



Expect the Unexpected

Exeter's newest festival, Unexpected 2013, is celebrating the legacy of last year's Olympic Games this month

One of the many uplifting results of last year's Olympic Games, preceded by an Olympic Torch tour which saw 50,000 people line the streets of Exeter, was the incredible sense of unity sport and culture created across the country. A year later, as part of the legacy of the Games, Exeter City Council announces a new festival. Unexpected 2013 is an exuberant eight-day festival with a brilliant programme offering the kind of inclusivity which made London 2012 such a hit.

The festival runs from 15-22 September and has three key purposes: taking art and performance out of traditional venues into thrilling, unexpected indoor and outdoor locations; nurturing exciting local talent; and enhancing the city as the cultural hub for the South West, working in partnership to improve the quality of life for people living, working-in and visiting Exeter.

This is the first festival of its kind in the city for three years, and you get the feeling organisers are making up for lost time. For starters, the opening Sunday (15 Sept) has canoeing, rowing, biking and athletics during a day devoted to family fun on the Quayside, with have-a-go sessions for anyone wanting to try and imitate our medal winners. The Last Supper (20-21



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Sept), at the ancient Guildhall, has been heavily praised by leading theatre critics for its subtle, atmospheric appeal, inviting a small audience to be regaled by tales during dinner with the performers.

A flank of equally historic venues in the city centre will have their stories told through Theo Simpson's special exhibition, Lesser Known Architecture (16-23 Sept). The piece has been partly informed by four local museums and galleries,

including the Royal Albert Memorial Museum.

Throughout the week, art interventions will pop up where you least expect - a cinema under the stars is just one of the 'surprise' plans for more than 250 points around Exeter. And Princesshay Square (22 Sept) is the place to head to for spectacular on-stage entertainment, be it acrobats ready to show off their masterful grace and agility, or the theatrical playfulness of Tangled Feet, who will be making everyone laugh with music, drama and comedy on a bouncy castle.

Bristol's Above and Beyond will also be in town to provide an incredible set of 45-minute workshops for all ages followed by a professional aerial display. Meanwhile Blind Ditch, a group who have won Arts Council praise, showcase their project This City Centre, which presents a behind-the-scenes look at everyday life.

The zip of tyres, meanwhile, will reverberate along the High Street, where fans of Bradley Wiggins will get to see some of his closest admirers sprint past each other as part of the Devon stage of the Tour of Britain (20 Sept).

Wherever takes your fancy, Unexpected 2013 ends the summer in an electrifying, exciting way. ■ unexpectedexeter.co.uk