

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## HISTORY OF BATH RESEARCH GROUP



No: 1

2012-13

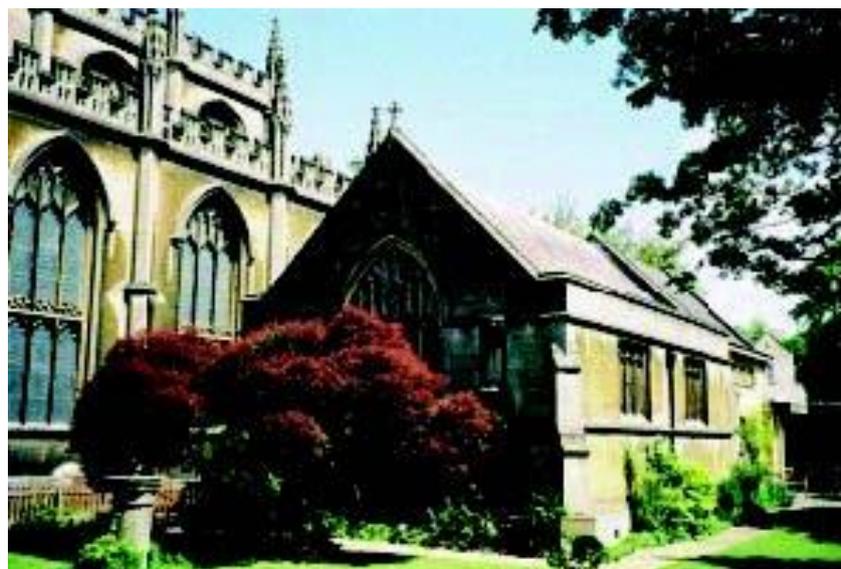
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### EDITORIAL

By now all Members of the HBRG should be aware that we have decided to call this annual publication, our “Proceedings”. Hopefully, the reason is obvious – it has become an archive of our past meetings and therefore was no longer a letter of news. News, book reviews and other more topical items shall now appear first on the website.

Following the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations and the London Olympics of 2012, one would have assumed that the current academic year would look rather dull, but as you will see, we followed on with much of interest to bring us through the winter.



We also seem to have settled down into our new home at St Mary’s, Bathwick Church Hall which while not as revered as Pinch’s grand church adjacent, this, designed in 1906 by Deacon as the choir vestry, serves us very well.

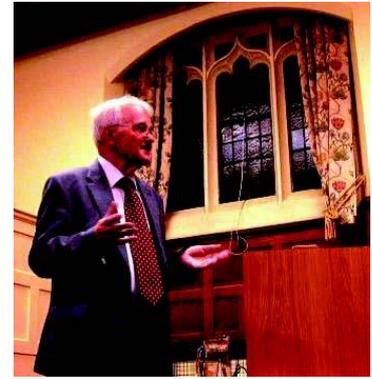
# MEETING REPORTS

## LIFE AND STRIFE IN BATH ABBEY 1572-1800

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012      St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

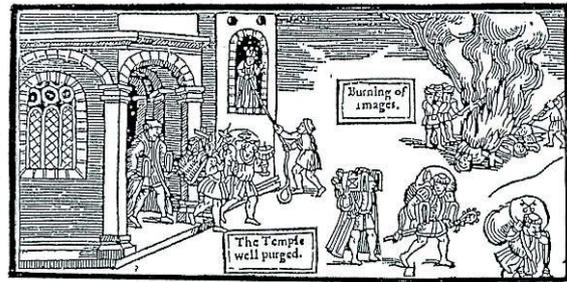
Speaker                                      Dr John Wroughton

Reporter                                     Dr John Wroughton



In 1500, Bath's small population lived a secure and well-ordered existence. Nothing ever changed. The Benedictine monks of Bath Priory dominated city affairs, offering employment, poor relief and education. Daily life centred around one of the five parish churches with its annual round of fifty holy days, fifteen major festivals and seventy fasting days, followed by days of feasting and merrymaking. The city was locked in a time warp.

But suddenly their fixed routine was shattered. Henry VIII's breach with Rome resulted in the dissolution of Bath Priory, the very rock of their existence. Worse was to follow. A raft of reforms by Edward VI, a keen Protestant, swept away all Catholic practices from local churches, abolished traditional ceremonies and introduced a new English Prayer Book.



Local people, however, were resilient. In 1572, Elizabeth I granted Bath Corporation's petition to transform the former Priory Church into a Protestant preaching centre (later styled 'the Abbey'). Over the next forty-five years, local people worked together to raise money and complete the project. Sadly, this remarkable unity was soon undermined by a Puritan revolution from 1590, which removed all final traces of Catholicism and totally transformed local culture. Fairs were suppressed, alehouses closed down and those guilty of immoral or drunken behaviour punished. Many, however, deeply resented this decline in Merry England.

The outbreak of civil war in 1642 highlighted these cracks in local society. Attempts by the Marquis of Hertford to raise forces for the king in north Somerset caused local puritans to arm themselves, drive him out of the city and pursue him to Wells, where they sacked the Bishop's Palace. Above all, they feared that his arrival would herald the suppression of Puritanism and the revival of Catholicism. The Civil War locally became a war of religion as the Bath community was torn apart.

By the end of the war, the Church of England had been abolished, royalist clergy ejected and a new Presbyterian church established. Locally, Puritans quickly adopted the system - though its success was limited, thanks to a dearth of Puritan ministers and a shortage of the new Directories of Worship. The 1640s witnessed the breakdown of Puritan unity in Bath and the emergence of radical sects -Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists and Quakers.



The Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 saw the return of the Church of England, the Prayer Book and the ejected clergy. Many Presbyterian ministers refused to accept the Prayer Book and were themselves ejected. Many members of Bath abbey left to set up their own nonconformist conventiclers, meetings in barns or in the open air. In 1687, the Bath Abbey congregation was horrified when James II on a visit to the city held a ceremony to 'touch for the King's Evil' - claiming that the divine nature of the monarchy gave him the power to cure scrofula and other diseases.

By the eighteen century, the growth of tourism and commercialism in Bath heralded the Age of Respectability and Compromise. The Abbey tried hard to avoid giving offence to those in Bath's 'mixed company' by avoiding any extremes in preaching or worship. Indeed, a visit to the Abbey became part of the social round of the fashionable society. Methodist preachers such as George Whitfield were therefore banned from the pulpit, leaving John Wesley to describe the city as 'Satan's Throne'. Nevertheless, the Lantern of the West struggled through these new challenges. Furthermore, the legacy of the Puritan revolution with its commitment to preaching had not been entirely lost -while the rise of the nonconformist movement was to prepare the way for the evangelical revival of the nineteenth century. Bath Abbey was more than ready to receive it.

## MILITARY CONNECTIONS IN WIDCOMBE

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker

Bill Hanna

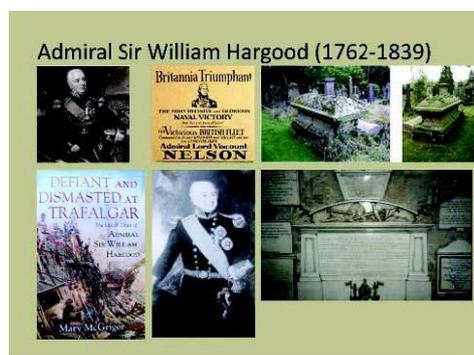
Reporter

Nigel Pollard

Bill's fascinating collection of "Military Connections" is the result of detailed studies of church, cemetery and other monuments around the parish of Widcombe, which of course also contains the main "Abbey" cemetery on Prior Park Road. They cover all Services and Ranks from Privates to Generals to Admirals from Trafalgar to the 2nd World War.

Starting with Trafalgar, there are three men who had connections with this historic event. LIEUT. COL WILLIAM SUCKLING (1761-1833) Nelson's cousin, is buried in St Mark's churchyard: his father, Nelson's uncle, CAPTAIN MAURICE SUCKLING RN commanded HMS Raisonnable which Nelson joined as his first appointment. Thereafter, Maurice Suckling, who became Comptroller of the Navy, ensured that Nelson became an accomplished seaman by placing him with a succession of captains of small vessels.

THOMAS PITT ROBINSON - RN (1792-1861) who joined Nelson in the Battle itself as a 14 year old volunteer on board the Royal Sovereign that really impresses, as do the exploits of ADMIRAL SIR WILLIAM HARGOOD (1762-1839) who first went to sea under Commodore Maurice Suckling, Nelson's first captain. His behaviour in command of HNS Belleisle at Trafalgar caused Nelson to exclaim "Nobly done, Hargood".

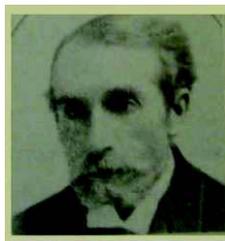


Bath was obviously a fashionable place during these times and a popular place to retire and a further high ranking gentleman to end his days in the City was GENERAL PAUL ANDERSON (1764-1851) who was the Late Governor of Pendennis Castle. More importantly, he was a close friend of General Sir John Moore and was one of four officers who lowered Moore into his grave at Corunna.

Moving away from both the sea and the higher ranks, we find the name of PRIVATE ROBERT WARREN ( - 1854) who died in the Crimean War in 1854 and is recorded on the memorial erected by the Bath City Council.

Staying with the Crimean War, Widcombe also remembers two further men who excelled in this war to such a degree that they were awarded the VC. Their names: HENRY HUGH CLIFFORD and WILLIAM HENRY THOMAS SYLVESTER .

HENRY HUGH CLIFFORD VC (1826-1883) Went to Prior Park College and served in South Africa in the 1850,s and then in both the Crimea and in China between 1858-9. He won the VC at the Battle of Inkerman in the Crimea in 1854. >

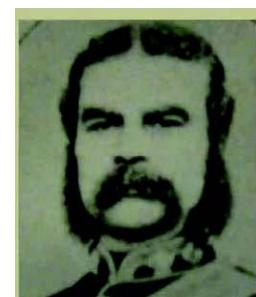


WILLIAM HENRY THOMAS SYLVESTER VC (1831-1920) was not a fighting man, but a medical man who at the age of 24 became an Assistant Surgeon to the 23 Regiment. He was awarded his VC for tending to the wounded under fire, on two reported occasions near Sebastopol in 1855. He was later made Surgeon Major.

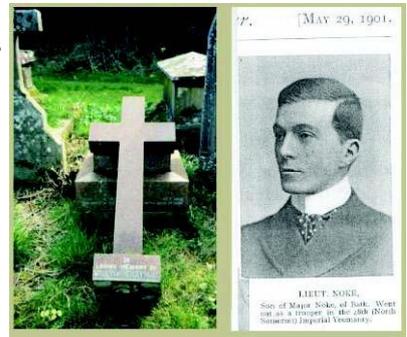
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Travelling further east to India, St Matthew's Church, Widcombe has a memorial to the Women and Children killed at Cawnpore in 1857 during the Indian Mutiny, India's first war of Independence, while a further pupil of Prior Park College HANSON CHAMBERS TAYLOR JARRETT VC (1837-1890) of the 26th Bengal Native Infantry was reported in The London Gazette for an "Act of Bravery" leading his men during a further uprising in 1858 for which he received the VC >



Moving into the Twentieth Century, the last war before “The Great War” is remembered with the name of **WILLIAM HENRY NOKE (1877-1901)** who was killed during the Boer War at Vlakfontein aged only 24



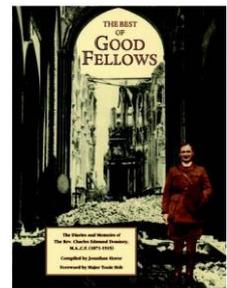
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And so to the 1<sup>st</sup> World War.

Here, two men stand out: The **REV. CHARLES EDMOND DOUDNEY** and **JOHN MAY MAITLAND HARDYMAN**.

**REV. CHARLES EDMOND DOUDNEY (1871-1915)**

was the Rector of St Luke’s Church and appears to have been a very popular man even before he signed up as an Army Chaplain. He helped found St Thomas’s Church at OddDown and had a role in the setting up of the Toc H movement at Poperinghe before his untimely death in the Trenches within a year of his signing up. However, he has left a legacy in the shape of his diaries and memoirs which form the basis of a biography still widely available, entitled “The Best of Good Fellows”.



**JOHN MAY MAITLAND HARDYMAN (1894-1918)** was the youngest Lieutenant Colonel in the British Army before being “killed in Action” in August 1918. His rather unusual but beautiful memorial is shown adjacent which has recently been restored by the efforts of the Bathwick Local History Society.?



Bill concluded his talk to a close with two memorials taken from the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, those of **RICHARD WHITFIELD JAMES** and **HILARY EDRIDGE**.

**RICHARD WHITFIELD JAMES (1915-1944)** took part in the decisive landings on the Normandy beaches but unfortunately did not make it through to see the victory of which he as part.



**HILARY PATRICK M. EDRIDGE (1919-1940)** also, did not see the victory of which he was a part, but is unique in this list of military personnel in that his battles were fought in the sky. Hilary was the son of a local doctor in St Mark’s Road, Widcombe and joined the Air Force. Stationed at RAF Hornchurch in Essex, he was shot down in 1940 during the Battle of Britain and is remembered there in a road named after him - Eldridge Close.



## BATH - LOCATION AND ACTOR

### ASPECTS OF BATH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MOVING IMAGE

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012      St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker                                  Dr David Humphrey

Abstract                                  Nigel Pollard

David Humphrey's fascinating talk on Bath's relationship with the moving image was an education in the understanding of what makes a good film and the reputation of a great Director.

The title "Bath - Location and Actor" was a further education in separating out the location of a film as simply a backdrop to the film or of it becoming more of a character, or actor, in its own right; A simple test being to ask whether the film's location could have been anywhere, or whether it could be seen as an integral part of the story.

Dr Humphrey, first gave due recognition to the B&NES web site and Movie Map ([visitbath.co.uk/film](http://visitbath.co.uk/film)) that lists over thirty five films made in and around Bath between 1931 and 2008, those of particular note being:

The Ghost Train (1931) Director: Walter Forde. Stars: Jack Hulbert, Cecily Courtneidge, Arnold Ridley.

80,000 Suspects (1963) Director: Val Guest. Stars: Clare Bloom, Richard Johnson, Cyril Cusack and Ray Barret.

Inspector Morse (1997) Episode Death is now my neighbour Director: Charles Beeson. Stars: John Thaw, Kevin Whatley

.....while those missing from the list included:

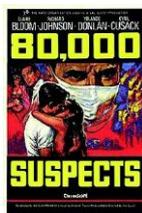
Catch us if you can (1965) Director: John Boorman. Stars: The Dave Clarke Five.

The Wrong Box (1966) Director: John Forbes. Stars: John Mills, Ralph Richardson, Michael Caine, Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, Peter Sellers, Irene Handle and Tony Hancock.

Unfortunately, due to time restraints, there was not time to study all these films, so after lamenting the loss of an early travelogue on Bath made in 1946 entitled An Englishman's holiday which may or may not have been any good, our speaker concentrated for the remainder of the evening on the 1963 classic: 80,000 Suspects.

This film which RANK chose as their offering for the Edinburgh Film Festival that year, turns out to be a very good example of the above noted theme of Bath as Actor due, in no small measure, to the mood setting black and white film shots directed by Arthur Grant, the Director of Photography.

While the pictures main stars were undoubtedly Clare Bloom and Richard Johnson shown here, the evening brought out many reminiscences from those who remembered the filming in the very cold winter of 1962/3 and that many of the film extras were recruited from the Teacher Training College at Newton Park and that Clare Bloom took time off to visit the sick at the RUH.



## A GENEALOGICAL STUDY OF ALDERMAN BECKFORD

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013      St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall  
Speaker                              Dr Mike Fraser  
Abstract                                Nigel Pollard

Anyone giving talk on the Beckford family would need to be sure of their facts with Dr Amy Frost in the audience, and Dr Fraser was I can report well up to the match.

Alderman Beckford (1709-1770) was the son of Colonel Peter Beckford and Bathsua Hering, both of Jamaica, he being a wealthy planter and later Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Island.

The Beckford's were originally from Gloucestershire from where his grandfather Peter Beckford together with his wife Phillis had sailed early in the reign of Charles II to the newly won colony of Jamaica.

At the age of 14 in 1723 he was sent to England, to Westminster School to be educated, where he met and became a life long friend of Lord Mansfield.

While the vast wealth of the Jamaican estates had passed to the eldest son in 1735, this son, another Peter, died without issue only a year later, so the whole inheritance came down to the younger son William who by this time had set up as a merchant in the City of London.

In 1744 Beckford bought an estate at Fonthill Gifford in Wiltshire to which he made substantial improvements although it was largely burnt down in 1755 a few years after he had been elected MP for Shaftsbury (1747-54) and Alderman of Billingsgate Ward in the City of London (c 1752)

However, following the fire, he declared that "I have an odd fifty thousand pounds in a drawer: I will build it up again," and he rebuilt it as Fonthill Splendens.

In 1754 he was elected MP for both The City of London and Petersfield and in 1755 became a Sheriff and later in 1761 Lord Mayor of London.

On 8 June 1756, aged 47, he married Maria Hamilton, daughter of Hon. George Hamilton. His only child by this marriage was William Thomas Beckford, born at Fonthill Splendens in 1760. Beckford also had eight children born out of wedlock who were left legacies in his will.

He was again elected Lord Mayor of London 1769 less than a year before his death on 21 June 1770.



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Unfortunately, Dr Fraser has been unable to produce a synopsis of his talk but for those wishing to look further into the genealogy of the Beckford family, Dr Fraser's contributions to *The Beckford Journal* as listed below would be a sensible start:

Fraser, M., Stanton Fraser, D. E. B., and Fox, J. W., *The Rise and Fall of the Beckford Name from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century*, in *The Beckford Journal*, vol. 14, pp. 40-57, Spring 2008

Fraser, M., Stanton, D. E. B., and Fox, J. W., *William Beckford's Paternal Half-Siblings and their Descendants*, in *The Beckford Journal*, vol. 10, pp. 14-29, Spring 2004

## ADELARD RETURNS TO BATH

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2013      St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker                                      Michael Davis

Abstract                                      BRLSI - Michael Davis (Ed NEP)

This most interesting and informative talk by Michael Davis “in costume” was about a person who could be our greatest Bathonian – but of whom most of us have never heard.

Adelard was world-famous in his day and, for several centuries, Bath was known primarily as his birthplace. But today, in his native city, he is entirely forgotten; a strange case of civic amnesia. The few people who think they have heard of him get him mixed up with the Frenchman Peter Abelard of the ill-fated love affair with Heloise (they were contemporary and almost certainly met).



He was one of the great Minds of the Middle Ages, a Renaissance Man 300 years ahead of his time; primarily a Mathematician and Astronomer but also a Philosopher, Scientist, Astrologer, Alchemist, Medic, Musician and Government official; a Polymath who could aspire to know everything, a type impossible in the modern age. He was also a snappy dresser and was well known around Bath for his magnificent green cloak; also his green emerald signet ring with astrological associations.

He was born around 1080 and lived to a ripe old age into the 1150s and is thus part of the Norman period. In 1088, when Adelard was a lad, Bath was sacked and laid waste by Norman troops. The Saxon Church, where Edgar had been crowned in 973, was destroyed. Following the Conqueror's death King William Rufus sold what was left of Bath to John de Villula, who as the new Bishop of Bath & Wells moved the seat of the Diocese to Bath building a Cathedral which was bigger than the present Abbey and one of the major structures of Europe.

Adelard attended this local Cathedral school where, as a very bright local lad, he became a protégé of John de Villula Tours who sent him to his home Cathedral School at Tours where he studied the Trivium and Quadrivium. He then, as a Lay member of the Benedictines, went on to study for a couple of years at the Cathedral School at Laon in northern France. He had received the best education available in Western Europe but having heard much of the glories of medieval Islam, knew that his scientific education was still lacking.

The early Caliphs had thirsted for learning and knowledge and had soaked up all the classical works of ancient Greece, which had been lost to Western Europe, the knowledge of their conquered lands, especially Persia, and also the knowledge of adjacent lands especially of the Hindu scholars in the Rajasthan. This was in contrast to Christianity which rejected and suppressed learning and knowledge and put Western Europe into a deep freeze for 1,200 years. At this time the Arabs were 800 years ahead of us.

Adelard was attracted to the Studia Arabum and departed for the Mediterranean and Middle East to study with the Arab scholars, apparently the only western scholar to do this, and was resident there for seven years, travelling widely. He returned with a wealth of material and knowledge and was a changed man. He spent the rest of his life, mostly resident in Bath, translating great works from Arabic into Latin and causing a series of sensations in the West. He also wrote some original works, one major and several minor. Amazingly, his works are still largely extant, with copies, generally in Latin on parchment documents, spread around Libraries, Universities and other collections throughout the World.

His major work was *Quaestiones Naturales*, written on his return from the Middle East, which was a Standard in the West for centuries and was one of the first books to be printed when that technology appeared 300 years later. *De Eodem et Diverso* was an early philosophical work written when he had finished his studies at Tours, in an engaging style; he was known as a good teacher and raconteur.

His main claim to fame was his translation of Euclid's 13 Elements of Geometry, dating from 300 B.C., which had been largely lost to the West and which answered seemingly intractable problems; this led to great advances especially in the field of Architecture. He also translated Al-Khwarizmi's Zij, or Star Tables, which caused another sensation; suddenly it was realised that the Heavens were not just the unchanging face of Creation but a working laboratory to help Man work out his own place in time and space; it caused a change in the general Mindset.

A current controversy is about his role, if any, in the technological transfer of the Arabic Numerals and the Zero to Western Europe? These had not been lost; they had never been known in the West anyway. It is difficult to see how the Greeks and Romans could effectively have done any Arithmetic (the Roman numeral system could be used for writing down the questions and answers but the Arithmetic must have been done on the Abacus)? The answer hinges on whether Adelard was the author of the unsigned Latin translation of al-Khwarizmi's main work on Mathematics, itself derived from the works of the Hindu scholars.

He wrote practical manuals on the operation of the Abacus, de regule Abaci, and the Astrolabe, de opera Astrolapsus; the latter expanded into a more general review of Astronomy and was dedicated, in familiar terms, to the young Prince Henry who was shortly to become Henry II, one of England's greatest Kings. During the Anarchy, Bath was with King Stephen but Bristol was with the Empress Matilda and the young Prince was resident in Bristol with his mother. Adelard must have had a foot in both camps and it is probable that he was tutor to the Prince; in the dedication he exhorts him to be a Philosopher King, tolerant of all religions and beliefs and recognizing the authority of the Arabs; i.e. scientists and thinkers; and not that of the rigid Church Elders.

He was deep into Astrology, normal for the times and requiring expert knowledge in Astronomy, and cast horoscopes for King Henry I. There are a set of ten mid-twelfth century royal horoscopes in the British Library, unsigned, but there were only two men in England who could have written them and, if they are by Adelard, which is probable, they are a sort of autograph. He wrote a number of minor works on Astrology.

He was also an Alchemist and wrote a book with the mock-humble title (to throw the authorities off the scent?) A Little Key to Drawing. There are nearly 400 recipes, a third of which appear to be added by Adelard, including the manufacture of sweets using sugarcane, then unknown in the West, and the brewing of alcohol. The modern sciences of Astronomy and Chemistry owe a huge debt to the early works in Astrology and Alchemy.

He was not a doctor but had acquired considerable medical knowledge with the Arabs. He had witnessed a cadaver trussed in a flowing stream, the water washing away the flesh and revealing the systems of blood vessels and nerves; strictly forbidden by the Christian Church at the time. He wrote a little book called de Cura Accipitrum which was a manual on the care of Birds of Prey and which demonstrates his medical knowledge; Hawking was the sport of royalty and the nobility at the time.

He was also a musician, having studied Music in the Quadrivium at Tours, and played the Cithera. On his return from the Middle East he played it for Queen Matilda (Henry I's wife) at Easter 1116 (at Bath?).

He was a member of Henry I's Court; i.e. a Government official; with responsibilities for the Exchequer Table, the system for tax-gathering. It is recorded that, late in his life, and as a member of the Court, he was excused from a Murder Fine in West Wiltshire. The simmering resentment of the English towards the Normans often erupted in violence and Henry I brought in a law which stipulated that if a Norman was murdered by an Englishman, if the local Hundred did not cough up the culprit, they would be levied with a large collective fine. This also tells us that he lived in West Wiltshire, probably a small estate just over the county boundary and near to Bath.

He never married (too busy?) but was close to his nephew who was a sort of working colleague.



## 200 YEARS OF RACING IN BATH

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2013

St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker

Jim Beavis

Abstract

Nigel Pollard

Jim Beavis is a Racing Historian from Kent and is the author of the book "The History of Bath Racecourse" which he published in 2011.

The first horse racing known to have taken place in this country was at Chester and near Edinburgh in around 1540. Charles II instigated racing at Newmarket, and it is possible that a meeting might have been held at Bath when he visited.

Claverton races were being run in and possibly before 1721. The official record of racing, the Racing Calendar, has its first results of a Bath meeting in 1728. Meetings were intermittently on Claverton Down during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 1770s it reached its peak of success and popularity, but the number of entrants then declined.

One of the reasons for the lack of runners was the firm going. From 1784 meetings were held at Lansdown. Despite general approval of the move, they continued to be sporadic. In 1793 half of the grandstand collapsed when it was full of people, and several suffered broken limbs.

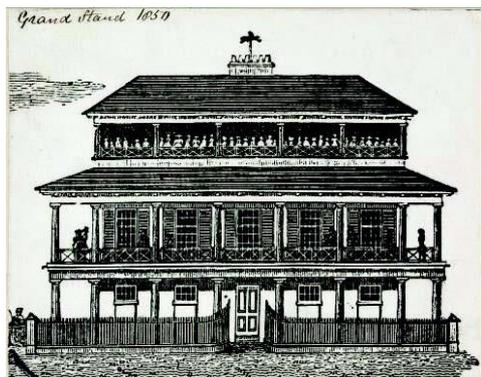
No racing took place in Bath for fifteen years after 1796, while the local economy was suffering and the threat of war and invasion by Napoleon meant it was regarded as a luxury. These were less important issues in 1811, when racing resumed with the consent of the landowner, Mrs Frances Blathwayt. This Lansdown course was not on the site of the present one; it lay between the site of Beckford's Tower and Weston Lane. The meeting was a great success.

1823 saw a new race, the £100 Somersetshire Stakes, Bath's most famous prize in the nineteenth century. Lord Palmerston won one of the early runnings. The 1824 meeting was described as the best ever, thanks to the clerk of the course, Mr Margerum.

Those who used to come to the racecourse up the hill from Bath were astonished in 1827 by their first sight of Beckford's Tower.

In 1831 the track was moved to its present location. There is no record of why, but the advantage of moving was that it meant no roads needed to be crossed and a reasonably sized circuit could be made. Much of the original grandstand is still in use today.

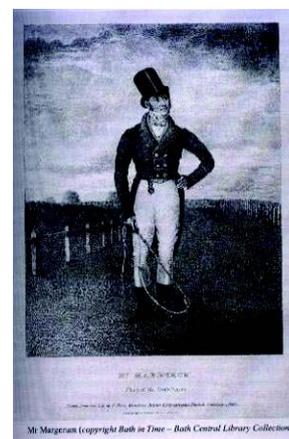
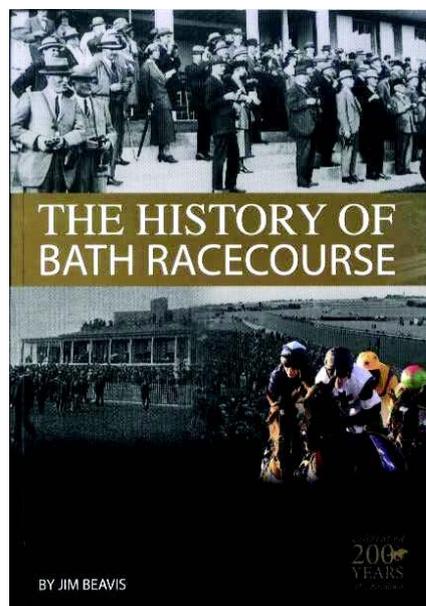
Margerum's wife owned properties, including one in Sydney Place that had once been rented by the family of Jane Austen. Margerum may have used his wife's money to launch his career in racing. But by the 1840s his star was in decline and he was obliged to hand over his last property to a moneylender to pay off his debts.



The races were moved to just after the middle of May from 1851. This decision marked a turning point in Bath's fortunes. The Epsom Derby was run a week later, and the Somersetshire thereby became the last opportunity to test a Derby candidate. Instead, Bath acquired a reputation for bursting the bubbles of Derby contenders who ran there.

1862 was the exception. Caractacus won the Somersetshire, despite his previously moderate form. In the Derby itself he gamely repelled all comers, but the drama did not end at the winning post. At first it seemed he was carrying less weight than before the race - that was overcome - and then came an accusation that he had taken the wrong course. Luckily for Caractacus the objection was deemed to be too late.

By now Bath's race meetings had relatively little to do with the city itself. In contrast to the earlier part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were now a component of the racing world and the presence of a historic city three miles away was much less relevant.



Racing continued relatively uneventfully until the end of WW1, when news came of the sale of two major estates, one of them being Lansdown. Members of the Race Committee felt unable to continue managing the races. They thought future success “was in high degree speculative”.

Mr Bushby, the pre-war clerk of the course, had faith in the racecourse. He persuaded the directors of the Newbury Racecourse Company that they could make it pay. They formed a syndicate and acquired the Bath course at auction for £12,750.

Gang warfare had been brewing since the end of the war, and in August 1921 it reached Bath. Gang members attacked each other in the centre of town, on Lansdown Hill and on the racecourse, where a gun was produced during a riot before racing. Despite all of that mayhem, there was no trouble at the races in the afternoon, nor the next day.

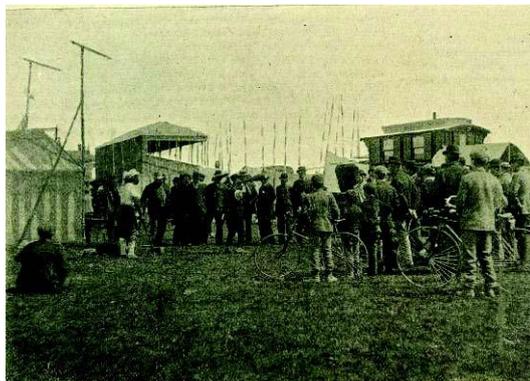
The most notorious event in the history of Bath races is the Francisal story of 1953. A gang of crooks plotted to win a minor race by running a good horse under the name of a bad one – a “ringer”. In order to maximise their winnings, they planned to cut the telephone wires to the course. This would prevent word reaching the racecourse bookmakers that the horse was being backed, so the odds would not be reduced. The fraudsters stood to collect £60,000 (about £1.3 million now).

Bookmakers queried the telephone failure with the Post Office and their investigations soon located the cut wire. The police were brought in and the trail soon led to the villains being arrested.

At their trial they pleaded that they had attempted a legitimate coup and that the two horses had been accidentally switched. After deliberating a long-running and complicated case, the jury could not reach agreement. The judge ordered a retrial.

It was thought at the time that the jury may have been confused by the complicated plot. However, that was not the case. One of the jurors had been nobbled. Police kept an eye on the jurors for the second trial and made sure no interference took place. At the end of it one man was cleared and the rest found guilty of conspiracy to defraud.

Northern Racing, now renamed Arena, bought the course in 2000 and have tried to re-engage with local people by staging meetings at times that attract them, at weekends and summer evenings, reminiscent of the racecourse’s early days when it was a major part of the Bath social scene.



“All the Fun of the Fair.”  
(A Scene on Bath Racecourse, by Our Special Artist.)

Jim Beavis’s book chronicles all of this, and in much more detail than we had time for at the meeting, or for these Proceedings.

## ACQUISITIONS OF THE BATH RECORD OFFICE

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 Museum of Bath at Work

Speaker Colin Johnston

Abstract Nigel Pollard

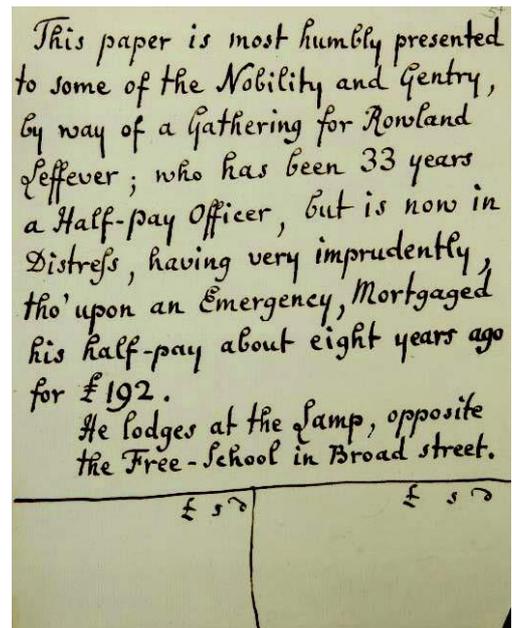
Rather than a formal talk on an historical subject, this evenings event, prior to the AGM, took the form of a presentation by the Council's Head Archivist Colin Johnston.

Colin's topic was one very relevant to today in that it covered the dilemma of whether Public Record Offices should, as they have in the past, wait for donations of historic material to come to them, or be pro-active and go out and buy them in the market place.

The downside of such a move is that once people are aware that a local PRO is willing to buy material, they will not donate it. However, the upside, as Colin ably demonstrated, was that though networking with fellow archivists around the country, using internet search engines and auction sites much can be found and saved for posterity that would otherwise be lost.

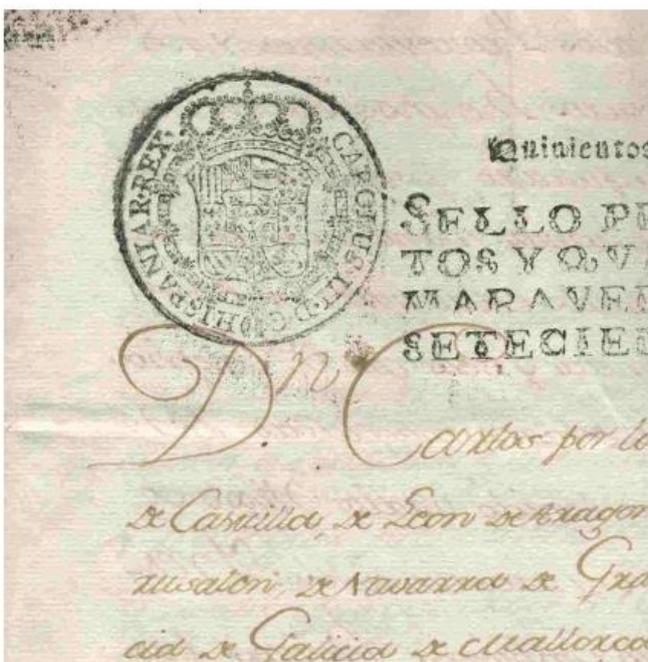
Through this system Colin had found a great deal of material both for his own Bath archive and for others, samples of which he had brought along to show us.

The image to the right is taken from the letters of Roland Leffever to Richard Nash in the 1750s, which was purchased at auction with grant-aid.



This paper is most humbly presented to some of the Nobility and Gentry, by way of a gathering for Rowland Leffever; who has been 33 years a Half-pay Officer, but is now in Distress, having very imprudently, tho' upon an Emergency, Mortgaged his half-pay about eight years ago for £192.  
He lodges at the Lamp, opposite the Free-School in Broad street.

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The second is from the business papers of the Langton family in Cadiz c.1810, again purchased at auction.

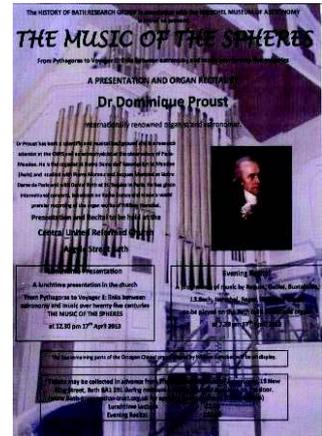
## THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 CENTRAL UNITED REFORM CHURCH

Presentation and Organ Recital: Dr Dominique Proust\*

This meeting, held in association with The Hershel Museum of Astronomy brought over from Paris the distinguished organist and astronomer Dr Dominique Proust to talk about the links between astronomy and music through the centuries between Pythagoras and Voyager II.

The talk took the form of a lunchtime lecture during which examples of musical aspects were played on the organ by Dr Proust's colleague Gus Orchard, and a further highlight was the singing of the "sounds of the planets" by Prof. Bridget Proust, the lecturer's wife.



\* \* \*

The evening concert at 7.30 was well attended and full of celestial meanings as can be seen from the programme, all of which was played on the Bath built "Sweetland" Organ:

### Fantasia

**Charles Racquet** (1598?-1664) Composed on the request of Pere Martin Mersenne (1588-1648) for the publication in 1636 of his "Harmonie Universelle"

### Dialogo

**Vicenze Galilei** (1520-1591) Father of the astronomer Galileo Galilei

### Passacaille in D Buxwv161

**Dietrich Buxtehude** (1637-1707) Composed on the "le lunar cycle" with 4 sections and 7 variations each on a theme.

### Choral - How bright is the Morning Star BWV739

**Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750)

### Fugue in D minor

### Prelude in F

### Fugue in C major

**William Herschel** (1738-1822) Musician and astronomer who discovered the planet Uranus and the infra red emission.

### Choral - How bright is the Morning Star

**Max Reger** (1873-1916)

### Jupiter (from The Planets Suite)

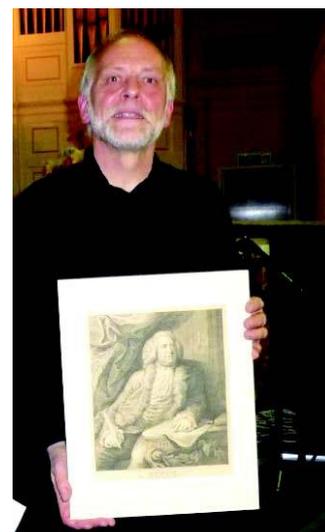
**Gustav Holst** (1874-1932)

### Hymn au Soleil

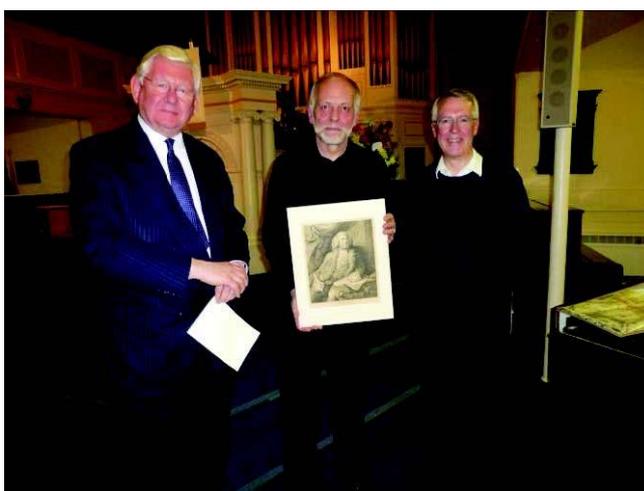
**Louis Vierne** (1870-1933)

\* Dr Proust has both a scientific and musical background and is a research scientist at the CNRS and an astrophysicist at the observatory of Paris-Meudon. He is the organist at Notre Dame de l'Assomption at Meudon and studied with Pierre Moreau and Jacques Marichal at Notre Dame de Paris and with Daniel Roth at St. Sulpice, Paris. He has given international concerts, broadcast on Radio France and made a world premier recording of the organ works of William Herschel.

At the end of the proceedings our Chairman, Michael Rowe presented Dr Proust with an early print of William Boyce the "Master of the King's Music" who's organ music, like Herschel's, is largely forgotten.



The photograph below shows our Chairman and Dr Proust joined by Gus Orchard who had played the organ during Dr Proust's lunchtime lecture.



## WALK: BATHFORD

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2013

Leader Fae Hall - Chairman of The Bathford Society

Abstract Nigel Pollard (with references to "Bathford Past and Present")



This walk, led by Fae Hall started at The Crown Inn from which one could look across to the site where two Roman roads the "Fosse Way" and the "Via Julia" met close to the ancient ford across the River Avon, before the GWR railway embankment blocked the view.

After the Romans had left in the early fifth century, Bathford seems to have retained its importance as a meeting point in that it lay along the boundary between the Kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia and gets a mention in the Domesday Book.

Having covered this early history, Fae then took her party up the hill to the village itself, pausing on the way to study how the road levels and changed over the years and to look across and down to "Bathford Mill" on the By Brook. A mill on this site was noted in the Domesday Book and has been used for corn, cloth working and tanning before turning to paper around the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is still in business today and produces high quality security paper for the international De La Rue Company, although water had given away to steam (c.1913) and steam to electricity (1966). The adjacent image of c. 1850 is taken from the book "Bathford Past and Present" detailed at the end of this abstract. >



Our walk continued up to Church Street where we made a detour to our left to visit "Titan Barrow" a fine Georgian House built for Southwell Pigott Esq. in 1748 to which the new owner had generously given us permission to view.



Designed by John Wood the Elder, it is a fine example of Palladian architecture although much altered during the last two hundred years.

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The house overlooks the Avon Valley towards Bath, as well as the Bathford Mill, adjacent to which, c 1740, was discovered a mineral spring. This apparently persuaded the then mill owner to sell his estate to Dr. William Oliver who also commissioned John Wood to design a small pavilion to cover the spring although nothing remains

Returning to Bathford Hill, the party continued down Church Street admiring the many historic cottages up to the Square and Sycamore House. This house, originally the home farm of Bathford Manor was bought in c. 1978/9 by James Dyson and it was in one of its outbuildings that he invented his famous vacuum cleaner. >

We then moved on to pass still grander properties such as Eagle House and so to the Parish Church of St. Swithun.

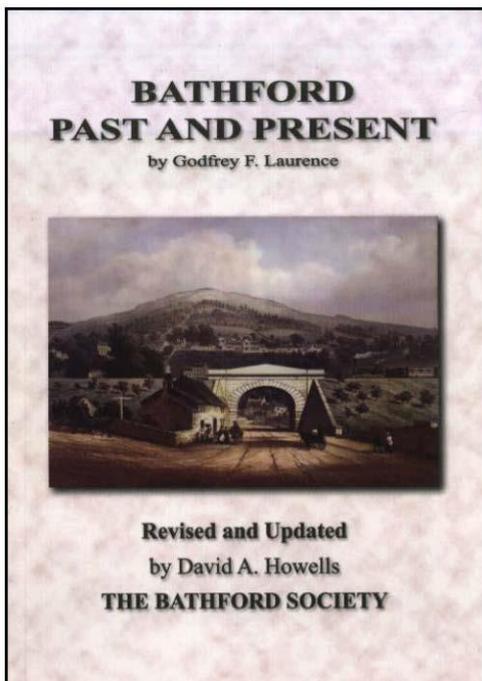


While there has been a church on this site since around 1140 the current building is mostly Victorian and was closed at the time of our visit. However a walk up by the side of the churchyard offered some lovely views over the surrounding countryside.

We finished the walk outside what is called Bathford Manor House, although it is not believed to be on the site of the original one, and is now in Local Authority hands and looking rather dilapidated.



\* \* \* \*



### **Bathford Past and Present**

By Godfrey F. Laurence

Revised and Updated by David A. Howells

The Bathford Society 2010

## WALK: KELSTON PARK

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2013

Leader **Martin Palmer**

Abstract **Nigel Pollard**



This walk, which must have been one of our best attendances, was lead by Martin Palmer whose knowledge and enthusiasm can only be matched by that of Elizabeth Devon of the Bath Geological Society.

Our walk started in the offices of ARC, the “Alliance of Religions and Conservation” of which Martin is the Secretary-General which are located within the grand mansion now known as Kelston Park.

The manor, which was formerly attached to Shaftesbury Abbey, was taken by Henry VIII, from the Abbess, and given to Ethelreda Maite who was in turn given in marriage by the King to one of his faithful followers John Harington. At that time c. 1587 the Harington Mansion stood near the church which we were to visit later, while the present mansion was erected by Sir Caesar Hawkins on the site of the summer house, by John Wood the younger in 1760 with Capability Brown designing the park. It then passed to the Inigo-Jones family from where it later passed in 1968 to the Methodists before being bought by Andrew Brownsword in 1996 who now lets it out as offices.



Following this potted history our group then went around to the main terrace to view the splendid vista across the Avon valley that so many of us had viewed in reverse from either the A4 or the GWR.

There is also here a tree, planted by Eileen Brownsword in 1996 to commemorate the Park’s new beginning.



Our walk then continued around the west end of the house and across the Capability Brown landscape towards the village.

However, the west side of the house held an amazing “walled garden” that was in fact not built as such, but as a breeding ground for Arabian Stallions. Its size was immense which can be clearly seen from the aerial photograph overleaf. It was used from around 1760 to 1820 after which the falling price of Arabian stallions made it uneconomical and it was turned into a large vegetable garden.



During the walk across the park, Martin pointed out the various topographical landmarks such as Kelston Round Hill, that he would prefer we called by its original name of “Henstridge Hill” , as well as examples of the early field systems.

We then skirted the “Tower House” architect James Thomson, built so Martin informed us by one of the Inigo-Jones family for his mistress in 1835, from where we passed close to the original manor house and the site of one of the worlds first flushing toilets (invented by Sir John Harrington in 1596), to the Church of St Nicholas.



It was at this point that Martin entrusted us all with even more knowledge and anecdotes from why the church maybe named after St Nicholas (because he was believed to have been the saviour of women and the church was originally built by the Abbess of Shaftesbury) to why churches are built facing east (to face the

rising sun) and why the north is the devils side (because that was the direction from where the Israelites were most often invaded by those from Megiddo and from where the last great battle to end all battles was believed to come. - The “mountains of Megiddo” translates into “Armageddon”)



With all these fascination facts and figures, and in the warm evening air, the party returned across the Park, via a wonderful dovecote - believed to be the largest in Somerset and used to collect guano for fertilising the land, and the site of a possible roman villa.....to the House and to home.

A splendid way to finish off the HBRG 2012/13 season.



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HBRG Web Site: [www.historyofbath.org.uk](http://www.historyofbath.org.uk)