

I appreciate all the help I get from members who write reports of meetings and occasionally other material. Therefore, it was something of a shock to find, after the March Newsletter went out, that there was a report missing from December 1998. I am very grateful to the writer of that report, who produced her copy for this issue. I hope she finds, as I do, that retirement is good for the soul.

This Newsletter comes with two letters to members, both of which are important. That from David Crellin is self-explanatory. The Committee thank all those who replied to the questionnaire and to say that those members who expressed interest in helping with a Bath Gazetteer will be receiving a letter on this subject with this Newsletter.

GROUP NEWS

MEETING in DECEMBER 1998

BATH AND THE CHINA TRADE and THE FESTIVAL PROMENADE PROJECT: Rachel Kennedy and Michelle Morgan, 2 December, chaired by Amanda Berry: A welcome invitation was extended to members to visit the Museum of East Asian Art. The first part of the evening consisted of a talk on The Festival Promenade Project, Life in Georgian Bath and its Trade Links to the Orient by the Curator, Michelle Morgan. The Festival Promenade is an educational multi-media computer programme linked to Key Stage 3 History, which shows a fictional panoramic view of 18C Bath. Members were transported visually through Georgian terraces at a touch of the screen, meeting elegant characters who spoke at their behest. It was possible to scroll the Panorama and journey from day into night along its length. A Time Line illustrated a variety of primary source material from 1700 to 1820. A Search button gave access to an image and simple text for 48 different topics, many of the images having been provided by local and national museums. A computer terminal has been installed at both the Museum of East Asian Art and at the Building of Bath Museum, who collaborated on the project, supported by a £20,000 grant from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. The Festival Promenade provides a wealth of information on the social, cultural and commercial history of Bath, including trade

links with the Orient, for local schools and visitors alike.

The second part of the evening was taken up with a talk by Rachel Kennedy, whose delightful new 32-page publication Between Bath and China: Trade and Culture in the West Country, 1680-1840 was commissioned by the Museum. She recounted how Bath was the second most important City after London in the 18C and how tea drinking played an essential part in the social round. The West Country developed a steady trade with China in this period with the growing demand by Bath's residents for tea and Chinese porcelain. The Dutch were trading a whole century earlier, as illustrated by a blue and white Kraak porcelain dish, Ming Dynasty, c.1591-1605 from the Museum's own collection. Armorial porcelain was illustrated by a Chinese dish, c.1722, made in Canton for William Pulteney, Earl of Bath, and a tea bowl and saucer, c.1770, with the Pratt family crest of an elephant head, from a Chinese tea service owned by a cousin of the Earl of Camden. A plate from Admiral Francis Holburne's Chinese dinner service, c.1745, with the arms of Holburne of Menstrie, has a painted view of Canton opposite a view of Plymouth Sound and in the centre Fort St. George, the Madras headquarters of the Honourable East India Company. This company played a most important role in the development of trade with China, their great ships being known as 'East Indiamen'. It might take three years for a private order to arrive from China and many shipments were lost at sea either from pirates or storms.

Tea drinking was very popular and superseded coffee and chocolate in the 18C but it was also very expensive. Thus, only a little was drunk at any time. Tea was kept in a caddy, usually under lock and key. We were shown a very small 18C stoneware Yixing teapot that formed part of a teaware collection bought by Paul Methuen, a West Country clothier, who built Corsham Court in 1745. By 1748 there were as many as 672 tea dealers registered in Bath and Bristol. Rachel Kennedy went on to talk about trade advertisements that appeared in the Bath Chronicle. These included one from 15 October 1761: "Now selling by JOHN KENDALL, at his China-shop, the Golden Canister in PIERPOINT-STREET, Near the South-Parade, BATH, All Sorts of useful and ornamental China, both Foreign and English: also fine Teas, Coffee and Chocolate, of the highest flavour". On 24 March 1774, there was an announcement of an auction by Mr. Rose of "a large assortment of FOREIGN CHINA, being part of the cargo of the ship British King East-Indiaman, which is the most valuable collection that has ever been exposed to sale in this town".

M. Lambe and Son advertised on 21 July 1791: "INDIA-HOUSE, No. 44, STALL-STREET, BATH. First established TEA and GROCERY WAREHOUSE in this CITY". The Lambe family was one of the longest established tea dealers in Bath and may have been started by Lacon Lambe as early as the 1750s.

The influence of China on the culture of the West Country was considerable. Queen Mary II was one of the first collectors of blue and white Oriental porcelain in England in the 17C. William Blathwayt owned an early collection of Oriental porcelain at Dyrham Park. The Digbys were also admirers of such wares and they imported Chinoiserie wallpaper for Sherborne Castle. This ornamentation was at its most popular between about 1730 and 1750. Philip Coales of the East India Bengal Army retired to Bath and bought a house in Sydney Place in 1810. Fragments of a hand-blocked Chinoiserie wallpaper have since been found in the house. China's influence spread to West Country garden design also: Sydney Gardens, opened in 1795, are an example. John Rennie's designs for the cast iron bridges over the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1800 were described as being "after the manner of the Chinese". It was suggested that Ralph Allen may have considered building a Chinese pagoda at Prior Park, as a watercolour drawing in a private collection, c. 1750, refers to a "pagoda for Mr. Allen".

Rachel Kennedy's talk led to a clearer understanding of the many trade and cultural links between China and the West Country and was well illustrated by examples from the Museum of

East Asian Art, the Holburne Museum, the Victoria Art Gallery and other collections.

ANN HOPKINS-CLARKE

MEETINGS HELD MAY – JUNE 1999

GRIST TO THE MILLS OF BATH, THOUGHTS ON THE MILLS OF BATH AND AREA: Owen Ward, 5 May, chaired by Amanda Berry: Owen Ward began his survey of the development and variety of mills in the Bath area by defining his approach. Rather than concentrating on particular sites, many of which have been investigated in detail by others, he proposed to discuss the power, processes and products. The first simple corn mills in the area were undoubtedly hand querns. Bronze age evidence exists; and later Roman rotary querns, mostly hand operated, survive at the Roman Baths. Although this form of milling continued, water-powered mills became more common for mass production. A Roman water-powered installation is believed to have existed at the Roman military station at Nettleton Shrubb. However it is not until the Middle Ages that watermill sites on the Avon and its tributaries, often owned by the Church, appear. These include Monks' Mill on Pulteney Weir. Priston mill still operates while other sites including those at Midford, Bathampton and Woolley survive with some of their original features visible. Water remained the most important source of power, but other sources include horses at a rotary threshing mill at South Stoke and the wind-powered grinding mill at the Combe Hay Fullers's Earth processing works. This mill, installed around 1890 and imported from the United States, burnt down in spectacular fashion in 1904. In addition, man-power was discussed with reference to treadmills installed to crush rocks at Twerton New Gaol by Stothert and Pitt in 1867.

Finally, steam power was discussed, firstly those mills built as new with steam as the only source of power at Kingston Mill (1870s) Norfolk Cereal Mill (1880s) Bathampton Steam Mill (1840s) and Camden Mill (1850s). Other mills were fitted with steam to assist the waterwheels, for example at Monks' Mill (pre 1882) to combat competition from imported grain and flour. In addition steam was used to assist and ultimately to replace the Combe Hay windmill.

A number of small mills were built or adapted for minor trades such as the 'Jewelling Mill' at Widcombe which required little more than a trickle. Here the water driven lathe used in the production of cameos for the tourist trade appears to have used water power simply as a gimmick, given the machinery could have as easily been foot powered! Other industries attracted to Bath included leather dressing (Twerton Lower Mill), paper at De Montalt Mill (Combe Down) and Bathford Paper Mill, cutlery and razor grinding (Twerton and Smallcombe), china and flint milling (Twerton) and logwood dye manufacture (Twerton).

Many mills, having been established as corn grinding or grist mills equipped with horizontal millstones, later augmented their installations with fulling stocks for processing woollen cloth in the Middle Ages. Other mills changed their use altogether. The mills at Twerton and Weston changed regularly in use while other examples include De Montalt Mill (grist to paper making to patent cloth manufacture to cabinet making) and Bathford. One worthy of special mention is the grist milling installation at Englishcombe Farm where a set of conventional millstones were driven by a waterwheel ¼ mile away which drove the wheels by cables on gantries. The elaborate treadmill operated equipment installed at Twerton Gaol (mentioned above) reduced rocks to fragments for the construction and road building industry.

The so-called 'Jewelling Mill' (it was explained that 'jewelling' traditionally referred to the manufacture of watchmakers' 'jewels' and as such was a misnomer) appears to have been the only installation supplying the tourist trade rather than local domestic or industrial use. Given its success during the 18C it is unusual that other mills were not set up or converted to supply this market for luxury goods. In Bristol many mills were converted to the production of snuff for just such a market.

One unusual product was that which may have been produced at Thimble Mill at Widcombe where, when not pumping water up the Widcombe lock flight for the Kennet and Avon Canal, wooden blocks used for securing ship's sails were manufactured. These blocks were the eponymous thimbles!

It was noted that millstones used in milling often survive as garden ornaments (occasionally to be seen on sale at Walcot Reclamation) or decoration (Newton Caravan Site, the offices of which are on the site of a watermill). In addition 3 metopes on the carved frieze of the Circus feature a waterwheel, a windmill as well as a pair of millstones. They possibly commemorate millowners, millstone suppliers or even manufacturers of patent artificial millstones!

STUART BURROUGHS

KEYNSHAM – THE PARTS YOU DON'T SEE: a walk led by Elizabeth White, 10 June: Elizabeth White told us that Keynsham has the reputation of being the 'Slough of the West'. Therefore it was delightful to be made aware of the ancient origins of the town and we were surprised to find how much remained to see despite the high level of improvement in the 60s and 70s. The town has some ancient origins with a Roman Villa discovered on the outskirts but it was as a Royal estate with an Abbey that the town became significant. At the Conquest it was a Royal manor and in 1170 the Earls of Gloucester built the Abbey, which owned the centre of the town and the key river crossing. This resulted in considerable difficulties for the poorer inhabitants who were forced to walk a long circuitous route to get to other parts of the town. At the Dissolution in 1539 the King sold the Abbey lands to the Bridges family and they build a mansion on the site of the Abbey. These passed to the Dukes of Chandos and then in 1713 the estate was sold to Anne, a member of the wealthy Whitmore family. The result was a long period of life in the town with no resident gentry.

In the Domesday Book, the town boasted 6 mills and in the 18C some of these were turned over to the new technologies of brass and steel. Our tour took us past the Dapperfers or King's Agent's house and then on past the Gas works (1857) where the retort house remains and is due for redevelopment. We walked on past the building that had been rented by the poor house (now attractive cottages) and to the scene of the 1968 floods which occurred when a dam burst further up stream resulting in water rising over 12 feet at the bridge whose parapets were washed away. This was the river crossing used during the Abbey's heyday when access was not available across church lands. On past the old steel mill (which used the Bessemer process in later years) and was subject to espionage by the Swedes in the 18C. Then we returned up the other side of the valley to the main road. From here we were able to see Coniger farm, the Abbey rabbit warren and a number of the sites of local mills including Chewton. Rock Hill Farm was the home of the Steward to the Whitmores in the 17C. We walked back towards the town past the site of the Town Mill where all the buildings have gone but the wheel pit and some old walls remain. Then we passed the remains of the Abbey which was extensively excavated particularly when the bypass was cut through the site. The site of the Bridges mansion has not been identified.

The Church was built in 1270 for parishioners but never had a burial ground as the old churchyard was used instead. In the 19C a new burial ground was opened and Major Davis of Empire Hotel fame built the mortuary chapel. At the north east corner there had been a spire which fell across the Church in 1631. Walking along the High Street we saw a wide variety of buildings ranging from a 16C Hall house with a 17C front to modern horror shops. All in all a delightful walk.

DAVID CRELLIN

MEMBERS' NEWS

It is sad to report that we are losing one of our most steadfast members now that Godfrey

Laurence has finally left Bathford to live at Clevedon. His new address is: Apartment 312, The Hawthorns, 18-21 Elton Road, Clevedon, BS21 7EH, telephone 01275-871773.

BATHWICK LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

This recently formed group has arranged a programme of monthly meetings on Bathwick topics, including the industrial archaeology of the parish, early Georgian Bathwick deeds and the railway in Bathwick. It is hoped to build up a small archive of old postcards and photographs of the area. For further information contact Mrs. Sheila Edwards, 103 Sydney Place, Bathwick, Bath, BA2 6NE.

PUBLICATIONS

G. Stock, 'The 18th- and early 19th-century Quaker burial ground at Bathford' in Margaret Cox, ed., Grave Concerns: Death and Burial in Post-Medieval England, 1700-1850 (York, Council for British Archaeology, 1998).

David Falconer, Bath Abbey (Bath in Old Photographs, (Stroud, Sutton, 1999).

David and Jonathan Falconer, Bath at War, 1939-1945 (Stroud, Sutton, 1999).

Maggie Lane, A City of Palaces: Bath through the Eyes of Fanny Burney (Bath, Millstream Books, 1999).

Mauro Galantino, 'Bath: crescita e modificazioni nel corso del XVIII secolo', in Leonardo Benevolo, ed., Metamorfosi della Città (Milano, 1995). In this 75-page chapter, 18C Bath joins the select company of Istanbul, Palermo and Rome. Special sections on Bath's development deal with the main set pieces from Queen Square and the Circus to the crescents and Bathwick. The rest is fairly derivative and is sprinkled with spelling errors (of the 'Humphry Klinker' variety) but the work is worth consulting for its illustrations. These include sets of diagrams showing the physical evolution of the city, five coloured aerial photographs and good reproductions of views both well and less known, such as the image (*below*) by S.H. Grimm, 1788, looking across Bathwick. The volume can be found on the reference shelves, classmark 711.2, in Bath Central Library.

REGIONAL BIOGRAPHICAL DATABASE

The Regional History Centre at the University of the West of England intends compiling a database of biographies of individuals significant to the region's history, to be available on disk or in other electronic format. The focus will be not on figures whose biographies are readily accessible (e.g. in the DNB) but on people of lesser national importance who nonetheless had an influence on the region's history. If the response is good, it may eventually be possible to produce collections of biographies on a thematic, chronological or local (e.g. Bath) basis. Contributions of c. 250 words are therefore requested, with a list of sources (giving locations of unpublished sources and full publication details of printed sources) preferably submitted on disk ('Word 6' if possible). Send these to: Regional History Centre, UWE, St. Matthias Campus, Oldbury Court Road, Bristol, BS16 2JP, or by fax to 0117 975 0402, or by e-mail to regionalhistory @ we.ac.uk.

Also received: notice of An Unhappy Civil War, the Experiences of Ordinary People in Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1642-1646, by John Wroughton (The Lansdown Press): publication date 1st October 1999. **Pre-publication offer** by 30th September only: £13.50 paper back edition (normal price £14.99), £24.00 limited hard back edition (normal price £25.99). To obtain the leaflet please apply **before 30th September** to The Lansdown Press, 41 The Empire, Grand Parade, Bath, BA2 4DF (01225 420050).

An Unhappy Civil War tells the story of ordinary people in Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire as they faced up to the horrors of a conflict, which eventually engulfed their lives. It also tells of the failure of army commanders to cope with the logistics of war, thus forcing soldiers on both sides to 'live off the country'. Incidents in scores of local villages and towns within this vital war zone are vividly described to show how it felt to be at the mercy of hungry, unpaid and lawless troops. Although some people, as always, gained handsomely from the war, many experienced the depths of human suffering - families split by divided loyalties, conscripts dragged unwillingly to battle, houses plundered by marauding soldiers, homes requisitioned as billets, villages fired for military convenience, churches vandalised and desecrated, prisoners abused and neglected, ploughs and horses seized for army service, goods snatched *en route* to market ...

This lavishly illustrated book, which also deals with both the terror of the siege and the lingering effects of war, includes the most comprehensive chronology yet published of military events in the three counties.

'John Wroughton has produced the most thorough study ever made of the impact of the English Civil War upon local society In his pages, more than ever before, it is possible to understand how the conflict was commenced, sustained and ended, but also how it felt.'

(Professor Ronald Hutton, University of Bristol)

Dr. John Wroughton was formerly Headmaster of King Edward's School, Bath. A Fellow of the royal Historical Society and freelance lecturer, he is author of 15 books (chiefly on the 17C) and a contributor to the New Dictionary of National Biography (forthcoming).

The Newsletter is compiled and typed by Judith Samuel.

PROJECT FOR A HISTORICAL GAZETTEER OF BATH

Discussion Paper

It is proposed to collect data for a systematic, historical gazetteer of Bath Streets and buildings, bringing together established information and undertaking fresh research as necessary. The gazetteer would eventually be made available in two forms: as a computer database and as a set of individual printed publications on particular districts of the city. The main users of the gazetteer are expected to be local residents and researchers, though some visitors to Bath and the wider public might also be interested. It is hoped this would be a collaborative venture drawing on the expertise and help of various local organisations and individuals, all working to common rules of procedure under a Project Committee.

Suggested nature and scope of the gazetteer

- 1)
- 2)

- 3)
- 4)

- 1)
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MORE ON BATH CENTRAL LIBRARY

A scrapbook from the R.Wright collection in Bath Central Librayr (B942.38 Strong Room) contains a useful mix of later Victorian material under the title 'Newspaper cuttings relating to Bath, c.1877-1882'. The following samples may whet the appetite:

- p.25:Oct. 1877 – improvements intended in Holloway - Strange's Court will be cleared of its dilapidated cottages.
- p.45:Nov. 1877 – election of the Mayor of the Dolmeads (dinner of sprats and tripe and onions) and a diner given to the mayor of Combe Down.
- p.46:Nov. 1878? – Tramcar service mooted from the GWR station to Bathford railway bridge.
- p.46:Nov. 1878 – effects of the Hedgemoad slip - buildings shored up.
- p.47:June 1879 – building operations in Wells Road and Oldfield Park - a new road being cut in front of St. Matthew's.
- p.49:Oct. 1879 – nos. 1-2 Old Bond (Street?) To be pulled down for street improvements.
- p.51:Oct. 1879 – the Board School in Kingsmead Street will soon be finished - handsome Gothic front.
- p.53:Sep. 1879 – changing of street gradients in upper Marketplace to prevent accidents and wooden pavements to reduce noise.
- p.54:Oct. 1879 – Jolly's fine new shop front on Milsom Street.
- p.54:Oct. 1879 – St. Andrew's spire nearly finished
- p.56:Dec. 1879 – efforts to publicize Bath for health and residence - 613 advertisements placed in London, provincial and foreign press in recent years.
- p.56:Apr. 1880 – Lawn Tennis Club leases an acre at corner of Park Lane and Audley Road for 4 grass and 2 asphalt courts.
- p.57:Feb. 1880 – Cater begins aerating Bath waters in vaults below Pump Room - 2 sizes of bottle, each labelled 'Sulis Water' - mor e palatable when aerated.
- p.58:Mar. 1880 – Davis and the excavations at the baths.
- pp.59 & 67:Apr., Nov. & Dec. 1880 – the elegant Corridor where the Rhine String Band will play every afternoon.
- p.59:Apr. 1880 – fountain being erected in Laura Place.
- p.60:Apr. 1880 – renovation of Sham Castle.
- p.69:Jan. 1881 – verses on Sion Hill - what a trudge up to it!
- pp.64, 67 & 94:Oct. 1880 & July 1881 – laying of wooden pavements in Southgate Street, Marketplace, Union Street, Cheap Street and Milsom Street.
- pp.88-89:1882 – more discoveries at the Roman Baths.
- pp.93 & 155:June 1881? – more on the Hedgemoad landslip.
- p.96:Summary of the 1881 Census.
- p.135: Oct. 1882 – new premises of Evans and Owen in Bartlett Street now being lit by electricity
- p.140: Aug. 1878 – sale of the Corridor.