

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

HISTORY OF BATH RESEARCH GROUP



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EDITORIAL

The year 2018 cannot be let pass without mention of the retirement of the Council's Principal Archivist

COLIN JOHNSON, BA (Hons), DAA.

Colin's years of dedication have undoubtable brought about, initially almost singlehandedly, order out of chaos and the firm foundations of what in the last twelve months has become the Bath Local Studies Centre.

The Centre formed out of the City Archives rooms in the basement of the Guildhall and the historical book collection from the Bath Central Library is a fitting legacy to all Colin's efforts, and although we know that his aims were much higher, the fact that our Council have got this far, is at least a start that any new Archivist will be able to build on.



NB. The story behind the new Local Study Centre can be found on Page 23 of these *Proceedings*.

MEETING REPORTS

BATH LIGHT HORSE VOLUNTEERS – 1798 – 1825

from their formation in 1798 up to the retirement of Captain Thomas King in 1825.

Monday 11th September 2017 St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker Richard Dellar

Abstract Richard Dellar

Volunteer military forces had existed in England for some while before the BLHVs. By way of background, the English Militia had existed since the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 following the Civil War, but the raising of the BLHVs in 1798 was a consequence of the events taking place in Europe at that time. The French revolution had started in 1789 and France had been at war with Austria since 1792 following the execution of Marie Antoinette. King Louis XVI suffered the same fate at the beginning of 1793 at which time revolutionary France also declared war on Britain.

Fearing invasion from France and also to suppress seditious and revolutionary movements at home, between 1794 and 1804 Britain passed a number of acts of parliament calling for the raising of volunteer forces to protect the homeland and the response was overwhelming – voluntary units of infantry and cavalry sprang up in every county, city, town and borough throughout Britain and Ireland. The military fever was amusingly described by Sir Walter Scott in his *Antiquary*:

I came to consult my lawyer, he was clothed in a dragoon's dress, belted and casqued and about to mount a charger, which his writing clerk (habited as a sharpshooter) walked to and fro before his door. I went to scold my Agent for having sent me to advise with a madman. He had stuck in his head the plume which in more sober days he wielded between his fingers and figured as an artillery officer. My mercer had his spontoon in his hand as if he measured cloth by that instrument instead of the legitimate yard. The banker's clerk, who was directed to sum my cash account, blundered three times, being disordered by the recollection of his military tellings-off at the morning's drill. I was ill and sent for a surgeon: He came, but valour had so fired his eye, And such a falchion glittered by his thigh, That by the Gods with a load of steel, I thought he came to murder, not to heal!



Frome & Selwood V.C. 1802

Bath was not slow to respond: on 26 April 1798, a meeting was called by the Mayor of Bath to consider the formation of a Military Association for the defence of the town and volunteers flocked to the cause – units of infantry and cavalry were raised and accepted into service by the King in May 1798. The cavalry – known at that time simply as ‘The Bath Volunteer Cavalry’ were to be commanded by Captain John Wiltshire with John Brander as lieutenant and Ruben Joyce cornet. They held a field day at Claverton Down in August 1798 in honour of the Duke of York’s birthday and on 6 September 1798, both infantry and cavalry met in Queen’s Square before marching to the Town Hall to take the oath of allegiance and receive their arms. Officers were expected to provide all of their equipment including their

uniform, arms and charger but the men – which at that time would have numbered around 40 – were provided with arms by the government.

Following their formation, there is little record of what the volunteers got up to over the next couple of years apart from the fact that the cavalry had to advertise for a trumpeter. They would have met regularly for parades and training which was often undertaken by regular army units stationed in the vicinity. The Bath Chronicle of 30 May 1799 tells us that the colours of both the infantry and the cavalry are to be presented ‘in splendid form’ in Sydney Gardens in honour of his Majesty’s birthday next Tuesday (6 June 1799’).

Events in Europe then took another turn in March 1802 with – and what was to be short-lived – the Peace of Amiens. By that time of course, the French Revolution was over and Napoleon Bonaparte was First Consul and master of France. Volunteer units up and down the country began to disband and the Bath volunteers followed suit – the infantry were disbanded in May 1802 and the cavalry in June when their colours were deposited in Bath Abbey ‘*with much impressive ceremony and solemnity, there to be preserved til the shouts of war shall again grate harsh thunder on the public ear and call our vigilant citizens once more to military duty*’.

Unfortunately, the harsh thunder was not long in coming again – war with France broke out again 14 months later in May 1803 and in July of that year, the Mayor of Bath – H Parry – once again called a meeting to consider ‘a plan of arming for the defence of the country’. The meeting was held in August 1803 and Captain Wiltshire was again appointed to lead the re-formed corps assisted by lieutenants Farrant and Ball and Cornet Guyenett. A patriotic song specially written for the corps by a Mr Courtenay appeared in the Bath Chronicle of 29 September 1803:

Chorus: *Then wield the sword and load the gun*

And hurry to the Field

We’ll soon compel the French to run

John Bull will never yield

However, it appears that the initial enthusiasm may have been short-lived. Captain Wiltshire was compelled to call a meeting at the Town Hall on 26 March 1804 to find measures to make the volunteers more effective and to prevent a further diminution of its numbers. It was resolved:

- It is the duty of all to step forward and protect England in the current crisis
- Some individuals have resigned which has weakened the strength of the corps
- In future anyone who resigns will appear in the newspaper

The next few years appear somewhat uneventful until a major incident occurred in May 1810. The West Mendip Local Militia who were assembled for duty in Bath at that time mutinied on account of the cost of a pair of trousers being deducted from their ‘marching guinea’. The ringleaders were arrested and imprisoned. However, the same night some men of the regiment marched to the prison, broke open the doors and freed the ringleaders. The Bath Volunteer Cavalry and Infantry together with the Lancashire Militia who were stationed in Bath at that time were assembled under arms. The released prisoners were soon re-captured together with the ringleaders of the men who had attacked the prison. The ringleaders of the attackers were tried by court-martial on Claverton Down and their leader was sentenced to 50 lashes. However, before the sentence could be carried out, he was reprieved with commendable leniency by his commanding officer Colonel Rogers. Both the Bath cavalry and infantry were present under arms during the court-martial and to witness the flogging. Subsequently Captain Wiltshire received a piece of plate from the magistrates of Bath in thanks for his part in the suppression of the riot.

By this time, any threat of invasion by France had long since subsided and, as was the case throughout the country, the main duty of the Volunteers had become suppression of riots by the local disaffected population. The Bath Volunteer Cavalry was called out again in 1812 to suppress an election riot in the city for which it again received the thanks of the magistrates.

However, re-organisation of the Volunteers was also now in the air. There were still many small independent troops and units of volunteers up and down the country and the government set about consolidating these into larger administrative corps. In November 1813, following a circular from the then Home Secretary Lord Sidmouth, the Bath Light Horse Volunteers agreed to attach themselves to the Frome & East Mendip Yeomanry Cavalry and following shortly after in January 1814, the Bath Light Horse Volunteers, which at that time consisted of 44 members under the command of Captain Wiltshire, became one of the 7 troops of the newly formed North Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry.

This was all followed shortly in April 1814 by Napoleon's first abdication and peace with France. In June, the Bath Chronicle reported that 'a car, ornamented with appropriate emblems was constructed by Mr Lewis in which the Mayor, accompanied by the Archdeacon of Bath Abbey and several members of the Body Corporate, paraded through the city to several stations where the proclamation of peace was read. A countless multitude accompanied the procession which was followed by the Bath troop of the NSYC.'

At the end of 1814, the Bath troop and Captain Wiltshire in particular were involved in a most remarkable incident. The Bath troop was called out to industrial disturbances in the colliery district around Radstock. During the suppression of the rioting it was reported that Captain Wiltshire killed a collier 'without apparent provocation'. He was charged with manslaughter and sent for trial at Taunton Assizes. However, he was acquitted, his defence being that his pistol 'had gone off by accident'.

June 1815 saw Captain Wiltshire promoted to the rank of Major in the NSYC and it is now that we have the first record of Thomas King, apothecary of Brock Street, who was promoted to Captain of the Bath troop in place of Wiltshire. There is no mention of Thomas King in the 1807 Yeomanry Lists so it must be presumed that he had joined sometime between 1808 and 1814 either as lieutenant or cornet.

June 1815 also of course saw the battle of Waterloo following Napoleon's return from exile on Elba. After his defeat and second abdication, Napoleon was detained for a short period upon the navy frigate HMS Bellerophon (affectionately known as the 'Billy Ruffian') anchored in Torbay. It was rumoured that he was to be taken to London and the Bath Light Horse Volunteers offered to provide the necessary escorts. The offer was declined.

In January 1817, another major event took place in Bath. The Bath troop together with 4 other troops of the NSYC was called out for the visit of the political orator Mr Henry Hunt. Hunt, who incidentally was born in Upavon Wiltshire, was already a renowned firebrand and political agitator and would later go on to achieve notoriety at the so-called 'Peterloo massacre' in Manchester in 1819. The Bath magistrates left nothing to chance - as well as the 5 troops from the NSYC, numerous special constables were sworn in and two troops of the 23rd Light Dragoons were also called to attend. In the event, the day and evening of Hunt's visit passed without incident and the volunteers received the grateful thanks of the magistrates and justices of the city.

1817 also saw the number of days per year that the Bath troop of cavalry was required to muster and train reduced from twelve to six. In June of that year, the troop assembled under the command of Captain King for its 6 days annual duty following which and accompanied by the Bitton troop, it retired to York House for an '*excellent dinner*' and an evening '*spent in great hilarity*'.

This seemed to set the tone thereafter. In October of 1817 on the anniversary of the King's accession, the officers of the NSYC again enjoyed an '*excellent dinner*' at York House where they were joined by officers of the 15th Hussars.

In June 1818, the NSYC held a field day at Keynsham followed which they marched into the City for inspection. It was recorded that '*their cleanly appearance and the excellence of their appointments formed a theme of universal approbation*'.

June 1819 saw another excellent dinner at York House but their peace was disturbed in July and August 1819 when they were called out for duty in Trowbridge following disturbances during the Wiltshire County elections. This incident also resulted in some discord within the troop itself: the Bath Chronicle of 11 August 1819 recorded:

'The Bath Troop of Yeomanry Cavalry - At a muster of the troop on Monday morning in Queen Square in this city, two of the troop were publicly dismissed for refusing to attend when ordered upon duty at Trowbridge, two others for returning from Trowbridge without leave and one for drunkenness whilst upon duty. This measure is directed to be inserted in the Orderly books of the Yeomanry Cavalry throughout the Kingdom.'

Annual muster days and the occasional calling out continued into the 1820s as did social occasions:

'On Saturday 15 September 1821, the officers of the NSYC dined at York House, Colonel Horner in the chair. The dinner was served in Mr Reilly's accustomed style of superiority; many loyal and constitutional toasts were drunk and the evening spent in utmost harmony.'

The pattern of muster days and evenings of utmost harmony continued unhindered over the next few years albeit the preferred place of repose seems to have switched from York House to the White Hart.

On 16 October 1825, it was recorded that Charles Wilkins was commissioned as Captain of the Bath troop of the NSYC and it must therefore be supposed that that date also signifies the retirement of Captain King.

Postscript: The NSYC continued its existence throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century before becoming part of the Royal Auxiliary Corps in 1941.

Captain Thomas King of the Bath Light Horse Volunteers is thought to be the apothecary whose address is listed at Brock Street, Bath. He was born around 1776 and is thought to be the eldest son of the renowned sculptor Thomas King (1741-1804) of Walcot, Bath. Thomas King (the sculptor) had taken a mortgage (together with others) on 9 Brock Street in 1802. His business as a sculptor had been taken over by his second son Charles following his death in 1804.

Thomas King (the younger) would therefore have been between 32 and 38 years of age when he joined the Bath Light Horse Volunteers. He lived in Brock Street with his wife Margaret (born c. 1781) and his daughters Margaret (b. 1816) and Georgeana (b. 1821).



Images of Captain Thomas Kings Sword



RECENT ARCHAEOLOGY OF BATH QUAYS

Monday 9th October 2017

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker

Cai Mason

Summary by

Cai Mason



In 2016–17, Wessex Archaeology West undertook a major excavation along the north bank of the River Avon, between Churchill Bridge and Green Park, during flood mitigation works that formed part of the Bath Quays development. The excavation, which was funded by Bath and North East Somerset Council, uncovered a 270 m long by 20 m strip through what was once a bustling quayside on the edge of Bath's infamous Avon Street district.

The earliest archaeological feature was an artificial watercourse, known as the Fosse Dyke, which served as an outfall for the hot springs on the west side of the city, and defined the boundary between the parishes of St James and Walcot. The land to the east, known as the Ambury, belonged to Bath Priory; the land to the west, known as St John's Mead and later Little Kingsmead, was granted to the Hospital of St John in the 13th century. The earliest maps of Bath, dating from c. 1600 onwards, show a battlemented wall alongside the Fosse Dyke. The foundations of this wall, which were 0.8 m wide, formed a revetment for an earlier bank that contained a few sherds of medieval and early post-medieval pottery. Documentary evidence suggests that the wall was probably built in 1580.



Stone footbridge over the Fosse Dyke, constructed c. 1685 - 1735

In the late 17th and early 18th century, the southern end of Little Kingsmead was heavily quarried, possibly for aggregates for use in construction. During this period a small stone footbridge was constructed over the Fosse Dyke, but it was not until the late 1720s that the development of the Ambury and Kingsmead meadows began in earnest.

The creation of the Avon Navigation in the 1720s, which linked Bath to the port of Bristol, significantly lowered the costs of transporting heavy goods such as building materials, which in turn provided a spur for the first major phase of speculative development outside the city walls. Kingsmead Square and Avon Street, both designed by the architect John Strahan (or Stachan), were largely constructed in the late 1720s and early 1730s. The buildings he designed were mostly well-built townhouses, designed to accommodate wealthy visitors to the spa. The southern end of Avon Street lay within the excavation area, but here, most of the buildings were non-domestic structures, probably warehouses and/or stables. These buildings were constructed alongside a small quay, which incorporated a slipway and what appears to have been a subterranean boathouse. The main quay for the Avon Navigation (later known as Broad Quay) lay further to the east.

In the mid-1760s, the Ambury was laid out with a grid of new streets (including New Quay, Little Corn Street and Back street). Development of this areas commenced with the construction of houses along Little Corn Street (formerly Clement's or Clark's Buildings and later Clark's Lane) and the western end of New Quay, both of which were fully built-up by c. 1768. The eastern end of New Quay was developed in a more piecemeal manner from the mid-1760s onwards. The excavated buildings in this part of the site comprised lodging houses, stables, warehouses, stone yards, and a fellmonger's – a dealer in skins or hides – and parchment makers workshop. Beyond the excavation area, there were breweries, slaughterhouses and bone yards – all contributing their own pungent aromas to the pervasive smell of coal smoke from nearby houses and factories!

The insalubrious nature of these industries, coupled with the district's less than optimal location near a commercial quayside and a flood-prone river, led to a gradual exodus of the area's wealthier patrons to the north and east of the old city. Following the departure of the wealthier tenants, and the falling rental value of their properties, landowners sought to maximise their revenues by increasing the levels of occupancy. They achieved this by subdividing and extending the houses, and by infilling their gardens with courts of blind-back and back-to-back houses. These were the homes of the city's artisans, labourers



Stone-lined liming pits within a fellmonger's yard and parchment works at 3 New Quay, constructed c. 1775

and servants who built and maintained Bath's world-famous Georgian buildings. The excavation showed that the infilling of gardens with court-housing, was already well under way by the early 1770s and was largely complete by the end of the century. It was during this period that Avon Street had acquired a fame of sorts, though probably not for the reason its architect had intended: it had become the city's principal red-light district.

Development to the west of Avon Street began with the laying out of Milk Street in the late 1760s, but the area further to the west remained undeveloped until the mid-1790s. During this period, the area to the west of Milk Street was used as a refuse dump, though whether this was officially-sanctioned as a means of raising the ground level, or opportunistic fly-tipping is uncertain: the absence of food waste may indicate the former. Large quantities of pottery and glass were recovered from these deposits: these provide a snapshot of the city's dining and consumption habits at the end of the 18th century.

From the 1790s onwards, the pattern of remained largely static, though further small-scale infill development occurred throughout the 19th century. The most notable change during this period were the improvements to sanitation, which including the laying of sewers, provision of piped water, and the construction of a public wash house and laundry known as the Milk Street Baths. This establishment opened in 1847, which makes it one of the earliest establishments of this type in the country, and the only well-preserved example to have been archaeologically excavated. The excavations showed that the building contained a laundry block, bathing rooms, and was equipped with three steam boilers; one powered an engine that pumped river water for use in the baths; the others heated the water.

During the second half of the 19th-century, the Avon Street district became increasingly industrialised, with the establishment of new businesses such as brass and iron foundries, dye and engineering works and timber mills. The expansion of these businesses led to the demolition of some residential properties, which coupled with the increasing availability of newly-built houses outside the city centre, led to a gradual decline in the district's population. Despite improvements to sanitation and a reduction in overcrowding, the area's reputation as a den of iniquity and crime persisted into the 20th century.

The Avon Street district had always been something of an embarrassment to the city authorities, and by the 1920s, plans were being drafted for the wholesale demolition and redevelopment of the area. These plans were implemented in the early 1930s, but they were incomplete at the outbreak of the Second World War. As a result, although most of the district was demolished, plans for its rebuilding came to a halt: the resulting wasteland was subsequently paved with asphalt for use as a vehicle park. After 70 or so years use as a car and coach park, the planned redevelopment is now finally being implemented, and as a result the remains of Bath's forgotten industrial past is gradually being brought to light.



Post-excavation work is currently underway, and the full results will be published as a Wessex Archaeology occasional paper.

FANNY MURRAY - BATHS MOST FAMOUS COURTESAN

Monday 13th November, 2017 St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker Barbara White

Abstract Barbara White

The aim of this talk was to separate the real Fanny Murray (1729-78) from the many myth-making and inaccurate anecdotes and narratives that grew up around her, both during her lifetime and after her death in 1778 at the age of 49. Most of these inaccuracies originated with a fake memoir entitled *Memoirs of the Celebrated Miss Fanny M---*, which were published in 1759. They narrate her extraordinary rags-to-riches story from her childhood in Bath, as the daughter of an impoverished musician named Thomas Rudman, to her retirement from the sex trade in 1755, following her eight-year career as the most famous courtesan in England.

An early error in the *Memoirs* was its claim that Murray was twelve years old and an orphan at the time of her seduction by the Hon. John Spencer (1708-46), grandson of Sarah, duchess of Marlborough. In fact, she was aged thirteen and her father and siblings were all living. Indeed, her father and at least one sister survived her. It is possible, therefore, that Murray sacrificed herself by turning to prostitution in order to support her family and to save her sisters from following in her footsteps. Spencer dropped Murray within weeks of seducing her and shortly afterwards, she became mistress to Richard 'Beau' Nash (1674-1761), Master of Ceremonies. By 1744, however, the fifteen-year-old Murray had left Bath, never to return, and had headed to the brothels that proliferated around Covent Garden and the Old Bailey.

As a young prostitute, Murray could have easily followed a downward path to disease and penury but was fortunate enough to become the mistress of John Montagu, 4th earl of Sandwich (1718-92), who introduced her to London's demi-monde.

It was through Sandwich that Murray, then aged sixteen, met Sir Francis Dashwood (1708-81) of West Wycombe Park in Buckinghamshire.



A gouache miniature portrait thought to be of Fanny Murray, (c.1750). Artist unknown.



The Morning Tost; or, Fanny M--y's Maid Washing her Toes, by George Bickham the Younger (c.1751). A satire which shows Fanny Murray at her morning toilette.

They do not appear to have been lovers for Dashwood's interest in Murray was as the model for a dazzling portrait he commissioned of her in Turkish costume, which still hangs at West Wycombe Park. By 1752, when Murray was at the height of her notoriety, she might well have reconnected with Dashwood as one of the 'Nuns of Medmenham'. Dashwood's infamous hellfire club met in an old Cistercian monastery at Medmenham, six miles from West Wycombe Park, where he, and other club members, would meet in convivial surroundings and enjoy feasting, religious mockery and sex-romps with mistresses and courtesans like Murray.



Medmenham Abbey by James Tingle, after William Tombleson (1840)

During her career as a premier courtesan, Murray's notoriety and exceptional magnetism made her one of the first media celebrities of the Georgian period. Her alluring beauty was celebrated in ladies' magazines, poems, jest-books, novels and songs. Print shops did a roaring trade selling highly-prized mezzotints of her image and thousands of these were produced to satisfy demand. Her face even appeared on watch papers which gentleman could keep close to their hearts. At the height of 'Murray mania', gin cocktails, ships, hats and racehorses were all named after her.

It is little wonder, therefore, that Murray counted princes, aristocrats and politicians among her adoring friends and lovers. Her roll-call of conquests included Henry Gould (1710-94), Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Joseph Yorke (1724-92), ambassador at The Hague and possibly Prince William Augustus (1721-65), the duke of Cumberland. Disturbingly, Murray had a taste for rough-trade ne'er-do-wells as well as elite gentlemen and her name was linked with the likes of the swindler Captain Plaistow and the highwayman James MacLaine (1724-50). Murray was cited by Naomi Gough in her divorce case against her particularly violent husband Edward Strode. According to Gough, Strode spent 'night after night' with Murray during the course of their marriage. All of these affairs were conducted while Murray was being kept by the wealthy Sir Richard Atkins (1728-56), 6th baronet of Clapham. Her cavalier treatment of the kindly and doting Atkins would cost her dear. It is likely that Atkins finally tired of his faithless mistress so that rumours of a marriage that would have made Murray both wealthy and titled came to nothing.



Female Court Martial by Louis Philippe Boitard (1757). A satirical print featuring Fanny Murray which refers to the court martial of Admiral John Byng in 1757 following the loss of Minorca to the French.

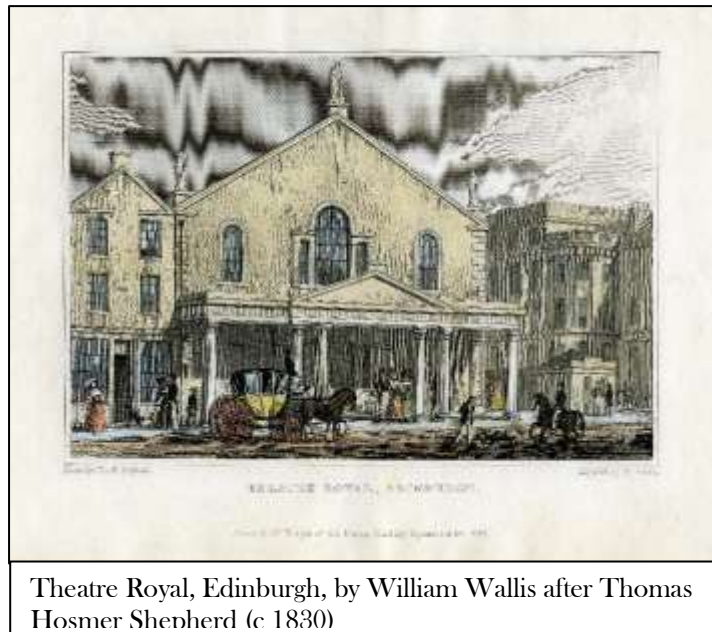
As noted above, the *Memoirs* conclude with Murray's retirement from the sex trade in 1755. Since details of her later life are not readily available, subsequent biographies of Murray also tailed off after she withdrew from public life and especially after she was eclipsed by the latest new face on the town, Kitty Fisher (1741-67). Yet research into the last twenty years of Murray's life has revealed further fascinating information. Of greatest interest are a cache of letters, a hitherto untapped resource, which are now in the British Library, that were written by Murray herself. They contradict the *Memoirs'* claim that Murray was left grief-stricken, unprovided for and in penury following the sudden death of Atkins in 1756. In reality, Murray and Atkins had separated a year before his death at a time when Murray was attempting to renounce whoredom altogether. In her desire to support herself without resorting to prostitution, Murray wrote to John Spencer (1734-83), created 1st earl Spencer in 1765, the son of her seducer, to ask his financial assistance. Murray's letters show that Spencer agreed to a life-time annuity of

£160 per annum, on condition that, henceforward, she lived an exemplary life and that she agreed to marry a man of his choosing. Murray agreed to all conditions and she kept her word for never again was there a whiff of scandal about her and she became a devoted, faithful and loyal wife.

The man chosen to be her husband was the actor David Ross (1728-90) and they married on 17 May 1756, although the marriage was kept secret for at least a year, at Ross's insistence, to ensure Murray did not embarrass her new husband by returning to her old life. Although the marriage appears to have been a happy and affectionate one, Murray had to bear the many challenges of life with Ross with patience and in silence. Ross did not fulfil his promise as an actor and his immense laziness on stage earned him the title of the 'Prince of Negligence'. Murray also had to contend with the fact that Ross much preferred the company of good friends, the occasional mistress and gourmandising to promoting his career or ensuring a steady income. Indeed, he ate himself into such an obese shape that in later years, he would be unable to find work and died in poverty.

There were other challenges to their marriage too. Murray's image continued to appear in portraits or satiric prints that depicted her as the courtesan she had once been. As her looks faded, there was still money to be made from Murray and she was the butt of several hurtful jokes in broadsides and poems that presented her as an old has-been 'unnotic'd by the passing crowd'. Worse was to come in 1763 when her name was dragged through the House of Lords as the addressee of John Wilkes's (1725-97) pornographic poem *An Essay on Woman*. The poem was the centre-piece of a famous obscene libel trial that aimed at the removal of Wilkes from Parliament. For months, and much to her distress, Murray's name appeared in numerous newspapers and pirated editions of the *Essay*.

In 1767 Ross and Murray moved to Edinburgh where Ross became manager of the Canongate Theatre. It is to Ross's credit that by 1769, he had raised enough funds, with some financial help from Murray, to build a new theatre, the Theatre Royal, that was situated in Edinburgh's new town. Ross's theatre had the honour of being Scotland's first licensed national theatre but it soon ran into financial difficulties and proved too much effort for a man who liked his ease. By October 1770, Ross and Murray had returned to London where Ross was appearing at the Haymarket Theatre. Although Murray was very much in the background now, she was to enjoy one last moment in the limelight. In October 1768, she was celebrated in various newspapers after her appearance, in the character of 'night', at the society event of the year - a masquerade ball hosted by King Christian VII of Sweden (1749-1808).



Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, by William Wallis after Thomas Hosmer Shepherd (c 1830)

Nothing more is known of Murray until her death in 1778. Her last letter was to her patrons, the Spencers, whom she thanked for their support and friendship while informing them that she was 'now past all hopes' and feared 'my time is but of short date'. Her death-bed request to the Spencers was for them to give a £50 annuity to her father whom she had supported throughout her life. She received a letter from the Spencers granting her request in the hours just before her death.

Murray was an intriguing woman if only because of her many contradictions. She was undoubtedly beautiful and charismatic but was also possessed of a fiery temper. On one occasion when she had asked Atkins for some money and he had given her £20 (worth about £2,400 today), she had shown her displeasure at the paltry sum by putting it between two slices of bread and butter and eating it. As a courtesan she was profligate with money and faithless with men yet as a wife, she managed her finances assiduously and was devoted to Ross despite his infidelities to her. In terms of lovers, she appeared reckless and mercenary, choosing the wealthiest of men and caring not if they were elite and refined or violent and criminal. Yet she was also benevolent, supporting the

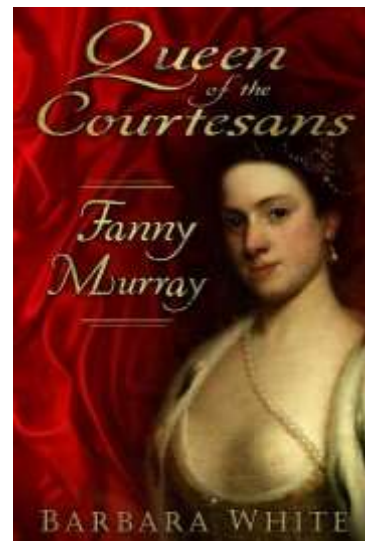
Lock Hospital charity in its treatment of venereal disease among the poor and providing, throughout her life, for her father and siblings.

Fanny Murray was a phenomenon in her own time and, retrieved from the *Memoirs'* monopolistic hold over the telling of her story, she has now contributed a valuable chapter to the study of eighteenth-century courtesans.

Queen of the Courtesans: Fanny Murray

by Dr Barbara White

published by The History Press in June 2014



CLIFFORD ELLIS - BATH ACADEMY OF ART AND THE RECENT BEQUEST TO THE VICTORIA ART GALLERY

Monday 8th January 2018

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

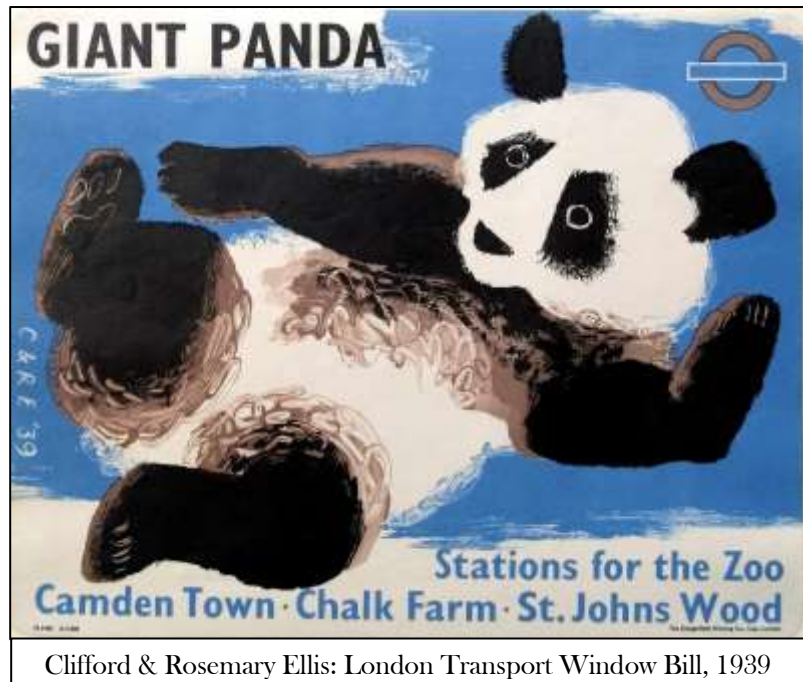
Speaker

Jon Benington

Abstract

Jon Benington

Clifford Ellis (1907-1985) was born in Bognor Regis, East Sussex and studied at St. Martin's School of Art and the Regent Street Polytechnic, before taking a one-year postgraduate teacher training course. He joined the staff of the Regent Street Polytechnic for eight years, and it was here that he met Rosemary Collinson. After their marriage in 1931, they worked as partners designing posters and book jackets, their imagery revealing an overwhelming interest in, and love of, the British countryside and the creatures that inhabit it. They also shared a love of fresh bright colour and bold design.



Clifford & Rosemary Ellis: London Transport Window Bill, 1939

They moved to Bath in 1936, Rosemary teaching art at the Royal School for Daughters of Officers of the Army in Lansdown, whilst Clifford became Assistant at the Technical College, teaching art to 12- to 14-year olds. After just two years he was promoted to Head of the Bath School of Art.

With the advent of the war, the Ellises continued their teaching and design work and Clifford set up the Bath Art Club with monthly lectures by prestigious speakers including John Piper and Nikolaus Pevsner. He painted Bath's cast iron railings for the Recording Britain project, executed watercolours of bomb damaged buildings and VE Day celebrations in Bath, and devised camouflage schemes for use by the military. At time he secured the lecturing services of Walter Sickert for the benefit of the art students and added the latter's name, as Patron and Honorary Lecturer, to the staff list of the School of Art. When the School was destroyed in the Bath Blitz of April 1942, new premises had to be found for the students, first in the home of the Sickerts in Bathampton, later at 99/100 Sydney Place.

When the war ended in 1945 Ellis sought a new home for what he conceived as a residential school of art where students would be trained within two years to become art teachers, whilst experiencing the performing arts and poetry as well as the visual arts. He compiled a list of possible premises that included Corsham Court, newly released from its use as a military hospital, and when Lord Methuen (one of Sickert's former pupils) telephoned him they struck a deal within minutes whereby Ellis's Bath Academy of Art would occupy one wing of the Court. Ellis had already appointed William Scott and

Kenneth Armitage as his Heads of Painting and Sculpture, both working part-time whilst retaining studios in London. This pattern of spotting talent when it was young and relatively cheap continued from 1946 to 1972, when Ellis retired, by which time the establishment had also taken on the four-year Diploma in Art and Design. Rosemary initially assumed a support role at the Academy, eventually heading up the Visual Communications Department.



Clifford Ellis: VE Day, Queen Square 1945

The Ellis Family Archive that was given to the Victoria Art Gallery in 2016 is shared with the Bath Record Office - documents, posters and sketches in the BRO, finished artwork in the VAG. By joining forces in this way, the Gallery was able to assure the family that the collection would be held in one place and not split up. Amongst the gems of the collection are prints and watercolours by Howard Hodgkin and William Scott, letters from Peter Lanyon and Walter Sickert, the wartime diary of Rosemary Ellis, and book cover artwork for the iconic Collins *New Naturalists* series (1944-82). Many of these items will feature in the forthcoming exhibition the Victoria Art Gallery is staging from the Archive between 8 September and 25 November 2018.

THE HISTORY OF THE SPA PUMP AND LAUNDRY

Monday 12th February 2018

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker

Mike Chapman

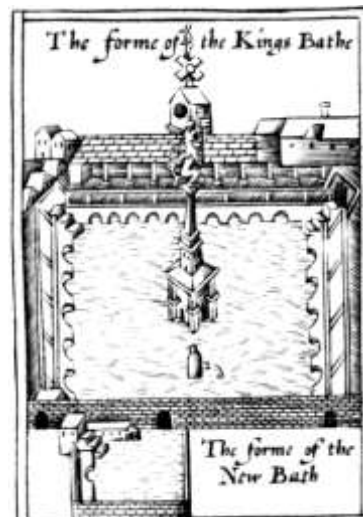
Abstract

Mike Chapman/Nigel Pollard

The first references of a 'Spa Pump' appear c.1578 when an Elizabethan Syphon was built over the spring which can be clearly seen in 'Speed's map of 1610 and which was described later in detail by a Dr. Robert Pierce in 1697, as follows:

'It was a pyramidal Stone, hollow in the Middle, artificially placed over one of the largest Springs ... [ie. over the aperture in the centre of the floor of the Bath where the spring water entered] A square Wall was made about this Spring, the Hollow of which was about eighteen Inches Diameter, and near upon the same Depth. The top Stone had a Mortice proportionate to the Tennon of the pyramidal Stone which went in, and held so close, that none of the extraneous water could get into its Hollow; and the Strength of the Spring was so great, that it forced itself up through the Cavity of the pyramidal Stone, which was a Foot or more above the Water, when the Bath was at fullest. This Water discharged itself at a Copper Spout, about three Inches above the highest Water Mark, and to this Spout some set their Mouths and drank, while others put Cups and received the Water sincere from the Spring.

(Dr. Robert Pierce, *Bath Memoirs or Observations in Three and Forty Years Practice at the Bath*, 1697.)



The first hand-pumps in the King's and Queen's Baths, were donated in 1631 by one Humphrey Browne, at the instance of Doctor Edward Jorden for 'dry pumping and bucketing' which in 1634 are described by a Thomas Johnson as; 'a water-screw or water-spouting machine for making the embrocations stronger and hotter.' (BCA).

For a detailed explanation of such proceedings as 'embrocations' and 'bucketing', we have wonderful description by Dr Jorden, as follows:

'Bucketting is only done in the Bath, by two men alternately pouring water from buckets with a quick movement upon the patient's head ... We have of late erected Pumpes, which draw the water from the springs or neare unto them, so as wee have it much hotter from thence, then we can have it by bucketting. A worthy Merchant and Citizen of London, M.Humphrey Browne, was perswaded by me to bestow two of these Pumpes upon the Kings and Queenes Bath, whereby he hath done much good to many, and deserves a thankfull remembrance. The like I also procured to be done at the other Baths ... we have a Pumpe out of the hot Bath, which wee call the dry Pumpe, where one may sit in a chayre in his clothes and have his head, or foot, or knee pumped without heating the rest of his body in the Bath ... For these Pumpes we are beholding unto the late Lord Archbishop of Yorke, and to M. Hugh May, who upon my perswasions were contented to bee at the charge of them. It were to be wished that some well-disposed to the publike good, would erect the like at the King's Bath where, perhaps, it might be more usefull, in regard of the greater heat which those springs have.'

By 1661 it had been decided to erect a Dry Pump House on the west side of the Queen's Bath which can be seen in Johnson's adjacent illustration of 1675.



The first 'Grand Pump Room' was built by the side of the King's Bath between 1705-6 but by the 1720s the building was already too small for the large crowds of visitors. A separate gallery for musicians was provided in 1732-4. In 1751 an extra bay was added on the west side, and the whole northern elevation finished off with a balustrade parapet. New pumping and changing rooms were installed in the cellars below, the two at the eastern end serving as a 'Public House' and 'Ware House'. Coal fireplaces were also installed about this time, but it was not until 1782 that an annexe for water-closets was provided by Baldwin, a few years before he started the Stall Street Colonnade.

In this closeup detail of Humphrey Repton's caricature entitled *Taking the Waters at the Pump Room, Bath 1784* (VAG), a suitably underdressed 'cherub' can be seen in the top right corner manning the pump.



The interior layout of the first Pump Room is still reflected in the present building which replaced it. The (manual) pump itself was sited centrally between the windows overlooking the bath on the south side. Encased in marble, it had two taps, and the water was served in glasses over a surrounding balustrade which served as a counter.



The King's Bath, 1801: aquatint by John Nixon (c. 1760-1818)

As may be expected, the next century was to bring great changes, and the above aquatint by John Nash made in 1801 shows the one of the dying images of a hand pump being used in the King's Bath.

In 1808 the area to the south for the Baths were being developed and York Street and Swallow Street were laid out and in 1829, the old-fashioned bar and pump were removed from the pump Room and a new fountain substituted with a marble basin *said* to be fashioned from one of the columns of the Melfont Cross.

Just a year later, in 1830, the Baths first steam engine was introduced into a newly built Engine House in York Street. It was an 3hp engine with a cooling tank (32,000gals) to supply the Grand Pump Room, Private Baths, The Bath General Hospital and new Tepid Swimming Bath.

The Bath General Hospital, which was opened in 1742 in order that ‘poor visitors’ coming to Bath could ‘take treatment from the water’, was to later become the Mineral Water Hospital (1887) and its growing use must have been a major reason for installing an up to date Steam engine, before which the medicinal waters would have had to be transported up Stall Street by hand or horse and cart.

By 1855 the engine was also supplying the Bath St. Fountain and a pump for Street Watering, the fountain being rebuilt in 1859 with Bladud’s statue (Later converted in 1873 for drinking) and in 1862 tenders were invited for a new engine, supplied by Stotherts.



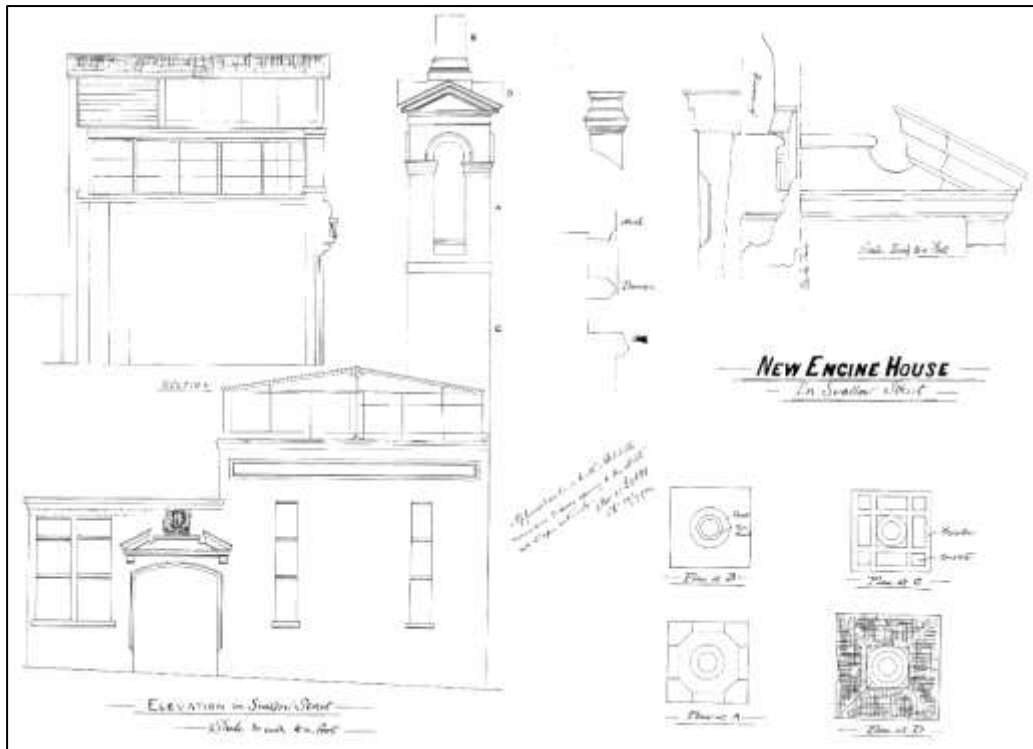
However, in 1880 when enlarging the Baths yet again, Charles Davis, Surveyor of Works discovered the Roman complex that we know today. This was of course a game changer, and in 1884 some stables in Swallow Street were acquired for a new Pumping Station in which contained new Galloway boilers (of Manchester) and two new Evans engines (of Wolverhampton) all the machinery being installed by Stothert’s.

All these improvements can be clearly seen on this OS map of 1885 which shows both the old and new pump houses as well as the Methodist Chapel that following some litigation, was purchased by the Council in 1886 followed by the building of the bridge over York Street in 1888.



The laundry that finally opened in 1891 after an archaeological excavation of the site was built by Bradfords of Manchester and equipped with 3hp, 10,000g/h Owens engines. The warehouse to the south being purchased in 1909.

In 1926-7 an additional Electric 15hp triple-ram pump was added - installed by Stockalls & Son, while the Owens engines were overhauled and a new iron grate floor laid.



In 1932 the Old Boilers were condemned and replaced with 20ft Lancashire boilers (Stanley Eng, Bath) while the old Steam engines were scrapped in 1950 with the boilers being kept for the Laundry

The Laundry finally closed in the 1970's. Some of the engines are kept at the University of Bath.



< Site of Private Baths and old Pump House.

Archway and site of laundry >



SCULPTORS IN BATH IN THE LONG 18TH CENTURY

Monday 12th March, 2018

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker

David Bridgwater

Abstract

David Bridgwater/Nigel Pollard

My intention here is to present a very brief survey of the portrait sculptors working in Bath in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is something that I have been meaning to approach for a long time and the talk will form the basis of more detailed researches to be posted on line.

The William Seward unsigned bust of Alexander Pope bought at Gardiner Holgate in Bath in 2000, was the first major bust that set me on the course of researching and understanding mid-18th Century portrait sculpture - particularly that of **Roubiliac** and **Rysbrack**

The Miniature Marble Bust of Alexander Pope in the Victoria Art Gallery possibly came from the Roubiliac studio in St Martins Lane. Although of reasonable quality it is more likely to have been taken from a plaster version of the original by Roubiliac. It is however very similar to a small version of the signed and dated life sized Pope bust by Roubiliac at Milton House near Peterborough, which formerly belonged to Lord Mansfield and was at Kenwood House in the 18th century. There are 2 full size plaster versions of this bust - one at Hughendon House, Bucks - National Trust and another at Holkham, Norfolk.

The miniature bust was first noted in 1920 by Mrs John Lane of the Bodley head Publishers in 1920 - presented to the Gallery by Mrs Lane in 1925 and then attributed to Prince Hoare.

Two further Roubiliac busts linked to Bath are those of Pope and Newton that graced Wiltshire's Assembly Rooms.

Here there is a possible link between the busts of Alexander Pope and Isaac Newton in the Warren and Foster Sale of March 30, 1765 which might have been the busts sold in a disposal of objects from the lower Assembly Rooms at about that time.

These busts can be seen in the drawing by James Vertue and known to have been in Wiltshire's Assembly rooms on Terrace Walk in 1741 >

This Assembly Rooms disappeared and became a warehouse in about 1788.

Surprisingly Ralph Allen is not known to have owned a bust of Pope even though they were close friends. I suspect that Ralph Allen was involved with the placing of Pope and Newton in the Wiltshire's Assembly Rooms

Lord Rothschild now owns a pair of marble busts of Pope and Newton by Roubiliac which are now at Waddesden Manor, which could be these busts >



Another link with this pair of busts has been made with Bath sculptor **Prince Hoare (1711 - 69)** brother of William Hoare the artist who was said to have been educated by the sculptor Scheemakers (away in Rome in Rome 1728 - 1730) but Hoare did not return to England from his grand tour until 1749 he had been away for about 9 years.

George Vertue the diarist recorded in 1750 that he was "a tall handsom agreeable person and somewhat skilled in musick He bids fair for a great man"

There is another Pope link in that Hoare commissioned the monument to Pope in Twickenham Church commissioned by William Warburton and put up in 1761.



Bishop William Warburton had also commissioned the marble bust of Ralph Allen for the Mineral Water Hospital by Prince Hoare in 1769. <

Horace Mann said of him that he was able but lazy. “Very clever in his copying but I have seen nothing original in his doing – had he application equal to his skill, I believe he would make a great figure at least in England where sculpture is not at any great pitch”

He seems to have found a wealthy wife Miss Mary Coulthurst of Melksham - who brought a considerable fortune of £6000 and he led the life of a sort of gentleman sculptor who could pick and choose his subjects. It appears that Joseph Plura was responsible for much of the work attributed to Hoare.



The Bust of Lord Chesterfield by Prince Hoare now in the Government Art Coll. now at the Rangers House, Blackheath - Bought 1992 (with an Irish provenance) - two versions are mentioned by Chesterfield in a letter to Richard Chevenix, Bishop of Waterford, dated London, 22 May 1752: 'Lady Chesterfield . . has sent you from Bristol a busto of your humble servant, cast from a marble one done by Mr. Hoare, at Bath, for Mr. Adderly: it is generally thought very like.' >

The Statue of Richard (Beau) Nash in the pump room has, in the past been wholly ascribed to Plura who worked in Prince Hoare's Studio. >

See - <https://bathartandarchitecture.blogspot.com/2018/08/beau-nash-statue-in-pump-rooms-bath-by.html>

See also <https://bathartandarchitecture.blogspot.com/2018/08/beau-nash-bust-by-prince-hoare.html>

The Plaster bust of Jerry Pierce is now missing from the mineral water Hospital – the Mercer Art Gallery in Harrogate have the marble version.

Prince Hoare made the monument to Jerry Pierce in St Swithin's Church, Walcot, Bath.



Giuseppe (Joseph) Plura (d. 1756)

See - <https://bathartandarchitecture.blogspot.com/2018/08/the-busts-of-gratiana-davenport-by.html>

Little is known about his early life. It is thought that he is the Plura that was noted as being an assistant to Stuccoist Giovanni Bagutti (1681-?) in the work on Castle Howard in Yorkshire between 1709 and 1712 where it suspected they were working in order to attempt to gain the commissions to perform the sculpture work on the rebuilding of St Pauls Cathedral in London, but they were unsuccessful in this regard and he probably returned to Italy when work on Castle Howard was completed.

Son of the Italian Sculptor from Turin who possibly worked at Castle Howard, by 1749 Giuseppe had settled in Bath - he married Mary Ford aged 17, the daughter of John Ford (1711 - 67) a local building Contractor who had worked for John Wood.

Given the date it is quite possibly he came to England with Prince Hoare on his return from his grand tour.

He is believed to have completed the statue of Beau Nash in the Pump Room for Hoare

His most famous work is the Diana and Endymion.

He set up on his own in 1753 and took up the lease of a statuary Yard 1st October 1753. Unfortunately, the location is not recorded.

In the City accounts show that he paid 6s. 8d for the seal of his 'Statuary' lease. Unfortunately, the location of the studio is not recorded. The same year Plura was paid £26 5s. for carving the Coat of Arms in the tympanum of the pediment of the Edward VI Grammar School, for which his father-in-law was a benefactor.

In the same year he executed a bust of Mrs Gratiana Sharington Davenport (nee Rodd) that is now on long-term loan to Lacock Abbey.

See - <https://bathartandarchitecture.blogspot.com/2018/08/the-busts-of-gratiana-davenport-by.html>

In 1755 Plura completed the five busts of Worthies for the façade of King Edward's Grammar School. These were removed to storage in 1978. They have since disappeared – where are they now?

His father in law John Ford (1711 – 67) was the contractor



In 1755 he had taken rooms in Oxford Row, Poland St. London to display Diana and Endymion

In 1756 He died “d’une fièvre maligne” leaving his widow with three children Mary, Joseph Plura II who also became a sculptor and his brother John who became a well-known auctioneer.

The Gahagan Dynasty of Sculptors – See http://bathartandarchitecture.blogspot.com/2015_12_21_archive.html

Lawrence Geoghegan. 1735 – 1820.

Won a premium at the Royal Dublin Society in 1756. With the statuette of van Dyck after Rysbrack and almost certainly worked in the studio of John van Nost in Dublin.

He had two brothers Vincent and Sebastian also sculptors. They all appear to have worked in the studio of Joseph Nollekens in the late 18th early 19th Century. Vincent came to a sticky end, crushed whilst working in the studio of sculptor Richard Westmacott.

There is much confusion with Lawrence his son Lucius (1773 – 1855) who also signed his work L. Gahagan.

They almost certainly lived and worked together at various addresses in London: 22 Dean St Soho in 1797, Pershore Place, New Road in 1800 and Little Titchfield St in 1801.

Lucius Gahagan lived at 12 Cleveland St Fitzroy Sq from 1809 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1817.

His Magnum Opus was the Egyptian Figures of Isis and Osiris on the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly put up in 1806.

By 1824 Lucius Gahagan is recorded at various Bath Addresses

1852 - 66. Lucius Gahagan, sculptor was at Chandos House, Chandos Buildings, Bath

Perhaps the most fascinating but also the most misleading source of information on the works of Lawrence and Lucius Gahagan is a sale catalogue of c.1855 of the collection of Miss Fenton of Chandos House, Westgate Buildings, Bath.

The death of Lucius Gahagan was reported in Keene's Bath Journal, Dec 22, 1855 and in Bath and Cheltenham Gazette Wed Dec 19, 1855 - same report in both: Dec 14 at Chandos House, aged 82,

He was survived by his sister Sara who was also a sculptor in a small way.



Photograph of a bust of Nelson found in a garden in Great Pulteney Street. Bath.
Ascribed to Lucius Gahagan.
Now at Beckford's Tower, Lansdown, Bath.

Please take a look at my blog postings which I will continue to add to in the future

I have written a brief survey of bath statuaries and stonemasons

see <https://english18thcenturyportraitsculpture.blogspot.com/2018/07/parsons-and-greenway-sculptors-of-bath.html>

AGM FOLLOWED BY:

TOWARDS A HISTORY CENTRE - AN UPDATE ON THE BATH LOCAL STUDIES CENTRE

Monday 16th April, 2018

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speakers

Colin Johnston & Anne Buchanan

Abstract

Colin Johnson

Colin led off on this two-part presentation with illustrations of newly-built History Centres in SW England and beyond where a local authority Record Office and Local Studies library have brought their collections together under one roof, usually in a brand-new building and often achieved with Heritage Lottery funding.

He then summarised his efforts over the past 18 years to bring about just such an ideal for Bath's two great collections of local research material, beginning in 2000 and still ongoing today. He emphasized that, grateful as he was for the refurbishment in 2017 of the old Record Office rooms into brighter, smarter, more attractive accommodation for users, this was not the ultimate goal but just a half-way stage. 2017 had seen the re-location of the Local Studies, Family History, and Special Books collections from Bath Central Library to join the Archive collection in the Guildhall, which was a long-held ambition of Archive and Library staff. Whilst this brought huge satisfaction to staff and customers, the accommodation problem was unresolved and the need for a History Centre premises remained.

Colin then showed old photos of the Record Office storage and public space over the past 35 years illustrating how the collections and public demand for access had grown since he was appointed archivist in 1984. From 350 visitors that year the figure today is 3,500 per annum, with a further 3,000 email and phone enquiries this year. The collection in this period grew from just two archive stores to twelve rooms today, occupying almost the entire Guildhall basement, and filling over 4 kilometres of shelving.

The story of the campaign for a History Centre is long and well-intentioned but so far in vain. In 2002 the Council's Best Value Review recommended the creation of a "centre of excellence for local and family history studies". A customer survey of 2003 showed overwhelming support for a Local History Centre. In 2007 stakeholder consultations were held with possible partner archives in Bath. In 2009 independent consultants produced a feasibility study looking at locations and space requirements for the project.

The World Heritage Site Management Plan of 2010 contained an Action Point of finding better provision for the Archive, an action carried forward from the previous Plan of 2003, and again repeated in the current 2016 Plan. In 2014 the Leader of the Council convened a Working Group of archive users to consider potential new sites, but commercial values always outweighed those for cultural use and the Group folded.

Most recently in this saga, Colin entered an employees' Bright Ideas scheme of the then Chief Executive, proposing the relocation of Bath Library's local studies material to vacant rooms in the Guildhall basement. The scheme was formatted on TV's Dragons' Den, and Colin pitched his idea to a panel of Chief Officers who gave approval but could find no finance to make it a reality. All seemed lost until the surprise news in late 2016 that not only would Bath Library transfer its Local collection but also the Record Office would be decorated and re-fitted.

Anne took up the story and described the complicated preparations for transferring many thousands of books and documents to the Guildhall and other stores within a very short time-frame, ready for the re-opening in 2017 of the new amalgamated service. Examples of treasures in the collection were shown to remind us of the wealth of fascinating resources we can access.



Find out more about the collections on www.batharchives.co.uk

VISIT: BATH ARCHAEOLOGICAL STORES AT THE ROMAN BATHS

Monday 14th May 2018

Leader: Stephen Clews

Report: Nigel Pollard

A group of eighteen or so met up in Abbey Churchyard to be greeted and invited into the Roman Baths Complex by Manager Stephen Clews and Head of Collections Susan Fox, who then took us on a subterranean tour of the Council's archaeological stores that are located in and around the Roman Baths Museum.

In his introduction, Stephen informed us that these were only part of the Council's stores and that they had many others, some as far away as Keynsham, and that we were going to visit two separate stores, one to the east and the other to the west of the Great Bath.

We first went west through a network of curving tunnels that led beneath Bath Street in which were stored the larger, heavier stone fragments that had been dug up by Major Davis in the late nineteenth century. Unfortunately, many of these had not been very well documented as to where they were found.

However, several more ornate pieces, such as the one shown below, had been further researched, and these were due to be put on public display in the coming months.



Other sections of tunnel exposed yet more treasures such as stone sarcophagi, and some not so old, such as the network of old pumps and pipes that channelled the waters up to the Mineral Water Hospital.

We were finally brought to a halt by the current building contractors preparing some of the underground services for the 'Archway Project'.



We then retraced our steps, back through the Museum and into the eastern storage area which had more recently been modernised and updated.

This area had indeed a different feel, with not only an area set aside as a 'Green Room' for the *Roman Actors* to get dressed up in, but also a number of display cabinets to exhibit some of the smaller items that the museum holds, but for which space is not available to show in the more public areas.



It was in here that Susan Fox explained the rationale behind the collections displayed as well as showing us the further area in which the remaining collections had all been referenced, catalogued and boxed up.



VISIT: SWAINSWICK

Monday 11th June, 2018

Leader David Crellin

Report Nigel Pollard

On what can only be described as a perfect summer's evening, a lucky group of us assembled outside the beautiful Norman church of St Mary's.

Temped to stay outside to admire the view we were however ushered inside to learn of the history that we had come to hear about.

For starters, hanging over the South door through which we entered, was a diamond-shaped painted panel depicting the Royal Arms of Charles I, dated 1647. This date however is an intriguing one, as by this date, the civil war was over, and the King had been defeated and was in prison, later to be executed!

It is also an introduction to how this small, relatively isolated village church has played its part in shaping English life in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Swainwick's first national figure was 'William Prynne', (1600-1669) a Puritan pamphleteer who was born in the nearby manor house and who later lived at Hill House, of which more later.

However, for members of the HBRG, the more important figures of national importance and who are both buried in the church are John Wood the Elder (1704-1754), architect and developer of Georgian Bath and of his son, John Wood the Younger (1728-1782), also an architect and whose church at Woolley, built in 1761, can be seen across



the valley. Their two burial slabs lie side by side in the chapel.

The group then left the church and walked up the hill, past the old rectory to Hill House, the current home of Fifi Charrington, who welcomed us all into her beautiful garden with outstanding views over the Charcombe valley.



This had previously been the home of William Prynne, who as noted above had been born at the local manor house. He was educated at Bath Grammar School and Oriel College, Oxford before entering Lincoln's Inn. However, he soon became a zealous adherent of the Puritan Party and suffice it to say that after publishing a book against Stage Players in 1632 entitled 'Histrio-mastix' he fell from grace. The book was seen as a libel upon the current Queen and her Court and he was then prosecuted by the Star Chamber, and sentenced to a fine of £5000, the loss of both ears in the pillory, expulsion from the Bar, Oxford and Lincoln's Inn and condemned to life imprisonment. However, after incarceration in Carnarvon, Dunster, and Pendennis Castles, and subsequently in that of Mont Orgueil in Jersey, he was released in 1641, by a warrant of the Long Parliament then sitting. Shortly afterwards he became MP for Newport in Cornwall and, surprisingly, resisted the proceedings against the throne and Charles I. He then assailed Cromwell and was imprisoned again, before finally, when freed on the Protector's death, became MP for Bath. He died at his apartment in Lincoln's Inn in 1669.

The party then made a short detour to see the old Manor House in which William Prynne had been born.

While it has since been divided into two homes, it is believed to have had a rather magnificent historical garden layout that current research is still investigating.



The final home visit was back in the centre of the village to Upper Swainswick house, now the home of Edward and Rachel Leigh-Wood who run it as an outward-bound retreat for children under the title of ‘Swainswick Explorers’

Another glorious garden with views to match across the Avon valley towards Bath and Prior Park.



BOOK REVIEWS:

EXPOSED

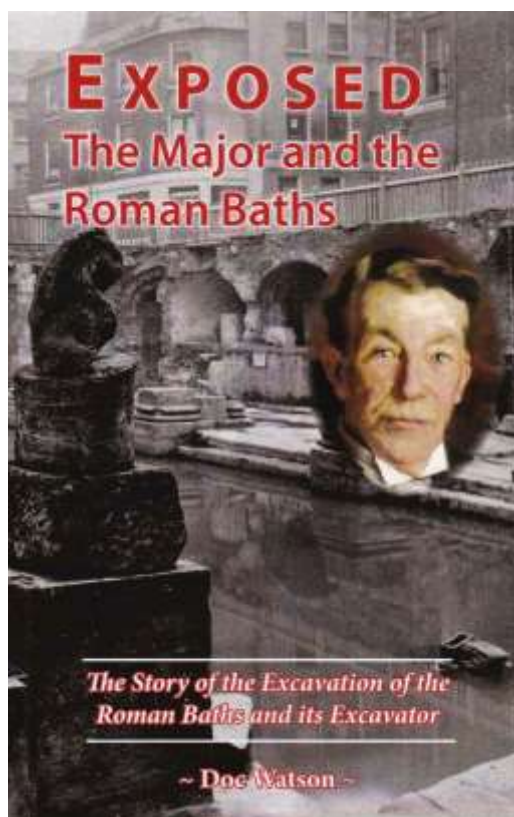
The Major and the Roman Baths

Doc Watson

ELSP 2017

ISBN 978-1-912020-63-8

£ 8.99



EXPOSED – the Major and the Roman Baths tells the story of the finding of the Roman bathhouse in Bath after being hidden for over 1400 years. It also charts the life of the man in charge of the excavation, as well as the struggles of the city throughout the 19th century trying to reclaim its position as a top visitor attraction.

When Major Davis, the city surveyor of Bath, was ordered by the Town Council to investigate a leak of hot water into the basement of houses near the Abbey in 1871, he little realised, and neither did the Council, the treasure trove that he was to unearth hidden below the streets – a treasure trove dating back 2000 years.

An engrossing story of ambition and failure, but ultimately of revenge.

Editor: Nigel Pollard - nigel.e.pollard@zen.co.uk

HBRG Web Site: www.historyofbath.org.uk