

# Acknowledgements

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## Published August 2006 by:

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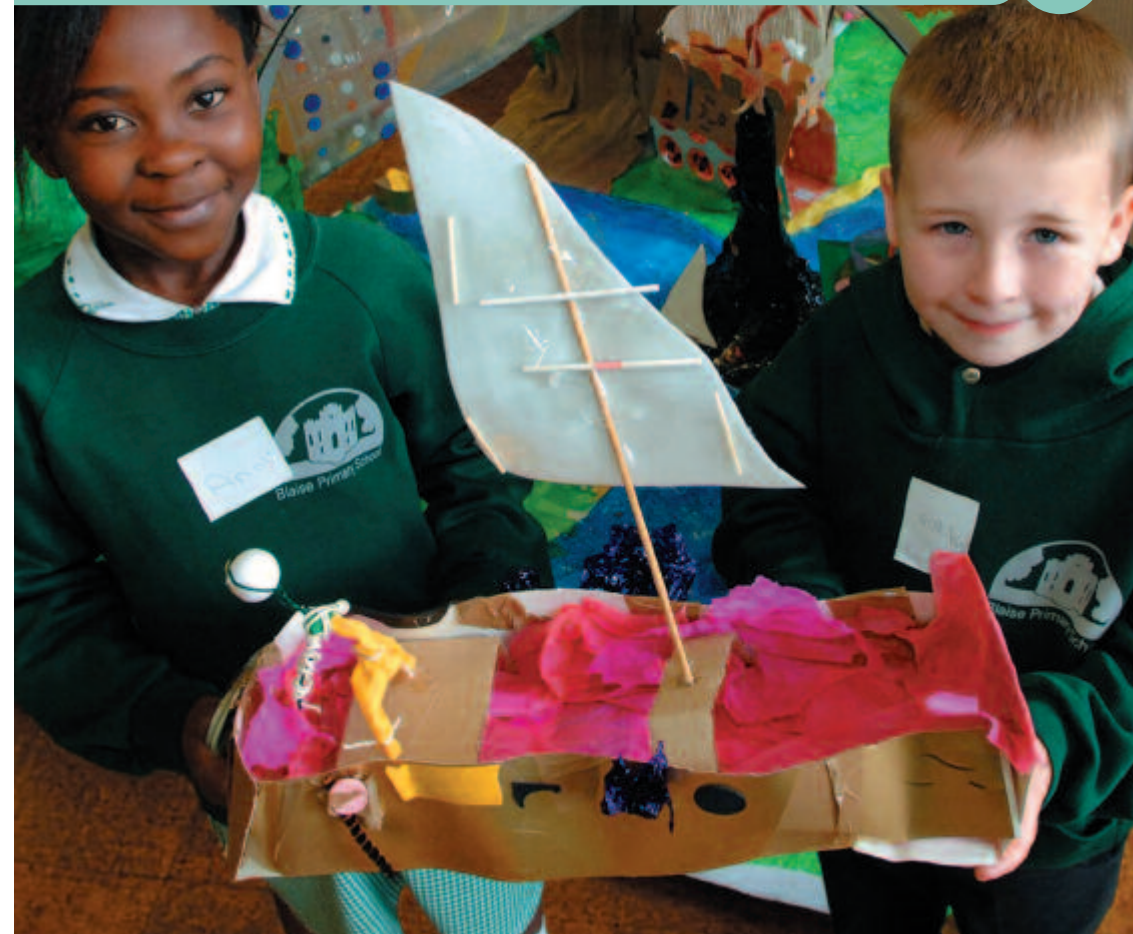
## Designed by: Qube Design Associates Limited.

## Printed by: Doveton Press.

Cover photo: Annie Muteniwak-Wenda and Nathan Groves from Blaise Primary, Bristol with models from the Amazing Bridges project (Neil Phillips).

# BRUNEL 200 NEWSLETTER

Issue 3 Autumn 2006 [www.brunel200.com](http://www.brunel200.com)





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## Brunel 200

Over the past eight months Brunel 200 has helped to organise and promote a wide range of exciting activities that have taken place across the South West to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. These have included innovative arts projects, stunning new publications, amazing exhibitions, fun-packed festivals, guided walks and talks, radio shows, workshops, Brunel-inspired beer and bottled water, and lots of inspirational educational events for young people.

Some of the activities will continue into the autumn when we will also have additional events including the Bristol Brunel 200 finale in September and the premiere of the Swindon opera *Brunel: the little man in the tall hat*. Check the Brunel 200 website at

1. Four Brunels taking part in the Swindon Brunel 200 Festival (David White).  
2. Emerald Ensemble performing A Radius of Curves (Mark Simmons).

[www.brunel200.com](http://www.brunel200.com) for news bulletins and regularly updated calendars of events.

As this is the final Brunel 200 newsletter, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners who have made such a magnificent contribution to these celebrations and to all those who have joined in the events.

**Andrew Kelly**  
*Director Brunel 200*

3. Bristol Old Vic Theatre School's Brunel production (Mark Simmons).



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## Bristol Finale Weekend

The official finale to Bristol's Brunel 200 celebrations takes place over the weekend of 15-17 September.

Among the activities are:

- A free exhibition at the Create Centre.
- Free guided tours of Clifton Suspension Bridge.
- Performances by Travelling Light, the Family Deaf Centre, Elmfield School, Show of Strength, Dance Bristol and Triangulation at various venues across the city.
- Broadcasting of the radio drama Brunel 2206 on Bristol Hospital Radio.
- Unveiling of a mural at Bristol Temple Meads accompanied by music from the Brunel Sinfonia.

- The Brunel 200 Banquet held in Brunel's Passenger Shed at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum.
- The Isambard Project at Underfall Yard showing work to date on the construction of a Cornish pilot gig named in honour of Brunel.
- A lecture about Brunel's little-known swivel bridge in Cumberland Basin.

A special promotional leaflet outlining the programme of events has been produced and details are also on the Brunel 200 website at [www.brunel200.com](http://www.brunel200.com)

4. Performers from Dance Bristol (Mark Simmons).  
5. Performer from Elmfield School (Paul Box).





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## Brunel 200 in Swindon



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6. A Brunel tunnel paraded through Swindon (Sam Frost).

7. Finale fireworks (Steve Causer).

8. Brunel and dancers (Steve Causer).

Swindon, home of the original Great Western Railway engine house and works, provided the setting for a spectacular Brunel 200 festival in July.

Events included:

- Performances of the show *Building Bridges* at the Wyvern Theatre.
- The opening of the exhibition *The Railway Comes to Town*, also at the Wyvern.
- A schools' science event at Ridgeway School, Wroughton.
- The Big Town Centre Street Festival! featuring a carnival parade and the Brunel Conga Line.
- The Rodbourne Walking Trail.
- Crossing the Great Divide Railway Village Festival and Children's Fete featuring local performers, community groups and Bristol artists Cirque Bijou.
- The sensational Finale at the Park with fireworks and pyrotechnic displays.

The festival featured excerpts from Janice Thompson Performance Trust's newly commissioned Swindon youth opera *Brunel: the little man in the tall hat* which will be performed at St Mark's Church in the Railway Village on 16 and 17 September.

See the Brunel 200 Swindon website at [www.swindon.gov.uk/brunel200](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/brunel200) for further details of activities in 2006.

## Brunel in South Devon

Brunel first came to South Devon in 1836 during work on the railway west of Exeter. He was so impressed with the area that he regularly returned for personal visits, as well as on business, and in 1847 he bought land at Watcombe near Torbay where he hoped to build his retirement home.

As part of the Brunel 200 celebrations, South Devon has enjoyed the fabulous Newton Abbot Atmospheric Event along with guided walks, the erection of new interpretive boards, 'Meet Mr Brunel' events, vintage bus and steam railway trips, an exhibition at Torquay Museum and performances of the community play *A Wonderful Alteration*.

Devon Library and Information Service has produced a booklet entitled *Devon's Brunel Journey* based on the original illustrations of the South Devon rail route by William Dawson.

The beautiful gardens of Brunel Manor, site of Brunel's proposed family home at Watcombe, have been open to the public and a fully illustrated book telling the fascinating story of the estate and Brunel's life in Torbay will be published shortly.



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9. Broadlands Viaduct is crossed by a steam train (Torbay Development Agency).

10. A view of the staff celebrating at the opening of Torre Station in 1848 (Torquay Museum).





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## Brunel 200 in Cornwall

Brunel's association with Cornwall includes the building of a stunning rail route running all the way down to Penzance. The line featured innovative wooden viaducts (now lost) and Brunel's last engineering triumph, the magnificent Royal Albert Bridge.

Brunel also had maritime connections to the county through the person of Lt James Hosken, RN, a Cornishman who served on both the ss *Great Western* and *Great Britain*. Boilers patented by the Cornish engineer Richard Trevithick were used on the *Great Britain*, and Brunel's *Great Eastern* helped lay the telegraph cable that linked Porthcurno in Cornwall to Bombay. In addition, the original chains for the Clifton Suspension Bridge were made by the Copperhouse Foundry at Hayle in Cornwall.

Events that have taken place in Cornwall as part of the Brunel 200 celebrations have included the Saltash Festival, exhibitions at Porthcurno Telegraph Museum and Falmouth Art Gallery, workshops at Penlee House Gallery and Museum, and the development of a Brunel museum trail linking 14 Cornish sites.

Actors taking part in the launch day of the South West Great Reading Adventure, the first event of the Brunel 200 year, came to Penzance station as part of their whistle-stop trip across the region promoting *Around the World in Eighty Days*.

September sees the opening of the exhibition *The End of the Line: Brunel in Cornwall* at the Royal Cornwall Museum. This forms part of a major initiative by the museum to create a definitive record of Brunel's railway creations in the county, from track and viaducts to stations and signal boxes.

Emma Lloyd, the museum's Curator of Social History, said:

*"Although Brunel only spent a short time in Cornwall his impact was huge. Brunel and the coming of the railway heralded a new chapter in Cornish history with mass tourism replacing tin as the boom industry. The building of the Royal Albert Bridge and the laying down of track with the Cornwall and West Cornwall Railways enabled Cornwall to become truly accessible."*



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11. Gover Viaduct on the Cornwall Railway  
(Elton Collection: Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust).

12. View of the Royal Albert Bridge, 1859.

13. Cover of children's verse book celebrating the building of the Great Eastern, c 1858 (private collection).



# Brunel 200 in Stroud

14. Brunel cutting his 18 foot-birthday cake at Stroud in April (Ian Mackintosh).

15. Brunel discussing plans for his celebration banquet with Anne Mackintosh and Camilla Hale of Brunel 200 Stroud.



## Brunel 200 in Schools



Stroud in Gloucestershire is home to a splendid goods shed built in 1845 by Brunel to provide cover for the transferring of goods between railway trains and road vehicles. It is the only known survivor of its type and was rescued from demolition by Stroud Preservation Trust. The Trust hopes to be able to convert the building to form a vibrant community exhibition space.

Brunel 200 events in Stroud have included guided walks, talks, a drama performance, a poetry competition and a banquet.

The exhibition *The Railway Comes to Stroud* held at the Stroud Subscription Rooms told the fascinating story of

the building of the line, its impact on people's lives and its evolution over 150 years.

The final event of the Stroud programme will be an engineering seminar at Stroud High School in September, which will be led by leading engineers and aimed at encouraging young people to tackle engineering projects associated with the Great Western Railway.

See the Brunel 200 Stroud website at [www.brunel200stroud.org.uk](http://www.brunel200stroud.org.uk) for further details.

16. Brunel (headmaster Tony Philips) with Azmeena Hussain, a pupil at Chester Park Junior School (Paul Box).

17. Glen Chadburn and Grace Beese, pupils from St Bernard's Primary (Paul Box).

18. Illustrator Simon Gurr with pupils from Blaise Primary (Neil Phillips).

The Brunel 200 educational residencies programme unlocked opportunities for creative, hands-on learning that stimulated the curiosity of young people to explore the many different sides to Brunel's life and work.

The varied activities included:

A flotilla of fantastic ships created by pupils at Chester Park Junior School in Fishponds working with sculptor Barbara Ash.

Amazing hybrid inventions devised by children at St Bernard's Primary, Shirehampton working with Toby Hulse and Pickled Image.

A remarkable drama and poetry performance by hearing impaired children from Elmfield School for Deaf People and the new Fairfield

School, which will be repeated as part of the Bristol Brunel 200 finale.

The creation of an enormous bridge installation in the school hall at Blaise Primary led by the artists Paper, Scissors, Stone.

A comic book workshop led by Simon Gurr and Jim Freebury at Blaise Primary as part of the school's Brunel Fortnight.

A tour of primary and secondary schools of Richard Ellam's ingenious working models of Brunel's designs.

A touring Brunel Puppet Show, which visited nursery and primary schools.

Contact Sue Sanctuary, the Brunel 200 Education Coordinator, at [sue.sanctuary@businesswest.co.uk](mailto:sue.sanctuary@businesswest.co.uk) for further details.

# Brunel 200 Programme September and Beyond

Among the autumn highlights of the Brunel 200 programme in the South West are:

## Until 4 September

### **The Railway Comes to Town**

T: 01793 463 725

Exhibition continuing at Wyvern Theatre, Swindon.

[www.swindon.gov.uk/brunel200](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/brunel200)

## Until end of October

### **The Nine Lives of I K Brunel**

T: 0117 926 0680

Exhibition continuing at the ss *Great Britain*, Bristol.

[www.ssgreatbritain.org](http://www.ssgreatbritain.org)

## Until December

### **The Forces That Made Brunel**

T: 0117 915 500

Exhibition continuing at Explore At-Bristol. [www.at-bristol.org.uk](http://www.at-bristol.org.uk)

## 15 September

### **Work of Genius: I K Brunel's engineering achievements and their legacy**

E: [L.Pursell@bath.ac.uk](mailto:L.Pursell@bath.ac.uk)

Symposium at STEAM, Swindon.

[www.bath.ac.uk/ace/events/index.html](http://www.bath.ac.uk/ace/events/index.html)

## 15-17 September

### **Brunel 200 Bristol Finale**

Mini-festival at various venues in the city. [www.brunel200.com](http://www.brunel200.com)

## 15-16 September

### **Brunel Remembered**

T: 01752 844255

Mini-festival in Saltash, Cornwall.

## 16 September

### **High Sheriff's Concert**

T: 0117 946 8183

Orchestral performance at Bristol Cathedral.

## 16-17 September

### **Brunel: the little man in the tall hat**

T: 01793 463 725

Opera performance in Swindon.

[www.swindon.gov.uk/brunel200](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/brunel200)

## 22-24 September

### **Brunel displays at Weston Super Quilts 2006**

E: [sjhart@fsmail.net](mailto:sjhart@fsmail.net)

Exhibition at the Winter Gardens, Weston Super Mare.

[www.weston-quilters.org.uk](http://www.weston-quilters.org.uk)

## 23 September

### **Brunel's Kingdom**

T: 01793 463 725

Choral performance at STEAM, Swindon.

[www.swindon.gov.uk/brunel200](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/brunel200)

## 30 September - Christmas 2006

### **The End of the Line: Brunel in Cornwall**

T: 01872 272205

Exhibition at Royal Cornwall Museum.

[www.royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk](http://www.royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk)

## 2-6 October

### **Oh, I Do Like to be Beside the Seaside**

T: 01803 329333

Brunel-themed painting breaks at Brunel Manor, Torquay.

## 15-16 October

### **Coming Home**

T: 0845 40 24 001

Musical retelling of the adventures of the ss *Great Britain* at St George's, Bristol.

## 24 October

### **Heroes of the Industrial Revolution**

T: 0117 928 8519

Lecture at University of Bristol – first of Autumn Arts lecture series on the theme '*Designing a New World: art and industry*'.

## 18 November

### **Brunel's Arrival at Chippenham**

T: 01249 721171

Re-enactment as part of Chippenham Festival.

## 20 November

### **Immigration, Diversity and Belonging**

T: 0117 928 7777

Lecture at University of Bristol – first of series of three linked to Brunel 200.

## 4 December

### **Bristol: Science City**

T: 0117 928 7777

Lecture at University of Bristol.

A regularly-updated calendar of events is available on the Brunel 200 website. Programme may be subject to change at any time: check with venue/organiser to confirm.