

Talking Signposts are the Way Forward

Talking Signposts were set up during two weeks of the Festival, by Buxton Town Team to test out if one local person volunteering to stand by the street map near Turner's Memorial for two hours would be of help to visitors. They were! Three people each doing a two hour shift between 10 o'clock and four o'clock helped, directly and indirectly, over 1400 visitors.

As well as helping visitors by giving directions and ideas of places to visit and things to do, the Talking Signposts logged the questions asked and where people came from. International visitors were from USA, Canada, China, Korea, India, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. One couple from New Zealand, who lived in Buxton until 15 years ago, had come back to celebrate their wedding anniversary. They were delighted with the town and said that it felt very different from when they were last here. They were putting photos on Facebook and urging their NZ friends to visit. Interestingly, most European visitors were from northern Europe.

People came from all over the UK, many from London and southern England, regional visitors from Leicester, Nottingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Blackpool and Birmingham. More local ones were from all over Derbyshire and Cheshire as well as from The Potteries, Manchester and Sheffield. They travelled by car, bus and train. One man on a bike was looking for the High Peak Trail but thought that he may stay in Buxton because there was so much going on.

The questions varied enormously; most could easily be answered from the local knowledge of the volunteers. Fewer people were aware of the Festival than expected, although they were delighted when they found out about it. All the visitors were very appreciative of the help – and the warm welcome. Local people too, stopped to say "What a good idea" and visitors came back to report on what a great town Buxton is and sometimes to ask for more information. The volunteers genuinely enjoyed helping them to really discover Buxton.

At a recent meeting the Buxton Town Team's Ideas and Vision Group decided to explore extending Talking Signposts next year to more places around the town. So, if you would like to join the Signposts; local knowledge is essential and then enthusiasm and a positive outlook, willingness to wear a smile, a Town Team tabard and an Information badge are all that are required. Just email townteam@buxtontownteam.org or telephone 71041.

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Note to Editor:-

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