



UNVEILING OF THE ROMAN BATH BLADUD PIG: the chairman of B&NES Council, Cllr David Bellotti, Gitta Dawson, and David Lawrence, the council's director of tourism, heritage and culture

“ King Bladud was a key figure in our history and people love the pigs



ROYAL OUTING: King Bladud with his pigs in Abbey Church Yard

PICTURE: Kevin Fern



MEET PLAYGROUP PIG: youngsters at The Magic Box in Wellow show off the model they worked on with St Gregory's pupils Alice Warburton, Holly Penny, Clementine Brakspear and Aine McCarthy

PICTURE: Lloyd Ellington

Bath succumbs to swine fever

A public art project 3,000 years in the making has been officially launched in the centre of Bath. Over the past 12 months, businesses and individuals across the city have signed up to sponsor King Bladud's Pigs in Bath.

The scheme will eventually see 100 model pigs placed in streets and parks around the city in honour of the figure who discovered the healing spring waters of Bath.

Several of the swine – representing the animals who alerted their royal owner to the waters' properties after being cured of skin problems – have already appeared in locations across the city, including Kingsmead Square and Walcot Street.

The project was launched with the unveiling of the Bath Pig at the Roman Baths by Bath and North East Somerset Council chairman Cllr David Bellotti.

He said: "These pigs will be a great joy for the residents and those visiting Bath."

Project leader Gitta Dawson led a toast to King Bladud before inviting an audience of sponsors, artists and other supporters to celebrate with 16 decorated pigs placed in Abbey Church Yard.

Mrs Dawson said: "It has been tremendous how our team has worked together to make this possible. I have no doubt we will run out of pigs before we run out of sponsors."

Businesses and groups have paid £1,000 to sponsor a pig, and artists have been invited to personalise them with their own designs.

The Bath Pig, which is available to

Rupert Hall
r.hall@bathchron.co.uk

view at the King's Bath in the Roman Baths, was designed by Widcombe Studios' artist Francis Mosley.

He said: "Most artists work individually so it's nice to be involved in a group project."

"This project allows artists to get their work out to unusual locations."

"Most people come to Bath because of its history but we could do with more about what is going on today."

Bath-based food and drink consultancy Zenith International was one of the first businesses to sponsor a pig, and chose artist Sonia Follows to design the model now known as Globe Trotter.

Zenith boss Richard Hall said: "Bath is the perfect stage for sculpture and I hope this will bring lots more sculpture to our streets and squares."

Bath's incoming city centre manager Andrew Cooper was among those at the launch.

He said: "I think public art projects are good for a destination, particularly when it is capitalising on the myth and a sense of place."

"Dressing the city is very important."

The project will run until the end of September when each pig will be auctioned to raise money for a scheme to open a cycle route between Bath and Bristol.

The Two Tunnels project secured £1.1 million of National Lottery cash earlier this year and is expected to cost about £1.8 million to complete.



Artist Sir Peter Blake

B&NES Council has pledged £400,000 but organisers are still looking for £350,000 in funding.

Two Tunnels' fundraiser Rob Shields said: "We are behind the King Bladud's Pigs in Bath project and think it is lots of fun and in the spirit of the Two Tunnels project."

"The route will be a unique experience for locals and visitors and will allow people to access the fantastic countryside through what promises to be a really exciting route."

St Julian's Primary School in Wellow, which is on part of the national Sustrans cycle network that will be linked to the new route, is one of three locations in the village to sign up for a pig.

Artist and parent Cathy Beale will be working with children from the school to decorate the Progressive Pig with sausages with a view to placing it in the school grounds.

The Fox & Badger pub has also joined forces with the Parlour Shop to help sponsor the Village Pig – for which the artist is Sir Peter Blake, one of the leading lights of the pop art movement of the 1960s.

He was responsible for the iconic design on the cover of The Beatles' album, Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.

The pig was this week still in London.

Meanwhile, Circle Health, the company behind Peasedown St John's new mini-hospital, has recruited children from The Magic Box playgroup in Wellow and the art department of St Gregory's Catholic College at Odd Down to design its Playgroup Pig.

There are 24 pigs left for sponsorship and organisers are encouraging anyone interested to sign up as soon as possible for a chance to appear on a pig trail which will be printed at the end of May.

Organisers are also looking to raise £4,000 to help resurrect a statue of King Bladud believed to be in the basement of the Roman Baths.

Mrs Dawson hopes the statue can be restored and placed in Parade Gardens.

She said: "King Bladud was a key figure in our history and people love the pigs. We would also like for there to be something permanent left over, possibly in the form of a stone pig, to accompany the statue."

The Bath Chronicle has sponsored its own pig and is currently choosing a name.

For more information visit the website www.kingbladudspigs.org.



JOURNEY'S END: Georgie Swindells and her dog Indy receive a colourful welcome at Bath Abbey



FULL OF HOT AIR: left, artist Cllr Cherry Beath with her colourful creation; below left, Luca, aged five, meets the pigs in Abbey Church Yard; below right, pupils at St Julian's School talk to BBC Newsround presenter Adam Fleming about making their pig covered in sausages

PICTURES: Lloyd Ellington and Kevin Fern



Greeted by patchwork pig

Charity walkers were met by a model patchwork pig at the end of a 102-mile trot.

A group of 12 supporters of the local homelessness charity Julian House spent five days walking along the Cotswold Way from Chipping Camden in Gloucestershire to Bath.

The route ends outside Bath Abbey – where the party found one of the King Bladud's Pig models.

Organiser Cathy Adcock said Julian House had a history of walking and trekking events.

She said: "The logic of organising a challenge event has yet to be calculated but along one of the finest long-distance trails in the country seemed solid."

"Many people want to do it but the logistics of accommodation

and bags can be tricky. We committed to take care of all that and let the walkers get on with the hard part, the walk – all 102 miles."

"They paid all their own costs, which means all the sponsorship which they raised will come to Julian House."

Walkers covered an average 20 miles each day but their task was made much harder by torrential rain on one of the days.

Mrs Adcock said: "We are immensely proud of their achievement."

The final sponsorship amount has yet to be calculated but Julian House is hoping that it will exceed £5,000. Another Cotswold Challenge is scheduled for next month and more events will take place next year.