

# **BATH COMMERCIALIS'D**

**Shops, Trades and Market  
at the 18th-Century Spa**



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at the 18th-Century Spa**

**by Trevor Fawcett**



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*In Memory of  
a Leeds Shopgirl  
and a Market Florist*

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

*The Wedgwood cup-and-saucer on the title-page and the teapot above illustrate Georgian consumerism rather well. Tea consumption went up by sixty times between 1710 and 1800, a prime example of a luxury taste spreading to the masses. Shipped by the East India Company from distant China, tea also symbolised Britain's commercial prowess and global reach. At home it gave rise to the social rituals of the tea table, and to new ceramic forms (matching tea sets) which hastened the decline of pewter. And it was the demand for utilitarian tableware that underpinned Wedgwood's expansion into the range of ornamental pottery for which he is now best known. It is not surprising that Wedgwood chose Bath as the ideal place outside London to site his public showrooms. Nowhere else could boast such a modish clientèle with so much purchasing power. The spa's eighteenth-century growth was meteoric - in buildings, in amenities, in seasonal visitors, in permanent residents, and in prestige and sophistication. Long before Jane Austen began to use Bath as a setting in her novels, the shops there dazzled newcomers. One young visitor in 1788, Mary Anne Galton, could*

*only wonder at 'the beauty of the shops... I could not conceive how it was possible to invent all the wants, which here were professed to be supplied'.*

*This book attempts to recreate something of that vivid impression, and to do so it ranges over the whole spectrum of commercial activity from humble backstreet dealers and manufacturing workshops to the richly stocked provisions market and the flamboyant retailing establishments of Milsom Street. Some historians have seen the eighteenth century as pivotal in fostering our modern acquisitiveness. There has been much debate with regard to disposable incomes, living standards, and the aspirations of the rising middle class; about the effect of revolutionary changes in agriculture, industry, transportation, and marketing; and concerning the part played by population growth, the financial system, colonial exploitation, or simply the whirligig of fashion, in stimulating and feeding demand. What cannot be contested is the fabulous range of wares and produce that was on everyday sale at Bath. Familiar and unfamiliar, many of these goods are touched on in this book - full-bottomed wigs and gouty shoes, umbrellas and quilted petticoats, cosmetics and snuff, duelling pistols and kitchen smoke jacks, harpsichords and postchaises, Bath Olivers and sausages, ice cream and asses' milk, vintage clarets and cheap illicit gin, to list only a few.*

*Commodities of all sorts, whether produced locally or brought in by road, river and canal from other places, were traded by generations of shopkeepers, market stall-holders, craftsmen, visiting dealers, street pedlars, and so on, all pushing for custom in an economic environment with few safety nets. In the pages that follow, some of the more significant tradesmen and tradeswomen are picked out and individualised to give some idea of the people behind the façade of business. Each occupation is covered in alphabetical order for ease of reference - from Apothecaries, Chemists and Druggists through to Woollen Drapers - but most are linked by cross-references to enable the reader to pursue with ease any particular topic of interest - clothes shops, for example, or luxury retailers, or the sale of*

*foodstuffs. There are special sections too on Bath shops in general and on the vital provisions market.*

*Old-established trades (butchers, grocers, shoemakers) mingle here with relatively new ones (carvers-and-gilders, coachbuilders, laundresses, music dealers, toymen), but the emphasis is always on suppliers of commodities. This means that some commercial sectors of eighteenth-century Bath are excluded on principle. Do not look here for information on the building industry, lodgings and transport services, or the various professions - nor on the business of diverting visitors (treated, however, in a companion volume, Bath Entertain'd).*

*Although grounded in the particulars of the Bath scene, this is a book about the world of eighteenth-century retailing at large, with much about business methods, sales trends, production processes, and sources of products. Increasingly, as the century wore on, many articles on sale came from a distance, sometimes - like tea, sugar, cottons, and tobacco - from a great distance. Most perishable foodstuffs originated locally of course, but even so Brixham fish, Essex oysters, Yorkshire hams and Welsh butter were regularly available. By contrast manufactured goods poured in from all quarters, especially from London, the Midlands, Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the Clyde, making Bath a veritable showcase of the early Industrial Revolution in action. Shopkeepers' lives grew more complicated as a result, dealing as they often did with dozens of wholesalers, importers, manufacturers and middlemen, with a plethora of transport services, and with all the pressures of credit terms and variable cash flow. The customer, meanwhile, was spoilt for choice - and above all at Bath. Admiring comments echo down the years, from a witness of the 1720s enthusing about the well-patronised Bath shops 'filled with every thing that contributes to Pleasure' down to a much later visitor appreciative of the 'Multitude of splendid shops, full of all that wealth and luxury can desire, arranged with all the arts of seduction'. But the luxury retailers they were referring to here were only part of a much broader story.*

*N.B. Pre-1752 dates are always given in 'new style', i.e. 28 Jan 1726/7 is regarded as occurring in 1727. Certain entries quote sums of money. To obtain very approximate modern sterling equivalents multiply by around sixty - though because relative values have changed, this will sometimes understate, sometimes overstate, the true comparison.*



*Market officials check for underweight butter,  
a woodcut from Hannah More's cautionary broadsheet,  
The Market Woman, or Honesty is the Best Policy (1790).*

## **Apothecaries, Chemists and Druggists**

A venomous satire of 1737, *The Diseases of Bath*, pictures a repulsive, slovenly apothecary (Stercorio) in his equally repulsive, slovenly shop - 'a nauseous, litter'd Magazine // Of all that is unwholesome and unclean'. Here amid the squalor he mixes cordials with dirty hands, spreads plasters, powders oyster shell, and doles out pills and ointments, quite careless as to which medicine will eventually be sent to what patient. Taking on the physician's role he even dares to prescribe, boldly but quite ignorantly, and at the end presents his dying victim with a huge 'Assassin's Bill' for useless remedies. Nonetheless, the piece concludes, despite all his misdeeds Stercorio rates as 'a very Treasure... an Aesculapius' compared with the spa's other eighteen apothecaries - 'all worse than he'. Nineteen apothecaries in all seems about right for 1737, but does anything else in this scurrilous exposé ring true?

Illness and disease were still poorly understood of course. Treatments were sometimes dangerous or, to modern thinking, quite misconceived. Yet Bath, hospital to the nation, remained the country's premier health resort, and its medical practitioners were regarded by and large as serious people. Apothecaries in particular had gained in status following a landmark legal judgment of 1704 which won them the right to advise and prescribe - transforming them almost at a stroke from mere tradesmen into something approaching family doctors. Still debarred from charging for their advice, they continued to make up physicians' prescriptions but now profited too from dispensing the medicines they prescribed - or overprescribed - themselves. At Bath they enjoyed a further advantage in supplying all the medication (purges, sweats, tonics, sedatives) that patients on a water cure were routinely dosed with. Their notoriously high mark-up on drugs could be defended on several grounds, including the need to keep in stock all 400-500 basic ingredients listed in their holy book, the *London Pharmacopoeia*, many of which tended to spoil and required periodic renewal.

*Materia medica* divided into two main categories - traditional 'galenic' (mainly herbal) remedies and a growing number of chemical compounds. Medical supplies in general could be bought from Apothecaries' Hall in London or specialist wholesalers, though a few Bath apothecaries (Thomas Haviland, David Russell, William Sole) cultivated their own herb gardens, and others may have relied on the simple-gatherers or herb

women whom we sometimes hear of. Jones of Covent Garden was an important outside supplier for over forty years - even of the live vipers urgently requested in 1781 for West & Sole's dispensing shop in Trim Street. Far from the scene of disorder that Stercorio's shop presented, the typical apothecary's was probably rather tidy, with a big counter, shelves of labelled gallipots and stoppered bottles, and dozens of drawers, all kept very methodically to prevent tragic mistakes over substances and quantities. The workshop would require a furnace, crucibles, distilling apparatus, pestles and mortars, tiles for rolling pills and boluses, graduated measures, funnels, bladders, accurate balances, etc., as well as instruments and dressings for the minor surgical procedures that apothecaries sometimes had to undertake. Journeymen and apprentices, who did much of the routine dispensing, would later deliver the phials of medicine, pill-boxes, and other orders to the patient's door, while a polite, well-dressed assistant minded the front shop.



More often than not the apothecary himself was out on his rounds. In 1721 and 1723, for example, William Skrine called on the Countess of Bristol almost every day, supervising her dosage of spa water and plying her with cordial boluses, burnt rhubarb, bedtime fomentations, and above all laudanum (either in pills or as a draught with almond oil). 'I am seldom to be found compounding in the shop. I have done with *that* branch of the *profession...* and am... *a visiting medical gentleman...*', boasts Mr Mixum in Richard Warner's mocking portrait of a later Bath apothecary, William Bowen. It was this re-emphasis in the apothecary's role towards doctoring that left a commercial niche for a new breed of retail druggists and chemists to occupy. Robert Carton, a London druggist, was one of the first to set up shop in Bath, in 1753, but others gradually followed - Henry Parry, Henry Knight, William Franckling, Thomas Horton, to name but a few. Generally opposed by apothecaries, whose monopoly on medicines

they directly threatened, they prepared and sold all kinds of potions and remedies over the counter - including proprietary medicines. These branded products, nationally advertised and sold at a fixed price, were already widely available through bookshops, printers, perfumers, and the odd wholesaling apothecary like William Street. In the late 1780s - despite the excise duties and licensing requirements imposed in 1783-5 - one Bath printer could list as many as 140 different nostrums - among them 13 treatments 'for a Certain Disorder' and 4 prophylactics 'to Prevent it'. Few Georgians, even at Bath, did not at some time in their lives resort to Godfrey's Cordial or Black Drop (both opiates), Daffey's and Bostock's Elixirs (senna-based purges), Anderson's Scots Pills (an aloe-based emetic), James's Powder and Ward's Pill and Drop (fever cures containing dangerous quantities of antimony), or Bateman's Drops and Balsam of Honey (for respiratory infections).

Despite the encroachment of druggists and chemists, apothecaries (and 'surgeon-apothecaries') continued to flourish. Altogether they enjoyed a remarkably successful century. Whole genealogies could be traced back to eminent early practitioners like Francis Bave, John Moore and William Seager. They included some well-known Bath names - Samuel Bush, William Gallaway, Thomas Haviland, William and Edmund Anderdon, John Horton father and son, William Street, Simon and George Simon Crook (who treated the younger Pitt), and Joseph Spry (who lodged and treated Nelson). Recruits to the profession paid quite steep apprenticeship premiums and increasingly came from genteel backgrounds. Once qualified and established in his own dispensing shop, an apothecary often joined forces with a particular physician, generally to their mutual benefit and notwithstanding certain professional tensions. Some took on special roles as parish apothecaries or employees of the medical charities and infirmaries. Others progressed through civic office. Apothecaries constituted almost a quarter of the City Council membership in the eighteenth century - far and away the largest occupational group - and they supplied a similar proportion of Bath Mayors, making them a powerful lobby in the development of the spa.

## **Auctioneers**

Whether to sell by auction or 'private contract' was a matter of judgment. Auctions had the advantage of finding a buyer quickly - useful when

clearing a house or selling a bankrupt's stock-in-trade - yet at the risk of obtaining a lower price than by normal sale. Sporadically advertised in the Bath press from the 1740s, they were used at first by attorneys in order to dispose of properties and contents - as a rule on the site itself or at an inn, never at coffee-houses as in London and Bristol. It was thus an attorney who in 1761 posthumously auctioned Beau Nash's picture collection and other effects at his house in St John's Court. Meanwhile the upholsterers, already in demand as valuers of goods, were themselves moving into auctioneering as a logical extension of their other activities. Messrs Evatt of Westgate Street began the process at Bath, perhaps in 1759 with an auction of furniture from Chandos Buildings for which they issued a proper catalogue. Upholsterers soon came to dominate the local trade, little troubled by the occasional visiting dealer turning up with a load of crockery, linen, carpets, or other surplus stock which he then proceeded to auction off in some hired upstairs room. Another intruder may have worried them more - a certain Clarke, a broker from London, who in the late 1760s opened a Great Auction Room, Repository and Public Sale Warehouse at the bottom of Walcot Street. The enterprise proved short-lived however.

Auctioneers worked on a commission basis. In 1776 one Bath exponent, Daniel Dickes, charged 6% all in, though John Plura preferred to itemise his expenses separately (for advertising, room hire, etc.) when property belonging to the bankrupt architect John Eveleigh was sold in 1794. Important auctions were advertised far afield through newspapers and printed catalogues, and virtually all used the modern sales' system of ascending bids. William Evill's sale of linen and haberdashery 'by the Candle' in 1795 must have been staged as a novelty, for the method of frantic last-minute bidding (before the flame of a candle stump expired) had long been obsolete. Plura's conditions of sale were probably typical, i.e. bidding to advance by regular sums; purchaser to pay 25% deposit on the spot if required; balance to be paid and goods removed, with all faults, the day after the sale. Artificial bidding (or 'puffing') was particularly frowned on, but may have been easier to spot than thieves mingling in the crowd - a problem which in 1795 forced some of Bath's leading auctioneers - Plura, Trimnell, English, Bally and Evill - to issue joint rewards for convictions. In theory anyone could auction. Even the Town Clerk attempted it in 1769 to dispose of some Corporation houses in Holloway. Not until the Act of 1779 were auctioneers compelled to take out an annual licence.

John Plura was probably the city's busiest auctioneer in the later decades, his skills at the rostrum even celebrated in verse. Opening into John Street behind his smart Milsom Street upholstery shop stood his warehouse, site of a disastrous fire in 1785 when thousands of pounds' worth of stored furniture went up in smoke. At his adjoining 'great room' (or sometimes at the actual properties put up for sale) commodities of every kind went under his hammer - household contents galore, farm animals, hogsheads of cider, a perfumer's stock-in-trade, a cabinet of curiosities, three Bath pleasure gardens, the black funeral carriages and horse teams belonging to the *Bear* inn, and many collections of artworks - for which, as an eminent sculptor's son, he might have felt a special sympathy. Others, too, auctioned pictures, and in the early 1790s Charles Spackman, at his saleroom in Monmouth Street, almost rivalled Plura in this field before bankrupting himself in property speculation. Spackman was unusual in coming to auctioneering from coachbuilding. Most took a more orthodox route via the furnishing trade, including successive occupiers of the auction room on the west side of Queen Square - Henry Hill, William Birchall, Peregrine Birchall, William Potter and William Bally, the last-named once in partnership with Plura. Similarly Edmund English began as a cabinet maker, and Charles Trimmell (following a long family tradition) first learned his craft as an upholsterer.

⇒ See also **Upholsterers**.

## **Bakers**

Bread, the bakers' prerogative, was subject to exceptional legal controls. Unlike any other commodity its price was determined by a so-called 'Assize' held by the Mayor and guided by current wheat prices in the Bristol or Wiltshire grain markets. In some towns the cost of bread constantly fluctuated. Bath preferred the alternative method of keeping prices constant (i.e. loaves at 1d, 2d., 3d., 6d., 1s. and 1s.6d.) but varying the permitted weight of each kind of loaf. The system also took quality into account by setting different weights for white bread (considered the most nutritious), wheaten (wholemeal minus the bran), and household (full wholemeal), marked respectively on the loaf by the initials W, WH and H. At some periods the Assize hardly altered year on year, but large surpluses or shortfalls in the harvest could prompt more frequent

adjustments. In the twelve months starting 11 May 1768, for example, as the grain supply improved, the official weight of a penny loaf at Bath increased six times, rising from 6oz 1dr, 8oz 3dr and 10oz 11dr for white, wheaten, and household to 7oz 10dr, 10oz 2dr and 13oz 9dr. The difficulty of hitting such precise targets can be imagined, yet bakers were kept up to the mark - especially at times of rising food prices - by unannounced inspections by Corporation officers, seizures of any bread found under weight, and punitive fines on offenders. Their profit arose from the standard baking allowance (amounting to a shilling a bushel in the 1760s), but it could be supplemented by dealing in flour, selling breads and biscuits exempt from the Assize, or putting their ovens to public use.

Bakers nationally were sometimes accused of adulterating their flour with bean-meal, chalk, alum, etc. to make it go further, but no Bath instance has come to light. Locally it seems that most bread was made from pure wheat as the earlier use of wheat-rye mixtures died out. Small-scale bakers obtained their flour from other bakers or mealmen, but the bigger firms could buy grain more cheaply at the corn market (even direct from farms) and have it milled for them. Presumably this is what John Flower, a considerable Bath baker, was doing in 1757 when a wagon on its way to him was robbed of 17 sacks of wheat by a hungry mob.

Farms were often equipped with ovens and some country bread came straight to Bath market - the politician John Wilkes liked a certain brown country loaf he found there so much that he sent one to his daughter in London to try. In town ovens were rarer, so most citizens relied on their local baker for fresh bread and for any proxy baking they wanted done. The baker's oven was in special public demand on Sundays when it was illegal to sell bread but not to bake. Not until 1795 did Sabbatarians manage to restrain the practice, when the city's master bakers finally agreed not to bake customers' meat, pies and puddings on Sunday afternoons after 1 p.m. The journeymen bakers must have welcomed this odd afternoon off, for they commonly worked long unsocial hours, rising early to knead the dough and heat the ovens for the early morning bake. Despite the fairly hard labour involved, the trade attracted plenty of recruits. The Bakers' Company, briefly resuscitated in 1681, re-formed once more in 1752 along with the other trade guilds, and accepted under its wing the pastrycooks and confectioners despite their competition in areas such as biscuit-making. Inevitably there was a hierarchy of success within the trade. Somewhere at the top came prosperous, well-connected

master bakers like Thomas and Henry Atwood (both of whom became Mayor), Simon Collett (whose busy shop stood in Stall Street opposite the *Three Tuns*), and the Collibeys, Flowers, Tylees and Wingroves. For some of the smaller bakers, on the other hand, it was a struggle to survive. A hostile account in 1777 spoke of them pawning their watches and Sunday suits for the money to buy 'a sack of flour and a dozen ... faggots to bake with', and pestering newly arrived visitors at the city inns for orders.

Being known for a special product might of course give a baker an edge over competitors. Charles Morgan certainly had a winner in the original recipe for Bath Olivers, sold not only at Bath but despatched to invalids throughout England. The recipe later passed to John Bailey and then in 1800 to James Kidd at the same Bath Oliver shop in Westgate Street - but their monopoly was not absolute because William Dalmer, a major baker and biscuit-manufacturer, made plain Bath Olivers too, as well as several kinds of sweet biscuit. More importantly, Dalmer had inherited from Spring Gardens the recipe for Sally Lunn's, which he distributed every morning, quite warm, from a specially constructed portable oven, together with his unique Sans Pareil bread.

By the 1780s it was common for bakers to advertise biscuits, muffins, milk cakes, French breads and tin-baked rolls, so that the restrictions imposed during the food crises of 1795 and 1799-1801 affected many of them severely. From July 1795 white bread, rolls, cakes and pastry came under a complete bakers' ban (unless prescribed for invalids), leaving only standard wheaten and other brown loaves on sale - a blow even to poor Bath citizens grown accustomed to eating fine white bread. The same happened in 1800 when first the baking of pastry, rolls and hot cross buns was frowned on, then the sale of any bread less than 24-hours-old prohibited, and finally the baking of white bread halted altogether. These temporary bans on white bread eroded profit margins, and by 1801 the bakers and the Corporation - now experimenting with selling large loaves by price rather than weight - found themselves seriously at loggerheads over both the Bread Assize and the linked issue of the new Bath corn market. The bakers wanted a decent return for their labour. The authorities for their part feared public unrest at the high cost of bread and began to consider building municipal ovens to defeat the bakers' monopoly.

⇒ See also **Corn Factors and Mealmen; Pastrycooks and Confectioners.**

**Barbers** *see* **Hairdressers**

**Basketwomen** *see* **Porters and Basketwomen**

**Blacksmiths** *see* **Braziers, Smiths and Ironmongers**

## **Booksellers**

Pressing a friend to come to Bath in 1742, the philosopher David Hartley cited 'two excellent booksellers shops' among the spa 'conveniences'. He was probably thinking of James Leake's on Terrace Walk and William Frederick's in Orange Grove, rather than the other main contender by that date, Richard Goadby's at the corner of Wade's Passage. These are the first booksellers we know much about, though the pedigree went back at least to 1610 when a binder-stationer was already settled at Bath. Leake, a Londoner, seems to have acquired Henry Hammond's Terrace Walk bookshop c.1722, having married his daughter. Armed with the city freedom (obtained by a timely gift of prayer books to the Corporation), he set about turning a provincial shop into a concern equalling any in the metropolis. His smartest move was to open a circulating library - still a rare institution nationally but an obvious boon to spa patients and others with ample time for reading. Generously stocked by 1731 (shelved 'from the Cornice to the Skirting') and with multiple copies of popular titles, it came to overshadow the bookselling side of the business.

Lending books out was bound to spoil sales, complained one aggrieved author, Dr George Cheyne, in 1739, willing though he was to pronounce Leake's shop (in an update of Defoe's *Travels*) 'one of the finest in *Europe*'. Whatever else, it was unrivalled for literary gossip at this period, frequented by the likes of Henry Fielding and William Warburton, and privy to every new page of *Pamela* as Samuel Richardson, Leake's own brother-in-law, actually penned it. That surely trumped Leake's competitor bookshops, though these too would have their habitués. Goadby dealt in serious books, new and secondhand, but had no circulating library, which was fast becoming a prerequisite of any Bath bookshop. When he decamped to The Hague early in 1745, the vacuum was immediately filled

by Benjamin Matthews. He likewise had an important by-trade in old books and indeed sometimes held book auctions, but was more willing to succumb to fashion by lending out 'books of entertainment'. William Frederick, successor to a previous bookseller in Orange Grove, James Warriner, proved a more serious rival to Leake's, not only on the bookshop front but in the realm of publishing. Just as Leake had begun to dabble in publishing soon after starting up (e.g. with Cheyne's *Essay of Health and Long Life*, 1724), so did Frederick take an early risk with John Wood's 2-volume *Description of Bath* (1742-3). He was also prepared to indulge a favoured customer like the Countess of Huntingdon, sending her new publications to peruse just as they arrived, hot off the press, by London wagon.

Steadily the number of booksellers grew - from 4-5 in the 1750s-1760s to 8-9 in the 1780s-90s, and this without counting the various printers who also listed new books for sale. Although their stocks varied, they would all have a similar basic repertoire of popular fiction, plays, songbooks, jestbooks, almanacks, political and religious tracts, bibles and service-books, statutes, schoolbooks, 'small histories' (children's stories), and a mix of travel, history, medicine, etc., and in some cases erotica. They sold stationery as a matter of course, from paper, quills and ink to memorandum books, ledgers, and legal documents. And because books and pamphlets were typically issued in flimsy covers, most bookshops could bind them up as the customer preferred in quarter-, half-, or full leather. No doubt the more considerable shops could supply - either off their shelves or by special order from London - quite scholarly works, standard classics, foreign literature, and costly illustrated folios. By contrast, the antiquarian trade flourished less well at Bath than in some other centres.

What did prosper (given the increasing purchase price of books) were the circulating libraries, each with its regularly revised catalogue of items for loan. Library and sales stocks must have been interchangeable to some extent, and both were often passed on to successors when shops changed hands. Leake's sons thus handed over a going concern to Lewis Bull, a former toyman, in 1770, and six years later Frederick's turned into Meyler & Sheldon's. One well-known Milsom Street establishment (boasting an astonishing list of upper-crust library subscribers) went through four different proprietors - Tennent, Clinch, Pratt, and Marshall - in a generation. Some of the most active bookmen also took to publishing. In

the 1790s Samuel Hazard, a printer-turned-bookseller, produced many of Hannah More's moralising *Repository Tracts*, and William Meyler brought out the weekly *Bath Herald*. Meyler, prominent in civic affairs generally, was elected to the Council in 1801, the first bookseller to be so since James Leake junior (1760) and William Frederick (1766).

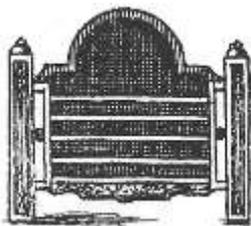
⇒ See also **Printsellers**, and the entry 'Circulating Libraries' in Trevor Fawcett, *Bath Entertain'd* (Ruton, 1998).

## **Braziers, Smiths and Ironmongers**

The brass and iron trades were once quite distinct. Stuart Bath could parade blacksmiths, locksmiths, nailers, even a cutler, but the arrival in 1664 of John Axford, a brazier from Rode, filled a notable gap and he was allowed to trade for that reason, providing he kept to his own patch as the smiths did to theirs. Blessed with a virtual monopoly in brass, copper and pewter products, Axford prospered, rose to become Mayor (1696-7), and bequeathed a thriving concern to his son John Axford II and later generations of metalworking Axfords, who no doubt benefited from the new Avon brassmills for raw materials and finished pots and pans. By 1750 - as the popularity of pewter tableware, one of their staples, declined (with the rise of ceramics) - their interests had broadened. Benjamin and Isaac Axford at their respective shops had already diversified into whitesmithing (i.e. making tin goods and tinning kitchenware), and, more radically, Isaac was wholesaling bar iron - clear signs of the growing amalgamation of the brass, tin and iron trades. This process might equally begin with the smiths and ironmongers, witness the expansion of Richard Jones's ironmongery business into brass- and tinware under his successors John Latty/Latty & Hallett. John Atwood's blacksmith shop developed in the same way under his son. By 1771 John Atwood II was able to supply the new Assembly Rooms with copper coal scuttles, boilers, bells, lamps, torch-snuffers, trays, pewter plates and dishes, fire irons, trivets, a gridiron, a frying pan, cooking spits and a smoke jack - a complete medley of ironmongery and brazier's wares.

Bath's growth generated a constant demand for metalwork. In 1777, as the new Guildhall neared completion, John Atwood was fashioning the railings for the street frontage, James Atwood the staircase ironwork inside,

and Jonathan Harris, a brightsmith, all the fire grates. Over at the rebuilt Hot Bath, tenders were simultaneously being invited for brass hinges, latches, bolts, rails, and iron stoves. Builders and householders were forever wanting coal grates, area railings, kitchen gear, fire dogs, polished fenders, locks and keys, or brass doorknobs. At night the streets were lit with standard oil lamps fitted out by local tinmen and hung from brackets wrought by local smiths. No wonder so many artisans in small workshops across the city could be seen forging iron, running liquid metal into moulds, hammering, soldering, filing, polishing, mending locks, patching kettles. James Atwood manufactured block-tin and kitchen wares and tin-plated daily. Latty & Hallett assured the public their copper and tinplate goods were home-made. The workmen whom the ironmonger John Harris employed could turn out anything from locks to planing tools to tin-plated stewpans. And yet the shift to bought-in commodities could not be ignored either. So much was already evident with a fourth-generation Axford (Jacob II) who added an ironmongery showroom to his Marketplace shop in 1765. The Sheffield files and London pewter specifically identified in his trade publicity would certainly not be the only imported products on display. What local shops failed to manufacture themselves, they could always buy in from Bristol and Wales, Shropshire and the Black Country, Sheffield and London, either to sell on to other tradesmen (builders, cabinetmakers, and coachbuilders, for instance) or to retail in the normal way. Between 1777 and 1784 Benjamin and Charles Axford's [Old] Bond Street showrooms brimmed with stoves, ovens, steel grates and fenders, smoke jacks, iron safes, locks of every description, cutlery, lamps, guns, and machine parts like brass barrels and pump screws - some of it obtained from other manufacturers, the rest made in their workshops which still took on smithing, tinning, mending, and even bell-hanging jobs. At some ironmonger-braziers the proportion of bought-in factory goods - from Argand lamps to Pontypool lacquerware - was probably higher still.



All the same, the specially portable oven that Robert Darby ('ironmonger, brightsmith, brazier, tinsplate worker') exhibited at his shop in Horse (Southgate) Street in 1800, far from being some Midlands factory product, he had designed and constructed himself. Just one instance of the mechanic talent that existed at the supposedly non-industrial health resort of Bath, it could be matched by others. 'Mill and Engine Work done in the compleatest Manner', announced an earlier Horse Street foundry, Ann Freath & Son (successor to John Freath) in 1768. By 1779 the engine-builder George Ford was established in Bridewell Lane where over the next dozen years he turned out fire appliances and water pumps of all descriptions. Other Fords followed in his tracks - Charles, oven- and stovemaker, and John and Samuel, who for a time in the early 1790s engineered quite elaborate wool-carding machines. But the brightest portent was George Stothert. Chief foreman to John Harris, ironmonger, brazier and planemaker, Stothert became his partner in 1784 and sole proprietor soon after, allowing his business skills full scope. Over the coming years, as an agent for the Coalbrookdale Works, and perhaps too of Birmingham firms like Matthew Boulton's, he imported grates and stoves, pipes and iron banisters, even the ornamental cast-iron bridges for Sydney Gardens (floated to Bath via the Severn and Avon). All the time, though, he was stepping up the firm's own productive capacity in the usual lines of kitchen utensils, heating apparatus, locksmithing and tool-making, so that by the end of the century 'Stothert planes', his speciality, were being sold in America, and the foundations for future expansion had been laid.

⇒ See also **Cutlers; Gunsmiths.**

## **Breeches Makers**

Until the fashion revolution around 1800 introduced first pantaloons and then trousers, men of all classes wore knee breeches and long stockings. Breeches cut from cloth - whether strong fustian, worsted, silk, or cotton velveteen - were ordinary tailors' work. The term 'breeches maker' had the special meaning, however, of a worker in buck-, doe- and sheepskin, who made up breeches to order, and often produced leather gloves, waistcoats, aprons, gaiters, bags and satchells as well. Though his traditional output consisted of serviceable wear (including riding apparel), by the mid-eighteenth century improved dyeing techniques and neater styling made

leather breeches much more vogueish, for 'they now appear as as handsome as cloth... [though] softer to the touch, and more durable' (1761). By 1765 they were even being seen in the Assembly Rooms until the Master of Ceremonies clamped down, ruling leather breeches unsuited 'to the decorum of the Place'.

Bath's leading breeches makers of the 1750s and 1760s - John, James and Ann Bishop, and their former apprentice William Brockenbrow - each employed a team of journeymen and may in addition have used women outworkers to sew gloves, etc. They dressed their own leather, presumably dyed it (black being increasingly popular), and besides breeches advertised dress gloves, riding gloves, and spatterdashes. They also washed and repaired old leather garments. In the 1770s one of their successors, John and Elizabeth Pike, supplied men's gloves on an exchange basis of up to four pairs a year. These would be leather gloves of course, generally fur-lined. A much greater range of gloves - woollen, worsted, cotton, silk, and leather too - could be had from other shops, most often from hatters and hosiers. But from 1785 all of them had to put up a notice 'Dealer in Gloves' over their doors and place a label within each right-hand glove stating the duty (up to 20%) paid per pair. This cannot have pleased Thomas Parsons, by then Bath's best-known glover and breeches maker, who like others in the trade already suffered from the long-existing tax on leather. Fortunately for him the irksome glove tax was repealed in 1794.

⇒ See also **Tailors; Tanners and Leather Dressers**.

## **Brewers**

The eighteenth century saw the steady rise of the common or wholesale brewer at the expense of the publican brewer who provided solely for himself. In 1700 virtually all Bath alehouses must have brewed their own beer, as indeed many families did. By 1800 perhaps only the larger inns and public houses thought it worth their while. The rest bought from the common brewers, locally and nationally, to whom increasingly their houses were tied. Accompanying this major shift to industrial production came a greater variety of ales and strong beers - marked by the growing popularity of dark London porter and the availability of pale ales and

various provincial brews. Throughout the whole period 'small' or 'table' beer remained the everyday beverage in the home and in many institutions - even, for instance, at the private girls' school run by the Lee sisters on Lansdown Road. It was to safeguard the production of this relatively weak beer, less dangerous than many water supplies, that Parliament allowed brewers a general price increase in 1793. By then Bath contained twelve commercial breweries supplying public houses and private customers in and out of town. That was a big change, since only fifty years earlier they had been thin on the ground.

The case of malting houses was somewhat different. Established much earlier to meet the needs of domestic brewing, these could long be found both in the city and in outlying villages like Batheaston and Marshfield which had easy access to the Wiltshire grain markets. Independent maltsters like William Horton, Richard Morgan and William Wiltshire cut a prominent figure in early Georgian Bath, both Horton and Morgan in the 1730s serving as Mayor.

Wholesale brewing began in a small way around 1730 as an enterprising sideline of a Bath jeweller, Thomas Goulding. It led to Goulding joining, or heading, a consortium of local businessmen (among them Thursby Robinson, landlord of the *Three Tuns*) who in 1736 erected a substantial brewery by the river at Dolemeads. Furnished with its own malthouse and equipped with a horse-powered grinding mill and a wort pump, this concern survived some fourteen years, a period when beer drinking was still struggling to recover from the long dominance of cheap spirits. Other small-to-medium-sized breweries gradually followed - Jones on Broad Quay, John Palmer (already a well-known tallow chandler) in Southgate Street, William Tucker in Avon Street, Luke Flood (succeeded by Joseph Carincross) and James Ewing both in Westgate Street, and several more. One brewery and malthouse even occupied a prime site opposite the Guildhall. Given the reduction in domestic brewing, some such expansion might have been predicted. Much more unexpected was the arrival, from the mid-1770s onwards, of quite big-league brewing at Bath - largely the work of outsiders spotting Bath's market potential but accelerated too by penal new taxation on small brewers.

Samuel Sayce, a Shropshire man, set the trend. Once launched as a wine merchant (1772), he turned brewer as well, and by 1776 was making not

merely a typical range of ales and hopped beers but also, for the first time at Bath, the mild dark stout called London porter. In spite of its higher price - 4d. per quart as against 3d. for strong beer - the demand for porter grew, and within four years Sayce could list seventeen licensed premises where it was on sale, some of them perhaps already managed by tied tenants. His combined brewery and distillery in Northgate Street backed onto the river, not only giving the option of transport by barge but handy for Bathwick meadows where his cattle fattened on the grain wastes. Did the Avon also satisfy the firm's considerable requirement for water? It was certainly the source for Warren & Clark's Porter and Amber Brewery, much further upstream at Lower East Hayes. This newly built brewery was in large-scale production from early 1780 - though not until September, after maturing six months in barrel, did Warren & Clark porter come on tap at a dozen or so Bath pubs. By 1790 East Hayes marked the outer limit of a linear strip of new or revitalised breweries that daily floated their beery aromas across the city. Beginning with the Marketplace and Northgate breweries, it extended through James Racey's at no. 3 Ladymead, the London and Walcot breweries near St Swithin's, another brewery opposite Dover Terrace (sold by Richard Palmer in 1790 to Powney & Evans as a thriving concern), and yet one more in Morford Street just off the main arc.

This was the line of greatest concentration, but there was a second focus - still close to the river - at the other end of town. Although in 1780 William Matthews (Tucker's successor) had removed his brewery and coalyard from Avon Street up to Walcot, two major firms remained - Isaac Williams & Sons (on Broad Quay since 1779) and Opie & William Smith at the Anchor Brewery off Southgate Street. Like the other big brewers they must have supplied publicans and other customers for miles around. The Williams brewery, a Bristolian enterprise in origin, sent much of its product back to Bristol by barge (specially decked over in 1797 to stop pilfering) and no doubt shipped overseas. Their scale of operations can be seen by the firm's losses in 1800 from an arson attack - 20,000 bushels of malt and barley and a large stock of beer. They swiftly rebuilt, and in doing so copied two of their rivals, Sayce & Kelson at the Northgate Brewery and William Clark at East Hayes, by installing steam power. Heavy capital investment explains why the big names in brewing were usually partnerships and family concerns. Evill & Co.'s brewery in Bathwick Street, built 1791, was another example, for the ramifying Evill family had

commercial interests throughout Bath and some stake in the Marketplace brewery as early as the 1760s. In 1800 the breweries were already a bulky industrial presence on the city scene, and the Northgate Brewery would go on to become the premier beer producer in the West of England and one of the notable sights of Victorian Bath.

⇒ See also **Distillers**.

## **Brushmakers**

One of those unsung, often overlooked occupations that made a range of useful everyday items few could manage without. Apart from seasoned wood, which he shaped with an axe or pivoted blade and perhaps a lathe, the brushmaker's chief material was, in a description of 1747, 'Hog Bristles, which he combs, picks, and cuts in Lengths fit for the various Sorts of Brushes he makes'. He also made hair brooms, and sometimes besoms out of bundled birch-twigs, and mops from old rags and wool. One of the six brushmakers listed in the local directory for 1800 declared himself a brush-, mop- and patten-maker. The craft must have existed at Bath for most of the century, and indeed in the 1750s and 1760s one of its exponents, William Brooke, took on four indentured apprentices, three of them his own sons. Scarcely more is known of the brushmakers than about ropemakers, birdcage-makers, and similar specialists who turn up in city records. Basketmakers are seldom heard of at all, perhaps because theirs was primarily a country craft.

## **Butchers**

The better-off ate meat almost every day. John Penrose's carefully itemised bills during the family's stay at Bath in 1766 show them dining frequently on mutton, lamb, beef, and veal (roasted, boiled, or baked in pies), rather less often on pork, bacon, tripe, sheep's hearts, poultry, or fish - and all this while strictly economising. This matches other samples of private consumption, and bears out John Trusler's estimate c.1780 that a family of eleven (including four children and five servants) would require about 37 lbs of butchers' meat a week, averaging half-a-pound a day per person. Except at times of soaring prices, even the poor could often afford the

cheaper cuts, all of which created a high demand at both the central provisions market and the butchers' shops. By 1800 around 45 beef and pork butchers had retail premises in the city centre and suburbs, with perhaps double that number of meat stalls in the market (a total that had grown to c.150 by 1819). Taking food suppliers as a whole, only the baking trade could challenge the butchers in numbers, though there was one signal difference. Nearly all the bakers were resident in Bath, whereas only the shopkeeping butchers necessarily were. The majority of the market butchers were farmers, graziers and dealers from outside.

Bath's rural hinterland was not cattle-breeding country, but it did provide ample pasturage for fattening livestock brought in from South Wales, Gloucestershire, Devon, or yet further afield - for instance a herd of 400 cattle driven to Claverton Down from Scotland, a month's journey, during the meat shortages of 1797. Once they had put on weight, beasts were slaughtered at the farm and the carcasses transported to market. A traveller visiting Castle Combe in 1754 was told that the farmers there 'kill meat twice a week and carry it to Bath', and the same could have been said of Cold Ashton, Marshfield, Box, Midsomer Norton, and many other places. But with the Wednesday and Saturday meat market eventually open from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. in summer, and only two hours less in winter, the country butchers worked an inordinately long day and then faced the ride home in the dark. With butchers who lived at Bath it was easier, for they often leased pastures close to town from which animals could be easily walked to the city slaughterhouses. In taking over the *New Inn* (Kingsmead) in 1773, James Matthews recognised the value of the adjacent meadows in fattening cattle for local butchers and for his own Stall Street shop. Some grazed their sheep at Prior Park and on Lansdown - whose pasture was reckoned to impart a particular succulence to the lamb produced there. Sheep and pigs, unlike cattle, were certainly bred in the surrounding district. Writing in 1797, the agriculturalist John Billingsley listed various sheep breeders at Wolverton, Foxcote, Camerton, Corston and Twerton, adding that their 'sort of sheep, having a large quantity of tallow, is highly approved by the butchers'. Hog rearing too was common, and in the meat shortages of 1797 some farmers deliberately stepped up the production of pork and bacon. Pigsties could be found even in Bath backyards, sometimes to the point of constituting a public nuisance.

More complained about than pigsties were offensive slaughterhouses, especially those standing near the old East Gate. These were handily located for the butchers' market, the hides and tallow market, and the river (where messy waste was often disposed of), but the stench they created polluted the air near Pulteney Bridge and in the 1770s led to calls for their removal. In 1781 the Guildhall finally agreed to close these slaughterhouses on account of 'the foul and nasty Manner in which they are kept', and yet at least one was still operating on the site in 1796. As custodian of the market the Corporation was necessarily concerned about meat supplies. In 1745-6 it had used a £500 gift from the Bath M.P., George Wade, to enlarge and pave the shambles and to build regular butchers' stalls there. In the mid-1770s the wholesale/retail meat section was extended and a separate building put up for the pig butchers - always regarded as distinct from dealers in beef and mutton. This new 'Market House' had a controversial lead-covered, instead of tiled, roof - a very effective means, its opponents pointed out, of baking pork chins, 'griskins' and spare ribs on hot summer days, and equally good, one imagines, at melting the fresh butter that was sold in the same building.

Various regulations applied to market butchers about hanging joints of meat 'in line', the size of chopping blocks, and use of proper weights and measures - though the butchers' liking of steelyards for weighing did at times raise suspicions of fraud. A city official, the Supervisor of Flesh, kept an eye on the quality of meat on sale, and any produce deemed 'unwholesome' was burnt very publicly, in the Marketplace, with the miscreant butcher's name attached. Equally important (meat being such a staple of diet) was the question of illegal profiteering, which the city attempted to stamp out by discouraging middlemen, i.e. the so-called cattle jobbers who went round farms buying up stock for later sale to the butchers. In 1746, despite the failure of a similar initiative in 1736, the Corporation gave notice of a Wednesday cattle mart to be held in Sawclose, urging farmers to deliver livestock on the hoof and sell to local grazier-butchers direct. At first they were free from paying tolls, but initial enthusiasm soon evaporated and by 1749 the cattle market was said to be under-used. Neither this nor the annual Lansdown Fair on 10 August seems ever to have been a major source of supply. Farmers and butchers had other ways of managing and manipulating the market, and it was to curb the illegal practices of 'forestalling' and 'regrating' that the Corporation in 1765-66 tightened up on permitted trading hours. At the

same time it gave butchers the right to trade in the market (not just in shops) on any day but Sunday, an experiment that lasted ten years before the old Wednesday/Saturday system returned. Whatever was done, nothing stopped the cost of meat almost doubling in the last quarter of the century. By the late 1790s retail butchers were sometimes avoiding the market altogether by having carcasses sent in from outside Bath under cover of darkness. Meanwhile the growing demand at table for lamb and veal (rather than mutton and beef), together with the wholesale slaughter of beasts to supply the armed forces, were among the factors pushing up prices.

The butchers' trade required some experience and judgment. 'They must not only know how to kill, cut up, and dress their Meat to Advantage, but how to buy a Bullock, Sheep, or Calf, standing... [and] judge of his Weight and Fatness by the Eye' - though shop butchers without the latter skill could always buy carcass meat already killed. Up to the 1750s the leading Bath retailers took apprentices, but since journeymen butchers were ill-paid, the main reason for undergoing a formal training was in the hope of becoming a master butcher. Two local families, Matthews and Russell, created successful dynasties of butchers that lasted most of the century, though James Matthews did face bankruptcy proceedings in 1776. It was in general a respectable occupation, a few butchers even aspiring to gentility - drinking chocolate for breakfast and speaking 'fine', as John Penrose noticed. But it was hardly a job for the squeamish and, according to Campbell's advice to parents, it was 'almost the last Trade I should chuse to bind a Lad to', requiring strength and a tough disposition. Not all local butchers were saints. In 1769 one shop butcher almost beat a youth to death. In 1779 a market butcher, George Weaver, who had insulted a Twerton farmer and roused a mob against him, compounded the offence by insulting the magistrates who tried him and ended up in gaol. And another butcher, Thomas Martin, skirted the law around 1791 as a part-time prizefighter.

The beef and sheep butchers dealt primarily in joints of fresh meat and offal, a role with clear boundaries. The pork butchers had much more to do with meat preparation, as Wall & Garland's advertisement of 1793 indicated when they opened their Westgate Street shop, listing fresh pork, corned pork, pork sausages, beef sausages, 'bolognas', 'savoloys', hams and tongues. The Shum brothers in Cheap Street, advertising as German pork butchers, doubtless offered an equal, if more exotic, range. The pork

butchers' interests were thus more inclined to overlap and compete with allied trades - the bacon sellers, cheesemongers, poulterers, and pastrycooks. There were also a few tripesellers around, who probably sold a greater range of cheap meat products than their name suggests.

⇒ See also **Poulterers**.

**Butterwomen** see **Milksellers and Dairymaids**

**Cabinet Makers** see **Furniture Makers**



## **Carvers-and-Gilders**

Yoked together in this way the phrase specified a distinct trade, one that more than any other glamourised the Georgian interior and made it sparkle, reflect, and shine with gilded mouldings and overmantels, large mirrors, glittering sconces, elaborately carved stands, side-tables, and pictures in burnished frames. The carving part demanded real artistic skill and made use of softwoods (lime, pear, pine, beech) rather than the tropical hardwoods favoured by cabinet-makers. Oil- and water-gilding both involved the painstaking application of gold leaf over coatings of gesso and mordant. In the water process generally preferred, the surface was then burnished to a mellow gleam. Some Bath workshops also undertook the potentially hazardous task of silvering mirrors (by the mercury method still), though others may have obtained their mirrors ready-made. They would all have bought in plate glass, if only for glazing pictures.

Joshua Ross was the first in the field. About 1740 he joined the artist Thomas Ross (his brother?) at Bath, and gave notice he made 'Gold, Silver,

and Lacquer'd Pear-Tree or Deal Frames' and gilded rooms, i.e. picked out in gold the mouldings, friezes, crests, and other ornaments. He and a fellow-craftsman, John Madden, may have worked on the Bristol Exchange in the early 1740s, since both subscribed to John Wood's book on the building, but only Madden remained active at Bath after 1750 when the rage for Rococo, Chinoiserie (Madden's forte) and Gothick decoration was at its height. Madden probably carved only in wood, but by 1761 papier-mâché ornament could be had - at the same price - from a rival carver-and-gilder, Thomas Smith. The latter survived until 1775, by which time his business had so much declined he could no longer support an apprentice. The early Neoclassical period was dominated instead by John Lockyer and John Deare. Lockyer, London-trained, had settled in Avon Street by 1757, opened a looking-glass shop there in 1766, and was still trading twenty years later, now from a more upmarket address in John Street. Deare & Son, established 1766, had an even longer run - their Kingsmead Street premises crammed with Adamesque ornamental ware, pier- and chimney-glasses, dressing-table glasses, girandoles, side tables, and handsome frames. Among their framing jobs were pictures by local artists (e.g. Gainsborough, Thomas Beach, R.E. Pine), and in 1771 they furnished the Upper Assembly Rooms with girandoles (at £3 16s. apiece) and other work.

Between 1787 and 1791 another half-a-dozen firms set up shop at Bath, attracted no doubt by the extraordinary building boom. Faced with such hot competition, some attempted to diversify. Henry Mais doubled as a marble carver. John Giles also sold stationery. John Self took up auctioneering, but perhaps proved more successful dealing in plate glass. Robert Carpenter specialised in carved coats-of-arms, crests, and single figures or groups 'from one inch to six feet high' and the framing of prints and maps. However, any hope of commissions for more routine ornamental carving must have been dashed by the arrival around 1790 of an agent for a London manufacturer of 'composition ornament' - ready-moulded elements up to 70% cheaper than wood carving. Fortunately there was still high demand for what was now perhaps the carver-and-gilder's staple product - wall and furniture mirrors in all their variety (including the latest convex mirrors and mirrored girandoles) - together with the silvering, framing, gilding, fitting-up, and repairing services that went with it.

⇒ See also **Furniture Makers; Upholsterers.**

## Chandlers

Sometimes called hucksters, chandlers could be thought of as small neighbourhood stores or corner shops selling groceries, bread, tea, salt, candles, oil, firewood, soap, other cheap household items, and often alcohol. What made them important in the chain of retailers was their essential service to Bath's poorer citizens in their readiness both to sell in small quantities and to let their customers run up an account. Purchases on credit, traditionally chalked on boards, had advantages on both sides when the shortage of small coin in circulation made cash payments difficult. Moreover the system tied customers to using particular shops and deterred them from buying more cheaply at the provisions market where they would have to pay immediately in cash. The demand for bread, flour, cheese, butter, bacon, etc. in small portions (even hap'orths) brought chandlers easy profits - 25% on a sixpenny loaf in a Bristol example of 1742 - though wastage had to be allowed for. There is evidence too of cheating by selling underweight, and it seems improbable that every chandler who dealt in tea or vended cheap spirits was properly licensed to do so. Obtaining their supplies wholesale or at discount from bakers, grocers, distillers and other traders, they have been likened to 'outstations' serving the backstreets and suburbs. They would often have been one-man or one-woman businesses, but their general anonymity makes their numbers hard to estimate. Even harder to guess is their value as economic safety nets, or alternatively the social harm they caused, in the eyes of some critics, by promoting gin drinking.

⇒ See also **Grocers**; **Tallow Chandlers**.

## Cheesemongers

With no better refrigeration than a cool cellar, cheesemongers were 'liable to a great many Accidents... notwithstanding all [their] Care' - in other words the inevitable losses from rancid butter, shrunk and maggoty cheese, and putrid hams. They might sell cream cheese from late spring if they could be sure of regular supplies, and they normally stocked pots and firkins of salted butter (especially from Wales). Some might risk freshly churned butter, cottage cheese, and eggs as well, but these highly perishable products were more the prerogative of dairymaids selling through the market. So their basic trade, delicatessen-style, was in made cheeses and preserved meats. Once they might have bargained for cheese

personally at local fairs (e.g. Chipping Sodbury and Lansdown), but under the influence of the mighty London market the wholesaling side fell steadily into the hands of cheese factors (or 'badgers') who purchased directly from dairy farms and sold to shops at set prices. Mature, named varieties that were itemised in Bath cheesemongers' advertisements (Cheddar, Double Gloucester, 'old Mere', 'old North Wiltshire', and ripe Stilton) must increasingly have come from these middlemen, though cheaper 'new' or half-fat cheeses - a staple of many poorer diets - could still be found every August at Lansdown Fair or maybe obtained from nearby farms. Between 1775 and 1795 such new cheese sold from 30s. to 40s. per hundredweight at Lansdown, which meant a shop price of around 4d. a pound. Mature cheese would be at least 50% dearer.

One Bath cheesemonger, Owen Batchelor, became a full-time cheese factor/bacon merchant in 1786 and sold his retail shop at no. 7 Broad Street. Announcements by his successor, William Watkins, and various competitors (including the long-established Cheap Street shop run by the Dunkerton, Strawbridge and Minisie families) show clearly that on the meat side their main trade lay in Yorkshire and Westmoreland hams, Wiltshire and Hampshire bacon, 'dried jowls', dried and pickled ox tongues, and hung beef - whereas brawn, for instance, was more a pastrycook's affair. There were no demarcation lines, however, and a pastrycook might equally deal in hams, a tripe-seller in cheap cuts of bacon, and a cheesemonger in hops, soap, candles, groceries, and even Bristol Hotwells water.

⇒ See also **Milksellers and Dairymaids**.

## **Chemists** *see* **Apothecaries, Chemists and Druggists**

## **Chimneysweeps**

Avon Street was their headquarters, no fewer than four chimneysweeps having addresses there in a Bath directory of 1800. Philip Cray, one of their number, would shortly be honoured by a verse obituary - '... Oft times twixt Earth and Sky this Wondrous man was seen // Performing Deeds... as Black as hell... [to] keep his Neighbours Clean'. This description - and accounts telling of people giving grimy, black-faced chimneysweeps a

wide berth in the streets - suggests they sometimes climbed chimneys themselves. But of course they also used climbing boys. As another writer explained, 'they all take Apprentices, and the younger they are the better fit to climb... [and] I think this Branch is chiefly occupied by unhappy Parish Children'. The announcement in 1791 by another Cray, this time Thomas, that two of his youngsters had absconded (wearing his engraved brass badge in their caps) rather bears out the comment - one being a slim 15-year-old from Frome Workhouse, the other a 9-year-old apprenticed by the parish overseers of St James's. Yet chimney sweeps also put their own sons to this filthy, dangerous, unhealthy trade, with all its criminal temptations. Certainly boy sweeps were caught pilfering on occasion from houses they were employed at, and in 1759 two such culprits suffered a whipping for it.

⇒ See also **Coal Merchants**.

## **Chinamen** see **Pottery, Porcelain and Glassware Dealers**

## **Clearstarchers** see **Laundresses, Clearstarchers and Scourers**

## **Clock- and Watchmakers**

Probably none of them made timepieces from scratch. At best they assembled components manufactured elsewhere, or acquired the pre-assembled movements from London ready to fit with dials and wooden or metal cases. Alternatively, clocks and watches might be bought in from the manufacturers all finished bar the engraving of the retailer's name. *Bona fide* clock- and watchmakers did of course have the expertise to undertake adjustments and repairs - supplying a spring balance, say, or crafting replacement parts. Routine maintenance and cleaning of timepieces also went with the job - as highlighted by the annual guinea the Corporation paid the person appointed to keep the Pump Room's famous Tompion clock in order. Some of Bath's leading clockmakers held this post, starting with William Barwell - himself the maker of a public clock in 1711. He looked after and wound the Tompion for some thirty years, and was

Henry Stimson  
Clock AND Watch-maker,  
In Green Street, near  
St. Michael's Church,  
**BATH,**  
Performs Clock & Watch-  
Work, in General, after the  
neatest manner, and on the  
most reasonable Terms.  
LIKewise  
Barometers of different Constructions.

succeeded in turn by John Taylor, Thomas Chapman, Richard Laurence and Robert Stennett. Of these Laurence is the best known. Taught his trade by John Taylor, he kept a watchmaker's/goldsmith's/jeweller's shop in Wade's Passage from 1754 to 1773, rising meanwhile through civic office to the rank of Sheriff. Occasional press announcements give some flavour of his everyday stock-in-trade - plain, chased, and repeating watches (in gold, silver or pinchbeck), clocks of different sorts, enamelled dial plates, accessories such as watch chains and protective shagreen cases, engraved stone seals, buckles made in his own workshop, necklaces, earrings and jewelled aigrettes. Better still, the quality of his work, and that of several other Bath craftsmen, can be judged in surviving pieces, e.g. walnut and mahogany long-case clocks, bracket clocks, and a variety of handsome watches.

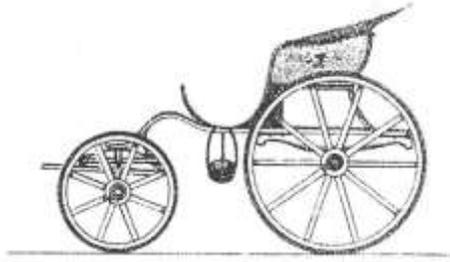
Skills were passed on through local apprenticeships (e.g. Laurence under Taylor, Stennett under Laurence) or by training in one of the great metropolitan workshops. Marmaduke Webb, Samuel Jones, and Thomas Field were all examples of London-trained masters working in Bath by the 1760s. Field, a member of the Clockmakers' Company, took over the shop of 'the late ingenious Henry Stimson' (maker of musical clocks near St Michael's) in 1766, and entered partnership with a London dealer who supplied the shop with jewellery, silverware and cutlery. Clocks, watches and toyshop goods often came together in this way. In 1761 the toyman William Evill was already selling ready-made watches and employing a workman to service them on 7-year contracts. By 1770 he had elaborate clocks worth up to 100 guineas on display. Similarly in the 1790s a fine selection of enamelled gold watches and chiming clocks created a dazzle in William Glover's Milsom Street emporium. But whereas toymen concentrated on new goods, ordinary watchmakers dealt in secondhand timepieces as well, even lending them out to customers whose watches were being repaired. Among the 70-80 gold, silver and other watches (plus gold and silver dial plates) stolen in 1770 from Thomas Bullock, a Widcombe watchmaker, a high proportion seem to have been secondhand, several of them indeed bearing the names of other Bath dealers. Though Bullock did recover half of his property, this was the worst loss of the period, but now that watches were increasingly owned and coveted, they offered - as other Bath dealers found to their cost - a constant temptation to thieves. Worse than the odd theft, however, was government taxation. Duties on gold and silver, and above all the crippling taxes of 1797 on

clock- and watchmakers and their products (as much as 10s. on a gold watch) nearly ruined the trade. Although the Act was hurriedly repealed, Bath suffered from its imposition as badly as anywhere.

⇒ See also **Goldsmiths and Jewellers; Scientific Instrument Dealers; Toymen.**

## **Coachbuilders**

Constructing a farm cart or a simple wagon was a job that a proficient local carpenter might manage with a wheelwright's help. Not so a carriage to take people, which was a far more complex vehicle. Until the mid-eighteenth century almost any coach seen on the Bath streets must have been London-made, as indeed were many public vehicles (stage-coaches, mailcoaches, hackney chaises) well into the future. Nonetheless, from the 1750s, a private coachbuilding industry did take root at Bath. Despite the failure of an earlier venture (by N. Hewett of London, c.1748-50), the moment was propitious. Not only were the turnpikes making travel to the spa easier, carriage design too had visibly improved. A private coach, a chariot, an open-top landau, a brisk chaise, was now a covetable object, an opportunity for self-display. It would of course be expensive to buy and to run, but the coachbuilder's costs were high as well. Much like the upholsterer, he depended on varied craft skills. The body-maker styled the panelled box in which the passengers sat; carriage-maker, harness-maker, wheelwright and smith provided the suspension and moving parts; trimmer and heraldic painter contributed the luxury touches and high finish. Only the busiest firms could maintain a complete team. Wheelwrights and painters in particular might often be self-employed men working on contract. No doubt this reduced the wage bill, but considerable capital was still tied up in unfinished vehicles, tools, and large stocks of material - several different woods, wrought and bar iron, harness leather, brasswork, plate glass, upholstery fabric and carpeting, paint, and manufactured components such as axle-boxes, steel springs, locks, lanterns, and blinds. It is obvious why a number of coachbuilders soon failed, and why partnerships were common. Of the five start-ups in the 1750s, two firms quickly sank without trace, while two others, Bridgen's and Carincross's, arguably survived more through hiring out coaches than building them.



Edward Morton, based in Kingsmead Street from 1758, proved the most durable. London-trained, he took full advantage of the boom in coach ownership which also generated a demand for repairs and refurbishment and created a healthy trade in secondhand vehicles - often taken in part-exchange for new. After 1773 he worked with partners (Charles Creace & Charles Spackman 1773-91, Robert Coxhead and John Fuller, once his apprentice, 1791-96), which enabled him, if not to expand, at least to keep abreast of technical change, including the evolution of the crane-neck chassis and of new types of coach (especially the dashing, dangerous phaeton). Morton & Co. were not afraid to experiment themselves, one notable product being their innovatory twelve-seater coach to convey the Theatre Royal's actors to and fro between Bath and Bristol.

They had, however, a string of rivals to contend with. Except for John Hensley/Hensley & Stone/William Stone, established 1782 onwards in Broad Street, coachbuilding now centred in the long triangle on the west of the city marked by Kingsmead and Monmouth Streets (straddled by Morton & Co.'s extensive premises) and Charles Street. Richard Caink, followed by Francis Kilvert, had large workshops in Monmouth Street c.1761-94, as did Morton's former workmen Hamlin & Lee, subsequently Watkins & Lee, 1778-93. Robert Coxhead was active in the area 1772-91 before he joined Morton. Phillips & Thornthwaite were installed in St John's Court. Thompson's - who won great applause in 1794 for a superbly elegant phaeton - stood round the corner nearby, with the newcomer William Garland (from c.1798) only a step away in Upper Bristol Road.

Because a new coach might fetch 100 guineas or more (even without the trappings) and took months to build, workshops were financially vulnerable when orders fell through at a late stage. Presumably this is why two Bath coachbuilders, Francis Kilvert and George Lee, were forced out

of business in the financial crisis of 1793-4. Among Kilvert's bankrupt effects were two new chaises, a new phaeton, a virtually new coach, several secondhand vehicles, a coach and a chariot each hired out for four years, and another chariot for hire at around 30 guineas a year.

⇒ See also **Saddlers and Collarmakers; Wheelwrights.**

## **Coal Merchants**

'Volumes of smoke' and soot-blackened buildings testified to Bath's high consumption of fuel, and all the more so because for most of the century the high season lasted through the colder months of the year. Mendip coal, laboriously carried to the spa by road on pack animals, carts and wagons, had long supplied local hearths, but in addition the nearby Newton St Loe deposits were exploited from 1738 and coal came at times from as far off as Shropshire and South Wales, brought upriver by barge. The development of the Radstock-Timsbury collieries from 1763 onwards meant that fuel costs at Bath (8d. to 10d. a bushel for good household coal) were far cheaper than in London, and still left the supplier a reasonable margin. Traditionally these suppliers had been the pit-owners and colliers themselves, selling coal door to door from panniered asses and horses, or in larger quantities (e.g. in chaldrons of 36 bushels, or over a ton) from carts and wagons. Noisy deliveries of coal being tipped into cellars, sackfuls being portered through front doors, and traffic impeded by colliers' carts and asses, were everyday Bath experiences. Two St James's householders were prosecuted in 1753 for allowing colliers to 'break their Coals' and feed and rest their lines of animals in the street, and in 1757 a local Act of Parliament banned any movement of coal through central Bath at night. This forced vehicles to use the route through Sawclose where eventually something of a coal mart developed alongside the city weighbridge. Sooner or later the colliers, who had no great reputation for honest dealing, established a cheap overnight base in Holloway beyond the reach of Bath magistrates.

Coal merchants proper, on the other hand, were considered respectable middlemen who bought directly from the pit-head or in some cases through coal shippers. Well provided with vehicles, some of them also handled bulk commodities like corn, acted as general carriers, or combined the seasonal coal trade with brewing (William Tucker, Joseph Carincross, and William Matthews). Their number increased from the late

1760s up to a dozen operators by the 1790s. Two were even city freemen - John Croome in New King Street, and Farndom Groom who traded on the Quay until 1782 and subsequently in Bathwick next to Pulteney Bridge. Here he dealt in large coal orders and also held stocks of charcoal. Other merchants maintained coalyards in fashionable areas near Gay Street and Catharine Place and so were better placed to supply residents and lodging-house visitors with a bushel or two at short notice, or by advance order with a whole cartload straight from the pithead - Timsbury coal being thought the best. By 1801 however, with the Somerset Coal Canal and the Kennet & Avon Canal (except for Widcombe locks) finally open, the long coal run by road became a thing of the past, and coal dealers simply hauled their loads from temporary wharves near Sydney Gardens, disturbing the quiet of Bathwick in the process. Even so, customers hardly benefited from cheaper fuel, for Mendip production costs were going up. Soon the Corporation would be looking to the Kingswood and Monmouth coalfields for alternative supplies of a commodity so important to Bath.

⇒ See also **Chimneysweeps**.

**Collarmakers** see **Saddlers and Collarmakers**

**Colourmen** see **House Painters and Colourmen**

**Confectioners** see **Pastrycooks and Confectioners**

## **Coopers**

At any one time there was sufficient call for casks and barrels, wooden pails, washtubs, garden tubs, and other staved and hooped products to support several coopers' workshops at Bath. Ten different firms took on apprentices in the period 1707-60, the best-known of them now being Charles Milsom, member of the Corporation and the eventual developer of Milsom Street. As early as 1728 Milsom had earned the title of 'wine cooper', showing he had already embarked on the potentially more profitable trade of tasting, blending, fining, 'recovering' and 'reviving' wines and spirits - a not unusual sideways move for wood-working

coopers to make. Sooner or later he opened a liquor store at his premises in Horse (i.e. Southgate) Street but never abandoned the manufacture of hogsheads, firkins, tubs and buckets. Both sides of the business were kept going after his death in 1767 by his son, Charles Milsom II, until the latter's bankruptcy five years later.

⇒ See also **Wine and Spirits Merchants**.

## **Cordwainers** see **Shoemakers**

## **Corn Factors and Mealmen**

The complex local trade in arable products, which involved farmers, corn factors, millers, maltsters, mealmen and bakers, has yet to be unravelled. Wiltshire probably grew much of Bath's corn, traded through the markets in Devizes and Warminster or bought up by middlemen (corn factors or 'badgers') direct from farms. On the other hand, grain and flour stored in the warehouses and corn-lofts around Bath Quay more likely originated in the West Midlands and came upstream from Bristol along with coal, salt and other goods that several barge-owning corn merchants also dealt in. Throughout the century Monks Mill and Bathwick Mill, nearly facing each other across the Avon, continued to grind corn. John Shurmer, who occupied Monks Mill until his bankruptcy in 1745, kept a mealman's shop (the Windmill) in the Marketplace where he doubtless sold much the same range of products as his successor there, John Chilton, i.e. wheat flour, barley, oats, barleymeal, oat groats (dried in a kiln and hand-ground on the premises), bran, beans and peas. Chilton - like John Warren, miller and mealman in the 1770s/1780s - was also a baker. Others combined the corn trade with malting. Dealing in staple foodstuffs, corn traders were widely accused of hoarding and profiteering at times of scarcity and high prices. Wagons were sometimes stopped on the road by hungry mobs, and in 1795 a corn factor on Bath Quay only saved a barge-load of wheat and flour from a crowd of women by the protection of mounted cavalry. The food crisis of 1800 finally persuaded the Corporation to establish a toll-free grain market and invite farmers within reach of Bath to barter with mealmen and bakers face-to-face, cutting out the middlemen.

⇒ See also **Bakers**.

## Curriers see **Tanners and Leather Dressers**



### **Cutlers**

Most pre-1700 details of Bath cutlers are to do with them refurbishing swords in the city armoury. After 1700 they continued to deal in swords (as long as the gentry still wore them), but every kind of edged tool in steel came within their scope - household and trade knives, hunting knives, penknives, razors, scissors, shears, pruning hooks, butcher's cleavers, surgical instruments - as well as the cases, sheathes and scabbards to protect them in. From the long-established Ditcher family at the start of the century to James Atwood, Stone & Dallamore, and others in the 1790s there must always have been a practical cutler in the city to forge and temper a blade, grind an edge, fit a new haft, or repair a cutting tool. Making fine scissors or really sharp razors - 'an article of the greatest difficulty to procure' - required great skill. William Stone, whose remark on razors this was and who had his own steel-tempering method, learned his trade at Salisbury under the royal cutler Goddard. Having settled at Bath c.1790, he entered partnership with James Dallamore and moved with him to Milsom Street in 1795 - but hardly to thrive, it seems, for he had gone by 1800 when all Dallamore's stock of first-class, 'home-made' workmanship was due to be auctioned off. One difficulty for a cutler lay in competition from the Bath toymen, some of whom also sold sets of table utensils, knives, razors, scissors, and even surgeons' instruments. William Evill, for example, paid great attention to cutlery in the 1760s. Part of his shop-sign depicted a Golden Knife and Fork, and for some years he employed Salisbury craftsmen on the daily (silicosis-threatening) task of 'grinding' or simply sharpening razors, knives and other tools that customers brought in. However, the bulk of cutlery wares that shone so temptingly in many Bath toymen's shops from the 1770s, Evill's included, came not from Salisbury but from the great national manufactory of Sheffield whose forged and crucible steel products, useful and ornamental, were now unsurpassed in Europe.

⇒ See also **Toymen**.

## **Dairymaids** see **Milksellers and Dairymaids**

### **Distillers**

A justification of the distilling industry in 1736 claimed that it enriched landowners, stimulated grain and cider production, and supplied an essential product to apothecaries, furniture makers and others. As for health, the argument ran, 'strong waters' were altogether more wholesome than malt beer or wine (often adulterated), and their intoxicating effects passed off quicker. If anything, they should be classed as medicines, pick-me-ups, cordials. Opponents took the contrary view of course. Alarmed by the spread of alcohol abuse, especially among the poor, Parliament tried twice (in 1729 and 1736) to suppress the gin trade through punitive taxation and the licensing of retailers, yet only succeeded in driving it underground. Not only did legitimate distillers suffer the imposition of heavy excise duties, they lost the valuable right - except for a brief relaxation in 1747-51 - to retail spirits from their own premises. How then they still contrived to make a fat profit was a mystery - 'but the Fact is true, that they all get Estates, and yet the poor Man may get drunk for Two-pence'.

This was said of the London distillers, but was it true of the handful at Bath? It was a business that needed considerable initial investment in buildings, furnace, coppers, stills, 'worms', and other apparatus. We know nothing of Jonathan Hall, a London distiller who in 1730 had Bath premises (and stocks of malt and brandy), but can safely assume that Edward Marchant's distillery would have been well funded from the start. Elder son of a prominent master mason, Marchant was also cousin to the wealthy Bath financier Richard Marchant and clearly found his Quaker faith no barrier to profiting from drink. If his business covered malt distilling, he would first have fermented the malt wort and then distilled it twice to produce a raw spirit. The second stage, compound distilling, involved flavouring this malt spirit (or another derived from molasses) and distilling it once more to obtain a drinkable liquor such as gin or straight *eau-de-vie*. Marchant very likely undertook the whole process, at the same time nurturing an extensive out-trade around Bath that lasted from 1730 (or earlier) into the 1760s - when he was described as an 'eminent brandy merchant'. He had competition nevertheless. Local distillers in the 1740s included James Biggs, William Smith, Francis Ansty, and the chemist James Morse, producer of cordial waters. In the 1750s-

1770s Thomas Maggs (Biggs' successor), the well-to-do Collett family, and again Ansty (who, like Maggs, had a retail shop in Stall Street) were all prominent.

After Marchant's death in 1778 a new distillery-cum-brewery started up in Walcot. Run by the wine merchants William Hetling and Samuel Atlee with Thomas Cave of Bristol (who dropped out in 1780), this was an ambitious enterprise. Rather than sell the waste created in the distilling and brewing operation to hog farmers (the usual practice), the partnership fed it instead to their own large stock of pigs which, when fattened up, were slaughtered and processed in other buildings on the site. It was an interesting early example of industrial integration but premature, it seems, for Hetling & Atlee soon went bankrupt and in 1784 their considerable premises and equipment were up for sale.

⇒ See also **Brewers; Wine and Spirits Merchants**.

## **Drapers** see **Linen Drapers; Silk Mercers; Woollen Drapers**



## **Dressmakers**

Unlike staymaking, a trade still dominated by men, dressmaking was women's territory. Seldom well paid, it took place mostly in the privacy of the home or behind the scenes in milliners' workshops. Relatively few Bath 'mantua- and sackmakers' (their usual title) are known to posterity, or only in the sketchiest detail. Three bare newspaper references from the early 1750s are all that rescue the names of Mrs Bishop of Trim Street (succeeded on her death by her 'finisher' Mary Waters and niece Mary Smith) and of Sarah Buckle and Phoebe Edwards, both working from

home near the Cross Bath. Street directories add a few more. One of 1773 lists the aptly named Miss Robe. Only slightly less obscure, Elizabeth Walton managed a dressmaking business in Orange Grove for over twenty years, c.1756-79, housed in Ann Walton's former milliner's shop which now thrived in Terrace Walk instead. One of Elizabeth Walton's bills - for making up a negligée coat in 1758 - has survived. What had been her actual role in creating this garment? Conceivably no more than to advise her customer on fabrics, trimmings and the current mode, take her measurements, and later check the fitting, since the straightforward tasks of cutting out and sewing a loose-fitting gown could be entrusted to any competent assistant trained, as all girls then were, in plain needlework. Garments were run up quickly, the stitching kept simple to allow for easy unpicking and alteration as fashions changed. Customers supplied the materials (cf. Jane Austen, in 1801, furnishing her Bath dressmaker, Mrs Mussell, with muslin for a gown) and it was these, not the making up, that accounted for most of the cost unless unusually elaborate finish (e.g. embroidery) was called for. The work required no equipment beyond needle and thread, thimble, measure, and scissors, and for someone working from home it might be fitted in around other household duties.

It was of course seasonal. At times the orders came flooding in and humble seamstresses laboured long hours, whereas at slack periods they might be suddenly redundant, or reduced to sewing caps, aprons, cravats and shirts for the ready-made market. The summer lull, when visitors thinned and Bathonians travelled, gave the top dressmakers a chance to do the rounds of London fashion houses. Mrs Williams (the Penrose family's chosen dressmaker in 1767) even journeyed to London in the depths of winter 1769-70 to observe the mode before taking orders for the forthcoming Queen's birthday. Others kept up through correspondents, news reports from Paris, and by scrutinising the fashion plates which increasingly appeared in women's magazines. The mantua-maker, it was said in 1747, must be a 'perfect Connoisseur in Dress and Fashions', as well as possessing absolute discretion, the willingness to flatter, endless patience with customers, and 'no small Share of Ingenuity to execute their innumerable Whims'. Not that the dressmakers themselves could always be absolved from blame. Indeed the unsatisfactory gown that Mrs Mussell made for Jane Austen had to be altered - in the wearer's own words - 'a good deal'.

⇒ See also **Furriers; Haberdashers and Milliners; Silk Mercers; Staymakers; Tailors.**

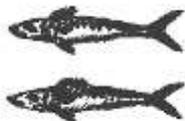
**Dyers** see **Laundresses, Clearstarchers and Scourers**

**Fanmakers** see **Toymen**

## **Fishmongers**

'... we have Fish in great Plenty as fresh and as good as even the greatest Epicure can desire', boasted John Wood in the 1740s, and for an inland town Bath was indeed served remarkably well. Coastal supplies came in 'by relays of horses twice a week, quite fresh', it was said in 1763, this double delivery being timed for the Wednesday and Friday fish markets. In addition to the Bristol Channel and Devonshire sea fisheries, the tidal Severn produced a significant catch. Its value may be judged by the Corporation's reaction to a salmon conservation Bill before Parliament in 1778. A petition went at once to Westminster, pointing out that any restrictions on the use of 'putts' [basket traps] or certain types of net would jeopardise not only the 'large Quantities of seasonable Salmon' consumed at Bath but also reduce the yield of plaice, flounders, soles, whiting, herrings, sprats, eels, tumblin [fish fry?], and shrimps. Being directly responsible for the provisions market, the Corporation took a close interest in what was vended there. It employed a minor official to watch for any under-legal-size or tainted fish offered for sale, and on several occasions it prosecuted traders suspected of 'regrating', i.e. purchasing fish cheaply and then displaying it in the market at a higher price. Buying fish from market wholesalers to retail elsewhere was quite a different matter. It was acceptable, for instance, to supply the mackerel sellers who hawked their product round Bath even on Sundays - mackerel being the only perishable foodstuff next to milk that could legally be sold on the Sabbath. More importantly, the fish market must have been the major source for fishmongers with their own retail shops. Milo Smith in 1725 opened perhaps the first Bath outlet of this sort, trading six days a week and not Wednesday and Friday only. But though he doubtless obtained sea fish from the market, his pickled sturgeon at least must have been imported, and his freshwater fish might well have been taken from the well-stocked Avon and bought from fishermen with angling rights. The market was sometimes by-passed in other ways. Grocers might sell pickled and barreled fish, and even a tavern advertised a sale of Tenby oysters.

Notwithstanding the claim in 1763 that Bath enjoyed much cheaper fish prices than London, a brief attempt was made that same year to undercut fishmongers' prices by bringing supplies all the way from the capital. Backed by the Society of Arts, the London City Fish Company had recently challenged Billingsgate's monopoly in London by transporting fish overland in special, well-ventilated carriages. In November 1763, once it was decided to involve Bath in the scheme, the Company began a regular carriage run to the spa too, selling from a pitch just off Stall Street in White Hart Passage. But though it was claimed their fish was fresher and cheaper than at Bath market, and their sales staff more respectful, the operation could not be sustained for very long and in 1765 the fish carriages were sold off. Whether this metropolitan competition had really forced the market traders to reduce the cost of sole from a shilling to fourpence, as was said, was hard to substantiate, since fish prices fluctuated so markedly anyway in line with scarcities and sudden gluts. Members of the Corporation could hardly avoid noticing what fishmongers charged from day to day, because the fish standings lay on the east side of High Street almost beside the old Guildhall. The location was congested and inconvenient, but not until the completion of the new provisions market in the mid-1770s did the fishmongers obtain a permanent site with numbered stalls. These stood immediately behind the new Guildhall so that Council members still had no respite from the scent of fish.



Daniel Ashton, who moved to Bath from Exeter in 1783 and still received his fish directly from Brixham, found it paid to rent a market stall as well as run a separate retail shop. Penny Hancock - whom the politician John Wilkes called 'the great fishmonger here [at Bath]' - perhaps did the same. His High Street shop, just opposite the Guildhall, was always a great lure. In December 1778 Wilkes himself twice ordered fish here (soles, 'a beautiful piper' [i.e. gurnard], and whiting) to send to his daughter in London, and the memory of Hancock's display slab flooded back to Mrs Piozzi years later in Prague at the sight of a fat carp. Lacking an ice-house, Hancock relied on deliveries of sea fish three times a week and on eager

demand. Freshwater species could be kept alive in ponds or in chained fish trunks on river beds, though always at risk from poachers. Several times he lost carp, tench, perch, gudgeon, crayfish, and as much as a hundredweight of eels, from pools at Widcombe and from the Avon by Bathwick Mill. The shop offered plentiful choice - witness Robert Hancock's advertisement when he took the business over in 1794 on his brother's death - fresh sea fish (including turbot - the most valuable catch, John Dory, mullet, cod, sole, skate and sprats), with crabs, lobsters and seafood generally (including both Welsh and Essex oysters), various river fish, preserved salmon, cod, herring, anchovy and lamprey, and, more surprisingly, 'Venison at the proper seasons'. Even so in 1795 the accolade of fishmonger to the Duke and Duchess of York went not to Hancock but to Sage Nash. Long-established in the fish market, she soon took over Hancock's premises as well and by late 1799 had a fleet of purpose-built vehicles capable of delivering a ton of fish daily - a sharp rebuff to 'ANOTHER PERSON' whose only means of transport, she suggested, was the boot of a stage-coach. This unnamed rival was no doubt Theodore Allen, a London fishmonger with a shop since 1793 at 6 Bath Street plus a market stall. The relatively fast route to London, which enabled Allen to buy from Billingsgate and Bristol alike, must also have suited Moore's London Oyster Warehouse (at 6 Quiet Street), which sold not only oysters supplied daily but also barreled cod and pickled salmon.

## **Fruiterers**

Apples, pears, plums, cherries, soft fruits, nuts, all grew in the orchards and market gardens in and around Bath, and each crop would presumably show up in its season on the greengrocers' stalls. Oddly enough, except for one shocked reference to very early strawberries being displayed at a shilling each (in late April 1766) and a record in 1796 of eating-apples at a penny apiece (and cookers at 10d. and 1s. per half-peck), fruit seldom rated a mention among the foodstuffs on offer in the market. Some people still warned against eating nuts, but fruit proper - raw or cooked - was increasingly part of everyday diet. Exotic or imported fruits - lemons, oranges, pineapples, raisins - could have been had from Bath confectioners or, in the case of dried fruits, from grocers, but around 1760 shops specialising in fruit of all sorts - calling themselves 'fruiterers' - began at last to emerge. By 1800 their number had grown to eight, sited mainly in



the affluent suburbs. At least five of them were run by women, among them S[arah?] Pindar, 'the fair orange woman', whose many admirers 'look'd, and sigh'd, and ate her fruit'. It was a genteel enough occupation. The auction of a fruitshop fixtures in 1790 lists counters, sliding sashes and show-glasses, - and the typical display (with sweetmeats, dried fruits, and citrus as well as fresh local produce) must almost have matched the confectioners' in mouthwatering appeal.

⇒ See also **Greengrocers; Pastrycooks and Confectioners.**

## **Furniture Makers**

Much of the sturdy oak furniture to be seen in Bath interiors up to c.1730 would have been the work of local joiners with wood-turning and other skills. By contrast, any richly carved, inlaid, or lacquered piece on show was likely to have been London-made. Some joiners may have specialised in chairs, tables and bedsteads, but the more prestigious name of 'cabinet maker' is not recorded at Bath until 1732, the year George Davis took an apprentice under that title. The growth of both the upholstery and the cabinet-making trades over the next few decades helped transform the rather plain, vernacular rooms typical of the early-eighteenth spa into much lighter, brighter, more comfortable living spaces. George Davis who headed the firm up to 1759, and his son Marks Davis who followed, witnessed the change and the progression of styles that went with it - from Palladian to Rococo/Chinoiserie/Gothick, and then Neoclassical. Besides George Davis, both Thomas Bishop (his former apprentice) and Mathias Walter had active workshops by the mid-1740s, and in the 1750s and 1760s a dozen or more cabinet-makers, each no doubt employing a variety of specialist craftsmen, were competing for business. They had probably

ousted independent joiners by then from all except utilitarian work - bedsteads, benches, kitchen tables, and house fittings. Certainly cabinet makers supplied the more ornamental range seen in William Pemberton's advertisement of 1757 for chairs and tables, bureaux, chests-of-drawers, and looking glasses in the Gothick and Chinese taste.

Occasional house sale notices and visitors' descriptions now reveal a sense of comfort and style in quite ordinary interiors. The lodging house parlour where the Penrose family stayed in 1766 contained 'a Beaufet [buffet or sideboard], 6 Mahogany Chairs with Hair-Bottoms, an Easy-Chair, a Dining Table and Pillar and Claw Table both of Mahogany, Chimney Looking Glass, and [another] Looking-glass... between the Window Frames'. And the main bedroom - in addition to the four-poster bed - was furnished with walnut chairs (their blue seats matching the flowered blue-and-white bed hangings and curtains), a chest-of-drawers, a dressing table, and a looking glass. All these pieces could well have been created at Bath by leading craftsmen such as Marks Davis, Mathias Walter, Joseph Albin, and William Harding, either working to their own designs or, when invention failed, copying from standard pattern books. In a few firms cabinet-making and upholstery were united, as with the partnerships of Davis & Bartlett c.1770-73, and the brothers John and Matthew Viel in the 1790s, and in any case there was always some overlap of functions between the two trades. The cabinet-maker Robert Coxhead, for instance, also serviced funerals and hired out velvet palls, which was normally the upholsterer's job. Coxhead supplied mahogany and deal tables, canvas-covered screens, and dozens of chairs to the Upper Assembly Rooms before it opened in 1771, but the furnishing committee ordered further screens and a table from an upholsterer, and settees upholstered in red damask from another cabinet-maker, Joseph Walter, heir to Mathias Walter's old firm. Furniture makers branched out where they could. One, as early as 1744, specialised in billiard tables. Several, later, turned out sedan chairs.

Fresh names came to notice towards the end of the century - e.g. E. Willcox, H. Thurston, G. Edwards, T.G. Eyles - thanks in part to the vogue for painted furniture. Willcox was one of several cabinet-makers engaged in the manufacture of 'fancy[-back] chairs', a few of which he still had in stock when he retired in 1795, along with dining and card tables, swing glasses, quantities of planking (2500' of mahogany, 800' of beech and

maple), 300' of fine veneer, a piece of satinwood, 14 dozen chair spindles, brass- and ironwork, work benches, and tools. Tools were generally the property of individual craftsmen, and to lose them, as Henry Vanoff, an 'ingenious' Swede, did in a fire at Thurston's cabinet workshop in 1791, might spell disaster. Deprived of his precious toolbox, assembled over thirteen years, Vanoff could only appeal to public charity for the means to replace his loss.

⇒ See also **Carvers-and-Gilders; Upholsterers.**

## **Furriers**

Winning Canada in 1760 secured the British fur trade and quickly boosted imports of pelts and skins. North American beaver was particularly necessary for good-quality men's hats, but cheap hat manufacture equally demanded rabbit skins, and women's costume made use of many other furs, domestic and foreign, in trimmings, cape and cloak linings, tippets and muffs. Milliners' advertisements throughout the period regularly mention furs, though price and availability dictated what was worn - e.g. ermine and sable muffs in the 1740s, black bearskin muffs fifty years on. The skimpier women's fashions of the later eighteenth century stimulated a demand for warm furs, and for the first time shops with the designation 'furrier' or 'fur merchant' appear at Bath, though they commonly retailed other millinery as well. Thus J. Isaacs, trading in Abbey Churchyard and Stall Street around 1790, sold, made up, and cleaned fur goods, but dealt also in ornamental feathers and artificial flowers. Minchin's millinery and fur shop stood, most unusually, in the Circus at no.19, where it survived from 1787 well into the 1790s, run first by Robert Minchin then his daughter, who periodically topped up and refreshed their stock from London and even, it seems, Paris.

⇒ See also **Haberdashers and Milliners; Hatters and Hosiers.**

## Gardeners and Nurserymen

Horticulture was pursued at various levels, amateur and professional, as can be seen in the mixed membership of the Gardeners' Society, an organisation founded in 1752 to prosecute garden thieves and vandals. The professionals divided into two main categories: market gardeners who grew vegetables and fruit and commonly doubled up as greengrocers, and nurserymen who raised trees, shrubs, and plants, with an additional trade in seeds and bulbs. The cultivation of market crops, already well-established by 1700, intensified as Bath expanded. Many of the earlier commercial gardens (such as Samuel Broad's two plots in the Ambery and the Fisher family's extensive ground in the Ham) lay just outside the city walls. With increasing demand, however, production soon spread into all the surrounding parishes. A visitor to Bathwick in 1743 noticed many gardens there - some just escapist retreats for Bath citizens, but others leased by local gardeners to supply Bath market 'with Greens & Roots'. Commercial gardens dotted the landscape too in Walcot, Lyncombe and Widcombe, and other parts - though the risk in 1773 that the pasture below Royal Crescent might itself become a scene of 'scare-crows, cabbages, and dung' (to quote Anstey's satirical verses on the proposal) was averted at least. Land as far off as Richard Sadler's six-acre orchard and garden at South Stoke still lay within daily range of the Green Market where the Sadler family rented a stall.



For all these local growers the 'main crop' would have included potatoes, onions, turnips, peas and beans, cabbages, cucumbers, radishes, salad greens, apples, pears, cherries and other fruit, and probably cut flowers. On the other hand, references to cloches, frames, green- and hot-houses, as well as to the sale of *primeurs*, suggest that producers were also into forcing crops early and cultivating delicacies for the recherché palates of

visitors and invalids. It was 'a healthful, laborious, ingenious, and profitable Trade' - a statement that one Bath gardener, Thomas Rogers, would surely have agreed with, living as he did to the age of 89 and prosperous enough to set his sons up in the more genteel lines of jewellery and watchmaking. Gardening also gave apprentices and journeymen a training they could put to use in private employment, because experienced hands rarely lacked for a place. Wanted, ran one advertisement in 1755, a gardener for an acre of private grounds 'who understands pruning and cropping a Kitchen Garden well' - and better still if he also knew about flowers. Wanted, proclaimed another, a gardener skilled in mowing grass walks.



Outside London a score or two nurseries existed nationally by 1730. The date of the first local example is uncertain, but a nursery advertising at Devizes in 1741 belonged to a former Bath man. The five-acre Dolemeads garden occupied by Walter Knight may have started earlier. When Knight died around 1749, it was fully planted and could supply - presumably in the form of sturdy saplings - elm, oak, walnut, chestnut, hawthorn, firs and other evergreens, flowering shrubs, and a great many fruit trees including sixty sorts of dessert and cider apple. The note by Knight's widow Hannah in 1750 that she also stocked 'a Variety of LIMES for a Visto [i.e. an avenue]' - is evidence that landed estates were among the nursery's expected clientèle. Indeed, lying so near the terminus of Ralph Allen's tramway, it may well have raised the elms, oaks and other hardwoods planted at Prior Park from 1742 onwards, though hardly all the 50,000 conifers Allen eventually had growing. Though Allen's plantations were impressive, it was orchards and flowery walks that turned the fringes of Bath into something of a garden suburb. Fruit trees were a speciality of most nurseries. Edward Day had a thousand standard and dwarf apple trees for urgent sale in 1775. A few years later Christopher Messer's large nursery at Batheaston advertised over sixty varieties of apple, seventy different pears, and a number of new peaches propagated on the spot.

Customers would be able to select specimens at out-of-town nurseries or else order from the seedsmen's shops that several nurserymen - most prominently Charles Tarlton, James Petrie, and William Bower - opened after 1770 in Bath itself. Tarlton kept a nursery near Larkhall (at one stage bristling with 1400 Lombardy poplars up to 14 feet high) and a shop in Horse Street where he sold seeds, bulbs, asparagus roots, fruit bushes, and no doubt all kinds of garden tools and equipment as seedsmen tended to do. Trained under Capability Brown no less, he also offered his services in designing and laying out gardens. By 1780, though, this kind of work was in the hands of another of Brown's protégés, William Dicker, whose expertise ran to laying out parks, draining bogs, making roads, and erecting hothouses. More mundanely, Dicker cultivated trees, fruit and rose bushes, and many kinds of garden plant (from asparagus and shallots to larkspur and violets) at his nursery ground in Widcombe, but seems not to have established a city centre shop - perhaps sensing the competition he might face from James Petrie. Formerly gardener at Corsham House, Petrie probably had the lion's share of the seedsman's trade at his retail store in Westgate Street. Besides seed produced at his own nursery or obtained from the great London seed merchants, he would certainly sell many of the bulbs, roots and plants destined for the tasteful range of ornamental pots available round the corner at Wedgwood's shop in Milsom Street. In November 1789, though, he was more concerned about disposing of a large quantity of Antwerp raspberry canes.

⇒ See also **Fruiterers; Greengrocers.**

**Glassware Dealers** see **Pottery, Porcelain and Glassware Dealers**

**Glovers** see **Breeches Makers; Hatters and Hosiers**

**Goldsmiths and Jewellers**

Early goldsmiths often provided a simple banking service, handling both bills and coin. Perhaps this explains the Corporation's keenness in 1700, on the death of the city's sole resident goldsmith, to encourage his

successor, Philip Hayes. Yet if Hayes was a banker, he must have been a master goldsmith too, registered in London, skilled in working gold and silver, adept at gilding, and competent enough to make a silver spoon, fashion a buckle, set a diamond ring, or even re-furbish the civic regalia. Any items in precious metals that he made himself would have to be hallmarked in the capital, at the assay office in Goldsmiths' Hall, but he doubtless bought in from London anyway, particularly more elaborate pieces beyond the scope of his own small workshop. The 'toy' trade, which itself mainly sold bought-in goods, was growing fast at Bath, so one imagines Hayes offered customers a wider choice than simply fine metalware and jewellery, just as the new breed of toymen returned the compliment by stocking goldsmiths' articles. In time goldsmiths' and toymen's retail shops became hard to tell apart, except that 'working' goldsmiths at least retained their craftsmen and ateliers behind the scenes, where pieces were made for sale, mended and regilded. When the London Huguenot goldsmith Paul Bertrand took over the 'great toyshop' on Terrace Walk (c.1732), he continued to run it as a quality giftshop, selling everything from fans and jewellery to cutlery and porcelain. Nevertheless he must have carried on a workshop somewhere, for on his retirement in 1747 two of his chief workmen, Moses Roubell and James Tilly, as well as his shopman John Pyke, all set up their own separate businesses in and around Orange Grove. Of this trio only Roubell (at the Hand & Solitaire opposite Morgan's coffee-house) lasted very long, being eventually succeeded (1775) by his son John.

The sheer purchasing power of modish visitors and residents supported increasing numbers of luxury retailers. Besides Roubell, the leading craftsmen-jewellers in the period 1750-75 included Benjamin Axford who initially trained under Peter Goulett (another Huguenot presence in Bath) but also practised awhile in London - as his rivals Henry Chilcot, William Rogers and Joseph Ward all had. Their publicity suggests they dealt in a typical mix of manufacturers' goods - plated wares (for which they had to be licensed), silver cutlery, Pontypool lacquer, watches, snuffboxes - coupled with fashionable jewellery made, set, strung, or engraved in-house, e.g. fancy rings, garnet buttons and bracelets, pearl necklaces, engraved seals, and delicate filligree. In the 1770s Chilcot loudly sang his daughter's genius at 'hairwork' - designs such as landscapes, portraits and Classical objects minutely fashioned in human hair (often supplied by clients themselves) to set in locket and rings. This vogue seems to have

**JOHN DAVIS,**  
**JEWELLER and GOLDSMITH,**  
 ON THE  
*Lower-Walks, fronting the North-Parade, BATH,*  
 MAKES, MENDS, and SELLS  
 Diamond, ~~Spouting~~, and Fancy  
 RINGS, STONE-BUCKLES, STAY-HOOKS, SEALS,  
 and EGRETS for the Hair,  
**NECKLACES and EAR-RINGS,**  
*In French Paste or Scotch Pebbles :*  
 And all Sorts of  
**Jeweller's Work,**  
*After the Neatest and Newest Fashions.*  
 Likewise great Variety of  
 Gold, Silver and other Sorts of **TOYS,**  
 Silver and Pinchbeck Buckles ; Snuff-Boxes ; Writing-Boxes ; Pocket-Books ;  
 Toothpic Cafes ; Pocket Tweezer-Cafes ; Tea-Chests ; Smell Bottles ; Cellars  
 of Bottles ; Cafes of Silver or China-Handle Knives and Forks ; India, Bir-  
 mingham, or Pontipool Ware, in Dressing Sets ; Tea-Tables, Waiters, &c.  
 'The Best ENGLISH  
**TEA-KETTLES, LAMPS, and COFFEE-POTS,**  
 USEFUL and ORNAMENTAL  
**CHINA-WARE,**  
*And various other GOODS, too numerous too insert.*  
 §§ MONEY for OLD GOLD, SILVER and JEWELS.

BATH : Printed by T. BODDLEY.

reached Bath c.1765 through William Tresilian, an ex-London jeweller and diamond merchant best known locally for creating the splendid two-sided symbolic medallion for the spa's master-of-ceremonies to wear. As the leading Bath firms of the 1780s and 1790s continued to demonstrate (Bretton, Vere, Dawson & Atkinson, Riviere), a metropolitan training was

almost indispensable for practising jewellers and goldsmiths. The chief exceptions seem to have been Philip and Benedict Masters (active 1730s-70s) and the Fords, both families with strong local roots. John Ford achieved unwonted notoriety in 1753 when accused by John Poulter, leader of a criminal gang, of receiving stolen property (gold buckles, a silver tankard, etc.) and melting them down into ingots. The evidence was vivid - the shears fixed in a vice, the large crucible heating on the fire - but unproven, and while Poulter was hanged, Ford escaped sentence.

Ford presumably traded on quite a small scale, but goldsmiths and jewellers with prime-site locations and considerable stock (including quantities of gemstones and old gold and silver) depended on a steady stream of well-healed customers. Most did well enough. When the goldsmithing firm John and William Townsend went bankrupt in 1795 it was an unusual event, and apparently had less to do with their normal business than risky speculation in building development. Earlier, in 1775, the jeweller William Rogers had also begun selling off his stock 'for the benefit of creditors' after thirty years of trading. By then one of his seven recorded former apprentices, Philip Rundell, had embarked on a London career that would eventually make him royal goldsmith and bring him the vast fortune that Rogers, his old Bath master, could never have dreamed of.

⇒ See also **Lacemen; Seal Engravers; Toy men.**

## **Greengrocers**

Unsurpassed for 'Garden Stuff of all Kinds', Bath was well served with market gardens. One even bordered South Parade and in the 1790s afforded fashionable strollers a pleasing vista of the rows of 'fine Cauliflowers in Macpherson's Beds'. These cauliflowers, with William Macpherson's other cash crops, would eventually be sold on his market stall. Commercial growers had perforce to be greengrocers as well, usually by renting a space in the central market or, as Bath expanded, by opening a suburban shop. From time immemorial they had traded in the Marketplace, probably from carts or makeshift stalls, or out of baskets and sacks of produce heaped on the ground. As trade and traffic grew, the market day congestion must have steadily worsened, until in 1754 the

'country gardeners', along with the fishmongers, were prosecuted at Bath Quarter Sessions for obstructing the highway. They moved for a while to a site just east of the Marketplace alongside the *White Lion*. Then, around 1762, the Corporation demolished the adjoining *Noah's Ark* and turned the vacant space into a regular 'green market'. Fitted up with ten stalls, each 8 feet by 6, lined up in two facing rows, it had a distinct tidying effect. The greengrocers were henceforth confined to a clearly identifiable spot and street costermongering became an offence. In 1776-7, during a complete rebuilding of the market and Guildhall, the vegetable area was apparently enlarged to at least 60 stalls and roofed over against the weather. No doubt a few traders stood there most days (until as late as 9 p.m. in summer, 8 p.m. in winter) with a show of brassicas, salad stuff, peas and beans, root crops, seasonal delicacies like asparagus, and sometimes fruit and flowers. Visitors as well as residents came to admire, inspect and buy. This was where the Penroses, up from Cornwall, shopped in 1766 for their potatoes and spinach and marvelled at the cost of cucumbers; where in 1773 John Wilkes's 'herb woman' presumably had her stall; and where Edmund Rack noticed startlingly early green peas on sale in mid-January 1780 at a guinea a pint (as compared with sixpence a peck - less than a ha'penny a pint - for the main crop). A Shropshire visitor, Katherine Plymley, jotted down more typical prices in October 1796: radishes, turnips and carrots all at 6d. a bunch, celery 1½d., potatoes 6d. a peck, dessert apples 1d. each, cauliflowers from 2d. to 1s., and artichokes 8d.

But poorer citizens shopped here too - hence the Corporation's concern, above all in 'bad harvest' years, to hold down prices, deter hoarding, and prevent fraudulent practices. Amid the food scare of 1795 the authorities ostentatiously burnt a number of false (basket?) measures used by pea and potato traders, and meanwhile offered a shilling premium for every 4-bushel sack of peas brought to market while the dearth lasted. The high price of potatoes, now a widely consumed foodstuff, caused fresh alarm in 1800. One day, angry at what the greengrocers were charging, several women cut open sacks of potatoes in the market and began handing them out - the prelude to a mob marching out to Larkhall and looting a market gardener's potato store. Already the charitable Bath Provisions Committee were buying up potatoes to sell cheaply to people in need, and by October had distributed two hundred sacks of potatoes plus large quantities of rice and hot soup. The same month the magistrates imposed a harsh sentence of three months in gaol on two market women for 'regrating' onions, i.e.

re-selling at a profit. People hawking vegetables round the suburbs sometimes got away with much worse - from giving customers short weight to palming them off with counterfeit coins.

⇒ See also **Fruiterers; Gardeners and Nurserymen; Hawkers and Pedlars.**

## Grocers

There was a whiff of the exotic (and colonial) about groceries, mostly imported from the Caribbean, North America, the Mediterranean, and the East, and some of it produce of the slave-trade. The business was all about buying in bulk from importers or middlemen and selling in smaller quantities at a good mark-up. This might involve a wide network of suppliers - a Sherborne grocer in 1794 bought from over forty different merchants, the majority in Bristol and London. It certainly entailed plenty of weighing out and packeting (in paper cones), but at least little wastage, since commodities like tea, sugar, dried fruit, nuts, rice, spices, pickles, and tobacco deteriorated quite slowly in storage. Nor did salt, soap, candles, starch, and other household goods that grocers commonly stocked cause them much trouble. This ease of handling encouraged other traders to dabble. A draper, say, or a coal dealer or a wine merchant might all carry grocery items, and some made a name for vending a particular product - witness Agnes Pitcairn at her hoop-petticoat warehouse in Orange Grove who during the 1780s did considerable business in 'genuine tapioca'. Conversely, grocers might themselves branch out - deal in tobacco and snuff perhaps, hire out china and glassware to visitors, or sell patent medicines. Some took the grocer-and-cheesemonger option. Besides the usual range of groceries Joseph Dibbens carried pickled pork, cured bacon, Isle of Man herring, annatto (for dyeing cheese), tar, resin, and glue, both wholesale and retail, and was holding at least five tons of prime cheese when bankruptcy overwhelmed him in 1786. Perhaps without exception every grocer was also a teaman, selling not only black and green teas but also coffee and chocolate.

No doubt all the big grocers had a redistributive role in supplying local chandlers - petty grocers in their way - who in turn sold to their poorer customers in small quantities. And similarly they offered special terms to retail shops in nearby small towns and villages. Bath's proximity to Bristol

meant that imported groceries (tea excepted) often arrived from that quarter, keeping carriage costs low. Not every article yielded much of a profit though. Take sugar, whose consumption increased enormously at this period - to the sure benefit of Bristol importers and refiners, but not to grocers who at times had to sell this heavily taxed, high-demand product at or below cost price, almost as a loss leader. Retailed in different grades, brown or white, in both loaves or lump form, sugar hardly required advertising, although a few grocers - like Mary Tagg at the 'Golden Canister and Three Blue Sugar Loaves' - alluded to this now everyday item in their shop signs. Other commodities gave a much better return, especially when the shop assistants (often wives and other family members) 'took advantage of the scales'. Branded products were slow to gain ground in such an established 'weighing out' trade, though by the mid-1780s the High Street grocer John Kendall was the official purveyor of 'Wheble's Kensington candles', a valuable enough local monopoly for Kendall to defend against rival grocers 'who have imposed on their customers other Candles as Wheble's, to the discredit of that Manufactory'. Another grocer, Daniel Powney, was the Bath agent for Hickson's Italian Warehouse in the Strand, and as a result could lay out a tempting display of Ligurian anchovies, tamarinds, pickles, Parmesan cheese, flasks of Tuscan olive oil, and even Bengal curry powder. It was all this variety that made a large grocer's an enticing place to shop at, but heavy stockholding did carry a risk.

⇒ See also **Chandlers; Tea Merchants; Tobacconists and Snuff Dealers**.

## **Gunsmiths**

Reports of deaths and injuries caused by firearms were not uncommon, which suggests a fairly widespread ownership of pistols and shotguns, particularly by sportsmen and farmers (not to forget highwaymen). Alternatively, gunsmiths would hire them out, even for illegal duels - as in the case of the notorious Brereton-Spooner encounter of 1780. All guns were of the flintlock type and fired shot or balls of lead, but otherwise they took many forms - from matching pairs of duelling pistols to the standard military musket. Besides their utilitarian value they bestowed status on the possessor, and the more decorative pieces ranked almost as works of art. Some of the glamour must have brushed off onto the gunsmith, who could



claim to be a connoisseur of weapons, gunpowders, and all the accessories of the trade. Only five names have come to light at Bath however - Edward Coombs (well enough established by the 1750s to take apprentices), his probable successor Joseph Thwaits from 1769, Isaac Brookman about the same period, and John Cook and William Smith in the 1790s.

To some extent they were assemblers, for they obtained proofed (i.e. officially marked) gun barrels, and maybe other components, in ready-made state from London or Birmingham workshops. Nevertheless they had to be craftsmen. Meticulous smithing and joinery were prerequisites in constructing a safe, reliable, good-looking weapon, and Brookman's workshop, we know, was equipped with an anvil, bellows and vice. 'It is a very ingenious Business, requires Skill in the tempering of Springs, a nice Hand at forming a Joint... and a good Hand at the File to polish it handsomely', noted one admirer. In fact the Bath gunsmith Joseph Thwaits dismissed one journeyman assistant in 1770 for bungling his work and had to recruit fresh workmen from London. A capable mechanic, Thwaits 'blued and browned' (i.e. lusted) barrels, manufactured a unique kind of swivel lock, and repaired firearms generally. His Stall Street shop must have been something of a hazard to its neighbours, however, for it carried all kinds of gunpowder (some of it obtained from the Woolley powder mill near Bath?), including 'the double strong' which fired much faster, he warned, than battle powder itself. Not that he was alone in stocking gunpowder - or guns either, because several all-purpose toymen sold those. William Evill, for example, could fit you up in a trice with a gun from Birmingham or a brace of pistols, unless you preferred a resplendent blunderbuss from William Glover. Another source of firearms was George Stothert, an up-and-coming blacksmith/toolmaker with strong Midlands links, who offered to supply the local militia with pistols and flintlocks during the French invasion scare of 1798.

## Haberdashers and Milliners

The haberdasher (like the pedlar) descended from an old tradition of selling small wares, especially items connected with apparel. It was to him one turned for sewing materials and for lesser articles of ready-made clothing - needles and thread, embroidery silks and knitting wool, tapes, ribbons, fringes, pins, hooks, stay-laces, buttons, buckles, pieces of cambric, cotton and lace, caps and hoods, shifts and aprons, waistcoats and shirts, stockings and gloves. Millinery, by contrast, was less concerned with the everyday and focussed above all on women's wear. Originally signifying 'Milan' or Italian goods (e.g. straw hats and silks), the word retained a sense of dressing-up about it, applicable not merely to head attire but to trimmings, accessories, and 'as many *Etceteras* as would reach from *Charing-Cross* to the *Royal Exchange*' - even to petticoats and the fancier sort of gown. It was an intensely fashion-conscious trade and one that - on the retail side at least - women increasingly came to dominate, a rare branch of retailing not under male control.



In practice, however, the distinctions between haberdasher and milliner often blurred, and some shops traded under both titles, even tacking on 'mercer' or 'hosier' for good measure. Haberdashers' shops supplied men's

needs as well as women's, and so most had male proprietors even if they also stocked millinery and employed female staff. Some went on for decades - John Bowden in Wade's Passage and Joseph Terry in Stall Street and Abbey Green, for example, both haberdasher/hosiery, while Samuel Hemming and Thomas Paulin successively kept a haberdashery/milliner's shop on North Parade (easily identified by a statue of Queen Elizabeth on the façade) for nearly thirty years. Smith & Co., launched by a London haberdasher in 1794 on newly built Bath Street, likewise sold fashionable millinery - embroidered muslin shawls from Norwich, Duncan bonnets, black bear-fur muffs, the latest in Barcelona neckerchiefs. At the time Mrs Leigh Perrot made her fateful lace purchase here (see below under **Lacemen**), the concern was being run by Smith's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Gregory, assisted by one shopman, one shopwoman, and one girl apprentice - a level of staffing which doubtless allowed for her frequent absences waiting on customers at home.

Private attendance was certainly a requirement. 'This morning a milliner was ordered to bring whatever she had to recommend... to our habitation... [on South Parade]', Fanny Burney noted rather sternly in her 1780 journal. Demeaning though this sounds, milliners enjoyed definite status as expert counsellors on dress and modes, and indeed for other reasons. Mary Chandler, whose Abbey Churchyard shop flourished through the 1730s and early 1740s, published a much admired poetic *Description of Bath*. In the 1760s-70s Mary Gibbon could bask in the reflected glory of her famous brother, the artist Gainsborough, whose imposing house near the Abbey contained her millinery and perfume shop. The two Miss Hoblyns, appointed milliners to the Duchess of York in 1798, were daughters of a clergyman and traded no doubt with unsullied reputation. With others there was more room for doubt. Ann Thicknesse considered milliners 'in general... very *convenient* sort of people', always willing to help customers cheat their husbands with inflated bills, and John Penrose in 1766 was quite convinced he only escaped being overcharged for his wife's innocent purchases (from Janetta Brett & Co., then in Wade's Passage) through the intervention of a friend. Often employing unmarried young women, milliners faced criticism on that score too. A guide of 1747 warned parents about the 'vast Resort of young Beaus and Rakes to Milliners' Shops', of the ribald talk there and the risk to their daughters' morals. And nearly fifty years later, in 1795, the advice still applied. Elizabeth Mandell's at 41 Milsom Street was, it seems, just such a honeypot: 'Where, *boot'd and*

*spur'd*, the gay macaronies, // Bestride *Mandell's* counter, instead of their ponies' - their excuse probably being the men's ruffles and cravats to be found among an array of feminine satins, lace, coloured crape, ribbons, fans, and trimmed straw bonnets. Maybe it was here too that Isabella (in *Northanger Abbey*) noticed in the shop window 'the prettiest hat you can imagine... with coquelicot ribbons'. At Bath in late 1798 'coquelicot' was the *in* shade, as Jane Austen - retrimming her own hat with a poppy-red feather - well knew. Keen to be thought *à la mode*, she sprinkled her correspondence with news of millinery - gauze and lace, voguish caps, and hats everywhere adorned with artificial flowers and fruit (a mock plum or greengage costing 3s. apiece at the most expensive shops, cherries and grapes dearer still). Trimmings the novelist always did fancy, but sought them out at cheaper places, including a milliner's near Walcot Church that her aunt, Mrs Leigh Perrot, had told her of.



Although milliners might stock fairly utilitarian items - hoop petticoats, bathing dresses (for the hot baths), baby linen, children's coats - their proper business was fashion. It was this that gave the smarter shops an air of glamour, a sexy appeal, a touch of Parisian sophistication, that not even the Bath toyshops could equal. The subtleties of women's head-dress, from the lacy caps at the start of the century to the fruity, floral, feathery constructions at the end, had always offered a perfect vehicle for milliners to progress as fashion arbiters, and gradually they became influential in all departments of women's costume. By the 1770s they were moving into dressmaking itself, sometimes making sacks, mantuas, pelisses, and fancy dress in their own shops, sometimes employing home dressmakers to do it for them.

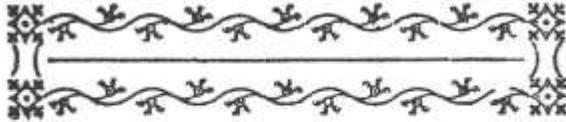
⇒ See also **Dressmakers; Furriers; Hatters and Hosiers; Lacemen.**



## **Hairdressers**

Because for men it was a clean-shaven, mostly wig-wearing century, barbers and peruke-makers abounded. In the 1750s indeed they were sufficiently numerous at Bath to merit their own trade guild. A few were solely barbers and haircutters (perhaps with tooth-drawing and blood-letting on the side), but the majority also made up and dressed the various sorts of men's wigs then worn - full-bottomed, campaign, tie, bob, bag, and other styles, long and short, with assorted curls and rolls, greased with pomatum and commonly powdered. It was predominantly a male occupation, though most hairdressers catered to customers of either sex. Only about 1765 did specialist 'ladies' hairdressers first appear at Bath, as former trade restrictions ended and women's coiffures grew ever more elaborate. By the 1770s and 1780s the most extravagantly contrived headpieces could be seen at Bath assemblies - towering structures built with pads and pins, threads and wool, false curls and toupées, braids and bows, feathers and artificial flowers. 'A friseur is employ'd three hours in a morning to make a young Lady look like a Virgin Hottentot or Squaw...', scoffed Mrs Montagu, who thought the fanciful hairdos of foppish men no better. The return of simpler women's styles in the 1790s and the gradual abandoning of periwigs by men (especially from 1795 when hair powder licensing came in) probably led to some redundancies in the overstocked ranks of hairdressers, but at Bath they still mustered over fifty shops in 1800, some of them served by a small team of journeymen assistants and apprentices. Assistants, even if they received tips, were not well paid and in 1763 they protested loudly about having to work on Sundays for no extra reward, and demanded a shilling per morning, 1s.6d. for a whole day, on threat of exposing their employers' profits. The complaint of strict Sabbatarians was of course that hairdressers (like pastrycooks) should work on Sundays at all and that their customers, for the sake of vanity, demanded it.

( 1 )



THE

A R T

OF

HAIR-DRESSING, &c.

---

**T**HE chief Cause of bad Hair, is too frequently the Fault of Parents, Nurfes, Tutors. owing to Neglect. Many love to see the Hair lay long down the Back. comb'd in Gurls; to do which, are obliged to pinch it with hot Irons \*, to the great injury of the Hair. as it dries up its Juices hinders its Respiration. so that it can't acquire the Strength it would have had, if treated otherwise.

If

\* This is wrong to use such Methods; as in the first Place it puts the Hair out of its eẽilinear Course: Secondly, the Usage of warm Irons, not only dries up the Juices, but burns the Hair off in Time, when the Hair is of a tender Age, it must be weaken'd, and stop'd from getting that Strength it would if left much shorter and cut oftener.

Some Bath hairdressers undoubtedly enjoyed fair profits, which arose partly from the sale of wigs, hair pieces of all kinds, hair ornaments, combs, preservatives (such as bear's grease), powders, perfumery, and even snuff, jewellery, and toyshop items. John Bally, who in the 1780s ran two shops and provided separate men's and women's dressing rooms, charged from 16s. to 2 guineas for wigs, cut and dressed hair for 1s. to 2s. a time (or at weekly, monthly and annual rates). He and his assistants would wait on customers at home if required, but this was doubtless common practice. William Moore, whose shop in Orange Grove stocked natural hair and made-up 'têtes' as well as perfumery and fancy goods, administered a separate hairdressing concern in High Street and produced a 40-page pamphlet on hair care, *The Art of Hair-Dressing and Making it Grow Fast* (c.1777), full of odd-sounding (though once orthodox) notions. Moore expected immediate payment in cash, but would accept returned goods should customers be dissatisfied - a service especially useful to country clients who, when they ordered, provided samples of their own hair for matching purposes. John Penrose, a Cornish parson up in Bath in 1767, thus requested toupées for his daughters to match tresses they sent from home, and wondered whether 18-year-old Mary might fancy a 'Sett of Curls besides, tossed off A la mode de Paris'. Simple, easily removable hair pieces he accepted as 'wholesome', but was shocked that fashionable women at Bath who 'have their own Hair, not artificial, and have it dressed by the Barber, do not comb their Heads for three months together... and endeavour to conceal the Stink... with Perfumes, Essences, etc.'

The barber/hairdresser whom Penrose seemingly favoured, William Orchard, ran a family business in Abbey Green and instructed many apprentices in the trade - including his own son Walter who took over the firm in 1787. Yet even Walter Orchard struggled in the harsh economic climate of the mid-1790s, became briefly insolvent in 1796 and auctioned off stock that included snuffs, toyman's goods, almost four hundredweight of hair, and quantities of hair powder - for which the demand must have almost dried up since the imposition of a yearly guinea licence on wearers. Competition among the more stylish resident hairdressers was aggravated by hairdressers from London arriving in Bath for the season, sometimes flaunting their French credentials or undermining the trade by tutoring private manservants and ladies' maids on how to dress hair. In these circumstances it often paid to have a gimmick or special product that might attract public notice - cork or elastic or non-shrink wigs, for

example, pinless toupées, violet powder (made from iris root) to nourish the scalp, a special paste for razor strops, or Taylor's approved pomatum to stave off male baldness.

⇒ See also **Haberdashers and Milliners; Perfumers.**



## Hatters and Hosiers

Up to a point the hatter-cum-hosier acted as a men's milliner, and like a milliner he often stocked haberdashery, trimmings, and smaller made-up garments such as fancy silk waistcoats, cotton caps, and gloves of all sorts. His appeal was not solely to male shoppers though. Women went there to purchase stockings and gloves, and certainly for their riding hats which in essentials resembled masculine headgear. Nonetheless, men's hats were his core business. Despite the long reign of wigs, hats were universally worn, or at least carried in the hand, and gave rise to an entire etiquette of 'hat honours'. Making and styling them called for particular expertise in which the first stage was to produce 'hoods' of pure beaver felt (for the best quality hats) or of wool felted with beaver, rabbit and other furs, usually dyed black and stiffened with shellac. The rather messy felting procedure, which exposed workers to noxious mercury fumes, may well have been performed by local feltmakers (Isaac Archer, William Ford, William Collins, John and Samuel Rundell... ) rather than by hatters, but the latter undoubtedly carried out the second stage of blocking the hat into shape, perhaps cocking it into the favourite tricorne form, and lining and trimming it for wear. It was laborious but profitable, because a good hat - given the price of beaver fur, gold-and-silver lace, and other materials - might easily cost a guinea in the shop. At the other extreme one Bath hatter, Thomas Harding, could offer plain, utilitarian, round hats in 1783 at wholesale prices of sixteen to thirty shillings per dozen, guaranteed not to fade and to keep out the rain. Harding - from London - had first hung up his Hat & Beaver sign in Northgate Street about 1758, moving round the

corner to Borough Walls in 1775. In both places he kept a workshop where hats of every kind (including women's beaver hats and livery headgear for menservants) were modelled, dyed, trimmed, cleaned and refurbished. The fact that he advertised for rabbit and hare skins, and for rarer pelts such as otter and marten, suggests he even did some of his own felt preparation. Harding's chief rival, Cary's of Cheap Street, was Bath's leading hatter for over fifty years until the firm's bankruptcy in 1781. By then there was growing competition from various rivals, notably from Charles Elkins - another London-trained hatter (with special skills in military wear) and Joseph Smither, both of whom at different times worked with the hosier Philip Tully in the combined hat-and-stockings business. Felted hats, elaborately dressed, had become high fashion for women too, and Parliament's decision in 1784 to charge duty on the entire hat trade came as no surprise.

Hosiery likewise could be a lucrative commerce, but it was surely his Stalbridge links that induced the future toyman, William Evill, to feature hosiery when he first established himself at the spa c.1757. His brother John, who had opened a separate store retailing shoes and haberdashery, sold not merely the local Stalbridge product but a standard range of Nottingham frame-knit stockings: men's, women's and children's; white, brown and coloured; plain, ribbed, clocked, fine and superfine; in yarn, worsted, cotton, and maybe mixed silk; but not it seems the most expensive black or white silk stockings, a London speciality, for which one shopped at Cary's, or at the haberdasher Terry's, or later at Tully's where in 1791 a special three-day service for cleaning silk stockings was announced. A couple of Nottingham stocking manufacturers set up Bath retail outlets in the 1760s. James Wood's was still an active concern in Abbey Churchyard into the late 1780s, but Mandell & Co. gave up hosiery in 1775 to concentrate on the still more rewarding trade of millinery.

⇒ See also **Breeches Makers; Furriers; Lacemen; Haberdashers and Milliners.**

## **Hawkers and Pedlars**

Shopkeepers saw little good in itinerant salesmen. A broadsheet of c.1730 accused them of impoverishing the honest family retailer, evading taxation, deceiving the public, dealing in contraband, and subverting fair trade



generally. To compensate for their immunity from standard rates and taxes, hawkers were charged an annual £4 licence fee (plus £4 for every pack animal), but there were various exemptions, and in any case a great many hawkers plied their trade unlicensed. How many 'travelling Scotchmen' and the like peddled their wares round Bath is hard to say - but their presence was resented enough in 1785 (when the hated Shop Tax came into force) for the Corporation to demand that the licensing of hawkers be stopped for good. Instead Parliament doubled the licence fee, and then in 1789 reduced it once more to £4 now that Shop Tax had ended. For a while the Bath J.P.s continued to ban hawkers except on market days, though mildly enough, for in 1791 they merely reprimanded an unlicensed pedlar of draperies instead of penalising him £20. All this applied mainly to outsiders. The customary local street trade went on apace. Coalmen, country gardeners, milkmen and mackerel sellers (the last two sanctioned even on Sundays) did their door-to-door rounds. The streets resounded with the calls of old clothes' dealers, the shrill voices of sandboys, the cries of '*fine potted laver, fresh oysters and pies!*'. And occasionally we catch glimpses of individuals - the man who hawked apples and poultry, Mary Young who cried muffins (and was fined in 1772 for selling two underweight 'brown Georgies'), and Mary Jennings - nicknamed 'Mutton' - renowned for the curious manner in which she recited the titles of the ballads she had on offer. Ballads, almanacs, sensational broadsheets, and other cheap prints were common street merchandise, and in 1795 the reformer Hannah More enlisted a little band of street traders, all decently dressed and 'with characteristic ribbands in their hats', to cry her moralising tracts about the city. Hawkers were no longer to announce their presence by playing musical instruments, a practice the Corporation had

banned six years earlier, though they still walked about Bath singing (it was said) merry tales and amorous ditties.

⇒ See also **Milksellers and Dairymaids**.

## House Painters and Colourmen

When sashed windows replaced the Guildhall's old casements in 1718, John Warren gave the frames a few preservative coats of oil paint - a typical job for a house painter. In fact, some in the trade combined painting with glazing, and - since they also distempered house interiors - even with plastering. They also acted as 'colourmen', in other words dealt in paint, varnish, oil, brushes, and the like. This might entail grinding the pigments and mixing the paints in the shop, using a linseed or other oil medium and white/red lead from London, though all this labour was much reduced when mill-ground pigments and ready-mixed paint came onto the market. A range of colours was available. The elder John Wood wanted only white window frames and brown (imitating mahogany) doors for his uniform frontages, but a London colourman of the time offered almost a rainbow of hues. In 1757 the Bath firm Woolley & Devis would be thinking of basic white or cream when they charged 4d. a square yard for two coats of oil paint (and ditto for a sashed 12-light window). Thirty years later the rates had barely altered for best leaded white, but pea green, blues, French greys, and other colours all cost proportionately more. Green, it seems, was then (c.1790) a special favourite. Dr Armstrong's vegetable green paint, for use indoors or out, had a designated local supplier in Joseph Horlor, and another colourman, John Crease, advertised 'a pleasant invisible Olive..., a beautiful Grass Olive... [and a] Verdigrease Green', among earthier oil-paint colours from ochre to chocolate brown. Crease manufactured his own varnishes, published a short treatise on their use (*Elegance, Amusement and Utility, or The Whole Process of Varnishing...*), and for a time produced work tables, flower stands, and ornamental boxes papered ready for painting and varnishing over. He claimed expertise in cleaning and varnishing pictures and sold artists' colours, but never advertised as a heraldic, coach- and signpainter unlike several other house painters in town. Foremost here were Charles Davis (father and son) and William Lloyd. Davis, who learned his craft under Nicholas Tucker (Bath's leading house painter c.1745-79), had extended into heraldic painting by 1767 and eventually had an exhibition room at no. 2 Westgate

Buildings where samples of his ornamental work - shop and inn signs, transparencies, escutcheons, armorial coach panels, funeral hatchments - must have been on view. William Lloyd, followed by his widow Sarah, similarly ran a colour shop and took on both house painting and heraldic commissions - including furniture decoration. Both Davis's and Lloyd's were among the Bath painting firms whose men downed tools in joint strike action in 1796. Journeymen painters had a poor moral reputation, but then they were ill-paid, endured long winter lay-offs, risked their lives on rickety scaffolds, and suffered the daily fumes of lead paints which, a contemporary noted, were 'apt to affect their Nerves and Lungs'.

**Ice-Cream Sellers** see **Pastrycooks and Confectioners**

**Ironmongers** see **Braziers, Smiths and Ironmongers**

**Jewellers** see **Goldsmiths and Jewellers**

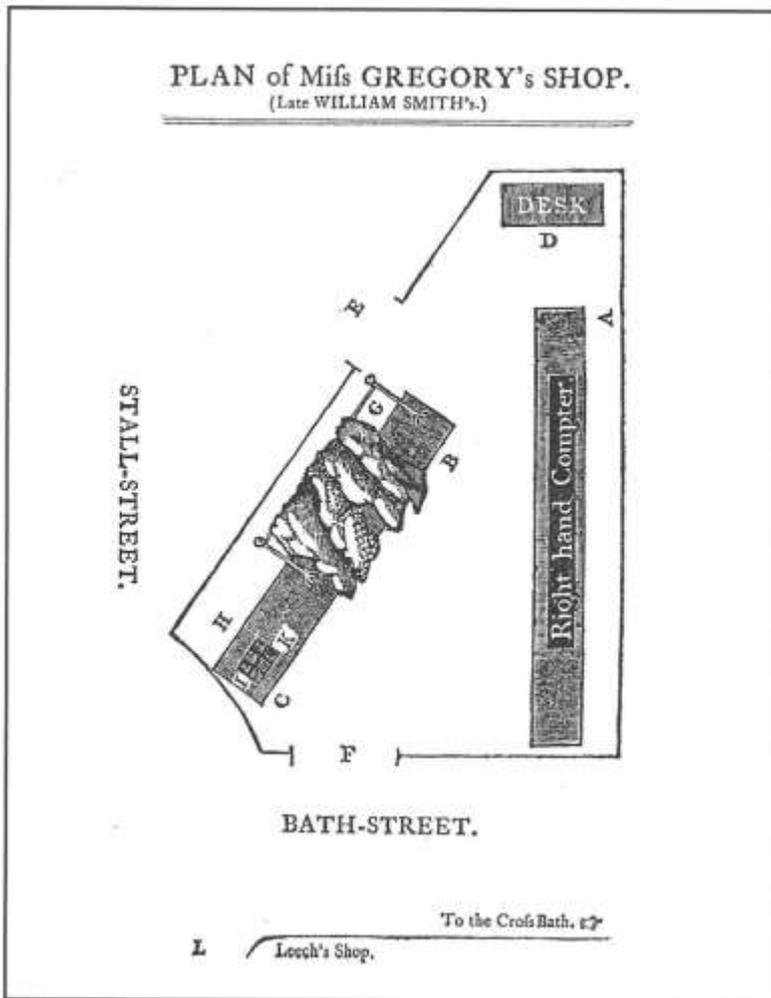
## **Lacemen**

Just below the *White Hart* in Stall Street, Leonard Coward father and son (the latter four times Mayor) conducted an exclusive lace shop for nearly fifty years, c.1724-73. Here they sold not only needlepoint and bone lace but also the expensive finery that typically adorned a gentleman's dress coat, waistcoat and hat at least into the 1760s (and military and naval uniforms well beyond), including gold and silver lace, braids, tassels, and shining gilt and silvered buttons. Female attire - often in boldly patterned, strongly coloured fabrics (sometimes threaded or embroidered with gold) - was usually set off better by white or black lacework, yet women certainly frequented the gold-and-silver lacemen, and the Cowards could be expected (as one writer put it) 'to speak fluently, though not elegantly, to entertain the Ladies... [and] be Master of a handsome Bow and Cringe'... [as well as having] Confidence to refuse... the extravagant Beau who never pays, and Patience... to bear the sharpening Peer, who pays but seldom'. Their

services probably included refurbishing metallic lace which easily tarnished.

The Cowards presumably acquired their gold and silver lace from metropolitan dealers, or even direct from the orris weavers who made it, without any say in the actual patterns. Some of their bone lace, on the other hand, they may have designed themselves, bearing in mind John Wood's remark (in 1749) that 'Bath Lace' took its name 'partly from the great Consumption of it in this Town, and partly from the Manufacturers receiving their Patterns from hence'. Milliners as well as lacemen, he explained, greatly profited from this lace, supplying wedding outfits far and wide and selling 'Head Attire' to many older customers who liked to shop at Bath. Produced mainly in Devon and the S.E. Midlands, English lace nevertheless faced stiff competition from exquisite Flemish and French workmanship. Between 1748 and 1762 one well-known London importer, Elizabeth Chancellor, regularly brought down to Bath the latest Brussels needlepoints, corded mechlins, etc., and fashion shops in general could offer a good selection of foreign and domestic laces (mechlins, mignonettes, blondes, gauzes, and many others) for men's shirt ruffles and cravats, and women's caps, lappets, tuckers, and lace-trimmed gowns. The Cowards and a few visiting manufacturers were unusual, however, in specialising almost wholly in this one product. The greatest consumption of thread lace - sometimes already made up into caps, fichus, aprons, even whole suits - was probably through milliners', mercers' and hosiers' shops, and by the 1770s at drapers' too as machine-made net laces began to displace handworked gauzes and lawns. The silk mercer Hanbury Pettingal, the hosier John Gale, the drapers Henry Stone and John Dawson, all sold quantities of lace, and it was from a haberdasher/milliner's shop (Elizabeth Gregory's at the corner of Bath Street) that Mrs Leigh Perrot, Jane Austen's aunt, was notoriously charged in 1799 with stealing a card of white lace under cover of buying a length of black. The report of the ensuing trial, at which Mrs Leigh Perrot was acquitted, goes into revealing detail about shop procedures, from the storage of lace in boxes (on pale blue cards, each bearing a unique shop mark and ticketed with the measured length) to precisely how it was folded and wrapped for the customer in 'whited brown paper'. (See following page.)

⇒ See also **Haberdashers and Milliners; Hatters and Hosiers.**



*From The Trial of Jane Leigh Perrot... charged with Stealing a Card of Lace... and referred to in evidence at Taunton Assizes, 29 March 1800. Key to the letters on the plan: A) counter; opposite which Mrs Leigh Perrot originally stood, B) Mrs LP's second position, C) Mrs LP's third position, D) desk where the shop manager Elizabeth Gregory stood before and after attending Mrs LP, E) door to stairs and kitchen, F) entrance from street, G) position where EG showed a box of black lace, H) original position of the shopman Charles Filby before serving Mrs LP, I) box of white lace which CF was stocktaking, K) corner of box holding checked cards of lace. The shorter counter had a brass rail displaying veils and neckerchieves. Also working at the desk end of the shop were the shopwoman Miss Leeson and the apprentice Sarah Raines.*

## Laundresses, Clearstarchers and Scourers

In many families the household wash could be done at home, given access to a water supply, a hot fire, a sink or tub, and a drying space. Not everyone had these facilities, however, and that included the majority of spa visitors and many others lodging in private rooms. Here, the laundering of bed and table linen might or might not be covered in the weekly rent. For Robert Corbett, visiting from Shropshire in 1796, it was not, as his niece Katherine Plymley noted in her diary: 'The house finds table linnen, Napkins & sheets... but Mr. C. pays for the washing'. Any items of dress a lodger wanted cleaned had always to be sent out: to a laundress if they were easily washable (cottons, linens, and knitted stockings), to a clearstarcher if they needed a careful starched and 'blued' finish (e.g. ruffs, caps, aprons, some petticoats and gowns), or to a scourer, who relied on strong de-greasing alkalis, in the case of more substantial clothing. Even housekeepers might send out some of the heavier washing such as bed linen, so adding considerably to the load that weighed down her laundrymaid as she collected and delivered. It was toilsome work anyway, constantly performed in a damp environment, steeping, scrubbing, rinsing, wringing, mangling, hanging out to dry, and then finishing - or 'getting items up' - with a flat or box iron which forever needed reheating. Work, moreover, with its own occupational hazard of 'washerwoman's hand', a skin affliction or wrinkling caused by the constant irritation of soap and washing soda. At least most laundresses would have the benefit of piped water. Home laundries came into the category of premises for which the Corporation might charge a special water rate.

John Penrose, at Bath in 1766, failed to name his laundress but thought her 'very civil' and her bill 'reasonable enough'. In fact her prices, which included the ironing and ranged from a ha'penny per neckerchief to 3d. for a shirt, closely matched Mrs Guillebave's a quarter-century earlier and listed by another visitor - shirt 3d., shift 2d., pair of pockets 1d., two caps 2d., two kerchiefs 2d., a pair of stockings 1d., bed gown 2d., and so on. Yet on his visits in the 1770s the politician John Wilkes faced far heftier bills (one of more than £2 10s.) from his own laundress, Margaret or Mary Cotes. By that date, of course, standards of personal cleanliness were improving among all ranks of society, thanks to the greater use of soap and the ubiquity of cheap cottons. The ten laundresses (four based in Claverton Street) and eight clearstarchers advertised in the Bath Directory of 1800 must surely understate the number of women involved in the

business. Even disregarding all the laundrymaids employed as domestic servants, many a hard-up sempstress, one imagines, would have taken washing in from time to time to eke out her meagre earnings.

Clothing such as silk and stuff gowns, suits, coats, cloaks and breeches were scoured with strong lyes to remove dirt, grease and stains. So too were soft furnishings. The treatment could be expected to fade colours or make them run, which might explain the association of scouring and dyeing. One old dyehouse belonging to the Stevens family stood outside the East Gate and may have continued to dye for local clothiers until its eventual sale in 1743. The various 'silk dyers' who subsequently appeared at Bath - William Edmunds, Robert Hayward, George Munro - were in essence scourers and re-dyers whose job was to restore fabrics 'to look like new', as Edmunds put it. Hatters and hosiers, who also undertook cleaning and re-dyeing, mainly did so for the sort of goods they sold over the counter, namely hats, stockings, muffs, feathers and furs. To remove small stains people used products such as Beck's Tincture, obtainable from haberdashers and linen drapers. Glossy fabrics, once cleaned, could regain their smoothness and shine by hot-pressing. Around 1800 Bath had as many as nine calenderers and one calico-glazer engaged in this sort of work.

⇒ See also **Hatters and Hosiers; Lacemen.**

## **Leather Dressers** see **Tanners and Leather Dressers**

### **Linen Drapers**

Richard Harford was called a 'mercier' in 1709, a 'draper' in 1717, a 'mercier' again in 1721. The terms were still fluid, and in any case he and his principal competitor, Samuel Howse, sold all sorts of fabric - silk, cotton, linen, wool - as well as lace and items of haberdashery. Many textile shops continued to do so. Bennett & Goldney's, who habitually described themselves as linen drapers, were retailing silks and woollens right up to their closure in 1779, and indeed plenty of their goods were mixtures anyway, especially cotton-linens and wool-silks. Nevertheless, depending on a shop's emphasis, distinctions could be made, and by 1740 silk mercers,

woollen drapers, and linen drapers were all regarded as separate occupations. The linen draper dealt equally in cottons but, for much of the century, operated under serious legal constraints. Between 1701 and 1722 Parliament took increasingly drastic measures to protect the domestic silk and stuffs industries - above all by banning the use of printed cottons, not only the colourful (and highly popular) Indian chintzes and fine muslins but their British imitations. Though an Act of 1736 eased the ban for cotton-linen mixtures, not until 1774 was it swept away for pure cottons, now that Britain had an overwhelming commercial advantage (thanks to the spinning jenny and other new technology). One consequence of the ensuing cotton boom was a doubling of Bath's linen drapers (from seven to fourteen) within a single decade, 1770-80, accompanied by much fiercer competition.

Until then it had been an urbane and rather profitable business, exemplified by the old-established firms of Samuel Howse (pre-1712 to 1779, successively under Samuel I and II, John, Henry, Henry Edward) and Francis Bennett (c.1736-79), both trading from first-class sites fronting Cheap Street and Abbey Churchyard. A linen draper's prospects were good enough in 1767 for Bennett to demand as much as 100 guineas to bind an apprentice, and he himself retired in 1779 a wealthy man - and with his second term as Mayor of Bath still to come. His late partner (and one-time apprentice) Samuel Goldney had concurrently held a stake in the Bath & Somerset Bank, and another link with banking was forged by William & Robert Clement, who c.1749 opened a linen shop in Wade's Passage specialising in Scottish textiles - hollands, plain and patterned lawns, and printed cotton-linens. Alongside their drapery business they were soon providing financial services in government bonds, state lottery tickets, and 'light gold' (i.e. buying debased gold coin), gradually accumulating the funds and experience that would enable Robert Clement, many years later, to found the High Street Bank.

The Clement brothers' championing of Scottish manufactures was paralleled by the promotion of Irish linens - in particular by James and Alice Wall (1757-83) who went on several buying trips to Ulster in the 1760s for quality diapers and damasks as well as everyday linens and 'huckaback' (for towelling). Acting as a conduit for Irish products (which they also sold on to other retailers) did not stop them stocking a good range of 'Manchester goods' and foreign cambrics. Customer demand was

growing all the time. Even the poor now wore 'hollands' shirts, fustian breeches, striped cotton waistcoats and aprons, calico petticoats, and printed gowns. These were light, comfortable, washable, and at their best - finely woven and printed with copperplate designs - as elegant as the silks they were coming to supersede. Their sheer practicality had already won them a large market. What made cotton 'king' in the 1780s and 1790s was the crowning sanction of fashion, and the revolution in women's dress (to high waists and simple flowing lines) that soft pure cottons allowed. The variety on offer had never been greater, with delectable Indian calicoes and muslins (bought at the East India Company's regular London sales) and fine French cambrics (legally available from 1786) joining the stream of factory cottons pouring out of Lancashire and Clydeside.

Who began the cut-price trade war at Bath was disputed even at the time, but from 1781 onwards Prynne & Collins were certainly its brashest proponents at their 'Cheap Shop for Ready Money' (later the 'Bengal Warehouse') in the Marketplace. Bargain sales by two different drapers in 1785-6 considerably raised the stakes. Prynne & Collins responded at once - 'no settled [i.e. resident] Draper, nor itinerant Puffer' would ever undersell them, they asserted, a policy statement quickly echoed by other retailers. Success (in a trade increasingly littered with bankruptcies) lay in forestalling rivals, correctly guessing fashion trends, buying fairly large stocks, and then selling fast by aggressive pricing and a barrage of advertising. Some managed the trick with dignity. Thomas Coward, who had a Bristol shop in addition to his elegant premises in [Old] Bond Street, seems to have been a specially astute purchaser of 'India muslins' (which in 1796 even attracted royalty to view his display), though he also sold quantities of cheaper fabrics for dress and furnishing. Both he and his ex-assistants Percival & Cunditt, who had their own extensive salerooms close by in Milsom Street, claimed they offered the largest stocks of drapery in the kingdom. Percival & Cunditt's summer clearance sale of 1793 gives some idea of their turnover - over £3000-worth of reduced-price printed cottons, calicoes, dimities, muslinets, and cambrics, and many remnants - an opportunity not lost on Parson Woodforde, for example, who on visits in July and October bought thirty yards of muslin, two made-up gowns, and one waistcoat piece, for various relations. Neither this retailer nor several others long survived the commercial battlefield, yet others were always ready to take their place, among them Sayers & Co., who from 1795 ran an opulent store in Milsom Street,

unique in Britain, that displayed over a thousand Indian-cotton muslins woven and embroidered in their own Scottish factories. A French traveller admired the wonderful show of 'white wear' at London linen drapers', but at Sayers' towards the end of the century neoclassical white competed for space with the most colourful fashion fabrics.

⇒ See also **Silk Mercers; Undertakers; Woollen Drapers.**

**Locksmiths** *see* **Braziers, Smiths and Ironmongers**

**Maltsters** *see* **Brewers**

**Mantua Makers** *see* **Dressmakers**

## **Market**

In essence a farmers' market, it put producers in direct contact with their customers. That was the main idea, to cut out the middlemen. Given free competition and fair trading, the market should therefore have been the cheapest place to shop for common foodstuffs, and up to a point it was. Katherine Plymley's accolade in 1794 - 'The market is excellent & I understand a family may be supplied as cheap here as in any town' - simply echoed the prevailing opinion. Even the Penroses in 1766, initially taken aback by the cost of a goose or a cucumber, came to accept that on sheer quality, richness and profusion the 'noble provisions' they delighted in, as they wandered round the stalls, were not generally overpriced. Yet restrictive practices did distort the ideal of the open market. Thus it was in the traders' shared interest not to undercut one another, and this alone might keep prices higher than need be - as an outside competitor demonstrated in 1763 with regard to the market fishmongers.

A year or two later poor harvests and rising food prices focussed attention on other problems, particularly the activities of jobbers - middlemen who bought up livestock and other produce directly from farms, then sold it on at a profit - and 'forestallers', including some retailing butchers and

poulterers at Bath, who managed to bypass the market altogether. Once again the Corporation condemned every sort of illegal hoarding and profiteering, as it often had in the past, only this time under strong pressure from a citizens' committee set up in 1765 to prosecute any 'forestallers, ingrossers and regraters' who impaired the proper functioning of the market. All the same, as the bad harvest times of 1795-6 and 1799-1801 only confirmed, illegal trading was hard to stamp out. Forestalling and especially regrating (re-selling inside the market or at an unreasonable profit outside it) were now 'practised with impunity', the *Bath Herald* admitted in 1796, and it pointed to further reasons for the high cost of provisions - the chandlers' shops and 'the Servants of opulent Families who have the command of unlimited purses' and who never question the sums asked. Jane Austen recognised a similar problem. Although salmon was being sold at 2s.9d. a pound, she observed at Bath in May 1801, at least the 'Duchess of York's removal is expected to make that article more reasonable...!.

On the whole Bath Corporation earned good marks for its stewardship of the market, and especially for the series of physical improvements it carried out between 1745 and 1777 - first enlarging and smartening up the butchers' shambles, then in 1762-3 creating a regular green market for vegetables and fruit, in 1767-8 erecting a two-storey weigh-house for dealers in hides and tallow, and finally in the 1770s, the biggest step of all, doing away with the old, open-sided market house (and the crumbling Guildhall perched on top) and installing the traders on a rebuilt site that henceforth enveloped the brand-new Guildhall on three sides. The market's resulting 'theatrical form', its neat rows of covered stalls, and the rich, colourful display of produce on sale, all evoked widespread admiration. In its 'order and abundance it surpasses any thing in London'. Indeed it was one of the most 'surprising' sights of Bath.

The gradual transformation of the crowded, traffic-ridden, rather messy scene that the High Street once presented on market days into the rationality of the spacious new market was paralleled by a steady tightening of the regulations. In 1767 a Deputy Clerk of the Market took office with specific authority to rent out stalls and to police the stallholders. From about the same date, full trading was extended from the usual Wednesdays and Saturdays (Fridays for fish) to six days a week - an experiment continued to 1776 and then abandoned. This was accompanied

by stricter control of trading hours - in summer from 5 or 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on other days, each period shortened by two hours in the winter months. Produce could be retailed from the start of trading, but not wholesaled until the market bell sounded - at 7 or 8 a.m. for meat, fish and dairy produce, 11 a.m. for grain and pulses. From now on more attention was also paid to hygiene (regular cleaning and sweeping) and convenience (preventing stalls from encroaching and keeping passageways clear). In 1796 even the amount a butcher's chopping block might protrude beyond his stall was laid down. Some things proved harder to control. Traders were often suspected of using faulty weights and steelyards, but few shoppers bothered to check their purchases despite the public scales put there for the purpose. From time to time the authorities made inspections unannounced, and occasionally they came across substandard measures, underweight butter, unwholesome meat, or instances of regrating, any of which might lead to confiscation, prosecution, fines and, at worst, gaol.



Towards 1800 the available space in the market, already given over to hundreds of stalls, was running out. This led to further regulation. In future no butcher, poulterer, fishmonger, greengrocer or other trader was to be allowed a double stall. Country butchers were now given preference over residents in allotting stalls. And after 1801 anyone not selling provisions

(e.g. dealers in cheap pottery, tolerated until then, just as clothiers had been in the past) was officially banned.

Bath, it was alleged, owed a good deal of its prosperity to the reputation of its market. Certainly there is plenty of testimony that shopping there was a memorable experience. Yet it was hardly a task Caroline Herschel relished when she first settled at Bath in 1772. Knowing little English and terrified of going alone to market 'among fishwomen, butchers, basketwomen, &c... I brought home whatever in my fright I could pick up', she confessed once, a little amused, looking back. Perhaps in time, as her visits became routine, she began to favour particular traders. Such appears to have been Mrs Piozzi's inclination. Years later and far from Bath, remembering old times, images surfaced: 'Warren the Cheese Monger, the deaf & dumb Fish Boy, with poor Mrs Cooper who sold Greens - shall I see [them] no more at the Market in *that* City?', she wondered.

⇒ See also **Porters and Basketwomen** and under individual trades, e.g. **Butchers; Fishmongers; Greengrocers**.

## **Market Gardeners** see **Gardeners and Nurserymen**

## **Mercers** see **Silk Mercers**

## **Milksellers and Dairymaids**

An estimate of family expenditure c.1780 allowed for each person a third of a pint of milk a day. This may be too high an average for poorer families at that date (despite their relish for tea), but it nonetheless suggests a consumption of well over a thousand gallons a day at Bath during the high season for visitors. The dairy herds supplying this quantity must have pastured close to Bath, including some kept on Kingsmead Meadows and others on Bath Common where a dairy house was apparently erected in 1755-6. Milk was sold 'loose' on daily door-to-door rounds (even on Sundays) according to a system of street distribution that must have been settled among the various private suppliers. How far the traditional image of milkmaid with yoke and open pails serves for Bath is doubtful, for the

few records we have pertain to milk *men* - two of them, as it happens, guilty of violent acts. One of them, recently employed by Saunders of Slippery Lane 'in the carrying of milk', was implicated in the arson attack on the Roman Catholic chapel during the 1780 riots, while in 1789 the other (described as wearing a smock, which does fit the image) faced charges of physical assault. The trade was not easy for the authorities to police, and practices such as milk watering can hardly have been unknown. Only once did the magistrates act, when in 1775, because of legal requirements, they called in the milksellers' gill, pint or quart measures for certification with a standard mark. The order would have applied equally to dealers in asses' milk. This dearer commodity, sometimes prescribed for invalids, was certainly available at Bath by 1730, and could if necessary be supplied on the spot, still warm, by milking animals at the customer's door.

Some relationship there surely was between producers of milk and providers of butter, but the evidence is scanty. On the whole dealers in fresh butter - 'one of the excellencies of Bath' - were female. Most of them seem to have travelled into Bath from dairy farms in the surrounding area to trade as 'basket sellers' on pitches near the Shambles or from actual market stalls (and from 1775/6 at standings within the Market House which they shared with the pork butchers). Besides newly churned butter they must often have sold its by-product 'Bath cheese' (made from skimmed milk) and also eggs, but not salt butter which was more of a cheesemongers' commodity. Used widely in cooking as well as spread on bread and buns, butter was a staple of Georgian diet at all levels of society. Supplies were nevertheless sensitive to weather and season as well as to local demand, so that butter prices fluctuated all the time, rising and falling in a single day just 'like the Stocks', one amused observer noted. But many customers, suspicious of profiteering, were far from amused and complained loudly as the average cost of a pound of butter more than doubled from 5d.-6d. in the 1750s to around a shilling by 1785 and 14d.-15d. in the 1790s. In July 1793 it shot up briefly to a preposterous two shillings because, the dairymaids claimed, not only was milk scarce but the heat made churning difficult.

Their clients had a right to feel sceptical when the Mayor's inspectors so often found underweight butter on sale. In 1795 they confiscated as much as 50 lbs from one butterseller, and in 1796 30 lbs from another - despite a recent reminder from the Guildhall that butter had to be sold in exact

one-pound and quarter-pound quantities, and that any stocks seized would be re-weighed in front of the Mayor and then distributed, as usual in such cases, to the city's deserving poor who could no longer afford to buy it. However, it had ceased being merely a question of occasional butterwomen imposing on the public, for 'jobbers' or middlemen were now involved. Moreover, high prices were also sometimes asked for eggs, though never so brazenly as in December 1794 when the *Bath Herald* related that some vendors were charging three shillings a dozen and that a groat (4d.) had been paid for a single egg.

⇒ See also **Cheesemongers**.

## **Milliners** see **Haberdashers and Milliners**



## **Music Dealers**

Professional musicians at Bath all boosted their income by taking pupils, and it was to these and the growing pool of amateurs and connoisseurs that music shops largely catered. The more a taste for music was seen as genteel, and a talent for playing or singing the proof of a polite education, the greater the call for instruments, graded exercises, sheet music, songbooks, and all the other materials and services a specialist shop could offer. Music masters had always met some of these needs, but by c.1740 a full-time instrument-maker had taken up residence - or residences, for Thomas Underwood's business was often on the move - in Lansdown Road, Cock Lane, and High Street in the 1740s, in Stall Street, High Street again, and near Abbey Churchyard during the next quarter century. Under the shop-sign of a bass viol, or a violin, or a violin and flute, Millgrove provided a comprehensive service. His essential trade lay in the making, repair, maintenance, tuning, and hiring out of instruments - stringed, wind, and keyboard (mainly spinets and harpsichords). Along with this went the stocking of accessories (reeds, bows, gut and metal strings, pitchpipes, ruled music paper, etc.), and the sale of printed scores and parts, sheet

music, songs, dances, church psalmody, libretti, tutors... plus, quite incongruously, a separate line in mushroom preserves. He dealt too in second-hand scores and old instruments, and among his professional services offered copying and transposing music on demand. It was a considerable operation and the 'great Music Shop' in High Street had room enough in 1760 to house an impromptu band performance to celebrate a British naval victory. Among the three or four apprentices Underwood then had learning the craft, Benjamin Milgrove was the undoubted star, a versatile performer on violin, keyboard and French horn, and in years to come an accomplished composer. Partnered by John Brooks, a 'cellist colleague, Milgrove took over the firm - now in Stall Street - when Underwood retired temporarily from business. From 1764 they traded in Abbey Green and in 1778 Milgrove moved to [Old] Bond Street, now more of a toyman than a music dealer, though he still rented out instruments, participated in Bath's strenuous concert life, and taught the fashionable guitar.

Milgrove was not unusual in blurring the distinction between music dealer and active musician. In 1765 Joseph Tylee, deputy organist at the Abbey Church, was also managing a full-scale music and instrument business (with wholesale arrangements for country dealers) from premises in Queen Street. Five years later, now full Abbey organist and maybe too busy to trade on his own account, he installed an experienced instrument-maker in a shop by the Pump Room to sell and rent out instruments (including early fortepianos and guitars) and all the latest music from Italian opera to pieces in the *galant* style and the current Bath minuets and country dances. If this was the origin of Lintern's, most renowned of the city's Georgian music shops, the omens were not initially good, for James Lintern had to auction off his entire stock in 1781 to meet creditors' demands. Soon flourishing once more, however, he lent out music on the circulating library principle, and ministered to a copious demand for song sheets - judging, that is, from his occasional discount sales of 2000-4000 songs, or the c.1000 copies of popular favourites, made up in small bundles, stolen from his counter in 1790. In 1795, and in rebuilt premises (thanks to the new Pump Room), Lintern's was appointed supplier of music to the royal Yorks, and a year later the firm took out an unprecedented three-column press advertisement, surmounted by the ducal arms, to give news of the latest publications (Pleyel, Dussek, a Mozart sonata) together with an offer - a sign of the warlike times - to

equip regimental bands. Although the shop retailed and serviced instruments, and hired them out for concerts or on weekly, quarterly or annual terms, it probably manufactured none of its own. A few instrument makers did make a Bath living, but the bulk of Lintern's warehouse stock came from London, transported to the spa by slow wagon, and in no small number to judge from the two hundred harpsichords and pianofortes the shop had constantly circulating on hire in 1796. New sheet music naturally arrived much quicker and was available more widely, not only from music dealers but at bookshops and circulating libraries.

**Nurserymen** see **Gardeners and Nurserymen**

**Painters** see **House Painters and Colourmen**

### **Pastrycooks and Confectioners**

Nowhere, thought John Wood, produced 'better and cleaner Cook Maids' than Bath, that great nursery of culinary talent. And if domestic cooks were esteemed, so too were their commercial equivalents, the shopkeeping pastrycooks and confectioners, especially in the days of 'immortal' Gill and Molland. In theory the pastrycook specialised in savoury pies and pastries, soups, and cooked meats (an area of some overlap with cheesemongers), and the confectioner - 'a sweet-tooth'd Tradesman' - in cakes, candied fruits, creams, and other desserts. In practice the two branches were often combined under one roof. Some pastrycooks served up fast food on the premises - basins of hot soup, 'alamode' beef stew, spit-roasted meats, tarts, indeed snacks generally. Gill's, nestling close against the Abbey Church in Wade's Passage, must have been rather cramped for eating, but Molland's at 2 Milsom Street had more space with a proper dining room. Other pastrycooks made full use of their cooking facilities by dressing (i.e. preparing) meals to order and sending them round to visitors' lodgings all ready to serve. Alternatively, if they had an oven, they might offer (like some bakers) to cook pies and puddings that customers had assembled in advance. The first pastrycook to do this, in 1753, was Richard Page, a byword in Cheap Street for over forty years (c.1742-84) for his brawns, hams, tongues, and Yorkshire muffins fresh daily.

Skills were passed on by apprenticeships and within family firms like the Taggs, long-established Stall Street pastrycooks. Nathan Strange, trained under Page, even adopted his master's trademark of Yorkshire muffins, but also joined forces with a French cook for a time, enabling him to add a fashionable range of pâtés, tarts, biscuits and blancmange. The mix of traditional and foreign cuisines was increasingly evident. In 1775 Thomas Wiltshire offered Indian dishes and 'turtles drest the West-Indian way', and soon the Shum brothers in Cheap Street and John Peterswald near Trim Bridge would be selling all kinds of German and Italian sausages, puddings, and preserves. French influence had long been felt, above all in sauces, pastries and confectionery. The trend culminated in ice-cream, first available at Bath from 1774 when Benjamin Forde established ice wells by Pulteney Bridge and began concocting cream ices (at 4d. per small glass), fruit sorbets, etc. He was followed by John Bedford, who for a time (1786-90) froze ice cream daily at his shop in [Old] Bond Street, and by Peter Vivier, a Brock Street confectioner with a tea garden and glacière on Lansdown serving homemade strawberry ices. Enough ice cream was being consumed at the time of the 1800 food scarcity to affect butter prices, and the better-off were asked to abstain from such luxuries, just as they had in the crisis of 1795 when the 'almost total abolition of Pies, Tarts, &c... [was] beyond a doubt... the saving of us' - though pastrycooks and confectioners undoubtedly suffered from the temporary loss of custom.

Otherwise their shops were normally among the most attractive in Bath. Crusty pies were fashioned like sculpture, and sweetmeats and candied fruits stacked up in architectural forms. The description of a London confectioner's in 1786 tells of glass display cases, preserved fruits and jellies in handsome jars, pyramids of pastries and tartlets, lidded goblets of liqueurs, and transparent gauze to keep off the flies. Bath, famous for its show, can have offered no less. As early as 1750 William Smith confected jellies, creams, syllabubs, biscuits and other desserts 'as genteel as in *London*'. Forde on Pulteney Bridge shaped his ices in fancy moulds, and tempted the passer-by with jellies, orgeat, lemonade, fine biscuits, and a rich choice of cakes - almond, lemon, thick plum, saffron, and Royal Queen. One Victorian writer, John Britton, remembered for the rest of his life the fascination of the Bath pastrycooks' shops which he experienced c.1779 as a child, particularly the flavour of Charles Gill's raspberry tarts - probably sampled at Gill's second shop in Wade's Passage, opened in 1772 sixteen years after the first. Famous too for soups and jellies, roasts

and grills, Gill's set the standard - as a Bristol imitator admitted in 1770, saying he would do everything 'in the same Manner, as at GILL's in Bath'. Only the gourmet 'temple' of Nicholas and Dorothy Molland, repeatedly mentioned in novels, verse and memoirs of the next generation (1779-1813), won more acclaim. Expensive but alluring, its prime site near the bottom of Milsom Street (from 1781) made it a constant rendezvous for those who could afford it.

⇒ See also **Bakers; Corn Factors and Mealmen.**



## **Pawnbrokers**

The working-class poor, according to one writer around 1750, could scarcely survive without pawnbrokers - a breed, it was true, with a shady reputation, often unfairly criticised for profiteering at the poor's expense, but which surely had as much right as any other to a fair return for their services. Even 20%-25%, he thought, did not sound unreasonable considering that a pawnbroker had to make snap judgments on a vast diversity of goods that people brought him, and keep a large stock of cash on hand. As to the common charge that the trade encouraged thieves, 'a Pawnbroker of Credit is as cautious as any other Man... [and no more] liable to... Mistakes than others who have a more reputable Name'. In any case, from 1756 onwards they were increasingly regulated, and from 1785 licensed, with the legal right to exceed the usual maximum interest rates on loans.

Pawnbrokers were visible enough at Bath if only by their trade symbol, the sign of three balls, which was how one bypasser identified a pawnbroker's shop (Paul Scudamore's maybe) in the rundown district of Holloway around 1800. Not that the trade necessarily gravitated to the poorer, slummier districts. One busy shop, said in 1779 to be long-established, stood 'at the Three Blue Balls' in St James's Parade, a perfectly

good address. Twenty years later pawnbrokers could be found in Peter Street, Kingsmead Square, Queen Street, and London Street. They rarely advertised except when a business changed hands or to publicise a sale of unredeemed articles. The auctioneer John Plura sold off one such assortment in 1795, including watches, plate, jewellery, books, and twenty lots of clothing. Another sale in 1800 listed old and new clothing, pieces not made up, blankets, furniture, shop fittings, and three watches - the property of some desperate tailor perhaps? Altogether the best notion of what people pledged *in extremis* comes from the declarations sworn before the Mayor respecting pawn tickets they had lost. Applying to just one pawnbroker, Samuel Porter, and covering only 1785-91, the list provides a graphic list of personal possessions temporarily placed in hock, and the sums agreed in order to redeem them. Items of wearing apparel accounted for the bulk of pledges at this particular broker's, followed by watches, jewellery, and a few expendable household articles such as tablecloths and sheets. None of the sums was very great however - from sixpence for a poor waistcoat up to £1 11s. 8d. for a silver watch with two pairs of silver shoebuckles and two silver teaspoons. Even if he charged 20%, Samuel Porter would not be rolling in clover on business like that.

⇒ See also **Secondhand-Clothes Dealers**.

## **Pedlars** see **Hawkers and Pedlars**

## **Perfumers**

Until about 1750-52 when George Duperré and the Italian dealer De Coppa settled at Bath, perfumery goods could be had only from toymen, hairdressers, milliners, or the occasional visiting perfumer from London. Whether they knew it or not, the new arrivals were challenging vested interests. The Corporation, which had just mounted a fresh campaign to restrict trading rights to registered freemen, decided to prosecute several interlopers by way of example, Duperré and De Coppa among them. But the city's trade monopoly was hard to prove and the case dragged on, complicated by a libel against the Corporation published, one supposes, by friends of Duperré. By the early 1760s, no longer under much threat, the specialist perfumery trade had taken firm root, with Duperré (at the sign of the Civet Cat in Wade's Passage) and De Coppa now joined by

further outsiders in James Grandi, Alexander Jolly (who in 1767 married De Coppa's widow), and a Bath branch of the London firm of Richard Warren & Company.

Though they also sold snuffs, cordials, foreign confectionery and the like, their main business was in scented waters, essences, soaps, shaving materials, hair powders and dyes, smelling salts, skin preservatives and whiteners (such as 'chicken gloves', that bizarre passion of the 1770s), and cosmetics and accessories in general. Most of these items were bought in from London or imported direct from foreign warehouses, and some concoctions on sale must certainly have been noxious. Cosmetics, for instance, might contain lead, mercury or bismuth, and only Warren was willing to guarantee (in 1775) his perfumes to be wholly 'vegetable', with not a trace of musk, civet and other 'foetid' substances - though certainly 'spermaceti paste' (for the skin) had once featured in his advertisements among the violet and jasmine waters, odour of roses, and quintessence of lavender. Perfumers' lists had an exotic ring, with their Naples Dew, Bloom of Circassia, rosemary-based Hungary Water, Donna Maria's Lotion, and 'Eastern Wash-Balls, used by the beautiful Fatima' - the last item obtainable from Mary Purdie (later Mrs Phynn), a former Warren associate who kept a well-patronised shop on North Parade from the late 1760s. She was an accredited agent for particular manufacturers and by 1780 had also developed a sideline in haberdashery, just as other perfumers kept going by offering hairdressing services or dealing in 'toys', stationery, or - in the case of Alexander Jolly (twice bankrupt during a 26-year trading career at Bath) - an array of foreign preserves, sauces, and pickles. It was a polite enough occupation, but severely competitive. Common perfumery, it was said in 1781, was 'now being vended in every little shop', a growth that the licensing of perfumers and the tax on perfumery (1786) might well have stifled had it not been for widespread avoidance. Eleven perfumers appear in the Bath Directory for 1800, seven of whom were also toymen and the other four hairdressers. Warren is strangely not listed, though the firm had traded at Bath ever since 1762 in various partnerships and at different addresses, and from 1794 onwards had premises in George Street.

⇒ See also **Hairdressers; Tobacconists and Snuff Dealers.**

## Pipemakers

The majority of working men smoked, and generally preferred to do so using cheap, discardable, fragile clay pipes, which were manufactured locally and consumed in great numbers. Up to the mid-1720s the demand was largely met by Robert Carpenter's prolific workshop, but by c.1740 as many as three pipemaking firms were in production, run by John Carpenter (successor to his father Robert), Giles Howell (a family relation), and John Smith (newly started up). Smith, or rather his sons, dominated the Bath pipe industry in the later period, rivalled only by Thomas Clarke from the mid-1770s. The art was 'more dirty than laborious', remarked one contemporary, though the strength of the apprentices was 'tried in carrying Pipes to the publick Houses'. Manufacture depended on supplies of pipe clay from Dorset or North Devon, plenty of fuel to fire a specially lined kiln, and the use of pipe moulds distinctive to each maker. Generally bundled up by the gross, either plain or glazed, clay pipes had a widespread distribution, ubiquitously available in alehouses, sold through grocers, tobacconists and chandlers' shops, and even provided by special order for the indulgence of Bath Corporation.

⇒ See also **Tobacconists and Snuff Dealers**.



## Porters and Basketwomen

Look at almost any street in working hours and you would see servants, shop assistants, journeymen, apprentice boys, carters, street traders, even on occasion sedan chairmen, delivering goods to houses, lodgings, retail shops, and other places. Hot dinners, bundles of clay pipes, cane chairs, hats from the milliners, novels from the library, pewter mugs of ale, harpsichords on hire, apothecaries' potions, laundered sheets, baskets of

this, boxes and tubs of that, were constantly being borne through central Bath or into the spreading upper town.

Among all the carriers, the porters and basketwomen stood out, or did so anyway from the late 1740s, because they displayed special identification - an engraved brass badge - to show they performed under Corporation licence. Their main job was to carry customers' purchases for them, and specifically to deliver from the provisions market to private addresses and lodgings. One must suppose this required them, once chosen, to accompany their clients round the market, noting the goods ordered or perhaps loading up baskets as they went, and then arranging the time, place and cost of delivery to the door - male porters handling larger items such as filled sacks or carcasses of meat, basketwomen the rest (often carried in baskets on their heads). This kind of work usually fell to 'poor strangers' - non-Bathonians desperate to earn a crust but unfamiliar with where people lived, hence the 'great mistakes... often made in the carrying of Meat and other provisions by such Strangers, ignorant of the Place of Abode of... Persons to whose houses they were directed to convey the same', as the Council minute rather fussily put it when the new licensing scheme was confirmed in 1749. The magistrates had fifty badges at their disposal and threatened any unlicensed operators with a shilling fine and



loss of their basket. Nevertheless the system did depend on trust - above all that carriers would faithfully deliver their cargo and not take it home with them instead, as was sometimes happening by 1786. The revised bylaws of 1793 were noticeably more explicit. Up to thirty porters and a hundred basketwomen/men could now be registered annually. They must wear their licence number visibly, display a 3-inch black metal plate (with the number in white) on their basket, wait for customers at approved stands in the market or High Street, and carry their loads, or any messages they had been given, politely and without dawdling en route - all subject

to a fierce penalty of twenty shillings or forty days' suspension. As with sedan chairs there was a clear tariff of charges. This varied by distance (with a steep increase for carrying beyond two miles) and by weight of burden, the maximum for a porter being a hundredweight, and for a basketwoman half that. But porters, it is worth noting, generally earned rather more than basketwomen for carrying the same weight the same distance.

## **Pottery, Porcelain and Glassware Dealers**

A spa visitor in 1703 fell for an expensive 'China Tea Pott' and bought it for his Buckinghamshire mansion. Oriental porcelain like this, made specially for the European market, was much admired, as were good pieces of Dutch, Lambeth and Bristol blue-and-white delft - objects rather for display than daily use. At this date, pewter satisfied most household needs and there was limited demand for utilitarian pottery. What transformed the situation over the coming years was the way the whole nation took to tea drinking. Still somewhat exotic, hot drinks tasted better out of ceramic vessels and gave rise to novelties like cups and saucers, milk-jugs and tea-pots, usually in matching sets. Until the 1740s people looked mainly to the toyshops for items like these - places such as Deard's (later Bertrand's) on Terrace Walk and Wicksteed's in Orange Grove. When Bertrand finally sold off his stock in 1747-8, it included 'ornamental and useful Dresden' and probably some English china too, because not only were Dresden figures and entire table services (such as Ralph Allen later had at Prior Park) now available, their English and French equivalents - Chelsea, Bow, Worcester, Vincennes - had also begun to filter onto the shelves. Moreover the first china shops (as distinct from general toyshops) were now appearing - Constantine Crowbrow (c.1742-5) for one, and also Mrs Davis on Grand Parade. Despite the name they doubtless stocked decorative earthenware as well as porcelain, particularly the colourful lead-glazed pots and figures now coming out of Staffordshire. More ordinary grades of pottery could probably be had from teamen and grocers. At least one grocer was hiring out crockery and glasses by 1746, and four years later a baker advertised Salisbury pots for sale. Earthenware dealers also traded in and about the market.

Unlike its neighbour Bristol, Bath had no ceramic industry of its own, but could always accommodate London and provincial factories wanting

retail outlets at Bath. One such deal, struck for the 1756-7 season between Thomas Loggon (fan-maker and toyman) and the Worcester factory, promised fresh deliveries twice a week of cups and saucers, ewers, basins, mugs, teapots, and sauceboats. Loggon had already hosted a porcelain sale (including scarce Oriental pieces) by a London dealer in 1754, which must have helped him weigh up demand. Various other opportunist sales took place over the years in hired rooms, e.g. a ship's cargo of tea-sets and Chelsea ware in 1764, more sales of china in 1768, 1774 and 1780, and in 1793 a 'glorious' collection of French porcelain from Paris, presumably dispersed by the Revolution.

After 1760 the specialist shops controlled most of the retail and wholesale trade. Benjamin Layton at the bottom of Walcot Street (until 1782) and John Kendall in Pierrepont Street (until 1786) were now among the leading chinamen. Besides ceramics they sold teas, coffee, etc., and glassware, and lent out tableware to short-stay visitors in lodgings. In 1772 the potter Josiah Wedgwood considered the Bath toy- and chinashops to be even 'richer and more extravagant in their shew' than their London counterparts. Yet the fancies of Rococo were now giving way to simpler classical designs, and Layton, Kendall, and other dealers stocked plenty of creamware, everyday delft, and plain brown teapots (which indeed Layton supplied to the new Assembly Rooms in 1771). The glassware, plain, engraved, cut, and sometimes gilt, took many forms - decanters, wineglasses and rummers, syllabub- and jelly-glasses, tumblers, jugs, basins, punchbowls, cruet sets, toilet bottles, candlesticks and girandoles. Here as well, periodic sales by outsiders (most notably Christopher Haedy, a London glasscutter, 1769-89) widened local choice, but when it came to something really spectacular - chandeliers for the Assembly Rooms and the new Guildhall, say - the orders went straight to London makers, bypassing any suppliers at Bath.

The decision of Wedgwood & Bentley to establish their own saleroom at the spa was taken in full knowledge of the competition, not forgetting the ready availability of handsome, locally carved, *stone* vases, so much cheaper than anything Wedgwood could produce in pottery at his Etruria works. Managed by William Ward, Bentley's brother-in-law, his enterprising showroom opened in Westgate Buildings in 1772, later removing to more central locations in Milsom Street (first at no. 43, then no. 22) in 1774 and 1779. The celebrated Queensware service, the black

basalt and 'pebble' vases, urns, ewers, Etruscan teapots, enamelled flower-pots, and ceramic bas-reliefs and medallions, were all available from the start. Given the firm's flair for presentation, it made for a novel, rather distinguished-looking display of a single firm's output. During his twenty years of trading Ward continued to add new lines - cameos, seals, portrait busts, agate vases, the famous cobalt-blue-and-white 'jasperware' - always determinedly loyal to Wedgwood products. All the more significant then that his successor in 1792, William Ellen, diversified the shop's range at once, adding porcelain and glassware - doubtless the stock from the [Old] Bond Street china-shop his aunt, Sarah Williams, had recently run. Ward's ex-shop assistant, G. Denner, adopted the same mixed-goods policy at his Staffordshire, china and glass store just off Cheap Street. And so did other dealers, including Richard Egan who retailed Derby porcelain alongside pottery, glass, and Oriental china. So in the end Wedgwood's single-firm shop, which never yielded the profits he had hoped for, provided more of a cautionary tale than a model to follow.

⇒ See also **Toymen**.

## **Poulterers**

In January 1780 cooked chickens fattened on raisins and chopped almonds - latest whim of the Bath pastrycooks - were selling for an unbelievable two guineas a pair. This was real extravagance, but poultry and game always did command a good price. That same winter the poulterers were asking 2s.6d. for a wild goose, 1s.6d. for woodcock and mallard, 1s. for snipe and teal, 6d. for fieldfare and starlings, and 1s. for a dozen small larks. Farmed poultry came dearer still. Used to Cornish markets, John Penrose reported with some amazement in 1766 that turkeys were not to be had at Bath 'under 7s.6d.' and that geese were considered cheap at 6s. Even an ordinary chicken cost him 20d. Did poultry like this come to market already slaughtered (but unplucked) or alive in baskets and cages? Before c.1756, when the magistrates decided to suppress the barbarous Shrovetide custom of 'throwing at cocks', farmers certainly brought live cockerels in for market customers.

Plenty of fowls were reared in the Bath neighbourhood, so that much of what the market traders sold would be their own produce (including eggs). Poulterers with shops would have relied far more on suppliers, and in the

case of game this undoubtedly involved the temptation to buy at bargain prices from poachers. Though the authorities occasionally sounded a warning against selling trapped, netted or illegally shot game, the practice was hard to stop - as the novelist Fielding well knew, describing in *Tom Jones* how the ex-gamekeeper Black George laid wires in order to catch hares 'with which he was to supply a poulterer at Bath the next morning'. In 1786 one real-life poulterer with a shop at 7 Cheap Street, Moses Potter, was snared himself. A set-up job, in which landowner, his servant, and two poachers all connived, saw him receiving eleven illicit partridges and then offering them for sale. Given the harshness of the property laws, he was judged to have escaped lightly, even for a first offence, with a £20 fine, plus costs and a promise not to re-offend. For Potter, a well-known Methodist, it must have been a humiliating experience and he soon sold up to Hester Cole, who kept the shop going into the next century. Hers was on a prime site, not far from another poulterer's shop, Scudamore's, in Westgate Street - in all likelihood the two premises cited in Parliament by Charles James Fox in attacking the iniquities of the Shop Tax. One trader, he pointed out, had to pay nineteen shillings, whereas the other, close by, 'whose capital was not near so large, nor his business near so extensive', was assessed at over five times that rate.

Another poulterer of the time, Charles Hemmings, surely boasted a greater turnover than either. He occupied the largest shop in Wade's Passage, where his predecessors, the Gifford family, had plied the same trade of poulterer for fifty-one years (1723-74). Hemmings was not to stand in their shadow. By 1788 he was promising fine venison transported twice a week during the season from different estates, along with genuine warren rabbits sent from Mendip, all kinds of poultry 'fresh daily', and real Bath cream cheese. A year later he joined with a fellow poulterer in Cheltenham in launching a caravan service between the two spas, hoping amongst other benefits for a cheaper supply of pigeons and asparagus. In 1791 he advertised cooked turtle, hams, and 'Parmesan and Fancy Cheese', and also informed other poulterers, warreners and 'Dealers in Rabbits, Hares and Vermin Skins' that he had now embarked on the fur business. Nothing more is known of this venture, but as a poulterer and transport entrepreneur (Bath-Cheltenham in 14 hours) Hemmings continued to thrive. Orders for his venison could be taken at Bath, Cheltenham, or Biddeston (one of his estate suppliers) for delivery anywhere in the kingdom. The keeper would ensure the beasts were not overheated when

shot (to keep the flesh sweet), and entire young bucks and does could be supplied on request.

⇒ See also **Butchers**.

## Printsellers

Today we are incessantly deluged with visual images. Georgians were not, and a printshop offered a rare scene of pictorial abundance. No wonder that Admiral Croft (in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*) could never pass a certain Bath printseller's without looking in the window. Festooned with engravings and etchings, mezzotints and aquatints, portraits and caricatures, picturesque views and old master reproductions, printshop windows drew spectators like a magnet. Little throngs must have gathered when new prints appeared, especially if these had strong local appeal - as with Worlidge's copperplate of the Abbey interior (1750), Cozens' and Malton's streetscapes of Bath (1770s), or satirical images of well-known individuals. One imagines the general merriment when Matthew Darley's *Bath Characters* came out (1777), despite the odd protest at 'the public exhibition of *indelicate* and *defamatory* prints'. Even during the politically repressive late 1790s the Bath magistrates struggled to prevent shops selling 'the most indecent, scandalous, and disloyal Prints'.

Bath's foremost print dealer of the 1780s-1790s, Robert Ricards of [Old] Bond Street, no doubt kept such stuff under the counter. Top sellers for him would be pin-up portraits of war heroes, stage stars, famous preachers, and other public idols, together with reproductions of paintings, moral tales in pictures (the ever-popular Hogarth), sentimental genre, landscape scenery, and topographical views. In 1782 he advertised 'Sarah Siddons' (mezzotinted in two versions, after Beach or Lawrence), in 1788 hand-coloured prints from Raphael's *Logge* frescoes, in 1794 Francis Jukes' aquatints of the River Dee, in 1800 the celebrated set of illustrations to Boydell's *Shakespeare*. Buying and selling prints of every kind, old and new, British and foreign, Ricards' shop was a little mecca for artists, amateurs and collectors alike. He loaned prints out, as the circulating libraries did books. He sold artists' materials such as crayons, brushes, Reeves' colours in cakes and boxes, and presumably, as a stationer, a range of drawing papers and sketchbooks. On occasion he would handle subscriptions for new prints, and in 1793 exhibited Mather Brown's

original painting, *The Last Interview of Louis XVI*, to drum up support for an intended etching. There is no record of Ricards framing prints, which was more the prerogative of the carver-and-gilder. Conversely, though, a carver might sell and hire out prints - as Thomas Birchall did in the 1790s. Auction notices show that framed prints (usually in burnished gold frames) hung in many Bath houses by 1780, and that some connoisseurs owned copies of the great illustrated books of the period and portfolios of valuable engravings. Their best sources remained London and foreign dealers, but scarce proof impressions could sometimes be picked up from local dealers (Ricards, Abraham, Birchall, Gwennap, Nichols) and at auction. The Bath engraver William Hibbert also dealt in prints, as did several booksellers in a small way, and there were surely discoveries to be made in 1796 at a one-off sale of nearly 4000 hunting prints by engravers ranging in time from Dürer down to Bartolozzi.

⇒ See also **Booksellers**.

## Saddlers and Collarmakers

Indispensable occupations in a society that so much relied on horses for transport and haulage, these nevertheless remained quite distinct trades. Collarmakers were fewer in number and ranked well below saddlers in status. Their business was strictly utilitarian and mainly to do with common draught animals, for which they made the all-important, padded leather collars that maximised traction, plus the ordinary harness, traces, and other gear that went with it. Furthermore, they worked primarily in horse-hide, which tended to link them with the trade in horseflesh and the sale of dog's-meat - even though at Bath this link remains unproven. A number of local collarmakers took apprentices, and one, Thomas Sperring, combined the craft with ropemaking for a time. But neither he nor any other collarmaker could aspire to a seat on Bath Corporation, unlike the saddlemaking branch of the Chapman family who consistently took a prominent part in city affairs. The saddler's art embraced not only saddlery but fine harness- and trunkmaking, and hence involved different skills - leathercraft, wood-carving (to shape the beechwood frame or 'saddle-tree' to the horse's back), tailoring and needlework (to cover the leather with velvet, etc, and embroider saddle-cloths), smithing and brasiery (for saddle-plates, bridles, stirrups, and brasses), and not least a talent for handling horses. Increasingly the metalwork could be had ready-made

from the Black Country, but craftsmen were still needed in the other branches, as well as a stock of expensive materials - which in Walter Chapman's bequest (1729) to his saddler son John included ornamental gold and silver lace. As Bath grew, so did the prestige accorded stylish riding, smart coaches, and the sophisticated trappings that saddlers knew how to supply. Not surprisingly, the two saddlers' shops of 1700 (Walter Chapman's and Thomas Biggs') had doubled to four by 1750 and doubled again by 1800. Among the market leaders was now the Cheap Street firm of George Rogers/John Rogers/Rogers & Lewis/John Lewis, but closely pressed from 1767 onwards by Thomas Maxfield whose great innovation, patented 1786, was the elastic saddle which 'expands and contracts' with every movement of horse and rider. Rogers & Lewis soon adopted the patent elastic saddle themselves, whereas a less fashionable saddler, Jonathan Harman in Horse Street, saw no need. Instead he diversified into rope and twine manufacture, and took over an existing ropewalk (probably the collarmaker Sperring's, lying beyond Bath Bridge) for the purpose.

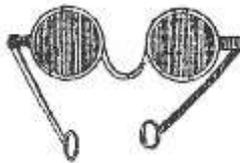
⇒ See also **Coachbuilders**.

## Salt Merchants

Boiled brine salt for the Bath market came from Droitwich, transported by water to Bristol and (after 1727) on to Bath by barge. Two 'salt warehouses' existed by 1760, one of them (Bradley's Buildings) on the Quay opposite the crane, the other nearby at the bottom of Avon Street. Their operators tended to have general interests in bulk freight. George Farley, who resumed his uncle Bradley's business in 1760 and managed a second warehouse at Bristol, carried salt down the Severn once a fortnight in his own craft, but in addition shipped cargoes of timber, pipe clay, bricks and tiles, and Tenby coal. Among his successors, Samuel Ward imported corn, salted butter, coal, and chalk for milling into plasterers' whiting. But salt remained their main business. In 1797 Ward still devoted one of his vessels solely to the Droitwich 'salt run', and assured his customers that the salt would be loaded onto the barge straight from the drying ovens and so arrive quite clean. He dealt only wholesale, never less than a quarter-hundredweight at a time, leaving individual grocers, chandlers, etc. to retail salt in smaller packets.

## Scientific Instrument Dealers

Prompted perhaps by a recent upsurge in science lecturing at Bath, the partnership of Ribright & Smith - London manufacturers of optical, scientific and mathematical instruments - set up shop in 1777. Three years later the business moved to a more permanent location at 10 [Old] Bond Street under the management of Benjamin Smith alone. The Bath music master and pioneering star-gazer William Herschel (obliged to grind his own telescope lenses) surely applauded the initiative. This was something new for the spa, a captivating *mélange* of everything from electrical machines to reading glasses, and it gave people access to precision instruments, educational tools, and experimental apparatus hitherto available only from London or visiting instrument makers. Barometers, magic lanterns, globes (terrestrial and celestial), and electrical machines could even be hired. No less important, as both optician and electrician, Smith was able supply spectacles with optometrically correct lenses and also administer electric shock treatment to patients with rheumatic, paralytic, and other conditions. If the slogan 'Persons electrified at One Shilling each' were not draw enough, Smith had other means of attracting notice. He advertised courses of lectures, demonstrated an improved solar microscope, and in 1788 exhibited a dissectable model of the human eye along with *camera obscura* devices, 'poly-optic pantographs', and other items. Clearly a deft mechanic, in 1789 he constructed a miniature glass planetarium for the lecturer Abraham Didier, and in 1795 secured a further coup when a 'travelling table' he devised was snapped up by the Duchess of York. Electric shock therapy was still being advertised into the 1790s, so it might well have been here that Jane Austen's brother, Edward, received treatment in 1799. However, Robbins' Bath directory for 1800



records Smith simply as 'optician' and in the end this was surely his most valuable function, for spectacles were often purchased, from toymen and the like, very casually and even worn to make a fashion statement. Indeed,

according to John Penrose in 1766, to be 'near-sighted' was quite *à la mode*.

⇒ See also **Clock-and Watchmakers; Toymen**.

## Seal Engravers

The chief use of a seal was of course to authenticate documents, though there was snob value too in wielding a personalised seal that bore a family device or coat of arms. Moreover, the fairly mechanical craft of seal engraving shaded off into gem engraving with its pleasing overtones of Classical Antiquity. Both aspects, utilitarian and aesthetic, were present in this specialist Bath trade datable to c.1732 when John and Sarah Wicksteed opened a 'toyshop' in Orange Grove which offered the additional service of bespoke intaglio seals. John Wicksteed's workshop may have remained in Bathampton at this point, but about 1737 he re-sited it in Lyncombe Vale just off Ralph Allen Drive. This proved an inspired move, for 'Wicksteed's Machine' - named after his water-powered 'jewelling mill' - soon became a favourite spot to visit, a curiosity of the neighbourhood out of which a tea garden, the Bagatelle, would eventually emerge. Orders could still be placed at the Orange Grove shop, whose prominent sign, 'STONE SEALS', announced the engraved 'Brazil pebble' insignia set in gold which were still the main product. However on Wicksteed's death in 1754, his son James seems to have branched out, first exploiting the more creative vein of cameo miniatures, and later (1769) developing a small spa and the Bagatelle garden on the Lyncombe site. Subsequent events were dictated by a family quarrel. James Wicksteed sold the Bagatelle property in 1773 and departed, abandoning the seal business to his estranged son Edward. Then for eight years (1778-86) the latter's widow Mary, with a young family to support, kept the firm going in premises (still dubbed 'Wicksteed's Machine') at Pulteney Bridge. Here she employed skilled men and sold through the toyshops - all in the face of bitter competition from her father-in-law, James Wicksteed, who had returned to the Bath fray. Both Wicksteeds, though, had gone by summer 1787 leaving the field to Anthony Vere, a seal engraver equipped likewise with a 'machine' as well as a collection of heraldry books for reference. Vere had worked seasonally at Bath since c.1779, and besides sculpting cameos, engraving metallic, jewelled and figured seals, and setting gems, he accepted copperplate commissions for bookplates and visiting cards. This link with jobbing printing was of course nothing new. The Bath

printer-engraver William Hibbert was retailing black cipher seals in 1776, and in the 1760s the Wicksteeds had collaborated with their kinsman, the printmaker Thomas Worlidge, in publishing *A Select Collection of Drawings from Curious Antique Gems*, proof of their more artistic aspirations.

## **Secondhand-Clothes Dealers**

Unwanted clothing often got passed on to relations, friends and servants but eventually, too shabby or outdated for respectable wear, it went to dealers for further distribution and recycling. Fashion-conscious Bath probably did the rag trade proud, but details are scanty. We hear of a woman in male disguise who bought and sold old clothes in the early 1740s, and of Gilleker, another dealer, who in 1779 met with a fatal accident. We know that outsiders were attracted. The London broker John Matthews came on several sorties to Bath in the 1760/70s, offering good money for cast-offs - from 10s. to £10 for plain, brocaded, laced and embroidered suits. Old clothes men were enough of a nuisance in 1799 to need a magistrates' warning not to cry through the streets before 9 a.m. After sorting, the better stuff they collected would be re-sold locally or to specialist brokers, the worst maybe sent for paper-making. But for all its importance, especially to the poor, the trade in old clothes remains obscure. Slopshops and pawnbrokers certainly had a hand in it. Thus the tailors Charles Waters (from 1753) and George Evill (by 1759) both sold secondhand clothing as well as newly made, and both offered to supply charitable causes at special rates. Later on an Avon Street pawnbroker, John Allen, opened a similar shop in Kingsmead Square.

⇒ See also **Pawnbrokers; Tailors**.

## **Seedsman** see **Gardeners and Nurserymen**

## **Shoemakers**

Robbins' *Bath Directory* for 1800 listed around a hundred shoemakers and retailers (i.e. separate businesses, not employees) - a total unmatched even by the tailors, the next most crowded occupation. Top ranking for shoemakers was not unusual in urban settings, but mere numbers did not



necessarily translate into wealth or status, and no shoemakers wielded influence on the Town Council. Cordwainers, as once they were called, were nevertheless the only local craftsmen besides the merchant tailors to preserve their guild organisation all through the stormy seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth. They employed many extra hands as journeymen (some outworkers perhaps, others in-house), and between 1706 and 1768 they jointly enrolled over 200 apprentices - with master shoemakers like Joseph Bush and the elder Philip Palmer each training in the course of their careers up to a dozen apprentices, some of whom eventually took apprentices of their own.

It was a trade requiring neatness and skill, though the basic formula of manufacture hardly altered throughout the century. Most of the raw materials were bought in - tanned leather from curriers or, in roughly shaped pieces, from leather cutters; wooden and cork heels from a heel maker; and fabric for women's shoes from wholesale mercers and drapers - unless supplied by the customer herself to go with a particular gown. A few shoemakers specialised in women's dress shoes or, in the 1780s and 1790s, in men's boots, but the majority supplied all kinds. Men's footwear, most commonly of black leather, was furnished with straps to take the removable buckle (bought from a toyman or silversmith) which constituted the chief fashion interest until the 1790s, when eyelets and shoelaces superseded buckles altogether. Women's shoes were rather more varied, whether in shape, height of heel, means of fastening, colour, decoration, or material (silk, satin, brocade, suede, fine kid, canvas, callimanco, or strong leather for working wear). Many dress shoes, and especially the flat slipper styles of the 1790s, were flimsy enough to warrant the use of protective clogs out of doors, and these too the shoemakers could supply. The alternative safeguards for shoes in wet weather, humble metal-hooped pattens, were obtained direct from patten-makers. By the 1780s quite genteel women at Bath sometimes adopted pattens, though one visitor of 1792 who tried them ('things perfectly new to me') found walking up Lansdown extra difficult.

In the 1750s the bespoke trade was being increasingly challenged by the sale of ready-made shoes, for everyday wear at least. Typical of this trend, John Evill, an outsider, had opened a shoe and stocking warehouse around 1757 in Green Street, and like other warehouse merchants immediately established a policy of low prices, quick turnover, and cash-only sales. In 1761 his aggressive marketing (undercutting competitors by at least 10%) provoked an angry response from three other Bath shoemakers. How, they asked the public, could a pair of women's stuff shoes sold by Evill at 1s.3d. possibly be as well made as a pair at 1s.8d. or 2 shillings, the lowest price 'the Free Masters of this City' could profitably sell for? Whatever the answer, Evill thrived. Soon installed in larger premises in Stall Street, he now produced his entire range on the spot - from women's and children's leather and stuff pumps to boots, clogs, galoshes, pattens, and cork-soled 'gouty shoes', the majority as ready-for-sale goods but some specially to order. When after sixteen years John Evill handed the business on to John Smith, his successor too was a practising shoemaker. This was unusual. As a rule warehouse-type shops simply bought in their stock from wholesalers or acted for particular manufacturers - as Hewitt's Cheshire Shoe Warehouse did at Bath from c.1766, serving (like similar branches in London and Liverpool) merely as a retail outlet for the Nantwich footwear industry. The ready-made trade also gave other sorts of shop their chance to test the market, witness the 'Cheap Shoes' sales campaign waged by Richard Prynne at his Bath drapery and muslin warehouse in spring 1796. But local producers too might seize their opportunities. One shoemaker, for instance, undercut rival bids in 1794 to supply 816 pairs of uniform shoes to the Somersetshire Militia at 5s. a pair.

Prices need to be considered in the light of profits, a matter which had come to the fore in March 1792 when striking Bath journeymen claimed a wage increase to 2s. for making a pair of shoes and 5s.6d. for boots, arguing that the price of footwear at Bath was as dear as anywhere in Europe but that the master shoemakers, operating a wage-fixing cartel, paid their workmen significantly less. With the ever-rising cost of living in the 1790s, the footwear industry became a focus of early trade-union activity, and several Bath journeymen were prosecuted in 1798 for illegal 'combination' to improve wages. The masters too faced pressure as they competed with cut-price merchants and fought for market share among themselves. None of them could ignore the great fashion swing of the later decades that put 'the Beaux in their boots - the Belles in their slippers' (to

quote a Bath rhyme of 1795) and ended the long reign of the shoe buckle. A few retailers, though, tried to secure advantage with a particular product - modish women's sandals (c.1791), Thomas Haynes' waterproof (waxed leather or sealskin) shoes and special boot cleaning fluid (1789-94), Stephen Pitcher's shoe-blackening balls (1793), William Huntley's elastic and Bath cushion soles (1794). Better still, Thomas Harris obtained a royal appointment in 1796 as supplier to the Duke of York (and maker of his waterproof campaign boots). Some shoemakers ceased trading or moved away, but reports of bankruptcies are rare. The assets of one who *was* forced to sell up in 1795, James Olive, included a stock of women's embroidered, 'jean' and leather (black and coloured) shoes, plus sandals and boots, leather and skins, silk bindings and ribbons, fancy vamps, York and pegged heels, and, interestingly enough, nearly 700 shoe lasts. No accounts of the time refer to a separate occupation of cobblers, so most shoemakers probably undertook repair work. Shoeblocks there were, however, plying their poor trade in Orange Grove and elsewhere. In 1763 the *Bath Journal* rescued one of them for posterity by reporting the burial of 'one-eyed William' who once blacked shoes outside the *Bear* inn.



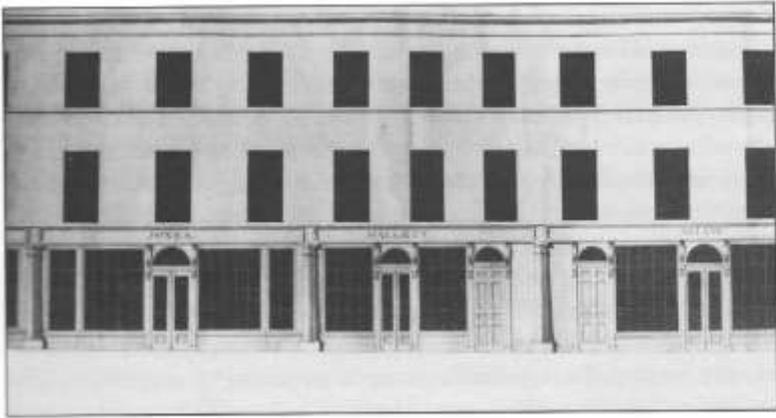
## **Shops (i) Exteriors and interiors**

Queen Anne's court visits of 1702-3 sparked off a flurry of investment in spa amenities - repair of approach roads, street improvements, and several significant new buildings, an elegant Pump Room, Harrison's Assembly Rooms, and - not least - a row of luxury shops. The latter, strung along the side of Gravel Walks (the future Orange Grove), may well have been the

first purpose-built shops at Bath. Retailing had long since spread beyond the Marketplace into Northgate, Cheap Street, Abbey Churchyard and Stall Street. Some of these older shops might amount to no more than a workshop, or a window and counter opening straight on to the street, though the more substantial shopkeepers would already have converted their front parlours into proper sales rooms.

The new premises in Gravel Walks, with their large windows, were designed for retail trade from the start. They fronted a broad stone pavement, which by c.1725 had extended into a long shop-lined promenade snaking from Abbey Churchyard through Wade's Passage all the way to Terrace Walk. Shops old or new preserved their 'vernacular' look still, with gabled roofs and conspicuous hanging signs, though window sashing now gave a smack of Georgian style. Bow windows, first appearing in the 1730s, allowed more room for the enticing widow displays which steadily became a conspicuous feature of the shopping streets. The Palladian shop front proper arrived in the 1740s when retailers moved into part of recently erected North Parade and Pierrepont Street, and after 1760 commercial architecture grew increasingly classical as shops invaded [Old] Bond Street, Milsom Street, and places in the upper town - even a row built into the north side of the new Assembly Rooms. This imposed a greater uniformity on retail premises, enhanced in 1766 by the ban on hanging shop signs in favour of painted, gilt and lettered boards fixed flat against the wall. In the 1790s the centre itself was modernised, Bath Street built, and Cheap Street and Stall Street refronted. Yet here and there a few old-fashioned shops did survive, and nowhere more so than in Wade's Passage, where several even clung obstinately to the flanks of the Abbey Church.

Shop interiors were a different world, warmed in winter by coal fires, reliant for illumination on daylight, lamps and candles, and full of the goods and tools of the trade. No-nonsense Daniel Defoe deplored any undue expense on shop fittings, but many Bath traders manifestly ignored his advice. The 'Mahogany Counters, large Glass Cases, Show Glasses, and small Nests of Drawers' that furnished one toyman's in 1759 could be expected in any genteel shop. A counter, which typically divided the shopkeeper's space from the customer's, was *de rigueur* and sometimes contained a bed where an apprentice might sleep. Articles for sale were arranged on shelves and tables, displayed in cases, hung on the walls or from brass rails, stored in drawers and cupboards, kept in canisters, boxes,



*Detail from Thomas Baldwin's plan for remodelling shops on the south side of Cheap Street, 1790. From left to right - Arthur Jones (woollen draper), Edward Hallett (hatter and hosier), and Benjamin Shaw (linen draper).*

bottles, barrels and sacks, and brought out as necessary for customers to examine. Scales and measures would always be at hand, with more delicate balances for weighing coin. Every trader had a till, account books, and headed shop bills. Goods were parcelled up in brown or white wrapping paper (available from local stationers) and tied with string.

## **Shops (ii) Staffing and service**

Trade directories convey the impression that shopkeeping was by and large a masculine affair, and it is true that property law, freedom rights, and employment customs ensured that the name over the shop door was usually a man's. In practice many shops were family units, run with the essential help of wives, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, who served behind the counter, handled orders, made up goods, and provided back-up of every kind. It depended on the trade of course. Women were likelier to be employed selling foodstuffs and clothing than clocks and watches, furniture, ironmongery, books or medicines - unless, that is, they were widows inheriting their husband's business. In that circumstance we even come across women managing paint shops, chimneysweep firms, and breweries, and so taking over full responsibility for the accounts, dunning customers for unpaid bills, dealing with suppliers, and controlling their

own staff - all tasks the master would otherwise have undertaken. Employers acted *in loco parentis* for any teenage apprentices (mostly boys) that they agreed to train - in return for premiums up to £50 but rising to a hundred guineas or more in a few prestige concerns. Apprentices and other assistants, male and female, learned the trade on humdrum jobs at first, and by running errands and delivering goods around town, before being groomed for attendance in the front shop. This was the customer zone where the serving staff were expected to be neatly turned out, knowledgeable about their wares, patient, polite, and even decently obsequious if the gentry came shopping. Never mind if the customer simply wasted the assistant's time, 'cheapening' (i.e. pricing) and 'tumbling' goods without any intention to buy. They might return another day. Reputation was all-important, and the honest tradesman staked everything on his good name for sound merchandise and honest dealing. This was the way to build the sort of shopper loyalty seen in the advertisement for an ironmonger's in 1794, a shop in full trade 'with a good ready-money Counter Business and a regular set of Family Customers'. Much of the crucial visitor trade equally depended on word-of-mouth recommendation.

### **Shops (iii) Business methods**

What counted in the end was the balance sheet. The ironmonger Latty of Latty & Hallett left his partner Hallett to do the books and found himself bankrupt as a result. The woollen draper Thomas Creaser failed to keep systematic accounts and met the same fate. Such cases were not uncommon. Shopkeepers who prospered paid close attention to detail. Postlethwaite's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* (1751) advised them to maintain three basic double-entry volumes (waste book, day book, ledger) and at least a dozen others to record cash, debts, invoices, remittances, expenses, and every other transaction - all of course handwritten and kept scrupulously up-to-date.

Except perhaps for the craftsmen-shopkeepers (for example 'working jewellers') who made their own goods, the majority of retailers were perpetually in debt to manufacturers, wholesale merchants, and assorted middlemen. Acquiring their stock on commission or short-term credit (generally of three-to-nine months), they found deadlines for payment always coming up. And since, for goodwill, they usually allowed their own

customers time to pay, the resulting cashflow problem led to a perennial juggling of owed money and outstanding bills. From the 1740s/1750s the answer for some shops was to demand immediate payment or, in the jargon, 'ready money'. But if they were to woo customers from rivals who continued to let purchasers settle bills many months, or even years, in arrears, their goods had to be correspondingly cheaper. On the other hand, if all went well, their smaller profits would be compensated for in greater sales and faster turnover. This was the formula behind the 'warehouse' system, summed up in John Evill's explanation (1761) of why he could charge 10% less for shoes and stockings than his competitors - 'A large Consumption - Dealing for Ready-Money - and a quick Return'. Over the next few decades linen drapers, toymen, and agents for factory-made products in general would lead the rush to adopt the name 'warehouse' or 'repository' and offer a large choice of goods at fixed, but cheap, ready-money prices. By 1774 John Evill had joined his brother William at the great toyshop in the Marketplace, the London, Sheffield and Birmingham Warehouse. Their joint capital enabled them to buy their whole merchandise cash-down, direct from the manufacturers, at preferential rates - the best trading position of all to be in, creating a virtuous circle of relatively low-priced commodities.

The ready-money policy - a sensible idea at Bath where so many customers were unknown faces - came up against one hard economic fact in the chronic shortage of legal gold and silver and copper coin, and the consequent circulation of 'light gold' (worn and clipped guineas, etc.), counterfeit money, and trade tokens. Buyers and sellers alike faced this predicament, and suffered too from the uncertainties in paying by bills of exchange and private banknotes. Twice in the 1790s long lists of tradesmen willing to accept local banknotes appeared in the press, a gesture of confidence that still failed to save two banks going to the wall leaving a trail of debts. For small transactions several Bath retailers - the grocer Lambe, the ironmonger Heath, and others - issued their own penny, ha'penny and farthing tokens. Shops were prepared to take these, *faute de mieux*, and indeed to accept payment in light gold and foreign coin, but money transactions always carried a risk. More irksome still was the burden of government taxation, especially onerous after 1775 as the nation strained under the cost of the American and French wars. In addition to the long-standing duties on alcohol, tea and coffee, tobacco, candles, glass, printed fabrics, and various other goods, taxation came to embrace all but

GENERAL POST-OFFICE,

SEPTEMBER 22, 1792.

**T**O prevent the loss of entire Notes or Drafts, payable to bearer, in letters put into any post-office or receiving-house, the Postmaster-General repeats the recommendation so often inserted in the London Gazettes, and circulated by hand-bills throughout the kingdom; namely, to cut all such notes or drafts in half, in the following form; to send them at two different times; and to wait for the return of the post, till the receipt of one-half is acknowledged, before the other is sent.

And when any cash, in gold or silver, or when any rings, or lockets, are sent per post from London, particular care should be taken to deliver the same to the Clerk at the window, or to the Clerk of the money book, at the General Post-office; and when any such letter is to be sent from a country post-office, it should be delivered into the hands of the Post-master.

By command of the Postmaster-General,  
ANTHONY TODD, Secretary,

February 9th, 1792.

N<sup>o</sup>. 108

N<sup>o</sup>. 108

I Promise to pay to John Doe, or bearer, on demand, the sum of ten Pounds.

London, the 9th of Feb. 1792.

£. Ten

For the Governor & Company of the Bank of England.

Entd. Thomas Styles.

Richard Roe.

N. B. The note is to be cut exactly where it is marked with a black line, first writing the date and year at one end of the note, and the number at the other end; by which means each part will contain a sufficient specification of the whole.

This specimen will be put up at every post-office in the kingdom.

[3896

*Post Office advice on sending money bills and cash by mail, including the recommendation to cut bills in two and send the two parts separately. From Bath Chronicle 18 Oct 1792.*

the most essential items. Furthermore, shops dealing in tea, tobacco, wines and spirits, perfumes, patent medicines, hats, gloves, etc. were obliged to buy an annual licence, display a notice over their doors, and in some cases fix a ticket, stamped with the duty, on their products. Pitt's Shop Tax, imposed from 1785 on all except bread and meal shops, enraged people beyond measure, for with its multitude of retail shops Bath felt unduly victimised. Moreover, as local retailers went on arguing until the tax's repeal in 1789, it could not be recouped in higher prices, it led to all kinds of discrepancies, and it unfairly singled out shopkeepers who, like other citizens, already paid their share of house, window and commodity taxes and ever-rising city and parish rates.

Yet while the trading community might unite in a common cause, individual shops continued to battle among themselves for market share. Interlopers only added to the rivalries, and the collapse of the old guild monopolies in 1765 left Bath a commercial free-for-all. Ploys to increase sales abounded - special offers, auctions, exhibitions, discounts for bulk purchases, part-exchange deals, catalogues, handbills, puffing advertisements, glib sales patter, attractive window display, pavement boards and showcases, fancy signs, and even touting for custom outside inns as visitors arrived. A good commercial site on a busy street helped enormously. Wedgwood's sales improved at once when his pottery showroom moved from the backwater of Westgate Buildings to Milsom Street. Some retailers stocked unusual products (a milliner sold tapioca, a tailor gunpowder) or were sole agents for a particular manufacturer's goods. Many boosted their income by letting rooms. A few had second shops, in Bath or elsewhere, or held summer sales at resorts such as Cheltenham and Bristol Hotwells. The less scrupulous resorted to bribing servants (who often did the household shopping) with offers of 'poundage', a collusion in which employers' bills were inflated to allow for the servant's cut. Some sold adulterated and smuggled products. The use of defective scales and measures was widespread despite periodic Corporation raids on offending traders, confiscations of property, and cautionary fines. But while customers needed to be on their guard, so did shops. Newspapers quite frequently reported cases of shoplifting, of theft from tills and shop windows, and of frauds practised on credulous shop assistants. Watchmakers, toymen, haberdashers and drapers seem to have been especially at risk.

## **Shops (iv) Merchandise**

Though well able to meet everyday demands, Bath shops around 1700 did not cater to very fashionable, sophisticated, or recherché tastes. A few decades later they did. Hardly any whim could not be satisfied. Elizabeth Penrose, up from Cornwall in 1766, was delighted to discover 'she may have at the shops here whatever she pleases'. Mrs Allen (in *Northanger Abbey*) agreed entirely - Bath offered such good shops that 'one can step out of doors and get a thing in five minutes'. Commodities flooded in from near and far, all too frequently the products of sweated labour at home, colonialism and slavery abroad. London - the motor of industry, setter of trends, centre of manufacture, world entrepôt - must have been far and away the chief supplier, with wagonloads of goods forever heading for Bath along the Great West Road. There are no statistics to prove it, but Bristol may well have come next, sending its insatiable neighbour a mass of stuff by road and water - sugar and tobacco, glassware and timber, Irish linen and Shropshire ironwork, Welsh oysters and (that favourite of public banquets) Caribbean turtles - merely to hint at its character. But merchandise arrived from every quarter, and increasingly from the Midlands, North Country and Scotland, carried in the earlier years by trains of pack-horses, and then, as turnpikes improved and canals got built, by lumbering wagon or the smoother ride of the Severn trow and canal barge. Whatever method of transport was chosen, it tended to be slow, expensive to the shopkeeper who had to bear carriage costs, and hazardous to goods - which might easily be damaged or pilfered en route. Only precious, urgent and small items would be consigned to the speedier service of the passenger/mail coach.

Foodstuffs were perishable to a variable extent. Fresh fish, meat and poultry soon went off, fruit shrivelled and rotted, bread staled. Cheese and hams lasted longer, but still caused wastage. These were all sold either by specialist shops or on market stalls. Dry groceries like tea and sugar, less liable to deteriorate, were purveyed much more widely, even by haberdashers and booksellers. This was also true of proprietary medicines and other branded products, which sold well and often came in distinctive containers to aid recognition and prevent fraud. The question of 'shelf life' affected not only foodstuffs but fashion goods. Dress materials and accessories could date very quickly at modish Bath, leaving retailers with little option but to clear unsold stock as soon as demand faltered, usually by means of cut-price sales. A tired display was a poor advertisement for

any shop out to catch visitors, as Ann Ward at Wedgwood's Milsom Street shop knew only too well. Customers were always after something fresh, she reported, explaining that the pebble vases they had on show 'have been seen so often & ye best picked and... People dont like what is Left'. Toyshops paraded novelties whenever they could - one year it might be hairwork jewellery or filligree, another year papier-mâché tea caddies or patent Argand lamps. The linen draper Richard Prynn made a virtue of 'Every week producing SOMETHING NEW'.

During their partnership Prynn & Collins ran a separate wholesale department at the back of their Marketplace shop. Most large shops dabbled in wholesaling to some extent, making Bath a centre of redistribution to smaller dealers and country shopkeepers for many miles around. This had several benefits. By placing bulk orders, wholesalers would secure better terms from suppliers and carriers, allowing them a decent profit margin even at wholesale prices. The small shop gained in turn by an improved mix of stock, a chance to examine wares before purchase, savings on transport costs, and simpler money transactions. Wholesaling, though, was only one of several useful services an enterprising retailer might offer. Some were capable of high-quality craftsmanship to special order - James Evill, for instance, who in 1795 made the gold box in which the Duke of York received the freedom of Bath. Others cleaned and repaired goods, gave professional advice, and offered money broking services. Hiring out was a significant industry at Bath, appreciated above all by spa visitors in lodgings. Many shops would lend by the day, week, month, or for longer periods, to anyone in want of drinking glasses, crockery, candlesticks, household linen, a rout table, a harpsichord, an album of prints, a funeral pall, or a sedan chair.

⇒ For shops see also under individual trades, e.g. **Grocers; Music Dealers; Upholsterers.**

## **Silk Mercers**

The simple word mercer, unqualified, was in the early eighteenth century almost a synonym for draper, so that well-known Bath 'mercers' like William Bush, Milo Smith and Richard Marchant would have dealt in other fabrics besides silks. By 1740 the meaning of the term had narrowed. Mercers had risen to the top of the hierarchy and now handled only the

more expensive fashion materials - silks, velvets, brocades, and mixed silk-worsted stuffs. The change was evident when Spitalfields silk weaving firms took to opening their own provincial shops. Earliest on the Bath scene were Peter & James Ferry, paying autumn and spring visits from c.1742 and soon prolonging their stay through the winter in order to meet the brisk demand for fine products at almost factory prices. In due course they settled at the spa for good, occupying a convenient shop at the corner of Gallaway's Buildings and attaining some prominence in city affairs before they retired in 1769-70. The vacancy was immediately filled by two more Spitalfields manufacturers - Roe Palmer & Co. in [Old] Bond Street, and the Huguenot firm of Vansommer & Co. who quickly settled themselves in the Ferrys' old shop just off the Parades. While doubtless pushing their own products, each may have sold a diverse range of silks for dress and furnishing. Fresh consignments, straight off the looms, were hurried down to Bath almost weekly at the height of the season. Such was the premium placed on novelty that fabrics only slightly out-of-date had to be marked down in price. The result was that while shoppers often picked up bargains, the rapid stock turnover made it difficult to find superseded designs. 'The Pattern is too old for Bath...', the Penroses were forced to conclude in 1767 after trying every mercer in town to match a particular silk for a friend. They were luckier in their own shopping, for they located a source of cheap silks in downmarket Avon Street and persuaded a more fashionable mercer, John Pritchard, to sell them satin for shoes at a special rate once their son-in-law had purchased a good length of rose-and-white flowered silk for his wife.

Pritchard, a London mercer and silk weaver who had hired a Bath salesroom most seasons from 1757, offered his silks along with millinery and lace, just as a number of resident mercers did. Prominent among them, Hanbury Pettingal advertised his 'Silk and Lace Warehouse' in Trim Street, then Pierrepont Street, then North Parade, for some forty years. No descriptions exist, but the sumptuous display can be imagined of costly French as well as English manufactures - gold- and silver-threaded fabrics, figured and flowered and striped weaves in many colours, brocades and lustrings, satins and velvets, gaudy Norfolk stuffs and black bombazines, delicate needlepoint, fine bobbin laces, ruffles and lappets, and drifts of gossamer gauze. Mercers, just like lacemen (and Pettingal was both), were advised to 'dress neatly, and affect a Court Air... [assuming] a great deal of the Frenchman' in their manners - counsel that was surely followed by

Hanbury Pettingal junior, who succeeded his father in 1785 and who had the graces that earned him the appointment of master-of-ceremonies at civic balls. 'The good quality of Mr. Pettingal's goods are too well known to require any recommendation', declared William Lonsdale after buying up most of the retiring mercer's stock in 1790. Lonsdale had recently dissolved his six-year partnership with John Buttress, Vansommer's former shop manager. From now on, as quite separate concerns, Lonsdale's and Buttress's were acknowledged the city's foremost mercers, their prestige confirmed in 1795 when each in turn was made royal silk mercer to the Duchess of York.

⇒ See also **Haberdashers and Milliners; Lacemen; Linen Drapers; Woollen Drapers.**

**Silversmiths** see **Goldsmiths and Jewellers**

**Smiths** see **Braziers, Smiths and Ironmongers; Cutlers; Goldsmiths and Jewellers; Gunsmiths**

**Soap Boilers** see **Tallow Chandlers**

**Stationers** see **Booksellers**

**Staymakers**

Until the 1790s a woman's fashionable shape depended on a hooped petticoat and the discomfort of tightly laced stays - i.e. the stiffened underbodice which elevated the bust and constricted the waist. Making stays was, for the most part, a branch of tailoring and hence a man's job. As Campbell's *London Tradesman* (1747) pointed out, 'since he approaches the Ladies so nearly' the staymaker should be 'very polite', assured and self-controlled, and must never betray his customers' secrets. He might call on them at home to measure and fit, probably cut out the fabric himself, and leave the making up to his journeymen. In 1792 four

different staymakers gave joint notice they needed to replace up to eight journeymen who had walked out on strike, which suggests they perhaps employed two each. Some took apprentices, especially in the period 1730-70 when 26 boys were indentured at different times with thirteen master staymakers. Of all the technical operations involved in constructing stays, the trickiest was inserting the prepared whalebone strips between the rows of stitching, a task needing some strength and usually undertaken by the master himself or the shop foreman. For a time female staymakers were discouraged at Bath by trade restrictions - the Merchant Tailors indeed prosecuting one such intruder in 1717. After about 1750, however, as stays grew lighter in construction, several women makers successfully challenged male dominance, notably Sarah Hemmings from 1756 and Agnes Pitcairn from 1772. Besides fashioning stays, waistcoats and petticoats, staymakers had a near monopoly in 'children's coats', i.e. boned petticoat skirts and bodices for young children of both sexes.

By the late 1770s, as corseting fashions began to change, French and Italian staymakers from London and abroad appeared more often on the Bath scene with stocks of ready-made stays and innovatory patterns. Foret, a Parisian, and John Gray both announced new designs which kept their shape while modishly emphasising the bust. In the 1790s, as younger women sometimes dispensed with stays altogether, every staymaker had to bow to the revolution sweeping through women's fashion by introducing elastic corsets, Circassian and Brunswick vests, and back and shoulder braces, all supposedly with medical advantages over rigid stays. At the same time the high-waisted, free-flowing gown styles killed off the traditional demand for skirt-distending hoops, panniers and padded bustles. Though akin to stays in construction, hooped petticoats in all their variety required no fitting skills. Around 1750 they could be bought off the peg at Bath at one of the specialist 'warehouses', Samuel Hemming on North Parade or Sarah Clarke in Abbey Churchyard, and thirty years later from the staymaker Agnes Pitcairn who bought in her hooped petticoats from a leading London manufacturer.

⇒ See also **Dressmakers**.

## **Street Traders** see **Hawkers and Pedlars**

## Tailors

The number of master tailors at Bath stayed remarkably constant - 54 in 1734, 53 in 1801. And if, as one estimate for London suggests, the ratio of journeymen to masters approached 15:1, then at any one time hundreds of masters, journeymen and apprentices were involved in tailoring at Bath alone, without counting those in the suburbs ministering to customers in town. It did not follow they all had work. As with other trades, the volume of orders depended very much on spa visitors and varied greatly from high to low season. Perhaps only the senior workmen - say the foreman cutter and his deputy - had any kind of fixed employment, and even then the poaching of skilled hands by offers of better wages elsewhere was not uncommon. The semi-skilled journeymen had still looser attachments, and at slack times they waited at well-known tailors' pubs or 'houses of call' in the hope of work. When a rush of orders did come in, whole workshops (the men sitting cross-legged in familiar tailors' pose) would spend long days sewing men's suits, skirted and frock coats, waistcoats, knee breeches, and other garments - including women's riding dress, a traditional prerogative of male tailors and habitmakers. The master normally waited on customers himself, advised them on styles and fabrics, took measurements, obtained the cloth and trimmings from a draper, and perhaps did the cutting out (the crucial operation). Alternatively his foreman cut the cloth, as well as overseeing the journeymen's tasks (seaming, lining, pockets, buttonholes, etc.), and being responsible maybe for the finishing and trying on. Sometimes it was the customer who provided the materials. Matthew Evill, a tailor, supplied the scarlet material for Elias Pickwick's waistcoat in 1763, whereas Pickwick bought his own cloth for a pair of breeches that another tailor, William Glazby, was to make up.

Evill and Glazby were cut-price, unregulated tailors - just what the Company of Merchant Taylors at Bath most abhorred. The Company's rules, dating back to 1628, were designed to monopolise local tailoring and confine its practice to paid-up members, all of them city freemen and as far as possible Bath-trained. Having successfully prosecuted interlopers in the past, and emboldened by the Corporation's current support for guild privileges, the Company brought a case against Glazby in 1759 for working in the city without being 'free'. Delayed until 1765, however, the judgment this time went against the Company, undermining its monopoly and forcing it into terminal decline. What remained intact was a cartel of

master tailors still capable of joint action - as in resisting their journeymen's repeated demands for an increase in wages, the cause of several bitter disputes from the 1760s onwards involving protracted strikes and the use of scab labour. The maverick tailor John Cosgrove, who had suffered five months' imprisonment at the hands of the Merchant Taylors in 1764-5, happily worked on during the stoppage of 1775 (when London tailors benefited from orders at Bath's expense) and pledged to make a man's suit, if need be, in as little as nine hours. The Glazby judgment encouraged other outsiders to try their luck at undercutting the 'exorbitant' charges of the local tailors' cartel. A certain Hickey, who claimed to be 30% cheaper than other master tailors, listed his very competitive rates in 1768 - e.g. £4 13s. for a bespoke French frock suit (or just £1 13s. if the customer found the cloth), £1 10s. for a pair of velveteen breeches, and a mere five shillings (the making only) for an outdoor coat. He did, however, expect immediate payment - unlike the fictional Bath tailor in Fielding's *Tom Jones* who let one dubious client run up a bill of over £150, though no doubt this sum was inflated for linings, fancy buttons, gold lace, and all the other extras that so contributed to a tailor's profits. A Bath Quarter Sessions trial in 1727 illustrated a different risk of tailoring, when one of the city's most eminent masters, James Elkington - 'commonly known as Prince Eugene' - lost his claim of debt on a certain Lady Dorothy Hesilrige for clothes he had made for her servant but which she denied ever ordering.

Still, tailors could not survive without customers. John Totterdale in 1779 acknowledged the bountiful favours he had experienced from Scottish and Irish visitors, and the 'spirited' orders placed by men like the novelist Smollett - 'I knew they did not want all the cloaths... They meant it for the good of trade...'. But a pity, he went on, that some other gentry walked about in shabby coats and all too rarely ordered a new suit. Since the 1760s, besides his bespoke tailoring business, Totterdale had run a separate store, in part a woollen draper's, in part a 'slop shop' - selling cheap ready-made clothes, as he explained, to 'tradesmen, servants and working men'. These were items stitched in his own workshop - men's suits, worsted breeches, underwaistcoats, cloaks, reversible ratteen-beaver overcoats, etc. - a useful form of employment during the quiet summer period. Whether his offer to make clothes for the overseas market was ever taken up is unknown (he could produce, he said, up to £6000s-worth in four or five months), but export orders may well have provided some Bath tailors with work, and perhaps most of them ran up garments for the ready-made trade on

B A T H.

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**JOHN TOTTERDELL,**  
 WOOLLEN-DRAPER and TAYLOR,  
 IN ST. JAMES'S-STREET,  
 Sells every Sort of *Woollen-Drapery Goods*  
 V I Z.

Superfine, Second, and Livery Cloths, Kerzymear's,  
 Ratteen-Beavers, Bath-Beavers, Naps, Duffils, Serges,  
 and Shalloons; Silk and Worsted Breeches Pieces;  
 Silk and Manchester Velvets; Thicksets, Ververets,  
 Jennets, and Fustians; with every Article necessary  
 for the Suit; and makes on the very *lowest Terms*.

➔ The new Ratteen-Beaver Surtout Coat, com-  
 pleted at *Three Guineas*, to wear either Side out.

BATH: Printed by JOHN KEENE.

occasion. Nor was Totterdale's slop shop, the Greatcoat and Cloak Warehouse, at all unique. The tailor Charles Waters, a pillar of the Merchant Taylors, was dealing in old and ready-made new clothes as early as 1753, the date he informed churchwardens and parish overseers he could supply cheap clothing to the poor. He was followed by George Evill, and then from 1786 by Evill's widow and son - whose retail store in the Marketplace went by the same name as Totterdale's, the Greatcoat and Cloak Warehouse.

⇒ See also **Breeches Makers; Dressmakers; Lacemen; Woollen Drapers.**

### **Tallow Chandlers**

Rather than lamps it was candles or cheap rushlights that shed most of the artificial light in eighteenth-century interiors. Ordinary candles were made from tallow, i.e. the rendered fatty wastes obtained from local farms, slaughterhouses, and specialist dealers. The process involved either

repeated dipping of cotton wicks mounted on a frame, or else running the hot tallow into moulds prepared with wicks and leaving it to congeal. Altogether it was 'a nauseous greasy Business', but the profits, it was said, more than compensated for the unpleasantness. A number of Bath candlemakers manufactured hard household soap as well, another smelly occupation that used tallow and involved a boiling and congealing process. At the same time, despite their simple characterisation as *tallow* chandlers in apprenticeship records, one or more local firms also produced the dearer but much better-quality beeswax and spermaceti candles. The entrepreneurial John Palmer undoubtedly did so at his Southgate Street works, for his trade notice of 1744 said he purchased yellow wax for cash and that his wax and spermaceti candles, flambeaux and sealing wax sold at London prices - prices inflated nevertheless by much heavier taxes on wax than on tallow products. By 1758 the increasing national consumption of soap had allowed middlemen to exploit the situation and force up tallow prices too. Alarmed by the thought of candles costing 10s. per dozen, Parliament sanctioned cheap imports of tallow from Ireland, a measure that Bath and Bristol chandlers welcomed, and still endorsed in 1764 when they met to press jointly for its continuance.

John Palmer's candle- and soap-making business clearly flourished, because in due course he expanded into brewing and theatre building (the Orchard Street theatre would later be lit with his spermaceti candles). One of Palmer's competitors, Francis Hales of Walcot Street, reaped similar rewards, rising through the Corporation to serve thrice as Mayor (1751-62). Several other candle-cum-soap factories stood just behind Walcot Street or outside the East Gate where their odours would be less offensive and the nearby river offered a place to dump wastes. The prominent soap-boiler John Bryant, maker of 'Best Castile Soap', had premises in Walcot Street. William Swallow, who sold candles near Abbey Green, actually produced them, it seems, in a building at the foot of Boatstall Lane which his old apprentice, John Bishop, probably occupied later. Like Swallow all the professional candle- and soap-makers would have run their own retail-wholesale shops. On the other hand, the majority of people called 'chandlers' were not manufacturers at all, so that the term now breeds some confusion. Generally in the form 'tallow chandler' it referred of course to the candlemakers discussed above. With different prefixes - corn chandler, ship's chandler - it carried other specialist meanings. In the combination 'grocer and chandler' it suggested a retailing grocer with a substantial stock

of bought-in candle goods - Bath tradesmen such as John Kendall, agent in the 1780s for Wheble's Kensington candles, and John Gibbons who had several thousand of the best wax and spermaceti candles for sale. But in most cases the simple word 'chandler' denoted a petty shopkeeper, a caterer to the poor in small quantities of foodstuffs, liquor, and other necessities that would doubtless include the candles and tapers - mainly of tallow or inferior wax - that once gave them their name.

⇒ See also **Chandlers**.

## **Tanners and Leather Dressers**

Hides and skins from the slaughterhouses and surrounding farms were weighed and traded in Bath market under nominal inspection from the city's two Supervisors of Leather. In the decades up to 1740 local tanners like Anthony Elkington, father and son, and the James family, who seem to have had lime- and bark-pits near the Avon behind Walcot Street or beyond the East Gate, must have taken some of this supply, and cured and dressed leather in various ways to suit the wishes of shoemakers, saddlers, upholsterers, and other trades. Those like breeches makers and glovers who needed a softer, suppler, alum-processed leather seem to have prepared their own. By 1736 there was already a wholesale leather dealer at Bath, forerunner of the curriers and leather cutters listed in later years. The likelihood is that the insalubrious tanning trade gradually migrated away from Bath into the countryside, but the evidence is so far lacking.

⇒ See also **Breeches Makers; Shoemakers**.

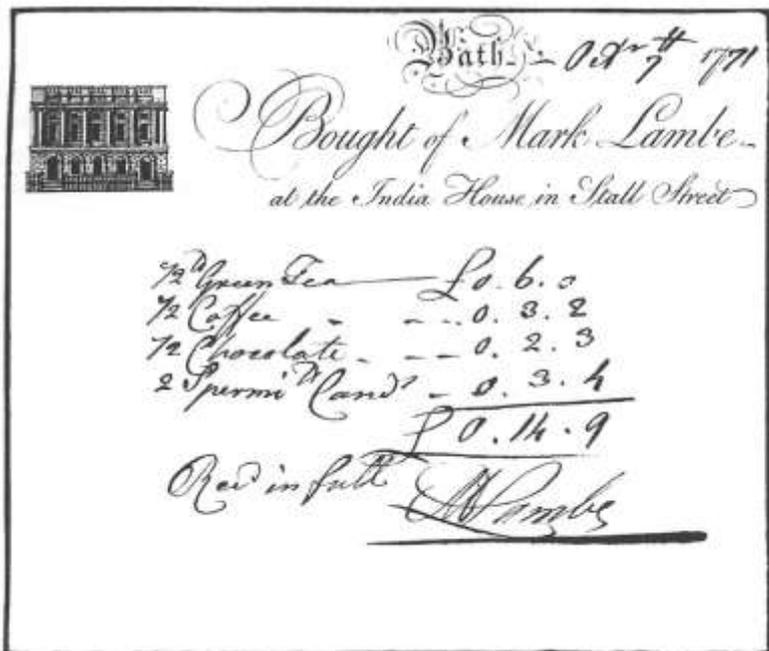
## **Tea Merchants**

Foreign visitors expressed surprise at the British passion for tea - generally taken with milk and sugar, accompanied by bread and butter. The 'humblest peasant has his tea twice a day just like the rich man', remarked one in 1784, the year Pitt slashed customs duty in an effective move against tea smuggling. The East India Company's vast import of Canton tea was sold at great quarterly auctions to dealers and brokers, from whom most Bath teamen obtained their legal supplies. In earlier decades, before tea drinking spread to all classes of society, the expensive

green teas Singlo and Hyson sold best, but after 1740 black teas came to dominate, Bohea above all, together with the dearer Souchong, the coarser Congou, and the various inferior grades. The cheapest teas - untaxed altogether from 1784 - were sometimes used along with other adulterants (such as liquorice and ash leaves) to bulk out the better-quality products, a fraud made all the easier by the normal practice of blending teas in the shop to suit local customers' tastes. Though all tea dealers had to be 'entered' or licensed (and carry a sign to that effect over the door), dozens of petty shopkeepers and hucksters at Bath handled tea in fairly small quantities, supplied by local tea merchants or by agents for London dealers. The trading pattern was probably not unlike that at York where in the 1780s a handful of major dealers held stocks of over 2500 lbs and a few others 600-700 lbs, whereas over half those licensed managed with less than 50 lbs on hand at any one time. Country shops around Bath held equally small stocks, partly because the city's wholesalers were legally restricted in what they could supply them - as little as 40 pounds per consignment (and only 20 pounds in 1782-85).

Many teamen doubled up as grocers, and the chief shops invariably dealt in coffee, chocolate and sugar as well. Coffee, while not so dear as the best teas, was drunk very weak - even by the rich, according to one German traveller, who added tartly that back home in Germany the meanest tradesman enjoyed 'better coffee than they do'. Its relative popularity in the beverage stakes might be gauged from what was ordered for the grand opening of the Upper Assembly Rooms in 1771, namely 28 lbs best tea, 12 lbs coffee, 6 lbs chocolate (and 6 lbs vanilla to flavour it). Hot chocolate tended to be a luxury drink, though a Bath butcher was spotted in 1766 treating himself to a cup for breakfast. Patented, machine-ground Bristol chocolate bearing Joseph Fry's stamp had been advertised a few years earlier, but other brands of chocolate and cocoa were also on sale - and even whole freshly-roasted cacao-nuts from one dealer in 1796, which, he pointed out, saved any risk of contamination.

Longest established of all the tea/coffee/chocolate shops was Lambe's of Stall Street, an agent for Twining's, the great London tea-merchandising house. Lacon Lambe was trading in Stall Street by 1745 (perhaps earlier) and in 1758 moved to a prime site which would eventually become the S.E. corner of Bath Street. After his death in 1768, his son Mark, daughter-in-law Mary, and her son Lacon L. Lambe in turn consolidated the firm's



reputation and briefly opened a branch shop in Bennett Street. Enterprisingly, they issued a series of trade tokens over the years (in farthing to penny values), most of them bearing the image of 'India House' - not their Stall Street premises but the East India Company's building in London. No other Bath institution produced so many tokens or circulated them so widely in the Somerset/Wiltshire/Bristol region, and if the ostensible aim was to make up for the shortage (and counterfeiting) of small coin, it was also astute publicity in the face of stiff commercial competition. Around 1770 several newcomers - James Gegg, the similarly named John Gregg of London, and a visiting tea auctioneer - all introduced a more aggressive style of marketing in which they undercut prevailing prices and allowed special discounts for large orders. But comparing prices between one retailer and another was complicated by the practice of adulteration and the amount of contraband tea on the market. Some two tons of smuggled tea were discovered by the Excise in a barn near Midford in 1779, and it was no isolated example.

All this changed almost overnight in 1784, however, when the Commutation Act came into force and reduced the tax on tea from 119% to 12½%. As tea prices toppled, a fresh struggle broke out among Bath retailers, again involving both recent arrivals and established shops. John Coles at the Golden Canister near St Michael's was among the first to take advantage of the London tea auctions in December 1784, declaring his new stocks recently imported, unadulterated, and cleared by him in person 'from the East-India Warehouses'. Other tea merchants - including Peter Paul (also near St Michael's), John Gibbons (facing the Guildhall), and Mary Lambe (in Stall Street) - were soon vying with Coles in pledging that their teas were pure and not smuggled. They offered their customers written 'affidavits' to that effect, and listed the prices of their Bohea, Congou, Souchong, and other varieties for public comparison. In August 1785 Peter Paul, still fresh to the Bath scene, maintained it was he alone who had pioneered low prices, and 'whatever parade they may now make of setting out their tea-chests', it was doubtful, he thought, whether the established dealers would ever have allowed their customers such bargains without his lead. In a bid to expand he obtained Customs rights to export tea through his Bristol shop, since at Bath the struggle for market share remained intense, especially with a new cost-cutting, cash-only merchant in town, Joyce & Co.'s New Tea Warehouse in Bridge Street.

Advertising now laid almost as much emphasis on freshness and flavour of the product as on price, and John Coles, who allowed his customers to return any teas they disliked, particularly attacked dealers who passed off old deteriorated stock as new. Mary Lambe meanwhile had a different complaint. Yet another upstart from London had begun trading in the Marketplace in 1789 and had adopted her well-known sign, 'India House'. Unfortunately there was no redress over usurped shop signs (as another tea dealer discovered when a rival appropriated his 'Golden Canister' trademark) and the Marketplace premises still retained its title in 1795-8 when Ann Dando, Peter Paul's former shop assistant, ran a tea business there.

⇒ See also **Grocers**.

**Tinsmiths** *see* **Braziers, Smiths and Ironmongers**

## Tobacconists and Snuff Dealers

Out of sixteen tobacco sellers recorded at Bath as early as 1632, it was natural that most should be grocers and apothecaries, the main retailers of imported herbs and spices. These two trades dominated sales of pipe tobacco into the following century. Some retailers might buy it ready prepared for smoking. Others perhaps acquired the leaf from import warehouses in 'carottes' or twists, which they then shred and blended themselves. Both would sell tobacco in their own shops and through petty chandlers, taverns and inns around town. With snuff the channels of distribution were somewhat different. Snuff-taking (accompanied by the ceremonies of the snuffbox) grew rapidly after 1700 as a genteel alternative to smoking that both sexes could indulge in. To the extent that snuff was recommended medically, it would be available from apothecaries, but otherwise its associations were with perfumery rather than groceries, and hence more the preserve of Bath's luxury shops. These could easily furnish themselves with stocks of Continental and British snuffs - mild, scented blends as well as strong rappees - from specialist London merchants or from Bristol snuff mills processing imported Virginian tobacco. Increasingly, London and French/Italian perfumers turned up at the spa in person - William Paget visiting in 1737-8, for instance, and others settling more permanently in the 1750s-60s, including Peter Berwick, George Duperré, James Grandi, Warren & Co., and Alexander Jolly. These may have been equipped to mill and prepare their own snuff (and Jolly later had a furnace), but the bulk would surely have been bought in - so that Duperré in 1757 could refer to a large 'cargo' just arrived from abroad.

Although a few perfumers sold straight tobacco, grocers, chandlers and taverns were still the prime source for pipe smokers until the appearance of tobacconists' shops - the first example at Bath perhaps being a Stall Street shopkeeper, John Lloyd, who in 1770 gave up selling groceries to concentrate on tobacco and snuff. In 1780 Lloyd's entire stock went over to Benjamin Montague, a perfumer and stationer near the Pump Room. Shortly before his bankruptcy in 1784 Montague could supply as many as forty different types of snuff. Profitable up to a point, the trade was hampered by heavy duties and the extensive black market in smuggled and adulterated products. The Tobacco Excise Act of 1789 made things even worse, required traders to declare their holdings of tobacco and snuff, and for the first time to take out a licence and put up a notice - 'Dealer in

Tobacco and Snuff' - over their door. Many innkeepers and publicans stopped selling tobacco altogether, and in 1790 one Bath tobacconist, John Peterswald, also abandoned the trade and turned pastrycook, which he must have thought a more profitable line.

⇒ See also **Pipemakers**.



## Toyman

'A plaything; a bauble' - certainly a toy was *that*, yet Samuel Johnson's definition in his great *Dictionary* merely hints at the riches of an eighteenth-century toyshop in its full splendour. At Bath, it is true, they began without any pretension, just a few booths in Gravel Walks behind the Abbey Church open only in season. But by 1710 these had given way to a row of permanent shops that soon extended round the corner into Terrace Walk facing onto Harrison's new Assembly Rooms. Often called 'raffling shops' (because of the promotional lotteries they held - with maybe a locket, a snuffbox, or a pair of embroidered shoes as the prize), these were also the 'very handsome Toyshops like those in London' spoken of in 1725. Already the term 'toyshop' was displaying its elastic propensities, being used here to cover an assortment of luxury retailers -

jewellers, milliners, porcelain dealers, gift shops in general - all dangling temptations before the well-off spa visitors who strolled past their windows. Foremost among them stood 'the warehouse of the fop', Mrs [Mary?] Deard's on Terrace Walk - the Bath branch of a London toyshop (gently mocked as 'Derdaeus Magnus' in Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*). Toyshops and their clientèle were acutely fashion-conscious. One can be sure therefore that Deard's, whether in Bath or London, would display all the latest trinkets, shoe buckles, fans, canes, rings, snuffboxes, French paste jewellery, fine porcelain, and decorative silver that even the most faddish could expect. Around 1732 the shop turned into Bertrand's, Mrs Deard having married a Huguenot goldsmith. He probably set up a jewellery workshop the firm had hitherto lacked. Any extra service or distinctive product a toyshop could offer might give it a commercial advantage. Sarah Wicksteed's in Orange Grove, for example, had a reputation for china tea-sets and tableware, increasingly in demand, and the sign over her door advertised the heraldic seals her husband John engraved to customer order. Next door, George Speren (or Sperring) offered a special novelty in Bath-view fans. One well-known example depicted Orange Grove and its terrace of giftshops, his own among them.

About 1750 competition intensified all round. In Orange Grove itself Wicksteed's and Speren's were still going strong but had been joined by three similar shops, all run by former Bertrand employees - John Pyke (purveying jewellery, gold and silver knickknacks, plated goods, china, and lacquerware), and two craftsmen jewellers, James Tilly and Moses Roubell. In 1754 Pyke moved to Terrace Walk, where he faced further tough opposition from John Davis who exhibited the same range of merchandise further down the Walk. By 1756 Pyke was bankrupt, and in 1764 Davis, who had moved into Pyke's old shop, met the same fate. The baton had been passed on though, for Davis's ex-shopman, Lewis Bull, was already trading on his own account a few doors away in Orange Grove, a fact that may have contributed to his former boss's downfall. Meanwhile, around Abbey Churchyard, other rivalries were being played out by William Rogers, a well-established jeweller and toyman, and two relative upstarts, Thomas Loggon and Elizabeth Taylor. For half-a-dozen seasons (1753-8) Loggon, the self-named 'Little Fan-Maker' from Bristol, successively experimented with hand-made fans, perfumes, stationery, lacquer boxes, Indian goods, Worcester porcelain, and flower pictures, all on sale at his ladies' reading-cum-tea/coffee/chocolate room. Elizabeth

Taylor's toyshop in the Pump Room forecourt occupied an even better site, and by late 1755 she too offered newspapers and refreshments. Neither Loggon nor Taylor reigned long, but the Pump Room toyshop and the women's coffee-house continued under other managements at least into the 1770s.

Of all the principal toy dealers none matched Evill's in longevity. At the apt sign of the Golden Knife-and-Fork and Stocking-Legs, William Evill, cutler and hosier, launched his Marketplace store about 1759. After three years he gave up the hosiery side to become the 'London, Sheffield and Birmingham Warehouse' - with, he claimed, an agent stationed at each of these industrial entrepôts 'to see my Goods complete from the different Makers'. As well as cutlery he now sold all kinds of useful artefacts from treble-gilt thimbles to pistols and watches, from wedding rings to girls' steel collars. Yet he was not quite the typical 'warehouse' style of retailer he seemed. There is no evidence, for instance, that he bought on credit or sold on commission. Indeed by paying cash down, the firm could demand cheaper terms, he bragged in 1774, just back from a tour of the manufacturers with his brother John. Another difference was that he maintained his own workshop on Borough Walls, variously staffed by watchmakers, Salisbury knife grinders, smiths, and jewellers - the latter quite capable, years later in 1795, of making the fine gold box (worth 60 guineas, or nearly £4000 in today's money) in which the Duke of York received the city freedom. Nevertheless, the public display rooms opening off the Marketplace were what really counted, and in this respect even a connoisseur of shop design like the potter Wedgwood was forced to admire. The shop, it was reported, 'is in every part lined with glass, and... a circular glass-case stands just at the entrance...'. The shelves must have sparkled and glinted with clocks and watches, silver urns and coffee pots, buttons and buckles, razors and surgeons' instruments. Evill's own small output of bespoke jewellery and metalware was quite dwarfed by factory-made products - Boulton & Fothergill plate, Evers' warming pans, Clay's papier-mâché tea trays, Dollond's microscopes, Ribright's spectacles, patent Argand oil lamps, Gill & Waters' pistols (with concealed bayonets), and 'all the newly invented articles' the manufacturers could offer. The shop still dealt in cutlery, loaned it out to visitors, and in 1771 helped equip the Upper Assembly Rooms with tableware, candlesticks and quadrille dishes. Indeed, traditional articles like this might have been the core of the business. On the other hand, sales were also driven by the rage for novelty.

W. Sheridan



Bath 23. Nov 1771



Bought of William Evill  
In the Market Place

	To 1 pair neat Toyls	10.6
Dec. 12	To 1 pair of " "	10.6
Jan. 23	To 1 neat Toothpick Case	4.6
June 10	To 1 neat Hair Locket	1.11.6
	To 1 neat Fancy Ring	2.12.6
	To 2 " " Seals	9. "
	To setting a Picture in a Case	3.6
Aug. 25	To 1 neat Gold Watch Key	1.6
	To 1 pair neat Garnet Buttons	1.15. "
	To Mending Gold Seal	1. "
Sept. 9	To 2 neat German hollow Blades to Swords with Wellers Scabbards, neat Steel and Gold Locket & Hanger and mounted to 2 Steel and Gold Hilt, & repairing the Hilt	3.13.6
	To 1 neat Morocco Balls for Swords	15.12.6

William Evill's bill to the playwright Sheridan, on different dates 1771-2, for pairs of foils, toothpick case, hair locket, fancy ring, two seals, watch key, pair of fashionable garnet buttons, setting a picture, mending a gold seal, and refurbishing two swords and scabbards - these latter items presumably relating to Sheridan's duels with his rival Captain Mathews over Elizabeth Linley. Willing to admit to his father he had bought pistols from the gunsmith Joseph Thwaites, Sheridan concealed from him the details of Evill's bill.

Fashions continually swept the toy trade. If Evill persuaded the fop (in William Madden's satire *The Bath Macaroni*) that Patagonian buckles were in high vogue, it meant that just now, for a few weeks, they were. By the early 1790s not just Patagonian but shoe buckles of any kind were all at once *passé*, and Evill's was doing a roaring trade in patent shoe latches instead.

There was something of the Aladdin's cave about most toyshops, though each cave had its individual character. Most had arrangements with particular manufacturers. Thus in the 1760s Roubell, Speren and Lewis Bull were all appointed to retail Allgood's 'genuine' Pontypool ware, i.e. decorative, lacquered-metal trays, baskets, knife boxes, tea caddies, etc. In 1771 Ambrose Mainwaring on Terrace Walk acted for a Staffordshire potter by displaying his imitation-Wedgwood black basalt vases. And William Moore (hairdresser turned toyman) had exclusive rights at his Universal Toyshop in Orange Grove to Launcelot Palmer's double-unit tea and coffee urns - though the urns must have been increasingly lost in the plethora of different articles Moore claimed to stock: over 25,000 of them by 1792 at prices from a penny up to £50, all stuffed into what were quite cramped premises.

William Glover & J.L. Newman by contrast had lavish space at their disposal, having in late 1782 leased the redundant Assembly Rooms on the east side of Terrace Walk. They began with a huge cut-price sale of silver and silver plate, hardware, cutlery, jewellery, lacquerwork, mirrors, optical instruments, musical instruments, prints and maps - a medley of commodities that went beyond the typical toyshop range. Styling themselves the London, Sheffield & Birmingham Repository, they presumably handled stock straight from the manufacturers (on commission or credit terms) and relied on a rapid turnover, wholesale and retail, with special bargain rates for merchants trading overseas. From 1788 Newman took on the whole concern himself, venturing into new areas (e.g. Pontypool wares and art reproductions), extending the music side, and even opening a reading room to draw in customers. It was all a far cry from the old raffling shops, and in sheer scale and content remained so after Newman removed in 1794 to spacious rooms in Milsom Street. Here he was soon supplanted by his former partner William Glover whose elegant emporium (described below in the section on **Upholsterers**) seemed less of a toyshop than an opulent household store. Evill's apart,

none of the other twenty-odd toyshops trading in the 1780s-90s aspired to such grandeur. Nevertheless, their displays were remarkably varied and, it is worth noting, they now sometimes contained an array of games and of foreign and English children's toys in the modern sense of the word.

⇒ See also **Goldsmiths and Jewellers; Pottery, Porcelain and Glassware Dealers; Seal Engravers.**

## **Umbrella Dealers**

Occasionally seen on London streets as early 1710, umbrellas made little headway as general fashion items until the 1770s when they were promoted at Bath by Matthew Evill and one 'George' who supplied them 'on the French construction to any size'. Parasols are mentioned about the same period, adopted by women and foppish beaux to ward off the sun. The more cumbersome umbrellas typically had a cane or turned wood stick, and a whalebone frame covered with green fabric which was then oiled or varnished to render it waterproof. George preferred a green linen but would also work with coloured silks supplied by his female customers, and either way could provide detachable sticks with 'joints to fold into the pocket'. As demand increased, local toymen and perfumers began stocking umbrellas in some variety. They were covetable enough to attract shoplifters - in 1786 Moore's toyshop in Orange Grove twice lost large 4-foot brollies to casual thieves - and by 1787 we have the first record of an 'Umberralla' being pawned. Two years later one perfumer needed to appeal publicly for the return of umbrellas he had lent to some ladies caught by a sudden shower. Yet they sold well. Lumbered with more than 80 in return for a bad debt, a tobacconist found he had disposed of all but 20 six weeks later. These probably came from London or Manchester, but Bath had its own makers or perhaps assemblers using certain ready-made components. In 1791 Matthew Evill resumed production, wholesale and retail, after a spell as a baker, while Edward Bartley (also box book-keeper at the Theatre Royal) made and repaired umbrellas and sunshades at his wife's school in Orange Court. By the mid-1790s the chief 'manufactories' in Bath were William Ashley's at the foot of [Old] Bond Street and George Sykes (also a staymaker and fossil dealer) in and around St James's Square. Sykes, who recycled material from 'old silk skirts', offered 5-guinea courses in umbrella making. His name no longer appears in the 1800 Bath

Directory, but Ashley is still there along with four other manufacturers, showing this had become an established local trade.

## Undertakers

Funerals must once have been up to the bereaved family to arrange, negotiating with different tradesmen for what was needed - the joiner for a coffin, the draper for the pall and hangings, the tallow chandler for candles, the haberdasher for black crape and gloves... Only as Bath's population increased, and mortality rates with it, did providing a more all-in service become a serious business proposition. By the 1740s the estimated number of funerals, around a hundred a year, was double what it had been forty years earlier, and it was then that Francis Bennett, draper and haberdasher in Abbey Churchyard, seized the opportunity. In 1744, equipped from London with a whole panoply of expensive hangings, tapers, candelabra, sconces, decorations, black fabrics, silk scarves and hatbands, he added the business of undertaking to his other shop interests. Despite his claim to offer a complete service, his announcement made no mention of other rather important matters: laying out and shrouding the corpse, making and furnishing the coffin, supplying transport and attendance, painting hatchments to display at the deceased's house. Did Bennett liaise with other tradesmen to settle all this, or was it still the family's melancholy duty? Similar uncertainties arise in interpreting 'Funerals furnished', a phrase quite often seen post-1750 in the publicity of other linen drapers, haberdashers, etc. At the very least this surely implied a comprehensive stock of funeral fabrics and dress accessories like black cloaks, chamois gloves, crape and sarsnet hatbands, black and white favours, and other symbols of grief. These shops benefited enormously on occasions of *public* mourning, and they stocked up accordingly - as Thomas Paulin clearly did in 1758 for Princess Caroline's mourning, rushing large quantities of black stuffs from Norwich, and crape fans, black gloves and black Cyprus gauze from London. George II's death in October 1760 provoked a frantic demand for the proper mourning fabrics, crape and bombazine. Mary Delany heard of 1500 yards of crape sold from one Bath shop in a single evening - and a Sunday evening at that!

Drapers and haberdashers could satisfy the sartorial needs of mourners and mourned alike to judge from James Hooper's statement in 1799 that he supplied shrouds. This announcement was directed at undertakers - i.e. the upholstery firms who had now assumed the main responsibility for orchestrating funerals. As specialists in furnishing, they had long since been involved in making coffins (complete with brasswork and soft linings). They were experts in draping rooms, and used too to hiring goods out - so that lending biers, velvet palls, or large silvered candlesticks gave them no qualms. And they could easily assemble a team of sombrely clad employees to do duty on the day of the funeral. Moreover, undertaking fitted in with the broking work - clearing houses, disposing of property - that a great many upholsterers engaged in anyway when people died. True, not every Bath upholsterer took it on, but by 1770 the majority - led by William Cross, William Bartlett, and probably Arthur Trimmell - did list undertaking among their regular services to customers.

If special vehicles were required they could be hired. In the past this had seldom been necessary. Funeral processions to church and churchyard in compact central Bath had normally been on foot. Eventually, though, the growth of suburban Walcot and the increasing resort to cheaper burial grounds in Bathwick and Widcombe created a need for horse-drawn transport. The solution was 'the Black Work' - a complete set of three hearses, four coaches, a chariot, and twelve black horses, together with smart harnesses, plumes, coachmen and all the rest, available for hire from the *Bear*, one of the city's chief coaching inns. No other operator had anything like it, and at the time of the Black Work's sale in 1794 to the surgeon Henry Phillot, son of the late landlord at the *Bear*, it was reckoned to have been vastly profitable for many years.

⇒ See also **Upholsterers**.

## Upholsterers

When the Duke of Chandos was furnishing his new lodging houses by the Cross Bath in the late 1720s, he acquired most items from London or his own house, Canons. Ten feather beds, though, he bought locally from Bath's first important upholsterer, Nicholas Baker, who presumably not only stuffed chair seats but, like others in the trade, dealt in soft furnishings. If Baker had only just set up shop (as it seems) his timing could scarcely have been better, for interior decoration at Bath was then on the brink of

major change. Looking back in the 1740s over the previous twenty years, the architect John Wood described how the better-class houses had been transformed in the interval. Painted wainscots and marble fireplaces had come in. Stained floors were now carpeted. Handsome mahogany and walnut furniture had replaced plain oak. Chairs, once cane-bottomed, were upholstered. Screens, looking-glasses and brass fittings adorned the main rooms. Curtains, bed hangings and table linen had all improved in quality and style. It was a new scene, cosier, lighter, more opulent, as another witness confirmed in the early 1760s - 'Down-beds, soft blankets, fine linen, damask curtains, mahogany tables, chairs, cabinets, and costly mirrors, furnish every room. The servants garret is now as good as the masters bed chamber was thirty years ago...!'

Spending out on domestic goods had become a national craze, made possible by higher disposable incomes and spurred on by new ideas of comfort and gentility, the urgings of fashion, and the love of acquisitive display. To a few outspoken critics it simply proved how effeminate the times had become. To upholsterers, however, it spelled opportunity. Theirs was the most intimate branch of furnishing and the best placed to take a managerial role. Already used to decking out beds, draping curtains, laying carpets, and covering walls, they gradually took control of every aspect of interior décor, advising customers, supplying furniture of every kind, employing skilled journeymen in their own workshops and liaising with other craftsmen as necessary. Their alternative name 'upholster' signalled even larger possible roles - emptying houses as well as equipping them, valuing the contents and the premises, undertaking funerals, dealing in secondhand goods, and ultimately auctioneering. When every spurt of new building produced more and more space for consumables, all sides of the business could prosper - not forgetting those house de-infestation services that were occasionally advertised (though not by upholsterers, always coy on the subject of bugs and soft furnishings).

Arthur Trimnell, upholsterer in Westgate Street from the 1740s to 1781, had trained under Baker in the traditional skills - knowledge of fabrics, cutting out to pattern, sewing and stuffing, hanging wallpapers, fitting up rooms - and probably remained a craftsman retailer throughout his career. His advertisements were all about feather and flock beds, damasks and printed cottons, rugs and carpets, chairs 'stuff'd with Curled Hair only', and the latest in framed wall hangings for staircases and halls. But his partner

William Cross left him in 1769 to spread his wings in recently built Milsom Street as 'upholder, appraiser, undertaker and auctioneer', an increasingly common mix of functions which Trimmell's sons also adopted in the 1780s. Among their rivals (from c.1758) we observe in Richard Evatt & Sons and John Bryant the métiers of upholstery and cabinet-making combined. The Evatts - with a large property in Westgate Street and a further warehouse nearby - employed carvers, gilders, and silverers (for looking glasses) and held stocks of furniture for hire - from sofas, settees, easy and French chairs to beds and bedding. Bryant likewise furnished rooms or whole houses - by the week, month or year - from his shop in the Marketplace, and even rented out sedan chairs. An advertisement of his in 1759 also lists typical upholstery wares such as carpets (Wilton, Kidderminster, Scotch and Turkish), matting and painted sailcloth for floors, many sorts of furnishing fabric (damasks, linens, harrateens, checks, cheneyes, corded moreens, etc.), quilts and cotton counterpanes, and horsehair chair seats.



Upholsterers' show-rooms, workshops and storage areas must have taken a lot of space, created a fire risk, and tied up considerable capital. Moreover the number of competitors in the field was on the increase and it was hardly surprising some failed to stay the course. Bryant failed in 1769 and others followed - William Bartlett bankrupt in 1776, Thomas Bird in 1790, and in 1798 John Stafford, whose furniture shop in the Marketplace offered an extensive choice of fashionable paper hangings from London, fancy chairs made for him by Bath craftsmen, and a range of sofas, card tables and other items for hire. Keeping abreast of fashion was a prerequisite of the trade, hence the readiness of William Evill - 'Upholsterer to the Duke and Duchess of York' - to appoint an expensive London 'japanning' specialist in 1800 to decorate chairs and pier tables in the floral manner then in vogue. The more successful upholsterers - William Evill himself, William Cross, John Plura (all based in Milsom

Street) and the Birchalls (in Queen Square) - combined furnishing work with valuing, broking, and auctioneering goods in general. When Plura lost thousands of pounds in a warehouse fire in 1785, the furniture that was destroyed might have belonged to any side of his business.

These later upholsterers were not so much plain tradesmen as entrepreneurs. In the case of William Glover enterprise assumed a specially distinctive form. Formerly the proprietor of a fancy goods 'repository' on Terrace Walk, in 1795 he opened new showrooms in Milsom Street on a rather magnificent scale, cramming the floors not only with a luxurious range of toyman's wares but also encroaching onto the upholsterer's territory with comprehensive exhibitions of carpeting, painted and mahogany chairs, tables, bedsteads, marble-lined wash-stands, chandeliers, looking glasses (in sizes up to 80" x 50"), framed paintings and prints, and much more. Add in the cutlery, chinaware, silver plate, jewellery, telescopes, blunderbusses, umbrellas, organs and pianofortes, clocks and watches, 'composition' chimneypieces and coach harnesses, and we have here the precursor, Georgian-style, of the departmental store. It was too ambitious to survive. Glover's amazing stock was still being auctioned off as Jane Austen's family moved to Bath in 1801. Their confidence in leaving their old furniture (save five beds) behind, and buying new items on the spot, was far from misplaced seeing that, in addition to Glover's, they had maybe a dozen different upholsterers to choose from.

⇒ See also **Auctioneers; Carvers-and-Gilders; Furniture Makers; Undertakers.**

**Washerwomen** see **Laundresses, Clearstarchers and Scourers**

**Watchmakers** see **Clock- and Watchmakers**

## **Wheelwrights**

There must always have been carpenters and smiths at Bath capable of repairing and fashioning a wheel or a wooden axle, but already by 1752

William and John Cottle (followed c.1760 by their ex-apprentice James Willis) had established independent wheelwrights' shops alongside the emergent trade of coachbuilding. It was a skilled craft and required a good eye. Carriage wheels were assembled from accurately shaped wooden components - hubs of elm wood, oak spokes, and ash fellies or rims - all fitted with protective metal tyres made of nailed-on iron strakes. By 1750 axles and axle-boxes were of metal as a rule, prefabricated in the Black Country, but the set of wheels for a vehicle still had to be custom-made. In order to withstand sideways thrust, wheels were always 'dished', i.e. canted at an angle to the body of the individual coach, cart or wagon. This angle related to the wheel width (partly determined by legal requirements), which in turn affected how the outer rim needed to be bevelled in order to reduce friction and skidding on the road - requiring long experience to judge. The Cottles and James Willis passed on their knowledge to their apprentices and workmen, but some Bath wheelwrights, especially those engaged by coachbuilders, probably underwent a training in London. There were enough journeymen at Bath in 1782 and 1787 for advertisements to appear telling of job opportunities back in the capital, and there was still plenty of work at Bath in 1791 for George Withey, a wheelwright in Corn Street, to advertise for two journeymen with the promise of constant employment.

⇒ See also **Coachbuilders**.

## **Wigmakers** see **Hairdressers**

## **Wine and Spirits Merchants**

Most wine was imported, but certain merchants and taverns also sold concocted British wines that 'nearly resemble' (according to one optimistic retailer) their foreign equivalents. Until 1756, moreover, it was possible to buy a genuine local *cru*, either red or white, by the gallon or hogshead, directly from the 7-acre vineyard near the foot of Lansdown Road. Otherwise wine came in via Bristol, Southampton and other ports, and licensed victuallers obtained their stocks from the shippers and big merchants. A few Bath dealers imported their own wine. In the 1760s, for example, a shipper from Lisbon and Oporto, George Warden, was selling wine in bulk from double hogsheads down to quarter casks. Isaac de Vic,

a Channel Islander, began trading much earlier (and certainly by 1738) from premises in Lilliput Alley/North Parade Passage, but using cellars elsewhere in town constantly replenished from his own father's warehouses in Southampton and Guernsey.

Thanks to the heavy duties payable on French products, the eighteenth-century British palate had become accustomed to the generally sweetish wines of Portugal and Spain, the source of 90% of the wine passing through Customs. Hence wine merchants' lists were dominated by red and white port, mountain, canary, sherry, madeira, etc., at less than half the cost of claret. Isaac de Vic's was no exception, though he tended to specialise in *fine mature* Iberian wines as well as in choice vintage hock, burgundy, champagne, and château clarets (Margaux and Lafite). Principally a wholesaler, with customers near and far, De Vic employed expert cellar-men to blend, 'fine', and re-cask or bottle wine for sale. In 1750 his assistant Edward Gillam, and in 1761 his long-serving wine cooper John Viel, another Guernsey man, set up their own shops, while his counting-house clerk, Joseph Marrett, took over the whole concern on De Vic's death in 1773. It was a lucrative line of business despite the rising burden of Customs and Excise duties on alcohol. De Vic was wealthy enough by 1753 to provide Bath with an early banking service linked to a sister bank in London, and Marrett eventually acquired Bathwick Villa pleasure garden to run in tandem with his high-class wine store in Milsom Street.

This kind of association can be seen with other Bath wine merchants. William Purdie took on Spring Gardens, Richard Stephens the Parade Coffee House, Henry Derham the Upper Assembly Rooms, and Nathaniel Goulding the New Rooms at Weymouth. In much the same fashion the *York House*, *Bear*, *White Hart* and other leading Bath inns conducted a flourishing trade from their well-stocked cellars. Thus it seems there was no difficulty in 1788 about the *York House* sending two large hampers of wine to the Isle of Wight for the politician John Wilkes - 22 quart bottles of claret, 20 of 'Calvacello' [Carcavelos, a sweet Lisbon white], 13 of port, 12 of madeira, 6 of 'mountain', 7 of champagne, and 4 pint bottles of Tokay. Around the same period the *Bear*, too, sometimes furnished the Guildhall with impressive quantities of port, madeira, sherry, claret and hock in order to lubricate Corporation banquets. Many customers bought their wine ready-bottled, often in dozens, and were expected to return empties

to the shop. Indeed, the job specification for a porter to be employed by Evan Thomas, a leading wine merchant in Orange Court in the 1740s, required him 'to carry out Wine [i.e. deliver to customers], and wash Bottles'. Some wealthy individuals, however, would also purchase by the cask. Should they lack an expert butler, they could always seek professional help - from someone like John Gardner, say, cellarman and wine cooper for 16 years to Chalie & Walters of Chandos Buildings, who in 1795 specifically advertised his services to the public in laying down and bottling wine. The rarer occupation of cork cutter also existed. One hatter who turned to cork-cutting in 1755 requested wine merchants to take note of his services.



Wine sales might have been greater but for the popularity of spirits, which wine merchants - like publicans - also sold in quantity. Cognac (in common with other French products heavily taxed, and as a result frequently smuggled) was the most expensive. In 1772 Samuel Sayce, who then occupied the well-known wine and brandy vaults in Horse (i.e. Southgate) Street, quoted cognac at 3s.3d. a quart compared with Dutch geneva at 2s.9d., 'Usquebough' (whisky) and Jamaica rum both at 2s.6d., and domestic cherry- and wine-brandy at 1s.9d. to 2s. Foreign spirits - included slave-trade rum (the basic ingredient of punch) - appealed to more expensive tastes, but cheap British schnapps and gin-type drinks were consumed right down the social scale. The fact that no licence was needed to sell hard liquor until 1729 encouraged innumerable small-scale dealers, and their persistence after that date, often illegally, contributed largely to the national gin problem. Above-board retailers at Bath could obtain spirits from reputable distillers, but plenty of illicit firewater must also have been dispensed in backstreet alehouses and dram shops. Besides wine and spirits, ciders and perries were commonly advertised, though well before 1800 it was becoming recognised that these West Country favourites might be potent for reasons other than their high alcohol level,

since some of them were dangerously contaminated by lead during the production process.

⇒ See also **Brewers; Coopers; Distillers.**

## Woollen Drapers

When the last looms had gone from Broad Street and the stretching frames outside the city walls (still standing in the 1690s) were finally removed, woollens continued to be produced in nearby Bathwick, Lyncombe/Widcombe, and Twerton. At each stage - supplying the wool, combing and spinning, weaving (or fulling in the case of serges), dyeing, finishing, marketing - the manufacture would be controlled no doubt by well-to-do local clothiers such as George Trim and John Marchant. Some of the output was then absorbed by woollen drapers (wholesalers and retailers) in Bath. The Marchants themselves owned a 'well-accustomed' shop in Stall Street c.1698-c.1740. Moreover, cloth continued to be sold in Bath market. In 1754 an Englishcombe clothier promised tailors a good discount on broad and narrow weaves bought on market days 'at the Two Lower Cloth-Standings', and as late as 1772 a serge-maker was renting a Saturday stall in the Green Market and undercutting drapers' prices by sixpence-a-yard.

Some woollen drapers may have specialised wholly in West Country textiles. Certainly Richard Street listed only broadcloths - superfines, double-milled drabs, seconds, knaps, forests, Bath coating, and liveries - when he advertised from North Parade in 1752. But larger shops covered the whole gamut of British woollens, worsteds, and wool-silk stuffs, procuring them either directly from the manufacturers or through the great London clearing-house of Blackwell Hall. Much of their skill lay in deciding which fabrics to order, and in what amounts, on the evidence of pattern books, full of fabric samples, left them by 'riders' (commercial travellers) from Yorkshire, East Anglia, Devon, and other places. Tailors being their major customers, they held everything else a tailor might need, from lining materials and thread to trimmings, lace, and Birmingham-made buttons. Together with all the rolls of expensive cloth on the shelves, it amounted to a small fortune tied up in stock even allowing for goods obtained on credit. When Thomas Creaser, woollen draper in Abbey Churchyard, sold up in 1773, his merchandise (going cheaply no doubt) still fetched £5100, and that despite several years of financial

mismanagement on Creaser's part. The Churchyard was a favourite location for woollen drapers. Before Creaser moved there in 1762 the 'Golden Fleece and Hat' had already been a draper's for some forty years under Richard and Mary Collins and William Wiltshire. Another shop - successively held by Richard Harford (c.1725?-71), Arthur Jones (1772-94) and Thomas Jones (from 1794) - had a still longer history. And there were others in the area too, including Roger Williams and Christopher Marsh, who, like other Bath drapers, both supplied cheap cloth for military uniforms when the call came in 1794.

The realities of running a shop occasionally come into sharp focus, as when Thomas Creaser's shaky finances and poor accounting practice are all set out by the local press in 1773 in embarrassing detail. We catch glimpses of customers - Parson Woodforde, for instance, buying superfine black cloth and rich florentine, at 19s. and 12s. per yard respectively, from Arthur Jones in 1793. We hear of a serious loss from this shop three years later when thieves got away with two 34-yard pieces of narrow, peppered and striped, West Riding cloth and 30 yards of superfine black ratteen. Henry Crook's bill of 1803 for the making of a brown lapelled coat with gilt buttons and velvet collar is also revealing, for it shows that Crook, a Milsom Street woollen draper, employed his own shop tailor. This went beyond the common practice of the draper recommending a tailor to a customer, and may have started in 1789 when Christopher Marsh first engaged a tailor to make up clothes to order, a move copied by Crook several years later. The converse situation also occurred of the tailor opening a draper's shop. By 1775 George Evill had taken this a stage further at his bespoke tailoring-cum-drapery business on St James's Parade by making inexpensive clothing to sell off the peg - men's winter greatcoats, waistcoats, breeches, women's cloaks, quilted petticoats, ready-made stays, children's 'first suits', postillions' jackets, and carters' smocks.

⇒ See also **Linen Drapers; Silk Mercers; Tailors.**





## ***Postscript: The Evill Family***

The name Evill crops up in this book more than most because the family - prominent Baptists - had fingers in various commercial pies; and though they are no more representative than any other trading family, their history is instructive. The senior figure, John Evill, described as a tanner from Milborne Port in south Somerset, had settled at Bathford by 1755 when he acquired the Old Inn, subsequently managed by Thomas Evill, most likely his elder son. But at least four other offspring, George, John II, William and Matthew, were obliged to make their own way in commercial Bath, just at the brief moment when trade monopolies were being actively enforced. George, a tailor, indeed soon fell foul of the guild of Merchant Taylors for a business arrangement made with a non-free workman, and Matthew Evill, the youngest son, was refused his freedom c.1762 despite claiming to have served a full tailor's apprenticeship.

The other two brothers made a better start, both of them capitalising on their former Somerset connections to promote the Stalbridge stocking manufacture. John II opened a shop near St Michael's church for hose, haberdashery, shoes and groceries, and William, on the west side of the Marketplace, combined hose with cutlery. Adopting the still novel policy of low prices, cash sales and rapid turnover, they quickly sensed where their best market opportunities lay, the one in inexpensive footwear and clothing, the other in the more fashionable commodity of Bath toys. By the mid-1760s John II had moved into larger premises in the shopping artery of Stall Street and given up hosiery altogether to concentrate on shoes. In addition, he had established a separate shop in Kingsmead Square dealing in cheap readymade clothes and managed by his tailoring brother George. Over in the Marketplace meanwhile, William was displaying the astonishing range of plate, jewellery, ornamental and fancy goods that now cascaded from the nation's industrial workshops. Here in 1773 he was joined by John II who gave up his very profitable Stall Street concern to bring extra capital into the toy business. George for his part had now left Kingsmead Square, and after moves to Thomas Street and St James's Parade (always occupying clothes/drapery shops with a trademark 'Green Door') eventually, like his brothers, gravitated to the busy hub of the Marketplace.

*[Continued]*

Matthew's career was more diverse. Having started as a tailor, he took up the burgeoning trade of umbrella making c.1770, then in the 1780s made a fresh break by turning baker at premises in Walcot Street. His next move was into brewing. The Evills had long had interests in a Marketplace brewery, but the Bathwick Brewery, built by Matthew in 1790-1, was on a larger scale. Handing over the baker's business to two of his sons, he ran his new venture (assisted by his nephew Mark) until his death in 1795, when a new Evill partnership took it over. By then a second family generation was everywhere in the saddle. George had died in 1785 and left a thriving clothes shop to his son George II, who would later be actively concerned in the Bathwick Brewery himself. John II, long in easy retirement at Southcote House, Lyncombe, had died childless in 1791, and William followed in 1793. The latter was then sufficiently well-off to have a house in Lambridge and to have given at least two of his sons - Luke the attorney and William II the upholsterer/auctioneer - excellent career prospects. A third son, Mark, seems by contrast to have squandered his chances, starting out as a Bathwick brewer (1791-5) and short-term proprietor of the Quayside salt warehouse (1796-7), but then sinking to become a mere wood turner in Walcot Street. For whatever reason, none of William I's sons entered the lucrative toyshop trade. Instead this was inherited by the enterprising James, one of the elder George Evill's sons.



## *A Note on Sources*

Since no comprehensive papers have survived on any Bath trade or individual traders, the evidence presented in this book has been assembled from many quarters. Central to the whole inquiry, though, were the countless trade advertisements and news items printed in local newspapers - in the *Gloucester Journal* 1725-45, *Bath Journal* 1744-1800, *Bath Advertiser* 1755-60, *Bath Chronicle* 1760-1800, and *Bath Herald* 1792-1800 - supplemented by data from the Tradecards Collection in Bath Central Library. Bath trade/street directories exist only from the late eighteenth century and are very selective before G. Robbins' *Bath Directory* of 1800. Bath Records Office holds important documentation on shop premises, on the regulation of trade (e.g. Bath Council Minutes 1700-1800; Freeman's Apprentices 1706-76; Assize of Bread 1767-81), and on Corporation spending with particular traders (e.g. Chamberlain's Accounts and Vouchers), and there is also a mass of fragmentary information to be found elsewhere, in contemporary diaries, memoirs, correspondence, novels, etc., which give something of the customers' point of view. The secondary literature on eighteenth-century shops and markets, production and consumption, and on trades, processes and commodities is now considerable. The list below contains some of the more relevant publications consulted for this book, including some further primary sources.

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