



Electrifying the country house: taking stories of innovation to new audiences

Video outputs (document made available online 29/6/16)

'Electrifying the country house' is a University of Leeds project running from May 2015 until July 2016 to develop and deliver educational resources for our collaborative partners: Cragside (Rothbury - National Trust), Standen (East Grinstead - National Trust) and Lotherton Hall (Leeds - Leeds City Council).

The resources focus on the houses' historical electrical technologies, in particular their electric lighting, telephones, and electrical call bell systems. They draw on research undertaken by the two project investigators, [Professor Graeme Gooday](#), a historian of science and technology, and [Dr. Abigail Harrison-Moore](#), an art historian.

Most of these resources are intended to be used by visitors to the three partner country houses, or by house staff or volunteers, although one is for use by KS2 teachers and pupils. The project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

As part of this project we have produced several outputs which involve video content. These materials are available on YouTube. Links to these videos are listed below.

1. **Exploring the First Electrical Houses: the story of electricity in the home** – an online interactive resource for schools
2. **Electrified: a new musical** – a new musical theatre production
3. **Lotherton Electrified** – a short film

1. Exploring the First Electrical Houses: the story of electricity in the home

This is a Key Stage 2 online resource which combines content from each of our three partner houses to tell the story of domestic electrification. Pupils are encouraged to explore rooms in each of the three houses via clickable floorplans, and will learn about the history of electricity from three different angles which link into the KS2 curriculum: science, art and design, and social history. In this way we combine different topics to create a cross-curricular resource which demonstrates the interactions between science and technology, and art and design.

Teachers will be able to use this resource in the classroom, or direct pupils to access it at home. Upon launching the interactive, users will be prompted to select one of the three houses on the home screen. Selecting one will bring up an interactive floorplan and a video. This video is the introduction from the house's guide character.

Each house has an associated guide character who explains things through video content. In Cragside, this is the butler Mr. Grey, in Standen it is the lady of the house, Mrs. Beale, and in Lotherton Hall it is a maid called Bertha. These characters are played by final year Theatre and Performance students from the University.

Clicking on one of the four rooms on the floorplan brings up a large picture of the interior of the room, within which is a hotspot which can be clicked. In each case this is an artefact of electrical interest. Clicking on this hotspot opens a larger picture of the object, alongside which is a question and a link to click which opens a video in which the house's guide character answers the question.

These questions are themed according to the house: in Cragside the theme is science and technology, with a focus on electrical circuit components and on insulators and conductors as required by the KS2 curriculum in Years 4 and 6. In Standen the theme is art and design, and in Lotherton Hall it is social history. The questions offer the opportunity for teachers using the interactive as part of a whole-class activity to encourage pupils to engage with the content prior to watching the video in order to reveal the answer.

Having viewed all the rooms in one house, pupils will see a conclusion video from the house's guide character. After going through each house, pupils will then complete an evaluation quiz which questions them on the content from each of the houses.

The evaluation section comprises 6 questions, each of which will be displayed in turn underneath a picture of a circuit board. Each question corresponds to one of 6 electrical circuit components: battery, wire, buzzer, bulb, motor, switch. Answering all the questions correctly, pupils can switch on the circuit and activate the components. The resource will be available via SchoolScience.co.uk from July 2016.

The videos from the interactive can be viewed here:

Cragside:

Butler's introduction video

The Library:

- Hotspot picture: Cloisonné lamp
- Question: How were these lamps turned on and off?

- [Video](#)

The Butler's Pantry:

- Hotspot picture: Telephone
- Question: How do we get electricity from one place to another?

- [Video](#)

The Red Landing:

- Hotspot picture: Fire alarm
- Question: Why did the Victorians use electricity to make loud noises?

- [Video](#)

The Power House:

- Hotspot picture: Batteries
- Question: What do we use to store electricity?

- [Video](#)

Butler's conclusion video

Standen:

Mrs. Beale's introduction video

The Hall:

- Hotspot picture: Yellow glass light shade
- Question: Why does this light have a glass shade?

- [Video](#)

The Drawing Room:

- Hotspot picture: Wall light
- Question: Why has this light fitting been designed like this?

- [Video](#)

The Dining Room:

- Hotspot picture: Candlestick
- Question: Why did people still use candles when they had electric lights?

- [Video](#)

The Kitchen:

- Hotspot picture: Lights and wires
- Question: Who benefitted from these lights?

- [Video](#)

Mrs. Beale's conclusion video

Lotherton Hall:

The maid's introduction video

The Medal Room:

- Hotspot picture: Call button
- Question: Who used this button, and why?

- [Video](#)

The Morning Room:

- Hotspot picture: Wall light
- Question: Who used this room?

- [Video](#)

The Lift Corridor:

- Hotspot picture: Lift
- Question: Why might you want to have a lift in your house?

- [Video](#)

The Servants' Hall:

- Hotspot picture: Call board
- Question: What was this used for?

- [Video](#)

The maid's conclusion video

2. Electrified: a new musical

This was a new musical written and performed by 3rd year Theatre and Performance students from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries at the University of Leeds - including the three involved in the interactive - as their final year project. It was supervised by Dr. George Rodosthenous and Dr. Tony Gardner, and was performed in Leeds in December 2015.

The musical is inspired by Professor Gooday and Dr. Harrison-Moore's research, on which this project is based. It is set in 1882, a year after William Dimmock, a labourer at Lord and Lady Salisbury's home, Hatfield House, died after receiving a fatal electric shock in the grounds.

The story follows the two families, the aristocratic Salisburys and the working-class Dimmocks as they deal with the aftermath of the tragedy. It also examines the entrance of electricity into the theatre for the first time in that year, when it was used in the staging of the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta 'Iolanthe' in London's Savoy Theatre.

The show features new music and songs, and also uses some period music and lyrics dealing with electric lighting. For example, a poem about ladies' responses to electric light from *Punch*, a popular satirical periodical, is set to music and performed by the cast of Iolanthe upon seeing the new electric lights for the first time.

[Watch the musical here.](#)

3. Lotherton Electrified

As one of our outputs for Lotherton Hall we wrote a short film - featuring seven of the students involved in the musical - which we filmed at the house. Set in 1904, a year after Lotherton Hall was electrified, the 10 minute film addresses the hopes and fears of upper-class and working-class people regarding electricity at the turn of the century.

The film will be used at Lotherton Hall as part of their visitor offer, and will also remain available online. We will recommend it as a supplementary teachers' resource for use alongside the online interactive.

Having written the script, we are now in a position to offer it as a more generic resource if other houses around the country wish to use it. The themes covered are drawn from Professor Gooday's and Dr. Harrison-Moore's publications, and are fairly general. By changing a few names and dates, other houses could film their own versions at their own locations.

[You can watch the film here.](#)