

About the Portrait Bench

The Portrait Bench is a new and unique National collection of local portraits. The figures are inspired and chosen for their individual contribution to the life of the community.

Creating portraits is an old custom - honouring individuals for their philanthropy, political prowess or acts of heroism, and most commonly for the love of family members. All major public spaces are graced by statues or portraits of eminent individuals and family photos are treasured across the world.

Each Portrait Bench is a collection of three distinctive, life-size local figures cut from sheet steel and installed by a simple bench, inviting you to sit or step up into the space and become a part of the portrait group.

The features of each character have been simplified while retaining their essential characteristics. The characters reflect those things that are important to the community; each is inspired by the local heritage, culture and aspirations of the area; some we'll know and some we won't...together they will represent around 230 characters chosen by thousands of people from across the UK.



Work beginning on the Two Tunnels route at the famous Devonshire tunnel, 8th March 2010

Choosing the Two Tunnels portraits

The community based Two Tunnels Group, which initiated and has supported the scheme through its construction, created a shortlist. From this the children of Oldfield Park Junior School in Bath made the final selection.

The portrait bench is located on the approach to Devonshire Tunnel, adjacent to Bloomfield Open Space, near Bear Flat in Bath.

New walking and cycling networks

Sustrans is bringing the award winning National Cycle Network deep into the heart of communities across the UK to enable many more people to get about on foot and by bike. Find out more about walking and cycling routes in Bath and how to find this portrait bench at www.sustrans.org.uk/c2/bath www.twotunnels.org.uk



Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day.

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Portrait Bench Two Tunnels Greenway

Harry Patch (1898 – 2009)



Henry John 'Harry' Patch was a British supercentenarian, briefly the oldest man in Europe, and the last surviving soldier to have fought in the trenches of the First World War. Born in Bath, he left school in 1913 to begin work as an apprentice plumber. In October 1916, Harry was conscripted as a private into the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He arrived in France in 1917 and fought at the Battle of Passchendaele, but was invalided back to England when a shell exploded overhead, killing three of his comrades.

Known in his latter years as "the Last Fighting Tommy", he was awarded eight medals, including the British War Medal, the Victory Medal, and was appointed an Officer of the Légion d'honneur in 2009.

Amy Williams



Amy Williams is an English skeleton racer and Olympic gold medallist. She grew up in Bath, where she attended both school and university. Originally a runner, Amy began training in skeleton after trying the sport on a push-start track at the University of Bath. She was unable to qualify for the 2006 Winter Olympics, but by the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, Amy was a member of the British team and won a gold medal, becoming the first British individual gold medallist at a Winter Olympics for 30 years.

In 2010 she was appointed an MBE and installed as an Honorary Freeman of the City of Bath. Amy announced her retirement from skeleton in 2012.

Roman Centurion



Soon after the Roman conquest in the first century AD, the Romans started building their great Baths and Temple at the Sacred Spring in Bath. These were constructed in 60-70 AD and the art and engineering of them offers an insight into Roman Britain at its most glorious.

The Romans named the city Aquae Sulis ("the waters of Sulis") after Sulis, a Celtic god whom the Romans identified with their goddess Minerva. People often scratched messages onto metal and threw them into the sacred spring for her; it was believed that in this way, they could lay curses on people. Around 130 of these tablets have been recovered, making the collection the most important of its kind found in Britain. In the Roman army a centurion usually commanded 100 men.