

City Peace Trails : their use and how to create them Using Bradford, UK as an example

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Background

Very few cities have created a peace trail to highlight their known and less known sites and people. Bradford, UK, has done this and has found interest from cities across the world – Europe, USA, Asia - wanting to do their own versions. This paper explains the process, the opportunities and challenges in order to inspire others to do their own trails. Bradford has printed over 10,000 copies so far in just two years. They are free.

Having such a trail is also a significant outreach contribution from a local peace museum to positive peace in that area, attracting both residents and visitors alike.

Each city can design their version in their own way, of course. It can be shorter or longer depending on time and money and desire. It should be well designed in order to get maximum impact.

How Bradford's Peace Trail started

It was designed jointly by The Peace Museum, UK (an independent charitable trust) and Bradford City for Peace (a local voluntary peace group) in 2006. The idea originally came from a few local people 'walking for peace' around different peace sites in the city. We then realised that there were more sites than we thought – some 30 or 40 – and many were unknown to the general public. There were other booklets showing sculpture trails and history trails, but none on peace. We saw a definite gap in the market and went for it.

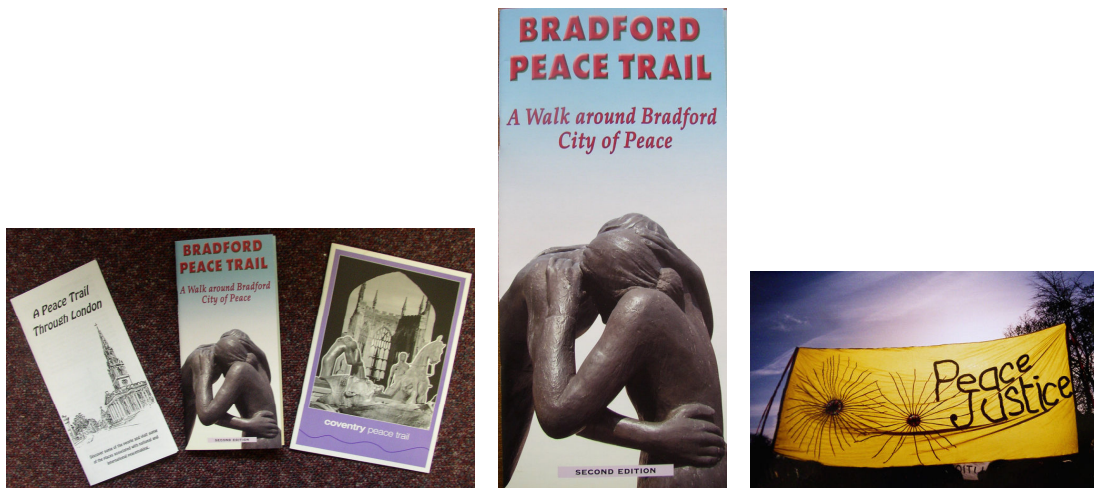
Definition of peace sites : we took a wider definition, covering 'peace and justice' in history as well as currently, plus some conflict sites too. We looked at positive and negative peace. Many were also personal and community peace sites, as well as a few national-related sites and people. We found stories which had largely gone out of the public knowledge.

There may be other existing trails in the city with perhaps some overlap, but the peace trail sees things from a quite different angle. Think widely rather than narrowly.

Existing trail leaflets from two UK cities were obtained (London and Coventry). These were good but were more limited in design and scope, for financial and time reasons. One was done by individuals, the other by the city municipality.

Why did Bradford's booklet do so well?

- a) Two people were committed to making it happen.
- b) Bradford as a city had an image problem and needed to attract more people into the city, both as residents (to shop) and as visitors. Since most (but not all) of the sites are in the centre this trail was seen as helping to improve that image.
- c) The finance – for design and printing - was supplied totally by the city municipality (about £5,000 for the first edition of 2,500 copies, but we found a much cheaper printer later). The finance was also requested near the end of a financial year and there just happened to be money in the 'city centre' budget which was not yet spent. That was fortunate.
- d) The booklet was attractive to look at, whether or not one was interested in the trail itself. This good appearance of the outside and inside was a significant contribution to its success : people were impressed just by seeing the booklet on the table, as well as by reading it.
- e) Some conflict as well as peace sites were included, thus appealing to a wider market.
- f) Excellent newspaper publicity helped in the launch of and reputation of the first edition.
- g) There was attention to detail in content, in cross-referencing, checking on facts, and in obtaining permission from the city to use their tourist map as a basemap.
- h) The second edition costs came from the same sources and for the same reasons. The success of the first edition played a role in that too.
- i) They are from the Tourist Information Centres in the area.
- j) They are free. We found it just too complicated to charge any money. If anyone wanted many copies (for a school class) we asked for a donation.



Practical issues

a) it is a one-third of an A3 page, portrait style, with 18 pages (=36 sides) plus an integral fold-out map. All in full colour. Stapled. Attractive cover photo.

b) two people wrote the Bradford trail – each took photos and researched and wrote some 200-250 words on each site. These two met regularly to go through what

each had done and do amendments. Attention to detail was very important. Using mostly our own photos meant that copyright issues were less of a problem.

c) a separate booklet designer person – at a commercial rate - was selected to create a print-ready CDRom. This was a key job and needed someone committed to the project. A good mix of images and text is important in the appearance.

d) The sites don't have to be only city centre – they could be in the suburbs or even outside the city

e) Phrase the content so that it does not get out of date too quickly.

f) The city library was a very helpful source of information

g) References and acknowledgements – on information, photos and finance - were clearly included

h) the finance was handled completely by one person – through the local peace group account.

i) the publicity with the local paper and community radio was handled by one person.

j) It was launched by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Bradford.

k) It took about a year and a quarter of two people working on it part time, between their other jobs.

l) It needs someone to keep restocking the information centres with more copies and to keep pushing the booklet in other ways.

m) If there is only finance and time or sites for a more basic leaflet – perhaps a folded A3 leaflet – then do a black and white version. If well designed it will still be attractive. It could be a springboard to inspire finance later on for a colour version.

Interest in the publication

The booklet is a useful small gift which peace museums can give to visiting delegations and also to take as gifts from your home city when you visit places elsewhere.

There has been specific interest (but not developments as yet) from Vienna (Austria), Atlanta, Philadelphia & California (USA), Istanbul (Turkey), Rawalpindi (Pakistan), The Philippines and some Australian cities.

Local schools were interested for school projects. Also, some are wanting to make a podcast (yet to be done).

The local peace group also put the trail on their website.

Further spin-off developments

Many cities in the UK have small notices – called plaques - fixed to buildings to record the fact that an event took place at that place, or that a particular person lived in that house in the past. Around A4 in size. Bradford has a few of these. The Peace Trail booklet mentions several of them. Some were placed by the city municipality, some by interested groups.

While researching the booklet we found four people and events that did not yet have a plaque, one even being a Nobel Peace Prize winner. We thought they should have a plaque. We said so in the booklet and sought finance to create them.

So, still working jointly as before, and again with a grant from the city municipality (£2,500), we designed four different plaques and had them made in a local foundry. These were cast in aluminium using inbuilt relief lettering, with white painted letters on a dark blue background.

We asked the building owner for permission to attach them (by screws). They are still owned by the local peace group.

For each one we had a public unveiling ceremony, again by the Deputy Lord Mayor, plus a short talk and reception nearby.

These were well covered in the local media and helped publicise the peace trail as well.

These have stimulated to other people doing further investigation into the background. For example, at one launch, descendants of the person named on the plaque attended and gave with more information. Someone else wished to write a book about that person.

How to get started on a booklet?

Using these notes, take time for a few initial thoughts, for example:

- How many peace sites might there be in my city or area? Think a wide definition of peace (and conflict), at least initially.

- Are there other trail publications of any sort locally? The city municipality could well be interested if not, or more if there are already.

What are the chances of finding finance? Might the city be interested as a means of attracting more people to the place (especially as a tourist attraction).

- Is there anyone who might know, or is good at finding out, about people and events in the city, both present as well as past? Especially the more unusual stories too.

- Get a few committed people together to do it - a smaller rather than larger group may be easier to manage, at least initially.

- Don't be put off by people saying that no one will be interested in a peace trail.

- Tell me about it when you start – I will be interested!

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(The Peace Museum is an independent trust and registered charity. It is not part of the Bradford University Peace Studies Dept nor of the City Municipality, but has good informal links with both)