

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE  
HISTORY OF BATH RESEARCH GROUP



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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the fourth edition of our "Proceedings" covering meetings from September 2015 through to June 2016. On 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016, just a month before we heard from David Crellin on the 'Descendants of John Wood', the Bath Preservation Trust were successful in purchasing John Wood the Elder's beautiful set of drawing instruments shown below:



The set, which is engraved with John Wood the Elder's name and crest, is on public display in the Museum of Bath Architecture. Made by leading C18th mathematical instrument maker Thomas Heath, they were acquired with support from the Art Fund, the Arts Council England/Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund and several local donors.

# MEETING REPORTS

## THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015 St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

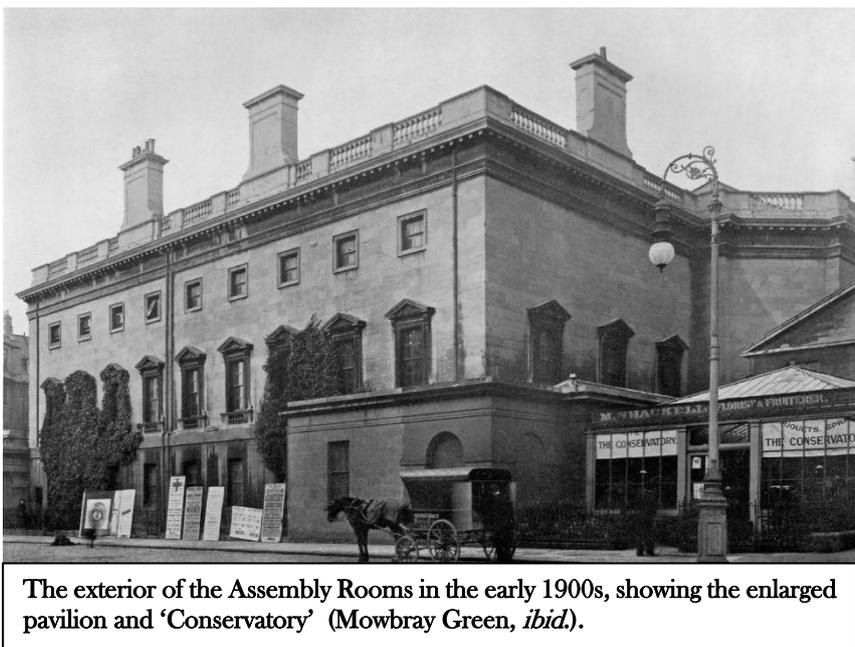
Speaker Mike Chapman

Notes Mike Chapman (Edited)

### 1900 to the Great War

At the beginning of this period, from 1897 to 1904, most of the Assembly Rooms building was leased from the proprietors by Charles Bryan Oliver, an architect and J.P. who lived 'on site' as manager in the Master of Ceremonies House.

The main rooms were hired out to those who wished to use them. However, the Wine Vaults, together with the North Colonnade in Bennett Street which had been turned into a wine merchants shop, were leased separately to Lawson Howes, Wine Merchant and Pawnbroker, 'a well-known citizen of Bath', who was also lessee of the Billiard Rooms on



the west side of the building. At some time the Sun Insurance fire engine was kept somewhere on the premises, and in 1869 a greenhouse called 'The City Conservatory' had been built in the open area on the south-east corner of the building, occupied for many years until the end of WWI by Miss Mary C.Shackall, florist.

Although the Assembly Rooms remained a prestigious venue for public gatherings at the end of the Victorian period, to remain financially viable it was being put to a wide variety of uses which can be broadly grouped under the following headings:

1. Dances: County and Private Subscription Balls, Easter Monday Fancy Dress Balls, Charity and Christmas dances continued in traditional fashion. However, since 1868 the office of Master of Ceremonies had fallen into abeyance, and the balls were mainly run by a Public Assembly Committee except for a brief period between 1874-78, and again from 1908-14.

2. Music: From the early 19th century the Assembly Rooms had become the main concert hall for serious music in Bath, and was equipped with a special organ built by Flight and Robson at the upper end of the Ball Room when Beethoven's Music was first performed in Bath. Favourite singers such as Madame Patti and Clara Butt made frequent appearances at the Assembly Rooms well into the 20th century.



3. Intellectual: The rooms became an important intellectual centre for lectures, exhibitions, and conferences of learned societies and interest groups and in 1900 part of the Rooms was temporarily inaugurated as a Presbyterian Church, when an arrangement was made that services should be held there every Sunday. This lasted until 1904 when the Bath Presbyterians purchased the Margaret Chapel nearby in Brock Street. In 1907 the Bath Trade Union Congress was held as the Assembly Rooms, as were also for many years (at least until the end of WWI) the Annual General Meetings of the National Union of Railwaymen.

4. Variety: Light entertainment was provided by travelling exhibitions, spectacles and displays, such as the 'Tableaux Vivants, Moving Figures, with Limelight Effect, Vocal and Instrumental Music, under the direction of Miss M.A. Smith' in 1900. Messrs Poole & Young, with their 'Myriorama' or 'Diorama' shows were also popular at this time, and were soon to include 'Cinematic Displays'.

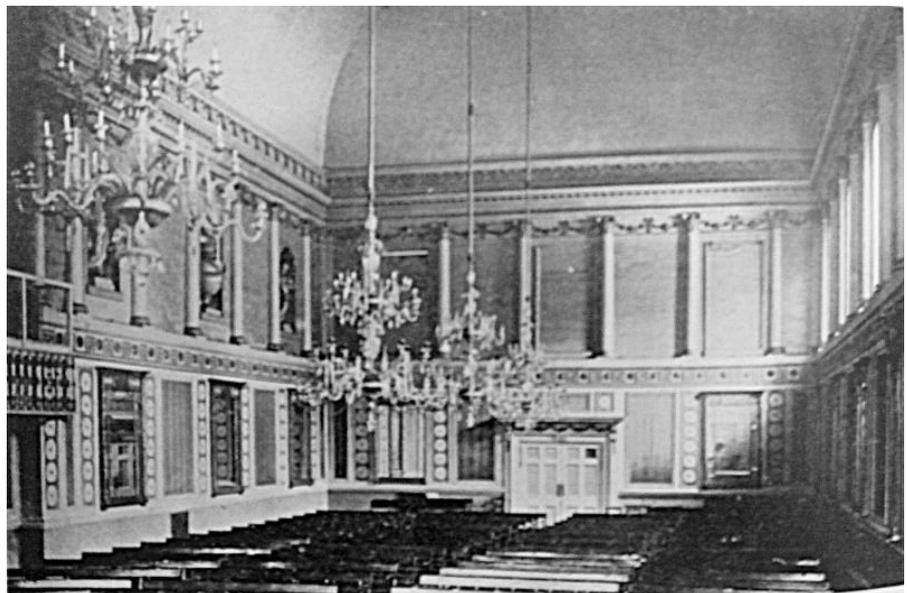
Notwithstanding all these uses, during these early years of the twentieth century the proprietors of the Rooms were facing considerable financial losses, despite the revival of the spa following the discovery of the Roman Baths in the 1880s. Besides the customary competition from the Pump Room, Guildhall and Theatre Royal, the late 19th century had seen the introduction of grand hotels (Pump Room Hotel, 1869, and Empire Hotel, 1900) where private balls found increasing favour, and the opening of the 'Bath Theatre of Varieties' in the Saw Close (1886) had driven away those who required less erudite entertainment. Most damaging was the erection of the 'Roman Promenade' and concert room extension of the Pump Room which considerably affected the letting of the Rooms. It was during this period that some of the furniture and fittings of the Assembly Rooms were sold, including Gainsborough's portrait of Captain Wade, auctioned at Christie's in July 1903 for 2,200 guineas.

To address this problem, in 1904 the Company decided to reorganise the management of the Rooms and bring in a programme of renovations and modern improvements. The Rooms were closed for three months and the 1879 décor removed, the newspaper reporting that it had been 'determined that the intentions of the younger Wood would be respected', although the decoration was 'in somewhat less severe style'.

More convenient safe exits were to be provided, and a system of air-conditioning installed together with a complete scheme of electric lighting. However, while it appears that the introduction of the electric light into the cut-glass Vauxhall candelabra was carried out, producing what the Newspaper called 'a strikingly beautiful effect', a photograph of the Easter Ball in 1903 shows that gas was then still being used to light the remaining Chandeliers.

On Wednesday 5 October 1904 the Rooms were reopened with a grand inaugural ball in the evening, as usual under the auspices of the Mayor and the Mayoress (Alderman Major Simpson, as M.C., and Mrs. Simpson).

Noticeable was 'the rich carpet laid in the Octagon, an Axminster of a particularly warm red shade, which looked particularly handsome under the brilliance of the electric light that is now introduced throughout this noble suit of apartments'.



The Ball Room after the 1904 re-decoration (*Fine Art Views of Bath*, 1905).

However, at a shareholders' meeting five years later it was announced that although 'a fair measure of success had attended the directors' management', the results were not sufficient to warrant the continuation of this system, and since it was no longer thought profitable to re-let to a new lessee, the sale of the Rooms should be considered. This caused a great deal of concern from many citizens, including the newly formed Old Bath Preservation Society, and rumours were circulated that the Rooms were to be acquired by a 'monster London emporium company'. Indeed, the Bath Chamber of Commerce approached the City Council to consider the desirability of the Corporation acquiring the Rooms, either by purchase or lease, an idea which was rejected by the Special Committee (Attractions) who were 'unable to submit any recommendations on the subject'.

Despite the recommendation to sell, it would appear that the Directors were authorised to continue with their management of the Assembly Rooms, and business carried on as before. By this time the Rooms were being increasingly used for moving picture shows. The earliest to appear in Bath in the 1890s were presented in tented or temporary structures in the open air, but halls were soon being booked for the purpose, and the Assembly Rooms, together with the Theatre Royal, the Palace Theatre in the Saw Close and the Pump Room were already being used by the early 1900s. Indeed, by 1907 the Pump Room had its own projection equipment for publicity purposes, operated by Albert Jones, then Assistant Engineer of the Baths. In 1902 the Bath Chronicle announced 'Animated Photography: T.J.West's Coronoscope Company at the Assembly Rooms, almost entirely consisting of moving pictures ... perhaps the best we have seen so far in Bath. One of the most famous showmen to visit Bath was Ralph Pringle, and in February 1905 the paper announced: 'The Royal Assembly Rooms; Today for one week only: Ralph Pringle's North American Animated Photo Co'

In the following year 'Pictures that Talk' were shown at the Assembly Rooms for a week. This was the first visit of the St.Louis Animated Pictures Company, 'bringing with them for the first time in Bath Gaumont's marvellous Chronophone, which makes the figures thrown upon the screen talk, sing, and live in the most natural manner'.

In 1910 Ralph Pringle returned to the Rooms, this time with the funeral of King Edward VII, including episodes from his life. The *Chronicle* enthusiastically reported that 'While this film was being shown Chopin's 'Marche Funebre' was rendered in a most impressive manner by the Theatre band, supplied by Mr.W.F.C.Schottler, and King Edward's favourite hymn was sung by an excellent choir, accompanied by Mr.H.J.Davis, L.R.A.M., at the organ'.

## The Great War, 1914 to 1918

As elsewhere in the opening years of the war, the Assembly Rooms were relatively unaffected, and the usual round of events continued; the Mid-Somerset Music Competition (17Apr15), the Annual Display of the Association of Girls Clubs (24May16), or the seasonal subscription concert of the Bath Quartet Society (14 Nov16) being typical. Throughout the conflict one or other of the Rooms always seems to have been available for whist drives and other lesser events, and even in October 1918 classes were still advertised for 'Dancing, Calisthenics and Eurythmics by the Misses Parnall'.

Lectures also continued, although now often concerned with war subjects - about its progress (by Hilaire Belloc, Chron.6Feb15), 'The German Spy Peril' (Mr.W. Le Queux, Chron.5Jun15), and in 1917 on the Russian Revolution. For the war effort, there were talks on 'Wartime Work at Home for Ladies', an 'Arts, Crafts & Thrift Exhibition', and fundraising concerts for disabled soldiers, medical support for the troops &c. There was even a Spiritualist Society meeting (although with hostile audience). Stranger still, in December 1915 the Assembly Rooms became the venue for the Bath Fanciers' Association Poultry Show (the Crystal Palace being unavailable owing to wartime necessities), with '1,000 birds occupying the Ballroom, Tea Room and Octagon'.

However, as time went on the war became more intrusive. Already in August 1915 War Office inspectors visited the Assembly Rooms for hospital accommodation, but came to the decision that 'it was not suitable for a military hospital', and that 'work should start on the Lansdown Cricket Ground', i.e. the War Hospital at Combe Park, later the site of the Royal United Hospital.

From the outset Bath had been a transit station for units preparing for the front, and was usually full of billeted soldiers. Mess halls were therefore required and in early 1916 the Tea Room at the Assembly Rooms became the mess hall of the 610th Army Service Corps.

Soon after the outbreak of war it was already becoming apparent that the aeroplane could play a useful part in the war effort, and orders were put out to the existing aircraft manufacturers to produce suitable designs and to find the necessary contractors to build them. Since aircraft were then constructed of wood and fabric, these contractors were mainly woodworking firms (such as cabinet makers), the engines being provided by the new motor-car industry. Bath had both.



Three-quarter Front View—A Bristol Two-seater Fighter. (Rolls-Royce "Falcon" engine.)

By 1917 aircraft had become so essential that 5,000 were required in active commission for one year, and since the average life of an aeroplane at the battlefront was not more than two months, it was necessary to mass-produce 30,000, each machine needing at least two motors during its service. To cope with this considerable growth at least 1,000 firms in England were engaged on work for the British Directorate of Aeronautic Supplies, only a third of which were direct contractors, the remainder being sub-contractors.

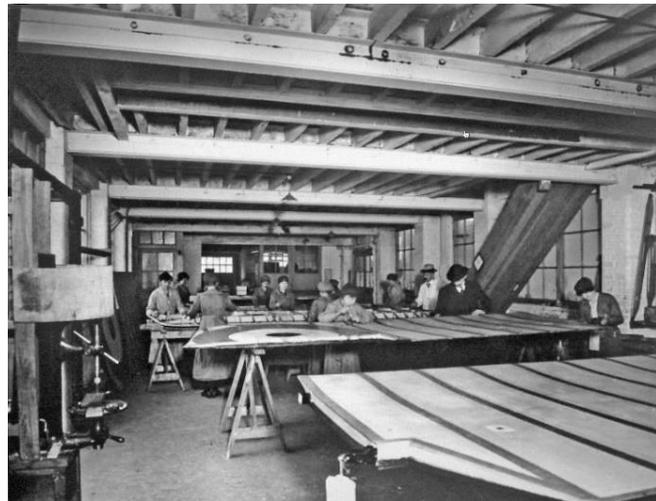
One such firm, the Bath Cabinet Makers Company Ltd (BCM) in Bellott's Road, Twerton, employing some 50 or 60 people was fully equipped with modern electrical machinery but did not have sufficient floor-space for production-line assembly work. For this purpose a loan was secured from the Government to acquire a six-storey malthouse at Avon Buildings in the Lower Bristol Road in Twerton belonging to the maltsters J.D. Taylor & Sons. This was ideal for aircraft production; the malthouse was the largest in Bath at that time, being newly built in 1900, and had extensive floor space for malt growing. However, for conversion to aircraft manufacture considerable modifications had to be made including the enlargement of the windows for better lighting (reducing the number of storeys to four), the erection of a curved 'Belfast'-type truss roof for additional headroom, and the installation of the latest electric woodworking machinery.

These alterations took some time to complete, and in the meantime any available hall was hired for assembly work, including, in April 1917 the Assembly Rooms.

Fortunately, one of those working there, Mr. Lewis Bennett was able to record his experiences on tape for the Museum of Bath at Work in the 1990s, and it is from a transcription of this that much of the following detail has been extracted.

The main contract for Bath Aircraft was from the British and Colonial Aircraft Company Ltd (later the Bristol Aeroplane Co.Ltd) at Filton to supply components of their Bristol 'Fighter' F2B known as the 'Brisfit' or 'Biff', a very successful two-seater fighter/reconnaissance biplane, first flown in September 1916, and for which orders were put out for 1,600 the following month. The construction of the wings was carried out in the Ballroom of the Assembly Rooms, and the ailerons next door in the Octagon, the component parts being supplied from Bellott's Road by BCM. Completely new machinery had to be installed in the Rooms, and altogether about 40 to 60 people from BCM worked there, each man on the wings having a woman worker to help with the assembly.

Modifications to the Rooms for the works otherwise appear to have been slight, without the removal of the chandeliers, although it was during this period that 'such articles of historic association as remained were finally disposed of', including portraits of Richard Tyson, James Heaviside and Beau Nash.



Typical scene at an aircraft factory in WWI, in this case for the production of wings in a converted brass foundry in Liverpool (Wikipedia).

It was presumably the construction of aircraft in Bath which led to the decision to locate a School of Aeronautics in the city for training aircraft observers. By the end of 1917 Bath was already the base for an officer cadet school, many destined for the Royal Flying Corps. At about this time there was a considerable change in policy towards the training of airmen who were needed in much larger numbers with much greater skills, prior to the re-organisation of the Royal Flying Corps with the other flying arms into the Royal Air Force in April 1918. Instead of 'learning the ropes' at the Front, a series of schools were set up for directly-recruited observers. After induction into the Cadet Brigade at Hastings, most were sent to No 7 (Observers) School of Military Aeronautics [(O)SoA which had been set up at Bath on 14 January 1918 to provide a dedicated ground-based aviation course for 'back-seaters', i.e. those who provided the 'air-crew' for the pilot.

Since no aerodrome was required, the No.7 (O)SoA was stationed at the 14-acre Bath and County Recreation Ground (presumably with access to the aircraft assembly shop in the Pavilion), together with 80 hired buildings for lecture rooms and billets throughout the town. The latter included the upper Francis Hotel in Bennett Street (later the Regina Hotel, destroyed during the Bath blitz) and the Tea Room of the Assembly Rooms for a mess hall (again, presumably with access to the assembly shop in the Ball Room). The total strength of the school was 1,250 cadets, with a teaching staff of 46 Officers, 59 Warrant Officers & Senior NCOs, 115 Corporals, 266 Rank & File, 44 Women, and 189 Women ('household') (ARG). An average course lasted three months before the cadet moved on for a further two or three months to learn gunnery, photography, artillery spotting, wireless telegraphy &c, on completion of which they graduated as 2nd Lieutenant or Sergeant-mechanic.

### The Great War up to the 1938 Restoration

The Assembly Rooms appear to have been evacuated by Bath Aircraft soon after the Armistice and on 7 April 1919 the Royal Air Force in Bath was also demobilised, but by then the Assembly Rooms had already been put up for auction in February. However, before the date fixed for the sale, they were sold privately to the Rector of Walcot, the Rev Cecil W. Wilson for the use of the National Council of the YMCA for the conversion of the building to 'a centre for the social life of the young ... to show gratitude to the young men who had fought for their country' However, about the end of 1920 the National Council of the YMCA decided to drop the scheme owing to more pressing needs, and at the AGM of Bath YMCA at the Guildhall the President, Mayor Alderman Colmer, regretted that it 'had not been developed as they had hoped, but they were glad to hear that the Rooms had been disposed of (rumour said) at a good profit (applause) ... and that the largest share should come to the local Association ...'. The YMCA Boy's Centre eventually opened in Edgar Buildings in 1926.

Except for the site manager William Herd, the Rooms remained unoccupied until the beginning of 1921 when the *Chronicle* reported that 'The painters and decorators are busy at the Assembly Rooms and a much-needed transformation is taking place. A commencement has also been made towards turning the ballroom into a picture theatre.'



*Interior of the Assembly Rooms Cinema*

In November Charles Pearson handed over the licenses to Mr. George A. Morley, the new general manager, who took up residence in the Master of Ceremonies House as soon as it was vacated by William Herd. Morley had now 'sole control' of the rooms and arranged the programmes.

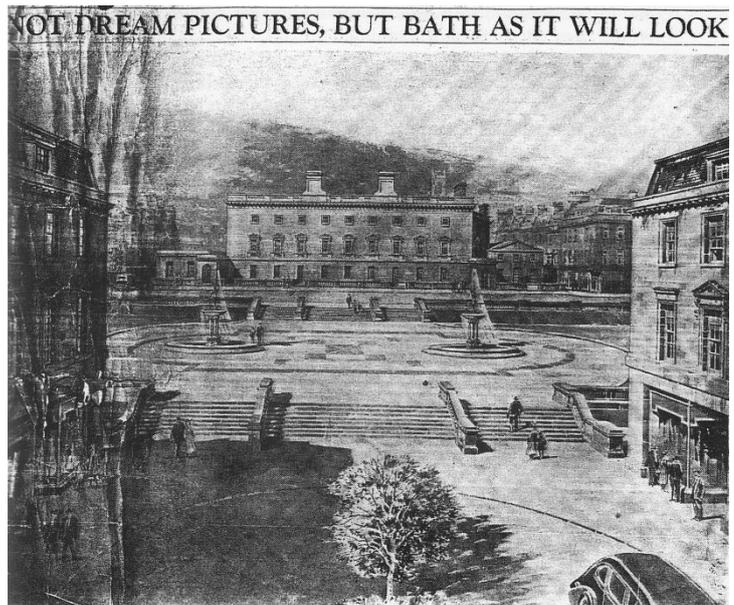
From here on the Assembly Rooms underwent a rapid series of changes of management and ownership. In June 1923 the licenses were transferred from George Morley, who had resigned the management, to the lessee Jacob Lewis, now named as 'the owner of the property' who had 'come to live in Bath' and 'was going to take over the management of the cinema himself'. It appears that by 1923 Lewis had acquired the freehold ownership of the Rooms from the Assembly Rooms Company, and it is possible that the former sale to the Rev. Wilson already involved a lease with right to purchase. In 1926, Lewis gave up management of the Rooms to new lessees, the Savoy Cinemas Ltd in London, who provided a general manager of their own, Thomas Arthur Adams of Crescent Gardens

On the 17 October 1931 an announcement appeared in the *Chronicle* of the 'purchase of the Assembly Rooms by the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings' (*sic* - the purchaser was actually an anonymous donor), with the wish that 'this fine building will again play a dignified and harmonious part in the life and letters of this very beautiful city'. The building was to be held by the National Trust, but no indication was given as to its future use, although 'it is suggested it might be converted into a great public library and become of national importance as a centre of culture and literary activity' On 5 July 1932 a letter was received by Bath City Council from the SPAB with an offer to lease it to them for some public purpose. By October 1933 negotiations were already being made by SPAB with the Cinema Company for the determination of their lease, which had in the meantime been transferred to the Regent Cinema, a division of ABC Cinemas. The term ended in April 1934, and after a brief extension of the lease, the cinema finally closed its doors in June 1934.

However, this was followed by a petition from ratepayers expressing disapproval of the Rooms being used exclusively for library purposes and in March 1935 Ernest Cook, the donor, wrote to the SPAB secretary '...about the City's plans for the building ... their use as a library would be the greatest possible mistake ... I approved of the idea but since then I have changed my view of the matter. Personally I should regard it as a disaster if these grand rooms are not to be available for concerts or entertainments'.

A second difficulty arose in 1935 during the promotion of a private Bill by the City Council in which powers were asked for the City to make several major 'improvements' to the area including a proposal for the total demolition of buildings at the top of Milsom Street in order to extend Milsom Street northwards to the Assembly Rooms and create a vast piazza with fountains. This was not in the spirit of the donor, nor of the Bath Preservation Societies who suddenly found themselves 'temporarily at variance with the City Council'. However a successful campaign was raised against the 'improvements', and a modified Bill was eventually adopted in 1937.

The first problem also was resolved, in February 1936, when the Assembly Rooms sub-committee advised the Council not to adapt the Rooms as a Public Library.



Progress in the restoration of the Rooms, completed in less than two and a half years, can be followed in some detail in the Council minutes, and in the full paper by Mike Chapman that is available from the author, as are details of all the events that surrounded the reopening of the Assembly Rooms on 18 & 19 October 1938

# THE LANDSLIPS AROUND BATH

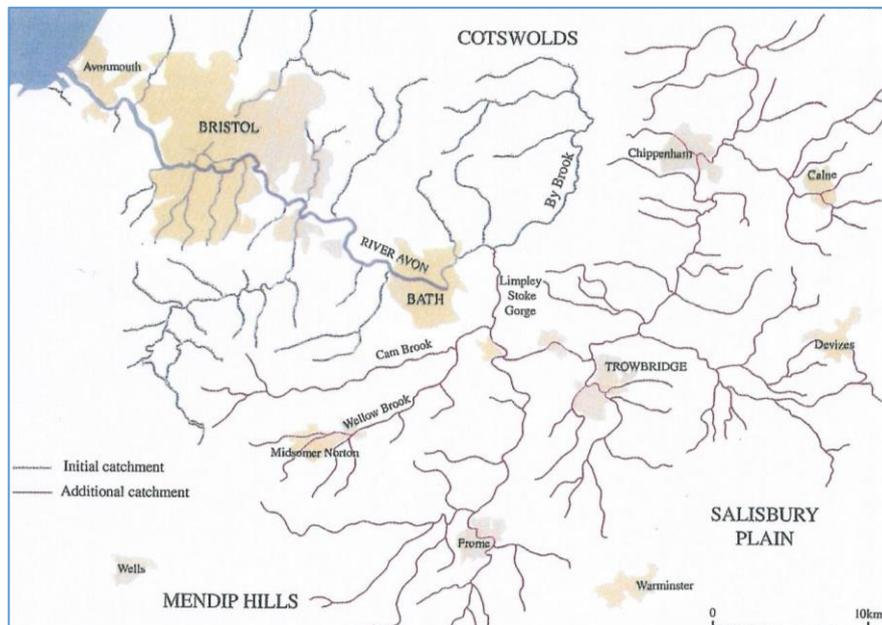
Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015 St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker Brian Hawkins

Summary by Nigel Pollard

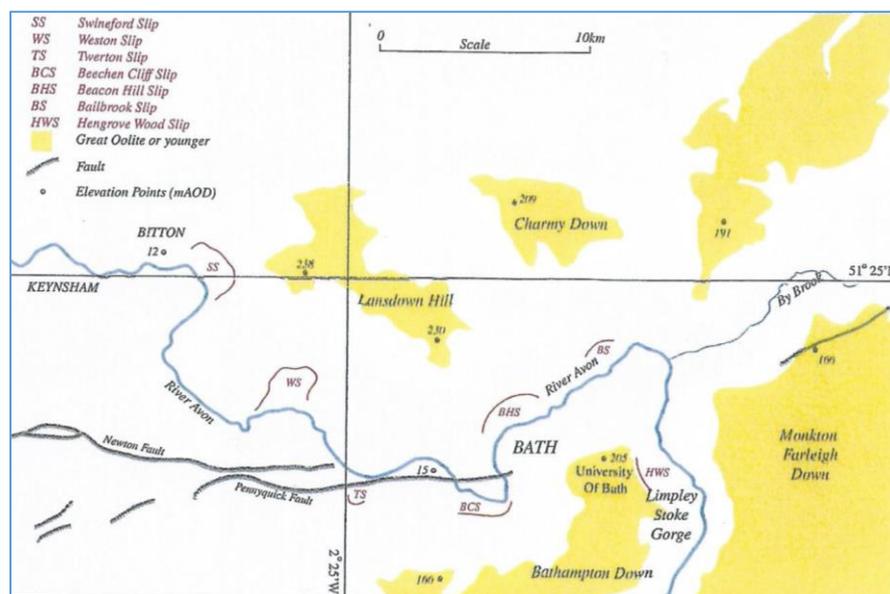
*With the untimely death of Brian Hawkins soon after giving this talk, the following is a simple outline of what he discussed.*

Brian started his talk with an overview of the areas geology with a map showing the extension of the River Avon catchment following the demise of the glacial Lake Trowbridge, shown here. >



He then moved closer to home with a second map indicating the main features in the Bath area that he would be discussing in more detail, although it is noticeable that the site of the Hedgemoad slip is not shown.

What the talk/paper did highlight was that due to the historic ground conditions, landslips around Bath were not uncommon and that some still occur today.



However, they are not usually 'major' incidents and that in the case of the most famous 'Hedgemoad' slip of the late nineteenth century, there had been a number of small, isolated ones a few years before. This had led to a monitoring of the area, and even when the largest one occurred in 1881, it only took away a few houses, the main problem being the fracturing of water, sewers and gas mains. It was with the safety concerns of any future slips that led the Council to re-house those within the area and demolish the remaining house and create the open space now known as Hedgemoad Park in the 1890's.

## PIERONI'S FOUNTAIN

Monday 9<sup>TH</sup> November, 2015 St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker Colin Fisher

Abstract Colin Fisher

Colin Fisher gave a talk based on his book: *Pieroni's Fountain: An Italian immigrant's search for respectability in Victorian Bath.*

This excellent little book is a most enjoyable read as it tells a story behind an artefact of Bath that we all know, but much embellished by new research.

Colin began by saying that it was difficult to find new areas for historical research in Bath but he thought he had found one when he read the inscription on the fountain on 'Bog Island' and wondered who Stephano Vallerio Pieroni, who erected the fountain in 1859 might be.

However, he had discovered he was wrong in thinking Pieroni unknown; as was clear in the discussion after the talk when some society members in the audience revealed they knew more about some aspects of Pieroni's life, such as the *tazza* in Victoria Park, than he did. Nevertheless, in a city whose history boasts many memorable characters Pieroni is still relatively unknown.

Colin attempted to put this right by telling Pieroni's story; how he arrived in England as a lowly street trader of plaster cast figure, moved to Bath and slowly established himself in the city as a publican, a taker of death masks, a plaster cast figure maker and as an art dealer.

Pieroni sought and gained a local celebrity. His means of doing so was by supporting local events by decorating fetes and balls with statuary and decorative arch ways and by organising public works such as the Hot Mineral Water Fountain and various urns and statues in Victoria Park. His celebrity was probably greater than his artistic talent or business acumen. In the matter of portrait busts he was overshadowed by the French sculptor, based in Bath, Louis Gardie and in business terms he was sometimes outwitted by business associates and was on at least one occasion nearly bankrupt. He died in Bath in 1900 a relatively obscure figure but as an example of how an immigrant could create a role for himself in Victorian Bath, Colin argued, he deserves to be remembered.



## PIERONI'S FOUNTAIN

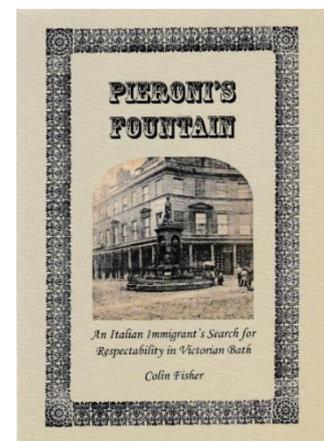
An Italian Immigrant's Search for  
Respectability in Victorian Bath

By Colin Fisher 2014

AKEMAN PRESS

ISBN: 978-0-9560989-6-2

£ 10



# ANATOMY OF POETS CORNER

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 St Mary's Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker Richard Williams

Abstract Richard Williams

## An Exploration of the Suburb and the People Who Inhabited it in 1911, Their Occupations & Their Origins

In the Victorian and Edwardian periods suburbs sprang up all over Britain. Cities with overcrowded centres began to spread out into neighbouring countryside and villages. Bath was no exception, after its Georgian boom it stagnated through the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, there was some mid-Victorian building and then a steady expansion up out of its valley into the surrounding hills in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Much has been written about the building of Bath as one of the most important cities of Britain showing layers of history from the pre-Roman, Roman, Medieval, and Georgian periods. I would like to contribute to this, looking at Bath after its heyday, when it was struggling as one of Britain's smaller cities with a wealth of history and a glorious past but an uncertain role in the modern, industrialised world.

Bath developed little in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century but then began to expand in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. Like many other towns and cities it did develop suburbs, so much so that, once the area covered by Bath was officially recognised to include these suburbs, the city had more than doubled in population in the century. My focus is not on the city itself but on the suburbs that were to become the home of the majority of its inhabitants in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### The Area Under Study

Bear Flat was just one of several areas of expansion around the city. Less than half a mile to the south of the old city walls, situated at the top of a steep climb up Holloway, the route of the ancient Fosse Way out of Bath. Georgian Bath had already reached the area a century before the period this study is looking at, with houses built along the edge of Beechen Cliff, overlooking the city, and another row of houses at Devonshire buildings, about 500 yards further south. The Georgians had even built more than a mile from the city to the south with Bloomfield Terrace (1797-1801) and its commanding views of the more famous north side of the city with its Georgian crescents and squares. Further to the south-east lies Combe Down which was the heart of the stone quarrying district that provided the stone that gave Bath such a unique look. However,



this area was, up until the late Victorian period, largely rural. This study is of an area on the west side of Lyncombe Hill which was agricultural land, some of which was used as the Bath and West Showground.

I have focused on the area known as Poet's Corner which included the roads, Shakespeare Avenue, Byron & Shelley Roads, Kipling Avenue, Milton Avenue, Longfellow Avenue, Chaucer Road, Bruton Avenue, Beechen Cliff Road (some Edwardian but with a mix of Victorian and a few Georgian), Devonshire Place and Devonshire Buildings (the north side is Edwardian, the South Georgian). I've also included Wellsway, the main road running past the estate, but only those houses on the estate side (odd numbers). The study includes addresses up to the 1911 census, further study of addresses occupied after that date will necessarily wait for the future census publication, 1921 due in 2022.

### **The 1911 Census**

Since its public release in 2010, this census has provided an invaluable source for the study of this Edwardian suburb. Providing even more detail than previous censuses it allows a glimpse into the world of suburban Bath in that year.

My first task was to capture the data and store it in an accessible form. This has required the design of a fairly complex database which allows me to capture, store and then manipulate the data. The initial results of this can be seen under General Statistics on my website which has a simple analysis of the raw data.

Having captured the 1911 data, I have then begun the task of going through each census return trying to trace the occupants through the census as far back as possible. This can be difficult at times and sometimes impossible (more details of the issues with using census data are dealt with on the website page about Census Issues). Despite these difficulties, enough people are traceable to give me a broader picture of where they had come from, both their geographical and occupational backgrounds. The trends and patterns that are beginning to appear will form a major part of my later research, for the moment I have been able to write-up some interesting individual case studies.

### **Directories**

Another source which compliments the census material are the Bath directories most of which were published by the Post Office. I started digitising the 1911 Post Office Directory in 2013 and using this material have been able to build up a more complete picture of peoples activities and movements, supplementing what is available from the census. With the History of Bath Research Group the digitisation of directories continues and, at the time of writing, we have digitised one per decade of the Nineteenth century from 1846 and 1911, with further directories in the pipeline.

With this additional resource it possible for me to trace Bath inhabitants back, some as far as the 1840s, looking at them and their families back through time. Further work will be done as the directories extend into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, looking to their futures as well as their past.

### **The Building of the Estate**

The talk started with additional material on the building of the suburb. More work will be done on this as it proved a popular topic. In summary:

The first building started in **Shakespeare Avenue** with numbers 1 to 5 being occupied by 1900, 1-16 by the time of the census. The avenue was completed just in time for the census in 1911. House sizes range from 6 to 8.

**Byron Road:** has 3 modern houses on it now but nothing in 1911. It may have been intended as a road like Chaucer Road, crossing the estate in a North-South direction.

**Shelley Road:** the only Edwardian road to give views over the edge of the cliff (North side only). First inhabitants 1908, Numbers 1-14. 19 completed by the census with 20-25 yet to be inhabited. All houses have 7 rooms.

**Chaucer Road:** bisecting the avenues of the estate. Started in 1906 with 2 semi-detached houses of Chaucer Villas (9 rooms) and 1-5; 1-12 (6 rooms) inhabited by 1907. Building continue after WWI and first house inhabited by 1920.

**Kipling Avenue:** Numbers 1-26 completed by 1903; all 50 by 1906. All 6 rooms.

**Milton Avenue:** Numbers 1-5 by 1905; 41 by 1911 but 42-50 completed after census. 6 rooms on South side, 7 on North.

**Longfellow Avenue:** 2-21 by 1905; by 1908 1-22 with 22-28 not yet inhabited; 1-46 with 47-51 not yet inhabited by 1911. All 6 rooms.

**Devonshire Place:** mixed Georgian and Victorian, largest house 14 rooms, average 9.

**Devonshire Buildings:** Georgian houses built from 1790's onwards; Edwardian terrace started in 1891 and all 51 occupied by 1901. 6 to 7 rooms.

**Bruton Avenue:** Not an avenue but simply a terrace, may have been intended to run on up to Chaucer? May be named after Bruton Hospital, Bruton, Somerset - large areas of land around southern Bath paid rent to the hospital. Number 1 is 6 rooms, the rest 5.

**Beechen Cliff Road:** Mixed Georgian and Victorian; Edwardian houses 1-5 occupied by 1808; all 9 completed by census. All houses 6 rooms.

**Wellsway:** First 7 houses appeared by 1901 Census as Fairfield Terrace; Changed name to Wellsway about 1908, by that time numbers 21-125 (odd numbers) had been completed. Numbers up to 205 outside area of study. Range from 6 to 9 rooms.

### The Anatomy

The anatomy formed the core of the talk, summarising some of the findings of the study:

#### Population - Census Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1911

1503 people in 428 households - 3.5 people per household (4.3 in UK in 1911; 2.5 today).

59% female (51% in UK population in 1911) - see Servants but also large number of unmarried or widowed women were present on the estate.

499 people had occupations; 153 occupational categories; 35% were women

**Children: 331 (22%):** 114 pre-school; 202 'scholars' (5-18 in school); 13 'students' (14 and older in further or specialist education - oldest 26. 50% of UK Population stayed in school until 14 at the time; only 1 under 14 in this estate not at school - a servant born in Oldfield Park.

**Wives: 296 (20%)** - some hidden work found in directories (see Dressmaking)

**Relations no stated occupation: 106** all but 1 female - daughters, nieces, mothers, etc.

**Private Means: 72**

**Retired/Pensioners: 42 retired; 9 pensioners; 33 over-70s no other information given; Only 1 'Old Age Pensioner'** Flora McLeod (72) born Skye - earning less than £31 10s a week, given 5s

5 'Nil' or 'None' in occupation; 1 'Unable to Work', an invalid.

### Occupations

With 153 occupational categories on the estate in 1911 there was not time to cover the majority. However starting with the largest category the larger occupational groups were covered:

**Domestic Servants Living with Employers: 116** (19% of working pop.), **all female.** This was broken down into categories with 8 women Cooks/Housekeepers; 3 'Companions'. Only 3 households with more than 1 servant.

**Domestic Servants living in Own Households** - 6 people, 4 male. 3 retired: a Domestic Coachman; a Governess; and a Housekeeper. 3 working: a Domestic Gardener; Domestic Coachman; and a Domestic Chauffer.

**Commercial/Business Clerks:** 29 (5%), 6 female, a variety of industries covered including Plasticine.

**Teachers Employed by LEA:** 28, 15 female, 7 head teachers, 2 specialist teachers & 1 in 'higher learning', 2 student teachers and 2 retired.

**Schoolmasters, Teachers, Professors, Lecturers - Other/Private/Higher Learning:** 8, 5 female, a variety of schools including 'domestic science'. 3 in 'private' (home) education.

**Workers in Engine & Machine Education:** 24 (4%), from a range of industries, including horticulture and rubber manufacture. 5 state 'crane making' and 1 names 'Stovert & Pitt'

**Post Office:** 21 Officers & Clerks; additionally 2 in Telegraph & Telephones.

**Commercial Travellers:** 21 from a range of industries.

**Grocers:** 18, two examples of old, established Bath groceries were given.

**Drapers:** 15, 3 female, examples of two examples of drapers born some distance outside Bath were given.

**Dressmakers:** 15, all female, 6 working from home. An example of a dressmaker not appearing on census but appearing in PO Directory given.

**Milliners:** 12, all female, all working outside home **Tailoring:** 10, 1 female.

**Building Trade:** 13, 1 retired. **Electrical Trade:** 10.

**Law Clerks:** 12, one 14 year old. **Solicitors:** 1 practicing, 1 retired.

**Local Council Officers:** 10, 5 clerks. **Civil Servants:** 8, mostly Customs & Excise or Inland Revenue, 2 retired.

**Lodging/Boarding House Keepers:** 10. **Boarders:** 71. **Lodgers:** 2. More people taking boarders/lodgers than the occupation would suggest.

**Piano/Organ Makers:** 9, all actually have the occupation of **piano tuner**, 1 apprentice, 1 retired.

**Musicians:** 6, 3 violinists, 1 French horn, 1 organist, 3 teachers/professors of music

**Ministers/Priests & City Missionaries:** 10, C of E, Methodist, Free Church, Baptist, Congregationalist, Primitive Methodist and Salvation Army. One visitor, a Swedenborgian minister.

**Sick Nurses:** 8, including a monthly nurse (lived with and took care of mother and newborn in first month of life)

**Bankers:** 8. **Railway Employees:** 8. **Printers:** 8

**Auctioneers/Valuers/House Agents:** 6. **Life Assurance/Insurance Officials & Clerks:** 6

**Cabinet Makers:** 6. **Carpenters & Joiners:** 5

**And another 123 Occupations with 5 or fewer people:**

**Farmers:** 5, three retired but 2 working and living on the estate, both in Shakespeare, one a dairy farmer, farming on Lyncombe Hill.

**Manager of Bath Oliver Biscuit Factory,** Manvers Street.

**Political Activist:** Honorary Secretary of the Anti-Socialist Union

**Occupations Associated with the Hot/Mineral Baths, etc.:**

**Masseur/Masseuse:** 3 on census; 1 in 1911 Post Office Directory

**Director of the Baths,** John Hatton

### Geographical Origins

**Counties of Origin:** Residents in 1911 had origins in 74 counties within the UK. Only 44% from Bath, 70% from Bath and immediate 3 counties. Fifth largest number (5%) from London, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> largest from Lancashire & Yorkshire.

**Countries of Origin:** All corners of the UK, with Scotland second largest country represented (46 people). Then 17 countries outside UK: USA, Morocco, South Africa, Malta, France, Germany, India, New Zealand, Norway, Australia, Holland, Spain, Fiji, Ceylon, Canada and Italy.

### **Conclusion**

#### **Oldfield Park & Beyond**

The extraordinary range of places of origin of the inhabitants has led to further comparative research into other suburbs in other areas of the UK. This is an ongoing investigation and has, as yet, revealed nowhere with the breadth of counties/countries found in Poet's Corner.

I always had an intention to carry out a similar study of Oldfield Park, and the census data for this has now been downloaded ready for a fuller analysis. In summary: 4607 people living in 1139 households, 51% female (UK average in 1911). Many industrial workers are to be found in this suburb. The sample also includes 5 coal miners.

This is ongoing research and new material is being added and analysed all of the time, this will be updated on the website at regular intervals:

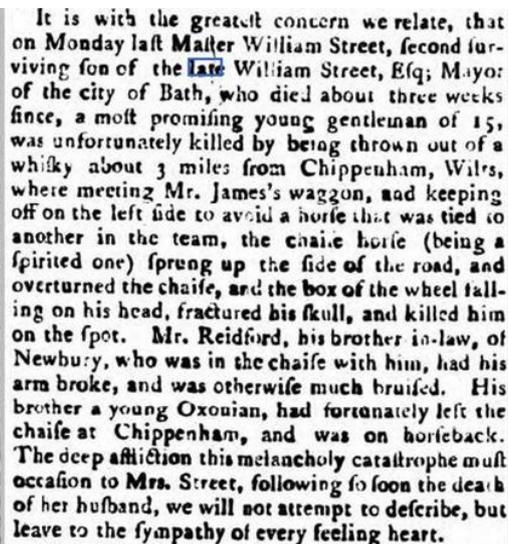
<http://www.data-designs.co.uk/BearFlat1911Census/>



### Elizabeth Street (nee Wood) (1732-1789)

Elizabeth was the first of at least 52 descendants but all her lines that have been traced have died out.

Elizabeth married the well to do apothecary William Street who later became mayor of Bath. They had 13 children most of whom died young. His son William died 1785 falling from a Whiskey as described in this newspaper article only a few days after his father had died.



It is with the greatest concern we relate, that on Monday last **Master William Street**, second surviving son of the **late William Street, Esq;** Mayor of the city of Bath, who died about three weeks since, a most promising young gentleman of 15, was unfortunately killed by being thrown out of a whisky about 3 miles from Chippenham, Wilts, where meeting Mr. James's waggon, and keeping off on the left side to avoid a horse that was tied to another in the team, the chaise horse (being a spirited one) sprung up the side of the road, and overturned the chaise, and the box of the wheel falling on his head, fractured his skull, and killed him on the spot. Mr. Reidford, his brother in-law, of Newbury, who was in the chaise with him, had his arm broke, and was otherwise much bruised. His brother a young Oxonian, had fortunately left the chaise at Chippenham, and was on horseback. The deep affliction this melancholy catastrophe must occasion to Mrs. Street, following so soon the death of her husband, we will not attempt to describe, but leave to the sympathy of every feeling heart.

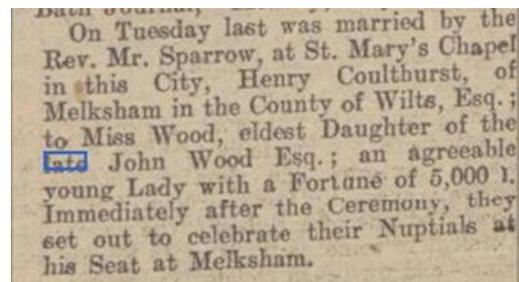
Four survived to adulthood

- Elizabeth married John Russell in 1772. Sadly all attempts to discover information on their lives together have failed.
- Maria Anna married John Charles Reidford in 1777 and had six children. Charles Piers died in Jamaica at the age of 23 probably without issue. Three others died in infancy but Eugene and William remain unaccounted for.
- Thomas went to Oxford and married Ann Ready Fidoe in 1789. They almost certainly had no children.
- Charles married Mary Ann Novosielski in 1796 and had two children. She was the daughter of a successful Polish émigré architect. They lived at Hamswell House but he died on his passage from the West Indies. His daughter Mary Ann married Henry Brett in 1824. They had 7 children who mostly were in the navy but it is likely that none of them had surviving issue. Eliza Felicia married Richard Nantz Else who was a successful Bath solicitor but they seem to have lived apart for much of their lives. She living with her two sons and two daughters in Bath and Richard living in Paris with a mistress. One of the sons, Richard Charles Else (1823-1905) was a successful engineer working with Brunel on the Bristol to Exeter Railway. He was a well-known and respected mason. Bizarrely his daughter Zillah Rebecca Else married her maternal uncle Edward Claudius Raggatt. She died just after emigrating to Australia

### Jane Maria Coulthurst (nee Wood) (1729-1770)

Jane Maria was the first of at least 433 descendants many of whom still live in and around the Bristol area.

She married Henry Coulthurst a very well to do mill owner of Melksham. Her dowry of £5000 not only demonstrates her status as a favourite of John Wood but was also a serious drain on the resources of his son John. She was the sister in law of Prince Hoare but despite the apparent wealth of the family at that time the descendants of this union did not prosper. As an example her 5<sup>th</sup> great grandson the actor Robert Graham Stevens (1931-1995) was the son of a Bristol steelworker.



On Tuesday last was married by the Rev. Mr. Sparrow, at St. Mary's Chapel in this City, Henry Coulthurst, of Melksham in the County of Wilts, Esq.; to Miss Wood, eldest Daughter of the **late John Wood Esq.**; an agreeable young Lady with a Fortune of 5,000 l. Immediately after the Ceremony, they set out to celebrate their Nuptials at his Seat at Melksham.

### John Wood junior (1727-1781)

It is from John Wood 's son John that the bulk of living relatives descend. He married Elizabeth Brock on 1st March 1751/52 at St Peter's Church Huyton, Liverpool at the time he was managing the development of the Liverpool Exchange. Her brother Thomas died unmarried but exceedingly wealthy. He and his brother William (also died unmarried) both left their inheritance to the children of their two sisters.

Despite having 13 children most of whom survived to adulthood and five married only one survivor was a son (John Brock Wood) and he was born next to last! As a result, he inherited large estates in Bath, Cheshire and

Wales. Despite the wealth of her brother and son, for reasons that are hard to fathom fully, John's wife Elizabeth died in relative poverty in London in 1809.

- Elizabeth (1752-1839) married Thomas Clutton and had seven children. They lived at Kinnersley Castle, Herefordshire, Pensax Court in Worcestershire and Berry Mead Abbey near London.
- Jane (1755-1840) lived in Bath throughout her life.
- Margaret (1757-1789) died with her sister Elizabeth at Kinnersley Castle.
- Mary (1758-1791) married her first cousin once removed James Tomkinson in 1781. (no issue)
- Barbara (1760-1782).
- Ann (1762-1768) is mentioned on the grave slab at Swainswick.
- Dorothy (1764-1786) is the last daughter born at Bitton and died at Hotwells.
- Sarah (1766-1811) became a renter of the pumps in 1810
- Catherine (1768-1848) became a renter of the pumps in 1810 and 1811 and married her first cousin once removed Richard Selfe Stone in 1818. (no issue)
- Dionysia (1769-1852) married William Williams in 1751/52 and died at Pensax. He was turned out of the army for discreditable practices! She was the last child of John Wood to die. (probably no issue).
- John Brock (1773-1825) married Eliza Davies. There were six children of this union all of whom married into the English minor aristocracy.
- Richard died young.

The complex wills of Thomas and William Brock resulted in a case in chancery that reads like the Dickens novel *Bleak House* with Elizabeth Clutton and her siblings as the main protagonists. In addition, Elizabeth Clutton's daughter Elizabeth nearly ran off with a Captain Young in about 1810. A plot that was only foiled at the last minute by her mother. A real example of the lives portrayed in "Pride and Prejudice"!

Elizabeth Clutton's daughter Elizabeth married John Henry Whitmore-Jones who inherited Chastleton House. The family were to live in that wonderful survival from the Jacobean period until it was gifted to the National Trust in 1991



John Brock Wood was 10 when his father died and four years later his uncle left him a huge estate including properties in Bath, Wales and Cheshire.

Wealth at so young an age does not appear to have been a good influence on him. Perhaps it all went to his head as he certainly turned out to be something of a rogue.

After he went to St John's College, Oxford in 1790 he married Eliza Davies on 21st January 1800 in Crickhowell. She was the daughter of a worthy local land owning family who lived at Cwrt-y-Gollen. However, in August 1800 he was sued for breach of promise by Elizabeth Jones at Gloucester Assizes and lost having to pay £1000.

In 1807 he was involved in a very odd action in the courts at Hereford assizes in which a housemaid (Miss Mifflin) of Colonel Adlam was arrested by a magistrate (John Brock's brother in law!) because she was accused of having had an illegitimate child. John Brock was then accused of removing Colonel Adlam's property illegally but he claimed it was to recover a debt! What was going on? In addition the family records of the Davies' state "This was not a happy marriage and the husband (John Brock) is said not only to have deserted his family but to have married again during his wife's lifetime"!

In his will he left his whole estate to an illegitimate daughter Margaret by Margaret Huxley. Intriguingly there is a marriage of a John Wood of Somerset to a Margaret Huxley in the Isle of Man in 1811.

Among the causes tried at our last Assizes was one between Grace Mifflin, who describes herself as the Housekeeper of Major Adlam, and the Rev. Richard Davies, a gentleman of property, and a Magistrate residing at his seat of Court-y-Gollen, in the county of Brecon.—The Defendant and another Magistrate had caused the Plaintiff to be apprehended in the regular and in a legal way, in order to examine her respecting the father of her natural child, and to make an order of maintenance; for which she thought proper to bring an action for false imprisonment, and to try it in the county of Hereford, conceiving that the measures adopted must be illegal, because they might not exactly correspond with the practice of a neighbouring county: but upon entering into the merits of the case, the learned Judge soon declared, that the Magistrate had acted properly in every sense of the word, and the Plaintiff chose to be nonsuited rather than have a verdict given against her.—No decision ever gave more general and more sincere satisfaction than has been felt at the result of this trial by all who knew the parties.

Eliza and John Brock had two sons and four daughters.

- John Brock (1801-1885) married Sarah Ann Percy in 1833 but had no children so left £1000 to each of his sisters and the residue to his younger brother.
- William Henry (1803-) was articled to his maternal first cousin George Augustus Apreece Davies. He married Eliza Maria Stisted in 1830 at The House of his Britannic Majesty's Plenipotentiary in Naples.
- Eliza Matilda (1805-1897) married John Francis Close in 1834 at the British Chaplaincy, Livorno.
- Charlotte Margareta married Henry Cornick Lynch-Staunton in 1838 in The British Embassy, Florence. Her daughter Eliza Victoire married into the wealthy Sandeman family.
- Maria Augusta (1808-1903) married William Henry Tanqueray in 1841 in Paris.
- Marianne Georgiana Davies (1809-1897) married John Markham in 1834 at the British Chaplaincy, Livorno.

It seems that Eliza moved abroad to Italy with most of her children (to get away from John Brock perhaps). Descendants of William Henry still live in and around Florence and intriguingly a scrapbook dating to the mid nineteenth century is apparently in their possession.

John Brock's illegitimate daughter Margaret Wood (1813-1902) was the acknowledged illegitimate daughter of John Brock Wood and inherited £3000 from her father. She married William Pidcock, Vicar of Addlestone. He was from a long line of ministers of the church so clearly money trumped her dubious lineage! Many of her descendants are now resident in Canada.

So at this point in my researches there is yet to be any evidence of anyone with the Wood surname. If there is anyone it now appears that they will either have been children of Thayer Allen Wood or William Henry Wood.

Other substantial questions which I hope one day to answer include:

- What happened to Elizabeth Street and John Russell?
- Did Dionysia Williams (nee Wood) have any children?
- Did any of Maria Anna Reidford (nee Wood) children survive?

Not surprisingly this research is a never-ending task with more relatives being discovered on a regular basis but despite some recent breakthroughs regarding Thayer and William Henry it still seems unlikely that there are any male direct descendants...

David Crellin

# BATH ABBEY – IT’S ‘FOOTPRINT’ - PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

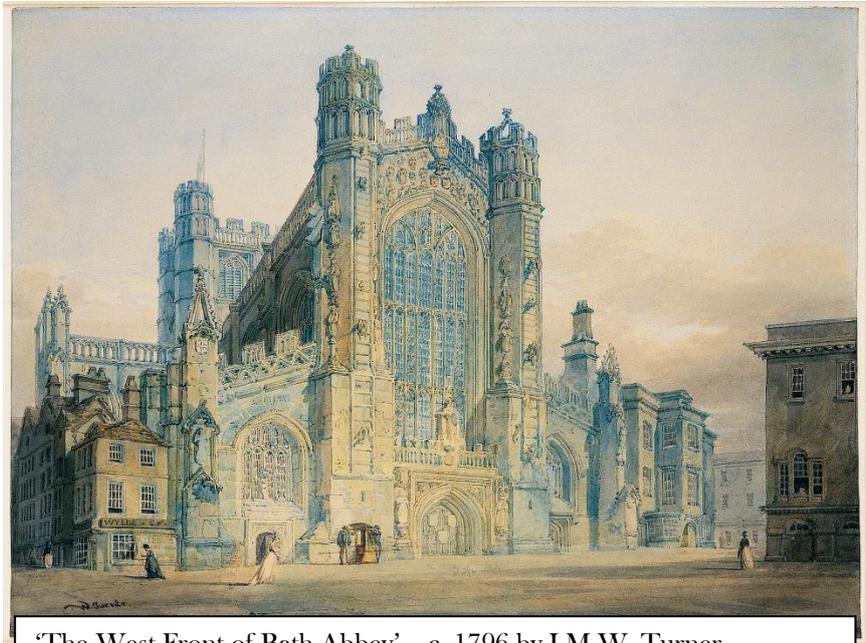
Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 St Mary’s Bathwick Church Hall

Speaker Charles Curnock

Abstract Nigel Pollard (plus images from Bath Abbey’s ‘Footprint’ project file)

Charles started his talk with a reminder of how over the centuries Bath Abbey has grown and altered, not just its own fabric, but also its environmental surroundings, and that change is not something to be afraid of, but planned for and appreciated.

He illustrated this by showing a few images of the past starting with this Watercolour by Turner c. 1796 showing the houses abutting the north and south walls of the Abbey, and finishing with the photograph below from 1923 that shows not only the opening up for the newly discovered Roman Baths finds, but also the partly constructed ‘Jackson Extension’ to the Abbey that currently contains the gift shop and administration rooms.



‘The West Front of Bath Abbey’ - c. 1796 by J.M.W. Turner

Victoria Art Gallery, B&NES Council

These illustrations also show, unlike most other great English Cathedrals or Abbeys, how confined the site is for adding any new meeting rooms and educational amenities. For this reason, the recently launched ‘Footprint’ project to extend underground, has been initiated for which our speaker is the Project Director.

This is a large and complicated project for which Heritage Lottery funding was sought and an initial grant given in 2014 to progress and develop the plans further in order to secure the full grant of £10 million in 2016.



‘Abbey Churchyard’ - c. 1923

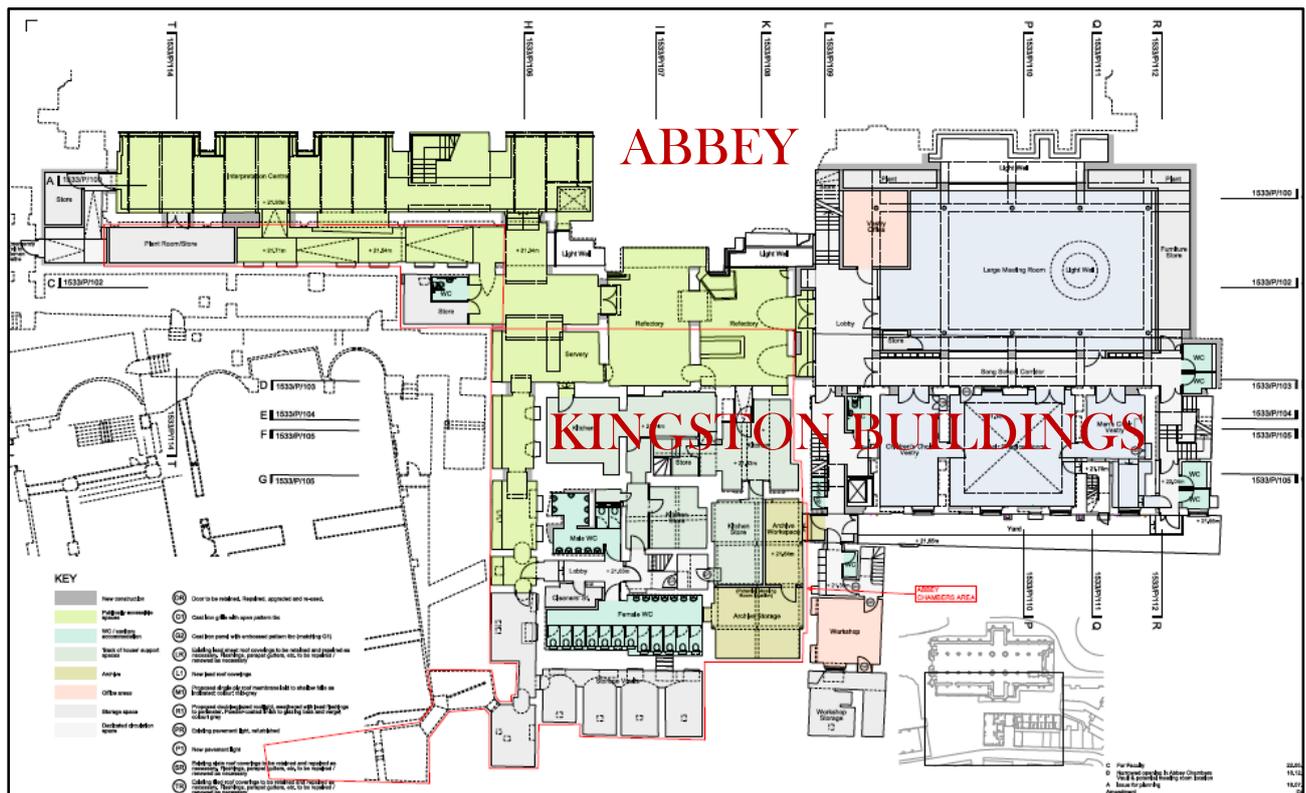
While some mention was made of the various excavations that have been made under and around the Abbey in order to further the main project aims, the overall presentation was of the exciting future that beckons once the final HLF monies are confirmed later this year.

The initial excavations, and the most important, were those to examine and stabilise the Abbey floor under which up to 8,000 bodies have been buried beneath several hundred tombstones. This work, starting in the south transept, is progressing well and it is envisaged that once the Victorian pews have been permanently removed in the later phase, these tombstones will all be more visible and their historical inscriptions more easily read. (See adjacent images >)



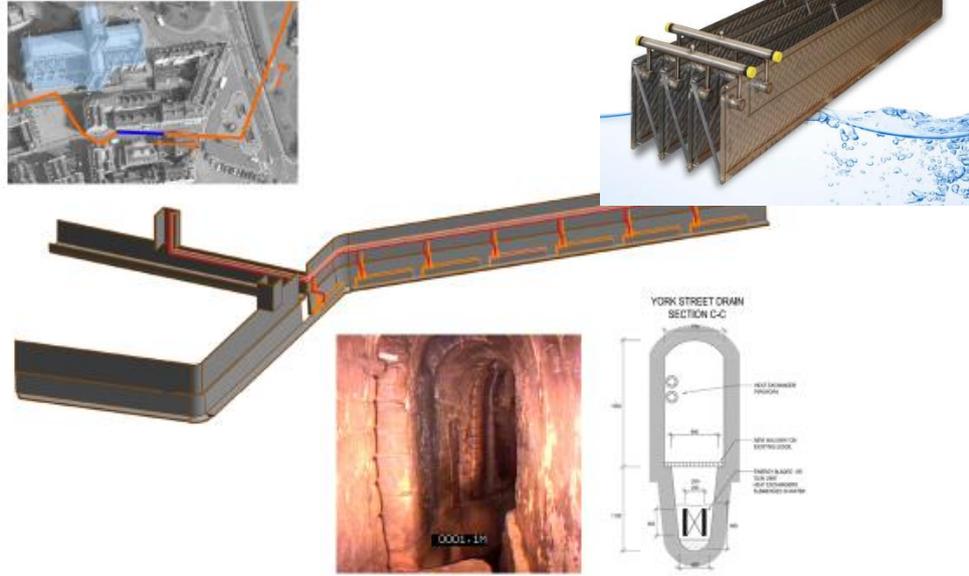
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The complexity of the final 'Footprint' is best explained by means of the plan below which shows the lower ground level from which it can be seen that it is intended to create a new 'Discovery Centre' within and below the 1923 Jackson Extension and a Refectory and large meeting room between the Abbey and Kingston Buildings.

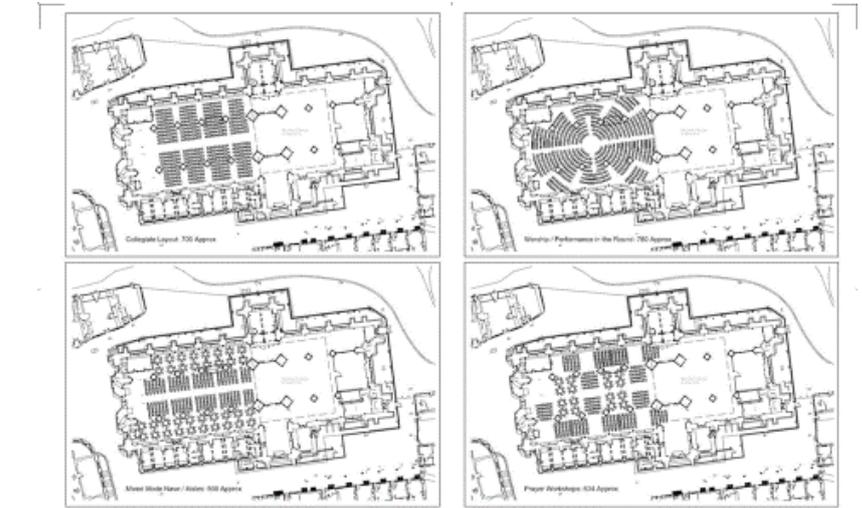


It is hoped to heat the building as well parts of the Abbey itself, using the waste heat from the 'Great Drain' from the Roman Baths, details of which are shown on the following page.

**Energy Blades in Great Drain in York Street**



Finally, with the Victoria pews removed from the Abbey, the replacement chairs, hopefully the ‘design guild’ examples shown here, will allow for some exciting variations of layout to accommodate the wide range of services and events that the Abbey hosts throughout the ecclesiastical year.



## **“BATHWICK - DIGGING FOR ROMANS”**

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2016**

**St. Mary’s Bathwick Church Hall**

**Speakers:**

**Richard McConnell and Cheryl Green**

**Abstract:**

**Nigel Pollard**

In 2012 one of the most important excavations in Bath in recent years took place at Bathwick Street, about which little was previously known. Although numerous finds have been found scattered across the parish of Bathwick, both on the low-lying ground close to the river and on the slopes leading up to Bathwick Woods, this was the first time that an open area excavation had examined this part of Roman Bath in fine detail.



Richard’s introduction gave an outline of the known roads and trackways east of Bath at the time and confirmed that the excavations had revealed seven broad phases of activity spanning the pre-Roman to post-medieval periods, although the most significant evidence related to intensive early Roman occupation which demonstrate a wide variety of evolving domestic and industrial activities. This period has yielded important finds assemblages including unique and rare objects and well-preserved environmental data. The earliest Roman occupation is indicative of a military camp, with small hearths, pits, stake-holes and occupation debris. This was followed by a more coherent level of occupation with crude buildings, basic drainage and work areas/ surfaces. Occupation was consolidated in the subsequent period with more robust buildings, paved road surfaces with drainage and larger scale artisanship/ industrial type activity including bigger hearths and ovens/ grain dryers. A decline in use during the later Roman period is evident from occupation deposits overlying some of the larger structures.

The results were quite unexpected, and threw new light on the occupation and activity on the Bathwick side of the river. The excavation not only produced unusual archaeology, but a wide variety of finds including an important collection of Roman glass, complete pots, and an extremely rare coin bearing the three busts of Carausius (287-293), who ruled over Britain between 287 and 293, and the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and Maximian (285-310), who ruled the eastern and western empire overseas.

The findings make a significant contribution to our understanding of the origins and development of Roman Bath/ Bathwick and as such are of both local and national interest. The post-Roman phases were largely truncated by early twentieth century buildings, with early medieval, medieval and post-medieval occupation, including remnants of early medieval surfaces and structures, surviving around the site periphery.

The excavations were conducted by Context One Archaeological Services, and the talk was given by Richard McConnell, its Projects Director, and Cheryl Green, its Post-Excavation Manager.

While we all eagerly await the publication of their full studies in a book promised for 2017, more details of the initial findings can be found in the Report highlighted opposite which is available as a PDF on the BANES web link given below:

**Archaeological Excavations at Henrietta Road/Bathwick Street,  
Bath**

**Post-Excavation Analysis, Publication and Archiving:  
Strategy and Costs**

on behalf of

**Ashford Homes**

by



Brickfield Offices, Maperton, Wincanton, Somerset. BA9 8EG.

T: 01963 824696

E: [mail@contextone.co.uk](mailto:mail@contextone.co.uk)

W: [www.contextone.co.uk](http://www.contextone.co.uk)

COAS reference: C1/EXC/11/BSB

Bath & North East Somerset Council Planning Reference: 07/03670/FUL

National Grid Reference: centred on ST 75466 65446

Roman Baths Museum & Pump Room Accession Number: BATRM 2011.8

OASIS reference: contexto1-123827

October 2013

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/WAM/doc/Other-757648.pdf?extension=.pdf&id=757648&location=VOLUME3&contentType=application/pdf&pageCount=1&appid=1001>

## VISIT: DOWNSIDE ARCHIVE

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2016

Keeper and Guide Dr Simon Johnson

Abstract Nigel Pollard, Photos: Downside Web Site & Robert Cole



The Benedictine Community of Downside came originally from the St. Gregory's Monastery at Douai in the Spanish Netherlands that was founded in 1606.

The House was re-established in England in 1795 near Shrewsbury, and while the Downside Estate was bought in 1814, it did not launch its 'new beginning' on the scale we see today until 1872.

The Abbey Archives and Library constitute one of the largest collections of research material in the South West of England.

The collection contains the centralised papers of the English Benedictine Congregation as well as a substantial collection of material from Downside's daughter foundation at Ealing, London. The Library is the largest private library in the South West of England. Its strengths are in Philosophy, Theology, Patristics, History, Biblical Exegesis and Sundials. Its Rare Book Collection is one of the finest in the country.

As the Mother House of the English Benedictine Congregation it holds the central archives of the order as well as important collections that relate to our shared heritage. The collection is the largest single repository of its type in the British Isles and includes the missionary collections of the Benedictine Order in the New World. The collection contains over 60 incunabula, 175 Papal Bulls, a large collection of Vatican State Papers. It is the only library in the world which has a complete collection of Early English Catholic Recusant Publications (1514 - the late eighteenth century).

The Archive collections include:

- The papers of the Barons of Petre.
- A large collection of letters and architectural drawings ranging from Sir Ninian Comper, Pugin, Dunn and Hansom and Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.
- Papers of the First Baron Acton - the celebrated historian.
- Augustine Baker: Benedictine mystic and ecclesiastical historian.
- Edmund Bishop: liturgical scholar and historian.
- Bishop Christopher Butler: auxiliary bishop of Westminster.
- The papers of the Abbots and Priors of Downside Abbey.
- The Camm MSS.
- The papers of Cardinal Aidan Gasquet: Vatican Librarian and Prior of Downside



The visit began in the Archive Room where the party was shown the set of 'Confession Books' dating back to the foundation of the Benedictine Community at St. Gregory's Monastery at Douai in the Spanish Netherlands in 1606.

The Party then spent the rest of the visit in the main Library building looking and exploring this unique collection, ranging from the works of St Thomas Moore (1535), the Ely Psalter (1390) back to the Lambach Prothetarium dated 1060.

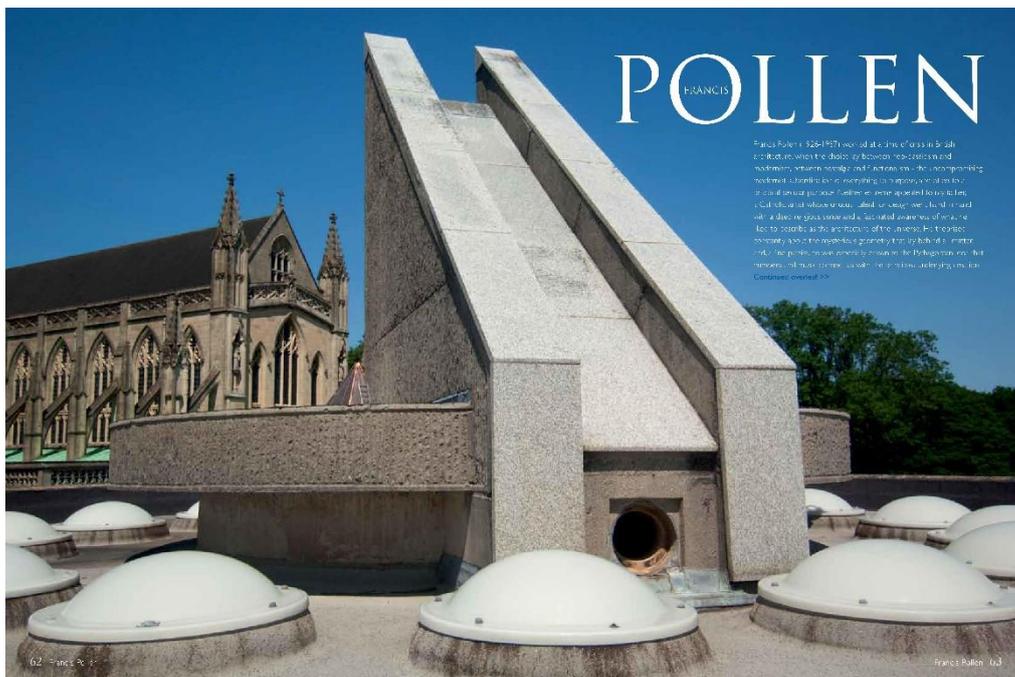


Of final interest was the building itself.

Designed by the architect Frances Pollen in the 1960's, while full of symbolism gleaned from seventieth century works relating to sundials and zodiacs from the Gatty Collection, its practical design as a functioning library has unfortunately left the Abbey with a number of problems including damaging daylight penetration, damp and humidity. However, these are now being addressed and following success with a HLF grants the Collections have a secure future.



The Art Dyalng part of The Gatty Collection which influenced the final design of the Monastic Library.



# WALK: BROWNE'S FOLLY AND MONKTON MINES

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2016

Leader Professor Maurice Tucker

Abstract Nigel Pollard - Bath Geological Society Web Site

Photos Robert Coles / Nigel Pollard

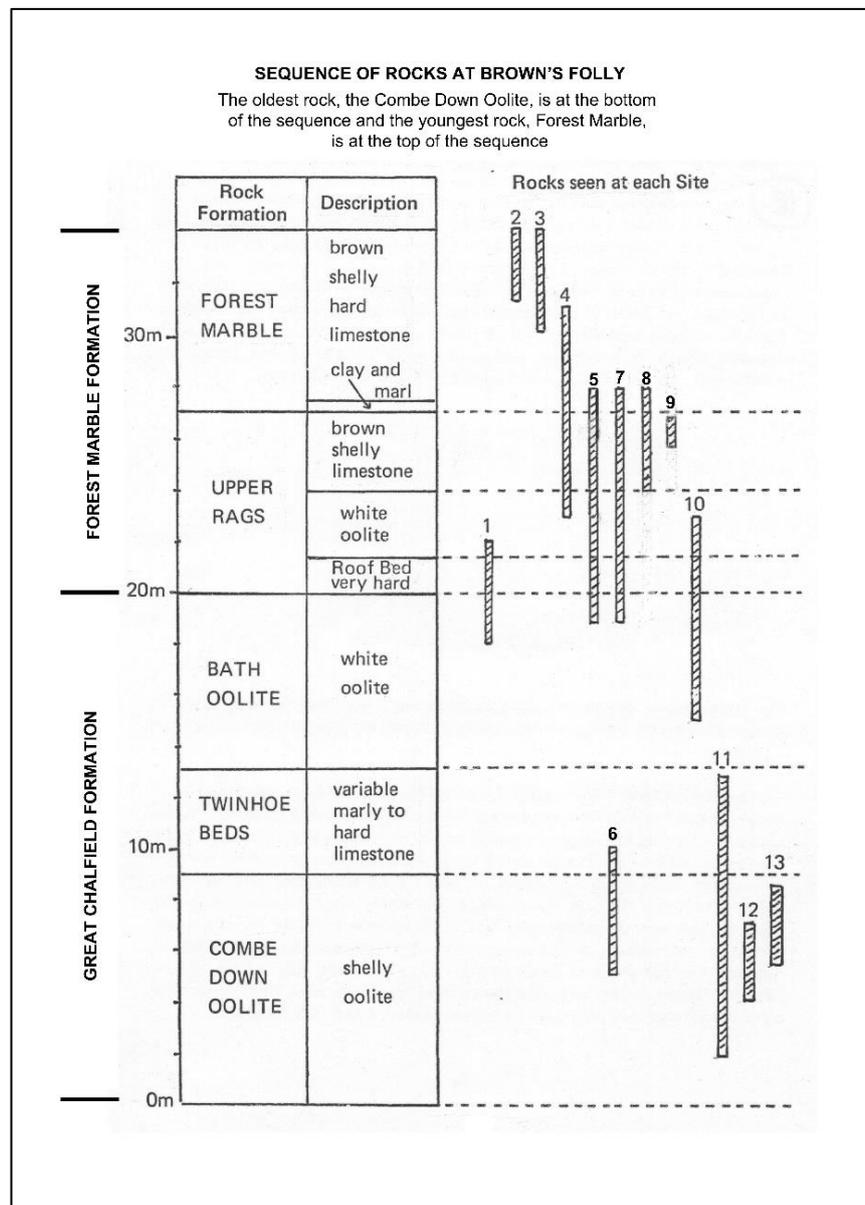


Browne's Folly was built c. 1845 by Wade Browne, the local landowning squire, some say to give employment to his tenants during a time of economic depression, others as a "Tower of Observation" for Government surveying purposes. There is a memorial to him in the church at Monkton Farleigh.

However, our guide around the site was Prof Maurice Tucker, a Geologist who inspired us much more with what was underneath the ground, rather than what was built on top of it.

The 'Browne's Folly Nature Reserve' consists of 91 acres of land on the hillside overlooking the valley of the River Avon about half a mile south-east of the village of Bathford. It is owned by the Avon Wildlife Trust and has been designated as a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) because of the Middle Jurassic rocks, plants, wildlife that can be found there.

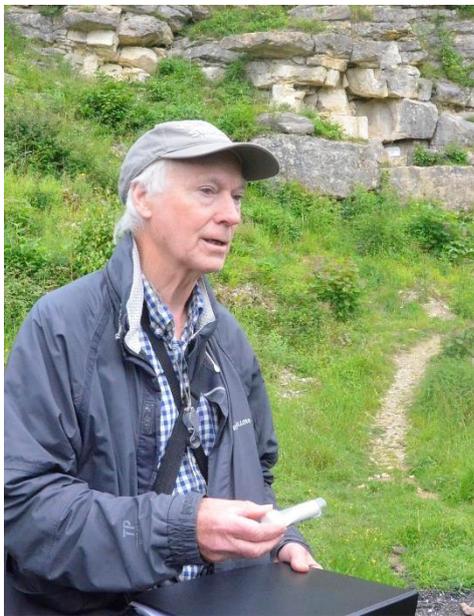
Extensive limestone extraction, largely by mining, was carried out in the past which has left the rock exposed at many sites enabling it to be examined. The rocks seen on the reserve are from the Chalfield Oolite Formation and the Forest Marble Formation. A number of different rocks make up each group and these can be seen in the 'Sequence of Rocks at Browne's Folly'. In this table, the rocks are set out in sequence, together with their total thickness and an indication of the rocks that can be seen at each site.



The sites are well laid out with blue topped marker posts indicating the most important rock formations, of which our first stop, shown adjacent, was No. 1. Here, above Maurice' head can be seen the Roof Bed (part of the Upper Rags) below which is the Bath Oolite that is the one extracted for building.

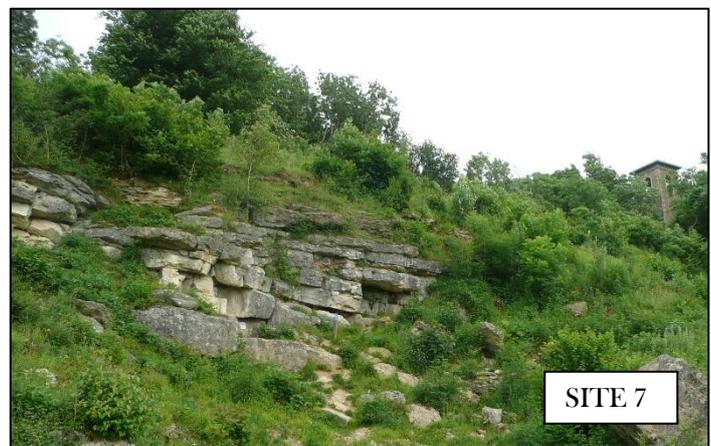
The walk then took us up on to the ridge that overlooks the Avon valley with spectacular views towards Bath, highlighted for a time between storm clouds, before arriving at the foot of Browne's Folly.

From here we continued down the hillside and back to our starting points viewing more of the rocky outcrops.

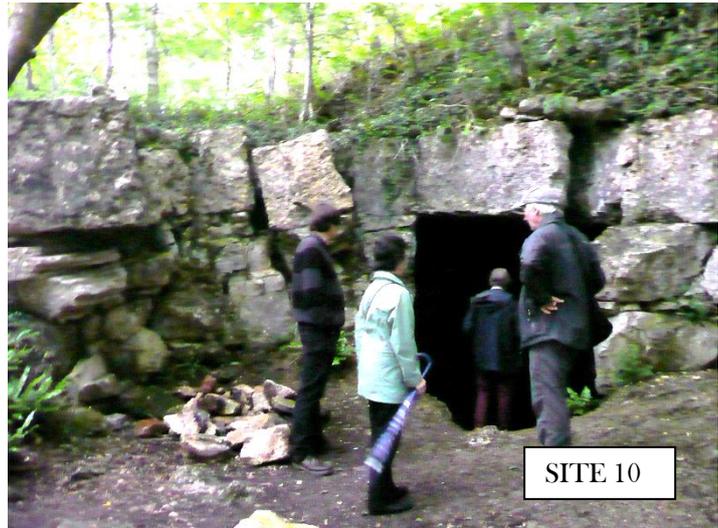


Maurice had also brought a number of samples of both the rocks, and their constituents that added greatly to our understanding of what we were looking at.

Here, at Site 7, the Roof bed is topped by some White Oolite, with glimpses of the Forest Marble, while below is again the Bath Oolite.



Finally, on our return to our starting point, we stopped off at Site 10, at which the Bath Oolite overlain by the Roof Bed and white oolite were exposed. Also, of special interest at this site is the mine and the way the rocks have moved. The mine only penetrates a short way into the hill; the reason for which is thought to have been that a fissure, seen at the left hand side of the back wall of the mine, made the stone of poor quality or unworkable. Although the mine is little more than an entrance, it does give some idea of what a mine was like and shows inside the greatest continuous thickness (4.5m) of Bath Oolite seen so far.



\* For those interested in a more detailed study of the 'Rocks of Browne's Folly' should visit the Bath Geological Society's Web site at <http://bathgeolsoc.org.uk>



Storm Clouds over Bath – a view from Browne's Folly

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