

THE BATH SURVEY

The Newsletter of the Survey of Old Bath
No.1, July 1994

Editors: Mike Chapman

Elizabeth Holland

NEWS FROM THE SURVEY

A report on the Survey's study of the Bishops' premises in Bath has been written in association with Peter Davenport of Bath Archaeological Trust. At the time of compiling this newsheet, the Survey is waiting to hear from a national journal which has been considering it. If they are not able to publish it, some other arrangement will be made. Once it is published, we hope to arrange some kind of public event, perhaps a walk around the Bishops' grounds.

We are now seeking sponsorship for our next large project. According to our programme, this would be the map of the Duchess of Kingston's Estate in 1774. The next stage would be a study of the Ham area, a part of the Kingston Estate we have so far neglected. We would hope to begin the study with the earliest references to the Ham, and to bring it up to the present day. Particular emphasis would be placed on social and economic considerations in the Ham area during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Elizabeth Holland visited both the Empire Hotel and North Parade House this spring and took photographs. Three files were created on the Empire Hotel, i.e. Documents, Cuttings, and Photographs and Pictures. It is hoped to donate them to Colin Johnston at the A.G.M. of the Friends. A file was also assembled on North Parade House.

Elizabeth has been indexing the Survey's files at the Record Office (Accession No.350). The Record Office has valuable indexes under Names, Photographs, Places and Subjects, and we have been using these categories.

Elizabeth's study of the Warwick Book of Hours continues. It was hoped to publish a report on this in the newsletter but further material has still to be assembled. A display of medieval pictures from Elizabeth's own personal collection of reproductions on greetings cards and postcards has been prepared for the A.G.M. of the Friends.



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NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS

Dr. John Wroughton at present Chairman of the Friends of the Survey of Old Bath, retired from King Edward's last summer, as we all know. He has now accepted a commission from Longman's to write a volume entitled **The Stuart Age, 1603-1714**, in their "Companions to History" series, to be completed by August 1996. He also hopes to be lecturing again next winter for the Universities of Bristol and Bath in their Departments of Continuing Education.

Professor Robert Alexander, who spoke to a fascinated audience at the Tudor evening we held last August at Manvers Street Baptist Church Hall, is a Life Member of the Friends. He belongs to the English Faculty of the Humanities Department of Point Park College, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. From September Professor Alexander will be Chairman of the Department and we send him our good wishes for his new post.

He writes that **REED** (Records of Early English Drama) is making their Somerset-Bath volume a top priority at the minute, and he hopes that this volume, which includes his work on Bath, will soon be out.

Marek Lewcun has had an article on clay pipes and pipemakers published in **Bath History V**, now on sale. It is hoped that Marek will be speaking on his researches at the A.G.M. of the Friends on July 8. These pipes are evidently invaluable in dating archaeological layers, as fossils are for geological strata.

Mrs. Connie Smith writes that she has been concentrating this year upon the western part of Widcombe and Lyncombe parish which, because it grew into an urbanised area in the 19th century, tends to be overlooked. Today we call this part of the parish Oldfield Park. Some of Oldfield Park extends into Twerton parish where the bulk of the 19th century factory expansion occurred. There is a great deal of history to be found out about this western side of Bath and Connie has sent us some information which is included under **Notes and Queries**.

Mrs. Doreen Collyer has been instrumental in the past in setting afloat the **Widcombe and Lyncombe History Study Group**. Its 1994 programme is now under way, looking into some topics at greater depth and introducing some new ones. It is fortunate in having the use of a room at St. Mark's Community Centre (courtesy of Widcombe Association) where research material can be stored under the supervision of Connie Smith. While members pursue their own interests, the main effort is concentrated on certain themes relevant to the area - including among others a street by street study; education and the local schools; the Holloway district and families and individuals. It is hoped that the results of these studies will form the basis of a useful additional archive for the city's records and that some of them will be available for publication in the near future.

The Friends of the Survey of Old Bath held a coffee morning on Saturday 23 April at the home of **Mrs. Denise Walker** in Prior Park Buildings. The files prepared by Elizabeth Holland on the Empire Hotel, for presentation to the Record Office, evoked many memories which were later shared during an enthusiastic discussion session with which the morning ended, chaired by Mike Chapman. Denise Walker was warmly thanked for her kind hospitality and Mrs. Cridland presented her with a voucher from Fred Daw's Nursery in token of the Friends' appreciation.

Any enquiries about joining the Friends or about their programme should go to: **Mrs. J. Hodkinson, 55** Connaught Mansions, Great Pulteney Street, Bath BA2 4BP.

BOOK NEWS

We were very pleased to receive from **Bernard Stace** a signed copy of his excellent booklet on **Bath Abbey Monuments**, published by Millstream Books on behalf of Bath Abbey, 1993, price £1.25. This is beautifully produced, with photographs of some of the monuments. On page 6 he records the fact that Peter Chapman's memorial tablet has now disappeared again, in spite of Captain John James Chapman's attempts to rescue it, and the sovereign he gave the Abbey verger for his efforts in that line.

Whiteman's Bookshop, the Orange Grove, has **Bath History V** in stock, with Marek's article. The bookshop reports that John Wroughton's **A Community at War** is selling well, and also the Council's **The Hot Springs of Bath**, edited by G.A. Kellaway. Also recommended is Niall Allsop's **The Somersetshire Coal Canal Rediscovered**, published by Millstream Books in a revised edition in 1993, at £4.95.

From time to time friends show Editor Elizabeth Holland Phyllis Hembry's book on the English Spas. Perhaps this is a good survey of the spas for those who are spa fans, but we cannot recommend it as a source of detail. Every time it is brought forward, the material in question proves doubtful, and this has recently happened again.

She gives Elizabeth Holland's article in Bath History II on the medieval Guildhall as one of her local sources. Unfortunately she does not accept Elizabeth's view that the Guildhall was not moved to the High Street until 1626-1627, a point also brought forward by P.R. James in his pioneer work on the baths of Bath in the 16th and 17th centuries. She refers to the Tudor Guildhall as being situated in the High Street as if neither of these studies had been written.

She mentions a theatre by the Abbey Gate, but the documents make it perfectly clear that the theatre stood by the Ham Gate, as shown on the Survey of Old Bath's Kingston Map. She states that the King Edward's grant of 1552 conflicted with the monastic sale of 1543. The latter was for the priory site, i.e. the monastic residence, the former was for the priory's rental, its investment properties. On page 8 of **King Edward's School at Bath, 1552-1982** (published by the Governors of King Edward's 1982), John Wroughton writes that the schedule presented in the petition to the King for this school consisted basically of "all the Priory property originally rented".

There has been a great deal of talk lately about "raising the standards of Bath history". Apparently we are supposed to smarten ourselves up, tugging our forelocks the while. This being so, we are not prepared to accept that the authors of nationally received books should not have read recognised Bath documents and books. From time to time other such works will be referred to in this page, we hope.

(**The English Spa 1560-1815** by Phyllis Hembry. Published by the Athlone Press, London, 1990.)

Still available...

The Kingston Estate Within the Walled City of Bath A composite plan of the 1740's Showing the work of Jan Woodland others

Map by the Survey of Old Bath, with descriptive text. Available at Winterstone's, Whiteman's, etc. Price £5.50.

CITY NEWS

BATH RECORD OFFICE

Colin Johnston, City Archivist, writes that recent acquisitions include:

- 1.a catalogue of the records held at King Edward's School
- 2.a photograph album of the Infantry on Bath Recreation Ground and elsewhere, c.1900.
- 3.a newscuttings book, mostly Somerset County Cricket and Rugby Rugby Clubs, also Bath events and weddings, 1918-1929.
- 4.aerial photographs of Bath, c.1918.
- 5.notes relating to Bath watch and clock-makers, supplied by one of the Friends, Marek Lewcun.

A draft list of a substantial collection of title deeds from the solicitors Stone, King and Wardle is now complete, and has been indexed by place and personal name.

The outsize map (6 feet 6 inches square) of Ralph Allen's estate, dating from around 1760 and formerly in Bath Library, has now been repaired and cleaned.

The possibility is being explored of the Record Office opening one evening a week for public research, maybe starting in the autumn.

Meanwhile we send Colin and his wife congratulations on the birth of their daughter Rose, a sister for Samuel, in whose progress we all take a great interest.

BATH ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Peter Davenport, Director of Excavations, writes that last year's excavations at the Abbey revealed evidence of the medieval cloister and forwarded the plan of the Norman transept which now has at least a western aisle. Burials of the 12th century and later were uncovered in the cloister east walk, also 9th-10th century burials under the cloister, predating it. Evidence of pewter manufacture was found in a late Roman shop or workshop.

This year the Trust has carried out a survey of the Milk Street workshops and chimney prior to their demolition (industrial archaeology) a watching brief for English Heritage at Farleigh Hungerford Castle, evaluations on the site of the medieval and 17th and 18th century country houses at Hunstrete, and a detailed survey of the east end of the Roman Baths Complex. It is currently carrying out monitoring of the route of the Batheaston/Swainswick Bypass. It is also providing archaeological consultancy and supervision to the National Trust in their project to restore the gardens at Prior Park. If the Spa Restoration project takes place, the Trust will be carrying out excavations in advance.

NOTES AND QUERIES

THE EMPIRE HOTEL was designed by Major Davis for Alfred Holland. It was begun in 1899 and opened in November 1901. The Admiralty took it over in 1939. The bulk of the Admiralty personnel travelled on September 17 1939. The Admiralty vacated it in June 1989. Tenders were sought for restoring it for use as hotel. Tenders are now also being invited for use as flats.

As well as the Survey's files, the Record Office has many references in the Places index which provide sources of information on the hotel.

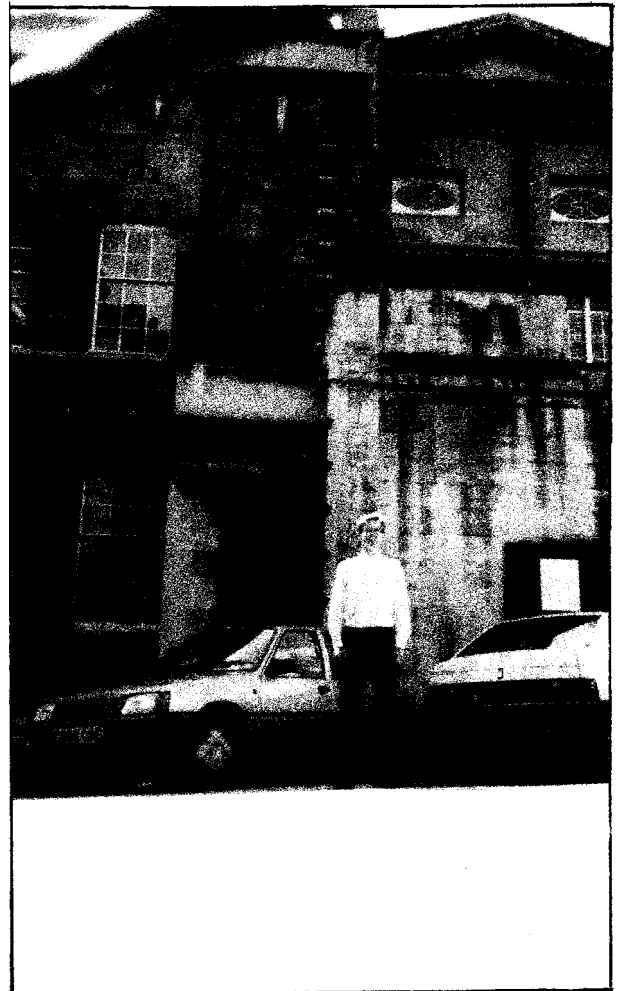


NORTH PARADE HOUSE has been put up for sale by the Corporation. It is known as no.12A and was formerly one house with 12. The conversion seems to have been made some time during the 1840's, though Cotterell's detailed survey in the 1850's still shows it as one house. No.12 has the old front door, while a new front door was built for 12A and a passage divided off from one of the front rooms. 12A has its staircase on the original site. In 1994 old panelling could still be seen in the upper floors. It is hoped the house will be converted into flats. Designed by John. Wood, it was built for Ralph Allen. Deed Packet 2629A.

Above right: the 18th century Guildhall with the Victorian extension beyond. The Stuart Guildhall, built out of the Tudor Market House in 1626-1627, stood in the street in front.

Right: Colin Johnston, Bath City Archivist, standing on the site of the medieval Guildhall, east of the present one.

Photographs by Elizabeth Holland, 1987.



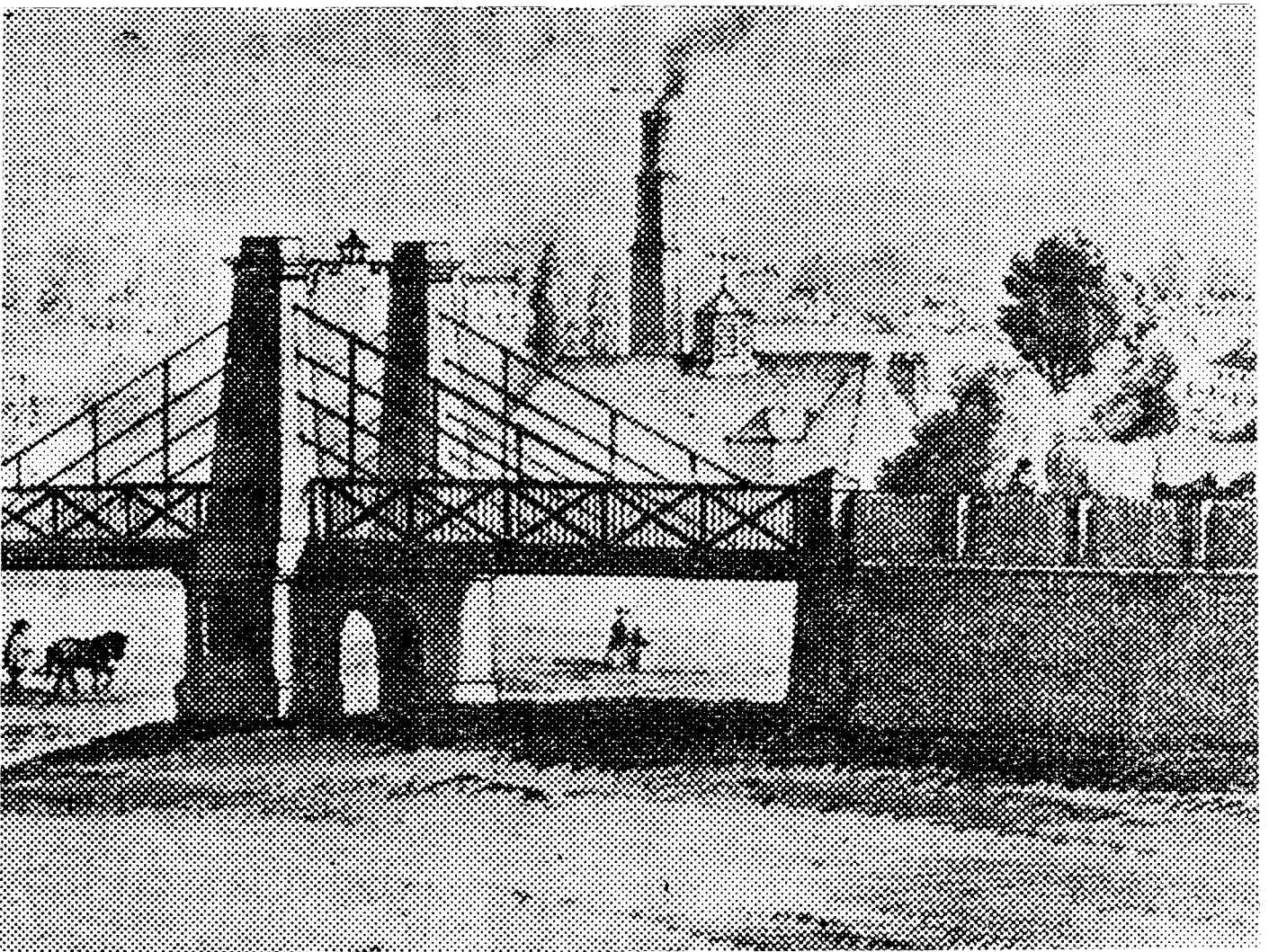
NOTES AND QUERIES Continued

Connie Smith writes that **GAS** came to the city in 1819 and started in a very modest way on the northern side of the river at Locksbrook. Gas mains were restricted to the northern parts of the city for many years. There was evidently no demand from the southern industrial sector for gas which was only available in the evenings and at night. Gas by day came into use in 1845.

Notes on the extension of the mains:

- 1829 Lighting of the outparts of Walcot and Bathwick
- 1836 Parishes of Widcombe and Lyncombe (the river was crossed)
- 1856 Combe Down and Batheaston
- 1859 The village of Weston
- 1862 Charlcombe
- 1866 Bathford and Twerton
- 1869 Bathampton and Swainswick
- 1870 Southstoke.. etc.

Connie remarks that Bath in the 19th century offers much scope for more research - perhaps the earlier centuries offer more contrast, yet the 19th is equally interesting.



Bath gas works in the 1830s, with Twerton Suspension Bridge in the foreground

TAKING TEA IN THE EMPIRE HOTEL

Ruth Haskins

It was one of those occasions every child dreads, even sixty years ago. A distant cousin wrote to tell us she was coming to stay in Bath for a few days at the Empire Hotel, she suggested we took tea with her on the day of her choice. My Mother accepted. I was pressed into accompanying her, very unwillingly.

We arrived by taxi, it was one of those best dress, hat and glove occasions. We were helped from the taxi by the doorman, escorted up the steps into the entrance hall. A bellboy was summoned, my Mother gave the name of the guest, he sped off to find her, then escorted us to the lounge.

The Empire Hotel of those days was sumptuous luxury in the Edwardian style. In my mind's eye I can see the groups of chairs and settees around low tables, the large palm trees in tubs - ferns, greenery and flowers abounded. Such large windows looking out on the Grand Parade, you could hear the rushing water of the weir - very little traffic then, trams and cars came up and down the High Street.

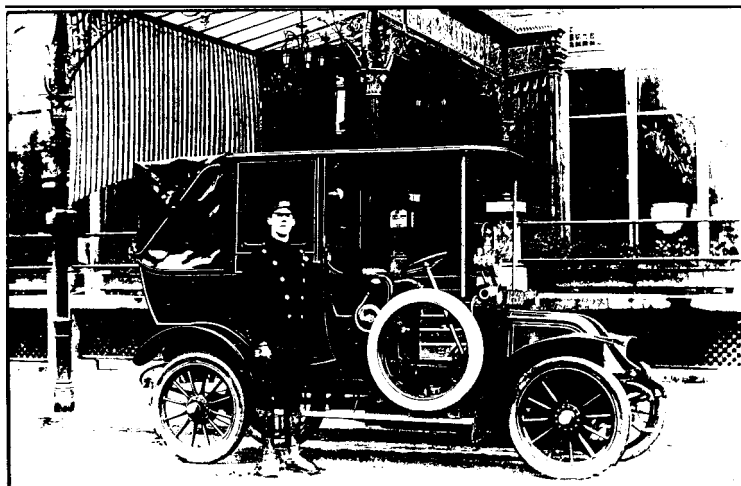
Miss Wallace was elderly, grey-haired. She wore a blue lace dress, with many necklaces and brooches. I clearly remember her hands, covered with rings.

The conversation bored me, but I did enjoy the tea. Tiny sandwiches, scones, fruit bread cut in fingers, little iced fancies, sponge cake. Tea served in fine china cups. The waitress gave us constant attention, anxious to please, it might mean a big tip!

Before we left we were escorted up the splendid staircase to the powder room. The appointments were gleaming, large mirrors everywhere, the attendants gave you each a clean towel with a tiny tablet of scented soap.

Those were the days of luxury for those lucky enough to be wealthy. But out on the streets of Bath were many without jobs, with little money, some very hungry. A well-fed child as I was, knew nothing of this, my family were in trade locally.

Today as I walk past this shabby old building, I wonder will it ever be restored or will it be reduced to rubble! Will they still be only talking about what to do, in ten years' time? By then no one will remember its former glory.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF CROQUET AND THE BATH CONNECTION

Gillian and Michael Cope

Few facts are available about the origins of this game. Evidence exists that it was being played in Ireland in 1830 - coming to England in the mid-1850's. Suggestions that it was being played in France pre-1830 have been made, but this is uncertain.

Croquet became very popular among the Victorian aristocracy and the Vicarage lawn was a favourite spot for the game. The All-England Croquet Club was formed in 1868 at Wimbledon but by 1877 tennis overtook it in popularity, resulting in the club being renamed the All-England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club.

Croquet tournament play reappeared in the 1890's. By 1896 the revival of the game was well under way and the United All-England Croquet Association was formed. The Wimbledon Club again changed its name, after much squabbling, to the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. Croquet's Headquarters are now at the Hurlingham Club, London.

International play started in 1925 with a test match between England and Australia, New Zealand joining in soon afterwards. Play, abandoned during the Second World War, continued afterwards but in the doldrums for about fifteen years. America, having played Croquet since the 1850's, did not join in the test matches until the 1960's.

In 1962 the face of the English game changed when a group of undergraduates competed in a tournament. A trickle of new young players has been attracted to the game ever since, indicating the revival was soundly based on the appeal of the game's intrinsic competitive merits to young minds.

Several forms of Croquet exist. Golf Croquet more closely resembles the Victorian game played on the Vicarage lawn. There are other "fun" versions but the competitive international game is Association Croquet. This is a thinking person's game, likened to a cross between Chess and Snooker played on grass, requiring skill, concentration and forethought - the image of Victorian ladies playing Croquet in their long dresses being a world away from it. Unfortunately T.V. usually depicts it played this way in their costume dramas which does Association Croquet a great disfavour. Association Croquet is played by about 5,000 people in the U.K. at present. Many more play "fun" Croquet on their own lawns, being uninterested in the competitive game.

Bath's first tournament was held on 19th September 1896, the Reverend Arthur Law being the prime mover. Eight lawns (courts in those days) were laid out on the Lansdown Cricket Ground. For the third tournament the location was moved to the New Recreation Ground. "All courts were good considering the drought" and 154 games were finished in a little over four days. The Bath and County Club invited all competitors to be Honorary members during that week.

Open tournaments took place in Bath until 1938, dying a natural death until the Bath Croquet Club was formed in 1976. The Club now has three full-sized lawns and a half lawn on the Recreation Ground, rented from Bath City Council, with an annual membership of between 60 and 70 players. The Club has two coaches and is prepared to give tuition to beginners wishing to try their hand at the game. Mallets can be borrowed from the Club. The Club is affiliated to the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs, participates in three South Western Leagues and also enters National competitions. It runs its own internal competitions and monthly tournaments and new members, young or old, are welcome.

"THIS FAMOUS CITY": THE STORY OF THE CHAPMANS OF BATH

Elizabeth Holland

Introduction: Studying the Chapmans of Bath

The Chapmans were one of the leading families of old Bath, constantly appearing in municipal records and prominent in the city's government. As they were fond of a limited number of personal names - in the seventeenth century John, William and Walter were favourites - they have caused endless confusion, and it has been claimed, more than once, that it would never be possible to unravel the whole family. However a head start in this task was made by John James Chapman, of the Chapman Collection, Bath Library. He was then a half-pay captain of the Royal Artillery, who had served at Waterloo. He describes how his research came about:

The early death of my poor Father, on the Expedition to St Domingo in 1794, the return of my poor Mother to the United States of N. America in 1803, the fact of three, out of five, sisters having joined her, and ultimately the death in 1809 of my only paternal Uncle, all combined to strip me of relations and to engender a wish to ascertain whether it were not possible to find other belongings. This feeling amounted almost to that of isolation, and led to a determination to hunt out my Pedigree, conte qui conte.

It so happened that I had been severely paralysed, that I had no employment, and that I had few resources, when in the winter of 1841-2 my sister, Marianne ((wife of Sir George Smith Gibbes)) informed me "that there was a box of military books belonging to me at Mr Wiltshire's, No.1 Broad St, Bath".

This box also contained copies of monumental inscriptions, collected by John James's uncle the Rev. Hayward - a vast assortment said to be now in the Public Record Office - and John James set out on his family researches. He used sources such as parish registers, and the records of the heralds, a resource less expensive than it is now, which enabled him to combine individuals into groups. With this material, he managed to isolate his own line of ancestors. It was also apparently at this time that he began the Chapman collection.

Wonderfully revived by the study of ancestral history, in 1852 Captain John James married a nurse of thirty-two, and at the age of over sixty, produced a family at least five in number (John James finally settled in Bradford). His known descendants live in England, New Zealand, Australia and East Germany, and amongst them have preserved his portrait, his sketches of Waterloo, his personal writings, and his family tree completed in 1845, a copy of which also belongs to the related Hollands. This tree made possible the researches of the 1970's and later in which the rest of the Bath family was laid out, for since one line had been defined it became possible to arrange the rest in their groups.

The Role of the Chapmans in Bath

Part of John James's improved spirits came from the confirmation of his family's importance in Bath. Entering a stage coach one day, he came upon a gentleman loudly berating Bathonians for incivility and unhelpfulness. On John James's offering to help him and giving his own name, the stranger said he had come to Bath on Antiquarian and Genealogical research and that his name was Byam. "Sir," he said, "your family, and my family, are amongst the most ancient and most respectable families of Bath." This verdict John James felt his later studies confirmed.

Dr. John Wroughton has provided a considerable amount of information on the Chapmans of the Civil War period in **A Community at War**. Apart from that, only one book is known to have been published on the Bath family, by Ruth Young, entitled **Mrs. Chapman's Portrait A Beauty of Bath of the 18th Century**, a charming book, very popular with the family, but not analytical and sometimes inaccurate (she did not know of John James's work).

This is an inadequate amount of publication for a family of such influence. One of the Chapmans was evidently on the Council, the ruling clique which governed the town, as early as 1340. From then on the Chapmans are always to be found on the Council and amongst the wealthiest of the citizens until the death of George Chapman in 1808, the last of the family to hold office. The names of other leading families came and went. Chapman remained.

Their heyday in Bath was probably the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An illuminated genealogy illustrating the seventeenth century Chapman mayors (and showing the family's arms) has been presented to Bath Record Office, compiled by Elizabeth Holland and Mike Chapman (no known relation). A revised list of all seventeenth century Bath mayors has also been deposited there, which was created to assist in Chapman research. The surname Chapman appears on this list twenty-one times, comprising eight individuals, four innkeepers, two mercers, one supposed clothier (John of Weston), and one apothecary. In addition another twenty-nine times the mayor is a known or presumed Chapman in-law, bringing the total to half the century, and indicating that the Chapmans were the major pressure group governing seventeenth century Bath, apart from their influence in other centuries.

Maurice Keen writes that by the later middle ages increased mobility, social and economic, prevented the establishment of urban "hereditary principalities". His remarks scarcely apply to Bath. To stay on the Council for four hundred and seventy odd years represents the hereditary principle, even if as tribunes rather than princes. The family did not then "die out" after 1808 as Bath legend puts it. Mobility had become global, and they went elsewhere.

R.E.M. Peach launched a quite hysterical attack on the Chapmans in his supposed history of St. John's hospice. His remarks have no substance, but they have diverted attention from serious study of the Chapmans, leaving national writers like Maurice Keen unaware of a sequence which may well be unique in the record of English cities.

Any treatment of the family on a national level seems to have been trivial, and based on Peach. The **Independent** for example published an article on St. John's obviously inspired by Peach, but it is time that this writer's works were relegated to the status of antique curiosities. Anyone who has read the municipal records can see that the seventeenth century Chapman Masters of St. John's had no opportunity to make money out of St. John's beyond their stipends of £2 a year, since rents were collected by the city chamberlain and lettings were decided by the Council. As for the statement spread by Peach's followers that the Chapman Masters closed the hospice, this is simply untrue.

It is true that the family had wayward members, and some of them - like everyone else's relations - did act corruptly at times, but corruption alone could not have sustained a family in power for four hundred and seventy years. In other cities there was muttering sometimes about cutting off the heads of "the churls that rule us", and the Chapman record denotes acceptance. The impression is confirmed which genuine historical research also provides of old Bath, that for the most part of the time it was a singularly comfortable and happy place in which to live. Mrs. Jean Manco has also pointed out already that, contrary to the opinions of its detractors, pre-Georgian Bath "was considered one of the loveliest of cities".

At all ages the Chapman family, on the whole, present the same picture. They are seen as supporters of the Church, loyal to each other, energetic, usually of strong constitution, able to earn a good living, and always putting something by in property and money - able, for instance, to lend out funds to the Corporation. Above all, the family had sons, essential for survival as a family unit in a patrilineal and patriarchal society. Yet they did not outnumber the rest of the city, but were a minority, as tax rolls and parish registers show.

In appearance, the early family portraits tend to the aquiline features typical of the old West-countrymen. William the mercer's monument was said to have had the typical Stuart mustachios and small pointed beard. Spelling of old deeds suggests the West-country accent in Bath (such as "mister" for master, "marchant" for merchant), though the city did have the occasional Welsh speaker, writing "pottle" for bottle in the accounts, for instance.

It is hoped to follow the Chapmans through the centuries, dealing sometimes with the adventures of the Chapmans overseas as well. This present article begins with a watershed.

At the close of the medieval age in Bath, on the eve of the Dissolution, it becomes possible to begin tracing the unbroken descent of the family, from Robert, who died in 1504, and his son Thomas, the clothier, who died in 1524. People now called Chapman living in, say, Australia, can show their descent from Robert and Thomas without missing a single generation. Before this period other Chapmans can be discerned, from the 1340's on, bearing names like Robert, Roger, John and Richard, but it is not possible to connect them together

definitely. It is hoped to return later to them and to their setting, the world of Bath in the 1300's and 1400's.

Robert Chapman, died 1504

Robert's name first definitely occurs towards the end of the Wars of the Roses, the dynastic conflict of the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster, which dominated the mid-century, supported and fostered by great nobles like Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, known as the "Kingmaker". In 1471 the Yorkist Edward IV established himself on the throne for the second time and reigned until his death in 1483, followed by the boy-king Edward V (April-June 1483) and then Richard III. It has not yet been demonstrated that the wars had any major effect on the citizens of Bath. Surviving records of the period include the churchwardens' accounts of St. Michael's without the North Gate. Both Robert and a John Chapman appear in the accounts in this latter period. As churchwarden himself, Robert presented the accounts at least six times. He is also paid for cheese, which has been made the basis for calling him a grocer. John Wroughton has pointed out that by the mid-seventeenth century at any rate mercers sold a wide range of goods, as if running general stores.

In 1475 Robert Chepman and John Jeffreys witness a Council deed as proctors, an echo of names also appearing in the 1340's, and demonstrating that Robert was a member of the Council. In 1492 he is named as constable. He was therefore a leading citizen and may even have been mayor (not all the mayors of the period are known).

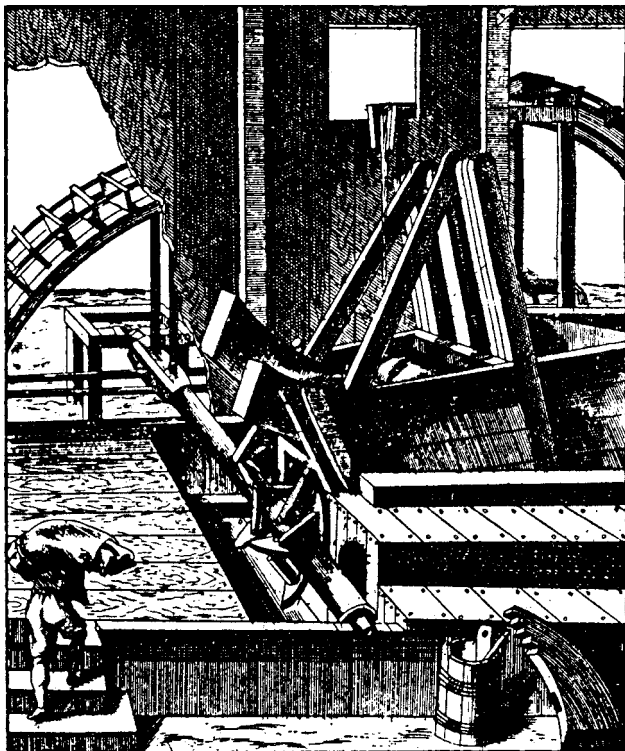
Robert's will of 1504 has been recorded. By this time the Tudor age had begun, since Henry VII had defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, and was endeavouring to establish a strong centralised government after a long period of conflict, seeking peace, law and order, and improved trade. Robert's will itself was quite a modest affair. His executors and residuary legatees were Alice his wife and Thomas his son. Named monetary bequests totalled £2.1.-. The Kipping in-laws were included, and Thomas "Kyppyng" received a crimson furred gown. St. Michael's accounts mention Robert's legacy to the church and the lighting of two torches for him.

Thomas Chapman, clothier, died 1524

Thomas Chapman evidently made considerable sums in the cloth industry, since he left far more money than his father - he was able, for instance, to provide £12 for a priest to sing for him two years. In his **Itinerary** (obviously post-Dissolution) Leland mentions that the town's fortunes, by then somewhat decayed, had previously flourished under three clothiers, Chapman, Style and Kent. This statement is often quoted and gives the impression that Thomas Chapman (died 1524), John Kent (died 1532), and Thomas Style (died 1536), were the chief clothiers of Bath in the early Tudor period.

There is no doubt of their importance, but it appears that the peak of the cloth industry had already been reached in Bath. Although he is never mentioned in general Bath histories, the wealthiest clothier of whom there is record in Tudor Bath was Thomas Chaunceler, who died in 1496, an alderman who evidently lived in the parish of St. Mary within the North Gate.

His named monetary bequests exceed £500, with money for the repair of the Abbey and other churches and the making of the great bridge of Bath, besides many items which cannot be valued. His legacy of 12d. apiece to his weavers and tuckers throughout the town shows a concern with different stages of cloth production, and as well there was 20s. for "Isabell that kepith my shop". His will does not mention mills, but he was mentioned in the Priory rental in reference to a mill at 4s. a year. His funds can be compared with those of Robert Chapman, who itemised just over £2, and workmen who were assessed in 1524 and elsewhere as being worth £1 a year in wages. By modern standards, Thomas Chaunceler must have seemed a millionaire.



RUSTICS. 1. Woman driving horse laden with fuller's earth.

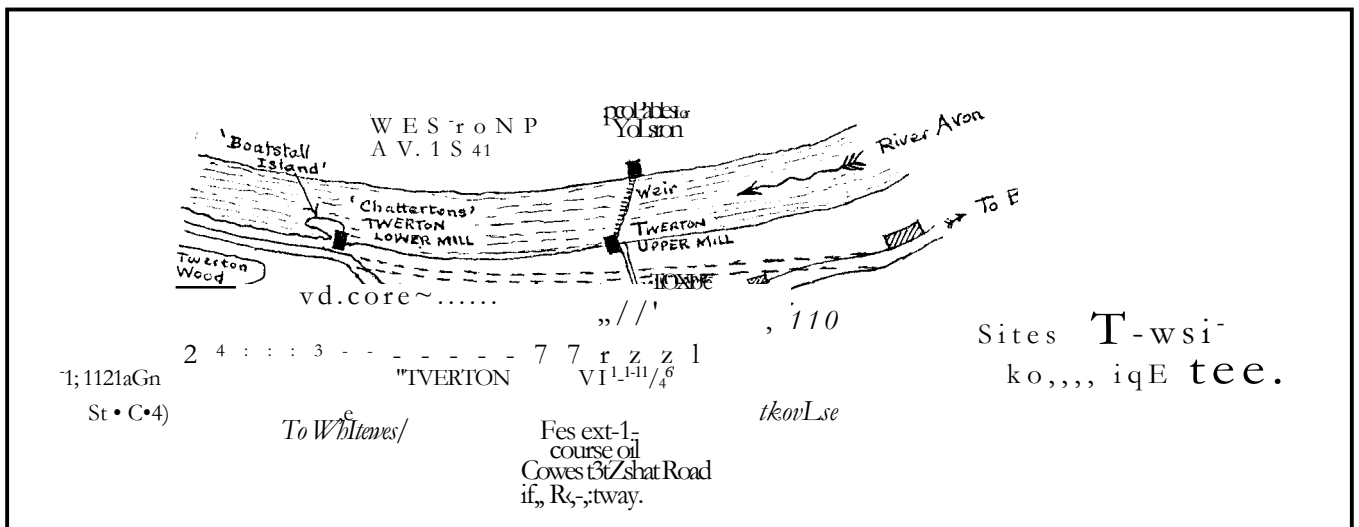
Sixteenth century cloth-mill with fulling stocks

Records of national tax returns enable us to estimate the status of Thomas Chapman in his own day. These have been transcribed by Emanuel Green, and show that in 1496 a John Chapman, tucker, was a tax collector, and Thomas a sub-collector. It has not proved possible to place this John exactly in relation to either Robert or Thomas. The tax was granted because of the "cruell malyce of the Scottis".

Green points out that the city was then assessed at a notional worth of c.E133 (even though Thomas Chaunceler was worth over £500), and £13.6.8 was expected in payment. This traditional type of assessment countrywide evidently proved inadequate, so that a new valuation was used for the subsidy granted in 1523, which was to be paid in two instalments to support the wars against King Louis of France, carried on by Henry VII's ambitious son Henry VIII, who had ascended to the throne in 1509. The lists made in 1524 of the taxable citizens have survived, and provide means of assessment and comparison.

The returns for 1524 list 213 lay men and women over 16 (widows were also taxed) considered taxable. Green states that the criterion was the possession of goods worth forty shillings or more, or daily or weekly wages worth at least twenty shillings. In fact his transcript contains names cited as worth twenty shillings in goods only, such as John Geld and William Bocher in St. Michael's by the Bath. The documents evidently need retranscribing, but this has not proved feasible at the minute – and Green found them hard enough to read in his own day!

Using the usual multiple of 5, for each taxable household, this would mean a total of 1065 for the more affluent sector of the town. To this should be added the church members, and whatever estimate one wishes to make for the poorer classes, to arrive at one's view of the total population of the city.



Using his transcript meanwhile, only 42 people are listed as having assets worth £5 or over. Of these 13 lived in the parish of St. Mary Within, i.e. in or around the High Street. The distribution of taxable households is tabulated below.

Tax Returns of 1524

Parish as Listed	Total no.	Worth £5 or over
St. Michael by the Bath	17	2
The Blessed Mary Within the North Gate	26	13 - including Thomas Styll and Henry Cavell
The Blessed Mary de Stalles*	46	9 - including Thomas Cheppman
St. Michael Without the North Gate	69	9 - including John Kentt
St. James the Apostle**	49	9 - including Geoffry Frauncom
Domestic servants of the Priory listed under St. James	6	
	—	—
Taxable residents	213	

Listed as worth over £5 **42** (not all figures are given)

*only 45 payments are listed. Green gives the number as 45.

**Green seems to have omitted Frauncom, and makes the total 54.

The five wealthiest citizens are listed on the right above. All but Henry Cavell were included among the tax commissioners. These five are the only names itemised in the 1523 returns. The three clothiers named by Leland led the way. Frauncom or Francombe (all his names are variously spelt) had the alias Staynor and was apparently a dyer. Henry Cavell was the father-in-law of Thomas's son Richard and presumably a member of the cloth trade.

Assessment of 1523

Thomas Cheppman	£133.6.8 (200 marcs)	£6.8.4 payable
John Kentt	£133.6.8. (200 marcs)	£6.8.4 "
Thomas Style	£100	£5 "
Geffrey Francam	£40	£2 "
Henry Cavell*	£40	£2
	—	
	£446.13.4	

*Henry Cavell was listed in 1524 as being worth £46, with £2.6.- payable.

The combined assessment for these five wealthiest citizens of 1523-1524 does not equal the amount left by Thomas Chauceler in his will of 1496. It seems that the cloth trade in Bath had already begun to decay, as will be discussed further below.

The last days of medieval Bath

Like his father, Thomas Chapman is not a known mayor, though he may well have been one. The first known reference to him as alderman is the will of John Jeffreys, also Cockes, 1510, who left Thomas and his wife Edith each a "skarlett" gown and bequeathed Thomas £1, also making him a witness and supervisor. In 1512 Sir Rich²rd Estynton, apparently once vicar of Stalls (his will actually mentions Sir William Bradewey of Stalls) made "Thomas Chepman alderman of the cite of Bath" a supervisor of his will, leaving him 40s. He also included these legacies:

To John Chepman my godson 3s.4d. To Richard Chepman 3s.4d. To Isabell Chepman 3s.4d. To Johan servant to Master Chepman 20d. To all my other godchildren owte of Mr.Chapsman howsse 12d. a pece...Edith Chapman a girdill of murrey with gilte studdis.

He left "Another girdill that is fellow to my sister Agnes".

In their wills John Kent and Thomas Style also designate themselves aldermen, naturally, and make especial mention of their ceremonial gowns. Style left a black gown furred with fox, Kent left a gown furred with "foynes" and a blue "puke" gown furred with black. Thomas Chapman left his best "skarlett" gown to "Sir William Rogers my curat, vicar of Stalls...for my forgotten tithes", and a furred tawny gown to his own servant William Romsey.

The three clothiers lived at the end of an era. The Church was now a major landowner, owing allegiance outside England to the Papacy, and Henry VIII saw it as a threat to the power of the Tudor monarchy. Although the call for the subsidy in 1523 had spoken of subduing Louis to the Apostolic See, it was only sixteen years or so to the dissolution of the monastery.

The last sunset glow of the medieval age in Bath fell on what Henry Chapman later called a "little, pretty" city. Bath was then a charming place, set amid rural surroundings and green hills, full of gardens and orchards within the city - as well as pigsties and henhouses. The priory (with twenty-one monks named in 1499) occupied about a third of the city within the walls, extending from a point slightly south of the East Gate, to the southern city wall.

The Guildhall lay on the northern side of the lane to the East Gate, Boatstall Lane, the hall's exact site being in the Corporation car park east of the present Guildhall (to be seen on Kingston maps as the open area which was known as the Shambles). It was evidently a timber frame building with, by the later Tudor age at any rate, a Council Chamber over the kitchen at the north end. Here the prosperous clothiers and others would repair, donning their gowns as appropriate.

In 1524 Thomas Chapman died, still a successful clothier and alderman, leaving six surviving sons, as well as daughters. His will mentions E111.16.8 in monetary bequests. It does not openly cite the lease of the Hart, a priory inn in Stalls Street, though the priory rental lists Thomas for it, and it passed to his eldest son John. (Stalls was the parish for which Thomas was taxed). Mills are included, apparently fulling or tucking mills, which he had purchased "of my Lord Prior of Bath in the parish of Weston in the oon side and of maister Rodnay in the parish of Tweverton in the other side". "Fulbroke's rents" are included, another priory holding. Their exact location is not known, though people mentioned as living in them are assessed for Stalls Street.

Technically owner of all English land, Henry could legitimately repossess it if the holders could be demonstrated to be failing in the duties of their tenure. It was maintained that the monasteries had failed in spiritual duties, and on 27 January 1539, the surrender of Bath priory was signed.

The loss of the priory's revenue must have made a difference to the city, since dues from surrounding properties which once flowed into it, now in part flowed elsewhere. There are indications however that Bath was already in decline. An Act of 1540 lists it among the decayed cities which need to be rebuilt, with houses lying waste. The tax returns of 1540 and 1541 cite far fewer taxable names than those of the 1520's. Leland's opinion has already been cited. In the Star Chamber case of the mid-1530's, **Crouche v. Horner and others**, loss of some of the St. John's rents through decay is mentioned. **Crouche v. Horner** (concerned with the presentation to St. John's) also produced witnesses who blamed the truculent behaviour of one William Crouch(e) for driving clothiers from the city.

There is always a tendency to localise events, both in time and place. For these houses to be decayed by the 1530's and 1540's, a loss of population must indeed have begun long before, probably after Thomas Chaunceler's death, rather than the deaths of Chapman, Style and Kent.

Secondly, the decay evident in Bath was not simply local but part of a general decline of certain old guild towns with their many restrictive regulations. In 1540 the English cloth trade was still booming, and the south and south-west of England were in general prosperous. It was an export-led trade, and new-style entrepreneurs had come forward, who dealt in bulk. They found it more convenient to bypass the old guild towns and seek new sources of supply, often in country areas - trade "goeth these days into the country".

Maurice Keen points to the rise of Castle Combe as evidence of a new area which prospered under the changed system. As a sample of capitalism, we find that Leland mentions one Stumpe, who had filled the offices of the former Malmesbury Abbey with looms. It was not William Crouch's manners which were the real grievance, but that he was a successful clothier in the hamlet Englishcombe. Bath was now entering a different world, both because of the loss of the priory, and because of structural change in the cloth industry.

It was now the age of the Renaissance, spreading to England from Europe where it originated in the fifteenth century, and without this upsurge of new attitudes, Henry would not have found support for the dispossession of the monasteries. Behind Thomas Chapman's sons and daughters lay the medieval world, ahead of them the modern age. It is hoped in later essays both to return to the medieval age, and to travel forward to the modern world.

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