

THE LIBRARY  
OF IDEAS

DAVIS & JONES

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The Library of Ideas is an artwork installation created by artists Eleanor Wynne Davis and Deborah Aguirre Jones (Davis & Jones).

During the building of the Junction 3 Library and Learning Centre development in Easton, Bristol (between 2010–2012) Davis & Jones met with residents, construction workers and visitors who gave objects and stories of some significance to their lives and experience of Easton. The result is this everyday and extraordinary collection that forms a portrait of the rich community surrounding Junction 3.

At the heart of this artwork is an installation of the objects which is on permanent display at the entrance to the Junction 3 Library and Learning Centre.

Accompanying this permanent artwork is the book The Library of Ideas, which draws together the stories behind the objects.

The objects have been arranged both in the library and book into categories according to their stories which reflects something of the distinct character of this neighbourhood.

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Remembering and Forgetting | Belonging            |
| This Place                 | Origins              |
| Conviviality               | Loved Objects        |
| Distance Travelled         | Endeavour            |
| Surprises in Life          | Baptist Mills        |
| Freedom                    | What Makes You Tick? |

Davis & Jones would like to thank everyone who donated objects, sharing their stories and time.

Where a participant has wished to be known by their first name only a \* is used.

When I was a child, I had many treasures.

There was a worn ha’penny from Queen Victoria’s time, and a family of green pottery rabbits. Six redcoat soldiers in different poses. But the one I loved best, perhaps because it was the strangest, was a battered metal penguin, standing on a barrel, its wings stretched out behind it. It was only an inch high, and it had a big bent beak like nothing on a real bird.

I have it still, though I lost sight of other treasures in the process of growing up. And I have acquired new treasures that speak to me of the person I have been and become. A jumper knitted for me by someone I loved, though I don’t think it would fit me now. A book in which my grandparents wrote their names, just days after they were reunited, when their city was liberated in 1944. My father’s fountain pen.

Everyone has treasures. Some are on the mantelpiece or the television and seen every day. Others are tucked away in a drawer or in a box under the bed, not thought of for weeks at a time. But they are there, holding a moment, a feeling, a memory. They are the irreplaceable things we’d go for if the house was on fire. They are the things we’ve carried from home to home, down the years. They are the things that make each place we live a home; our household gods.

Treasures are personal, by their very nature. My penguin cannot mean anything to you. Only I knew Mrs Mold who gave it to me as a little boy. It’s only my memories that it holds in its claws. These objects we love, that we invest with so much magic, end with us.

And so they should. Most will get thrown out as worthless, but some will be passed on or find their way to a jumble sale or junk shop somewhere. And they’ll get picked up by a new heart that will weave new stories around them. They’ll acquire new memories. And they will serve their purpose of anchoring us in time and space, in the changing pattern of everyday life.

Most of us, most of the time, pay attention to things as they are. If you want to go into town, you get on a bus and buy a ticket with some coins. You don’t ask yourself why exchanging some bits of metal for a piece of paper means you’re allowed to ride instead of walking. You don’t wonder what it means that some people are in the bus, while others are driving cars. It would be exhausting to think like that all the time; and quite hard to get things done.

But artists do. They are good at seeing beyond the surface of things and wondering what they mean. Because things are not just what they look like; they’re signs to all sorts of meanings. We care about our treasures because of those meanings. A battered old bird, a book in a foreign language, a jumper too small to be worn— as objects they make no sense. But as signs, they make all the sense in the world. They hold our hearts.

Artists often make new signs, like the pictures we usually expect them to produce. But they also make signs by reorganising existing things, so that we see them differently. By drawing our attention to something, whether they paint it, photograph it or just put it somewhere different, artists can change its meaning. They can help us see things differently. They can remake our world by encouraging us to ask questions about things we take for granted: where and how we live; even why.

Things are changed by an artist’s look.

And that is just what Eleanor Wynne Davis and Deborah Aguirre Jones have done in creating the Library of Ideas. By inviting people to share their treasures in the new library, they have revealed some of the meaning of those objects. As a result they ask us to look again, not just at the things around us, but the people we pass every day.

In the Library of Ideas, a bus pass is not a piece of card, or even an entitlement to travel; it is freedom and wellbeing.

A squash racquet is not just a piece of sports equipment; it’s a sign of long residence and reminder of past pleasures.

A teenage mutant ninja turtle is not just a stuffed toy, or a character in a children’s cartoon; it’s a passport to a new country and a new life.

A Hannukia is not just a candlestick or a ceremonial object in Jewish religion: it’s safety and survival.

A pair of cheap green shoes signal first steps in a new faith and a reclaimed identity; a rusty trowel brings to mind love of growing things and friendships; a brick is a symbol of home and continuity across generations.

The list could go on and on. But you can look through this book or, better still, stop as you make your way up the library stairs and give a moment to one of the objects that have been taken into its permanent collection. Listen to someone’s story: perhaps they are already a friend or a neighbour. If not, your friends and neighbours have similar treasures and similar stories. As do you. All different, all important. And all making up a community that is different and important.

Naturally enough, museums and libraries and art galleries hold the best that we have, our rarest local or national treasures, and they make them available to everyone. Such shared treasures, the things we agree are beautiful, important and precious, are one of the ways in which we come together. They help us see what we have in common. They help us become not just people who live side by side, but a community.

The Library of Ideas shows that it is not only the rare and expensive things that matter. Our humbler, everyday treasures are just as important to each of us. They are just as capable of signalling friendship, hope, courage and love. They can hold the best of us. It’s not the container that is important: it’s the contained. The heart may be, as Yeats called it, a rag and bone shop, but it’s the heart that matters.

François Matarasso

23 November 2012



ELAINE OLPHERT  
*Baby tooth and scan*

Zak scan photo and first tooth.



INGA ENDE  
*Mexican calendar*

Pocket calendar from Oaxaca Mexico. I got this as a present when I was there in 2006 and carried it in my purse ever since, reminding me of this beautiful place and the lovely people I met.

JAMES MURRAY-WHITE  
*Brick*

I've lived in St Werburghs for nearly two years now. Our street is a cul de sac, where many people have lived for a long time; kids play on the street, neighbours say hello.

One lady, who still lives in the house she grew up in over 70 years ago, recently had a conservatory built. I loved to see the skip outside their house fill up with rich red earth and clay.

This brick was dug up from their patio. It represents the layers of human history lying in the earth everywhere we tread.





GLORIA WATSON

*Single earring and beads*

I used to wear this earring when I was younger, I don't wear jewellery any more since I became a Christian.

These beads came from a dress I bought for a wedding in Jamaica. I never wore it; I'd put it somewhere but couldn't find it, so I wore something else. About five years ago my sister phoned and she'd found the dress.



VIOLET \*

*Wrist band*

I've got twins, they're 57 now. They were born in Southmead Hospital.

I was the first black mother to have children there with a black father.



RICHARD HEADON

*Coffin made from old school desks*

We (Desperate Men theatre company) set up a hijack scene in a lay-by in Devon. Our target was a coach full of Bristol teachers on their way to a conference at Dartington Hall.

We pretended to be mourners on the way to bury 'Old Ed Ways' with a coffin and a hearse that had broken down. We needed a lift. Could they help?

After our 'Undertaker' had convinced the driver, we climbed aboard with the coffin.



BERNICE GORE-RODNEY

*Embroidery*

Ackee is from Jamaica and is a national dish. The parishes cook it on a Sunday morning with either fried dumplings or boiled green bananas, but mostly dumplings. The children loved fried dumpling.

My sister embroidered this for me.



JADE \*  
*Easter chick*

It's a chick. It's cuddly. The Easter Bunny gave it to me.

RACHEL KNIGHT

*Watering can*

This was given to me by a young girl who I used to take to do gardening at my allotment. We'd eat homemade almond biscuits and then weed or plant seeds, build a pond or look for slow worms.



NAOMI BROWNE

*Japanese keyring*

A friend sent it to me from Japan. When I lived in Japan she was my Japanese mum. Japan changed my life. I'm not sure whether it was for the better or not!



SUE COHEN

*Piano brooch*

Music is so important to me. My brother was in the Bristol Royal Infirmary where he nearly died; he has just recovered and when he came out he played one of the pianos in the street. He's a blues pianist, I'm a blues singer.





FYNN CLARKE

*Photograph*

This was taken in 1940 during the Blitz when my grandfather Bert Bevan was a fire-fighter. He is the fine upstanding man in uniform, third from the right in the front row. He was well known for keeping a goat as a mascot at the Bristol Bridge Fire Station.

He witnessed many terrible events and attended many raging fires in attempting to save the lives of his fellow citizens. 1,299 men women and children of Bristol lost their lives between 24 November 1940 and 11 April 1941. The impact of the bombings of Easton is commemorated in a plaque at the end of Bloy St as it joins Chelsea Road.

I am proud of my grandfather's service. He lived until the age of 96.



BHANU BHARANIA

*Hinges and handles*

You've got to be part of the community. I've been here ten years.



DAVE BURTON

*Squash racket*

When I first took up squash it was at Easton Sports Centre. I'd still play there now if they had the courts but it's gone. I've lived here 50 years, I love it.

AMERJIT SINGH

*Mobile phone*

This was the phone that I had when I worked for 'Connecting Communities'. My role was to raise the numbers of BME and females entering the Fire Service.

It was difficult for Sikhs to enter the Fire Service because wearing a turban meant the breathing apparatus and helmets didn't fit. For Muslims there was often a difficulty with beards stopping the seal of the breathing apparatus.

I came to Easton when I was 4 years old. I used to live in a house where the Sports Centre is now.







DES BRAY  
*Three keys*

We've been established here 45 years; the business (D.I.Y. Newfound) has come through the 3-day week, no electricity, the miners' strike and the building of the M32. We've come through all that. So I've been serving the father, the son and the grandchild over a 45 year period.



MATT OLDEN  
*i am the mighty  
jungulator CDs*

We were reminiscing about the Junction 3 site, all those washing machines.

We got into walking round all the little alleyways round the houses, they're like little rat runs. Looking them up on Google Earth I found loads. Some have gates across but some are open. A nice alternative way. Why are they there?

I've been chatting to my Brazilian friend about Easton and from looking at Google Maps he's realised that a lot of the houses here follow the same pattern. They don't have that in Sao Paulo.



TIM PHILLIPS  
*Cracked teacup*

One of my favourite teacups; I bought it from a charity shop in Knowle. Café use has cracked it but I have kept it 'til now as I like it so much.

I have the matching teapot but I keep that at home safely.



SYLVIA BURTON  
& KATE FRASER  
*Sticking plaster*

K: The plaster was in my bag.  
S: So I agreed to meet a friend and invited Kate along.  
K: You had a worry about your son.  
S: Kate offered to help.  
S: We went to St Pauls advice centre and ...  
K: You suggested coming here (Easton Baptist Church Community Café). I knew of it, because when the convoy left Easton for Iraq, I came here for a cup of tea.  
S: I found out a few things about you today.  
K: Exactly, and I found out a lot I didn't know.



FATHER GEORGE  
*Greek Church books*

The foundation stone was laid in 1846 and in 1847 the church was finished, built in one year. It was the mayor of Bristol who laid the stone; he gave £300 and the whole building works cost £3,000. And now the church is 165 years old. The Greek Orthodox Community has had this church since 1959. I've been here since 1979.

In those days it was nearly 1,500 people in the congregation.

I came here to find my home. It's my house, it's my people. I try to help people whoever they are. Under God we are brothers and sisters. When you move from your country, English people accept you.

RACHEL PEARS  
*Knitted bootie*

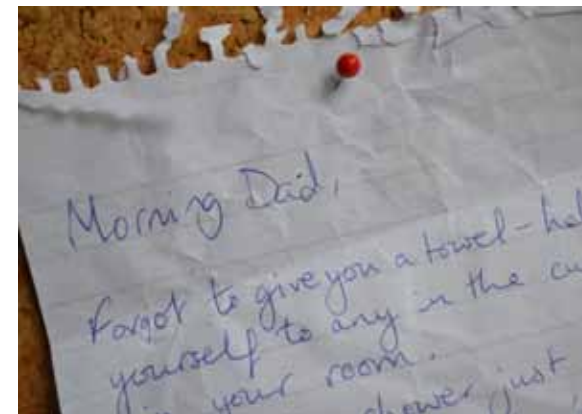
It was knitted by their great grannie (my grannie) for her twin grand-daughters. She knitted a whole box, her and the ladies from their morning tea group.



CATHY SPENCE  
*A note to my dad*

The first time Dad came to visit baby Aiken he didn't stay over, perhaps because he was worried about a crying baby or he didn't want to impose on us. So this was his second visit, he did stay over and we'd just had a new shower; these are the instructions.

It was just lovely seeing Aiken and my Dad together.



LYN P COLEMAN  
*Crochet*

I do crochet in my spare time. I've got one going at the moment, a blanket. It will be for my granddaughter, Jasmin, she lives in London.

I'm a Grandmother of seven: five granddaughters, two grandsons and a great-grandson.



REBECCA SWINDELL

*Burnt chair leg*

The wood is from a workshop down the road, it's tucked away. They have really nice bits of oak. They have to pay to get rid of waste wood so instead local people use it for firewood. It's a way of things moving around, people helping each other.



AKMED

*Football rubber*

It's from Somalia, I like it because it can zoom up high.



LAURA HAMPSHIRE

*Train ticket*

A train ticket to go and see one of my best friends. I haven't seen her since she moved into her new house. I used to live with her. We talk on the phone a lot.



JOANNA ESPINER

*Ceramic tile*

There used to be a brass mill here where molten metal would have been poured and cast to make useful things. In the absence of something made of brass, here is a tile.

It is similar in that it is functional, made in a mould and has undergone transformation through a high temperature, changing mud to something glossy and colourful.

Even though it is functional, the maker took time to decorate it with a pattern to make it both beautiful and useful.

KAREN VARNHAM

*Knitted worm*

I live in Easton and love knitting so when I was asked to contribute to the Library of Ideas I wanted to knit something. I thought a worm would be appropriate because he could be an earthworm while the library was being built and then once it was finished he could become a bookworm and live happily among the books for the rest of his days.



ANGELA SMITH

*Odd sock*

These were the 1st socks that actually stayed on his feet...

He's already a member of the library, he's got a card, and has already had his first book overdue, aged 5 months!



IRA WILLIAMS

*Blank car key*

This is the key to open the door of the car I didn't win. It could open the door to someone's heart!



MUSA \*

*Ninja Turtle*

My mother gave this to me five or ten days before we came to this country.

ALFIE WILLIAMS

*Black shoes*

I go to Clark's Village and buy a bit too quick, not make sure they're the right fit.

I got lots of shoes, no way I'm going to wear shoes that squeeze my toes!





**MIKE BRAMBLEY**  
*Zero fare ticket*

When you're over the age of 60, you get a Diamond card for free travel on buses anywhere in the country. You can see a bus and wonder where it goes to, then jump on and find out. It gives you a sense of freedom.

When you can't do things you experience depression. The Iranians have a phrase for it, 'When the world becomes narrow'. This card opens my world up.



**GRACE BAILEY**  
*Personal alarm*

I'm active and at the moment I don't need a thing like that, I'm loud enough to shout. I don't need a microphone because I've got one built in.

I'm a Christian and am protected by God. He's been protecting me from I don't know when and he will continue to do so until he take me home.



**PEARL QUASHIE-WILLIAMS**  
*Boomerang keyring*

My daughter married an Australian. Her husband's family are extremely warm, hospitable, good company and very down to earth. I'm happy they married and she's looked after very well.

I told them 'I had to leave home to come to England to make a living. So to me it's okay and the world is not as big as it used to be.'





KARWAN  
*Keyring*

We are living in a time when everyone is racing to get more money. But here's a bunch of people (Bristol Refugee Rights Centre) of different nationalities and ages who want to do something for their community: working as a team under one roof without conflict, expectation or reward.

They occupy a corner of my heart, like a family.

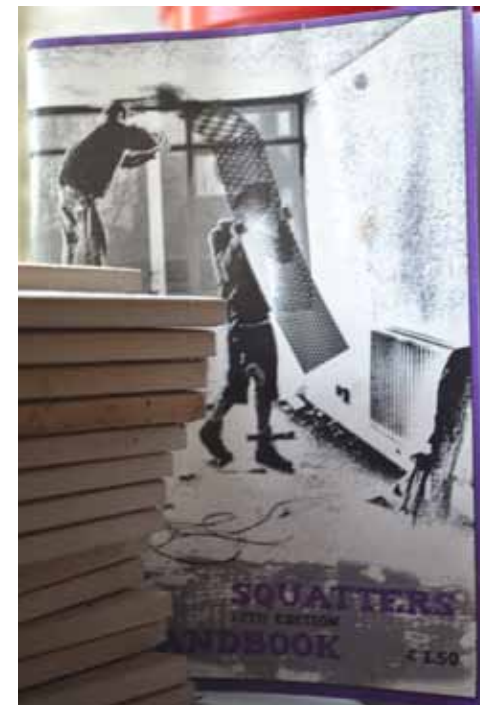
ALICE MILLBANK-FLETT  
*Pink dog*

We made the dog to keep us safe, like a guard dog that looks after you.



GARETH HUNT  
*Collection of keys*

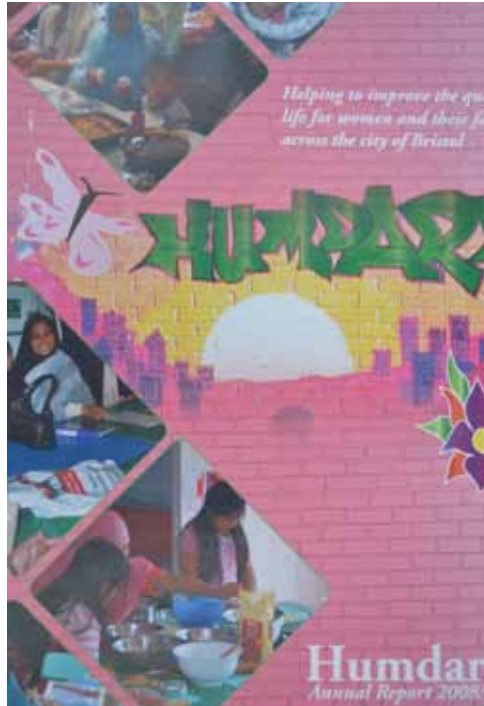
I love Easton, I've been working here as an estate agent for 9 years. It reminds me of where I used to live. It's vibrant, the best community in Bristol. We come in to work and say coming down here is like going on holiday!



ANONYMOUS  
*Squatters Handbook*

This has a lot to do with my memories of Easton when I was in my late teens and early twenties. I wasn't having a good family life; I was homeless and squatting. Here I met people who used the community and were politically conscious.

People didn't look down on me. We shared our vegetables. There was a sense of solidarity.



ABDI YUSEF

*Humdar Report*

There are 20,000 Somalis in Bristol, maybe 10,000 have citizenship. For people coming to Britain, ESOL is not enough because it does not help with the practicalities of living here.

My father, God bless him, said I must speak English.



MARY HARVEY

*Whistle*

I got the trainer job here at the Easton Cowgirls because I had a whistle. This role has given me lots of fun inflicting my humour on women footballers!

JETHRO BRICE

*Pebble with paint*

I found it when I was visiting a lover in Pantin (Paris), on the banks of the canal, by a wall that had been graffitied many times. This pebble had fallen off and was lying in the path. It reminded me of Berlin, and the fragments of the Wall that are sold to tourists as mementos, and that struck me as funny so I kept it.

Wherever I go, I hitchhike, so I'm conscious of borders and distances. The journey to Paris takes me through Calais and helps keep me mindful of others' journeys through that place.



REBECCA LISSAK

*Hannukia*

My father came to the UK at the age of 10 as a Jewish asylum seeker from Poland after having survived World War II in hiding. But my first experience of Judaism as a religion was here in Easton at the Liberal Synagogue. This Hannukia was given to me and I used it to celebrate my first Jewish festival, Hanukkah.

It means a lot to me that I can light Hanukkah lights in safety in Bristol and reclaim my Jewish heritage.





MOHAMED MUMIN  
*Camel bell*

Camels are very important to the life of the Somali nomadic people, they are valued more than any other animal and give prestige. It is used for transport, milking, meat and selling. The bell tells where the camel is, even when it cannot be seen.

MUHAMMAD FAISAL MUGHAL  
*100 rupee note*

... shows the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. I came from Pakistan to get my education. Many people of different languages live in Easton. I like it here because the people are very nice and cooperative.



MARVA CROAL  
*Photograph*

Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham was the first president of Guyana. I was born under the British Empire in 1963. He went to the British Queen and asked for his country back. He was a lawyer; he believed in women and the women backed him. He said 'Women is the backbone of the country'. We had our own women's organisations.

IMOGEN ROBINS

*Wool winder*

I run the local charity shop and this wool winder was our 'Mystery Object Of The Day'. I worked out what it was. It's such a sweet object and moves really nicely. It's called 'Angel', which I love!



JJ \*

*Ben 10 ball*

It bounces, it's special, it's my favourite.



MOHAMED-DEEQ \*

*Shiny ball monster*

It's my favourite thing: its shiny and round and it turns into a monster.



MOHAMED \*

*Rory the Racing Car*

It's special because it talks, I've had it a long time.



IMAN \*

*Yoyo*

I've got five yoyos and this is my favourite. I can do two tricks with it.



KATE \*  
*Glass paperweight*

This is a thing of beauty, given by a dear Palestinian friend ... something creative and beautiful.

FRAN HOPCRAFT  
*Orange flower*

I've been here for 22 years. I came here from London, from an unhappy life. Ever since I arrived in Easton my life just got better and better. I met the love of my life and he is the father of my kids. I could not have done it all without him. It feels like home.

I wanted vibrant fiery colours, I wore this to my brother's wedding. I thought that's perfect: bright, cheerful and represents joy.



ABDUL ISMAIL  
*Curry powder*

We came here in 1972 as refugees from Uganda, expelled by Idi Amin. My father set up the business (Sweet Mart) in 1978 with my mother, as an Indian takeaway, Indian sweet shop and later groceries. They chose Easton where the rents were cheap and there were ethnic people who could not source food items. They had a lot of difficulties in a new country and knowing very little English.

Basically it is an Aladdin's cave for Bristolians. It's a truly family run business and I'm proud of it.

Having worked long hours for over 30 years I missed out on many things. I now travel and have just returned from climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.





JAYNE WHITTLESTONE  
*Junction 3 notebook*

I've had to write down everything, its all about the Junction 3 development; it keeps me on track with this site and all that we want to do here.



JULIE BOWIE  
*Rescue Remedy*

Juggling quite a lot with Junction 3, the Rescue Remedy is getting me through the day.

JULIE YORK  
*Pain killers*

This project (Junction 3) has given me a lot of headaches along the way, I'm sure it will be worth it!



GEORGE ROBERTS  
*Thai enamel mask*

I think it's supposed to be one of those guardians of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the most popular and biggest temple in Bangkok. I went from Bangkok to Ayutthaya then up to Chiang Mai then down to Krabi. In each of those I did a Thai cooking course. My favourite food was in the south; the Muslims treat their food really nicely. It wasn't too spicy and it wasn't deep fried.

When my friends come to stay they take the mick out of me because I'm always thinking about what do they want next to eat, what do they want to drink. It's definitely all I think about.

I want to go to China next and try the black chicken feet soup.



FARHAD HAIJ  
*Plastic fork and napkin*

I know our customers as they come to me, but I don't really know the area as I am so busy working. I live in Barton Hill and work in Easton.

I came from Iraq ten years ago. I had my own business auctioning cars. I used to eat burgers in Iraq, here I sell and eat them!



MOHAMMED \*

*Tagine*

A tagine, it's what they use in Morocco. It's very traditional, they've been using it for centuries. It tenderises the meat and gives a beautiful flavour.

I established this Moroccan restaurant with my family. We've worked really hard to keep it going.



DAVID MARTYN

*Copper tokens*

A copper token used by the Bristol Brass and Copper Company, which once stood around the Junction 3 site.

The brass company was one of Britain's earliest planned industrial works and had an impact on history both nationally and for Bristol. The tokens were used in lieu of money in exchange for goods in company premises at the Baptist Mills site.

Nothing now remains of this historic site.



BRAM THOMAS ARNOLD

*Film canister*

Photos from Tented City.



SARAH GOODEY

*Metal box*

I came to see Tented City and wanted to know what was happening. I like the idea of giving something.



RHIANNON CHALONNER

*Badge*

I met with Davis & Jones and created a profile of Junction 3, through the eyes, using iconikit. I'm part of You and Your Work and have been collaborating with people throughout the world to create these imaginative representations of who they are.



JOHN RICHFIELD

*Map for cyclists*

Cycling is what I do, it's why I came here. I've always cycled.

I finished my degree, ran a restaurant in Birmingham, got a Danish freight bike and delivered sandwiches. About ten years ago I got a job in Bristol.

I love Easton: it's a great place, very cosmopolitan, full of creative people.

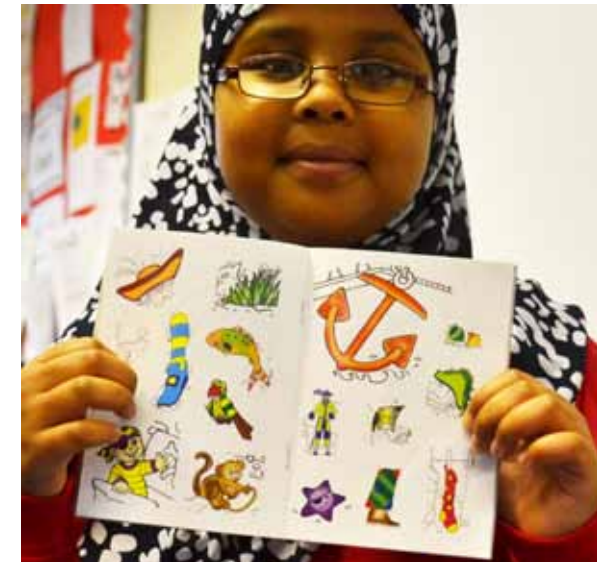
**MEREDITH FREEMAN**

*Rusty trowel*

The trowel represents my love of gardening and watching things grow; my involvement with the Transition Easton Gardening Group and the Easton Arts Trail Front Gardens.

Its spotty handle helped me find it whenever I lost it among the plants. I thought about painting it bright pink so it was easier to find, but obviously never did. It's rusty because it has lived its life outside among the plants, pots and frogs.

This trowel has been my trusty companion during internal and external transformations. My friend Sarah gave it to me.



**NASAH \***

*Book of stickers*

I like stickers!



**JANE LETHBRIDGE**

*Paintbrush*

Well I paint. I used to be an actress a long time ago. Painting brings expressiveness to mind.

I lived in Somerset before. Easton is much quieter. The only thing you usually hear here is kids playing and that's alright!

**THEO \***

*Crayons*

I like yellow and blue the best.  
I would draw a fish.





KAREN FIRMSTONE

*Pair of shoes*

Recently I was baptised and received into the Catholic Church. It was a minor miracle!

I walked into St Chad's Cathedral on a Good Friday and asked to meet with the priest. I'd had a number of attempts at following a process of conversion, for some reason it wasn't right in my life. I told him my story. He said 'What're you doing tomorrow evening at eight o'clock? I think I can baptize you.'

So I needed to get an outfit quickly. Both my dress and the shoes cost £3 each.

I wasn't raised by my birth mother and knew that she was an Irish Catholic, it was about claiming my identity.





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Junction 3, Bristol 2010–2012  
[www.davisandjones.co.uk](http://www.davisandjones.co.uk)

Book designed by City Edition Studio  
[www.cityeditionstudio.co.uk](http://www.cityeditionstudio.co.uk)

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For further information of Bristol's  
programme of art in the public realm see  
[www.aprb.co.uk](http://www.aprb.co.uk)

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