

# Benjamin West in Bath

Martin West

In 1807, Benjamin West, president of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, journeyed to Bath, England for the sake of his wife's health. He had visited Bath only on one other occasion, forty-four years earlier. Born near Philadelphia in 1738, young West gained recognition as a precocious painter who impressed several wealthy residents of that city, led by William Allen, Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. They helped support his studying in Italy, 1760-63, the first American known to have done so. West not only viewed works of art available from various periods and copied original pictures for his patrons, but also he was exposed to, and was influenced by, Neo-Classical painters.<sup>1</sup>

West's initial trip to Bath occurred not long after his reaching London on August 20<sup>th</sup> 1763 from Italy via Paris. By the first of September, he had encountered William Allen, who, with his two daughters, Margaret and Anne, was coincidentally present in the great metropolis. In order to further his elder son's education, Allen had contemplated for several years a voyage to Great Britain but was unable to sail until the end of April 1763. Moreover, to forestall potential conflict, the Chief Justice intended to use his influence to dissuade Parliament from levying a controversial Stamp Act tax on the thirteen colonies.<sup>2</sup>

After greeting West, the Allens seem to have proceeded directly to Bath, but the painter, expecting only a temporary stay in the homeland of his father and maternal grandparents, first examined the art holdings at Hampton Court, Windsor, Oxford, Blenheim Palace and Corsham Court, before arriving in the popular resort city. West remained there for about a month with his benefactor. [fig. 1]<sup>3</sup>

While in Bath, West painted portraits of William Allen and his youngest child, Anne, apparently his first works in the medium of oil on canvas to be undertaken in England. West must have been exposed to the pictures of the most fashionable Bath artist, Thomas Gainsborough, and possibly to those of William Hoare,

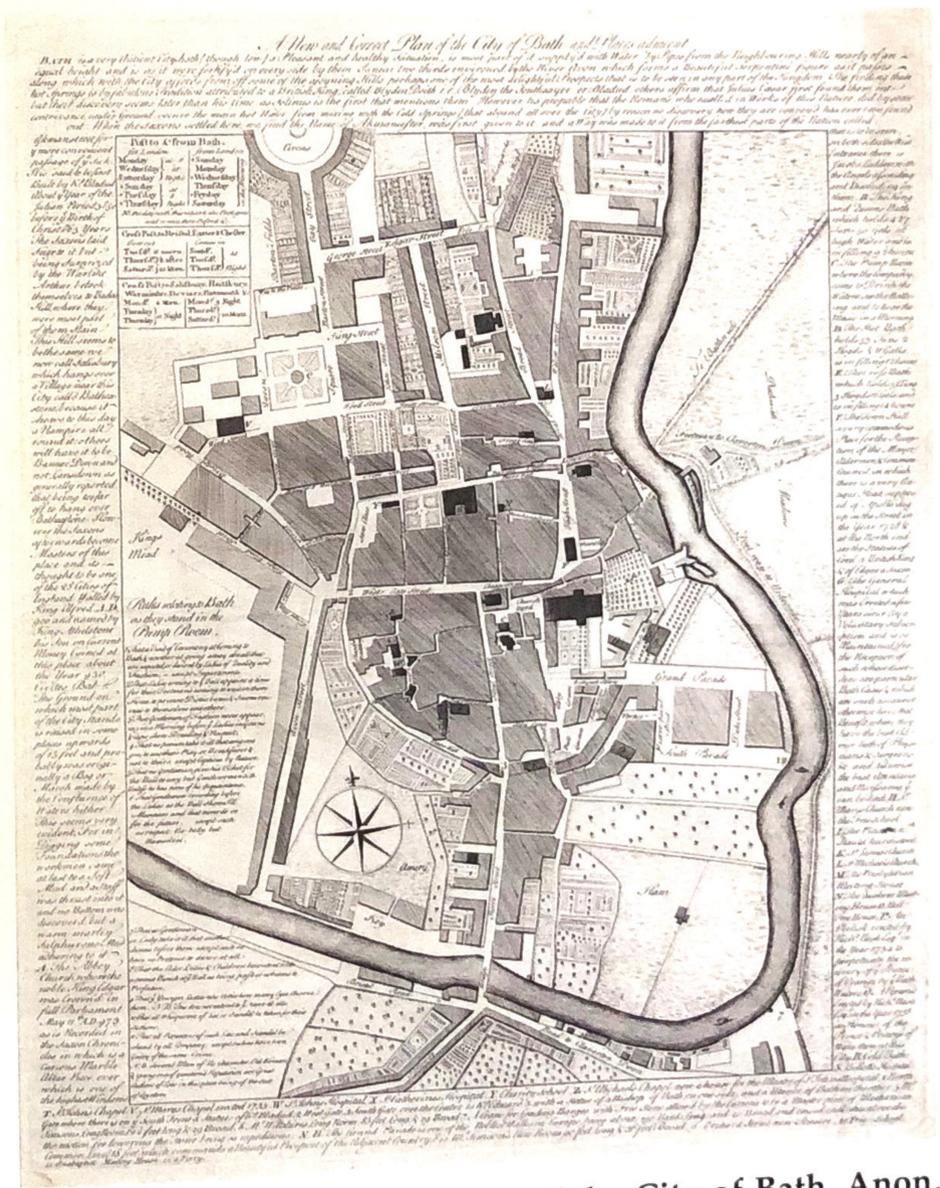


fig 1: A New and Correct Plan of the City of Bath, Anon, c.1764

Bath in Time - Bath Preservation Trust

Facing: Detail from Self-Portrait (Mr. West painting the portrait of Mrs. West in one picture half figures, large as life) by Benjamin West, 1806. Oil on canvas  
The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry R. Hallowell



**fig 2: Abbey Street, the Abbey Green, Church Street and part of the Abbey, c.1785 by William James Blackamore. Pen on paper.**

*Victoria Art Gallery PD1918.453, Bath & North East Somerset Council*

among other local painters. To further his career, Gainsborough, a native of Sudbury, Suffolk, had relocated from Ipswich to Bath in autumn 1759. From the following year to 1766, Gainsborough leased a new town house on Abbey Street [fig. 2], where he maintained a large picture viewing room intended exclusively for exhibition.<sup>4</sup>

The young Pennsylvanian's likenesses of the Allens represent a change from his Italian style, because they resemble certain of Gainsborough's half-length portraits painted in Bath during the early 1760s, as determined by the authors of the authoritative Benjamin West *catalogue raisonné*, Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley. That West scrutinised the Englishman's paintings is evidenced by his incorporating such Gainsborough touches as the averted gaze of the sitter and a complex landscape background. He may have been influenced by the works of Gainsborough, but whether or not West met in Bath with the artist eleven years his senior is questionable. According to Gainsborough biographer Susan Sloman, the painter was confined to bed for five weeks due to exhaustion and a presumed venereal disorder that almost took his life. Mistakenly reported dead by the *Bath Journal*, October 17<sup>th</sup> 1763, Gainsborough might have been too ill to see West, who probably arrived in Bath by the beginning of that month.<sup>5</sup>

Thus engaged with the Allens, West had little spare time to tour the surrounding area, but almost certainly he saw much of Bath, which could be accomplished easily by walking or by hiring one of the eighty or more sedan chairs then available. Upon departing the city, West continued his itinerary of inspecting various English collections on the return circuit to London, prior to his planned embarkation home to Philadelphia.<sup>6</sup>

These early months in England, 'the mother country, which we Americans are all so desirous to see', in West's words, presaged a rapid advancement as an artist so unprecedented realised that professional opportunities, especially his passion to paint history, were practically decided to send for her, and they were married in September 1764. Four years later, he was given his first commission from his exact contemporary, King George III, and became one of four principal founders of the Royal Academy. West exhibited his celebrated masterpiece derived from recent history, *The Death of General Wolfe* [fig. 3], at the Royal Academy in 1771. Based on events from history, literature and Scripture, history painting was the most dignified genre in the hierarchy of academic art; a 'grand manner' was attainable by incorporating the august and ennobling tenets of the classical era and Italian Renaissance. In less than a decade of his arrival, West had achieved spectacular success and international fame as the foremost history artist in the British Isles.<sup>7</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Much of the information on Benjamin West's 1807 sojourn to Bath is found in the daily diary of Joseph Farington. A Lancashire native, Farington entered the Schools of the Royal



fig 3: *The Death of General James Wolfe* (1727-59) by Benjamin West PRA, Ickworth. Oil on canvas  
National Trust Images

Academy in 1769, where he exhibited annually for over three decades, mainly as a topographical draughtsman and landscapist. He was elected to membership in 1785. Farington's sixteen volumes of diaries, kept from July 1793 until his death in December 1821, offer unique insights into the Royal Academy and London art scene for that period. Commencing about fifteen months after West's election to the presidency, the diaries indicate that although initially Farington was sceptical of the American-born painter, the two men would become close friends.<sup>8</sup>

Debilitated by a paralytic stroke in early 1805, Elizabeth West, the president's wife, contemplated travelling to Bath in order to take a course of the medicinal waters. In the opinion of their family doctor, Sir John McNamara Hayes MD, a reputable military physician, the preoccupied Benjamin West did 'not seem to be affected by what may happen. He feels only the present'. Hayes suspected that Elizabeth's condition was exacerbated by an aversion to the malodour of fresh white pigment redolent in the large painting room of her home. She had

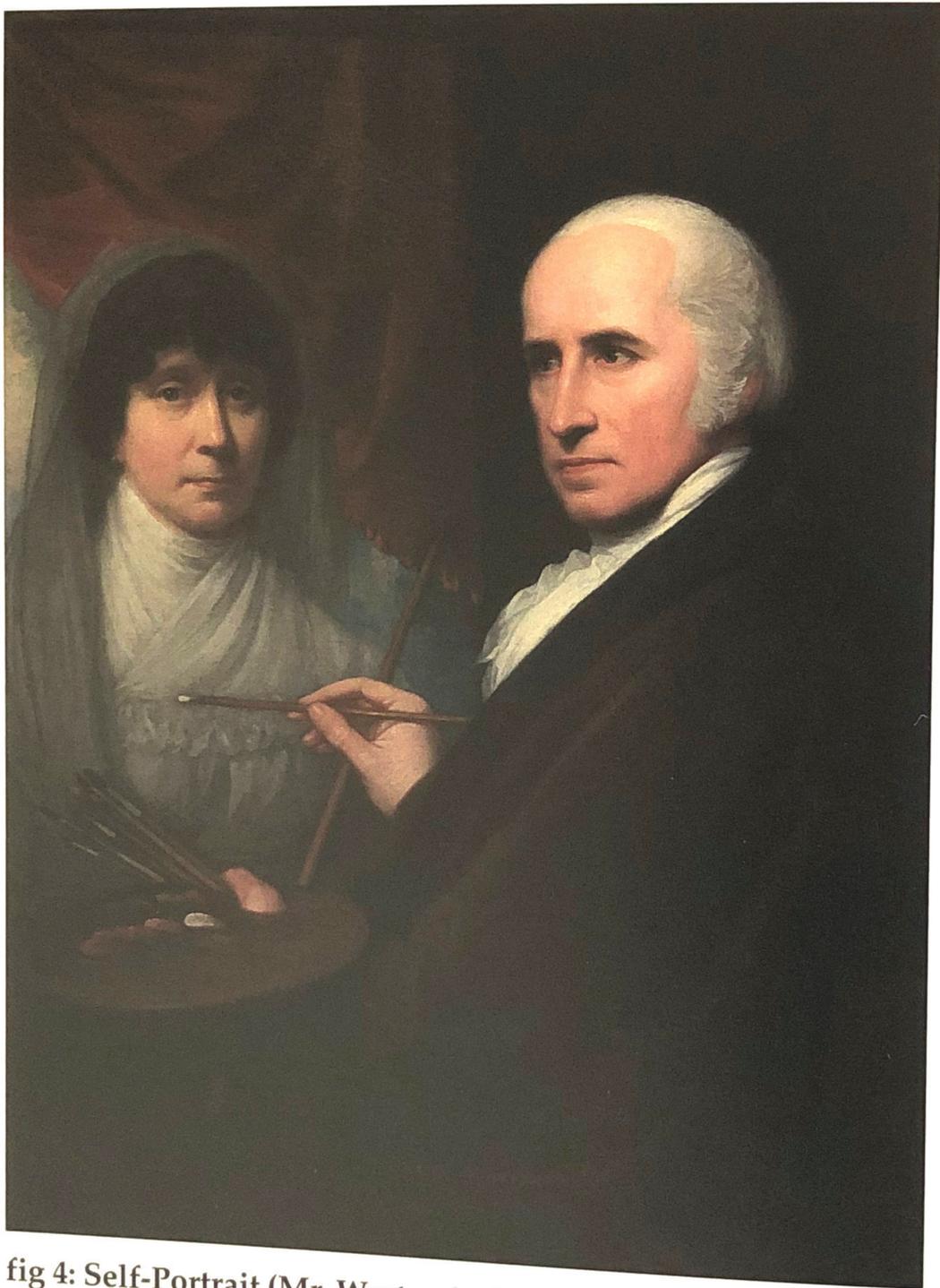


fig 4: Self-Portrait (Mr. West painting the portrait of Mrs. West in one picture half figures, large as life) by Benjamin West, 1806. Oil on canvas

*The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry R. Hallowell*

been weighing options since at least mid-November 1806 but complained to Farington that her husband could not afford a lengthy visit to Bath. The frugal alternative was nearby Windsor where the couple had rented a house for many years to facilitate the artist's numerous projects for the King. Eventually, sufficient funds were acquired, and Elizabeth West chose Bath [fig. 4]. Having diagnosed no possibility of her recovery, Hayes warned that a second major stroke would prove fatal. A now desperate West told Farington on July 8<sup>th</sup> 1807 that he would escort his spouse to Bath the following week, as 'It was Her only chance'. The painter engaged his Newman Street neighbour, Elizabeth Hooton Banks, widow of sculptor Thomas Banks, to accompany them as a carer.<sup>9</sup>

Familiar with London and Bath, Farington appreciated Elizabeth West's exigency to escape, if only temporarily, the vast urban centre for the salubrious spa community. The previous year he had entered in



fig 5: George III Resuming Royal Power in 1789, c. 1789, by Benjamin West. Pen and brown ink with brown wash on laid paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington, John Davis Hatch Collection

his diary a provocative 'contest of opinion whether London or Bath should be preferred as a town residence' between a banker of South Mimms, Middlesex and a garrulous clergyman from St Albans, Hertfordshire. Farington explained that the former, in the long-standing debate of country versus city living:

pleaded for Bath; said *there* something of the appearance of country was associated with the town, — that many articles of provision were a third cheaper, — and amusements might be had with the greatest convenience, — also friends and acquaintance from all parts were occasionally met there, which was not the case in other places. — [The minister] contended for London; s[ai]d that as to situation those who looked over the *Parks* & in other parts had as great an advantage; — and London was free from that *gossiping* which prevailed as much at Bath as it could do in a country village. London also contained a variety which no other place can afford.<sup>10</sup>

West's party left in a hired carriage for 'the Great Bath Road', mid-July 1807. Historian Brenda Buchanan has demonstrated that no single road connecting London and Bath existed during this period, only 'a patchy, disorganized sequence'; even the exact route had not been fixed as of yet. The jarring trek necessitated at least two days of travel and one night for sleep at a nearby inn, but, by this time, with replacement drivers and frequent change of horses, the journey could be reduced to twelve hours, often made overnight. If he had the means, West may have selected the latter alternative to limit Elizabeth's suffering.<sup>11</sup>

Expecting to remain only a fortnight in Bath to complete his wife's arrangements, West, possibly detecting a growing rift between Elizabeth and her attending companion, decided to stay through the course of her treatments, which would extend to fifteen weeks. His reluctance to depart may have involved an added factor, however.<sup>12</sup>

At 68 years of age, Benjamin West could pause in Bath and reflect with satisfaction on his career, especially his unlikely relationship with King George III, involving over 60 commissions [fig. 5]. Starting in 1772, the sovereign's preferred artist had been made Historical Painter to the King, and, during the War for American Independence, West, ironically, served as portraitist to the immediate royal family. He was appointed to Surveyor of the King's Pictures in 1791, and, reaching the highest professional status, West, with the monarch's



**fig 6: All Saints Chapel, Bath, July 29, 1807 by Benjamin West. Sketch**  
Victoria Art Gallery PD2007.7, Bath & North East Somerset Council

approval, was elected second president of the Royal Academy the following year, succeeding the late Sir Joshua Reynolds.<sup>13</sup>

These achievements notwithstanding, West faced an uncertain future because of his deteriorating association with George III. Having received reports of the artist's democratic tendencies and sympathy for the French Revolution, the recurrently ailing King, perhaps influenced by others, allowed suspension of West's royal projects in 1801, which were cancelled altogether one-half decade later, only a year before his second journey to Bath. His annual stipend of £1,000 from the crown was in jeopardy also (it would be terminated in December 1810). Furthermore, the Royal Academy had been the scene of chronic contention and unremitting turmoil that led to the harried West's resigning the presidency in December 1805. In July of the next year, Farington, speaking to a concurring Dr. Hayes, was shocked by the toll the office had taken on West, noticing 'that His personal appearance has much changed in the last 12 months; that he is become more *bony* & his flesh has fallen in.' Dissatisfied by his replacement, numerous Royal Academicians prevailed upon a reluctant West, who had been happily devoting his free time to painting, to stand for election the following year. Winning easily, he resumed his former position on New Year's Day 1807 and was never again seriously challenged for it. Almost eight months subsequently, West, over a hundred miles removed from court intrigue and Royal Academy politics, was enjoying the leisurely, pleasant Bath summer and must have concluded that taking an extended holiday could be remedial for him as well.<sup>14</sup>

At times afflicted by gout but apparently free of the malady while in Bath, West found ample opportunity to investigate the countryside during his wife's daily therapy. The artist retained the carriage that had conveyed his small party from London for 'all His excursions, hiring 2 or 4 Horses as the distance might require'. When not exploring, West spent his mornings preparing landscape sketches [fig. 6] and making 'a design of the discovery of the good qualities of the Bath waters.' He was extremely impressed by the local topography, and, Farington opined, his admiration and zeal for Bath were unequivocal. Following the return of the couple to London on November 7th, the diarist wrote on the tenth:

[West] spoke of Bath & its vicinity with rapture as abounding with picturesque scenery. Take Bath & 20 miles round it He s[ai]d & there is not in the world anything superior to it. Rocks of the finest forms for a painter that He had ever seen, large, square forms. *Quarry's* worked out, now most picturesque & romantic. Wyck & Hampton rocks, Chedder Cliffs, most picturesque—distances the most beautiful—roads with occasional pools & streams of water falling from the Hills & Cattle & figures such as Berghem never saw. Take *Tivoli away* & Rome & its vicinity of 20 miles not to be compared with Bath & its neighbourhood.<sup>15</sup>

Local Bath artists, West ascertained, were 'much encouraged'. He met three of them: Thomas Barker 'of Bath', his younger brother, Benjamin, a landscapist and drawing master, and Joshua Shaw, a landscapist. In the president's view, the brothers were 'very ingenious'. Thomas Barker's name had been established by his work *The Woodman*, but West admired his 'admirably drawn. . .for truth of expression excellent, unrivalled' chalk drawings on tinted paper of peasants and landscapes, which he felt would be 'captivating' if portrayed in oil on



fig 7: Prince Bladud Contemplating the Medicinal Virtues of the Bath Waters by Benjamin West, 1807. Coloured chalk and wash

*Royal Academy of Arts, London*

canvas. The president assessed Benjamin Barker as a landscapist superior to his brother. West learned that while drawing masters were exceptionally well compensated, actual drawings sold poorly because oil paintings were the popular choice.<sup>16</sup>

The third artist, Joshua Shaw, boasted to West of his many commissions, which, placed as orders to be undertaken sequentially, were so numerous as to require eighteen months for execution. The Englishman further contended that he received about forty guineas for a kit-cat portrait. Should he have any idle hours, two dealers in Bristol wanted to purchase his pictures for resale, Shaw prated to his distinguished guest, and patrons throughout western England sought him to decorate their homes with chimney pieces and overdoors.<sup>17</sup>

West was also informed that a Bath art exhibition was scheduled for opening the following spring. Seeking his advice, the arrangers were counselled by the president to organize themselves on the Royal Academy model.<sup>18</sup>

During his stay in Bath, West completed four landscapes representative of the sights that had moved him. They featured subjects of the city and vicinity:

- *A View of the City of Bath, as seen from the high grounds eastward of Prior Park House*
- *A View within Prior Park, near the city of Bath*
- *A View on the river Avon above the city of Bath*
- *A View of the Rocks at Bristol Wells, with the ceremony of conducting down the river Avon the Man of War presented by the City of Bristol to Government*<sup>19</sup>

Additionally, West commenced a picture taken from a local myth entitled, *Prince Bladud Contemplating the Medicinal Virtues of the Bath Waters by Observing their Effect on Swine* [fig. 7], coloured chalk and wash, heightened with white, 28 by 41½ inches / 71.1 by 105.4 centimetres. Signed, *B. West Bath Sept 20 1807*, this work is pieced together from several sheets of brown tinted paper. Conceivably, as suggested by art historian Allen Staley, the terrain seen in the background of *Bladud* is derived from one of the landscapes listed above.<sup>20</sup>

Two of West's four landscapes feature Prior Park and might provide a clue to understanding his research for *Bladud*. Located about two miles south of the city, Prior Park House [fig. 8], a Palladian mansion, was under construction in 1735 by John Wood the elder, the prominent Bath architect and town planner, who wrote *An Essay Towards a Description of Bath*. West consequently was acquainted with the great house and the reputation of the late architect; he may have been aware also of the *Essay*, in which the author, basically accepting the prince as an actual figure of history and his story as established fact, recorded and embellished the Bladud fable.<sup>21</sup>

As with Wood, West was inspired by the enduring Bath legend. In brief, Bladud, the only son of Lud Hubibras, king of ancient Britain, was found to be a leper. Compelled to act, the king exiled the young man, who was obliged to labour as a swineherd. Having contracted



Prior Park in Somersetshire, the Seat of Mrs. Smith.  
*Published as the Act directed by 1785, by W. Watts, London.*

fig 8: Prior Park in Somersetshire, the Seat of Mrs. Smith, 1785, after William Watts. Copper engraving  
*Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection*

leprosy from the banished prince, his pigs, after wallowing several times in the mud of the thermal springs on the future site of Bath, became free of the disease. Astonished, the outcast immersed himself repeatedly into the warm ooze and found that he too was no longer leprosy. Bladud, later reputed ninth king of Britain, was credited with founding Bath, place of his miraculous cure, circa 483 BC, according to Wood's singular calculation. West, who evidently classified his Bladud composition as a historical, rather than a mythological, subject, possibly accepted the rudiments of the traditional fable as fact.<sup>22</sup>

The biographers of Wood, Tim Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, have argued that he was obsessive and an incompetent historian, who adapted 'all information to suit previously fixed notions', in order to remake Bath within the architect's lifetime through his chimerical conception of a Druidic-Roman city. West's interpretation of *Bladud* may have been taken from the *Essay*, and his depiction of the Prince could have been informed by a print found in Wood's account [fig. 9]. The plate, engraved by Bernard Barton after an imaginative portrait by William Hoare, who resided and painted at No. 6 Edgar Buildings, Bath, is entitled, *BLADUD, To whom the GRECIANS gave the Name of ABARIS*.<sup>23</sup>

Hoare, through Barton, represents Bladud at middle age, his body thickened, and his head, almost in left profile, with short wavy hair and a whitening beard. Following his recovery, the Prince supposedly was educated in Greece, but he was described in the *Essay* as dressed in Athens like an inhabitant of Scythia, a vast Eurasian region to the northeast. His fanciful garb is reminiscent of both classical and anachronistic Ottoman Turkish styles. Depicted as a huntsman, the prerogative of Kings, Bladud is accoutred with a quiver of arrows, and his right hand grasps an unstrung reflex bow. Behind him, in agreement with Wood's text, is a Greek landscape. Bladud's dignified bearing embraces a sensitivity reflecting his bitter experiences as a young man.<sup>24</sup>

West's callow Bladud, turned slightly to his left, faces the viewer. Normally a careful researcher, the president evinced little or no knowledge of the raiment of ancient Britons and clothed the prince in classical Greek apparel. His eyes, nose and short wavy hair appear to resemble the older Bladud's corresponding features in the Barton-Hoare engraving. Slim and athletic, the youthful swineherd, otherwise weaponless, holds a long wooden staff in his right hand, similarly to the king gripping his bow. A frowning, but intensely curious Bladud, stares down in wonder at his recovering swine. In the background is West's romanticised rendering of the hills of Bath.<sup>25</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

The purpose of Benjamin West's second journey to Bath was a quest by his wife for relief from paralysis and discomfort. So the choice of the exile of Bladud theme, a topic they likely discussed together after arrival, was particularly appropriate. In September, Elizabeth West sent a letter to Dr Hayes and his wife, who showed it to Farington, indicating that her condition was 'very indifferent'. Painfully distressed by the therapeutic baths, Elizabeth's only improvement had come through a daily regimen of drinking Bath mineral water, offering hope of her surviving another winter. Encouraged, West had no intention of curtailing his Bath interlude, even by a day or two. In the past, he seldom, if ever, missed Royal Academy functions, but a missive by West posted from the resort city was read to the Royal Academy

General Meeting, November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1807, in which he apologised for his absence as a balloting was scheduled to elect an associate; all of his presidential business had to be postponed. The couple and the carer returned to London five days later, but Elizabeth West was no longer speaking to Elizabeth Banks, having had 'a certain difference' with her during their months together in Bath. More resilient than predicted earlier, Elizabeth West would live for another seven years in a failing state of health.<sup>26</sup>

Having conversed with West three days after his arrival, Farington, although still taken by the distinctive signs of ageing, thought his friend looked rested and well. The diarist dined with several other Royal Academicians, including artist John Hoppner, on November 11th. Once reportedly favoured by George III, Hoppner, without evidence, had held West responsible for his subsequent break with the King, but his antagonism might have waned since he had voted to return the ex-president to his former office the previous December. Hoppner expressed to Farington, 'West's admiration of Bath noticed'. Paraphrasing Samuel Johnson's opinion of poet James Thomson, Hoppner said of West, 'so poetical His mind. He could not see a farthing candle but with a poetical feeling'. Hoppner remarked that whatever belonged to the president, including his agreeable experiences in Bath, had to be 'always best'.<sup>27</sup>

Visiting the Wests' home at No.14 Newman Street on the snowy late afternoon of the nineteenth, Farington found the artist in his small painting room, with Elizabeth sitting nearby. He observed that West "was touching, with White Chalk, upon His design of 'the discovery of the virtues of the Bath waters by King Bladud' - a very able design". The work was initiated in



**BLADUD,**  
To whom the GRECIANS gave the Name of  
**ABARIS.**

fig 9: Prince Bladud, frontispiece of John Wood's, *A Description of Bath Vol 1*, after William Hoare, 1749. Copper engraving  
*Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection*

Bath, but Farington's entry proves that it was finished in London. Von Erffa and Staley have speculated that since *Bladud* consists of several sheets of paper, the president may have supplemented or revised the composition in his painting room. Perhaps West anticipated that the pieced-together image, afterward displayed at the Royal Academy, might encourage a wealthy patron, perchance one who esteemed the beauty of Bath and vicinity as much as he did, to commission an oil-on-canvas history picture of Prince Bladud in the grand manner.<sup>28</sup>

That night Farington wrote of West's four landscapes as well. He noted that the president 'shewed me also several studies He had made in & near Bath with Chalk & Crayon upon coloured paper, very good, His power seeming in no respect to have diminished'.<sup>29</sup>

In early December, Farington discussed West and his recent trip to Bath with two connoisseurs, Sir George Howland Beaumont, seventh baronet, and his wife, Lady Margaret Willes Beaumont, at their London home. They admired West's accomplishments. The diarist quoted Sir George's speaking 'in the highest manner of the excellent Landscape sketches' produced by West at the fashionable spa city, adding that "they were of as high a character as the designs of Nicolo Poussin, 'the true Heroic Landscape'". Beaumont further commended the president for "His very able design of King Bladud discovering the virtues of the Bath Waters". Nevertheless, the elegant baronet criticized West's vanity, grammar and alleged overstatement of his welcome to Bath, by repeating a line of poetry Beaumont attributed erroneously to Alexander Pope but actually composed by Charles Churchill, 'A man so very high, so very low'.<sup>30</sup>

West disclosed to Farington in mid-December his deliberateness on considering a new composition, but once mentally committed he was 'a Child to everything else' until it was finished, and only then would the artist proceed to his next project. Hence, *Bladud* must have been done by that time, because the cold and darkness of the season, the president added, precluded most of his painting until the beginning of February. Placed on exhibition by West at the Royal Academy in spring 1808, *Bladud* and the four Bath landscapes were well received but quickly forgotten.<sup>31</sup>

Relieved by the improvement in Elizabeth's health and rejuvenated by almost four months in Bath, West, even without royal patronage, would experience resounding triumphs in ensuing years. Especially gratifying to the declining septuagenarian were several ambitious works, including two based on the life of Christ, which he painted on a genuinely grand scale. They brought to the venerable president some of the greatest popular acclaim and financial profits of his life.<sup>32</sup>

In March 1820, only six weeks after the death of King George III, West expired, and his collection was dispersed over the subsequent decade. *Bladud* was acquired from an unnamed seller on May 17<sup>th</sup> 1845 by the Royal Academy of Arts in London, where it can be viewed today. One of the landscapes, *A View of the City of Bath, as seen from the high grounds eastward of Prior Park House*, chalk and crayon on coloured paper, 24 by 38 inches/61 by 96.5 centimetres, was purchased for ten shillings by an unidentified buyer at Christie's, London, March 19<sup>th</sup> 1898. At some point before or after that date, the remaining pictures must have been sold or misplaced. Regrettably, the current locations of all four Bath landscapes by Benjamin West are unknown.<sup>33</sup>

## Acknowledgements

Grateful appreciation is expressed to Brenda Buchanan, former editor of *Bath History*, for her advice, helpfulness and encouragement, Michael N. McConnell, historian of Colonial-Revolutionary America, and especially Allen Staley, the leading Benjamin West scholar today, for reading this article. As always, the West family of the twenty-first century, Penelope, Jane and Benjamin, provided assistance and support.

## Notes

1. Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (New Haven and London, 1986), pp. 21-25; Norman S. Cohen, 'Allen, William', John A. Garrety and Mark C. Carnes (eds.), *American National Biography* (New York and Oxford, 1999) 1: pp. 344-345; Allen Staley, email to writer, February 2nd 2012.
2. John Galt, *The Life and Works of Benjamin West, Esq. President of the Royal Academy of London, Subsequent to his Arrival in this Country; Composed From Materials Furnished By Himself* (London and Edinburgh, 1820) Part II:1, pp. 3-5; Robert C. Alberts, *Benjamin West: A Biography* (Boston, and Edinburgh, 1820) Part II:1, pp. 3-5; Robert C. Alberts, *Benjamin West: A Biography* (Boston, 1978), pp. 59-60; Cohen, 'Allen, William', ANB 1: pp. 344-345; 'William Allen to David Barclay, 20 October 1760', 'Benjamin West to Joseph Shippen, 1 September 1763', E.P. Richardson, 'West's Voyage to Italy, 1760, and William Allen', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (January 1978) 102: pp. 14-15, pp. 23-24; Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand-Style History Painting* (Washington, DC, 1985), pp. 90-91; Benjamin Franklin, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, edited by Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven and London, 1966, 1967) 10: p. 415 n.1, 11: pp. 34-35 n.9. The opposition of Allen to passage of a stamp act had been 'indefatigable', as reported by the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 10th and June 4th 1764. By utilising his access to officials in Britain, including members of the House of Commons, Allen helped prevent the proposed colonial tax legislation for that session.
3. Galt, *Life and Works of Benjamin West*, Part II: p. 5.
4. Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, 23, pp. 486-487; Susan Legoux Sloman, 'Artists' Picture Rooms in Eighteenth-Century Bath', *Bath History* (1996) VI: pp. 132,134.
5. Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, pp. 486-487; Susan Sloman, *Gainsborough in Bath* (New Haven and London, 2002), p. 51, p. 193; Hugh Belsey, 'Gainsborough, Thomas', H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 1999) 21: pp. 266-272. West and Gainsborough were founding members of the Royal Academy in 1768, and following the Englishman's move from Bath to London six years later, their affiliation continued. In 1788, Benjamin West was a pallbearer at the funeral of Thomas Gainsborough.
6. Trevor Fawcett, 'Chair Transport in Bath: The Sedan Chair Era', *Bath History* (1988) II:124; Galt, *Life and Works of Benjamin West*, Part II: p. 5.
7. 'Benjamin West to Joseph Shippen, 1 September 1763', Richardson, 'West's Voyage to Italy 1760, and William Allen', *PMHB* pp. 102:23; Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, pp. 23, 50-51, 168, 211-213; Abrams, *The Valiant Hero*, pp. 97-98, 103, 146, 154, 170; David H. Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, 1985), pp. 254-255, 269. In *The Death of General Wolfe* (National Gallery of Canada), 1770, West combined classical sculpture prototypes with contemporary military clothing and equipage to create a sensation. This immensely popular picture extolled the heroic death of Major General James Wolfe while commemorating his British victory in 1759 at Québec, Canada during the Seven Years' War (1756-63). He frequently had visited his parents in Bath, who resided at what is now No. 5 Trim Street. In 1758, his health impaired by two Atlantic Ocean crossings and the successful siege of Louisbourg in Nova Scotia, the general wrote to a friend, 'I am going to Bath to refit for another campaign'. During his stay, Wolfe was betrothed to Katherine Lowther, whom he seems to have met in Bath the previous year. Stephen Brumwell, *Paths of Glory: The Life and Death of General James Wolfe* (Montreal and Kingston, 2006), pp. 105, 185-186, 293; Brenda J. Buchanan, 'Sir John (later Lord) Ligonier (1680-1770), Military Commander and Member of Parliament for Bath', *Bath History* (2000) VIII: p. 96.

8. Von Errfa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, 424; Evelyn Newby, 'Farington, Joseph', *ODNB* 19:45-47; Alberts, *Benjamin West*, p. 197.
9. Gordon Goodwin and Claire E.J. Herrick, 'Hayes, Sir John McNamara, first baronet', *ODNB* 26:35; Julius Bryant, 'Banks, Thomas', *Ibid.*, 3: pp. 698-700; Joseph Farington, *The Diary of Joseph Farington* (New Haven and London, 1982), 14 November 1806 8: p. 2906, 5 May 1807 8: p. 3038, 8 July 1807 8: p. 3083, 13 July 1807 8: p. 3087; Alberts, *Benjamin West*, pp. 124, 307 n.2, 336-337, 437 n.124.
10. Farington *Diary*, 18 July 1806 8: pp. 2816-2817.
11. *Ibid.*, 13 July 1807 8: p. 3087; Brenda J. Buchanan, 'The Great Bath Road, 1700-1830', *Bath History* (1992) IV: pp. 71-76. Measured from Hyde Park Corner, an original one-hundred-mile stone marker on a London-Bath road variant displays the remaining distance to Bath at precisely seven miles, for a total of 107 miles. An image of the marker is reproduced on page 76.
12. Farington, *Diary*, July 8<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: p. 3083.
13. Von Effra and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, pp. 51, 83, 97.
14. Alberts, *Benjamin West*, 190 n.8, pp. 319-320, 322, 332-335; Farington, *Diary*, July 9<sup>th</sup> 1806 8: p. 2807; Von Effra and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, pp. 90, 97-98.
15. Farington, *Diary*, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: pp. 3138-3139; Alberts, *Benjamin West*, pp. 336-337. The ageing West praised, perhaps wistfully, several places in the Bath area that can be identified as the 'Wyck rocks', lining both sides of a scenic glen by the village of that name in South Gloucestershire, the 'Hampton rocks', a notable outcrop of rock near the village of Bathampton, Somerset, and the dramatic 'Chedder [*sic*] Cliffs', rocks and ravine on the south side of the Mendip Hills, located close to the village of Cheddar, Somerset. To emphasise the loveliness of Bath and the surrounding area, West compared them favourably to the scenes painted by Nicholas Berghem, or Berchen, a Dutch landscapist of the seventeenth century. When touring Italy as a young man, West had been inspired by Tivoli, site of the Aniene River waterfalls issuing from the Sabine Hills. Located about twenty miles east of Rome, Tivoli has splendid views of the *Campagna*, a landscape of traditional artistic importance. [No author,] *Gazetteer of the British Isles* (Edinburgh, 1963), pp. 51, 143, 725; Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini (eds.), *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1996), p. 143; Abrams, *The Valiant Hero*, pp. 90-91.
16. Farington, *Diary*, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: pp. 3138-3139. At minimum, Thomas Barker executed five variations of *The Woodman*; a 1792 engraving of it by Francesco Bartolozzi (who also made prints after Benjamin West) was the most popular and recognised version. Ellen Wilson, 'A Shropshire Lady in Bath', *Bath History* (1996) IV: p. 121 n.7-122 n.7.
17. Farington, *Diary*, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: pp. 3138-3139. A kit-cat portrait is a standardised canvas, measuring about 36 by 48 inches/91.5 by 71 centimetres, usually including the head, shoulders and one hand. Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms* (London, 1984), 'Kit-cat', p. 109. West and Shaw had future contact. The Bath landscapist accompanied the president's gift of the massive religious painting, *Christ Healing the Sick in the Temple* (Pennsylvania Hospital of Philadelphia), 1815, to the United States in 1817, after which Shaw became an American citizen. Edward J. Nygren, 'Shaw, Joshua', Jane Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art* (London and New York, 1996) 28: p. 560.
18. Farington, *Diary*, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: pp. 3138-3139.
19. Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 424; John Dillenberger, *Benjamin West: The Context of His Life's Work with Particular Attention to Paintings with Religious Subject Matter* (San Antonio, Texas, 1977), pp. 196-197.

20. Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, pp. 186, 424; Staley, email to writer, 2 February 2012. West's work is also known as *Exile of Bladud*. Paul Hutton, 'A Little Known Cache of English Drawings', *Apollo: The Magazine of the Arts* (January 1969) 89: p. 54.
21. John Wood, *An Essay Towards a Description of Bath* (London, 1765) I: pp. 6-8, 72-77; Tim Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *John Wood: Architect of Obsession* (Bath, 1988), pp. 101-118, 185-187; Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, pp. 186, 424, 484. Interestingly, the West catalogue authors have listed *Bladud* under the category of 'Historical Subjects', instead of 'Mythological Subjects'. John Wood's *An Essay Towards a Description of the City of Bath* appeared in Bath, 1742-3. Revised, corrected and enlarged, it was published in London in 1749; a second edition of the latter was issued in London sixteen years later and reprinted, 1769.
22. Wood, *Essay* I: pp. 6-8, 72-77; Mowl and Earnshaw, *John Wood*, p. 184.
23. Andor Gomme, 'Wood, John', *ODNB* 60: pp. 112-114; Wood, *Essay* I: pp. 38-39, 72-77; Sam Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination* (New Haven and London, 1994), pp. 82-83; Mowl and Earnshaw, *John Wood*, pp. 184, 219; Gordon Goodwin, 'Hoare, William', *ODNB* 27: pp. 368-369; Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, pp. 186, 424. Prior Park House was commissioned by Ralph Allen, the entrepreneur and philanthropist who helped lead the rebirth of Bath. Brenda J. Buchanan, 'Allen, Ralph', *ODNB* 1: pp. 812-814.
24. Wood, *Essay*, Part I: p. 38. The physical appearance of Bladud, or Abaris (although lacking documentation, Wood insisted that they were one and the same 'historical' figure), was described in the *Essay*: 'Abaris came to Athens holding a Bow, having a Quiver hanging from his Shoulders, his Body wrapt up in a Chlamys [a Greek mantle fastened at the shoulder], girt about his Loins with a gilded Belt, and wearing Trowzers reaching from his Waste to the Soles of his Feet'.
25. Brenda J. Buchanan, email to writer, May 28<sup>th</sup> 2011.
26. Farington, *Diary*, September 4<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: p. 3117, November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1807 8: p. 3138, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: p. 2138; Alberts, *Benjamin West*, p. 337.
27. Farington, *Diary*, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: p. 3138, November 11<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: p. 3139; Alberts, *Benjamin West*, pp. 175-6. Hoppner's probable source for the West reference was James Boswell's biography of the lexicographer and essayist, Samuel Johnson. On July 28<sup>th</sup> 1763, Johnson told Boswell that James 'Thomson, I think, had as much of the poet about him as most writers. Every thing appeared to him through the medium of his favourite pursuit. He could not have viewed those two candles burning but with a poetical eye'. Seventeen years later, Johnson, in his *The Lives of the Poets*, expanded this view of Thomson that Hoppner also may have read: He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on nature and on life, with the eye which nature bestows only on a poet; the eye that distinguishes, in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute. James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, edited by George Birkbeck Hill, revised and enlarged edition by L.F. Powell (Oxford, 1934) I: p. 453; Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, edited by John H. Middendorf (New Haven and London, 2010) 3: pp. 1291-1292; James Sambrook, 'Thomson, James', *ODNB* 54: pp. 516-523.
28. Farington, *Diary*, November 19<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: p. 3144; Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 186.
29. Farington, *Diary*, November 19<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: p. 3144.

30. Felicity Owen and David Blayney Brown, 'Beaumont, Sir George Howland, seventh baronet', *ODNB* 4: pp. 656-658; Farington, *Diary*, December 4<sup>th</sup> 1807 8: pp. 3156-3157. Nicolas Poussin, the intellectual French artist of the seventeenth century who painted in the classical style, was admired greatly in the 1700s, and sometimes West was compared to him. Two lines of Charles Churchill's satire, *The Rosciad* (1761), provide the context of the Beaumont-Farington quotation:  
Ludicrous nature! Which at once could show  
A man so very high, so very low.  
Charles Churchill, *The Rosciad*, *The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill* (Edinburgh, 1794) in *The Works of the British Poets with Prefaces, Biographical and Critical* (London, 1795) 10: p. 461; James Sambrook, 'Churchill, Charles', *ODNB* 11: pp. 592-595.
31. Farington, *Diary*, December 17th 1807 8: p. 3173; Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 186.
32. Alberts, *Benjamin West*, pp. 348, 355, 364, 369.
33. Von Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 23; Alberts, *Benjamin West*, pp. 186, 424. The Bladud work appeared in the exhibition under the title, *Prince Bladud, eldest son of Lud Hudibras, King of Britain; he first discovered the medicinal virtues of the Bath springs by observing the salutary effect those waters produced on swine*. Dillenberger, *Benjamin West: The Context of His Life's Work*, p. 197.