



Total number of visitors recorded: 1012

31 August and 1 September were set-up days but visitors came in and there was enough installed to talk to them about the theme and of course the Turbine House itself. Still school holidays. Apart from the HOD weekend there were almost no child visitors on other days.

7-10 were Heritage Open Days; 9-15 were Reading on Thames Festival days

#### Pre-arranged groups

- 2 Sept: Exhibitors+guest launch a.m.; AH neighbours p.m.
- 3 Sept: Private lunch party p.m.
- 5 Sept: Friends of Reading Museum Coffee Morning a.m.; University Women's Club p.m.
- 6 Sept: Friends of the University of Reading a.m.
- 7+8 Sept: (some pre booking) Jelly Tots workshops a.m. [others just drop-in]
- 10 Sept: yarn-bombers group (from the Thames Path Community Project)

#### Advertising

- Spirally flyers in Central Library, Reading Museum, MERL, Bel & the D, Warehouse in Newtown, various people distributing, Jolly Anglers, Fisherman's Cottage, Picnic, UoR SCR
- Info sent to the 2 local primary schools
- 2xA4 posters Chestnut Walk, Gas Works Rd bridge, outside B&theD, Kennet Mouth+towpath
- Email to GetReading and BBC Radio Berkshire. We were the end point on the radio's Peach Quest Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> and mentioned most days to the 15<sup>th</sup>
- Heritage Open Days + Reading map, Reading on Thames Festival, University Events Diary
- RG Spaces: Twitter, Facebook, website, TurboCharged.org website

### Other numbers

Around 65 tiles were painted (mostly our tile painting activity is used by children while their parents take a look around but some adults do them too!)

Over this Spring & Summer so far around 550 of our Riverside Trail booklets (a trail designed for children but often the booklet is taken by adults to find out more about the site) have been taken from the windowsill in the Turbine Hse. not sure how many over All of a Twist, estimate around 100.

The exhibition had 16 posters on the T. House boards taking a different topic advised by Reading-related scientists (mainly UoR) plus objects (plants, willow, photos, maps, 2x3D printed models, 2 books and 2 scientific papers and extra info e.g. blueprints about turbines in particular).

2 main artworks – FLOW by Kate Findlay who won last year's competition at the Artist Data Day organised by Thingitude and Cultural Partnership as part of Reading Year of Culture and which was supported by members of RLab (Reading's Maker/Hackspace) and Undertow by Tom Cartmill who has just won a prestigious drawing prize and exhibited at the RA this year.

2 hands-on mechanical devices demonstrating propellers and crankshaft working  
Display cabinet showing insides of various motors – especially the coil winding

5 iPad displays (how a watermill works, turbine at Sonning, DNA molecule spinning, child reading her river poem and Flanders & Swan's Misalliance [Honeysuckle and bindweed]).

In all, 27 people contributed directly (plus yarn-bombers from the Thames Path Community Project).

Jelly Arts ran 2 workshops for pre-schoolers on the first two Heritage Open Days.

Over the Heritage Open Days weekend there were 5 'Extra Twists' but we did not otherwise widely advertise these extras and visitors just dropped-in to them.

- Spinning [Rachel Blunden, Berkshire Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers]
- drop spindling demonstration & info on pattern techniques [Felix Ford, Knitsonik]
- mini-workshops on drop-spindling [Guja Bandini, RG Spaces]
- willow weaving [Christine Brewster, Stripey Basket Co.]
- outside water-based experiments [John Holden, science teacher]

Most days there was a fairly steady trickle of visitors which meant we could talk with them (at least 2 people were manning the exhibition at any one time). A majority of visitors did not know the site (some despite having previously visited Bel and the Dragon).

On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> there were weddings at the B&theD – around a dozen guests came up to the exhibition from each (they seemed to need something to do!).

## Initial analysis

In 2016 over the 4 Heritage Open Days our exhibition (art from 23 artists which ran only over the HODs) had 809 visitors. Taking out the pre-arranged groups from both years the comparison is roughly:

2016 700 visitors 2017 410 visitors. This is a disappointing drop.

In 2016 3 of the 4 days were fine and the noticeable drop in numbers (to around half=100) occurred on the rainy Saturday.

In 2017 the Thursday was reasonably fine, the Friday was not and we had a halving of participants in the Jelly workshops. The Saturday started fine but there was horrendous weather in the afternoon – hail, thunder, absolute downpours. The Sunday weather was horrible, including very windy and we had to take down our outside activities. So 3.5 of the 4 HODs had nasty weather compared to 1 of the 4 last year. If the weather is to blame then these figures stack up.

The worst day for visitors (11) was Monday 11<sup>th</sup>. The weather was wet and cold.

Elaine asked whether in 2016 the Prison opening had had an effect. We were not aware of that at the time (and there was no advertising of our exhibition at the Prison for example). So the answer to that has to be 'don't know'. Given the correspondence between the weather and the number of visitors we feel that weather is probably is a major factor for this site. As is:

## Wayfinding

We ran out of all local brochures (Reading's HOD map, the Reading on Thames leaflet and the Museum's What's On) very early on and we didn't find a source for extra maps. Apparently only 3000 HOD maps are printed. This is minute given the size of Reading. We helped a few visitors with their next HOD visit by looking up online.

As last year, many visitors remarked on the difficulty of finding the site. This included complaints that walking along the side of the (roadside) buildings was confusing as 'you keep reaching doors but they aren't it'. We eventually put OPEN signs beneath the Riverside Museum boards and arrows along the wall. A few people complained that they came out of the restaurant and didn't know which way to go for the exhibition (despite our large banner outside the Turbine House saying exhibition open!). Occasionally events (or just large groups of people) at the B&D can appear to block access. A comment in the visitors' book is: 'this place is almost completely impossible to find'.

As noted on previous occasions, the official address of 'Blake's Lock' can be fatal – people may go to the lock. [One visitor to a lunch party ended up driving round and round Newtown....]. A couple of people also remarked that they'd found it difficult to find the place on the Museum website.

The Blake's Lock brown sign on Kenavon Drive points in the wrong direction (and has done for well over a year), there's confusion about what the museum is called (Blake's Lock on some signs, Riverside when you get there but also Waterside on a parking sign). There's confusion over parking – with a few visitors worrying about the threatening notices mentioning fines. There's confusion over whether the bridge is open. Also, just to note that there is less parking than last year because office workers are renting spaces. And there may be no parking (or toilets) if there is an event which has booked exclusive use of B&theD.