

BOOK REVIEWS:

PIERONI'S FOUNTAIN

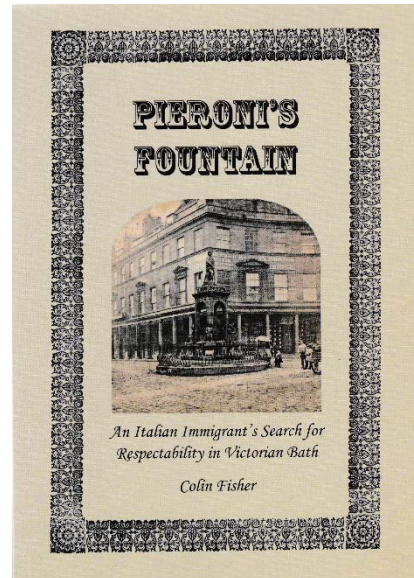
An Italian Immigrant's Search for
Respectability in Victorian Bath

By Colin Fisher 2014

AKEMAN PRESS

ISBN: 978-0-9560989-6-2

£ 10



This excellent little book is a most enjoyable read as it tells a story behind an artefact of Bath that we all know, but much embellished by new research.

I am sure we all knew it in its former home in Stall Street, but how it got there and in all its various forms is indeed a fascinating story as is the biography of its foremost creator.

Signor Stefano Vallerio Pieroni was born in Tuscany in 1819 and migrated to England at the age of 18 to seek a living making plaster statuette. Arriving in London but settling in Bath he became both a Publican and an Art Dealer while doing his best to integrate into English Victorian Society.

However his acceptance in Bath society was not a qualified success and as a foreigner in Bath, one is immediately reminded of Whistler's painting of "The Foreign Bloke" in the Victoria Art Gallery, although the same gallery has surely to be reprimanded for apparently "losing", we are told, both of their recorded portraits of this actually known foreigner; As Oscar Wilde would have put it: "to lose one (relative) may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness".

Colin Fisher has certainly carried out some interesting and detailed research which put down in print some important facts surrounding a number of Bath monuments. However, it is a pity that we have as yet not found either of the above paintings of Pieroni himself. Some historical research, if not detective work still to be done!

Meantime, a very good read.

Nigel Pollard