

Coventry Young Ambassadors

コヴェントリー子ども大使

Cities of Peace Schools Projects

平和都市学校教育プロジェクト

Contributing to the 2019-2021 Japan-UK Season of Culture and the *Between the Stones* project, and incorporating the UNESCO vision to inspire peace in the minds of men, women and children



Working in association with the *Between the Stones* Team, Japan Society and Japanese Garden Society, with support from Coventry City Council, National Lottery Fund, Eurovia, Chiel Construction, Mitsubishi Corporation and many others



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This booklet is about:

- The educational and other achievements of the Coventry Young Ambassadors Cities of Peace Schools Projects
- The benefit and relevance of the children's work to the wider society
- The people who have worked with the children over the course of the past three years
- The impact of the children's work for the future.



Contents

Introduction

Background: Shared artistic & cultural elements with *Between the Stones* noh drama and the Cities of Peace Schools Projects

Cities of Peace Project 1:
Introductory Day with *Between the Stones*
Author and Tanzaku Poem Cards

Cities of Peace Project 2:
Noh Theatre, Poetic Songs and Masks

Cities of Peace Project 3:
Karesansui Gardens

Supporters and Contributors

Introduction

Coventry is a designated International City of Peace. Peace and reconciliation is the foundation and ethos for many of the city's activities and interests. **Peace has been included in education in Coventry for many years.** In 2016 over 250 pupils from over 30 Coventry primary schools attended a Coventry Young Ambassadors Japan Conference. It was opened by the Embassy of Japan and was supported by over 100 volunteers.

A number of activities across the city have links with Japanese culture and Japan; and especially with Hiroshima, as a sister International City of Peace. Since 1987 a service of remembrance is held annually in Coventry Cathedral on Hiroshima Day, August 6th, the anniversary of the A-bomb in 1945.

The City of Coventry is extremely proud of the engagement of the **Coventry Young Ambassadors**, a formal training programme to give primary school children the skills they need to support and lead cultural and sporting events across the City. Their many achievements are important to the future of Coventry and to its many national and international partners.

The children's engagement with Japanese culture, especially through the **Cities of Peace Schools Projects** over the past years, demonstrates how the young can share important concepts about the way we perceive and value the world in which we live.

The Coventry Young Ambassadors Cities of Peace Schools Projects work supports the objectives of:

- the *Between the Stones* Project
- the 2019-2021 Japan-UK Season of Culture
- the 2021 Coventry UK City of Culture
- the Centenary Celebration of the Coventry War Memorial Park
- the work of the Coventry Lord Mayor's Committee of Peace and Reconciliation
- BBC Countryfile Plant Britain Initiative
- the International Cities of Peace initiative
- the UNESCO vision 'to build peace in the minds of men, women and children'. NB: A number of the Coventry schools involved in the Cities of Peace Schools Projects are also registered with the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet).
- **And looking to the Future:** A new pilot project is under consideration with the UNESCO ASPnet National Co-ordinators of the UK and Japan to share the Cities of Peace Schools Projects with others.



Key artistic elements from the *Between the Stones* noh drama shared with the Cities of Peace Schools Projects

1. Tanzaku: Peace Poem 2. Noh Theatre: The key characters in the new noh 'Between the Stones'



Above:
The *Between the Stones* Tanzaku poem which reads:

*Winter butterflies released
Silent in the breeze
Silent in the ocean's waves.*

Right:
The Traveller (played by Jubilith Moore) - the traveller sings the travel poem, and performs throughout the play.



Middle:
The *Between the Stones* masks carved by Hideta Kitazawa:

Left: Mask used for the Woman Gardener (Act 1)

Right: Mask used for the Spirit of the Silent Waves (Act 2)

Top Left:
Kinue Oshima, main actor, performs the **Woman Gardener** (Act 1) in the world premiere of *Between the Stones* at the Southbank Centre, London.

Middle: Kinue Oshima as the **Spirit of the Silent Waves** (Act 2).

Right: Iori Oshima as the **Spirit of Winter Butterflies** (Act 2) representing the memories of lost loved ones.
Photography by Clive Barda

www.betweenthestones.com

3. Karesansui Gardens: *Between the Stones* (Act 1) features the famous karesansui garden at Ryoan-ji Temple, Kyoto.



The story of *Between the Stones* takes place in two karesansui gardens

Left: A section of the world-renowned 'karesansui or Zen' garden in Japan - Ryoan-ji (temple) Kyoto. This is also the location of the 'Between the Stones' noh drama (Act 1).

Right: A section from the *Between the Stones* author's karesansui garden, the location of *Between the Stones*, Act 2.



Background

Coventry Young Ambassadors from five Primary Schools (Broad Heath, Finham, Howes, Park Hill and Stivichall) took part in the three-year Cities of Peace Schools Projects from 2018-2021.

These education projects began as part of a programme of education and outreach activities associated with the international arts collaboration - the *Between the Stones* project. This intercultural noh theatre project included professional Japanese noh theatre performers and international artists, and was part of the *2019-2021 Japan-UK Season of Culture*.

What is noh theatre?

Noh is a UNESCO-recognised cultural heritage classical theatre form (Nōgaku), combining elements of dance, drama, music and poetry into a highly aesthetic art that has been performed continuously for over 650 years.

Between the Stones

This rare, new noh drama uniquely draws on gardens, and the solace and space they provide for reflection. It demonstrates the transformative power of gardens to nurture and heal following the loss of loved ones. Taking place in two karesansui gardens on different sides of the world - Ryoan-ji temple garden in Kyoto, (also a UNESCO-recognised cultural heritage); and a newly created karesansui garden in the West. There is a realisation at the end of the drama by the traveller *'that gardens far apart share a legacy of enduring peace, beauty and love'*.

Linking art, education and culture

Noh theatre, Japanese gardens, and a Tanzaku (a poem card suspended from a wind chime) are three iconic Japanese cultural forms influenced by the approach of 'less is more'. All three are intrinsically part of the *Between the Stones* new noh, and were also used as the main cultural vehicles for learning for the children's three

peace projects - artistically and thematically using the *Between the Stones* theme: *from tragic loss to peace....*

Using this theme each of the **Coventry Young Ambassadors Cities of Peace Schools Projects** included three key elements:

- studying one of the three cultural forms and using these to relate to historical events, and how these may connect to others (e.g. Coventry and Hiroshima)
- being involved in creative activities and skills development
- and sharing the results for the benefit of the wider community.

The Cities of Peace Schools Projects began by introducing noh theatre and the story of *Between the Stones* and then the children worked in their classrooms with their teachers to create their own work.

Project One: The children researched war and peace in Coventry and Hiroshima and then created and exhibited their own **tanzaku peace poem cards** and 'Peace Trees'.

Project Two: The children created and performed their own noh-inspired **poetic pieces** using their initial research on Coventry and Hiroshima.

Projects 1 & 2 were exhibited to the public at Coventry Cathedral to promote peace and reconciliation.

Project Three: The children discussed **karesansui** gardens and how such gardens reflect peace, respect nature and protect our planet, and their value in helping people find peace in their lives. A group of children brainstormed ideas that inspired the building of a **Japanese Peace Garden** at the Coventry War Memorial Park for the benefit of the wider society that is part of Coventry's ethos of peace.

Many experts and volunteers supported the children. However, the artistic, cultural and educational learning comes from the engagement and creativity of the children and their teachers.



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Introductory Day with the Five
Schools, the Japan Society & *Between
the Stones* Author, followed by the
creation of *Tanzaku* Peace Poem
Cards (2018)

Left: A teacher working with his pupils as they study the story of *Between the Stones* during the introductory day.

Right: A Peace Tree comprised of *Tanzaku* peace cards suspended from *Furin* wind chimes made from recycled materials created by the children in their classrooms.





Introduction day, plus Project I - Creating *tanzaku* poem cards and the Coventry 'peace trees'



Introductory workshop:
Coventry Young Ambassadors are introduced to noh theatre and the story of *Between the Stones* (2018)
Photography by Clive Barda

Project I Objectives

Following the introductory day:

- Study the history of Coventry and Hiroshima, war and peace, and write (or select) a related peace poem
- Design and create a *tanzaku* poem card (using their research) and suspend this to a 'furin' (wind chime) made from recycled materials
- Display the peace poems to form 'peace trees' exhibited at Coventry Cathedral on the centenary of Armistice Day (Nov 2018).

Implementation

The Cities of Peace Schools Projects began with an introductory workshop for Coventry Young Ambassadors from all five schools with the Japan Society and the *Between the Stones* author, Jannette Cheong. The day focused on an introduction to noh, the *Between the Stones* story and the planning of the three projects.

Following the introductory workshop children worked with their teachers in the classroom to learn about Coventry during the Blitz as well as the bombing of Hiroshima in WW2. They used this knowledge to create their own peace poems that were written on handmade *tanzaku*. Then they used recycled materials to create their own *furin* (Japanese wind chimes) from which they attached their *tanzaku* peace poem cards. The children's peace poems were suspended from 'peace trees' and displayed at Coventry Cathedral to mark the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day (2018).

In summary, the children focused on activities involving history, literature, art, sustainability and design technology. Finally, their project outputs were displayed to share their work for wider public benefit.

Coventry Young Ambassadors with Rebecca Bollands, Deputy Head Teacher, Howes School during the introductory day seen here working with the Japan Society. Rebecca is the key coordinator of all the Cities of Peace Schools Projects.





Comments from the Head Teachers of the five Coventry Primary Schools involved with the Cities of Peace Schools Project, and Rebecca Bollands, Deputy Head Teacher, Howes Primary School, Coventry

Each school has done a fantastic job. As we were putting it up members of the public and cathedral staff were asking for more information about the children's work. It will be on display until 16 November (2018). Many thanks for your help with this and we look forward to the next phases of the project.

— **Rebecca Bollands, Deputy Head Teacher, Howes Primary School, Coventry**

Wow! Stunning! So proud of all the contributors and all their hard work. Hoping to take my ambassadors down to see them next week. Thanks for all your hard work Howes when putting them together!

— **Tracy Bailey, Deputy Head Teacher, Park Hill Primary School, Coventry**

I went to the Cathedral this afternoon and the display was certainly getting some attention. I'm not surprised!

— **Paul Vickers, Year 4 Teacher, Park Hill Primary School, Coventry**

They look stunning and so many members of the public approached me while I was there and said how much they liked the display. Well done all and thanks Howes in particular for all your work!

— **Becky Fuller, Stivichall Primary School, Coventry**

These are amazing - massive thank you to all the work that has gone into getting the display co-ordinated and ready - it's a stunning thing - it really is!

— **Richard Machin, Head Teacher, Finham Primary School, Coventry**

What a wonderful achievement. Our Year 5s are very much looking forward to our visit next week. Thank you for all of your hard work everybody. Coventry schools have a great deal to feel proud of.

— **Karen Ferguson, Head Teacher, Stivichall Primary School, Coventry**

The children shared their peace trees with the people of Coventry on the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day in November 2018 at Coventry Cathedral and at the Japanese Embassy, London in February 2019 at a special *Between the Stones* event.





Kinue Oshima performs the Maeshite, main actor (Woman Gardener Act I) in the world premiere of Between the Stones. Photograph by Clive Barda

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Project 2: Noh Theatre

2019-2020





Project 2: Noh Theatre, especially its masks and poetic songs



Project 2 -
Left and Bottom Right:
 Kinue Oshima and Hideta
 Kitazawa give performance
 and mask making workshop
 to the Coventry Young
 Ambassadors who then worked
 with the Japan Society officers
 to learn how to decorate their
 own masks.

Project Objectives

- Learn about key aspects of noh theatre, in particular, movement, masks and its poetic texts (e.g travel and central songs)
- Using the research of local stories related to the history of Coventry and Hiroshima during WW2, write dramatic poetic pieces and decorate card masks inspired by noh
- Perform noh-inspired poetic dramatic pieces on Hiroshima day 2019 at Coventry Cathedral.

Implementation

For the 2nd peace project the children focused on understanding more about noh theatre and explored the art of noh with visiting artists Kinue Oshima and Richard Emmert.

They learned some noh movements and to walk like noh performers. They also made drum calls that are used by the hayashi (musicians) in noh. They were introduced to aspects of poetic texts and how noh stories are structured. The children enjoyed this rare performance workshop with a well-known professional noh actor, Kinue Oshima, whose family-run noh theatre is located in Hiroshima Prefecture.

At the end of her world premiere European Tour playing the lead role in *Between the Stones* (31 January - 5 February 2020), Kinue was able to return to Coventry to work again with the children. This time she worked with professional noh mask maker, Hideta Kitazawa and Richard Emmert to introduce the children to the unique art of noh masks, how these are made and, with Kinue demonstrating, how they are used in performance. A mask decorating exercise organised by the Japan Society followed.

Using noh to interpret the lessons of history

The *Between the Stones* project, through Kimiko Aoki, organised for the children to have a rare opportunity of meeting Keiko Ogura, a survivor of the 1945 bombing of Hiroshima. The meeting was by video conference linking Coventry with Hiroshima. Both teachers and students were deeply moved and inspired by Keiko Ogura's personal account of the Hiroshima bombing.

During the Spring and Summer terms of 2019, the children worked with their teachers to produce their own noh-inspired song poems linked to 'Cities of Peace'.

They further explored the culture of Japan and the shared trauma and hope from Coventry and Hiroshima. Taking the theme *from tragic loss to finding peace* the children created their own noh-inspired poetic songs and short dramatic pieces.

Coventry Cathedral invited a group of children to perform examples of these on Hiroshima Day in August 2019. This was the first time children had been invited to contribute to Hiroshima Day events at Coventry Cathedral.





Above: CYA (Imogen and Isabella) preparing to read their class travel song poems at Coventry Cathedral for Hiroshima Day, 6 August 2019 with other presentations of the children's work.

Below: Children perform their travel songs before their peers from all five schools at Stivichall School. These pupils have incorporated elements of noh performance using a flute, drum, and most impressive of all, the 'shiori' a symbolic gesture in noh theatre which means great sadness.



'Thank you so much for all your hard work involving us in the Noh project and for giving us such fantastic opportunities.

Firstly on behalf of myself and all the schools, thank you very much for inviting us to the Embassy event. It was a great honour to attend and we were thrilled at how interested everyone was in our peace poems.

Secondly, many, many thanks to you, Kinue and Richard for coming to Coventry especially when you had such a busy schedule. The workshop with the pupils was absolutely fantastic. I had been curious to see the children's reaction to Noh and they were completely mesmerised. It was something so different to anything they have experienced before. I think that they will always remember the experience. In our busy lives as educators we sometimes need to

stand back and let the children experience something totally different.

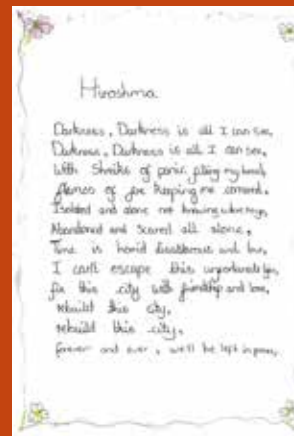
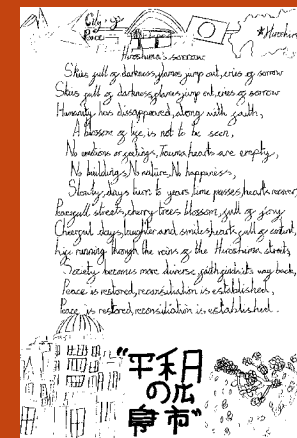
We are very excited about the next phase of our project...'

Please pass on our sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Oshima family and Richard.

— Letter to the Between the Stones team from Rebecca Bolland

Examples of the children's noh-inspired poetic and dramatic work

Below: Examples of the children's noh-inspired poems written in 2019 after they had researched the Hiroshima bombing



Below: Noh-inspired poetic text/song by Year 6 students Zavian and Shahzaib depicting the devastation and regeneration of the City of Coventry - to be performed at the Coventry Young Ambassadors Japan Arts Festival at Coventry Cathedral, 2 July 2021.

Drowned in sorrow and regenerated with life

Darkness rising, families lost
 Darkness rising, families lost
 Nowhere to go, flames rising
 Frozen in fear, radiation burning
 Screaming for families, scared, alone

Limping through this city of pain alone
 Limping through this city of pain alone
 At death's door
 Shrieking victims in fear
 Shedding tears
 Together we hid
 Together we ran
 My siblings and I were scared for our existence
 Families stood together concerned
 Families stood together concerned

"If we work together, anything is possible"

Sauntering through the city happiness all over
 Sauntering through the city happiness all over
 "Never forget what has happened but we must forgive"
 People in joy outspread love as we fight no more
 People recovered from death's burden
 Terrorised no more, regenerated life
 "The nightmare was over but never forget"
 Together we sheltered
 Jointly we let out our sadness
 Finally relaxed
 We stood together in serenity
 We stood together in serenity

Playful children, happy families
 Peacefully working, radiation no more
 My home rebuilt, no flames to burn it
 The nightmare over, darkness fades
 The nightmare over, darkness fades



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Project 3: Karesansui Gardens

2019-2020



Left: A view of the Coventry Young Ambassadors 'Islands of Peace' Japanese Garden located at the Coventry War Memorial Park and the final output of the Cities of Peace Schools Projects.

Above (left & right): The world-renowned 'karesansui or Zen' garden in Japan - Ryoan-ji (temple) Kyoto. This is also the location of the 'Between the Stones' noh drama (Act 1).

Karesansui Gardens

The children were introduced to Karesansui gardens (translated as 'dry mountain and water').

They researched examples and discussed the style of the gardens and how people who visit them sit and observe the gardens, often for quiet contemplation. Some of the children had recently been introduced to the idea of 'mindfulness' and explained this to the others. The children began to understand that symbolism is a fundamental part of these gardens; gravel representing water, and rocks representing mountains or islands, and that both tall 'Cranes' rocks and flat 'tortoise' rocks or boulders also represent longevity. They discussed symbolism in other forms and the idea of 'less is more'. They understood that to appreciate such gardens we need to use our imagination for these 'gardens of the mind'.

In discussing the symbolic nature of karesansui gardens the children also considered how such a garden can reflect peace and respect nature and our planet. They agreed that this was an important connection to their Cities of Peace Project and its links with Hiroshima and Japan.



Project 3 Objectives

- Study the art and meaning of karesansui gardens
- Discuss how such a garden could reflect peace, respect nature and our planet.
- Inspire and learn from the building of a karesansui garden for the people of Coventry to reflect the City's ethos of peace.

The importance of peace, reconciliation and sustainability

Coventry is an international beacon for peace and reconciliation. The importance of this to young people is represented by the Cities of Peace Schools Projects.

Implementation

This theme is reflected in the children's interest and ideas about karesansui gardens. One school (Broad Heath), created a school karesansui garden based on the ideas that a Coventry Young Ambassadors planning group conceived while working for a day with the author of *Between the Stones* brainstorming ideas for a full-size garden. These formed the basis for a garden that became the key outcome of Project 3.

In this final phase of the Cities of Peace Schools Projects the children focused on the symbolic importance and beauty of karesansui gardens. As they began to study karesansui gardens the idea that they might inspire the creation of a full-size garden in Coventry for the people of Coventry became a strong focus.

The children considered the following key messages for their possible garden:

- understand and respect our fragile planet
- create bridges rather than division
- reflect on 'less is more'

They also agreed the key elements for such a garden design which might reflect the following in some way:

- our planet is made up of only 29% land mass (islands big and small) and 71% (mostly salt) water
- being at peace with ourselves helps us be peaceful with others
- the symbolic meanings of trees and nature in Japanese gardens, especially karesansui gardens
- a symbolic link with Hiroshima by planting some ginkgo trees (as 170 are said to have survived the bombing); the ginkgo tree would also link with the story of *Between the Stones* (the

beautiful Autumn leaves representing the memories of lost loved ones)

- nature's beauty being complex and simple (they looked, for example, at the Fibonacci spiral in nature's forms).

The children discussed the importance of people working together, despite living on islands big and small, to find solutions to our common challenges. Then, they explored ways in which these ideas might work in a karesansui garden.

Seven islands could represent the continents. The gravel would represent the oceans. 'One planet' could be the soul of the garden, represented by one 'bridge' a symbol of unity (a flat horizontal line is also the kanji character for 'one') and maybe the way the rocks and islands are arranged might loosely resemble the kanji character for 'heart'. This was inspired by 10-year old Cameron's comment that 'happiness is at the centre, or core of the heart'. Taitum also added that 'our' garden needed to have something special to suggest that our relationship with the planet was fragile.

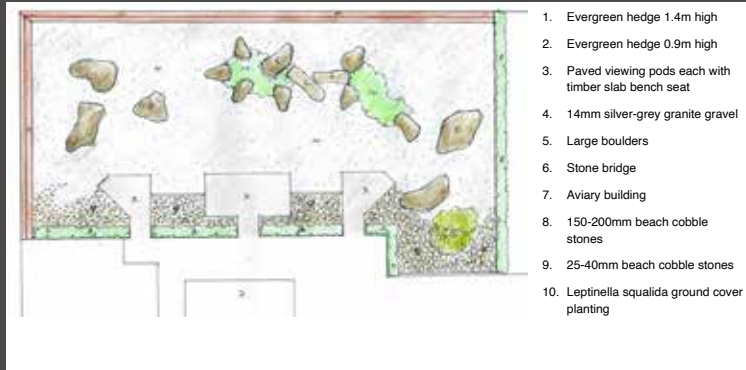
The children agreed the title **Islands of Peace** reflected in the style of garden and the main message of the garden that **global communities can live peacefully with ourselves and our planet.**



Below: Broad Heath Primary School, Coventry built their own small full-size garden at their school as part of the project reflecting the key themes of the Islands of Peace Japanese Garden.



Right: Japanese Garden Society's chosen garden designer, Robert Ketchell, produced this concept sketch from the children's ideas. This provides the overall design for the Coventry Islands of Peace Japanese Garden.



From Idea to Reality

Following the children's work, a permanent site for a garden was found at the War Memorial Park by the Coventry co-ordinator, Rebecca Bollands. This is the largest civic park in the centre of Coventry. Expert help was offered by the Japanese Garden Society based on their experience of building gardens in public places elsewhere in the UK.

The resulting garden - Islands of Peace - is based on the children's ideas.

The children were shown a concept plan for the proposed garden produced by Robert Ketchell of the Japanese Garden Society. They could see that it included their most important ideas. Firstly, the garden can be seen to represent the Earth. The granite gravel symbolises the fact that over 70% of the planet's surface is water, mostly in our oceans and seas. The idea of seven continents is respresented by seven islands in the garden: five as individual rocks and two larger islands with some planting – symbolic of the scarcity of natural resources. These two larger islands are connected with a two-part bridge, expressing the need for people to reach out to forge links of peace and reconciliation with others. The children felt that the broken bridge represents the fragile nature of our relationship with the planet and how peace is fragile and not always easy to achieve, and that there can be obstacles that must be overcome.

The children thought that the islands can represent different things to different visitors. It is a garden for contemplation. For example, the children also felt that the two larger islands could also represent Coventry and Hiroshima, or, indeed, even two individuals who needed to make peace and reconcile their differences.

Pupils engage with the construction of the garden

Throughout the building of the garden the children visited the site as often as possible and observed how the skilful aspects of the construction were undertaken by experts. They learned about some of the key aspects of the garden build and were allowed to participate in a number of key processes thanks to the careful supervision of the experts from Eurovia, Chiel Construction, and the Japanese Garden Society's volunteers who gave generously of their time. In this way, the children could learn about the garden's development throughout the building phases and gain a sense of the world of work and how ideas are turned into reality.

The wall and yew hedge enclose the garden, allowing viewers to see the garden without connection with what is outside; to be absorbed in their personal experience of the garden. The only exception to this is the Shakkei or borrowed scenery, another regular feature of gardens in Japan. Here it is the view of distant cedar trees above the back wall of the garden.



The children were able to learn about the many skills needed to complete the building of the L-shaped retaining wall.

The art of wall building

Contractors introduced the children to the process of cement mixing and how to prepare the foundations for the garden wall, and the essential skills of bricklaying. As well as learning about the building of the real wall, some of the children were even allowed to build their own temporary wall under the skilful eye of experts!





The beauty of stone

Children braved the rain to visit the garden soon after the large feature boulders were delivered. The children gasped in amazement when they were told that the largest rock (a Lewisian gneiss) could be up to 3 billion years old. Later they could see how the boulders were used in the garden design.





Understanding the world of work

Children also gave a helping hand with the planting that surrounds the Islands of Peace Japanese Garden. The experience of working in the garden also gave the children an understanding of horticultural work.





Finally, the children helped to plant the surrounding cherry trees!



And the observation benches were added to the garden by the garden workers.

Islands of Peace Japanese Garden Timeline

2019 September 2019 November 2019 December 2020 September-October 2020 September-October 2020 Mid to End October 2020 Early November 2020 Late November 2020 December 2021 January-July

Children's Planning Group work with 'Between the Stones' author, Jannette Cheong, to explore potential themes and the reason for creating a full-size garden for Coventry. Following which, Jannette invited the Japanese Garden Society to support the realisation of the children's project.

Japanese Garden Society Honorary Vice President, Graham Hardman and Garden Designer, Robert Ketchell, submitted the garden concept and notes for the building of the garden using the children's ideas.

Rebecca Bollands took on the role of local coordinator and brought together representatives from the Coventry War Memorial Park and other potential partners with the JGS representatives to agree the way forward and how the children could be involved throughout the garden build.

Work started in September on the construction of the garden, following much detailed planning, materials ordering, delivery scheduling and organisation of JGS working parties. Feature boulders were selected (one was over two and a half tons!)

Chiel Construction built the retaining wall. Several visits by schools took place giving children insights into digging foundations, filling trenches with concrete and laying blocks to build the wall. The children even built a temporary wall to experience brick-laying. Following the construction and rendering of the wall, JGS could start work on the garden.

JGS volunteers added a cedar shingle roof to the wall. Eurovia removed the old grass and soil from garden designated area. Boulders were delivered and placed into position. Visiting schools were amazed at the size and age of the boulders - the largest over 3 billion years old! The framed archway was erected.

Paving: The Eurovia team expertly laid the silver-grey granite kerbstones which edge the gravel garden, and the high quality paving to the front of the garden for both the entrance and the 'viewing pods'. The public will be able to view the garden from these areas.

Planting: JGS Volunteers with some help from the children planted the 78 6ft Yew hedge plants, which surround the garden on the two non-walled sides. Specimen plants outside of the Yew hedge and around the archway on front of the garden were also planted. Including the Ginkgo trees, 2 large specimen pine trees. 34 posts and rope were also added.

28 tons of gravel were spread and raked smooth over the main garden. Pebbles and cobblestones (8 tons) were also laid. The Roof of the wall was completed and further planting added before the second 'UK COVID-19 Lockdown'. The Friends of the Memorial Park also created a Sensory Garden nearby.

Finally, benches, stone lanterns and cherry trees, leading to the Japanese Garden, were added. The garden was officially opened on 2 July 2021 by the Japanese Ambassador and the Lord Mayor of Coventry.

Below: Islands of Peace Japanese Garden in the Snow (Feb 2021).



Comments from the initial planning group

'We have to have one bridge to symbolise that we are one world...we are all humans so we need to get to know each other and understand each other.'
(Taitum, age 10)

'The world is fragile ... if there is damage in one part of the world it can impact on the rest of the world.'

'It is important ... we are all humans and if we fight then we will hurt ourselves, animals and the planet...'
(Kiran, age 10)

'The planet is fragile because anything can happen like global warming, air and water pollution... 'I have chosen a 'heart' because happiness is in the centre...'
(Cameron, age 10)

'The planet is fragile ... if we don't look after it properly and clean it up, we won't be able to use it.'
(Dylan, age 10)

'We have different ways of life, but a bridge unites us all.'
(Hayden, age 10)

'You can do little things to make bigger and better things...'
(Jay, age 10)

'If there wasn't so much plastic lots of animals wouldn't be dying... 'less things mean a better life...'
(Araya, age 10)



A garden for everyone

Coventry Young Ambassadors and their supporters send you a warm invitation to visit the garden. It is open to all, free of charge, every day. The children believe the garden will provide all of us with a special opportunity for reflection.

As this is a garden for the community it is a permanent resource for adults, children and young people around the world. It builds on the ideas that came from the pupils in the five Coventry schools which will now serve as a new starting point for further discussion of achieving peace, reconciliation and conserving Planet Earth. The ideas of islands and the importance of building bridges, are central to the garden's design, and symbolise both the challenges and the opportunities of reaching those goals.

We hope that visitors to the garden will include people of all ages, from Coventry and far beyond. We also hope that everyone will appreciate the way in which Japanese gardens, such as this one, are intended to be a way of finding and respecting a greater harmony with nature, alongside our focus of reaching out to other communities across the world.

It is especially appropriate that the garden has been built in the City of Coventry, which stands as a worldwide symbol of peace and reconciliation, and that it embodies the City's long lasting close links with Japan, not least with Hiroshima, and Coventry's membership of the International Cities of Peace Project.

We look forward to receiving visits from citizens of every country and we hope that, in addition to providing an opportunity for reflection on issues which affect us all, the garden's strong sense of tranquillity and calm and of balance with space and nature will enhance mindfulness and the sense of wellbeing for everyone.

It is hoped that in the future our Japanese Peace Garden will build links with other peace gardens around the world and will continue the work of bringing together education, art and culture in other Cities of Peace Schools Projects.

Welcome to our garden and please join us in aiming for a future of peace, reconciliation and protecting our Planet Earth.

Coventry Young Ambassadors

Julie Saito
International
Coordinator of
the UNESCO
Associated Schools
Network

'On the occasion of the inauguration of the Coventry Young Ambassadors Islands of Peace Garden, I would like to send my heartfelt congratulations and wishes to the students who participated in the Cities of Peace Schools Projects and to you all in Coventry on this special day.'

This innovative project combines all three thematic action areas of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network: Learning for global citizenship and a culture of peace and non-violence, reflecting about sustainability and fostering intercultural learning and the appreciation of cultural diversity and heritage.

Through tanzaku peace poems, noh theatre and the building of a karesansui Japanese Garden, you have brought together arts, culture and education to create a place of peace and mindfulness for you, the people of Coventry and visitors from around the world.

Your garden is a symbol for hope, reconciliation and transformative education, as it encapsulates the idea and vision of UNESCO to build peace in the minds of men, women and youth.

I was delighted to learn that schools in Coventry became members of the ASPnet through this project.

I would like to thank all involved in this inspiring project and I very much hope that this might be a 'seed' for more peace projects and gardens by schools around the world.

Thank you very much'.



Sponsors and Contributors

The following people and organisations have given generously of their time, energy, commitment and resources to the Cities of Peace Schools Projects. This was either directly, or indirectly through their support of the *Between the Stones* Project 'Getting to noh' education and outreach work, which included the Cities of Peace Schools Projects across the collaborative years of the BTS programme.

We are deeply grateful for their vision and support to help us uniquely combine art, culture and education, and to inspire peace, reconciliation and matters relating to the sustainability of our planet. It has always been our hope that the Coventry Young Ambassadors would inspire other children and adults through their work on these projects. They have done this on several occasions through their displays at Coventry Cathedral and the Japanese Embassy and ultimately through their legacy of the Islands of Peace Japanese Garden at the Coventry War Memorial Park.

Special thanks to the children and teachers of all the five schools who have participated in the Cities of Peace Schools Projects. The outcomes of all the projects are a result of their creativity and enthusiastic engagement.

It was a rare opportunity for the children and teachers of the five schools to be able to have a video-conference meeting with Keiko Ogura, a Hiroshima bomb survivor. Everyone wanted to send a huge thank you to Keiko Ogura and her colleagues for taking the time to create this amazing link between Hiroshima and Coventry.

A very generous donation from the City of Coventry kick-started a successful campaign to raise the necessary funds to build the garden. Eurovia Ltd, an international construction company that was working on the renovation of the city centre, generously offered to help with donations of materials and labour. Many other organisations and individuals also contributed to what was seen as such a worthwhile legacy project with the Coventry Young Ambassadors.

Organisations/Institutions

- *Between the Stones* Project
- Builders Supply Stores
- Chiel Construction Ltd
- Crown Waste
- Coventry Primary Schools
- Coventry Cathedral
- Coventry City Council
- Coventry War Memorial Park
- Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation (BTS Phase 3 Sponsor)
- Embassy of Japan, London (2019-2021 Japan-UK Season of Culture including BTS Phases 1-3)
- Eurovia

- Finnis Scott Foundation
- Friends of the Coventry War Memorial Park
- Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation
- Hansons Concrete
- Japan Foundation (BTS Phase 3 Sponsor)
- Japanese Garden Society
- Japan Society
- John Lewis & Partners
- London Digital Print
- Mayor of Coventry's Peace Committee
- Moss Timber (specialist wood for Hideta Kitazawa's demonstration talks)
- Mitsubishi Corporation International (Europe) Plc (BTS Phase 3 Sponsor)
- Mitsubishi Corporation, Corporate Management Support Office (EMEA)
- Mitsubishi Electric Europe B.V. (BTS Phase 2-3 Sponsor)
- National Lottery Awards for All
- Niwaki
- RED Partners (BTS initial website development support)
- Sakai Kuwahara Moving Service UK
- Sawin & Edwards (BTS Sponsorship in-kind)
- Severn Trent Community Fund
- Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust

Individuals

- Kimiko Aoki (organised the Keiko Ogura video link)
- Tracy Bailey
- Richard Benbow
- Sarah Bracken
- Rebecca Bollands (Coventry Cities of Peace Schools Projects Co-ordinator)
- Clive Barda (BTS Photographer)
- Margaret Caistor
- Jannette Cheong
- Sheila Christie
- Katie Croft
- Afton Cochrane
- Riichard Emmert
- Hannah Eastham
- Karen Ferguson
- Becky Fuller
- Graham Hardman (Garden Project Manager)
- Henrietta Heald
- Hideta Kitazawa
- Robert Ketchell (Garden Designer)
- Graham Marchant
- Maurice and Linda Mealing
- Gosia Madera (Garden Photographer)
- Rebecca Lee
- Keiko Ogura
- Kinue Oshima
- Heidi Potter
- Julie Rogers
- Nick Sanders
- Alys Turner
- Paul Vickers

We would also like to pay special tribute to the late Richard Machin, Head Teacher, Finham Primary School, Coventry.



With special thanks to all those who worked so hard to realise the Islands of Peace Garden for the children and people of Coventry.



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Coventry Young Ambassadors Japanese Peace Garden

コヴェントリー子ども大使 日本平和庭園

Islands of Peace

平和の島

