

# Sydney Gardens Bath Heritage Trail for Kids



**SYDNEY  
GARDENS  
BATH**

 **COMMUNITY  
FUND**

 **Heritage  
Fund**

**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**

Improving People's Lives



# SYDNEY GARDENS BATH



- 1 Behind the Holburne
- 2 Site of the Roman Remains
- 3 Site of former Labyrinth
- 4 The Kennet & Avon Canal
- 5 Canal Bridges
- 6 The Railway
- 7 Temple of Minerva
- A Kiosk
- B Gardener's Lodge
- C Public Loos, Changing Places Facility & Community Pavilion
- D 1920s Ladies Ironwork Loo
- E Edwardian Gents Ironwork Loo
- F London Plane Tree Trunk
- G Canal bridge 'Father Thames'
- H Canal bridge 'Sabrina'
- I Loggia
- ⊕ Play and Sport area
- 🚲 Cycle Lock-up
- 🎾 Pétanque Court
- Private Properties



# Welcome to the Sydney Gardens Heritage Trail for Kids

Sydney Gardens was created over 200 years ago in 1795. It is one of Britain's remaining Georgian Pleasure Gardens. The Gardens were created in what is known as the Georgian period where they had four kings in a row all named George! They were called Pleasure Gardens, as it was a place where people came to relax, see friends and have fun!



People could get lost in a maze, swing on giant swings, or visit a 'Sham Castle' (you might spot one today in the new play area!). They could listen to music, watch firework displays and see some of the first hot air balloons take off!

Back then you had to pay to get in, so it was a bit like a theme park today.

Get ready to follow this trail, step through different times, discover what came before the Georgians and journey right up to the present day.

Footstep  
**1**

## Find yourself on the map, where we begin at the back of the Holburne Museum

Can you see which part of the museum was the original Georgian Sydney Hotel and which part is the modern extension to the museum completed in 2011?

What do you think they are made of? .....

What's your opinion on the combination of Georgian and Modern architecture?



## Roman Remains

You are looking at the Panna-Football Court, but what came beforehand?

**How many people do you think have trodden here in the last 2000 years?**

**What might they have buried or left behind?** .....

As time passes layers get added to the earth, covering over artefacts. Archaeologists can learn more about our history from digging things up.

**What do you think might be under your feet now? Draw or note your ideas in the box below.**

Romans first invaded Britain in 55 BCE In 2021 as this play area was being created, archaeologists excavated a stone coffin just 50cm underground! This is the fifth stone coffin that has been uncovered in Sydney Gardens. Inside this coffin they found two skeletons buried over 2000 years ago. One was buried with beads.

**Why do you think this person was buried with colourful beads?**

Romans believed in the afterlife, and would often make offerings to their dead to help them.

What kind of artefacts do you think people might leave today? **Draw or note your ideas in the box below.**



Above: Roman stone coffin and bead



## Sydney Gardens Georgian Labyrinth

You have travelled through time to 1795, where Georgians would have strolled in the gardens dressed in their finery or trotted on horseback around the perimeter along what was known as 'The Ride'.

Right here there used to be a Labyrinth (similar to a maze), a popular attraction in the Georgian Pleasure Gardens. It had high hedge walls so you couldn't see over them and you could easily get lost in trying to find your way to the centre. It was so tricky that some people cheated and would pay a guide to take them there!



In the centre was Merlin's Swing. Look carefully at the Merlin Swing in this picture. Can you see the rope pulleys they used to help them swing higher? Perhaps you've been on something similar at a fair?

**Use a pen or pencil to see if you can find your way to the swing.**



**Entrance**

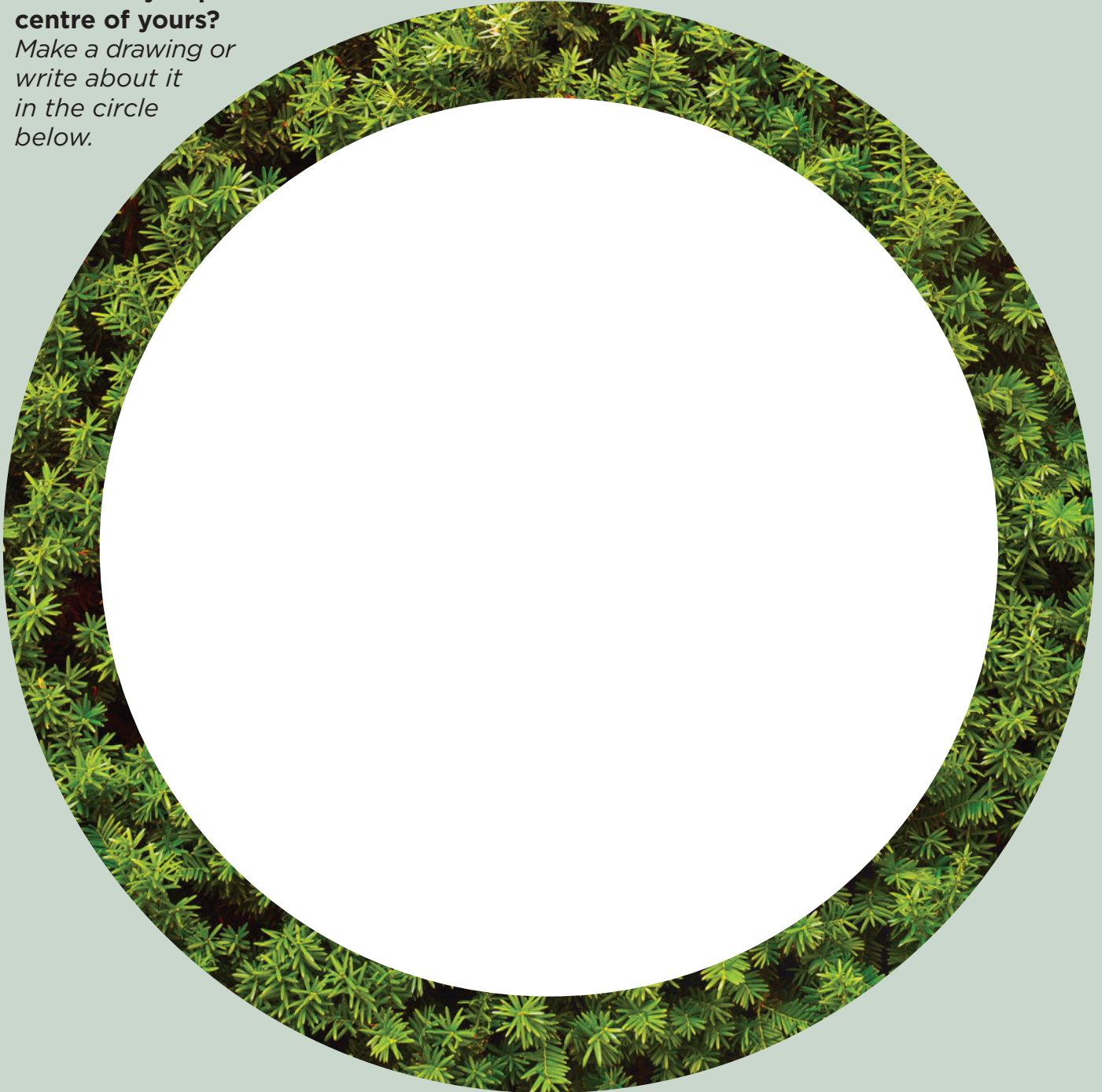


## Design Your Own Labyrinth!

The word Labyrinth comes from ancient Greece. In the ancient Greek myth of 'Theseus and the Minotaur', a deadly human eating beast inhabits the centre. In the heart of the Georgian labyrinth there was Merlin's Swing, a fun activity which Georgians believed would be good for their health.

### What will you put at the centre of yours?

*Make a drawing or write about it in the circle below.*



**Why do you think the gardens and the entertainments were such an important part of life in Georgian times?**



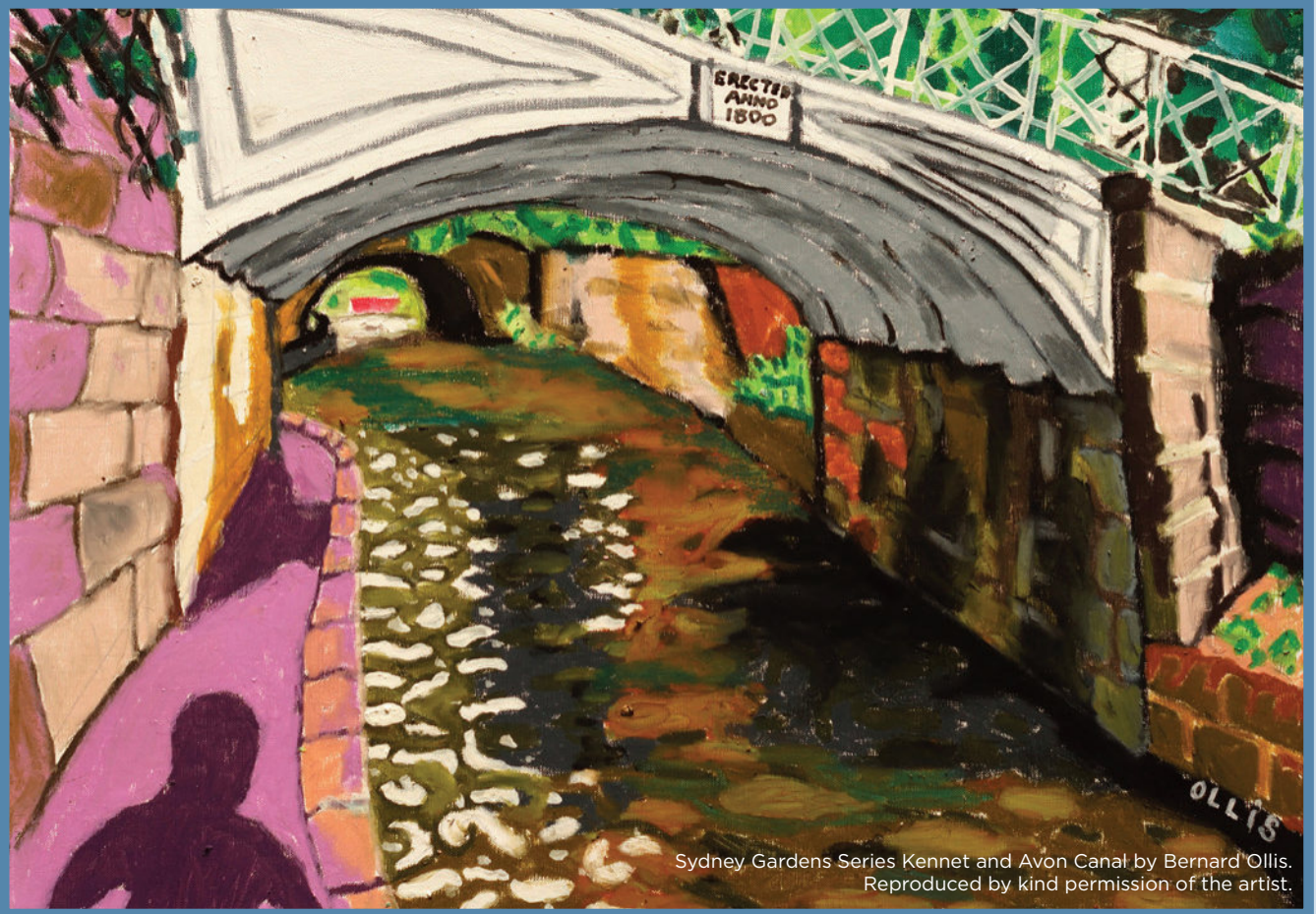
---

---

---

## The Kennet & Avon Canal

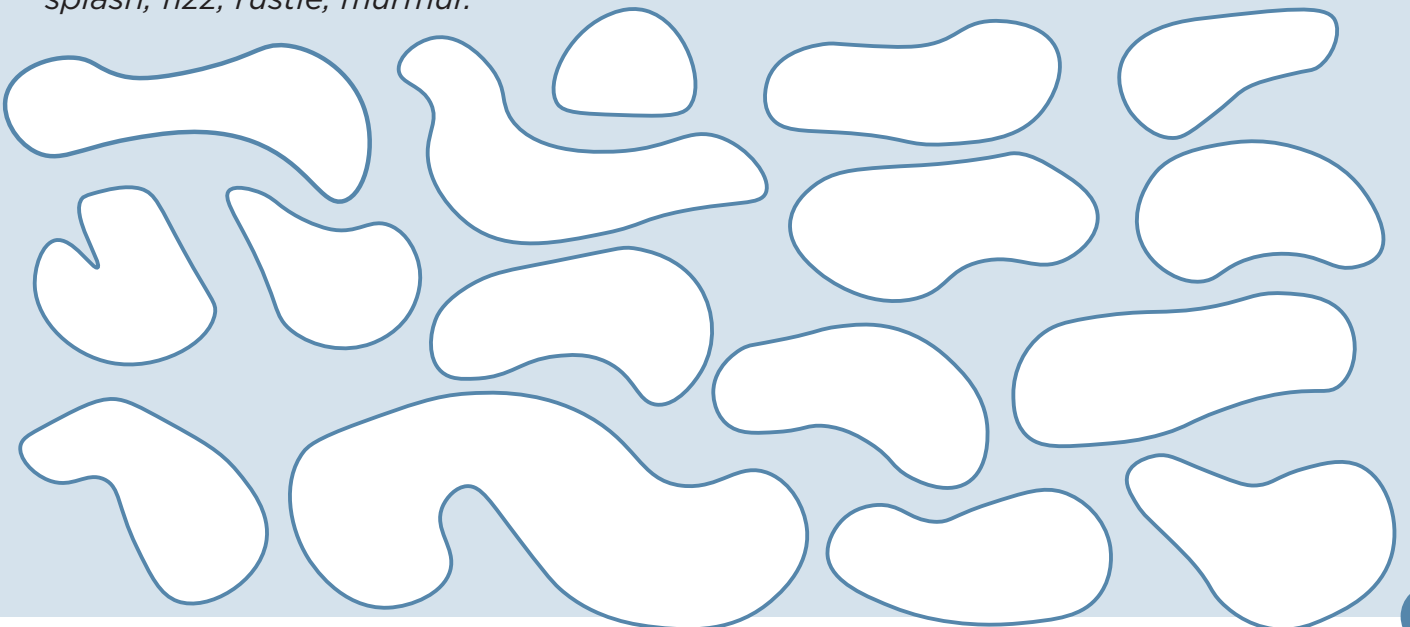
Water can be very relaxing in a pleasure garden but this canal wasn't always here and was added in 1800. **Why might canals have been built? What travels up and down them?**



Sydney Gardens Series Kennet and Avon Canal by Bernard Ollis.  
Reproduced by kind permission of the artist.

**Let's create a water poem by adding words into the swirly pattern below inspired by what you see and hear.**

*Try some onomatopoeia. These are words that describe sound for example: splash, fizz, rustle, murmur.*





## The Canal Bridges

Some people were upset about the canal dividing the Pleasure Gardens. As compensation, John Rennie was commissioned to design two attractive bridges to cross it. These bridges were designed in the 'Chinoiserie' style, pronounced 'sheen-waa-zuh-ee'. It's a style which takes its influence from China, Georgians loved Chinese design.



**Look closely at the two bridges, what material are they made from?** .....

Chinese designs were influenced by nature. Can you see shapes, patterns or symbols taken from nature in these bridges? **Draw and label below.**

A large empty rectangular box with a pink border, intended for drawing and labeling the bridges.



Rennie also designed the two road bridges/tunnels (see G and H on the map). They each have a figure on them: one has Sabrina Nymph of the River Severn and the other Old Father Thames.

**What do you notice about the style of these bridges?**

---

---

**Why do you think they are so different to the Chinoiserie bridges?**

---

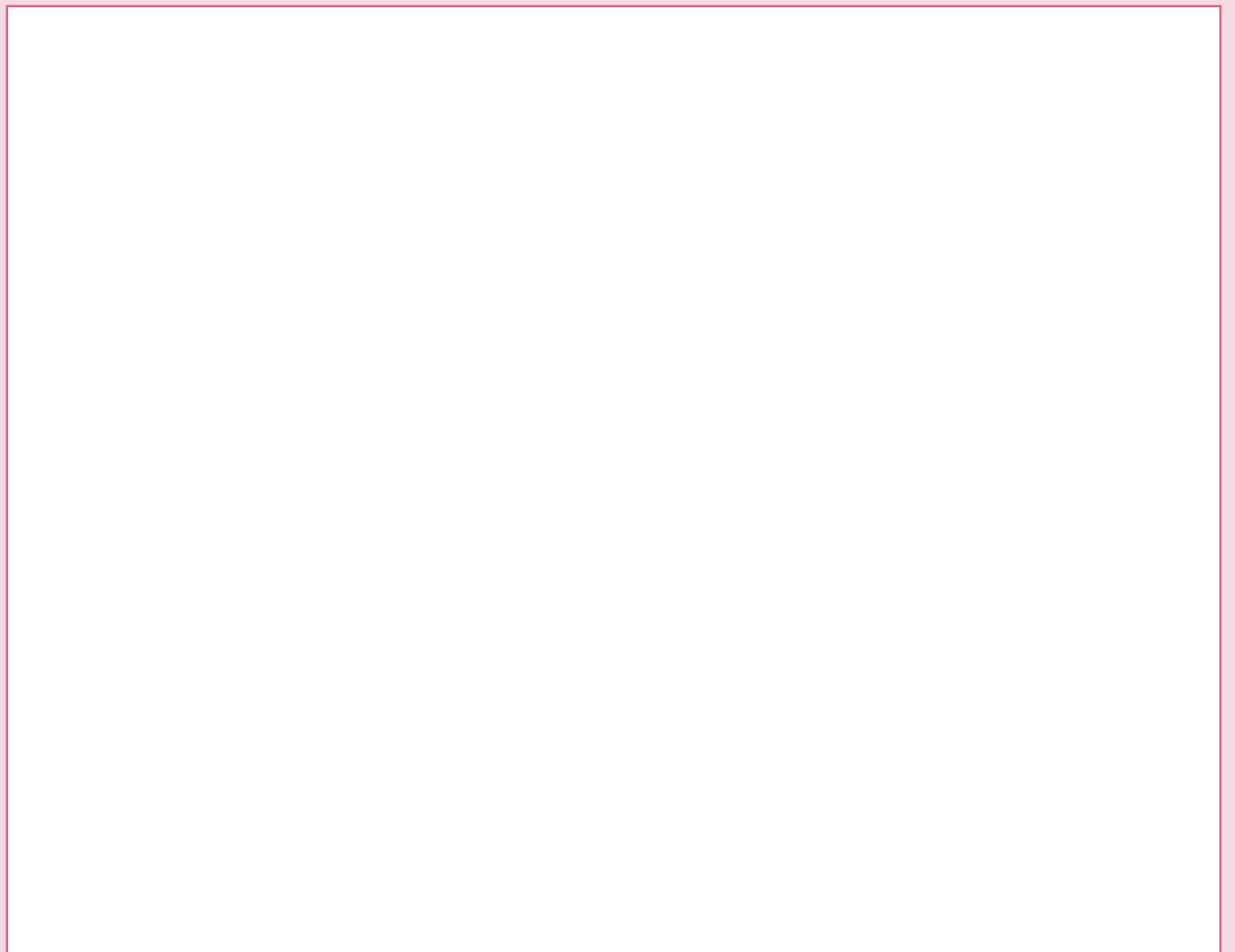
---

**What material are they made from? How is the shape different?**

---

---

**Draw and label features that stand out to you below.**





## Speedy Victorian Railway

In 1839 Isambard Kingdom Brunel designed a railway line, which ran through the centre of the Pleasure Gardens in 1840. Steam trains were powered by coal.. Watching a steam train back then would have been as exciting as seeing a rocket fly to the moon!

This railway line runs all the way from London to Bristol and it is still in use today! Nowadays trains are mainly powered by diesel or electricity.

Imagine all the sounds you might be able to hear as it goes on its journey.

Take a look at this extract of a poem by Chrissie Gittins.

### The Listening Station

It hears the wind that rushes through the trees  
saying something of the sea,  
it hears a moth leaving the ceiling,  
it hears the thin pages of a book close,  
it hears a late key turn in the door.

### What do you like?



Steam Train Sydney Gardens Bath by JS Gibb

Now take some time to listen to the landscape around you.



Sydney Gardens Series Train approaching by Bernard Ollis. Reproduced with kind permission of the artist.



Can you hear a train approaching?

Imagine the park is listening, what sounds does it hear?

**Make a listening poem using these prompts.**

<p>First, listen! The garden listens to the smallest sounds that are closest to you, what does it hear?</p>	<p><b>It hears the...</b></p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Now, it listens in to the top of the tree tops, what sounds does it hear?</p>	<p><b>It hears the...</b></p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Next, imagine the gardens have superhuman hearing and can hear a train leaving the station at Bristol Temple Meads, what can it hear?</p>	<p><b>It hears the...</b></p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Finally, imagine it can hear the passengers arriving in London, what does it hear now?</p>	<p><b>It hears the...</b></p> <hr/> <hr/>

**Imagine you are a child in 1850s, standing on this bridge, why were trains so exciting?**



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## An Edwardian Temple of Minerva

Welcome to the Temple of Minerva built in 1911. Can you spot evidence of classical Roman and Greek architecture?

If you noticed the columns, you are right! That's because this is a replica of the Temple of Sulis Minerva found at the Roman Baths in the centre of the city.



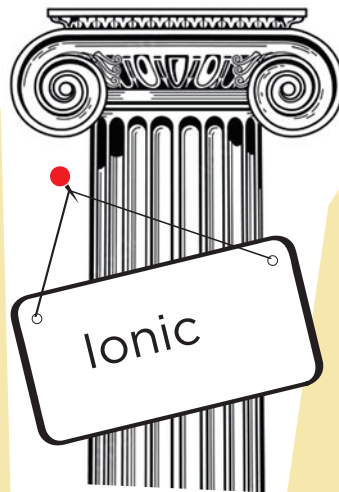
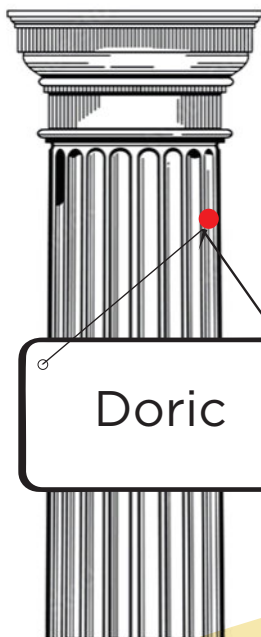
Look closely at the columns below.

**What is the same?** .....

**What is different?** .....

Now compare them to what you see on the temple columns in front of you, **what do you notice?**

The columns are in the Corinthian style which is much more decorative with carvings of plant leaves. **Try drawing the Corinthian column in the remaining box.**



### Ancient Facts

The Roman Goddess Minerva was originally known as the Greek Goddess Athena.

Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, trade, the arts and the strategy of war.

The animal associated with Minerva is the owl. Can you spot an owl carved into this temple?

This Temple was built by the Edwardians in 1911. Why do you think that different eras of history copy one another?

## Congratulations! You have finished the heritage activity trail.

To celebrate, here is a special poster from the old Pleasure Gardens to the Children of Bath. *Maybe you can read it out loud!*

# CHILDREN OF BATH,

Worry your Mothers to allow your Fathers to take you to SYDNEY GARDENS, Next Thursday, 11th September—Great Doings there—and all for A SHILLING. The Last Gala.

Promise them you won't be naughty for at least a week. Such beautiful Fire Works, you can't think—and such Illuminations, and Fire Balloons, and Funny Songs; and you'll see Naples, with the Burning Mountain of Vesuvius; and London by Moonlight—and the grand Railway, where they travel almost Fifty Miles an hour—and the great Fire of Bristol; then there's a Congreve Rocket, a 38-Pounder, to be let off.

All this is to be seen for only **1S**

Therefore, worry your Mothers, I say; and if they don't let you go, never be good again.

DOORS OPEN AT HALF-PAST SIX.

**NEXT THURSDAY,**  
11th SEPTEMBER.

**We hope you've had a good time.  
Come back soon to Sydney Gardens soon!**

**SYDNEY  
GARDENS  
BATH**



**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**

Improving People's Lives