

PRESS PACK
Benedictine Bath Festival 2016



Following last year's successful initiative, the *Benedictine Bath Festival* returns to the City of Bath this summer.

Friday 8th – Monday 18th July

For full programme details
bit.ly/benedictinebath

The *Benedictine Bath Festival* explores a little-known chapter of Bath's heritage. A partnership between Downside Abbey, Bath Abbey, and St John's Hospital, the series offers a range of free and paid-for events throughout the city.

Visitors will be able to visit an exhibition of manuscripts at Bath Abbey, get involved in hands-on activities at St John's Hospital, listen to Gregorian Chant as part of a traditional service, or relish the chance to explore former Benedictine sites as part of the daily walking tour.

#BenedictineBath

FESTIVAL EVENT LISTING

Date: Friday 8th July – Monday 18th July

Time: Open during Abbey Visiting Hours [see BathAbbey.org for details]

Event: **Benedictine Bath Exhibition**

Rare books, documents and objects from Downside Abbey Archives and Library.

Location: St Alphege Chapel, Bath Abbey

Booking: Available to Bath Abbey visitors (suggested donation £2.50 adult/£1.00 student)

Date: Friday 8th July, 6pm

Event: **Benedictine Bath Opening Service**

Location: St John's Hospital Chapel, Bath, BA1 1SQ

Booking: Free event, just turn up

Saturday 9th July 11am – 4pm

Benedictine Food Family Fun Day

Cookery for kids on the hour (11.00-3.00)

The Bubble, St John's Hospital.

Free event, just turn up

Sunday 10th July, 9.30am

Sunday Service, Bath Abbey

Free event, just turn up

Sunday 10th July, 10am

Sunday Service, Downside Abbey

Free event, just turn up

Sunday 10th July, 10am

Sunday Service, St John the Evangelist, Bath

Free event, just turn up

Monday 11th July, 11am – 12.30pm

Benedictine Bath Walking Tour

Departs from outside Bath Abbey's West Door.

Free event, just turn up

Monday 11th July, 2pm – 3pm

Talk on Bath's Benedictine Monastery (for over 55's)

The Bubble, St John's Hospital

Free event. Booking required.

Email Anna Ferguson (anna.ferguson@stjohnsbath.org.uk) or call 01225 486403

Tuesday 12th July, 10.30am – 12noon

Learn about Lectio Divina

St John the Evangelist Church, Bath

Free event, just turn up

Tuesday 12th July, 11am – 12.30pm

Benedictine Bath Walking Tour

Departs from outside Bath Abbey's West Door.
Free event, just turn up

Tuesday 12th July, 1pm – 1.30pm

'St Benedict and the Ladder of Humility' in words and music.

Bath Abbey

Free event, just turn up

Tuesday 12th July, 6.15pm – 7.45pm

Twilight Tour of Bath Abbey

£5.00 per person, to include light refreshments

To reserve your place email Oliver Taylor (otaylor@bathabbey.org), or call 01225 303322

Wednesday 13th July, 11am – 12.30pm

Benedictine Bath Walking Tour

Departs from outside Bath Abbey's West Door.

Free event, just turn up

Wednesday 13th July, 2pm – 4pm

Cookery Workshop and Tea Party (for the over 55's)

The Bubble, St John's Hospital

Free event.

Booking required.

Email Anna Ferguson (anna.ferguson@stjohnsbath.org.uk) or call 01225 486403

Wednesday 13th July, 6.15pm – 7.45pm

Twilight Tour of Bath Abbey

£5.00 per person, to include light refreshments

To reserve your place email Oliver Taylor (otaylor@bathabbey.org), or call 01225 303322

Thursday 14th July, 9.30am – 3pm

Tour of Downside Abbey, including lunch.

£10.00 per person.

Click [here](#) to book.

Thursday 14th July, 11am – 12.30pm

Benedictine Bath Walking Tour

Departs from outside Bath Abbey's West Door.

Free event, just turn up

Thursday 14th July, 6pm – 7.30pm

Choral Vespers sung by Downside monks and the Choir of St John the Evangelist.

St John the Evangelist Church, Bath

Free event, just turn up

Friday 15th July, 9.45am – 5pm

Benedictine Bath Conference

Old Theatre Royal.

£10.00 per head to include refreshments.

Click [here](#) to book.

Friday 15th July, 11am – 12.30pm
Benedictine Bath Walking Tour
Departs from outside Bath Abbey's West Door.
Free event, just turn up

PRESS CONTACTS

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Susie Champion, Senior Comms/Events Officer, St John's Hospital - susie.champion@stjohnsbath.org.uk 01225 486422

Date: Thursday 7th July, 6pm
Event: **Exhibition Press Preview**
Location: St John's Hospital Chapel, Bath, BA1 1SQ
Booking: RSVP susie.champion@stjohnsbath.org.uk

ABOUT BATH ABBEY

<http://www.bathabbey.org/>

Bath Abbey is a flourishing Church of England parish church which technically serves a small city centre parish (Bath Abbey with St James). This parish has a small residential population and primarily consists of commercial properties; and most of the regular congregation and the 692 people on the electoral roll live in other parishes or come from outside the city of Bath.

The Abbey holds daily services of morning or evening prayer or Holy Communion; and the standard pattern of Sunday worship is for five daily services attended on average by 630 people. Special services at Advent, Christmas and Easter are well attended; and many local organisations hold annual services in the Abbey.

The Abbey has four choirs: Men's, Boys' and Girls' choirs support worship in services; whilst Melody Makers is a choir for younger children which performs in concerts in the Abbey once a term and at other events in and around Bath. The Abbey runs a successful Schools Singing Programme, an outreach activity which supports singing within local schools and holds regular workshops and concerts in the Abbey.

The Abbey welcomes approximately 400,000 visitors annually and is open daily all year round; many of these visitors being families and school parties. Apart from being a place of prayer, worship, weddings and funerals, the Abbey has an important role as a visitor destination, a performance space (for audiences anywhere between 10 and 1,000), a general civic space and an exhibition space.

ABOUT DOWNSIDE ABBEY

www.downside.co.uk

Downside Abbey sits atop the Mendip Hills in Somerset. Home to Benedictine monks, the Catholic community has been based in Somerset for over 200 years. Downside Abbey Church is dedicated to Saint Gregory the Great, and it is a Minor Basilica; it is also the largest of the Neo-Gothic style churches built in this country after the Reformation, and was described by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner as "*the most splendid demonstration of the renaissance of Roman Catholicism in England. If ever there was an excuse for building in period forms in the twentieth century, it is here*".

Monks and books have from the outset been close friends. The link that Benedictine monks made between the love of learning and the desire for God led to the part they were to play from the Eighth Century in the revival of education in the new Europe of the Middle Ages. The same sense of purpose inspires our engagement with culture today. Thanks to the 'Beacon of Learning' project, we are delighted to be able to share our collections with you, please contact us if you'd like to arrange a visit.

ABOUT ST JOHN'S HOSPITAL

<https://www.stjohnsbath.org.uk/>

We have been serving the disadvantaged community of Bath from the same City Centre location since the 12th century, when Bishop Reginald Fitzjocelyn established a medieval refuge on this site.

The aim was to provide 'hospitality', in the form of shelter and food for the poor and disadvantaged in his parish. We have never been a hospital, in the medical sense, nor a hospice for the dying.

Almshouses trace their history back to monastic times where the terms bedehouse, hospital, maison dieu, almshouse and others described the provision of accommodation for those in need.

The first recorded Almshouse was founded by King Athelstan in York in the 10th Century, and the oldest still in existence is thought to be the Hospital of St. Oswald in Worcester which dates from circa 990.

In the early 1500s, there were about 800 medieval hospitals spread across the country but following the dissolution of the monasteries, only a handful remained. Luckily for the disadvantaged of Bath, St John's survived and has gone on through the centuries to become the forward thinking organisation it is now.

Contributors and Sponsors

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St John the Evangelist Church, Bath

St John's Hospital

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