

The ***Architectural Bon Viveurs*** are in for a real treat today as we find ourselves in the beautiful and historic city of **Bath!**



There has been a settlement in Bath for over 2000 years stretching back before even the Romans turned up to install the plumbing. Kings Arthur, Alfred and the Welshman Offa and all sorts of royalty have parked up over the years so it's packed with history and fancy buildings.

Although the Romans are very much associated with Bath and its thermal springs the great proportion of golden Bath stone architecture that you will see today was designed and built by the Georgians in the 18th & 19th centuries and it is this that quite frankly makes Bath is a great looking city. Since 1987 Bath has been designated as a World Heritage site by Unesco which means there isn't going to be many dual carriageways built through the town anytime soon no matter how much easier it would be to get to Bristol.

As we traverse the city I'll try to highlight points out areas of architectural interest and will be happy field any questions you may have.

To the main business of the day however...

As we'll be coming off the train at around 10.30 am we have a chance to take in some sustenance, buy a novelty pen or just take in the ambience of this fine city before we partake in an ale or two.

Pubs

Bath has a lot of pubs and a lot of nice ones at that. We have a full itinerary of such establishments and while we'll be in some touristic areas we will also be going to some places that only the locals would know.

The Huntsman : 1 Terrace Walk, North Parade, BA1 1LY (11am)



Comments

Built in 1748, this is a fine looking Georgian pub with which to start the day.

The Alehouse: 1 York Street, BA1 1NG (11:25am)



Comments

Dinky little corner pub next to the Huntsman because we'll still be thirsty. The landlord has quite a reputation as a fine "close up" magician.

Architecture Breakout

Camera time because a short walk round the corner means we will be confronted by the marvellous sight of Bath Abbey



Three different churches have occupied the site of today's Abbey since 757 AD. First, an Anglo-Saxon monastery which was pulled down by the Norman conquerors of England; then a massive Norman cathedral which was begun about 1090 but lay in ruins by late 15th century; and finally, the present Abbey Church as we now see it.

Look out particularly for the unique “ladders of Angels” which sit on the West front and depicts angels ascending and descending into heaven.



From across the road we then spy our first view of the fabulous Pulteney Bridge and weir...



Pulteney Bridge, like the Ponte Vecchio in Florence, is one of a handful of bridges which has shops built into it. For my money though this is better.

Ok, back to the pubs

The Rising Sun: 3-4 Grove Street, BA2 6PJ (12.40 noon)



Comments

Small pub just over the Pulteney Bridge. I once went to a 40th birthday party here and was surprised to see Bobby George, John Lowe and Eric Bristow having a pint at the bar! They also used to have an old school skittles alley as well. I have a horrible feeling that this may have now gone which would be a crying shame. Only a half in here if it's gone...

The Boater, 9 Argyle Street, BA2 4BQ (1.05pm)



Comments

Lovely bay fronted boozer. Suggest we pop out the back as the garden has more fabulous reverse views of the weir and bridge.

Pulteney Arms, 37 Daniel Street, Bath BA2 6ND (1.55pm)



Comments

Moving away from the city centre this pub is popular with the egg-chasing locals. Open since 1792 there should be a nice range of 5 original gas light fittings over the bar.

Carrying on moving out a bit we've a nice 10 minute walk to:

The Curfew Inn: 11 Cleveland Place, BA1 5DG (2.45pm)



Comments

Situated on a pleasing 1820's curve, my mate Hairy Jim and family used to live above this pub. Run by Wadworth's which is nice to see.

The Bell Inn: 103 Walcot Street, BA1 5BW 3.45pm



Comments

The Bell Inn has always had a bit of an alternative reputation and was the sort of pub that used to house people who couldn't be bothered to go home from Glastonbury - fellas with dreds and dogs on strings, you get the idea. It has always however always served a good pint and used to be home to Smiles Best a fabulous pint from Bristol. Alas, Smiles is no longer with us but The Bell Inn goes from strength to strength and is now owned by 536 of its customers in one of the first co-operative pub ventures in the UK. What's more, if you have some spilt some beer or pork pie over you by this point you'll be pleased to know there is a launderette out the back.

The Star: 23 Vineyards, BA1 5NA 4.45pm



Comments

A star in all senses this fabulous pub dates from 1760 but the unique wood panelling interior dates from a more recent 1928 refit. Split into 4 small rooms The Star Inn is quite rightly in CAMRA's National Pub Inventory and is a national classic. Bass on tap straight from the barrel (my Dad would have loved it) and complimentary snuff is available on request. The governor, if he's the same one from 12 years ago, used to look like Al Murray.

Architectural Breakout & Camera Alert

A slight detour before the next pub because we cannot go to Bath without taking in the Circus and The Royal Crescent:



If you get the uncontrollable urge to start dancing and singing “Who Will Buy My Sweet Red Roses” that’s because you’ve just invoked the spirit of the 1968 “Oliver” film which was filmed at **the Circus!** Consider Yourself one of us!



Round the corner is a row of terraced houses...

The Royal Crescent was designed by architect John Wood the Younger and built between 1767 and 1774 and you can’t find any more a stunning example of Georgian architecture anywhere.

This deserves a drink so lets head back into town.

Salamander: 3 John Street, BA1 2JL

6pm



Comments

Smashing Bath Ales pub. It’s bigger than it looks.

The Raven: 7 Queen Street, BA1 1HE

6.45pm



Comments

This pub used to be a relatively scary Heavy Metal boozer called Hatchets. Rumour has it that one Saturday afternoon in 1987 your host stood on a chair wearing a suede 1970's charity shop cardigan dancing to "Hanging On the Telephone" by Blondie. It was 4.30pm. It's not that sort of pub anymore.

The Old Green Tree: 12 Green Street, BA1 2JZ 7.30



Comments

Tiny, tiny pub which serves its own beer. Let's hope we get in.

Coeur de Lion: 17 Nortumberland Place BA1 5AR 8.00pm



Comments

Tiny, tiny pub with a stained glass window front. Let's hope we get in.

8.46 pm Back on the train!

Additional Extras: If we've got time:

The Pig & Fiddle: 2 Saracen Street Bath BA1 5BR (12 noon)



Comments

Historically a bit of a sports pub with a predominantly egg-chasing theme

Crystal Palace: 10-11 Abbey Street



Comments

My best man Andy was beaten up by bouncers here when he was a student. And Lord Nelson stayed here once too. Just a coincidence?

Garricks Head: 7-8 St John;s Place BA1 1ET



Comments

Theatre pub luvvies.