

Visitors will flock to Derby in summer 2020 for Derby Ram Trail

In the summer of 2020, a number of very colourful and highly visible rams will start to appear in Derby as part of a new tourist attraction in the city centre.

The thirty, five-foot high, fibreglass sculptures will be in the shape of Derby's mythical Ram - which, according to legend, was ten yards high with enormous horns and a huge flowing fleece.

The story goes that people travelled from all over the country to see the legendary Derby ram. In common with similar trails in other UK city centres, which have been successful in bringing thousands of visitors, it is hoped that the new trail will do the same once it opens to the public in June, 2020. Best of all, it will be a free, walkable art sculpture trail that will take people around the highlights of the city centre.

No animal is more closely associated with any city, as the ram is to Derby. Walk anywhere in the city, and you will spot a statue, a plaque, a radio station or an entire football club, which has put its name alongside that of an animal of almost mythical proportions.

The origins of The Derby Ram are believed to stretch back as far as the 16th century, when *The Ballad of the Derby Ram* was first penned. Telling the tale of an animal "ten yards high, with wool on its back which reached to the sky, horns which reached to the moon, and capable of sending the devil back to hell", the Ram became a symbol of such strength that the city quickly adopted it as its own.

Set to music by either Dr John Wall Callcott in the 18th century, or his son William Hutchings Callcott in the 19th century, the ballad - and the myth - continued to develop over the years.

In 1858, for example, the first "Private Derby" was acquired by the 95th Derbyshire Regiment of Foot during the Indian Mutiny Campaign. The commanding officer at the time had noticed a fine fighting ram tethered in a temple yard, and ordered Private Sullivan to take it into his possession. What followed was the start of a distinguished military career for Private Derby (as this ram was known).

The first Private Derby marched some 3,000 miles throughout Central India with Sullivan, and was present in six actions, resulting in him being awarded the "India Medal with Clasp Central India". In total, Private Derby 1st fought in 33 battles, and was never defeated.

Since that time, there has been an uninterrupted line of Regimental Mascots - each one named Private Derby, followed by his successive number. It has become a tradition for the Duke of Devonshire to select a Swaledale Ram from his Chatsworth flock to present to the Regiment.

Today, visitors to the City of Derby will find a host of references to The Derby Ram, not least at Pride Park Stadium, which is 'home' to "The Rams". Not surprisingly, their mascot - who patrols the touchline during every home game - is called "Rammie".

Now, local sculptor Michael Pegler who, in 1995, created the famous stone ram now on Derby's East Street, has generously allowed Derby Museums to use his Ram design for the new Derby Ram Trail sculptures.

It is designed to emulate the success of similar initiatives, such as Manchester's Bee in the City trail, and will be unveiled in June 2020.

The scheme is being led by Derby Museums in partnership with Wild in Art, a group which produces free public art. Derby Museums executive director Tony Butler said the trail would be a fun way to bring people together to "rediscover" Derby and take pride in the city: "The Derby Ram Trail is all about making public art accessible to the people of Derby and beyond. The trail's legacy will help ensure Derby's art and heritage remains accessible for generations to come."

Further details can be found at <http://www.derbyramtrail.org>, @DerbyRamTrail, and #TheRamsAreComing.

Full visitor information about the City of Derby, meanwhile, is at <https://www.visitderby.co.uk>.

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