

Elliot Laffin and Leah Holland

## SYLVIA

Sylvia was one of the first students to participate in the Bristol-Hanover exchange in 1952.

Bristol was twinned with the German city of Hannover in 1947, two years after the second world war ended. Sylvia explained the importance of the friendship formed by the twinning and recalled how the twinning was an amazing step to take for reconciliation between the two countries.

In any friendship there must be an element of helping each other and respect. Sylvia explained how shocked and upset she was at the lives that German children were living at the time of her first exchange. "They had no shoes," she says. The people of Bristol sent shoes over to the children of Hannover. She was proud that she, along with others from the project, helped the children in their time of need.

The Hannover students, who had travelled to Bristol, stayed for five months and spoke almost perfect English. One of them, was a girl named Ilse. Whilst Ilse was living in Bristol, she had knitted her own cardigan in her spare time. In post-war England buttons were in short supply, so Sylvia's father gave her his old Royal Air Force buttons. 'We are at peace,' he said. Sylvie and Ilse befriended each other through the exchange and stayed in contact until Ilse passed away last year.

Since her first exchange, Sylvia has returned to Hannover three times. "I wish I had the chance to go more," she said.