Disabled Access Day 2015

Foreword

The first ever Disabled Access Day happened on the 17th January 2015, initiated by a group of disabled people and their friends and sponsored by Euan's Guide. The day ended up being a lot bigger than initial expectations!

The idea for Disabled Access Day came from Paul Ralph, a powerchair user, who had been on a 'try it out day' with a local bus company.

"Prior to this, I had not used the bus network in my hometown because I was unsure how the ramp operated, how ticketing worked and if my powerchair would fit.

I attended a demonstration organised by the local bus company with the opportunity to explore a stationary bus. Extra staff were on hand to explain the process of getting on and off safely. There was also ample time to become more familiar with the layout of the bus and with what you need to know as a wheelchair using passenger.

I'm now a frequent bus user.

Chatting with friends, I thought how great it would be if there were similar initiatives, including some more informal events, happening across the country on one specific day. The idea of encouraging disabled people to also try something new that day appeared and out of it came the idea of Disabled Access Day."

Paul Ralph

We were inspired by the idea of Disabled Access Day and the potential for it to increase the numbers of conversations between venues and disabled people, as well as to raise the profile of disabled access. We were delighted by the backing from the many venues, organisations and businesses that got involved, in particular their appetite to improve their own accessibility and to get more feedback from disabled people.

We loved hearing about what everyone got up to on the day and were truly inspired by the journeys people took, some of which you can read in this report.

The first Disabled Access Day was really a pilot, achieved with very little resource but lots of drive to improve disabled access, to showcase some of the good practice, and to try out some new places! Given the limited resources the project had, we were blown away by the results, and hope that next time will be much, much bigger.

We hope you'll join us next year on the 12th March 2016!

Kiki MacDonald
Co-Founder of Euan's Guide

The aims

Disabled Access Day aims to be a fun event that everyone can take part in no matter where they live.
Try something new - Encourage disabled people and their families, friends and carers to try something new.
Confidence - Give disabled people the confidence to explore new places in a welcoming setting.
Highlight - Highlight accessible venues across the UK and further afield.
Staff training - Give venues an opportunity to refresh their staff training and focus on disabled access.
Educate - Educate the wider public on the access issues faced by disabled people.
Raise awareness - Raise awareness of the importance of disabled access.
Showcase - Give venues an opportunity to showcase the services and facilities they provide to disabled people and reflect on how they can improve.

What happened in 2015?

Individuals could get involved by simply visiting somewhere new and venues could take part by organising a special event, providing an incentive or by extending a special welcome to disabled visitors.
A few highlights:
London - The National Theatre opened its doors for people to learn more about the accessible performances it hosts throughout the year and provided backstage tours.
Edinburgh - Lothian Buses organised an event which gave disabled people the opportunity to learn more about the accessible features of their buses and try out a demonstration bus.
UK Wide - Over 170 Caffè Nero stores got involved in the day. They offered a hand crafted coffee to everyone taking part.
Belfast - The NOW group celebrated the event by hosting a 'Sharing Session' for young disabled people to share ideas on places with good access and discounts for disabled people.

2015 Activity Hotspots
A map of the UK & Ireland showing locations of events, activities and venues taking part in Disabled Access Day 2015.

Mik Scarlet
Tweet "@MikScarlet A wonderful @Access_Day wiv the equally wonderful @digidiane outside @StPaulsLondon. Roll on next year!"

Mik's Day
Mik Scarlet & his wife, Diane, ventured to St. Paul's Cathedral in the heart of London.

“Our visit to St Pauls was amazing. The staff were so helpful and friendly and our guide was super informative and engaging. A real day to remember and I can’t wait until the next Disabled Access Day, as it allows you to visit places and KNOW that you the access will be spot on!”
Mik Scarlet is a Broadcaster, Journalist, Actor, Musician,
Access / Inclusion Expert & Wheelchair User

Borough Market
Tweet “@BoroughMarket The first 50 people who come to the pod get a FREE Borough Market coolbag & plenty of #AccessDay info is available”
Borough Market

London’s iconic Borough Market hosted “Taste & Aroma”, a Saturday Demonstration kitchen which, for the first time, featured a British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreter.
“We had great engagement from customers and really positive social media coverage - we’ll also be making BSL signed demonstration kitchens a regular feature as a result”
Kate Howell, Director of Development and Communications, Borough Market

What people did...

A selection of photos from Disabled Access Day including:
MK Centre for Integrated Living.
An Assistance Dogs demonstration in Edinburgh.
Young people at WAC Arts in London.
Thornbridge Brewery in Bakewell.
A family visiting the Houses of Parliament, London.
Odyssey Cinema, St Albans
A family visiting the Tower Bridge Exhibition, London.
Cycle fun at York Sport Cycling.
A library visit in Leeds.
A garden tour of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.
A group from Freespace taking a tour of Scottish Parliament.
A child enjoying a visit to The Deep in Hull.
A powerchair user at the Lothian Buses demonstration.
A cinema visit in London.

What people said...

A selection of quotes from individuals and media headlines:
Fiona - I'll make it my business to go somewhere new that day... and to make note of the accessibility! This is a great idea and a positive way of generating awareness and hopefully change in how people, business and organisations think about and approach access.
BBC Ouch ‘What are you doing on Disabled Access Day?’
C - My partner and I are both disabled and will go to the cinema on Saturday. It will be the first time in 8 years that we have been to the cinema. There’s a small cinema in our town, that we will try to access.

Lisa - I may take the chance to play tourist and visit the Tower of London instead of just going past it or go to one of the museums or galleries in London.
Tracey - Brilliant idea! It's good to have a non-whingey voice for the frustrations of getting about in a world that is sometimes unaware of the disabled population.
Sue - I'm a disabled lady who has never visited Caffe Nero. I'm up for visiting somewhere new!
Melanie Reid, The Times Magazine - 'Give us an equal chance to participate in life and we will prove our worth – and pay our way'
Disability News Service - 'Access day could spur disabled people to new adventures'
Laura - A new coffee venue... thinking... How exciting!
Christoph - I'd like to make a difference, find venues to praise for excellent accessibility, and also find venues which need improvement and alert them to the need for change.
Able Magazine - 'Disabled Access Day A Great Success'
Nick - Pleased to get out and about with my disabled daughter, her quality of life is much improved if we go places and do things!
Museums Association - 'Museums To Take Part in First Disabled Access Day'
Sophie - I am a powerchair user who is always searching for new places to go and things to do with friends. This sounds great and I hope it's the start of something great. I will be taking part!
Brenda - Three days away... willing and ready to go out and DO something!
The Londonist - 'Disabled Access Day Encourages People To Visit Somewhere New'

Who took part in 2015?

Organisations
Capability Scotland
Euan's Guide
ENAT
English Federation of Disability Sport
Scope
Scottish Disability Sport
Sense Scotland
Standard Life
Tourism For All
Tourism South East
Visit England
Visit Scotland
Visit Wales

UK Wide
Caffè Nero
Visits Unlimited
Barclays

England
Accessible Derbyshire

Ascot Racecourse
Aspire Leisure Centre
BlueAssist UK Ltd
Borough Market
Buckingham Palace - The Queen's Gallery
Caffe Concerto
Calvert Trust Exmoor
Calvert Trust Kielder
Carver Care and Mobility
Cutty Sark
DASH
Disabled Holiday Information
Eureka!
Hackney Museum
Hampstead Theatre
Household Cavalry Museum
Houses of Parliament
Huddersfield Sports Centre
Inn on the Park
Living Sport
London Canal Museum
Lyric Hammersmith
MK Centre for Integrated Living
Mollett's Farm
National Theatre
No. 1 Royal Crescent in Bath
Norfolk County Council
Oxford University Museums
Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre
Royal Air Force Museum
Royal Engineers Museum & Library
Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve
Services for Independent Living
Shropshire Disability Network
St. Paul's Cathedral
StarBistro (Cheltenham)
St. James Theatre
Stratford Town Walk
Suffolk Owl Sanctuary
Tate Modern
Thames Clippers
The Art House
The Deep
The Story Museum
The Swan at Streatley
Thomas Pocklington Trust
Thomley Hall
Tower Bridge Exhibition
Tricycle Theatre

Volunteer Cornwall
WAC Arts
Westminster Abbey
Winchester Area Access For All
Worthing Leisure

Northern Ireland
Belfast Lough Sailability
Positive Futures
NOW Group

Scotland
Ability Falkirk
Brunton Theatre
Camera Obscura & World of Illusions
Centre For Inclusive Living Perth and Kinross
Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park
Clyde Shopmobility
Crathie Opportunity Holidays
Dalmuir Park
Drumbrae Library Hub
Homelands Trust Fife
Lothian Buses
Ocean Terminal Shopping Centre
Palace of Holyroodhouse & The Queen's Gallery
Ratho Library
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Royal Yacht Britannia
Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF)
Sighthill Library
The Scotch Whisky Experience
The Scotsman Hotel & North Bridge Brasserie
The Scottish Parliament
The Yard Adventure Centre
West Dunbartonshire Council
Wester Hailes Library

Wales
Aberystwyth Arts Centre
Bryn Elltyd Eco Guest House
Celtic Haven Resort
Clynfyw Care Farm
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire Disability Forum
Keep Wales Tidy
Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre
National Trust Aberdulais Tinworks and Waterfall
Sparkle
Tenby Golf Club

The National Botanic Garden of Wales
Trehyddion Barns Holiday Lets
Y Talbot
Ye Olde Bulls Head Inn & Townhouse

Europe
Belgium
Toegankelijkheidsbureau
Visit Flanders

Netherlands
Accessible Travel Netherlands

Turkey
Accessible Turkey
Sundance Villas

Bulgaria
Street Dance Zoom

Portugal
Parques de Sintra Monte da Lua
Places 4 All

Cyprus
Sundance Villas

Greece
Aksos Suites Accessible Accommodation

VisitScotland
Tweet "@VisitScotNews Here's some lovely pics from @Access_Day last Saturday at @Ocean_Terminal and @britanniayacht!"

VisitScotland organised an Edinburgh event to showcase the vital work of Assistance Dogs. Guide Dogs Scotland, Dogs for the Disabled, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and Canine Partners took part alongside local partners Ocean Terminal shopping centre, Lothian Buses and Royal Yacht Britannia who hosted a reception at the start of the event.

As well as the event raising awareness of assistance dogs generally, some disabled visitors took the opportunity to find out from the charities how to register for an assistance dog themselves, and others went on board the accessible bus to try out its facilities.

"We recognise that improving accessibility can help improve the quality of experience for every visitor, not just those with access requirements. Disabled Access Day gave VisitScotland the opportunity to encourage dialogue between disabled people and the industry about making Scotland the best it can

be for tourists and for its own communities. The Disabled Access Day initiative 'took the writing off the wall' and transformed words into actions on the ground. We're looking forward to next year already."

Chris McCoy, Head of the Accessible Tourism Project, VisitScotland

Barclays Access
Tweet "@BarclaysAccess - Great start to the new year, 17 branches and counting have signed up to hold events for @Access_Day on Sat 17th Jan! Details to follow.

Barclays
"Barclays were thrilled to be part of the first ever Disabled Access Day and found it a great way to connect with customers and colleagues on the subject of accessibility – and have some fun in the process.

For those unable to attend any of the in-branch events we held on the day, we also used social media to connect with customers and colleagues, getting their thoughts on what makes, and could make, their banking experience more accessible. Disabled Access Day will definitely be part of our annual calendar of events, and we look forward to coming back even bigger next year."

Elaine Draper, Head of Accessibility & Inclusion, Barclays

Outcomes

Over 1,000 disabled people and their families friends and carers tried somewhere new.

Feedback in the lead up, during and post event suggests that the day gave people a reason to, and in some cases, the confidence to try somewhere new.

261 venues took part, most showcasing their existing disabled access and facilities. Some venues also used the day as a chance to put on special events to further highlight their accessibility.

Disabled Access Day provided many venues with a great opportunity to refresh their staff's disability awareness training and draw their attention to the facilities and offers that are available to disabled people in their venue. Feedback from participants gave a resounding thumbs-up to the staff at venues taking part.

The event was widely reported in the media and received a great response on social media. This succeeded in starting many conversations and generated much greater awareness of the issues surrounding disabled access.

The day also provided a focal point for efforts to raise the general population's awareness of disability issues. Events such as the assistance dog display in Edinburgh helped to educate the public on the challenges faced by some disabled people and how they overcome them.

The inaugural Disabled Access Day has built a solid foundation for future events and we're looking forward to bigger and better events in future years.

Parliamentary Motion

'That this House gives its full support to Disabled Access Day on 17th January 2015, a fantastic initiative aiming to encourage the 11.6 million disabled people in the UK to visit somewhere new with their friends and families; praises Euan's Guide and all the organisers for the hard work that they have put into recruiting organisations and ensuring that the day will be a success, and for their continuous efforts to make information on disabled-accessible locations readily available; commends the over 200 companies and venues across the UK that have pledged their support for the initiative, including Buckingham Palace; recognises the importance of empowering disabled people so that they have the confidence to get out of their comfort zone and visit new places; and encourages more venues and facilities to consider how they could make their sites more accessible for disabled people.'

The day in numbers

Over 250 venues and organisations took part in 11 countries. And those were just the events we knew about!

The week leading up to Disabled Access Day saw much press interest. There were also thousands of mentions on social media using the hashtag #AccessDay or discussing the event.

Countries = 11
Number of Venues = 261
Number of People = >1000

Print & Online = 65 articles featuring Disabled Access Day
Television = 3 TV News Stories
Radio = 4 Radio News Stories

Social Media Total Mentions = 6838
Social media Impressions = 19.4 million

Unique visitors to DisabledAccessDay.com = >11,000

Total Estimated Media Impressions = 412,826,000

Thank you!

A massive Thank You to everyone who supported the inaugural Disabled Access Day!
Main Sponsor = Euan's Guide
Supporters =
VisitEngland

VisitScotland
VisitWales
Barclays
BT
Standard Life
Able Magazine
ENAT (European Network for Accessible Tourism)
SDEF (Scottish Disability Equality Forum)
Tourism For All

Our sponsor Euan's Guide

Euan's Guide is a disabled access review website & app. Euan's Guide aims to empower disabled people by providing information that will give confidence and choices for getting out and about. Euan's Guide is a charity registered in Scotland (SC045492).

Euan's Guide was recognised in the 2014 Nominet Trust 100 (NT100) - a global list of 100 inspiring ventures from around the world and was the People's Choice winner in the BT Infinity Lab Connected Society Awards "for innovations that use ICT and communication technologies to address current and emerging social challenges". Euan's Guide has been endorsed by Professor Stephen Hawking and JK Rowling.

"The goal of Euan's Guide is to provide a friendly, honest & empowering alternative to hours of web searching and phone calls and, most importantly, remove the 'fear of the unknown' when visiting a venue for the first time."
Euan MacDonald, Co-Founder, Euan's Guide
Hear more from Euan at www.EuansGuide.com/Film

How to get involved in 2016

Disabled Access Day is all about trying something new. Here are a few ideas - please send us yours!

Individuals
Please join us and choose a new place to visit. It can be absolutely anywhere... Coffee with friends... Cinema with the kids... Try a new activity... Visit a new town... Join others taking part... The list is endless!

Don't forget to send us your photos and stories!

Groups & charities
There are several different ways you can be involved:

Tell your own members / supporters about us
Organise a group outing to visit somewhere new
Open up your own facilities to disabled people
Offer activities that participants can try for the first time

This list is endless too... The key is to get as many people as possible participating, so whichever way suits you suits us!

Venues
On Disabled Access Day, we would like you to make disabled people feel welcome:

Could you hold an event on the day?
We know there's no such thing as a free lunch - but could you offer a free coffee perhaps?
Or if you charge people entry could you discount this for the day?
And if you're not able to offer a deal then how about a good old fashioned welcome?

Just let disabled people know that they are welcome and that your venue is accessible!

How we can support you

We're here to make sure you get the most out of Disabled Access Day. Here are some ways in which we can support you:

Every venue which registers for Disabled Access Day will be featured on the official website and events will be promoted through social media.
We'll provide customisable graphics for sharing on social media and template blog articles which businesses could adapt for their websites.
We'll distribute vouchers to everyone taking part to encourage people to try new venues in their local area.
Participating venues will be sent an event pack including Disabled Access Day balloons, leaflets and posters to enable venues to publicise their involvement in the event.
We'll send regular email updates in the lead up to the event and a pack with tips and suggestions to help venues make the most of their events.
Media coverage was generated by press releases highlighting the events taking place and interviews on national and local radio.
Venues shared photos of their events on social media which were then retweeted from the official Disabled Access Day account. Social media gave venues the opportunity to participate in a national discussion and promote the accessibility of their venue to a worldwide audience.
And there's lots more to come!

Further opportunities

Disabled Access Day presents an opportunity to gain new customers and re-engage with existing customers. It allows business to gain insight into their own accessibility by facilitating a direct dialogue between venues and disabled people.

There is also an opportunity to increase positive exposure to your brand by sponsoring an event or encourage the personal development of your staff through our volunteer scheme. Participation in Disabled Access Day can form a part of your corporate social responsibility and help to strengthen your ties to your local community.

Get in touch for more details - takepart@disabledaccessday.com

How we can improve...

We asked all venues and participants for thoughts on the day and how we can make the event better... Here's your top ten:

1) You didn't know about it!

We're working to increase promotion and raise awareness but we need your help for this! 2015 was the first year, we had some good press coverage and great support on social media but we need even more people to get involved next year.

2) January is too cold.

We've moved the date to later in the year - March 12th to be exact.

3) More preparation time.

The 2016 date has now been set - so this should help everybody with their preparation.

4) You'd like more ideas as to how you can be involved.

Check out some of the ideas in these pages for how you can get involved. Please keep sending us your ideas too.

5) Submit and maintain your own event information.

Next year the website will allow you to upload and edit your own event and venue information.

6) Get vouchers and discount codes out sooner.

Announcing the date now will give everyone more time to prepare and get information to all participants.

7) More events and a better geographical spread, please!

We plan to make Disabled Access Day 2016 much bigger and better. We need your help to promote the event and get more people and venues to take part.

8) More materials to promote your venue's involvement.

Materials produced for 2015 included balloons, posters, leaflets and stickers. Let us know what else you would like to promote the event.

9) More materials to promote your own involvement.

We can supply materials to everyone so that you can use them to encourage others to take part.

10) And, lastly - Every day should be Access Day.

Of course it should be! But currently it is not. Disabled Access Day has been set up to be a fun and engaging way to raise awareness of disabled access and encourage individuals (& venues) to try something new.

Save the date for 2016!

We are very excited to announce Disabled Access Day 2016! Make sure you register on our website to be updated with the latest news, events and information.
Saturday 12th March 2016

Get Involved!

12th March 2016
Contact
www.disabledaccessday.com
takepart@disabledaccessday.com

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www.disabledaccessday.com/AltFormats

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