

# PROCEEDINGS

## OF THE HISTORY OF BATH RESEARCH GROUP



No: 11

2022-23

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### EDITORIAL

As a body dedicated to recording the history of Bath, there can be no greater historical event in this Country that the death of a monarch and the Coronation of their successor.

#### Ladies and Gentlemen.

#### The Proclamation of the Accession.

“Whereas it has pleased Almighty God to call to His Mercy our late Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth the Second of Blessed and Glorious Memory, by whose Decease the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is solely and rightfully come to The Prince Charles Philip Arthur George: We, therefore, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal of this Realm



and Members of the House of Commons, together with other members of Her late Majesty's Privy Council and representatives of the Realms and Territories, Aldermen and Citizens of London, and others, do now hereby with one voice and Consent of Tongue and Heart publish and proclaim that The Prince Charles Philip Arthur George is now, by the Death of our late Sovereign of Happy Memory, become our only lawful and rightful Liege Lord Charles the Third, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of His other Realms and Territories, King, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, to whom we do acknowledge all Faith and Obedience with humble Affection; beseeching God by whom Kings and Queens do reign to bless His Majesty with long and happy Years to reign over us. - **God save The King.**

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September last year, the above Proclamation was “Given at St. James’s Palace this tenth day of September in the year of Our Lord twenty thousand and twenty-two” and repeated around the country as recorded here outside the Guildhall, Bath.

The Coronation of King Charles III on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023 that followed was one that connected the present very much with the history of Bath, as it was here in a previous Abbey Church that King Edgar’s coronation took place in 973, marked in a poem in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:

“Here Edgar, ruler of the English, was hallowed as king... There was much bliss for everyone on that blessed day.”



*Edgar's Coronation as 'First King of all England' captured in one of the Abbey's stained-glass windows*



While the Coronation service has long since left Bath for London’s Westminster Abbey, the city still had a leading role to play in that one of the ‘Bishop Assistants to the King’ was the Right Reverend Michael Beasley the Bishop of Bath & Wells, pictured on the right in the adjacent photograph.

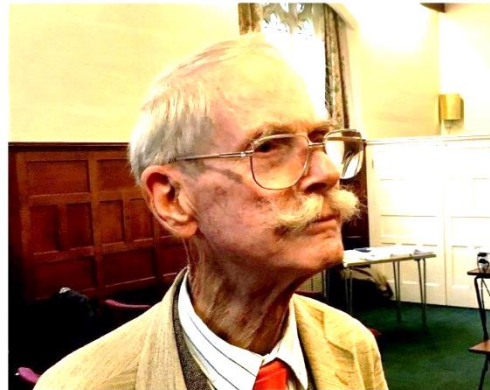
However, in a sign of the times, Bath Abbey was also able to ‘live stream’ the Coronation Service, so that those loyal residents of Bath could again, 1,050 years on, bear witness to a Coronation in their own Abbey Church.

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## OBITUARY - MIKE CHAPMAN

It was with the greatest sadness and sense of loss that The History of Bath Research Group received the news of Mike Chapman's death on 26th December 2022. Mike was one of the earliest members of the group and served on the committee for many years.

Mike has been central to the understanding of the city and its surroundings since around 1986 never mind his school boy curiosity as a volunteer with the famous Wedlake excavations at Camerton.



His early experience in the army, in the Royal Engineers, where he was introduced to the mysteries of cartography, has over subsequent years proved a priceless asset both to other researchers and to the Council. Mike was not only a gifted researcher but he was always ready to share his sometimes hard won information. His comments about Bath and his maps are so often quoted and indeed are central to many publications. In particular his work on Council projects, not least the hugely successful Spa project, ensured a real understanding of the sites involved and the proper recording of what was inevitably destroyed in the redevelopments. His Spa Quarter maps showing the evolution of the area around the springs is unlikely ever to be bettered and will be consulted for many years to come. Mike was one of the first to sign up to Trevor Fawcett's History of Bath Research Group in 1986 and he has contributed ceaselessly to its work ever since and was still a member of the committee right up to the time of his death. The meetings always ended with a session of questions for Mike in an attempt to download his brain further to enhance the efforts of lesser mortals. The Survey of Old Bath project occupied a great deal of his time over the years. He and Miss Elizabeth Holland set about using the Council survey of properties and sites as recorded in 1641 to construct an accurate map of Tudor and Stuart Bath. The details and site plans came from the city collection of Deeds and their drawings which have been designated as of national importance and Mike stitched together their information in a most precise way. He finished the final version of the map shortly before he died and it will be published as a central feature of the new historic map of the city showing all the historical periods. This currently is being created with the Historic Towns Trust. Miss Holland of the Survey of Old Bath tells me that working with us on that project brought a great deal of pleasure to Mike's last year of life. Miss Holland also said that Mike's work brought 'distinction' to the Survey.

Mike gave fascinating talks which captured his audiences and he edited journals and produced pamphlets too numerous to name on his interests in the Somerset coalfields and in industrial archaeology. He also had just about completed a major work on water in Bath that should hopefully have its finishing touches completed, and soon be published. Mike had an extraordinary visual memory which the Victoria Art Gallery exploited in identifying old views of Bath from lost view points and in naming lost streets and buildings. This skill allowed the Gallery to enhance the experience of visitors to exhibitions about Bath by giving more detailed descriptions on labels and wall boards than would otherwise have been possible. Mike's journals written for the Survey of Old Bath are all on the HBRG website and any pamphlets and other articles that are not already in the public domain will be offered to the city archives department. Mike Chapman's legacy to the city of Bath in his published work is substantial and will inform research relating to The World Heritage Site in perpetuity. His example in relentlessly pursuing accurate research will spur on many others to achieve excellence in their work and so enable the public not only better to understand the city but to enjoy contributing to its conservation, preservation and to its appreciation worldwide.

# MEETING REPORTS

## ROMAN BATH

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022

St. Mary's Bathwick, Church Hall

Speaker

Peter Davenport

Summary by

Nigel Pollard

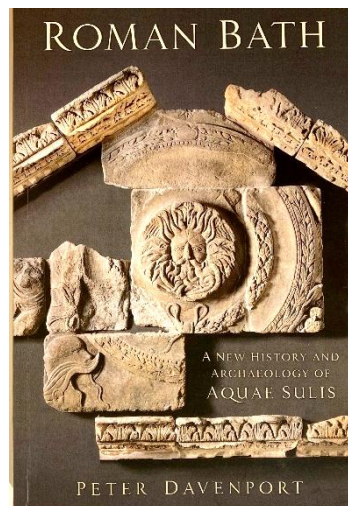
*All images taken from Peter Davenport's Book 'Roman Bath', Published by The History Press, 2021.*

“ For almost three hundred years, excavations have been carried out in Roman Bath. At first these were rare and sporadic and archaeological find were made by chance. Even fewer were reported. But from the 1860s, deliberate investigations were made and increasingly professional methods employed. The Roman Baths were laid open to view, but little was published.

From the 1950s, interest accelerated , professionals and amateurs collaborated, and there was never a decade in which some new discovery was not made.

The first popular but authoritative presentation of this work was made in 1971 and updated several times. However, from the 1990s to the present there has been some sort of archaeological investigation almost every year. This has thrown much more new and unexpected light on the town of Aquae Sulis and its citizens.”

This introduction was to Peter Davenport's book 'Roman Bath' which was published during the Covid19 lockdown in 2021, so it therefore very timely that we can now, free of all restrictions, call upon Peter to re-introduce his book and update us all with the latest knowledge on 'Aquae Sulis'.



It was soon after the initial Roman invasion of AD 43 that the Roman army set up their first outpost in the area where a number of their roads met at a crossing of the River Avon in present day Walcot. At this time, it would appear that the hot springs had not been noticed, or at least not yet exploited.

This all changed around AD 70 which instigated what has been named the 'First Period' (70-150). This was to be followed by three more, the Second Period (150-200), the Third Period (200-350) and finally the Fourth Period (360-450) by which time we have the fall of the Roman Empire itself.

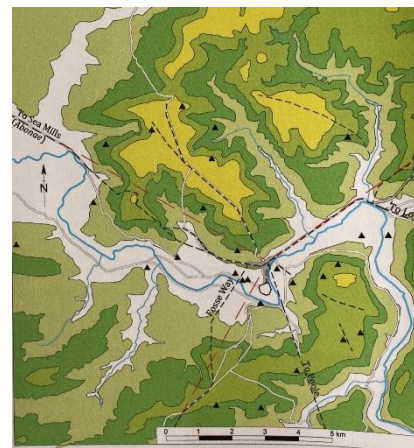


Fig. 8 Roman roads and the Avon Valley topography around Aquae Sulis.

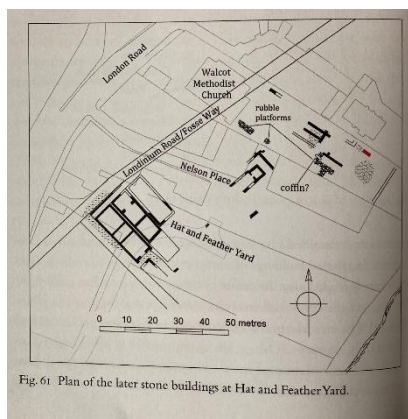


Fig. 61 Plan of the later stone buildings at Hat and Feather Yard.

As the book makes clear, the history of Roman Bath has been difficult to trace due to the limited opportunities for archaeological excavations in the centre of the city, although it would appear that Walcot, although not in the centre, is one of the longest lasting settlements as shown here on a plan of the excavations at Hat and Feathers Yard.

The 'First Period' noted above, led to a simple but fairly extensive development of the Bath complex and Temple being built at the source of the spring, although it would appear not much else accompanied it in terms of a settlement or town. However, this was all to change in the following Periods and the book does require reading to understand all that went on.

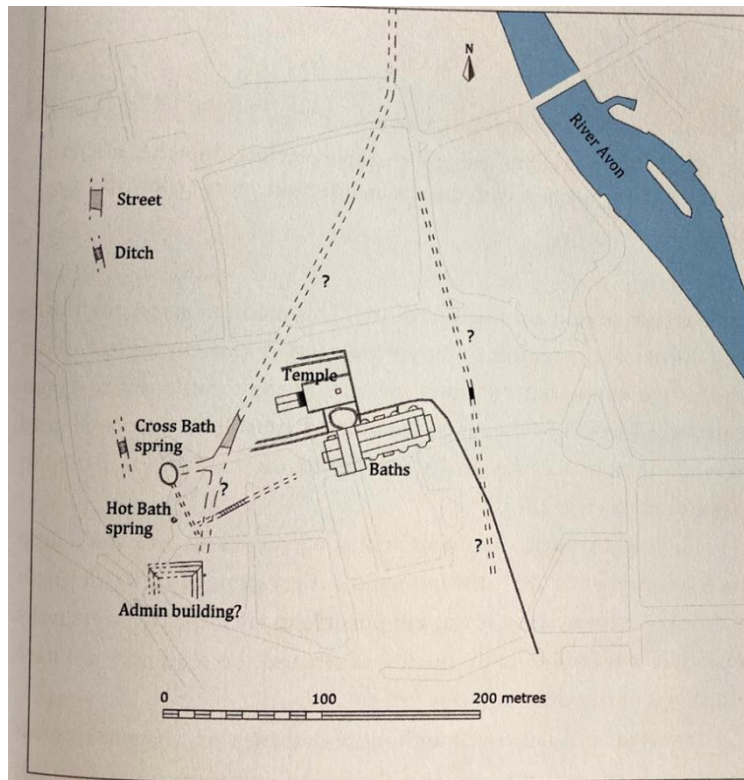


Fig. 46 Plan of the central part of town AD 70–150 (including early 'administration' building).

In terms of the Baths complex the following Figures give detail of the progression over the years

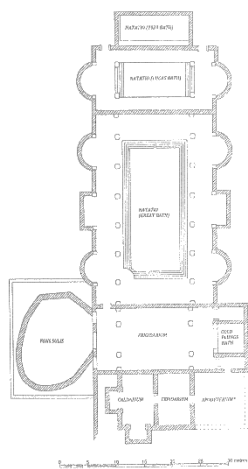


Fig. 27 Plan of the Period 1 baths.

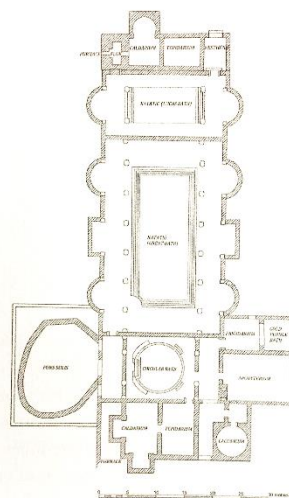


Fig. 72 Plan of the Period 2 baths.

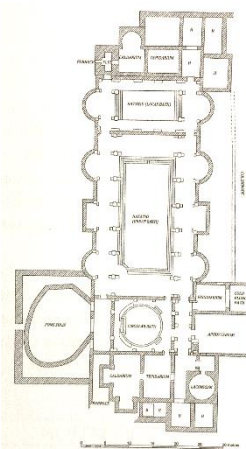


Fig. 73 Plan of the Period 3 baths.

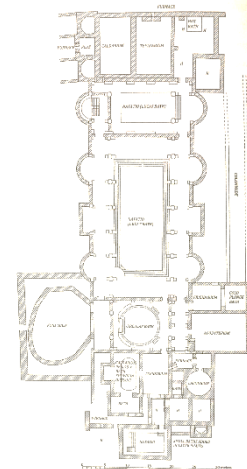


Fig. 106 The plan of the Period 4 baths (fourth century).

It was towards the end of the Second Century and the beginning of Period 2 that 'Aquae Sulis' started growing as a town with a bank and ditch being built as a fortification around it as shown in the plan below.

Also of note in the plan is a most exciting recent find of which is what appears to be a theatre on the site of the later medieval abbey. While not yet confirmed, excavations imply the following footprint and idea of reconstruction.

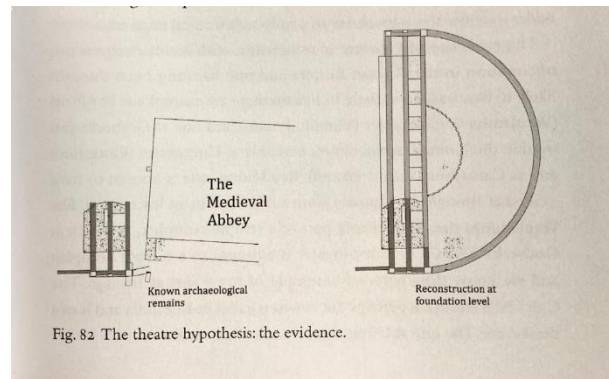


Fig. 82 The theatre hypothesis: the evidence.

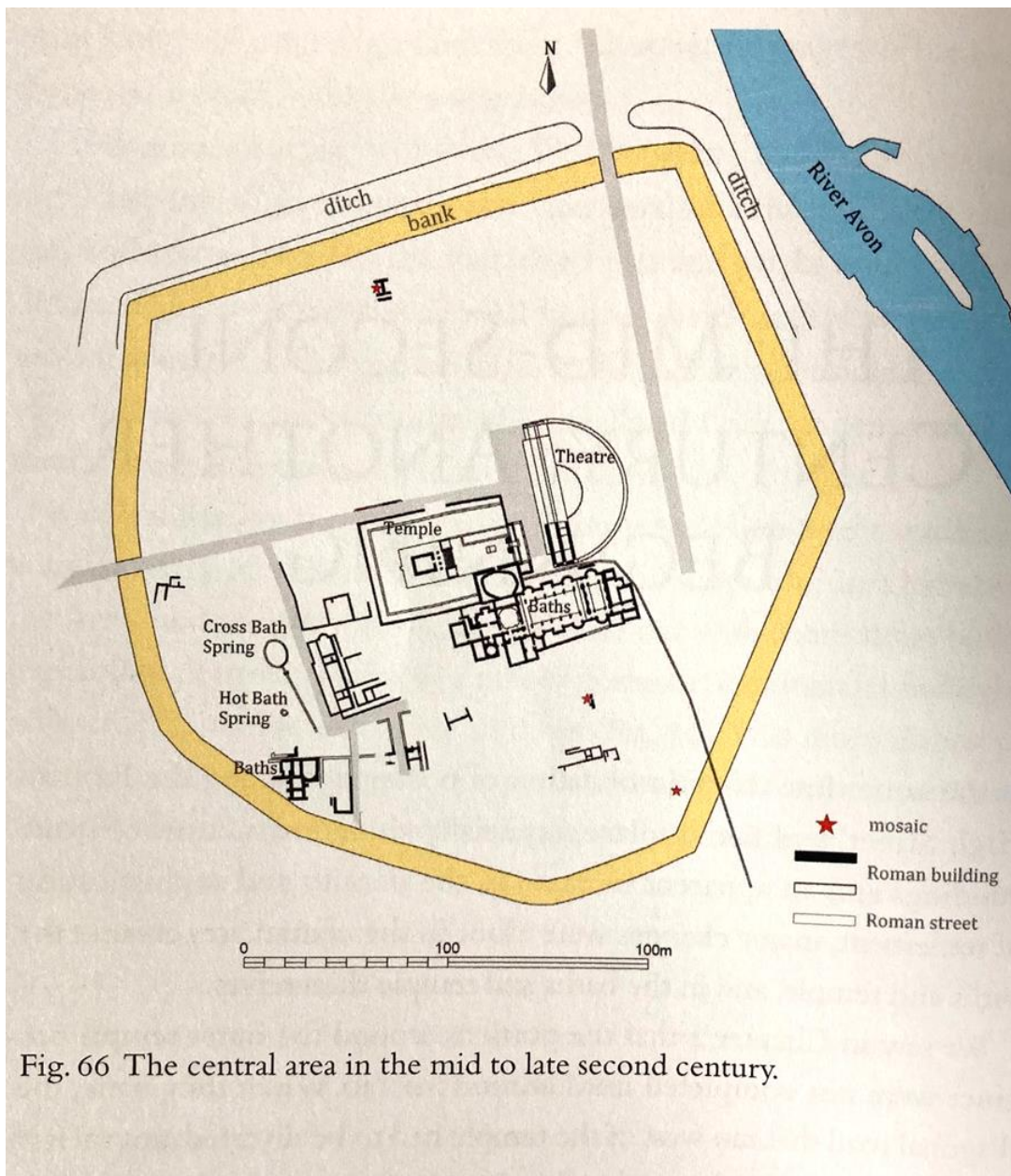


Fig. 66 The central area in the mid to late second century.

Returning to the Baths Complex and moving into Period 3, amongst more improvements, the Great Bath acquired a new roof, seen here below in a reconstruction and part of which can still be seen in its collapsed state over a thousand years later.

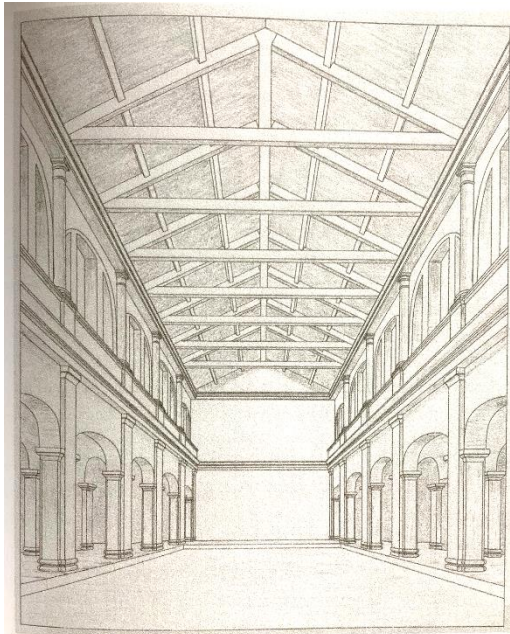


Fig. 31 Reconstruction of interior of the Period 1 Great Bath.

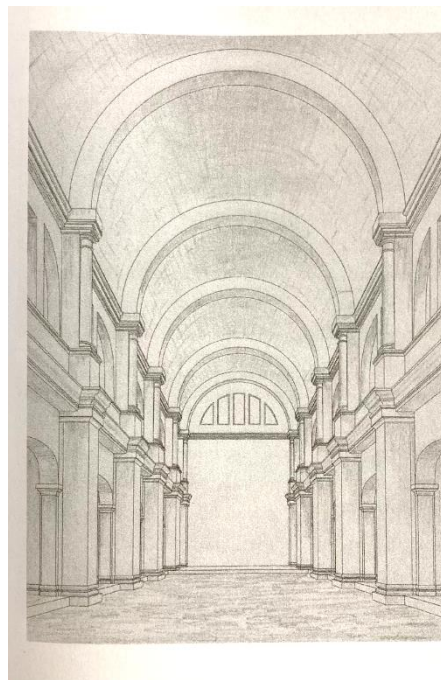


Fig. 75 Reconstruction of interior view of Period 3 Great Bath.

This is indeed a must have book for all interested in Roman Bath, as is also a further visit to the Roman Bath's Museum in which much of the archaeological finds are beautifully displayed.

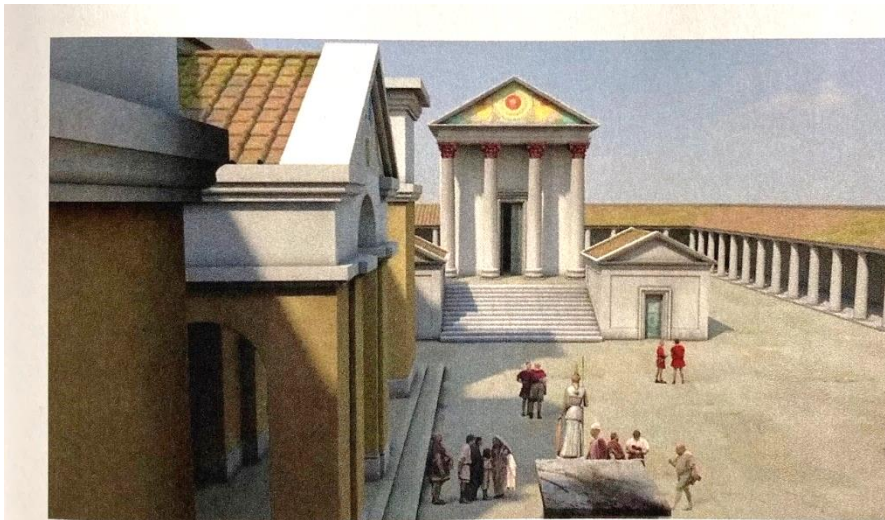


Fig. 33 Reconstruction of the temple precinct in the late period. (© Bath and North East Somerset Council, Roman Baths Museum)

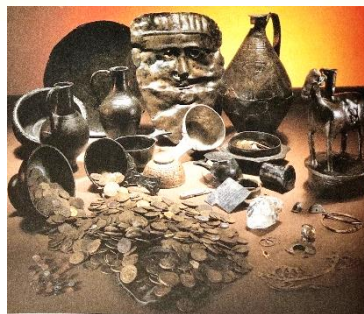


Fig. 44 A selection of items from the sacred spring (© Bath and North East Somerset Council, Roman Baths Museum)

# BATH WATERWORKS - AS SEEN THROUGH THE BATH CITY WATERWORKS RECORDS HELD AT THE BATH RECORD OFFICE - BC/7/1

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021      St. Mary's Bathwick, Church Hall  
Speaker                                  Drew Westerman  
Abstract                                  Drew Westerman

The first surviving record within the Record Office's collections for the supply of piped water in the City of Bath can be found in the Chamberlain's account rolls of the 1560s; which detail payments made by the Corporation for the supply and installation of 'lead pipes' (BC/5 - not catalogued in detail). Regrettably these and the occasional mention in the Council Minutes (BC/2/1/1) are the only known records that can provide any evidence of the water supply until the Georgian period, when the wheels of bureaucracy really began to turn within the City of Bath.

Starting in 1768 we hold the minutes of the now separate Waterworks Committee of the Council (BC/2/1/164), and from 1772 detailed 'Water Rent' registers of who was paying the Corporation for a water supply and where it was being supplied to (BC/7/1/11/1). We also hold some plans from the 1700s that show where the early supply of water was being sourced from, namely springs issuing out of the hillsides above Bath at Holloway (see Fig. 1) and Bathampton Down (BC/7/1/1/105/10).

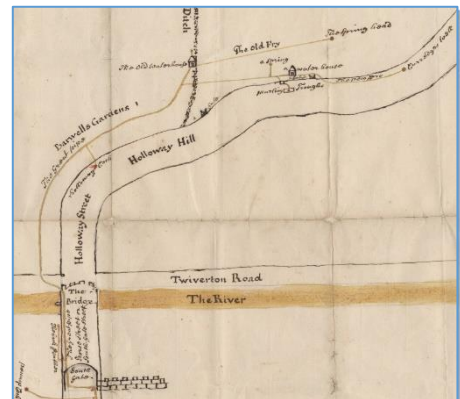


Fig. - 1 Springs on Holloway c.1740  
(Ref: BC/7/1/6/10)

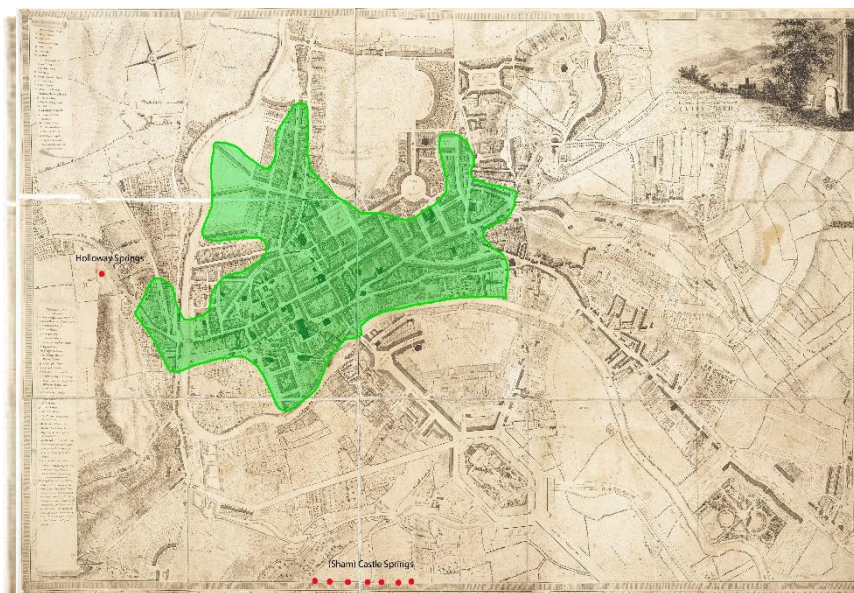


Fig 2. - c.1800 Harcourt Masters plan of Bath - Annotated to show area of water supply and known water sources.

The water rent registers are a spectacular source of information as they allow us to view the scope of the area that the Corporation was supplying with water as seen in Fig. 2. Although it is worth noting that not all properties within this area had individual supplies; some likely still relied on shared public taps or wells.



The 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw the beginning of the most significant period of expansion of the water supply system within the city. The population of the city had been growing significantly during the later 1700s and early 1800s as seen in the census statistics for the city.

1781: 19,000  
 1801: 33,200  
 1821: 46,700  
 1841: 53,200

By the 1830s the Corporation recognised the significant need for a better supply to serve the growing City and employed GP Manners as a surveyor and engineer to find and implement new sources. This led to the acquisition of new springs at Beacon Hill and Beechen Cliff in the late 1830s.

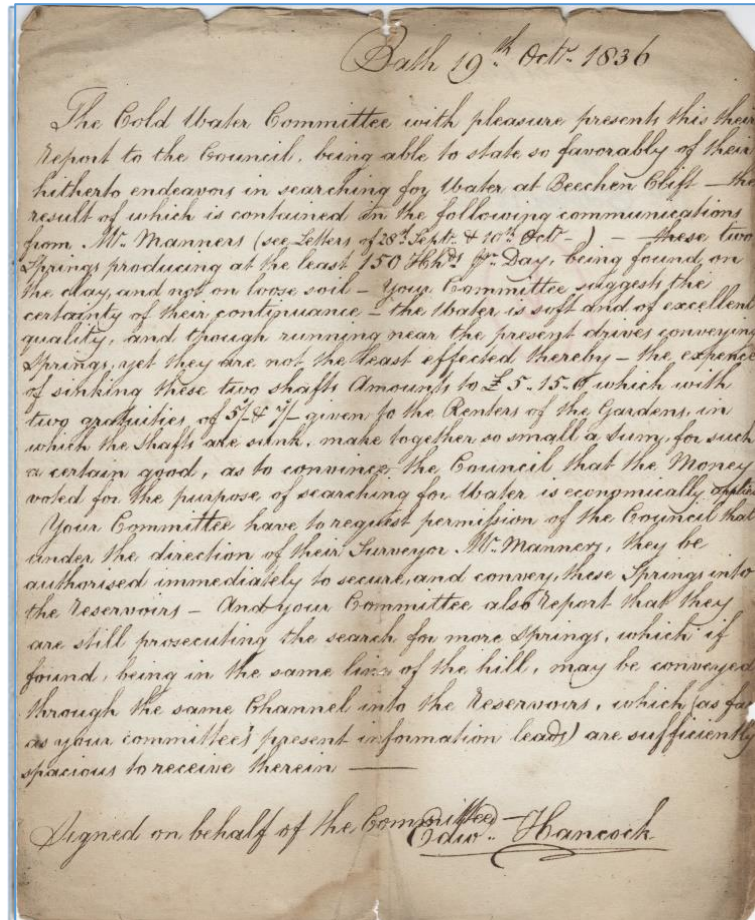


Fig.3 - 1836 Report on the efforts to increase the water supply. (Ref:BC/7/1/2/3)

### Bath Waterworks Act 1846

The new springs acquired in the 1830s alone were not enough to fill the demand in the city, and the remaining springs within the city either did not produce enough or had become contaminated, a concern for many Corporations at this point in time due to the public health risks that such contamination posed. The Corporation therefore turned its attention to the area outside the city limits. After further investigation by GP Manners a Bill was submitted to Parliament for powers to take up certain springs in Swainswick, Batheaston and Bathampton; to construct the works necessary to use the said springs; and to purchase or take up other sources by agreement with the owners.

The records related to this (BC/7/1/3) include but are not limited to, correspondence relating to the setting up of bill, the back and forth with landowners, parliamentary agents, etc.; the Bill as submitted which defined what they were trying to do, and when passed as an act what they legally had power to do; financial records, including mortgages funding the works by investment from the local community; engineering plans detailing how the system worked, how and where they were transporting the water; and records of the disputes, not everyone was always happy with what was happening, and there are a significant number of arbitration papers over the loss of productivity in the Batheaston Silk Mill from the taking of the water. Some examples of these can be seen overleaf.

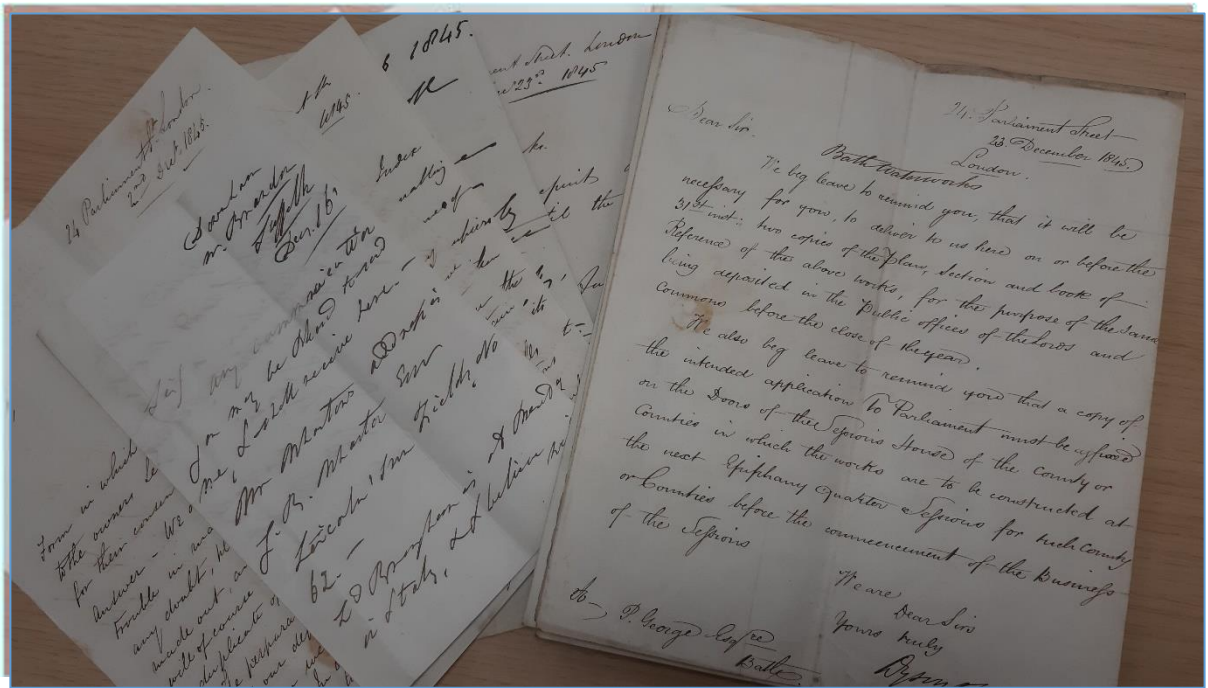


Fig. 4 - BC/7/1/3/1/2 - Correspondence relating to the setup of the 1846 Bath Waterworks Bill

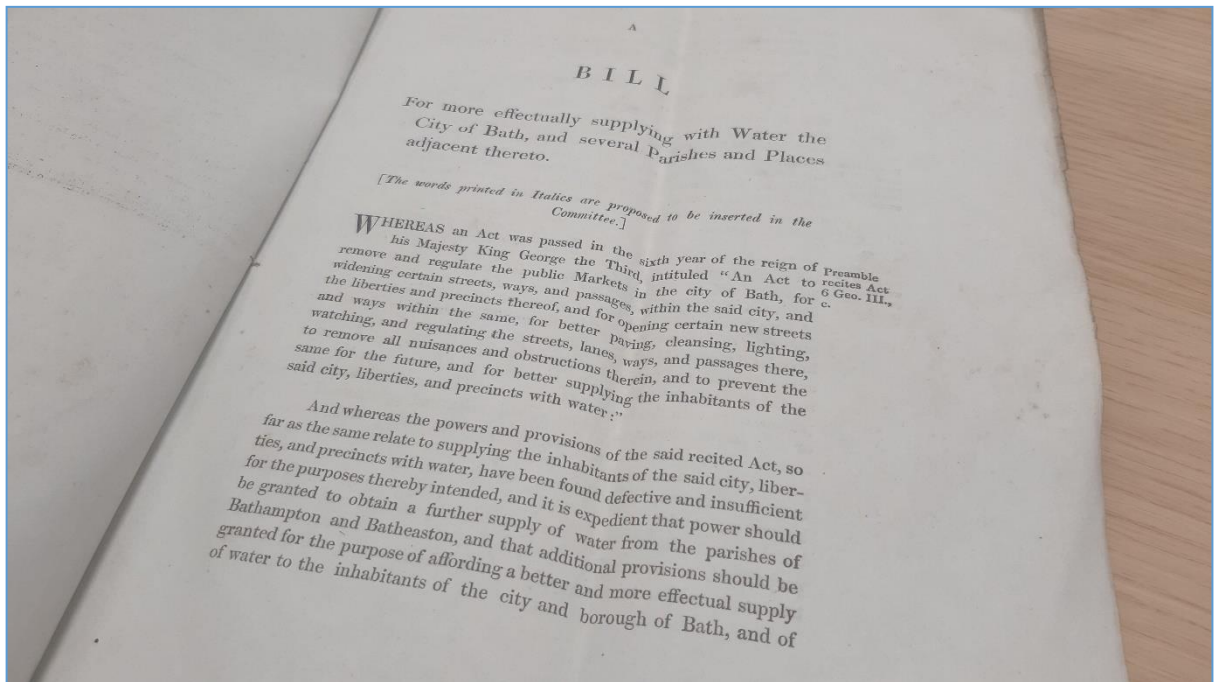


Fig. 5 - BC/7/1/3/1/4 - 1846 Bath Waterworks Bill

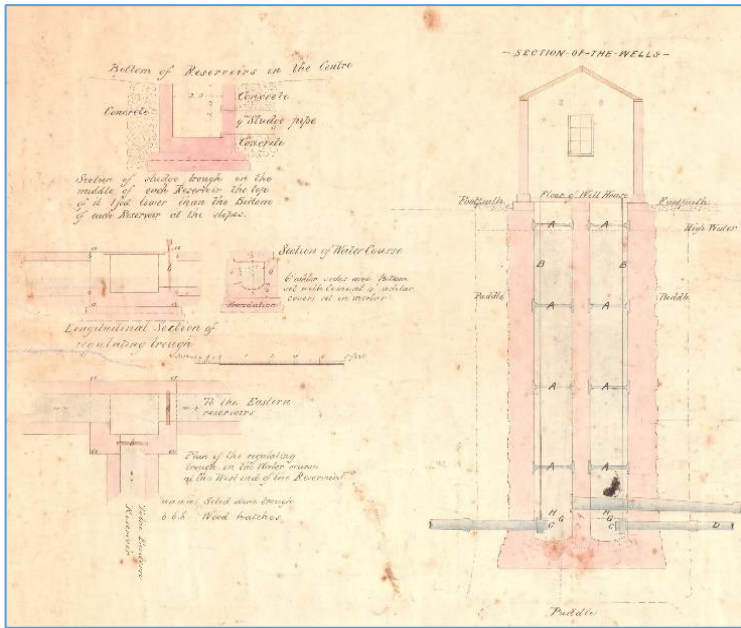


Fig. 7 - BC/7/1/3/12 - G.P. Manners plan of waterworks infrastructure at Batheaston, 1846

With new sources far outside the city large new pipes were also needed to bring that water back to where it was needed as seen in Fig. 8. The red dots indicate the water sources, the blue lines the path of the new delivery pipes, and the green shading the area then being supplied.

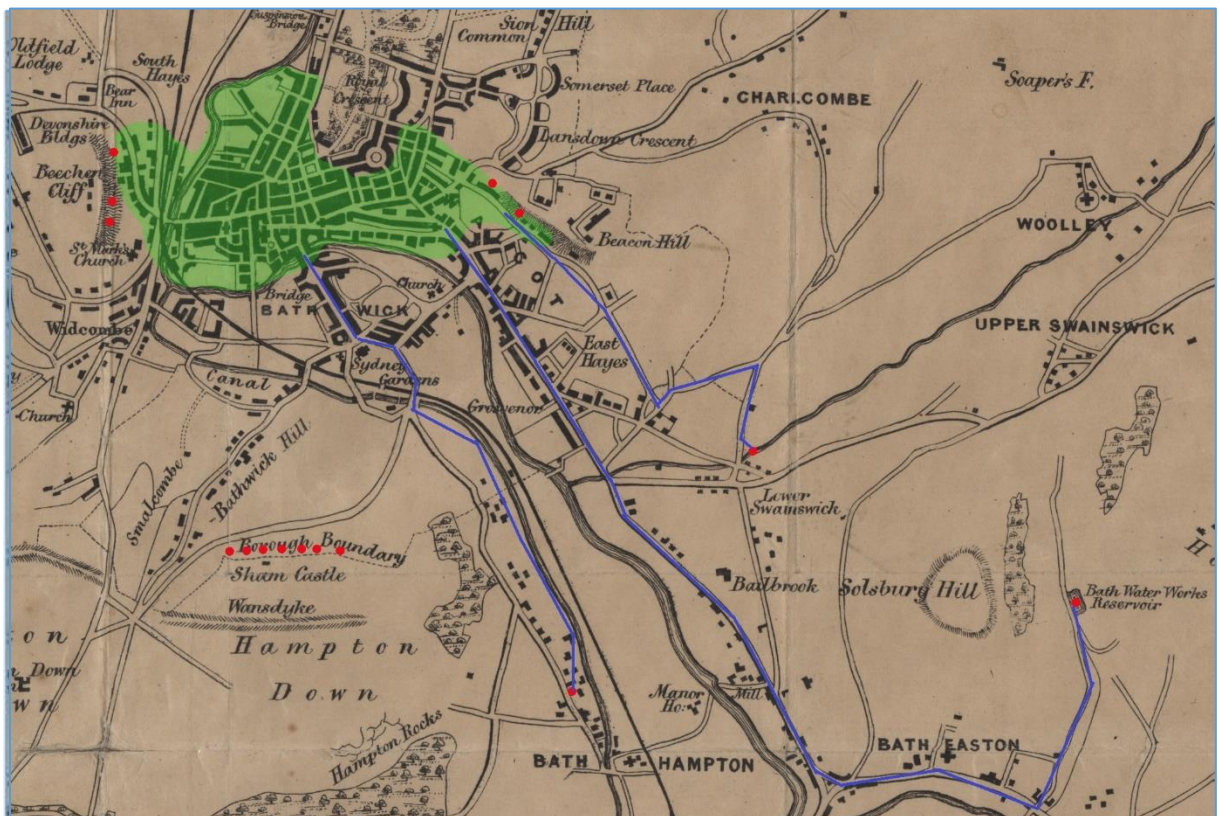


Fig. 8 - 1847 Cotterell plan of Bath - Annotated to show rough area of water supply and known water sources after the 1846 Waterworks Act.

## Bath Waterworks Act of 1870

By the late 1860s the City was once again in need of a better supply, some areas of the city had a poor or limited supply especially in dry seasons. A new Bill was submitted to parliament for powers to take up springs in the parishes of St. Catherine's, Marshfield and Cold Ashton; construct new reservoirs; and begin buying up the private waterworks in the city, including the Duke of Cleveland's springs off Bathampton Down and the leasing of the Circus waterworks.

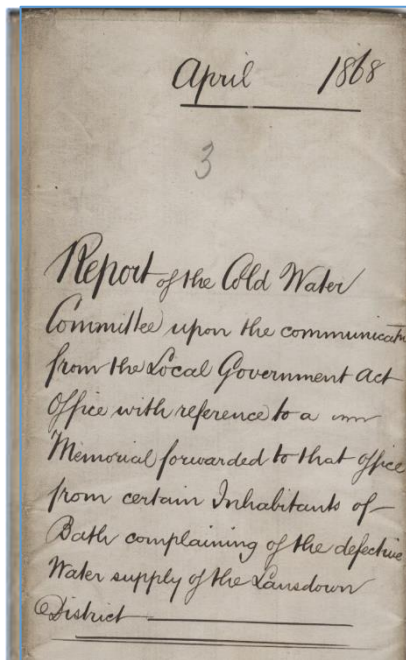


Fig. 9 - BC/7/1/5/1/14/1 - 1868 report on defective supply in the Lansdown

Documents on the Bath Waterworks Act 1870 held at the Record Office include, copies of the Bill and accompanying plans; objections raised by local landowners not wanting to lose the water supplies they use, or from private waterworks companies that did not want to lose their businesses; detailed financial accounts including the records of the works being over-budget and the requests made to the Local Government Board for permission to borrow more money for the works; detailed engineering plans of the new reservoirs; and records of the several disputes that arose over the value of lands and businesses being affected by the works.



Fig. 10 - BC/7/1/5/1/8 - Petitions against the 1870 Bill from local landowners and businesses

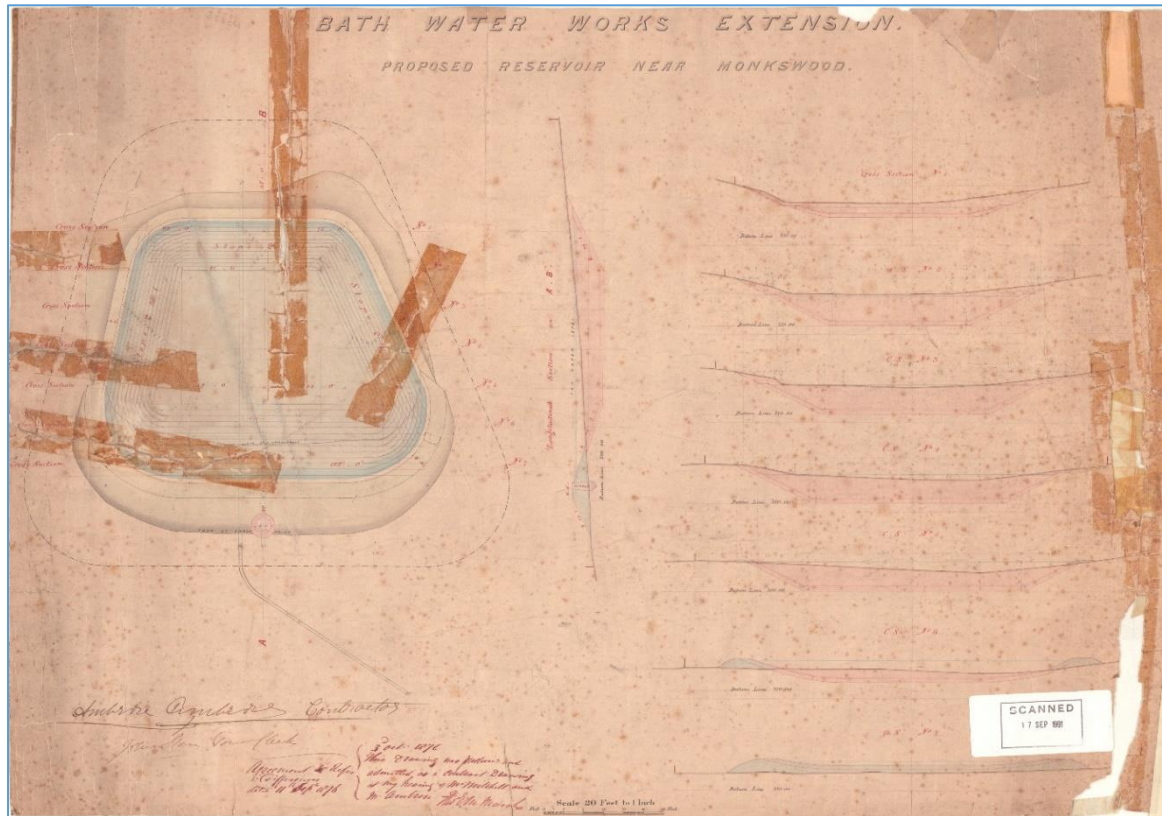


Fig.11 - BC/7/1/5/5/1 - Engineering plan of the 1<sup>st</sup> Monkwood Reservoir

### Acquisition of the Private Waterworks

Alongside the City waterworks there also existed numerous small private waterworks companies within the City, including the Charcombe, Circus, Rivers', Duke of Cleveland's , St. Saviours, and others. Some these were struggling to provide enough water to the areas they served and other had become contaminated. The Corporation made several attempts to buy them out including trying to acquire Compulsory Purchase powers but most of these efforts failed. Eventually they returned to a power to take leases on the works from the 1846 Act and had the Town Clerk purchase the works in his private capacity to then lease to the Corporation with clauses that would allow the purchase of the works after several years.



Fig.12 - BC/7/1/1/105/11 - c.1870 plan of the Private Waterworks Companies

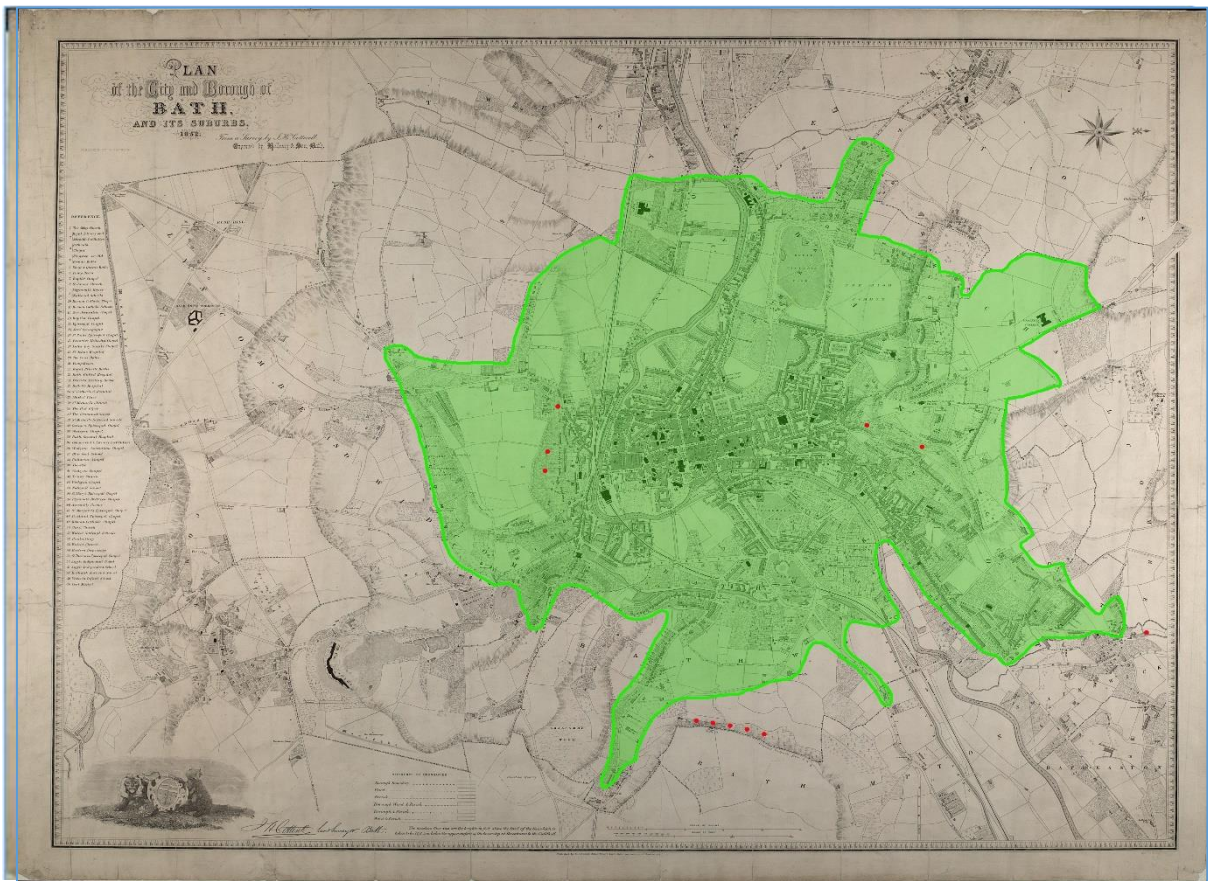


Fig.13 - 1852 Cotterell plan of Bath – Annotated to show rough area of water supply after the 1870 Waterworks Act and purchase of the Private Waterworks.

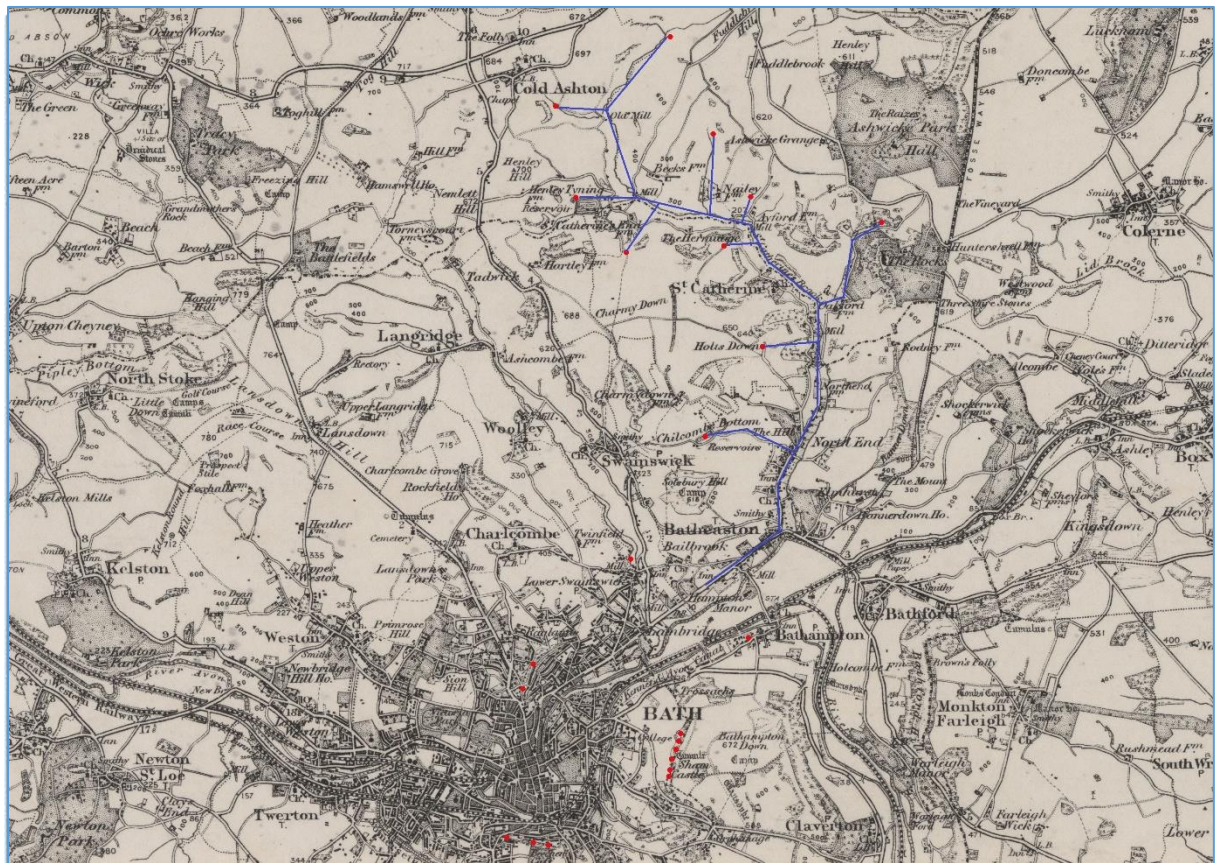


Fig.14 - Plan of the known major water sources and new supply routes after the 1870 Act

## Expansion at Monkswood

Further plans for the expansion of the water supplies were drawn up in 1891, the Corporation getting as far as signing provisional agreements with several landowners relating to the taking of springs (BC/7/1/8/1). However, these plans faced a significant amount of opposition from the local ratepayers, one Mr E.C. Petgrave being particularly vocal in his objections at the public inquiry, on the grounds that the proposed costs were very high for very little actual benefit.

Further investigations by William Fox, a consulting Engineer hired by the Corporation, suggested that an improved water storage scheme would be of greater benefit to the City's supply even though it would come at a greater cost than the initial plans to acquire new springs would have (BC/7/1/8/5). This led to the creation of the new Monkswood Reservoir adjoining the original one created in the 1870s.

The records relating to this include the original provisional agreements to take springs, the unsuccessful petition to the Local Government Board to borrow money, papers from the public inquiry which led to the change in plans, detailed architectural plans for the new reservoir, financial and accounting information, tenders and specifications for the works, contractual papers with William Neave & Son, of London the Contractors for the works, and a significant number of court papers relating to a case in Chancery for a dispute with the Contractors over them not being paid for some of the works.

680 gallons. Although the reservoirs were empty it showed we were able to supply the inhabitants with as much as between 18 and 19 gallons and that by the means adopted by Mr Gilby of shutting off the water during the hours of the night a saving of between 3 & 4 gallons a head was effected. Still a supply of 16 gallons a head is not a small supply and I say the inhabitants of Bath at large would willingly put up with it rather than this enormous expenditure should be undertaken, in exceptional seasons with a very adequate supply of 16 gallons during one or two months in the year during which the springs might fall to that very low limit. If there is to be an increased supply let it be by means of storage and not by means of the springs to be obtained in the somewhat uncertain manner in which Mr Mitchell has described. You have no doubt quite properly

Fig.15 – BC/7/1/8/6/6 - Extract from the public Inquiry into the borrowing of funds for new springs.

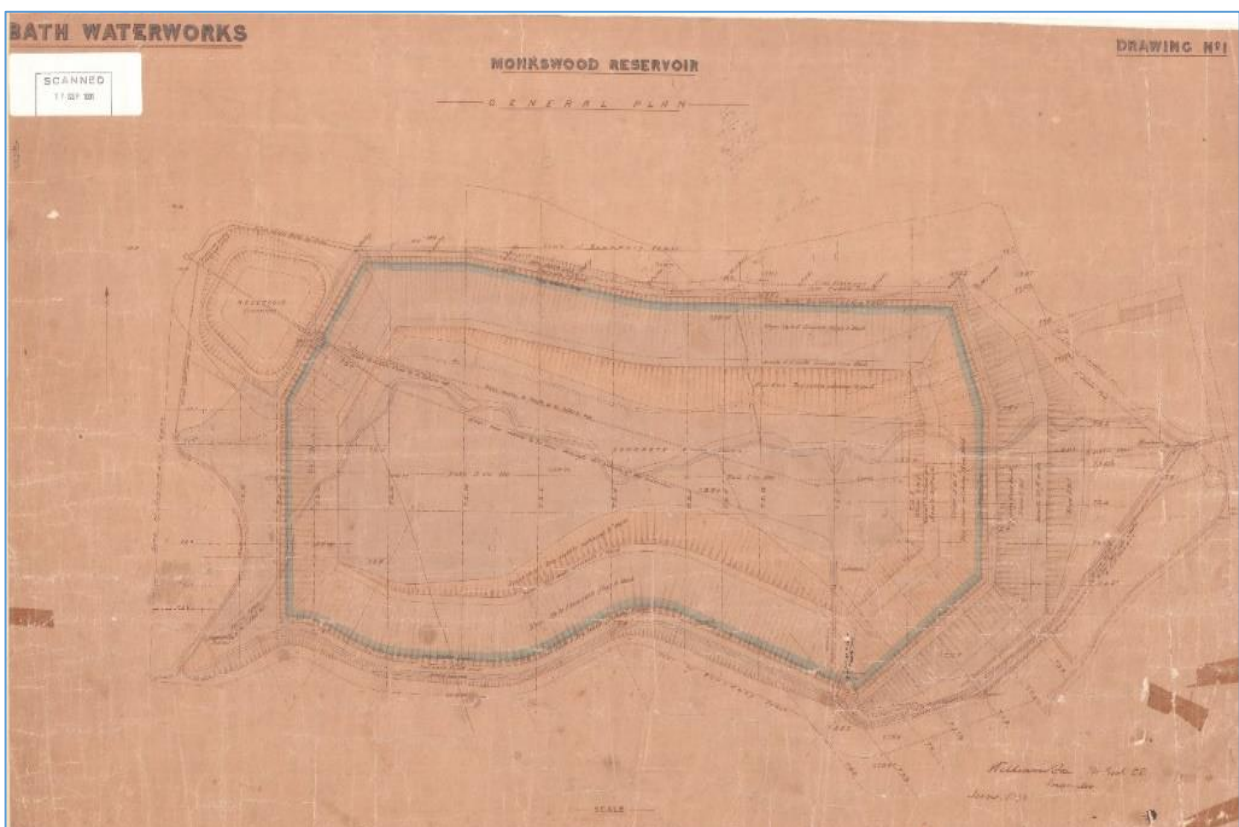


Fig.16 - BC/7/1/8/36 – Plan of the expanded Monkswood Reservoir, 1890s

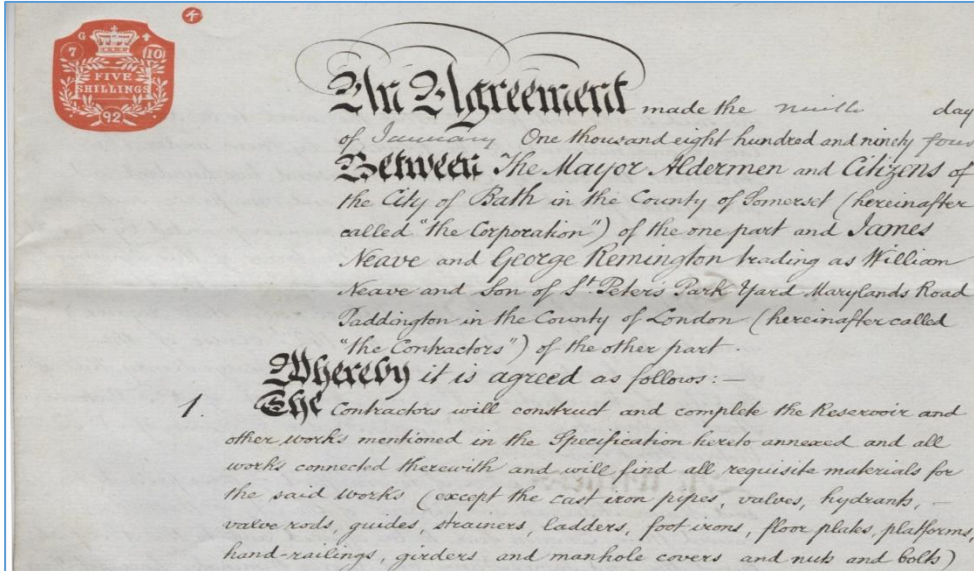


Fig.17 - BC/7/1/8/23 – Contract for Works with William Neave & Sons, for the construction of the Reservoir.

### Bath Waterworks Act 1903

Despite the benefits of the Monkwood Reservoir within 5 years of its completion the water supply was struggling again. To ensure that they would not face the same kind of opposition that they had previously the Corporation conducted a poll of the local ratepayers to determine the level of support for submitting a Bill to Parliament to expand the works again. The poll books for this have survived and show that there was a significant level of support for this course of action (BC/7/1/9/4). The Bill submitted to Parliament sought powers to create a new covered reservoir at Oakford Lane, and take springs called the Drummond Springs, Watts Springs, Oakford Springs, County Boundary Springs and Wayfield Springs in the St. Catherine's Valley

Many of the same types of records as mentioned in relation to earlier Waterworks submissions to Parliament are also found in the records for the 1903 Act as the process of acquiring Parliamentary approval that the Corporation had to go through was the same. Correspondence, accounts, plans, and of course dispute paperwork, all make an appearance in this set of documents, but also included are full transcripts of the committee discussions that took place in the Commons and Lords that lead to the Bill being passed. There is also a Register that details all the landowners that were affected by the works with details on their holdings and the processes of coming to agreements and compensation payments with them to acquire the springs and wayleaves to undertake the works.

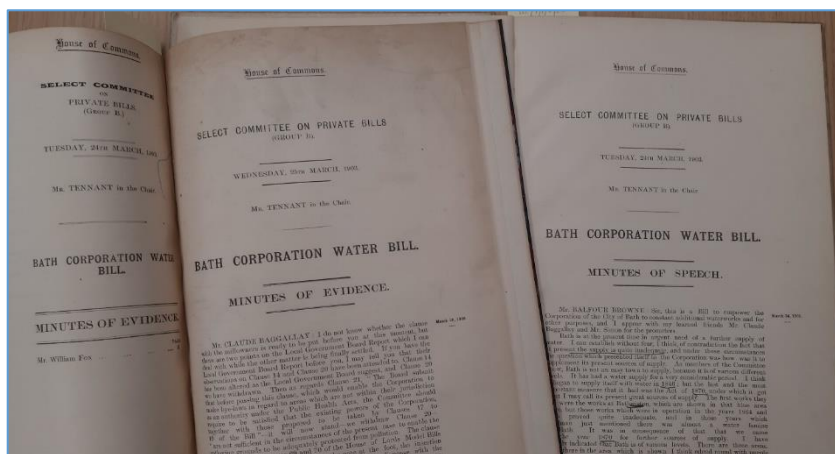


Fig.18 - BC/7/1/9/20 – Proceedings in Parliament for the 1903 Bath Waterworks Bill



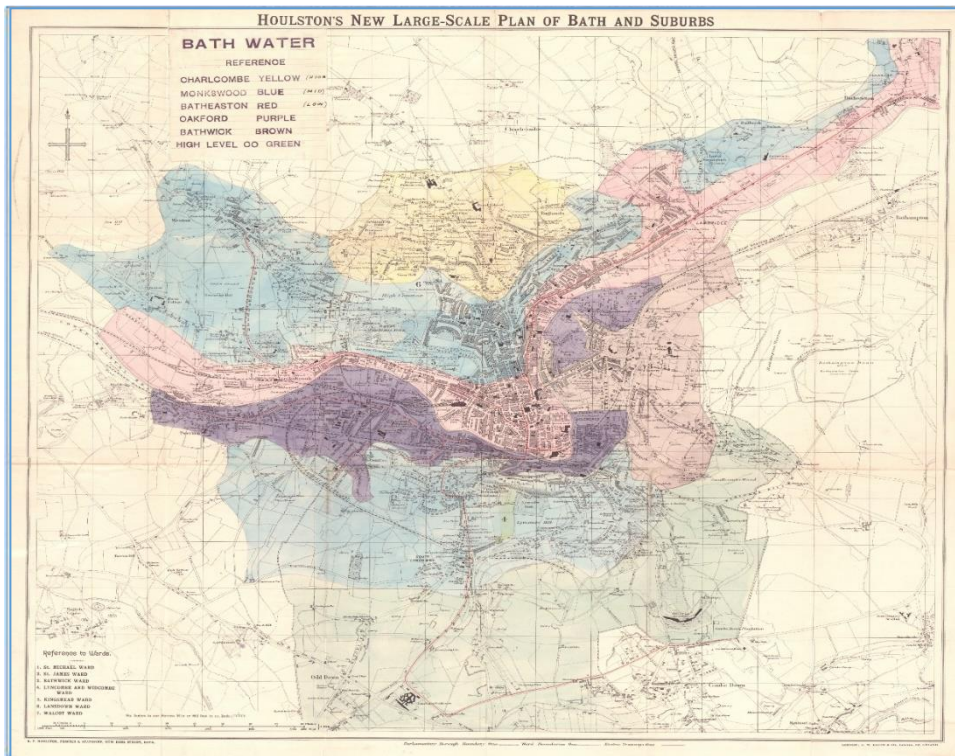


Fig.19 - BC/7/1/105/25 – c.1903 Plan of the water supply area showing which springs would supply which areas after the 1903 works.

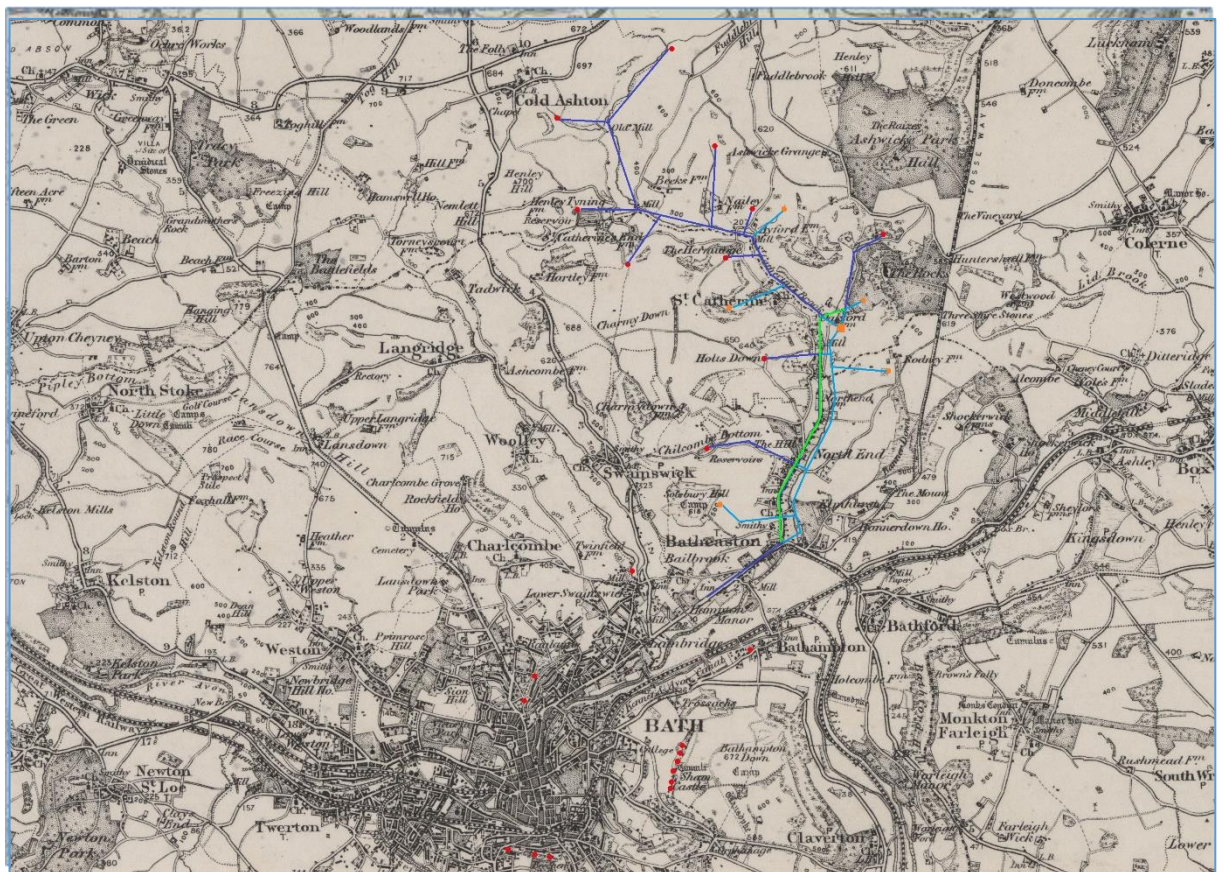


Fig.20 - Plan of the known major water sources after the 1903 Act.

New sources shown in orange, new pipes in light blue, and old pipes removed shown in green.

At this point in the talk we were running out of time and having only been able to talk in detail about the records up the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it became necessary to briefly outline what had not been mentioned.

The Waterworks Collection also holds; over 300 20<sup>th</sup> century copies of land deeds, the originals having been transferred to Wessex Water with the lands in 1974; over 200 administrative ledgers dating from the 1770s -1970s; c. 145 boxes of 20<sup>th</sup> century Waterworks Engineer's departmental filing; and c. 110 boxes of late 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century Waterworks Committee Correspondence filing.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century records include records relating to groundwater capture schemes at Bathampton and Newton Meadows, rural water supplies to villages near Bath, 'The Southside Scheme' to improve supply to the post war housing estates on the southern slopes of the city; 'The Bristol Bath and Mendip Area Water Supply Scheme' which saw the creation of Chew Valley Lake as a reservoir, and much more besides.



Fig.21 – the Bay of waterworks material covered by this talk.



Fig.22 – The eight bays of documents that have barely been mentioned!

# LOWER WESTON (1850-1911)

(including Combe Park, Locksbrook & Newbridge)

Monday 9th January 2023

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker

Richard Williams

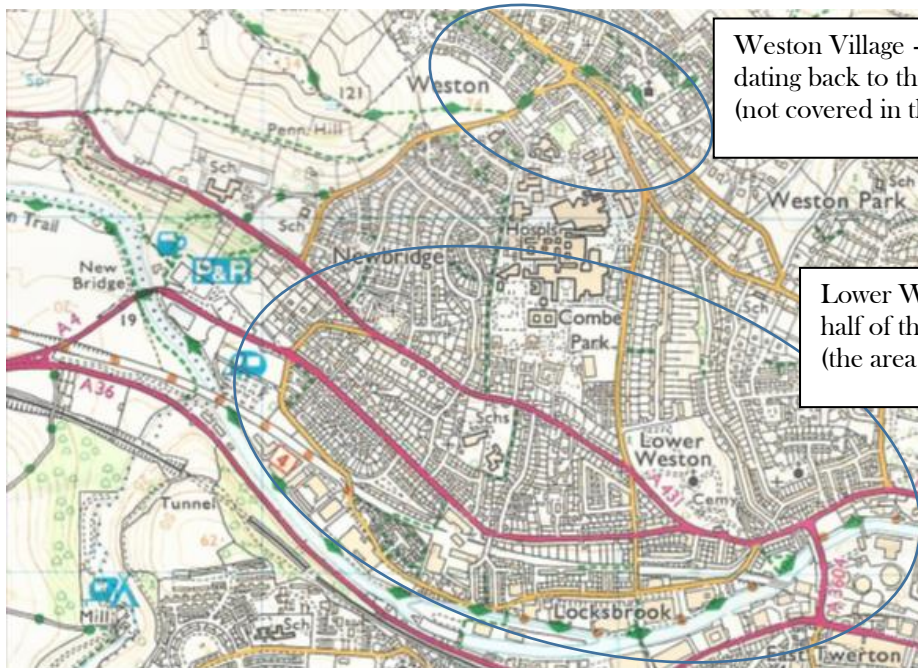
Abstract

Richard Williams

## Bath's Western Suburbs Expand North of the River

An exploration of the development of this suburb, some of the industries that supported its growth, and the occupations of the people who lived in the new housing. This is part of a series of talks on the growth of Bath's suburbs in the Victorian and Edwardian periods.

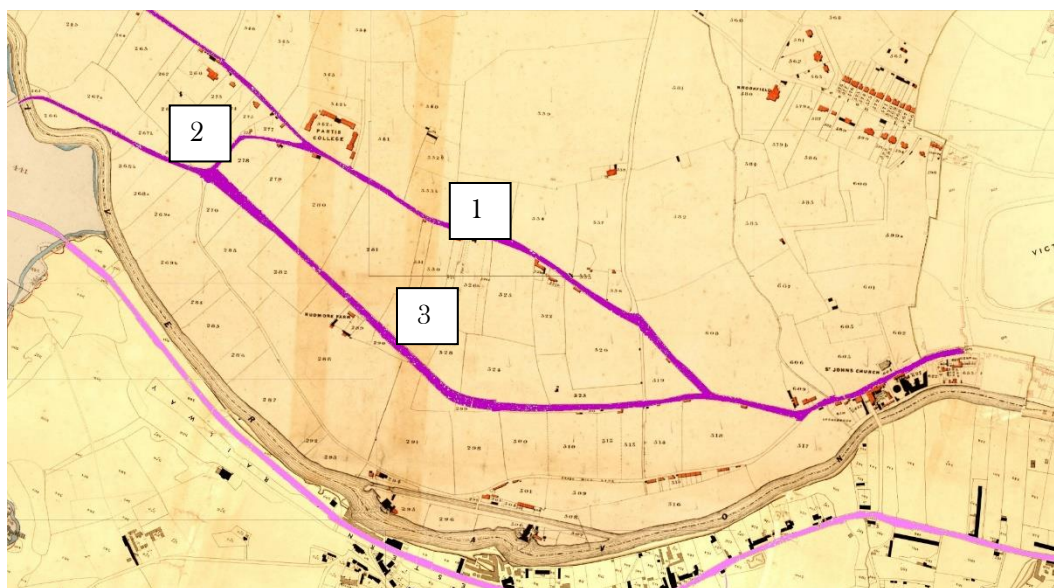
### The Area Covered - Modern OS Map



Weston Village - the original settlement dating back to the Early Mediaeval Period (not covered in this talk)

Lower Weston - largely developed in the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (the area covered in this talk)

### What Was There Before? - 1840s Tithe Map



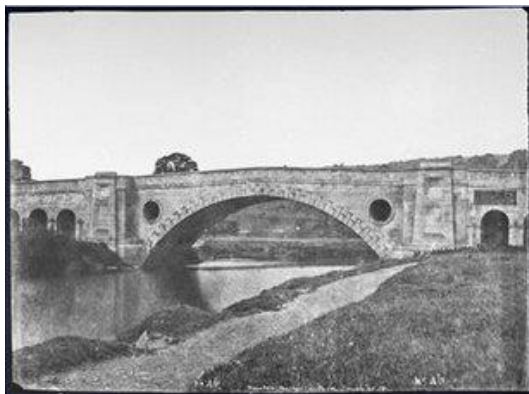
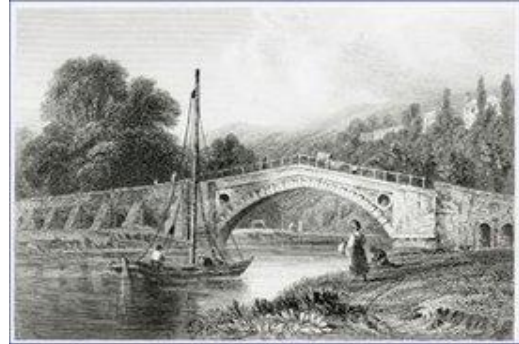
The area under discussion showed little urban or industrial development in the 1840s, the small amount that was there will be explored further, below. What does seem key to the understanding of Lower Weston are the transport links running through the area.

Firstly the turnpikes, shown on the map above in dark mauve. The first, the Kelston Road (1), over the hills via Swineford to Bristol. The second, originally a spur off the Kelston Road (2), but later joined by a flatter, more southerly route, to cross the River Avon at, what was originally, a ford.

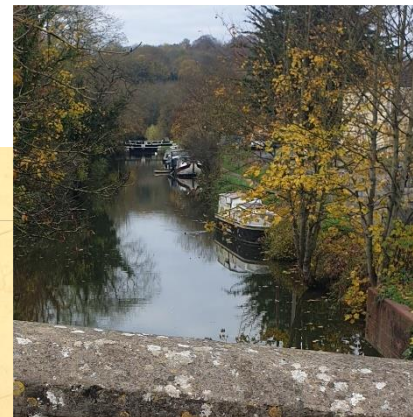
## Turnpikes - The Avon Navigation and the New Bridge

From 1724 the Avon Navigation Improvements deepened the river to take large boat traffic, which made the ford impassable<sup>1</sup>. The residents of Weston complained and a bridge was proposed by the Avon Navigation, this was completed in 1728. Designed by John Strachan, Ralph Allen, treasurer to the Avon Navigation, undertook to build it for £800, considerably less than the estimate by the surveyor, a Mr Ireton.

The 'New Bridge' was not universally popular and John Wood wrote, "one of Palladio's Designs was imitated in a Bridge executed to make a way over the Avon", went on to describe it as "the shadow of a good Design ignorantly applied". The image opposite shows how steep it was for wagons and it was, apparently, very narrow.



By the 1820s the bridge was recognised as inadequate for the traffic it was receiving and a second bridge was built by William Armstrong between 1831 and 1834, this is the bridge that we see today.



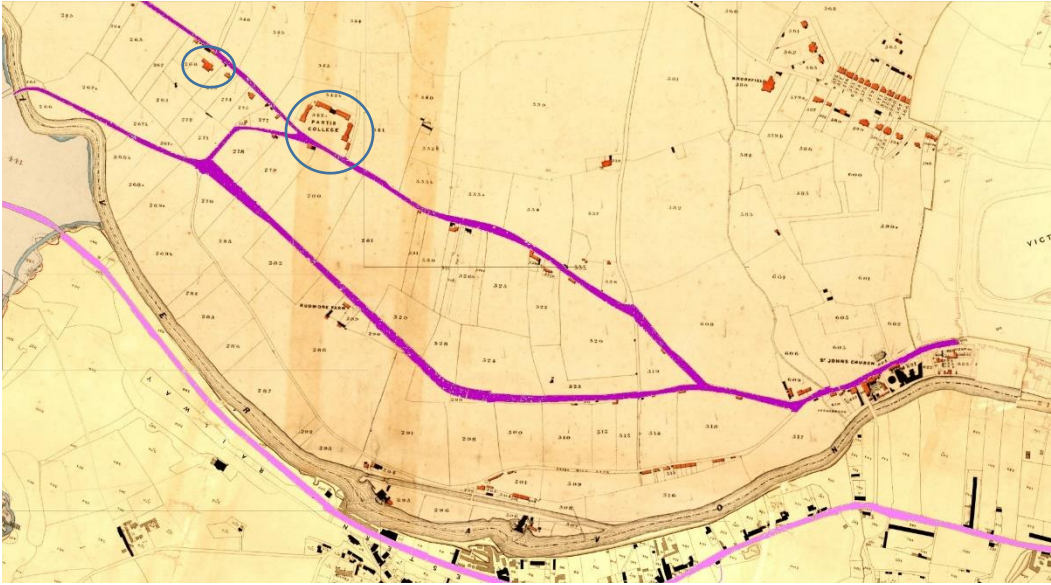
## Transport Along the River



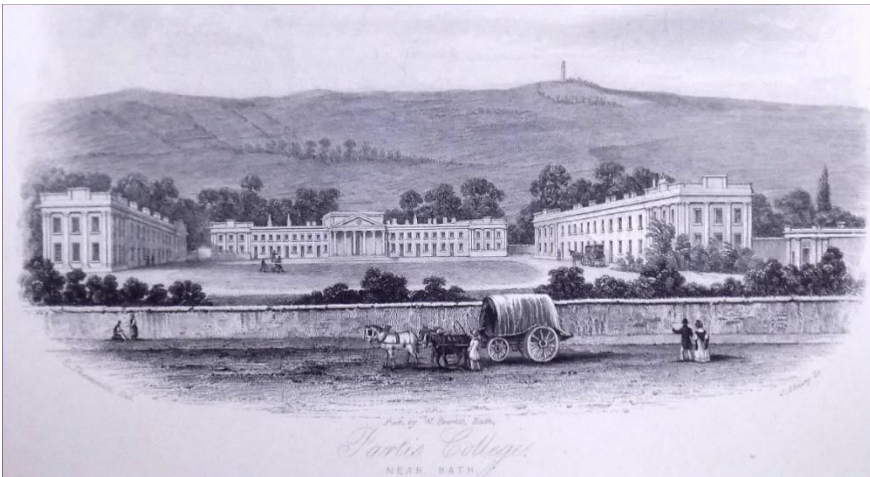
The Avon formed a natural route to Bristol and the sea and, as part of the improvements to its navigation a canal was built (marked in blue on the map) to avoid the two weirs on the river. The Weston Cut was opened in 1727, creating an artificial island, Weston Island. A bridge was built across the canal to the brass mill, built in 1711 - the inset image, is a recent photograph taken from the bridge showing the two locks at its western end.

<sup>1</sup> For more on Bath's bridges read the article in Bath History Volume 3 by Angus Buchanan, *The Bridges of Bath*, available on the History of Bath Research Group website (HistoryOfBath.org - Publications, Bath History)

## 1840s Tithe Map - Existing Development on Newbridge Hill



The tithe map shows some development along Newbridge Hill, including a small number of houses. Newbridge House, circled on the left, was built c.1770, owned in 1840s by Colonel Tobias Kirkwood. South-east of Newbridge House is the remarkable Partis College. Built by Ann and Fletcher Partis, for ladies ‘who had been left in reduced circumstances’, 30 two story, an up-market set of alms houses, pictured left. This still carries out its original function.



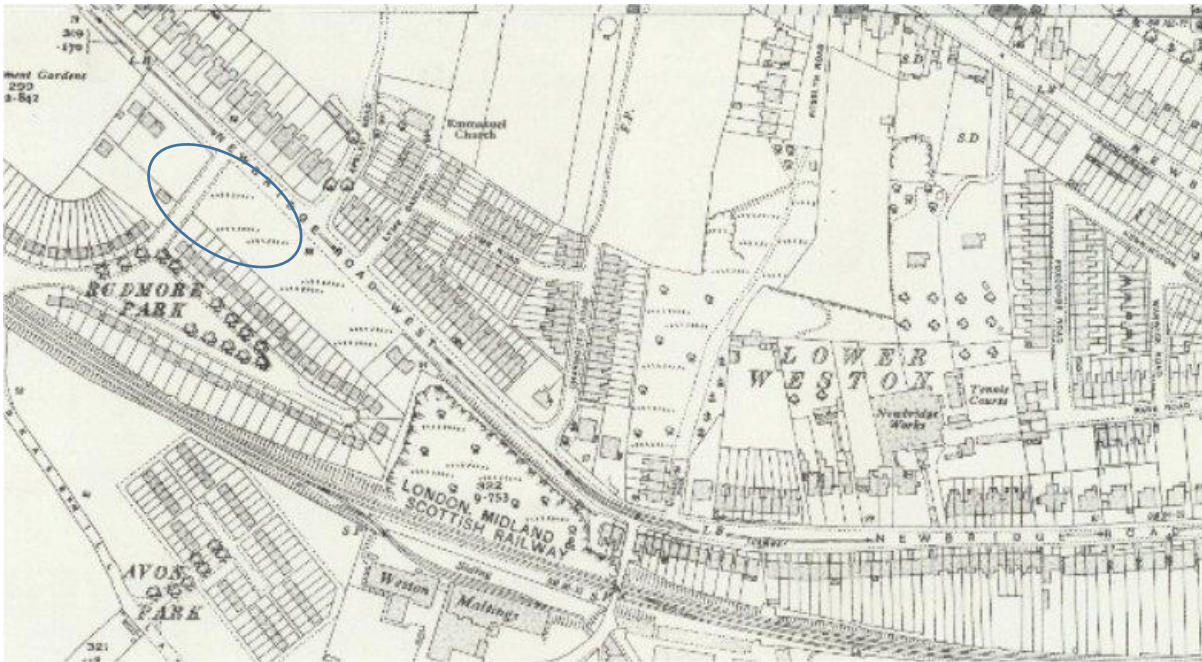
**Rudmore Farm on the Newbridge Road**

On the lower road lay Rudmore farm. Through the 1870s to 1910s it was farmed by James Banks, who was born in Yorkshire, with his wife and 9 children. The census records the farm as 147 acres (in this period a farm between 100 and 300 acres was defined as medium size).

By 1911 the census shows James Banks, now 78, with his son Albert, 34, as farmer. However, what is striking about the census document, and relevant to the suburban development that had occurred by this period, was that their address is no longer Rudmore Farm but St Celia, Newbridge Road. This does not appear to be uncommon, in previous studies of Bath’s suburbs of this period, there are several farmers living in the newly built suburban housing but who are continuing to farm, even though some of their farmland would have been occupied by the new buildings.

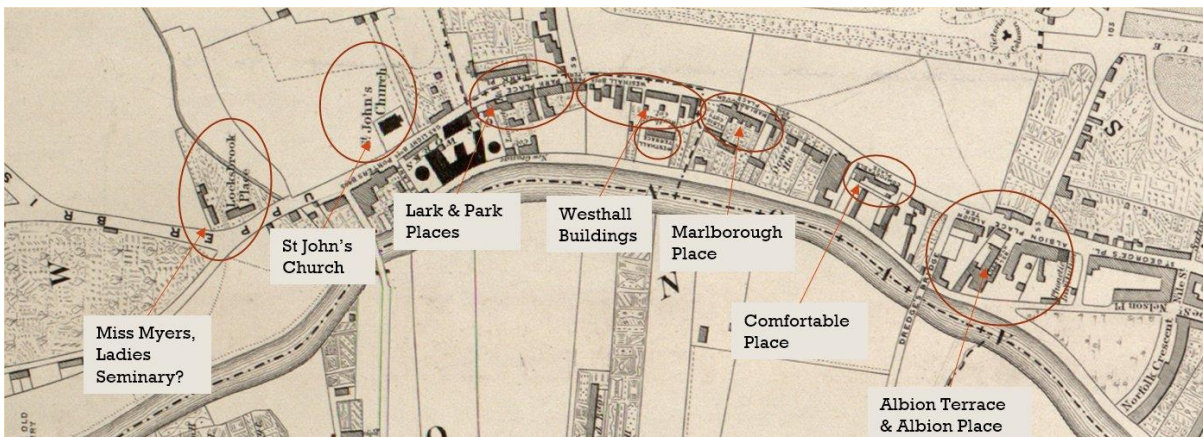


By the 1930s the map of the area shows a housing development named Rudmore Park situated close to the original site of the farm (ringed on the map). Where St Celia was is unclear, no house appears with that name today, however, it may have been one of the 'modern' houses along the Newbridge Road opposite the original farm site which were built in the 1900s.



## What Was There In 1852

Going back to Cotterell's map of 1852, we see that there was a core of development along the river in the south-eastern corner of what was to become Lower Weston. Sitting just below The Royal Victoria Park, opened in 1830, along the Upper Bristol Road and down to the river-front, and just west of the final Georgian terraces, this collection of houses, short terraces and small industrial premises looks almost village-like.



This collection of buildings includes:

**Locksbrook Place** - only Locksbrook House, from 1850s to 60s - Miss Mary Myers, ladies seminary

**St John's Church** - more of that below.

**Park Place** - a pub the Gardener's Arms (now The Victoria Pub), a gentleman, an architect, 2 grocers (1 woman), shopkeeper (female), greengrocer, etc.

**Westhall Buildings** - pub the Quiet Woman (now The Hop Pole?), 2 coal dealers, shopkeeper, rope and twine maker - a rope walk ran down towards the river at this point

Behind **Westhall Place** - a pensioner, 3 gentlemen, a woman

**The City Boundary**

**Marlborough Place** - 2 smiths, gardener, shoemaker, launderess, basket maker,

**Comfortable Place** - smiths, masons, carpenters, bakers, porters, dressmakers, bootmakers, launderesses etc. At No 4 - 1846-1866 Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (founded 1824 in London)

**Dredge's Victoria Bridge (1836)** linking the north and south sides of the river, recently refurbished for pedestrian and cycle traffic only.



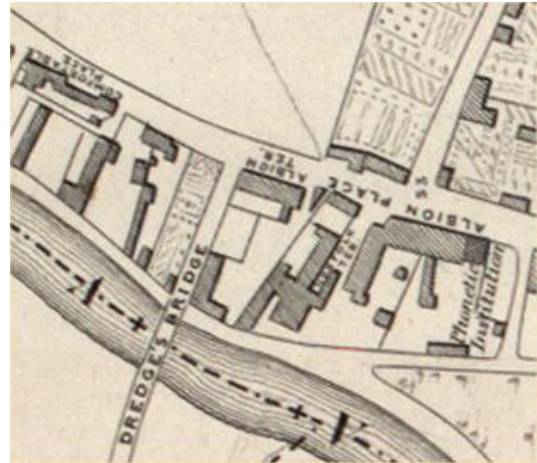
### **Albion Terrace & Albion Place**

**Albion Place** - Issac Pitman's **First Phonetics Institute** (1851) (marked on Cotterells' map):

Pitman moved her from 5 Nelson Place where he had a printing press, compositors and a bindery. Pitman says in a letter, 'in January 1851, to obtain more room, I removed to 1 Albion Place, Upper Bristol Road, where the business was carried on, under many inconveniences, in four rooms'

The **Albion Stay Manufactory** - G.W. Langridge & Co (1850s to 70s). This has the same name as Bayer's stay factory opened in the 1890s on the other side of the river (was there a connection?)

The **Albion Cabinet Works** (1851) - This 'Art Cabinet Manufactory' was founded by Simeon Norris and owned by



the Norris family until the 1920s. The original premises had two fires, in 1882 and then in 1889, which almost destroyed the building. The building was insured for £6,000 but the rebuilding cost estimated at £10,000, however, a new building was erected (photograph opposite).

In 1891 there was a strike at the Albion Cabinet Works in December 1891, led to a breakaway group headed by Charles Richter to set up the Bath and West Co-operative Cabinet Makers Ltd. with its own building on the other side of the river.<sup>2</sup>

The Cabinet Works continued until the death of Norris's sons in the 1920s. The building was taken over by the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Light Infantry in the 1930s.



### **Living in Lower Weston in 1911:**

- 36 Cabinet Makers
- 1 Wood Turner
- 8 Wood Carvers
- 9 French Polishers
- 7 Sawyers/Wood Cutting Machinists
- 6 Upholsters

Note: Not all of these would have been employed at the Albion Works, particularly as the Bath Cabinet Makers lay just across the river, but this does demonstrate the importance of this trade to the development of the suburb of Lower Weston.

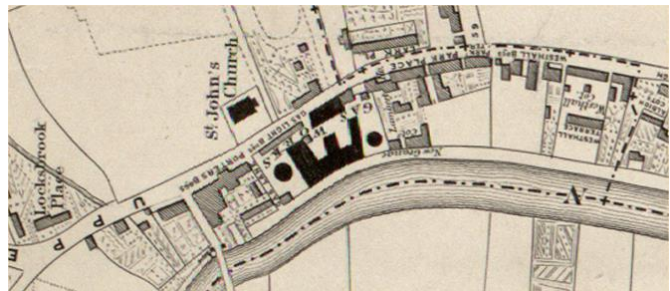
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<sup>2</sup> The Bath and West Co-operative Cabinet Makers Ltd. was documented in my talk, '*The Development of Oldfield Park, Bath's 'New' Industrial Dormitory,*' published in Proceedings No 7, on our website.

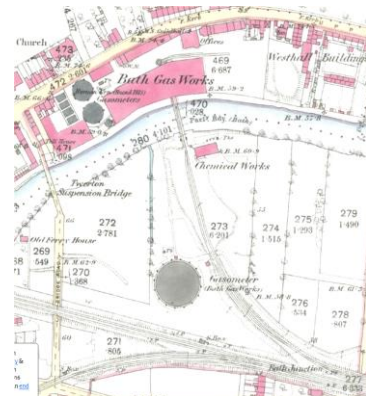
## Bath Gas Light & Coke Company – 1819

Another key feature of Lower Weston was the gas works. The World's first public gas lighting, was opened in the City of Westminster, 1813. There was a plan for Bath gas lighting as early as 1815 but its implementation was delayed because of concerns that the gas works could be **'very detrimental to the health comforts or convenience of the inhabitants'**<sup>3</sup>

Despite local protests, the bill before Parliament was approved and gas lights used at the Kingston Rooms (the Upper Assembly Rooms) and, according to one account, by 29<sup>th</sup> September 1819 'the city centre was lit by gas'. The gas works clearly appears on Cotterell's 1852 map (right).



In its early stage, gas was only used for lighting and there was no supply across the river. However, by the mid-century gas was being more widely applied in the city and a new offices were built on the Lower Bristol Road, designed by G.P. Manners:



The 1888 map (above right) shows the extent of the gas works on both sides of the river, with a gasometer on the southern side of the river (later to become 3 gasometers) and a connecting siding to the Midland and Somerset and Dorset Railways.

## Further Transport Connections

In 1837, a year after Dredge's 'Victoria Bridge' was built, the Twerton Suspension Bridge was opened. Designed by Thomas Motley, it has been described as 'remarkable as being an anticipation of the modern "cable-stay" type of bridge'. However, this bridge did not remain long and was replaced by the far more 'conventional', pedestrian only bridge in 1894.



This bridge remains today but now only carries utilities across the river. In the photograph (left), taken in 1980, the 1894 bridge can clearly be seen beside the footings of the new, 'Windsor Bridge', behind the crane.

## Midland Railway – 1869

<sup>3</sup> This is the wording on the original petition to parliament stored in the Bath Record Office. The petition is undated but seems likely to have been just before parliament approved the building of the gas works in 1819.

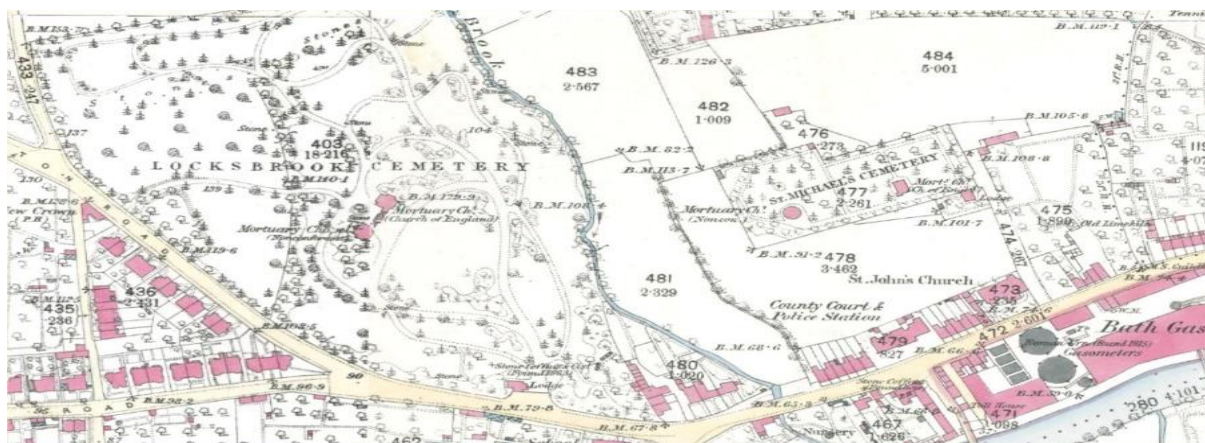


A final piece of connectivity for this area was the arrival of the Midland Railway in 1869 to Green Park Station and the building of a station in Weston.

Whether there were many passengers from Weston into the City through Green Park Station, less than a mile away, is a matter of conjecture, however, connections west, to Mangotsfield and then on to Bristol or into Gloucestershire must have had some impact on the area.

## Cemeteries in Lower Weston

Before the suburban housing really began to appear, two cemeteries were built in the area, the larger Locksbrook (left) and smaller St Michael's (right)<sup>4</sup>:



St Michael's Cemetery was consecrated 1862 and is now closed. 3,625 burials (1,623 plots) are recorded there. This was created for St Michaels Parish, Walcot, as city burial sites became full – they were offered a place in Locksbrook but chose to have their own separate cemetery.



Although quite a small cemetery it has separate chapels for Anglicans (left) and Non-Conformists (right), both designed by Manners & Gill.



The larger Locksbrook Cemetery was opened in 1864 and was the the burial site for St Swithins Parish, Walcot, with separate sections added for Weston in 1877. The cemetery was closed in 1937 but still remains open for family plots, 30,000 burials are recorded here. With twin chapels for Anglican and Non-Conformists either end of the same building and a central spire. The cemetery chapels sit high on a rise above the Locks Brook and affords excellent views East across Victoria Park to the city.



<sup>4</sup> Full details and some photographs of Bath's cemeteries can be found on the Bath Burials Website - <https://www.batharchives.co.uk/burial-index>

## County Police Station & Magistrates Court



Another early arrival in the area was the County Police Station and Magistrates Court. This was designed by Thomas Fuller, who had moved to Canada by the time that it was built, the work being supervised by Manners & Gill.

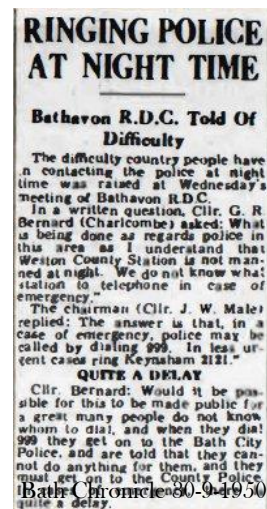
The central Magistrates Court held Petty sessions every Tuesday and Saturday. It had 4 cells for prisoners on remand.

Either side of the magistrate's courtroom was housing for police officers. One side for superintendent with a parlour, kitchen, 3 bedrooms (the superintendent was also Inspector of weights and measures for the Weston Division); the other, rooms for 2 single police officers, comprising a sitting room and bedrooms; rooms for a married officer with a sitting room

and 3 bedrooms.

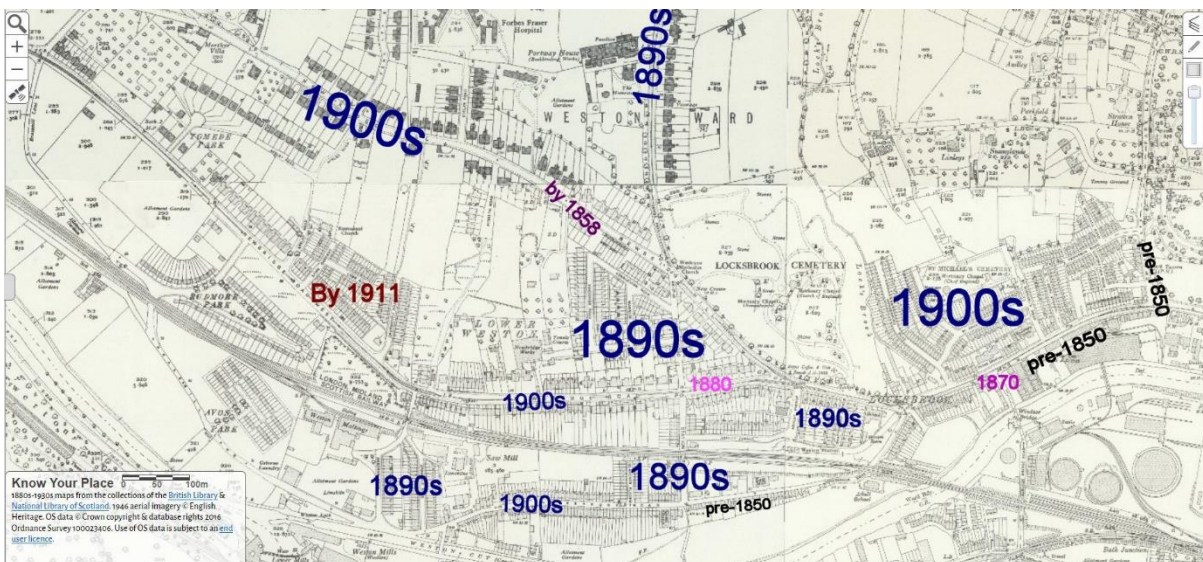
Having a police station and magistrates court so near the city with its own duplicate facilities, a little over a mile away, seems strange, however, when this building was built Weston and also Twerton, across the river, were not part of the city. Even when the city finally absorbed these outlying suburbs in 1911, police jurisdiction remained with Somerset County until 1967 when Somerset Constabulary took over the City Police.

This division of police powers within the city led to anomalies over the years. A newspaper report from 1950 (right) demonstrates this. Residents phoning 999 in the night when Weston Police Station was shut would be put through to the City Police. The City Police had no jurisdiction over Weston, Twerton, Oldfield Park, etc., so would tell the caller that they needed to contact Keynsham Police Station, the nearest County police station.



## Lower Weston Housing - Dates

Having set the scene, now we come to the actual suburb. Below is a map from the 1930s but the dates of housing development up to 1911:



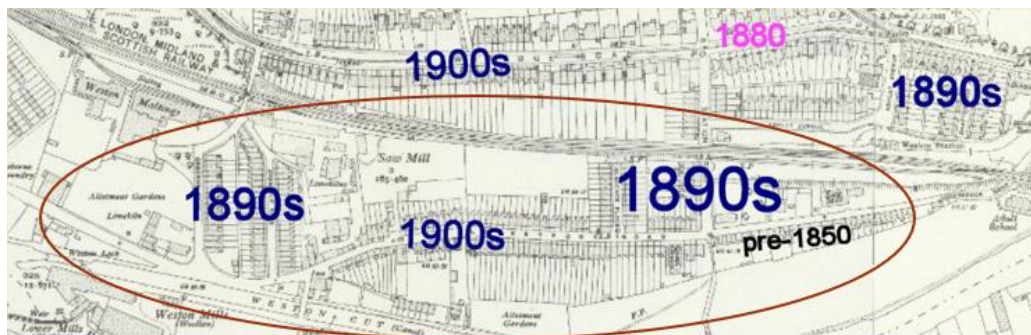
There was a core of development prior to 1850 along the Lower Bristol Road, as described above, with some earlier large houses along Newbridge Hill and the Kelston Road, and working class housing along Brassmill Lane, then a small number of early terraces in 1870s and 1880s (see map above). However, the bulk of development took place in 1890s and early 1900s.

## Suburban Development from the 1890s

Housing development began in earnest in the 1890s.

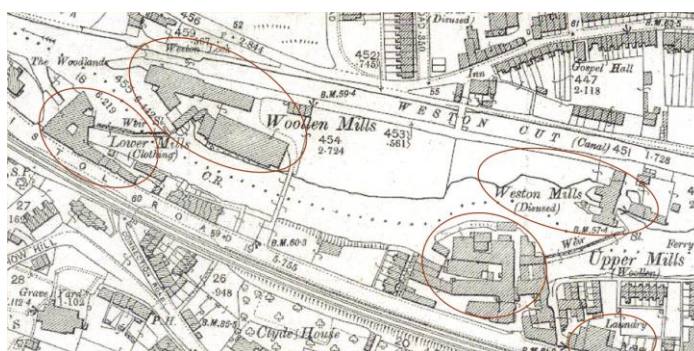
### The Locksbrook Road Area

Moving from south to north, the area along the river following Brassmill Lane, the eastern end of which was renamed Locksbrook Road:



This was a largely working-class area to the south of Newbridge Road and the railway line. To understand this area better, below is a summary of the industries that had become established along the river south of the Locksbrook area:

From west (left) to east (right) these comprised, on the south side, W & R Cooks, clothing manufacture. Across the river on Weston Island, woollen mills at the western end, at the eastern end, Weston Mills, formerly the site of the brass mills, disused by the 1890s. Opposite, on the south side of the river, at the Upper Mills, Isaac Carr & Co., woollen mills. Just east of the Upper Mills there was the Bath Sanitary Steam Laundry. A pedestrian bridge linked the two sides affording workers from both sides of the river access to their work.



### Occupations in the Locksbrook Road Area in 1911

This area had a population of 954, with 226 households and only 1 shared property. The majority of houses were of 5 rooms. Occupations included:

- 17 Gas Works employees;
- 16 Painters & Decorators;
- 14 Commercial/Business Clerks;
- 14 Messengers/Porters/Watchmen (includes 6 errand boys);
- 12 General Labourers; 12 Carmen, Carriers, Carters, Wagoners;
- 12 Grocers; Tea, Coffee, Chocolate - Dealers;
- 12 Tailors; 11 Brewers; 8 Cabinet Makers; 8 Domestic Gardeners;
- 7 Bookbinders (see below); 7 Blacksmiths/Strikers; 7 Police Officers;
- 6 Carpenter/Joiners; 6 General or Unclassified Shopkeepers/General Dealers...
- 27 Laundry Workers (see below)

### Laundry Workers

In 1911 there were 29 living in the area, 28 female, 1 male. At the time Bath had a number of large commercial laundries and there were clusters of laundry workers around them. For instance, the large laundry at the bottom of Milk Street in the centre of town had a cluster of about 20 workers, mainly female, living nearby. What is very unusual about the cluster in the Locksbrook area was that they were mainly self-



employed ('own account' on census) working in their own homes, several sharing with other women<sup>5</sup>. The majority were in the Locksbrook Road with a cluster around Avondale Road and Osborne Road.

It is interesting to find such a cluster and to look more closely at some of these women and to speculate about how they wound up in 'modern' housing in the late Nineteen and early Twentieth Century carrying out this very traditional woman's occupation.

## Laundry Workers and Their Families - Three Examples from the 1911 Census

|   |                    |          |    |         |    |   |   |   |                  |      |                            |
|---|--------------------|----------|----|---------|----|---|---|---|------------------|------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Amelia Scott       | Head     | 67 | Married | 44 | 4 | 6 | 1 | Cloth Weaver Ref | Wife | William Westling Partridge |
| 2 | Amelia Scott       | Wife     | 67 | Married |    |   |   |   | Laundress        | Wife | General Laundry            |
| 3 | Ada Maria Scott    | Daughter | 27 | Single  |    |   |   |   | Corset Maker 197 | Wife | General Laundry            |
| 4 | Gladys Anne Palmer | Niece    | 18 | Single  |    |   |   |   | Corset Maker     | Wife | General Laundry            |

The first is Amelia Scott, 67, born in Twerton, her husband, a cloth weaver (possibly working in the adjacent mill on Weston Island). Their daughter, Ada Maria, 27, a corset maker, also living with them is Gladys Anne Palmer, a niece, 18, and recorded as a corset maker. Corset making very prominent in Bath at this time, and they may have worked in the Bayer factory along the river, but there were other possible employers. The house that they live in was small, 4 rooms, so, presumably, 2 up, 2 down and all of the housing on the Island disappeared in the Twentieth Century.

This, second, is Emma Salter, 62, a widow, born in Bath. She is living at 62 Locksbrook Road (see inset of what it looks like today) in 1911 and 1891 with her two children, Alice, 36, born Woolwich, described as 'laundress's daughter assisting in the business' and William, 28, born Manchester, musician. In 1881 they live in Primrose Hill, Bath. I have not found her or her children before that date but an Emma Salter marries a George Clement Salter in Woolwich in 1872, he is a corporal in the Army serving in Woolwich. It is possible that the reason that their son was born in Manchester because George was there with the military, I have not found his death recorded

|   |                |          |    |        |  |  |  |  |                                     |      |                       |     |
|---|----------------|----------|----|--------|--|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|-----|
| 1 | Emma Salter    | Head     | 62 | Widow  |  |  |  |  | Laundress assisting in the business | Wife | At Home Bath Somerset | 141 |
| 2 | Alice Salter   | Daughter | 36 | Single |  |  |  |  | Laundress's daughter                | Wife | At Home Woolwich Kent | 008 |
| 3 | William Salter | Son      | 28 | Single |  |  |  |  | Musician                            | Wife | Manchester Lanc       | 059 |



anywhere.

The third example is of Mary Poole, 52, unmarried, living at 9 Avondale Road (see insert), born, not in Weston, Bath, but in Weston Super Mare. She has her nieces Elsie Binding, 25, and Lucy Binding, 19, as assistants. They have joined her, along with their brother, Edwin, 22, a general labourer from Weston Super Mare. In 1901 she lives at the same address, with two boarders working with her as launderesses. At the age of 22 Mary Poole is a laundress in her home town.

|   |               |          |    |        |  |  |  |  |                     |      |                                    |     |
|---|---------------|----------|----|--------|--|--|--|--|---------------------|------|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1 | Mary Poole    | Head     | 52 | Single |  |  |  |  | Laundress           | Wife | Employed at home Weston Super Mare | 030 |
| 2 | Elsie Binding | Daughter | 25 | Single |  |  |  |  | assistant           | Wife | At Home Weston Super Mare          | 030 |
| 3 | Edwin Binding | Boarder  | 22 | Single |  |  |  |  | General Labourer    | Wife | Boarder at home                    | 030 |
| 4 | Lucy Binding  | Niece    | 19 | Single |  |  |  |  | Assistant Laundress | Wife | At Home Weston Super Mare          | 030 |



Note that the houses for Emma Salter and Mary Poole both look quite substantial 5 roomed houses, the Locksbrook Road houses have quite large back gardens, the Avondale Road have smaller gardens but their frontage is very decorative, suggesting that the occupation of laundress could produce a reasonable income, certainly enough to rent a good standard of working class house.

<sup>5</sup> Since giving this talk I have learned a great deal about the role that Weston Village played in a laundry for Bath. Surrounded by hills, various streams fed down into the valley, the Locks Brook thus giving a supply of fresh and plentiful water which was used to do Bath's clothes washing. An article on the Bath and Counties Archaeological Society website, *The Story of Weston Village*, <https://www.bacas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2012-43.pdf> gives a bit more detail. Some of these women did in fact come from Weston, so possibly grew up in the tradition of 'doing the laundry', however, many came from other areas of Bath and further afield. Although the Locksbrook area bears the name of the brook, the stream ran into the Avon and did not run down Locksbrook Road, many houses where laundresses carried out their business were quite distant from this natural water source and by the 1890s the area consisted of 'modern' houses with, presumably, plumbed in water supplies. It may simply have been that the tradition carried on, and the name Weston, being associated with laundering, picked up that reputation.

## Industrial Development In the Locksbrook/Newbridge Area - 1880s-1900s

As detailed above, the river had quite substantial industries built along its banks, the area north of the river also saw industrial development in the 1880s.

### Lime Kilns & Cement Works

Limekilns and a cement work were built at the western end of Locksbrook Road, presumably cement for the huge amount of housebuilding taking place in Bath at this time - Oldfield Park on the other side of the river had at least three brickmaking works in this period. The cement works is marked as disused on the map<sup>6</sup>, right, which was drawn up at the very end of the century, however, the 1911 census John Trimble Fryer owner of the Fryer Blue Lias Lime and Cement works, Locksbrook mills living at 63 Newbridge Road with his brother Roderick who was works manager.

### Saw Mills

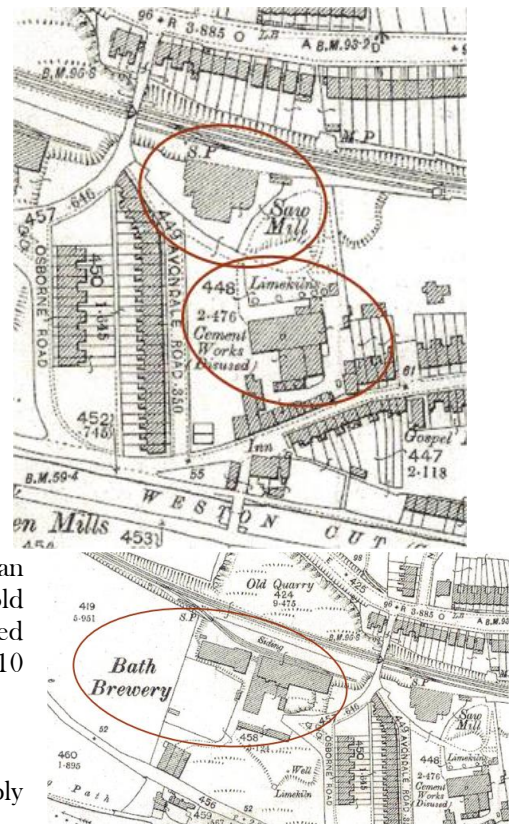
The 1911 census shows 7 sawyers in the area - 2 worked at the 'Cabinet Manufactory', but others may have worked at the saw mill just south of the Midland railway line. The mill had its own siding off the railway.

### Bath Brewery

West of the cement works lay Bath Brewery<sup>7</sup>. Opened in 1899 as an amalgamation of a number of breweries in the city it was eventually sold to the Bristol Brewery Georges & Co. Ltd. in 1923 when brewing ceased at this site. The brewer in 1911 was Harry Archibald Briggs, living at 110 Newbridge Road.

In this area in 1911 there were 14 men living in the area and possibly working at the brewery:

Brewers Labourers, Malters Labourers, a Cellarman, a Brewery Wheelwright, 2 Brewers Drayman and a Carter, 2 Brewers Commercial Traveller, a Brewers Fireman, a Brewers Agent, etc.



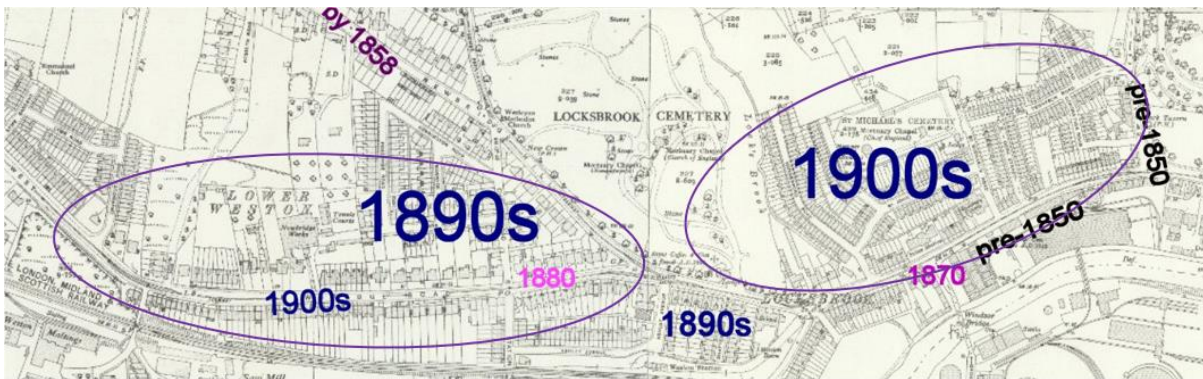
The illustration of the brewery, left, shows the substantial nature of the brewery. The scale of the locomotive and railway wagons depicted is a bit odd, they seem miniatures of the real thing. There was also a ban on Midland locomotives being used in the sidings, so there appears to be quite a bit of artistic license being used.

<sup>6</sup> Although the map marks the cement works as disused, other sources show that the Fryer family, who owned the land on which the works was built, continued producing lime and cement products through the period into the 1920s. It is possible that the 'disused' is either a map-makers error or only part of the works was disused.

<sup>7</sup> The Brewery was covered in John Ennor's talk, *An Illustrated Talk on the History of the Hartwell and Surrounding Sites*, 19 April 2021 - the transcript and recording are available on our website

## Suburban Development in the 1890s & 1900s

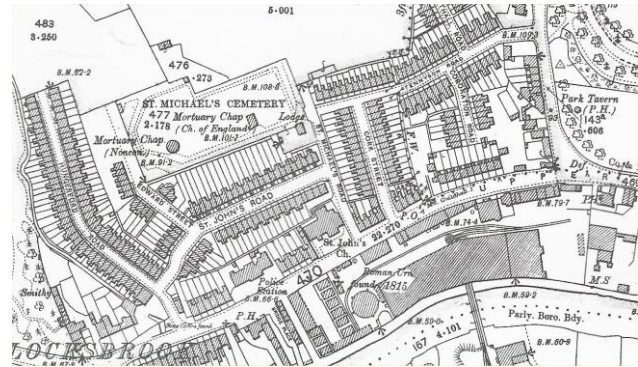
### Park Lane to Hungerford Road, Chelsea Road to Newbridge Road



In the middle strip of Lower Weston running along the Lower Bristol Road and Newbridge Road two areas of suburban terrace began to be developed in the 1890s and 1900s.

### Park Lane to Hungerford Road

Slightly later than some of the housing to the west, this comprised the Tennyson Estate: Park Lane, Tennyson Road, Cork Street and Cork Terrace; and St. Michael's Road, St. John's Road, Edward Street & Hungerford Road. Housing was largely of 5 rooms, with about a third of St John's Road being 6 rooms (2 up, 2 down, with a rear two story extension); Tennyson Road was all 6 rooms but with a terrace of 13 houses at the Western end with 7 rooms - an additional room in the attic. A small number of houses had a live in servant. The occupations of the inhabitants would suggest that this was a lower middle class area.



### Newbridge Road & Chelsea Road Areas

By the early 1900s this comprised Ashley Avenue, Chelsea Road, Park Road, Warwick Road, Foxcombe Road, Kennington Road, Newbridge Road. A mixture of housing but generally larger houses than the previous area. Ashley Avenue, Park Road, Warwick Road, Foxcombe and Kennington Roads, had 6 to 7 rooms, with a few with 8. The Newbridge Road was largely 8 but also had some very substantial properties with 15 or even more rooms.

This was clearly a middling to upper middle class area, with many managerial and business owning residents.



### Chelsea Road



Chelsea Road first appears in about 1895 and it stands out as a street largely given over to retail premises. Unlike Moorland Road in Oldfield Park, which started out as housing and, as the suburb grew around it, became shops, Chelsea Road appears to have been mainly shops from the start. The coloured postcard (left), shows the left hand-side (west) particularly designed with shop fronts, some of the right had, and still has, private housing.

In Chelsea Road in the 1900s the following occupants can be found:

**Business premises only:** Watchmaker and Cycle Agent (George Harrison, living at 95 Newbridge Road), Shoemaker, Grocers & Provision Merchants, Greengrocer and Fruiterer

**Business & living above the shop?** Baker, 2 Butchers (1 female), Draper, Greengrocer, Fishmonger

**Residential Only:** 6-8, a Retired Builder, a Commercial Traveller, and a woman 'Living on Own Means'

## House Sizes Along the Upper Bristol & Newbridge Roads

**In 1911 - Total Population 1385:**

Of 315 households, only 13 shared the same address.

Households in less than 5 rooms - 22 houses (3 had only 1 room)

117 houses - 5 rooms; 94 houses - 6 rooms; 42 houses - 7 rooms; 43 houses - 8 rooms;

10 houses - 9 rooms; 15 houses - 10 rooms; 6 houses with over 10, 2 with 12

## Occupations Along the Upper Bristol & Newbridge Roads

**Working Population without an Occupation 804:**

215 Wives (no occupation); 215 School Age Children; 108 Pre-School Children; 36 over 70s, plus 19 more Retired from Business, 1 Army & 1 Navy Pensioner; 35 Living on Own Means (7 male; 28 female); 19 Widows; 5 Unemployed

**Working Population 582:**

74 Domestic Servants - majority living in employers home; 28 Clerks (12 female) and 7 Law Clerks;

22 Dressmakers; 20 Bookbinders (see below); 17 Tailors (9 female - 2 sewing machinists); 21 School Teachers (17 Local Authority, 15 Female) only school in the area a Girls & Infants School; 17 Railway Officials/Clerks, and another 10 Railway Workers; 14 Drapers; 13 Domestic Gardeners; 12 Gas Workers; 9 Grocers (including assistants)...

## Transport Links - Horse Buses to Newbridge

Many of the working classes living in the Locksbrook area, worked near their homes, although, in a city that was still possible to walk across town in a relatively short space of time, many probably walked some distance to work. The development of middle-class suburbs along the Lower Bristol Road, Newbridge Road, Newbridge Hill and Coombe Park, led to demands for public transport. Horse buses began to appear in the 1880s and a variety of companies vied for custom.

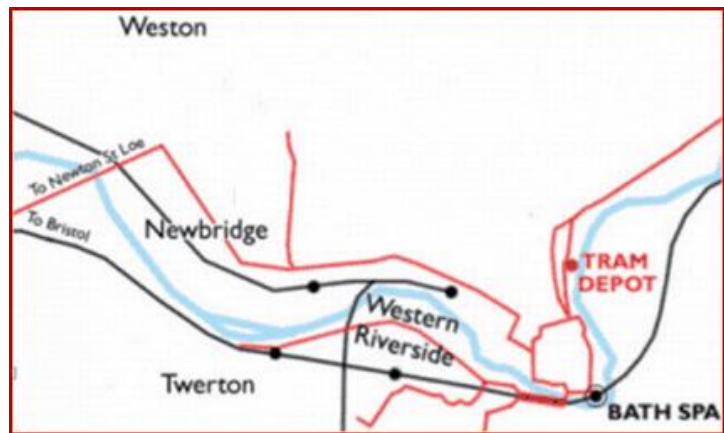


Bath Road Car & Tram Co., Newbridge, c.1890

Early attempts at running trams in Bath date to 1880 with a line running from Bath Spa railway station, through High Street, Walcot and on to Grosvenor College. However it was in 1904 that an electric tram was opened in Bath, with an additional line running to the Newbridge Road and up to Coombe Park. The two branches of the tram lines can be seen on this composite map 1821-43



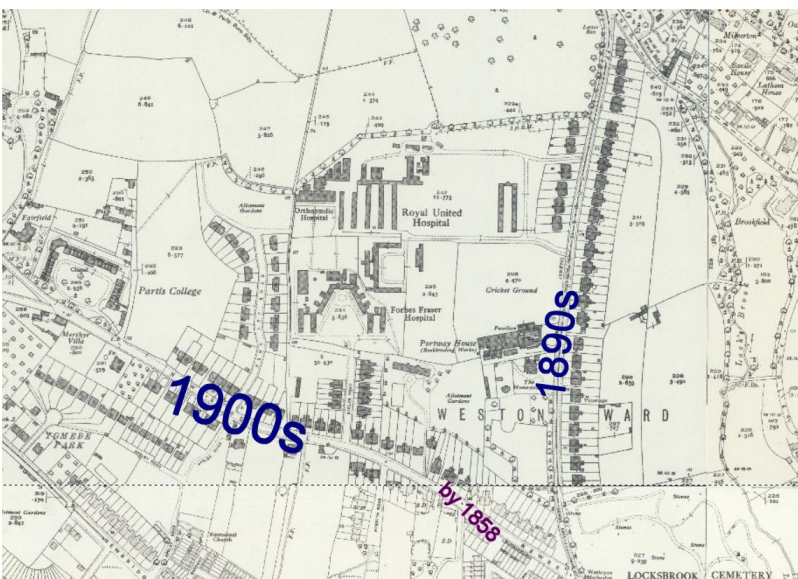
A tram in the Newbridge Road



The full extent of the tramways in Lower Weston can be seen on the map above. There was a further extension to Newton St Loe in 1905 (the Globe Inn) with the possibility of linking with Bristol trams but nothing came of the idea.

## Suburban Development in the 1890s & 1900s

### Newbridge Hill & Combe Park



The final area of Lower Weston to be looked at is the northern area, Newbridge Hill, with its earlier houses of the wealthy and Partis College, and the new development of Combe Park, in the 1930s becoming the site of the Royal United Hospital (seen below on this composite map 1921-1943). Combe Park reaches up, ending just short of the original Weston Village.

In 1911 there were 148 Households in this area. The new housing in this part of Lower Weston is almost exclusively semi-detached. Combe Park houses are largely 10 roomed, but a number are larger. Newbridge Hill has a large range of room numbers, some earlier 2 up, 2 down cottages, plus the earlier very substantial

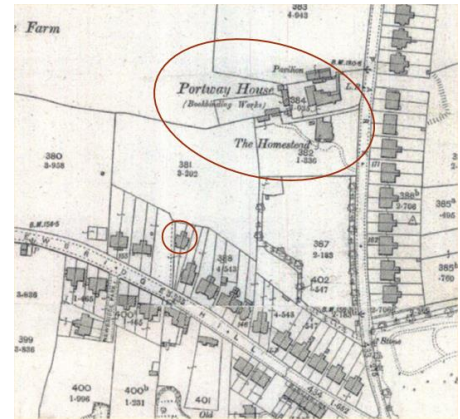
houses of the wealthy. However, the new houses start with 8 rooms up to 10 or more.



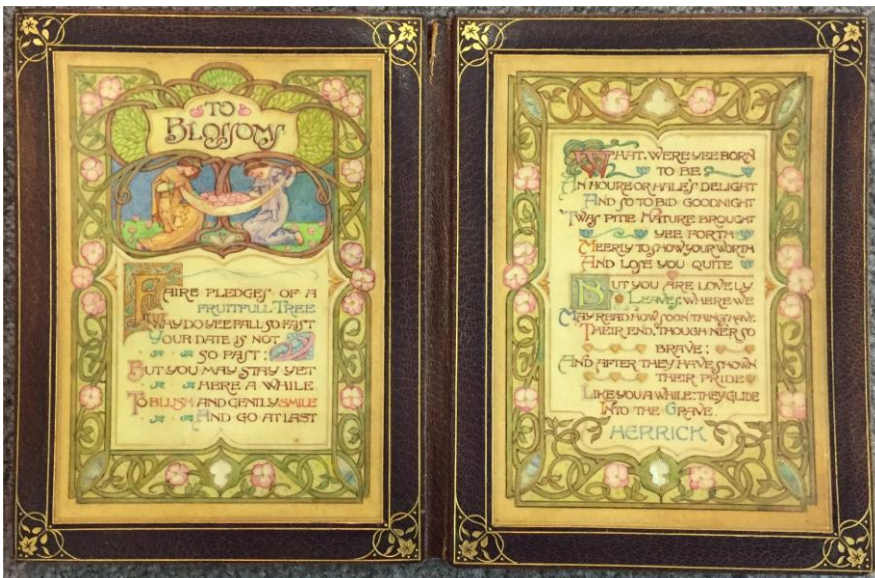
## Newbridge Hill & Combe Park 1911 - Occupations

15 Retired from business; 4 Pensioners; 5 Private means; 6 Widows  
 9 Sick Nurses/Invalid Attendants; 8 Physician/Surgeons;  
 8 Students (half female); 6 Teachers (all female); 6 Civil Servants; 5 Railway Clerks (all sons);  
 5 Bookbinders (see below); 4 Tailors; 4 Gardeners (living in cottages on Newbridge Hill); 3 Bank Clerks; 2 Lodging  
 House Keepers; a family of china repairers (house in Newbridge Hill unidentified),  
 etc...

At 46 Newbridge Hill, farmer Edwin Cole, whose house is half of a semi-detached pair (small circle on the map, right), this sits back from the rest which are almost identical properties, so, presumably, was built so that he had easy access to his farmland beyond - there is also a lane running past it giving access to, what is now part of, the RUH.

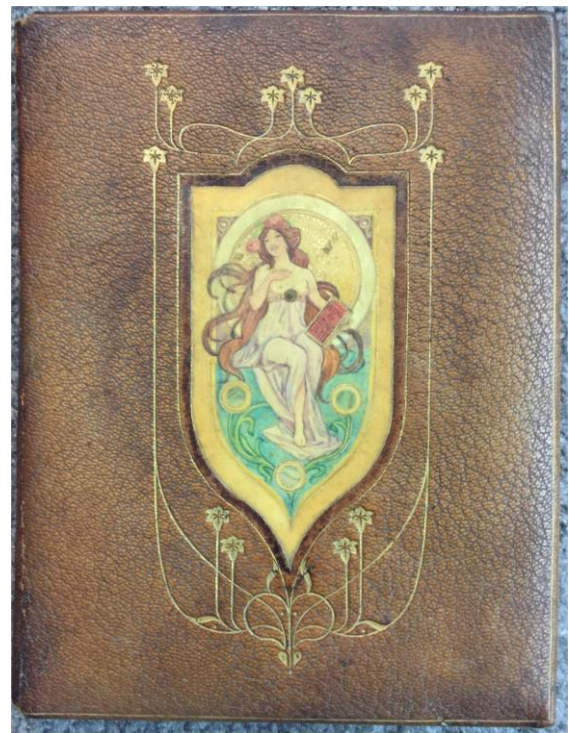


The larger circle on the map indicates Portway House. This was an academy from the 1840s, but in the early 1900s became Cedric Chivers (Ld.) bookbinding works. Cedric Chivers (left) was a major contributor to a number of enterprises in Bath including the Bath and West Co-operative Cabinet Makers Ltd. mentioned at the start of the talk. He had invented the 'vellucent' method of decorative bookbinding in 1898, and the works at Portway House produced bookbindings which are still sought after as classic 'art nouveau' work. He was also a local councillor and mayor of the city several times in the 1920s<sup>8</sup>.



Chivers patented his "vellucent" method of decorative bookbinding in 1898

<sup>8</sup> Cedric Chivers and his contribution to Bath was covered in talk by John Daniels, *Saving Our Hospital: Bath's Royal United's Box Scheme*, 8 March 2021 - a write-up and recording of the talk can be found on our website.



## Lower Weston - In Conclusion

Over 50 years Lower Weston's population grew from a few hundred to almost 4000 people. Most of this development took place in the 1890s & 1900s about a decade later than the larger suburb over the river, Oldfield Park. Working class housing was mainly concentrated in the Locksbrook area and a range of skilled working-class and middle-class housing from the Tennyson Estate to Newbridge and Combe Park. Development which went hand in hand with the growth of Bath's industries and wider economy, better housing and better transport links ...

## Bath's 19<sup>th</sup>/Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Suburbs

Bath's population rose during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century reaching 54,000 by the 1851 census, then dropped in the second half to 49,000 by 1901. However, Oldfield Park and Weston, and a number of other outlying suburbs, were not included officially in this figure, only becoming part of the city in 1911. People were moving to the 'new' suburbs...

# CLAVER MORRIS, 1659-1727: A SOMERSET DOCTOR AND HIS TRAVELS

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023

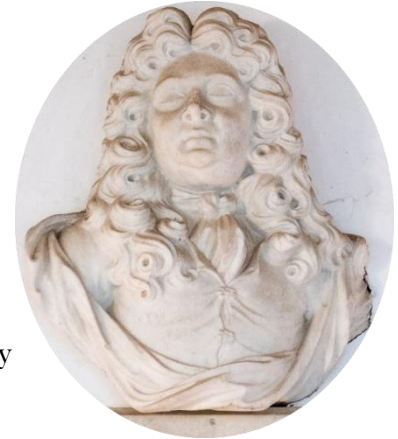
St. Mary's Bathwick, Church Hall

Speaker

Paul Hyland

Abstract

Paul Hyland



## Life and Character

Aside from its pagan origins, there could not have been a better day for Claver Morris to be born than May Day 1659.

Since at least Medieval times, in towns and villages throughout the country, 1st May had come to mark the arrival of Spring, celebrated in a day of music, dancing and feasting. Though suppressed by parliament as 'a heathenish vanity generally abused to superstition and wickedness' during the Commonwealth, on 1st May 1660 the House of Commons voted to invite Charles II to return from exile: kings, bishops and traditional festivities would now be vigorously restored. So, Claver could look forward to a life in which music, dancing and feasting – all things he loved – would play a vital part.

The fourth and last child of Hannah Claver and William Morris, Claver's early years were spent among the little farming villages of Blackmore Vale, deep in Dorset, where his father was a rector. At the age of sixteen he was enrolled at Oxford University, graduating with a BA in 1679 and MA in 1682. By 1685, with a Bachelor's degree in Medicine and a licence from the Royal College of Physicians, he was fully qualified to practice 'Physic'. Later in that year he married the twenty-two-year-old Grace Green at Chelsea; a date that he recorded as the very first entry in his private diaries and accounts.

A handwritten entry from Claver's first book of accounts, dated 13th October 1685, recording his marriage to Grace Green. The text is written in cursive and reads: "13<sup>th</sup> October 1685 An<sup>d</sup>. Dom: 1685 I was Married to M<sup>rs</sup> Grace Green of London, by D<sup>r</sup> Littleton at Chelsea near London."

## The first entry in Claver's first book of accounts

Although had been working with his cousin, an apothecary in Salisbury, he had little money of his own, so it was fortunate that Grace, an orphan, was heir to a modest inheritance, including two houses off Fleet Street, near the new cathedral of St Paul's. With Grace's money, the couple soon moved to Wells in Somerset where, after lodging with Richard Cupper, an apothecary in the Market Place, they rented an old chantry house in the Liberty.

The city was no longer the largest town in Somerset, as it had been in the Middle Ages, but with over 3,000 inhabitants it was still larger than Bath, and especially important as the seat of the diocese of Bath and Wells, which covered the whole county, and the residence of its bishop. Here, Claver would gradually build his medical practice, initially among the senior clergy and wealthy citizens of the city, and later, as his reputation grew, among many of the gentry and most notable families of the West Country.



‘The Market Place, Wells’, from *Picturesque Antiquities of English Cities*,  
by John Britton (1830)

The first few years of Claver’s life in Wells were beset with troubles. It was not easy to build a medical practice: who would chose to put their faith and the lives of their loved ones in the hands of a young and unknown doctor? Wells and the West were only just recovering from the traumas of the Monmouth rebellion against the accession of Charles II’s brother, the Catholic James II in 1685; and the body parts of hundreds of condemned rebels were still on show across the towns and landmarks of the region. Shortly after the accession of William and Mary in the ‘Glorious Revolution’ of 1689, a confrontational new bishop, Richard Kidder, one of Claver’s patients, was appointed in place of the greatly respected and kindly Thomas Ken. Above all his troubles, Claver was heartbroken by the loss of his baby daughter and, six months later, after ‘*only three years*’ of marriage, his wife Grace.

Seven years later, Claver married for a second time and soon delighted in the birth of his much-loved daughter Betty. But less than three years after their marriage, Elizabeth and her second baby died in childbirth. To quell his anger and distress, Claver immediately had his house in the Liberty torn down and started building a Palladian-style mansion in its place.



The new house, c.1700,  
which cost £807 to build.

The new house and grounds were primarily a private residence, but they were also designed to accommodate a laboratory where Claver would conduct experiments and mix medicines for patients who could arrive at any time. So did friends and other visitors, often with their coach and horses, staying for days or weeks to enjoy the extraordinary hospitality that he showed. It was no surprise therefore, having married again in 1703, Claver's home became so popular for good food, music and entertainments he did not dine alone for over twenty years.

Blessed with an exceptional ability to make and keep good friends from all ranks of society, Claver never lacked company or industry. In addition to his work as a physician, he played several instruments and founded what would become a renowned music club that met weekly in the Vicars' Close next to the cathedral; he led two agricultural development projects to enclose and improve the common lands at Glastonbury; and he played an active role in the civic and political life of the county.

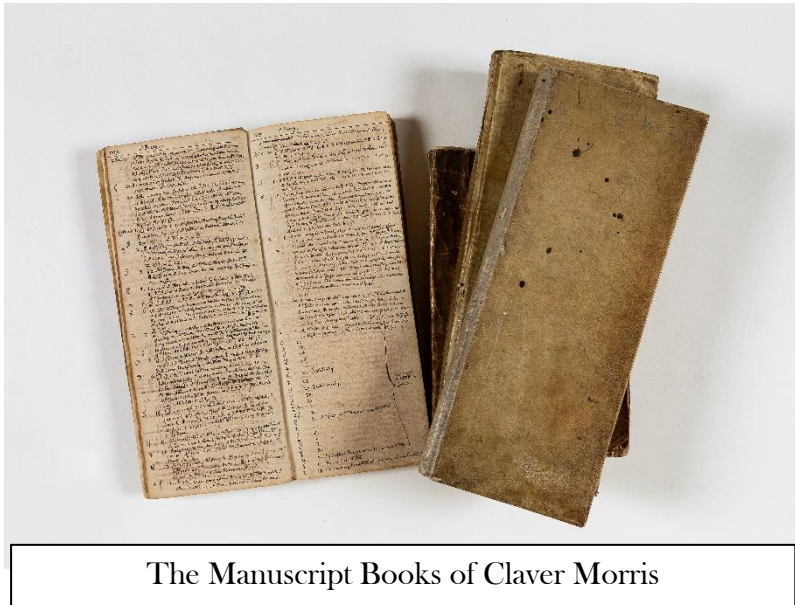
As 'an affectionate member of the Church of England', as he put it, Claver attended six o'clock matins in the cathedral on most mornings, but at a time of deep religious animosities, he was far more tolerant of Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics than the great majority of people. He was also astonishingly well read; buying books on poetry, history, philosophy and other subjects as well as medicine, chemistry and mathematics. Though immensely enterprising, knowledgeable, and loving towards his family and friends, he was also strong-minded and could be overbearing and on some occasions his troubles were partly of his own making, as his manuscripts reveal.



Detail from William Symes' *Plan of the City of Wells* (1735), showing Claver's house at the top-right of the Liberty, looking down Back Liberty

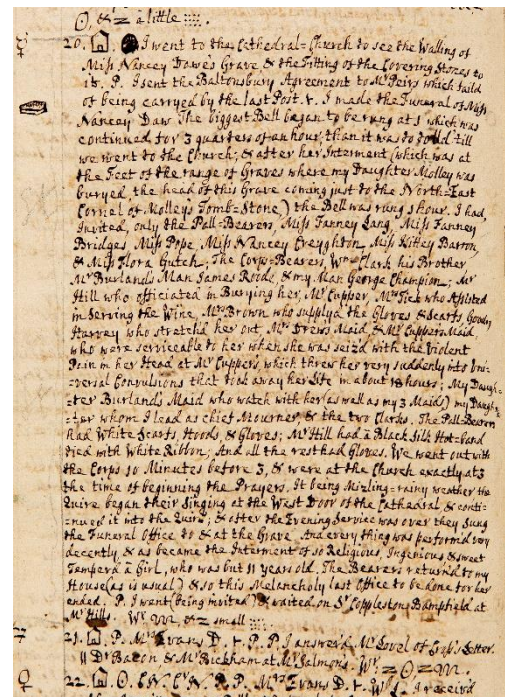
## Key Sources

The key sources for Claver's life are the private diaries and accounts that he kept from the time of his marriage to Grace in 1685 until a few months before his death in 1727. Not all of his writings have survived, but there are diaries for the periods 1709-10 and 1718-26, and meticulous daily accounts of his income and expenditure throughout the period 1685-1723. These writings are contained in four unpagged books, each bound in vellum. Together, the books contain well over 1,000 pages of Claver's mostly tidy writing, of which the diaries alone account for nearly 180,000 words.



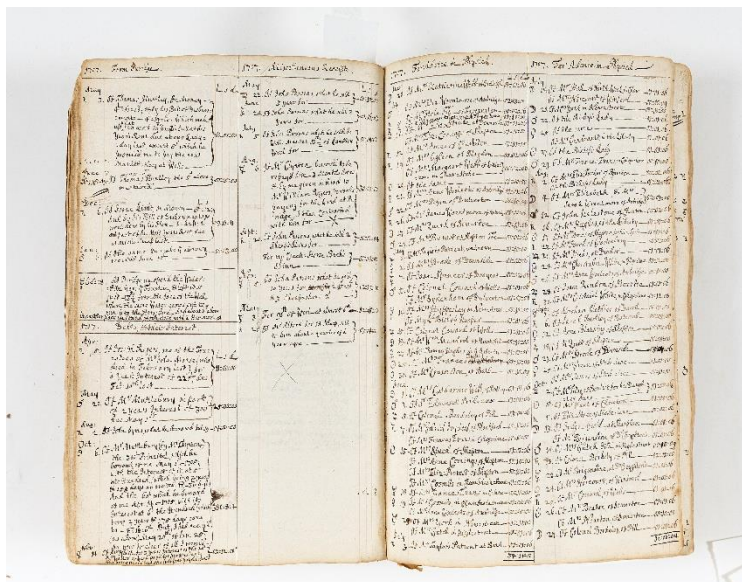
The Manuscript Books of Claver Morris

Most of the entries in Claver's dairies are quite short and the words and phrases that he uses are just those that came to mind as he sat down every day or so to record of the key facts and figures for each day. In keeping with this relaxed manner of composition, the spelling of common words, especially of names and places, is often inconsistent. Ideographs are often used to represent activities such as attending church, writing prescriptions or seeing patients, and alchemical symbols are used to represent common elements or compounds. On days when there was something nagging or upsetting him, Claver would often write half a page or more, as when he recalled the sudden death of Nancy Dawe, an 'ingenious and sweet tempered' eleven-year-old girl who had been staying with him.



The death and funeral of Nancy Dawe diary, 20-22 January 1720

Claver's account books are as revealing as his diaries, providing a wealth of information about every aspect of his finances for almost all his working life. In the annual ledgers for his expenses, various headings are employed, such as 'In Housekeeping', 'In Clothes and Household Stuff', 'About Horses and their Keeping'. Similarly, various headings are used to record Claver's income from his properties, his 'Miscellaneous Receipts' and 'For Advice in Physick'. Under the latter, after the astrological symbol for each day, Claver always records the name and place of his patient and the money he received.



Pages from Claver's accounts of his income in 1707

In 1934, Edmund Hobhouse published about 20 per cent of the diary in *The Diary of a West Country Physician A.D. 1684-1726* and, from 1936 to 1942, a series of extracts from the account books, under the title 'Dr. Claver Morris' Accounts' in *Notes & Queries for Somerset and Dorset*. To date, these are the only parts of Claver's manuscripts (copies of which can be found at Somerset Heritage Centre) that have been printed.

## Work as a Physician

There was no easy route to becoming a licensed physician in the seventeenth century. By the time Claver became a Bachelor of Medicine, in 1685, he was twenty-six and had been a student at Oxford for nine years. Even as a student of 'Physic' (Medicine) his studies would have been highly academic, focusing on Latin and Greek, mathematics, natural philosophy (physics), chemistry and botany. Above all, he would be required to learn about the works of Galen (b. 129 BC) and Hippocrates (b. 460 BC) and to listen to lectures about the nature of illnesses and their treatments according to the ancient texts.

These studies required a deep appreciation of how the four elements of all matter (and their primary qualities) - Earth (cold and dry), Fire (dry and hot), Air (hot and wet), and Water (wet and cold) - corresponded with the four fluids or 'humours' of the human body and its mental state: Black Bile (melancholic), Yellow Bile (choleric), Blood (sanguine), and Phlegm (phlegmatic). For it was generally believed that all illnesses arose from an imbalance of these humours; an imbalance that could be most readily diagnosed from a physician's examination of the smell, sediment, swim, colour, crown, and sometimes the taste, of a patient's urine.

Alongside the examination of urine, a physician would probably conduct a case study of the patient's medical history; their diet, bowel movements and 'regimen'. He might also cast a horoscope to see how the position of the moon and planets might have influenced the patient's health – as in Saturn's association with melancholia and gout. Any physical examinations (such as to determine whether the patient were cold, hot, moist or dry) also proceeded along these lines, which usually led to bloodletting and to the prescription of a great range of vomits, purges and enemas, regarded as fundamental to the treatment of most conditions.

When Claver delivered three public lectures to receive his MD (*Medicinae Doctor*) in 1691, he was required to demonstrate his deep knowledge and appreciation of the texts of Galen and Hippocrates, rather than to challenge them. But in his practice Claver was clearly also influenced by the sixteenth-century Swiss mystic and physician Paracelsus, who had denounced most of Galen's theories, claiming that there were just three principles – sulphur, mercury and salt – in God's Creation and the Book of Genesis, and that different kinds of salt in the body were responsible for different kinds of disease. According to Paracelsus, therefore, diseases were not due to imbalances of the humours. His followers (iatrochemists) were often scholarly physicians at universities in Europe who, like Claver, were keen to conduct experiments to produce chemical treatments to accompany or replace many of the traditional Galenic herbal and organic recipes.

So Claver's views, though still based upon centuries of traditional beliefs, were by no means wholly orthodox and, judging by the medicines he created and prescribed, and the dozens of new books he bought on medicine, his practice reflected his ideas. For example,

He often purchased herbal ingredients:

- *oyl of amber*, made from fossilised tree-sap, used 'to cure the suffocation of the uterus', and 'excellent against fits of the mother, epilepsy, convulsion, palsy, lameness, numbness, wounds of the nerves etc';
- *saccharum essence*, made from the juice of cane sugar, believed to be 'good in all diseases of the lungs', for cleansing cuts and easing pain;
- *resin of jalap*, made from the tubers of the Mexican plant and frequently used to make boluses to treat gout or dropsy (swellings of the head or limbs);
  - *resin of scammony*, made from the tuberous roots of the Syrian plant, used to make strong purgatives, and especially to kill worms in children; and
  - *hepatica oyl*, made from the liver-shaped leaves of the plant, mostly used to treat liver diseases, to provoke urine and as a cure for yellow jaundice, rickets and gonorrhoea.

He avoided animal ingredients:

- *goat's urine*, dropped into the ears to cure deafness;
- *dried bone of stag's heart*, taken to prevent miscarriages;
- *dried mole's heart*, taken to treat ruptures, 'most effectual in May';
- *oyl of winged ants*, for drinking to excite lust;
- *dried fox lungs*, drunk to treat coughs and colds;
- *ashes of a black cat's head*, blown into the eyes to cure eye diseases; and
- *legs of the male tortoise*, which 'being cut off alive a little before the change of the moon, and bound to the part affected, the right to the right, the left to the left 'leg, would be a cure for gout.



He liked to use chemical ingredients:

- *ens veneris*, ‘essence of Venus’; a mixture of copper and ammonium chloride, regarded as ‘a noble and worthy anodyne’, ‘easing all manner of pain and strengthening the parts dedicated to generation’;
- *vitri antimony*, a toxic infusion of the glass of antimony, a silvery-white metalloid used to promote sweating, vomiting and purging, ‘best made on Sundays when the moon is in Pisces or other watery signs’. It was also widely used as ‘an antidote to Plague’ and as ‘a cure for the green-sickness in virgins’ (a disease, associated with weakness and a pale complexion, that was widely believed to afflict unmarried young women, due to a lack of iron or sexual intercourse); and
- *aqua fortis*, ‘strong water’, nitric acid prepared by distilling potassium nitrate with sulphuric acid, and used to dissolve silver and other metals.

Quotes are from the Royal College of Physicians’ encyclopaedia of medicines, *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis*, by William Salmon (1682).

It may be that at the beginning of his career when he struggled to build his practice, Claver’s avoidance of animal ingredients, and his preference for chemical and herbal medicines, limited his appeal. But as word of his abilities was spread, not least through his treatment of the gentry, Claver’s income as a doctor grew to a very comfortable £260 a year (a little less than the income he received from the lands that he had acquired). Had he treated only the rich, and not waived or greatly reduced his fees for treatment of the poor and needy, he could undoubtedly have earned much more.

As an eminent physician, Claver was expected to work primarily with his head, rather than with his hands; leading a medical team that included an apothecary (Richard Cupper, responsible for preparing and selling medicines according to Claver’s prescriptions), and a surgeon (Christopher Lucas, responsible for bloodletting, treating wounds and fractures, and undertaking all surgical operations), neither of whom were university educated. Together, the team worked tirelessly for their patients.

## People and Places

Among the thousands of patients that Claver treated in the course of his career, from the children of the poor to the families of the extravagantly wealthy, there were few illnesses and diseases for which there were generally effective treatments. Many, like plague and smallpox, were highly contagious and likely to be fatal. Yet Claver never flinched. He had one notable defence —the doctor’s cane. Having filled its perforated head with aromatic herbs, he could hold this to his nose to mask any foul smells, ‘bad air’ or miasma, arising from his patients. And as miasma was believed to be the vehicle for the transmission of infections, so it was hoped that this simple practise would afford protection. Naturally, it didn’t.

But Claver also needed to be fit and strong to cope with the physical demands of riding hundreds of miles each month, often in haste and in bad weather. He would travel with cases packed with flasks for the analysis of urine, cloths and bandages, and a selection of surgical instruments and medicines according to what he knew or might anticipate about a patient’s condition. He would often need to rest his horse overnight before returning home, but the poor condition of the roads and the vagaries of the weather often wrecked his plans. Sometimes, he had to walk his horses through the lakes of Sedgemoor or pick himself up after a fall, but such things were easy compared with getting lost in the Mendip fog.



Map of Somerset, c.1749, engraved by Thomas Kitchen

The most demanding (and financially rewarding) journeys that Claver had to make were to the manor houses of the gentry. These families, often friends and patients with whom he would stay for days, were spread across the West Country. They included: **Bampfylde** (*Poltimore, Devon*); **Berkeley** (*Pylle & Maiden Bradley, Somerset*); **Bragge** (*Thorncombe, Devon*); **Bull** (*Shapwick, Somerset*); **Chichester** (*Youlston Park, Devon*); **Coxe** (*Ston Easton, Somerset*); **Dawe** (*Ditcheat, Somerset*); **Drewe** (*Broadhembury, Devon*); **Farewell** (*South Cadbury, Somerset*); **Harrington** (*Kelston, Somerset*); **Helyar** (*East Coker, Somerset*); **Hippisley** (*Ston Easton, Somerset*); **Horner** (*Mells, Somerset*); **Leigh** (*Newport, Isle of Wight*); **Long** (*Downside, Somerset*); **Martin** (*East Pennard, Somerset*); **Mogg** (*Farrington Gurney, Somerset*); **Newman** (*North Cadbury, Somerset*); **Phelips** (*Montacute, Somerset*); **Pitt** (*Cricket Malherbie*); **Poulett** (*Hinton St George, Somerset*); **Prowse** (*Axbridge, Somerset*); **Seymour** (*Maiden Bradley, Somerset*); **Strode** (*Shepton Mallet, Somerset*); **Trevelyan** (*Nettlecombe, Somerset*); **Warre** (*Hestercombe, Somerset*); and **Wyndham** (*Witham Friary & Orchard Wyndham, Somerset*). Several of these families such as the Coplestone-Bampfylde, Horners, Phelips, Trevelyans and Wyndhams were conspirators in the Jacobite rebellion in 1715, though Claver was not involved.

Claver also often went to Bath and Bristol.

He would go to Bath

- **to attend to patients** – to see visitors such as Sir John and Lady Fust, the sheriff of Gloucestershire (for whom he also bought an oboe); and residents such as Elizabeth and William Hunt, rector of the abbey;
- **to shop** – for gifts, especially for books and music from Henry Hammond’s premises;
- **to do business** – to negotiate the purchase of land from Lord James Waldegrave’s estate; to commission work from the master stonemasons John Harvey and Thomas Greenway; to enable his tailor from Wells ‘to see [how] the fashionable make clothes’;
- **to treat family and friends** – to enjoy the fine dining and good company; and
- **to enjoy music** – meeting famous musicians, attending concerts in the city, and playing music with the Harringtons at their manor house in Kelston.



"The road from Bath to Kelston",  
 drawn by Thomas Bonner, from  
*The History and Antiquities of the  
 County of Somerset*, by John  
 Collins (Bath, 1791).

Here are some typical diary entries (with weather report, 'W') from Claver's visits to Bath:

**24 - 26 September 1718**

*P. [I wrote a prescription] I went to Bath & had with me my Daughter [Betty] & M<sup>r</sup> Sarah Edwards. The 3 Tuns was so full that we could only get a Chamber for my Daughter & M<sup>r</sup> Edwards & I lodg'd one night in a Chamber of the 3 Ton=Lodgings. We supp'd at the Inn. W: 0 Z ~*

*We continued in Bath & Din'd with my Sister[-in-law] [Anne] Leigh at her Lodgings at M [Rev. Thomas] Fords. II M [Anthony] Walke[le]y [Organist of Salisbury Cathedral]. W: 0.*

*We continued at Bath. II [I went to prescribe for] Mr [John] Harington at Kelston. I got Mr Du Burg, Mr Shojan, Mr Walter and Mr David Baswilwaldt to go with me. We Dined there, and had a Consort of Musick. We returned to Bath in the Evening; and I entertained them with 3 Fowles and Wine in the great new Dining-Room at the 3 Tuns, where I had a Performance of Musick by these extraordinary Hands. And had M<sup>r</sup> Leigh, her Friend M<sup>r</sup> Hull, M<sup>r</sup> Walkey, her Sister Walkey, two of the M<sup>r</sup> Burton's of Sutton Crow=thorn, & some others to hear it. W: Z 0 Z ~.*

**25 - 26 September 1723**

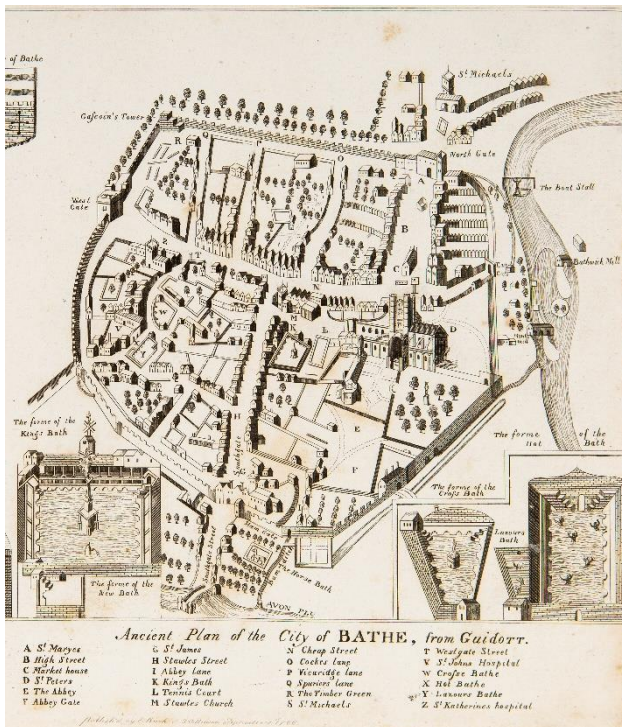
*I went to M Harington's at Kelston. I call'd & Dined at M [Preston] Hyppesley's at Stone=Easton. I went over upon Wall in the River Avon at Saltford, & my Horses were carry'd over in the Stone=Barge. I found M Rogers the Clergy=Man, his Brother the Organist, & M George all of Bristow at M Harington's, & they all Play'd in the Consort in the Evening. I play'd Tables [backgammon] with M Harington. W: 0*

*I went about 12 a clock to Bath to hear Signiora Corzzoni sing; But she was gone to London. The Bristow [Bristol] Gentlemen were gone to Bath in the Morning: I found them at the 3 Tunns, & Drank with them, & Jo Priest. I visited M<sup>r</sup> Wrottesley at the Abbey, & D Hunt at his House. I met with M Burland just come from the [horse]Race at Clarken=Down. And he & I went & Lodg'd at M Harington's at Kelston. I found the Bristow Gentlemen again there, & we had a Consort. I play'd three Consertos, & then play'd Tables with M<sup>r</sup> Harington. W: Z 0 Z ~*

3 - 4 November 1723

*I went to Bath, & Dined at M Shorts at the White Hart. In the Evening [I] went to M [Thomas] Harrison's House & with him in his Parlor M W<sup>n</sup> Harington's Wife, M Robert Harington's Wife, & D Harington's Wife, were Drinking Tea. I stay'd not long; but afterwards went into Harrison's Great [Assembly] Room, & looked on some losing their Money at the Ace of Hearts. I supp'd at my Quarters on a Couple of Fowls. W: Z 0 Z ~*

*I saw M [Henry] Mills of Croyden [Headmaster of Whitgift School, Croydon] in the Pump-room. He & I went to M Greenway's, that I might speak with him about Vases which I had a mind to put on the Top of mine House, instead of the Rails & Ballisters now decay'd. I visited D Harrington; Then I went & talk'd with M Harvey about a monument for my Wife. I about 12 a clock went to Kelson to Visit M<sup>r</sup> Harington. D Harington → [came] after Dinner. I lodged there. W: ~ & foggy.*



Map of Bath' from *Ancient Plan of the City of Bathe* (1706), based on T. Guidott's plan.

## Questions and Reflections

I was delighted that my talk raised several questions:

- When Claver set up his medical practice in Wells, did he have help from any established physicians there? ( Possibly, but I've found no evidence of this.)
- Do the West Country family of Broderips appear in Claver's books? (Yes, in the diary alone there are at least 93 references to the family, especially to William, the organist at Salisbury cathedral.)
- Did Claver know Robert Gay, MP for Bath? (Yes, in particular, he tells us that he 'writ to Mr Gay, surgeon in Hatton Garden, about cutting off the cancer from Mrs Grishild Irish's breast'. Grizelda was a young unmarried woman who lived in Wells.)

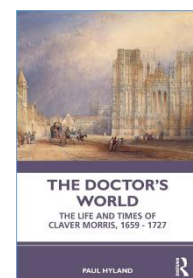
There was also a general question about how the story of Claver's life and work fits in with what we know about the history of the period; a great question, but hard to answer here. In my book *The Doctor's World: the life and times of Claver Morris, 1659-1727* (2022) I tried to tell the story of Claver's extraordinary life, without stopping to discuss how it challenges or illuminates wider historical views and debates. But it certainly does, I think, in many ways. For example,

- Everyone will be familiar with the way that physicians were usually mocked for their greed and indolence, and their indifference towards their patients' suffering, according to so many notable satirical writers and artists of the period, not least in Bath. Of course, Claver made a good living from his work, but he was tireless and dedicated to the care of his patients, rich or poor. I think his apothecary and surgeon were too. There are not many, if any, physicians' diaries and accounts from which such a rich picture of a doctor's life and work in this period can be drawn. Claver's story is undoubtedly a good one in the social history of medicine.
- Although it is generally recognised that the enclosure of common lands in the eighteenth century greatly improved agricultural productivity, historians remain deeply divided on how it was conducted and what it meant for lives of agricultural workers and communities. Claver's manuscripts provide a wealth of information about the two ground-breaking Enclosure Acts that he oversaw in Somerset. I was genuinely surprised to see how determined he was that everything should be done as fairly and honestly as possible. When he feared that some Glastonbury farmers had been short-changed, he met them at an inn to compensate them at his own expense.
- There are many strands to the long-running and important historical debates about the nature of family life and childhood in the period 1500-1800. There is nothing in Claver's diary or accounts that suggests to me that parents were reluctant to invest (time and love) in their children at a time when child mortality was so high (compared with today), or that the rich were more caring of their children than the poor were of theirs (though there is a little evidence to the contrary).



*Acknowledgements* I should like to thank Niall Hobhouse for permission to show images from Claver's manuscript books, and to Wells Cathedral School for the image of Claver's house. I should also like to thank Dr Michael Rowe, Nigel Pollard, David Crellin, Richard Williams, Dr Roger Rolls and Dr Barbara White from the History of Bath Research Group for their help and support for my talk and this summary.

NB: book Review by Dr Roger Rolls – Page 65.



## ST ALPHEGE (953-1012) SON OF BATH, PROPHET FOR OUR TIMES

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker

Dr Giles Mercer

Abstract

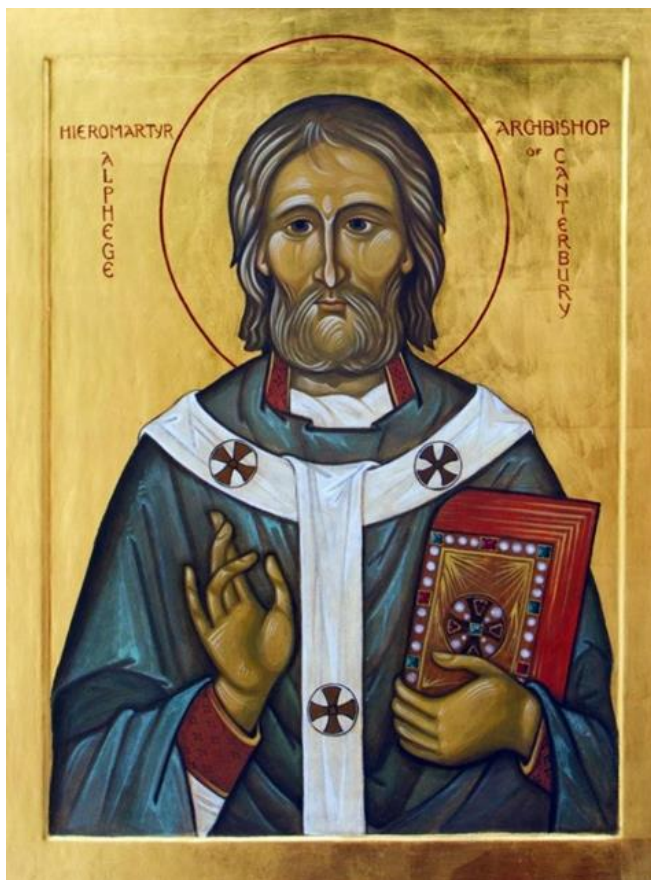
Dr Giles Mercer

Recent decades have seen something of a golden period in Anglo-Saxon studies in universities. This has led to a profound reassessment of the origins of the English state in the six centuries preceding the Norman Conquest, including developments in law (and an embryonic jury system) and government at various levels.

The Church shaped culture and ideas, social and economic behaviour, political expectations (above all influencing Christian ideals of monarchy, which still obtain), and the organisation of landscape and settlement. Vital to this transformation were monasteries, male and female. Important too was the impact of minsters (groups of clergy living in community, such as in Wimborne Minster), and the emergence of parishes and dioceses. The Christian conversion of England, of the British Isles, of the Continent (in which missionaries from these islands played such a formative part) capitalised on urban growth and bit-by-bit influenced the rural population. Evangelisation was the urgent, non-negotiable priority of the Anglo-Saxon Church. In seeking converts the Anglo-Saxon Church showed itself flexible, inventive, courageous, and energetic.

The Anglo-Saxon Church, furthermore, preceded the splits in Christendom, first the eleventh-century schism between the Western Church with the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and then the major fractures of the sixteenth century which we call the Reformation. The Anglo-Saxon Church, therefore, as a subject of exploration is largely free from denominational pain and controversy. It is more accessible to all Christians than later periods. While in doctrine and jurisdiction, the Anglo-Saxons, like the Celtic Church, were in communion with Rome, they offer much common ground to be shared by all Christians, principally in religious art, architecture, scriptural study, prayer, pastoral approaches, preaching techniques, and missionary impulses. Like the Celts they also had profound insights into creation, the spirituality of the Cross, the theology of friendship and of learning.

In the Church of St Alphege in Oldfield Lane in Bath, the icon of the Saint Alphege which was commissioned for the millennium of his martyrdom in 2012 was painted by a local Orthodox artist, Tamara Penwell. It was blessed at a service of evening prayer in which the Orthodox parish in Bath provided the choir. The sermon was given by a retired Anglican vicar, John Crowe, who concluded that Alphege can be, one of the 'living stones on which can be built progress towards unity.' There is, therefore, an ecumenical dimension to Anglo-Saxon church history.



England in the second half of the tenth century saw a marvellous flowering of Christian civilisation, flowing from monastic communities, serving the wider society and the Church, and led by men – and women – of exceptional abilities and prayerfulness. Monk-bishops, such as Alphege, gave kings and the wider society counsel, in peace-making, in law-making, in diplomacy. The surviving religious art and scholarship are stupendous. Far from being narrow or insular, the Anglo-Saxon Church, like the Irish Church before it, was in touch with the best practices on the Continent, and its leading men and women often played a notable part in the wider orbit of Christian Europe.

At the level of religious culture, the world of Alphege was glorious. But at the other extreme were the appalling threats and reality of Viking invasions, with their consequent destruction of life and property. It was a society in a state of fairly constant fear, especially in the south-east of England. We know that many Scandinavians settled and converted to Christianity, and that the devastation might have been exaggerated by chroniclers, but not much. Colonies of Danes settled in East Anglia and east of the Pennines, and Norwegians settled in the north-west, but this did not stop others from raiding. Viking raiders came for captives – slaves – and booty. All this was over and above the widespread incidence of epidemic, bad harvests, illness and poverty. The tenth century was an age of extremes, of disturbing contrasts.

The people had lived under more or less constant fear of invasion by Vikings since the first invasions of the 790s and the first full-scale Danish invasion of the 860s. By the late 870s nearly all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had fallen to the invaders. Only Wessex was able to survive, under the remarkable leadership of its king, Alfred. The tenth century is the story of the unification of the English by the Kingdom of Wessex. In 973 Alfred's great-grandson, Edgar, was crowned king of the English in Bath Abbey by Bishop Dunstan of London. Sadly, Edgar died only two years later and was succeeded after family bloodshed by Aethelred (nicknamed later the 'Unready', of 'bad-counsel' or 'without counsel') who reigned from 978 until 1016, a long and often disastrous reign. Alphege, along with the English people, had the great misfortune to have to live with the consequences.

In 991 Danish raids began again in earnest and with devastating success in Essex. Aethelred decided not to fight but to use up the Kingdom of Wessex's long-accumulated and rich reserve of coinage to buy off the attackers. Appeasement through danegeld, however, only encouraged the Vikings to come back for more. There was further folly, mixed with cruelty. With an astonishing change of approach, Aethelred in 1002 ordered Danes living in England to be slaughtered. In effect this meant mainly Danish mercenaries and not Danish settlers. Unsurprisingly, the Danes wanted revenge, and took it in a terrifying way in the great invasions of the early 1000s, the years that critically affected Alphege's time as archbishop of Canterbury.

Alphege (Elphege, Aelheath, Alfege) is honoured in his home-city Bath mainly by the Church of St Alphege, established by Downside Abbey in 1929 to serve a growing population in the west of Bath from Oldfield to Twerton. The Church is an architectural gem (grade 2\*) designed by Sir Giles Gilbert-Scott. The saint's life was sculpted on the capitals of the nave pillars by William Drinkwater Gough.



The sources on Alphege's life are sparse and, apart from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the years 1011 and 1012, considerably later. Nonetheless, they allow us to uncover the actions and personality of the man himself, although one has to bear in mind that the sources are somewhat encased in a particular hagiographical mould. However, the main stages of his life can be confidently established and the principles for which he died are not in doubt.

Alphege was born in 953 or 954 in Weston village on the outskirts of Bath, to a family of some social standing and wealth. There is a Victorian statue of him as a boy in a niche above a house which is alleged to be on the site where he was born and which is near the Church of All Saints. Alphege felt called to the priesthood and monastic life. He entered the monastery at Deerhurst near Tewkesbury, being elected abbot in his twenties.

The twelfth-century chronicler William of Malmesbury tells us that Alphege went on to Glastonbury, which had been reformed and extended under Abbot Dunstan in the 940s, and became prior and a protégé of Dunstan. But even the higher form of monastic life at Glastonbury seemed not to be the long-term answer to the spiritual hunger which Alphege seemed to experience.

Alphege returned to Bath in 980, as a monk at Bath Abbey. Yet soon he was able to remove himself to a hermitage in Lansdown, where the site of his cell is marked on Ordnance Survey maps as St Alphege's Well. He seems to have craved a solitary life of deep prayer, perhaps a period of retreat, taking stock spiritually. However, he was constantly sought after by many, seeking his counsel.

Dunstan then put Alphege under pressure to resume the ministry of leadership and to be abbot of the monastic community in the centre of Bath. If Bath Abbey were like other abbeys at that time, it is likely that there would have been a group of monastic cells, like little houses, around the main church, with perhaps several small chapels. The main church might have been something bigger than the Anglo-Saxon church at Bradford-on-Avon. The Rule of St Benedict, under Dunstan's leadership, became the most influential and commonly-used monastic Rule, but other Rules and influences and local practices were at work. In terms of monastic practices, it was an emerging and rather fluid time.

Dunstan seems to have seen Alphege as an essential ally in his programme of monastic reform and an agent in his strategy to have a monk of the highest quality appointed to every bishopric. For this reason, Dunstan recommended to the king in 984 that Alphege be appointed to the See of Winchester and cajoled Alphege into accepting this important and large bishopric. Alphege agreed and succeeded in 984 the great reforming monk-bishop and scholar, St Ethelwold.

At Winchester Alphege is reported to have won the admiration of all. Foremost in his concerns was care of the poor. It is said that when he was bishop there was not a single beggar on the streets of Winchester. This did not stop a building programme or a drive for better music and liturgy. Many churches in the diocese were rebuilt or restored. The Cathedral was consecrated in 993 or 994. A massive organ was installed in the Cathedral which required seventy men to operate, and is said to have been so powerful that it made the cathedral walls shake and could be heard for miles around.

In 994 a Viking force led by Olaf Tryggvason harried the south of England, and danegeld was imposed. Alphege had a central part in the peace treaty that led to Olaf's confirmation as a Christian at Andover and Olaf's promise never to attack England again, a promise he kept. This was a remarkable achievement on Alphege's part which shows his charisma, extraordinary courage, and great diplomatic skills.

Such was Alphege's standing that it was not surprising he was appointed in 1006 to succeed Aelfric as archbishop of Canterbury. It was Canterbury which saw Alphege's final struggle, about which the chroniclers are clear.



In September 1011 Danish Vikings were at the gates of Canterbury and a two-week siege ensued. It is alleged that they were let inside the walls by the treachery of a certain Alfmaer, the city's archdeacon no less, a man whose life Alphege had saved (how is not recorded). The sources present him as a kind of Judas-figure. The Danes then were able to enter the city, which they ransacked. They burned the cathedral and took many citizens prisoner, including Alphege. The graphic account of the chronicler Osbern bears comparison with atrocities in our own times.

The Danes demanded a vast sum of money (£48,000) for the release of prisoners, to be paid by the following Easter 20 April 1012. Alphege was brutally seized, along with others, and taken to Danish headquarters at Greenwich, where he and the others were imprisoned for seven months. It took all seven months up to raise the crippling ransom money, but the Danes then insisted on a further hefty ransom of £3,000 for the life of Alphege. At this point Alphege took a stand. He refused to allow this to be done, because it would have brought unbearable suffering to his people. Enraged by what they saw as Alphege's intransigence, members of the Danish army brought him before their assembly on 19 April, Holy Saturday, and, in the words of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,

shamefully put him to death. They pelted him with bones and with ox-heads, until one of them struck him on the head with the back of an axe; then Aelfheah sank to the ground, blood flowing from his body, and his holy soul departed to God's kingdom.

Paradoxically, Alphege's death helped in the reconciliation between invader and invaded. This had already begun over the winter of 1011-1012 when Alphege was slowed to minister to Danes during an epidemic and some of the sick converted to Christianity. The cult of Alphege started among the Anglo-Saxons and Danish people immediately after his murder. Overnight, literally, he became both a martyr-saint and a national hero. One story has it that the Danish leaders had planned to drop Alphege's corpse quietly into the river, but they were thwarted by a great outpouring of grief among the English *and* the Danes. People-power prevailed. On the day after his murder Alphege's body was taken for burial in state at St Paul's in London. Instantly his tomb became the focus of pilgrimages and many miracles were credited to his intercession. The leader of the Danish Vikings, Thorkell, also defected to the English, along with 45 ships. There was clearly something about Alphege which attracted all ranks.

When the Danish King Cnut came to the throne in 1016 the cult of Alphege threatened to become something of an embarrassment. Cnut's solution was to become Alphege's most fervent patron. In 1023 he ordered the removal of the relics from London to Canterbury where they were placed on the north side of the high altar. Cnut wisely capitalised on the spiritual virtue of the native martyr.

The Normans were to look with less favour on some English saints' cults. But St Alphege came through with flying colours. An important conversation on Alphege between Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury (1070-89) and his successor, Anselm, is reported in Eadmer's *Life of Anselm*. Lanfranc asked Anselm whether Alphege could properly be counted as a martyr given the circumstances of his death: he had, after all, been killed not for professing the faith but because he refused to pay ransom money to his pagan captors. Anselm argued that Alphege had been killed above all because he had died for justice, which was equivalent to dying for Christ and thus equivalent to martyrdom: 'He who dies for justice', Anselm famously said, 'dies for Christ.' Indeed, this is the inscription of the memorial tablet in the nave of St Alfege's Church, Greenwich, allegedly marking the site of the martyrdom.

Once persuaded, Lanfranc commissioned Osbern to write a life of Alphege and promoted his canonisation in 1078. Together with Dunstan, Alphege had a special place in the Cathedral next to the high altar. Such honour was equalled only by Thomas Becket, and Becket is said to have commended his cause to Alphege in the moments before he was killed. In the following centuries up to the destruction of Alphege's tomb by Henry VIII's agents in the 1530s, St Alphege was revered nationally. Everyone knew of him then: so very few do so now.

Archbishops Robert Runcie and Rowan Williams had special devotion to Alphege, as one who faced hostile forces, while standing up for justice, freedom, and human dignity. The story of Alphege raises some perennial, deep questions. Alphege was asked how much his life was worth. His reported answer is timelessly profound: no one, he said, can put a monetary value on a soul that has been redeemed by Christ. Human lives cannot be measured in monetary terms. Alphege deserves a much greater profile in Bath, in national life, and on the international stage, a martyr for justice, for solidarity with the poor, for reconciliation.

The qualities, the virtues, of Alphege are as inspiring as ever for Christians, since they exemplify heroically love of God and love of neighbour. But they inspire not only Christians. Courage, integrity, truthfulness, compassion, selflessness, a sense of justice, and peace-making speak to all humanity, to those in all faith traditions and none. It was on that basis that I was invited to speak about Alphege in the Bath Mosque in 2012. Alphege stood against violence and oppression. He demonstrated a deep sense that we are stewards of the world and have no right to plunder and destroy at the expense of our fellow creatures. Alphege offers a uniting and inspiring example for our multi-faith cities, for our country, and for our troubled world.

Giles Mercer



A 15th-century [illuminated manuscript](#) showing Ælfheah being asked for advice. (Source: Wikipedia).

## THE FAILURE OF THE OLD BATH BANK

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker

Bruce Land on video recording

Abstract

Bruce Land / ed. Nigel Pollard

Joseph Phillott and Mary Lathbury, the author's 5<sup>th</sup> great-grandparents, were the couple that started the Phillott family's significant influence on Bath and its surrounds in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Joseph became a man of property and eventually became a founding partner (with four other men) of the Bath Bank in 1768.

Joseph's grandfather Daniel had been born in the Languedoc region of France in 1668 and the family tree asserts that Daniel emigrated to England in the first half of 1688 due to the persecution of Huguenots of which Daniel was apparently a follower. Louis had amped up the persecution of the Huguenots by issuing the "Edict of Fontainebleau(Nantes)" in 1685 which ended legal recognition of Protestantism in France. Huguenots were either forced to convert or flee as refugees. It is said that 200,000 Huguenots left France of which 50,000 moved to England. He died on or slightly before 11 Apr 1735 and he is buried at St Swithin's Burial ground, Walcott, Bath.

Daniel had married and had a son, also called Daniel, who appears to have been a carpenter based in Bath where in 1714 he married a Mary Stephens of Wantage. There are few publicly available records of this time but it appears he took on apprentices in 1721 and 1725, so his business must have prospered. He and Mary had two children, Joseph and Ann.

Bath in the early 1700s had recovered from its tumultuous history. The English civil war had taken its toll - the royalists took it over in 1643 only to surrender to parliament two years later. So it returned to its market town roots and depended on its springs of natural waters. At the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, its population was approximately 3,000 and they were mostly contained within the medieval walls. But things started to change. Its first pump room was built in 1705. Then it began to grow as roads were paved and lit by gas and large buildings were erected.

It can be assumed that the family prospered, as a carpentry business in a building 'boom' must have been a case of being in the right place at the right time.

Joseph married a Mary Lathbury, who together had seven children, three daughters and four sons and were established enough to have their portraits painted as seen below:.



Portraits of Joseph and Mary Phillotts, Felsted School, Essex

Bath grew a lot as it became a destination for the well off for their leisure activities, Gravel walks, bowling greens and coffee houses sprung up, even though its central streets remained narrow and cramped.



Painting of the Pump Room by Thomas Rowlandson

Joseph's bank, referred to as 'The Old Bath Bank' was the second one established in Bath and it prospered. It started operations in 1768 and held a local monopoly for 8 years because the first bank had shut up shop in 1765 when the owner died.

Banks at that time were either individuals or partnerships of no more than six named individuals. These restrictions were put in place by the law makers so that the Bank of England had a secure monopoly as a joint stock company - the progenitor of the limited liability company that came into use in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is likely to remain in use forever in a capitalist based economy. These restrictions also meant that the capital base of banks was restricted to the resources of the partners because they were personally liable for the debts incurred by the partnership. Some individuals had interests in more than one bank. Okay when times are booming but not so good when the local economies suffered reversals. Creditors wanted their money. Bankrupt debtors could end up in jail for years. There was no regulation of banks until 1808 so there was no formal oversight. Banking can be a precarious business if you throw good money after bad or provide services for free.

The original partners in the bank were Messrs (Samuel) Cam (a "superfine clothier"), (Daniel) Clutterbuck (an attorney-at-law), Whitehead, Danvers and (Joseph) Phillott and set up shop in what is now known as General Wolfe's House in Trim Street. Some of the partners were closely linked to Bradford-on-Avon, a town 20kms to the south-east of Bath.

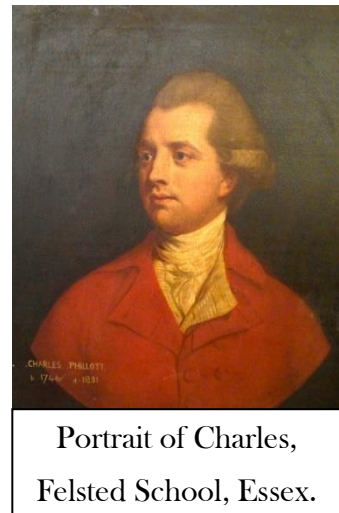
Joseph's business interests flourished and he died in 1784, well before the property boom in Bath came to an end. In the eight years after his death, some 30 percent of the housing stock in the city was built - an extraordinary level of activity.

After he died (his will ran to 5 pages), his property at the Bear Inn (operated by his son Henry) was not immediately transferred. His executors and sons, Joseph (2) and Charles (1), prepared proposals for the Commissioners of the Bath Improvement Act to review on 17 February 1802 at the Guildhall.

**Charles Phillott (1746 - 1831)** took over his father's stake in the Bath Bank when Joseph (1) died in 1784. Charles would have been 37 years old at the time. It is highly likely that he had been taken into the family partnership well before then so he could 'learn the ropes' but no documents that support this possibility have yet been found.

On 4 August 1768, at St Michael Church in Bath, he married Ann Robinson Wright (1745 - 1806), the daughter of the surgeon to whom Charles' older brother Joseph had been apprenticed.

Charles Phillott, like his father Joseph, rose to the elite of the local society's merchant and political class. He was an apothecary, trained from 1761 (aged 14) under a Jonathan Hershaw. He took on apprentices himself from June 1773.



The family tree states he was Mayor of Bath in 1797, 1805, 1814 and 1823 and had been elected a magistrate for many years.

This is the summary of his Council positions from Trevor Fawcett's article.

|            |                                      |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Councilman | Feb 1776-97                          |
| Constable  | 1776-77, 1786-87                     |
| Bailiff    | 1778-79, 1788-89                     |
| Alderman   | Apr 1797-1831 (renamed Councilman)   |
| Mayor      | 1797-98, 1805-06, 1814-15, 1823-24   |
| J.P.       | 1796-97, 1798-1805, 1806-23, 1824-31 |

He was also a foundation member (1777) of the Bath & West of England Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce and was a vice-president of that society from its inception until his death 54 years later.

He was also Treasurer of the Pauper charity in 1780 which had been recently revived and was the person to whom applications were sent in December 1780 for the position of Apothecary for the charity for 1781. On 7 August 1784, he was admitted to the Royal Cumberland Lodge of the Freemasons in Bath - five months after his father had died.

In The Bath Chronicle of Thursday 26 October 1786, he, along with George Chapman (another family you will meet a member of soon), were appointed Chief Constables of Bath by the Corporation of Bath. Chief Constables were essentially the chief magistrates and dealt with both criminal and civil matters.

There were numerous public notices in the Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette listing him as the conduit for benefactors passing money to various causes like the Pauper charity and the Bath Hospital. He was also a committee member of the Bath Agricultural Society in 1787, the Bath Guardian Society in April 1789 (this was a group set up for the protection of property from thefts and prosecuting Felons, Forgers, Cheats, Receivers of Stolen Goods, Swindlers, Highwaymen etc - essentially, a local 'police' force) and on 11 December 1792 was appointed Treasurer of The Association for preserving Liberty, Property and the Constitution of Great Britain against Republicans and Levellers (aka 'The Bath Loyal Association').

This last-mentioned association was one of many that sprung up in towns across England to show support for the King. There were fears that the ongoing French Revolution that had started in 1789

would spread to England. The 'Reign of Terror' in France was about to begin with widespread use of the guillotine. King George would have been concerned seeing what had happened to Louis and his wife Marie Antoinette.

In May 1798, he was Mayor for the year and was the chairman and Treasurer of the Bath Military Association and in September that year his brother Joseph joined him as a JP. By December 1805, Charles was back as Mayor and issued a public notice of a meeting to be held on 6 December to consider raising subscriptions for a monument to Admiral Viscount Nelson, arguably the most famous UK naval officer. The battle of Trafalgar had been run and won - and one of Charles relations by marriage, Admiral Pender, was there in the thick of it.

Meanwhile, his banking business continued and in April 1830, one of his partners, Launcelot Lowther, left the partnership. Johnson Phillott, Charles' son, is shown as one of the partners in the public notice of the dissolution of the partnership. One of the other partners, Charles Lowder, was the son of Commander John Lowder (said to be one of the original partners at the establishment of the bank) and was married to Susan Fuge, Mary Fuge's sister. Charles himself left the banking partnership in early 1830 aged 83, having put in some £25,000 of securities as he left. More on the Old Bath Bank a bit later.

The Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette of 7 July 1831 contain a public notice concerning Charles' nature which is reproduced here:

*"In the first of these schools (in Ham Gardens) we have seen the man, who the next year filled the highest station in the Corporation of that city (Bath) condescend to sit down to teach a poor shoe-black the letters of the alphabet. This is indeed proof, amongst many others, of his mind being actuated by the spirit of his Divine Lord and Master, when he washed his disciples' feet."*

Clearly Charles left a large impression on a lot of people and obviously saw he had a social responsibility that went along with his position in Bath's society. His will is quite brief at half a page. He bequeathed his real estate to his daughters Ally and Mariann and, after providing for the residue of Mariann's marriage settlement, it was left to son Johnson to come to a fair distribution between him and his sisters.

The responsibility for the family's banking business passed to his son, Johnson.

### ***Henry Phillott (1748 - 1821)***

Joseph had another younger son, Henry who married Ann Haycock (Heycock) (1750 - 1821) on Tuesday 11 July 1769 at the Bath Abbey.

Henry was apprenticed to his father around 1 January 1762 in the occupation of Inn Holder.

In May 1776. Henry operated the centrally located Bear Inn and Tavern from which, apart from serving drinks and accommodation, he solicited enquiries for the letting of properties. There were toll roads in place at the time and certain premises were advertised as being toll-free, an obvious selling point of the time. There were other notices at that time that indicate the Inn was used to hold property auctions or creditors meetings. Henry's place was centrally placed and was clearly well regarded as a place to conduct public matters.



Portraits of Henry and Ann,  
Felsted School, Essex.

The Bear Inn had been in the Phillott family for three generations at that time from what I have been able to determine. It was located on Cheap Street very close to the Bath Abbey in central Bath and no longer exists.

In July 1789, the Bath Improvement Bill was given Royal Assent. This was a far reaching piece of legislation that set in place major changes to Bath. The improvement works program was to be funded from new tolls (principally road tolls via turnpikes) that were collected every day except Sunday. The estimated value of the houses to be compulsory acquired was £83,173. The Bear Inn at Cheap Street, North-side was one of them and was to become the centre of a major dispute.

The following April Henry informed the public in a series of weekly notices that Cheap Street would be shut until 29 September that year and there were new ways to get to his Bear Inn.

On Thursday 2 June 1791, the Chronicle announced that the preceding Friday an agreement had been reached for the purchase of the leasehold property, which had been in the family for three generations, and some adjoining freehold stables. The price was £13,500 (over £1million in today's money) which sum included £2,000 for damages caused to Henry on account of his forcible removal. Henry also received property (for a set fee) on the west side of the new street to be named Union Street on which he had two years to build a hotel or inn. In the intervening period, though, Henry could continue to operate the lower floor of the Bear Inn.

However, this sum was £7,000 more than the estimated value of the property presented to Parliament when the Bill was presented. Due to this disparity, a number of the alderman thought that the value should be submitted to jury for consideration. The motion was dismissed by a vote of 12 to 6 - in the 12 were Henry's brothers Charles and Joseph, their banking partner George Chapman, Henry Wright (Charles father-in-law and Joseph's surgery master) and Charles Gunning (a relative of the husband of Henry's niece Sarah). While the vote did not depend upon them, it is interesting to note whether any 'conflict of interest' issue was raised by the dissenting alderman, if that concept was formally recognised at the time.

Nevertheless, despite this supposed windfall, trouble struck Henry when he went bankrupt sometime in 1794, culminating in a dividend to creditors of five shillings in the pound. Looking at the Bath property market at the time, it would appear Henry may have over-extended himself after the acquisition and could not offload properties he had built. Bath would have been well into its renovation program. The Bath Chronicle reports on Wednesday 15 August 1798 that new Commissioners under the Bath Improvement Act had been appointed and that the orders made in May 1791 (the purchase referred to above) were revoked! Seven years and back to square one for the Phillotts. All matters were settled in 1802 when the Phillotts agreed to build premises on Union Street.

Henry's wife Ann also had her financial problems. She had the concession to rent the Kings, Hot and Cross-Bath Pumps, expiring in July 1804. She had a public notice issued on 6 June 1804 requesting the 'favour of Visitors, Resident Gentry and others, who have been supplied with Bath Water from the Pumps to pay for the water' before the term of her lease expired. She had been handing it out for free.

### **The Collapse of the Old Bath Bank**

The collapse of this bank was huge news in Bath in the late 1841/early 1842 and I am fairly sure it seriously affected, if not haunted, the Phillott family for a long time. In the words of Henry Hobhouse MP, one of its partners, uttered six months prior to its collapse, in his evidence before the UK Parliament's Select Committee on Banks and Issue "We are the purse holders for the district".

What increased the losses suffered by creditors was the standard practice of lenders to banks requesting the bank deposit securities with them in order to secure the loans they made to the Bank. Like any good lender would do. This means that the pool of assets available to meet general creditors is reduced - sometimes by small amounts, sometimes by large amounts. With respect to the Bath Bank, the latter applied. Their London agent was owed over £35,000 fully covered by assets over which it had some form of security.

In the collapse of the Bath Bank, proofs of debt from approximately 3,000 creditors were assessed over the 10 years of the bankruptcy. This is an enormous number of creditors, even in the current year (2022). I can picture a junior clerk poring over the documents and marking a determination by some form of ink stamp or the like. "Accepted", "Rejected", "Partnership debt", etc with the amount duly noted. There would have been a large manual alphabetised ledger created and maintained for these proofs, recording who was owed the debt, the amount of the debt and then the dividends paid.

The latter was crucial because the proofs did not all come in at the start of the bankruptcy. Interim dividends would be paid and if a creditor came late to the 'party' so to speak, they would be paid 'catch-up' dividends to ensure all creditors were treated equally. Finally, if any creditor died, which I am sure would have been case here, the ledger would have had to record accurately to whom the future dividends would be paid. There was no photocopying or computers in those days.

After being made bankrupt, the individual/s concerned had to attend a formal examination by their creditors. Certainly the examination of the three partners of the Bath Bank was very willing and was extensively reported in the Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette in November 1841 - January 1842. Police were called to the November 1841 meeting.

My final general comment is that the impact of the collapse of a bank depends upon its size of operations as it relates to its geographic spread of customers and creditors. The higher the concentration of customers and creditors in a defined area, the greater the impact - often devastating entire communities as the wheels of commerce greased by a bank's flow of funds essentially seize up.

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So it came to pass that on Friday 17 September 1841, the three partners were made bankrupt, the bank/s collapsed as did Johnson's world and his two partners. One partner was the Charles Lowder I mentioned earlier, the husband of Susan Fuge, a sister-in-law of Johnson. The other partner was Henry William Hobhouse, the son of a wealthy peer.

There were three banks operated by the partnership, being Bath, Bradford-on-Avon and Trowbridge that had separate books of account (no computerization back then) but under the central control of the Bath based owners. The three were all known as "The Old Bath Bank".

At the time of its collapse, its head office was on Milsom Street, Bath. The principal reasons given for the collapse of the bank was the collapse of two of their borrowers, Messrs Cooper and Co and Messrs Saunders Tanner (or Fanner) and Saunders, both of whom operated woollen mills near where the non-Bath based branches were located.



I thought I would add a bit more detail about these two debtors of the bank seeing the effect they had on the Phillott family but it has proved too difficult to find and aggregate the information. So I will just give the bare facts and leave others to flesh it out if they are so inclined.

The **Cooper and Co mill** operated in Staverton, a small village to the north of Trowbridge to the east of Bath. It was a family concern as the partners at their bankruptcy on 1 October 1841 (two weeks after the bank's collapse) were Edward, Edward Peter, Benjamin and John Alexander. They got their certificate early in their bankruptcy and promptly set up shop again as woollen cloth manufacturers in Staverton. Probably bought the mills and equipment off their bankruptcy Commissioners.

The **Saunders partnership**, comprising John Saunders, James Tanner (Fanner) and Thomas Saunders, was based in Chippenham, a town to the north-east of Bath on the road to Swindon. It went bankrupt on 13 September 1841 (four days before the bank) and would appear to have been the trigger for the bank's bankruptcy nine days later. Its property was offered for sale by auction on 21 October 1842. The notice of the auction stated that it comprised three factories that were capable of manufacturing 40 pieces or 2,000 yards per week of the best superfine cloth 'which will readily insure an INCOME of £5,200 per year'. The notice also states other assets to be sold that day - freehold farm of 2 acres leased out and a freehold tan yard - and that the properties can 'INFLUENCE AT THE BOROUGH ELECTION ABOUT 50 VOTES'. Nothing like a bit of political influence to sweeten the pot so to speak.

Both of these accounts had been in place when Charles started with the bank at the age of 17, indicating these mills had been customers since 1807. The debts just kept creeping up and up.

The woollen mills may have looked something like this >



The reason for saying may is that a history of 'The Trowbridge Woollen Industry as illustrated by the Stock Books of John and Thomas Clark 1804-1824' printed in 1950 gives a picture that the mills had to get bigger to compete.

The Industrial Revolution was in full swing and operations like Cooper and Co appears to have had smaller output compared to the larger operations like the Clarks. The price for the 'best Spanish wool' dropped in price from 6 1/2 shillings per pound in 1815 to half that in 1824. The price for wool had been kept high during the Peninsular war with Napoleon as supply could not leave Spain. But wars stop, as they did after the Battle of Waterloo finished off Napoleon in late June 1815, supplies return to normal and additional sources became available with the outcome being larger price reductions. All in all, not a good outlook for the mills unless they could pass on the price increase to their own customers.

From a reading of the newspaper account, the seeds for the bank's collapse were sown well before the woollen mills collapsed. Likely due to poor banking practices such as not discounting all bills presented to it by local merchants and allowing them to be paid at full face value ie the bank was not taking a cut for performing its services. 'Free' banking is a recipe for disaster. It is also clear that they likely did not take any security for some of the loans it made. I cannot be certain but I suspect that it did not have good security for the loans to the two woollen mills' partnerships.

Between 1827 and 1829 there were various transactions between the partners culminating in December 1829 when two amounts of £25,000 each were contributed by Sir Benjamin Hobhouse, a Baronet and former MP, and Charles Phillott. Sir Benjamin put in cash while Charles deposited securities that were assessed as being worth £25,000 - effectively clearing the doubtful debts balance.

These injections of capital were enormous amounts for the time, each equivalent to the purchasing power of nearly 6.0 million Aussie dollars in 2021 terms. Sir Benjamin's father John was a slave trader and Bristol merchant and is almost certainly the source of that family's wealth. Sir Benjamin officially left the partnership on 2 July 1830, six months after his son became a partner.

On Thursday 5 May 1842, the Trustees advertised their intention to pay a first dividend of 5 shillings in the pound (25%) the following Tuesday and this came to pass in June when £50,000 were paid to 2,000 creditors. Over time, the number of creditors grew to 3,000 owed £250,000+.

The logistics of the dividend payments at the time meant that the payments were staggered across five business days where creditors were paid in alphabetical order. Imagine if you can how this process actually took place before any form of technology replaced manual writing of cheques. There must have been a lot of clerks beavering with ink pots and the like, writing out names and numbers in their beautiful copperplate cursive writing of the times.

A fifth and final dividend of 4 pence in the pound (1.67%) was paid in late July/early August 1851, bringing the total return to creditors of nearly 49 pence in the pound on total debts in excess of £250,000. The assignees/trustees had therefore realised approximately £125,000 from asset recoveries. A disaster to say the least.

This insolvency rippled (or perhaps more precisely, ripped) through the Bath community. Charles Lowder had been the Treasurer of the Bath Friendly Society which had deposits with the Bank. Luckily for that society, its investments were guaranteed by the Government so they got all the money back.

For Charles' children (all six of them), it would have been a tough time. His eldest son, Charles Fuge Lowder (1820 - 1880), was studying for his B.A at Oxford at the time. Luckily, a friend stepped in to assist with funding and he graduated in 1843

For Henry William Hobhouse, the impact was likely severe in the short term. He had effectively resigned his position as MP in October 1841 and it must have a bit of a struggle to provide for his family, unless the family stepped in to help.

As for the Phillott family, very few of them were actually living in Bath at the time of the collapse which I feel was a good thing.

Johnson seems to have moved to London after the collapse, never to return.

There appear to be no burials at Bath after the 1840s except for Johnson's older sisters Ally and Mariann who both died in the first quarter of 1855.

My 3<sup>rd</sup> GGF Charles and his family never lived in Bath, residing at Clevelands in Dawlish, Devon. He is buried in Frome as are a substantial number of other family members, including in-laws. Charles' daughter Ellen moved to Bath after her marriage to Reverend Charles Penrose in June 1843, as he was the Head Master of Bath's Grosvenor School until July 1845. This was a fairly exclusive school that had been established in 1837 for the education of "none but the sons of noblemen and gentlemen".

This is the building known as Church House in Bradford-on-Avon from which the Bank operated.



This is a copy of an image of the cheques that the bank issued.

## WALK: NEWTON ST LOE

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Meet at The Old Rectory

Leader:

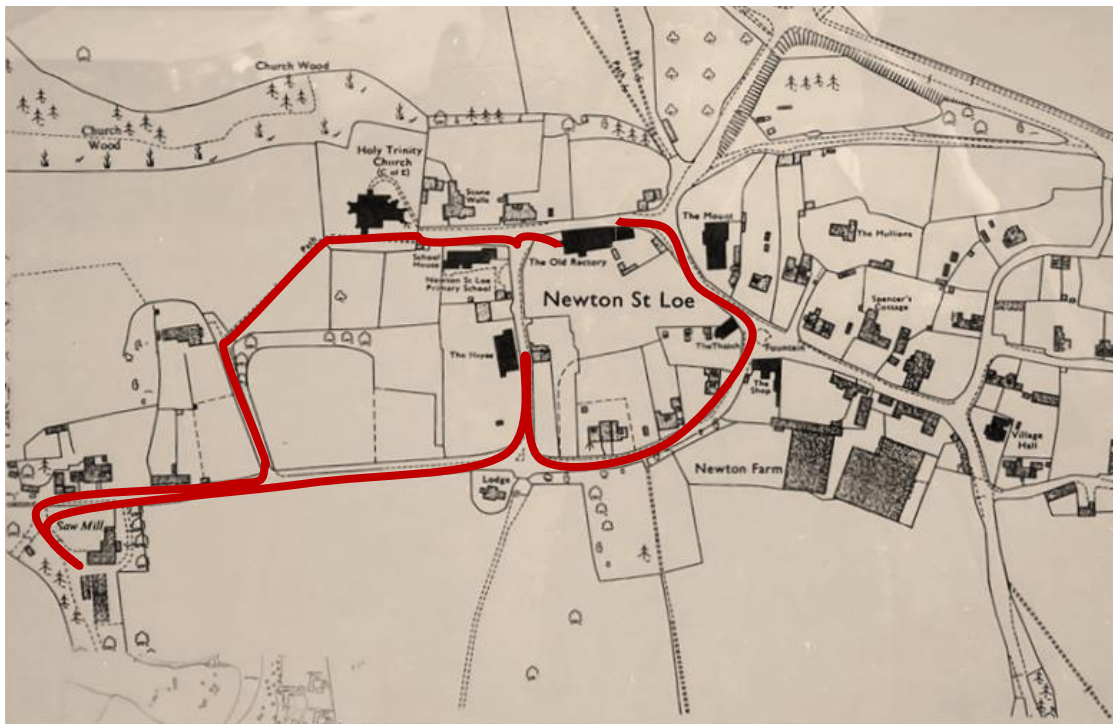
Nick Mould

Report:

Nigel Pollard/Duchy of Cornwall/Wikipedia

The Saxon manor of Newton, held by Aluric in the time of King Edward the Confessor, was given to the bishop of Coutances by William the Conqueror. At the time of Domesday the bishop was Geoffrey de Montbray also known from his see as Geoffrey of Coutances, a Norman nobleman, trusted adviser of William and a great secular prelate, warrior and administrator.

Newton St Loe takes its additional name from the family of St. Lo, who drew their name from Saint-Lô in Normandy.



The Newton Park Estate was purchased on the death of the 5th Earl Temple in 1941 whereas the Manor of Inglescombe was acquired as part of a larger land swap 520 years earlier back in 1421. Together they form a block of 6,300 acres creating the Duchy's largest estate outside Dartmoor.

The Newton Park Estate, when taken together with the adjacent Manor of Inglescombe, is unique in still retaining the Georgian mansion house of Newton Park and the estate village of Newton St. Loe. The two component estates, however, have very different histories.

The Duchy's Eastern District Office, covering Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, are situated at the Old Rectory in the village where the party met up with Nick Mould, the deputy Land Steward.

A view of the Old Rectory >



The overall Estate contains 14 farms, more than 100 houses and cottages, 160 hectares of woodland, eight offices and workshops, three village halls, a golf course, two lakes, two recreation fields, a pub, a rugby pitch, about two miles of river bank as well as a university. However, this walk, as can be seen from the map on the previous page was confined to the village.

Turning ones back to 'The Old Rectory' , the party continued walking along the short village street passing the Old School House on the left, established in 1698 but closed in 1972 which the late Queen Elizabeth II visited on 17 April 1956 when she came to the village following her official opening of the Chew Valley reservoir. The village also once had a Girls' school, now the village hall, built in 1846.



Just past the School House is the local Church of the Holy Trinity which dates to the 11th century. An interesting feature being its clock, which has only one hand. The church is noted in the Domesday book, where the village was recorded as "Newtonne".



< Walking through the churchyard and into the adjacent field footpath, there is a fine view of the church looking back up the hill.

There is a history of coal mining in the area as part of the Somerset coalfield, but all mines have now closed. The Lower and Middle Coal Measures at depths between 500 and 5,000 feet (152-1,525 m) of the Pensford Syncline, were worked at the Globe Pit in Newton St Loe in the 19th century, and on the edge of the village .

There was formerly a forge at the top of Smith Hill that leads up into the village.

Further down from the village by the New Mill the party noted an old weighing platform, although whether it related to Milling or Coal Mining was not known >.



The New Mill itself has recently been re-developed which together with a couple of other significant developments on the estate in recent years have led to award winning rural offices and the construction of some retirement cottages.

The cottage that we looked at back up the lane, have enabled retirees to stay in their village in more suitable accommodation, and looked very fine.



In the mid 1990s nearly three quarters of the directly let properties in the village of Newton St. Loe were occupied by retirees and of these two thirds were living on their own. The old properties often had awkward stairs and in some the bathrooms were not easily accessible. Many of the tenants had spent most of their lives in the village and wanted to remain in their cottages rather than moving to purpose built council accommodation.

In 1995 the Duchy carried out a local consultation exercise which indicated overwhelming support for some single storey manageable homes in the village so that the older generation could

stay as long as they were able to.

Virtually no new housing had been built in the village for 100 years, so site selection was dealt with sensitively. Various sites were short listed for consideration and consultation with villagers before taking the preferences to the planning authority. The favoured site was outside the development boundary of the village in a quiet location with southerly views out across the parkland. Consent was granted under the “exceptions” basis that there was a demonstrable local need that could not easily be answered elsewhere.

Design inspiration came from the nearby Lodge at Newton Park with its attractive chimneys, beaver tail roof tiles and stone mullioned windows. The accommodation comprised a ground floor of 56 square metres including a living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom with gas fired central heating. However, each cottage also had a proper staircase in the hall leading to an extra 41 square metres in the roof space divided into two rooms overlooking the rear gardens. This meant that tenants who were still able to use stairs could have a bedroom on the first floor or at have somewhere for visiting relatives to stay with plenty of space for storage.

Using local builders, Shellard Winter & Co, the Bath architects Watson Bertram & Fell completed the four cottage terrace in 2002 and in the autumn the then Prince of Wales, now King Charles III, officially opened them, just a couple of weeks before the first tenants took possession.

The planning conditions ensured that that the new occupiers were over 60 years of age and were previously tenants of the Duchy on the Newton Park Estate. This meant that there were immediately four new vacancies in the village which, after works of refurbishment, were available to let to younger generations.

Returning down the lane from the above cottages to the road, just opposite is the Gate Lodge to Newton Park, now the Bath Spa University – a ‘back entrance’ so to speak, that few of us were aware of. >



Staying with the village road, we arrived at the centre of the village with its listed fountain, behind the tree in the adjacent photograph, and just up the road from the justly famous ‘farm shop’ which was now unfortunately closed.

It was but a short walk from here back to the Duchy Offices and our parked cars.

## WALK: SYDNEY GARDENS

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Meet at main gate to Holburne Museum

Leader:

Kirsten Elliot

Report:

Kirsten Elliot/Nigel Pollard

The party met at the front gate of the gardens, where Kirsten Elliott explained how the gardens were intended to be at the centre of the Pulteney estate, with Upper Great Pulteney Street extending eastwards as far beyond the gardens as Great Pulteney Street extends to Laura Place. One feature that is often not noticed is that, looking westward down Great Pulteney Street, Barrow Hill, also known as Twerton Round Hill, can be seen on the horizon. Kirsten believes the street was aligned precisely to gain this view, because the hill was thought to be a burial mound, said by John Wood to be the burial site of none other than King Bladud. It was not until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that people began to realise it was natural. In John Kerr's Syllabus of 1825, describing the gardens, much was made of the view of the 'verdant promontories of the Barrow Hill' from the pavilion at the top, though the trees now obscure this panorama.



Kirsten offered an explanation of why one of Brunel's footbridges leads directly to a garden wall. Until recently it was thought that the coming of the GWR had swept away the labyrinth and the grotto, but she had discovered that this was incorrect. Once, she uncovered more and more evidence to back this up, and also proved that they had remained until about 1852. This meant that the grotto in the grounds of the Bath Spa Hotel could indeed be the Sydney Gardens grotto, and Brunel's bridge would have led you to the entrance. However, although she is 99% certain she is right, she stresses this is still a theory unless final pieces of the jigsaw turn up to clinch or refute this deduction.



A plaque which has long puzzled people and caused confusion is the one in the Temple of Minerva, stating that it commemorates the Pageant of 1909. It had been Bath's exhibit in the Festival of Empire at the Crystal Palace in 1911. When the festival was over, Bath Corporation was meant to bring it back, but left it where it was. In 1913, however, councillors were told that it was in the way of another forthcoming exhibition, and, if they wanted it to stay there, they would have to pay rates. After much wrangling, it was agreed to bring it back to Bath and re-erect it in Sydney Gardens. The Pageant Committee suggested that it could commemorate the pageant, and offered to pay for a plaque. At that time, everyone knew that, although the pageant itself was in Royal Victoria Park, most fringe events, including the final parade with a Battle of the Flowers, had taken place in Sydney Gardens. Over time, however, memories of the pageant faded, and today the temple causes confusion for the general public and local historians alike: the public being led to believe that the pageant took place here, while some historians claim that the gardens had nothing to do with the pageant at all. The temple is now the home of several information boards about the gardens.

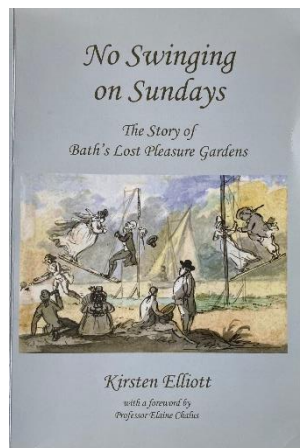




The tour was a pleasant stroll on a summer evening, with Kirsten pointing out other details including the site of Edward Davis's Rustic pavilion and a pond which once had a fountain which exhibited hydraulic experiments. As the author of a book on Bath's pleasure gardens and historic consultant to the restoration project, Kirsten was happy to answer questions on the history of the gardens.



*The book 'No Swinging on Sundays' is published by Akeman Press and is available in all good book shops at £19.99*



## BOOK REVIEWS:

### THE DOCTOR'S WORLD

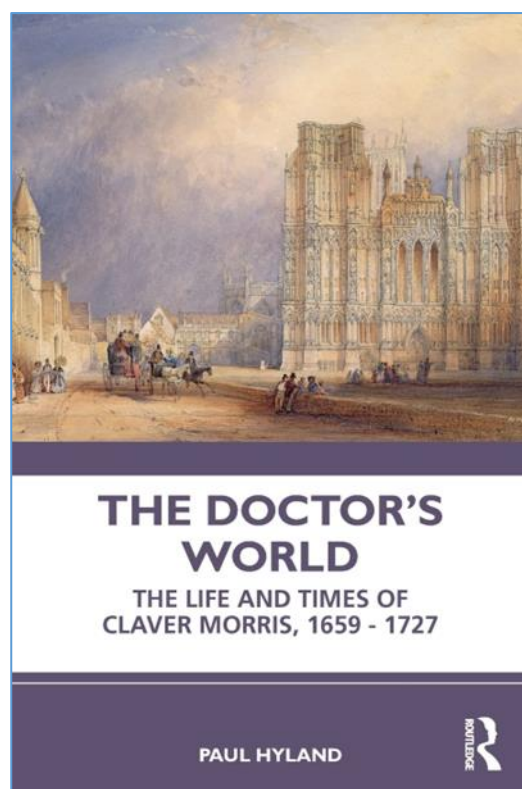
The life and Times of Claver Morris, 1659-172

by Paul Hyland

Routledge 2023

ISBN: 978-1-032 36765-1

Obsessional diarists can provide a goldmine of information for biographers, social historians and family researchers. One such was Dr Claver Morris, a physician living in Wells during the later Stuart period, who kept a series of diaries packed with details of everyday life. Paul Hyland, in his book "The Doctor's World", has used the diaries and other personal records to reconstruct a biography of Morris in the context of the contemporary political, medical and ecclesiastical climate of that time. One is reminded how different the world was then, the ubiquity of untimely death, the implicit reliance on useless or even dangerous therapies like phlebotomy and emetics. Religious intolerance, anachronist attitudes to women, petty disputes about property are all revealed at a local level.



Morris had an impressively widespread practice, visiting patients all over Somerset and Wiltshire, and as far away as Exeter. The vagaries of the weather seldom bothered him and he frequently got lost in Mendip fogs or was half-drowned crossing rivers when his horse refused to get on a ferry.

He enjoyed the friendship of a large number of influential people throughout the county, frequently organising wine-fuelled dinner parties at his house going on well past midnight. His rational and inventive approach to his work led him to concoct new chemical compounds in his laboratory and construct a mileometer to fix on his caleche. He was an accomplished musician, playing in concerts at Wells and with fellow musicians elsewhere, including the Haringtons at Kelston Manor. Despite this, there were sad times in his personal life; all three of his wives and two of his young children died before him and he refused to speak to his much-loved daughter for over a year after he learnt she had secretly married a gentleman who failed to meet with his approval.

Although selected excerpts of Morris's diaries were published by Edmund Hobhouse in 1934, Paul Hyland is the first to edit the entire surviving body of Morris's writing. In doing so he has given us a fascinating account of a successful country doctor's life and times. I became slightly disorientated by the sheer number of people named in the book and would have liked to have known a bit more about them, but this encouraged me to break off to look them up elsewhere. The chapters are quite short which made the book more readable. I would certainly recommend "The Doctor's World" to anyone interested in this period of history, or simply needs a reminder that life is better in the twenty-first century.

Roger Rolls March 2023

## LATEST WEBSITE PUBLICATIONS (HISTORYOFBATH.ORG) :

General Publications

### [Camden's Legacy](#)



This article delves into the history of Bath's Camden area and the Camden family back to William of Camden. A fascinating glimpse into all that is Camden.

### [Our Farm of Gules - The Search for a Lost Site at Widcombe, Bath - Part 1](#)



Penny Gay and Elizabeth Holland examine the site of a lost medieval farm on Widcombe Hill. This includes a look at the White Hart Inn and the sign at its front entrance.

### [Our Farm of Gules - The Search for a Lost Site at Widcombe, Bath - Part 2](#)



In Part 2 - Penny Gay and Elizabeth Holland continue to examine the site of a lost medieval farm on Widcombe Hill.

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