

H. Smith.

T H E
PARISIAN MASTER;

O R,
A NEW AND EASY METHOD

F O R
ACQUIRING A PERFECT KNOWLEDGE

O F T H E
FRENCH LANGUAGE

I N A S H O R T T I M E,

D I V I D E D I N T O T W O P A R T S;

C O N T A I N I N G
THE RUDIMENTS AND THE SYNTAX
OF THE LANGUAGE.

C O M P O S E D, D I G E S T E D, A N D E X P L A I N E D,
I N A M O R E C O N C I S E, A C C U R A T E, A N D E A S Y M A N N E R
T H A N A N Y E V E R Y E T A T T E M P T E D.

By Dr. M. GUELFY BORZACCHINI,

Professour of the French and Italian Languages.

B A T H:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY R. CRUTTWELL, FOR THE AUTHOR;
SOLD ALSO

BY S. HAZARD, AND J. MARSHALL, IN BATH;
W. BROWN, AND J. LLOYD, BRISTOL;
AND C. DILLY, POULTRY, AND S. HAYES, NO. 332, OXFORD-
STREET, LONDON.

M D C C L X X X I X.

Private Schooling in Eighteenth-century Bath

Trevor Fawcett

At the Bath mayor-making ceremonies in 1785 pupils of the city Grammar School carried aloft a banner with the words 'Athenae Redivivae' (Athens Reborn) - a reference, said the *Bath Chronicle*, to the spa's reputation as 'a seminary of polite education, and the residence of philosophers and learned men'.¹ By this date some of the 'philosophers', William Herschel among them, had already departed,² but otherwise it was a fair claim. Later eighteenth-century Bath abounded in schools and offered instruction of every hue. Alongside the two more-or-less official institutions - the long-established Grammar School and the charity Bluecoat School - dozens of private schools catered to the needs of Bath's own rapidly expanding population, as well as serving pupils attracted from well beyond the city limits by the cachet of a Bath education and the unusual number of boarding establishments on offer. Uninspected, unregulated, and variable in quality, the many private schools nevertheless offered between them a very broad curriculum at all levels, from the most basic grounding in the three Rs to the mental discipline of the Classics, practical training in commercial subjects, or genteel tutoring in the polite 'accomplishments', an area in which Bath was pre-eminent, served as it was by dozens of language, dancing, drawing and music masters.

Concerning the education of boys in general, opinions differed over the respective merits of a traditional Classical curriculum and a more vocational one favouring 'modern' subjects. At Bath the long-established Grammar School held to the Classics model: indeed its very terms of endowment obliged it to teach only Latin and Greek. For the sons of Bath freemen who made up the core of the Grammar School's intake an Eton-style syllabus of dead languages and ancient authors might seem narrow and even inappropriate, yet a Classical schooling did of course carry cultural weight and, for the brightest students, opened the door to university and the professions.

As one of its headmasters, the redoubtable Rev. Nathanael Morgan, reminded them on one occasion, 'So many of the Comforts and Advantages of Life are derived from a Classical Education...'.³ After its move to Broad Street in 1754, the Grammar School had places for over a hundred day boys and boarders (c.140 in 1798 during its Morgan heyday).⁴ Yet it is clear this did not wholly mop up the local demand for Latin and Greek since a number of private schools also offered Classics in some form, though often taught within a much broader mix of subjects. As early as 1733, Edward Brett advertised Latin among the optional extras at his school in Barton Fields,⁵ and by the 1780s and 1790s it was fairly common for boys' schools to teach at least the rudiments of Latin and sometimes Greek as well. But only one long-lasting private school appears to have provided a full Classical alternative to the Grammar School, namely the establishment run by the Rev. Richard Graves [fig. 1] just outside Bath in the village of Claverton.⁶

During his lifetime Graves became a nationally known figure for his novels, essays, poems and translations, but this was spare-time activity. As rector of Claverton from 1749 he also had church and parish duties. Yet it was the school that absorbed most of his time for nearly forty years, boosting his otherwise slender income but anchoring him to the spot sometimes even



fig 1: The Rev. Richard Graves, from *Public Characters, 1799-1800*
Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

we know Graves did experiment with school texts by adding some uncommon authors to the usual diet of Horace, Virgil, and the like. Nothing is known either about the detailed workings of the school, or how his wife and own children assisted, or what extra teaching help Graves had, but the evidence at least suggests he treated his pupils rather as extended family, tempering strictness with good humour.

The same sense of kindly responsibility, of acting *in loco parentis*, can be found in various other boarding schools of the time. Advertisements speak of making learning a pleasure,⁹ of pupils' health and happiness being no less important than their education,¹⁰ of bans on corporal punishment and 'the usual hated methods of discipline',¹¹ and, repeatedly, of the close attention paid to moral conduct. Boarding school pupils were generally expected to attend church on Sundays, and at least one school held regular sermons and Anglican services on its own premises.¹² Richard Graves's scholars merely had to cross the road to the village church.

Careers advice to parents published in 1747 referred to the current popularity of 'private Boarding Schools, called Academies', while admitting that their teaching methods were not always much better than the pedantic regimes of the public schools.¹³ What especially drove the boom in private boys' schools, whether day or boarding institutions, was the more broad-based, practical education they usually offered. This often meant an emphasis on commercial

during school vacations, as in 1763 when he admitted he would have lost four pupils, including two 'of great consequence', had he not boarded them at Claverton while their parents were 'absent upon a summer's expedition'.⁷ He had started teaching around 1750 with twenty pupils housed in an annexe to the parsonage house specially built for him by his wealthy neighbour, Ralph Allen. The total intake eventually expanded to over forty when space in the nearby manor house became available. Some came from the neighbourhood, perhaps preferring the more personal care, supervision and rural quiet of Graves's school, despite the extra cost in fees, to the rougher, bullying, urban atmosphere of the Grammar School.⁸ Among them were the three sons of Henry Harington, a prominent Bath physician, and the sons of Graves's two Claverton patrons, Henry Skrine of Warleigh Manor and Bishop William Warburton of Prior Park. Two more famous pupils, Thomas Bowdler and Thomas Malthus, would later give their names to the English language as a result of the Bowdlerised *Family Shakespeare* and the Malthusian theory of population, though their originators' previous boyhood education under Graves would have included little if any Shakespeare or economics. Because he never advertised his school curriculum in the newspapers, it remains uncertain whether lessons strayed much beyond the standard drill of Latin and Greek, though

subjects taught typically by writing masters and accountants. Edward Brett, a writing master trained in London, offers an early example, advertising his Bath presence first in 1733 and then as follows in 1745.¹⁴

At the HAND and PEN In St. James's-street, BATH, WRITING, in all the Hands; ARITHMETICK, in whole Numbers; FRACTIONS, Vulgar and Decimal; and FOREIGN EXCHANGES, shewing the Price-Currant, and in what Species the chief Trading Cities or Places make their Exchanges, &c.; MERCHANTS ACCOMPTS, or the true *Italian Method of Book-Keeping*, by double Entry, are Taught, by ED.BRETT, from the late eminent Mr.CHARLES SNELL, *London*.

Brett was still teaching as late as 1779 (though only as visiting writing master at Mrs. Aldworth's girls' school),¹⁵ by which time other specialists in commercial handwriting, mathematics and Italian book-keeping had established themselves, including John Wignall and John Jarman. The latter gave his main aim as equipping his students for employment in 'Merchant's Counting-Houses, Trades, the Public Offices, Attorney's Clerks, or any other Business they are intended for, and particularly to fix them in a neat and expeditious Running Hand, so necessary in every Business'.¹⁶ A later commercial school, run by Robert Carpenter, particularly emphasised the book-keeping side, which he claimed to address 'in a manner seldom practised in schools, by uniting practice and theory, in imitation of real business'. The negotiation of bills of exchange would be explained by circulating drafts among the pupils themselves, who would also handle counterfeit money to practise 'telling' and achieve fluency in business correspondence by writing real letters on commercial topics.¹⁷ Other schools inclined more to the practical applications of mathematics, measurement, surveying and navigation. Thus in 1751, besides the essential trio of writing, arithmetic, and tradesmen's accounts, William Kingston was advertising algebra, geometry, plane and spherical trigonometry, calculus, 'mensuration' (using logarithms), surveying, mapping, and navigation (using astronomy).¹⁸ Around the same date John Wignall's school offered geometry, trigonometry and other useful mathematics, together with quantity surveying - the 'methods and customs' in use for measuring the work of stonemasons, bricklayers, carpenters and plasterers.¹⁹ Publicity for a later school highlighted another application - land and timber measuring.²⁰

The trend towards educating boys for fairly specific careers took a fresh turn with Charles Moor. A former actor with the Bath Theatre Royal company, Moor opened a boys' school in Abbey Green in 1774, moving into Union Passage in 1776. Unlike the majority of other actors who turned schoolmaster, he focused not on theatrical skills such as reading and elocution, but rather on mathematics and the use of scientific instruments - indeed directly advertising his business as a 'mathematical school'. Increasingly in fact he channelled his energies into preparing his students for military and naval careers. A friendly correspondent to the *Bath Chronicle* in 1778 reported seeing his pupils out on Claverton Down measuring ground and positioning stones to make a fortification, putting classroom theory into practice. The following year Moor published *An Easy Introduction to Naval and Military Mathematics*, and by 1781 his school went openly under the title of the Naval & Military Academy. The fact that it took only six boarders but was able to run both day and evening classes suggests a healthy local demand for a syllabus that included - in addition to mathematics and accounting - the science of fortification, gunnery, land surveying, the use of

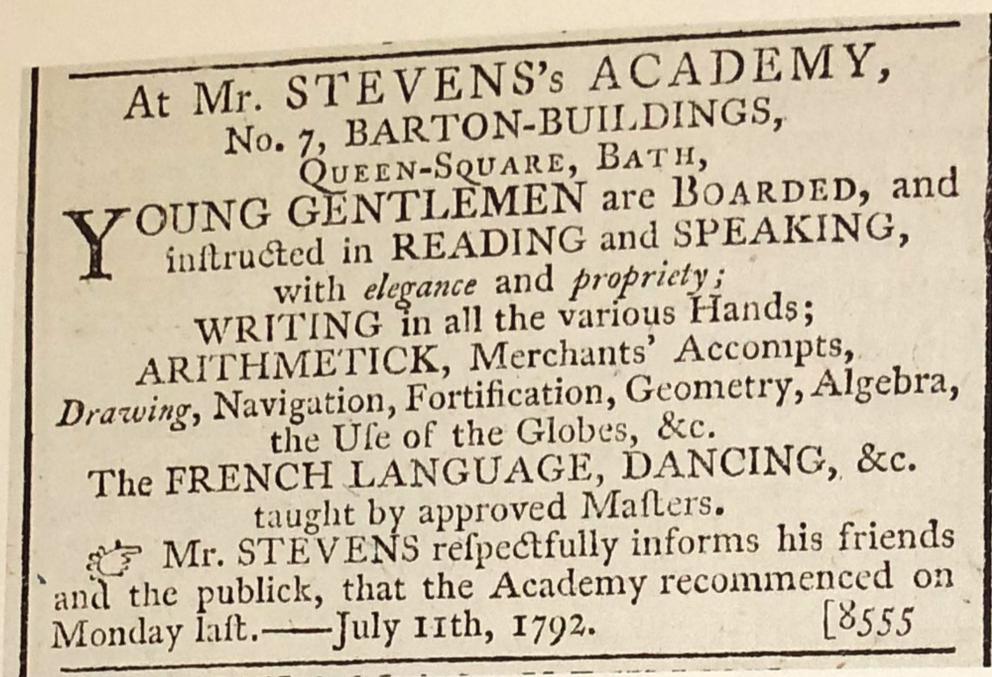


fig 2: Advertisement for Mr Steven's Academy, No. 7 Barton Buildings, Bath, 1792

Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

Academy [fig. 2], now housed near Queen Square, and ran it until his own death in 1797. Under Stevens and his successor, Groombridge, the naval and military emphasis significantly diminished, as subjects such as 'Reading and Speaking with Elegance and Propriety' came to the fore, and French and dancing masters now attended.²² [fig. 3] They did of course teach geography with 'the use of globes', for this had now become an almost obligatory school subject. Addison's boarding school at Bathampton, for example, took a special interest in it - 'In learning Geography, they [the pupils] are made to draw all the different Parts of the Globe, according to their real extent, on a given scale, and plan all the towns, rivers, &c. according to their known latitude and longitude'.²³ Most schools could muster a terrestrial and perhaps even a celestial globe, and some amassed more elaborate equipment - mathematical and surveying instruments, gauging tools, sextants, telescopes, and other devices. Giving notice of his mathematical and philosophical [i.e. scientific] academy in 1799, J. Weaver referred to the large terrestrial globe he used in lessons and promised lectures on the properties of matter, mechanics, electricity and astronomy, all to be explained with the aid of 'apparatus'.²⁴ Similarly J.B. Florian, master of another Bath academy, owned an electrical machine, a camera obscura, a theodolite, station staves and measuring rods - these being items put up for auction when he left town in 1798.²⁵

A French émigré from Brittany, Florian was author of *An Essay on an Analytical Course of Studies* (1796), the pedagogical system behind the expensive boys' school he set up in 1797 in



fig 3: Embossed quill pen of William Bowden at Mr Stevens's Academy, Bath

Author's own collection

globes, astronomy and navigation (with practice on naval instruments and the nautical almanac), in other words a fully vocational course based on those at the naval and military academies of Portsmouth and Woolwich. A further important topic of instruction under Moor was perspective and topographical drawing, not in this case taught as a polite accomplishment but as one further skill valuable to an army officer.²¹

On Moor's death in 1784 his assistant, W. Stevens, took over the Drawing, Naval and Military

Burlington Place.²⁶ In essence his 'Education upon a Superior Plan' amounted to providing a general curriculum of classical and modern languages, writing, mathematics and drawing, all taught in a strong Gallic atmosphere and with the intention of preparing his students 'for any civil or military Profession... at an Age when, among the generality of Youth, an imperfect smattering of Latin and Greek too often constitutes the Whole of their Attainments.'²⁷ The main teaching was undertaken by a fellow Breton, Kerouartz, assisted by a classics master and

and the Number of his Pupils is limited to Fifteen; consequently they are under immediate and constant inspection, and not only their literary Improvement but their Morals, Temper, and general Behaviour are attended to with the most conscientious Vigilance; they sleep all in separate Beds, two or three in one Room; they rise at half after Six in Summer, and half after Seven in Winter; immediately after the French Lesson, which lasts two Hours, Breakfast upon Milk, Bread and Butter; have their Luncheon at One o'Clock. Dine at Four with Mr.KEROUARTZ and Family, where no other Language but French is used, have their Supper at Eight, and are always in Bed at Nine.²⁸

The experiment was soon abandoned. Although Florian's academy seems to have recruited ten pupils (most of them with military careers in mind) by February 1798 when they all contributed their pocket money towards the national defence fund against a French invasion, it was hardly enough to keep the establishment going and, perhaps for this reason, it closed abruptly that summer.²⁹ This was always a hazard of private education: the ephemeral nature of too many schools and the disruption caused to pupils' studies. Where then did Florian's abandoned pupils go? One possible refuge, higher up Lansdown hill, would have been Lyde House Seminary [fig. 4], where in 1795 William Drayton was advertising a mixed syllabus of Latin, Greek, French, English, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, geography and history - but, according to an earlier promise on his part, always carefully tailored to the individual pupil's needs.³⁰ Alternatively, Groombridge's Naval, Military and Commercial Academy in St. John's Place might have fitted the bill, though the varied curriculum here lacked any Classical component.³¹ Or Addison's boarding school at Bathampton, which did teach Latin and Greek alongside English, geometry, geography, surveying and navigation, only in this case without French since the other stated subjects were deemed sufficient for boys under fourteen.³²

The question of the most suitable curriculum for boys was echoed in the contemporary debate over the education of girls. Here the role of Classics hardly came into it, since there was no female equivalent of the grammar and public schools, and women were barred anyway from the universities and professions. The few women who did apply themselves to Latin and Greek generally did so at home or with the help of a private tutor. Only radicals like Mary Wollstonecraft and Maria Edgeworth argued that girls were capable of studying any subject whatsoever and were entitled to the same opportunity to improve their minds as boys. In the perhaps more influential opinion of Hannah More it came down to social class. Girls did deserve a mind-stretching education (though certainly not the poorest servant classes who were not even to be taught writing),³³ but the more ornamental subjects were best left to the gentry. By 1799



fig 4: Lyde House, Sion Hill, Bath, c.1850
Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

when her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* appeared, she felt the pursuit of 'accomplishments' had turned into a 'phrenzy' no longer restricted within the usual limits of rank and fortune; the middle orders have caught the contagion, and it rages downward with

increasing violence, from the elegantly dressed but slenderly portioned curate's daughter, to the equally fashionable daughter of the little tradesman, and of the more opulent, but not more judicious farmer.

Instead of all that superficial attention to art and fancy work, music and dancing, French and Italian, middle-class girls should first and foremost learn how to be effective wives, mothers, and mistresses of families, with an appropriate 'stock of ideas and principles, and qualifications and habits'. At the same time (while they should certainly study serious things, learn to reason, and undertake some 'dry tough reading') the idea was not to turn them into 'scholastic ladies' either.³⁴

Having managed a successful girls' school with her sisters for thirty years in Bristol, Hannah More knew perfectly well the balance was difficult to achieve, and that many parents were willing to pay good money for the fashionable airs, graces and accomplishments that would stand their daughters in good stead in the marriage market. It was not surprising that the earliest private girls' boarding school at Bath was launched by a dancing master, John Stagg, and his wife. This was around 1720, decidedly early, when Bath's spectacular expansion had hardly begun and the visiting season remained limited to the summer months, still too short to sustain a resident dancing master without another job. In fact the venture, housed in newly built St. John's Court (Kingsmead Street), succeeded remarkably well, prospering for more than twenty years under the Staggs and then passing in 1742 to Mrs. Stagg's niece and long-serving principal assistant, Miss Tomlin(s).³⁵

St. John's Court was then a smart address (occupied among others by Bath's master-of-ceremonies, Richard Nash) and in 1743 Miss Tomlin asserted her independence by removing her school a few doors from John Stagg's house but remaining on the same fashionable site. Here, taking both day pupils and boarders and employing at least one assistant, she must have taught the core subjects of reading and needlework, and certainly appointed visiting masters to provide the usual extras - dancing, music, writing and French. After a teaching career of nearly 45 years Miss (or rather Mrs., as befitting her age) Tomlin retired, now comfortably off to judge from her charitable bequests to the Bath Hospital and the poor.³⁶ The school still enjoyed a solid reputation, and under Mrs. Aldworth (1765-74) and the subsequent partnership of Mrs. Mainwaring and Miss Perks (1774-79) it continued to thrive, though by 1774 'shellwork' had become a core subject of the timetable with geography among the extras.³⁷ Yet it cannot have survived for long after Miss Perks resigned, especially since the once-desirable neighbourhood it stood in was looking rather shabby compared with the handsome upper town which had become a new focus of fashionable schooling.³⁸

Much earlier, another girls' boarding school with a long future had opened around 1736 in St. James's Street, fully in the old town, set up by Anne Emblen from Bratton, Wilts. Evidently popular, in 1745 it moved across the street to fresh premises having the advantage of a garden. The school then had at least two other teachers on the staff, Elizabeth Patillo and Mrs. Pulleine, and later employed a French mistress in addition to the usual supernumerary tutors for writing, dancing and music. Otherwise, needlework seems to have dominated the timetable. Mrs. Emblen herself taught it, as did Elizabeth Patillo (with some English) before she left in 1753 to start her own girls' school in Beauford Square - apparently a short-lived affair since its founder was soon running a millinery shop.³⁹ The other chief assistant, Mrs. Pulleine, became a business partner in 1754 and governess of the school on Mrs. Emblen's death in 1760.

It was she who re-located the school in 1766 to Trim Street where it eventually became a familiar enough sight to figure in the list of sedan-chair fare distances - 'From the [Orchard Street] Playhouse to the Boarding-School in Trim-street - 733 yards' (a shilling ride).⁴⁰

Hardly was Mrs. Pulleine established in her new quarters in spring 1766 than she received a visit from John Penrose, a Cornish clergyman, with his wife, daughter Fanny and a Bath family friend, anxious to discover whether the school would suit a younger daughter, the 13- or 14-year-old Dolly. They took careful note of the entrance fees, charges for boarding and tuition in reading and 'sewing', additional sums for writing, arithmetic and dancing, and all the bills for a silver spoon, sheets, towels and napkins, a Sunday seat in the Abbey Church or Octagon Chapel, the annual ball, vacation fees, and staff presents - the sundries amounting to nearly 40% of the 28 guineas per annum John Penrose would be expected to pay. Writing home to Cornwall, he reported that they had approved the general set-up and been rather taken by Mrs. Pulleine herself.

The Mistress a well-looking Person, and we like her very well. The House is a very handsome one, very near Barton Street. All Bills to be paid every Half-year. Great care will be taken to instruct Ladies in the English Grammar. If Dolly comes here, she will soon become acquainted with Apostrophes and all the Niceties of Spelling.

And no doubt the niceties of fine needlework too - except that in the end Dolly did not enrol with Mrs. Pulleine. Instead, the following spring, April 1767, the Penroses returned to Bath, vetted the rival establishment of Mrs. Aldworth in St. John's Court, liked what they saw, and here entered Dolly as a boarder without delay. She made an unhappy start, finding the transition from family to school hard, but Mrs. Aldworth consoled her with a trip to the Theatre Royal and presumably she adjusted in time, as Bath's many boarding pupils generally had to.⁴¹ Kindliness paid off, and boarding school mistresses saw mothering their young wards as part of the job, some even declaring as much. Opening a boarding school in 1770, Mrs. Burdett, announced she would particularly welcome girls who had lost their mothers, as she indeed had just lost hers, promising to treat them as parlour boarders and 'be their friend'.⁴² Another school similarly offered to accommodate six orphaned girls, who would live intimately with the mistress as parlour boarders.⁴³

Mrs. Burdett's advertisement also emphasised her school's 'most healthy' location on Lansdown, in the recently built terrace of Montpellier on the rural edge of Bath. The earlier girls' schools were sited near the city centre, and some continued to be established there - Mary Delafons's in Cheap Street and then near the Cross Bath, for example, or Mrs. Leslie's French boarding school in St. James's Street and Abbey Green. When, however, the latter removed in 1756 to Borough Walls the more open, airy location was already regarded as a selling point in its favour,⁴⁴ and the rapid spread of smart streets and terraces on Lansdown hill from then on was an invitation for boarding schools to follow, nowhere better illustrated than in the case of the Rosco school.

Originally an embroidress, Anna Barbara Rosco had run a boarding school in Bristol, on St. Michael's Hill, for over twenty years before her decisive move to Bath. At Bristol she first had the help of her husband, James Rosco, who - as a retired actor from the London and Bristol stage - taught reading and elocution. On his death in 1761, the eldest daughter, Ann Rosco, stepped in, giving up her own theatrical career (mainly as a singer) to do so. Embroidery was inevitably

allotted a high place in the curriculum and several samplers executed by girls attending the school have survived as testimony. What exactly spurred their move to Bath in autumn 1770 is not obvious unless it was simply the attraction of the Royal Crescent, then under construction and offering a splendid opportunity. Here the Roscos, mother and daughter, ambitiously leased No. 2, the second house from the east, before it was even ready for occupation, obliging them to launch the school in premises just round the corner in Brock Street where it spent its first year. Besides needlework they offered English, French, writing and accounts, with the chance of extra classes in geography, drawing, Italian, music, and dancing - the latter given special prominence by the fortnightly public dancing days held once the school had settled into the more spacious environment of the Crescent. Yet there were further moves to come. Six months after Mrs. Rosco's sudden death in May 1774, her daughter Ann took the school away from the prestigious Crescent setting to far more modest accommodation in Barton Court near Queen Square. She remained there nearly eight years, enlarging her premises twice to make more room for boarders and day girls, with enough space, it seems, to hold public readings from English literature showing off her pupils' talents. Then came a final move. Still lured by the elegance of the upper town, in 1782 she leased a large house in Lansdown Road, engaged the three nieces she had trained as assistants, and opened a French-speaking school with a resident French mistress. It

turned out a venture too far. Within six months the school closed in the face of mounting debts and the bankrupt Ann Rosco quitted the scene for good.⁴⁵

Perhaps she underestimated the competition. Although Mrs. Burdett's school in nearby Montpellier had recently closed,⁴⁶ there were at least half-a-dozen rival establishments already scattered about the city, three of them on Lansdown alone. Mrs. Stone's had arrived in Rivers Street from Margaret Buildings in 1780. Jane Arden and her sisters established theirs in nearby Catharine Place in March 1781 (listing astronomy among the extracurricular subjects - probably taught by their science-lecturer father, John Arden) and when they left after two years, a successor, Miss Bird, immediately took their place.⁴⁷ A serious competitor to Ann Rosco's short-lived French school existed even nearer to hand at No. 7 Belmont, the thriving boarding school run by the Lee sisters - one of whom, Charlotte, had in fact trained as a teacher under Ann Rosco and then gone on to found her own girls' day school at the foot of Lansdown Road in 1780.⁴⁸



MISS LEE.

Author of the Receipts Chapter of Accidents &c &c.

fig 5: Miss Sophia Lee, author of *The Chapter of Accidents*, 1797

Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

Charlotte, Sophia, Harriet and Ann were the daughters of John Lee, an actor-manager well known in the theatres of London, Dublin, Edinburgh and Bath. It was Charlotte's prior experience of teaching, coupled with the profits from Sophia's play, *The Chapter of Accidents*, just staged in London, that probably induced the sisters to open a school in December 1780 - initially in Vineyards but transferring to smarter Belmont in 1782 thanks to the continuing success of Sophia's play [fig. 5]. By August they had all but one of their complement of 24 boarders. And while the curriculum of needlework, English, French, writing and arithmetic seems orthodox enough, exposure to the sisters' bright conversation must have been an education in itself. Sophia and Harriet continued to produce novels, stories and plays, and in 1786 or 1787 the school migrated further up Lansdown Road to roomy Belvedere House [fig. 6] where it eventually housed some 72 girls aged 8 to 19 - two parlour boarders, fifty ordinary boarders, and about twenty day pupils - and even so had a waiting list. One pupil there in the 1790s, Susan Mein, later recorded her memories of a firm but benign regime under its three governesses (Charlotte Lee having then married and left) and three assistant teachers. She shared a bedroom with the French mistress and two other girls, but at least one other room slept eight. The large schoolroom filled with desks and forms lay at the back, with a dining room below and a paved terrace that served as a play area overlooking the garden. The day started at six and on most days tutors from Bath arrived to give lessons in arithmetic and writing, drawing, music (the school had three fortepianos), and dancing - a major preoccupation involving frequent public displays at the

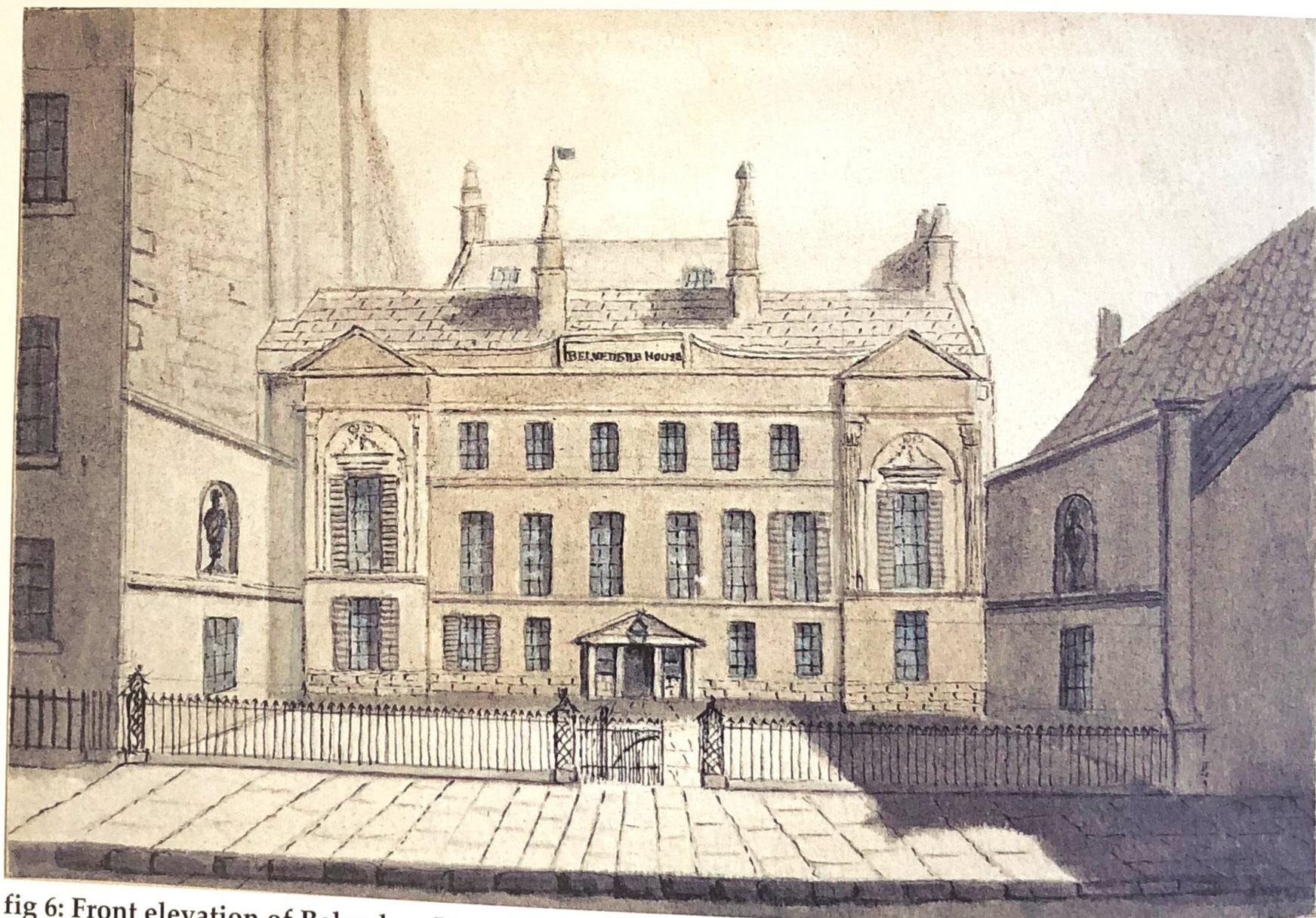


fig 6: Front elevation of Belvedere House, Miss Lee's School, pre 1860
Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

school and every three years a prestigious scholars' ball at the Assembly Rooms. French was generally spoken in school hours. There were twice-daily prayers, good meals (taken with milk, small beer or even port wine), pocket money, treats, country walks, white frocks on Sundays and, after church, sometimes visits to friends. Sanctions ranged from a breakfast of thin gruel to the rare scandal of expulsion, but corporal punishment was in theory banned.⁴⁹ Our informant, the one-time Susan Mein, makes no mention, however, of the Lee pupils being made to wear back braces to improve their posture - devices that were nevertheless actively recommended to Bath boarding schools at the time.⁵⁰

The 'Leevites' made a pretence of rivalry with the 'Colbournites', the 20-30 girls attending the Misses Colbournes' (or Coobans') boarding school - originally Anne Wignall's - higher up the hill at 10 Lansdown Crescent.⁵¹ This was just one of at least thirty new girls' schools that sprang up in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. Some of these, as in the Wignall/Colbourn example, colonised fresh areas on the growing outskirts of Bath, such as: Miss Milgrove's French-speaking seminary in Marlborough Buildings, or Mrs. Voysey's and Mrs. Matthews' schools in Grosvenor Place. Others appeared in the new suburb of Bathwick - the Misses Kiddell's and Mrs. Thane's - and one further out at Devonshire House on the Warminster Road. The latter survived for four years as a girls' boarding school run by a Miss Eames, then in 1795 became an academy for 5-12-year-old boys under the headship of Edward Guest, a rather unusual succession. Batheaston produced several girls' schools including Mrs. Vereyt's academy for English, French and Italian. There were others at Kelston and Twerton.⁵²

Nearer the city centre a former governess, Miss Lawrence, set up a successful day school at 8 Bridge Street, and Mrs. Evans a similar institution in Pierrepont Street, having once kept a boarding school at Frenchay. Another experienced school mistress, Mrs. Bennett from Maidstone, admitted both boarders and day girls at 3 Walcot Terrace, and the somewhat less experienced Elizabeth Lefanu - after a trial run in Upper Charles Street - at No. 3 Edgar Buildings. Sister of the playwright R.B. Sheridan, Mrs. Lefanu at least had family antecedents in her grandfather, a notable Dublin school-master, and her father, Thomas Sheridan, actor, elocutionist and educational theorist, whose English teaching method she followed in the school. French lessons she left to the Abbé Denais, an *émigré* teacher from Anjou.⁵³

Being speculative ventures, private schools experienced mixed fortunes. Some of those advertising their presence in the Bath newspapers soon fell by the wayside while others survived and even thrived. The staying power of the Emblen/Pulleine school, dating from c.1736 and housed in Trim Street from 1766, has already been mentioned. Mrs. Pulleine's own career with the school had spanned nearly forty years when in 1786 she finally handed over to Miss Wagstaff. In 1790 it passed to one of Wagstaff's assistants, Caroline Habersham, and a year later to the Ewing family who were still going strong in 1805 - as indeed was Mrs. Habersham, who, after an interlude in Queen Square, had established a well-respected school in Catharine Place.⁵⁴ There were other cases too of long continuity over a half century or more, among them the Lee sisters' famous school, which prospered for some 24 years (1780-c.1804) under their own stewardship and a further 30 or so years under their successors, Thomas and Frances Broadhurst.

Almost as many boys' as girls' schools came into being at this period, though relatively fewer of these catered for boarders. Boarding schools were normally single-sex institutions, as were most day schools with the exception of dame schools for the youngest children which no doubt had a mixed intake. Only a few schools catering to older children, including one run by

John Fowler and his wife for maybe twenty years,⁵⁵ accepted both girls and boys. A handful of teachers, including Fowler himself, held evening classes of various sorts for both children and adults. John Comber, for example, coached adults in small groups of four, promising keen students they would learn to write a good business hand in forty hours and acquire good skills in reading and spelling within two months. A language master, Paul Guedelle, claimed his small evening class of eight pupils had made tremendous progress after only three months' work.⁵⁶ But there were of course no objective standards or examinations by which progress might be monitored. Only in the case of occasional public displays of pupils' oratorical or dancing skills was there some benign outside scrutiny, and school reputations were otherwise mostly built by word of mouth.

In their promotions and prospectuses schools naturally emphasised any special advantages they offered. It might be their location or premises. John Pullman's large, lofty school in Vineyards had been so built, he said, for the sake of his pupils' health - 'which the Closeness of the Generality of Schools in Town is apt to hurt'. William Drayton's academy on Sion Hill (also unusual in being purpose-built) enjoyed 'the salubrious Lansdown air'. Miss Desmoulins' in New King Street had a long terrace with a flower garden in front, Edward Guest's a large playground adjacent, and Mrs. Vereyt's at Batheaston a spacious garden entirely at her pupils' disposal.⁵⁷

Alternatively it might be the syllabus, teaching style, general ethos, or the personal attributes of its staff that gave a school its competitive edge. Several prioritised learning French and made it, as one of them put it 'the common dialect' of the school.⁵⁸ One or two made a virtue of training their scholars in public speaking and reading prose and poetry aloud, with the 'theory of reading, cadence, climax, etc', especially useful for boys 'designed for the pulpit'.⁵⁹ Some offered hands-on practice in book-keeping, mensuration and surveying. At least two taught some astronomy. Smith & Wingrove's day school for boys concentrated on those 'useful and polite branches of Education, which, in the present refined age, are indisputably requisite for those who wish to move in the genteel circles of life, viz. *Drawing, Music, French, Writing, and Arithmetic*'.⁶⁰ And while all girls' schools paid much attention to plain sewing skills, a number were at pains to specify the different sorts of ornamental work and embroidery (e.g. Dresden whitework, tambour work, samplers) that were actually covered in the syllabus. If religious instruction was seldom listed among curriculum subjects, a Christian ethos was expected all the same - with prayers and Sunday church attendance the normal thing at boarding schools. There was, nonetheless, a certain nervousness about the employment of Catholics to teach foreign languages, and even over Protestant sects, so that an otherwise well-respected teacher like Ann Rosco who personally attended the Countess of Huntington's Chapel felt the need to offer her boarders an alternative, more orthodox Anglican place of worship.⁶¹ [fig. 7]

Where the resident teaching staff lacked subject expertise, they could always call on the services of visiting tutors. The Lee sisters' Belvedere school in the 1790s, for instance, had a resident French mistress on the spot, but relied on auxiliary teachers for drawing, writing and arithmetic, music and dancing. Drawing was taught twice a week by Ferdinand Becker, a landscape artist good enough to hold one-man exhibitions. The writing-cum-arithmetic master, William Perks, who had run a school himself as well as a stationery business, attended on Mondays, and often rewarded his pupils with sugar plums and gingerbread. Mrs. Oaks came three times a week to give music lessons - probably in both singing and keyboard. And a violinist

retard than forward them: they learn fast when they learn well.

It is a great abuse introduced in most schools to force beginners to talk nothing but French to one another; they must either speak wrong, or condemn themselves to silence. The masters, on the other hand, being at a loss to satisfy the expectations of the parents, presently begin by making them learn words and phrases, and labour hard to beat into their heads as many common sentences as they can, pretty near after the same manner as parrots are instructed. Those parents who are unacquainted with the language, are charmed with the supposed improvement of their children, and think them great proficient. They recommend the school as one of the best for learning; and thus the master gets his end, but in truth the children know nothing, and the parents are deceived and imposed upon, without considering that, though the terms of a guinea a quarter appeared to them a trifling sum, yet they really spent for many years more money than if they had had a good master at home who would have instructed them completely in a few months.

One may daily see in schools (particularly those for the education of Young Ladies, where

where a woman teaches the French, though the grammatical knowledge has never been a business for women) pupils who have learnt the French for five or six years, and who pass with some for good scholars, on account of the readiness with which they express themselves; but they observe no concord at all, cannot so much as make one part of speech agree with another, and are utterly incapable of writing four lines, or even to make sense of half a page of a common French book: In short, they know no more than the words and phrases of their own books.

I conclude with my answer to the question frequently put to a French master, *How long a scholar ought to learn?* that it depends upon the capacity and application of the learner, who, possessing these advantages, and choosing a good master, may acquire a perfect knowledge of the language in a very short time.



CON-

fig 7: Extract from *The Parisian Master or A New and Easy Method for Acquiring Perfect Knowledge of the French Language in a Short Time*, 1789

Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

turned up every Wednesday to accompany the dancing lessons, when the school room and dining room were both cleared and the formidable Anna Fleming, Bath's leading dancing mistress, demonstrated minuets and figure dances while her assistant focused on the basic positions and steps. Anna Fleming taught for many years too at the boarding school in Trim Street and from time to time organised grand Assembly Rooms balls to showcase her various school pupils' accomplishments.⁶²

In choosing a school the deciding factor for many parents must often have been cost. Day school fees ranged from 2 guineas to, more typically, 4 guineas a year, plus a half-guinea enrolment charge and a further sum for any meals taken at the school. Basic boarding fees were much more variable, running from 12 to 30 or more guineas a year, or even to an exceptional 60 guineas in the case of Florian's academy in 1797 - especially high considering its short teaching year of 41 weeks. On the other hand his fee did include 'all Articles, [such] as Pens, Paper, Ink, and the long List of etceteras, which usually swell the Bills of all Schools'.⁶³ This was a telling point, for as we saw with Mrs. Pulleine's boarding school, the etceteras (including

visiting tutors) could easily put a further 40% or so on the bill. Another expensive school, Rev.J. Gerrard's at Batheaston, still charged additional sums for books, instruments, and visiting teachers from Bath. The sensitivity of the fees question is evident in Mrs. Burdett's defence of complaints in 1770 that her 28 guineas per annum seemed excessive. Unlike the practice at many other schools, she pointed out, at hers there were no entrance fees or presents allowed to individual teachers, no tipping of servants, and no charges for tea or laundry. Another schoolmistress, Mrs. Stone, stated much the same - no gratuities to teachers or servants, no expense on silver spoons, bureaus, etc. The Roscos likewise granted items such as tea, laundry and mending, but their basic fees were otherwise quite steep at £30 a year in 1770 and as much as £35 by 1775, which may be compared with the Lee sisters' quotation of £25 in 1782. The Roscos also required an unusually high enrolment fee of 5 guineas rather than the more usual 1-3 guineas, and like all boarding schools charged a higher price to parlour boarders for the privilege of living *en famille*.⁶⁴ Fees tended to increase over time and especially in the late-eighteenth century in line with inflation.

In the end, if it was to survive, a school had to be profitable. Setting one up was not in itself expensive. A day school could manage with one large room and minimal equipment, though a boarding establishment was necessarily more elaborate. What mattered more was the simple equation of annual running costs set against the annual income from fees multiplied by the number of pupils on the books. Staff costs could be reduced by giving the core teaching roles to family members (spouses, offspring, siblings) or by sharing in partnerships, though a successful large school would employ regular paid staff besides, especially to teach specialist subjects like French and Classics, not to mention the need for reliable domestic servants. Nothing is known about the financial deals with visiting tutors, but the typical 4 guineas (plus entrance fee) that they charged per pupil may well have allowed a cut for the school.

How many teachers made a living in eighteenth-century Bath is impossible to estimate. Some are now quite obscure figures - even the schoolmaster Daniel Milsom, whose name is perpetuated in a famous local street, is known not for his educational profession but solely as owner of the land on which the street was built. We catch the merest glimpses of Henry Smith, 'an eminent schoolmaster' who died of gout in 1759; of Mrs. Etwell, 'a respected Bath schoolmistress' for nearly fifty years; of Mrs. E. Bartley whose school in Orange Court shared premises with her husband's umbrella workshop; or the unfortunate Maria Bally, shot dead by her lover in front of her class of young schoolchildren in 1795.⁶⁵ It is clear that opportunities for teachers at all levels vastly increased, and indeed offered women - a point Susan Skedd has emphasised⁶⁶ - an entirely new career as more and more girls' schools produced more and more potential teachers in something akin to the familiar apprenticeship system. Teaching was nevertheless not an easy option. A school might, like Rev.J. Gerrard's, require proof of any new entrant's 'moral, amiable disposition' or, like Mr. Addison's, reserve the right to return 'unpleasant' pupils to their parents,⁶⁷ but it still had the unremitting, sometimes anxious task of educating, enthusing, parenting, and disciplining a mixed bag of children and adolescents while at the same time satisfying its paymasters (the parents and guardians) and somehow keeping a varied business enterprise afloat. Yet there was job satisfaction to be had as well. Far better to be an independent schoolmistress than a governess tied to a family, Mary Wollstonecraft advised the Arden sisters when they were contemplating launching their Bath school in 1780.

Your employm[en]t tho a troublesome one, is very necessary, and you have the opportunity of doing much good, by instilling good principles into the young and the ignorant, and at the close of life you'll have the pleasure to think that you have not lived in vain, and, believe me, this reflection is worth a life of care...⁶⁸

Notes

BC: *Bath Chronicle*, BJ: *Bath Journal*

1. BC Oct. 20th 1785.
2. Trevor Fawcett, 'Bath Scientific Societies and Institutions' in *Innovation and Discovery*, ed. P.Wallis (Bath, 2008), p.157.
3. Nathanael Morgan, *Grammaticae Quaestiones* (Bath, 1783), preface.
4. BC Nov. 8th and 15th 1785.
5. *Gloucester Journal* Jan. 9th. 1732/3.
6. The main source for Graves' school is Clarence Tracy, *A Portrait of Richard Graves* (Toronto, 1987), pp.100-3.
7. Robert Dodsley, *The Correspondence... 1733-1764*, ed. J.E.Tierney (Cambridge, 1988), Graves to Dodsley, Apr 25th 1763.
8. John Wroughton, *King Edward's School at Bath, 1552-1982* (Bath, 1982), pp.62-5.
9. William Drayton's school - BC Sep. 30th 1784.
10. Addison's Bathampton school - BC Jul. 20th 1797.
11. J.B.Florian's academy - BC Apr. 20th 1797; Fenner's school - BC Dec. 14th 1780.
12. John Pullman's writing and book-keeping school in Harlequin Row - BC Jan. 11th 1770.
13. R.Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (London, 1747), pp.84-6.
14. *Gloucester Journal* Jan. 9th. 1732/3; BJ Jul. 8th 1745.
15. BC Jul. 11th 1771.
16. BC Apr. 9th 1767.
17. BC Jan. 2nd 1794.
18. BJ Apr. 29th 1751.
19. BJ Dec. 25th 1752.
20. J.Hamblin's school - BC Feb. 3rd 1791.
21. BC Jul. 21st 1774, Jan. 4th 1776, Sep. 10th 1778, Dec. 30th 1779, Oct. 5th 1780, Oct. 18th 1781, Feb. 14th 1782, Jan.23rd 1783, Jul. 8th 1784.
22. BC Sep. 23rd and 30th 1784, Jul. 30th 1789, Jul. 12th 1792, Sep. 19th 1793, Jun. 23rd 1796, Oct. 26th. and Nov. 2nd 1797; *Bath Herald* Jan. 6th 1798.
23. BC Jul. 20th 1797.
24. BC Nov. 28th 1799.
25. BC Aug. 16th 1798.
26. BC Apr. 20th 1797.
27. Florian school prospectus (2-page copy held by the author), partly reprinted in BC Jun. 28th 1798.
28. Florian school prospectus.
29. *Bath Herald* Feb. 24th 1798.
30. BC May 14th 1795 and Sep. 23rd 1784.
31. *Bath Herald* Jan. 6th 1798.

32. BC Jul, 20th 1797.
33. Hannah More, *The Letters*, ed. R.Brimley Johnson (London, 1925), p.183, à propos her Mendip schools.
34. Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 2nd ed., 2 v. (London, 1799), v.1, pp.68-71, 107, 167, 180. Skills in domestic crafts such as fine sewing and shellwork were nevertheless highly regarded in Georgian culture. Amanda Vickery has recently argued that centrality in *Behind Closed Doors: at Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009), ch.9.
35. *Gloucester Journal* Dec. 27th 1737 and Jun. 15th 1742. The Staggs faced some competition in the 1720s but nothing more is known of Mrs. Dutton's boarding school before it removed to Stroud in 1728 - *Gloucester Journal* Feb. 6th 1727/8.
36. *Gloucester Journal* Oct. 4th and Nov. 15th 1743; BJ Apr. 27th 1752; *Bath Advertiser* Nov. 6th 1756; BC Dec. 19th 1765 and Feb. 15th 1770.
37. BC Dec. 19th 1765, Jan. 6th 1774, Sep. 19th 1776 and Apr. 15th 1779.
38. Philip Thicknesse, *The New Prose Bath Guide for...1778* (Bath, 1778), p.81. Nevertheless another girls' boarding school, run by Chilcot and Harwood, operated in St. John's Court until 1783 - BJ Apr. 14th 1783.
39. *The Diaries of Jeffery Whitaker, Schoolmaster of Bratton, 1739-41*, ed. M.Reeves and J.Morrison (Trowbridge, 1989), pp.39 and 87; BJ Sep. 2nd 1745, Mar. 12th and 19th 1753, Jul. 8th 1754 and Jan. 9th 1758; BC Oct. 23rd 1760; will of Ann Emblen, Wilts Record Office 929.1 - which tried to instate her niece, Mary Whitaker, as Pulleine's partner.
40. BC Oct. 23rd 1760 and Apr. 3rd 1766; *New Bath Guide* (Bath, Cruttwell, 1785), p.52.
41. John Penrose, *Letters from Bath, 1766-1767, by the Rev. John Penrose*, ed. B.Mitchell and H.Penrose (Gloucester, 1983) pp.146, 167, 171, 176, and 195.
42. BC Mar. 1st. 1770.
43. Ann Rosco's school - BC Aug. 26th 1779.
44. BJ Oct. 22nd 1753 and Jan. 7th 1754; BC Sep. 18th 1766 (Delafons). BJ 10th and 17th 1754, May 19th 1755, Sep. 27th 1756 (Creed & Leslie; Leslie).
45. For the Roscos see BJ Dec.16th 1749 and May 7th 1759; *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* Dec. 12th and 19th 1761 and Jan. 7th 1764; BC Oct. 11th 1770, Oct. 3rd 1771, May 12th and 19th 1774, Jun. 16th and Dec. 1st 1774, Jan. 12th 1775, Aug. 26th 1779, Jan. 18th and Mar. 15th 1781, Aug. 8th 1782, Jan. 30th, Feb. 20th and Mar. 13th 1783. Samplers worked by Rosco pupils can be seen at the Royal Crescent Hotel in Bath, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Exemplary Collection in Dearbarn (Mich.), and the Benjamin Ginsburg Collection in New York (information from Mrs A.E.Rideout).
46. BC Aug. 15th and Sep. 16th 1782.
47. BC Feb. 29th 1776, Jan. 20th 1780, Mar. 22nd 1781, and Feb. 20th 1783.
48. BC Jul. 6th 1780.
49. BC Dec. 7th and 14th 1780, Feb. 22nd and Jul. 12th 1781, Jan. 17th and Aug. 8th 1782, Nov. 17th and 13 Dec. 13th 1787; Walcot Poor Rate 1781, 1786; Susan Sibbald, *The Memoirs of Susan Sibbald [née Mein]*, ed. F.Paget Hett (London, 1926), pp.32-83 passim.
50. Advertised by P.Brickman, a Bath staymaker, in BC May 1st 1794.
51. Susan Sibbald, pp.33-4, 58; BC Aug. 10th 1797. This was originally Anne Wignall's school, which re-located here from Weymouth House in 1790 and passed to the Colbournes in 1797 - BC Jan. 21st 1790.
52. Milgrove - BC Apr. 15th and Jul. 22nd 1790, Jan. 6th 1791, Jul. 26th 1792, and Jan. 3rd 1799; Voysey - BC Jul. 9th 1795 and Jul. 14th 1796; Matthews - BC May 22nd 1794 and Jun. 27th 1799;

- Kiddell - BC Jun. 27th 1793 and Oct. 8th 1795; Thane - BC Aug. 1st 1799 and Jan. 16th 1800; Eames - BC Jul. 30th 1789, Feb. 25th 1790 and Nov. 7th 1793; Guest - BC May 7th 1795, Jan. 12th 1797 and Jul. 5th 1798; Vereyt - BC Jul. 19th 1787, Feb. 26th, Jul. 16th and Oct. 8th 1789, Jul 19th 1792.
53. Lawrence - BC Dec. 15th 1791, Jan. 12th 1792 and Jul. 7th 1796; Evans - BC Mar. 17th 1796 and Jan. 12th 1797; Bennett - BC Mar. 8th 1798; Lefanu - BC Sep. 27th 1798, Jul. 4th 1799, Jan. 2nd and Nov. 27th 1800.
 54. Wagstaff - BC Sep. 21st 1786, Jul. 30th 1789 and May 13th 1790; Habersham - BC May 13th 1790; Habersham and Second - BC Jul. 8th 1790, Mar. 31st 1791 and Jul. 10th 1794; Ewing - BC May 5th 1791.
 55. BC Jul. 1st 1779, Sep. 25th 1788, Jul. 24th 1794.
 56. Comber - BC May 1st 1781; Guedelle - BC Mar. 26th 1778.
 57. Pullman - Jan. 11th 1770; Drayton - BC May 14th 1795; Desmoulins - BC Dec. 13th 1784; Guest - BC May 7th 1795; Vereyt - BC Oct. 8th 1789.
 58. Mrs Chilcot - BC Nov. 28th 1776.
 59. John and Mrs Fowler - BC Jul. 15th 1790 and Jun. 16th 1796.
 60. BC Oct. 7th 1770.
 61. Rosco - BC Jan. 12th 1775. Advertising a female French teaching post, one Bath school stipulated that any applicant must be Protestant - BC May 3rd 1781. On Catholic and Methodist teachers see Charles Dibdin, *Observations on a Tour*, 2v (London, 1801) v.1, pp.358-9.
 62. Susan Sibbald, pp.44-5, 58-64; Trevor Fawcett, 'Dance and teachers of dance in eighteenth-century Bath', *Bath History* vol. 2, 1988, pp.27-48.
 63. Florian school prospectus.
 64. Gerrard - BC Aug. 14th 1788; Burdett - BC Jun. 28th 1770; Stone - Feb. 29th 1776; Rosco - BC Oct. 11th 1770 and Jan. 12th 1775; Lee - BC Jan. 17th 1782.
 65. Smith - *Bath Advertiser* Apr. 14th 1759; Etwell - BC Feb. 13th 1794; Bartley - BC Mar. 10th 1791 and Jan. 5th 1792; Bally - Jun. 11th 1795.
 66. Susan Skedd, 'Women teachers and the expansion of girls' schooling in England, c.1760-1820' in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. H.Barker and E.Chalus (London, 1997), pp.101-25.
 67. Gerrard - BC Aug. 14th 1788; Addison - BC Jul. 20th 1797.
 68. Cited in Susan Skedd, p.116.