

Bath Spa – a Utopia of the Past Present and Future?

Welcome to the debate about the role of Bath and European spa towns in creating ideal towns and cities!

Why “Café” of Europe?

The city of Spa was nicknamed the Café of Europe in the 18th Century as it was a place where everyone gathered, and gossiped, between drinking copious amounts of mineral-rich water for the cure. There were artists, philosophers, writers, top military brass, composers, royalty, nobility, scientists and many more. The Source project wanted to reflect the rich variety of subjects that are still important to the spa town network, and are often reflected in the many festivals that take place every year across Europe.

Why all the logos?

This debate is the last in a series of 8 “Cafés of Europe” which have taken place in other spa towns as part of the “Source Project”, which is a project supported by the EU Culture Fund. The project is being managed by the Route des Villes d’Eaux du Massif Central, on behalf of EHTTA, the European Historic Thermal Towns Association, which is also recognised by the Council of Europe as one of its 30 or so ‘Cultural Routes’. Bath & North East Somerset Council was a founding member of EHTTA in 2010, putting it at the heart of European thinking on tourism, culture, heritage, and wellbeing. For this project the council is working in partnership with Bath Festivals.

The SOURCE project has several strands, which have been woven through the series of cafes:



- The themed Café debate, in partnership with major festivals
- The Interactive Novel
- Festivals and Travel Diaries and Celebration@Sources
- The “Centre des Sources” digital archive in Vichy, France

Bath completes the cycle of “Café of Europe” debates which have taken place across Europe and examined diverse subjects since June 2013 - from digital media and film, to pilgrimage and tourism. All the previous café events and all the works created as a result, such as the beautifully illustrated travel diaries, and the multi-media interactive novel are available on the SOURCE project website, www.sources-of-culture.com. Some of the images created from other Cafés are on display today near the bar.

Who else is involved?

- Local artist Andrew Lansley, of Walk and Draw Bath is making a “travel diary” of the whole event and will be sketching during the café to capture the essence of the Bath Café of Europe.
- As we have a number of European delegates, the café is being interpreted by University of Bath MA students.
- The character of “Beau Nash”, 18th Century Master of Ceremonies is being brought to life by the Natural Theatre Company.
- The event is being filmed by Sunflower Films, and the resulting footage will be placed on the Source Project website, (www.sources-of-culture.com) and in the new European Thermal Resource Centre in Vichy.

Café Refreshments

There’s a varied and interesting programme for you today, and we hope that you enjoy this event. It’s a packed afternoon, so there will just be the one official break during the proceedings, but there is tea and coffee available on tap, and you are welcome to help yourself to free drinks during the proceedings. If you would like anything else, the bar will be open for fancy coffees and alcoholic drinks. During the break, there will be a Waterstones bookstore in the Arts Café, selling interesting books related to the Café and our speakers.

Programme

You are welcome to join in the Q&A sessions, please indicate that you would like one of the roving microphones.

1.30 *Call to order by Master of Ceremonies, “Beau Nash” and Café Chairman, Paul Simons*

Welcome from the Mayor of Bath, Cllr Cherry Beath

The President of EHTTA, Mr Giuseppe Bellandi, Mayor of Montecatini

1.45 *The Panel of local experts, who effectively manage Utopia every day will each introduce themselves very briefly*

If they run over their allotted time, “Beau Nash” may have a word or two to say!

14.00 *Presentations*

Chris Pound – “Mingusbad – the mythical ideal spa town”

Q&A

Ian Bradley – “Water Music – music in European spa towns”

John Carey – readings on Utopia

Q&A

3.15 *Coffee break – please visit the bookstall in the Arts Café at the front of the venue*

3.35 *Amy Frost – “John Wood the Elder – Obsession”*

Gillian Clarke – “The Prior Park Landscape”

Q&A

4.45 *John Carey – more readings on a Utopian theme*

Sue Sloman – “Gainsborough in Bath”

Christopher Woodward – “The Heritage and Joy of Swimming”

Q&A

5.15 *Comments, thoughts and reactions of panel members*

5.45 *Finish*

Background to the Debate

Since time immemorial writers have attempted to describe visionary perfection; a place enjoying a perfect social, legal and political system housed in the Ideal City. In creating such visions of the ideal - an image of heaven on earth - writers, politicians, philanthropists, socialists, artists and architects have tried to put vision into reality. Did any get close to creating a workable vision of Utopia? Did any get close to building it?

Spa towns are a unique form of settlement and do not conform to the usual settlement types established for the purposes of protection, worship, kingship, politics, industry, trade or expansion. They were cities of leisure and health, where boundaries of class and gender were blurred, and where artistic and cultural activity came to the fore. These places of healing were the first tourist destinations, attracting people to stay for lengthy periods of time, inventing themselves as islands of leisure and pleasure, where life was somehow *different*. Spa in Belgium was nicknamed the “Café of Europe” because, as in a café, all manner of people gathered together, while taking the cure, to discuss the arts, politics, philosophy, music, and of course to gossip! The Café of Europe debate takes its inspiration from the rich and varied heritage of Europe’s historic spa towns.

The City of Bath is the only European spa town currently listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, having been inscribed in 1987. The inscription is based on the natural thermal springs, the Roman archaeology and the 18th Century urban plan and architecture. In creating his vision of the Ideal City, John Wood the Elder, creator of Georgian Bath, saw Bath as an imaginary place, a garden city of great vistas and grand public spaces merging with the surrounding landscape and... *“A Region that sets Paradise itself before one’s Eyes...the very Elysium Fields of the Antients.”*

The Bath Café will debate a range of inter-related topics with interludes and presentations to stimulate discourse concerning the future of Bath and other famous European spa towns. Do these places have the potential as model cities for urban living in the future with the health and well-being of its inhabitants and visitors underpinning all policy decisions?



The debate will be built around a series of short presentations on one of the many themes linking the unique qualities of our famous spa towns. After each presentation a panel of local experts; the people responsible for managing and protecting the various aspects of Bath’s fabric, its offer and its image will respond to the themes and relate them to their current roles when considering the future issues facing Bath and North East Somerset as a place to live, work and visit.

@SourceAtBath

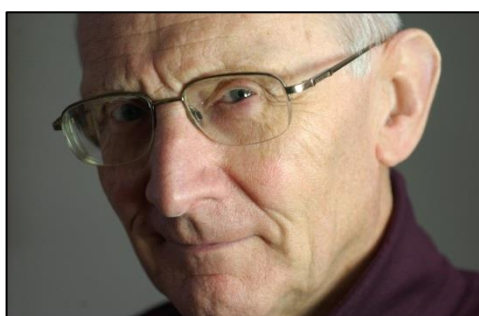
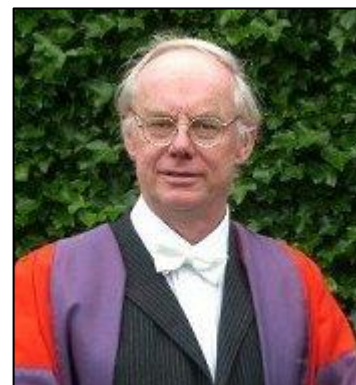
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Café speakers



Christopher Pound is an architect, town planner, writer and World Heritage expert, and author of 'A Verve excellent treasure – values of the Bath spa resort'. He is also the author of 'The Genius of Bath'. Chris has spent the majority of his working life helping to protect the City of Bath and now acts as an international consultant on World Heritage projects, and is currently on the International Working Group of the Great Spas of Europe.

Professor Ian Bradley is Principal of St Mary's College, St Andrews, Reader in Church history and Practical Theology at St Andrews University and a minister of the Church of Scotland. The author of more than 40 books, he has a life-long fascination with spas and has written, lectured and broadcast on their cultural, historical, medical and spiritual significance. He is the author of 'Water Music: Music Making in the Spas of Europe and North America' and 'Water: A Spiritual History'. He has made documentary programmes about spas for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 3. He is particularly interested in the connection between music and spas and is a frequent visitor to and lecturer at operetta festivals in the spas of Europe. If he is spared (his words!) long enough, he has hopes of writing the definitive spa novel.



Professor John Carey is an emeritus Professor at Oxford University and a Fellow of the British Academy. His books include studies of Donne, Dickens and Thackeray, 'The Intellectuals and The Masses', 'What Good are the Arts?' and a life of William Golding. His most recent book, 'The Unexpected Professor: An Oxford Life in Books' was Published in 2014. He is also the Editor of 'The Faber Book of Utopias'.

Photo credit Matt Writtle

Dr Amy Frost is the Architectural Curator of the Bath Preservation Trust based at the Museum of Bath Architecture and specialises in British architecture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Alongside her work on the built heritage of Bath she is also an expert on the life and aesthetics of the British collector and writer William Beckford (1760-1844) and since 2002 has been the Curator of Beckford's Tower & Museum in Bath. She is a part-time Teaching Fellow at the University of Bath, School of Architecture.



Gillian Clarke has specialist knowledge of the early eighteenth century landscape with particular reference to Prior Park Landscape Garden in Bath, and was involved in the restoration of part of this significant landscape. Her background is in local government planning and conservation and she has lectured on heritage and conservation matters. She is an active member of the Avon Gardens Trust, and a member of the Garden History Society. In her spare time she indulges her other passions for music and travel.

Dr Susan Sloman is an independent art historian. She is currently finishing her second book on Thomas Gainsborough and working on a book about a private collection of English eighteenth and nineteenth century drawings. Her working life has been divided between the public and the private sector. Between 1999 and 2012 she was a researcher for Agnew's and WS Fine Art in London. She has published widely in the *Burlington Magazine*, *British Art Journal*, *Bath History*, *Gainsborough's House Review* and other periodicals. She has a particular interest in Bath artists and in eighteenth century British artists' painting rooms and showrooms and is preparing a paper 'Lighting the Painting Room' for a conference later this year.



Christopher Woodward has worked at two Museums in Bath: The Building of Bath Museum at its opening in 1992, and as Director of The Holburne Museum until 2005; an architectural historian, he is the author of 'In Ruins', published in 2001 and short-listed for the Rhys Prize for young writers. He is currently Director of The Garden Museum, London, and has just swum The Thames from Oxford to London to raise funds for its development project. He has also swum The Strait of Gibraltar (hard) and The Hellespont (easy) but learned to swim in the River Avon.

Photo credit Heathcliff O'Malley for The Telegraph

The Panel



Paul Simons, Chairman of the Bath Café trained as an architect and has worked on conservation projects and urban regeneration for over 30 years. He has also worked in tourism in the historic Cities of Oxford, Bristol, Norwich and the World Heritage City of Bath – where he was Director of Tourism and responsible for the construction of Thermae Bath Spa. He was a founder member of the European Spas Association, the European Historic Thermal Towns Association and is Secretary General to the Great Spas of Europe UNESCO project. Paul is a World Heritage consultant to B&NES and the Council's representative on EHTTA.

Stephen Bird, Head of Heritage Services at Bath & North East Somerset Council, has worked in museums, tourism and heritage management in Bath for many years. Since 2004 he has established the Heritage Services division as a business unit within the Council, working to a five-year business plan and with a business model that has attracted the interest of heritage organisations nationally and in several other countries. He sits on the Bath World Heritage Site Steering Group.



Tony Crouch, World Heritage Manager for Bath & North East Somerset Council

Tony is employed by Bath & North East Somerset Council. Working with a steering group of local stakeholders, his role is to ensure that the commitments of the World Heritage Convention to 'protect, conserve, present and transmit the City of Bath to this and future generations' are met.

David James, Chief Executive of Bath Tourism Plus. David joined Bath Tourism Plus in January 2015, after 9 years as Chief Executive of Visit Peak District & Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership. Bath Tourism Plus is the official organisation responsible for encouraging overseas and domestic visitors to the Bath area. It works closely with the public and private sectors to deliver a programme of targeted marketing initiatives. In addition to its leisure and business marketing activities the company also manages the Bath Visitor Information Centre - one of the busiest centres in the country - and runs the Bath Christmas Market



Peter Rollins, Marketing Director of Thermae Bath Spa. As the Marketing Manager of Thermae Bath Spa, Peter has been a core member of the team who re-opened the Spa back in 2006 and has played an active role in building up a successful operation which has brought additional profile and business to Bath. With the opening this summer of the Gainsborough Bath Spa Hotel, Peter is looking forward to contributing to the ongoing development of Bath as a leading spa destination.

Tom Boden, General Manager, Bath Portfolio, National Trust. Tom is responsible for managing the National Trust properties in Bath which include the Bath Skyline, Prior Park Landscape Garden and the Bath Assembly Rooms (currently leased to Bath and North East Somerset Council). The Bath Skyline makes up 10% of the land within the City of Bath and consists of a patchwork of woods, fields and farmland on the eastern side of the city.



Rhodri Samuel, Managing Director, Craneworks Community Interest Company, Bath. Rhodri worked for 21 years for B&NES Council, leading the long-term vision and regeneration strategy for Bath. Since leaving the Council in 2013, he has led the Craneworks project which seeks to deliver a world-class centre for creativity and invention in the city.

Belinda Kidd, Chief Executive of Bath Festivals, which produces the Bath International Music Festival, the Independent Bath Literature Festival and the Telegraph Bath Festival of Children's Literature. Bath Festivals also has a substantial year round learning & participation programme, and runs the Bath Box office, supporting over 120 organisations with sales and marketing services. Before joining Bath Festivals in November 2010, she worked for Royal Liverpool Philharmonic as Thrive Programme Director for LARC (Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium), a partnership of eight of the major cultural organisations in Liverpool.



Grateful thanks go to all the speakers and panellists, partner organisations, Bath Festivals staff, the staff at Komedia, and everyone who has helped to plan and organise the event, as well as those involved on the day.

Thank you for being here and supporting the Bath Café of Europe!