

Abbey filled as visitors share farewell to Queen

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On Monday, September 19 as Britain waited to say goodbye to its Queen of 70 years, much of Bath stood in eerie silence.

The chic boutiques of Green Street were shuttered without a single customer to be seen.

In the place of Avon and Somerset police officers sent to London, a solitary PCSO walked silently along Northgate Street towards the Guildhall where the Union Flag was flying at half mast.

In the collonaded part of Abbey Churchyard residents and visitors were greeted with the rare sight of the Bath Abbey's great wooden west doors dating from 1617 being thrown open.

The main doors to the abbey remain closed except for special occasions, but after the Queen's memorial service on Sunday, September 11, this was the second time that they had opened since we lost our monarch 11 days earlier.

Within the Abbey Church of St Peter and St Paul, with its fan vaulted ceiling reminiscent of Westminster Abbey, televisions were mounted on the vast pillars to show the state funeral.

Bath Abbey, with its cavernous space and special acoustics, was one of several locations to offer free screenings of the funeral in the West including Salisbury Cathedral and Vue Cinemas in Cribbs Causeway, Bristol.

Here in Bath, visitors at the west door held cameras aloft, straining for a view of the altar and stained glass window.

City artists on the scene to paint history

Bath artist Charles Minty joined the crowds on the Long Walk in Windsor as they watched the state funeral while awaiting the arrival of the Queen's coffin for a Committal Service at St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.

Charles, 41, said he arrived on the Long Walk on Sunday, got a spot at the front by the barriers and had been painting ever since.

Charles was named after the now King, having been born on the wedding day of the then Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer. He finished a portrait of the Queen



Visitors fill Bath Abbey to watch the funeral of Queen Elizabeth together on televisions mounted on the pillars

Pic: Sarah Travers-Clark/SAY Photographic

But the clergy and Huw Williams' heavenly choir were all missing from their places. Instead, the spaces were filled with visitors watching the funeral.

Abbey Missioner the Rev Stephen Girling said: "We were delighted to fill the Abbey with local residents and visitors, with an

overflow into Abbey Churchyard.

"People came because they wanted to honour the memory of Her Majesty in the company of others.

"It was a fitting way to honour all that Her Majesty stood for in this place of Christian witness and service."



Pic: Miriam Kuepper/PA

I wanted to say goodbye

Bath entrepreneur Louis Bollard, above, was among the tens of thousands who spilled into Hyde Park to watch the "historic moment" of the Queen's state funeral and to wave goodbye as her coffin passed through on its final journey to Windsor.

Louis was draped in a Union Flag to watch the Queen's funeral on the big screens and see her final journey.

The 29-year-old said: "The funeral was very powerful. Seeing it was quite enchanting and mesmerising. It was a really, really nice, fitting tribute."

He watched the Queen's coffin go past and said: "I just wanted to see her and say my last goodbye, more to pay my respects more than anything.

"When you see it on TV it's one thing, but when you see the coffin yourself, it's completely different.

"I also helped out in the queue last night, giving out refreshments for people in the queue, but I didn't get to see her myself, which is why I wanted to come here and do it now."

Climate protest takes to streets

A large protest will take place in the streets of Bath this weekend to highlight the links between the climate and the cost-of-living crisis.

The Bath extinction rebellion group will be welcoming the 'Change Is Now' bus tour at 11am on Sunday at Brunel Square.

After speeches there will be a march up Southgate to Royal Victoria Park led by the XR Bath samba band.

"We can now see clearly how the cost-of-living crisis is a direct result of the climate and ecological crises," said Dave Searby, spokesperson for the Bath extinction rebellion (XR) group.

"This summer the UK suffered temperatures up to 40 degrees, and one third of Pakistan is now under water following devastating flooding linked to climate change.

"As ordinary people, we must do something before it's too late."

Authors lined up for book festival

A host of famous authors will be visiting Bath over ten days from this weekend for the city's Children's Literature Festival.

Tomorrow (Friday) sees the opening of the festival and among the celebrity names

attending are David Baddiel (inset), Julian Clary, Cressida Cowell, Richard Ayaode, Dermot O'Leary and Dame Jacqueline Wilson.

Europe's largest children's book festival will see more than 100 events, including storytime for little ones, family-friendly draw-alongs and creative workshops.

Joining the line-up this autumn are a number of YA (Young Adult) writers including Simon James.

To book tickets visit: <https://bathfestivals.org.uk/childrens-literature/whats-on>.



Left, Bath artist Charles Minty, painting on the Long Walk. Inset, fellow Bath artist Peter Brown.

Pics: main, Rebecca Speare-Cole; inset, Artur Lesniak

tired" after having no sleep for two days.

Another Bath painter has travelled to London from his Somerset home to capture the capital in mourning.

Peter Brown, 55, went London on Friday last week, painting the crowds along The Mall, in the parks and queueing along the Thames to see Her Majesty lying in state.

Peter, known as Pete the Street as he is an expert in painting street scenes, said: "With street scenes it is amazing to spend time on each one, so it's not like 'click' and done.

"I want to really capture the moment and for that you need to take time."

and had started working on a painting of Windsor Castle from the perspective of the crowds.

He said: "I finished the portrait as it is a tribute to the Queen and wanted to express how I feel through my art.

"I enjoy the energy I get from

people who watch me paint, so as such a big event it is a way I can use my talent to express gratitude to Her Majesty."

He added: "I've felt very emotional this morning. I was in tears, it was so moving, the atmosphere, the beautiful music playing."

He added that he was "super

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