



NEWSLETTER 60

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GROUP NEWS

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EDITORIAL

Newsletter no 60 concludes my efforts at editing and the new editor to whom I send all best wishes will be Nigel Pollard.

MEETING REPORTS

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SILVERSMITHS AROUND BATH

Tuesday 14th October, 2008 Tovey Room, Bath URC

Speaker **Mr. Tim Kent F.S.A**

Reporter **Michael Rowe**

Tim Kent is, as the result of intensive research, the foremost authority on West Country silversmiths and is the author of a number of substantial reference books on the subject, notably 'West Country Silver Spoons and Their Makers, 1992'. He was called to the Bar and is a Liveryman of the Goldsmiths Company.

His well illustrated talk was enhanced by his generous provision, from a private collection, of numerous examples of extremely rare pieces of silver for members and guests to handle, The rarest of all being an apostle spoon with a hallmark depicting the west front of Bath Abbey. No other piece of silver with this mark has been recorded.

Mr. Kent prefaced his talk with some reflections on why people collect old silver. He views a silver collection as therapeutic, rather like a group of up market worry beads, as the metal is so tactile,

aesthetically pleasing and satisfying. It is beautiful as well as historically important. Some collect for beauty alone but others, like Tim, derive immense satisfaction from researching the ownership of pieces, their domestic history and the history and family connections of the craftsmen who fashioned them. He, as a lawyer, searches for reports of trials involving silversmiths, and for details of enforcement proceedings by The London Goldsmiths' Company, so exploring the craftsmen's private lives as well as their trade misdemeanours. He gave the example of a Taunton silversmith improperly striking as his own, the mark of a lion although this is restricted use to the London company for indicating the sterling standard.

The terms silversmith and goldsmith were used interchangeably in the talk as although these craftsmen worked almost exclusively in silver, they were, or should have been, registered at Goldsmiths Hall. Local craftsmen mainly produced small cups, spoons and rings and larger pieces were usually imported from London. An example was the commission from Bristol, by Exeter Corporation, in 1583, of a major presentation piece for the then Countess of Bath, although there were competent local large plate workers some of whom had been apprenticed in London.

Spoons were often given as christening and wedding presents, but many had the 'pricked' initials of the first recipients defaced and re pricked because of the awful death rate in children. Spoons, therefore, were reused for the next child and often very quickly.

The Reeve monument in Bath abbey was illustrated.

Nicholas Reeve was admitted to the Freedom of Exeter in 1573 and with his wife Elizabeth and his brother George went to Taunton . In Bath, probably the earliest silversmith recorded is Spencer Reeve believed to be the son of George. He married Katherine Symonds of Crewkerne in 1616 and initially lived there. There is a record that he swore to Goldsmiths Hall that he would use only sterling standard silver and therefore, was trusted to use only his personal maker's mark instead of being required to send everything to London for testing and marking. Spencer Reeve was in Bath by 1624 and his children appear in the registers. His is the rare spoon with the Bath abbey mark of circa 1630. Reeve apostle spoon finials were cast here in Bath but all seem to be of St. Mathias. These finials were a speciality and were attached to spoons from out of Bath makers e.g. from Shaftesbury In the next generation is another George Reeves who was successful in business, was a town councillor and issued trade tokens. Unfortunately, some of his spoons were substandard, and in 1671 he was fined £5 at Goldsmiths Hall. An Apostle spoon of his was shown with the GR mark. In his will of 1676 he left good legacies to his wife and children, including two daughters and the business to his son Matthew Reeve. After an unfortunate trial for treason in 1683, in which Matthew was acquitted and restored to the town Council, members of the family, Matthew and George, finally emigrated to Barbados.

Next described was Thomas Cory of Warminster who came from Cheshire, was freeman of the London Company in 1655, and produced lovely beaker cups several of which were shown. A rare two handled flat vessel of 1670, and beakers of 1669 and 1680, along with a rare, footed dram cup were much admired. The latter piece is small and described as being used for 'strong water'. Cory seems to have had multiple apprentices who spread out over the West Country.

Also at Warminster was William Clare, apprenticed in London in 1667. His children were baptised at Warminster and he supplied a fine silver communion cup which is still in the town. Warminster work included pictures of the Ludlow tankard at Hill Deverill circa 1695, with splendid engraved arms, and a beaker of 1689 with pricked decoration and with the mark 'WC' was examined. The aesthetic virtues of these beakers as vehicles for an evening dram of whiskey, after a heavy day in court, were much extolled by Mr. Kent.

The work of Thomas Elderton of Frome was exemplified by an exquisite 'laceback' spoon stamped with flowers, buds and foliage in a lacelike pattern on the front of the stem and the reverse of the bowl.

Silver marked for Gabriel Felling, Fellin or Feline of Bruton was illustrated by a set of three castors. He had the patronage of the Thynne family at Longleat, for small work and repairs, as he appears in the archives of this house. Yet he was capable of supplying wonderful larger work.

We were allowed to handle a splendid, large, lidded tankard with the finest of engraving indicating that the piece was a gift, in 1685, to one Mary Hoddi from her grandfather, William Martin of East Pennard.

Those present felt greatly indebted to Mr. Kent for his trouble, not only in describing Bath workers, but in placing those in the city amidst the other significant craftsmen in surrounding towns. To be able to handle so much rare provincial silver of the highest quality and condition, and around 350 years old, was a very great privilege.

VISIT TO BAYNTUN'S BOOK BINDING BUSINESS IN MANVERS STREET

Tuesday 11th November 2008

Guide **Edward Bayntun-Coward**

Reporter **Chris Noble**

A well attended visit to Bayntun's in Pierrepont Street where we were welcomed by Edward Bayntun-Coward who after a brief introduction giving the history of the firm allowed us free access to the workshop where we could see skilled staff at work and ask then questions about their craft.

George Bayntun, Edward Bayntun's great grandfather, founded the business in 1894 in premises in Northumberland Avenue and the business subsequently moved to the present address. The building is in itself interesting, starting life as a GPO sorting office, built for that purpose in 1893 and adjacent to Brunel's Bath main line station. The firm of Bayntun moved to the premises in 1937.

Behind the office and book shop front lies a large steel-framed industrial style building where the bookbinding work is carried out.

The extensive workshop area is a rare, example of an industrial workshop situated in the centre of the city and many examples of heavy cast iron machinery can be seen. Edward Bayntun had thoughtfully arranged for us to see some of his staff at work. After their apprenticeship of seven years staff were seen achieving a very high level of excellence binding books which had arrived in varying conditions.

We saw the application of gold leaf to the edges and lettering on the spine and cover and binding in leather.

JOHN JEFFERIES ARCHIVE: THE LETTERS OF A 18TH CENTURY TOWN CLERK OF BATH

Tuesday 13th January 2008 **St Stephen's Centre, Lansdown**

Speaker and Reporter **Colin Johnson**

Before describing the contents of this newly-discovered archive, Colin related how he had been told of its imminent sale in a London auction-house in 2008 and the subsequent rush of activity to obtain purchase-grant funding in time for the successful acquisition by Bath Record Office.

Over the following months a dedicated volunteer has transcribed most of the 500 letters which make up this unique collection, revealing their full content for this summary. The letters are nearly all from business clients of John Jefferys in the years 1760-1800 when he was Town Clerk of Bath and a lawyer with thriving practices in Bath and London. Virtually no working papers of Jefferys survive in Bath Record Office and it is believed this newly discovered cache remained at Jefferys' London offices after his death.

Apart from a few family letters, there is correspondence on Bath Corporation business, and from many private clients whose names are already known to us from eighteenth century records. Colin gave extensive quotes from the correspondence to illustrate how it mostly dealt with the financing of

building and development projects in Bath at the height of the city's expansion. Two of the most prolific writers are local architect John Wood the younger and property developer Sir William Pulteney. To these and other local clients Jefferys was evidently acting not only as financial adviser but even providing the financial backing to support local building projects. Pulteney's letters in particular provide highly detailed updates on the progress of his major building projects in developing his land to the east of Pulteney Bridge, for which he had sought designs from Robert Adam.

Other prominent Bath correspondents which Colin chose to quote and set in context with background information on their careers in Bath were Thomas Baldwin, architect, and Major William Brereton, master of ceremonies at Bath's assembly rooms.

A surprising discovery in the collection is the number of personal draft letters made by Jefferys in his later life when he was unsuccessfully wooing Grace, the daughter of Lord Grantley, one-time speaker of the House of Commons.

The collection is now available for view at the Record Office under the document reference Accession 0745.

BANKING IN BATH

Tuesday 10th February **St Stephen's Centre, Lansdown**

Speaker and Reporter **Stephen Clews**

Stephen's talk traced the history of early banking in Bath up to circa 1825 and drew some parallels between earlier banking crises and current difficulties experienced by those institutions. The evidence for early banking in Bath begins with references surviving in accounts to the provision of finance for building ventures, such as Mr Marchant who provided funds to the Duke of Chandos for Queen Square. The Council's accounts also record debt repayments to private individuals who were de facto bankers.

The earliest reference to public banking as a walk in service at established premises is by Isaac De Vic who offered to transfer sums between Bath and London in 1753 for the convenience of the company attending the spa. It was an additional service to his trade as a wine merchant and other Bath banks originated in this way. The High Street Bank of the Clement Brothers who were drapers by trade is the longest surviving continuous banking business in Bath, founded in 1787, currently trading as National Westminster.

The primary services of a bank are to provide security and interest to lenders and credit to borrowers together with the facility to transfer sums between different locations securely. Early Bath banks provided a full range of services and had access to banking circles in London. For the most part they were unregulated partnerships and casualties occurred due to unwise speculation and during hard times such as the outbreak of war with France in 1793.

The expansion of paper money posed the risk of forgery of note issues and Bath banks responded with more elaborate designs. Bank note engravers and forgers both practised in Bath.

Alternative specialist providers such as pawnbrokers, and the new savings institution which encouraged saving amongst those with lesser means, are known at the beginning of the 19th century and it seems that Bath banks had no special role in the circulation of local token coinage at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries.

MAPPING AND SURVEYING AS A RESEARCH TOOL

Tuesday 10th March **Tovey Room, Bath URC**

Speaker and Reporter **Mike Chapman**

It is only recently that historians and archaeologists have come to recognise the importance of early maps as a vital source of information when combined with other research material. In this respect

Bath and its neighbourhood is well endowed, starting with Speed's map of the city in the late 16th century and leading up to the large-scale Ordnance Survey sheets of the late 19th century. During this period maps played an important rôle in the city's architectural and economic development, as well as providing a useful guide to the educated visitor.

Already by the early 18th century, landowners in and around the city were all having surveys made for the management of their estates, and John Wood's published map of Bath, in 1735, was the first in this country outside London to be produced with a view to urban planning. The city attracted many innovative mapmakers from then on, particularly Thomas Thorpe, whose 1742 circular map of the district five miles around Bath not only enabled the visitor to explore the surrounding countryside, but even provided William Smith, 'father of English Geology' with a basis for his first geological surveys.

However, like any other historical source, caution and experience is necessary in the use of early maps. The earliest, for example, employed a three-dimensional convention sign system (derived from heraldic practice) which, however accurately surveyed, were not intended to be a photographic 'birds-eye' view. A map may also have been produced for a particular purpose which could influence what details were included and how they were represented. This can be especially misleading in the case where proposed developments are shown that were never actually carried out. Nevertheless even these can provide a valuable insight into contemporary intentions.

Map sources vary widely, many showing a great deal of useful large-scale detail. Tithe maps, turnpike maps, deposited plans, insurance maps and deed plans are some of the best examples. However, the most important maps for the researcher must still remain the large-scale OS sheets of the 1880s. These perhaps should be consulted before any others, since they provide an amazingly accurate link between present-day topographical features and those of earlier times. It is also worth familiarising oneself with the abbreviations key used on these maps, which can not only identify many curious details (even lamp-brackets and man-hole covers!) but whether the line of a boundary is marked by a wall or a hedge.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 14th April Museum of Bath at Work

IMAGES OF BATH

Speaker Daniel Brown

Reporter Chris Noble

Daniel Brown introduced his collection of more than 13,000 Images of Bath which he has collected and put on his website www.bathintime.co.uk.

We saw and in many cases were introduced for the first time to images, both prints and photographs of Bath ranging from early prints and photographs through pictures of the city over two hundred years. Daniel's fundamental question is 'What is Bath about ?' He was drawn to look at the pictorial representations of a city whose importance far exceeded its size. We liked the range and variety of images, a range which started long before the discovery of photography, included it as it arrived and developed and then stretched on to today. Here we saw Southgate being completely redeveloped for the third time Who will like it and what will the world and Bath say of it in 2050 ?

WALK: BATHAMPTON

Tuesday 12th May 2008

Led by Gill Huggins

Reporter Michael Rowe

The walk was led by Gill Huggins of Bathampton LHRG with contributions from Mike Chapman who is assisting through the Survey of Old Bath, with the assessment of the earliest buildings surviving in the village. Although the Bathampton LHS has been disbanded those engaged in original research continue to meet monthly with a view to eventually publishing their findings.

Approximately 3,000 years of history of a settlement are recorded despite the lack of major development due to the topography and absence of a major through route.

The current boundary is much the same as in the Saxon charter and copies of sequential maps including the Allen estate map were shown. Ownership was with Bath until the Dissolution when it passed to the Crown and was then purchased by William Crouch. Subsequent owners were Thos. Popham, Edward Hungerford, the Bassett family and the Holders of Claverton. Ralph Allen married Elizabeth Holder in 1736. By 1743 Elizabeth's brother, Charles, had become "financially embarrassed" and Ralph paid off his debts and purchased the Manor from him.

Collinson records 150 residents in 29 houses in 1790. There was a modest increase in population with the building of villas in Bathampton Lane around 1826.

From 1801 the Kennet and Avon canal split the church from the village high street. This was followed by "The New Warminster Road" and the advent of the railway and subsequent branch line, station and goods yards. The extreme effects this had on a community reliant on agriculture was discussed. It was noted that Pulteney had ideas for a turnpike through the meadows as also did the Melksham turnpike.

The "closed" estate passed to Allen's brother, Philip, and through his descendants until 1921 when it was sold off in lots. Population is now c1500.

Ralph Allen greatly altered the church, building a chapel, now the south aisle and Australian memorial. There is a family vault below the tower. The ancient crosses on the chancel roof were discussed; one believed to have been relocated from an ancient barn. The fine and very early effigy in the east end wall may have come from Bath but the origins are unproven. The GWR boundary marker was noted near the bridge abutment.

The large house known as Bathampton Lodge, the result of multiple additions to an earlier more modest building, formerly belonged to Dr. Augustus Harvey of Bath, and had pleasure grounds and a hot and cold bath house which the public could visit. The charming Gothick bath house was viewed by kind permission of the current owners.

In the High Street the former Zionist Chapel, converted from cottages of c1840 was noted as was the former and short lived Seven Stars pub of c1840.

Dogs Head cottages with the Allen arms in stone take their name from the stone dog head fountain spout which Whitaker believes may be Roman.

The Grange was the main Harbutt dwelling and was much extended. Unproven date "1661" above the door and a commemorative plaque on the gable. Photographs of the old steam mill, later Harbutt's Plasticine factory, were shown.

The re-fronted Manor Farmhouse was identified as was the site of a Roman villa in Down Lane. The location of the original farms direct onto the High Street were discussed. The lost great house of the Holders was regretted.

Bathamton House, dated 1843 on a plaque, was formerly the site of C16th farm buildings, and served as accommodation for worker's in the Allen's "Bathamton Laundry" in the adjacent property - Kennet Court. The Laundry ceased in 1916 and then became the second Post Office.

The owners of the Old Rectory generously allowed access to the extensive and very beautiful gardens. Formal terraces, statuary and extensive planting along with lakes formed from early monastic fish ponds, were much admired. The house itself said to date from 1317 when the Monastery of St Peter and Paul's ordained the church and had to provide accommodation for the priest. After the Dissolution the church property together with patronage passed to the new see of Bristol. The "Living" was annexed to Bathford until 1855 and the Parsonage House, not being required, was let to the Fisher family who eventually purchased in 1809. On the chimney there is a fine sundial erected by William Fisher in 1697.

Glebe Cottage is dated 1846 with George Edward Allen's initials, although clearly an older building which had once formed part of the monastery's holding. The garden contains remains of stonework and archway from that period.

Old Cottage is the end of the original village and is dated 1616. It became the house of the waterman for the village whose job was to regulate the pumps there and control supply for a system that became Bathampton Water Works.

This revealing walk with rare access to some properties was curtailed by failing light and a chill wind as the sun went down, but all were most grateful to Gill and Mike for sharing some of their discoveries with us and look forward to hearing more and ultimate publication.

WALK: BATHWICK VILLAGE AND VILLA FIELDS

Tuesday June 9th, 2008

Led by Terry Hardick and Shiela Edwards

Reporter Michael Rowe

The walk started at Cleveland Bridge where the original river crossing from the Walcot bank was pointed out.

In the churchyard around St John's church (1861) the site of the original village church of St. Mary Bathwick was shown. It had seating for 130 and three bells in the single tower but the church became unsafe due to excessive burials against the wall and despite repeated buttressing. The proposal for the bridge and realignment of the street along with the rapidly growing population of Bathwick resulted in its demolition and replacement by the new St. Mary's at the bottom of Bathwick Hill. Some of the headstones from the old churchyard survive. The font was relocated to the new church and the three bells recast into a single number 9 bell for the new church. The former parsonage is next to the church and was probably built in the 14th. Cent and then much enlarged by the incumbent Rev. Peter Griggs in 1771 and again in the 19th Cent. by Rev. Dunn.

In 1790 the village population was 250 people in 50 cottages. The village farm continued until 1896.

The extended churchyard of, 1809, with its ruined mortuary chapel of 1802, was then seen. The chapel, by John Pinch senior, was constructed from the reclaimed stone from the church and the chancel arch rescued and reinstalled. The stone frame of the porch door is in the garden wall nearby. The chapel was used for funerals and baptisms but not marriages until the new church was consecrated in 1820.

John Pinch and his wife Martha are buried outside the east window beneath a fine box tomb with a much weathered inscription.



Bathwick House on the main street was discussed, with its roofline altered from that depicted by Thos. Robbins and with the later Doric porch added probably to John Pinch's design. Internally there is a mullion window, at present basement level, which may be the original village street level. There are also alterations suggestive of work by Thos Baldwin. Further along the street numbers 9 and 10 are said to be the first sites leased out, one by Sir William early in 1784 and the other by Henrietta Laura Pulteney in 1785 after she became of age in July 1784. The footpath on the north side allowed the site of Kirkham's buildings and the Kirkham's brewery to be identified. The brewery later known as the Bathwick Brewery and then the Bath Brewery, was also associated with the original crown Inn on that site. On the east side of the path the site of the roman stonemason's yard was indicated and the small regular stones of the wall considered to be of Roman origin.



The four groups of cottages lost to slum clearance were, Villa Place, Kirkham's Buildings, Sam's Court and Cottage Row. The census recorded 400 people living in these 59 cottages. The remaining walls are thought to be of the extensive orchards bordering on Villa Fields where Capt. Forester was then to build his new estate. High quality brick, from Bristol, and Bath stone trims were used for these developments along with reclaimed Bath stone rubble from Bathwick Villa (1777). The history of the Villa, demolished in 1897, and its pleasure grounds was described. Ebony panelling from the villa was reused in a fishing cabin on the riverside but has since been lost.

The north village wall and John Pinch's builders yard were identified, and the erection of Pinch's Folly to reduce coal and soil cart traffic towards the villa was noted. The recently closed Castle Inn was pointed out. It was the replacement for an earlier pub at the foot of Sham Castle Lane and built for the use of the navvies on the railway. Bones from an early burial in the area have recently been examined by the Bath and Camerton Archaeological Trust and various diagnoses of the cause of ill health and death considered. Tabard House, an Arts and Crafts building, was formerly the church hall for St John's. The walk ended outside Forester Court and near the embankment of rubbish used as a foundation for the fire station. It is thought to overlie an old boat dock and its gates, a foundry and possibly a small mill.

Terry Hardick and Shiela Edwards of the Bathwick Local History Society were most sincerely thanked for leading this very enjoyable walk.

Further information on Bathwick village is contained in the two well researched and heavily illustrated publications of the society. Available from local bookshops or through Shiela Edwards they are:-

Bathwick. A Forgotten Village. 2004. ISBN 0948975 70 9

Bathwick. Echoes of the Past. 2008. ISBN 978 0 948975 84 4

Additional reading about river crossings and the use of the riverside land in Bathwick is to be found in Terry Hardick's book about his family business:-

Bath Boating Station. An illustrated history. 2005. ISBN 0948975 75 X

PUBLICATIONS

Philippa Bishop has published an account of her time at the Holburne Museum, going back over 48 years!

It is available direct from Philippa, Mr B's Emporium, The Moorland Road Bookshop, No 1 Royal Crescent, or the Building of Bath Museum at a price of £6. 50.

We hope to include a review in the next Newsletter.