



NEWSLETTER 37

SEPTEMBER 1998

GROUP NEWS

The Bath Minuet Company headed by Diana Cruickshank would like to invite local HBRG members to an evening_ at Claverton Hall on Friday, 11 December at 7.45 for 8.

PLAN of the EVENING: 1) Diana Cruickshank will talk about choreography, demonstrate steps and show costumes. 2) Break for refreshments. 3) Call some dances. HBRG members can join in if they wish.

Suggested cost £1.50 per head. Invitations will be sent out later.

MEETINGS HELD MAY — JUNE 1998

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT PRIOR PARK 1994-6: AN 18C LANDSCAPE GARDEN: Marek Lewcun, 14 May, chaired by Michael Rowe — Work towards the restoration of the grounds at Prior Park by Bath Archaeological Trust has revealed many of the original features which had disappeared but, in their time, played an important role in the development of the English landscape garden. Marek's sequence of slides followed the course of the excavations as each successive phase of Ralph Allen's development of the grounds was examined.

First a contour map of the whole site was surveyed and a dense covering of trees and scrub had to be cleared before the earliest features could be examined in the 'Wilderness' below the house. Here the serpentine canal was uncovered, revealing its relationship with the Sham Bridge and later alterations to its design. Nearby, extensive cascades and other water-works were found in the undergrowth, together with pathways and bases for urns and ornaments but not, alas, the famous statue of Moses. Remains of the original central pond (superseded by the lower lakes) were also located further down the lawns. The original outlines of the lakes and their relationship with the Palladian bridge were examined, together with details of their dams and outlet tunnels, prior to the removal of silt.

The 'Jewel in the Crown', however, was the Grotto inspired by Ralph Allen's wife Elizabeth in imitation of the one created by Alexander Pope at Twickenham. Although in ruins (the roof and two of the three entrance arches had collapsed) much of the flooring was found to be intact —

consisting of an elaborate mosaic of pebbles, bones, shells, fossils and rare minerals set out in geometrical patterns. Other details included the socket of a plinth (presumably for a statue) and drainage channels carefully provided around the edge of the floor. On a more personal note, the headstone, now in fragments, of the grave of the Allen's Great Dane puppy, a present from Alexander Pope, was also recovered. All this was carefully repaired and drawn up in exact detail. Quantities of plasterwork fallen from the walls and ceilings were also found, evidence that they too had been similarly decorated with precious stones. An idea of what it originally looked like was provided by Marek's closing slides showing Thomas Goldney's grotto at Clifton.

MIKE CHAPMAN

THREE BATH CEMETERIES: JEWISH, BAPTIST AND MORAVIAN: Judith Samuel, Colin Johnston and Jane Root — Our customary summer field trip took us to three cemeteries, none currently in use, all hidden behind high walls and requiring pre-arranged access.

We were fortunate to have one of our members, Judith Samuel, to share with us her research into the Jewish Cemetery at Combe Down. It is still a mystery why this site was chosen. The earliest reference comes from the *Bath Chronicle* of December 1815 with a report that 'some rogues got into the room adjoining the Jews' Burial Ground on Combe Down and stole the furniture'. That was the prayer room where the deceased's body was brought for prayers before interment. It still stands, sadly neglected, at the entrance to the cemetery. The 19C saw the synagogue in Bath move from Kingsmead Street to Corn Street, where it was eventually demolished to make room for the extension to the Mineral Water Hospital which was never built. Instead the Technical College stands on that site. By the turn of the century the Jewish community had all but disappeared. Amongst those buried in Combe Down there may be some Jewish visitors who came to take the waters, lying in unmarked graves (other visitors were travelling merchants, notably lane. age teachers) but the most prominent gravestones belong to residents, with dates and script in both Hebrew and English. Joseph Sigmund, died November 1832, was an eminent dentist; Solomon Wool. died May 1866, was 'a very special Rabbi', and George Braham, died December 1865, an optician and amateur scientist. The Board of Deputies of British Jews struggles to keep the weeds under control so that we can appreciate this single remnant of Jewish history in Bath today.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: A deed has recently come to light showing the land was purchased on 8.4.1812.] Those who had visited the Baptist Burial Ground in Lyncombe Hill some years ago were pleasantly surprised to find it looking so tidy. Ownership has recently been transferred to the Bath Preservation Trust and, thanks to Gillian Sladen., new plantings of symbolic significance to the place have been added. As neither Kerry Birch nor Tony Walter, the local experts, could be with us, Colin Johnston nobly stood in as our guide. The Baptists in Bath had their first burial ground opened in the mid-18C off the London Road in Snowhill. This appears to have filled rapidly as by the 1790s burials there were being restricted. Opie Smith, a man involved in the development of Southcot Place (1817), made land available for a new burial ground in 1810. It was entered through a Gothic archway, providing accommodation for the sexton above and shelter for prayers below. This stood (see Peter Coard) until 1970, indeed the final tenancy is recorded in the 1950s. The 49 stones standing today mark out the lines of unmarked graves, their exact number is unknown. Undoubtedly the most striking feature on record here is the number of child burials —320, of whom 204 were under two years old. Other burials of note were of Paul Parker, minister 1790-1832; of William Perrett, who died 1860, Superintendent of the Sunday School, whose funeral was attended by no fewer than 16 Sunday school teachers along with 75 boys and 55 girls; and of George Cox 'the master hatter of Stall Street', a noted Sunday School teacher and social reformer.

The Moravian burial ground is tucked away behind the Moravian Cottages in Weston Road. Access is through the home of Jane Root, one of our members, and that of her neighbour. Their gardens enclose the burial ground or 'God's Acre', to use the Moravian terminology, where the most striking feature is that all the headstones are recumbent, allowing for no distinction in rank or class. The deeds date back to 1792, when a Mr. Salisbury was the landowner, although Christopher Anstey had satirised the Moravians earlier in his *New Bath Guide* (1766). Their first church was in Monmouth Place but it was at East Tytherton, near Chippenham, that they built their own settlement. This can still be seen today. Here in Bath the Moravians now have churches in Coronation Avenue and Weston but the Weston Road burial ground has not been used since its closure in 1904. Jane generously rounded off the evening by not only telling us something of the Moravians in Bath and arranging an interesting display of reading material and maps but also to enjoy some welcome refreshments in the garden.

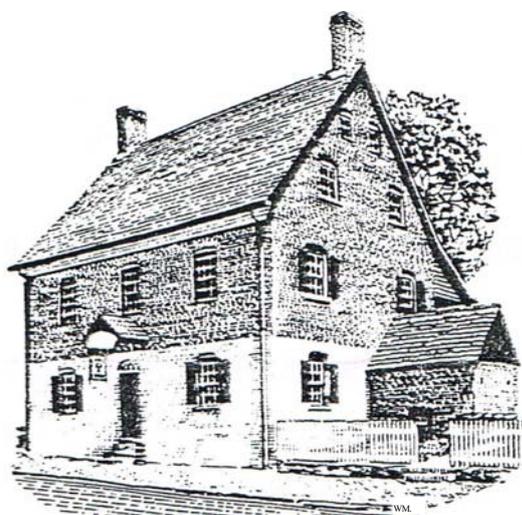
JULIA MOSS

Winkler Gingerbread

¾ cup butter or margarine
 ¾ cup sugar
 1½ cups molasses
 3¾ cups sifted flour
 1 teaspoon-cinnamon
 1 teaspoon ginger
 ½. teaspoon cloves
 teaspoon salt
 1 cup hot water
 1 tablespoon soda
 3 beaten eggs

Cream shortening and sugar. Add molasses and blend. Sift together flour, salt and spices. Combine soda and hot water. Add dry ingredients alternately with hot water mixture. Add beaten eggs. Place in greased and floured pan 8' x 12" and bake at 350' for 25 or 30 minutes.

Christian Wunder took over the bakery in Salem in 1807, and it was operated continuously by family members for more than 120 years. Today again bread, cakes and cookies are baked in a wood-feed oven for visitors to Old Salem, a restored Moravian congregation town in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Exhibit buildings are open daily, except Christmas.



WINKLER BAKERY. 1800

Recipe used by Jane Root for our refreshment on 11 June taken from the book "The Winkler Bakery" produced by the Moravian community.

MEMBERS' NEWS

New members: Mr. Douglas Bernhardt, 17 Sion Hill, Bath, BA1 2UJ. Postgraduate research on the Bath architect G.P. Manners (1789-1866).

Mrs. Frances Maggs, 8 Hall Park Hill, Berkhamsted, HP4 2NH. Postgraduate research on later mediaeval Bath (c.1200-1530s).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Bath Chronicle, Down Memory Lane: Old Photographs (Bath, Bath Chronicle and Millstream Books, 1997)

Tim Craft, Our Hospital: Royal United Hospital. Bath (Oxford, BIOS Scientific Pubs., 1998). An account of the contemporary, not historical, RUH.

Paul De'Ath. Bath: the Second Selection [of more old photographs] (Stroud, Chalford Pub., 1998)

Thom Gorst, Bath: an Architectural Guide (London. Ellipsis, 1997) In small square format with photographs by Keith Collie; an unhackneyed selection which includes modern buildings.

Timothy Mowl, William Beckford: Composing for Mozart (London, John Murray, 1998) £22.00 hardback

Christopher Woodward, 'Ralph Allen and Prior Park, Bath: a Kingdom of Stone' *and* 'John Harris, A Pagoda Fountain for Prior Park: Sambrooke Freeman's Unrealized Project', both in Apollo. April 1998

John Wroughton, From Civil War to Age of Reason: Bath Abbey 1600-1800 (Friends of Bath Abbey, 1997) 2Opp

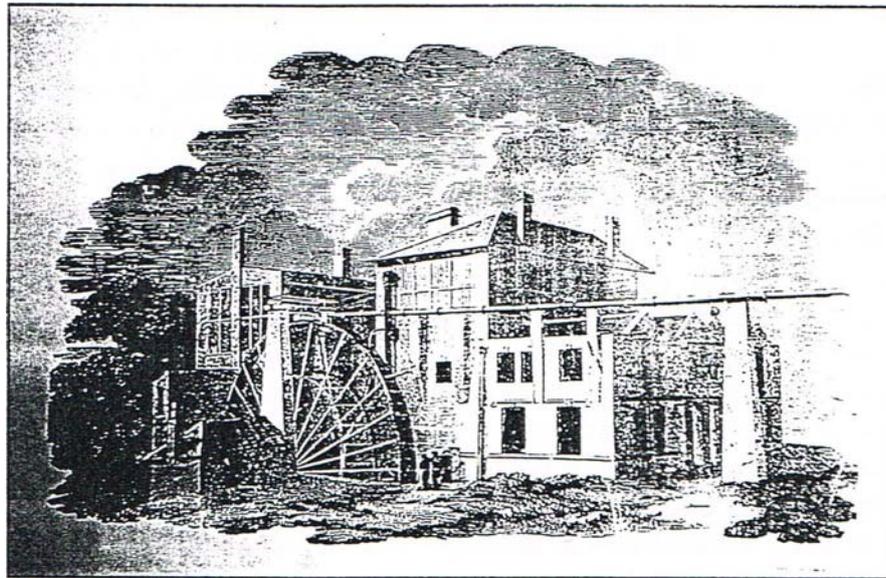
BOOK REVIEW

Peter Addison, *Around Combe Down* (Bath_ Millstream Books, 1998) 152 pp., £6.99, ISBN 0-948975-2

This book deals with the history of a former industrial, now residential, village whose modern parish boundaries date from only 1854. It is not meant to be a comprehensive study. Readers will learn little about how Combe Down was administered, who represented it in Parliament, to what extent its residents intermarried, how they fared in two World Wars, or when the first telephones arrived. They will however gain much insight into the way the physical village developed and its social structure altered, and find detailed accounts of past industries and a couple of chapters on schools and religious institutions. Combe Down's early history is thin: a Roman villa, the Saxon frontier of Wansdyke, monastic sheep, a little Tudor quarrying. The modern story begins when Ralph Allen turned the previous piecemeal stone trade into an industrialised process, from mining right through to marketing, symbolised by the two rows of quarrymen's/masons' cottages at the top and bottom of the down and the railroad between them. Though the outlines of Bath stone production are familiar enough including its decline from c.1840 when faced with competition from the more accessible Box/Corsham deposits — Peter Addison has assembled a mass of information and does signal service in describing the techniques employed and in identifying 41 separate quarries (with grid references and notes on each). Equally valuable are his careful accounts of two other local enterprises — fuller's earth extraction (and of the subsequent purification process at and near Tucking Mill) from 1883 to 1940, and paper manufacture at De Montalt Mill from 1805 to 1834. The latter mill, equipped with an enormous 56'—diameter water wheel, specialised in high-quality writing and artists' papers but the book's claim for banknote papers as well is not substantiated in the text. Indeed there is a real problem of verifying any

statements the author makes, since not even direct quotations are referenced and we have only a bibliography at the end to indicate the many sources used. The book seems sound on Combe Down itself, but sometimes strays on matters to do with Bath and other topics. There is a particular muddle over the De Montalt family who inherited Ralph Allen's Combe Down estate and who are here credited with an earldom many decades too soon. It was in their time that Combe Down evolved from a great quarry site into a hamlet of working-class cottages and then into a more heterogeneous Victorian village that attracted prosperous bourgeois villa-owners. The building of C of E Holy Trinity in 1832-5 opposite the Nonconformists' Union Chapel of 1815 signified the change, and the arrival of the first proper school (1830), financed by the philanthropic Thomas Tanner, was also symptomatic. Peter Addison conveys a fair impression of the 19C occupational mix — from carpenters and well-sinkers to laundresses and market-gardeners — and we learn too about benefit clubs, allotment holdings, convalescent homes and lunatic asylums, though little about well-known residents like T. Sturge Cotterell whose striking 'Voysey' house in Shaft Road is not even mentioned. There is instead a section on William Smith's connection with Tucking Mill and a range of useful, if sometimes rather faint, maps and illustrations. A good fold-out plan of the whole parish would nevertheless have helped readers who are not intimate with every street and site covered in this latest addition to the growing literature on Bath's outlying communities.

TREVOR FAWCETT



An engraving of De Montolt Mill from the 1820s showing the 56-foot diameter overshot water wheel and the iron pipe feeding it.

NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE AT THE OFFICE OF THE BATH CHRONICLE

Some months ago Elizabeth Bevan, Bath Central Library, wrote to the Bath Chronicle's editor, David Gledhill, expressing her and our concern about future access to the newspaper archive for bona fide researchers. In his reply of 18 May David Gledhill wrote: 'It is true the staffing has been reduced from two to one and most of our cuttings and pictures are now on an electronic database. However, I am aware of the continuing need to make our bound volumes as well as

our electronic database available to the public for research and for that reason the library will continue to be staffed in one way or another.' Since Bath Central Library has a fairly comprehensive file of local newspapers, it will be only very rarely that HBRG members need to use the Bath Chronicle's resources. If however you do encounter any difficulties of access in the future, would you please inform the HBRG Committee.

SCHELLINKS' VISIT TO BATH, July 1662

Marta Inskip's article on two 17C views of the King's Bath in *Bath History* vol. 3, drew attention to the Dutch topographical artist Willem Schellinks who made several Bath sketches during his English visit in a lull of the Anglo-Dutch Wars. Since then his travel notes have been published (*The Journal of William Schellinks' Travels in England, 1661-1663*, trans. and ed. M. Exwood and H.L. Lehmann, Camden 5th Series vol. 1. Royal Historical Soc., 1993) adding a further mid-17C visitor's account of Bath to those of Evelyn, Pepys, Loveday and others.

The artist rode over from Bristol on 19 July with his companions (including Bristol friends) and put up at the *Bear* — 'a very good inn'. That evening they seem to have strolled around inspecting the five baths (King's, Queen's, Hot, Cross, Lepers' or Lazarus), the 'very beautiful and large' Abbey church and the bowling green just south of it, and the Marketplace, noting also that a horse bath stood outside the South Gate. As early as 5 a.m. next morning, dressed in undershirt and underpants, they were carried in chairs to the King's and Queen's baths 'and found there a lot of people, gentlemen as well as ladies and others'. At the steps leading into the bath men stripped off their undershirts (women wore shifts). If the seats in the bath were too low, the guides could be asked for a cushion. It was usual to drink mulled wine while bathing to prevent feelings of faintness. For some people stayed soaking for 2-3 hours. Schellinks watched one woman receive 800 gushes from the pump on her shoulder and head, and a man a thousand, and reported that there were 'also people in the bath who are ready with Dives, scissors, etc., to cut people's corns, warts and nails, to earn some money'. He stepped out of the bath onto a woollen cloth and was draped in a linen sheet and then a bath robe before being carried back to his inn. Here he lay in a linen sheet in a warmed bed for an hour or two, and drank mulled wine, while someone dried off the sweat with warm towels and the city waits serenaded them. All this must have stimulated the appetite and he enjoyed delicious artichokes and a large perch for lunch. It was probably the same day he returned to the King's bath to work on his drawing of the scene he had experienced earlier. Next morning he took a look at all the parish churches and the hospitals, and then climbed to a viewpoint overlooking Bath to make a panoramic sketch before they left the city at 4 p.m. for Wells.

There are no surprises in Schellinks' account though he adds extra detail to what Pepys tells us in 1668. He alludes to the Bladud legend but without the scornful dismissal of Robert Loveday in the pre-Restoration period. Indeed Loveday, while conceding that the town is 'doubtless the prettiest of *England*, was also more critical of the Abbey Church than Schellinks and found 'so little virtue' in his 'steepings' and pumping at the baths that he felt worse rather than better. Furthermore Loveday comes up with the most memorable comment on Bath: 'Most of the inhabitants live the lives of fishes in Summer and flies in Winter, for then they have nothing else to do but sleep in their crannies'. (See *Loveday's Letters, Domestick and Foreign* first printed 1657 but quoted here from the 1684 impression, pp.49-50, 168.)

TREVOR FAWCETT

- 0 0 0 - 0 0 0 - 0 0 0 - 0 0 0 - 0 0 0 - 0 0 0 - 0 0 0 -