



NEWSLETTER 54

May 2005

GROUP NEWS

It is good to welcome Michael Rowe as our new chairman, Stephanie Round as treasurer, and Philippa Bishop as editor of the Newsletter. She will be taking over this summer and all future contributions should be sent to her (16 Cranwells Park, Bath BA1 2YD). This issue contains the usual mix of reports of meetings and the AGM minutes, reviews and items of interest.

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HISTORY OF BATH RESEARCH GROUP 13TH APRIL 2005 AT THE ST STEPHEN'S CENTRE LANSDOWN

1. Apologies were received from several members of the group including Allan Keevil, Colin Johnstone, Maria Joyce and Godfrey Laurence. We had a very good turnout with 21 members present representing just over one quarter of the membership.
2. The minutes of the meeting of 14th April 2004 were confirmed.
3. As retiring Chairman Mary Ede reported on a successful programme of talks and visits for 2004/2005. Members present thanked Mary very much for her substantial contribution as chairman of the group. Mary expressed her thanks to the committee for their efforts especially Julia Moss (meetings secretary), editor of the newsletter and the secretary/treasurer.
4. David Crellin presented the treasurer's report in which he outlined the financial state of the group via a statement of affairs. The group has a present balance of £1335.48 which is healthy. He therefore proposed no increase in subscription. It was noted that we have a balance which could enable us to start up a small appropriate History Project. David McLaughlin noted that there was a BBC requests for proposals on the theme of War which may be of interest to the group. A matter to be considered further by the committee.
5. Meeting and related matters

- a. Sponsorship of a Bath History Day. In fact this activity was taken up independently by the BBC which resulted in a successful event in which the group took a stand.
 - b. Donation of a set of Bath directories from Stone King. It was noted that only one of the directories had been borrowed during the year by a member. Following discussions with the committee it was decided to offer the Directories on loan to the Bath Archives subject to satisfactory agreement regarding insurance. Just prior to this AGM David received notification that satisfactory arrangements had been made for Colin Johnston as Archivist to have the directories on loan. The meeting unanimously agreed for David to make arrangements to move them to the Archives.
6. Election of the committee. A number of changes to the committee became necessary due to:
- a. The resignation of Mary as Chairman
 - b. The resignation of Julia as Meetings Secretary
 - c. The decision at last years meeting to separate the roles of Secretary and Treasurer.
 - d. The resignation of Marek from the committee.
 - e. The resignation of Kirsten as Newsletter Editor

The following elections were passed unanimously:

- f. Michael Rowe was elected as Chairman
- g. Stephanie Round was elected as Treasurer
- h. Philipa Bishop was elected as Newsletter Editor

There is still a vacancy for Meetings Secretary

7. Any other business. There was no other business.

At this point Michael Rowe took over as Chairman of the group and introduced the talk by Pauline Hanna on "Residents of Beechen Cliff" and gave the talk on "Pulteney Miniatures"

October at the Museum of Bath at Work

"Obsession: John Wood and the Creation of Georgian Bath" Speaker: Amy Frost

To mark the tercentenary of the birth of John Wood the Elder in 1704, an exhibition demonstrating his architectural theories and achievements was mounted at the Building of Bath Museum. Amy Frost, who curated the exhibition together with her colleague Cathryn Spence, gave us a lively personal account of how the displays were organised to tell the story of Wood's designs for buildings as realised here in Bath. By way of illustrating some of the major influences on his development, she told us that she had been privileged (through the generosity of Bristol University) to borrow from their rich architectural archive, even to the extent of including an early edition of Palladio's "Quattro Libri dell' Architettura" among other seminal works. The choice of exhibits, and the research connected with them, were her particular areas of responsibility. In describing these she concentrated on certain pieces she felt to be of particular interest, such as the sole remaining carved stone panel from the wall surrounding the Queen Square garden: a stone carved, it seems, with a pattern reproducing the layout of the garden as a whole, and shown up now (as part of the permanent collection) upside down! Amy also drew attention to Wood's little known but fascinating work in connection with Llandaff Cathedral, which involved the creation of a wholly new classical 'temple' enclosed within the existing Gothic ruins. Sufficient drawings (displayed in the exhibition) survive for architectural historians to be able to recreate Wood's boldly innovative structure, although all has long since vanished. Perhaps most interesting of all are the plans Wood drew up (they remained largely uncompleted at his death) for the Royal Forum in Bath, its central feature a large terrace-fringed stretch of water to the south of South Parade. Recent research suggests that this would have been surrounded by porticos beneath the terraces, and at a lower level than hitherto supposed. A model of Wood's ambitious project, specially created for the exhibition,

shows how - had his plans been realised - the whole lay-out of the southern approach to the city would have been transformed, and the city shifted southward. Report by A.M. and P. Bishop Rev. Eric Chandler: 'Bath Non-conformity: a Baptist Church's Records' 18.1 1.'04.

The Rev. Eric Chandler explained to members his work on the Archives of Manvers Street Baptist Church. He brought to the meeting examples from the Archives and based his talk on the material he had brought with him. In 1913, a tin box had been bought to store archives, and it was this he found at the bottom of a cupboard in Manvers Street. The books he found in it are numbered, but not consecutively, and he has no explanation for the missing books. The heart of the Baptist Archives are the membership books, of which the earliest is dated 1752 on the cover, but the first entry is in 1759. The members of the Baptist church were the authority for dismissing and disciplining members and for calling and dismissing Ministers. The first Church Book records meetings, actions taken, accounts and the membership roll. There is a series of entries in the late 18~ century which read 'church met, but no particular business.' The Minister between 1776- 1785 was the Rev. John Baillie. The Church Book was kept in a drawer in the vestry, written up at the meeting and signed by those present. The second Book (1803-1830) was held by the minister, the Rev John Paul Porter, during his ministry and was written mainly in his hand. John Paul Porter was reluctant to yield up the Book, partly because of a bitter dispute in 1828 about the appointment of a co- pastor. The appointment was made when he was not present and without his agreement, and resulted in his removing, together with some members, from Somerset Street to Corn Street. He was reinstated after a settlement in the Court of Chancery. After his reinstatement, the earliest extant copy of the Church Covenant is written in the Book and signed by members. The original home of the Baptist church was in Marchants Passage in 1752 and by 1759 it was in Somerset Street. This was a Particular Baptist congregation, i.e. Calvinist, and meetings in 1794 and 1796 took place on Christmas Day, without regard to the season. Meetings were largely about membership and who was fit to be included. There are many records of members being disciplined and 'dismembered'. The commonest cause was non-attendance. The early records are pre-teetotal, and members are disciplined for drunkenness as well as for brawling and unsuitable language. There are a few cases of dismemberment for fornication and adultery, and one case of bigamy. The Minister had advised the man to marry and was investigated for culpability. He was exonerated of any blame, on the grounds that he could not have known the man's previous history. There is a gap in the Books after 1832 and the split in the congregation. Book 4 covers the move from Somerset Street to Manvers Street. The Books give evidence of mobility in the numbers of people applying for transfer of membership to other churches and of members joining. In 1880, out of a congregation of c.300, 18 people were accepted into membership by letter and 17 transferred out of Bath. Membership grew with the growth of Bath from about 1876. Certificates of membership were issued, which gave six months temporary membership of other Baptist churches. In 1880, the names of 'Absent members who cannot be found' were displayed in the lobby of the church and from 1894 the home address of members was taken. In 1880, Alderman Gibbs (a member) reported that he had 'never known trade to be worse', and the economic situation was reflected in several cases of bankruptcy, which were investigated to ensure there was no moral turpitude involved. There is evidence of a fairly high level of illiteracy in that 34 out of 129 members could not sign their own names. There is no mention of the Boer War in the records, but there is mention of those killed in WW 1. The minister applied for a year's leave of absence to work with the troops. It was debated whether soldiers could be admitted to the Institute next door to the church. They were admitted, and were allowed to smoke, but this permission did not extend to members. George Long, Councillor and Alderman and one time Deacon at the Church was a pacifist, but there is no evidence of pacifism as an institutional position. Deacons played an influential role in the Church. The first Deacons' meeting book is dated 1877. In the 1920s-30s, the Deacons' minutes are

extensive. They record some of the tribulations of the church organisation. In 1886, a new organ was installed, but the organist was not up to the new instrument. He applied for an increase in salary, the Deacons stipulated more practice, especially on the pedals, but eventually the organist's membership ceased. In 1898, a caretaker was appointed who turned out to be an alcoholic and very unreliable in his help to candidates after Baptism. He too was disciplined by the Deacons. The Church Rolls give details of membership, numbers on the rolls, date of admission and date of death or removal. Communion tickets were a way of checking on members' attendance. There are Scrap Books of miscellaneous items and various dates and a series of Magazines from 1819-2004, with only a few missing. There are records of societies run by the Church, such as Sunday School, Boy Scouts, Women's Group and the Mutual Improvement Society, an important strand in Non-conformity for education and training. The Society of Somerset Street Singers provided music in the 1800s, and there are records of the books used, including Rippon's Tunes, the possession of pitch pipes and the gallery they sat in. A good picture of the Baptist Church now in Manvers Street, interesting both for what is mentioned and what is left out, emerges from the Archives.

History of the Bathford Mill

We were fortunate to have Michael Tabb to speak to us in February as the history of his family firm – he is the third generation to work at the Mill – has been well researched and made for a most interesting evening.

Domesday records a mill at Bathford paying a tax of 10/-. A hundred years later there is evidence of permission to construct a mill and road 12' wide for a rent of 1/2lb pepper! In 1539 the Crown leased a granary and fulling mill but with the record of Thomas Fisher acquiring the mill from his father William Fisher in 1639 the mill passed into a succession of private owners. One of these was Dr Oliver, of Bath Oliver biscuit fame, who named the mill Trevarno after his Cornish home. In 1746 it is recorded that he built a spa pavilion over the spring. There is no surviving evidence of this building.

The start of paper-making at Bathford probably dates from 1809 when taxes were being collected for the first time from a mill recorded as "Mill No.18." The "Trevarno Paper Mills" are advertised for sale again in 1849 when it is evident that paper was still being made by hand. Our speaker showed a fascinating slide of a Lockey calotype of the mill dated 1853.

An unsettled period, with a succession of private owners, came to an end when Albert Reed took over in 1873, backed by his Wesleyan Methodist friends, Thomas Owen and Samuel Evans (of the department store, Evans and Owen) By 1875, he and his two brothers were trading profitably under the new name of "Bath Paper Mill Company".

Our speaker, Michael Tabb's family interest in the company came about when Thomas Bray Tabb, recorded as running a business in Stall Street, in 1890 at the age of 70, embarked on managing not only the Bathford Mill but, in addition, the Ryburndale Mill in Yorkshire. His son, Henry, took over but disaster struck in 1910 when the Bathford mill was devastated by fire and the company went into liquidation. The site was then bought by Henry Tabb, (our speaker's grandfather) and the mill rebuilt by the local firm Hayward and Wooster and registered as "Bathford Paper Mills Company" By 1913 paper-making was in full production again, specialising in lightweight papers, for example fine papers used for Bibles.

From 1973, when the lightweight paper production was moved to Ryburndale, Bathford has been producing security papers, documents such as travellers cheques, postal orders, passports, and vouchers where the product requires special authentication like a fine water-mark. Ownership in the latter part of the twentieth century has passed from Tabbs to Portals and, in 1995, to De La Rue, the

present owners. Portals, Bathford is now the only paper mill in the world specialising in high security paper cylinder mould paper that does not make bank notes.

"THE HISTORY OF THE DEMONTALT PAPER MILL, COMBE DOWN"

For the talk Owen Ward provided a fascinating insight into the History of the De Montalt Mill in Combe Down. Today the Mill is in a sorry state but is about to be restored to provide housing with a please amount of the original structure to be retained.

The mill was built by the 2nd Baron De (Viscount Haywarden) in 1805 as a Paper is steeply sloping and one of the major the choice was its access to a substantial supply water to drive the mill and machinery.



Above:-The Mill in the early 19th Century

One intriguing feature shown on the early chimney which was located a considerable the mill and was connected to the mill by a stands today.

The mill was run by John Bally, William Elan Steart (d.1837) and the paper they made widely used by the best artists of the day JWM Turner and Constable. The paper was standard and the watercolour boards were without being pasted together. This made from the problem of mildew. By 1819 the producing many thousand dozen boards indicating considerable success. The used by a wealth of amateur artists and



Despite the success generated at the the 19th century in 1834 the business failed 1841 a new lease was offered but apparently interested despite the inclusion of lots of and 25 tons of rags.

wire cable insulation. Substantial funds were the venture of about £100,000. At this In taken over by a company that wanted to make Gutta-Percha which is a natural rubber based material. It had a wide range of uses including picture frames, golf balls, and time the 56ft wheel as in place which at the time was possibly the largest in the country. The venture failed.

From 1859 the Mill changed hands many time including:

- 1861 it was a market garden
- 1874 it was a dry wood manufactory
- 1876 cabinet making
- 20th century farmed with cows and pigs being reared on the site!

Today the mill is in a sad state as shown in the picture. However restoration is in hand and shortly hopefully De Montalt Mill will have a new lease of life and high quality housing.

April – Some Residents of Beechen Cliff
Pauline Hanna

Montalt Mill. The site reasons for of good clean

print is the distance from tunnel. It still

and George became including of a very high made

them free Mill was watercolour paper was

beginning of twice and by no one was machinery

raised for 1854 it was

The north-western edge of Beechen Cliff comprises Beechen Cliff Road and Prospect Place, two areas that were often synonymous in 19th Century Poll Books, Street Directories and Census Returns. The area is on the edge of the 18th and early 19th Century maps and the few houses shown on them do not always tally with known house deeds. One map showed a plan of a Prospect Square near a Prospect Row, Prospect Row presumably became Prospect Place but plans for the square were probably a casualty of the economic recession caused by the Revolutionary Wars of the 1790s. At least five houses were occupied by the end of the 18th century; gradually the gaps were in-filled and there is now a mix of Georgian/Regency/Victorian and Edwardian housing, with two houses built in the second half of the 20th Century.

The inhabitants of the houses have pursued a variety of occupations. It was not an area for the aristocracy and gentry; there were Fundholders and retired Military but the middle classes and 'aspiring' were dominant.

During the later part of the 19th century there was a concentration of families who were active in the commercial and retailing life of the city; the Spears, Archards, Linsleys, Tabbs, Basters and Tuckers. Many of these were also active members of the Manvers Street Baptist Church, encouraging or taking part in its missionary work. Some of its Ministers lived in the area and for a while one of the houses ('The Tors', now 'Stockland') was used as the Manse for the Church. There were educational establishments; Miss Brackstone and Mrs Giller ran a Ladies Seminary in what is now Clarendon House with pupils from Australia and the East Indies as well as from the British Isles. The Preparatory School run by the Misses Linsley eventually became the Prep School for the Bath High School.

Among the people of particular interest one can note Mr. Isaac Titley (1750-1836) who lived in Eastern House (one of the oldest on the Cliff). A member of the salt refining, cheese factoring family, their business was expanded into the corn and forage trade on Broad Quay. Originally a member of The Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel he became a staunch supporter of Argyle Chapel and one of its first deacons.

Amongst the Military inhabitants was Captain Peter Gapper (1784-1866); a survivor of battle near Alexandria and the Peninsular War, he has a noble monument in the Abbey Cemetery. Major William Foster, who had been an Ensign in the Crimean War, was still fighting battles later against the City Council who wanted to take some of his land for road widening. Captain Beavis was awarded an MC in the 1914-18 War and Captain Ludlow, who fought in Afghanistan in 1919 and became Adjutant of the 4th Bn. Somerset LI, had a society wedding in the Abbey.

The Arts were represented by John Gully 1819-1888, who lived in 'Victoria Cottage', now 'Blakeleys'. Originally an ironmonger and apprenticed to Stotherts, he and his family emigrated to New Zealand and inspired by its scenery he became regarded as one of that country's leading water colourists. A later resident was Max Heymann who lived in the Victorian House, 'Sunnymead' and was the Musical Director of the Pump Room Orchestra from 1892 until his death in 1910. A violinist and conductor, it was said of him that he 'undertook the musical education of the Bath public'. Frederick Spear 1859-1935 epitomises the involved businessman of late Victorian and Edwardian Bath. The family butchers and provision shops provided the city with bacon, hams and sausages, while the business developed with factories in Bristol, Kent and Redruth. Increased wealth enabled him to build a large house, 'Esher House', with gardens and 'rides'; his children were well educated and married well. The next generation were Doctors, and Lawyers. His deeply held Christian beliefs caused him to play a leading roll in the Manvers Street Baptist Church and to encourage his family to

be missionaries. Very involved in city life, he became Mayor in 1914 and later an Alderman, his special interests being education and slum clearance. His daughter, Winifred, who married Mr Clement Chesterman (later knighted) worked with her husband as a medical missionary in the Congo.

There is much more information about all these people as there is about the 17 or more Reverends, or John Hatton, a great public servant of the City and its Spa Director from 1910 to his retirement, who was to be found in almost every aspect of Bath life, the Abbey, President of the Choral and Orchestral Society, the inspiration behind the development of the YMCA in Bath. He enabled 1st World War casualties to use the Treatment Baths, and was Emergency Officer for the City in the 2nd World War .

So this corner of Bath has housed what seems like a roll call of Bath life. The trades and shops ...

Archard- Pawnbrokers

Baskets-Grocers and Wine Merchants of George Street

Baster- MD Gerrish and Co Canal Carriers

Bladwell- Builders Merchants

Bullock- Jewellers of Milsom Street

Fuller- Hearse and Coach Builders, later Hartwells

Harbutt, one of the Plasticine Family

Henry Horton- Cabinet Maker mid 19th Century

Holmes- Timber Merchants

Irelands- Builders

Keevil of the Fullers Earthworks

Roadhouse- Bath Drapers

Sheppard- Quarry Owner

Tabb of Bathford Paper Mills

Willway- Dyers and later Photographers

It provides a snapshot of part of the city life in two centuries, not the centre, with its more cosmopolitan visitors and famous citizens, but the meat of the everyday life of solid achievement, good works and upward mobility. The area now has a more professional base . But there are no longer live in servants and the pace of life is faster; in 1907 only one vehicle of the passing traffic in a day was a motor in 2000 there were 76 in an hour but the feeling of being a small village like community is still very pronounced. The residents of the Cliff still know and talk to each other, do their neighbourhood watch and assist each other as did the Newports of Shirley Cottage when they went to the aid of Mr. Titley , of 'Eastern House', after a burglary in the late 1820's.

Some Pulteney Miniatures Michael Rowe April 2005

Michael Rowe gave us a fascinating glimpse into the complicated Pulteney Family with some slides of 18th century miniatures which have recently come to light. These were almost certainly collected by Henrietta Laura (1766-1808) the heiress of the immense Pulteney fortune from William Pulteney, 1st Earl of Bath, who began the development of the Bathwick estate. They include exquisite miniatures of Frances (1728-1782), Henrietta Laura's mother and of Henrietta herself and one of H.L. with a friend (Elizabeth Evelyn?). The painter has not as yet been identified. It was a delightful feast for the eye even through the camera and we look forward to Michael's eventual

book of the Pulteneys

MEE.