

Second UNESCO World Heritage Listing Celebration



Pictured: Paul Simons, Secretary General, The Great Spa Towns of Europe, Colin Skellett, Chair of Thermae Bath Spa's operating company, Councillor Lisa O'Brien, Bath & North East Somerset Council Chair, Councillor June Player, Mayor of Bath, Councillor Kevin Guy, Council Leader and Tony Crouch, City of Bath World Heritage Site Manager.

Bath's second UNESCO World Heritage status listing marketing it as part of the Great Spa Towns of Europe has been celebrated at an event to mark the inscription.

In July it was announced that the city, along with ten historic spa towns, had secured the much-coveted UNESCO World Heritage status as part of the 'Great Spa Towns of Europe' nomination. The event to mark the huge achievement was held yesterday (Monday 6th Sept) and included guests who were instrumental in helping achieve the second UNESCO World Heritage status.

Council Leader, Councillor Kevin Guy, said: "I want to thank all our partners who worked together for many years to achieve this remarkable second listing. Gaining this status is not just about our remarkable history, it is about looking ahead and nurturing our unique heritage within a modern and vibrant city."

Colin Skellett, Chair of Thermae Bath Spa's operating company, said: "At the beginning of this millennium Bath was restored as a spa city and this was vital in gaining UNESCO recognition. Civic leaders showed immense foresight in developing Thermae Bath Spa. The second listing is a great boost as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and start welcoming back visitors who are so important to the economy of Bath and North East Somerset. More than half of the visitors to

Thermae Bath Spa say the spa was their main reason for visiting the city which boosts the local economy by almost £12 million a year.”

The Great Spa Towns of Europe project focuses on historic spa towns, based around mineral springs, which have formed fashionable resorts of health, leisure and recreational ‘diversions’ such as gambling and dancing from the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries.

The towns were built in harmony with their natural therapeutic landscape settings to create unique urban forms. They were the pioneers of modern tourism and, although often small in size, they attracted guests who might otherwise only gather in great metropoloi and capital cities. Only a few spa towns rose to great prominence and, of those, only a few remain in a good state of conservation.

The spa towns included in the inscription are Bath (UK), Baden bei Wein (Austria), Spa (Belgium), Vichy (France), Baden-Baden, Bad Ems and Bad Kissingen (Germany), Montecatini Terme (Italy), and Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně and Františkovy Lázně (Czech Republic). This is a transnational nomination, meaning that the 11 spa towns are seen as a single World Heritage Site.

Bath is the only one of the 11 towns to already have World Heritage Status.

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- According to legend, the City of Bath was founded around the hot springs in 863BC by Prince Bladud in gratitude of his being cured of leprosy by the healing waters.
 - Soon after AD60, the Romans started the development of Aquae Sulis as a sanctuary of rest and relaxation. The Baths remained in use for hundreds of years attracting visitors across Europe.
 - Public access to the waters stopped in 1978 by was restored in 2006 with the opening of Thermae Bath Spa designed by Nicholas Grimshaw and partners.
 - The complex with four natural thermal baths, a multi-sensory Wellness Suite, 26 treatment rooms and a range of complementary therapies, makes Bath once again one of the Great Spa Towns of Europe.
 - Visitor statistics from Thermae’s Visitor Survey - an Independent Survey by The South West Research Company.

For more information on the UNESCO Nomination file, please visit <https://greatspasofeurope.eu/>

For more information on the Great Spa Towns of Europe contact Paul Simons, Secretary General, paul@simonassociates.co.uk / 07785 506338

To contact Bath & North East Somerset Communications Team, please email, communications_marketing@bathnes.gov.uk

To contact Thermae Bath Spa’s Marketing team, please email Alison Stubbs, Marketing and Communications Executive, Alison.Stubbs@thermaebathspa.com