BATH250

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE, 29–30 SEPTEMBER 2021 — ABSTRACTS

***Keynotes**:*

29 Sept.: Hannah Greig (University of York): Having a Ball in Eighteenth Century England

There were some Georgian men and women for whom attending an assembly (whether in a purpose-built assembly room in a town like Bath or a private house in London's West End) was an unremarkable part of their adult life. The letters and diaries of those who enjoyed a passport to the eighteenth-century's fashionable world reveal a social scene that was hectic and varied. Evening parties were not occasional events to mark a celebratory moment but were thrown night after night, week after week, for many months of the year.

For those living in the fast lane, such entertainments were ritualised and routine. Houses were built for socialising with grand reception rooms designed to accommodate hundreds. Leading London hostesses opened their doors throughout the season, timetabling events to avoid clashes and claiming particular days of the week as theirs for lavish "at home" entertainments. Running alongside the private parties were schedules of public entertainments, the evenings of theatre and opera performances, subscription assemblies and concerts and, in late spring and summer, excursions to the famous pleasure gardens. When the London season drew to a close the spa towns catered for the year-round pleasure seeker. The variety of social opportunities is revealed by the array of terms that distinguished different kinds of parties. There were not just balls, but grand balls, routs, ridottos and masquerades. There were private assemblies and subscription assemblies, small parties, dance parties, music parties and card parties. There were breakfasts (never held at breakfast time), Venetian breakfasts, al frescos, fêtes champêtres, galas and more.

This introductory talk will situate the specific entertainments that took place in Bath's famous assembly rooms within a broader context of Georgian parties and high life. How did Bath's social life compare to that of London's beau monde? What did these different types of party involve? Where were they held? What was their function? Why were there so many? Who were the guests? Who served the drinks, made the food and cleared up afterwards? And did anyone ever have any fun?

30 Sept.: Jonathan Foyle (Visiting Professor in Conservation at the University of Lincoln; Director, Built Heritage, Ltd): The Upper Assembly Rooms: Assembling the Influences on John Wood the Younger's Design

John Wood the Younger (1728–82) is often hailed as one of the most important and influential of British architects, though paradoxically. For not a single drawing for his major works exists, nor (except for a posthumous book of improvements for rural housing) a treatise of the sort produced by his more celebrated father, John Wood the Elder (1704–54). The father's corpus of designs has been prioritised in research and publication and understood as a conflation of local and national mythologies, invested into geometric classical forms — square, circus, crescent — that proved widely influential. Howard Colvin wrote that 'any connection there may have been between Wood's antiquarian researches and architectural projects is a subject that deserves investigation'. So much for the father

deserving enquiry. Without such attention, no proposal has been presented for a conceptual framework for Wood the Younger's Upper Assembly Rooms of 1769–71, other than the assumed impulse to transform a pragmatic layout into volumes of elegance and monumentality, with occasional suggestions of adopting an 'Egyptian Hall' from the Vitruvian example Burlington had used for York. So Wood the Younger is seen as derivative, set in the slipstream of his father's fantastical genius.

This paper contends that the Assembly Rooms can offer a different perspective. It briefly reviews both national and local typologies for eighteenth-century public assembly buildings, then examines Wood's role in completing the construction of the Circus by 1768 and considers the placement of the Assembly Rooms in relation to this celebrated new focus. It also views the framing provided by Bennett Street and Alfred Street as a kind of precinct, noting how the facades of the Assembly Rooms related differently to each street. Contrary to ideas of Wood the Younger being relatively disengaged with theory, it proposes that the primary influence on the building's form and layout was specific: his understanding of ancient monumental thermae as assembly spaces, principally the Baths of Caracalla in Rome. This provides a layout closely comparable to Wood's design, set within a precinct and not far from the Colosseum, a principal influence on Bath's Circus. It also examines the proportions of the Thermae excavated in Bath during the 1750s and considers the impact of local classical archaeology on measurement and proportions, information which Wood must have witnessed emerging. This evidence of Neoclassical influence has implications for the understanding of Wood's other work and the city of Bath as a whole.

Panel 1

Cathryn Spence (Curator and Archivist, Bowood House): 'Chocolate, Coffee, Tea and Buttered Hot Cakes': Entertainments in Bath before the Upper Assembly Rooms

For centuries, prior to the opening of the Upper Rooms in 1771, the focus of Bath's fashionable Company centred on the areas around Bath's famous hot baths. Naturally, entertainment venues flourished here and offered visitors delicious food and drink, the opportunity to keep up-to-date with the national journals and newspapers, enjoy diversions such as gambling, dancing and promenading and the enticing prospect of a furtive encounter. Drawing extensively on contemporary illustrations and visitor accounts, Cathryn will take you on a guided tour of how Georgian society enjoyed a typical day in Bath before developments, such as the Upper Rooms and the Bathwick estate, put paid to the many entertainment venues of the Lower Town.

David Hughes (Independent Scholar): Assembly Rooms: Why not Queen Square?

Bath Records Office holds the Rivers Estate archive which includes documents related to the Manor of Walcot. Among these documents is an agreement between Margaret Garrard, lord of Walcot Manor, and John Wood the Younger, dated 22 September 1764, for the sale of two areas of land as part of Wood's plan to build the Royal Crescent. Attached to the agreement is a plan. Part of this shows the location of Wood's proposed new Assembly Rooms, not to the east of the Circus but in the northwest corner of Queen's Square. This

paper will consider reasons why Wood, after raising subscriptions, did not build his new Assembly Rooms in Queens Square but in its present location to the east of the Circus. It will examine the impact of uncertainties related to the death of Margaret Garrard in December 1765 and the subsequent transfer of her Bath estate. It will suggest that Wood's inheritance from his mother, following her death in April 1766, combined with the land to the east of the Circus becoming available, helped change his plans. It will ask whether Wood's intention was to encourage change from the public sociability around the baths and Pump Rooms, as it had been since Bath became a fashionable spa town in the late 17th century, to the more private, and more exclusive, forms associated with developments to the north of the city centre. Would this change have happened with the Assembly Rooms in Queen's Square nearer to the centre?

Rupert Goulding (National Trust): Bath Assembly Rooms and its Subscribers

The New or Upper Assembly Rooms in Bath were created by tontine subscription, with around 70 individuals investing in May 1769. This paper will explore who those investing subscribers were, and explore their relationship to the creation and ongoing operation of the Assembly Rooms.

Subscribers were largely from Bath, but many were partially or fully based further afield. Many investors were directly connected to each other through kinship and marriage, and investors were both men and women. They were local landowners, clerics, professionals, plantation owners, doctors, members of parliament and military figures. Investors were part of broad networks, across the region, country and beyond.

The paper will explore investor interests and connections, as well as their sources of wealth, to better understand what economic and cultural contexts enabled the creation of the Assembly Rooms and its Bath context.

Panel 2

Rachael Johnson (Independent Scholar): The Shadow of Beau Nash: Masters of Ceremony at Bath and Tunbridge Wells, 1761–*c.*1801

Richard 'Beau' Nash, Bath's second and most influential Master of Ceremonies, ruled over the city's assembly rooms for over fifty years. Under his leadership, Bath established itself as England's premier watering place, outstripping its competitors and forging a leisure culture that was emulated by resorts throughout the Georgian era. Through the imposition of a set of 'Rules', Nash brought together the spa's royal, aristocratic and genteel visitors to form a polite, fashionable and aspirational company, which, commentators claimed, helped him to transform eighteenth-century society. In 1735, Nash also assumed the position of Master of Ceremonies at Tunbridge Wells, creating a link between these previously competing resorts.

After Nash died, Bath and Tunbridge Wells continued to share a Master of Ceremonies. In this paper, I will look at how subsequent post-holders tried to step into the shoes of their larger than life predecessor. Through an examination of characters and actions, the following questions will be considered: Who were Bath's Masters of Ceremony in the later eighteenth century? How did they seek to distinguish and promote themselves? How did

they contend with Nash's legacy? How did the role of Master of Ceremonies evolve during the later eighteenth-century, when post-holders were faced with increasing visitor numbers and a visiting company which increasingly preferred private entertainments to shared public amusements? Why and how was the link between Bath and Tunbridge Wells broken?

Hillary Burlock (PGR, Queen Mary University of London): 'Battle of the Belles': electing Bath's 'Kings'

The Master of the Ceremonies ruled Bath's Assembly Rooms, policing the politeness of the company gathered therein. He not only ensured that they behaved according to the dictates of politeness, but also that the space they inhabited embodied this civic virtue. The position of Master of Ceremonies was an elected office, with the power and duty to vote held by the subscribers to the rooms. Through holding elections, subscribers intimated that the power the Master of Ceremonies possessed stemmed from the people. Elections occurred on the death or resignation of a Master of Ceremonies. It was only on account of the rare electoral contest for the role of Master of Ceremonies that the rules surrounding these elections were debated and revealed. Using newspaper accounts, speeches, assembly room rules, literature, and caricatures, this paper will explore the heated contest between Major William Brereton and Mr Plomer in 1769, which was formative for consolidating the rules for electing Bath's 'Kings'. Time permitting, it will also explore other 'impolite' occasions when the role and function of the Master of the Ceremonies were called into question, including the resignation of William Wade and the attempted ousting of James King, exposing the competing elements of politeness and impoliteness in Bath's Assembly Rooms.

Steve Poole (University of the West of England): 'Confusion, clamour and insolence': Georgian Bath's disorderly sedan chairmen

By the closing years of the eighteenth century, anyone needing transport for a night out at Bath's Assembly Rooms could choose from around 330 approved and licenced carriers of Sedan chairs. Although chairmen ran their own business, their pay and conditions of service were strictly regulated by the Corporation who sought to control them through annually renewable licensing agreements and a stiff set of fines to combat frequent allegations of disrespectful behaviour, rudeness and inefficiency. Chairmen were physically tough (they had to be, given the gradients they were required to negotiate) and their reputation for what one dissatisfied passenger termed 'confusion, clamour and insolence' was frequently lamented. They were also organised, as the Corporation learned to its cost in 1793 when disgruntled Chairmen struck their poles over arbitrarily imposed new conditions of service. But physical strength, and an ability to swing a stout and heavy pole led too to frequent appeals from the Corporation to undertake policing duties whenever serious disorder broke out, as it did for example during the anti-Catholic Gordon rioting of 1780. This paper examines the Chairmen's cantankerous reputation and considers the extent to which it was genuinely earned.

Daniel O'Brien (ECR, University of Bath): 'There's not a man in the City of Bath that has a finer feeling than I have': the real and imagined undertakers of late-eighteenth-century Bath

"Mr. Coffin: *I was regularly brought up to the business; the others, there, are intruders, mere bunglers in it*"

The late eighteenth-century play, *Better Late Than Never*, presented audiences with three quarrelsome undertakers from the city of Bath. In a furious dispute Mr Finis, Mr Coffin and Mr Grimly asserted their appropriateness to undertake funerals, whilst belittling the talents of their rivals. In this comedic depiction of Bath, the undertaking trade was shown to be established, statused and competitive. How representative was this depiction of the early trade and its attempts to engage customers?

This paper considers how the characters of *Better Late Than Never* compare with their counterparts in eighteenth century Bath. We will examine the social standing, qualifications and the competitive behaviour of Bath's earliest undertaking businesses. Most significantly, we consider how the depiction of competition compares to the reality of advertising and promotion in the trade. The real undertakers of Bath did not fight on the streets, but they sought to engage the custom of Bathonians through the language of their advertisements and their use of urban space.

Panel 3

Rose McCormack (ECR, Aberystwyth University): Voices of Satire and Sincerity: Exploring the Letters and Diaries of Leisured Women in Georgian Bath

The female hedonist is a familiar figure in contemporary fictional depictions of Georgian Bath. She can be seen seeking fashionable attire, confectionery, and of course, romance, in the prints of Gillray and Rowlandson, the novels of Smollett and Austen, and the poetry of Anstey.

These fictional caricatures of pleasure-seeking women are also visible in Bath historiography, where they have sometimes been cited as evidence of female engagement in the spa's leisure scene. So numerous are these fictional examples, that they have helped conceal the absent voice of their real-life inspiration.

This paper brings the voices of Georgian Bath's real-life leisured women to the fore. It argues that by bringing together the letters and journals of elite and middling women, written during visits and residencies at Bath, we enrich the historiography of the fashionable resort, and understandings of Georgian female leisure.

Weaving together printed and manuscript material, the paper adopts a survey-like approach. It considers the letters of Bath's celebrated visitors and residents, such Elizabeth Montagu and Jane Austen, alongside the letters and diaries of lesser-known women, such Elizabeth Giffard, Bridget Ottley, Katherine Plymley and Margaret Graves. The survey demonstrates how analysis of women's life writings helps uncover the true extent of female participation in Bath's public leisure scene, and how women viewed the complexities, nuances and opportunities of this world.

Jemima Hubberstey (PGR, University of Oxford): 'I am a sort of Prisoner here': Jemima Marchioness Grey's and Lady Elizabeth Anson's Accounts of Bath

When Jemima Marchioness Grey visited Bath in October 1749 with her sister-in-law, Lady Elizabeth Anson, they – perhaps surprisingly – found little pleasure in the entertainments there. After visiting the famous baths, Lady Grey commented that she found the experience 'vastly unpleasant', remarking that 'of all Deaths I should not like Drowning'. As a fashionable metropolis, Bath demanded consummate elite performances in all who graced its sandstone walls. Yet for Jemima Grey and Elizabeth Anson, there is a clear tension as the frivolities of the spa town ran counter to their idea of enjoyment and rest. Grey felt smouldered by her inability to walk in the Somerset countryside, aware of the ridicule she might face 'for a Fine Lady who designs shortly to make a figure in the Rooms & at Public Breakfasts, to be seen walking up & down Styles, or trudging about with her Petticoat's shorten'd, & her Leathern Shoes.' Evidently, she felt the invisible limitations that her class and gender could impose. This paper will demonstrate the way in which educated, intellectual women — like Grey and Anson — struggled to reconcile their own interests and passions with the confining gendered performances that high society expected of them in Bath.

Rachel Bynoth (PGR, Bath Spa University/Cardiff University): The Marriage Mart Reassessed: Female Emotional Experiences of Eighteenth-Century Bath Through Letters

As Catherine Morland in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* says "Oh, who could ever be tired of Bath?".[1] Well, as Catherine herself finds out, Bath is all balls, promenading and socialising, often to find a marriage partner. Though historians have researched what happens in Bath during the season, there is less work on how people wrote of their experiences, often relying on *Northanger Abbey* as the central source for information. Given that Austen herself was allegedly not fond of Bath, more sources are required to fully understand experiences of the marriage market in Bath at the end of the century. There is even less work on how people expressed their feelings of visiting Bath, and to whom they were sharing these feelings. As a consequence, we know very little on how Bath's marriage mart was actually experienced by young women at the end of the eighteenth century.

This presentation goes beyond Austen's novel to uncover what the marriage market was like for two late eighteenth-century women. Through analysing their letters, this paper will demonstrate how letters could be duplicitous in their dealings with Bath, how letters were often used by mothers to check up on their daughter's prospects and discern which feelings and emotions were expressed and shared about Bath and why. It goes beyond the dancing and the card games to consider what life was like for young women entering the marriage market in late-eighteenth-century Bath.

Mark Philp (University of Warwick): Touch and Power in Bath, 1789–1815

The paper explores the complex place of touch for young women of the relatively well-off in Georgian society. Using diaries, memoirs, conduct books, prints and novels the piece is concerned to explore touch as both something that is desired and feared, potentially welcomed but often experienced as invasive, and often compromising in the sight of others. It is inevitably caught up in the status and power differentials of the social order. I want, in particular to focus on touch in Bath in the revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars — using

[1] Jane Austen, *The Complete Novels of Jane Austen*, (London: Penguin, 2007), p.999

primarily novels and prints — so as to explore the way that the ‘public sphere and its fashionable places can, by focusing on touch, be rendered legible as relations of power that inscribe systematic inequalities in relations between the sexes and across the stratified status hierarchies of the town.

Panel 4

Elaine Chalus (University of Liverpool): Sociability and Soft Power at the Spa

At the beginning of April in 1767, a week before Parliament rose for the Easter recess, Lady Rockingham, who was in Bath for her health, received a political request from her husband in London. How many — he wanted to know — of 'our Friends' were in Bath? Could she find out through her socialising and let him know? And could she please impress upon those 'Friends' the importance of being in Parliament for the debate on the 14th? Rockingham and his supporters, then in Opposition, were hoping to defeat the government on the penultimate day of term and put a stop to the parliamentary inquiry into the affairs of the East India Company. As Rockingham explained to his wife: 'Administration have always much advantage when the House is thin. Administration can easier keep their Followers in Town than we can keep the many Individuals who, if present would Vote with us.' In 1767 the joint benefits of increased turnpiking and the introduction of the new Bath Flying Coach had shortened the trip to London to less than twenty-four hours, so politicians could readily enjoy the comforts of the spa and still return to Parliament quickly when required.

Lady Rockingham was an experienced political operator by the 1760s and this was by no means the first time that she had acted as 'whip' for her husband. Nor would it be the first, or the last, time that she or other politically active elite women turned their presence at the spa to political ends. Bath was popular with eighteenth-century politicians and its conveniently social ethos could be used to gather information, woo supporters, and build networks and alliances. It was, therefore, an ideal locale for the exercise of non-coercive politics — that is, for the operation of social politics, the eighteenth-century version of soft power. And soft power, which depended for success upon the ability to attract and appeal, persuade and influence, was especially well suited to socially. as well as politically, astute women.

Robin Eagles (History of Parliament): 'More violent at Bath than even at London': Celebrity Politicians and the 'Rage of Politics' in 18th-Century Bath

18th-century Bath was a supremely political place. The reason for this was two-fold. First, it was a place where people of all classes mingled to recover their health and enjoy the facilities of a spa town, among them inevitably many deeply engaged in politics. It was not unknown for parliamentarians to excuse themselves mid-session for health reasons, or to dash to Bath soon after Parliament had risen to recover from the exertions of a lively session. Once there they continued to engage in political discourse both there and with friends and colleagues in London and across the country.

Second, and a feature perhaps not appreciated enough, Bath was a parliamentary seat that attracted more than its fair share of celebrity politicians. Characterized as 'an outstandingly independent and respectable borough' from the 1720s to the 1740s one of the town's MPs was a famous soldier: Marshal Wade, who was then succeeded by another celebrated commander, General Ligonier. From 1757 until his elevation to the Lords in 1766, Pitt the Elder held one of the seats.

This paper will consider Bath as a political melting pot, where politicians both recovered from politics and continued their political planning, and where a notably independent corporation was able to attract high profile individuals to represent them.

James Peate (PGR, University of Bristol): Schooled by Scandal: Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Eliza Linley & Managing Scandal in Eighteenth Century Bath

Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Elizabeth Linley were two cultural keystones of the Bath social scene of the early 1770s. In the first through Elizabeth's fame as a singer and later through Sheridan's play *The Rivals*, their fame helped build Bath's reputation as a cultural centre in the late eighteenth century. This fame was greatly expanded by the scandal over Sheridan and Linley's elopement and Sheridan's subsequent duels with Thomas Matthews. This paper will look to examine the role newspapers played in establishing the fame of both Sheridan and Linley and how it was an essential component in building both their careers. It will examine how Linley's experiences with the press through her fame in Bath helped provided experience for them both that would be beneficial throughout the scandal. But it will also show that how it helped spread celebrity from Bath around the country, as well as provide Sheridan with the skills that would help him manage public relations as a playwright/theatre manager, and propaganda as press manager for the opposition.

Michael McMullen (Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary): 'Molested with Callers and Calling': William Wilberforce's Love–Hate Relationship with Bath, Illustrated from his Unpublished Diaries and Journals

My research for over a decade, has consisted of transcribing and annotating for publication, the previously unpublished Spiritual Journals of Wilberforce, due for release September 10, 2021. I am now working as a co-editor under Professor Coffey of Leicester, to bring to publication with OUP, the entire corpus of Wilberforce's unpublished Diaries, *c.*1 million words.

For Bath 250, I propose a Paper that will draw from that research, as I highlight a variety of Wilberforce's previously unknown personal thoughts with regard to his relationship with Bath and its people. A love-hate relationship, for while he loved the city and its promise of health and healing, he never much found the relaxation he desperately sought, his door-knocker constantly being in use.

Drawing directly on his Diaries for his personal reflection and detail, I would highlight briefly:

- Wilberforce's love affair for the Pump Room and the Waters;
- His speaking at the Assembly Rooms;
- The surprising amount of time the Wilberforces actually spent in Bath, including
- having a Villa in Bath Easton;
- The speed of his courtship and marriage in Bath, and why it may have been "too precipitate;"
- The awkwardness of their daughter Elizabeth's relationship with Charles Pinney, who had inherited large slave holdings; and
- Wilberforce's personal assessments of various preachers in the churches of Bath.

Panel 5

Ann Hinchcliffe (Independent Scholar): The Evolution of the Country Dance in the Assembly Room from 1700 to 1900: What People Danced, and Why

From the building of the Lower Rooms in 1708 to the decline of the Upper Rooms into a 20th-century cinema, people in Bath not only displayed their skill in the celebrated minuet but came together in cotillions, quadrilles, polkas, waltzes, and pre-eminently country dances. The English country dance was described in so many publications, especially John Playford's 'The Dancing Master' which ran from 1651 to 1728, and dozens of 18th–19th century successors, that its evolution is clear: native English forms later coloured by French culture.

This paper will narrate the development of Assembly Room dancing over two centuries. It will trace changing movements [figures], steps and formations, and identify aspects that did *not* change. It will speculate on the likely influence of social and commercial pressures, and what the dances can tell us about English culture, and how people saw themselves within it.

Matthew Spring (Bath Spa University): The Glory Years, 1771–76: The New Assembly Rooms under Wade and Linley

Sadly, few account documents from Bath's several sets of Assembly Room have survived, yet happily one volume containing the 'Minutes of the committee for managing the New Assembly Rooms' 1771–76 (Acc. 28/281 F) does, and it can be consulted at the city's archives at the Town Hall. The accounts cover the lead up to the opening of the rooms with a grand 'Ridotto' on the 30 September 1771 and follows through over the first five years with minutes on the room's general operation. All the accounts for the Ridotto are present including those for servants, waiters, musicians, and caterers. The event was written up for the Bath Chronicle in a long satirical poem by the twenty-year-old Richard Brinsley Sheridan from the perspective of the servant Timothy Screw 'Underservant to Messers Khuff and Fitzwater' to his brother Henry, servant at the Almack's – the fashionable Balls Rooms in London that had opened in 1765.

The account book goes on to cover the room's first years under Captain Wade as Master of Ceremonies and Thomas Linley senior as Director of Music. It sheds much light on the considerable overhead costs involved in staffing the rooms (steward, housekeeper, maids and footmen) and in the running costs (spermaceti candles, fires, caterers, etc) but also on the round of near daily activities that the rooms were used for. The newly finished building had been paid for by subscribers who expected profits from the first; it was always run on fully commercial lines. Most usefully the accounts tell us how one of Bath's most important musical ensemble was run; who the musicians were; how much they were paid; how they were engaged and used deputies. This paper utilises the account book for its insights into the organisation of concerts and balls in the rooms in the years up to 1776, but also considers the more mundane but equally fascinating aspects of the operations of the rooms.

Brianna Robertson-Kirkland (ECR, University of Glasgow): Singing Stars and Singing Students: The Bath Assembly Room Concerts

Castrato singer and singing-master, Venanzio Rauzzini (1746–1810) was sole director of the Bath subscription concert series, held at the Bath Assembly Rooms, from 1780 until his death in 1810. Under his direction, the series was very popular, in part because he attracted opera stars such as Gertrud Mara (1749–1833) and Elizabeth Billington (1765?–1818), to sing. He also used the subscription series as a platform to showcase his aspiring professional students. One notable student, whose successful career was launched at the Bath concerts, was tenor singer, John Braham (*c.* 1774–1856). He trained with Rauzzini from around 1794 and performed as a principal singer at the Bath concerts during the 1794–95 and 1795–96 seasons. Rauzzini arranged for Stephen Storace (1762–1796), who was resident composer at Drury Lane, to hear Braham in Bath. The tenor must have made a lasting impression as he debuted on 30 March 1796, in the title role of Storace's new opera *Mahmond.* Other singers, such as Ann Cantelo (1766–1831) and Elizabeth Clendining (*bap.* 1767–1799), who also performed at the Bath concerts, could credit Rauzzini with launching their professional careers. This paper will discuss just how many of Rauzzini's pupils performed at the concerts during his tenure as director and will highlight how many went onto have professional careers. Indeed, I will argue that public performance was an important part of an aspiring professional singer's development. Likewise, the initial and later success of his pupils was established Rauzzini as a renowned singing master.

Rhian Davies (Artistic Director, Gregynog Festival): 'By particular Desire': Welsh Musicians in Georgian Bath

Emigrants from Wales have carved out successful careers from Liverpool and London to Pennsylvania and Patagonia, but the work of Welsh musicians in Georgian Bath has received scant attention despite a stellar roster of visiting artists headed by the 'Celebrated Blind Harper' John Parry and the 'Little Cambrian Prodigy' Elizabeth Randles.

Several prominent Welsh musicians were actually based in Bath and collaborated with contemporaries including Henry Harington and Madame Catalani. Evan Evans played the triple harp 'By particular Desire' at Public Breakfasts in prestigious city venues such as the Assembly Rooms for at least twenty years, 1765–85, while Reverend John Bowen founded the Bath Harmonic Society in 1795 and programmed its events, notably the annual concert tours of Wales, 1819–23, for which he coached a quintet of professional soloists to sing Welsh-language *pennillion*.

Illustrated with portraits of the protagonists by Robert Dighton, John Downman and Augustin Edouart — plus a linked recital of repertoire associated with Evans, Parry and Randles — this presentation reconstructs a lost world when Welsh exports to Bath included performers, composers and impresarios as well as flannel, cobs and mutton. The *Bath Chronicle* even requested donations in 1797 to assist two young residents, blinded by smallpox, to study 'the Welch Harp, by which they may obtain a comfortable livelihood, and give delight to others'.

Panel 6: Roundtable

Panel 7

Kevin Grieves (Bath Spa University): 'For the convenience of strangers': Digitally Mapping the Lodging and Boarding Houses of Bath

Bath's lodging and boarding houses played an important role in the development of the city from a health spa to Britain's premier resort. This development brought about the creation of annual guidebooks, such as Richard Crutwell's *New Bath Guide; Or, Useful Pocket Companion*, which contained a great deal of information useful to those visiting the city during the season. This information included lists of the locations of the city's lodging houses and their keepers.

Limited attention has yet been paid to the lodging house sector in eighteenth-century Bath, with much of the focus being on such accommodations in terms of those who stayed there, rather than the businesses themselves.

The digital mapping of the lists from the guidebooks published between 1773 and 1807 reveals a complex changing image of the spaces occupied by the visiting company and of the nature of hospitality in Bath. This paper provides an introductory investigation into the various aspects revealed by the visualisation of these data, such as changes in the number of listed properties, the locations of these businesses and the gender ratios of the listed lodging house keepers over the time-frame. In this paper I will demonstrate that the hospitality industry in Bath was both dynamic and responsive to change.

Amy Frost (Bath Preservation Trust): Adam in Bath: The unbuilt vision for a new town — Building the Assembly Rooms

The Assembly Rooms in Bath could have looked very different to that which we know today, had the scheme produced by the Adam brothers *c.*1765–68 ever been executed. Although the exact dating of the when they began work on designs is unknown, by 1765 work had begun on commissioning the new rooms, making the project the first undertaken by the brothers for Bath, and predating by a few years Pulteney Bridge, the only executed Adam design in the city. With an eleven bay concave corinthian colonnaded entrance front and both and ball room and concert room inside, the Adam vision for the assembly rooms was on a grand scale. It was a scale of vision from the Adam office that was seen again a few years later when they were commissioned by William Pulteney to design a masterplan for the building a new town in Bathwick. The various Adam plans for Bathwick show long streets radiating out from Pulteney Bridge connecting a series of circuses and crescents, and all communicating with the city of Bath's greatest, and most overlooked, urban asset, the River Avon.

This paper will introduce a different Assembly Rooms to that built by John Wood the younger, and pose the question of how different the Bath we know today would be, had the vision of the Adam brothers ever been realised.

Kim Simpson (ECR, Chawton House): Blunderheads at Bath: Jane Austen among the Satirists

This paper reads Austen's satirical descriptions of Bath in *Northanger Abbey* (1818) alongside those of Christopher Anstey in his popular *New Bath Guide: Or Memoirs of the B-R-D Family* (1762), a text which was in the Godmersham Park library visited by Austen as she likely began writing *Northanger Abbey*. The focus on Austen's literary satire of the Gothic genre in this novel often overlooks what Janine Barchas calls the 'cartographic

particulars' of her portrayal of Bath, but also her engagement with her bawdier predecessors.

Panel 8

Sophie Vasset (Université de Paris LARCA): Water medicine in British eighteenth-century spas

In the major and medium spa towns of Britain, leisure, gambling, sports and sociability were triggered by primarily health concerns, severe diseases, long histories of pain and recurrent medical trust in the water treatment. In most of the minor spas — more than 300 in Britain in the long 18th century — there was hardly any leisure but the search for a better health, and the long-term reminiscence, for some of the wells and springs, of religious rituals and thaumaturgic waters. This presentation will examine the role of therapeutics in British spas in the eighteenth century, focusing on intersection of the medical, literary and religious discourse on mineral waters. It will thus situate the mineral waters of Bath within the wider context of British spa medicine in the long eighteenth century.

Theophile Bonjour (PGR, EHESS — École des hautes études en sciences sociales): The 'Bath Revolution'? The Musical 'distractions' in French Spa '*cercles*' and '*salons*' at the Beginning of the 19th century

At the end of the 1990s, the French historian of tourism Marc Boyer described the "Bath Revolution" as a fundamental step in the history of thermalism and tourism in France and in Europe. His vision has since then become a reference in the French historiography of tourism. According to it, the invention by some entrepreneurs of the aristocratic season of Bath in the 18th century serves as a model for similar enterprises in the following decades everywhere in Europe, and in particular in the South-East of France, from Evian to Vichy, through Aix-les-Bains.

The aim here is to study what French entrepreneurs in the "distractions" sector (to use the French term) retained from the Bath model when they "launched" their resorts: a global strategy to attract and then fix in their resorts the European aristocrats. A major component of the Bath model is a substantial investment in the "distractions" sector. New spaces were created (circles and salons) in order to programme a dense sequence of events, systematically punctuated by musical moments, in such a way as to encourage an ostentatious form of idleness and to regulate the sociability between the curists by a rigorous organisation of the spaces and times of distraction.

Ellis Naylor (PGR, Bath Spa University): 'The Glorious Times' of Georgian Bath: The Celebrations of the Bath Historical Pageant

Bath is a city that has been viewed as a site with a vast and exceptional wealth of cultural history attached to its identity and one where its image has continually changed. The Bath Historical Pageant of 1909 offers a fascinating insight into how Bath has been celebrated and represented in the past and yet the art and significance of the British historical pageant is perhaps one that has been forgotten within society today. It was only recently in August

2020 that the first collective study on pageants was published which argued that they deserve to be acknowledged as a key aspect of community history.

This paper uncovers Bath's Georgian image through the lens of the Edwardian pageant to understand how this can add to or alter our perspectives on this period in the city by exploring in particular its seventh episode: '*The Glorious Times of Beau Nash and Ralph Allen.'* The pageant celebrated the history of the city through dance, costume, performance and music. The Georgian episode in particular was well renowned for having the best costume and dance in the whole pageant and this was enthused about in the *Bath Chronicle* at the time. Using case studies and sources from the 1909 souvenir book, *The Story of the Bath Pageant in Poetry and Prose*, this paper explores the events and celebrations within the Georgian episode, whilst emphasising the role of women, due to their prominence in the organisation, participation and the context of Edwardian politics at the time.