

Institution: University of the West of England, Bristol		
Unit of Assessment: 34		
Title of case study: Establishing and enhancing the cultural and economic significance of Bristol as a City of Film		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Charlotte Crofts	Associate Professor Filmmaking	2014 – present
Dr Amy Genders	Wallscourt Fellow in Screen Business & Creative Enterprise	2018 – present
Dr Steve Presence	Senior Lecturer	2010 – present
Dr Andrew Spicer	Professor of Cultural Production	2014 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>UWE's research has been instrumental in evidencing, shaping and enhancing Bristol's significance and profile as a regional, national and international screen hub and centre of screen production. This contributed to Bristol City Council's successful bid to become a UNESCO City of Film (October 2017). It also influenced Channel 4's decision to relocate to Bristol. This research has raised the profile of Bristol's screen heritage, enhanced and widened knowledge of this heritage nationally and internationally and has stimulated screen tourism. UWE research has also influenced wider regional arts and cultural policy, and informed national debate about the precarious nature of freelance creative labour and its importance to centres of screen production such as Bristol.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Research undertaken by Crofts, Genders, Presence and Spicer has contributed to the fields of Screen Heritage & Tourism (addressing local cinema history, contemporary cinematic tourism and fan pilgrimage), Screen Cultures (the programming, exhibition and reception of film), and Screen Industries (the industrial conditions shaping the production and circulation of film, and freelance labour). This research has been effectively shared through substantial original research reports, peer-reviewed publication, practice-based outputs and public engagements facilitated by those practice-based outputs.</p>		
Screen heritage, cinema culture & cinematic tourism: curating Cary Grant's Bristol		
<p>Building on Crofts' research on local cinema history (R1) funded by an AHRC REACT grant (G2), the <i>Cary Comes Home</i> project (R2; R3) explores how Cary Grant's Bristolian roots inform and complicate his star persona. Crofts' research suggests that whilst the public may be aware Grant was born in Bristol, there is far less understanding of his ongoing relationship with the city. The research addresses this gap through programming the biennial <i>Cary Comes Home Festival</i> (founded in 2014; R2) and developing the site-specific <i>Looking for Archie</i> walking tour (R3; G1), both of which foreground Grant's Bristolian connections. The research establishes how location-based and expanded cinematic experiences can develop new audiences for classic cinema and shows the importance of an ongoing festival to stimulate film tourism, including fan pilgrimage.</p>		
Screen industries: mapping Bristol's film and TV ecology		
<p>Spicer and Presence's research report <i>Go West!</i> (R4; G3) analysed the contribution of film and TV production industries to the economic and cultural health of the Bristol region. It generated significant data from two surveys (of companies and freelancers) and in-depth interviews with</p>		

company executives. It provided an historical overview of Bristol's development as the third-largest film and television production cluster in the UK. The research identified three key findings: first the importance of 'anchor' firms (the BBC's Natural History Unit and Aardman Animations) which have spawned local sub-clusters and made Bristol a global screen player; second the diversity and interconnectedness of the independent screen producers which compete but also co-operate; and third the need for a coherent screen strategy to lobby policy makers and the government to provide greater resources for what is, in many ways, a fragile ecology. It included ten recommendations to address these issues.

Screen industries: evaluating Bristol's freelance economy

Genders' research on freelancers, *An Invisible Army* (R5), was supported by a grant from the AHRC National Productivity Investment Fund (G4). This extended *Go West!* through in-depth interviews with Bristol-based freelancers, contextualised within a national framework. Her research demonstrated the precariousness of freelancers and their invisibility in economic analyses, resulting in their being ignored in policy decisions. It showed freelancers' interconnected networks, significance to Bristol's screen industries and importance to regional ecologies, analysing how they create value in multiple ways. The research highlighted issues of diversity and gender, and the difficulty many freelancers found in sustaining a viable career. Presence's follow-up study of the Bristol Editors Network (BEN) (R6), extended *Invisible Army* by providing a rich account of the specific conditions under which one freelance group operates.

3. References to the research

R1 Crofts, C. (2012) City Strata project, including the Cinemapping App prototype and the Lost Cinemas of Castle Park App (practice-based artefacts).

<https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/943525/>;

<https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/943509/>;

<https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/943517/>

R2 Crofts, C. (2014-2020) *Cary Comes Home Festival* (multi-component practice-based output). Output available on request.

R3 Crofts, C. (2017-2019) *Looking for Archie: Cary Grant's Bristol* walking tour (practice-based output). <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/6993516>

R4 Spicer, A. and Presence, S. (2017) *Go West! Bristol's Film and Television Industries* (UWE, Bristol, ISBN 9781860435379, pp. 72).

<https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/897844>

R5 Presence, S. (2019) Freelance Networks, Trade Unions and Below-the-line Solidarity in Regional Film and Television Clusters: An Interview with the Bristol Editors Network. *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, 16:2, pp. 233-249.

<https://www.eupublishing.com/doi/10.3366/jbctv.2019.0470>

R6 Genders, A. (2019) *An Invisible Army: The Role of Freelance Labour in Bristol's Film and Television Industries* (UWE, Bristol, ISBN 9781860435539, pp. 50).

<https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/849501>

Evidence of the quality of the supporting research

G1 Crofts, C. *Looking for Archie Walking Tour*, Being Human Festival/AHRC/British Academy, November 2017, £500

G2 Crofts, C. *City Strata project, Cinemapping and The Lost Cinemas of Castle Park App*, AHRC REACT 'Heritage Sandbox' Grant, April – June 2012, £35,748

G3 Spicer, A. and Presence, S. *Go West! Investigating and Analysing the Film and Television Industries in Bristol and their Impact on the Creative Economy of the Bristol Region*, Higher Education Innovation Fund, 2015-2016, £26,696

G4 Genders, A. *The Role of Freelance Labour in a Creative Cluster*, AHRC 3D3 National Productivity Investment Fund, January 2018 - February 2019, £19,000

R3 was featured on the AHRC website. **R4** and **R6** were reviewed (2019) in the *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, 16:4, pp. 591-95.

4. Details of the impact

Securing City of Film status: informing local cultural policy

According to Bristol City Council (BCC), UWE research was '*fundamental to the success*' of Bristol's bid to become a UNESCO City of Film in October 2017, part of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (CNN) (**S1**). Crofts, who initiated the bid in 2014 (**S2**), based on her research into Bristol's film heritage and culture (**R1**; **R2**; **R3**), was reported to be '*the driving force behind Bristol City Council's decision to support the bid*' (**S1**). Spicer and Presence's screen industry research (**R4**) was viewed as:

'essential, not only to the content of the bid, but also to Bristol City Council's understanding of the scope and value of the film and TV sector to the wider Bristol region' (**S1**).

The UNESCO UK Commission confirmed UWE research '*strengthened*' the application and '*assisted in the successful outcome*' (**S3**). City of Film status led directly to the creation of two part-time BCC posts (City of Film Co-ordinator and City of Film PR & Marketing Manager); GBP50,000 per annum financial commitment to cultural activity; and four years' funding (GBP165,000) from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for a film literacy project across Bristol, Belfast and Bradford, creating new work for local company Boomsatsuma to support teacher development in ten primary Bristol schools (**S1**).

UWE research also influenced BCC's wider cultural policy. It is referred to multiple times in Bristol's Culture Strategy (**S4**: pp4, 11, 14) and '*continues to play a vital part in influencing future sector development and sustainability*' (**S1**). Watershed, the region's leading film culture and digital media centre, used UNESCO badging to secure funding and international event support that have '*helped develop Bristol as a film destination, connect various parts of sector and added value to some of our events and initiatives*' (**S5**).

The UNESCO designation strengthened BCC's successful application to host one of Channel 4's two regional Creative Hubs (October 2018) (**S1**, **S6**). UWE's *Go West!* report (**R4**) '*proved an essential resource for communicating the ecology of the sector to inform how C4's presence in Bristol would complement the local industry*' (**S1**). *Go West!* '*influenced*' C4's decision to relocate to Bristol by providing:

'evidence of Bristol's strong and growing film and TV ecology and diverse talent-base, together with the city's dynamic screen history and contemporary culture, [which] convinced us that Bristol could provide the necessary infrastructure and cultural capital for Channel 4 to flourish in the city' (**S6**).

Creative Hub status led directly to the creation of approximately 50 jobs in Channel 4's Bristol team. It also had considerable indirect impacts, benefitting companies and freelancers in the region through enhanced commissioning opportunities (S1, S6).



Figures 1 & 2: 'Welcome to Bristol City of Film' greeting at Bristol Airport Arrivals walkway

Making Bristol's Cinema Heritage Global

Crofts' research on the Cary Grant project increased knowledge and awareness among film and media practitioners and has had wider impacts through engaging with public audiences and visitors to the city. Her work as curator of the *Cary Comes Home Festival* 'continues to contribute to Bristol's cultural profile nationally and overseas' (S1). Her research 'directly influenced' the programming of Watershed's *Cinema Rediscovered Festival*, the major UK festival dedicated to classic cinema, which, since 2018, has featured a "Bristol City of Film" strand focussing on Bristol filmmakers and themes, including a 2019 season exploring Grant as a local star (S5). The *Cary Comes Home Festival* went on tour to Bristol's twin city Hannover, Germany in November 2017. Crofts' research had a 'key effect' on the development, nationally, of the British Film Institute's highly successful two-month Cary Grant Season in 2019 (S7).

The *Cary Comes Home Festival* has also stimulated cinematic tourism to the city, attracting numerous overseas visitors seeking a closer connection to Grant (S8; Fig 3). Evaluation of a sample of events – the 2017 walking tour, online events in July (Fig 4), October and November 2020 – shows that each event expanded understanding of his life and work among wider national and international audiences. They gained a better understanding of the importance of Grant's connections to Bristol, acquired new knowledge about Bristol's cinema heritage and felt inspired to find out more about Bristol and Grant's relationship to the city (S8).



Figure 3: American superfan Colleen Zwack returning for a third time, featured in 'Bristol Cary Grant film festival celebrates third year', BBC Online, 23 November 2018 & Figure 4: Map of attendees at online event, 'Greeting Cary Grant', 28 July 2020 (S8).

Making visible the hidden labour of Bristol's freelancers

Extending earlier work by Spicer and Presence (R4), Genders' research, funded by the AHRC (G4), documented the importance of freelancers to Bristol's screen economy and culture (R5). This changed academics' and industry professionals' understanding of this 'invisible army', not as isolated 'nomads', but as key 'place-makers' integral to the ecology which supports film, television and media production. Attendees at the report's launch in 2019, despite considering themselves well-informed about freelancers, gained a new understanding of the 'vital', 'critical', 'essential', 'valuable' role they play in Bristol's creative community, underlining the urgent need for policy change that enables them to 'be recognised and supported as an important workforce' (S9). Focused on Bristol as a key hub for the creative and media sector, Genders' research and its findings has implications for the industry as a whole. It informed the national debate around freelancers' role and working conditions within the screen industries, being used as part of the oral evidence given to the House of Lords Communications Select Committee by the CEO of The Indie Club, an advocacy pressure group for independent producers and freelancers (S10).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1 Testimonial from Head of Culture and Creative Industries, Bristol City Council, contact details provided with source submitted to the REF Team

S2 Bristol City Council application for UNESCO Creative Cities Network, 16 June 2017

S3 Testimonial from Head of Accreditation, UK National Commission for UNESCO, contact details provided with source submitted to the REF Team

S4 City of Openness, Imagination and Originators: A Strategy for Bristol Culture. Bristol City Council, June 2017

S5 Testimonial from Managing Producer, Watershed, contact details provided with source submitted to the REF Team

S6 Testimonial from Head of Partnerships, Nations and Regions, Channel 4, contact details provided with source submitted to the REF Team

S7 Testimonial from Leader Programmer, BFI, contact details provided with source submitted to the REF Team

S8 *Cary Comes Home Festival* and *Looking for Archie* Events 2017-2020 Evaluation Report

S9 Questionnaire Responses from launch of Invisible Army, April 2019

S10 House of Lords Select Committee on Communications Oral evidence: Public service broadcasting in the age of video on demand, Tuesday 14 May 2019 (Q95; Q96)