

# Mandarin audio guides at the Roman Baths

## ■ Summary



**Audio guides are the principal vehicle for interpretation.** The audio guide is included in the cost of the visit and is free to B&NES residents. The Chinese community is the largest minority ethnic community in B&NES and we have two universities attracting many Chinese students.

In 2005 the Chinese Government gave the UK 'Approved Destination Status' allowing Chinese people to visit as tourists. At the same time Mandarin was added to the languages on the audio guides; the Roman Baths was the first UK attraction to do this.

## ■ The problems and how we tackled them

### 1) **Whether to use Mandarin or Cantonese:**

We were advised by the Bath East Asian Chinese group (BEACh) and a visiting delegation from The Palace Museum in the Forbidden City, Beijing to use Mandarin as the official language and the one most widely spoken throughout the country.

### 2) **How to pay for the addition of Mandarin.**

The 2004 Palace Museum delegation was accompanied by the manager of Acoustiguide's Shanghai office who offered the services of her team in Shanghai to do the translation for us.

## ■ Outcomes and impact



**Take-up of Mandarin audio guides has grown rapidly since 2005 when 12,804 Mandarin tours were taken.** By 2009 this had risen to 43,076. Visitor feedback has been very positive and some Cantonese speakers have said that they could understand and enjoy the tour in Mandarin.

We have won two awards have been won for the introduction of Mandarin audio guides; 2006 Museums & Heritage Awards for Excellence 'marketing' award for the promotional campaign that introduced the service; and the Roman Baths won the Silver 'marketing' award at the 2010 Chinese Welcoming Tourists Awards, held at the World Trade Centre in Beijing.

## ■ Who was involved?

**We involved BEACh in the launch of the new service,** as well as Fun Mandarin, a children's Chinese language group. The launch took place at the Chinese New Year and the Roman Baths reception hall was decorated with Chinese lanterns.

## ■ Next steps

**We have continued to build our links with China.** The Roman Baths now has a website in Mandarin and we also have a Roman Baths page in Mandarin on the VisitBritain website in China. We have an agent at the China Business Network who represents our interests in China.

In 2009 Stephen Bird, Head of Heritage Services, was a delegate on the first ever British Council museums delegation to China. In January 2010 the Roman Baths hosted a reciprocal Chinese visit. Delegations have also been welcomed from the Terracotta Army and the Council's friendship city of Jingdezhen.

# Our equality journey

Making Bath & North East Somerset an even better place to live, work and visit