The diarist Katherine Plymley was born on 4 January 1758 in the placid village of Longnor eight miles south of Shrewsbury. There also she died, on 2 September 1829. It is true of her as was said of Parson Woodforde that the salient facts of her life could just about fill a postcard. But, as she remarked, ‘Life is made up of little incidents, great occasions seldom occur’. The joys and trials of her ordinary but valuable life were recorded in a diary she kept for 36 years. It reveals her as a thoughtful and loving woman, deeply religious and scrupulously honest, lively and cheerful.

Her father, Joseph Plymley, was an apothecary who inherited his partner’s estate and married into the Corbett of Longnor family. She had a brother, Joseph, born in 1759, and a sister, Ann, born in 1761. The sisters never married. The younger Joseph Plymley became perpetual curate at Longnor and was made an archdeacon in 1792. In 1806 he inherited the manors of Longnor and Cardington from an uncle, Robert Corbett. He married twice (his first wife died in childbirth) and fathered a brood of twelve. Katherine and her sister, the perfect aunts, shared in the nurture and education of their nieces and nephews. Katherine regarded her fostering duties as an ‘honourable employment’ which gave her an intense family life, social standing and a measure of freedom. They also preserved her from ‘contracting some of those peculiarities of temper & manner which often attend increasing years when there are no young objects to engage the attention’.

Katherine Plymley was a prudent housekeeper, a generous hostess, and a sensible benefactor of the poor. She read widely and played the piano. From her father she acquired a passion for natural history and a gift for painting flowers and insects. She shared all the public interests of her much loved brother including the anti-slave-trade campaign organised by Thomas Clarkson who became their great friend. In what might seem to us to be a claustrophobic world for women, she appeared content. ‘Mercy and goodness have followed me all the days of my life’, she wrote on her 65th birthday. Her travels, always with or for the family, took her as far afield as Cornwall and London and between 1794 and 1807 she made six visits to Bath recording the observations which follow.
In 1794 Katherine Plymley and her friend Mary Adams accompanied her father Joseph Plymley to Bath to escape an outbreak of smallpox at Longnor. They set out by coach on 6 October, spent a night at Worcester, and reached the White Hart about 9 p.m. on the 7th.

8 October 1794 – Having come to Bath without a servant it is necessary that we shou’d board, from the Bath guide we learn that though lodging houses are numerous there are but few that take in boarders. Noon – We are return’d … after an unsuccessful search. My Brother wish’d my Father to take a servant & we find a want of one more than I expected, for the boarding houses we have yet met will take nobody without one. Night – Miss C. Isted had the goodness to accompany us … & by her assistance we are settled in very handsome apartments No. 5 Oxford Row. We left the White Hart after dinner, it is an excellent Inn, the business very great but everything managed with regularity & comfort. We are to pay 18 shilling a week each for board, half a guinea a week for each room & 3s 6d a week for each fire. Although we have no servant we are obliged to pay for servants rooms & servants hall 3 shilling a week each as it is a rule not to set the good rooms without the suit[e] & 5 shilling a week each to the master of the house for the use of the servants, but as we were one family this is to be lower’d to half a guinea a week among us. … Miss Charlotte [Isted] accompanied us to the pump room. It is at present a temporary one, the old one for some reason is not used, & the new one which will be a magnificent building is not finish’d.

9 October 1794 – I am extremely struck with the beauty & singularity of Bath. Passing through Queens square up Gay Street to the Circus & Crescent, I am ready to suspect that I am not in England. The uniformity of building, all of stone, the breadth of the flags, the openings every where into the country, shewing the hills that surround the town scatter’d over with stone houses in all situations, every thing is new, & the streets remind me of views I have seen of the inside of towns in Italy & Flanders. … The Bath season being not yet begun the Theatre is only open upon a Saturday. We went to the lobby & have taken places for next Saturday. … The same players act here & at Bristol. …

10 October 1794 – We go every morning to the pump room, meet Miss Charlotte there & we walk about together. My Father is amused with sitting in the pump room & observing the company. We were well entertain’d at the Play this evening, the house is small but extremely convenient, much thrown in boxes, as is most suitable to a place of amusement, such as Bath.
12 October 1794, Sunday – We went to St. James’s Church where seats are appointed for strangers & where ... service is perform’d with great decency & considerable pomp. It is Cathedral service, but not quite so much chanting as in some choirs. The Organ is a very good one, & some of the voices excellent. At 2 o’clock we accompanied Miss Rose Isted to the Abbey to hear service perform’d for the different charity schools. The children ... amounted to about seven hundred. The service was in the Nave, the children sang to the Organ the 100th psalm & are taught to repeat, amen, audibly at the end of each prayer. I should have supposed among such a number there would have been many fine children but I could not remark any. After dinner Miss Adams & I ... accompanied Miss Isted to Margaret’s chapel, prayers are read there at 5 o’clock. The chapel is neat, the service by candle light, a good Organ, & some chanting. From thence we went ... to Lady Huntingdon’s chapel, they sang very often, almost between every prayer & there was a good Organ ... but I prefer’d the singing at St. James’s. The prayers were read in a vulgar tone of voice & ... we ventured to leave the church before the sermon began ... It has the air of a public place, sixpence is paid at admittance, a check ticket is given you which you deliver again at the last door. The building has galleries on each side, at one end an Organ & gallery for the singers & at the other is raised what they are pleased to term a throne, large enough to contain many persons. Among these, which I think were almost entirely ladies, the reader sat & had an eagle for his book. In the same place but raised a few steps higher is an arm chair with a desk before it from whence the sermon is deliver’d. The whole chapel was extremely crowded. ...

13 October 1794 – Miss Charlotte accompanied us to see Miss Bowdler’s drawings, chiefly transparent paintings for windows & their effect was very good. There were some good crayon drawings particularly an inside view of Tintern Abbey. ...

15 October 1794 – We dined at Mrs. Isted’s. ... [She] & her daughters retreated to [Bath] after the death of Mr. Isted. ... I have already seen at their house the Duke of Newcastle, Lady Buckinghamshire, Lady Jane Long & Lady Middleton besides many untitled people of fashion. ... Mrs. Isted is a very charming old Lady, about 74, & her dress which she has not alter’d for near 30 years is very becoming. ... My Father is quite the fashion, every one seems in love with him, no young heir in his highest bloom was ever more courted.

16 October 1794 – ... Miss Adams & I ... accompanied Miss C. Isted to Weston a very pretty village about a mile from Bath. We took a round in
1 Detail from S.H. Grimm's drawing of 1788 showing Bath across the Ham meadows from the south-east. Katherine Plymley attended on occasion both the Abbey Church and, on the left, St. James's. (Courtesy Victoria Art Gallery, Bath City Council)
going to it & from Sion hill above Bath we had a fine view of this singular city. We dined at Dr. Falconers in the family way ... [He] is a man of great talents & great learning. ... an excellent Physician & a good benevolent man, a good Husband & a good Father, yet for want I will not say of courtesy only, but of common civility, he does not please. He walks about his house with so much rude inattention, not to say apparent contempt of his guests. ... Mrs. Falconer’s kindness took all my attention, but my Father, perfectly unused to this behaviour could not help feeling much displeased. ...

17 October 1794 – ... My Father has consented to sit for his picture. Whilst he slept this eveng. Miss Adams & I went in search of a painter but did not find Daniel, the one we wish’d at home.

18 October 1794 – This morng. we went to Mr. Daniel’s & after seeing his miniatures return’d to my Father & prevail’d upon him to accompany us. I was much surprized to see Daniel & he greet as if they had met before, in fact Daniel had sat behind him in the box at the play, my Father had apologized to him for keeping his hat on, & had given him some ginger drops & Daniel now told me he was so struck with my Father’s countenance that he ... wish’d he had an opportunity to make that gentleman’s portrait. ...

19 October 1794, Sunday – We were conducted by Miss Rose Isted to the Octagon. My Father & I were seated in one of the seats on each side the alter. These seats are rail’d out in a semicircular form, will hold, I
suppose, at least fourteen persons, round a nice parlour looking fire. They are carpeted all over, but to me this was too unlike a church to be comfortable. ... We heard the popular preacher Mr. Randolph, he is very energetic & his voice must be naturally uncommonly strong, when I first heard it ... he almost startled me. The Organ is good & there is some chanting. ...

20 October 1794 – ... We have look’ d at a very large exhibition of paintings by Barker, an astonishing number to be painted by one man, who is still very young. A very good Woodman was among them, but not his capital piece, from which I have seen a very fine print.

21 October 1794 – Mrs. Falconer receives company every Monday evening. Their house is a handsome one in the Circus, dining parlour & library below, two drawing rooms above. These drawing rooms open into each other, one is appropriated to cards, the other to conversation & work. We went to her party yesterday. Form is excluded & the meeting is pleasant ... tea & coffee of course. Cakes, wine, ozyot [orgeat], lemonade, ice &c are several times handed about & the company all retire by 10 o’clock.

22 October 1794 – We set out on an excursion to Bristol. Having been a fortnight in our lodgings today we discharged them. ... We have been very comfortably situated ... we were supplied with excellent eatables at breakfast, even an elegant dinner, never less than two good dishes & a pudding or tart, generally a remove besides. Bread & butter with our tea in an evening & some cold meat at supper. Wine, tea, & sugar we provided for ourselves. Our candles were charged to us. ...

24 October 1794 – ... return’d to the White Hart Bath to tea. It was dark before we reach’d Bath, the lamps, particularly in the Crescent & Landsdown Crescent, seen from the road, had a beautiful effect.

25 October 1794 – We saw the fine room in the Town Hall & the new assembly rooms ... just clean’d & put in order for the season. ... I was pleased particularly with the manner in which the windows are shut up in the ballroom, the shutters are painted with Herculaneum figures & the mouldings round the windows appear as frames. The lustres, particularly in the Octagon room, are very fine. The wax lights we are told cost 800£ pr. annum. In the tea room there is a contrivance to wind up three tea urns at one time from below.

My Father’s picture is finish’d, an admirable likeness & finely painted, Daniel says it is his chef d’oeuvre. ... I spent an hour or two this evening with Mrs. Falconer & carried my Fathers picture with me. Doctr. Falconer rather patronizes Daniel, when he look’d at the picture.
he said, "Fine, respectable, cheerful old age, it is just what the original is". This was highly gratifying from Doctr. Falconer who disdains to compliment. ...

27 October 1794 – We left Bath this morning in the same coach we came in at 5 o'clock. We are much impressed with the great civility & indeed kindness that we have received there. The characaristic of Bath manners appears to me courtesy. It extends its influence to the streets, in the busy parts there seems to me more care to avoid pushing & jostling than elsewhere, in fact they live upon strangers & to accomodate them is their business. The chairmen, used to invalids, step with a more gentle & equal pace than any I have met with in other places. The police is excellent, ladies may walk in the streets after candle light alone in perfect security. It is pleasant to invalids to be able to go about in any manner they please without attracting impertinent observations. Here they enjoy it fully, cripples are seen wheeled in chairs of different sorts about the parades, the circus &c without exciting anything but a general desire not to incommode their path. Every one may in a great measure chuse their own society. It is not necessary to visit any merely because they are neighbours & those who delight in the gaieties of life have an opportunity to enjoy them cheaper than elsewhere. The market is excellent & I understand a family may be supplied as cheap here as in any town. Bath in short has many advantages, it has too its disadvan­tages. The great business of this place is pleasure, life, I think, is seen through a false medium. Of the numbers that resort to it, the greater part come with a wish to see & be seen ... to leave all care behind ... & though the fixed inhabitants of Bath are now numerous, yet they must be influenced by the gay shifting scene around them. A melancholy contrast however presents itself ... in those who visit this place to regain
health but they... are very little seen compared with the numbers who
are fluttering about. The rent of houses is very high in Bath. The house
we lodged in was 100£ pr. an: exclusive of taxes, it had three rooms
upon a floor & was three stories high, besides the kitchen below the
ground & garrets. It was not call’d dear. Lodgings by the year are dear.
Mrs. Mary Isteds I thought particularly so, she had one good sitting
room, a bedchamber adjoining, an upper room for a servant, & an
occasional bedroom for a friend. For this she pays 98£ pr. an: Numbers
of new houses are at present unoccupied & numbers in an unfinished
state. Many have been ruined by their speculations in building, yet
those that are finish’d & ready for tenants keep up their price. ... Doctr.
Falconer lives in the circus, in a house he purchased about 2 years ago
... for 2600£. It is a good house & very convenient in the offices which,
as in all houses here, are under ground* but it is not large, only a dining
parlour & a study on the entrance floor & two drawing rooms above. In
the story above it is divided into three rooms, but one is too small for a
bed, at least it would be quite crouded with a small tent bed. Bath is on
the whole a good retreat for elderly ladies & indeed for elderly
gentlemen. ... It is not I think fit for people of literally small fortunes,
but those whose fortunes ... are sufficient to enable them to live in
genteel life ... may live in that rank of society cheaper than elsewhere.
Here rent is the only very dear article, a carriage is not wanted & fewer
servants are sufficient than in the country or London & the society is far
superior to a country town. Those who have children to educate may
perhaps do it to advantage here, there are good masters. Bath is the
great retreat of widows & unmarried ladies, a friend of Mrs. Corbetts
very well said, "The society consists of broken fortunes, broken
constitutions & broken hearts".

In 1795 Katherine Plymley, her brother, and her brother’s second wife
returned from a journey to London by way of Bath.

4 July 1795 – ... We drove to the White Hart at tea time. We walk’d about
Bath, it appear’d very quiet, it is not the season & perhaps the stillness
made more striking by our late residence in Pall Mall. ... Everything on

* with good arreas however to the street in many of these arreas plants
flourish greatly, particularly the Passion flower which I never saw in
fruit before
a small scale by comparison, but certainly far more regularly good architecture & building than in London. When I passed 3 weeks so pleasurably in Bath last Autumn (not however in public amusements) I fancied I should like to reside here but 2 or 3 weeks spent at home made me suspect I was mistaking. Bath presents a false medium. ...

5 July 1795, Sunday – We went to St. James’s Church to morn. service ... & afterwards walk’d in the Parades. We call’d on Mrs. Isteds & dined at Dr. Falconer’s. ... to the Octagon in the evening.

6 July 1795 – Dined at Mrs. Isteds – call’d on Lady Smythe who has now a house in Great Pulteney Street – In the eveng. went to Mrs. Falconer’s public day.

7 July 1795 – Dined with Lady Smythe. ... Though [she] had no longer the charming Park at Acton Burnell ... where she so often took her company to drink tea & syllabub, she retain’d so much of her old habits as to propose taking our tea in Sydney Gardens. She is quite a cripple with the gout but was carried in a sedan chair. ... [and] appear’d with much of her usual cheerfulness till the music ... play’d a martial strain which seem’d to bring to her recollection her son William who fell in one of the late seiges, he was in the Austrian service. ...

8 July 1795 – Left Bath after dinner. Upon the whole my reception at Bath calls to mind the speech of Othelo

“Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus
I have found great love among them”.

Katherine returned to Bath in 1796, this time as companion to her uncle and aunt, Mr and Mrs Robert Corbett of Longnor Hall.

20 October 1796 – ... We ... reach’d Bath to dinner. We drove to York House.

21 October 1796 – I do not find this so comfortable a house as the White Hart. It is not kept so clean, neither are the beds so good. ...

22 October 1796 – We are settled in a lodging at Mrs. Harrington & Hale, Milleners, No. 4 Milsom Street. We have a drawing room, two chambers, a dressing room with a small bed in it, two garrets & a servants hall for which Mr. Corbett is to pay £2 15s 0d a week, for dressing meat 7s 6d a week, to the servants 10s 6d a week. Mr. and Mrs. Corbett are to find earthen ware, china, glasses, plate, knives, forks, candlesticks, waiters &c coal & candles. The house finds table linnen, Napkins & sheets (but Mr. C. pays for the washing) & kitchen utensils.

29 October 1796 – As Mr. Corbett does not think it suitable to his health
to visit during his stay here I shall throw my memorandums into weeks having no great variety to observe. ... Mrs. Mary Isted retains her usual vigour of conversation, she is in her 81st year & at that age it is too often the lot of our sex to be visited & attended to from pity. ... but I dare to believe no one ever thought of pity & Mrs. M. Isted. You expect rather to be charmed by her vivacity yet she suffers, almost daily, great pain from the gout. ... She has entirely confined herself to the house for some months past, but time never hangs heavy on her. Carpet work, & muslin work by turns engage her, knitting fills up her odd minutes, a book amuses her & after supper she writes her letters. If she has a party she plays at quadrille. ... She last year worked 30 yards of carpet ... & this year a work’d apron for Mrs. Isted, which ... had a properly full pattern ... in chain stitch, within the month of August. ... On Monday I was at Mrs. Falconers public day, where were about 40 persons, among them Miss [Mary] Williams of Boddlewydden, the particular friend of Miss Panton. ... Her lodgings are at No. 8 Bennet St., at a Milleners. ... 2 small drawing rooms opening to each other, the one not above half furnish’d, one bedchamber (her maid sleeps in her room) & I think, a room in a garret to place boxes &c for this she pays 70£. ... On Tuesday I walk’d with Mrs. Corbett through the market. She was ask’d for caulyflowers from 2d to ls a piece, the largest not remarkably fine – Cellery 1½ – artichokes 8d a piece – Apples for eating ld each – Apples for baking 10d & ls a measure (the measure ½ a peck). Mrs. Whitacre bought a nice small dish of fish, gudgeons & roaches 6d a dozen – Veal was 8d a lb & Beef 6d – Butter 13d a lb – Potatoes 6d a peck – a good Fowl 2s – radishes, Turnips, Carrots 6d a bunch – one bunch was sufficient for us. The Housekeepers bill at the end of this week came to £5 7s 6d. We had no more fish, everything as plain as possible, & two Hares & a brace of Patridges from Longnor. Coal & wine are not included in the Housekeepers bill, but the bill for this week is larger than others as some articles were laid in.

5 November 1796 – The 1st: Sunday we passed here we went to the Octagon. Their late favourite preacher Dr. Randolph is removed to Laura Chapel. It was purchased for him by his numerous admirers among the ladies, young & old. Some subscribed from l to 200£ & others less sums, even as low as £5. I hear he sets a single sitting in Laura Chapel for £1 5 0 a year. ... Mrs. M. Isted said to me in her abrupt way “It is a sad thing there should be but one soul saver in all this place for fine ladies, they have bought Laura Chapel for Dr. Randolph when his time was expired in the Octagon, throw up their pews there & followed
him, there being no chance of their being saved but by his sermons." ... His successor Dr. Gardener" is a preacher of the popular sort but not, I think, so pompous & declamatory as Dr. Randolph.

Last Sunday we were at Queens Square Chapel, being accommodated with seats by Mrs. Key, an old lady of large fortune in Queen's Square, who has a large front seat in the gallery & one for her servants behind her.... There is no Organ in this chapel, but it is very neat, very well warmed, as the chapels all are here, & the service is decently perform'd. In the evening I go to prayers at the Octagon, being accommodated by Mrs. Falconer in her seat. The usual hour for eveng. prayers in the chapels is 5 o'clock. A church is now building in the upper part of the town, meant for a free church, where the poor & strangers may worship the Almighty. The idea is said to have originated with Mr. Wilberforce,\textsuperscript{12} who shocked to find the poor entirely excluded from the Octagon, too little room for them anywhere, & that strangers knew not where to go to church (indeed, two seats in St. James's excepted, they cannot go anywhere without paying) advertised an offer of 300£ towards a free church without mentioning his name; the plan succeeded, numbers have subscribed & a handsome building, in the gothic stile, is now in great forwardness. It is ... to cost perhaps somewhat more than 3000£. The whole body of the church is for the poor & strangers. Some seats in the gallery are to be set for a low rent, to pay a clerk, sexton & I think, a small stipend to a clergyman. ... My mornings are spent in walking about, making calls and shopping with Mrs. Corbett, my evenings all at home.... Mr. Corbett ... is daily attended by Dr. Frazer & Mr. Anderton. There is no saying what another feels, but to me he does not appear unwell. The housekeepers bill was not quite £3 0 0 this week....

\textbf{12 November 1796 – On Monday Mrs. Corbett & I went an airing with Mrs. Key in her chariot ... 3 or 4 miles ... to Kelston, a very pretty place belonging to the late Dr. Caesar Hawkins.\textsuperscript{13} We were at Mrs. Falconer's public day in the eveng. & from thence went to the Ball at the upper rooms, three sets danced & it was a lively scene. ... I have been one night in the warm bath, by way of luxury*. ... On Friday I was at a ball in the lower rooms. I have now seen both rooms lighted up. The new is undoubtedly much the most elegant, but the master of ceremonies at the lower (Dr. King) is more popular than Mr. Tyson\textsuperscript{14} of the upper

\textsuperscript{*}the price of bathing is 3 shilling & 1 shilling to the attendant
rooms. ... Housekeeping this week not 2£. Some game from Longnor, no fish except 1 pair of soles which were ls. No fruit, a few apples for tarts or roasting.

19 November 1796 – Nothing worth recording has happen’d this week.... I have been to look at Daniels pictures more than once....I have had a tooth taken out by Goldstone. 15

26 November 1796 – On last Saturday I was at the play with Mrs. Corbett & Miss Charlotte Isted. I saw a very celebrated young actor, Elliston, 16 in Frederick Mowbray in First Love, & Vapour in my Grandmother. In the last I had seen young Bannister, & yet was well pleased with Elliston. On Monday I was at Mrs. Falconer’s public day. 45 persons there. Lady Glynne was one a very agreeable woman with whom I became acquainted at Chesterton. She wish’d me to go to the ball at the upper rooms next Monday. ... it is expected to be very full as the Prince of Wales & Duke & Dutchess of York are coming to Bath. The Princes are to dine with the Corporation that day. ... On Wednesday I was at the first Concert at the upper rooms & was highly delighted. Mr. Panton who came to Bath a few days ago (& who looks extremely ill, but I hope will soon be better as Dr. Falconer thinks it quite a Bath case) was there with Mr. Mander. He said “Now you hear Haydn music played as it
ought to be”. The singers were Sigra: Storacci & Mr. Braham. He has
great melody & power of voice....

3 December 1796 – On Sunday ... the Corporation went in coaches to the
Duke of Yorks house (the centre house in the Crescent). The concourse
of people assembled in the Crescent was very great, the sight was no
more than six or seven coaches with the sword & mace &c held partly
out of the window. The Prince & Duke dined at the Mayors private
table. On Monday the same procession waited on the Prince to present
him with the freedom of the City, in a box that cost a hundred guineas,
gold enamel’d with blue & the city arms.... The mayor (Mr. Palmer the
inventor of mail coaches) had prepared his speech, but after speaking
about two minutes he said “I beg pardon but I am so impressed with
your Royal highnesses presence that I cannot proceed”. The Prince was
extremely gracious, put on all his fascinating manners, the speech was
given to Mr. Churchill [a royal attendant] who by Mr. Palmer’s desire
showed it to the Prince. On Monday ... I met Lady Glynne at Mrs.
Falconers public day & went with her to the ball. Miss Charlotte & Miss
Williams joined us, the latter however became discomposed because we
deprecated pushing thro’ the crowd (for such it was, 12 hundred persons
being present) from the ball room to the tea room & left us for a more
congenial party. The Prince & Duke came early to the ball room with the
Dutchess. ... The Dutchess I thought rather a pretty little woman, but
quite over rouged, so were all the ladies of her party, the Prince extremely
good humour’d & pleasant, I do not like the Duke’s countenance. They
were both dressed in plain blue with the star. The Dutchess’s body &
train was white spotted with gold, trimmed round the neck & down the
sides with narrow black velvet studded with diamonds, her head dress
a turban, diamond crescent, & large plume of feathers, diamond
necklace & earings. On Wednesday ... night [a family party] went to the
Concert. The last was so crouded in the concert room that this was held
in the ball room but such numbers attended that we were rather more
crouded than at the last. The singers were Storace & [Jonathan] Nield,
the latter has a sweet voice & is I believe a very just singer but does not
please equally with Braham .... We leave Bath today ....

8 December 1796. Longnor – A few memorandums of the expences of
different articles – Lady Eaglefields carriage, a job, expence very near
200£ pr. an.; & additional pay when she takes it a journey. A chair might
have been kept at Bath & used as often as you pleased for a guinea a
week. ... Mr. Sotheby’s horses were at livery stables whilst they were in
Bath. Their coachman paid 6d a night for his bed & cou’’d not board
under 2s a day. The house we lodged in had 2 rooms on a floor, attics &
garrets divided into 3 small rooms, the rent 90£ a year, the tenant paying
all repairs & taxes. The present tenant on entering it pd. 104£ for a lease
of 5 years. I was told that an unfurnish’d house towards Grosvenor
Gardens (a part of Bath where they have overbuilt themselves & where
few houses are inhabited) was lately sold for 60£ & cost the builder
2050£. I think I must have been misinform’d. ... Houses in the Crescent
in general sell for about 3,000£. The centre house was purchased very
cheap by the Duke of York tho’ very reluctantly sold by the owner a
Nabob. It was very elegantly furnish’d, one bed alone cost 200£. There is
coach-house & stabling for 16 horses. Yet the gentleman complimented
the Duke with it for 5,000£. ... The capital drawing masters charge 10s 6d
a lesson. Some of the music masters charge 19 guineas a year. Mrs. Isteds
house, including taxes, was 95£ a year but the lease nearly expired. The
next house, the same in all respects, 120£ pr. an. Miss C. Isted told me
that chairs & public places cost her about 18£ in the season, public places
are cheap at Bath. Mrs. M. Isted burnt wax candles, she thought the
difference to her between that & tallow was about 3£ pr. an.

A reluctant Katherine Plymley re-visited Bath in early 1799 in answer
to a summons from her uncle Robert Corbett who was laid up from a
fall. For the first time she journeyed on a Sunday and ‘I hope it will be
the last. I deprecate growing used to such things’. She reached Bath on
25 February. Mr Corbett had taken a house at 20 Milsom Street for 6
guineas a week, she noted in her diary, and after she returned home
she wrote a few other observations.

I left Bath 29th March. Mr. Corbett was much recover’d in his health,
but as lame as when I went there. He continued to be sat up with & was
trying the effect of bathing. ... I dined twice at Mrs. Isteds. The first time
I met Mrs. Patty Moore, sister to Mrs. H. Moore. ... She is a fat good-
humour’d looking woman, probably about 50 years of age, very lively
& full of anecdote & sentiment, talked almost incessantly & was very
amusing tho’ how often I wou’d wish to have the pleasure repeated I
can hardly determine. She was full of her sister & her works. Mrs. H.
Moore was just then publishing a work on female education. ... She
gave us a long account of their establishing a Sunday school at Mendip,
which tho’ it met with opposition from some was now very numerously
attended. ... Their own income must be a good one for they keep a
house in Bath & one in the country near Bristol, but they are assisted in
these undertakings by subscriptions from their friends. Mrs. H. M., I understand, has 200£ annuity from a gentleman whom she sued for breach of promise of marriage.

Bath was uncommonly full, a great many Irish were there. At Linterns music shop I was told he had at that time two hundred Harpsichords & Piano Fortes hired out & as fast as they were return’d from one family they were wanted by another. The price was from 3s 6d to 5s a week. ...

An old servant of Mrs. Isted who now keeps a grocer’s shop in Bath, hires himself to wait on parties at 2s 6d a night, he has in the season very constant employment. ... Mrs. Vaughan told me her 5 months residence ... with three servants wou’d cost her about 450£. In this was included 7 guineas to Docr. Falconer & about 20 guineas in dress. ... Surgeons fees, where there is no operation & little trouble, about four calls for a guinea ....

I went one week day to morning prayers in the free church, or Christ church, as it is sometimes call’d. The whole body of the church consists of benches, free to all poor & strangers, it will hold twelve hundred persons ....

I took a place in the Holyhead coach & was quite uncertain what companions I shou’d have. It set out at 7 o’clock from the White Hart, I went there in a chair. ... I was very fortunate in company, a Miss Brown, an Irish lady, who tho’ I did not know her call’d me by name & knew from Mrs. White & Miss Williams where I had been & my connexions. ... I found her very civil & good humour’d, with something of the freedom of her country. Our companions were two gentlemen who conversed in german but we soon found they spoke english very readily. They were officers just return’d from the West Indies where they had been in english pay 3 years & were now exchanged into a german regiment of Hussars now in Ireland.

This was the first journey I ever took quite alone ....

Because of the precarious health of her niece Jane, then 15, Katherine Plymley spent 10 months in Cornwall with Jane and her sister Josepha, then 16. Aunt and nieces returned home in June 1803 and were met when they reached Bath by the girls’ father, stepmother and stepbrothers Uvedale and Joseph.

22 June 1803 – Mrs. Plymley has been attacked with a very considerable degree of fever since we were here. She took cold on her journey &
bathing with it brought on fever ... She was attended three or four days by Dr. Falconer ... [Colonel Velley, brother of a Penzance acquaintance, invited them all to tea.] He and his wife live at present in Portland place but are going to remove to a house of their own in the Circus. In the drawing room where we sat was two fine landscapes of Poussins ... Colonel Velley has shewed us his beautiful collection of Marine plants, Grapes & Ferns, they are wonderfully well preserved, beautifully laid out & gummed upon paper with the most exact neatness & so closely pressed that even at a very near view it is difficult to distinguish them from drawings. They are systematically arranged & are a very novel collection entirely made by himself with some assistance from Mrs. Velley in placing out the nicer sea weeds ... He told us the english grapes amounted to 107 or 108, he has all except 2 or 3. The Ferns to about 30 different species. We sat in his Library. He has a fine collection of books. ... We have twice called upon Mrs. Corbett of Bartons Court. She has completed her 87th year & is scarcely at all altered since I saw her 4½ years ago. She has all her faculties & her memory for recent occurrences is still strong. She is cheerful & has all the allowances for youth that the youngest person would wish. She never goes out in the winter but in the summer is taken in a chair to church & sometimes to visit an old friend. She is the most agreable old woman I recollect to have seen. We have been entertained by the sight of Mrs. H. Bowdler’s drawings, principally in crayons & italian chalks, views taken by herself. Her house is neat & elegant in Park Street. Mrs. Jane Davies has pleasant lodgings in a very high part of Bath, St. Winifred’s Dell. It was lately almost country & is still open to it, but they are building near it. She pays for her lodgings 130£ pr. An. The price of purchase for a house in the Crescent is about 3,000£, for one of the same size in Pulteney Street 2,000£ & in the lower part of the town about 1,000. On Saturday I went with my Neices to a play, the first they ever saw. It was John Bull. A very crouded house. Uvedale & Joseph were with us. They both enjoyed it much. Uvedale laughed & talk’d so loud as to call the attention not only of those near him, but he could be heard at a great distance. He appeared to forget the illusion of the scene & called out to the actors as if it were all real circumstances. On Sunday morning we were at St. James’s Church. Mr. Warner read prayers but it being Sacrament day I was disappointed in not hearing him preach. In the evening we attended service at the Abbey. It was very indifferently performed.

24 June 1803 – We were yesterday in Sidney gardens. Mr. & Mrs. Dansey were with us. He is unable to walk with the gout. Mrs. Plymley
5 Sydney Pleasure Gardens, from J.C. Nattes, *Bath Illustrated by a Series of Views* (1806). (Courtesy Victoria Art Gallery, Bath City Council)
went in a chair & was afterwards taken round the gardens in a wheeling chair. Her Brother accompanied her in his. The scene was very cheerful. The trees are grown & flourish well. The Roses & Syringa’s are in blossom. A band of music played & tho’ Bath is now more empty than I have seen it, many were there. The canal now goes through the gardens. There are two Iron Bridges over it within the gardens, besides the stone arches thrown over for the drive on the outside. Swings are placed in different parts & we saw some very fearless swingers. In one part is a building to imitate a castle in ruins & in another is a very good deception painted on canvass of a stone arch. There are numerous alcoves & seats for parties to drink tea in. Jane’s pulse is slower since she came to Bath.... She is much fatigued for she has been willing to see what she could & very unwilling to go in a chair.... We intend to leave Bath tomorrow morning ....

In 1807 Katherine Plymley took Josepha and Jane to enjoy a season at Bath. Jane, delicate from infancy, fell sick and after a harrowing illness died on 9 March ‘aged 19 years 3 months and 19 days’. In addition to her usual ‘memorandums’ of the daily round at Bath, the devoted aunt afterwards compiled a long account of her niece’s short life.

20 January 1807 – ... We arrived at Bath about 8 o’clock. The Moon was very bright & made our drive from Petty France pleasant. We had lodgings ready ... at No. 7 St. James’s Street ... & we found fires in our rooms & mutton broth ready for our supper. We have two drawing rooms, two chambers & a room for our man servant [Richard Hickman]. The maid of the house is to clean & cook for us. The people find us in Linen, China, Glass &c. The maid is to live with our man. We are to pay three guineas a week. The rooms are small but clean & comfortable ....

22 January 1807 – The weather very unfavourable but in a dry interval we got out to Barratts in Bond Street & subscribed to his Library – 5s a month – brought away the Supplement to Hayley’s Life of Cowper & the 1st vol. of Lord Teignmouth’s Life of Sr. William Jones. 24

23 January 1807 – Finished Cowper last night. Was much pleased to observe several passages in his letters that confirm the Idea I have always indulged that the dreadful malady that occasioned such terrors in his mind was not constantly present. On the contrary his hopes were ... those of a Christian .... Miss Williams called upon us & accompanied us to Mr. Erringtons ... as a person very well qualified to give us information on the subject of Music & Drawing Masters. By their
recommendation (for Mrs. Errington who is a pleasant woman appear'd as much at home on the subject as himself) we called to look at Mr. Hewlett's drawings in Cambden Place. His drawing room is hung with beautiful paintings of Flowers in water colours, charmingly grouped. I was struck with the delicacy & accuracy with which he had painted some Insects introduced upon the Flowers ... . There were besides some beautiful paintings of figures, particularly groups of children most delicately touched in water colours. From thence we went to Bathwick Street to Benjamin Barkers. We saw two rooms, one hung with Landskips in oil, the other with water colours, both very excellent in their way. Both these artists called upon us in the evening & we engaged Barker to attend Josepha for Landskips & Hewlett Jane for Flowers, at half a guinea a lesson each. We have hired a Piano Forte at Linters at 4s a week. Mr. Errington was so obliging to give Josepha a ticket for the Catch Club. It was a Ladies night & it is a favour to get a ticket for no Lady can subscribe. She went with Mrs. Errington & Miss Williams. Jane & I drank tea at Mrs. Isted's.... [She] told me that Cowpers Johnny (Dr. Johnson of Norfolk, a clergyman) dined with her a few days before we came. He dedicated his whole time to Cowper with the hope of administering consolation in his later years. The last seven or eight his terrors & dejection were almost without any interval of relief ... It is well known that Johnson constantly read Novels aloud to amuse him, but he told Mrs. Isted that cheerful ones would not do – he would only listen to melancholy or horrid tales. ... Josepha returned much pleased with her evenings amusement. Miss Parke & several good singers, a great number of persons there & refreshments handed about.

24 January 1807 – ... This day Jane was taken by Mrs. Errington to a private musical party – Miss Parke & her sister & several other good singers. There was a supper & a great deal of singing, very pleasant. Josepha & I were at a party at Mrs. King's, a new scene to me – literally a squeeze – two rooms very elegantly ... furnished were open'd into each other by folding doors. A very small part of the company could get seats but there was great plenty of refreshments handed round from time to time, Tea, Ice, Cakes &c. How the waiters made their way thro' the crowd without overturning their waiters [trays] seemed very dexterous to me.

25 January 1807, Sunday – Jane & I went to the Free Church. ... We were put into [a gallery pew] for a shilling. Richd. sat in the body of the church which appeared principally filled with Livery Servants & Ladies maids which I believe was not the original intention; it was meant for
the real poor. We were not pleased with the manner of doing duty. The preacher was Mr. Daubeny, a popular preacher. We heard him only indistinctly but what we did hear gave us no wish for the rest. His doctrine was ... very high church. ... Every one stood up at the singing psalms, a thing ... which has been much insisted upon lately by the high church party. ... The whole Exortation to the Sacrament was read & the congregation stood & the custom of turning to the Altar at the Creed was observed. Josepha went to Margarets Chapel with Mrs. Corbett. We all went there to Prayers in the eveng. 

26 January 1807 — ... Josepha drank early tea at Mrs. Erringtons (early tea 7 o’clock!) from thence went with her to a large party & afterwards to the ball. 

27 January 1807 — We went with Mrs. Corbett to a large party at Mrs. Haygarths. Dr. Haygarths is an elegant house in the Crescent. The drawing room is large, four windows in front handsomely furnished. Another room backwards was opened. I was told above four hundred cards were sent out & it was supposed that in the course of the evening not many fewer persons were there.... Refreshments, tea, ice, oziyat &c handed about in abundance. From thence we went to another large party at Miss Mays in the Circus — ... 

28 January 1807 — .... Hewlett attends Jane every other day. He works before her & she copies in his absence. He is a respectable man & seems to have no other fault as a master than that of being very tedious. Barker was with Josepha for the first time today. He is too much engaged to attend as often as Hewlett. He appears to be possest of true genius & is as rapid as Hewlett is tedious. He too works before his pupil but he likewise put Josepha to sketch the outline & lay in the first colour whilst he was present. His manner is diffident & engaging. ... We went with Mrs. Corbett to the Concert at night. .... The singers were Miss Parke, Miss Sharp & Mrs. Windsor, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Magrath, Mr. Gray & Mr. Doyle — & a Mr. Woelfl, a german jew, & most celebrated performer, gave a concerto upon the Piano Forte. It was an agreeable Concert. 

29 January 1807 — Josepha drank tea with Mrs. Rocke & went with her to the Cotillon Ball. I had been with Miss Williams & Josepha to the rooms in the morning to see the gentlemen in walking dresses, many ... in boots, dancing by daylight, whilst numbers were looking on. At the ball when the Cotillons are over country dances succeed ... Jane & I were at the Play with Mrs. Corbett & Miss Andre, the first time I had seen the new Theatre, an elegant house & of a convenient size. The actors are heard perfectly well in it, two tiers of boxes all lined with crimson, the
ceiling painted. The entertainment was the “Forty Thieves” taken from the Arabian nights entertainments. It is altogether, like many modern plays, for show & scenery & the scenes were beautiful....

1 February 1807, Sunday – ... Jane & I went to St. James’s, a long walk, but an agreeable Church. The reader & preacher were strangers & though we were disappointed in not hearing Mr. Warner we found them both agreeable. The Organ is a fine one, the singing good & the Te Deum & Nunc Dimitis chaunted very well. In the eveng. were all at Margarets – they chaunt there, but in neither place the psalms.

2 February 1807 – We went with Mrs. Corbett to a Concert in the elegant new room at York Hotel. It was in the morning for the benefit of Miss Randles, a child of seven years old who plays wonderfully upon the Piano Forte. Her execution is good & what perhaps is still more extraordinary she has much taste & where it is required, force. She sings & has a sweet little voice. She is a fair & delicate child, little of her age, looking intelligent & pretty. Her Father is Organist of Wrexham. He is blind & is a fine player upon the Harp. He has lost his wife & has six children. This child had a concert for her benefit in Shrewsbury ... when she was
under four years old. She then played by ear only. She now plays by note. ... Josepha was so much affected when she first saw the Father led in & the little girl lifted upon her seat to the Instrument by her Uncle [Mr. Perry] that she could not help crying. ... Mr. Windsor the music master has been here tonight & given his first lesson to Josepha ... He appeared in a great hurry, said he had two ladies to go to afterwards. His hours are very inconvenient & his manners extraordinary ... he continually repeats "my Dear young Lady", "my dear Miss", "my Dear", "Missey" &c. ... I do not doubt his being a good master ... but of course he disgusted Josepha. ... Mr. Windsor’s terms are two guineas for eight lessons.

4 February 1807 – We were at a party at Mrs. Stackhouse’s – a very small one it was called, there were about thirty persons there. The drawing room newly fitted up & according to the reigning taste, all the ornaments
were Egyptian. The curtains & chairs callico covered with small egyptian figures & devices, with a border of larger pattern. The paper of the white glazed sort with egyptian figures, border coloured to match. The hearth rug had a large Tyger lying down upon it. The pier glass was ornamented at top with figures in black Japan. The stands that supported the fixed tables between the piers were black Egyptian figures....

5 February 1807 — ... Josepha went to the Ball in the evening. ... it was the first time she had danced Cotillons at the rooms.... The ball was very full. Ten sets danced Cotillons, it was a pretty sight. The Cotillon Ball is this year quite the fashion, the Mondays balls are rather neglected I am told. Mr. Magrath gave Jane a lesson in singing today for the first time. He appears a well behaved man & a good master. His terms are 7s a lesson.

7 February 1807 — ... We were at a very pleasant musical party in the evening at Mr. Erringtons. ... The singers were Miss Parke, Miss Fanny Parke, Miss Sharp & Miss Willis, Mr. Magrath, Dr. Murray & Mr. Broadhurst. Mr. Windsor was at the Piano Forte & Mr. Errington & four other gentlemen played two Violins, two Flutes & a Bass. Miss Errington played a Sonata on the Piano Forte accompanied by her Father. She is not eleven years old, her playing was wonderful. ... Her mother has been her chief instructor.... Her younger sister, a child of nine year old, appears a little prodigy in conversation & her knowledge of books in english & french. She is now learning italian & has begun music. Her mother is her only instructor in all these accomplishments ... There was a supper, the table elegantly lald out with cold Turkey, Fowls, sandwiches, tarts, jellies, custards, fruit, cake &c. Some partook it sitting, some standing without any form. There were about forty persons there....

9 February 1807 — ... We went this morning to a concert at York hotel for the benefit of Mr. Gray. He is a young man of great natural genius for music. He was put apprentice to some trade. ... He is just out of his time & wishes to take to music as a profession. I was much pleased with the music. It was all vocal. ... Windsor sat at the Piano Forte. Mr. Errington thinks him “the best accompanier in England”. ... The singers were Magrath, Bennet, Gray, Cooke, Webber & Winter & Mrs. Sims. She has a sweet voice & though said to be destitute of musical science, she pleased me more than any female I have heard here except Miss Parke. ... All the music was english which was an additional pleasure to me. We dined at Mrs. Isteds — Miss Hunt came into tea, she was once one of the preceptresses to the young Princess Charlotte, but was obliged to resign her office on account of health — she appeared an unaffected woman.
10 & 11 February 1807 – I staid at home with a bad cold that I had continued to go out with so long as I could.

12 February 1807 – Went to a party at Mrs. Isteds. Upwards of thirty persons – Among them a Colonel Hart whose name struck me & whose features I thought I recollected. ... Mrs. Corbett said she would ask him the question I wished – if he were connected with the Alison’s. He said “Mr. Alison is my Nephew”. We then entered into much talk. He remembered being at my Brothers about twelve years ago with Mr. Alison. He is a very agreeable man, of remarkably mild & gentle manners, has been a very brave officer & seen much service. ... Josepha went from the party, as did many more, to the Cotillon ball – She had been to the rooms to practice in the morning.

13 February 1807 – Went to the Concert. It was choral night when there is little except Oratorio music played. ... My cough was extremely troublesome. ...

14 February 1807 – I was very unwell, my head ached violently & that sort of head-ache that indicated a disposition to a bad seizure. ... I followed Dr. DuGard’s directions & applied Aether very plentifully to my head which was of great service. My Nieces were uneasy & sent for Mr. Bowen, an Apothecary of high repute. ... In about two hours his partner arrived. My head was relieved before he came. He ordered something for my cold. I was particularly thankful to be better for from what I saw I shd not like to be attended by Mr. Spry. ... I believe [Mr. Bowen] is too much engaged to attend new patients. Perhaps I am spoiled by Dr. DuGard. ... I like Mr. Spry less than almost any medical man I have seen ....

17 February 1807 – I am now convinced that the manner in which Windsor addresses his pupils proceeds from the wish to soften the faults he has to point out to them. He appears very good-tempered & enthusiastically fond of music. ... He is not only without comparison the best music master whose lessons I was ever present at but I think appears more anxious to inform & improve his scholars than I have ever observed a master in any other branch ....

18 February 1807 – We went to the Concert for the benefit of the Bath dispensary & Asylum for sick poor. It was ... excessively crowded. ... The singers were Miss Sharp & Mrs. Windsor, Messrs Bennett, Magrath, Gray & Winter & a little boy of the name of White, only ten years old, sang “angels ever bright & fair”. He has a sweet little voice & was very steady though it was the first time he had sung in public, he seemed without any apprehension & even quite pleased. Windsor played a
Piano Forte Concerto very finely & we had a very fine Violin Concerto play’d by Binger, a Dutchman. He speaks no other language but low Dutch & consequently is at a great loss to make himself understood. He was excessively applauded & encored ...  
22 February 1807, Sunday – We were at Margaret Chapel & afterwards walked to Mr. Barker’s in Bathwick Street to see two landskips (views in Wales) that he is just going to send to Town to the exhibition of paintings in water colours. They are very beautiful. I was most struck with the one that represents a scene near Llangollen, the warm sunshine upon it was charmingly touched.
23 February 1807 – We went to Mrs. Falconer’s party. I was (not very willingly) engaged in cards to make up Dr. Falconer’s quadrille table but I had afterwards the pleasure of turning over some curious prints & looking at some drawers of minerals ....

25 February 1807, Fast Day – We were at Margarets. It was much fuller than I had seen it upon a Sunday and when I afterwards passed by the Octagon thirteen carriages were waiting at the door & a great number of chairs. I heard some one say they had never seen the Abbey so full. [Later she wrote of this occasion, ‘Sir Thos. Broughton preached, a man of fashion & far from a correct character, but fond of preaching as a means of being admired & he is a popular preacher, energetic & aiming at rousing the attention’.] ... Jane was unwell & did not go out.

26 February 1807 – ... Bath is a bad place for those Ladies who like dancing unless they ... will accept of partners recommended by the Master of Ceremonies.... Josepha [thinks] it unpleasant to dance with an entire stranger. ... However there is one consolation for those who do not dance, it does not imply the absence of any charm either of person, agreeable manners, or good dancing, in fact, many of the handsomest & most pleasant Ladies do not dance.

27 February 1807 – Jane continued really ill. I did everything that my knowledge of her constitution in the long & dangerous illnesses in which I have been with her would suggest but I did not venture to consult any medical man here, both because we dislike all those we know & because the peculiar delicacy of her constitution makes it dangerous for those to prescribe who are ignorant of it all & seem in such haste ... I feared they would not listen to the detail I should think it necessary to give before I cou’d trust them to prescribe.

The account of what proved to be Katherine Plymley’s last visit to Bath ends here, but on 18 April 1807, at home at Longnor, she resumed ‘the sad history of my beloved Jane’s illness’. Since 23 February Jane had been visibly tired. At first they thought she had a cold and Katherine applied all her known remedies. She wrote to Dr DuGard in Shrewsbury and followed his recommendations. But Jane worsened. On 4 March Katherine sent for Mr Bowen. The popular apothecary was ill, however, and Mr Spry, whom Katherine so disliked, came instead. His prescription of a saline mixture with digitalis did seem to help but Katherine, now thoroughly alarmed, sent for Dr Falconer. The doctor ordered ‘leeches to the temple, a blister to the breast with opium in it & an opening mixture which operated rather powerfully’.
Woodman, one of which gained wide popularity through Bartolozzi’s print issued in 1792.

8 Sir Edward and Lady Smythe were Shropshire neighbours at Acton Burnell.

9 Shakespeare’s Othello, Act 2, Scene 1.

10 The Pantons of Plasgwyn, Anglesey, were relations of the Rev Joseph Plymley’s first wife, the former Jane Josepha Panton, daughter of Thomas Panton, a merchant in Leghorn, Italy, and younger brother of Paul Panton of Plasgwyn. The first Mrs Plymley died in 1787 when her daughter Jane was born.

11 Rev John Gardiner, D.D. (c. 1757–1838), J.P. for Somerset, was Proprietor of the Octagon Chapel 1796–1838.

12 William Wilberforce MP (1759–1833), moral reformer and parliamentary leader of the anti-slave-trade campaign, often visited Bath to restore his health.

13 Sir Caesar Hawkins (1711–1786) was at one time surgeon to the Prince of Wales.

14 Richard Tyson, M.C. at the Lower Rooms 1780–5 and Upper Rooms 1785–1805, also officiated at Tunbridge Wells during the summer months until 1801. James King had a similar career: M.C. at the Lower Rooms 1785–1805, at the Upper Rooms 1805–16, and also at Cheltenham 1801–16.

15 Both Richard and Charles Goldstone were surgeon-dentists and apothecaries in Broad Street.

16 Robert William Elliston (1774–1831) was intended for the church but joined the Bath Theatre in 1791 and became a popular performer of both tragic and comic roles. John Bannister (1760–1836) with whom he is compared was a celebrated comedian on the London stage. The play First Love was written by Richard Cumberland; My Grandmother by Prince Hoare, son of the Bath artist William Hoare.

17 According to Kenneth James, ‘Venanzio Rauzzini and the Search for Musical Perfection’, Bath History, Vol.3, (1990) pp. 90–113, ‘it is doubtful if concerts in the city have ever achieved greater eminence than they did during the latter part of the eighteenth century’ (p. 90). Anna Selina (Nancy) Storace (1765–1817) was a talented opera singer, noted for her comic roles. She met the tenor, John Braham (1774?–1856) about this time. They became lovers and professional partners in Britain and throughout Europe. Braham had a compass of more than three octaves and was capable of ‘prodigious volume’.

18 John Palmer (1742–1818), son of a prosperous Bath brewer, took over various theatrical enterprises from his father in Bath and Bristol. Noting that the mail from London took three days while he could make the journey in one, he planned a reformed postal service using stage coaches which was adopted in 1784. He became comptroller general of the postal service and was twice mayor of Bath as well as its MP from 1801 to 1807.

19 Hannah More, daughter of a Bristol schoolmaster, was an intellectual prodigy who became a writer of popular tragedies and poetry. After a religious conversion she set up charity schools in the Mendips and published many moral tracts. Wilberforce was a major subscriber to her work. She was at one time engaged to an elderly merchant who offered her an annuity to release him. Her sister Patty died in 1819 aged about 60.
20 Thomas Velley (1743?-1806) was a botanist and lieutenant colonel in the
Oxford militia. In a long residence at Bath, he devoted himself to the study of
algae. He was made a fellow of the Linnean Society in 1792.
21 John Bull was written by George Colman the Younger.
22 Rev Richard Warner (1763–1857) was curate of St. James’s for 22 years and a
leading man of letters at Bath.
23 Mr Dansey was a brother of Mrs Plymley, the former Matty Dansey, daughter
of Richard Dansey of Brinsop Court, Herefordshire.
24 William Cowper (1731–1800), the poet, suffered suicidal depressions most of
his life. Sir William Jones (1746–1794) was an Oriental scholar. Joseph Barrett
kept a circulating library at 11 Milsom Street, 1782–94, and then at 15 [Old]
Bond Street.
25 James Hewlett (1768–1836), a flower painter in water colours, exhibited at the
Royal Academy and elsewhere from 1799 to 1828.
26 Benjamin Barker (1776–1838), brother of Thomas Barker, exhibited
landscapes at the Royal Academy and Water-Colour Society 1800–1821.
27 Dr John Johnson (died 1833), a young cousin of Cowper and rector of Yaxham
with Welborne, Norfolk, devoted himself to the poet who died in Johnson’s
home.
28 Maria Hester Parke (1775–1822) was the oldest daughter of John Parke, a
prominent oboist. Trained by her father, she became a very good vocalist,
pianist and composer.
29 Rev Charles Daubeney (c. 1745–1827), Archdeacon of Salisbury, became the
principal officiating minister at Christ Church, otherwise called the Free
Church, from its opening in 1798.
30 John Haygarth, M.D. (1740–1827) settled in Bath in 1798 after some thirty
years as physician to the Chester Infirmary. He promoted various causes,
from separate fever wards in hospitals to savings banks.
31 James Windsor (1776–1853) was organist at the Huntingdon and Margaret
Chapels by 1798 and became a respected figure in Bath musical life in the
nineteenth century.
32 The Thomas Stackhouse family lived at Acton Scott near Longnor in
Shropshire.
33 Rev Archibald Alison, rector of Kenley in Shropshire, had recently moved to
Edinburgh. He was the author of Essays In ... Taste (1790).
34 Dr Thomas DuGard, at this time house surgeon of Shrewsbury Infirmary,
was physician and close friend to the Plymley family.
35 Bowen & Spry were apothecaries at 35 Gay Street and on Pulteney Bridge.
36 Rev Sir Thomas Broughton, 6th baronet (c. 1745–1813).

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