

Waters and Wonder at World Heritage Day 2017!

Bath's annual celebration of International World Heritage Day 2017 took place on Sunday 23 April in the sunshine at a beautifully blooming Parade Gardens.

The 'Waters of Bath' was the theme for the day and free activities exploring the history and use of Bath's hot springs, canal network and River Avon were enjoyed by over 1400 visitors of all ages.

The gardens came alive with the sound of music courtesy of Bath Spa Band and Bath City Jubilee Waits, who also accompanied the Widcombe Mummers in their colourful 'St George and the Dragon' play to mark St George's Day.



Special guided walks are an ever popular feature of the annual event. Various routes and subjects were covered, from the history and features of Parade Gardens to waterside tours. These were led by the Mayor's Honorary Guides, Cleveland Pools Trust and the National Trust.

This year, for the first time, World Heritage Day featured a programme of mini talks. These focused on the history of Bath's waters as well as updates from projects and initiatives across the World Heritage City including Bath Abbey Footprint, the Bathscape landscape partnership, Bath Medical Museum and the restoration of Cleveland Pools.

A record-breaking number of heritage displays and activity stands were present on the day offering opportunities to find out more about local canals, river safety, Bath's best green views, Lottery-funded projects and heritage initiatives. Location knowledge was tested with the 'Great Spas of Europe' picture quiz and flags were added to a giant world map to show the far-flung World Heritage Sites people had visited. Visitors were treated to the Bath Record Office Roadshow and the chance to see real objects associated with the spa from the Roman Baths collection. They even got to meet Paralympic champion swimmer Stephanie Millward and try on her medals at the Cleveland Pools stall! It was wonderful to bring together so many (27!) of the City's key heritage organisations, who enjoyed catching up with each other as well as enthusing visitors.



There were lots of family-friendly activities to keep younger visitors entertained including craft activities, World Heritage dominoes, historic maps, colouring competitions and a bookmark stamp trail. Special mention must be made of the amazing Pulteney Bridge model-building activities offered by Bath Preservation Trust. Robert Adam, the original Georgian architect, was wandering round the site all day and was most impressed with the efforts of budding designers and engineers. He also posed for many selfies with his physician in tow in front of his world-famous bridge.

All-in-all the day was a great way to kick off the 30th anniversary celebrations of Bath becoming a World Heritage Site. Watch this space for a series of special talks in the Autumn as we continue to celebrate this milestone.

