



## **A Musical Map Of Bristol**



## ***Introduction for Musicians***

This is an invitation to write a song or piece of music inspired by what you read in the pages of this book.

Earlier this year I was commissioned by the Architecture Centre to make a project that would explore people's 'sense of place'. In particular they were keen for me to go to areas beyond the city centre and find out what people on the edges of town felt about where they live. I was asked to tour Bristol's community festivals and that the project would conclude with a live event on the Sunday 25th September, on the Harbor side on Narrow Quay, part of the Architecture Centre's 20th birthday celebrations

I made the Sounding City trailer which could be towed by bike, acting as a portable artwork or folding out to become a social space, a table for people to talk around, lean on or take books and postcards from. Travelling around the city we got over 600 responses from Bristolians reflecting on what it is like where they live.

I wanted to take these words, the words of people who live here, and give them to you so that you might interpret them, shape them, see something in them, make something: to interpret the multiplicity of responses through the prism of your music and words.

It is up to you how you interpret this material. You may choose a narrative or an abstract form. The only rule is your inspiration must come from what follows....

Jennie Savage

*A big thank-you to my assistants, Cora Mclean, Chris Whiteside, Joe Walker, Alex Shepherd, Carys Marshall & Hani Salih.  
Photo: Christina Evans*

Uncle Nic goes to the corner shop in a onesie made of rubber bands.

\*\*\*

I'm a Taxi driver and I invented GPS 20 years ago. It was my idea. I should be a millionaire now.

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I was in the front garden and I saw this kid jump out of a taxi, run down the road and climb up onto the roof of a house. He stayed up there and wouldn't come down.

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Out the front of the house I see my neighbours. The two brothers don't really get on. He gets in a black van or goes out on his bike. The other one rides around the park.

\*\*\*

I like going to the swings or on my bike. I like going to the park.

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The best building in this area is 'The Hub' its all new and brightly coloured. There was nothing there before.

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Gainsborgh Square is really famous. There are pictures of it in the M Shed.

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If Lockleaze had a sound it would be R&B or blues.

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Two brothers had an argument. One stabbed the other, he died. They were drunk.

\*\*\*

Lockleaze. Raising aspirations. Bingo, films. Community events.

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The neighbours are friendly. There is a divide between young and old. A lot of traffic. An outdoor atmosphere...

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Reggae & Bob Marley.

The houses had concrete cancer:

\*\*\*

Normally it's very quiet. It's getting better around here.

\*\*\*

The Hub - the buzz is good. The shops around here are not good- the chemist is ok but the other shops don't sell good food and it's expensive. It takes ages to get the bus into town.

\*\*\*

It's changed for the better. The fish 'n' chips are good. The pub has closed. There were lots of drugs there.

\*\*\*

Pop music. People want to dance - we want music to dance too. A party!

\*\*\*

Everyone knows my big sister. She is amazing. She helps out at all the schools and clubs. I am so proud of her. She helps the other kids with their learning.

\*\*\*

I take care of the Castlehouse and lived here for one year. It's a nice community but people smoke too much weed.

\*\*\*

The area has definitely changed since the pub shut down. The drugs have gone. The community is strong. The church does loads with the kids. There are lots of groups for the kids.

\*\*\*

We like to walk out with the kids if you go under the motorway it is like open countryside. There is a river; you are out of the city and it is so quiet.

\*\*\*

I moved here from Trowbridge. That was a small town, I didn't like it and they didn't like us there. Now we are in a big city it is much better. There is culture here, city culture.

I come up from the basement and see kids shouting at each other in the street, people smoking weed, old men talking to each other. People playing football in the street. Yeah it's urban but it feels like home. (St Pauls)

\*\*\*

Colourful hectic, lots of kids, families...

\*\*\*

BIG JEFF

\*\*\*

My next door neighbour is obsessed with recycling  
There is a hello Kitty car parked around the corner  
An Indian restaurant with sparkly décor  
Huge derelict factory with loads of graffiti.  
Yellow sunny place. There are lots of kids with a park at the end of the street.

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At night it can be a lot darker.

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Its good having a park at the end opposite the house because you don't have to walk far.

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Lots of houses are being converted into flats. Green spaces are being built on.

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I am a police officer. I remember chasing burglars across Clifton. I caught somebody climbing in a ground floor window. He spotted me and ran off. I chased him and called to another officer and arrested him.

\*\*\*

The memorable building has to be the suspension bridge. It's a huge tourist attraction that defines Bristol and puts it on the map.

When I look out of my front window I see a bench, a path and some trees, lots of other houses. It is a 30 minute walk downhill into town. And 45 minutes uphill, back.

\*\*\*

Colourful houses.

\*\*\*

Graffiti.

\*\*\*

The new Major, Marvin Reese lives in Easton.

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In Easton there is a very famous shop called Sweet Mart. It is run by a Bangladeshi family. The shop is staffed by his family and hipsters. It's very famous.

\*\*\*

In St Werburgh's there is a collaborative building project where people got together and built their own houses in a collaborative design and build.

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Knowle is pop music! It's busy - lots of kids on bikes. A nice neighbourhood, friendly. They are old council houses, no trees, nothing pretty, but it is a nice place.

\*\*\*

Snow in winter; sledging...

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Arnos Court Park. Its very arty, fun! There is always something to do every weekend.

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People do like a chat but nobody ever asks you into their house. People talk on the doorstep or over the fence.

\*\*\*

Arnos Court Park - it's a lovely park. There is a BMX track, skateboarding, circuit training. In the winter people sledge

Bristol is the best city to live in!! It's about love and friendship, community... All anyone wants is love, friendship and respect and that is what you get in Bristol.

\*\*\*

Whitehall is a total mish -mash of everything. Happy, busy, diverse.

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Fishponds: All Saints Church is haunted by a monk who was killed by Henry VIII.

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There is a derelict train station. It is meant to be haunted.

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The derelict chocolate factory used to be Cadburys (IN fact Elizabeth Shaw) but it shut down about 8 years ago. It is supposed to be turned into flats. It is broken and vandalised.

\*\*\*

John Cabot the explorer in 1497 - now commemorated as a shopping centre.

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Finzel sugar refinery on Counterslip - by Castlefields- now it is a block of flats.

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St Georges - not enough goes on. It needs inspiration- I'm thinking of doing a street party so everyone can get to know each other. Yes a street party is what we need.

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St George's park on North street there is lots of graffiti and Banksy influence. The graffiti in Bristol is more iconic than the buildings it is everywhere.

\*\*\*

Redfield is folk music with a bit of a beat...

There is the Stag and Hounds - that is where the gallows were people used to be hung. Down in the basement it is spooky, they used to roll barrels down there when a delivery came.

\*\*\*

Central Bristol would be Jazz, Easy Listening, Funk.

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On my street there is a swimming pool but it is falling into dis-repair; they just don't have the funds to save it.

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In the summer there is an increase in people. It is greener, more colourful, the parks have flowers, it is very pretty. I helped to plant the trees in Victoria Park.

\*\*\*

Bedminster: There are some great characters in Bedminster. The running man. He is always running, never wears a top, but he is very old.

\*\*\*

Mrs Brown's café is a meeting point - we always went there after school for a lolly.

\*\*\*

Totterdown has alternative music.

\*\*\*

I live in a cul de sac. It is leafy- there is a sea of cars and vans.

\*\*\*

St George- Funky unity in the community.

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Kingswood: cars / children /bushes, trees, shrubs / Bungalow / Park / The college is now disused and being used by a film and TV company to film a TV programme

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I live by a school in the morning it is bedlam!

There used to be a derelict building behind our house - forgotten, sad looking - now it is a nursery; it's noisy, vibrant and happy sounding.

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Whitehall: I have two neighbours I speak to. We collect parcels for each other. It is not so community orientated, people are priced out of the area and can't afford to stay here.

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Redfield: My son plays in a band, my daughter lives here too. It was music that attracted them to the city. There is lots of culture here many pubs and bars, always a park nearby.

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Whitehall: people hanging out in cars. Six Houses, an old peoples home.

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Fishponds: Gorgeously relaxed atmosphere across the city with pockets of weird and wonderfulness for the more alternative amongst us.

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Redfield: We moved here recently and we love it. We have a beautiful park across the road which I walk through to get to work and two nice cafés.

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Whitehall: When I look out of my window I see the old fire station which has been converted into flats, a courtyard with blossom trees. There are always people passing.

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It's a Victorian Terrace, lots of bay windows. A diverse range of people, nice cafés

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Dog poo. Smell of weed. Rubbish weather . Corner shop. Concrete and tarmac. Dogs lots of dogs. A parade of shops for buying milk and takeaways.

Apples. Cats. Neighbours. Happy. Green. Friendly.

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Corner shop. Off Liscence. School children. Bus stop. Vets. Hill. . .

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Brislington is the song Park Life by Blur/ Psychedelic Stoner Rock. Local character is Uncle Mustafa in Café Casa

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Old Market – Big Jeff, Bristols music hero. There is a spot dedicated to him at the Fleece. There was a feature on him in Vice once, he goes to a gig every night.

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The chimney at Troopers Hill. The nails. St Nicholas market exchange.

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I can see people eating street food. A mother and daughter sitting together.

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A local character is Jack Hawkins, King of the Mods.

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Brislington: Our street is long and straight, with friendly neighbours. It is a quiet spot close to the city.

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Pero's bridge. Bars & eateries. A narrowboat with a decoy owl. Water. Flower boxes. A swarm of boats bobbing up and down.

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Easton. Flapping, floaty flags... fabulous

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Jack Hawkins and the crew from BIMM

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Flags atop the boats packed into the harbour.

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The sound of steam trains in the distance.

Local character is the very friendly and charismatic big issue seller on stokes croft and his Romanian cowboy hat.

\*\*\*

HMP Bristol building.

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Bishopsworth: The sun, very rare!, dog poo on my drive, next doors car, the roadworks. There is a magnolia tree which flowers every spring.

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Old Market: When the night time falls naughty things happen!

\*\*\*

When I look out of my window I see children playing in school. They are innocent and carefree.

\*\*\*

Easton: Cat Alley - they have their own street, it is like Top Cat!

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Horfield doesn't change much but the trees do. They are beautiful here and all different colours.

\*\*\*

A great local character is this guy who wears a red trilby hat. He went for Mayor but only got 4 votes!

\*\*\*

Once I saw a man taking heroin outside my front door! There are lots of homeless people here, graffiti, groups of people drifting.

\*\*\*

I was unable to work for 2 years and house bound for 1 year. There was a crab apple tree in next door's front garden. Me and the tree would spend hours together: Me inside, it outside. We were companions for months. Then I went to my parents for respite. There were high winds and whilst I was away the tree came down. I was so upset - I am still upset the tree has gone! The view is bare and I miss seeing it change over the year.

As part of my recovery from illness I did a programme of graduated exercise and every week I would increase the amount of time I could walk by 10%. To stop me getting bored I would highlight on a map where I had walked. The colour of the map slowly extended and I remember how emotional I was when I was able to walk the triangle around my house. My world expanded.

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The music here would be something polite and Georgian and the lyrics would feature middle class people moaning about Waitrose.

\*\*\*

I could never be unhappy here. It is too beautiful.

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Between 8-9 and 5-6 it is really busy. That is when people come and go to work. Otherwise it is really quiet. Occasionally you will see a drunk student.

\*\*\*

I live on a T-junction and look down a row of plane trees. Every three years they are pollarded. I always think they look like an army of amputees.

\*\*\*

There is no social richness in Clifton. I have seen the butchers and vegetable shop close down. Like everyone else I was outraged but then I realised I was the problem because I also stopped shopping there and went into town.

\*\*\*

There are a couple that live opposite me. A German Italian man and his wife who walks about in the garden wearing a Kaftan.

There are an Italian couple around the corner, he is super friendly and she is as cold as ice. They own the Deli. There is a Frenchman in the café, he is very friendly. Sometimes they take parcels for me and I always like to see him! I also leave the keys there is I AIRB+B my flat.

Bob upstairs loves cats. He feeds all the neighbourhood cats and his recycling is full of sardines. But he is a ninja and he moves silently. I never hear him.

\*\*\*

See guys selling pills to kids out of my window. The police don't stop them; I think they are worried they will be accused of being racist.

\*\*\*

I was twice asked out from my window. Once by An'bar who then died young of a heart attack and a random bloke from a café. And once by a very grand old lady in a fur coat who I then became friends with and she passes by everyday.

\*\*\*

The people who live on the outskirts are either poor and excluded or wealthy and self-contained. Bristol is like a village. You only have to know a few people and you know everyone! Its lots of interlinking circles.

\*\*\*

Coulsten Tower is a tall modernist building. I think They have opened a restaurant at the top. It is part of the city skyline. I have never been inside but I admire it because it is a classic building.

\*\*\*

I used to live at the bottom of Brandon Hill. When there is snow people always ski or sledge down it. There is an urban myth that somebody went down in a canoe and got impaled at the bottom on the railings. I don't know if it is true!

\*\*\*

In Stapleton, next to Lockleaze. The contrast is amazing. In Lockleaze there are boarded up shops and it is depressing. In Stapleton it is like a village and there is countryside, a stream.

Drizzle/Chips!

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Bedminster is folk music. It is free thinking, independent hippy and happy.

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Westbury Park is easy listening terrace community

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Lockleaze: When we first moved here we were told it is rough.

The kids are up to no good, the police are always around here. In fact it is the opposite. It is very quiet and there is real community spirit.

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Whitehall is cosmopolitan, smart, European.

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I met a man who was 90 years old. His clothes were stained and old. He is the same age as the clock tower.

\*\*\*

The police should have a song about Southmead. The beat team.

\*\*\*

The Happy Shopper is at the centre of the community. Everyone goes there and that is where you meet everyone. There are also lots of green spaces for the kids to play on.

\*\*\*

Trees/ Robinhood hill / schools / farm shop / dog walkers / cars and pushbikes. April.

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Local character of Southmead- Joyce! Everyone knows Joyce. She sits outside here house and waves at everyone. Everyone knows her. She is 90. When she dies she will have a carriage and 4 black horses!

\*\*\*

Tempy Sonia / Mad Cecil.

There is a man in a hat with a spaniel and a long black coat and green wellies. He walks everywhere and he walks around the area (Stoke Park) every day for the last 10 years. He is really tall and very eccentric.

\*\*\*

The troll bridge in Stoke Park - all the kids know it.

\*\*\*

Wessex Avenue: There are allotments at the end of the road. Lots of young people took them up, but they have lost interest and they are all growing over now. We have lots of street parties organised by the community.

\*\*\*

Fishponds: it's much more family orientated now. There is Eastville Park, that is a great place.

\*\*\*

The Star is a nice pub – it's local...

\*\*\*

The M32. For some reason Bristol has a motorway going straight into the city centre. Somebody should write a song about the M32. Going under it is a bit scary – dodgy. Driving on it is different!

\*\*\*

I live in Lockleaze - you don't have to be scared here!

\*\*\*

Since Brexit I have experienced more racism.

\*\*\*

St Pauls: I live in a caravan in a derelict yard in St Pauls. It's called The Yard Arts Collective.

\*\*\*

I'd like a garden - oh what I would do in a garden...

\*\*\*

Lockleaze: Tight Knit. Community based. Friendly, diverse.

St Pauls, Portland Square: It is a square with a path and a statue at the centre. I don't know who the statue is of. There are events in the square, barbeques.

\*\*\*

My front door jammed and I was stuck outside. My phone and keys were inside. These guys helped me bash the door down!

\*\*\*

St Pauls: There is a guy called Dutty Ken. He has long dreadlocks, I think he is a musician. But he is famous around here.

\*\*\*

There used to be a lot of fighting here. It's ok now though

\*\*\*

Southmead. There is a social club, fitness, private functions and weddings.

\*\*\*

The cars drive fast around here. Fast cars and fighting. It gets worse in the summer.

\*\*\*

It's a diverse community. There are no front gardens. It is close knit as people are in and out of each other's gardens. But the proximity means you must be tight knit and get along.

\*\*\*

Tower blocks and terraces.

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Urban Feel. High Rises and terraced houses next to each other - it's from the war; the different areas that were bombed.

\*\*\*

There is Mary with Shadow the dog. She is very chatty and everyone knows her. She is in her late 70's but has always lived in this street. Her brother lives two streets over.

\*\*\*

We are trying to re-open the community garden next to the vicarage. They have made a new entrance so a community group can use the space.

There is a druid stone in somebody's back garden in Stoke Bishop. It's a big Saracen Stone, just in somebody's garden.

\*\*\*

St Mary Redcliffe church. I often sit in the grounds. Its 11th century, Elizabeth I said it was one of the fairest churches in the land. There is a cave system underneath. The spire was rebuilt in Victorian times after it was struck by lightning. There is a recovery café in there now where recovering addicts learn how to cook and run a café.

\*\*\*

Lockleaze: People go to the shops in their pyjamas.

\*\*\*

Barrow Gurney. It's an abandoned mental institution. I went to Kingswood school and we used to dare each other to go there.

It's an abandoned building. There are holes in the ceiling and asbestos. But the beds and chairs are still there. My friend went there once to do a ougee board. She said she saw stuff moving. It was really scary. It's been knocked down now.

\*\*\*

At Temple Meads there is an underground tunnel to get an underground train. I don't know where it goes...

\*\*\*

Broadwalk Shopping Centre is really important to me. It is where I had my first job. I worked at Wilkinsons. I loved working there. The people were so nice. I didn't ever want to leave.

\*\*\*

The right to buy is not working. There are not enough houses and people can't afford to stay in the city.

\*\*\*

Shop Local.

\*\*\*

Toilets falling through the ceiling. Panes of glass missing from windows. People living in fear.

We got a call from the police to go to a house in Fishponds. There were prostitutes working there, drugs and it was a mess. Disgusting. It has been re done now - its lovely there. We are trying to fix the area one house at a time.

\*\*\*

We must invest in properties and tackle corrupt private landlords.

\*\*\*

Ikea is built on the old Bristol Rovers grounds.

\*\*\*

In Easton there is a man who walks around with a parrot on his shoulder.

\*\*\*

Immigrants are taken advantage of by the restaurant trade.

\*\*\*

In the night it is dark. There is a lot of dog poo. In the winter we do 'Window Wanderland' and everybody decorates their windows. Then we go around and look at each other's windows.

\*\*\*

The shops were independent now we have Weatherspoon's and loads of chain shops.

\*\*\*

The old Bristol Royal Infirmary was built in 1735. It is the oldest hospital in Europe. I worked there as a physio. The new building is much better but it doesn't have the character of the old building.

\*\*\*

The most memorable building in Bristol is the ball bearing factory. The metal is molten at the top and is dropped from a great height. It forms a ball and solidifies then reaches the water at the bottom as a solid ball. I love it, it's great but also the rudest building in Bristol!

In Southmead kids are raised by the community. There is not as much violence as there was. People still set cars on fire but not as often as they used to. The community is working together and we are making it better.

\*\*\*

In our block somebody was killed. It has destroyed our block. It has become really racial and divided. We need more get-togethers but everyone is angry.

\*\*\*

Unwelcoming. I hate living there. I hate it. I dread going home and I am scared. My neighbours abuse my kids. It's awful but I can't move because the council won't move me.

\*\*\*

There is lots of drug abuse, homeless people.

\*\*\*

If my block was a song I would call it Drama from the Block.

\*\*\*

Everyone knows Weatherman Steve. He talks to everyone.

\*\*\*

I live in the top floor flat. Outside my kitchen window there is a beautiful sycamore tree. I love to see it in the spring time and then as the leaves come out. It fills my kitchen with green colour. There are two collared doves that live in it. At least there were. One day I was looking out at the collared doves and this massive bird of prey swooped down and caught one. It was horrible. Collared doves mate for life and I thought somehow it meant something.

\*\*\*

Different coloured front doors. Everyone painting their houses different colours - that is a real Bristol thing.

\*\*\*

When the suns out everything gets better.  
Lots of people know each other.

169 Scout Hut on Tranmere Avenue because my Dad's brother has a plaque on it. Now his son is a member.

\*\*\*

I need an electric wheelchair. The hills are killing me!  
The local shops have changed. It's Tesco and Aldi now.

\*\*\*

There is a building on Gloucester Road that is famous for being derelict.

\*\*\*

Southmead was a brand new estate in the 1930s. Everyone cared about each other. I was at home on my own over Christmas so I went to the pub. I didn't know anyone. I got drunk because I was lonely. I wish people could be kinder.

\*\*\*

There are lots of foxes around here. They are lovely!!

\*\*\*

Pug man is a local character!! He has three pugs!! He doesn't like people talking to him.

\*\*\*

The building where I work is a radical new design. It has an exposed structure and is made of glass but the technology doesn't work and it is so hot!

\*\*\*

Carnivals and festivals... that's Bristol. It comes from the markets. Its history is as a market city and people still remember that, or it's in the blood of the city to gather and meet.

\*\*\*

I work in Filton Abbey Wood at the Ministry of Defence. There are five neighbourhoods on one site. The buildings are huge. Each building has wings and the wings are all named after trees. There is a special way to navigate around the site - nobody lives there. It is like a whole city on its own out there. I work in HR.

## Notes:

These words have been written down as they were spoken. They have been annotated here as closely to the original spoken word as possible.

I have chosen not to organise the comments or denote the location the interviewee speaks about unless they mention the location specifically. My reasoning for this is that ultimately all the comments, light and shade are about Bristol holistically. To organise this as a geographic archive would limit the content and may also be reductive. Instead I propose a mapping of the city through music. Perhaps we think of the map as a series of annotations which map not as geography but through opinion, ideas, reflection and memory. Giving voice to this empowers - as it articulates, re-inscribes and changes perceptions.

If you need to know the location for your song, drop me a line and I will look it up: [jennie@jenniesavage.co.uk](mailto:jennie@jenniesavage.co.uk)

All the comments in this book are the personal views of the interviewees. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Jennie Savage or the Architecture Centre, and cannot be guaranteed to be factually correct.

*Sounding City is a project by artist Jennie Savage, part of the Architecture Centre's 20th Anniversary programme, with support from Bristol800.*



**Bristol800**

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Part of Bristol 800: a programme throughout 2016 marking significant anniversaries in the city and what they mean for Bristol now and into the future. Bristol 800 is an initiative of Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (Arts Council England, Bristol City Council and Business West).