



NEWSLETTER 52

APRIL 2004

GROUP NEWS

A Word from the Editor.

Again, I must apologise to members of the group for the delay in producing newsletters. Personal circumstances have left me with very little time to work on the newsletter, which is one reason that I hope a new editor will be found. Although you will receive this in April, it does not include March, which I will put in another newsletter to follow the AGM, with my final effort during the summer. If, of course, someone else feels the urge to take over before then, I will be happy to hand over. It is rewarding, but sadly I am aware that I simply do not have the time to produce it as I would wish. In the meantime, may I thank all those who have contributed. Please note my change of address. The phone number, however, remains the same, as does the e-mail address.

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MEETINGS OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, JANUARY, & FEBRUARY.

October - Recent Archaeological Investigations in the Bath Area.

Speaker - Marek Lewcun - Report by Pauline Hanna

Following on from his excellent and exciting lecture last year Marek began with a slide of a familiar map of the walled city of Bath. As he pointed out there was now no doubt that the walls were Roman in origin; they had surrounded and protected the public buildings, the Baths, the Temple and the civil engineering associated with the hot water drainage system which was essential to maintain the day to day running of the religious centre.

Using slides of existing ruins at Pompeii showing the width of streets, water tanks, shops open to the streets and narrow side passages, he made interesting comparisons with excavations in Bath which have shown similar examples; e.g. the water tank in Walcot. Like Pompeii, Roman Bath would have had a theatre, probably near the Temple, and possibly an amphitheatre seating some thousands, (if one compares it with other towns/cities of the same size), but this has yet to be found.

Excavations in recent years have confirmed Marek's earlier ideas that Roman Bath was a great deal larger than 'the small town used for recreational purposes' described in past histories. In the Walcot area most of the Roman remains had been covered by clay slippage from the hillside. Evidence found behind the former St. Swithin's School, now St. Swithin's Yard, include a Roman wall some 25 courses high, terraced buildings on different levels down to the river, a blacksmith's and a pottery kiln, a warehouse near the river possibly used for grain storage and sites for the open shops which once fronted the streets.

At the former Kingsmead Motors site, James St. West, which is situated on the flood plain, recent digs have shown that below the vast amounts of alluvium and rubble there is a layer containing Roman materials, which suggests that much was going on nearby; broken tiles and pots were not carried long distances. Behind nearby Norfolk Crescent a tessellated pavement and other findings point to another suburb, possibly like Walcot Street but on a slightly grander scale.

Meanwhile further discoveries outside the city add to the list of known villas. Excavations at Batheaston, Avon Valley Country Park (between Salford and Keynsham), Newton St Loe, the Wells Road site and recent excavations at St Lawrence School, Bradford-on-Avon have all shown that the area was well settled; it is surmised that there may be another dozen or so villas yet to be found. Further examples of settlement are to be found in the Lower Common area below Victoria Park; Iron Age and Romano British artefacts were present and there is evidence of the recycling of glass.

Marek went on to show that the route of the Fosse Way, shown by Alan Keevil as coming from the south down through Oldfield and across the river to the west of the city took a north easterly direction under the Royal Crescent and met the road found at St. Andrew's Church in 1870. Adding to last year's account of the involvement of Channel 4's Time Team he illustrated how an 'aerial' view of the land in front of the Royal Crescent, to which Marek was alerted by the resident of a top floor apartment, showed crop markings with lighter lines crossing the grass indicating where the road and buildings had been. One of the most interesting and certainly unexpected discoveries was that of a Bronze Age ditch crossing the lawn in front of the Crescent, which contained pottery indicative of occupation in the area.

Finally, further discoveries in the stables behind the Royal Crescent again at differing levels provide remains of the same road and buildings while in Russell Street there are further burials. Altogether this was a fascinating account of the progress of excavations in the area. It is exciting to realise how much larger Roman Bath was. As Marek pointed out, to walk from the Esso Garage on the London Road, which is as far out as Roman buildings are known to have stood, to the South Gate of the City was the equivalent of walking three-quarters of the way across Roman London.

November – The Excellent Mr Pinch.

Speaker - Robert Bennett - Report by Mac and Ann Hopkins Clarke.

John Pinch the elder was only 57 years old when he died in 1827. His obituary appeared in the Bath Chronicle on 4th March of that year. The Bathwick Historical Society has discovered that John and his wife Martha and two of their sons, John and Charles, were buried in the ground of the Bathwick mortuary chapel which he had designed. The chapel no longer exists.

Pinch was the leading architect in Bath for the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The Bath Directory of 1800 listed him as living at 12 Chatham Row. The site had been bought by William Pulteney as a site for a new wharf. Pinch acquired this end property and paid rates on it until 1803. In 1804 he became bankrupt and moved his family to Spring Gardens which then became his business address. This is listed in the Bath Directory of 1805 and 1809 and referred to by Walter Ison in *The Georgian Buildings of Bath*. Gye's Bath Directory of 1819 gives 27 St James's Parade as the premises for John Pinch and Son, Architects and Surveyors, and a directory for 1824 also shows them at that address. In 1826 his address was given as 2 Duke's Street. After the death of Pinch Snr., the son John returned to a Darlington estate property, 21, Henrietta Street. When John Pinch Junior finally died his brother Charles was also listed at this address and carried on in the same profession.

The financial crisis on the late 18th century made many architects bankrupt and Thomas Baldwin's bankruptcy and his dismissal as City Architect caused him to withdraw from the employ of Sir William Pulteney. John Pinch Snr took over as surveyor of the Pulteney estate in 1793. This improved the standing of Pinch and he became a major player in building the city and was quietly revolutionary in his designs. Later, John Pinch Jnr. And then his brother Charles became surveyors of the estate.

John Wood had imported craftsmen into the city and Pinch was able to use their skills to implement his designs. He required delicate and detailed moulding of the fenestrations and plat bands and used the stone from a single quarry. New Sydney Place is regarded as his finest work and built in 1804 was probably his earliest. His Cavendish Place is also highly regarded. His original designs for unifying the terraces in stepped formations with corresponding decoration produced some very fine pieces of architecture.

John Pinch designed St Mary's Bathwick, including the pillars of the gateway and in 1824 - 6 the Untied Hospital in Beau Street. A full list of his buildings is given in the article by Robert Bennett on the work and times of John Pinch in Bath History vol. IX. This article also gives fuller details of his family.

On a personal note, my parents had the opportunity of buying No 12 Chatham Row when they returned to Bath in 1982. However, my father would not buy a house without a garage. My mother, a lover of history and guide to the city, never quite forgave him. Ed.

January – A Bath Family Firm

Speaker – Michael Lee – Report by John Ede

The story of the firm "J.J.Lee & Sons" began in the Yeovil area. John Lee learned his trade of box-making in a cottage industry supporting the strong local speciality of glove making but when he married a local girl in 1867 he decided that there was little opening for a new enterprise locally and

they move to the Bedminster area of Bristol but they found that area well served for box-making and so moved on, with a young family, to Bath where a thriving glove-making industry and many stores in need of good packaging promised a successful business. They settled in Philip St and set up the firm in 1870 and the 1871 census records their presence.

The special magic in this account of the growth of this business was that, to our speaker, John Lee was “my great-grandfather” and, as the fourth generation in the firm, his account was not merely of commercial progress but of the atmosphere in a truly family business. Excellent pictures on the screen showed us details of the family growth. John Lee retired in 1904 and was succeeded by “my grandfather”, Francis William Lee who believed that success lay in the attitude to his customers “once a customer - always a customer”. Street plans and photographs of buildings followed the firm from Philip St to trim St in 1875 with an extension to Harington Place by 1901.

Advertisements in Bath Directories did more than paragraphs of description to show the changes in the last 100 years. The first, in 1908, promised “Cardboard boxes for all trades at short notice” and quoted the first telephone number, “Bath 12x2”! By 1912 that had become Bath 587 and by 1930 was 3087. Even more evocative were photographs of the Company’s vehicles - to say nothing of the drivers! Even in 1930 the van had no windscreen wiper but a co-driver could put a hand over the top of the screen and wipe it with a cloth! In the Works, office arrangements developed slowly and all machinery was maintained “in house”.

Our speaker came fully into the firm in 1955. With a series of pictures he showed and explained the various processes and the people involved in them and answered a number of questions from his audience. The concern for the workforce and the family atmosphere within the firm came through clearly. After surviving a serious fire in 1964 the firm moved to Circus Mews and now operates from premises in Corsham. Since the retirement of Michael Lee the family connection is more distant but the firm remains J.J.Lee (Bath) Ltd.

After the lecture members were able to look at a range of exhibits and to ask more questions and the lecturer demonstrated the intricacy of folding a flat scored piece of card into a secure cardboard box. A below-average attendance of members had enjoyed a fascinating evening.

February - The History of a Bath Law Firm.

Speakers - Michael King and John New - Report by Pauline and William Hanna

Members heard a most interesting and entertaining history of the Bath law firm Stone King, presented by Michael King, a partner and a descendant of one of the founders, and John New, who joined the firm in 1933 and who retired for the second (or possibly third time) after working for the firm for more than sixty years.

Founded in 1785 by Robert Clarke, Attorney at Law, Stone King has had a continuous working presence in the city. Four families- the Clarkes, the Kings, the Stones and the Wardles- have been associated with the firm.

Robert Clarke’s son, also Robert, was taken into partnership in 1847 by Edward King, who had gone into the practice in 1832. Edward’s sons, grandson and great grandson joined the partnership, as, in 1975, did 5th generation Michael. The King family brought the Roman Catholic element into the firm, (four members were educated at Stonyhurst) and its strong relationship with many charity

clients; the family also had strong associations with the state education sector in Bath as members of the city's Education Committee and with Michael latterly a Governor of Beechen Cliff School.

The Stone family were associated with the firm from 1855-1926. John Stone, listed in Silverthorne's Bath Directory for 1833 as a barrister, was brought into the firm in 1855; he was appointed Town Clerk in 1860, the first of several members of the firm to hold that office.

The Wardle family's association with the firm from 1921-1991 began with Frederick Darlington Wardle who came to the city as Town Clerk in 1905. When he left that office in 1921 he joined the firm, into which he was followed by his son Lance, who was still linked with the firm at the time of its bicentenary in 1985.

Since 1829 the firm has been at 13 Queen Square, (once occupied by Jane Austen) which originally served both as office and family home, and has expanded into No 12; both houses were damaged in the Bath blitz. During the war the firm used its cellars under the Square as air raid shelters, and later to store its archive; this had to be moved when the Council covered the ventilators which opened into the Square and the cellars became too damp.

When solicitors were paid according to the length of their documents, lengthy deeds or indentures were common practice, with deeds being engrossed on to 3ft by 2ft sheets, and examples were available for members to handle and read, together with a perforating device and a round ruler which was rolled down the page, both ensuring that the clerk copying the deed kept all in line. Nowadays IT makes such devices unnecessary, though it might not have been welcome to a partner of an earlier age who threw his telephone out of the window because it kept making a ringing noise.

Other artefacts shown were an early calculator, a sealing device, (in the office a special gas jet for sealing purposes was kept alight throughout the working day), and a number of documents, including a wedding settlement, the probate of a Hopkins family, a cheque-book of the Bladud Bank.

In 1905, in response to a petition from solicitors' clerks in the city, Bath solicitors decided to close their offices at 2pm on Saturdays, and this generosity was celebrated by an outing to Weston-super-Mare. Since 1921 the firm has closed for one day in June for the office outing to places as varied as Torquay and Royal Ascot on Ladies Day. The firm has always supported sport in the city; it has a hospitality box at the Recreation Ground, and members have represented Bath and Somerset at cricket, rugby, tennis, squash, billiards and table tennis.

Mergers, such as those with Meade King, (private client services), Macfarlane Guy (criminal and commercial litigation), and the old established Bath firm of W T Chesterman and Sons, have enabled the firm to develop in several fields, with a London office in Cloth Fair EC1 allowing it to have a national presence in the charity and educational fields. It is a history of change and development, and also of continuity.

Notes and Queries.

1. The Bath Club in London.

At the February meeting, in response to a query at an earlier meeting, Nigel Pollard produced information about the Bath Club in London prior to its demise in 1990. This will be passed on to a member of the government's Veteran Affairs Dept. who is trying to locate a South African War memorial which was in the possession of the club.

2. Riddle-me-ree – a request from the Editor.

We have recently acquired a late Georgian album belonging to the Penoyre family who lived at Batheaston Villa. The book is full of pictures, poems, and riddles. Someone has solved some of them, but many remain as puzzling as they were originally. Is there anyone in the Group who is good at solving these? If so, give me a call and we can arrange a date for you to see the book.

3. Mysterious Visitors: a Question Probably Answered.

A report by Trevor Fawcett

In Newsletter 45 (May 2001) I listed various payments, mostly dating from the period 1725-38, that Bath Corporation made to certain named and unnamed 'Grecians' and other visitors apparently from the Levant. At the time I could offer no explanation, but one has now surfaced within the Chamberlain's accounts themselves (readily accessible in the Bath Record Office transcripts, preceding the indexes to vol. 2). The chief evidence consists of a general petition circulated by the Patriarchs and Archbishops of the Greek Church at Jerusalem to solicit donations from Kings, states, pious institutions and individuals 'for the Redemption of Eight Thousand Eight hundred poor Christian Slaves (and upwards) of different Nations, who now Groan in the Chains, and under the Tyranny of the Turks'. The Jerusalem priest who carried the petition to Bath in 1732/33, Father Anastasius Paulus, had other papers with him to prove he was no fraud, including 'Certificates of the Emperor and Several of the Electors and Princes of the empire, who have greatly favour'd him, and largely Contributed for the Relied of those poor distressed Slaves'. Their Majesties in London, he went on, had also generously contributed to the charitable cause (through Sir Robert Walpole, controller of the government purse). Encouragingly he added that if the 'Christian and Opulent' City of Bath saw fit to respond likewise than he and the slaves he spoke for would redouble the fervency of their prayers for the Corporation's preservation, health and perpetual felicity.

Perhaps more persuaded by the Royal example than the prayers, the Mayor, Milo Smith, asked the Chamberlain, James Atwood, to give Father Anastasius Paulus two guineas. This motive had certainly weighed with his predecessor, William Horton, in February 1732, when he awarded another foreign petitioner, 'ffathi [Fathi] Ishtamma', a guinea from the city funds on the grounds that he was 'recommended to our Charity by a Letter from his Majesty'. It seems likely that similar municipal donations to exotic visitors around this time went towards the same charity of aiding and redeeming captive slaves. A recent book by Linda Colley (*Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850*) has revealed that a surprising number of the victims of slavery were in fact British subjects.

BOOK REVIEWS & RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Tobias Smollet by Jeremy Lewis, published by Jonathan Cape.

I would probably have bought this book anyway, but as I was asked to do a walk for the Literature Festival, because Jeremy Lewis was due to give a talk about it, it became a 'must-have'. However, the more I read, the less sympathetic a character I found Smollett, and in the end it was Andrew Swift who created the walk for me. He totally disagreed with my opinion of the man, which is perhaps some indication of what a complex and controversial figure Smollett was – and is. Certainly his views on the efficacy of the waters were much more in line with modern thinking than most doctors of his day, for he realised that it was probably the temperature of the water which was important, not the minerals. This did not stop him returning to Bath on many occasions to take the water for his health.

At the talk, Lewis explained, as he does in the introduction, that he has not carried out new research, but he has pulled together all the various academic studies of Smollett, especially that by Lewis

Knapp, to create a biography which is accessible to the public. Hitherto, it seemed to Lewis, the most reliable research had been carried out by academics for academics. Lewis has no illusions about his hero, who is described warts and all. The book is certainly worth having for anyone interested in Bath, although those who see the past through rose-coloured spectacles are likely to be distressed at Smollett's comments. Many Bath characters walk through its pages, although some of Lewis's remarks are open to question. Did Ralph Allen really appoint Beau Nash as Master of Ceremonies? No, I think not. To the more academic reader, it could be better annotated, but it is certainly a good, thorough introduction to Tobias Smollett. KE

Pevsner Architectural Guides - Bath by Michael Forsyth, published by Yale University Press.

I am sure that many of you will, by now, have acquired a copy of this book. It is an updating and expansion of the original Pevsner Guide. Dr Forsyth and his researcher have spent many hours of research on it, and the book is sumptuously illustrated with photographs by James O Davies of English Heritage. It was long overdue, and, by and large, is a welcome addition to the bookshelves. However, as those of us who have launched into print will know, almost certainly there will be mistakes, and it was inevitable in a project of this size, that several have crept in, many of which members of the HBRG, with their wide range of knowledge, will, I am sure, have spotted. Having spoken to one member of the group who wrote to Michael Forsyth with his corrections and received an appreciative note back, with an assurance that it would be corrected in a future addition, perhaps other members may like to do likewise. KE

SHORT REVIEWS

Memoirs of William Smith first published 1844 by John Phillips

With an introduction to the life and times of William Smith and the William Smith lecture 2000 by Hugh Torrens, published by Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution 2003 pp xxxviii

A limited edition published by subscription and a valuable (and sometimes corrective) supplement to Simon Winchester's recent biography of Smith. TF

Stuart Bath: Life in the Forgotten City, 1603-1714 by John Wroughton published by Lansdown Press

Frustratingly for me, this book was produced after I had completed a new introductory history and put in the recommended reading list that modern literature about Bath in the 17th century was thin on the ground. Obviously John Wroughton thought so too, for he has expanded his output about Bath from the Civil War to cover the whole Stuart period. Having only just acquired my copy, I will provide a longer review in the next edition. But one can be certain that anything from the pen of John Wroughton will be well worth having. KE

Bath Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service 1891-1974 written and published by Dennis Hill

Neither Trevor nor I have read this book but the publicity material tells us that that it covers the period from the foundation until it was merged into the County of Avon Fire Brigade. Its role in World War II is fully covered, as is the work of Bath's Accident Flying Squad. It can be ordered from Dennis Hill, 31 Walden Road, Keynsham Bristol BS31 1QW, and costs £16 per copy. £2 postage and packing is required if you order it from Mr Hill.

CHANGE of ADDRESS and NEW MEMBERS

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LUTZ HABER

An obituary by Trevor Fawcett

Sadly, Lutz died on 19 February 2004 after two years of affliction by Alzheimer's Disease. An assiduous researcher, he published two valuable studies on the history of the chemical industry and another on the use of poisonous gas during World War I. During his retirement he worked on Haillie Selassie's years in Bath and on the earlier history of the Holburne Museum, both projects resulting in articles for Bath History, Until his recent illness he remained a stalwart supporter of the History of Bath Research group and a regular attender at meetings. We are sorry to lose him.

A recollection of Lutz by Kirsten Elliott

It was with great sadness that I heard of the death of Lutz Haber. I had seen him at meetings, but it was when I was asked to do some walks for the Holburne Museum to celebrate the bicentenary of the opening of the building that I came to know him well. He generously shared his research with me, although he might easily have suggested that he, and not I, did the walks. I felt honoured to work with this delightful man, and I hope the walks did justice to the depth of his knowledge - and to his wicked sense of humour. He fully accepted that in a guided walk, you often need little gossipy snippets as well as hard facts and he had uncovered plenty in his research. I learnt other probably useless but fascinating details- for instance that Pompeian Red is an ideal colour against which to display paintings. I can only reiterate Trevor Fawcett's words - we are sorry to lose him.

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY

We offer a warm welcome to the following new Members.

Mrs Margaret Dobson of 18 Sladesbrook, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1SH, 01225 862428

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Her interests include: Social and architectural history of Bath, Bath connections with Bradford on Avon

Publication: Bradford Voices: a study of Bradford on Avon in the 20th Century

Mrs Belinda Gornall, West Lodge, Kingston St Michael, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6HY, 01249 750313

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Cheques and non cashment thereof:

A number of you have noticed that a number of your subscription cheques have not been cashed. Some of you have had them returned by your bank with some stamps on them but not debited from the account. The explanation for this rather extraordinary situation is as follows:

I sent off a large number of cheques by post to the Lloyds Bank in two bundles and two paying in slips. One set were deposited as normal but the other set were not. Eventually the credit slip was returned to me with a note saying no credit could be made because the cheque (sic) was not enclosed. After some debate and discussion with the Bank they eventually admitted an error in the deposit and rather than ask us to get replacement cheques from all of you they credited our account with the deposit amount. As a result a number of you have received a free subscription this year courtesy of Lloyds Bank.