



NEWSLETTER 61

SPRING 2010

GROUP NEWS

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EDITORIAL

As we all come out of hibernation after our first cold spell of the 21st Century, how wonderful it is to be able to source images such as that below, from the *BATH IN TIME* website. www.bathintime.co.uk



Skating on the Kennet & Avon canal, Bathwick, Winter 1928 - 1929

Image Reference
24791

Artist / Photographer
Dafnis, George Love

Collection Reference
Private Box 232

Original Width (mm)
106

Original Height (mm)
82

Collection Location
Private Collection

© Bath in Time - Private Collection

2010 also brings a new editor, who follows in the shadows of others much more knowledgeable than he on the history of our unique city. I thank Chris for his best wishes and I will do my best.

In addition to our usual Meetings Reports I have also introduced a new section one “Home thoughts from Abroad”. This is for members who travel around and find aspects of Bath’s history that we may have lost here at home and feel should be recorded. I start this off with a beautiful piece of furniture found in a Museum in Budapest, last year while taking a conference break!

THE KINGSWOOD SCHOOLS, THE WESLEYS IN THE BATH AREA, AND THE CENTRE

Tuesday 20th October 2009

KINGSWOOD SCHOOL

Speaker

Mrs Zoe Parsons, Archivist

Reporter

Michael Rowe



The meeting was held in the study room next to the Wesley centre and commenced with a presentation on the history of the foundation of the school in Bristol, in 1739, by Wesley and Whitfield.

Building commenced in 1746 with the laying of the foundation stone which survives and is now in the Bath building along with the pulpit from the original chapel.

The school opened in 1748 and the inaugural service included a hymn written for the occasion, 'Come Father Son and Holy Ghost to whom for all our children we cry'. There were 28 fee paying pupils, boys and girls but it quickly became a boys only school for sons of Methodist preachers. The curriculum was published and was taught by 6 masters. The diet was plain and accompanied by water with meals only. No drinks allowed between meals.

The assumption was 'That children are born biased towards evil and need to be trained towards redemption'. If caught early and trained, the next generation would be improved but they had to be protected from re-corruption.

Original Wesley letters have survived and one was shown relating to the purchase of books by the headmaster for the library. 100 of these books survive and are on display in the Wesley Centre with some annotated in Wesley's hand.

Also shown and described was the Primitive Physician, a domestic manual of remedies applicable to the boys with somewhat alarming cures described as infallible.

Account books survive from 1764-70 and the school day books from 1802-1816.

By 1840 the Bristol buildings, wonderfully depicted in a model made some years ago by Michael Bishop and on show in the Wesley Centre, were in a state of decay. A new much larger site was purchased in Bath, at Lansdown, and Wilson was employed as the architect of the new and very fine school building. It opened on 26th October 1852 and quickly acquired an impressive reputation for academic excellence, an all round liberal education, and for missionary work abroad.

The school magazine, established in the mid 19th. Century, is a useful research resource.

In the 1914-1918 war 116 former pupils were lost along with 3 members of staff following which the memorial chapel was opened on 16th June 1922.

Consistent with the liberal attitude of the school an exchange with a Hitler youth school was arranged in 1930, although as events moved on in 1939 plans were evolved for evacuation as the school was identified as a base for the Admiralty in the event of war. This evacuation to Uppingham was undertaken very successfully and in 1939 a prep-school was established at Newbury. The school returned to Lansdown in 1946 and increasing numbers of students from abroad were admitted.

In 1995 the Summerleys estate was bought as an annex and further extensions built in the grounds.

There are now 647 boys and girls in day and boarding education of whom 25% board.

The talk was followed by time to examine the Wesley collections and by a tour of the historic building and the chapel.



ROCKS AND LANDSCAPE OF THE BATH AREA

Tuesday 9th February 2010

St Stephen's Church Centre, Lansdown

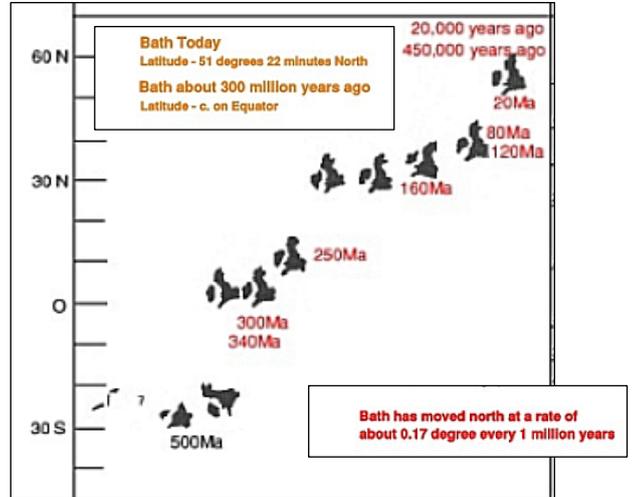
Speaker

Elizabeth Devon - Bath Geological Society

Reporter

Nigel Pollard + Images from www.bathgeolsoc.org.uk

Those of us who have been on Elizabeth's walks around central Bath inspecting the marble and other stone shop fronts will know the enthusiasm she brings to her subject, and this talk was no exception. What we experienced was a cross between Dr Who and Jurassic Park - on location in Bath, although even Bath has not been static. The diagram on the right shows part of an image shown to us that traces the movement of the British Isles from the equator to our present position. >

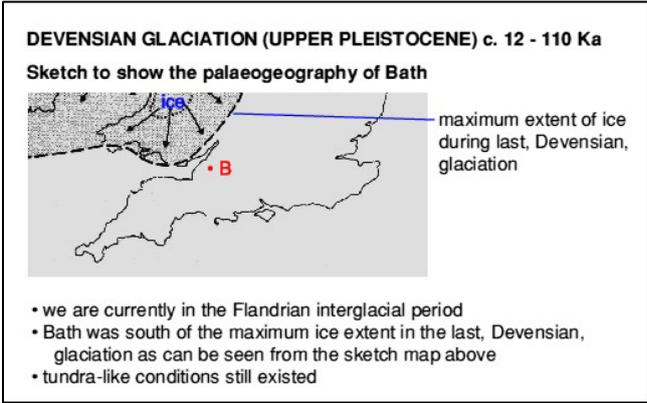


Following an introduction to the geological strata around Bath with the help of her "high tech" sponge, we were reminded why so many of us have springs in our basements and landslips around us.

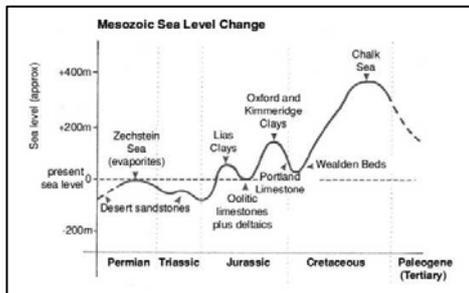
We were then treated to a trip through "Geological Time" skipping though the really early years to concentrate on the formation of Great Oolite (Bath Stone) a mere 160 Million years ago and from there tracing the fate of Bath as it rose from the depth of the tropical seas to Mediterranean resort, back into the sea and into the tundra where we only just miss out being covered with ice in the last glacial advance (Devensian) about 20,000 years ago.



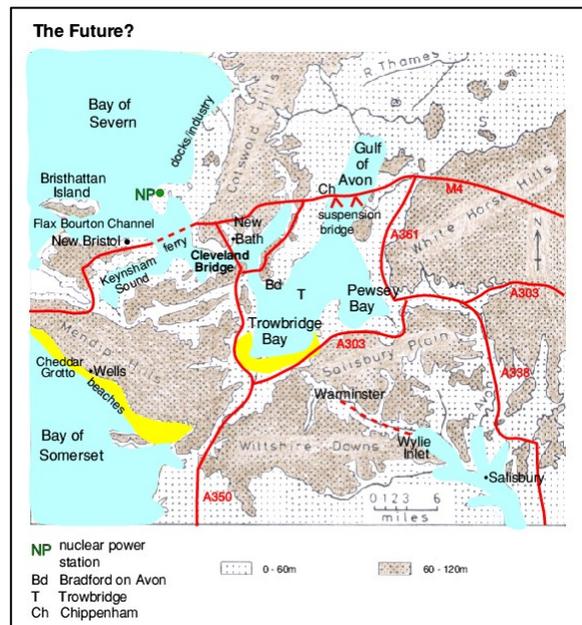
UK FROM SPACE 160MA YEARS AGO



On to the present and future, where we were reminded that climate change is nothing new and that sea level has also been volatile as indicated in the adjacent diagram.



Finally, as a post-scrip to a highly enjoyable evening, Elizabeth showed us a map of our fate if sea levels rise again by only 60m. A time when members of the HBRG will need to learn scuba diving to research the old city at the bottom of the sea and we spend our weekend breaks at Trowbridge Bay or Cheddar by the Sea.>



THE GREAT WEST ROAD

Wednesday 24th March 2010 URC Centre, Argyll Chapel, Grove Street

Speaker **Brenda Buchanan**

Abstract **Brenda Buchanan**

The turnpike roads are a much under-rated subject of historical research. They were more significant than the surviving handful of mile stones and toll houses would suggest, especially as many of these features date from the early decades of the nineteenth century rather than covering the whole period during which the improved roads were so vital to the country's economy.

The turnpike system was a great innovation, introduced effectively in the early eighteenth century in an attempt to improve upon the poorly maintained parish roads. The strength of the innovation lay in the fact that the system had a tightly-controlled legal basis, exercised through the powers granted by an Act of Parliament. These Acts authorised the setting up of trusts, often made up initially of Justices of the Peace, but then coming to include men of substance not necessarily on the bench. The Trusts were granted powers to improve defined stretches of road, setting up turnpike barriers at which tolls could be levied according to an authorised scale of charges. But these provided chiefly the revenue, and to fund the major work of building new roads and improving old, the raising of loans was permitted. In some cases (for example the Bath Trust) these were based upon a mortgage, not of the King's Highway, but of the tolls. These powers were usually granted for 21 years, after which (or even before, if new powers were being sought) a renewal Act was required.

After a brief account of the network of roads established by the Bath Trust, whose mileage grew four-fold after its establishment in 1707, attention was focussed on the major national link, 'The Great West Road'. This was made up of the work of several trusts along the line, each with its own design of tollhouses and milestones, and with the inns that provided fresh horses, and food and accommodation for travellers, varying considerably from the basic to the palladian. The talk began with an account of John Loudon McAdam, the Surveyor General of the Bath Trust who was greatly influential in the construction and administration of the turnpike roads at the national level, and who gave his name to the English language. It finished with a photograph of a solitary horse on an old stretch of turnpike road near Bath, providing LIS with a reminder of the motive force on which the whole system depended - horsepower. Another expression for the English language, helping further to confirm the significance of the turnpike roads.



Brenda Buchanan, 26 March 2010



BOOK REVIEWS & RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

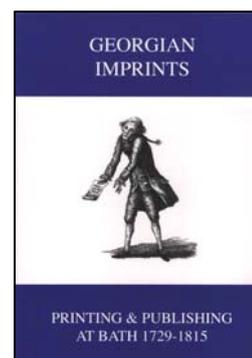
Georgian Imprints - Painting & Publishing at Bath 1729-1815

by Trevor Fawcett 2008

Publisher: Ruton

ISBN 0-9526326-4-0

£ 9.00



Trevor needs no introduction to members and the quality of his research and publications are well known to all, and *Georgian Imprints* is no exception.

For review however, I think it most useful to simply repeat Trevor's own Summary, sent with our copy for review:

“An often overlooked, yet vital trade quietly flourished amid the architectural splendours, visitor amenities and spa rituals of Georgian Bath. By the later eighteenth century local printing skills matched any in the country and a surprising mix of publications tumbled off the presses from sermons, poetry and guidebooks to medical treatises, magazines and romantic fiction. *Georgian Imprints* covers all this in some detail, aided by copious illustrations. It follows the careers of notable local printers, and describes the typical printing office in this age of hand-set type and the laborious wooden printing press. It touches on relations with authors and the London end of the book trade, as well as paying special attention to key publications. Examples here include John Wood's *Description of Bath*, the lively verse satires of Christopher Anstey, the beautifully printed Bishop Wilson *Bible*, Collinson's county history of Somerset, several works on natural history, the first bowdlerised *Family Shakespeare*, and Hannah More's famous series of *Cheap Repository Tracts*. The production of ephemeral items such as handbills, stationery, leaflets and posters, the staple business of some printers, is also given its due, as is the important history of Bath newspapers from the *Bath Journal* established in 1744 to the four competing weeklies that existed by 1815.”

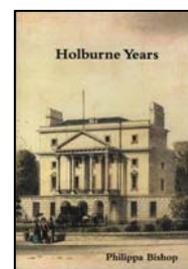
Holburne Years

by Philippa Bishop 2009

Publisher: Millstream Books

ISBN 978 0 948975 89 9

£ 7.50



Philippa Bishop's book on the Holburne years from 1960 to the present day is timely indeed as the Museum goes through its metamorphosis into the 18th / 21st century jewel box that will re-open in 2011.

As a reviewer to this book, I should of course disclose my interests as those of a “Friend of the Holburne”, but as their Winter Newsletter arrived this week, with the latest plea for financial support, it confirms the author's theme of the continual tightrope that the Museum has had to walk for most, if not all of its existence. That it has come through it all to the current exciting stage is a tribute to all involved, including Philippa herself who has been both a full time and part - time curator over the years, and to the generosity of many Patrons including Charles and Barbara Robinson, to whom she has dedicated the book.

The book has been split into a number of time frames depicting the major developments over the last fifty years: 1960-67, 1967-76, 1977-85 and 1986-2000 together with a “Postscript” to bring things up to the present. Milestones along the way have included the transfer of ownership to the then new University of Bath over the years 1967-73, the first, but unsuccessful, attempt at a re-build between 1969-75 and the joining up with the Craft Study Centre over the years from 1977 to 2000.

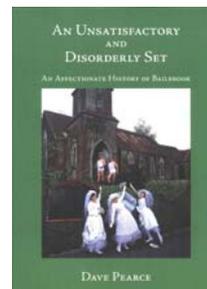
Finally, along the way the author remembers some of the temporary exhibitions that have been put on, but hear I must voice my only criticism of the book - no mention of that wonderful exhibition of Mrs Delany's (1700-1788) incredible paper collages in 1988.

An Unsatisfactory and Disorderly Set

An Affectionate History of Bailbrook

by Dave Pearce 2009

Publisher: The Batheaston Society & Millstream Books



This delightful book has a subtitle that describes it as “A selective and affectionate tribute to the people who have lived in the village of Bailbrook in the parish of Batheaston” and in fact has been part supported by the Bailbrook Residents Society.

It is mainly describes the village/hamlet since the mid-nineteenth century when the Rev. T. P. Rogers voiced a common Victorian concern that Bailbrook, which had 45 houses and 300 souls and a good mixed school, was however in need of a clergyman and a chapel - an observation that led finally forty years later in 1892 to the famous tin church, or more correctly the “Bailbrook Mission Church”.

While the book gives ample coverage to the villages architectural heritage in its church and school house, its greater coverage is of its residents. These, both past and present, have proved to be the true wealth of the village specifically in the late twentieth century when their community was so dramatically cut in two by the Swainswick by-pass.

A fascinating read and one that will have you wanting to go out and explore the place yourself, if you have not already done so.

NB: HBRG Planned walk for 2011

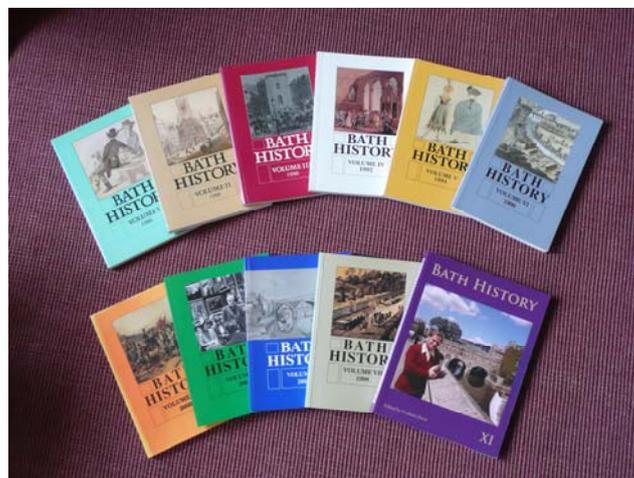
HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD: NO: 1



Dresser-cupboard -

The Bath Cabinet Makers Co. c. 1899

This beautiful piece of furniture, made here in Bath was found in the collection of the “Museum of Applied Arts” in Budapest, on a visit in June 2009. The information card says that it was purchased at the Paris World Fair in 1900. [Ref: 7.14]



ARE YOU EAGERLY AWAITING THE NEXT ISSUE OF “BATH HISTORY”

AND

WOULD LIKE TO HELP ENSURE ITS CONTINUED SUCCESS WITH A
DONATION?

THEN

- Please contact the Chairman Michael Rowe (01225 461902) for ways you can help-