

The Portrait of John Wood that Never Was

David Crellin and Penny Gay



Photograph (1941) of a painting by R.W.M. Wright
*'thought to be John Wood the Elder'*¹

Image Credit: Bath and North East Somerset Council

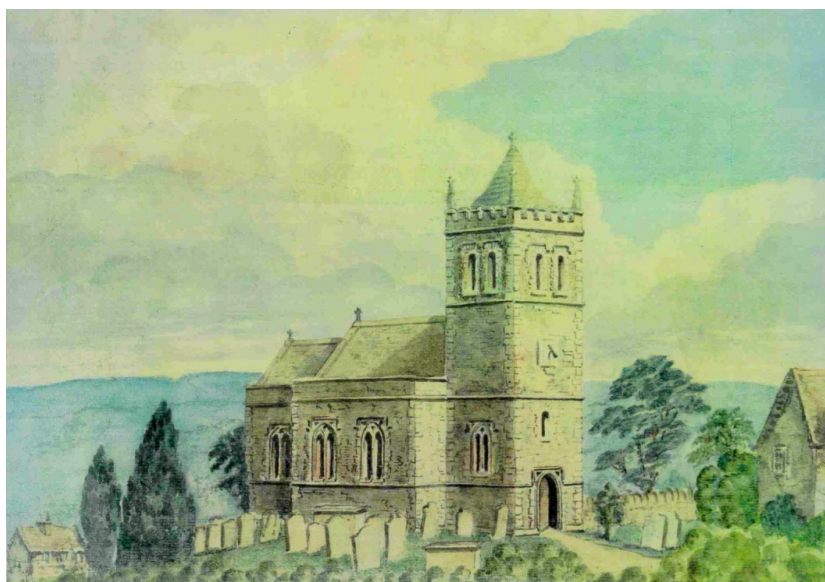
To those interested in Bath's history and proud of its Georgian architecture, the realisation that there seem to be no acknowledged individual portraits of John Wood or his son may come as both surprising and disappointing: surprising because the Woods were living and working in Bath at a time when the city was abounding with talented artists and commissions for portraits were becoming very much the order of the day² and disappointing because many people are naturally curious to know what a person looked like. Furthermore, as well as depicting an accurate physical likeness, a first-class artist can also capture the inherent characteristics of the sitter. Should portraits of the Woods ever come to light, they could possibly reveal far more than mere facial features and outward appearance. It would certainly be intriguing to know how a gifted artist might have portrayed the enigmatic and complex inner self of John Wood the Elder.

Among the many artists who flocked to Bath in the eighteenth century were two very successful portrait painters, William Hoare and Thomas Gainsborough – and of particular significance is evidence to show that, during the years they lived there, they would have had ample opportunity to become acquainted with John Wood or his son. It has even been suggested that Hoare could have encountered Wood in London in the early months of 1727, and that it was the architect who eventually persuaded him to move to Bath.³

William Hoare arrived in Bath in 1738 and is thought to have lived in a house on the east side of Queen Square,⁴ diagonally opposite the Woods, who lived at No. 9 on the south side. By 1763 he had moved up to Edgar Buildings and had a studio and 'picture room' there until his death in 1792.⁵ Bath was a relatively small place then, where most people knew most other people, but one particular piece of evidence confirms that, soon after settling in Bath, William Hoare, as well as being a near neighbour and fellow parishioner of John Wood, would have come to know him particularly well.

In the years following his return to Bath in May 1727, Wood's work was very much focused on pressing ahead with the scheme to build a General Hospital – an idea first put forward by banker, Henry Hoare⁶ and Lady Elizabeth Hastings⁷ during a visit to the city in 1716. William Hoare (not related to Henry)⁸ could see that one way to attract future clients and also enhance his standing in Bath was to become closely involved with the running of the new hospital, which, after many delays, had received Royal Assent in 1738 when Beau Nash took John Wood's revised plans to London for approval. When Bath's new Royal Mineral Water Hospital finally opened in May 1742, William Hoare's signature was duly included in the Minute Book as one of the Assistants or Councillors. He subsequently attended meetings almost weekly and was frequently nominated as one of two House Visitors for the week, which involved checking on the treatment and progress of the patients, as well as on the Hospital's amenities, staff and suppliers.⁹

Less than two months after the death of John Wood the Elder in May 1754, an even closer link was forged between the Wood family and William Hoare when Jane Maria, the Wood's elder daughter, married Henry Coulthurst, a clothier from Melksham, at St. Swithin's Church, Walcot. Three years previously, in the same church, William Hoare's brother, Prince, had married Henry Coulthurst's sister, Mary.



Watercolour attributed to R.W.M Wright (1889-1963)
St Swithin's, Walcot, as it might have looked in 1742 ¹⁰

Image Credit: St Swithin's Church, Walcot

A marriage notice, published on the 15th of July 1754 in the Bath Journal, described Jane Maria Wood as 'an agreeable young Lady with a fortune of £5000'. It was the exact amount her father had bequeathed to her as a marriage settlement in his Will, written in December 1753.¹¹ He was clearly aware that a young lady, however agreeable, needed the help of a desirable dowry to secure a good marriage – a sentiment that would resonate throughout Jane Austen's novels published over fifty years later.

As a result of her father's bequest and her ensuing marriage to Henry Coulthurst, Jane Maria became a sister-in-law of Prince Hoare (a talented sculptor). However, John Wood's resolve to leave a generous dowry for his elder daughter, as well as adequate provision for his wife and legacies intended to safeguard the futures of the two youngest surviving Wood children, Elizabeth and Thayer Allen, meant that little was left for his elder son John. An annuity of £150, to be shared between John and his widowed mother, Jenny Wood, who would live for a further twelve years, looks to be an insufficient allowance and poor reward for a dutiful son, expected to follow through with his father's unfinished building plans for Bath.

Apart from his acquaintance with William Hoare, there were, in fact, several other reasons to suppose that the elder John Wood might well have had his portrait painted. Although he could not claim to be a member of the aristocracy or nobility, he certainly benefited from the patronage of those who most certainly were. The early encouragement he received from Lord Bingley of Bramham Park, as well as the Duke of Chandos and his cousin, William Brydges, and from Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford, has already been well-documented, as has his appointment as a JP (with its entitlement of being addressed as *'Esquire'*) and his use of an adopted coat of arms on his seal and bookplate.¹² And from a purely practical point of view, he lived in a large house in Queen Square where there would have been plenty of wall space to hang portraits.

Conversely, he seems to have been reluctant to reveal the fact (only recently discovered) that his father was a Bath schoolmaster and his mother a descendant of Peter Chapman, renowned for being the man who initiated the rebuilding of the Abbey following the Dissolution.¹³ This should surely have given him some status in the city, yet throughout his working life the elder John Wood was beset with problems and delays over land leases, opposition to building plans from Bath Council, complaints from local citizens and clients, and worries with workmen. He suffered from severe bouts of asthma, as well as leg-cramps and chest infections, and did not live long enough to complete his architectural plans for his native city, dying before his fiftieth birthday and just three months after the foundation stone had been laid for his grandly named *'King's Circus'*.

In the years following his death, when John Wood the Younger was overseeing the huge task of fulfilling his father's ambitious plans for the Circus, the demand for portraits became even more intense and attracted many new talented artists to Bath. One of them, Thomas Gainsborough, first visited Bath in 1758 and by 1760 had set up his studio and *'picture room'* in a large house near the Abbey, thought to have been designed by John Wood the Elder before his death.¹⁴

The Abbey Street house, in the hub of the city and on the main route to the Baths and the Pump Room, was the perfect location for establishing a thriving business as an artist, but as the social centre of Bath began to shift to the city's northern slopes in search of cleaner air and open spaces, Gainsborough decided to sublet his *'house in the smoake'*.¹⁵ He moved first to Lansdown and then, from late 1766 until 1774, he rented house No. 17 in the newly completed northern arc of the Circus. If John Wood the Younger, living at No. 12 Brock Street in the late 1760s¹⁶ and about to begin work on the Royal Crescent, had been having thoughts about family portraits, here, almost on his doorstep, living in a house designed by his father and built under his own direction, was another accomplished artist he might well have commissioned to paint them. One reason for restraint, however, might have been that good portraits were expensive¹⁷ and, although the younger John Wood eventually achieved some success during his lifetime by completing the Circus and building the magnificent Royal Crescent, he was frequently in financial difficulties.¹⁸ When he died in 1781 at Eagle House, Batheaston, at the age of fifty-three, he was in debt. He was buried near his father in St Mary's Church, Swainswick, a peaceful place, some distance away from the hub-bub of the Georgian city they had both helped to create.

No portrait of either of them came to light and, despite their ever-increasing fame and the growing feeling of disbelief and disappointment that perhaps none had ever been painted, it was over a hundred and fifty years before any published reference was made to the possibility that a portrait of either John Wood or his son, by then highly acclaimed architects, might well have been discovered.

In 1939 an image of a painting in a Rococo-style frame appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Institution of British Architects*, under the heading *Wood of Bath?*¹⁹ It was a leading question, clearly designed to arouse interest, but sadly destined to be very *misleading*. Mr John Hatton, director of the Bath Pump Room, was the man who hoped to discover more about this *'mystery'* portrait, although how the image might have come into his possession was not revealed. He had already consulted most of the recognised authorities, including Bath historian Mr. Mowbray Green and the National Portrait Gallery, but was hoping *'... that some architect might know of a portrait of either John Wood the Elder or his son in private possession, information about which may help in*

*the identification of this picture.*²⁰ It is now known that the image published in the RIBA Journal in 1939 was very similar to the one shown below.

Monochrome Image of a Portrait at Berkley House, Frome ²¹

Image Credit: The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art



It seems unlikely that anyone came forward at the time, either to dismiss the speculative idea that the portrait might depict one of the Woods of Bath or to confirm the real identity of the gentleman in the painting. In a city long deprived of any portraits of its two most renowned architects, this meant that it became all too tempting for people to jump to the wrong conclusion. Who else, other than John Wood senior, or possibly his son, would have been portrayed holding an architect's dividers in his right hand, with a plan closely resembling the Circus clearly visible on the table in front of him?

Reginald Wright, the long-serving city librarian and curator of Bath's Victoria Art Gallery, was apparently so convinced that the gentleman in the portrait with the pleasant face and proud, upstanding figure was John Wood the Elder that he set about painting a copy of it – (see first page). Two images of Wright's copy, are currently listed by *Bath in Time* and still 'thought to be John Wood the Elder'.²² Whilst one is described as a copy by R.W.M. Wright of a painting at Berkley House, Frome, the other is reported to be a copy by the same artist of a portrait by Hoare 'at Brockley'. It seems likely that at some point there may have been confusion over the two very similar-looking and similar-sounding names Berkley and Brockley and that in fact Wright only painted one copy – and that was of the original portrait at Berkley House.

A black and white photograph of Wright's version of the Berkley portrait is now at Bath Record Office.²³ A label on the back confirms that this copied painting had been photographed by G. Bolwell in 1941 and had then been among the collection at the Victoria Art Gallery. More recently (2015), an article published in the *Georgian Group Journal* also refers to a similar portrait being at one time in the possession of the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution.²⁴ It is difficult to imagine that it could have completely disappeared, yet numerous enquiries and diligent searches have so far failed to discover the present whereabouts of Reginald Wright's copy, or confirm that it still exists.

Wright died in 1963, aged 74, by which time his firmly held belief that the gentleman in the portrait was John Wood the Elder had become generally acknowledged – and not only in Bath. An entry for Berkley House, near Frome, a Grade 2 listed building, can be found on the *Historic England* website and includes a description of the interior of the house (not seen) ‘... said to contain a fine Hall and beyond a balustraded staircase arranged around a square, open well and containing interesting paintings, including a portrait believed to be of John Wood of Bath, carved rococo decoration to frames of c1750.’²⁵

Perhaps even more surprising is that evidence in correspondence found among Evelyn Newby’s research papers at the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art confirms that in 1988 – and presumably for many years before that – this same portrait had been indexed in the records at the National Portrait Gallery in London as *John Wood the Elder, attributed to William Hoare*.²⁶ In 1988, however, an impressive article about Berkley House, written by Giles Worsley, appeared in *Country Life* magazine.²⁷ It included an image of a portrait in a Rococo-style frame, identical to the one published in the RIBA Journal in 1939, but captioned with the true identity of the sitter – ‘an eminent amateur architect’. He was not John Wood the Elder.

Evelyn Newby was prompted to write a hasty letter to Jacob Simon, then curator of 18th Century Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery. Not only did she cite the *Country Life* article, but also drew his attention to the unmistakable likeness between the sitter in the Berkley painting and the gentleman wearing a bright scarlet jacket, pictured in a portrait by Gainsborough and known to be Thomas Prowse, Esq., a former Somerset MP and Lord of the Manor of Berkley, Somerset. Mr. Simon was clearly convinced and on the 15th July 1988 he sent a letter in reply, confirming that he had amended his records accordingly.²⁸

The attribution to Hoare was a debatable one, favoured by Newby because she believed the decorative Rococo-style picture frames and decor at Berkley House might have been the work of William Hoare’s brother, Prince, but a further letter found among her research papers suggests that certainly up until January 1989, she had not had the opportunity to examine the Berkley portrait closely.²⁹

Further research might have seemed unnecessary, following the positive identification confirmed in Giles Worsley’s article and the official acknowledgement from the curator at the National Portrait Gallery that the gentleman in the Berkley portrait was Thomas Prowse, Esq. and definitely not John Wood. The fact that Thomas Prowse had been ‘an eminent amateur architect’ must surely explain why he was pictured holding an architect’s dividers and appeared to have been working on a design not unlike the Circus. Yet there still remained further questions. For instance, what might lie behind the *Bath in Time* reference to the fact that ‘versions of this painting exist without what appears to be a plan of the Circus’³⁰ – and were there any buildings designed by Thomas Prowse that might have required a circular plan?

Thomas Prowse, Esquire was a gentleman worthy of far greater attention than the scope of this particular investigation allows. Baptised in London in 1708, the grandson of John Prowse, descendant of a minor gentry family from Devon, Thomas would eventually inherit Berkley House in Somerset through his grandfather’s marriage to Anne Newborough in 1670. In the same year, John Prowse also inherited a fine 17th century house at Compton Bishop, near Axbridge. Thomas’s father, also named John, inherited both houses, but, after his early death from smallpox in 1710, when Thomas was only two, his widow Abigail spent much of her long widowhood at Berkley, often joined by her father George Hooper, Bishop of Bath and Wells.³¹

Following her father’s death in 1727, Abigail Prowse commissioned Nathaniel Ireson, architect and builder, to take down the old house at Berkley and build a new one in the Palladian style. It is clear from her precise instructions and comments to Ireson that the house was to be exactly as she wanted, down to the finest details.³² Building would have been under way when her son Thomas married in London in 1731 and the house was completed in 1732. It is good to know that Abigail Prowse, described as ‘one of the most accomplished women of her time, admired for her excellent

*understanding, extensive knowledge and agreeable manners*³³, would have had the pleasure of living in her new house for a further thirty years.

The relevance of this additional background information is that it might well explain why there is certainly *one* other version of the Berkley House portrait of Thomas Prowse containing no evidence at all of architect's dividers or any plan reminiscent of John Wood's design for the Circus. Whether more versions ever existed is debatable.

A painting owned by Axbridge Town Trust can be found on the website artuk.org.³⁴ It looks to be almost identical to the portrait at Berkley, the obvious difference being that Thomas Prowse is holding nothing in his right hand and, instead of a plan resembling the Circus, there is a written manuscript on the table in front of him. In this version, he is pointing to a page in a book of Parliamentary Bills. His portrait and books were among the gifts donated to Axbridge Town Trust from the Prowse Estate.³⁵

Thomas Prowse Esquire (1708 - 1767)

Image Credit: Axbridge Town Trust



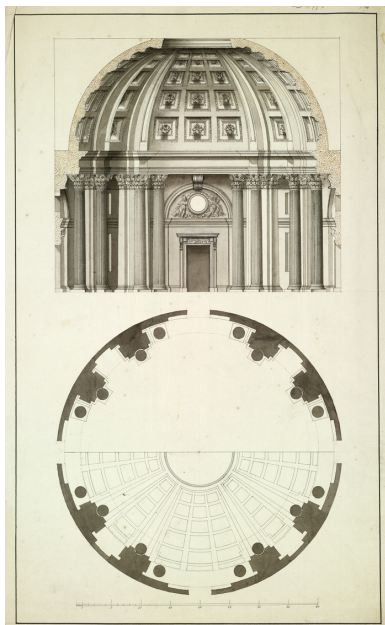
Between 1740 and 1767, Thomas Prowse was returned unopposed five times as MP for one of the Somerset seats and acted as the Recorder of Axbridge for many years. It would therefore seem appropriate that a portrait on display in his home at Compton Bishop would highlight his duty to ensure that the local Burgesses kept within the law. The fact that this painting was probably donated to the Town Trust in its original carved and gilded frame, typical of the 17th century, substantiates the theory that it had previously been at Compton House, built in the 1600s.³⁶

The very similar portrait of the same gentleman, pictured and correctly identified in Worsley's *Country Life* article published in 1988, was believed to date from the late 1750s, and was possibly painted soon after Abigail Prowse decided to redecorate the Hall at Berkley House in a more baroque style.³⁷ Consequently, as had been the case with the portrait intended for Compton House, the frame of her son's portrait would have been chosen to suit the setting in which it would be displayed. The inclusion of the building plan instead of the book of Parliamentary Bills, and the addition of the architect's dividers, may simply have reflected a fond mother's wish to be reminded of a different, more creative, aspect of her only son's talents and interests.

Even so, one mystery still remained in the Berkley version of the portrait. The fact that Prowse had been *'a country gentleman with a practical interest in architecture'*³⁸ would explain the inclusion of the dividers, but, unless some evidence could be found to link him with a building project requiring a circular plan, it was difficult to attach any particular significance to the architectural drawing in the portrait, which so closely resembled John Wood the Elder's design for the Circus.

Worsley's claim that Thomas Prowse had been an eminent amateur architect was well justified. With Sanderson Miller, Prowse contributed to designs for Hagley Hall, Worcestershire and the Shire Hall in Warwick. He designed Wicken Church in Northamptonshire, as well as Wicken House – inherited when he married Elizabeth Sharp in 1731 – and drew up plans for Hatch Court, Somerset and alterations to Kimberley Hall in Norfolk.³⁹ The rectangular Temple of Harmony at Halswell Park, Somerset, designed for his friend Sir Charles Kemeys-Tynte, was completed in 1767, the year of Prowse's death.⁴⁰ None of these buildings appear to include any obvious exterior feature that might have required a circular drawing.

One of Prowse's earliest projects was the re-designing of Copt Hall in Essex, which he worked on with Sir Roger Newdigate and John Sanderson in the early 1740s. These early plans were never adopted,⁴¹ but they did include a drawing of an enclosed central Rotunda. Although this did not closely resemble the plan depicted in the Berkley portrait, it was at least circular.



Early Plan for Interior Rotunda for Copt Hall, Essex ⁴²

Image Credit: RIBA Collection

It may have been the planned Rotunda for Copt Hall that inspired the interior octagonal dome in St Mary's Church in Berkley, rebuilt in 1751 and now thought to have been designed by Thomas Prowse.⁴³ It is interesting that the delicate patterns of filigree stucco work used to embellish the dome reflect the Rococo-style decor introduced at Berkley House in the 1750s by Abigail Prowse.

Interior Dome of Berkley Church ⁴⁴



These designs may not entirely account for the circular plan in the portrait, but they do seem to offer a more acceptable explanation than the vague idea that this had merely been a whim of an artist who happened to be well aware of the exciting building development under construction in Bath at the time.

Before leaving the subject of the Prowse portrait, which for almost fifty years was mistaken for a previously unknown portrait of John Wood the Elder, it is important to refer to a further group of portraits of Thomas Prowse relevant to this research.

Three pairs of near-identical, half-length portraits of Thomas Prowse and his wife Elizabeth were painted by Thomas Gainsborough, probably in about 1761.⁴⁵ It was one of these, mentioned in connection with Evelyn Newby's letter to the curator at the National Portrait Gallery, that confirmed the unmistakable likeness between Thomas Prowse and the gentleman in the painting at Berkley House.⁴⁶ Gainsborough's matching trio of portraits of Prowse depict him wearing a red coat with black lapels and gold buttons, with his gold laced tricorne hat tucked under his arm. There are no attributes to suggest an interest in either architecture or parliamentary law. Mrs Prowse is resplendent in lace and striped brocade, and, oddly for a pair of portraits of husband and wife, both face the same way. There is no other instance of three pairs of near identical portraits by Gainsborough, but it has been suggested that they were commissioned for their three surviving children. Only one of the pairs survives together – that auctioned at Christie's in London, now in a private collection in Somerset.⁴⁷

Thomas Prowse Esquire, MP (1708 - 1767)
by Thomas Gainsborough



Private Collection
By kind permission of the present owner

In all three versions of the half-length portrait of Thomas Prowse, the pose, the steady gaze of the eyes and the expression on his face are remarkably similar to those in the Berkley and Axbridge portraits. A possible reason for this was included in Christie's Lot Essay: ⁴⁸

... The portrait of Thomas Prowse follows the pose of the three-quarter-length portrait of Prowse by William Hoare at Berkley near Frome, and Gainsborough may have been forced to use another portrait of the sitter who 'on account of a distemper [was unable] to sit long in a chair at a time' (Letter from the Duke of Newcastle to the Duke of Bedford dated 20 October 1761 quoted by Namier & Brook, 1985 , p.335) ...⁴⁹

The theory that Gainsborough might have based his portraits of Thomas Prowse on a previous painting by Hoare is questionable. Whilst Gainsborough and Hoare had become fellow artists in Bath by the early 1760s,⁵⁰ expert opinion is that it was unlikely that Gainsborough would have accepted such a compromise. Thomas and Elizabeth Prowse are known to have arrived in Bath in June 1759 and may well have sat for Gainsborough during this visit.⁵¹

Christie's Lot Essay also quoted a brief extract from Thomas Prowse's memorial inscription in the Church of St John the Baptist, Axbridge:

... He discharged his duty in Parliament with ability, integrity and honour ever attentive rather to promote the Interest and Happiness of others than his own ...

It says much for the quality of all the portraits of Thomas Prowse that they not only portrayed what he looked like, but captured exactly the kind of man he was.

This research has centred around individual portraits and focused on one painting in particular, but it would not be complete without reference to a group portrait that was purchased from Bonhams by the Bath Preservation Trust in 1976 and has recently been restored.

The Four Bath Worthies ⁵² Artist Unknown

Image Credit: Museum of Bath Architecture -
Bath Preservation Trust



The significance of *The Four Bath Worthies* lies mainly in the fact that it provides a unique visual representation of the four men who were largely responsible for shaping the city's architectural history in the first half of the 18th century. But as with many historical group paintings, the scene looks contrived; the positioning and poses of the four men could well have been a mere figment of the artist's imagination. We may know who the men are, and the painting gives a vague impression of what they might have looked like, yet they lack character. There is no animation in this 'conversation piece' as there is, for instance, in William Hoare's painting of Dr. William Oliver and Mr. Jeremiah Peirce with a group of patients at the Bath Hospital.⁵³

Even so, different paintings have different values. The merit of *The Four Bath Worthies* is that it symbolises the coincidental coming together in Bath of four people who between them possessed the key elements and ability to plan and create a city now famous for its Georgian buildings. Robert Gay provided the land in Walcot and Ralph Allen the stone from his quarries; John Wood had architectural vision in abundance and Richard Jones the practical knowledge to oversee any proposed building scheme. The painting therefore represents a pivotal moment in Bath's history and, for many, creates a visual picture that remains in the memory far longer than the spoken or written word. Its particular relevance here is that, at present, it seems to be the only painting in existence to offer any idea of what John Wood the Elder might have looked like.

Nowadays it is hard to believe that no individual portraits of John Wood or his son were painted during their lifetimes. There is no doubt that the elder Wood in particular enjoyed the patronage of members of the aristocracy and set great store by some of the trappings of importance such as his coat of arms. Yet, knowing his tendency to be contrary and unconventional, there is also the possibility that for some reason he may not have felt entirely in tune with society's passion for portraits. He also did not enjoy the best of health. Another explanation could be that, as has been the case for many famous people of extraordinary skill and talent, recognition and acclaim arrived long after life had ended – and for both the Woods, death arrived far too soon. John Wood the Elder appears to have been tunnel-visioned, driven, obstinate, provoking and proud, though not in a showy way. His son has been described as calm, methodical, conscientious, modest, cautious, serious and thoughtful. They would have been preoccupied with architectural plans and building projects, immersed in family matters and fretting over the many other problems of work and daily life. A further consideration, especially for the younger Wood, was that portraits cost money. Not without reason did Gainsborough once describe his profitable business as '*picking pockets in the portrait way*'.⁵⁴

It might well be that portraits *were* painted of both of them – and also their wives and children. The paintings may not have survived, or they may still exist somewhere, unrecognised and forgotten. After the death of John Wood the Younger in 1781, many of the Wood descendants ended up in far-flung places. The last person in the family to bear the Wood surname was a great, great grandson of John Wood the Elder – Charles Stisted Wood – who died without issue in 1912 in Viareggio, Italy. If any family portraits still remain, it is most likely they would be in Florence, among the pictures bequeathed in 1896 by Henry Brock Wood, Charles's older brother, to their sister Sydney, with instructions that they should be given to her only daughter as soon as she reached the age of twenty-one.⁵⁵ In England, there remained no ancestral home where portraits could be proudly displayed; no direct male line descendant anxious to preserve the paintings of his prestigious ancestors for future generations.

It can only be hoped that one day an unknown portrait of John Wood the Elder or his son will be rediscovered and marvelled at. Meanwhile, perhaps there is some consolation to be found in the following quotation:

*... Every man's work, whether it be literature or music or pictures or architecture or anything else, is always a portrait of himself ...*⁵⁶

Certainly it might be said that the beautiful Georgian buildings designed and built by John Wood and his son have lived on to represent and immortalise them far more eloquently and impressively than any portraits painted by someone else ever could.

References and additional notes:

- ¹ *Bath in Time: Image Ref. 48838: Photograph by G. Bolwell (1941) of a portrait by Reginald W.M. Wright, City Librarian and Curator of the Victoria Art Gallery. Wright's portrait may have been a copy of a painting pictured in the Journal of the Royal Institution of British Architects, Vol. 46, No.11 (1939), p. 536, later identified as a portrait hanging in the Hall at Berkley House, near Frome.*
- ² *Susan Legouix Sloman: Artists' Picture Rooms in Eighteenth-Century Bath: Bath History, Vol. VI, 1996, pp. 132-154; historyofbath.org: accessed 04/05/21: 'At least 160 artists spent some time working in Bath in the eighteenth century, a statistic which indicates that sitting for a portrait was indeed one of the most popular activities at least half of these were miniaturists ...'*
- ³ *Evelyn Newby: William Hoare of Bath R.A. 1707–1792: Bath Museum Service, published by Alan Sutton, 1990; p.11: 'It is not known on whose advice he finally decided to remove to Bath, but it is tempting to suggest that John Wood the Elder may have had a hand in it ...'*
- ⁴ *See ref. 2: p. 152, endnote 48: G. Vertue, 'Note Books Volume III', The Twenty-Second Volume of the Walpole Society 1933-34 (1934), p.149; BRO, transcripts of Walcot Church Rate Books from 1742-56 show Hoare's name consistently next or next but one to that of silversmith and toyman Paul Bertrand whose house is known to have been in Queen Square (Bath Journal, 10 November 1775).*
- ⁵ *See ref. 3; p.13
[For further details about 'picture rooms' also see: Hugh Belsey: A Visit to the Studios of Hoare and Gainsborough: The Burlington Magazine, Vol. 129, No. 1007 (Feb. 1987), pp. 107-109: Burlington Magazine Publications Ltd. [See ref. 15]*
- ⁶ *Henry Hoare I (1677–1725), known as Henry the Good, was the son of Richard Hoare, founder of Hoare's Bank, and himself became a banker. In 1717 he acquired the Stourhead Estate, but died before the new house was completed. He had two sons – Henry Hoare II (1705–1785), known as 'the Magnificent', who inherited Stourhead, and Sir Richard Hoare (1709–1754), who became Lord Mayor of London 1745–46.*
- ⁷ *Lady Elizabeth Hastings (1682–1739) of Ledston Hall, Yorkshire, daughter of the 7th Earl of Huntingdon, was an English philanthropist, supporter of women's education and deeply religious. Her sister-in-law, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon was responsible for founding 64 chapels, including the Countess of Huntingdon Chapel in Bath (1765).*
- ⁸ *William Hoare was born in Suffolk and had no known family connection to the descendants of Richard Hoare, founder of Hoare's Bank. However, the two separate families with the same surname were linked eventually when, in 1765, 'Harry' Hoare, a great grandson of Richard and nephew of Henry Hoare 'the Magnificent' of Stourhead, married William Hoare's daughter, Mary.*
- ⁹ *Evelyn Newby : The Hoares of Bath: Bath History, Vol. I, 1986, p.106; historyofbath.org accessed 12/03/21*
- ¹⁰ *Wright's idealised interpretation of St Swithin's Church, Walcot, as it might have looked when completed in 1742, is thought to have been loosely based on a ground plan of its original foundations, still visible in the crypt of the present building, and details included in the Church Rambler of the Bath Herald, November 1899. Designed by Churchwarden Robert Smith and chosen in preference to a plan submitted by the elder John Wood, Smith's church was soon engulfed by the rapid growth of Georgian Bath's elegant Upper Town', and in 1777 John Palmer was commissioned to build a new one.*
- ¹¹ *Image of original Probate record of John Wood's Will (1754) ancestry.co.uk: Wills and Probate, accessed 04/05/21*
- ¹² *Michael Williams: John Wood Article 6: historyofbath.org*
- ¹³ *David Crellin and Penny Gay: John Wood Articles 4 and 5: historyofbath.org*
- ¹⁴ *Susan Sloman: Gainsborough in Bath: published for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2002; pp. 51-52*

- ¹⁵ *Hugh Belsey: A Visit to the Studios of Hoare and Gainsborough: The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 129, No. 1007 (Feb., 1987), pp. 107-109: Burlington Magazine Publications Ltd. www.jstor.org/stable/882786, accessed 07/04/21:
 '[I] let off all my House in the smoake except my Painting Room and best parlour to shew Pictures in ...'
 [M. Woodall, (Ed.) *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough*, 2nd edition, London [1963], p. 157 no.87]
- ¹⁶ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1395030> Brock Street, accessed 04/05/21:
 'No. 12 This was John Wood the Younger's house.'
- ¹⁷ Susan Sloman: *Gainsborough in Bath: Appendix III: By the time Gainsborough moved to the Circus, he was charging 20 guineas for a head or 3/4 portrait, 40 guineas for a half-length, and 60 guineas for a full length. William Hoare charged slightly less and there would have been many other good, but less expensive, artists in Bath. [A guinea would have been the equivalent of roughly £100 in today's money.]*
- ¹⁸ *Jefferys' Collection 1766–1780: Bath Record Office*;
 Also: Colin Johnston: *John Jefferys' Letters: The Survey of Bath and District No.24*, 2009; pp. 37–39
- ¹⁹ *Royal Institution of British Architects Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 11 (1939), 536
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *Photograph of Portrait of Thomas Prowse, Portraits Po-S, Box 11, Evelyn Newby Archive GB3010 The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London UK*
- ²² <https://www.bathintime.co.uk/portrait-of-john-wood-the-elder-1704-1754-48838>, accessed 07/06/21
<https://www.bathintime.co.uk/portrait-of-john-wood-the-elder-1704-1754-48839> ”
- ²³ *Bath Record Office: Local Studies Photograph Collections; Portraits/Wood John the Elder*
- ²⁴ David Wilson, 'A rare portrait of the famous architect and town planner of Bath, John Wood the elder (1704–54)', *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XXIII, 2015, p. 64, ref. 54: 'The painting... once in the ownership of the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution ...' was in fact a copy of the portrait of the amateur architect and politician Thomas Prowse MP of the grade II listed Berkley House, Somerset.'
https://georgiangroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/GGJ_2015_04_Wilson.pdf accessed 22/05/21.
 [As well as referring to the mistake over the Prowse portrait, David Wilson presents an intriguing, but very speculative, theory that a carved wooden bust, dated 1767 and inscribed 'I. Wood aged 49', was based on a death mask of Bath architect, John Wood the Elder, who died in 1754, in his 50th year. A more recent discovery by Bath antiquarian, David Bridgwater, of a second carved bust depicting a younger version of a man with very similar features and inscribed 'Iohn Wood, aged 36, 1754' strongly suggests that both carvings were of the same J. Wood (as yet unknown) who was born in 1717 or 1718. In which case neither carving could possibly represent John Wood of Bath, b.1704, or his son, b.1728.]
- ²⁵ © Historic England 2021: The National Heritage List Text Entry contained in this material was obtained on 07/06/21. The most publicly available up to date National Heritage List Text Entries can be obtained from <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>: Berkley House: List Entry Number: 1058192
- ²⁶ *Portraits Po-S, Box 11, Evelyn Newby Archive GB3010 The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London UK: Correspondence between Evelyn Newby and the curator of 18th Century Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery; July 1988*
- ²⁷ Giles Worsley, *Berkley House, Somerset: Country Life Magazine*, 19th May 1988, pp.168-171
- ²⁸ See ref. 26
- ²⁹ *Ibid.* Letter from Evelyn Newby to Michael Philips Esq., owner of Berkley House, dated 20th January 1989, requesting a visit to Berkley House for closer examination of both the portrait and the filigree rococo stucco work in the Hall
- ³⁰ See ref. 22
- ³¹ Michael McGarvie, F.S.A.: *St Mary's Berkley, A History and Guide*, p.16
- ³² See ref. 27, p.170
- ³³ *Memorial Inscription to Abigail Prowse in the Church of St John the Baptist, Axbridge, quoted in St Mary's, Berkley, A History and Guide*, p.18

- ³⁴ *Image of Portrait of Thomas Prowse Esq.*: https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/thomas-prowse-c-17081767-39345/view_as/grid/search/keyword:thomas-prowse/page/1, accessed 05/05/2021
- ³⁵ Information from John Page, Trustee of Axbridge Town Trust; also see acknowledgements
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ See ref. 27, p.171
- ³⁸ Quoted (1995) by Lewis Namier & John Brooke in *The House of Commons, 1754-1790*, Vol. 1, p. 336; referenced H. Colvin: *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840*, p.479
- ³⁹ *Howard Colvin: A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840*: John Murray, London, 1978; Thomas Prowse: pp.666-667
- ⁴⁰ *The Temple of Harmony: designed by Thomas Prowse*: <https://halswellpark.wordpress.com/2016/01/22/the-temple-of-harmony/>, accessed 06/05/21
- ⁴¹ Michael McCarthy: *Sir Roger Newdigate: Drawings for Copt Hall, Essex, and Arbury Hall, Warwickshire: Architectural History*, 1973, Vol. 16 (1973), pp. 26-36 and 77-88: SAHGB Publications Limited <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1568303>, accessed 12/04/21
- ⁴² RIBApix Ref. No.: RIBA20081: Image date 1740: Architects/designer: Newdigate, Sir Roger (1719-1806), Prowse, Thomas (1708-1767), Sanderson, John (d. 1774)
- ⁴³ Michael McGarvie, R.S.A.: *St Mary's Berkley, A History and Guide*, p.19
- ⁴⁴ Photograph (edited) of Interior Dome of St Mary's Church, Berkley: Portraits Po-S, Box 11, Evelyn Newby Archive; GB3010 The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London UK [Re: the interior Rotunda originally planned for Copt Hall and the interior dome of Berkley Church, also see: Foyle and Pevsner: *Somerset North and Bristol*; published by Yale University Press 2011, p. 220: Berkley House – 'Amongst the portraits one of Thomas Prowse drawing a rotunda or tempietto.']
- ⁴⁵ (a) Hugh Belsey: *Thomas Gainsborough: The Portraits, Fancy Pictures and Copies After Old Masters*, Vol.2: Yale University Press, New Haven and London 2019, for the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art; pp. 696-8.
(b) Portraits Po-S, Box 11, Evelyn Newby Archive GB3010 The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London UK: Thomas Gainsborough R.A.: Notes by Michael Harvard, dated 30 Aug. 1992, on the existence of two further versions by Gainsborough of his portraits of Thomas and Elizabeth Prowse
- ⁴⁶ See ref. 26
- ⁴⁷ See ref. 45 (a)
[Thomas Prowse's only son and heir, George, was buried in Axbridge just eight months after his father. One of the versions of Mrs Prowse's portrait belongs to the Leeds Museums and Galleries Group.]
- ⁴⁸ Christie's Auction 2008: *Prowse Portraits* : <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5133593>, accessed 06/05/21
- ⁴⁹ For Namier & Brooke reference also see ref. 38
- ⁵⁰ Evelyn Newby: *The Hoares of Bath; Bath History*, Vol. I, 1986, p. 114
['... it seems that the two men, if not very close as their temperaments differed so greatly, were at least on a friendly footing ...']
- ⁵¹ See ref. 45(a); p. 695: primary source: BBJ, XVI (23)
- ⁵² The Museum of Bath Architecture - Bath Preservation Trust: *The Four Bath Worthies: Group Portrait purchased in 1976*
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⁵⁶ *Samuel Butler: The Way of All Flesh: published posthumously in 1903*

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- Susan Sloman ***Pickpocketing the Rich: Portrait Painting in Bath 1720-1800:*** written essays published for an exhibition at the Holburne Museum of Art, Bath, 2002, with the support of The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art
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- Michael McGarvie ***St Mary's Berkley: A History and Guide:*** published by the Frome Society for Berkley P.C.C., 1992
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- Roger Rolls ***The Hospital of the Nation: The Story of Spa Medicine and the Mineral Water Hospital at Bath:*** Bird Publications, Bath, 1988
- Sue Shephard ***Three Gentlemen in Arcadia:*** A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol, October 2003
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Charlotte Brunskill, Archivist and Records Manager: Berkley House portrait of Thomas Prowse: black and white image in a Rococo frame from a photograph found in Evelyn Newby's files at The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art

Axbridge Town Trust: Portrait of Thomas Prowse given to the Trust by the Prowse family and now displayed at Axbridge Town Hall

Present owner: Portrait of Thomas Prowse Esq. in a red jacket, by Thomas Gainsborough (c1761); private collection

Bath and North East Somerset Council: photograph image of portrait by Reginald W. M. Wright

Bath Preservation Trust: Group portrait entitled *The Four Bath Worthies*, artist unknown, purchased from Bonhams in 1976

RIBApix: Early Plan of Copt Hall Rotunda (c1740): Sir Roger Newdigate and Thomas Prowse (architects)

Janet Cornish, Staff Team, St Swithin's, Walcot, Bath: Watercolour by R.W.M. Wright: Artist's impression of Walcot Church as it might have looked in 1742

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