse at the exhibition.

Lynne and Frank Evans also organised Hannover artist, Mansha Friedrich's *Love Tree*, a commission for the 60th anniversary to feature in our exhibition. The decorated shoes and German film footage from 1947 courtesy of German Federal Archives were also on display together with the bust of Professor Closs, one of the original pioneers kindly loaned to us by the University of Bristol.

The touring exhibition was adapted and enhanced for each of its venues:

- City Hall Vestibule
- Bristol Central Library
- Ashton Gatehouse
- University of the West of England Business School
- Stoke Lodge



In Someone Else's Shoes at the City Hall Vestibule, opened by Mayor Marvin Rees (photos above courtesy of Zed Photography)



In Someone Else's Shoes at Bristol Central Library

### City Hall Vestibule

Mayor Marvin Rees agreed to giving a presentation at the launch event at City Hall Vestibules on January 30th 2018. The event was attended by 70 and an additional 70 visited the exhibition at this location over the course of the 5 days.



Listening to the oral stories at the Vestibule exhibition (photo courtesy of Zed Photography)

### Bristol Central Library

Bristol Central Library hosted the exhibition throughout February and early March. The exhibition was enhanced with books, documents and articles from the library's collections relating to Bristol and Hannover.

As well as 5,997 visitors from the general public over the course of the exhibition, the event coincided with Colston Primary's 70th anniversary celebrations. 60 x Year 6 students (+ 4 members of school staff + 8 parents/ carers) visited the library to research events taking place during 1947 on a local, national and international level to be conveyed on a giant poster as part of their school anniversary.

Reference library staff, Dawn Dyer and Jane Bradley volunteered their time to organise displays and deliver activities with MILL for this visit. The Bristol Room and Conference Room were made exclusively available to students for the morning.

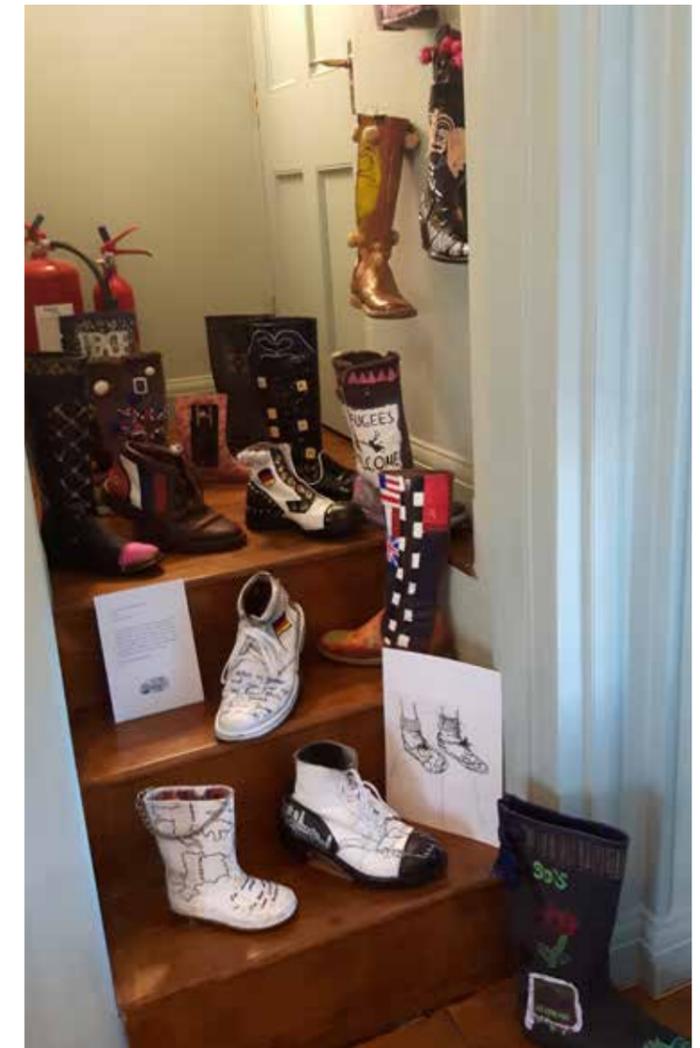
### Ashton Gatehouse

The exhibition moved to the recently restored gatehouse for the Ashton Court Estate for March and April 2018, in close proximity to the home of Gilbert Dicks, possibly the first person to send shoes to Hannover circa 1918.

Again, the display was adapted to accommodate its new surroundings with the shoes presented in what was once a spiral staircase.

78 people visited the exhibition at Ashton Gatehouse before it moved to UWE Business School Library who are setting up their own Bristol-Hannover exchange.

The shoes will be sent to Hannover to be displayed at IGS Kronsberg.



The shoes on display at Ashton Gatehouse

## Exhibition feedback

The 1930s George V replica postbox commissioned for our HLF and Arts Council *Meadows to Meaders* project was in City Hall Vestibules to encourage visitors to the exhibition to post their completed evaluations.

Words to describe the exhibition were collected from visitors to create the word cloud to the right.



Inspiring story. Recollections from people involved. Sense of history and passing time, endurance of friendship.

Reading the touching historic documents from the early days. Hearing about the resistance and how they overcame it.

I think it is a great exhibition and it tells the Bristol-Hannover story on a very personal level.

Easy to understand and very informative

Stitchwork drawings – very creative/ art shoes – very original/ message tree – what a great idea

The drawings (sewing originally) the info boards. I love the letter box!

Very well presented exhibition – accessible, visible and meaningful.

I've particularly enjoyed the letters and the detail. I like the fact that it is not too 'dumbed down'.

# Legacy

- Barbara Cowell, trained volunteer is now assisting with collecting oral histories for a new HLF project; *Washing in the Well*
- The exhibition is touring to UWE Business School and interest has been expressed for other university sites
- Curator, Sarah Knight has been asked by Bristol International Twinning Association to curate an international touring exhibition of artists in 2020 and has also been asked to curate an exhibition celebrating 250 years of circus taking place at Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery in October 2018
- Graphic designer, Carmen Garaghon's stitched artwork has been widely admired and taken on as booklet designer for a new project
- Hannover's music connection discovered through the written correspondence collected for the exhibition, has prompted a new collaboration between MILL and UWE Film and Media department to develop a new project celebrating the musical connections between the two cities
- The exhibition has also led to UWE Film and Media and MILL submitting a joint application to Heritage Schools for a new project; *Becoming Cary Grant* (who attended Fairfield School)
- A stronger relationship has developed between Fairfield and IGS Kronsberg (who had not visited Bristol before). Fairfield have a bigger cohort visiting Hannover in May 2018 (14 students). It is the second time only that students have visited Hannover from Fairfield, with 6 students visiting in 2016
- Widening participation and access to Higher Education through collaboration with University of Bristol and involvement with students from UWE. This is particularly important as universities often only target schools with sixth forms meaning that Fairfield is often neglected as it has no post-16 offer
- Promoting positive attitudes towards cultural exchanges through the collaboration with Bristol University's German Department
- Both the performance and exhibition has prompted considerable interest from BBC and Radio 4 to develop features covering long standing and still existing international friendships
- Roly Porter was asked to address Cotham Music students regarding future careers in music and may continue to inspire students in subsequent years through sharing experiences about his own career and opportunities for the next generation



In Someone Else's Shoes, Colston Hall



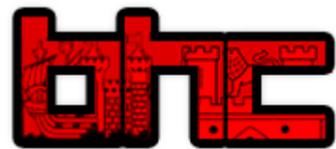
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Historic England



and delivered by



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**[www.locallearning.org.uk](http://www.locallearning.org.uk)**

All project outputs including the exhibition panels, theatre programme and oral histories are available at

<http://www.locallearning.org.uk/in-someone-elses-shoes-2/>

