

Coach Trip to Bath Christmas Market

On a dank and miserable morning, we gathered at church to go by coach to the Christmas Market at Bath, one of the best in the country. It was not actually raining while we boarded, but by the time we were going south on the M5 the rain started to come down heavily. However, it cleared up by the M4 and we arrived in Bath on time to an overcast morning but a dry one! The drop off and parking was being run like a military operation with each coach given a drop off window and a pick-up time as well. It certainly seemed to work well. Everyone disembarked and made their way off to the centre of Bath. The Christmas market runs through the centre of Bath and has some 200 stalls spread out in the various areas, some around the Abbey with the remainder off the main street and side streets.



Visit Bath (<https://visitbath.co.uk/>) describes Bath as: *'Bath is a living museum. History and heritage line the city's streets, with every footstep revealing compelling cultural attractions and astonishing architecture. Its why Bath is the only city in the UK designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.'* It certainly lives up to this description.



Arriving there at a reasonable time our initial forays in to the market meant that we could get close to the stalls, this soon changed though as the crowds started to build up. On the way back to Worcester our driver told us they had 170 coaches booked in for the day! We decided to have an early lunch at Sally Lunn's Restaurant and had to queue to get in, but it was certainly worth the wait. Their 'Bunns' (large rolls) were lovely and you could have them with either sweet or savoury toppings, each Bunn was about

the size of a small plate. Once fortified we set off to tackle the growing crowds and Sandra and I started by walking round the stalls around the Abbey. As with all Christmas Markets, Worcester, Birmingham, Bath and the many I have been to in Germany there are always stalls that you love and others that make you think why is that here? This one with its glass decorations was particularly good. However, we did enjoy the Market, but the crowds soon became overwhelming around the stalls, so we decided to head to see some of the other highlights of Bath.



We tried to go in to the Abbey, but it was holding short 20-minute carol concerts on the hour, every hour from lunch time so you could only go in for the service and as we were there just after one had finished we did not feel like waiting for 40 minutes until the next one. So, we headed off to see the



Pulteney Bridge over the River Avon, which is near the Abbey. This is a lovely bridge with shops on it overlooking a weir on the River Avon. The shops on the bridge are interesting as they are only a couple of meters wide so very narrow inside, specially the café!

Alongside the river was a regular indoor market that was very pleasant with a nice range of permanent stalls. We walked slowly round the shops and found an Artisan Market in one of the parks near the centre but away

from the main crowds where there were various food outlets.

By now we were feeling like a sit down was required so we went in to the Regency Tea Room in the Jane Austin Centre and had a very pleasant cream tea. Fortified again we walked up the hill to The Circus and Royal Crescent, both key places for visitors to Bath. Bath is surrounded by hills so moving away from the centre invariably includes walking up hill.



By now the time was heading towards the time we had to be back at the coach pick up point, so we headed back down in to the centre and the increasing crowds. As you can see from the



picture here they had increased significantly from the first image of the market. We arrived on time but were a little concerned as to whether everyone would be able to find their way back to the coach on time, but silly us, everyone was there, and we all boarded the coach and left within 5 minutes of the start of our pick-up time.

Bath is a beautiful city and has a lot to see and do in it, for example we did not get in to the Abbey or the Roman Baths, so I guess Sandra

and I will be going back, when it is quieter, to have a better look around the City. The journey home was smooth with no hold-ups getting out of Bath, and we arrived back at church just before 6pm, everyone was probably then going to recover from all the walking round the wonderful City of Bath and its Christmas Market. Another excellent event organised by the Events Team and I look forward to trips to Bletchley Park, home of the WW2 Code Breakers, and Stratford for the birth of William Shakespeare next year.

Colin Nash