

## Steam Engines and a Heritage Fair to celebrate Victoria Baths' first 2017 Open Day

*Emily Oldfield previews the forthcoming Open Day and Heritage Fair*



Explore one of Manchester's hidden gems, the beautiful Edwardian bath-house which is Victoria Baths, with the first open day of the year on Sunday 9th April 2017 – the first also to feature visiting steam traction engines and a heritage fair.

It will be a real trip back in time from 11am onwards; with the chance to see impressive steam traction engines up close. Learn about how these steam-propelled engines, also known as 'road locomotives', became a crucial part of Manchester's industrial history.

There will also be afternoon performances from the local choir **Artful Voices** at 1pm and 2.30pm, a number of stalls and exclusive guided tours.

Stallholders will include representatives from **Manchester Jewish Museum**, the **Pankhurst Centre**, **Elizabeth Gaskell's House** and the **Museum of Transport**. There will be a range of books from **Chis Makepeace**, and a chance to learn more about groups including **The Victorian Society** Manchester and **Ancoats Dispensary Trust**. This is the chance to buy beautiful goods as well as learn more about a variety of local history, all under one roof at the historic Victoria Baths, Longsight.

Discover the history of the former 'Water Palace' for yourself with the choice of two guided tours. After all, the beautiful baths building on Hathersage Road could be considered a fitting location – full of period charm, originally opened in 1906 and celebrated as 'the most splendid municipal bathing institution in the country'. A Turkish bath suite, tiled floors and terracotta are just the start...

With the '**Discover Victoria Baths**' tour on at 12 noon, 1pm and 2.30pm you will be guided through the impressive architecture and history of the place, from learning about Henry Price the city architect supervising the build back in 1902, to the terracotta coat of arms, the Gala Pool and much more. You will also hear the various ways the building has been used, hear memories of bathers and learn about the 2003 BBC Restoration win and how the money was spent.

Feeling adventurous? There's also an '**Off Limits**' tour for even more exploration inside The Baths, which will run from 2pm. This means you have access to some of the lesser known parts of the building – unlock the undercroft of the pools and places that have been used for filming, including TV shows such as *Life on Mars* and *Mrs Biggs*. You'll also get to take in all the usual iconic sights.

With both tours you can also learn more about the exciting future of the building – including plans for a Turkish Bath installation and apartment living. Plus there's chance to get involved yourself and be inspired by the dedicated team of volunteers who keep the baths up and running.

Throughout the day, **The Tearoom** will be serving a range of refreshments and the gift shop open too, selling books, handmade crafts and many other items to take home. Victoria Baths proudly served the people of Manchester for 87 years from its opening date back in 1906, and since its re-opening in 2007, the service just keeps on going.

It's been a busy few years for the baths, which has served as an alternate concert venue for the Royal Northern College of Music, an exhibition centre – and last year became host to the Indy Man Beer Con and a number of vintage film screenings.

2017's first open day is the start to another exciting year at The Baths – which has already hosted The Vintage Home Show, and is welcoming the Manchester Gin Festival Friday 24th March - Sunday 2nd April.

With upcoming wedding shows, restaurant pop-ups and even more heritage open days, there is plenty to be excited about. Victoria Baths is open April-October annually, with guided tours typically every Wednesday and upcoming open days on the second Sunday of every month.

Adults: Admission £4, Admission & Guided Tour £7 (standard prices £3/£6) FREE for under 16s and VB Friends

Victoria Baths,  
Hathersage Road  
Manchester  
M13 0FE

