

Riot!

A Sonic Theatre Experience to be based in Queen Square.

April 13 to May 4th 2004

Imagine a play for voices. It is the Bristol Riots of 1831. The Political Reform Bill has been defeated in Parliament and the vote denied once more to ordinary people. Now those people are rising up and thousands of them have filled Queen Square in the heart of the city to vent their fury. You hear the rioters' voices as they plunder the surrounding buildings, the flames as buildings burn, the merchants as they flee for their lives and the Dragoon Guards as they sabre-charge through the crowds cutting the rioters down.

As part of a three week experimental research trial visitors to Queen Square can immerse themselves in this dramatic experience in the very space where the riots took place 170 years ago. Equipped with a backpack and a set of headphones your movement through the square will trigger sounds and voices. Alter your position and you are in charge of who and what you hear. Art and technology have immersed you in the Bristol Riots and the experience is shaped by you.

Hewlett Packard Laboratories, the University of Bristol and the Appliance Studio plan to run a three week public trial of this unique experience as part of a DTI funded initiative called Mobile Bristol www.mobilebristol.com. Ralph Hoyte and Liz Crow were commissioned to write the play and to work with Mobile Bristol to produce this location guided drama. The process involves using innovative new tools and technology that have been developed by the Mobile Bristol team.

The Technology.

The equipment that will be used in the trial is an iPAQ handheld computer, a GPS receiver and headphones. Participants will wear headphones and backpacks that hold the computing equipment.

The Plan.

The plan is to make the experience available to the general public from 13 April until 4th May from 10am until 6pm Monday to Friday and from 11am until 4pm on weekends and bank holidays. We plan to base the trial in the foyer of Queen Square House. People will need to go there to register and receive their equipment. We will ask people to fill in a form and leave a deposit or credit card that we will hold until the kit is safely returned. We will also ask people for feedback on the experience. We hope to be able to support up to 40 participants at any time. If necessary we will introduce a booking system but we will not insist that everyone pre-registers.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about this event please contact Josephine Reid

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