

Walks, Talks and Balls: Jane Austen Festival [C1]

In occasione del Jane Austen Festival di quest'anno, potrai fare un salto indietro nel tempo e immergerti nell'affascinante mondo di Jane Austen. Georgia Delve, direttrice del Jane Austen Centre, ci svela le emozionanti esperienze che attendono i visitatori.



The Jane Austen Festival takes place in Bath from Friday 8th to Sunday 17th September this year. Thousands of people will unite in their love of [all things](#) Austen for ten days, [turning back time](#) in the [halls](#) and on the streets of the Regency city. We spoke to festival director Georgia Delve from the Jane Austen Centre. She explained what visitors can expect. **Georgia Delve (British accent):** Within the festival, there are walks, talks, workshops... The workshops are anything from dancing, to how to make a [bonnet](#), to [embroidery](#), we've had. We also have our big balls, so we have two balls this year, one of which is going to be in the Assembly Rooms in Bath. So, we have over 300 people, we fill the Assembly Rooms, there are card games, a bar. People can have some food and then obviously [there's] dancing, with live music in the big ballroom there. And the Assembly Rooms are very special in that Jane Austen herself actually went there. Obviously, she talks about them

in Northanger Abbey and Persuasion and she would have actually gone to a dance, so it's really, really special to be in that room.

A GRAND START

The festival's main event is the Grand Regency Costumed [Promenade](#) on the first Saturday, which [brings the city to a halt](#). **Georgia Delve:** We start this year from the Holburne Museum and we're going to promenade through the city of Bath for an hour. So last year, we had 573 people for that and you have to be dressed in Regency costume for the promenade and then we close the roads in Bath. We have the police out. They close it. We just stop the city as we as we go through, really.

A PLACE OF COMMUNITY

Visitors come from around the world and make friends who they meet year after year. The Jane Austen Centre makes sure they are all [looked after](#). **Georgia Delve:** We have a team of [stewards](#) that run the festival. So they are volunteers. They [give up their time](#) for the ten days or for a weekend or however much [long – ed.] they come. And they come and they run the events. Our [stewards](#) come from all over the world. We've got a French steward. We've had Australian, New Zealand... We've got an Italian girl coming this year. Because our visitors are multicultural and multilingual, it's really great to have [stewards](#) that also match that, to help with the languages and the translations and generally to just make everyone feel welcome and at home when they arrive.

TIMELESS RELATABILITY

Why is Jane Austen still so popular three hundred years on, that she brings together so many people? Georgia Delve believes that her books remain relevant today. **Georgia Delve:** The stories that she tells are timeless. They

are romantic. They are boy-meets-girl. She's also a female author which, for the time period, is really good and really modern and, obviously, at the moment, that's very relevant, because we are all about female empowerment. Again, it's a sense of community and once people find the Jane Austen world or you find this group of people that all love Jane Austen, there's an immediate sense of community through a shared passion.

FANS ONLY

The festival is a unique event, where [like-minded](#) people can [mingle](#) and imagine themselves in a [bygone](#) world. **Georgia Delve:** People come for the ten days. They wear their costumes or they may not wear their costumes, but they are around people that are talking about the same thing straight away. There's no barrier. You can [walk up to](#) someone and start a conversation and it's the easiest thing in the world. But they're in Bath, which is a Regency city or a Georgian city, and it's a form of escapism for those ten days.

A GROWING POPULARITY

Jane Austen has always been appreciated among a certain [demographic](#), but one TV series is now creating a whole new fanbase. **Georgia Delve:** We also of course [bounce a little bit off](#) — and I [loath](#) to say the word Bridgerton — but Bridgerton is bringing in a new generation of Jane Austen fans, in that they're finding Jane Austen through that way, because that is a Regency programme and then obviously Jane Austen is Regency, as well.

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Glossary

- **Promenade** = passeggiata
- **looked after** = prendersi cura
- **give up their time** = mettersi a disposizione
- **mingle** = socializzare
- **turning back time** = tornare indietro nel tempo
- **bonnet** = cuffietta
- **embroidery** = ricamo
- **brings the city to a halt** = fermare, bloccare
- **stewards** = aiutanti
- **bygone** = passato, lontano
- **bounce a little bit off** = rimbalzare
- **demographic** = fascia d'età
- **loath** = detestare
- **all things** = tutto ciò che riguarda
- **halls** = saloni
- **like-minded** = affini
- **walk up to** = avvicinarsi