



Press Release

Electric December: Visible and Invisible 10 December

Take two pupils from St Bedes School, Tom Balson and Joyann Boyce, team them up with researcher Anna Farthing and the result is two short films, produced using the Digital Story format which aims to test new ways of using museum archives for independent learning.

The trio spent several weekends at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, looking at archive images, interviewing the public, taking photographs and writing scripts.

Tom's interest in photography fuelled him to find images of young people of his age working on boats around the world. The images were sourced from The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum's new online digital resource, *Images of the Empire*, and from Bristol's Museum's Galleries and Archives. He created a piece that looks at Bristol's Harbourside today, and asks where all the young men's jobs have gone.

Joyann chose to take a closer look at the anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. Whilst appreciating that many wishes for freedom have come true, her piece also reminds us of the children who are still enslaved around the world today.

The results of this action style research will help museums provide rich learning experiences for both educational groups and members of the public in the future. Museums are increasingly encouraging people to find and tell stories that are meaningful to them and digital media offers an ideal tool as there is no risk of damaging the original artefact.

Electric December is Watershed's widely acclaimed online digital advent calendar, which offers a new and totally unique digital present every day from 1 Dec - counting you down to Christmas.

Notes to editors

- Both the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, through the Images of Empire archive, and Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives through the creation of Bristol Stories for the new Museum of Bristol, are leading the way in opening up access and providing opportunities for local people to participate, create and learn. For further information please visit <http://www.empiremuseum.co.uk>
- Anna Farthing's research is supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.
- Electric December is an example of the work contributing to Bristol's bid to The Digital Challenge, which offers a £7m prize to develop a showcase zone for eGovernment and ICT innovation - find out more at <http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/1716>
- Find out more about Electric December, and download images and press releases at <http://www.electricdecember.org/06/press>
- Electric December is a Watershed project supported by Bristol City Council and Bristol Evening Post.
- You can see the last seven years of Electric December now at www.electricdecember.org
- For further press information contact Taranjit Bahra or Anja Dalton on 0117 927 6444 or taranjit@watershed.co.uk / Anja.Dalton@watershed.co.uk