



BATH HISTORY

Edited by Graham Davis

XII

BATH HISTORY

VOLUME XII

edited by Graham Davis



Bath Preservation Trust

2011

Bath History Committee: Michael Rowe (Chairman), Stephen Bird, Edward Bayntun-Coward, Caroline Kay, Kristin Doern, Dan Brown and Graham Davis. All their hard work is gratefully acknowledged.

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Editorial

This volume continues the format and style established in volume XI. Apart from one criticism received that the layout, illustrations and production were possibly too lavish for a local history publication, the overwhelming reaction has been to support the new look of the journal. Dan Brown has once again done a superb job in producing the high quality images that accompany the texts. We are also persisting with a structure that allows for articles of differing lengths, the inclusion of new features such as reports on exhibitions held in the Central Library or in one of the galleries in the city, and the series of interviews with Bath historians. The material that is published in Bath History rests on the continuing strength of its cultural institutions - the Central Library, Bath Record Office, the Victoria Art Gallery, and the variety of museums of which the city can be justly proud. Access to this rich archive of sources is invaluable in the research undertaken by contributors to this volume.

To add to this network of support, we are pleased to announce a formal link with Bath Spa University. Through its constituent colleges, BSU has an association with the city dating back into the Victorian period, and its History department has a long tradition of research and writing of local and regional history. BSU has agreed to provide financial input to support the production of this issue and we are exploring options to build on this in ways that involve staff and students at the university in the production of future issues of Bath History. Historian Dr. Kristin Doern has joined the committee as a representative of the university. For the present, Bath Preservation Trust, Bath and North East Somerset Council and a number of public-spirited individuals and businesses continue to support the publication of Bath History.

Volume XII draws on the work of some of Bath's best known historians. Peter Davenport's study of St. Mary's Northgate, set alongside the city wall in the vicinity of today's Bridge and Northgate Streets, shows how scholarly opinion can change with new archaeological and historical discoveries. Early maps, deeds and other documents, provide the basis for the reconstruction of the medieval church. If today we regret the conversion of historic churches into apartments or workshops, it is not a new phenomenon. A later church on the site of the medieval church was turned into the city gaol and was also used as part of King Edward's School until the late-eighteenth century.

Cathryn Spence has pieced together the remarkable story of a group of 'true friends' who were not only among the movers and shakers of early-eighteenth century Bath but were between them of national significance. Jerry Peirce, Thomas Robins, Dr. Oliver, William Hoare, Alexander Pope, Ralph Allen and John Wood were all close acquaintances. Peirce, himself a Bath surgeon, cultured collector and patron of the arts, wanted a Patriot Whig garden designed at Lilliput Castle, Lansdown, as a shrine to the Enlightenment. It is an important reminder that there is more to the design of buildings than architectural style. Political ideology, social prestige and power are part of the statement historic buildings make.

If 'Beau' Nash was the undisputed 'king' of Georgian Bath, who should be chosen as its queen? In a lively and amusing piece, Barbara White presents the claims of rival candidates and at the

Pat Hase began her family history research with a painting by her ancestor Bath-born Edwin Long. Long went on to become a member of the Royal Academy and a celebrated artist in the Victorian period. As well as painting local Bath worthies, Long's work displays the style and vivid colours associated with Spanish artists of the time. Fashion in art comes and goes, but there is much to admire in his paintings, some of which are held in the Victoria Art Gallery in Bath.

Architect Aaron Evans reminds us of Bath's early association with pioneer photography and he provides a fascinating history of the moving image as well as the story of Bath's picture houses from the early Victorians right up to the newly-built Odeon Multiplex in Kingsmead. Memories of old cinemas, including the heroic story of *The Little*, and the golden age of film going are conjured up with the names of past Hollywood stars and film titles.

This volume concludes with the interview of Trevor Fawcett by Stephen Bird. Trevor has become one of the city's leading historians specializing in the eighteenth century. He has a formidable output of articles and books on Bath and has made very important contributions as a former editor of *Bath History* and as a founder of Bath History Research Group. It all adds up to a powerful legacy.

Graham Davis,
editor.

same time recaptures the atmosphere of Bath found in the satirical literature of Anstey, Sheridan and Smollett. See if you agree with Barbara's ultimate choice as the 'Queen of Bath'.

Trevor Fawcett has trawled through surviving records of the Georgian period to bring a human touch in surveying the full range of private schools and academies in Bath. While the grammar schools set store by a classical education, private schools sought to equip young men for commercial employment or the military. The prospectuses of the time reveal how young women were expected to acquire domestic skills and accomplishments to fit them for the competition of the marriage market. The numerous advertisements identified in Bath for tutors in music, dancing and drawing testify to the limitations of female education at the time.

Kevin Grieves recalls the story of William Meyler, a literary entrepreneur who rose from being an apprentice bookbinder to become the editor of the *Bath Herald* and a Justice of the Peace in Bath. He was clearly a much-loved character, active in local affairs, an author, poet and amateur actor, and his career provides an example of how Bath offered opportunities for upward social mobility.

A visual complement to the written pieces on Georgian Bath is provided in the gorgeous illustrations selected from the Cartoon Exhibition held in the Central Library. Cathryn Spence and Dan Brown have researched and written an entertaining and scholarly report to accompany the cartoons. In doing so, they bring to life subjects that can often require interpretation for a modern audience.

Jan Chivers, as part of a wider study of the poor in Bath, has featured the diary of John Curry, the overseer for the parish of Walcot, under the Old Poor Law. We learn of his countless journeys by carriage over long distances, often suffering a soaking as he rode outside the carriage to save the parish additional expense. We learn of the extraordinary lengths Curry went to pursue paupers who might become an expensive burden to the parish, and how Walcot was in several respects ahead of the new Poor Law legislation enacted by Parliament in 1834.

Amy Frost captures an important moment in the resurgence of Catholicism in the West Country in her account of the plans for converting Prior Park, once the site of a Benedictine Priory, into a Catholic seminary. Prior Park was sold to Bishop Baines in 1829, the same year as he became Vicar Apostolic of the Western District, and the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act. With the architect, H.E. Goodridge, he wanted an impressive domed chapel as a monument to the growing confidence of the old faith, after years of persecution. The chosen Greco-Roman style was intended as a religious statement in the glorious setting of John Wood's showpiece at Prior Park.

Graham Davis, in *Ten Pound Poms*, recalls the story of four pauper girls sent from Bath Union Workhouse to Western Australia in 1852. A surplus of females in Bath and a surplus of males in colonial Australia was the rationale behind the pauper emigration scheme, encouraged by the government as part of a cost-cutting exercise. An artificial ageing process where the authorities presented the paupers, as older than they were, made them more eligible for employment as servants in the new world.



Sketch No. 14 of Batheaston Villa c.1760 by Thomas Robins (1716-70)

Bath in Time - V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum

The poetical events held by Lady Anna Miller at Batheaston Villa feature in several chapters in this volume.



Newton Park Mansion House, Bath Spa University.

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Notes on Contributors

Stephen Bird – is Head of Heritage Services at Bath & North East Somerset Council and has worked in museums, heritage and tourism in Bath for many years. He studied Archaeology and the History of Art at the University of Leicester before embarking upon a career in museums. His post-graduate qualifications include certificates in Museum Studies and Adult Education, the Museums Association Diploma and a Diploma in Management. Stephen is a Fellow of the Museums Association and a Member of the Chartered Management Institute. He sits on the Advisory Board of the Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury and is a Trustee of Glastonbury Abbey. Apart from conference papers on heritage management and minor articles and notes in various journals, Stephen's publications include 'The Earliest Map of Bath' in *Bath History* volume I (1986), *Bath: History and Guide* (with Trevor Fawcett, 1994), *The Essential Roman Baths* (with Barry Cunliffe, 2006) and text and gazetteer contributions to the Pevsner Architectural Series volumes on Bath (M. Forsyth, 2003) and North Somerset (A. Foyle, forthcoming).

Dan Brown – has lived in Bath for over 20 years and is the creator of the *Bath in Time* website of historical images representing several of the local museum and private collections. In 2004, he swapped a successful IT career in sales and marketing to follow his passion for discovering and making accessible the many fine collections of images depicting Bath and the surrounding area. He has curated several local exhibitions, including *Brunel 2000* at the Holburne Museum, and *Betjeman in Bath* at the Building of Bath Museum. In 2004, he was awarded the Brunel Prize by the Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society for the research and article on William Smith and the Batheaston Coal Mining Company. In the last three years, he has also photographed all publicly owned oil paintings in Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and South Wales for the Public Catalogue Foundation. In March 2010, he produced *Bath - City on Show*, the first book from *Bath in Time*.

Jan Chivers – After a career in Primary Education, Jan obtained a Combined Honours BA from Bath Spa University, followed by an MA in Local and Regional History. She graduated from the University of the West of England with a PhD in July 2007. Her doctoral thesis was based on Poor Law records, charity records and Coroners' records for the city of Bath for the period 1775 to 1835. Her publications include 'Bath Penitentiary and Lock Hospital, 1816-1824' in *Women's History Magazine*, Issue 51, Autumn 2005, 'Infanticide in Bath, 1776-1835' in *Bath Exposed! Essays on the Social History of Bath, 1775-1945*, edited by Graham Davis, (2007), and 'James and George Norman and the rise of the Casualty Hospital, 1783-1861' in *Bath History* vol. XI, (2009). She is currently in the process of writing a novel set in late-eighteenth century Bath.

Peter Davenport – is an archaeologist and architectural historian/buildings archaeologist, gaining degrees from the universities of East Anglia and Oxford. He worked at Bath Archaeological Trust from 1980 until its closure in 2005. After a short stint at Oxford Archaeology as a Senior Project Manager, and an even shorter interlude as a free-lance consultant, he now works as Senior Publication Officer for Cotswold Archaeology. He has specialised in urban

archaeology and has published major excavations in Bath, Bristol and Worcester. Currently, he is working on a report on investigations above and below ground at Cirencester parish church. He has also published on vernacular architecture in Brittany, is the author of *Medieval Bath Uncovered*, and was a consultant on the Bath edition of Pevsner. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, a member of the Institute for Archaeologists and of the Vernacular Archaeology Group. He lives near Bath and retains a strong interest in its history and archaeology.

Graham Davis – retired as Professor of History at Bath Spa University in 2008 and continues to give talks to local and family history societies, as well as acting as editor of *Bath History*. His Bath publications include *Memoirs of a Street Urchin* (1985), *Bath beyond the Guide Book* (1988), co-author with Penny Bonsall of *Bath: A New History* (1996), and *A History of Bath: Image and Reality* (2006), editor of *Bath Exposed! Essays on the Social History of Bath, 1775-1945* (2007), and author of *Bath as Spa and Bath as Slum: The Social History of a Victorian City* (2010). He has also written extensively on Irish and British migration: *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1914* (1991), *Land! Irish Pioneers in Mexican and Revolutionary Texas* (2002) (Winner of The Presidio La Bahia Award for Texas History, 2003), and editor of the forthcoming, *In Search of a Better Life: British and Irish Migration*. He has lived in and around Bath since 1968.

Aaron Evans – is an architect with a practice spanning over thirty years working in Bath. He received his degree in architecture from the Welsh School of architecture in 1971 and set up his practice as Aaron Evans Architects in 1978. He was Vice President of the Royal Institute of British Architects from 2003 to 2005 and has been a frequent speaker at symposiums and events throughout his career. He has been an examiner at a number of universities, including Bath, Oxford Brookes and currently at The Bartlett School of Architecture UCL. Notable completed works in Bath include the Building of Bath Museum, St. Ann's Place, Widcombe Parade and the Seven Dials development at Saw Close. He is also responsible for the Kingsmead Leisure complex which houses the Odeon cinema. Other cinema related projects include the refurbishment of *The Little Theatre*, and community cinemas at Bridport and Bradford on Avon.

Trevor Fawcett – was formerly a university librarian, a Fellow of the Library Association, and the founder in 1969 of ARLIS, the Art Libraries Society. While at the University of East Anglia he undertook research into Norfolk history, art history and bibliography, and reproductive images, publishing his M.Phil thesis on English provincial art in 1974. Since moving to Bath in 1984 he has worked and written on local history topics, helped establish the History of Bath Research Group, and edited earlier volumes of *Bath History*. In this latest volume he is interviewed by Stephen Bird.

Amy Frost – has been the Curator of Beckford's Tower and Museum in Bath since 2002 and is also currently the Collections Manager of the Building of Bath Collection and archivist for the Bath Preservation Trust. Alongside her work on the life and aesthetics of William Beckford 1760-1844, she specialises in British architectural history focusing in particular on the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. Amy has a PhD in architectural history and theory for which her research was based on the work of Henry Edmund Goodridge 1797-1864. She has curated several exhibitions including *Obsession: John Wood and the Creation of Georgian Bath*

(2004), *Repairing War Torn Bath* (2005), and *William Beckford, Sultan of Lansdown* (2010). Amy is a regular guest lecturer at the University of Bath, School of Architecture, and has just contributed to the forthcoming publication on the architectural history of the school and Abbey at Downside in Somerset.

Kevin Grieves – Following a career in IT, Kevin returned to education obtaining a BA in History at Bath Spa University in 2006. He is currently working towards a PhD researching and reporting on the events of the French Revolution in Bath newspapers, with particular regard to the languages of loyalism and liberty. He is also a member of the Centre for History and Culture at Bath Spa University.

Pat Hase – was born and educated in Bristol but spent 3 years in Bath as a student at the City of Bath College of Domestic Science. She was appointed to her first post as a teacher of Home Economics at Churchill School. Following marriage to the metalwork teacher and raising two sons, Pat returned to teaching as a Tutor Organiser of Adult & Community Education followed by an appointment as a Principal Development Officer for Further Education for the LEA. The opportunity to take early retirement in 1990 allowed a burgeoning interest in Family and Local History to flower. This was considerably enhanced by achieving a Masters Degree in Local and Regional History at Bath Spa University tutored by Graham Davis. Pat is currently Chair and Honorary Life Member of the Weston-super-Mare FHS and Chair of the Weston University of the Third Age (U3A) for which she runs popular groups in Family History and Local History.

Cathryn Spence – is a museum professional, undergraduate tutor, lecturer and published writer. She is currently researching the 18th century artist Thomas Robins, with a view to publishing a substantial monograph on the artist and his patrons. As a prelude, in 2006, Cathryn (working with Dan Brown) published a short introduction to Robins. Her PhD thesis, awarded by London University, concentrated on the historic museology of the V&A Museum and its relations with the Tate and National galleries. For the last five years Cathryn has written a regular monthly column for *The Bath Magazine* on all aspects of Bath's architectural heritage. Much of the research undertaken for these articles helped inform her substantial text contribution to *Bath - City on Show* (2010). She has been responsible for a number of successful exhibitions including, *Public and Private: Women's Lives in Nineteenth Century Art* (1997), *Obsession: John Wood and the Creation of Georgian Bath* (2004), and *Laughing in Company: the Representation of Bath in Georgian Caricatures* (2009). Each exhibition produced a body of original research and an associated publication. Cathryn, who is a member of the Bath Assessor Team for the Civic Trust Awards, also undertakes historic house surveys for listed building applications. She is a trustee of Bath Preservation Trust, and has lived in Frome with her daughter for 10 years.

Barbara White – has retired this year as Director of an American study abroad programme based in Bath, after twenty years with the programme. She was awarded a PhD in 1980 for her study of early modern assize sermons. She has since published widely on sermon literature, censorship and criminal biography and has contributed articles to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and to encyclopaedias of censorship, the Victorian era, and erotic literature. She has also co-edited a collection of essays entitled *Writing and Fantasy* (Longmans, 1999), and is a regular contributor to *The Bath Magazine*.

Bath History is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the city's fascinating story. Volume XII continues the tradition of scholarship featured in previous volumes and retains the enhanced format of volume XI. The beautifully illustrated articles offer readers the fruits of new research, placing the history of Bath in a broader than merely local context.

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Trevor Fawcett interviewed by Stephen Bird

Cover Image

Detail from *Bath Races, 1810* by Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827)
Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

Rear

Dr Oliver and Mr Peirce the First Physician and Surgeon
Examining Patients Inflicted with Paralysis, Rheumatism and
Leprosy, 1761, by William Hoare (1706-99)
Bath in Time - Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases

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