

# FROM RIVETING ROMANS TO SAINTS, SAILORS & PILGRIMS

July 23, 2014 Samantha Boyle Buildings, Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2014, Early Medieval, Education, Historical Archaeology, Iron Age, Landscape Archaeology, Medieval, Museum Archaeology, Neolithic, Post Medieval, Prehistory, Public Archaeology, Roman, Romano-British Bristol, Bristol Castle, Bristol City Council, Bristol Threatened History Society, Castle Park, Kings Weston Action Group, Kings Weston Roman Villa, Lawrence Weston Community Farm, Riveting Romans, Roman Harbour, Sea Mill Archaeological Research Team

On the Day of Archaeology 2014 I was preparing for a series of events organised and coordinated by the Archaeology Team at Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives for the 24th annual Festival of Archaeology 2014. The Festival runs from Saturday 12 – Sunday 27 July 2014 and offers over 1,000 events nationwide, organised by over 400 museums, heritage organisations, universities, local societies and community archaeologists.

The purpose of the Festival is to showcase the very best of archaeology and give people the opportunity to learn about local heritage, have a go at digging and recording finds, watch experts at work and find out about the latest discoveries in their area.

The series of events has involved the Archaeology team working with a variety of local history and community groups including Bristol Threatened History Society, Lawrence Weston Community Farm, Kings Weston Action Group, Sea Mill Archaeological Research Team, Friends of Badock's Wood and Bristol and Region Archaeological Services to trace the history of Bristol from the Bronze Age right up to the 18th century.

There has been the opportunity to explore the history of Bristol with a tour of Castle Park – the site of Bristol Castle, one of the largest medieval castles in England and once compared to the Tower of London's White Tower. Discover and experience life before and after the Romans with events at Badock's Wood, Lawrence Weston Community Farm and Kings Weston Roman Villa. Uncover Vanburgh's 18th century paths at Kings Weston Estate. Learn about pilgrims in Medieval Bristol at M Shed and join a Medieval pageant celebrating pilgrimage in Brislington.

Gail Boyle Senior Collections Officer (Archaeology) at Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives said:

*"The Festival of Archaeology is undoubtedly one of the highlights of the year for Bristol Museums' Archaeology Team. The two week-long event provides us with a great platform to showcase Bristol's fantastic archaeological sites, museum collections and the work of such a wide variety of local interest groups. The Bristol programme has never been so packed, there are so many opportunities for people to be inspired by all things archaeological and all our activities are free of charge. You can find out more about our events through the Festival of Archaeology or at [bristolmuseums.org.uk](http://bristolmuseums.org.uk)"*

As of Tuesday 22 July, five events have taken place, the Bristol Castle Walk with Mike Ponsford of Bristol Threatened History Society, Riveting Romans, Ancient Woodland Activities, Conservation at Kings Weston and one of the guided historical walks around Badock's Wood. All of these events have been a great success with over 400 visitors.

Mike Ponsford led an interested crowd on a leisurely walk around Castle Park examining the remaining structures of the castle as well as describing the look atmosphere and history of this imposing fortification of Medieval Bristol, which once dominated the Bristol skyline. The sun shone as the 'Riveting Romans' event gave visitors the opportunity to explore Kings Weston Roman Villa and learn more about life and food during the Roman Period. Cherry Hubbard from Unfolding History had a table with Roman food and ingredients, kitchen utensils and recipes illustrating the variety of foods which the Romans ate and introduced to Britain. The Sea Mills Archaeological Research Team (SMART) presented their 3 years of research on the Roman Harbour at Abona whilst the Juicy Blitz project at Bread Youth in Lawrence Weston made a Roman inspired smoothie called Brutus Cassius which was given free to all visitors.

'Ancient Woodland Activities' took place at Lawrence Weston Community Farm with visitors having the opportunity to explore the farm and meet the animals as well as wander through Water Vole Woodland to discover woodland activities taking place amongst the trees. The activities included willow weaving and hurdle making, delicious woodland juice making using dandelion and burdock, charcoal making and drawing as well as green wood working.

'Conservation at Kings Weston' was organised by Kings Weston Action Group who held an alfresco exhibition on the history of Kings Weston estate in the Echo, one of the garden pavilions in the historic park. There was also the opportunity to celebrate the 350th anniversary of one of Britain's most famous architects, Sir John Vanbrugh and discover his work on the estate. Kings Weston Action Group also launched a new walking guide and map about the estate.

The historical walk through Badock's Wood has been led by the Vice-Chairman of the Friends of Badock's Wood Alan Arburrow. Alan has lead a delightful and enjoyable stroll around the woodland describing the history of the woodland from the Bronze Age Burial mound through to Dr Sir Stanley Hugh Badock's gifting of the woodland to Bristol City Corporation (now Bristol City Council), in perpetuity on the condition of the Corporation also giving 15 acres of adjacent land. Alan also showed up the gradual series of improvements which the Friends have done to maintain the woodland as well as talking about their community and young people engagement work to increase appreciation of this lovely woodland.

This series of Festival of Archaeology events has been successful through the enthusiasm and hard work of Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives staff, local history and community groups and a donation from Bristol Threatened History Society.