



BATH HISTORY

Edited by Graham Davis

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VOLUME XIV

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Editorial

Bath History provides a platform for current research, acknowledges local institutions and events in Bath, celebrates the publication of important books, and continues to salute historians who have made a significant contribution to our understanding of the city's history.

The first article in this volume, by Roman Archaeologist Stephen Clews, recalls the recent, exciting discovery of a substantial collection of Roman coins known as the Beau Street Hoard. Research on the coins was undertaken by the British Museum in partnership with Southampton University and sponsored by the Bath Hotel and Spa Company. Continuing investigation into the metal content of the coins ensures that the hoard will be one of the best understood of Roman Britain. The wider significance of the Beau Street Hoard is evident in the support from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver an educational project connected with the excavation involving a number of local institutions. Unquestionably, the find and the project represent a great boost for Bath and its citizens.

Vanessa Brett has written an important new book *Bertrand's Toyshop in Bath's Luxury Retailing 1685-1765*. Her article addresses some outstanding questions arising from her original research. Toys were luxury items and toyshops sold more than mere goods for wealthy clients; in Bertrand's case, a goldsmith who embraced a banking business. The survival of Bertrand's banking accounts opens up a new perspective on the extensive commercial trade in London and Bath in the early eighteenth century. The ledgers reveal the names of nearly 900 people and over a hundred different trades and occupations. This new and intriguing research builds on the author's significant contribution to date.

Barbara White has followed her acclaimed biography of Fanny Murray, the notorious eighteenth-century courtesan, with an equally salacious account entitled 'Love, Gossip and Diversion: John Wilkes in Bath'. Wilkes was a political agitator who championed parliamentary reform and the freedom of the press. Aside from politics, he was one of the most infamous libertines of his day. Over a forty year period, he made frequent visits to Bath which provided an appropriate setting for his love affairs and flirtations. His diaries, covering the years 1770 to his death in 1797, reveal not only an intimate portrait of his extraordinary love life, but also how he cultivated a large social network and an important role for himself in Bath society.

Trevor Fawcett, a prolific writer on Bath's history, has written a fascinating account of the Bath Volunteers in the period 1779-1815, focusing on civil defence during the Revolutionary Wars with France. Earlier attempts at private military recruitment arose from the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745 when Ralph Allen had formed a troop of a hundred men in Bath. In 1780 while donning scarlet uniforms and firing off rounds, volunteers assisted in the suppression of the Gordon Riots in the city. Fear of a French invasion at Fishguard in 1796 prompted the formation of a volunteer association although its services were initially rejected until later in 1796 when further fears of invasion led to Stothert & Pitt announcing the supply of flintlock muskets, pistols and swords. In June 1800 the volunteers were involved in maintaining order in the face of attacks on a brewery on the Quay and clearing the streets of Mendip colliers demonstrating against famine conditions. Further action by the volunteers took place in crowd control at a riot in Radstock and in an open air meeting in Bath held by the radical Henry Hunt in 1817. Ironically, the Bath Volunteers never had to confront the French enemy but did square up to their fellow citizens – echoes of the miners again cast as the 'enemy within' of recent memory.

Andrew Hill is the author of a recently published book on the history of the much-loved firm of Cater, Stoffell and Fortt. His article examines the impact of World War I on the business, its owners, employees and customers. Caters had an unrivalled reputation for the quality of its grocery stores, restaurants and wine vaults both in Bath and Bristol. The war had an increasingly serious impact with the losses of manpower and shortages of supplies. By the end of December 1914, 30 staff had joined the colours and William and Noel Fortt were sent to India with their regiments. A loss of key personnel and the impact of the war brought the closure of premises in Bath and Bristol. Conscription brought further losses of employees although some exemptions from military service were allowed by the Tribunal, including that of William Stoffell, the leading figure in the company, a man with many connections in high places in the city. Shortages reduced the provision and quality of customer favourites – chocolate olivers, macaroons and caramels. A shortage of sugar and dried fruit also affected the making of wedding cakes and Christmas puddings. Nationwide rationing introduced in 1918 reduced the availability of sugar, meat, butter, butter and cheese and a shortage of tin affected the packaging of Bath Oliver biscuits.

Kate James tells the story of the sale of Earl Temple's Newton Park estate in 1941. She provides the historical context both nationally and locally for the decline of an estate that had been in the family since 1666. Landed estates were sold off increasingly from the late nineteenth century prompted by the agricultural depression resulting in lower rental income, higher taxation and estate duty, accompanied in many cases by poor commercial management. The latter was particularly relevant in the case of Newton Park where a policy of selling off outlying lands on the estate and sales of the 'family silver' in London undermined the estate's financial viability. The deaths of Earl and Countess Temple in 1940 and 1941 prompted the sale of the estate and all the contents of the mansion house. Items listed in the sale catalogue make fascinating reading for those familiar with Newton Park. The Duchy of Cornwall bought the estate at a bargain price and leased the Newton Park site for a teacher training college. From its humble origins, under the determined leadership of the first Principal, Mary Dawson, the college developed over time to become the city's second seat of higher education with its modern day successor, Bath Spa University, celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2015.

Finally, Elaine Chalus interviews John Wroughton. His life story is inspirational in its long journey from relatively humble beginnings to the prestigious position of headmaster of King Edward's School in Bath and a highly respected Bath historian. Readers will enjoy John's early experience of Miss Lambert's History lesson that sowed the seed of his ambition to become a History teacher. A place at grammar school and further encouragement from a spellbinding history teacher and a sixth-form tutor prepared the way for a place at Oxford University. How appropriate that John's evident passion for teaching and the subject of History should lead to him inspiring generations of students through his own teaching and research. Elaine leads us through his impressive list of publications, a testament to his authority in the field of early-modern Bath and celebrates his quiet modesty - truly a gentleman and a scholar.

Brenda Buchanan has made a detailed study of Bath entrepreneurs John and Charles Palmer which more broadly examines how individuals gained social advancement through business activity as the city expanded in the eighteenth century. It explores an interesting link between the Palmers spermaceti works which produced superior candles for lighting and their patronage of the city's theatres. The advantage of whale oil in the production of smokeless and odourless candles was in the brilliant light it achieved. In addition to support for the theatres, John Palmer was probably the author of a play, *The Rose-Wreath*, performed in Bath in 1781. He was also involved in the development of the mail system via cross-country routes which led to his appointment in 1786 as Surveyor and Comptroller General of the Post Office with a handsome salary. Other positions followed on the city council in 1775 and later as M.P. for Bath 1801-1808. He also moved to grander premises, 25 The Circus and a London home, marking his entry into the gentry. His son Charles continued the family entrepreneurial tradition developing interests in the Army, Parliament, the Theatre Royal, and Bordeaux wines. Charles served with distinction in the Peninsular War, rising to become aide-de-camp to the Prince of Wales in 1811 and as a Bath MP he championed the cause of Parliamentary Reform passed by the Whig Government in 1832.

Roger Holly has gathered together some fascinating details on the anti-slavery movement in Bath. His article assesses the importance of Quaker involvement in the quest for abolition, notably the Sturge family, in championing the controversial cause of negro slaves in British colonies and in the Americas. Public opinion was sharply divided with special interests defending their property rights versus the growing tide of humanitarian feeling led by William Wilberforce supported by local worthies such as Hannah More. Boycotts of goods associated with slavery found women especially prominent in the campaign. Roger draws on the UCL website database *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership* that reveals details of the huge compensation payments made to slave owners with abolition of slave plantations in 1834. These included well known Bath families.

One of the most successful events in Bath in 2014 was the exhibition on Bath and the Great Western Railway held at the Victoria Art Gallery. Katharine Wall, the curator of the exhibition, puts on record the works of art associated with Brunel's famous railway showing great ingenuity in selecting a variety of images and delightful literary extracts on Bath society at the time. The much admired GWR was the most transformative engineering project in southern England at the time. Building the railway transformed the southern part of the city, cutting through the beggars' quarter in Holloway while protecting superior housing in Bathwick. The centre piece of the exhibition was an interactive display of William Powell Frith's monumental painting *The Railway Station* featuring the newly built Paddington Station.

With the commemorations of the First World War in full swing, Graham Davis addresses the question of how we should remember the war today, recognising that memories change over time and reconstructed memory is shaped by subsequent ideas and events. A meeting between veteran soldiers and Bath students in the 1970s revealed little common ground on the meaning of the war. The early optimism of Bath resident Ralph Staight contrasts with the better known graphic accounts of the horror of trench warfare by Bath-born Harry Patch, the 'last Tommy' and by Stefan Westmann, a German medical orderly whose compelling account combines the suffering of German troops with a moving compassion for all the victims of the brutal conflict. He later fled Nazi Germany to become a consultant doctor in London. Extracts from Louie Stride's memoirs, written in old age, reveal the hardships endured by the poor in Bath during the Great War, including the provision of emergency kitchens set up to feed poor children.

Notes on Contributors

Brenda Buchanan – has been a Visiting Research Fellow at the History of Technology Research Unit of the University of Bath since 1987. Her main research concerns the history of gunpowder. She has edited and contributed to *Gunpowder. The History of an International Technology* (1996) and *Gunpowder, Explosives and the State: A Technological History* (2006). Journal articles have included its production in the Bristol region, links with the slave trade, and legislation relating to the industry. Brenda became the Founding Chairman of the History of Bath Research group (1986-1991) and Editor of *Bath History* (1994-2006), vols. VI to X. *Bath History* articles have covered 'The Great Bath Road' (1992), 'The Avon Navigation' (1996), 'Lord Ligonier (1680-1770: Military Commander and MP for Bath' (2000), and 'Bath's Forgotten Gunpowder History: The Powder Mills at Woolley in the Eighteenth Century' (2005). She was also invited to write five entries on local worthies for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), including one on John Palmer.

Vanessa Brett – Vanessa Brett's article is largely about encouraging others to turn detective and to follow clues on subjects of interest. She was brought up in the City of London in a place founded in 1123; went to school in Essex in a building once owned by Henry VIII; and her first job was in a royal peculiar. A resulting sense of place, and of the past, fills the void of formal qualifications. She has edited the journal of *The Silver Society* for fifteen years, published other books over several decades and is still absorbed in the subject of luxury retailing. She lives near Bath.

Elaine Chalus – is Professor of British History at Bath Spa University. An expert on gender and political culture, her numerous publications – particularly her monograph *Elite Women in English Political Life c1754-1790* (2005) – have helped to reconfigure historians' understanding of women and political culture prior to enfranchisement. She currently serves on editorial boards for *Women's History Review*, *Parliamentary History Journal*, and the History of Parliamentary Trust, where she is editor for the House of Lords, 1660-1832. Her media appearances include *Time Team*, Amanda Vickery's *Suffragettes Forever*, and Lucy Worsley's *Fit to Rule*.

Stephen Clews – is Manager of the Roman Baths and Pump Room where he has worked since 1989. Prior to that he worked at the Corinium Museum at Cirencester and in field archaeology in Britain and overseas. He is a trustee of Radstock Museum, the Gloucestershire Archaeology Society and the Association for the Study and Preservation of Roman Mosaics. He has written previously for *Bath History* (Vol. V) on the subject of Banking in Bath in the reign of George III.

Graham Davis – retired as Professor of History at Bath Spa University in 2008. He continues to give talks to local and family history societies, as well as being editor of *Bath History*. His Bath publications include *Memoirs of a Street Urchin* (1985), *Bath beyond the Book* (1988), co-editor 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) and editor of *In Search of a Better Life: British and Irish Migration* (2011).

Trevor Fawcett – read French and Portuguese at the University of Leeds before joining the National Service's Russian interpreters' course. Embarking on a career in libraries he worked at the universities of Southampton and East Anglia, becoming a Fellow of the Library Association and then founding ARLIS, a professional body for art librarianship with many international links. His developing interest in art history led to an M.Phil and various publications, including *The Rise of English Provincial Art* (Clarendon Press, 1978) and articles on the reproduction of works of art. A parallel concern for local history, initially focused on Norwich, was confirmed on his move to Bath in 1984, inspiring much detailed research into Bath's Georgian past as well as promotion of the History of Bath Research Group in 1986. He has written six books and many articles on topics related to Bath. He has also edited three volumes of *Bath History*. Stephen Bird's interview with him appeared in *Bath History* vol. 12, 2011.

Andrew Hill – Having retired from a varied career with the MOD, he decided to focus his life-long love of history on his adopted city of Bath. In 2013 he published *Biscuits, Banquets and Bollinger*, a comprehensive account of the Bath and Bristol based firm of Cater, Stoffell and Fortt, renowned for their catering, wines, high-class grocery and manufacture of Bath Oliver biscuits. He is also a volunteer at the Museum of Bath at Work and the Bristol Record Office. At the latter venue he has been much involved with researching and uploading several thousand images from the Vaughan postcard collection to the Know Your Place website.

Roger Holly was born in Cardiff in 1949 and is now retired. He has always been interested in local history, particularly of that of Larkhall and Lambridge, the starting point for his interest in the Sturge family. He has lived in the Bath area since 1969 when he came to study 3D Design at Bath Academy of Art, and went on to teach locally for a time. He spent time travelling through the Americas and Europe which enhanced his interest in the history of the Slave trade. He maintains an interest in Art from Pottery to Photography.

Kate James – With previous lives in business and pre-school education, Kate James returned to studies as a mature student, gaining a History BA in 2011 and an MA in Heritage Management in 2012. Working alongside Dr. Roberta Anderson led to collaboration in the development of the Bath Spa University Archive project, based at Newton Park, which has in turn provided the topic for her PhD research. This explores the archive materials relating to the establishment of a teacher training institution, Newton Park College, amidst the extant elements of an eighteenth-century country estate. Using oral history testimony, the research analyses the foundations of a new community and the centrality of the character of Mary Dawson, the first Principal of the College.

Katharine Wall – is Collections Manager at Bath's Victoria Art Gallery. She has curated many exhibitions there including *Stewing Alive: The Story of Bathing in Bath; Life in Victorian Bath* and *Bath and the Great Western Railway*.

Barbara White – has retired as Director of an American study abroad programme based in Bath, after twenty years' service. 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 in 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* (1999), and is a regular contributor to *The Bath Magazine*. In 2014, she published, to much acclaim, *Queen of the Courtesans: Fanny Murray*.

Bath History is a resource which anyone interested in the fascinating history of Bath will find invaluable. Volume XIV continues the scholarship of the previous volumes. The illustrated articles provide readers with new research, which places Bath in a wider, less parochial context.

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A Visit to the Camp

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Rear

High Street, Bath, by Thomas
Malton, watercolour, 1777.

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