

The Survey

of Bath and District

The Magazine of the Survey of Old Bath and Its Associates

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Editors: Mike Chapman

Elizabeth Holland



Merlin reads his prophecies to King Vortigern, *Prophetia Merlini*. Before 1300. Published by Courtesy of the British Library, MS.Cotton, Claud., B.VII f° 224. (See Dr.Kellaway's article, below).



IVY

Arms: Quarterly, 1 & 4: (argent) a lion rampant (gules), 2 & 3 a fess raguly between three roundels.

Crest: A garb.

'Sir George Ivy of Westkingto. in the Cty of Wilts and Dame Susannah his wife, youngest daughter to Laurence Hide of West Hatch, Cty of Wilts, sister of Sir Nicholas Hide [*Hyde*], Kt, late Lord Chief Justice of the kings bench [*uncle of*

Back Cover; The Ivy(e) family, who were associated with Wiltshire and Oxford, held the lease of the Abbey Church House and Hetling Pump House site in the reign of Charles I and obviously lived there at least part of the time. Roland Symons has kindly provided these drawings of the arms of Sir George Ivy and his in-laws the Hide (Hyde) family. It is hoped to make a further study of the Ivy(e) family in a



HIDE (Hyde)

Arms: (azure) a chevron between 3 lozenges (or).

Crest: an eagle rising wings elevated and

Included in this issue:

- Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* – A Geologist's View

Dr.G.A.Kellaway

- Report on this year's work by the Bath Archaeological Trust
- The Chapmans Arrive in Bath
- The Origins of the Royal United Hospital
- Bath's First Photographic Studio

Marek Lewcun
Elizabeth Holland
Dr. Roger Rolls
Mike Chapman

NEWS FROM THE SURVEY

We regret to report that we did not receive the grant for which the University of Bath applied on our behalf, the reason being the "fierce competition" for funds from that board. We are grateful to the University for endeavouring to get it.

The Survey has made it clear long ago that its map-making projects will not continue except in response to grants or commissions. We do professional work and it must be paid for on a professional level. We will therefore be looking at other possible sources. We shall be carrying on with the Chapman history, which is one of the Survey's projects, and also with the Streetlore Project, which has been going very well. We are continuing with our indexing at the Record Office.

It has been suggested that a wider range of grants is open to registered charities, bodies with humanitarian or educational aims rather than commercial ones. (Bath Archaeological Trust for example is a registered charity.) The two of us who constitute the map-making Survey are hardly numerous enough to be a "charitable body". The Friends might like to discuss the possibility of seeking charity status and applying for grants for the Survey's work? It is up to them.

A comment made by one of the board's evaluators was that the Survey seems to be doing very well as it is, with all the support it receives in the town, i.e. work hard and be a success, and you can just carry on with more of the same. However this does show how the Friends have established themselves as the central local history group in Bath which brings together all those interested in Bath history, whether they are doing academic style research or not, or are actively engaged as Mayor's Guides, or whatever.

For instance Dr.Kellaway, Consultant Geologist to B&NES, has contributed to this issue of the *Survey* a completely new theory about the geological implications of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*. Peter Davenport, Director of Excavations, most kindly read it through and added some archaeological comment, for which "invaluable help" Dr.Kellaway sent us his special thanks. Marek Lewcun has once again reported on the recent work of the Archaeological Trust. Other people have made their contributions. Without the Friends the magazine would not exist, so it is the Friends who have created this forum.

Mike is working on a study of the springs and watercourses of Bath, to be published with our latest B&NES grant. In the meantime he is putting the finishing touches to the booklet on Bimbery which will be available soon.



Daguerreotype photograph of its inventor, Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre. (See the article on Bath's First Photographic Studio on p.41ff.).

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NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS

Our last issue carried a stop-press notice concerning the death of Mrs. June Hodkinson on 21 October 2000. A memory of June by Mrs. Ruth Haskins appears below.

Bath's Early Hospitals

The annual lunchtime gathering of the Friends was held at the URC Halls, Grove Street, on Thursday 9 November, when the Chairman, Ruth Haskins, warmly welcomed the speaker, Dr. Roger Rolls, Friends and their guests. The President, Dr. John Wroughton, was unable to be present and sent his apologies. Sadly, Ruth announced that June Hodkinson had died on 21 October and Committee members had attended her funeral the previous week. June had been the Secretary and cornerstone of the Friends since its inception and had worked tirelessly to ensure that everything always ran smoothly. An appreciation appears elsewhere in this Newsletter. Ruth thanked the Committee Members and also their husbands for all their hard work in preparing for this meeting and for their continued support.

Dr Rolls, author of *Hospital of the Nation* followed with an illustrated talk on '*Bath's early medical buildings - from wards, corridors and dead-houses good Lord deliver us*'. In medieval times very few hospitals were founded, the sick being treated at home or in their lodgings if they were wealthy but others could only rely on charity. Bath charities grew up around the baths but in about 1609 Bellott's Hospital opened for inmates with medical problems who were permitted to stay for one month only. A Master and Matron were in residence and a medical practitioner was paid to examine patients.

Early medical history is a useful means to see how today's ideas are taken from the past. In the early 18th century a General Hospital (later the Mineral Water Hospital) was founded by voluntary subscription donated by the wealthy to treat patients from outside the city. The design was similar to a country house, set in open ground and providing fresh air. Provision was made for wards, resident and administrative staff, an Apothecary's room, a dispensary and a laboratory for making up medicines while the basement housed the wash rooms, kitchens and the dead-house (mortuary). Dr Rolls said very few post mortems were carried out in those days!

In 1747 the Bath Pauper Scheme was established for Bath people to have outpatient treatment and later the Casualty Hospital was opened in Kingsmead Street to treat the growing number of workers injured from accidents arising from the very busy local building trade. This was possibly the first hospital in the country as we know it today. It subsequently amalgamated with the Bath City Infirmary and Dispensary, which also had outpatient facilities, to become the United Hospital on the site in Beau Street now occupied by the City of Bath College.

On behalf of all those present Ruth warmly thanked Dr Rolls for such an interesting and entertaining talk.

Priscilla Olver November 2000

Dr. Rolls' talk was indeed much appreciated, and an extended article by him appears later in this issue. The Friends were also gratified to see that in spite of the death of June Hodgkinson, who usually supervised the catering, the present team was able to provide lunch for around 50 people. A bookstall was run by Leslie Holt with the assistance of Paul Blackmore and other tasks were as usual carried out by different members of the Friends.

Chairman of the Friends Mrs. Ruth Haskins would like to stress the need for a new Secretary of the Friends. Mrs. Priscilla Olver is very kindly taking charge of the minutes at the moment, but cannot promise to do so indefinitely. Mike and Elizabeth do not mind carrying on as programme secretaries, though this will depend on the wishes of any new Secretary, who may wish to include this aspect - or may not!

Dr. John Wroughton has now completed his nine articles for the *New Dictionary of National Biography*, and has written three-quarters of his new book on the history of Colston's School in Bristol. He will shortly begin work on editing a souvenir volume to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the foundation of King Edward's School, in 2002. In the meantime, he has been commissioned to write a background article on the Civil War in the West for the BBC's website to support the new series of Simon Schama's *History of Britain*, which began on 8 May.

Sue Sloman has gained her doctorate. She writes:

I am delighted to have finally graduated, after seven years as a part-time PhD student at the University of Bristol. My thesis *Gainsborough in Bath 1758-1774* is currently away with a publisher's reader, and I hope to hear more some time in April. If it does appear in print it will certainly have a better title! It focuses on Gainsborough's patronage during the Bath period of his life and elaborates on several themes I have touched on previously, such as his working practice and the display of his work in his Bath houses. It also discusses his Bath landscape paintings and their place in the early development of Picturesque theory.

Allan Keevil recently gave a talk at the University of Bath on his views on the Fosseway in the Bath area. The hall was packed and great interest was shown, with requests for repeats elsewhere.

On Wednesday 16 May Mrs. Sheila Edwards led a walk for the Friends in Bathwick with fourteen people present including Sheila. Mrs. Edwards suggested calling the walk off as it was pouring with rain, but the party enthusiastically decided to continue, and they sheltered in the porch of the Argyle Street Chapel while she explained the highlights of Bathwick. Arthur Green, who also leads Bathwick walks, was able to contribute some interesting points. As the rain slackened somewhat, a quick journey was taken round the neighbourhood, with the promise of another meeting some other day. Everyone is to be congratulated on their enthusiasm for Bath history, typical of the spirit of the Friends.

The Friends are glad to welcome new members. Douglas Bernhardt has been writing a dissertation on G.P. Manners, and Friends may have heard him speak on the subject of Manners' work. Robert Mimmack was formerly Director of Development and Environmental Services with B&NES, and is now working with the National Trust as the manager of Avebury.

We have just heard of the death of former committee member Peter Addison and hope to say more later. We also regret to have to announce the death of Phyllis Beard, one of the Chapman cousins and a keen student of family history. Meanwhile Mrs. Phyllis Thomas writes to say that she herself is moving to a retirement home, of which she has sent us some beautiful sunlit pictures. Mrs. Thomas always photocopies our Chapman articles to distribute to the family overseas.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. June Hodkinson

I would like to pay tribute to June Hodkinson who died recently after a long illness bravely born.

As our Secretary she worked tirelessly for the Friends from its inception. Her quiet efficiency made sure our meetings ran smoothly. Friendly and charming, June made a lasting impression on all who met her. She will be sorely missed, and remembered with affection.

The Committee and other members of the Friends attended her funeral service in the Abbey on 31 October, with Mike and Elizabeth. A beautiful tribute of flowers had been arranged by Mrs. Denise Walker. Afterwards we met members of the family at the Francis Hotel, Queen Square. We gave a donation from the Friends to the charities she supported, Dorothy House and the South American Missionary Society.

Ruth Haskins, Chairman

CITY NEWS

The Building of Bath Museum

Samantha Baber has now left Bath for London. Cathryn Spence has been appointed as the new part-time Curator. Bath Preservation Trust writes that she has excellent recommendations and experience having worked for five years in both administrative and curatorial rolls at the V&A, lectured extensively and contributed to a number of publications. She is currently taking a PhD in the establishment of The National Gallery of British Art at South Kensington.

On Saturday 2 June the Building of Bath Museum held a Gala day called *Streets Ahead: A Celebration of the London Road*, lasting from 2.30-5.30 p.m. An exhibition on the London Road was on view and one entitled "Building Banners", together with family craft activities. The afternoon ended with a reception.

The William Herschel Museum

The William Herschel Museum has been awarded a grant of £4,500 by the Clore Duffield Foundation and is the only museum in the region to have been given a donation. Debbie James, curator, said "We are delighted to have been given this grant after the fourth time of asking!" The grant will provide a Replica and Handling Collection within the town house at 19 New King Street, Bath, where the 18th century musician and astronomer lived. The replica astronomical and workshop instruments will be of particular use for secondary school pupils.

In December 2000 the Clore Foundation and the Vivien Duffield Foundation were merged to become the Clore Duffield Foundation. The new Foundation allocates charitable donations concentrating on support for education, the arts, museum and gallery education, health and social welfare. Like its forerunners, the Foundation will have a particular emphasis on supporting children, young people and society's most vulnerable individuals, through the charities which work to educate, inspire, empower, or care for them.

William Herschel Museum, 19 New King Street, Bath.

Tel: 01225 311342.

Open Daily from March-October 2-5pm.

Weekends throughout the winter 2-5pm.

Visit the website at www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk

The Roman Baths Museum

About 17,000 school pupils visit the Roman Baths each year and the Museum has now created an “interactive teaching room”, with a window which overlooks the Great Roman Bath. Special permission had to be obtained to make this alteration in a scheduled ancient monument. Further information about this room can be obtained from 01225 477757.

The Museum has been praised for its use of mobile phone style audio guides, which have been available on its premises and at the Museum of Costume. These are now being introduced elsewhere in the city as well.

“Meet the Ancestors”

After the TV show, a “Meet the Ancestors” display was held at the Romans Baths Museum. The actual TV presentation appeared on BBC2 in January. Many people here felt, naturally, that it was the best programme in this series. The information presented has already been discussed at our group by Marek Lewcun and is featured on pp.6-7 of the last issue of this magazine. An interesting addition was an artist’s reconstruction of Walcot Street as a busy Roman shopping centre. Another welcome addition was the sight of Peter Davenport walking down Walcot Street explaining what it was like in Roman days. We felt the whole episode was very instructive and we suggested in various quarters that the programme should be used as a video for schools. Several references appeared in *The Bath Chronicle*, for instance 25 January 2001, p.12. A point the TV did not put across was that tests had combined to suggest that the male skeleton discovered was probably Egyptian. The two burials also appear to have been Christian, as Marek indicated to us.

Bath Archaeological Trust

Just a reminder of dates we have already mentioned... From 16-20 July 2001 Bath Archaeological Trust will be holding an exhibition at Bath Central Library. On Thursday 1 November 2001 there will be a lunchtime lecture at the Francis Hotel. To contact Bath Archaeological Trust, ring 01225 329659, Mrs.Nina Beaven.

A report by Marek Lewcun on the work of the Trust appears below. He will also be speaking at the AGM 8 June 2001.

The Museum of Bath at Work

We look forward also to hearing Stuart Burroughs at the AGM. Stuart is now working one day a week (Tuesdays) at the Radstock Museum. Perhaps that would be a chance for an outing by the Friends - a visit to the Museum and one of Mike’s guided tours around Radstock and the Coal Canal? What do the Friends feel about this?

The Museum is currently holding an exhibition by Wessex Water, “telling the story of water supply from Roman times to the present day”. A special opening was held which several of us attended. Mike and Elizabeth were present, and from the Friends, besides Stuart of course, there were Jane Coates, Malcolm Hitchcock and Allan Keevil. Mike Bone, a contributor to the latest *Bath History*, also attended. Refreshments were served, and there were short addresses. Some fine ornamental ceramic work caught the eye, and provoked memories of country houses some of us had visited in the past. The Museum newsletter has this notice about the Exhibition:

The Exhibition covers the period from Roman times up to Wessex Water's plans for the new century, and runs until December 2001. Ask at the Museum about lectures, walks, educational activities and other events associated with the exhibition.

The new staircase, paid for by the Friends of the Museum, was in place and proved to be very convenient. The upper floor had been new carpeted, giving it a cosy atmosphere and making a very agreeable meeting place.

The Museum has been collaborating with the Building of Bath Museum in a study of the Julian Road area. On Saturday 9 June, the day after our Friends AGM, there will be a Julian Road Gala Day. A guided walk of Julian Road will begin at St. Andrew's School and finish at the museum where an historical pageant, a temporary exhibition, artistic installations, slide show, World War II finger buffet and period music will be played. The theme of this morning event which will begin at 10 a.m. is the history of Julian Road from Roman times to the present day and those attending are invited to turn up in historical fancy dress. The finger buffet is based on Marguerite Patten's Ration Recipes and promises to be as palatable as all those wartime recipes could be. The children of St Andrew's School are to be "kitted out" in period costume so you are welcome to do the same! The event is completely free and is supported by Bath & North East Somerset Council, the South West Museum Council and the National Lottery Fund. On Saturday 16 June the Museum will hold a Giant Book Sale.

The Spa Project

As everyone knows, work has now begun on the new Spa building, and it seems the planned opening date is now 2002. Allied activities have been held, such as the conference on "The Language of Water" in Bath Assembly Rooms, 17-20 April, with an exhibition at the Hot Bath Gallery, Hot Bath Street. Dr. Alan Rayner, of the Department of Biology and Biochemistry at the University was connected with the event and on 19 April there was a civic reception and dinner at the Pump Room.

The conference included some very jolly titles for talks, such as "Wild Whorls: Drops, Waves and Vortices in Nature, Technology and Ourselves". Also, "Water Logic - Zero Spirals and Fluid Numbers", and "Sacred Springs: Oracles and the Underworld - reflections on water as mirror for the transforming power of the imagination". Obviously an event designed to enlarge the mind.

Walcot Plans

The Walcot Street Fund has been set up to help provide improvements in Walcot Street. Fund spokesman Rae Harris reports that the fund is managed by the Walcot Design Group with the sole purpose of enhancing the street. An initial project will be to repair and upgrade the Ladymead trough and drinking fountain. *The Bath Chronicle* reports that Elizabeth Landon gave this feature to the city in 1860 when this part of Walcot Street was still the site of the cattle fair. (As Allan Keevil demonstrated in his article, it is not on the site of the medieval Cornwell.) A touch of *son et lumière* seems to be planned, and also the restoration of the Biblical text.

Walcot Nation Day will be held on 10 June, including a day-long display of photographs and of ideas for restoration, in the courtyard of Ladymead House.



The Ladymead Fountain. Photograph by courtesy of *The Bath Chronicle*.

The Widcombe and Lyncombe History Study Group

Everyone seems to be branching out nowadays, and on 19 April the WLHSG held a well-attended meeting concerned with the geology of the area. The following account is reprinted by permission of *The Bath Chronicle* from their issue of 26 April, p.8.

Going back to Jurassic times - WIDCOMBE: Keen historians discovered more about the Jurassic period at their meeting this month. Elizabeth Devon, secretary of Bath Geological Society fascinated members of the Widcombe and Lyncombe History Study Group as she explained how the local geology dates from the Jurassic period (140-195 million years ago). She illustrated how the seas had risen and retreated, as had the ice caps. Ms.Devon went on to show how the geology of the Widcombe and Lyncombe area was formed and what it consisted of. She had taken photos from many viewpoints around the area, then transposed the geological strata over them. She explained how the various layers, like the Midford sand and Fuller's earth, were in context to the area. Doreen Collyer, Chairman, thanked Elizabeth warmly and said how lucky pupils are to have such an enthusiastic teacher. Elizabeth replied that it was a pleasure to have such an interested audience and offered to take a group around Brown's Folly - an offer which was readily accepted.

During the refreshment break, members were able to look at the many fossils which Elizabeth had provided. Using magnifying glasses, they examined ammonites and similar objects. A dish of very coarse sand was full of minute shells and what looked like miniature sponges made of stone.

B&NES Record Office

The Lottery grant received by the Record Office towards computerised cataloguing of its resources is now being expended, and researchers will have met the cataloguist in the office. This will do much to assist the Record Office in handling its vast array of collections.

Streetlore Project

The streetlore project is going very well, and the photographs received have passed the "dozens" mark and become "hundreds". Mr. and Mrs.Cope for example have recorded both sides of Weston Road. Members of the Widcombe and Lyncombe History Study Group in particular have taken the project up and, if they continue at the same rate, should be able to record the entire parish. It seems best for the local groups to organise the taking of photographs, as different members are able to agree to do different streets. It is hoped that the Survey can collect duplicate sets for the Record Office. The Survey will be able to arrange for pictures of Central Bath - we have dozens of our own already, even if they do not all belong to the Millennium period.

At the last meeting of the WLHSG, when a report was made by Elizabeth on the streetlore venture, it was suggested that the photographs might go on a CD-rom, so as to be accessible to the general public. An exhibition was also suggested, perhaps during Widcombe Week next year, organised by the Widcombe Association. People are adding historical notes to their pictures, so we hope the collections will tie in with any other street databases which have been proposed.

As we have mentioned before, the Survey has a collection of hundreds of newspaper cuttings of Bath streets and houses. Two large ring-binders on Widcombe and Lyncombe have already been donated

to the Record Office at the Guildhall, Accession 350, NCA (Newspaper Cuttings and Adverts), and also Georgian Bath north of the old City, which is chiefly the parish of Walcot. We have just completed Bathampton, Batheaston and Bathford, ready to donate.

As the Record Office belongs to the whole of B&NES, streetlore projects from other towns would be welcome. If the Guildhall ever becomes a Local History Centre, as some councillors have suggested, all such material will make a valuable addition to the collections already there.



Ormond Lodge, Weston Road - North Side. Photograph: Gillian Cope, October 2000.

BATH ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

The Trust has continued the same busy run of work reported in Newsletter 14. Two major site investigations came to very successful conclusions, while new and forthcoming projects are promising interesting results.

The Old Tramsheds Site, Walcot Street

Investigations here continued into February 2001. The focus of the excavations was the northern fringe of the site, to the west of the former Walcot Iron Foundry. The majority of this area was found to be occupied by the cellaring of the two properties shown on Harcourt Masters' map of 1794. To the south, elements of the mid 19th century foundry and cottages were identified and recorded. Outside the cellars, however, along the western edge of the site, a sequence of archaeological features and deposits from the 1st to 18th centuries had survived. These included remains of ditches and walls of Roman date, the walls later being robbed of their stonework during the medieval period from which post holes were also recorded. An accumulation of cultivation soils spanning the medieval and early post-medieval periods, in which important waste material from a nearby clay pipe workshop had been dumped, developed above this. The archaeological sequence was concluded in the third quarter of the 18th century with the construction of the Georgian terrace fronting Old Orchard. A report on the site is currently in preparation.

East Baths, Roman Baths Museum

A major redesign of the display of the East Baths will have been completed by the time that this newsletter is issued. With its complex array of walls and floors spanning four centuries of bathing, largely excavated between 1755 and 1923, the eastern suite has always presented difficulties in providing an explanation of its many stages of development to visitors. Illustrated signage and guided tours have not always left the visitor satisfied that they have fully comprehended the complexity of the site, and the redesign has sought to resolve this issue.

Until recently the southern fringe of the large display area below Kingston Parade had a somewhat untidy curvilinear edge to it, where previous excavations had edged as close as they dared to the stumps of walls of the cellars which once belonged to the Kingston Baths. Indeed, it was old excavations which led to the collapse of one of these walls in 1994. The consequence of this was the partial closure of York Street and the construction of a broad cantilevered concrete bridge to span the remainder of the 18th century structures. With these structures secure, it has now been possible to excavate further into a hypocaust that had been only partly exposed, creating a tidier and more acceptable presentation.

The results of the excavation were enlightening, and largely supported a recent reappraisal of the phasing published so far. In summary, each element of the southern half of the suite is one phase of alteration later than previously considered. The southern fringe had originally hosted an entrance to the Baths, with steps leading up from outside to the level of the paving of the great bath. A new entrance and steps appears to have built slightly to the east, before the south wall of a later room beyond it was demolished and a hypocaust built over it. Evidence was also found to indicate that the adjoining room to its west also began life at a lower level rather than a hypocaust being primary to its construction. The hypocausts of both rooms were eventually filled in and new floors laid over their remains which can be seen today.

The new-look East Baths will now enable visitors to walk out on new walkways into the rooms as they appeared in the fourth period, with suspended panels recreating the lines of the Roman walls as they appeared at that time and painted in a Roman fashion. The archaeological deposits which

developed here have been incorporated into the display, and appear in cross-section as if a slice through a many-layered cake.

Malthouse and Site of New Road Buildings and River Place, Lower Bristol Road, Twerton

At the time of writing the Trust is carrying out excavations on premises formerly occupied in parts by Bishops Move and Drainage Systems. An historical analysis of the land they occupy and a standing buildings survey was carried out by Mike Chapman before work commenced, describing how malthouses developed along the Twerton bank of the Avon with the turnpike improvements of the early 19th century, before the area was bisected by the Great Western Railway on its viaduct in the 1830s.

An 1830s malthouse, enlarged in the 1890s still stands on the site today. Excavations are being carried out within the building itself, and also on the open area to the west, concentrating on what remains of four houses in River Place West. Built in the 1830s, these comprised a terrace of back-to-back cottages, a form of construction rarely found in Bath by comparison with some other towns. Bombed in 1941, prior to the 1942 Baedeker raids, and demolished in the 1950s and 1960s, an intact ground plan still survives complete with fireplaces, tiled hearths, and linoleum-covered floors. The cottages of River Place West might be compared with Rackfield Place further to the west, but the latter were not built back-to-back, becoming so only when the original terrace was added to at a later date.

A letter from Rob Bell to *The Bath Chronicle*, asking for any former workers and residents to contact the Trust, prompted many people, including the Mayor of Bath Mrs. Angela Godfrey, to share their memories of life in and around the malthouse. There is an invaluable oral source of information on life in the industrial heartland of Twerton.



(right) The foundation walls of the 1830s Malthouse, revealed below the 1890s floor.



The Malthouse, Lower Bristol Road, Twerton. River Place lay beside the river behind the Malthouse, on the west (left) side.

Other excavations and watching briefs

A watching brief at *6 Cheap Street* revealed that an 17th century gable end still survived in the standing building, which was occupied by the Hind Inn until the late 18th century. The details of the stonework were drawn and recorded by architectural historian Kirsty Rodwell, and have been left intact. At the *Hot Bath* a number of visits were made to record those parts of the bathing establishment created by Decimus Burton in 1830, below A.J.Taylor's alterations, revealed during work on the spa development. At *St.Swithin's Yard, Walcot Street*, a few minor observations at the old Aldridges' auctioneers site brought the excavations there to a close, with no new information being added to that already reported. Close to *All Saints Church Hall, Weston*, pot sherds of mainly medieval date, and a few Roman, were recovered from subsoils when a retaining wall was rebuilt on the uphill (north) side of the parish hall, formerly the village school. The majority of the *boreholes along the Avon Valley* drilled by Wessex Water (see Newsletter 14) during the autumn and winter produced no features of archaeological interest, but one at the rear of Windsor Villas, much closer to the bank of the River Avon than burials and other finds previously recorded nearby, yielded a number of fragments of Roman pottery. For the first time in recent years the Trust has crossed the border into Wiltshire, excavating trenches at the north end of *The Conigre, Trowbridge*, where some impressive survivors of the 18th century houses built on the wealth of the successful clothiers of the town still stand. Only contemporary garden features were discovered here, with just a few sherds of early medieval pottery being recovered from the subsoil.

University of Bath

At present the Trust is working for the University of Bath to provide the archaeological input to a major development of the facilities at the campus. These comprise the creation of an Institute of Sport on the eastern side of the campus, adjacent to the present swimming pool and athletics track, and the

construction of additional student accommodation and a new university hall close by. New parking facilities will be created here, while the parking facilities on the west side of the campus, off the North Road access point, will be redesigned and extended. A considerable amount of research has gone into producing the design of a programme of archaeological investigation prior to the construction phases, including detailed geophysical surveys and evaluation trenches. These will ensure that the remains in this rich and sensitive landscape will be fully recorded and a concise report made in due course.

Preliminary research has brought together the many small pieces of investigation which have taken place on Bathampton and Claverton Downs in the last 200 years, which included excavations of Bronze Age barrows close to Sham Castle by Scarth and Skinner. Remains on the downs include, in addition to the barrows, flint tools related to early hunting and gathering, a well-preserved Iron Age and Roman field system divided by stone walls, and Roman buildings related to farming and possible quarrying activities. Documented activities on the downs include a section of William Waller's Parliamentarian army camping there in 1643 during the Civil War, a two-mile race course by 1729 marked out by large standing stones, and quarrying in the 18th century, before the 19th century Norwoods Farm and later playing fields gave way to the University in 1965. The Trust engaged Robert Whitaker M.B.E., whose dissertation on the archaeology of the downs was a contributing factor to his recently being awarded an M.A. by Bristol University, to assist with its research.

Marek Lewcun

DISTRICT NEWS

People of the West Country

With so much controversy going on nowadays, many people would like to encourage the growth of community feeling in the different regions of England. "Co-operation" is written into the constitution of the Survey of Old Bath, and this is a movement in which we feel we can join, since it is not dependant on race, religion or politics, which are outside the interests of the Survey, but on bringing people together to appreciate the culture to which they all belong.

Our region is the West Country. Wiltshire would be included in this, since one should not separate Stonehenge from the other stone monuments in considering the region's history and culture. The counties are therefore Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, and Gloucestershire. These six counties are not synonymous with "Wessex", which as a kingdom stretched farther east. Indeed Bath itself was at one time part of Mercia. At an earlier stage Cornwall, Devon and most of Somerset were regarded as being West Wales. "People of the West Country" is a concept which stretches from the earliest times to the present. We understand the Rastafarian poet Benjamin Zephaniah has already begun a study of the West Indian families who are "English of the West Country", and time permitting, we would like to contact him at some stage.

This issue features a study of a name associated with Uther Pendragon and with Tintagel, as well as with Wales, Merlin. Some say he is really a version of a Welsh bard, Myrddin. Others say that Myrddin himself was a figure invented to fit the early name of Carmarthen. The personality of Merlin would appear to be legend, but out of the tales associated with him Dr.Kellaway, consultant geologist to B&NES, has created a fascinating study relevant to our region.

In “Meet the Ancestors” we heard of an Egyptian visitor to the West Country who was buried in Walcot, apparently as a Christian. The latest chapter of the Chapman history includes some of the people of Bristol. We have always supported the idea of putting Bath into its setting. This has been the policy of Dr. John Wroughton in his Civil War studies. All we do now is to extend the concept of “and District” slightly more widely than our magazine has usually done.

St. John’s Church, Keynsham

In February this year a *son et lumière* display was arranged at this church, recounting “700 years of the history of the town and church, including triumph and tragedy”, in 15 episodes. The display was presented by the Bridges Society. The family were patrons of the church. Sir Thomas Bridges is well-known in Bath history through his role in the Civil War. (Captain Henry Chapman’s efforts to have him elected as MP for Bath are described in our Guildhall booklet pp.49-50 (*Bath Guildhall and its Neighbourhood: 800 Years of Local Government* by Elizabeth Holland and Mike Chapman).) The Bridges Society was set up as an independent charity to raise money for the conservation of the church and over the past ten years has raised more than £10,000 for this purpose.

Norton-Radstock Historic Streetscape Survey

An historic streetscape survey of Midsomer Norton and Radstock is currently under way. Commissioned by B&NES, it is being carried out by Mike Chapman, Jane Root and Bath Archaeological Trust, the same team which produced the Bath Streetscape Survey. Not only will this provide a guide for planning officers in retaining the historical character of the streets but, as with Bath, will also throw new light on the urban development of the area.

Local Historic Buildings Survey

Although Dunkerton will not now be able to take part in this project, as reported in our last issue, a large proportion of the historic buildings in Batheaston has already been surveyed. Mike has been employed to draw up the plans, elevations and sections, and the first drafts should soon be available for setting up on a website.

LETTERS PAGE

Letters Editor: Leslie Holt

Bath,

Dear Miss Holland,

This is just to thank you for having me as a guest at the talk last week. I met some delightful people (including your mealtime helpers!) and enjoyed every minute of the meeting. I would like to thank Mrs.Haskins for her part in this but, most of all, I am glad that the large attendance at the meeting proved that many people have an interest in the work of your group.

Sincerely,

Kate Clarke

Bath, 2 March 2001

Dear Leslie,

On the 26th February I went to a presentation to Resident Subscribers of the Bath Spa Project and was heartened to find at least four other Mayor's Guides there.

The presentation was given by Paul Simons and Rhodri Samuels and was most interesting and heartening. Building work is now going ahead and by the end of the month there will be a huge crane, I believe by 7 & 8 Bath Street. The Cross Bath has been lined inside the old Bath and this is to stop infection from the meningitis amoeba which loves moistness and heat and can live in porous stone. All the old part of the Bath (known by many as the 'tuppenny hot') will thus be encased and sealed off, giving a safe environment. The boreholes have confirmed the purity of the Springs and all seems to be on course for completion at the end of next year. The projected Spa is being advertised worldwide - the Cross Bath being for Bathonians, the Hot Bath a treatment centre and the main building being a leisure centre with saunas, cold sprays, massage centres, restaurants and a roof-top pool with whirlpool baths where one can relax and look at the stars! What's more the centre will be open from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m.

It all sounds very exciting but the most amusing thing was the question and answer session, especially the last question which was enquiring whether costumes would be worn!! Apparently people in countries with a developed Spa culture think nothing of plunging in naked. The Dutch Firm which will probably run the enterprise questions whether we as a nation will feel so free, and knows for sure that the Americans absolutely won't! After a bit of lighthearted discussion it was decided that a few hours could probably be put aside for naturists whilst those that feel like me could go at other times! What would Beau Nash say to all this!?

The evening came to a close with a glass of wine and a feeling of optimism.

Yours sincerely,

Gill Cope

Bath, 1 April 2001

Dear Leslie,

Almost every aspect of the history of Bath over the centuries has been written by eminent amateur historians up to the 20th century. There has been much about the Second World War and its effect on the city, but the period between the first and second war is very sketchy.

Surely many Bath citizens made their mark on what shaped the city in those years and must have had some impact on the city we know today. I would like to suggest this area could be researched, and prove interesting. Yesterday's times are tomorrow's history!

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Haskins

Bath, 22 March 2001

Dear Leslie,

Following an enquiry made by Elizabeth about the Hetling Pump House (opposite the Hot Bath), I carefully examined the Hetling Pump House drawings in Biggs/801 again yesterday. My conclusion is that they, and the rendered drawing in particular, are comfortably within the capability of George Phillips Manners in 1805, when aged 16. At this time he is believed to have been working with, and probably articulated to, Charles Harcourt Masters. The technique, meticulously drawn and finely rendered, is exactly that of a keen young draftsman eager to display his skills.

It is certainly not the technique of a busy working architect with plenty of other things on his plate, e.g. John Palmer, whom I believe Elizabeth favours. Palmer was 67 at the time, and busy with building the Theatre Royal and Bond Street. The Hetling Pump House drawing are most unlikely to be his.

Additionally, both drawings are inscribed verso in Manners' hand "Elevation of Hetling Pump House" and "Hetling Pump Room & House Adjoining". Though far from proof of authorship, it is perhaps an extra clue, as is their appearance in the Manners' Practice (Biggs') archive. I have little doubt that the strong balance of probability is that the drawings are Manners'.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas Bernhardt

4 March 2001

Dear Leslie,

In answer to Elizabeth's enquiry as regards the Byam family portrait and the exhibition at the Holburne Museum, I cannot add a great deal to the catalogue - Hugh Belsey, *Love's Prospect, Gainsborough's Byam Family and the eighteenth century marriage portrait*, Bath 2001. The Byams in question did not live in Bath, and in fact, as Hugh Belsey has suggested, the commission probably has more to do with Mrs. Byam's family, the Bathursts, than the Byams, who were associated with the West Indies and App's Court, Walton-on-Thames. Mrs. Byam's uncle, Benjamin Bathurst of Lydney, had commissioned a double portrait of two of his children from Gainsborough in 1759-60. The catalogue shows how the Byam portrait was painted in two stages, and the author suggests the second

stage (when the sitters' daughter was added and the costumes altered) took place in 1766. I can add to this the observation that in the *Bath Chronicle* for 31 July 1766 'Mr. and Mrs. Byam' appear in the *Arrivals* column, as they do again on 6 November 1766 and 15 October 1767. If these are the same people, these dates would tend to support this dating of the second stage of the commission.

I am giving a lunchtime talk at the Holburne on 22 March, at 1.00 p.m., entitled *Thomas Gainsborough, the artist and the written word*. This will not be specifically about the Byam picture (since Hugh Belsey has given a talk on that), but will touch on it.

A new edition of Gainsborough's letters, containing material of Bath interest, has just been published – *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough*, edited by John Hayes, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2001. This sets the letters in chronological order (much more useful than the alphabetical order of the previous edition) and includes an essay and linking passages by Hayes. It is very well presented, and small enough to read in bed, which, for an art book, is unusual. It is a companion to a similar volume of Sir Joshua Reynolds' letters.

With very best wishes,
Sue Sloman

Bath, 2 April 2001

Dear Leslie,

I enclose a photograph of the River Avon in flood, taken early one morning last October [see p.1]. Although the level had been higher on the previous day, it was a beautiful but dramatic scene – something I had never witnessed before during my years in Bath. Many centuries ago the Romans had problems with flooding which later contributed in part to the collapse of the baths complex. The Dolemeads area, in the south of the city, constantly suffered badly from floods and flood marks have been recorded at the base of the Tollhouse along the river towpath under the Widcombe footbridge. The highest mark was recorded in 1894.

I wonder how many readers (or Bath residents) know of a flood mark on the Prison building in Grove Street? It is situated, about 3ft.high, between two windows to the left of the studded door (No.16), on a line with the sill:

| |
|---------------------|
| FLOOD NOVEMBER 1823 |
|---------------------|

The stone surface is very worn and it is very difficult to see whether there is a date between the month and the year. Perhaps consideration could be given to protecting this mark, possibly with a transparent cover, to preserve this small but interesting fragment of the city's history?

The Flood Protection Scheme, which incorporated a completely new design for the weir, was opened in 1972 and has been most successful. Without it one wonders how far the water would have spread during the winter months and how much damage and misery would have been inflicted on the residents and city.

Yours sincerely,
Priscilla Olver

Norton St.Philip, 23 April 2001

Dear Leslie,

May I attempt a reply to the question posed by Margaret Burrows concerning the two apparently contradictory paragraphs on John Pinch, in the *Bath Chronicle* of July/August 1804.

With only one other item between, there is first, an advertisement for the sale of a house in Burlington Street and then an announcement for the sale of Pinch's estate and effects following his recent bankruptcy. In the advertisement for the sale of the house the name given is Jas.Pinch whereas in the bankruptcy announcement the name given is that of John Pinch. Were there two Messrs.Pinch living in the city at that time?

From my recent study on the life and times of John Pinch I feel that I can answer "No, there was just one man". He was a capable architect and already by that date a trusted surveyor to the Bathwick estate belonging to the Pulteney family. Pinch did however suffer along with many other speculative builders when two of the Bath banks closed in 1793. He moved with his family from the relative comfort of Chatham Row to what was most likely his builders yard in Spring Gardens, but fortunately for him retained his job as surveyor for the Pulteney family. Herein lies the answer to the question. In his job as surveyor he had a house to sell in Burlington Street, a new development to the north of Cottles lane (Julian Road). Annoyingly he learned that the notice of his bankruptcy was going to appear not just in the same newspaper but on the same page and in the same column. If that named him as John Pinch then he must adopt a small alias and change his name to Jas.Pinch. It was a tiny deceit but probably effective. The small fact that strengthens my belief that this is what happened is that Jas.Pinch gave his address as Spring Gardens, the home of John Pinch. Once his building business was sold to pay his debts, Pinch never again worked as a builder and is described in all the Bath guides until his death in 1827 as Architect.



Here is the electronically retouched picture of the United Hospital with the top storey added by Manners and Gill removed to show the building as John Pinch designed and built it. (His one foray into classicism.)

Regards,

Robert Bennet

Many thanks to each of our contributors for their letters, which are most interesting and informative. Please would everyone cultivate the habit of sending a letter (however short) whenever you become aware of any matter relevant to our wide spectrum of interests. Please send to me at: **Leslie Holt, "Westwinds", Hayesfield Park, Bath BA2 4QE.**

PUBLICATIONS

Bath History VIII was published in November 2000, with a launch at the Guildhall attended by the Mayor and also by a number of the contributors. Mike and Elizabeth had provided an article on 'The Development of the Sawclose from the Middle Ages', a report of the study commissioned by Bath Archaeological Trust. One of Mike's maps of the area was included, though not the whole set. Peter Davenport opened the volume with a study of *Aquae Sulis* as a Roman town, a theme we also saw him expounding in *Meet the Ancestors*, where he walked up Walcot Street with the presenter explaining that it would have been the same kind of bustling thoroughfare in Roman times.

Allan Keevil had created a thorough study of the history of Barrack's Farm, which can be seen as a companion to his previous article on the Barton. Mike Chapman drew the diagrams for both. Another of the Friends, Robin Lambert, contributed 'Patrick Abercrombie and Planning in Bath'. Friends will remember her valuable article in our magazine.

Graham Davis's article dealt with Irish immigrants under the heading 'Social Decline and Slum Conditions'. Social decline refers to impoverished Irish nobility seeking to better themselves in England. Slum conditions refers to poor Irish immigrants fleeing Irish destitution. To the Survey of Old Bath, people are interesting because people are interesting. We look forward to a study of the many Welsh families who moved into Bath, whose names changed from Ap Evan to Abyam to Byam, and the like, and who lived successful and regular lives. History has also seen plenty of respectable and hard-working Irish, including many who have risen to eminent positions.

Mike Bone, a fellow-member of BIAS with Mike, has written on a favourite Bath industry, brewing. His article also includes a drawing by Mike and was well received by the local press. Two unusual subjects for Bath publications are the Editor Brenda Buchanan's study of Lord Ligonier, arising out of her interest in gunpowder, and Bill Hanna's account of Bath and the Crimean War, both of which give this issue a wider dimension. The volume is published by Millstream Books and is available at £8.99. We understand it is selling well and arousing a great deal of interest.

The Millennium year has seen a number of local publications. In December 2000 *Limpley Stoke: Its Church and Its People*, was brought out by Arnold Lewis, a churchwarden at St.Mary's, and Neil Mattingley. The publication was preceded by an exhibition, 'A Thousand Years of St.Mary's'. Local sponsorship made it possible to bring the book out in colour. It was advertised as being available at Limpley Stoke Post Office at £6.99. Also in December came *Freshford, The History of a Somerset Village*, by Dr. Alan Dodge, sponsored by the Friends of Freshford Association. Dr.Dodge, who has lived in Freshford for 35 years, was formerly a senior lecturer in the Department of Biology and Biochemistry at Bath University. The publication is available at Freshford Post Office and local shops at £10. Through the publication of *The Timsbury Book* and events like a concert and quiz evening, the Timsbury Millennium committee were able by the end of December to provide three new boundary stones inscribed 'Timsbury 2000', as well as a seat by a local ha-ha.

Early in 2001 a Southstoke book was advertised in the press, to be published as a limited subscriber edition in November 2001, at £19.95. The volume is edited by Robert Parfitt and is planned as a 160-page hardback with more than 200 old pictures, maps, drawings and other illustrations. It will be obtainable from Halsgrove Direct, Halsgrove House, Lower Moor Way, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6SS, who have also published volumes dealing with other local parishes. The title will be *The Book of Southstoke with Midford*. Roman remains in the area included Samian ware, and Bath Archaeological Trust became involved in the project. Paulton History Society has had two books published in recent times, *A Question of Paulton*, and *Paulton Remembers Two World Wars*. Bathampton Women's Institute has also made an album of snapshots of the village, taken by the members, rather like our own Streetlore Project.

On a different theme Professor Christopher Booth of University College, London, reported in January 2001 that he hoped to bring out a work on Dr.John Haygarth, of the Haygarth Ward at the RUH. A note on the *Chronicle's* article is included in *Notes and Queries*.

NOTES AND QUERIES

The Golden House

A TV programme recently featured Nero's "Golden House", the palace which he built in Rome. Most of the display of course had to be reconstruction. *Domus aureus* is presumably the phrase from which Vachell took the title of his book on Widcombe Manor, mentioned in our Issue 14, p.11.

This reminded Elizabeth that of course the Latin for house is *domus*, not *domum*. On p.27 of Issue 14, our translation ought to be rephrased, "This building (*aedificium*) is dedicated to Queen Anne". It is much more likely that the inscription did refer to the house rather than the bath, which had been built in 1576 - though it was not named for Queen Anne until later.

No matter how one toils, mistakes will occur. On p.30 of the same issue, Captain Thomas Chapman's date of death should be 1794, not 1793.

Bath Abbey Church's Stained Glass Windows

In our magazine No.7, June 1997, page 6, there is a report of the talk by Tony Symons at the lunchtime lecture in November 1996. The seventh paragraph states that "Preb.Kemble lost a son at sea and it is believed this window... was installed in his memory".

At the time this information was thought to be correct, but my attention has been drawn to an entry in *The Bath Chronicle* dated 30 June 1870. This says:

We are informed that the window lately placed in the nave by the Rector of Bath as part of his contribution towards the restoration of the Abbey is not intended to be a memorial, as was recently stated.

I am grateful to Hazel Symons and to Linda Jones, Bath Abbey Heritage Vaults Administrator, for bringing this to my attention.

Priscilla Olver
November 2000

Bath architects

In the **Letters** section of this issue, there is an interesting contribution from Robert Bennet on John Pinch the elder (1770-1827) and his bankruptcy. John Pinch the elder is reputed to have been the designer of Prior Park Buildings. Robert Bennet has lately written a dissertation on him and is preparing an article.

Douglas Bernhardt has also contributed a comment on a drawing which may be by G.P.Manners, his chosen speciality. This does not mean that Douglas believes that Manners actually designed the Hetling Pump House, but rather that the sketch was an exercise. Manners was associated with Harcourt Masters, while John Palmer seems to have been in charge of the general redevelopment of the area. Either could have designed the Pump House.

The words "Hetling Pump Room" are still visible on the north of the building in question. This was only a part of the Pump House. It was retained by the Corporation until 1875, when it was considered to be no longer profitable. A Pump Room was created on the east side of Wood's Hot Bath, and the Hetling Pump Room was let out.

The entrance to the Hetling Pump House was through the doors on the south now painted dark green. A short flight of steps brings one up to the level shown in old plans of the house, to western rooms obviously retained from Skrine's old house there. On the next floor is a large eastern room which the Corporation decreed should not be used for dancing, when they let the Pump House out in 1809, after the reconstruction of the building. The site is also sometimes called the Hot Bath House. As said, the Corporation Pump Room was only part of it.

Dr.John Haygarth

By courtesy of *The Bath Chronicle*, the following points are reprinted from their article on Christopher Booth's forthcoming book:

Dr.Haygarth was nearly 60 when he came to Bath and his family of four girls and two boys were already grown up. He moved into 15 Royal Crescent and was part of a select company of medical experts in the City at the time. That included Caleb Hillier Parry, who also has a ward named after him at the RUH. Dr.Haygarth was at once involved in setting up the Vaccine Institute in Bath, the first to be established in England.

He was born in the Yorkshire Dales in 1740 and studied at Cambridge, Paris and London. He was appointed physician to the Chester Infirmary where he served for 31 years. Throughout his time there, Dr.Haygarth constantly recorded a full account of every important symptom, the remedies which were employed and, when possible, the outcome...Dr.Haygarth made up a set of rules regarding cleanliness and isolation of patients. And he was involved with the inoculation against smallpox. He was also on the lookout for hospitals other than Chester where empty attic storeys could be used for fever wards. He seized upon the fact that at the Bath City Infirmary, the attic was empty and unoccupied. It was soon used, as the attics in Chester had been, for the isolation of fever patients.

When Dr.Haygarth died in 1827 he was buried at Swainswick. His grave is not marked, but there is a plaque inside the church.

THE CARRIER'S BUSINESS AT THE SAWCLOSE

See *Bath History* VIII, 2001, p.69, bottom paragraph. With thanks to Mike Bone for drawing our attention to the text below.

Bath Chronicle 23 June 1842, p.2

THE SAWCLOSE. IMMENSE BUSINESS PREMISES In the Centre of the City of Bath. Together with the Excellent Dwelling-House and another Capital House in Westgate Street. - Messrs.English & Son – Beg leave to announce that they are instructed to submit to PUBLIC AUCTION. At their Rooms, Milsom Street. On Friday June 24th at Twelve for One o'clock punctually.

Lot First – The whole of those immense premises situate in the Saw Close, being the heart of the City; originally constructed, and for many years subsequently occupied by Mr.Mitchell, Common Carrier, together with the excellent dwelling-House immediately adjoining.

The Business Premises comprise, on the basement, an EXTENSIVE YARD, entered through a lofty archway of solid masonry, spacious sheds, a forge of great extent, wheel wrights' shop, counting house and offices, long warehouses, and commodious and dry stabling, for Sixty Horses; beneath are vast airy cellars, the more valuable from their solid construction, which renders them impervious from wet. Above the Stables are Granaries, Store, and other LOFTS OF STUPENDOUS DIMENSIONS, and of which the floors and roof timbers are of prodigious strength and massiveness.

The central situation of this vast site and area admirably adapts it for any Public Building, Institution, or Place of Worship, and the materials in stone, and the best seasoned timber on the premises, would be found highly available for such a purpose.

Lot Second – Those valuable Business Premises with commanding Double Shop Front, no.24 Westgate Street, in the heart of the City, and one of its chief thoroughfares. The house is very commodious, and lately put into substantial and complete repair, at the cost of several hundred pounds.

The whole of the foregoing Premises are all compactly connected and united, without any separation or disseveration, and are held under the Corporation of Bath for lives now full stated, subject to small ground rents.

The property may be viewed any day until the sale. Printed particulars will be ready for delivery on the 16th of June, and may be had by applying to Mr.Physick, solicitor, Northumberland Buildings; or to Messrs.English & Son, where plans of the Estate may be seen.

GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH'S *HISTORIA* – A GEOLOGIST'S VIEW

G. A. Kellaway

Completed in 1136, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* has been translated into English from the Latin on several occasions. The translation used here was made by the late Professor Lewis Thorpe and was published as a Penguin Classic in 1966. References to this work are given as 'LT' followed by the page number. The *Historia* is a work of considerable literary importance, although considered by modern authorities a dubious historical one. Shakespeare used Geoffrey's story of King Leir as the basis for his great tragedy and many other writers and artists have drawn material from it. It is the present writer's contention that the work contains indications of important geological and climatic events which merit investigation.

Geoffrey spent much of his early life in Monmouthshire, although he was probably of Breton ancestry. Bretons fought alongside William the Conqueror against the Saxons in 1066 so Geoffrey's sympathies are with the Celts and the Normans and his writings reflect this. He was a cleric in search of preferment within the Church and it was from his friend Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, that Geoffrey claimed he had obtained 'a very ancient book written in the British language'. This material, possibly a bundle of ancient Welsh manuscripts, has never been found. Nearly all modern historians have queried its existence at some stage, but Geoffrey was insistent on this point (LT.14, 51, 284). He also claimed that information had been given to him verbally by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, 'a man most learned in all branches of history' (LT.258). While we need not doubt that Walter gave some manuscripts to Geoffrey, their actual contents and nature remain unknown.

Geoffrey despised the Romans whom he regarded as having deserted the Romano-British people in the face of invasion by groups of Picts, Norsemen and Anglo-Saxons. He turns a blind eye to the ruthless exploitation of the Anglo-Saxon population by the Normans and tries to avoid the use of English place names. This makes it difficult to identify some of his localities. Stonehenge (*Stanhenge*) is mentioned only once in its English name (LT.262). However, this enables us to identify it and to distinguish it from Avebury (*Weala-dic*), both being circles built of huge stones situated in Wiltshire. Elsewhere in the book Stonehenge is described as the 'Giants Ring'.

Writing in mediaeval times, Geoffrey was able to invoke the actions of giants, magicians and dragons without impairing his contemporary credibility as a chronicler. One of his most well known characters - the magician Merlin - is founded on the writings of Nennius. From this scanty information he created the portrait of a great soothsayer, magician and engineer who is said by Geoffrey to have transported the stones of Stonehenge from Ireland to Salisbury Plain where he re-erected them (LT.195-198). Stonehenge is a late Neolithic-Bronze age monument built about 2500 years before the break-up of the Roman Empire in Britain. The dating and petrology of its stones flatly contradict Geoffrey's account of its age and origin.

In an earlier passage (LT.166-169) he related the tale of Merlin and Vortigern's Tower, an episode which he places when the struggle between the Romano-British people and the invading Saxons was in full swing. In the light of such an anachronistic reconstruction of Merlin's life we may well wonder whether any factual or historically viable material can be extracted from the *Historia*. There are, however, passages which are clearly free of these objections and which compel us to look more closely at some sections of the *Historia*. As Lewis Thorpe has said, much of the book is not history, yet history keeps peeping through and, it might be added, the glimpses of history which it affords us, often relate to very strange and intriguing events.

One of the clearest examples of accurate historical documentation in the *Historia* is the account of the early use of coal on the altar of the Goddess *Sulis Minerva* at Roman Bath (*Aquae Sulis*). This

reference was derived from Solinus, a third century classical writer. Geoffrey does not identify Solinus as his source. However, the reference has been critically discussed at length by several authors (Scarath, 1826, pp.2-3; Cunliffe, 1969, pp.7; Cunliffe & Davenport, 1985, p.35). It is clear that Solinus was drawing attention to the balls or lumps of 'stone' (rounded masses of clinker) resulting from the combustion of the fuel in the altar fire.

This peculiar feature is characteristic of the local coal seams of the Upper Coal Measures which outcrop on the surface west of Bath, notably at Burnett, Corston and Bitton. These thin coals have high volatile contents (up to 30% DAF) and very strong caking properties. They produce remarkably large masses of fused clinker, which have to be constantly broken up if a continuous fire is to be maintained. In Solinus' account Bath was not specifically named, but confirmatory evidence for the use of coal in the Temple of Aquae Sulis was obtained during archaeological excavations. Geoffrey was the first writer to recognise that Solinus' account refers to Bath, though he seems not to have identified the fuel as coal! However, Solinus' account has not been altered significantly by Geoffrey. In this instance he cannot be accused of misrepresentation.

Elsewhere Geoffrey refers to Bath as the 'City of Claudius'; though he also introduces the story of Prince Bladud (LT.80), leaving us in doubt as to who really founded Bath. The answer to this has recently been given in favour of Rome in decisive terms by Peter Davenport (1999, pp.18-19; 2001, pp.7-26). Other references to Bath in the *Historia* include the startling statement (discussed in more detail below) that at one period in its history the hot water at Bath turned cold. This is the only known record of its kind. Geoffrey's many references to Bath suggest that he was familiar with the city and may have visited it for medical reasons.

His knowledge of the geography of Wiltshire is decidedly shaky. He may have been a stranger or at least an infrequent visitor to the southern part of the county and have spent little if any time at Stonehenge. His curious statement that the Stonehenge stones were conveyed from Africa to Ireland by giants may have arisen because he had been told, or had read, that there were 'bluestones' on Salisbury Plain. He gives no indication that he understood the distinction between the local Tertiary sandstone (sarsens) which form the huge trilithons and the smaller non-local bluestones within the Stonehenge circle.

The idiomatic use of blue (*blau*) in Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon (e.g. *blau-stan*) does not relate solely to colour, but extends to people, or things of a very striking, rare or unusual appearance. In Anglo-Saxon times in England and for many centuries up to the present day in Iceland, a black-skinned African was an exotic visitor, a most unusual sight. He would be described as a *blau-man* or bluman (Kellaway 1991, pp.266-267). After the Norman Conquest, French scribes working in England substituted 'o' for 'au' where 'au' appears before 'm' or 'n' (Wrenn, 1949, pp.93-94). This change was made for clarity in writing and would not have had an immediate effect on pronunciation. *Blau-man* became Bloman in Middle English (OED) and as such would have been familiar to Geoffrey in the 12th century. Sometime after 1400, certainly by 1555, 'bloman' was replaced by a Latin derivative - *negro*. Geoffrey however may have concluded that the 'bluestones' of Stonehenge (he would not have known of those found in Boles Barrow) were brought to Britain by blomen, i.e. they came from Africa.

He may also have heard of a claim that the stones had come from Ireland. However, Aubrey Burl (1999, p.166) has suggested that the huge stones of County Kildare in Ireland were well known to British clerics visiting the Monastery of St. Brigid in order to see the famous monastic manuscripts in the Library. Geoffrey would probably have known of these - he dealt with the assumed Irish origin by having Merlin move them from 'Mount Killaraus' in Ireland to Salisbury Plain. It is quite clear that he did not know the difference between bluestones and sarsens, nor apparently was he aware that the really big stones at Stonehenge are entirely of local origin, while the bluestones are Welsh. The only way he could deal with all these self-inflicted problems was to have the stones conveyed from Africa

to Mount Killaraus in Ireland by giants (blomen) and thence to Salisbury Plain by Merlin the magician. Needless to say, none of these stones come from Africa or Ireland; the story is fictional, concealing the fact that until the 19th century no one knew of the great age of Stonehenge. This is an example of the fantasy from which we must attempt to extract historical information.

The *Historia* includes an interesting account of the medicinal properties attributed to the stones of Stonehenge and the Pagan rites associated with them. 'They used to pour water over them and run the water into baths in which the sick were cured... they mixed the water with herbal concoctions and so healed their wounds. There is not a single stone among them which has not some medical value'



King Vortigern being burned alive in his tower. *Langtoft's Chronicle*. 1307-1330. Published by Courtesy of the British Library, MS. Royal, 20A II, f^o 3r^o.

(LT.196). This account may be very old, but it could equally well have been a description of contemporary activities in the 12th century at Stonehenge. The mediaeval Church struggled for centuries to rid the country of Pagan customs involving the use of sacred stones. Some stones were Christianised by being capped by a crucifix, many were destroyed. The long-continued persistence of these ancient practices at Stonehenge is shown by Celia Fiennes' reference (1685-1703, p.15) to the ceremonial or medicinal 'scraping' of the stones at Stonehenge which she saw being performed at the close of the 17th century. Some of the scrape marks seen on the stones at Stonehenge may date from these activities.

Vortigern's Tower

Merlin's appearance as a flesh-and-blood character comes in the story of Vortigern's Tower, set in the period after the withdrawal of the Roman legions (in 410 AD) and before the great 'calamity' at c.540 AD. According to the *Historia*, King Vortigern, who appears to have been living at this time in Monmouthshire, was under threat of attack both by Breton armies advancing from Totnes and by Saxon invaders from the east. In desperation he turned to his magicians for advice as to what action to take. They advised him to construct a strong tower. This he proceeded to do. Unfortunately the foundations kept failing, so once more Vortigern asked his magicians for advice. The magicians replied that he should find a lad 'without a father', sacrifice him, sprinkle the stones with his blood and all would be well. A search was made and Merlin was found. His mother had claimed that he had no human father for she had been impregnated by an incubus in the shape of a 'most handsome young man'. This was all the evidence that the magicians required. They declared Merlin to be a suitable candidate for sacrifice. Merlin demurred at this! He claimed that the magicians were frauds. He told the king to dig in the earth and they would find a pool and that it was this that made the earth unstable thus causing the collapse of the foundations. They did so. The water was found and once it had been drained away, building was able to proceed. This was good soil mechanics. Merlin also told them that two hollow stones would be found in which 'dragons' were sleeping.

The site which was selected for Vortigern's Tower was 'Cloartius' beside the River Wye (LT.187 footnote). This is thought to be Little Doward near Genoreu¹, a hill-top site roughly mid-way between Symonds Yat and Monmouth. The hill is crowned by an Iron Age hill fort and is not far from King Arthur's cave. The main mass of Little Doward consists of Old Red Sandstone overlain by Lower Limestone Shale, crowned by Lower Dolomite and a very small outlier of Crease Limestone (BGS 1:50,000 Sheet 238). It is possible to try to reconstruct a plausible story out of all this magic if we consider the geology of the site. If we imagine a real tower there it might have been on or near the contact of the Lower Limestone Shale and Lower Dolomite. Such a tower could have had a base of dry stone walling but the remainder may have been constructed of wood. The bearing strength of the weathered Lower Limestone Shale is largely dependent on its water content, which is normally high at the contact of the shale with the overlying dolomite and limestone. Merlin had drained the ground water, thus stabilising the site. The thin limestones of the Lower Limestone Shale are often quite richly fossiliferous. So the two 'sleeping dragons' in the hollow stones may have been fossils.

This triumph brought fame to Merlin who was regarded thereafter as possessing supernatural powers. Recognising his ability, Vortigern then asked Merlin to forecast his own fate. Merlin told him not on any account to let himself be trapped by his enemies in the Tower, for, he said, they will burn you alive in it. Sadly, Vortigern ignored this advice. He was attacked by Aurelius Ambrosius who besieged the 'castle of Genoreu' and trapped Vortigern in his tower, setting it alight and burning him alive.

¹ The modern spelling is Ganarew

The Terrible Calamity

Forming a distinct unit in the *Historia* is the section dealing with the Prophecies of Merlin (LT.170-185). It opens with a message to Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, in which Geoffrey says he has translated the 'Prophecies of Merlin' from the British tongue into Latin. Presumably this was a document written in Welsh, part of the Welsh 'book' given to him by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford. Here again we find obvious anachronisms such as a mention of the family tree of William the Conqueror and the construction of the Tower of London (1070-1090) and an oblique reference to the defeat of the Berber invasion of France by Charles Martel, supported by Bretons at Poitiers in 711 AD (LT.176-177). These are some of Geoffrey's own introductions, probably for political reasons. Neither of these would have been included in an account written in the Welsh language in the 5th or 6th centuries.

There is however one section, or group of 'prophecies' referring to a dreadful 'calamity' affecting England, Wales and Gaul. From the written account one gains the impression that Geoffrey himself did not know how to interpret the evidence relating to this disaster; evidence which he must have gathered from some old written record or have learned of by word of mouth from his friend Walter in Oxford. The character and association of the various items listed in the published account indicate that Geoffrey is most unlikely to have invented them. As will be seen they may have included dimming of the sun's light, drought, pestilence and famine, as well as earthquake due either to tectonic causes, to recent volcanicity, or to the impact of some astral body of unusually large size.

The evidence for earthquake is compelling and the symptoms are such that they are likely to have been described by someone who actually observed them. Nothing closely comparable with this event is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. All the symptoms are associated with the 'prophecies' of Merlin, indicating a date after the departure of the Romans. This points very strongly to an episode lying between c.410 and 676 AD, i.e. the period during which the hot springs of Bath are not known to have been in regular use. If Geoffrey's writings are to be relied on, there is one episode within this time interval in which the hot springs temporarily ran cold. If true it implies that there may have been tectonic movement on the Avon-Solent Fracture Zone (Kellaway 1996) on a scale which has not been equalled at any other time between the arrival of the Romans in Britain and the present day. Such prophecies are very often written after the events they pretend to predict and therefore can be of value as historical evidence, if treated carefully.

Some of the principal elements mentioned in the 'terrible calamity' (LT.177-179) may be briefly listed as follows:

1. The Severn Sea shall flow through seven mouths and the River Usk shall be boiling hot for seven months. Its fish will die because of the heat and from them serpents will be born.
2. The baths shall grow cold at Bath and its health-giving waters shall breed death.
3. London shall mourn the death of twenty thousand and the Thames will be turned into blood.
4. Three springs shall burst forth in the town of Winchester. (One of these is said to be clean, the other two were probably contaminated).
5. Say to Winchester the earth will swallow you up ... Woe to the perjured people for their famous city shall come toppling down.
6. The sea over which men sail to Gaul shall be concentrated into a narrow channel. A man on any one of two shores will be audible to a man on the other and the land mass of the island will grow greater.
7. The secrets of the creatures who live under the sea shall be revealed and Gaul will tremble with fear.
8. A famine will attack the people and an appalling death rate will follow the famine.

Following the ‘calamity’ there are a number of ‘prophecies’ which give a probable indication of the magnitude of the changes which may have taken place, e.g. ‘Then the Thames shall begin to flow again. It will gather together its tributaries and overflow the confines of its bed. It will submerge nearby towns and overturn mountains in its course. It will join to itself the Springs of Galebes filled as they are to the brim with wickedness and deceit!’ It is probable that the Springs of Galebes may have been at the headwaters of the Thames originally in the territory of the Gewissie, the tribe ruled over by Vortigern. The passage therefore suggests that the flow of water from the Cotswolds into the lower Thames was temporarily interrupted either by drought or earthquake or both.

There are many other prophecies of which the significance is lost in the mists of time. Some could only be unravelled by historians with specialised knowledge of the Middle Ages. At the end however, climatic, astronomical and astrological aspects dominate the prophecies. The last two items suggest that some change took place in the sky causing the bright light of the sun to grow dim, striking ‘horror’ into those who witnessed it. That these events were linked to immense disturbances at sea is suggested by the final prophecy (LT.184-185).

It is therefore worth considering the itemised ‘prophecies’ listed above. These are, presumably, events which actually took place but have been presented as forecasts on a basis of hindsight.

1. Any substantial earthquake affecting Monmouthshire and Bath would almost certainly affect the very unstable depositional pattern of the inshore and estuarine sediments of the Severn. These are subject to sudden changes at the present day due to the high tidal range (almost 50ft.) in the Severn estuary. Earthquake shock could have a dynamic effect on the distributory pattern of water draining through the intertidal zone. Geoffrey’s reference to the Usk becoming ‘boiling hot’ (LT.177) may not be literally true. The river is most unlikely to have achieved a temperature of 100°C. However the ingress of springs in the river bed would have produced turbulence which would resemble boiling. In this sense there are springs at Ashley Down, Bristol, which emerge in a pool and which are known as the Boiling Wells, though the water is at mean annual temperature. Here the word ‘boiling’ may imply bubbling up and a strong flow with resulting turbulence.

The reference to ‘death of fishes’ may record the effect produced by shock or trapping of fish in shallows or by the emission of CO₂, CH₄ or other gases liberated from the organic-rich sediments filling the buried channel of the river. The reference to the ‘birth of serpents’ is particularly interesting. Eels breed in the Sargasso Sea and the young eels would not be mistaken for snakes which swim on the surface of the water. The ‘serpents’ in this case could be grass snakes which are often common in such situations. They live in holes in the grassy banks and sun themselves on grass hummocks in summer. They are very sensitive to ground vibrations and are excellent swimmers. When alarmed they will take off into a stream or nearby river and swim away at great speed. Geoffrey’s description indicates that an observer saw this happen and somehow or other the tradition has been handed on. It was probably recorded in writing or Geoffrey might not have known about it.

2. The reference to Bath probably relates to a temporary drop in the thermal water temperature in post-Roman times. After the collapse of the Roman buildings the hot baths were re-instated by the time of Osric of Mercia (676 AD). While the Roman baths were in use there was no indication that any such change in the temperature or flow took place. This record therefore relates to the period between about 400 and 676 AD. Investigations carried out at Bath (Kellaway 1991, pp.106-108; Stanton 1991, pp.127-139) show that when the Kingsmead Borehole was sunk a very large flow of thermal water was obtained. This resulted in a substantial drop in temperature of the hot water. When the flow was reduced the temperature recovered. If, therefore, the effect of an earthquake is to open up or clear sediment from the natural openings from which the thermal water is issuing, an increase in

flow and a drop in temperature should take place. The statement in the *Historia* may therefore be correct in respect of a strong earthquake affecting Bath. The three hot springs are situated on the main wrench fault in the Avon-Solent Fracture Zone (Kellaway 1996) where it is intersected by a WSE-ENE trending Lower Cretaceous fault. Changes in springs as well as underground water levels and temperatures are liable to occur as a result of earthquakes. The great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755 caused the thermal water issuing at Hotwells, Bristol to turn red. Unfortunately there are no written records of what, if anything, happened at Bath at this time.

3. In spite of the paucity of archaeological remains, there are Dark Age references to London, for example on coins. However, a population of 20,000 would seem impossible, as Rome itself was probably not so large. The loss of life reported at London may have been due in part to earthquake damage and the collapse of poorly preserved buildings. However it may also include casualties caused by famine and plague at a time of drought and crop failures. Geoffrey refers to this (LT.184) and disease: 'The harvests will dry up through the stars' anger and all moisture from the sky will cease'. The reddening of the Thames may have been due to the addition of red mud from dust falls. The worldwide prevalence of drought and dust falls in the middle of the 6th century is well described by David Keys (1999).

4. The outburst of springs from the Chalk at Winchester could have resulted from an earthquake. Geoffrey's reference to the contrast in purity of the resulting streams might well be true, as the waters would be rising within the confines of a settlement with inadequate drainage or sewage disposal, though it is not certain how far Winchester was inhabited then.

8 & 9. These items refer to physical effects produced in the Straits of Dover. Elevation of the sandy shallow sea floor or temporary withdrawal of the sea, could have combined to reduce the width of the Channel. At low tide all but the deepest parts of the sea floor may have been exposed. Gaul may also have been affected by this process, though it is possible that the occupants of that country were affrighted by visual astronomical phenomena. The Straits of Dover is a seismically active area where earthquakes have been identified for 1382, 1580, 1776 and 1950 (Musson 1994). The epicentre is situated on a NW-SE trending structure separating the Kent coalfield from areas to the west, probably continuing through London to Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire and forming the eastern boundary of the Midland Microcraton.

'The Great Calamity' - evidence for an earthquake

The foundations of the Roman Temple of *Sulis Minerva* at Bath were examined by the writer during the excavations described by Cunliffe and Davenport (1985). This showed small lateral displacements with only very slight or no vertical component. In view of the very low relief of the ground on which the Temple of *Sulis Minerva* was built, it is unlikely that these displacements were produced either by subsidence or 'creep'. This leaves seismic shock as the most likely explanation. When Major C.E.Davis (1884) excavated the King's Bath, he observed large masses of fractured Roman masonry which had collapsed into the Roman reservoir surrounding the King's Spring. Some of these shattered masses were exposed again during later excavations in 1979-80 when they were seen by the writer. Davis pointed out that these big collapsed masses differ from the mass of Roman debris resulting from the degradation of the ruins of the Great Roman Bath, where the debris and rubble were apparently produced by long continued weathering. The impression is that the fracturing of the very strong massive masonry of the King's Bath may be a product of sudden, perhaps violent movement, accompanied by collapse. This could have resulted from failure due to an earthquake.

The situation of the Roman Reservoir enclosing the King's Spring at Bath is particularly vulnerable to seismic shock as it rises above the intersection of the Avon-Solent Fracture Zone and the WSW-ENE

trending Pennyquick Fault (Kellaway 1991, pp.109-116). Unlike the Roman Reservoir surrounding the King's Spring, the Great Roman Bath is not underlain by a spring pipe with an unstable filling. The Great Roman Bath was therefore less vulnerable to the effect of seismic shock. Other Roman buildings in Britain may have sustained similar damage, but the symptoms are difficult to interpret. Bulging walls, strong lateral slip of foundations, distorted arches and the effects of ground liquefaction, well seen in better preserved Roman buildings, as for example in Italy or the Middle East, are seldom seen in England. Here most Roman remains have been badly degraded. Many consist only of floors and the lower part of the walls. It is possible, however, that some distorted and undulatory Roman pavements, such as those seen at Fishbourne in West Sussex may indicate liquefaction of the underlying material by seismic shock, but they may be due to subsidence into underlying soft spots such as pits.

The 'Prophecies of Merlin' were based on events which happened after Merlin's death, but which are presented as prophecies made in his lifetime. Their insertion into the text of the *Historia* on pages 170-186 divides the story of Vortigern into two parts. Presumably it is intended to suggest that Merlin's prophecy of Vortigern's death belongs to the same category as the 'Prophecies of Merlin'.

Any chronology here is of course legendary and conjectural - Vortigern is reputed in legend to have died while Hengist and Horsa were active in Britain, i.e. around 450-455. King Arthur's death is given as 542², i.e. during the period of the great mid 6th century 'calamity'. The date of Merlin's death is not mentioned, but according the *Historia* he did not live to see the accession of Arthur. Merlin appeared as a 'lad', before Vortigern. Assuming he was about 18 years of age, then he would have been born c.432. If he had lived to the age of 70 his death would have taken place in 502 AD. Vortigern was succeeded in legend by Aurelius Ambrosius, Utherpendragon and then King Arthur. Thus the great 'star' which was seen at the time of Aurelius's death (LT.200-201) and which caused Merlin to prophesy a victory for Utherpendragon, must have appeared some time before the accession of Arthur. The 'star' is generally supposed to have been a meteor, but whatever its nature, it was seen by Merlin and cannot therefore have been connected with the great 'calamity'³. The 'Prophecies of Merlin' may be a record (or compilation) based on Welsh accounts of the terrible catastrophe of the mid 6th century. This may well be responsible for the obscurity which shrouds the death of Arthur, said to be about 542².

The Saxon invaders of Wiltshire who came from the south-east after the 'calamity' defeated the Britons at Old Sarum near Salisbury in 552 and at Barbury Castle on the Marlborough Downs in 556. Their victory at Deorham (Dyrham) in the south Cotswolds in 577 probably separated the Britons of SW England from those in Wales. The comparatively rapid progress of the Saxon invasion is explained by David Keys (1999, pp.45-65) as due partly to the weakening of the Celtic people of SW England by the incidence of plague. This has been argued before, though not everyone accepts the case. In the 6th century there was a definite exodus to Brittany. However, an increase in the exodus of Anglo-Saxons from the coastal areas of Friesland and the Heligoland Bight may have resulted from the effect of an earthquake causing damage by sea floods in the coastal region at about 540 AD. The *Historia* mentions in particular a 'huge fleet' which the Saxons brought over at about 549 (LT.263).

Like Banquo's Ghost at Macbeth's feast, the content of the missing old Welsh records appears from time to time in the *Historia*. Statements on the dimming of the light of the sun, failure of the harvests through drought caused by 'the stars' anger so that all moisture from the sky ceases' (LT.184) are clear and unequivocal. The shading of the sun is clearly related to the formation of clouds of dust high in the stratosphere. The resulting dry, cold conditions produced remarkable effects on the vegetation. Thus 'Roots and branches shall change their places and the oddness of this shall well pass for a miracle' (LT.184). Under stress due to long continued drought, shallow rooting plants would die. Trees growing in well-drained situations would lose their leaves while their extensive root system might be able to continue to draw on some ground water. Under these conditions, suckers will rise from the roots of some trees. These will bear leaves. The leaves therefore arise from the roots, while

the branches of the tree are bare. These drastic conditions of cold, drought and famine could have led to a serious breakdown of Celtic social organisation in Britain, leaving an opportunity for invaders (LT.181), though of course they would also present problems to the invaders themselves.

The sea is also mentioned as becoming turbulent. The final section of the Prophecies of Merlin is apocalyptic in tone - 'In the twinkling of an eye the seas shall rise up and the arena of the winds shall be opened up once more. The winds shall also batter together with a blast of ill omen making their din reverberate from one constellation to another' (LT.185). Was the cause a huge far distant volcanic explosion, or an impact by fragments of a comet? The case for the volcano (?Krakatoa) has been put by David Keys (1999). That for the impact of cometary debris has been presented by Mike Baillie (summarised by Nick Nuttal and Allison Hamilton in *The Times*, September 9, 2000). At a time when the possibility of a threat to the world from the impact of asteroids is being actively considered (Steve Connor in *The Independent*, September 19, 2000), the matter is not purely of academic interest.

The evidence from Geoffrey's *Historia* is seldom clear, but it does add support to the thesis of the occurrence of a dreadful 'calamity' in the mid 6th century including an earthquake which was of tectonic origin. Any explanation which is put forward should therefore be capable of including this. However, additional independent evidence is required to deal with the alternative theories. The *Historia* demonstrates the need for investigation but it does not provide a definitive answer to the major scientific problem.

² An alternative date of 537 is given by *Annales Cambriae*

³ Unless Geoffrey has 'adjusted' the timing of the star's appearance!

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*Stop Press: an earthquake occurred just before midnight 31 May 2001, with an epicentre about 25 miles offshore from Bude and Hartland Point, at the mouth of the Bristol Channel. **The Bath Chronicle** reported on Friday 1 June (p.6) that it was felt across Devon and Cornwall, measuring 3.6 on the Richter scale.*

THIS FAMOUS CITY: THE STORY OF THE CHAPMANS OF BATH

THE CHAPMANS ARRIVE IN BATH

Elizabeth Holland

It is time to return now to the arrival of the Chapmans in Bath. The first known references to Bath Chapmans occur in the middle of the 14th century. Chapman is quite a common name, but for the time being one has to presume that these 14th century individuals were the ancestors of the later Chapmans of Bath.

An S.R.Kennedy-Chapman corresponded with me, some years ago, on his research into the Chapman family. He believed that the different branches which used the standard Chapman coat of arms, with variations, must have had some historical connection. This is a tenable theme, though it is not certain that burgher families never took up arms to which they did not actually have a right. The descent of the Chapman arms needs closer study.

The first occurrence of the Chapman arms traced by Kennedy-Chapman was one which seems to have been made to a Robert Cheping of Lowte, recorded about 1210, with the typical chevron and crescent counter-changed. From this Yorkshire origin he believes the family proceeded by ship down the east

coast to London, from London along the Channel to Bristol, and from Bristol inland to Bath (probably overland). He wrote to me as follows:

From the Domesday period the Chapman family were in Yorkshire, principally York, Hull, Whitby and Scarborough. The river from Hull being tidal to some eight miles above York, they were merchants, shipowners, shipbuilders and members of the Merchant Adventurers and Mercers of York, trading to the various ports of England, Wales, Scotland and the Continent, some settling in London, Bristol, Bath and Sunderland etc. While later some members of the family became bankers, lawyers, judges, others entered the Church, Army and Colonial Service.

In these early times when roads were scanty and ill-made, travel over distances was arduous and difficult, whereas by river and sea, travel was comparatively easy, particularly for members of a family engaged in merchandising by sea to many ports, which would also enable them to maintain contact with the family.

Apart from general merchandising, they were either manufacturers or traded in cloth. There are many references in the Customs accounts of York and Hull for duty paid on cloth.

To put these remarks in perspective, one could quote what used to be a standard textbook. Dealing actually with the Norman period, which includes of course the years of the Domesday Survey, it writes:

Even before the conquest London was the most important town in England. From Edward the Confessor's time onward, the court made Westminster its chief centre, and it followed from this that London gradually became a recognised capital... Under Richard I [who sold many privileges in order to raise money for the Crusades] London obtained the right of choosing its own mayor, and was henceforth self-governing in every respect. The country towns were contented to obtain from the king charters which extended to them privileges which were already possessed by the Londoners. Conspicuous among them were York, the capital of the north; Exeter, the chief town of the west; Bristol, the most important port after London; and Norwich, the leading manufacturing city. Among the ports, those of the south-east coast were particularly conspicuous. They were called the *Cinque Ports*, because they were originally five in number. They formed a confederation among themselves, and showed great activity. When war arose, the ships of the Cinque Ports formed a large part of the royal navy. The most famous of them was Dover, the chief port of passage between England and the Continent.

Kennedy-Chapman's theory links York/Hull, London, and Bristol in the story of the family. One can see that he does have a case in that we are dealing with a family of which certain branches, later on, all bear the same coat of arms, basically, accredited by the heralds, and engage in shipbuilding and in trade, especially the cloth trade. In the middle of the 14th century they turn up in the cloth-making town of Bath. There had lately been a great improvement in shipping, enabling people to venture farther afield. Our illustrator Stephen Beck writes:

...there was a revolutionary development in ship design at the turn of the 13/14th century. A rudder replaced the paddle at the stern and the upper works both fore and aft became integrated with the structure of the vessel, which itself was sturdier and broader in the beam so that a merchant ship could carry weighty cargoes like Nicholas Chapman's load of iron.



Kennedy-Chapman also pointed out various other connections between the different branches, such as the mention of the name Middleton in documents of Yorkshire and London, and of the Cavell family in documents both of Bath and London - though again these are common names. One of the most interesting connections comes later, in the time of the Armada, the *rendez-vous* at Tilbury. Why did Peter Chapman lead 800 trusty men from the West Country to Tilbury? The Queen's Master Shipbuilder, Richard Chapman, whose family bore the Chapman arms, owned a shipyard at Deptford and was engaged on the river defences against the Armada at Tilbury. It is hoped to return to this one

day in “The Chapmans at War” and in the meantime we shall be glad of any information which can be supplied about the Chapmans of Greenwich and Deptford.

A John Chapman is mentioned in the records of Bristol by 1327. In 1333 a Robert Chapman of Bristol received a document from Eborard le Frauncey, Mayor of Bristol, recommending him to the Bishop of Bath and Wells. There is a problem here in that the Bishops no longer lived in Bath. However it is very shortly after this that the Chapmans appear in Bath documents.

Meanwhile the Chapmans of Bristol continued to be concerned with trading and shipping, and again, any information about these Chapmans will be welcome. In the Customs Accounts of Bristol, 16 November 1378 - 27 May 1379, there is a valuation of the goods aboard the incoming *Magdalene*, of Bayonne in France, skipper Peter de Benesse. Nicholas Chepman was named for 9 tuns of iron, valued at £30.0.0, a large sum of money for those days. In a document of 3 August 1364 Nicholas had been listed as one of the Constables of the Staple of Bristol, being, with others, “trustworthy, renowned and discreet”. In 1366 he had joined in announcing the election of Walter de Frompton as Mayor of the Staple.

With all these early references, so consistent with the later history of the Chapmans of Bath, one is reminded of the epitaph on William the mercer, died 1647, presumably written by his son Captain Henry:

Hear a Chapman lies, who left his Trade on Earth,
To merchandise in Heaven, in his second Birth...

The Early Chapmans of Bath

The first reference to a Chapman who seems to be definitely associated with Bath is cited by King and Watts in *The Municipal Records of Bath*. For 19 March 15 Edward 111, 1342 (New Style) it records:

Commission directed to Robert Chapman and John Geffrays to collect the subsidies granted by Parliament, namely, a whole fifteenth and tenth, on the fifteenth day after Easter, and three parts of another fifteenth and tenth on the next feast of St.Martin in the winter. [That is, the 12th November].

One would expect these two men to be on the Council. It seems early for the Robert recommended to the Bishop in 1333 to have established himself. Details of the collection of this tax seem not to have survived; at any rate Emmanuel Green has not included them in his article.

The first reference to the Chapmans in the early property deeds of Bath is in *Ancient Deeds* V:95, 1378, where Roger Chepman witnesses a deed. This again would usually mean that he was on the Council. It was an exaggeration in the first Chapman essay to write that they were “always” on the Council thereafter. There are gaps in the records; however there does exist a series of items which show them holding property, paying a relatively high rate of tax, or witnessing deeds, so that one makes the presumption that they frequently figured on the Council.

Emmanuel Green transcribed the Tax Roll of 1340, which had 106 taxable names, not including a Chapman. He also transcribed the Poll Tax of Richard II, 1379, 329 persons. Two Chapmans (Chepman) were recorded, both in Stalle Strete. Roger Chepman, pedeler, was assessed at 2s. Richard Chepman, also pedeler, was assessed at 1s. These would not be pedlars as we visualise them, going about with a tray of ribbons and pins and pocketknives and bracelets, but presumably travelling salesmen, probably also connected with the sale of cloth. There seems some reason to think that “pedeler” was the colloquial English translation of the Latin for “merchant”. “Pety marchant” was *possibly* a general shopkeeper, such as would later often be called “mercier”. There were three such

listed in the Tax Roll, and 14 pedlars. A John Chaperwe in Sowter Strete (Cheap Street), pedeler, assessed as 1s., may in reality have been another Chapman.

Roger Chapman was one of the most prosperous people in the city, as the following tables show. Kennedy-Chapman would have expected him to have been concerned with the cloth trade, and acting through his family contacts. On his table of the Chapmans he has actually included him as “Roger Chepman of York and Bath” and cited a Yorkshire Customs Account of 18 Richard II, referring to cloth. The connection does not seem to have been proved yet, but any rate we need to stop visualising this man as going about with a little tray of pins. Cloth was sold at the twice-weekly markets, but there would be scope for selling it farther afield, which one presumes was done by the city’s 14 pedlars. On the other hand, the 14 pedlars, (about one twenty-third of the city’s taxable citizens), needed goods, and again one presumes these included cloth and the leather articles which were an offshoot of sheep-keeping.

The Poll Tax of Richard II

Sixty-three out of the 329 people assessed in this Tax Roll were entered as paying 1s. (one shilling, i.e. 5p.) or over, i.e.:

| | | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| 5 at 3s.4d. or over | The Mayor, John Natton | 10s. |
| | John Gregorye (a known Mayor) | 6s.8d.(¹ / ₂ mark) |
| | Richard de Forde, artificer | 5s. |
| | John Compe, petty merchant (a known Mayor) | 5s. |
| | William Cooke, petty merchant | 3s.4d.(¹ / ₄ mark) |
| 16 at 2s. | - including Roger Chepman, pedlar | |
| 42 at 1s. | - including Richard Chepman, pedlar | |

Of these 63, the trades of two are not apparent at all, John Natton and John Gregory(e). In 1343 there had been mention of “Robert Grigori, called le Dyere”, who had holdings outside the North Gate, on the left by the corner of Frog Lane (New Bond Street. One of his holdings would have jutted out north into the present street, on the south side. *Ancient Deeds* II:48.) It is possible he became Robert the Dyer of the mid-14th century, Mayor in for instance 1353. John Gregorye may therefore have been a dyer. There are seven dyers listed in the 1340 roll, including the well-known Alexander. The name “Robert le Deyare” in fact appears twice, as two of the seven references, one of them for a quarter of a mark, 3s.4d. Alexander pays the highest tax in the city, a whole mark, 13s.4d. There are no obvious dyers in the 1379 roll, though there are two references to “William Deyhar”, one a labourer in Brade Street, at 4d., one an artificer in Walecote Stret, at 6d. One could hazard that John Gregorye had taken over much of the business.

In some of the other 1379 references the surname appears to be a trade, as in Baker (though he also has an illegible trade reference) or Masoun. As for Thomas Leche, one presumes him to have been a medical person, whom Emmanuel Green calls “the one happy man”. Out of the 63 richer citizens, therefore, the trades of 61 appear to be as follows:

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 6 | - Cloth trade | Tailors - 3 <i>Textors</i> [weavers] - 3 |
| 16 | - Artificers [skilled workmen] | |
| 10 | - Leatherworkers | Shoemakers - 8 Skinners - 1 Tanners - 1 |

| | | |
|----|--------------------|--|
| 11 | - Catering | Bakers? (surname) - 1 <i>Braciators</i> [brewers] - 6 Butchers - 1 Innkeepers (“hosteler”) - 2 Fishermen? (i.e. John Scottfisher?) - 1 |
| 13 | - Merchandising | Pedlars - 10 Petty merchants - 3 |
| 3 | - Metalworkers | Goldsmiths (surnames) - 2 Smiths - 1 |
| 1 | - Mason (surname) | |
| 1 | - Doctor (surname) | |

Aurifaber, goldsmith, appears only as a surname. Both are assessed for Northgate Street. It would be tempting to suppose they belonged to Goldesplace, near the north-west corner of the street, but that seems to have been named for a Richard Golde (the goldsmiths in the roll are Harry (Herri) and William). In the mid-14th century it seems to have belonged to John de Dunsterre, tailor.

Of the 16 artificers, some may have been in the cloth trade, but some of the surnames do suggest other trades. They are therefore all given here:

- 1s. - John Druhed
- 1s. - Nicholas Burynton
- 1s. - Robert Pistor [*Pistor* = Baker]
- 2s. - Robert Waspour (presumably Robert Waspray, sometimes Mayor)
- 1s. - Philip Bichewe
- 2s. - Sewale Fraunces
- 5s. - Richard de Forde
- 1s. - John Heyward
- 1s. - William Cherward
- 2s. - Walter Webbe [weaver]
- 2s. - Thomas Plomer
- 2s. - Thomas Barbor
- 1s. - Roger Glover
- 1s. - Henry Fawe
- 1s. - Richard Brower (i.e. Brewer?)
- 1s. - Philip Henton

A number of the names in the Tax Roll, especially of the richer citizens, appear as witnesses to deeds, suggesting that they were on the Council. Both the goldsmiths appear as witnesses. The fact that the tradesmen ran their part of the town provoked the spiteful comments of writers like Peach, who would have liked to be able to point to the nobility and gentry as being in charge of Bath. Modern urban studies finds interest in the workers for their own sake.

The Clergy of Bath

Emmanuel Green points out that at this period the clergy were taxed separately, or, if they could achieve this, not at all. Green gives the following particulars of the Bath clergy in 1377:

In 1377, 51 Edward III., in a list of the names of all the religious persons in the Deanery of Bath, there is found first John Berwykes, Prior of the Cathedral Church of Bath, and following him come fifteen [sic] brothers, all paying uniformly twelpepence. The names of the brothers are – John Bradleigh, William Tonar, John Brok, William de Welles, John de Ciceter, Michael de Combe, Nicholas Vinor, John Kyneton, John Rockbourne, Henry Godeley, John Preston, John Plonte, Thomas Bampton, Philip de Pekelynych, Nicholas Huse and John Milverton. Besides these there were John Astwykes, master of St.John’s Hospital and Brothers Peter Harding, John Dunstarr, John Briwton and John Wedmor, and then Edward, without other name, master of the house of St.Mary Magdalen. The Dean, the Vicars of St.James, St.Michael, St.Mary, and Stalles, all paid uniformly twelpepence. The inferior clergy paid fourpence*.

* “Vicar”, see *Ancient Deeds* IV:99, 1393, rectory of St.James.

The Setting

The references cited above are the only ones which have yet emerged on the Chapmans of 14th century Bath. There are a number of 15th century references, which could be dealt with in another essay. Of the city in which these people lived, any city in Bath’s setting would have to be beautiful, with the hills around, though less wooded then - stands of ornamental trees are a gentry hobby, and sheep would have occupied much of the land. Every house had its plot, with none of the later slum conditions, and along the east side of Walcot Street the gardens ran down to the Avon.



As for calling old Bath “a muddy backwater”, this is again inappropriate. It was a famous cloth-making town, as Chaucer made clear by the Wife of Bath in *The Canterbury Tales*, published towards the end of the century. It possessed the Abbey which had succeeded the one in which King Edgar had been crowned, and often saw the arrival of royal parties with their trains of followers, and of nobility.

As well it had the only hot springs in Britain. The *Gesta Stephani*, 1138, records how invalids came from all over England to bathe in the hot waters. Hot baths were not a frequent practice in those days, and the visits were likely to be beneficial.

Speed’s map must always be our best guide to the layout of the old city. Speed appears to be correct for 1575 and must be adapted to suit the medieval setting. A market cross, for instance, stood where Speed shows the Market House. Our own studies on the old city have included the Guildhall, in *Bath History* II and in a recent booklet. Fairs, and markets were discussed in an article in Issue 12 of the *Survey*. Southgate, Lyncombe and Widcombe and now Bimbery have been featured in booklets, with maps; the Sawclose and Westgate Street area in *Bath History* VIII, Walcot Street in an exhibition at the Museum of Bath at Work. We have also produced various items on the baths.

Studies exist by others, such as Allan Keevil on the Barton and on Barrack’s Farm, and Bath Archaeological Trust on the Abbey, together with Professor Alexander’s study of medieval sources on Bath drama. We ourselves joined with Peter Davenport of Bath Archaeological Trust to bring forward a suggested layout for the Bishop’s Palace area, relevant to the handing over of Bishopsbower in the first half of the 14th century, giving the Prior overall control of the ecclesiastical premises in the south-eastern section of old Bath. Our reconstructed ground plan appeared in Issue 4 of the *Survey*. Our joint article on the subject appeared in the *Archaeological Journal*.

I am still carrying on research into the background to the so-called “Savile” map of Bath. We have already suggested, following a clue by Major Davis, whose family at one time owned Hetling House, that it may have been drawn by one of the Saviles of that lodging-house towards the end of the 17th century, to be engraved under Ernst von Hetling in the middle of the 18th century. The “Huguenot” map is an outline copy of Speed. Meanwhile the so-called Warwick picture has turned out to be a standard medieval depiction of Jerusalem, as already discussed in Issue 2, and Smith’s Tudor map is too awful to contemplate as a source on old Bath, except for one or two minor points. We are therefore left with Speed.

The 14th Century

As for the century in which the first Chapman names arrived here, the 14th century was of course the age of the Edwards. Edward I, or Longshanks (1272-1307), the son of Henry III, is described as “tall of stature, majestic in appearance and bearing, affable and, so it is said, truly royal”. He was followed by Edward II, of Carnavon (1307-1327), a weaker character with a love of favourites such as Piers Gaveston and the Despencers. (Later, in the mid-15th century, one of the Spencers, also called Wardroper, held the corner house at the junction of Cheap Street and the High Street, next to the St. John’s land.) Piers Gaveston, made Earl of Cornwall, was a Gascon knight. He was murdered by the Earl of Warwick in 1312.

King Edward himself was murdered in Berkeley Castle. His son, Edward III of Windsor (1327-1377) is described on the one hand as “grave, wise, capable and merciful”, but others have called him frivolous and extravagant. He was an energetic soldier, and his reign continued the conflict with Scotland, and in 1337 saw the commencement of the Hundred Years War, of which the battles of Crecy (1346) and Poitiers (1356) were part - hence the frequent taxation. Edward’s son the Black Prince sought to extend English influence in France, and by the treaty begun at Bretigni and finalised at Calais, 1360, Edward held Calais and an area around it, and an area round Crecy, as well as Aquitaine with Gascony.

These adventures were held to be justified because of the English monarchy’s French descent; in the next century Joan of Arc would help the French combat these claims. Bayonne is in Gascony, near the border of Spain and Navarre, which explains why the *Magdalene* was shipping goods to Bristol. The French, assisted by the Welsh, had already determined to drive Edward out. It is said that the Black Prince’s health was now so bad that he could not mount, “but directed his army from a horselitter”. The prince died soon after the convening of the “Good Parliament” in 1376. By 1377 “the only towns of importance remaining in English hands were Calais, Cherbourg, Brest, *Bayonne* and Bordeaux”.

Meanwhile the Black Death had broken out in 1348-1349, and changed the position of labour in the countryside. Since church registers do not exist from that period, it has not been possible to calculate its exact effect on Bath from such documents. (It is true that Alexander the Dyer does not seem to re-appear after the Black Death.) Finally the century ended with the reign of Richard II of Bordeaux (1377-1399), son of the Black Prince, described as “handsome but effeminate, fond of the arts and of personal display”, his clothes being “stiff with gold and gems”. He died as a prisoner in Pontefract Castle and was replaced by his cousin Henry IV, son of the Black Prince’s brother and rival John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. In the 15th century dynastic conflict would lead on to the Wars of the Roses.

Reading

E.M.Carus-Wilson, *The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the later Middle Ages*, London. The map printed as a frontispiece indicates that iron was regularly imported from Bayonne and wine and woad from the nearby port of Bordeaux. "The chief export to all parts was cloth".

Emmanuel Green, 'A Bath Poll Tax, 2, Richard II', *Proceedings of the Bath Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club*, Vol.VI, 1889, pp.294-314.

T.F.Tout, 'Part I: From Earliest Times to 1485', *An Advanced History of Great Britain*, London.



THE ORIGINS OF THE ROYAL UNITED HOSPITAL

Roger Rolls

Hospitals as we know them today originated in the 18th century although the word was in use in earlier times to describe residential institutions providing accommodation for poor people incapable of looking after themselves through infirmity or old age. It is perhaps not surprising to find medieval hospitals in Bath. These were sited near the thermal springs, a recognised source of relief for those crippled by arthritis or neurological disorder. The oldest surviving institution, St. John's Hospital, was founded, it is said, by Bishop Reginald Fitz-Jocelyn in 1174, although its medieval buildings have long since vanished.

One legacy of these early institutions (an excellently preserved example of which can be seen at Beaune in France) is the infirmary hall - the direct ancestor of the modern hospital ward - with beds facing each other across the breadth of the room, placed between a sequence of windows along the long walls. In medieval times, patients looked towards an altar placed at the far end of the ward; nowadays the altar has been replaced by a television set.

A post medieval hospital endowed by Thomas Bellott was founded in the vicinity of the baths by 1611. This had no communal ward accommodation and was arranged as a series of single rooms. Despite its similarity to an almshouse, Bellott's has features more akin to our present day concept of a hospital - a limited length of stay for patients, medical staff in attendance and inmates who suffered from conditions requiring medical treatments and particularly those suited to thermal water therapy. Bellott's was the first mineral water hospital in the city, antedating the Bath General Hospital (now the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases) by more than a century. It was unable to cater for more than a dozen patients at a time, none of whom could be residents of Bath.

Though much larger than Bellott's, the General Hospital, founded in 1738 and later renamed as the Royal Mineral Water Hospital, also restricted its admissions to non-residents of the city. John Wood the Elder originally conceived a circular design for the General Hospital which was to have been built on land called the 'Aumbry' (the site of the technical college building now called Bath College), but his final design, erected on the present site in Upper Borough Walls, features a squared U-shaped plan on three stories. The front elevation has a central triangular pediment supported on four pilasters and the centrally placed entrance door is gained by a short flight of stairs.

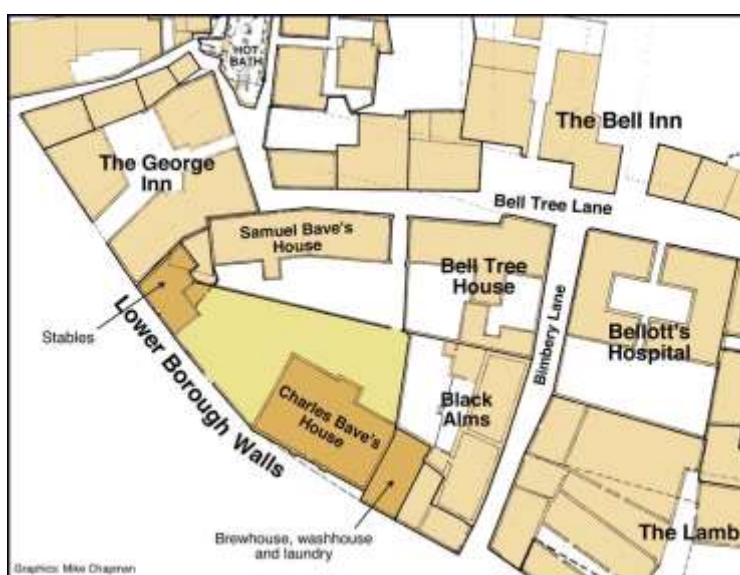
Eighteenth century hospital style was often inspired by the grand country house. Because their wards were built with one wall adjacent to a corridor, they were known as corridor hospitals. A century later, such design was frowned upon because of the absence of opposing windows on the long walls. By building wards as separate pavilions connected by an external corridor, cross ventilation could be effected. This arrangement was vital to achieve hygienic conditions in the wards and thereby reduce the appalling rate of infection which was so prevalent in the earlier hospitals.

The Bath General Hospital was founded to accommodate the large influx of poor crippled and disabled people who resorted to the city hoping to find relief in the thermal springs and who could afford neither private lodgings nor the advice of a medical practitioner. Those living in the city were deemed to have no need of hospital accommodation. Under the terms of the Poor Law, the city's destitute could apply to the parish to provide the services of a medical officer; the rich could afford to pay the practitioner's fees themselves. Only those in more humble occupations, servants, artisans, tradesmen and others of similar social class found themselves in a financial hiatus, unable to support themselves and pay for medical fees when illness prevented them from working, yet not able to qualify for parish relief.

It was for these unfortunate individuals that the Bath Pauper Charity was founded in 1747 “giving medical assistance to patients either at a dispensary or in their own houses”. I have been unable to trace the whereabouts of this dispensary until 1790 when the charity enlarged itself and opened a small hospital in Lower Borough Walls called the Bath City Infirmary and Dispensary.

Bath City Infirmary and Dispensary

Members of the Bave family were well-known and respected medical practitioners in the city in the 17th century. Dr.Samuel Bave forsook his practice in Gloucester to move to Bath where he established himself as a physician. He purchased a property and land in Bell Tree Lane, close to the Lower Borough Wall.



In the following century, his descendants built an imposing house on land overlooking what eventually became St.James Parade. It was occupied by Dr.Charles Bave until 1774 when the house was sold. A contemporary advertisement described it as

‘a large and substantial well-built messuage facing St.James Parade, built by the late Dr.Bave, deceased, for his own residence and fit for a large family. Consisting of a large good kitchen, two servants halls, a large hall, a handsome staircase; 3 large and lofty parlours, and a lodging room on the ground floor; a large elegant and lofty dining room; 3 good large lodging rooms on the first floor; five good lodging rooms on the attic storey, and seven good garrets; a wash house, brew house and laundry adjoining to and in front of the house, and two lodging rooms for servants over the same; a good seven stall stable, and a coach house for two carriages. There is plenty of both sorts of water, and a good carriage way to the premises’.



Charles Bave's house in the 1840s, from the Chapman Collection of calotypes. Courtesy of Bath Central Library.

The building was never to be a family residence again. It was transformed into the Alfred Hotel and remained thus for 18 years. In 1792, the building was once more for sale. The sale notice in the *Bath Chronicle* mentioned the proposed improvements to the nearby baths, allowing direct access from the back of the house and yard.

The immediate vicinity of the baths and the sizeable amount of undeveloped land surrounding the building made it eminently suitable as a site for a hospital. With this in mind, some of the Governors of the General Hospital purchased the building in 1792 for £1300, thinking they would re-site their hospital there. Considerable argument ensued, with the remaining Governors doubting the wisdom of this move in preference to adding a third storey to John Wood's building at Upper Borough Walls. In the end, the latter plan was adopted and the consortium of Governors who had purchased the Alfred Hotel arranged to lease their building to the managers of the Bath Pauper Charity who were keen to open a new hospital for the use of Bath residents. On 19 July 1792, the *Bath Chronicle* reported that the Alfred Hotel would be ready for the reception of patients "in a few days" and renamed it the Bath City Infirmary and Dispensary.

The Casualty Hospital.

At the beginning of June 1788, four accidents were reported in the local newspapers. A 13 year-old boy called Richard Grenfell was run over by a stone cart in Bathwick Lane and broke his leg. Another boy, a year older, slipped from a bank and a cart ran over his legs resulting in a violent bruise to his ankles. Meanwhile a postillion standing at the head of his horses in Batheaston was knocked down, sustaining a fractured skull. Finally, a plumber, working at a house in Peter Street, fell from an upstairs window and sustained a serious injury.

All of these unfortunate people were taken to 38 Kingsmead Street where another new hospital had been founded earlier that year. Known as the Casualty Hospital, the institution was the fourth of the growing number of medical facilities appearing in the city to cater for the "lower ranks" of society,

members of the labouring population whose fragile self-sufficiency could be undermined by the periodic affliction of accident and illness.

Nothing is known of the interior arrangements of the building but the Governors were evidently desirous of moving to purpose built premises. In 1820, James Norman who was consulting surgeon to the Casualty Hospital wrote to the mayor to inform him that the Casualty Hospital would be amalgamating with the City Infirmary and Dispensary so that the two charities could combine resources in larger premises.

The United Hospital

Appeals for funds for the new United Hospital were made to the public. The site chosen was on land adjacent to the Bath City Infirmary and a new building, designed by John Pinch, was proposed with a front elevation not unlike Wood's General Hospital in Upper Borough Walls. The rear of the building connected with the old City Infirmary premises by a long corridor. The basement of the new building contained kitchens, laundry, a pharmacy, laboratory, and a mortuary. In addition there was an examination room for post-mortems.

The resident medical staff, a house surgeon and apothecary (later styled house physician), had rooms on the ground floor, along with the matron. Nurses slept in the wards which varied in size, some being used for surgical cases and others medical. The operating theatre was on the top storey and featured tiered observation platforms so that pupil surgeons could watch their masters operate. There were no anaesthetics at this time and operating was a perilous procedure which was only done in extreme cases. Complications from surgery, usually haemorrhage and infection were common, and many areas of the body were "out of bounds" to the surgeons of the early nineteenth century. The introduction of anaesthetics and antiseptic techniques in the mid century revolutionised surgery and opened up possibilities for operation that nobody had dared contemplate in earlier times.

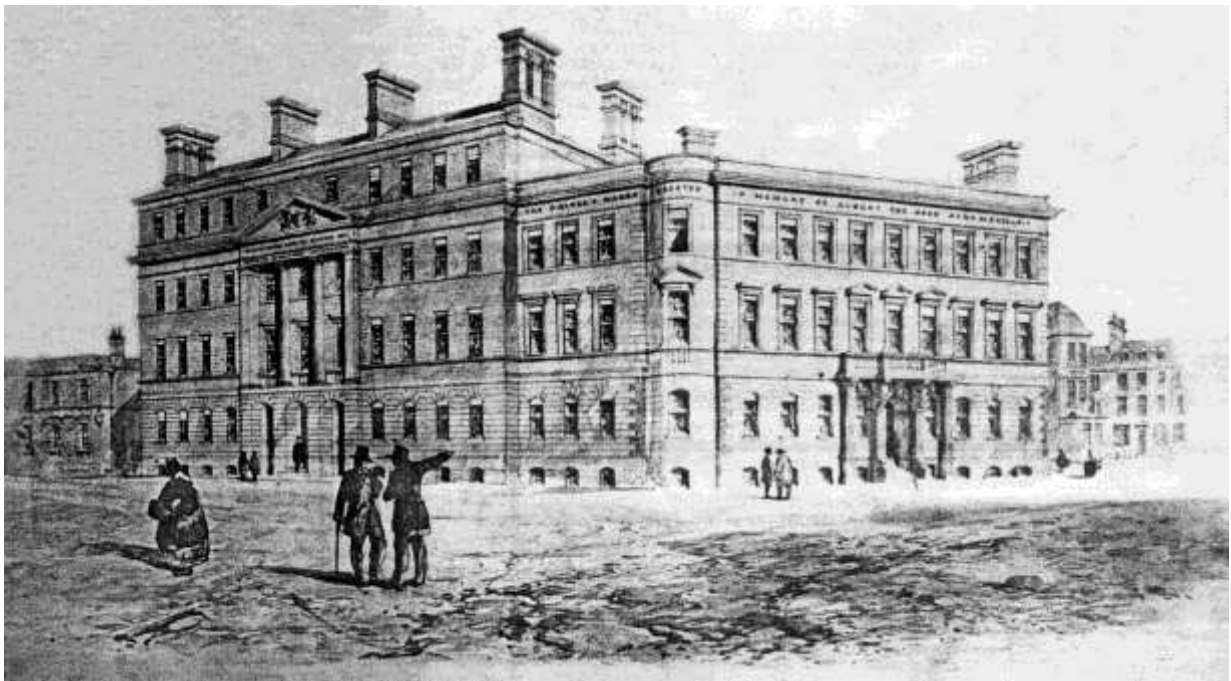


Elevation of the North or Principal Front.

Pinch's drawing for the United Hospital. Courtesy of the Bath Record Office.

Forty years later, the building was enlarged by the addition of a western extension, designed by Manners and Gill and known as the Albert Wing. At the same time, the old Alfred Hotel building was demolished and the current range of buildings along Lower Borough Walls was added. The triangle was completed by a chapel in Bimbery Lane which was roughly on the original site of St.Catherine's Hospital before it was moved to its present-day position further down the lane.

By the 1930s the site had become unmanageable and the RUH moved well away from the city centre to its present position at Combe Park where it has continued to evolve and develop. Since then, the buildings in Beau Street have been occupied by the Bath Technical College (now called Bath College), the forerunner of which had previously been housed at the corner of Bridge Street and the High Street, on the site of the former White Lion.



BATH'S FIRST PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO

Mike Chapman

In the article on Early Photographic Studios in Bath which appeared in Issue 14, it was stated that the site of Bath's first photographic studio was as yet unknown. Further details about this building have now come to light which provide a better idea of its location and background.

It is first worth mentioning that although the invention of the first photographic processes, i.e. the daguerreotype in France and Fox Talbot's calotype at Lacock, were both brought out in 1839, it was the high definition of the 'one-off' daguerreotype image which made it ideally suited for intimate portrait miniatures. The first daguerreotype studio, opened in New York in 1840, was an instant success - due in part to the invention by Alexander Wolcott of a camera fitted with a mirror (instead of a lens) which reduced 'sitter's time' and produced an 'un-reversed' image. In England however there was a slight delay. Although the French Government had published the daguerreotype process 'free to the world', Daguerre himself had restricted its use by taking out a patent in England, Wales, and the British Colonies.

Nevertheless, Richard Beard, a coal merchant, hearing of the success of the New York studio, readily paid the eight hundred pounds for Daguerre's patent, together with a further seven thousand pounds for the patent on Wolcott's camera, and on the 23 March 1841 opened the first photographic portrait studio in Britain in a **Courtesy of Bath Central Library.** glasshouse erected on the roof of the Royal Polytechnic Institution, London. He quickly followed this up by establishing a whole chain of photographic 'Institutes' throughout the country which brought him a considerable fortune (as much as £40,000 a year) - eroded unfortunately by litigation in defence of his monopoly, leaving him bankrupt by 1849.

The high cost of the daguerreotype portrait meant that a wealthy resort such as Bath was an obvious choice for one of these Institutes. In the autumn of 1841 Beard's name accordingly appears in the Walcot Rate Book as the occupier of a garden plot in the Subscription Walk Gardens below the Royal Crescent - in the eastern part of the Royal Victoria Park belonging to the estate of Sir Henry Rivers. In the next entry the plot is described as a 'Building & Garden in the Gravel Walk' (with rental increased from £7.10.0 to £23), and on the 11 November 1841 the following advertisement appeared in the *Bath Chronicle*:

PHOTOGRAPHIC AND DAGUERREOTYPE INSTITUTION,
VICTORIA PARK, BATH

By her Majesty's Letters Patent.

The Nobility and Gentry of Bath are respectfully informed that the above
Institution is now open, where

PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS
Are taken Daily, from Ten a.m. till Dusk.

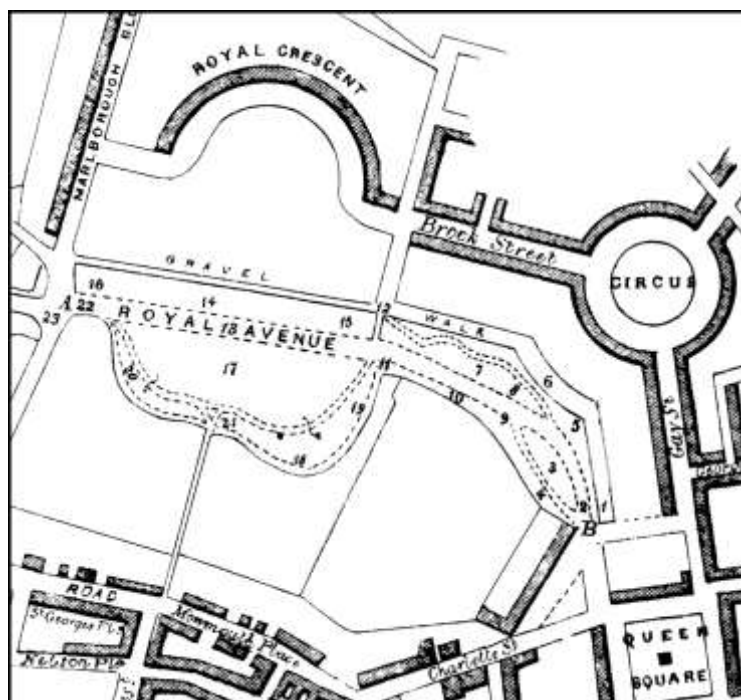
These extraordinary productions are executed in the short space of a few seconds only, and their great value consists in presenting a most faithful likeness, being, in truth, a perfect *fac-simile* of the Sitter. The process is equally successful under all the ordinary states of the weather, many of the best having been taken during dull rainy days.

Numerous specimens may be seen upon the table of the Reception Room of the Institution.

Although these Institutes were a purely commercial undertaking, Beard had not only taught himself this new skill but went on to make some important technical improvements, so it was presumably he who trained the licensees who ran his studios outside London. The first licensee in Bath, Thomas Sharpe, appears in the rate book entries between 1842/3, but little else is presently known about him other than that, like his successor, his name appears on the list of Victoria Park Subscribers under ‘Photographic Institution’, paying 10s. per year. By 1843/4 he had been replaced by James Freeman, a 30-year old Bristolian, who until that time was living at 27 Brock Street and ran a chemist’s shop at the ‘top of Belvedere’. An understanding of chemistry was a particular advantage in this new technology, and Freeman seems to have run the Institute with some success over the next eight years. His later advertisements in the postal directories mention a wide variety of services including, in 1846, landscape views and, in 1849, coloured (i.e. hand-tinted) portraits.

In the *Report of the Royal Victoria Park Committee*, 7 May 1845, two new improvements to the park were announced; ‘..the walk from the statue of Jupiter through the exhausted quarries [later the Upper Dell], and the conversion of a private garden, at the back of Brock Street, into a public pleasure ground’. Frederick Hanham, writing in 1857, in his *Manual for the Park*, adds the comment that this private garden was ‘..where the Photographic Institution previously stood, near the Mulberry Tree’ (p.xxiv) ...at the ‘Brock Street Entrance’ (*ibid.* p.204).

Hanham’s plan of the Park in c.1857, showing the Brock Street entrance (number 12).



The *Report* goes on to say ‘In the way of these objects, which had long been deemed desirable, there were various difficulties; they involved arrangements with parties in possession, permanent as well as temporary expenses, and no small sacrifice of time in superintending the alterations’. It would seem that the garden in question was the one attached to the Institute (mentioned in the rate books above), and that Freeman was reluctant to part with it. The building itself was otherwise unaffected, and in the *Report* for the following year, among the items of income and expenditure, is included ‘Alteration of Gateway and Railing near Photographic Institution, £10.19.6.’, together with the payment by Freeman of a quit rent of 1s. per year.

Nevertheless, the Institution itself was eventually removed for the improvement of the park sometime after May 1851, when all references to the building, or to Freeman, cease. How this came about is not mentioned in the park records, but may have been the result of the re-negotiation that year of the lease of the eastern park grounds from the Rivers' estate. The appearance in the Bath directory for 1850 of a second 'photographer', William Whaite, at no.1 Seymour Street (later, at 7 the Corridor), might also provide a clue. Unfortunately, it is at this period that there are no large-scale maps of Bath which might show the Institute building. The site, at the corner of the Brock Street entrance and the Gravel Walk, is now well known as a flower garden with an urn – a spot beloved of tourist photographers for the view across to the Royal Crescent. However, the flowers were not added until 1857, when they were donated by the well-known botanist and benefactor to the park, Philip B.Duncan, described as a 'practical and tasteful florist', as mentioned in the *Report*;

'To the same gentleman... who so liberally seconded their efforts in improving the Upper Dell, the Citizens of Bath are indebted for the recent addition to their Park of the Flower Garden at the back of Brock Street... his experienced eye detected the want of variety of colour as an embellishment to the sloping lawns and luxuriant evergreens, and he liberally offered to supply the omission at his own expense... the Garden has been planted with choice and beautiful flowers, protected by a light iron fence; an adjoining Shrubbery enlarged with rock-work, interspersed with Ferns of no common beauty, and additional seats provided for the accommodation of Visitors at Mr.DUNCAN'S sole cost'.

There is no mention of the urn in the *Report*, but this could have been transferred from elsewhere in the park grounds. The Mulberry tree probably disappeared at this time, but the present wrought-iron arch at the Brock Street entrance may well be a remnant of the original gate of 1846.

Since all surface remains of the Institute had disappeared by 1857, one can only speculate as to its scale and layout. Daylight illumination was particularly important for photography at that time, and pre-existing buildings were generally adapted by adding a glass-house on the roof. Where no previous building was available (as, presumably in this instance), a purpose-built circular structure was erected with a glass roof (tinted blue to reduce the glare), as illustrated in George Cruikshank's famous cartoon of the interior, shown below. Instead of using a tripod to aim the camera, the subject was rotated on a high moveable platform in the centre of the room to face the best light, and the camera, attached to a circular guide rail running around the wall, would then be pushed round to an appropriate position opposite the sitter. The light level was controlled by the adjustable canopy over the subject's head, as well as by calico blinds in the roof panels. Below the photographer (who appears to be timing an exposure) the dark-room bench can be seen through the open door. Having the dark-room close at hand was essential, since the silvered plate (being polished by the assistant on the right) had to be sensitised immediately before exposure. As the advertisement above shows, these studios were also provided with an attached gallery or reception room, but Beard's Institutes seem to have been otherwise relatively temporary structures.



Freeman himself apparently resided elsewhere in the neighbourhood, and in 1846 for example he is recorded in the postal directories at 10 Great Stanhope Street. However, in the census of 1851, listed under 'Photographic Rooms, Victoria Park', James Freeman, 'Photographic Artist', is shown living on site, together with his wife Louisa, their eight year old daughter Lucy, and a 28-year-old house servant, Fanny Alsopp*. The inclusion of dwelling accommodation suggests a fairly large building, raising the question of how (or whether) it was serviced with water, drainage, etc., particularly in this instance where certain dangerous chemicals such as hot mercury and iodine vapour were involved in the daguerreotype process. This question will probably be only answered by archaeological means.

It would therefore be useful to know whether any of Beard's Institutes have survived elsewhere. The Cheltenham Photographic Institution, for example (established in 1841 in the centre of The Promenade), later gained some notoriety when its manager, an American, suddenly disappeared after obtaining credit amounting to 'a pretty considerable sum' with local jewellers, silversmiths, furriers, etc. There was also a studio in Bristol 'at the top of Park Street', the licensee being a Mr. Vine who seems to have had some technical difficulties, judging from his advertisement in 1851 announcing 'Recent Improvements'. Following a quotation from the *Bristol Mercury* that '..We never saw a more decided improvement; the deathly appearance so justly complained of in the pictures taken by the old process, is avoided, and the likenesses are life-like and pleasing', a footnote adds that 'Portraits taken prior to the recent improvements may be exchanged at a trifling cost'. In the following year Mr. Vine moved his establishment to No.32 Park Street, providing '..spacious and convenient premises...

admirably adapted for procuring Daguerreotypes of the first class. Sitters are not required to ascend higher than the Drawing-room floor – Invalids may be taken at their own Residence.’

The year 1851, when James Freeman disappears from the scene, marks something of a watershed in the development of photography, being the year when Frederick Scott Archer invented the ‘wet collodion process’. This method, using a chemical film on a glass plate, was the precursor of the photographic film we use today. Like the calotype, any number of paper prints could be produced from the negative plate, but with the difference that they were now of a quality which could rival the daguerreotype. This process was not only quicker (though still cumbersome), safer and cheaper, but also (more importantly) patent-free. From hereon photographs became accessible to the man in the street, and it is not surprising that whereas the 1851 census shows only 51 commercial photographers in the country, by 1861 the number had risen to 2,534. In Bath both William Whaite and his main competitor, H.N.King in Milsom Street, were advertising stereoscopes (using glass or paper prints) in 1854, and by 1858 King was offering photographs on glass or paper, as well as ‘prints in large quantities for publication’. There is no further mention of daguerreotypes, and between 1851 and 1864 the numbers of photographic studios in Bath had risen from one to twenty four.

* I am grateful to Bill Hanna for bringing this to my attention.



The Gravel Walk, Victoria Park, at the Brock Street entrance. To the right is the flower garden and urn, site of the Photographic Institute.

Photo: Mike Chapman.

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