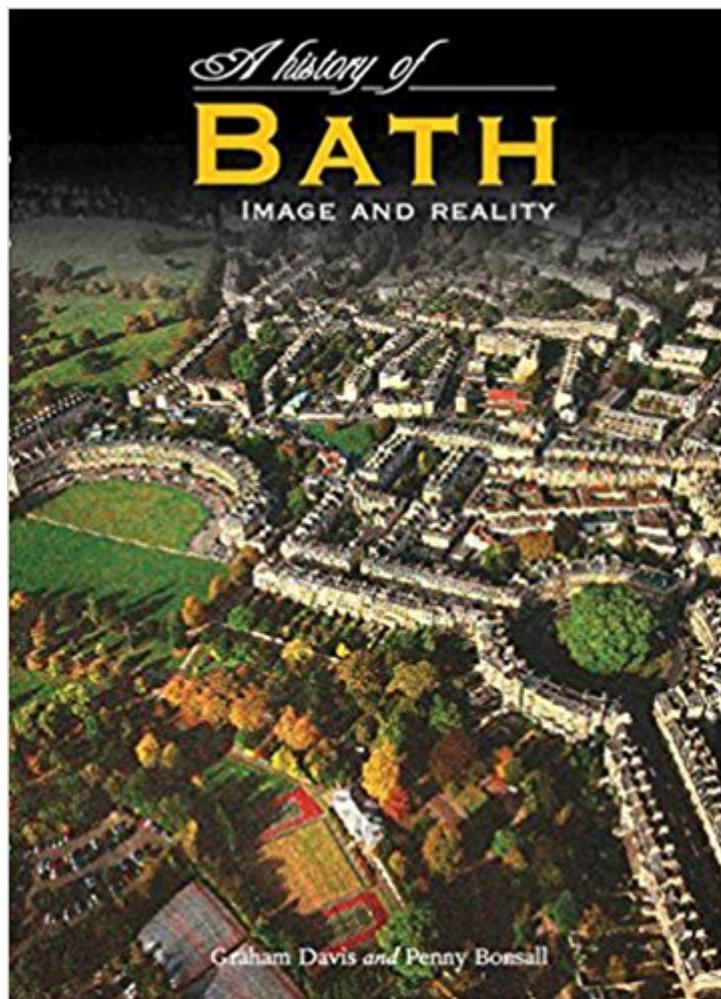


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A History Of Bath: Image And Reality



Synopsis

Bath is one of the most popular and significant tourist destinations in Britain. No fewer than four million visitors each year visit the much-renovated Roman Baths, marvel at the sites of this World Heritage city, or simply meander through its now carefully conserved eighteenth-century streets. For a few hours before they are whisked away to Stratford-upon-Avon, Edinburgh or London, they absorb the carefully presented image of Bath as ancient spa, elegant Georgian city and haunt of the likes of Richard ÆœBeauÆ¢ Nash or Jane Austen. Bath has always tried to present itself in a favorable light. The true picture of Bath throughout its long and varied history is of course much fuller, more interesting and varied than the facade presented to casual visitors. From its earliest known history as spa during the Roman period, Bath transformed itself into Saxon monastic town and subsequently Norman cathedral city. It developed into a regional market and Æ¢ perhaps surprisingly Æ¢ a centre of the woollen trade during the Middle Ages, before becoming probably the most important health resort of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thereafter, rapid expansion in the Georgian period created an enduring architectural legacy which made Bath the countryÆ¢s foremost fashionable resort, attracting increasing numbers of visitors. Later, the city experienced some years of relative decline, from which it re-emerged, this time as a favored place of genteel residence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This theme of constant re-invention now sees Bath attempt to become a Æœfestival cityÆ¢, in the market for cultural tourism, while the long-anticipated opening of a new thermal spa should bring a new lease of life to the hot springs which, of course, represent BathÆ¢s very oldest attraction, and in many ways its very *raison dÆ¢tre*. This book goes beyond the narrow, popular image of Bath to explore years of extraordinary change, variety and interest, focusing wherever possible on the lives of ordinary residents, and seeking to explain as well as to chronicle BathÆ¢s truly unique historical legacy.

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Customer Reviews

GRAHAM DAVIS is Professor of History at Bath Spa University. He has been the author or editor of a number of books and articles on Bath's history and is currently working on a collection of essays entitled *Bath Exposed!* He has also written extensively on Irish migration. Graham Davis was born in Cheltenham, grew up in Gloucester and has lived in and around Bath since 1968. He graduated from the University of Birmingham and completed his postgraduate studies at the University of Bath. Dr. PENNY BONSALL is a freelance historical researcher with a special interest in the Bath region. After graduating from Bath Spa University, she completed her postgraduate studies at the University of Warwick and was a junior research fellow at the Institute for Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast, and worked in higher education as a research assistant and part-time lecturer in local history. Her publications include articles on the labor history of the Somerset miners in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the Irish Resident Magistrates in the British Administration. Penny Bonsall was born in Bristol and grew up in north-west Somerset. She has lived in north-east Somerset for the past forty years and now lives near Peasedown St John.

Having been born and brought up there it is very interesting

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