

'Stand and Deliver': Bath and the Eighteenth-Century Highwayman

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Why is a Highwayman the most godly man? Because he lives by preying!
(Ben Johnson's Jests, 1755)¹

Dr. Archibald Maclaine (1722-1804) [fig. 1] who, from 1796 until his death in 1804, lived in 'dignified retirement' at 18, Belvedere in Bath would not have appreciated jokes like this which appeared in highly popular jest books throughout the eighteenth century.² Before his retirement, and between 1747 and 1796, Maclaine had been a highly respected Presbyterian minister at the English Church in The Hague and was 'admired and beloved by all who courted and enjoyed his society' in his adopted home of Bath.³ This particular 'godly man' had more reason than most to disapprove of jokes that irreverently likened clerics to highwaymen for he was possibly the only resident in Bath to be related to a notorious 'Knight of the Road'. Maclaine was the elder brother of 'Gentleman James Maclean', one of the most infamous highwaymen in England. [fig. 2]

Maclean (1724-50), whose exploits famously included holding up Horace Walpole's (1717-97) coach at Hyde Park, was executed at Tyburn on October 3rd 1750. He was a frequent visitor to Bath and it was alleged that he had a dalliance with Fanny Murray (1729-1778), Richard 'Beau' Nash's (1674-1761) cast-off mistress when she was a successful courtesan in London.⁴ She may even have been the mystery woman who was found in Maclean's bedroom in St. James's on the fateful day of his arrest.⁵ Maclean's dashing bravado captured the public imagination and over three thousand people saw him in Newgate Prison as he awaited execution. Numerous prints, pamphlets and ballads were published during Maclean's lifetime, and after his death, which not only made him a household name but also mythologised him into the romantic figure of 'The Gentleman Highwayman'.⁶ One of the most popular prints of the day showed the dissolute Lady Caroline Petersham (1722-84) and her friend Miss Elizabeth Ashe (c1731-?) weeping for Maclean in his cell shortly before his death. [fig. 3] Walpole was quick to recognise the parallel between Captain Macheath, the leader of a gang of highwaymen in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728),



fig 1: Archibald Maclaine D.D. by Henry Bone R.A. Miniature

Private Collection, sold at Bonhams 21 July 2005

and the grief of his two wives, Polly Peachum and Lucy Lockit, as Macheath was led to the scaffold, and the affected grief of Maclean's aristocratic doxies:

"the chief personages who have been to comfort and weep over this fallen hero are Lady Caroline Petersham and Miss Ashe: I call them Polly and Lucy, and asked them if he did not sing "Thus I stand like the Turk with his doxies around".⁷

Maclaine, who had braved the Newgate crowds to visit his brother and urge his repentance, was undoubtedly shocked by his brother's lack of contrition in his preparations for death and the crowd's celebration of him as a chivalrous hero. Shamed by his brother's life of criminality and the celebrity that grew up around him, the venerable cleric publicly renounced

his brother during his final incarceration in Newgate and changed his name from Maclean to Maclaine in an attempt to conceal his filial relationship. It was to no avail, for the public at large was too entranced by the myth of the highwayman hero to let such connections go unnoticed. Well into the nineteenth century, published accounts of Maclaine's exemplary life, and indeed his 1804 obituary notice, could not resist referencing this revered Bath resident's connection to a famous highway robber. 'It will be no reproach to this worthy man's memory' noted *The Annual Register* in 1805, 'that he was brother to the highwayman who went by the name of "The Gentleman Highwayman"'.⁸

Maclaine was not alone in having to reconcile personal shame with a public fascination, and indeed glorification, of the highwayman as popular hero. When Eliza Wheeler (d. 1794) made her debut on the Bath stage on Saturday October 24th 1789, there would have been an undoubted frisson in the theatre had members of the audience known that her husband, Francis Malloy, whom she had married on September 28th



fig 2: The Ladies Hero or the Unfortunate James McLeane Esq. (sic)

National Portrait Gallery, London

1787, was a highwayman.⁹ When he was arrested for a highway robbery at Maidstone in Kent in March 1791 newspapers concentrated on the light irony, rather than the seriousness of his crime, remarking that 'in her performance of Polly, in *The Beggar's Opera*, little did she expect she would so soon meet with - a real Macheath'.¹⁰ Mrs. Malloy was not so amused and changed her stage name to Mrs. Murray and after 1792 became Mrs. Cotter 'either by marriage or whim'.¹¹



fig 3: Newgate's Lamentation or the Ladys Last farewell of Machean

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after its first performance in the city, Bath audiences greeted the play enthusiastically. *The Bath Journal* reported that

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA was perform'd last Saturday Night at the Theatre in Orchard-Street, to a very polite Audience, with great Applause; and by Particular Desire, will be perform'd again this Night.¹³

The play's success led Dr. Thomas Herring (1693-1757), King's Chaplain and afterward Archbishop of York and Canterbury, to denounce *The Beggar's Opera* for its moral laxity in encouraging criminal activity, glamourizing highwaymen and, in its finale, for allowing Macheath to triumph unpunished.¹⁴ John Gay (1688-1732) [fig. 5] was tickled by Herring's denunciation and wrote to Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) in May 1728, at the height of Macheath fever, when he was beginning a six-month stay in Bath to take the waters:

I suppose you must have heard that I have had the honour to have had a sermon preached against my works by a court chaplain, which I look upon as no small addition to my fame.¹⁵

The popularity of *The Beggar's Opera* in Bath confirmed that, in the morality debate that followed Herring's condemnation, Bath society, ever addicted to scandal and pleasure, was firmly on Gay's side, and that of his highwaymen. Bath took Gay to its heart and he enjoyed all the amusements the city had to offer: Swift feared that 'Mr Gay will return from the Bath with twenty pounds more flesh, and two hundred less in money'.¹⁶ Rather than taking to the gambling tables, however, Gay devoted some of his time to coaching a company of actors who played Bath in July 1728, in the performance of his play. This had 'so good an effect that they

The Beggar's Opera, [fig. 4] which had its own connections to Bath, was first performed on January 29th 1728 at the playhouse in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Likening the leading politicians of the day to a gang of highwaymen, to the highwaymen's benefit, the play was an overnight sensation and ran for an unprecedented sixty-two consecutive performances in its first season. During its second season when *The Beggar's Opera* toured the provinces, it was performed a staggering fifty times in Bath and Bristol, more so than anywhere else in the country: the play 'spread to all the great towns of England, was played in many places to the 30th and 40th time; at Bath and Bristol 50'.¹² Even some twenty years



fig 4: A Scene from *The Beggar's Opera*, 1728/9 by William Hogarth. Oil on canvas.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Paul Mellon Collection

David Garrick (1717-79), actor manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, against performing the play, arguing that it was never 'represented on the stage, without creating an additional number of real thieves'.¹⁹ Similarly, Herring's sermon was held by some to be prophetic for:

Experience afterwards confirmed the Truth of his [Herring's] Observations, since several Thieves and Street robbers confess in *Newgate*, that they raised their Courage at the Playhouse, by the Songs of their Hero *Macheath*, before they sallied forth on their desperate nocturnal Exploits.²⁰

The twenty-one year old Isaac Darkin (c.1740-61) was a case in point. With Macheath an undoubted role-model Darkin, the son of a cork-cutter from Eastcheap, fashioned himself into a well-mannered and courteous gentleman with an eye for the ladies and a strong sense of his own style.²¹ He even had a mistress called Polly although her surname was Cannon rather than Peachum. In his short, three-year career as a highwayman, it was estimated he earned some £600 which financed his affected gentlemanly life-style.²² 'He frequently visited places of public

have not only gained a great deal of money by it, but universal applause, insomuch that they played it all last season at Bath'.¹⁷ Gay also found Bath conducive to playwriting and it was in the supportive atmosphere accorded by the city that he completed *Polly*, his less successful sequel to *The Beggar's Opera*. The preface to *Polly* explained that 'the very Copy I delivered to Mr. Rich [theatre manager] was written in my own Hand, some Months before, at the Bath from my own first foul blotted Papers'.¹⁸

The concern that *The Beggar's Opera* actively encouraged young men to take to the road was legitimate. In 1773, the magistrate Sir John Fielding (1721-80) warned



fig 5: John Gay, author of the *Beggar's Opera*, mezzotint, c.1730

V&A Image/Victoria and Albert Museum



fig 6: Scene from Claverton (Clarcken) Down, near Bath, 1824 by Benjamin Barker. Lithograph
Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

diversion, drove his phaeton, and constantly appeared upon the turf'.²³ In Bath, where he was a regular visitor, he supplemented his income by robbing 'invalids going to, or returning from, the waters' but he also took to highway robbery on the surrounding roads.²⁴ On June 22nd 1760, Darkin was taken at an inn at Upavon and sent to Salisbury for trial after an unsuccessful attempt to rob Lord Percival of about 14 guineas as he travelled by post-chaise over Clarcken (Claverton) Down. [fig. 6] Darkin was acquitted when neither Percival nor his driver could give a positive identification but accounts of his dashing, gentlemanly ways had already transformed Darkin from a common criminal into a heart-throb as the women of Salisbury flocked to see him in prison and pinned their romantic dreams on him.

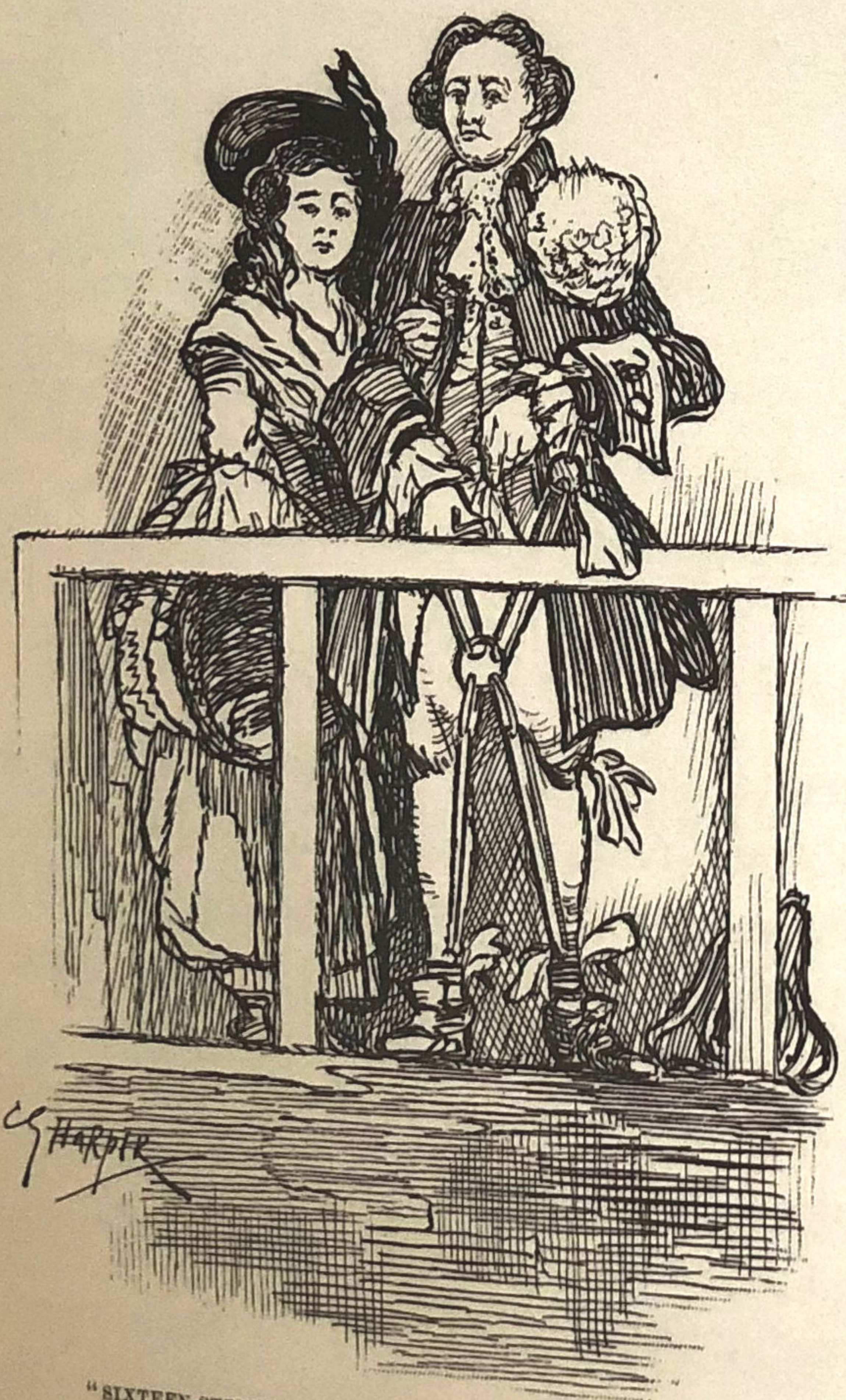
To Bath in safety let my lord
 His loaded Pockets carry;
 Thou ne'er again shall tempt the Road,
 Sweet youth! If thou wilt marry.²⁵

Within two months of his acquittal, Darkin was awaiting trial in Oxford for the robbery on the Oxford Road of a Mr. Gammon on August 26th 1760. Found guilty, Darkin was executed on March 23rd 1761, yet during his incarceration it was *The Beggar's Opera* that sustained him.

He diverted himself one Evening before his Trial, by reading the Beggar's Opera, when he appeared to enter thoroughly into the Spirit of Mackheath's Part, and seemed greatly to enjoy the Character. He dressed even then very neat, particularly in his Linnen; and had his Hair dressed in the most fashionable Manner every Morning; his polished Fetters were supported round his waist by a Sword-Belt, and tied up at his Knees with Ribbon.^{26'}

Thus, by associating the criminal Darkin with the fictional hero Macheath, his biographers disarmed him and made him safe, a process which was completed by effeminising and dandifying him in descriptions of his dress. This contrivance can also be seen at work in the representation of another highwayman with Bath connections, namely Jack Rann (c.1750-74) also known as 'Sixteen String Jack' because of the sixteen strings of brightly coloured silk

ribbons he stylishly attached to the knees of his breeches. [fig. 7] Rann was born near Bath in about 1750 and worked as a pedlar around the city's streets until the age of twelve when he left for London. During his four-year career in the capital and on Hounslow Heath, he menaced numerous travellers including Dr. William Bell, chaplain to the Princess Amelia (1711-86), whom he robbed on the Uxbridge Road. Yet his danger to the travelling public was eclipsed in the popular imagination by his extrovert dandyism and his fashionable lifestyle. Thus, accounts of his final condemnation concentrated as much on what he wore - 'a new suit of pea-green clothes, his hat was bound round with silver strings, he wore a ruffled shirt' - as the crime for which he suffered.²⁷ Indeed, in one account of a hold-up at pistol-point, Rann's dandyism turned what was, in reality, a terrifying ordeal into an amusing anecdote with the joke dependent on a popular knowledge of Rann's fastidiousness about his appearance. The story goes that when Rann told Mr. Shuter to stand and deliver, (probably the actor Ned Shuter), Shuter replied, '*you see, honest friend*, that I cannot



"SIXTEEN-STRING JACK" AND ELLEN ROCHE IN THE DOCK.

fig 7: Sixteen String Jack - Highwayman Jack Rann
Half Hours with the Highwaymen by Charles G Harper,
1908

An EXACT REPRESENTATION of MACLAINE the Highwayman Robbing LORD EGLINGTON on Hounslow Heath on the 26th of June 1750.



MACLAINE is said to be born in the North of Ireland, of Scotch Parents, is a tall genteel young Fellow, and commonly very gay in his Dress. On the 27th of July last, he was Apprehended for a Robbery on the Highway, and committed to the Gatehouse Westminster by Justice Lodiard; Among others whom he robbed, was Lord Eglington. The Stratagem he made use of was very extraordinary, being as follows. On the 26th of June, as his Lordship was going over Hounslow Heath early. Maclaine and his Companion Knowing they should have a good Booty resolv'd to rob him. But as he was well arm'd with a Blunderbuss; some Contrivance was necessary. They therefore agreed, that one should go before the Post-Chaise & the other behind it; he before the Chaise stopp'd the Postillion, and screen'd himself in such a manner that his Lordship could not discharge his Blunderbuss at him without killing his own Servant; at the same time, Maclaine who was behind swore if his Lordship did not throw the Blunderbuss out of the Chaise; he wou'd blow his Brains thro' his Face. His Lordship finding himself thus beset, was forced to comply, and was robbed of his Portmanteau and 50 Guineas. His Lordship had two Servants about half a Mile behind.

Published according to Act of Parliament Aug^r 13th 1750 & Sold by E. Angier Engraver and Printseller at the Plume of Feathers in Windmill Street St. James's London.

Dr. 6^s Plain &
1^s 6^d Colours.

fig 8: An exact Representation of Maclaine the Highwayman Robbing Lord Eglington on Hounslow Heath on the 26th June 1750

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stand, but I can deliver, and immediately spewed all over him, and escaped from being robbed'.²⁸ Anecdotes which emasculated highwaymen by downplaying their brutality or turning them into figures of fun were always popular. One such account centred on Mr. Gill, who was 'an eminent pastry cook at Bath' in Wade's Passage where, according to Lydia Melford in *Humphry Clinker* (1771), one could 'take a jelly, a tart, or a small bason of vermicelli'.²⁹ Travelling alone in a post-chaise between London and Bath, Gill noticed a highwayman closing in on him. Believing discretion the better part of valour, he decided just to give the highwayman his money without putting up a fight. As the highwayman drew level with the post-chaise, Gill thrust his head out of the window but forgetting the glass was up, his head went straight through the window and smashed the glass to smithereens. Misreading the accident as 'invincible intrepidity' on Gill's part, the highwayman galloped away rather than confront such a 'lion hearted fellow'.³⁰

The unmaning of the highwayman was never more obvious than in novel reports of transvestism on the highway, for it was always difficult to take seriously highwaymen in petticoats. *The Bath Chronicle* for 1761 reported how a criminal lay down in the road between Tetbury and Cirencester dressed in women's clothes and then robbed at pistol point the gentleman who came to 'her' assistance and rode off on the victim's horse.³¹ One of the more

amusing set-pieces of cross-dressing, which was clearly designed to titillate, referred to Thomas Sympson, known as Old Mobb (d. 1690) who, at the end of the seventeenth-century, frequently robbed on the Bath roads. On one occasion, having spent some time in Bath, he had reconnoitred a lord who was leaving the city and devised a plan to separate him from the large retinue which was accompanying him in order the more easily to rob him. Having 'a tolerable good face', Old Mobb disguised himself in women's clothes and caught up with the lord on the road. The lord propositioned the 'maiden', the 'maiden' demurred but eventually yielded and suggested they went into the woods together for greater privacy.

Taking up the petticoats, [the lord] found under them a pair of breeches. Quoth he, What a plague's the meaning of your wearing breeches, madam? Nothing, replied Old Mobb, but to put your money in. So putting a pistol to his lordship's breast, he said, If you make but the least resistance you're a dead man'.³²

This sense of farce on the highway is compounded by reports of passengers themselves engaging in transvestism. *The Public Advertiser* for May 1766 described how two tradesmen who were carrying large sums of cash and bills hoped to escape the close attention of any potential highwayman by disguising themselves in women's clothes. Their men's shoes and stockings gave them away to their alarmed fellow passengers who feared a conspiracy to rob them.³³

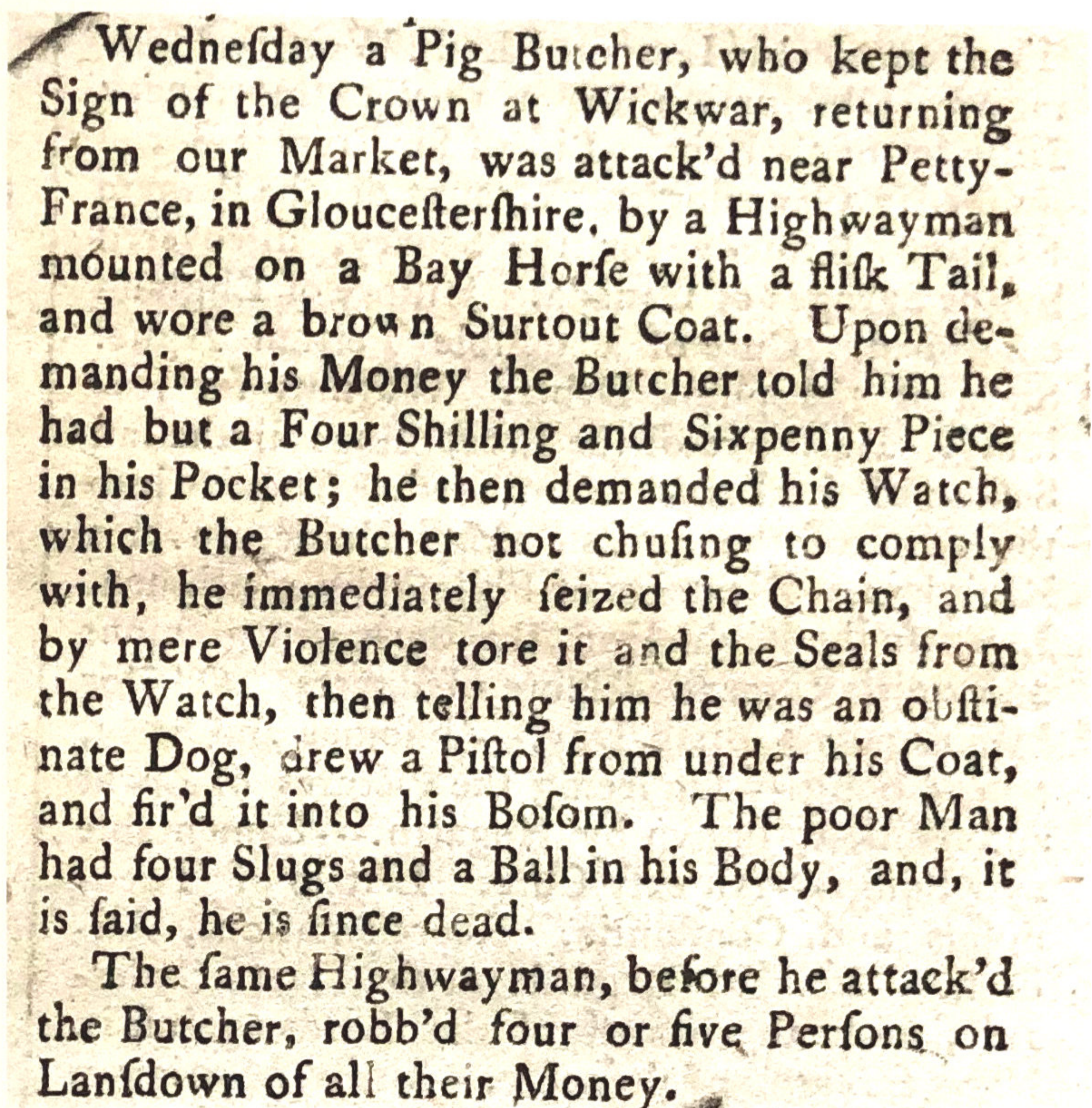
It is not surprising therefore, that although the hundreds of highwaymen who infested all the Bath roads could be both brutal and terrifying, eighteenth-century Bath remained captivated by the idea of the highwayman. The city revelled in its connection with John Gay who had created the most dashing highwayman of the eighteenth-century literary imagination and took a sneaking pride in its link to real-life highwaymen like James Maclean or Francis Malloy. It was a love-affair compounded by the numerous criminal biographies, prints, ballads and broadsides which did much to transform cold-hearted robbers into romantic, chivalrous heroes via a process of reinvention that created mythic, sexual creatures of legend for safe armchair consumption. This distanced the public from the real-life brutality of the highwayman by sanitising and dandifying him, turning him into a comic set-piece and unmanning him in women's clothing.³⁴ The lowly footpad played no part in the legend of the highwayman.

There were, however, enough residents and visitors to Bath to know that these inventions were a far cry from the reality of travelling on any of Bath's roads.³⁵ The 107 mile journey to and from London appeared especially perilous if only because of the large ratio of robberies to the volume of traffic on the road. John Wood the elder (1704-54) claimed that by the late 1740s Bath could accommodate a staggering 12,000 visitors, a figure that may have grown to 40,000 by 1800, and each visitor offered highwaymen the prospect of rich pickings as they made the two or three day journey from London to Bath for the season.³⁶ Between 1740 and 1777, there were up to forty-six coaches or 'Flying Machines' a week for highwaymen to choose from, a number that increased to 147 by 1800.³⁷ The more enterprising amongst the highwaymen fraternity infiltrated the various coach companies and had at least one employee on their payroll. Thus, the 39 year old Thomas Talbot, who was born at Wapping, began his

criminal career by riding postilion on the Bath and Bristol coaches and passing intelligence about his passengers to an unnamed Irish highwayman who paid Talbot for 'a previous Account of the People, and their Circumstances'.³⁸

Numerous highwaymen regularly lay in wait along the length of this often wild and desolate road with the vast 6,000 acre expanse of Hounslow Heath [fig. 8], as well as Colnbrook, Maiden Thicket, the wild Marlborough Downs and Cherhill in Wiltshire, the home of the notorious Cherhill gang, amongst their favourite haunts. One particularly unlucky passenger was robbed on Hounslow Heath in the summer of 1749 by two highwaymen, the 26 year old Michael Keys and the 24 year old James Poole, on her journey to Bath, and was robbed again by the self-same men as she returned to London some three weeks later.³⁹ It is little wonder that passengers often made their wills before setting out on a journey, even of only 50 miles, or that coaches were known as 'god permits' with arrival at one's destination dependent on 'god willing'⁴⁰. When Joseph Clavey advertised his London schedules for the 'Froom Waggon' in *The Bath Journal*, he made clear that all journeys were only to be 'perform'd (if GOD permit).'⁴¹

In reality, any journey beyond the city boundaries, no matter how short, was fraught with danger for the roads to Bristol in the west via Twerton, Newton St. Loe and Keynsham, to Marshfield and Cold Ashton in the North, to Box and Batheaston in the East and especially Claverton Down and Kingsdown were all patrolled by highway robbers. The nature of robbery on these roads was different in that journeys tended to be made on foot, horseback or by post-chaise rather than by the speedier 'Flying Machines' and instead of fashionable visitors, travellers were often lone farmers, servants or local businessmen returning home from farmers' markets or Bath fairs. As a result, there was a proliferation of footpads who were skilled at pulling riders from their horses, as well as highwaymen, working these routes and accounts of their thievery, taken mainly from the brief reports that appeared in *The Bath Chronicle* and *The Bath Journal*, confirm that these men, for there were almost no women working the Bath roads, were anything but chivalrous or romantic figures.⁴² For example, in 1763, a highwayman who robbed four or five persons of all their money on Lansdown shortly afterward killed a butcher who kept 'The Crown' at Wickwar in a robbery near Petty France in Gloucestershire. The butcher had been slow to hand over his valuables and so the highwayman, 'mounted on a Bay Horse with a flisk Tail' shot him in the chest as an 'obstinate Dog'. [fig. 9]⁴³ In 1756, as Mr Biggs, a maltster from Inglescombe (Englishcombe) was returning home from Twerton, he was



Wednesday a Pig Butcher, who kept the Sign of the Crown at Wickwar, returning from our Market, was attack'd near Petty-France, in Gloucestershire, by a Highwayman mounted on a Bay Horse with a flisk Tail, and wore a brown Surtout Coat. Upon demanding his Money the Butcher told him he had but a Four Shilling and Sixpenny Piece in his Pocket; he then demanded his Watch, which the Butcher not chusing to comply with, he immediately seized the Chain, and by mere Violence tore it and the Seals from the Watch, then telling him he was an obstinate Dog, drew a Pistol from under his Coat, and fir'd it into his Bosom. The poor Man had four Slugs and a Ball in his Body, and, it is said, he is since dead.

The same Highwayman, before he attack'd the Butcher, robb'd four or five Persons on Lansdown of all their Money.

fig 9: An account of a raid by a highwayman on a pig butcher near Petty-France, Bath Chronicle July 4 1763
Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

attacked by highwaymen who robbed him of over four pounds and 'used him very ill'.⁴⁴ When the highwayman, George Wilkinson, was taken for his robbery of William Cox which took place half a mile on the Bath side of Keynsham, he had a brace of fully loaded pistols and nineteen bullets on him.⁴⁵ Footpads had a worse reputation for barbarity and regularly carried blunderbusses, pistols, cutlasses and bludgeons with which to threaten and intimidate.⁴⁶ When a terrified maidservant was pulled from her horse at the direction-post between Twerton and Newton St. Loe, the footpad threatened to blow her brains out if she made any resistance.⁴⁷ Sarah Doderage who was travelling to Bath from Bristol received a worse fate for she was also pulled from her horse, but was then violently beaten with a stick, robbed and raped with the footpad threatening to murder her if she cried out.⁴⁸ James Eames, a servant to Mr. Abraham of Bathwick, was also treated brutally when he was travelling on foot to Freshford. He was overtaken at Brassknocker Hill [fig. 10] by a stout footpad who stole his bag and 'beat him most unmercifully with a stick, leaving him almost dead, with six large wounds in his head'.⁴⁹

Reports in the local newspapers provided very little detailed information on the hundreds of highway robberies that took place on Bath's roads throughout the eighteenth century. A brief account of the incident was customary, including where and when it had happened and what had been stolen. Details of the victim usually extended to no more than giving his/her name, place of abode and occupation:

Last Tuesday Evening, about Six o'Clock, Mr Pedding, a Carpenter, of Weston, was robb'd of about twenty-six Shillings in Silver, a Mile from this City, in the Road to Wells. The Robber seem'd to be a tall Fellow; and had on a light-colour'd Coat.⁵⁰

Where possible, physical descriptions of the highwayman were also provided but these were often vague when attacks took place at night or the victim was traumatised. The rape victim Sarah Doderage was unusual in being able to provide a reasonably detailed description:

He is a well-set Man, not very tall; wore a blue Surtout-Coat, a small round-brimmed Hat, and had a brownish Silk Handkerchief on his Neck, a brown Wig, and was marked with the small pox.⁵¹

It was probably easier for a victim to stare into the face of a horse than a highwayman so that descriptions of horses were often very detailed and a horse with distinctive markings could prove fatal to its rider. The butcher, John Weston, who was robbed near Newton St. Loe on his way to Bristol described a 'dark-brown Gelding, with a Mane and Tail of a Blackish colour, and a white Snip on his Nose'.⁵² As a result, highwaymen often rode stolen horses or, like Wilkinson, dismissed from the employ of a Bristol gentleman because of 'his bad Course of Life', they 'hir'd Horses at divers Places in this City, to carry on [their] illegal Courses'.⁵³

Concealing one's identity was of the essence and highwaymen made good use of wigs, hats and masks to disguise themselves. John Weston's assailant 'was a lusty Man, and wore a black Wig, a brown Great Coat, with his Hat uncock'd and his Face covered with something of a lightish Colour'.⁵⁴ Similarly the 'thick-set' footpad who attacked the servant of a Mr. Wood between Bath and Bitton, wore 'a long light-coloured Great Coat, a Grizzle Bob Wig; His hat



fig 10: Road to Bradford (Brassknocker Hill), 1804 by J.C. Nattes. Aquatint
Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

slapped before' whilst another footpad who terrified the maidservant at the direction-post between Twerton and Newton 'had a Crape over his Face'.⁵⁵ The fear of being recognised also explains why highwaymen were constantly on the move and, as we shall see in the case of the Poulter gang, could range up and down the country. Michael Keys and James Poole, who held up the same female passenger twice, were finally apprehended in Swindon where they admitted to working the Bath road between Hungerford and Sandy Lane but also to a robbery at Petty France in Gloucestershire.⁵⁶ Similarly Joseph Somner, William Cole and Paul Coleman who robbed a gentleman in a post-chaise on Kingsdown Hill also admitted to robberies at Holt-Forehead near Staverton, Bradford-on-Avon, Appleshaw, Wayhill and on the Wilton Road near Salisbury.⁵⁷

As a result, highwaymen and footpads could suddenly move in and terrorise an area for a week or a month and as quickly disappear again. Newspapers did their best to protect the travelling public and when *The Bath Journal* warned that there had been several attacks by a particular footpad near the direction-post between Twerton and Newton 'Farmers and others who frequent Bath Market, and are necessarily obliged to travel that Road by Night, accompany each other for Fear of being robbed by him'.⁵⁸ Of greater concern was intelligence suggesting

that organised gangs were in operation: for example, the two footpads who stopped a post-chaise on Totterdown Hill near Bristol were believed to be members of a larger London gang that had recently begun to work the environs of Bristol. Similarly, when Somner and Cole were arrested for a robbery near Staverton, it soon became apparent that they were part of a much larger outfit when they informed against some, but certainly not all, of their fellow gang members including Paul Coleman, Sam Lane and Peter Floyd, regarded as 'three desperate and leading villains', as well as Christopher Still and William Cromwell.⁵⁹

Execution, transportation, imprisonment: the consequences of informing were devastating to fellow gang members which was why so many highwaymen preferred to work alone rather than risk treachery from confederates eager to save their own skins or make money. Victims tried to capitalise on this by offering generous rewards to tempt partners into betrayal. Thus, when William Tavennor, the servant of a Chippenham farmer named Salway was robbed, Salway offered a ten-guinea reward to any of the three robbers who would impeach his colleagues. Similarly, when Mr. Murray was attacked by six ruffians as he was riding from Bath toward Hemington, he also offered ten-guineas for information as well as a free pardon to the accomplice who would give evidence against the others.⁶⁰

The outcome of one particularly spectacular betrayal was the publication of a pamphlet which exposed, in vivid detail, the secret world of a gang of highwaymen and the part played by Bath in its operation. In an attempt to save his life, John Poulter, alias Baxter turned King's evidence after he had been apprehended at Exeter in February 1753 for the robbery, committed with an Irishman named Thomas Lynch alias Burk, of Dr. Hancock, a physician at Bath, and his daughter as they travelled by post-chaise across Claverton Down.⁶¹ Poulter signed a damning affidavit against his former confederates which was printed in two issues of *The Bath Journal* in April 1753 and which then formed the basis of his forty-page *The Discoveries of John Poulter, alias Baxter*. [fig. 11]⁶² This described, in startling detail, Poulter's criminal career since 1749 and helpfully provided readers

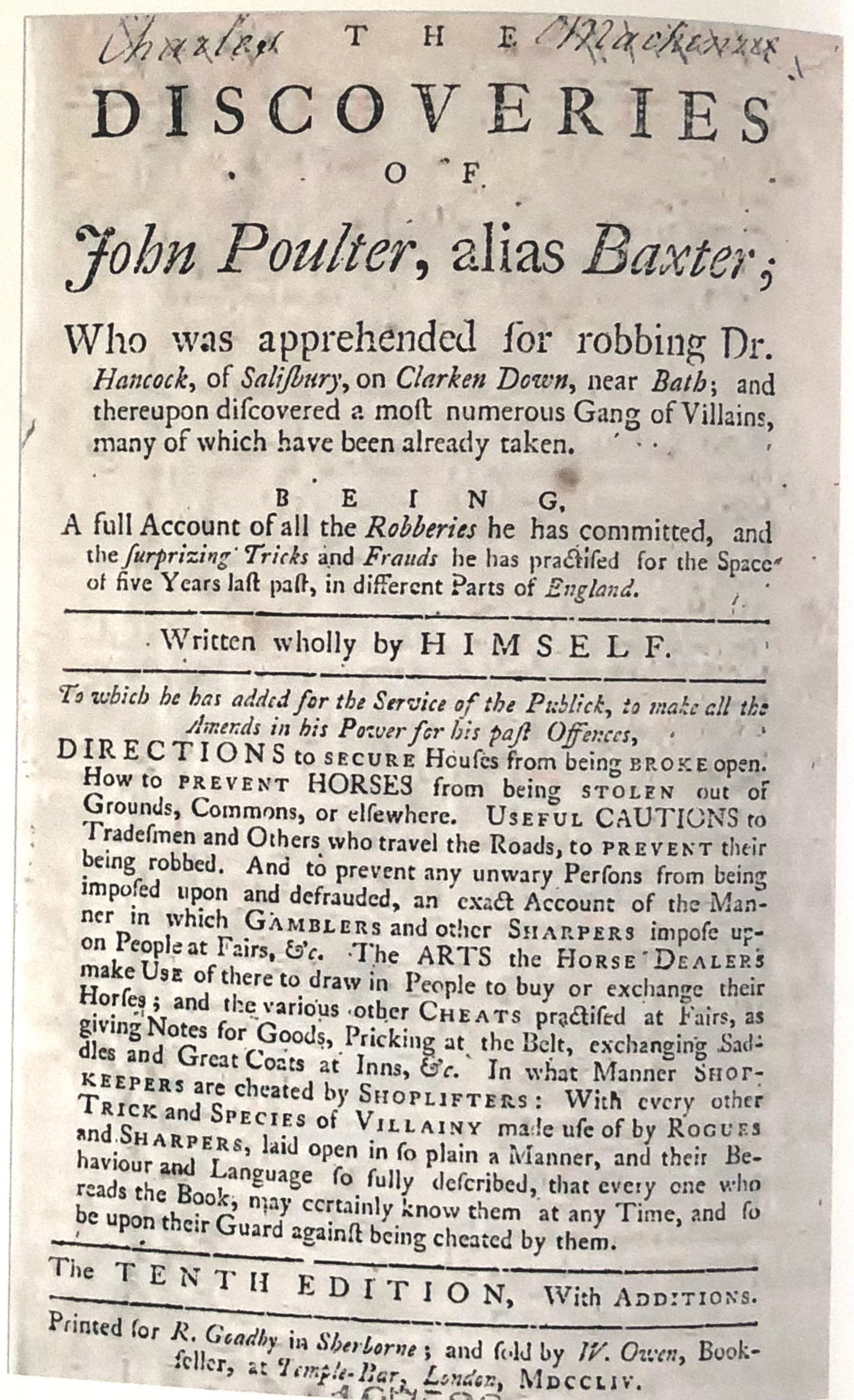


fig 11: The discoveries of John Poulter, alias Baxter; who was apprehended for robbing Dr. Hancock of Salisbury, on Clarken Down, near Bath... 1754

University of California Libraries / Internet Archive

with advice on how to avoid those tricks regularly used by gamblers, thieves and pickpockets. The pamphlet proved so popular that it had reached seventeen editions by 1779.

From the moment Poulter's affidavits were published, they must have sent a shudder through every gang member and associate involved in the intricate network of fences (those that received stolen goods) and safe-house inn-keepers, who had harboured and protected the gang along the length and breadth of England for the authorities moved quickly to arrest them all on the strength of Poulter's revelations. Edward and Margaret Lines, who were the landlords of the 'The Rock Tavern' near Stourbridge in Staffordshire, which Poulter described as the 'greatest Place of Rendezvous in England for Thieves', had regularly harboured the gang and received their stolen goods.⁶³ They were taken up as were Stephen and Mary Gea (or Gee) of Chapel Plaister near Box who had assisted Poulter and Burk after the robbery of Dr. Hancock.⁶⁴ Mary Brown, the wife of John Brown, Frances Allen, the wife of John Allen who had rooms in Bath and had often concealed Poulter's goods for him, were also arrested as was John Roberts and the silversmith John Ford for receiving. Roberts would die in prison shortly after his arrest.⁶⁵

In the end, Poulter's fulsome exposé did not save his neck. Nash, along with other dignitaries, tried to intercede for him and he wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, on behalf of the Bath Corporation, to press that 'everyone here wishes he may not be executed'.⁶⁶ On October 22nd, the Duke of Newcastle won Poulter a reprieve but after a failed attempt to escape from Ilchester jail on February 16th, Poulter was finally hanged there on February 25th 1754. He died 'very peniently [sic], but with a decent Resolution' and it was noted that 'he never struggled once after he was turned off, but hung quite motionless from the first Moment'.⁶⁷ According to Goldsmith, Nash had good reason to look favourably on Poulter as it was through *The Discoveries*, that Nash had 'received a list of all those houses of ill fame which harboured or assisted rogues, and took care to furnish travellers with proper precautions to avoid them'.⁶⁸ Goldsmith added that Poulter's original intention had been for his work to be dedicated to Nash and he had arranged for a copy of the manuscript to be sent to Nash along with a covering letter which was reproduced in Goldsmith's 1762 biography of Nash.⁶⁹

The Discoveries is a work of exceptional recall with details of the dates, names, conversations and crimes of Poulter's five-year career on the road minutely noted. Either Poulter kept careful records against the day he might need to save himself or *The Discoveries* was produced under duress as Poulter tried to save himself. Allowing for the caution that revelations written under such circumstances demand, Poulter's confession, if accurate, is particularly valuable in demonstrating the local part played by Bath within the gang's national network of highly organised criminal activity which ranged all over the counties of England from Durham to Devon and included Staffordshire, Oxfordshire and Worcestershire.

The centre of their Bath operations was 'The Pack Horse Inn' where Roberts was the landlord. The eponymous hero of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's nineteenth-century novel of highway adventure, Paul Clifford, alias Captain Lovett, took rooms above a hairdresser's in fashionable Milsom Street but used 'a mean-looking alehouse in a remote suburb' for the serious business of planning robberies with his confederates. By contrast, 'The Pack Horse Inn' was right in the centre of Bath for it was either the inn on Claverton Street or the one near St Michael's Church.⁷⁰ Being in the centre of town presented certain dangers to gang members and like any highwaymen visitors to Bath, it was essential to merge unobtrusively into the city

without drawing attention to themselves. Not all highwaymen succeeded: the 27 year old Thomas Pollard and the 26 year old James Kirton who had both returned early and illegally from a sentence of transportation, had been recognised in the environs of the city, disguised as gypsies, and their sighting reported in *The Bath Chronicle*. Recapture would almost certainly cost them their lives.⁷¹ The fictional Paul Clifford passed seamlessly for a dandy and was seen, and accepted, at all the fashionable assemblies as well as at the gaming tables. Darkin was more enterprising and early in his career gave himself a solid alibi by enlisting in the navy, joining 'The Royal George' at Portsmouth and becoming a midshipman, thus proving he had a respectable occupation if ever he were taken up for robbery. Michael Keys had kept a wine cellar in Bath before taking to the road and this may well have been a cover for his criminal activities. Poulter and his associates, however, chose the surprising personae of smugglers presumably working on the assumption that everyone, other than Revenue officers, liked a smuggler and goods at knock-down prices. To authenticate their roles, gang members 'used to give seven Shillings a Pound for Tea and sell it again for four Shillings and Six-pence, on purpose to make people believe we were Smugglers'.⁷² This was clearly a popular persona for

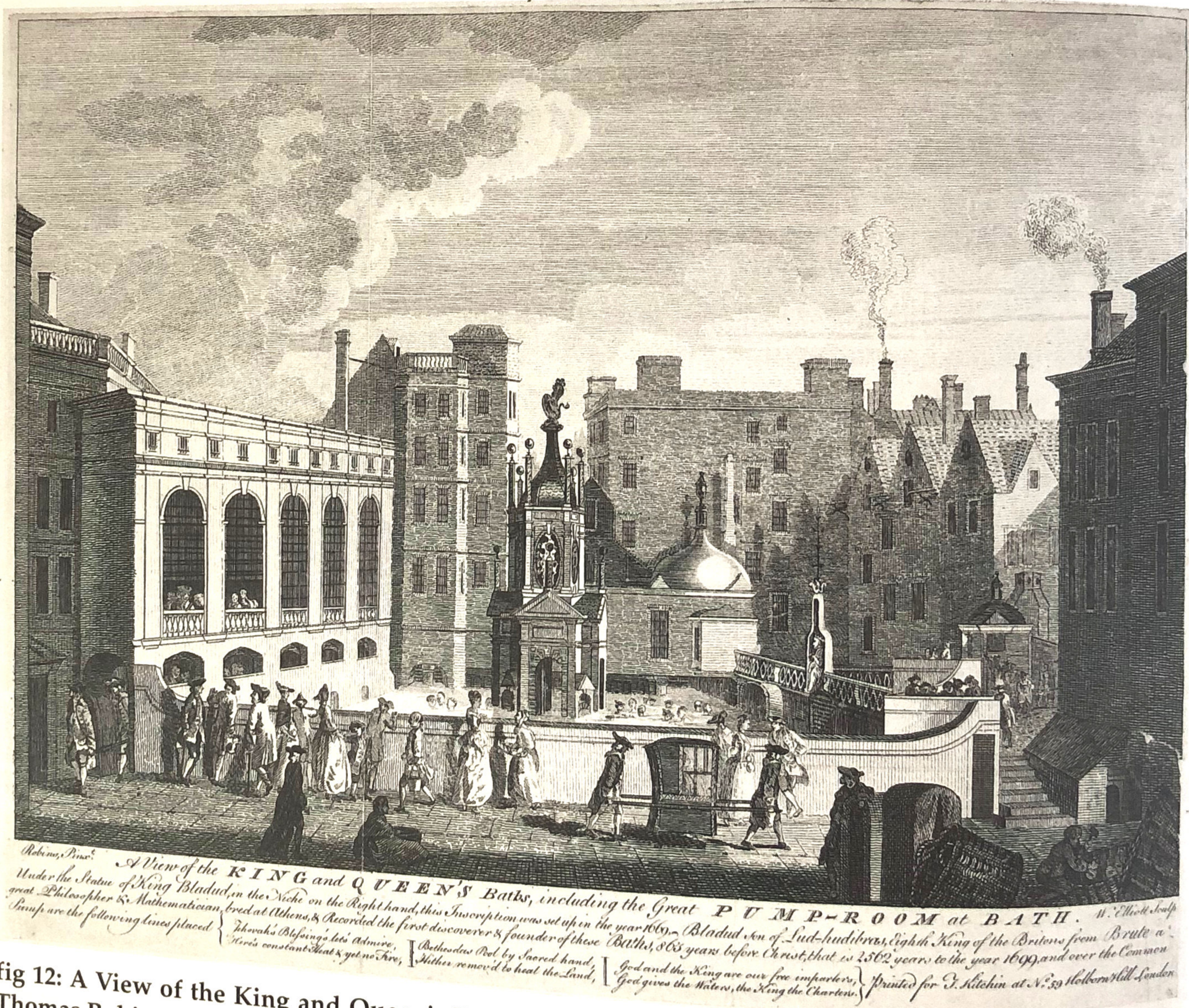


fig 12: A View of the King and Queen's Baths, including the Great Pump-Room at Bath, 1764, after Thomas Robins. Copper engraving.
 Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

when Somner and Cole 'skulked' around Melksham as the centre of their operations, they did so similarly 'under the Character of Smugglers'.⁷³

Despite the dangers of being recognised, the diversions of Bath acted magnetically on highwaymen who often accumulated as many 'contributions' from the road as they could, specifically to enjoy themselves, as Darkin and Rann had done, at the fashionable spa. Poulter financed a six-week stay in Bath by robbing enough in the preceding weeks 'to bear our Expences to Bath for the Benefit of the Waters'. [fig. 12]⁷⁴ It was a similar story with other highwaymen: after the 29 year old Charles Cleaver, from Whitechapel who was executed at Tyburn near Marble Arch on June 8th 1744, had robbed an old farmer at Holt, he and his two confederates Matthew Mooney and one Tool, 'went immediately to Bath, where they repaired to the Gaming-Tables, and had not been there a Week, before they were stripped of their Money at play' and presumably were forced back on the road.⁷⁵ Around 1776, Thomas Boulter (c. 1748-78), the scourge of Salisbury Plain, visited Bath and Bristol 'where he got into company with some sharpers, who eased him of a good deal of his cash' which he made up by robbing around the city environs during the following months.⁷⁶ The light irony of a highwayman himself being robbed becomes much darker with the realisation that Bath's very reputation for gaming and pleasure ensured the city itself, as well as the highways beyond, were rife with highwaymen.

As there are so many Nurseries for Vice, 'tis no great Wonder that so many Robberies, etc, are daily committed: Neither is it any Wonder how many Fellows live, who skulk about, and have no visible Employ'.⁷⁷

The gang to which Poulter belonged planned their robberies from 'The Pack Horse Inn' and, for example, at the end of April 1752, when twelve members of the gang 'all Gamblers and Pickpockets' were at the inn, they organised themselves into 'three setts' and took off to Sampford Peverell in Devon to carry out a variety of crimes including, robbery, burglary and horse stealing. Closer to home, Roberts kept surveillance on all the guests at his inn, and briefed gang members on their routines and their wealth. In November 1751, he aided Poulter and Richard Branning in planning the robbery of a gentleman clothier who habitually travelled from Trowbridge to Bath in order to collect money to pay his workers. Roberts was not averse to participating in actual robberies himself and was involved in the Bell Warehouse robbery in Bristol but he was much better suited to co-ordinating the operation. He concealed stolen items for gang members until it was safe for them to collect and was instrumental in receiving and selling on stolen goods (including horses) as he had developed an extensive network of criminal contacts within Bath for passing on, or laundering, (sometimes literally!) stolen items. Thus, an unnamed dyer in Bath regularly dyed stolen fabrics to make them untraceable and it was probably through Roberts that Poulter met the silversmith Ford who was actually in the crowd on the day Poulter was hanged, loudly denying Poulter's accusations from the scaffold that he was implicated in the gang. After a robbery at 'The Crown Inn' at Blandford, Poulter alleged he sold his share including 'Bells, seal, Shoe Buckles, and Girdle Buckles, all of Gold', to Ford who 'melted them down before my Face, into an Ingot of Gold, not quite an Ounce'. Ford also melted down a silver tankard that Poulter had stolen from an inn at Corsham and the silver thread from an embroidered waistcoat but, complained Poulter, 'I never got above one Shilling of F[or]d for my Silver to this Day'.⁷⁸

Poulter's confederates were not only highwaymen but could turn their hands to anything from opportunist thieving and burglary to horse-stealing. This was true of most highwaymen although it flies in the face of the romantic image of the highwayman as a 'Knight of the Road'. Darkin rather ignominiously robbed invalids going to and from the Baths whilst Still and Cromwell, who were impeached by Somner, were also involved 'in several Burglaries, and receiving, lodging, and dividing many stolen Goods'.⁷⁹ Thus, Poulter's confederates, William Elger, John Brown and John Allen made unsuccessful attempts in November 1753 to burgle a house in Wade's Passage that they had been watching, as well as a toy-shop and a watch-maker's in the Church Yard.⁸⁰ Brown was more successful on November 28th when he went 'on the sneak by himself' and robbed a Mr. Bartlet of North Parade of a portmanteau trunk from his home which was then quickly spirited away to 'The White Lion Inn' at Devizes.⁸¹ Poulter's confederates were also consummate card-sharpers and they worked one particularly lucrative scam up and down the country. Known as 'Pricking in the Belt, or the Old Nob', the trick usually worked best with four gang members involved. Goldsmith described it as follows:

A leathern strop, folded up double, and then laid upon a table; if the person who plays with a bodkin pricks into the loop of the belt he wins; if otherwise, he loses. However, by slipping one end of the strop, the sharper can win at pleasure.⁸²

In attracting the 'fashionable company', Bath also drew in a host of undesirables: pickpockets, beggars, prostitutes as well as highwaymen and footpads. Thus, Bath visitors and residents were as much at risk from highwaymen within the city walls as they were without. Sometimes this was obvious as when a nursery-man named Philip Brown was attacked at pistol-point 'near the End of Terrass-Walk, in King's Mead' by two footpads.⁸³ Quite often, however, it was impossible to know when a highwayman was in the vicinity. Like Macheath, the finest gentleman upon the road, who could keep company with lords and gentleman at the gaming tables of Marylebone in London as easily as he could drink in taverns with his gang members, the adept highwayman could blend seamlessly into society at Bath.⁸⁴ Poulter's *Discoveries* demonstrated, to the deep unease of Bath's visitors and residents alike, that the highwayman who had robbed them at pistol-point the night before, could pass unobserved in their company the following day as Bath society took the waters at the Pump Room, attended the assemblies, played the gaming tables or bought their bargain packets of tea.

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Notes

1. Anon: *Ben Johnson's Jests: or the Wit's Pocket Companion. Being a new Collection of the most ingenious Jests, diverting Stories, pleasant Jokes, smart Repartees, excellent Puns, wise Sayings, witty Quibbles, and ridiculous Bulls. To Which is Added, a Choice Collection of the newest Conundrums, best Riddles, entertaining Rebusses, satirical Epigrams, humourous [sic] Epitaphs, facetious Dialogues, merry Tales, jovial Songs, Fables, etc. etc. etc.* 3rd ed., *With great Additions and Improvements*, (1755), pp.89 and 112.
2. 'A Gentleman of great Genius and Learning' would throw jest books 'promiscuously into a large Bag in one Corner of his Library to obviate Melancholy, or relax his severer Studies'. See *The Jests of Beau Nash, Late Master of the Ceremonies at Bath, consisting of a Variety of Humorous Sallies of Wit, Smart Repartees, and Bon Mots; which Passed Between Him and Personages of the First Distinction, and the Most Celebrated for True Wit and Humour. Dedicated to the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield*, (1763), preface, p.i.
3. Dr. Maclaine was born in Monaghan in Ireland in 1722 of Scottish parentage and is best known for his translation of Johann Lorenz von Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History* (1765). He is buried in Bath Abbey where a monument was erected to his memory. See, *The Monthly Magazine; or, British Register*, (1805), vol. xix, p.94; John Britton, *The History and Antiquities of Bath Abbey Church: including Biographical Anecdotes of the Most Distinguished Persons interred in that Edifice: with an Essay on Epitaphs, in which its Principal Monumental Inscriptions are Recorded*, (1825), pp.107 and 109-110.
4. Anon, *Memoirs of the Celebrated Miss Fanny M[urray]*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (1759), vol. 2, pp. 80-83.
5. Peter Cuningham, (ed.), *The Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford*, 4 vols. (Circencester: Echo Library, 2005), vol. 2, (1749-1759), p.83. Letter from Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann dated August 2nd 1750.
6. There are numerous biographies of James Maclaine: see, for example, John Barrows, *Knights of the High Toby: Theory of the Highwaymen*, (Peter Davies, 1962), pp.159-178; Charles G. Harper, *Half-Hours with the Highwaymen, Picturesque Biographies and Traditions of the 'Knights of the Road'*, 2 vols. (Chapman & Hall Ltd., 1908), vol. 2, pp.271-300; Reverend Dr. Allen, *An Account of the Behaviour of Mr. James Maclaine, from the Time of his Condemnation to the Day of this Execution, October 3. 1750. By the Reverend Dr. Allen who attended him all that time, to assist him in his Preparations for Eternity. Drawn up and published at the earnest Desire of Mr. Maclaine himself*, (1750).
7. Cuningham, (ed.), *The Letters of Horace Walpole*, p.83. Letter from Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann dated August 2nd 1750. "Thus I stand like the Turk." is the finale of *The Beggar's Opera*.
8. *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature for the Year 1804*, (1806), p.510. See also, Sylvanus Urban, (ed.), *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 96, (1804), p.1173; W. Kenrick, et al., *The London Review of English and Foreign Literature*, (1767), vol. 5, p.343; *The Plain Englishman: Comprehending Original Compositions, and Selections from the Best Writers, under the Heads of The Christian Monitor; The British Patriot; The Fireside Companion*, (Hatchard & Son; Windsor, Knight & Dredge, 1821), vol. 2, p.174.
9. See Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim, Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Dancers, Managers and other Stage Personnel in London 1660-1800*, 16 vols. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), vol. 16, p.28. Another source gives the date of her marriage as 1786. See John C. Greene, *Theatre in Belfast 1726-1800*, (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 2000), p.238.

10. Arnold Hare, (ed.), *Theatre Royal Bath: A Calendar of Performances 1750-1805*, (Bath: Kingsmead Press, 1977), p.123.
11. Highfill, Burnim and Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, p.29.
12. *The Magazine of Magazines, compiled from Original Pieces with Extracts from the Most Celebrated Books, and Periodical Compositions, Published in Europe, for the Year 1754, the Whole Forming a Compleat Literary and Historical Account of that Period*, (Limerick, 1754), vol. 8, p.579.
13. *The Bath Journal*, November 4th 1754.
14. The sermon, which is now lost was preached in March 1728 in Lincoln's Inn Chapel. See, J.V. Guerinot and Rodney D. Jilg, (eds.), *Contexts 1: The Beggar's Opera*, (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1976), pp.118-124.
15. Walter Scott, *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D. Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin; Containing Additional Letters, Tracts, and Poems, Not Hitherto Published; with Notes, and A Life of the Author*, 2nd ed., (Edinburgh, 1824), vol. 17, p.194.
16. Quoted in, Calhoun Winton, *John Gay and the London Theatre*, (Kentucky: The University of Kentucky, 1993), p.129.
17. Quoted in, David Nokes, *John Gay: A Profession of Friendship*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.448.
18. John Gay, *Polly: An Opera. Being the Second Part of The Beggar's Opera*, (1729), preface, p.iv.
19. James Plumtre, *Four Discourses on Subjects Relating to the Amusement of the Stage: Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge on Sunday September 25, and Sunday October 2, 1808, with Copious Supplementary Notes*, (Cambridge, 1809), p.174.
20. Guerinot and Rodney, *Contexts 1: The Beggar's Opera*, pp. 119-120.
21. Harper, *Half-Hours with the Highwaymen*, vol. 2, p.269.
22. *The Bath Chronicle*, March 26th and April 2nd 1761.
23. *The London Chronicle*, March 26-28th 1761.
24. Harper, *Half-Hours with the Highwaymen*, p.266.
25. Harper, *Half-Hours with the Highwaymen*, p.268.
26. *The Bath Chronicle*, April 2nd 1761.
27. G.T.Crook, (ed.), *The Complete Newgate Calendar Being Captain Charles Johnson's General History of the Lives and Adventures of the Most Famous Highwaymen, Murderers, Street-Robbers and Account of the Voyages and Plunders of the Most Notorious Pyrates, 1734; Captain Alexander Smith's Compleat History of the Lives and Robberies of the Most Notorious Highwaymen Foot-Pads, Shop-Lifts and Cheats, 1719; The Tyburn Chronicle, 1768; The Malefactors' Register, 1796; George Borrow's Celebrated Trials, 1825; The Newgate Calendar, by Andrew Knapp and William Baldwin, 1826, Camden Pelham's Chronicles of Crime, 1841; etc, 5 vols. (1926), vol. 4, p.101.*
28. Anon: *The English Roscius. Garrick's Jests, or, Genius in High Glee. Containing all the Jokes of the Wits of the Present Age, viz. Mr. Garrick, Ld. Lyttleton, Mr. Fox, Ld. Mansf—, Mr. Burke, Mr. Foote, Mr. Selwyn, Dutchess of K., Lady H—, Lady T—, &c. Being Humorous, Lively, Comical, Queer, Satirical Droll, Smart Repartees, Facetious, Merry Bon Mots &c. To which are added, A New Selection of Epigrams, Poems, Conundrums, Toasts, Sentiments, Hob-Nobs &c now in Fashion* (c.1785), p.92.
29. Angus Ross (ed.), *Tobias Smollett, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, (Penguin Classics, 1985) p.70. See also, Gavin Turner, (Introduction and notes), *The New Bath Guide by Christopher Anstey*, (Bristol: Broadcast Books, n/d), pp.159-160.
30. James Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, LL.D. F.R.S. F.S.A. etc. Late President of the Royal Academy. Comprising Original Anecdotes of Many Distinguished Persons; His*

- Contemporaries; and a Brief Analysis of his Discourses*, 2nd ed., 2 vols, (1819), vol.1, note to pp.200-201.
31. *The Bath Chronicle*, April 30th 1761.
 32. Arthur L. Hayward, (ed.), *A Complete History of the Lives and Robberies of the Most Notorious Highwaymen, Footpads, Shoplifts & Cheats of Both Sexes Wherein their most Secret and Barbarous Murders, Unparalleled Robberies, Notorious Thefts, and Unheard-of Cheats are set in a true Light and exposed to Public View, for the Common Benefit of Mankind, by Captain Alexander Smith*, (George Routledge & Sons, 1926), pp. 39-40.
 33. Quoted in Daphne Phillips, *The Great Road To Bath*, (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1983), p.143.
 34. For a full discussion of this argument see, for example, Lincoln B. Faller, *Turned to Account, The Forms and Functions of Criminal Biography in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
 35. For a comprehensive discussion of the Bath Road, see, Brenda J. Buchanan, 'The Great Bath Road, 1700-1830', in *Bath History*, (Bath: Millstream Books, 1992), vol. 4, pp.71-94.
 36. R.S. Neale, *Bath: A Social History 1680-1850 or a Valley of Pleasure, Yet a Sink of Iniquity*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p.46.
 37. Graham Davis and Penny Bonsall, *A History of Bath: Image and Reality*, (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing, 2006), p.112.
 38. *The Ordinary of Newgate's Account of the Behaviour, Confessions, and Dying Words, of the Eight Malefactors Who were Executed at Tyburn on Monday the 17th June 1751*, (1751).
 39. *The Bath Journal*, August 28th 1749.
 40. See for example, *The Miscellaneous Works of William Hazlitt. In five volumes. The Spirit of the Age: or Contemporary Portraits*, 5 vols, (New York, Derby and Jackson, 1857), vol. 5, p.92; William Tyte, *Bath in the Eighteenth Century: Its Progress and Life Described*, (Bath, 1902), p. 78.
 41. *The Bath Journal*, October 1st 1744.
 42. Mary Abraham alias Mary Sandall (born c. 1754) operated around Wilton and is discussed in James Waylen (probable author) *The Highwaymen of Wiltshire; or a Narrative of the Adventurous Career and Untimely End of Divers Freebooters and Smugglers in this and the Adjoining Counties*, (E.&W. Books, 1970), pp.64-67. The book was probably first published in 1845. Alice Osman commonly called Jenny was sentenced to death at Salisbury Assizes, although this was commuted to seven years transportation, for robbing on the highway on December 22nd 1736 [sic] with two accomplices who escaped. See *The Bath Journal* August 5th 1745 and March 17th 1746.
 43. *The Bath Journal*, July 4th 1763.
 44. *The Bath Journal*, October 25th 1756.
 45. *The Bath Journal*, January 27th 1755.
 46. See for example, *The Bath Chronicle*, January 29th 1784 and January 18th 1787.
 47. *The Bath Journal*, February 20th 1758.
 48. *The Bath Journal*, January 23rd 1764.
 49. *The Bath Chronicle*, November 1st 1781.
 50. *The Bath Journal*, October 26th 1747.
 51. *The Bath Journal*, January 23rd 1764.
 52. *The Bath Journal*, February 14th 1763.
 53. *The Bath Journal*, January 27th 1755.
 54. *The Bath Journal*, February 14th 1763.

55. *The Bath Journal*, February 20th 1758.
56. *The Bath Journal*, August 28th 1749.
57. *The Bath Journal*, December 7th 1747.
58. *The Bath Journal*, March 20th 1758. See also *The Bath Journal*, March 13th 1758.
59. *The Bath Journal*, December 7th 1747. See also *The Bath Chronicle*, May 3rd 1778.
60. *The Bath Chronicle*, May 4th 1786.
61. Burk was apprehended in London on suspicion of being involved in November 1754. See *The Bath Journal*, November 4th 1754.
62. *The Discoveries of John Poulter, alias Baxter; Who was apprehended for robbing Dr. Hancock, of Salisbury, on Clarken Down, near Bath; and thereupon discovered a most numerous Gang of Villains, many of which have been already taken. Being A full Account of all the Robberies he has committed, and the surprizing Tricks and Frauds, he has practised for the Space of five Years last past, in different Parts of England. Written wholly by Himself. To which is added, as a Caution to prevent any unwary Persons from being imposed on and defrauded, An exact Account of the Manner in which Gamblers and other Sharpers impose upon People at Fairs and other Places; where their whole Tricks, Behaviour and Language, is so laid open, that any one who reads it, may certainly know them at any Time, and so be upon their Guard against being cheated by them. With some Precautions to secure Houses from being broke open, very useful for all Families: And likewise some Cautions to Tradesmen, and others who travel, to prevent their being robbed. With Directions how to prevent Horses from being stolen out of Grounds and Commons, 9th ed., (Sherborne, 1754). This edition appears in Philip Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices: Criminal Biographies of the Eighteenth Century*, (Routledge, 1992), pp.139-177, which also has a useful introduction. See also, Harper, *Half-Hours with the Highwaymen*, vol. 2, pp.301-315.*
63. Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices*, p.151.
64. Buchanan, 'The Great Bath Road', p.84.
65. *The Bath Journal*, April 16th 1753. *The Bath Journal* reflected the large amount of interest in the exploits of the gang. See entries for April 2nd 1753, April 9th 1753, April 23rd 1753, August 13th 1753, September 3rd 1753, October 22nd 1753, December 17th 1753, February 25th 1754, March 4th 1754, April 22nd 1754 and November 4th 1754.
66. Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices*, p.124. For a discussion of Nash's dealings with Poulter, see Oliver Goldsmith, *The Life of Richard Nash, of Bath, Esq; Extracted principally from His Original Papers*, (1762), pp. 130-139.
67. *The Bath Journal*, March 4th 1754. See also, *The Bath Journal*, February 25th 1754.
68. Goldsmith, *The Life of Richard Nash*, p.139.
69. *Ibid*, pp.131-132.
70. Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Paul Clifford*, (Penguin Books, 2010), p.220. *Paul Clifford* was first published in 1830.
71. *The Bath Chronicle*, October 4th 1770.
72. Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices*, p.136.
73. *The Bath Journal*, December 7th 1747.
74. Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices*, p.136.
75. *The Ordinary of Newgate, His Account of the Behaviour, Confession and Dying Words, of the Malefactor Who was Executed at Tyburn, on Friday the 8th of June, 1744*, (1744).
76. Waylen, *The Highwaymen of Wiltshire*, p.27.
77. *The Bath Journal*, March 7th 1748.
78. Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices*, pp. 137 and 144.

79. *The Bath Journal* December 7th 1747.
80. Toy shops sold souvenirs and fancy goods. The most famous toy shop in Bath was owned by Mrs Bertrand and it is mentioned in Alexander Pope's poem, written in 1739, 'On Receiving From the Right Honourable the Lady Frances Shirley A Standish and Two Pens'.
81. *The Bath Journal*, April 2nd 1753.
82. Goldsmith, *The Life of Richard Nash*, p.133.
83. *The Bath Journal*, December 9th 1751.
84. *The Beggar's Opera*, Act I Sc. IV.