Today’s Swindon owes much to Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Two important decisions by Brunel turned the little market town into the largest town in Wiltshire.

Brunel’s first decision was to plan a northerly route for the Great Western Railway line linking Bristol to London in 1833. The route took the railway through Swindon.

The second decision, in 1840, was to build the Railway Workshop close to Swindon Station.

This picture, painted by Edward Snell in 1849, shows the huge workshop at Swindon. At the workshop, mechanics kept locomotives from the GWR in good working order.

Within five years of opening, the Works was twice as big as planned. Brunel helped to design and construct the Works buildings, some of which we can still visit today. He also helped plan the houses where the men employed at the Works would live with their families.

Snell’s painting shows the “village” with terraced houses, a school, a church and a landscaped park where a cricket match is being played. In the 1850s, a library, baths and a covered market for the workers and their families were added.

Today, Swindon is much bigger than it was 150 years ago, but Brunel’s Railway Village is at the very heart of the town.

The buildings we now know as STEAM, the National Monuments Records Centre, Isambard House and the Designer Outlet Village are all part of Swindon’s railway history.

Next time you are walking from the town centre to the Designer Outlet Centre, have a look around you - you are passing through the finest early railway village and engineering works in the world!

I am delighted to invite Swindon residents, community groups and visitors to enjoy the Brunel 200 programme - an impressive range of events, activities, exhibitions and projects to celebrate Swindon’s fascinating railway heritage. Lots of the events are free of charge, open to everyone and provide unique opportunities for learning about Brunel, our town and our heritage.

I really hope you will learn, discover and enjoy Swindon’s Brunel 200 Celebrations!

Ray Fisher
Mayor
March 2006

Don’t miss our other great activities in this brochure. On page 16 there’s a train for you to colour in - and prizes to be won!
Brunel’s Birthday Party
Come and celebrate “Brunel’s Birthday” at STEAM and meet Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who will be there ‘in person’. There will be cakes and games - all the things you associate with a good birthday party!

When Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 April

Dig It!
Six young people’s support groups have been tasked with designing, planning and building town centre show gardens, inspired by Brunel or Victorian Planting. The support groups and the locations of their projects are: TWIGS: therapeutic work in gardening in Swindon - Brunel North, SMASH: project for youth mentoring support - Brunel West, STEP: Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project - Wharf Green, British Conservation Trust Volunteers - Brunel West, Foyer - Intel Roundabout, Stepping Forward - Theatre Square.

Where Town Centre locations, as above
When From early May
Price FREE
Info 01793 520592
www.new-mechanics.com

The Rolling Exhibition
Discover Swindon’s story of Brunel, the ‘Wild West’, and the ‘Town That Built Itself’ during the Victorian Age. The rolling story of this summer’s celebrations will also unfold, recording local events, throughout the celebrations.

Where The Community Crossroads
When Monday 1 May to Tuesday 31 October, 12pm to 4pm every Saturday and Sunday.
Special opening for groups by arrangement
Price FREE
Info www.swindontowncentre.org.uk

Price Reduced admission on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 April
Info www.swindon.gov.uk/steam

Brunel’s 18 Duke Street Office - a reconstruction!
Visit Brunel in his 18 Duke Street Office. The great man himself is seated at his desk, surrounded by drawings and equipment, working long hours to produce a report to present to the Gauge Commissioners who will make a decision over the future of his beloved Broad Gauge railway.

Brunel and the Battle of the Gauges
Take a journey through the “Battle of the Gauges”. This exciting exhibition tells the story of the bitter struggle between Brunel’s Broad Gauge railway and the Standard Gauge used by the other British railway companies. Hear both sides of the story and see original documents and objects belonging to Brunel. Be a Gauge Commissioner and cast your vote on which gauge you think should have won the “Battle of the Gauges”.

Price Reduced admission on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 April
Info www.swindon.gov.uk/steam

Toad’s Great Western Adventure
Sixth Sense Theatre Company
“Wind in the Willows” lovable rascal Toad toured 39 Swindon schools this Spring… in a stolen steam train! Inspired by the Brunel 200 celebrations, naughty Toad swapped stealing motorcars for stealing a train.

Join the fun at www.sixthsensetheatrecompany.co.uk

www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk
www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk
www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk
On the Wrong Line
or a return to rational railway
with Christian Wolmar
What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of rail privatisation?
In his latest book “On the Wrong Line” Christian Wolmar argues for reassembling the old into a new functioning rail network.
Where The Community Crossroads
When Monday 8 May, 7.30pm
Price £3 £2
Info 01793 466454

Brunel: In Love With the Impossible
An illustrated presentation with Andrew Kelly
Brunel changed the face of the world and left a lasting legacy for the people of the South West of England.
Director of Brunel 200, Andrew Kelly, has brought together a collection of specially commissioned essays and scores of high quality illustrations to create a fabulous, informative and celebratory book, “Brunel: In Love With the Impossible”.
Where STEAM - Museum of the Great Western Railway
When Monday 8 May, 12pm
Price £4 £3
Info Tel: 01793 466626

Swindon's Big Trip
The annual mass summer trip to the seaside was one of the highlights of the year for Swindon's Great Western Railway workers in the 19th and 20th Centuries. A new book to be published in 2006 tells the story of the GWR Trip Week, people’s experiences and the seaside resorts they loved.
Its author, Rosa Matheson, will give an illustrated talk recounting some of those holiday stories and memories. This talk is organised by the Friends of Swindon Museum & Art Gallery.
Where Swindon Museum & Art Gallery,
Bath Road, Old Town
When Friday 19 May, 7.30pm
Price Tickets £4.50 (£3 for Members of the Friends of Swindon Museum & Art Gallery)
Info www.swindon.gov.uk/heritage

www.swindonfestivalofliterature.co.uk
www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk
www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk
www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk
www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk
www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk
A Midsummer Film Spectacular
Taking place in the hangers and grounds of the Science Museum’s large objects collection.
Come along for a unique programme of events celebrating the amazing machines that have characterised Swindon’s industrial heritage; from Brunel’s world-leading GWR Works, via the production and operation of Spitfires in WW2, to the automotive and other industrial pioneers of today.

The full programme of events will be announced in May, including film listings, children’s activities, tours of the collection and more.

When Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 July
Where The Science Museum, Wroughton
Price To be confirmed
Info www.swindonfilmfestival.co.uk
Tel: 01793 466454

Bridge Building
Build your own mini Clifton suspension bridge with the help of a professional artist.

Where The Brunel Shopping Centre
When Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 July 10.30am to 4pm
Price FREE
Info 01793 525857

The Railway Comes to Town
The story of Brunel’s transformation of Swindon from a sleepy market town to a dynamic industrial setting is told through a series of photographs, prints and postcards of people and places.

This exhibition is run in partnership with English Heritage, STEAM, Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, the Civic Trust and Arts Services.

Where Wyvern Theatre
When Friday 7 July, 7.30pm.
Saturday 8 July, 2.30pm and 7.30pm
Prices £11 £10 for evening performances, £7 £6 for matinees
Info www.wyverntheatre.org.uk
01793 524481

Building Bridges
The Arts Community in Swindon has joined forces to produce “Building Bridges”. The show will celebrate the ageless spirit of creativity, inspired by Brunel, which is still prevalent in Swindon today. The two evening performances will feature favourite local companies. The young people’s matinee includes local schools and youth groups.

Dorcan Performing Arts Group will be presenting their newly commissioned work which has been funded by Patheon UK through Swindon Borough’s Council Percent for Art Scheme.

“Building Bridges” is supported by Brunel FM, Swindon’s new commercial radio station launching summer 2006.

Where Wyvern Theatre
When Friday 7 July to Sunday 16 July and features activities, performances, creative and fun events which the whole family will enjoy!

This year’s annual Swindon Festival is the flagship event of our Brunel 200 celebrations. The Festival runs from Friday 7 to Sunday 16 July and features activities, performances, creative and fun events which the whole family will enjoy!

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This exhibition is run in partnership with English Heritage, STEAM, Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, the Civic Trust and Arts Services.

Where Wyvern Theatre
When Friday 7 July to Monday 4 September
Price FREE
Info www.swindon.gov.uk/artsandculture

Youth Information Swindon Expressive Arts Project
A group of young people aged between 14 and 25 are being given the opportunity to celebrate Brunel’s work using imagery and colour.

They will explore Brunel’s work through photographs, pictures and postcards and interpret the images through expressive urban art.

Where Town Centre
When Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 July, 10am to 4pm
Info www.youthinfoswindon.org
A sensational FREE closing event to the Swindon Brunel Festival will be held at The Park (Faringdon Road) Sunday 16 July, 8pm.

Featuring breath-taking performances and music leading up to a spectacular fire show and pyrotechnics.

The Big Brunel Dance
Swindon Dance National Dance Agency will be bringing the Swindon Brunel 200 Festival alive with their unique brand of dance in the community. Part of the national Big Dance celebration, you are all invited to take to the streets and dance!

Crossing the Great Divide and the Children’s Fete
Linking the past, present and future, “Crossing the Great Divide” will be a day of spectacular celebration held in the very areas Brunel and Gooch founded.

This year, The New Mechanic’s Trust is working with local performers, community groups and Bristol artists Cirque Bijou, to take the traditional “Children’s Fete” dating from 1866 to new heights.

An exciting sound and light installation in the GWR Tunnel Entrance will take you across the time zone.

The Big Town Centre Street Festival!
The FREE fun starts Saturday 15 July, 10.30am with the traditional Carnival Parade, themed “Brunel: Engineer of the Imagination.”

Followed by one BIG day of street theatre, comedy and music with the accent firmly on creativity and invention. This one is not to be missed!!

The Rodbourne Trail
Rodbourne Living Story is a community based project, which tells the story of the Rodbourne area of Swindon.

Join a fun walking trail, at your own pace, around the area of Rodbourne to look for clues which bring together the story of this community.

Copies of the trail are available from the National Monuments Records Centre.

When Sunday 16 July, 11am to 5pm
Price FREE

Info www.livingstory.org.uk

Great Exhibition of 1851
Children from twenty different Primary and Infant schools in Swindon will visit The Ridgeway School to re-create the Great Exhibition.

Each school will present work on a famous scientist and, combining science with performing arts, they will bring their discoveries to life.

They will also take part in fun and exciting workshops, which will include a Rainforest Roadshow, the Science of Photography and designing and making Jet Toys.

Where The Ridgeway School, Wroughton
When Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 July, 9.30am to 2.30pm

School’s Science Festival

The Big Town Centre Street Festival!
The FREE fun starts Saturday 15 July, 10.30am with the traditional Carnival Parade, themed “Brunel: Engineer of the Imagination.”

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An exciting sound and light installation in the GWR Tunnel Entrance will take you across the time zone.

Where The Park (Faringdon Road); The Works; GWR Tunnel Entrance; the Railway Village and the Community Crossroads
When Sunday 16 July, 12pm
Price FREE

Info www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk

www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk

10

11
Heritage Open Days at the Railway Cottage
Visit STEAM’s unique Railway Cottage. Get a real idea of what living conditions were like to railway workers in the early 1900s.
Where: The Railway Cottage, 34 Faringdon Road
When: Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 September, 11am to 3pm
Price: £1 adults, 50p children

Swindon’s Secrets: Brunel 200 Guided Tours
Take a 90-minute walk around some of the hidden gems of Swindon’s industrial past, in a tour conceived by English Heritage, The National Trust, STEAM and The New Mechanics’ Trust.
Where: Leaves from the National Monuments Record Centre reception
When: On Sundays 30 April, 28 May, 25 June, 30 July, 27 August and 24 September from 11am
Price: FREE, but places must be booked with English Heritage on 01793 414797

Works of Genius: I K Brunel’s engineering achievements and their legacy
A Brunel 200 symposium organised by English Heritage and the University of Bath on the date of Brunel’s death. Experts on Brunel will present the findings of recent research on topics such as his adventurous designs for bridges, his use of cast iron, his spectacular ships and his relationships with other engineers.
Where: STEAM - Museum of the Great Western Railway
When: Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September
Price: Adults £6.60, Children £4.20, Senior Citizens £4.30, Family Tickets £16

Swindon Railway Festival:
The Swindon Railway Festival pays tribute to Brunel, the great engineer who shaped Swindon’s future and the town’s glorious railway heritage. Visiting locomotives, model railway layouts, trade stands, displays and exhibitions, and talks by railway experts, all feature during this weekend festival.
Where: STEAM - Museum of the Great Western Railway
When: Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September
Price: To be confirmed

Brunel: The Little Man in the Tall Hat
The Janice Thompson Performance Trust presents Brunel: The Little Man in the Tall Hat, by Betty Roe and Marian Lines. This exciting youth opera has been commissioned especially for the Brunel 200 celebrations. Over 100 young people set off on the annual ‘Swindon trip’. On their journey they bring to life the story and achievements of Brunel.
Where: St Mark’s Church, Railway Village
When: Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September at 4pm and 7.30pm
Price: £6 £5

The Railway Children
Be entranced by the magic of this classic family favourite in an exciting open air theatre production at Lydiard Park. Heartbreak Productions bring to life this classic children’s novel by E Nesbitt. An ideal family show (age 6+). Bring a picnic, refreshments & seating for a delightful summer evening treat.
Where: Lydiard Park, Lydiard Tregoze
When: Thursday 24 August, 6.30pm
Price: Tickets £10 adult, £5 child.
Info: Swindon Tourist Information Centre, 01793 466454.

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Wilsthires GWR FM Extravaganza

GWR FM offer you the chance to win your height in CDs and DVDs. All you need to do is attend at least TWO Swindon Brunel 200 events and collect the ‘passwords’, which will be found on the GWR FM stand.

For a chance to win log onto www.gwrfm.co.uk and look for the Brunel 200 page to register your details and the passwords. Alternatively write down the passwords and the events you have attended and send them to:

Brunel 200, GWR FM,
Chiseldon House, Stonehill Green,
Westlea, Swindon SN5 7HB.

All correct entries will be put into the prize draw, a winner will be selected at random and notified by GWR FM by Saturday 30 September.

(Please note that the “Building Bridges” event at the Wyvern Theatre on 7 and 8 July is not included in this competition).

Arkells’ Brunel Bonanza

Fancy a tour around one of the finest steam breweries anywhere in the world? Swindon brewer Arkells can make your dream come true. Arkells began brewing beer at the same time Brunel was completing his great railways works in Swindon. Then, a pint of Arkells real ale provided welcome relief for the hot and thirsty workers after a day in the engine sheds. Arkells Brunel Bonanza is being run through the brewery’s pubs and independent Arkells retailers this summer.

Answer six questions correctly and you could win a tour of the famous brewery and a case of Arkells 3B beer to enjoy at home.

Where Arkells’ pubs
When Throughout May and June
Price FREE
Info www.arkells.com

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Send your finished colour picture to me. The best three will win family tickets to STEAM Museum of the Great Western Railway.

Send your entry to: Sid the Swindon Steam Train, Colouring Competition, Swindon Brunel 200, Wyvern Theatre, Theatre Square, Swindon, SN1 1QN

Your entry must reach us no later than Thursday 1 June. Don’t forget to include your name, address and age with your entry.

Find the Swindon Brunel 200 venues

Community Crossroads
(The old Railway Museum) From the centre of Swindon, head north up Bridge Street then left at the junction with Faringdon Road. The venue is on Faringdon Road between its junctions with East Street and Emelyn Square.

GWR Tunnel Entrance
Opposite the Mechanics Institute on Emlyn Square. Find it from the town centre, head north up Bridge Street and turn left at the junction with Faringdon Road. Emlyn Square is the second turning on the right.

Lydiard Park

The Park (Faringdon Road)
Centre of the Railway Village approximately 3 miles from the M4. Take J16 of the M4 and follow the signposts for the A3102 (Swindon Town Centre).

At second roundabout take the third exit onto Woottton Bassett Road, at the next mini roundabout, take the first exit into Westcott Place (B4289), at the next roundabout, called Park Lane, you will see The Park is immediately in front of you.

National Monuments Record Centre
J16 M4 Swindon, straight over seven roundabouts following brown tourist signs to Outlet Centre On Great Western Way.

Railway Cottage
At 34 Faringdon Road. For directions, see Community Crossroads.

Science Museum, Wroughton
Is situated off the A4361 Devizes road, south of Swindon and the M4. From the motorway, exit at J15 or J16 and follow signs for Wroughton and look out for the brown Science Museum signs.

St Mark’s Church
St Mark’s Church is on Church Place, off Park Lane opposite The Park (Faringdon Road).

STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway
Follow the brown tourist signs for the Outlet Centre, Great Western Heritage Area, or the ‘M’ for STEAM. STEAM can be found to the left of the Food Court entrance of the Outlet Centre.

Swindon Museum and Art Gallery
Adjacent to the Community Heritage Museum in Bath Road, Old Town, Swindon. From Swindon town centre follow Victoria Road to its junction with Bath Road. It’s on the corner opposite the offices of the Swindon Advertiser and Pizza Express.

Wyvern Theatre
Situated in the town centre, 10 minutes from the M4 (J15 or J16) and the A419 and A420. Follow the signs to the town centre and when approaching the Magic Roundabout you will pick up the signs to the Wyvern Theatre where there are multi storey car parks to the right of the theatre and an open air car park to the front of the theatre.

For up to date travel information visit: www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk

www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk
Brunel 200 is supported by the Swindon Cultural Partnership.

Swindon Cultural Partnership was founded in January 2006 and exists to make Swindon a better place to live, work and visit. Managed by Arts & Business South West, its partners include Arts Council England South West, Swindon Borough Council, the New Swindon Company, the University of Bath in Swindon and the town’s business, community and voluntary sectors.

The Swindon Brunel 200 Celebrations are co-ordinated and managed by Swindon Borough Council.

The Swindon Brunel 200 team need to know what you think about our Brunel 200 celebrations, our town, our culture and what it is like to live in Swindon in 2006. Please send your feedback to:

Post
Swindon Brunel 200,
Wyvern Theatre, Theatre Square,
Swindon, SN1 1QN

Internet
www.swindonbrunel200.co.uk

Email
feedback@swindonbrunel200.co.uk

Telephone
01793 463 725

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Brochure Sponsors

New Swindon Company
Print production to ensure that every school child in Swindon has a copy of this brochure.

Public Art Swindon
Works to commission contemporary permanent and temporary artworks for the Borough.

Frequency
Production of the ‘Brunel Sticker Stamps’. Supporting the local creative scene. www.frequencyalive.co.uk

Marketing and Design
www.secretagentmarketing.co.uk
www.davidmarlowdesign.co.uk

Swindon Brunel 200 acknowledgements

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