

13/11/05: Press Release for immediate distribution

EMPIRE MUSEUM APPROVED AS BRISTOL'S NEWEST WEDDING VENUE

The exquisite rooms at the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum have today been granted a license to host wedding ceremonies. For the first time ever couples will be able to exchange vows in the magnificent Grade 1 listed building, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. The wedding venue will also be available for civil partnerships and naming ceremonies.

The news will allow the Museum to launch a special Brunel wedding package in 2006 to help celebrate the 200th anniversary of the great engineer's birth. The package will offer exclusive use of all the approved rooms plus the option to arrive in a horse drawn carriage.

One of the approved spaces, the Brunel Suite, comprises an intimate Victorian boardroom with original features, a second room for signing the register and a grand 19th Century oak staircase. Lavish, large-scale weddings and receptions can also be accommodated in The Passenger Shed, designed by Brunel on the scale of a Cathedral with an impressive hammer beam roof.

As an experienced Wedding Planner overseas, the Museum's Event Manager Katie Webb is delighted to accept the new license, "I know people will be amazed to find this historic gem in the heart of the city so we're really excited to be able to offer it for such special occasions".

To arrange a tour of the venue or obtain a copy of the wedding brochure, please call Katie in the Events Team on 01179 25 4980.

ENDS

For further information and venue images please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

The Passenger Shed

- The Passenger Shed was built in 1841 and had the largest roof span in existence at that time, measuring 200ft in length.
- This Passenger Shed is one of the largest venues in the South West measuring 1500 square metres, and can accommodate banquets for up to 650 guests
- The venue has hosted numerous popular events such as Bristol Evening Post Wedding Fairs, Hobbs Fashion Show, CAMRA Beer Festival and recently the BBC Children's Antique's Roadshow.

The British Empire & Commonwealth Museum

- The British Empire & Commonwealth Museum is the only national Museum to present the 500-year history of the British empire and the legacy of this colonial history on modern, multicultural Britain. The Museum opened in September 2002 and was short-listed in May 2004 for the title of 'European Museum of the Year'.
- The Museum is a registered charity and is independent of local or central Government.
- The Museum building was nominated as a part of a 'World Heritage Site' due to its importance to the heritage of British railways.
- £4 million was spent to restore the building to fulfil its current role as a National Museum and unique events venue.
- The Museum building was the World's first railway terminus and was built before London could boast a structure of equal importance at Paddington. The Museum Trust rescued the site after 50 years of dilapidation and restored the architectural triumph back to its original splendour.

Brunel 200

- The Museum is part of Brunel 200 – a celebration of 200 years since Brunel's birth that will be celebrated with a range of events and projects across the city. For further information go to: www.brunel200.com

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