



FRINGE 40

40 YEARS OF BUXTON FRINGE

1980 - 2019



CONTENTS - mapping four decades of fun!

In June 2019 we celebrated our 40-year history with an exhibition that charted the growth of the Buxton Festival Fringe from its humble beginnings in 1980 into one of today's largest open-access UK fringe festivals.

We now have 10 different categories and several unique annual events.

With a 40-year archive and small exhibition space it was impossible to include all the many people who have been involved with the Fringe since its inception, but we extend a huge thanks to everyone who has supported us over the years, including our faithful *Fringe Friends* and funding partners, and of course none of this would be possible if it wasn't for our wonderful venues, artists and performers!

THANKS :)

To view the exhibition:

- continue scrolling down the page
- to jump to a particular page please see the contents list >
- click on an image to enlarge

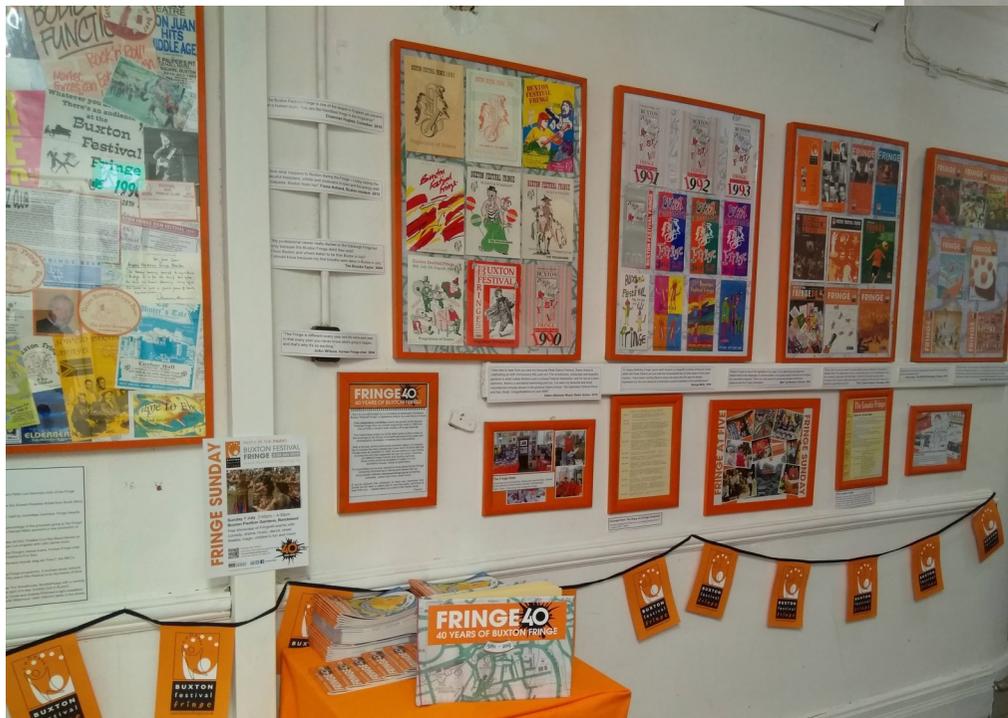
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The GALLERY

The initial frame at the top of the stairs gave a brief outline of the workings of the Fringe.

The exhibition continued around the walls with photographic montages, timelines, memorabilia and quotes.

We are very grateful to Buxton's Green Man Gallery for the loan of their exhibition space.



INSIDE the frame - a brief snapshot of events

1980 – 1989

1980 The first Fringe takes place in July with 28 music entries, 6 dance, 5 drama and 17 miscellaneous (everything from flower festivals to clay pigeon shooting at Harpur Hill). Alan Bailey is Fringe chair.

1981 The second Fringe includes a summer ball, Morris Dancing, Punch and Judy, wrestling in the Pavilion Gardens and a Georgian costumed street market.

1982 The Gandey Bros Circus arrives in town with roaring lions keeping the Fringe secretary, Sheila Barker, awake in her caravan! Barbara Langham becomes chair of the Fringe, now twice as big as the year before.

1983 The Fringe announces that it is double the size of the year before with some 250 performances put on by about six groups.

1984 The Fringe programme has a dramatically different cover. Events include The Crescent - 200 Years, a talk celebrating the building's history.

1985 Johnny Dagger makes his first appearance on the Fringe with his slides and music in Kingsterndale. He will become a Fringe institution showing up every year until 2005.

1986 Sketch group Edward the Deckchair arrive in Buxton. They become firm favourites coming back every year until 1990. Comedian Vladimir McTavish makes his debut on the Fringe. Arthur Dickinson takes over as Fringe chair.

1987 Another Fringe institution, Jennie Ainsworth, begins her *Vera Brittain* guided walks, which continue until 2010. Adrian Malbon becomes Fringe chair.

1988 Satirists Cloak and Dagger entertain July audiences and the Fringe amends its constitution.

1989 The Fringe celebrates its 10th anniversary with over 100 events including notorious comedian Jerry Sadowitz (then Gerry Sadowitz), who plastered the town with pink posters. The Fringe Information Desk boasts a telephone.



1990 The Big Fun Marquee Tour makes a splash with its circus skills workshop.

1991 Fringe Sunday is introduced as a way to publicise Fringe events. The legendary Peter Low becomes chair of the Fringe Committee.

1992 The Fringe's fame spreads worldwide. Among the international attractions are the Soweto Paradise Artists from South Africa and Victor Sobchak's Russian Modern Theatre.

1993 The programme begins to use a map format. Fringe readings are introduced, read by committee members. Fringe Awards for outstanding performers are introduced.

1994 50 plus events! A Fringe Film Festival is introduced as is Fringe Beer with a percentage of the proceeds going to the Fringe! Early music ensemble Partita makes its debut and larger than life musician / art patron George Melly sponsors a new production of *The Compleat Angler*.

1995 The Fringe Programme enjoys another major redesign. A lively Fringe includes Ad Hoc Theatre Co's *Not About Heroes* on the friendship between Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, and five-piece band Grupo Los Angeles with Latin dance music.

1996 The REC Theatre arrives on the scene. They will become a firm fixture on the Fringe's drama scene. Former Fringe chair there is music from BLA-BLA-BLA (Buxton Local Artists) and a Buxton Green Peace Children's Fun Day.

1997 A Film Festival takes the theme of Film and Poetry. Characterful Fringe performers include drag act Tina C, the REC's Martin Beard as Don Juan and Caribbean singer, guitarist and poet, Antigua Joe.

1998 The Bright Ideas children's art project is introduced to create a design for the Fringe programme. It involves seven schools led by artist Caroline Chouler. The finished artwork is displayed in Buxton Museum. This year's Film Festival is on the theme of Alice in Wonderland.

1999 An enticing programme includes Poole's Cavern candlelit tours, quirky singer Tim Woodhouse, BumblePuppy with a comedy set in a nuclear bunker and a night of stand-up comedy entitled Best of the Buzz - the start of a new comedy club in Buxton!

2000 A packed 21st birthday programme features comic Ross Noble; Derby Magic Circle and Andrew Robinson's light installation on the Crescent. Massive Elephant by Funny Wonders (a huge elephant decorated with Millennium 'wish' ribbons) takes to the streets as part of the Fringe.

1990 – 2000



2001 – 2009



2001 An exciting programme features a Jazz Festival parade and a spoof exhibition from one Johan Foops-Grotlier.

2002 OB Design comes up with a new-look ORANGE programme sponsored by the Old Hall Hotel in Buxton. Nick Butterley becomes the Fringe's first paid employee at the Desk. We publicise our first website!

2003 The Fringe celebrates a valuable new connection with the University of Derby College, Buxton, who become one of our major sponsors.

2004 The Fringe celebrates its 25th anniversary with Fringe Saturday, a float at the Carnival, a new Friends scheme, a Fringe club at Project X and a special exhibition in Buxton's Old Clubhouse on the history of the Fringe. At November's AGM, Peter Low retires as chair after 15 years and John Wilson takes over.

2005 The website receives a facelift. Margento improvise painting and music to poetry in Romanian and receive the first 'Fringiest Event' award. Fringe Saturday reverts back to Fringe Sunday and the Fringe goes eco-friendly with a Shetland pony instead of a carnival float!

2006 A new managed venue, Underground Venues at the Old Hall Hotel is launched. Its founders Three's Company have been inspired by their work with Martin Beard, founder of the Fringe's first managed venue, Venue 21. The Fringe has a new carnival float, courtesy of Lomas Distribution. The Shakespeare Jukebox makes their debut.

2007 French designer Armelle Perrin comes up with a new programme design. The Belly Dance Flames arrive at Fringe Sunday. A funding crisis is averted with the help of over 100 Fringe Friends. Fringe entrants enter online for the first time.

2008 Fringe is largest to date with 126 entries and is estimated to bring in more than £300,000 to local economy. 2009 30th anniversary celebrations start early with a Fringe30 gala at Buxton Opera House. John Wilson stands down as Fringe chair to be succeeded by Stephanie Billen.

2009 The Fringe celebrates its 30th anniversary with a whopping 141 entries. Fringe30 celebrations include schools project Vers@Tile, a children's well dressing and an outdoor exhibition from Art on the Railings. High Peak Radio interview figures from the Fringe's past.

2010 The Fringe has over 150 entries including the first Buxton Military Tattoo. Other firsts included the award-winning Buxton Art Trail and Hendrick's Horseless Carriage of Curiosities. The Fringe programme boasts controversial cartoon sheep!

2011 Another record-breaking Fringe sees over 160 entries. Underground Venues uses the brand new Pavilion Arts Centre as a venue attracting big names Ed Reardon, Henning Wehn and Isy Suttie. School workshops create a Giant Fringe for the Bandstand!

2012 The arrival of the Olympic Torch in Buxton on June 29 prompts celebrations in the Pavilion Gardens including the Fringe's *Torch Songs and Other Treats* featuring Fringe musicians on the Bandstand. Eric Tilley revamps the Fringe programme.

2013 New Fringe Beer supplier, Buxton Brewery, reports selling over 3,900 pints during a hot, sunny and busy Fringe! A Video Page is introduced for the Fringe website. Fringe chair Stephanie Billen steps down and is replaced by Keith Savage.

2014 New venture, Fringe at Five is blessed with sunshine. New managed venue The Market Place brings audiences to Higher Buxton. John Tromans takes over as programme designer. The Fringe also bids a sad farewell to Peter Low, who dies in the autumn.

2015 The biggest Buxton Fringe to date with 174 entries results in nearly 10,000 tickets being sold, over 5000 of them at Underground Venues. The Fringe website is significantly redesigned. Work on the Crescent begins creating uncertainty for Fringe venues but also the chance of using the Pump Room roof.

2016 A very enjoyable event features contributing nearly £400,000 to the local economy. Underground Venues celebrates its final year in the The Old Hall Hotel. Buxton-based trombonist Sam Slide is awarded a special Spirit of the Fringe Award.

2017 Underground Venues moves upstairs at The Old Clubhouse whilst The Green Man Gallery and new geodesic dome the Rotunda also become key managed venues. The Fringe programme goes landscape. Longstanding treasurer Barbara Wilson stands down and hands over the petty cash tin to Stephen Walker!

2018 A hot summer of fun! Buxton International Festival's New Spiegeltent makes a splash in the Pavilion gardens and hosts Fringe performers The Kaleidoscope Choir. Fringe postcards are made using designs from a programme cover art competition.

2019 The Fringe celebrates its 40th event with an extended Fringe40 boasting nearly 220 events and some 760 individual performances!

2010 – 2019



The PROGRAMME

Over the years we've had a wide variety of wonderful programme designs, and we now have an annual programme design competition. Visit www.buxtonfringe.org.uk/archive.html to see all 40 fab programmes!



Fringe EVENTS



Fringe Sunday and Fringe at Five

Fringe Sunday - our huge *Party in the Park* - was launched in 1991 and is now an annual event. Centred on the Pavilion Gardens' Bandstand, it offers performers a chance to showcase their events and audiences a great way to sample the Fringe for free!

Fringe at Five was introduced in 2014 and is an informal busking opportunity for Fringe performers, echoing Buxton International Festival's *Song at Six* in the same venue.

FRINGE AT FIVE

FUN ON THE BANDSTAND!
BUXTON FESTIVAL FRINGE 3-24 July 2019
www.buxtonfringe.org.uk

Fringe at Five is the perfect warm up to Buxton Festival's Song at Six: **FREE** entertainment at the Bandstand, Pavilion Gardens from this year's Fringe40 performers!

Check at the Fringe Information Desk next to the Opera House for details each day.

The Bandstand, Pavilion Gardens, Buxton
 8-12 & 14-20 July 5pm-5:30pm **FREE**

Sponsored by **UNIVERSITY OF DERBY** /buxtonfringe

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1980-2019

Buxton Festival Fringe is a registered charity No. 1017071

FRINGE SUNDAY

PARTY IN THE PARK!
BUXTON FESTIVAL FRINGE 3-24 July 2019
www.buxtonfringe.org.uk

Sunday 7 July 2:00pm – 4:30pm
Buxton Pavilion Gardens, Bandstand
 Free showcase of Fringe40 events with comedy, drama, music, dance, street theatre, magic, children's fun and more!

fringe for free!
 Lots more Fringe events are absolutely free!
 Visit www.buxtonfringe.org.uk or scan the code for an instant link.

Sponsored by **UNIVERSITY OF DERBY** /buxtonfringe

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COMMUNITY - we believe that the arts are for all !



Bright Ideas 1998 - An art project led by artist Caroline Chouler and Adrian Tissier to design the Fringe Programme cover. 140 entries gave us great scope for 4 future Programme covers!

Vers@Tile 2009 – A multi-media art project involving five local artists running masterclasses with local schools and community groups creating a ceramic tile triptych to celebrate Fringe30.



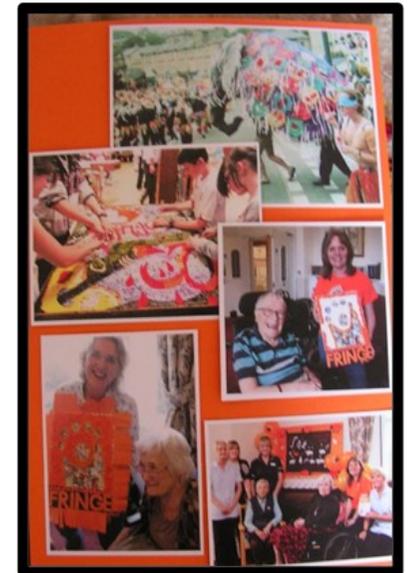
Our first **Fringe Float** in Buxton Carnival was in 2004 and since then it has grown and grown! On Saturday mornings volunteers rapidly customise a vehicle with posters, bunting, balloons and more - for which we've won a few trophies. As you can see in the photographs, our Carnival float hasn't always been 'motor' powered!



The Giant Fringe - This celebratory Fringe began in 2011 and is an ongoing project involving local schools and community groups. Short workshops are run by artist Gaye Chorlton, where students design and embroider a small panel which is then stitched into a length of fringe.

Get involved! We'd love more people to be involved in the project, so if your school or community group would like to take part, please email info@gayechorlton.co.uk for a chat.

As part of the Fringe's **Community Links programme**, we organise art workshops in residential homes and have a strong relationship with local schools including Buxton Community School, pictured here creating a Fringe30 well dressing in 2009.



The Fringe provides work experience for local students each year at the Fringe Desk and also encourages entrants to perform in schools, care homes and youth organisations.

Fringe FACTS

Buxton Fringe began in 1980 to complement the Buxton Festival which started one year previously. Malcolm Fraser founded both events but many other people were involved in the establishment of the Fringe including early chairs like Alan Bailey and Barbara Langham plus active secretary Sheila Barker.

From its earliest days the Fringe, a registered charity, has been run by a **Committee** of dedicated volunteers, meeting once a month.

Once just a table in Pavilion Gardens, adorned with flyers and a vase of wild flowers, the **Fringe Information Desk** has evolved into a buzzing hub. The Fringe provides both volunteering and Work Experience for local school students.

Situated at the entrance to the Pavilion Gardens' Conservatory it is open every day during the Fringe offering advice,



We are extremely grateful to everyone who has helped over the years and for the assistance of all our supporters including our nearly 200 **Fringe Friends**, High Peak Borough Council, the Trevor Osborne Charitable Trust and our longstanding sponsor, The University of Derby.

Without our wonderful **Venues** there would be no Fringe!

In 2019 we had three managed venues, *Underground Venues*, *The Rotunda* and *The Green Man Gallery*, but we are just as grateful to all our venues in town and beyond.

Curators' CHOICE

Ploughing through 40 years of programmes, photographs, posters and memorabilia was a wonderfully exciting experience, unearthing many gems! Unfortunately we can't show you everything in this online gallery but here are a couple of our personal favourites.....

Back in the early 2000s, our first paid Fringe Desk manager Nick Butterley produced some hilarious spoof **Fringe Newsletters**, and for the exhibition we created a mock up cover which included an extract from his infamous 'Keeper of the Fringe Desk Diary'.

Many articles were of course topical and often a little controversial, relating to who and what was going on at the time.

"Although I wasn't around then I love them and feel they really capture the spirit of the more crazy things that went on behind the scenes!.

Nick's diary pages particularly resonate with me - as the current 'Keeper of the Fringe Desk' - but these days the Desk is rather busier and sadly our Desk Diary is more fact than fiction! "



Gaye Chorlton
Fringe Desk Manager

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE BIXTON FRINGE FESTIVAL	<h2>The Lunatic Fringe</h2>
INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	<h3>Under the Fringe Desk</h3> <p>A tribute to the Fringe Desk, in the style of Dylan Thomas (in a Welsh Accent)</p> <p>It is midday, sunless midday in the musty conservatory. Posters litter the Fringe Desk with their green and black, white and black, cover back over all the tables when the wind carries them on a slow journey.</p> <p>Listen - see how noisy it is. The whispering customers are not silent now, they jibber and jabber like magpies in the dusty, musty, misty hall.</p> <p>Listen - car engines growl and trainers squeak on the filthy floor. Whistling now, more voices as they leave the Opera House to find the Paxton Suite.</p> <p>Listen - time passes.</p> <p>Listen - it is five past now and the Festival Town is sleeping, its hushing waters trickling in to the distance.</p> <p>Listen - for now you fly above the little town, see its Crescent, and Dome and Hotels, see into the little windows with the eating people inside. From where you are you can see what they eat</p> <p>- o o o -</p> <p>Nick Butterley: Pete Low will soon be sitting where I sit now. But where is he now? Where is the Lord of the Fringe?</p> <p>(Ghostly committee members appear)</p> <p>Martin Beard: Have you tried the Fringe Club? <i>One Fringe Club to Keep them all One Fringe Club to find him ...</i></p> <p>Nick Butterley: <i>Three pints for the Fringe Programme Nine for the Reviews doomed to fall Seven for the REC in dark Old Hall... One Fringe to advertise them all One Fringe Programme One Fringe to review them all One Fringe to cancel them".</i></p> <p>Extract from 'The Keeper of the Fringe Desk' Diary by Nick Butterley 21st July 2001</p>
CARRYING 2 THE CAN: "My role as a gardener by Pavilion gardens staff"	
BOO, GEROFF 3 The new comedy pages	
FRINGE BEER 7 RECYCLED AS LAGER	
BIXTON 10 PRIMARY PERFORMANCE NAMED BEST PERFORMANCE EVER BY ITS CREATORS: "Review WAS biased"	
BALLOON 4 BURSTS: 4 dead	
KEITH MILD 13 SAVAGED BY DOG	



"I particularly enjoyed finding a picture of the **Fringe Pony** - our carnival event in 2005.

We had only started trying to have a presence in the town's carnival the year before using a small pick-up truck which broke down in 2005 leaving us having to think on our feet.

A lovely friend called Pam Bridgens lent us her Shetland pony, Tansy, and decorated her with orange and white rosettes. An enthusiastic band of Fringe fairies joined us on the day and the sun shone - unlike the previous year when it poured!"



Stephanie Billen
Fringe Marketing Officer