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**ASSOCIATION AND REASSURANCE:
LOCAL RESPONSES TO THE FRENCH
REVOLUTION IN THE BATH NEWSPAPERS,
1789-1802**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of Bath Spa University
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ABSTRACT

The people of the City of Bath and its surrounding area were well served by newspapers in the last decade of the eighteenth century. These newspapers provided their readers with a digest of international and national news stories gleaned from the London press and, to a lesser extent, from other provincial newspapers. They carried advertisements for businesses and printed notices on behalf of various organisations. They dedicated column space to local news and announcements, and also provided a space for readers' opinions in the form of letters to the editor. This local content in the Bath newspapers reflected the concerns of the readership, which became particularly visible during the French Revolution.

Limited attention has yet been paid to the local content in the provincial press, particularly with regard to its societal role. Indeed, many historians have dismissed the provincial press as amateurish and uniform. One notable exception is Hannah Barker who has argued that regional newspapers provide an insight into the local conditions in which they were created. Peter Clark has also recognised the pivotal role of provincial newspapers in facilitating the growth of an associational culture during the eighteenth century.

This dissertation provides a thematic case study on the role of the provincial press during a time of ideological and military conflict, drawing upon the local content of the Bath newspapers printed during this period. This is supplemented

by newspapers printed in other urban centres to provide a comparison with similar content in other provincial titles as well as demonstrating how other newspapers reported on Bath and its neighbourhood at that time. The themes that are explored include philanthropy, the presence of émigrés in the city, celebrations of royal anniversaries, the clash of radicals and loyalists, the county militia and the volunteer movement.

I argue that the main role of the Bath newspapers during the French Revolution was in promoting various forms of association in the city, which became increasingly inclusive over the period, particularly with regard to women and those of a lower social status. This increased participation in civil society laid the groundwork for later democratic reforms. At the same time, they painted a reassuring picture of a united, generous and well defended city at a troubling time.

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CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	1
List of Tables	2
Introduction	3
Historiography and Context	6
Sources	14
 Chapter 1: The Cultures of Politics, Association and Print in Bath	
Introduction	19
Political Culture	22
Sociable Culture	28
Print Culture	34
Conclusion	59
 Chapter 2: Émigrés and Prisoners of War	
Introduction	60
Émigrés in Bath	62
The French Clergy	75
Suspicion and Regulation	84
Prisoners of War	89
Conclusion	93

Chapter 3: Bells, Balls, Galas and Parades: Royal Celebrations in Bath and its Region

Introduction	96
Civic Celebrations	98
Commercial Festivities	113
Conclusion	126

Chapter 4: Radicals and Reformers

Introduction	128
Radicals in the Bath Press: Advertisements, Notices and Letters	129
Social Exclusion, Suppression and Sedition Trials	145
Conclusion	168

Chapter 5: Displays of Loyalism

Introduction	170
Loyalist Associations	171
The Paine Burnings	191
Loyalist Content in the Bath Press	200
Conclusion	211

Chapter 6: 'The Patriotic Military Spirit': Militiamen and Volunteers

Introduction	213
The County Militia	214
Volunteers	220
'A Very Fine Military Appearance'	239

Conclusion	258
 Chapter 7: War Philanthropy	
Introduction	260
The Relief of Widows and Orphans	262
Flannel Waistcoats	273
Voluntary Contributions to the War Effort	283
Conclusion	302
 Conclusion	
	304
 Bibliography	
	307

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate 1.	Map of Bath in the 1790s	18
Plate 2.	<i>Richard Cruttwell of Bath</i> by Thomas Beach. H. A. Cruttwell, <i>The History of the Cruttwell Family of Wokingham, Berks, and Bath</i> (Camberley, 1933).	38
Plate 3.	<i>William Meyler</i> by Mather Brown. From the private collection of Bud Sandbrook.	41
Plate 4.	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> distribution network, 1799. <i>The New Bath Guide; or, Useful Pocket Companion</i> (Bath, 1799), p. 80.	52
Plate 5.	Notice to ‘Aliens’ and ‘Aux Emigres’. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (6 th November 1794).	86
Plate 6.	Advertisement for a Grand Gala at Spring Gardens. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (3 rd June 1790).	115
Plate 7.	Advertisement for the Annual Grand Festival at Spring Gardens. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (8 th August 1793).	123
Plate 8.	Letter ‘To the Printer of the Bath Chronicle’. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (8 th March 1792).	139
Plate 9.	‘The Mayor of Bath’. <i>Morning Post</i> (3 rd January 1794).	148
Plate 10.	Notices ‘To The Publick’. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (12 th June 1794).	151
Plate 11.	Report of the trial of the Robinsons. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (8 th August 1793).	165
Plate 12:	Loyal Address to the King. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (14 th June 1792).	173
Plate 13.	Advertisement for the Militia Society Offices. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (28 th February 1799).	219
Plate 14.	Proposition that volunteer corps take an oath of allegiance. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (30 th August 1798).	239

Plate 15.	'Court of the King's-Bench'. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (31 st January 1799)	250
Plate 16.	'A Card to the Ladies of Bath'. <i>Bath Chronicle</i> (14 th March 1793).	263

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Professions of Bath Corporation Members, 1789-90.	22
Table 2.	Loyalist association formation notices printed in the Bath press.	188

Introduction

The people of the City of Bath and its surrounding area were well served by newspapers in the last decade of the eighteenth century. At the outbreak of the French Revolution there were two well-established weekly newspapers, the *Bath Journal* and the *Bath Chronicle*, printed in the city. In 1792 they were also joined by two further titles that soon merged into the *Bath Herald*. The latter title survived well into the new century along with the two older newspapers. Together these Bath newspapers provided their readers with a digest of international and national news stories gleaned from the London press and, to a lesser extent, from other provincial newspapers. They carried advertisements for a variety of businesses, and printed notices for both local government and other organisations. They dedicated column space to local news and announcements, and also provided a space in which readers' opinions may be shared in the form of letters to the editor. They had extensive delivery networks that reached into the countryside, serving many neighbouring towns and villages, as part of a larger network, transmitting news and ideas from London to the provinces, between the provinces, and from town to country. Through this network the Bath press acted as a representative of the city, providing other newspapers with local news and opinion.

This local content in the Bath newspapers reflected the concerns of the readership. These concerns became particularly visible during the French Revolution. The tumultuous events of 1789 not only deeply affected France, but also the rest of Europe. While initially greeted with delight in Great Britain, the French Revolution soon proved to be divisive, inspiring those who wished to see

a transformation of domestic politics but provoking revulsion in those who saw it as a threat to the established order. Even the least politically aware Briton felt the effects of the lengthy wars that resulted from events happening across the English Channel. Between the Storming of the Bastille and the Treaty of Amiens, British newspapers not only informed the public about the progress of the Revolution, the military conflict and domestic reactions to both, but also provided a means by which individuals could associate to limit (or occasionally further) the resultant societal effects.

This dissertation will investigate the societal role of the Bath newspapers, beyond being simply sources of the latest national and international news, during this stormy period. Through a systematic analysis of the local content, it will demonstrate that the Bath newspapers had an important role in encouraging their readers to associate themselves in diverse ways and to different degrees as dictated by gender and social status. There is an implicit reassurance to be had from being part of a collective, but the Bath press was also explicit in its attempts to provide reassurance to its readers by maintaining an image of Bath as a united, well-protected, and benevolent city of temperate loyalty to the king and constitution. The newspapers also downplayed and even ignored events that tarnished this image.

The word 'association' is purposefully used in a broad sense to incorporate this variety, which includes association with a collective national and civic identity, the associational culture of clubs and societies, public gatherings, and contribution to charitable causes. Similarly the way in which individuals associated is considered broadly to accommodate the disparate interactions of the individual with civil society. While the charitable donation of a few shillings is

not the same as serving on the committee of a philanthropic society, it still demonstrates a personal investment in a collective endeavour. Even though this dissertation considers these forms of association broadly, there is a commonality whereby they all fit within the scope of what may loosely be called loyalism, as consequence of which certain forms of association became marginalised. While marginalising some forms of association, particularly the campaign for democratic reform, associational activities became increasingly inclusive. As threats to the existing order, both external and internal, became increasingly menacing those on the edges of civil society, women and men of lower social status, became more actively involved in forms of association that demonstrated their investment in the polity.

The provincial newspapers played a key role in this widening of participation in civil society. Whereas these forms of association existed prior to the French Revolution, the sophistication of newspaper networks facilitated the expeditious establishment of national campaigns on an unprecedented level. Not only did they print notices inserted by those who organised these campaigns, but they also promoted them in their local news sections. These local news sections often formed the basis of how a locality was perceived nationally, as they were often used as the basis of reports in newspapers elsewhere. Consequently the Bath newspapers portrayed the city and neighbouring areas in the best possible light. This was particularly important to a city reliant on its regular influx of visitors coming to the city for medical reasons or to partake in the social whirl. The newspapers provided much to reassure these visitors in its favourable portrayal of the city. Local readers of the newspapers would have also approved of this portrayal, not least the members of the Corporation and businesspeople whose

livelihoods depended on the city's status as Britain's premier resort for sociability and medical care.

This unique position made Bath significant during this period by attracting the fashionable and opinion formers, who gathered in spaces in which they enjoyed an 'egalitarian mixing of social ranks while excluding those lacking the financial status of a 'private gentleman''.¹ They could also demonstrate their generosity by contributing to the city's many charitable causes. The wealthier of Bath's inhabitants could also partake in this public philanthropy and social egalitarianism, but only those of the self-perpetuating oligarchy had any say in the management of the city. Medical men still dominated the corporate body, through which they maintained a tight control of the city's politics and economy to further their own interests. In so doing they suppressed any democratic challenges to their authority. Yet, in the decades following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Bath developed into what Ronald Neale describes as 'a radical utopia'.² This dissertation will evaluate the local content of the Bath press to identify how the French Revolution and its consequent responses created the conditions for this political shift.

Historiography and Context

This study of the local content in the Bath newspapers during the French Revolution provides a genuinely important case study on the role of the provincial press during a time of ideological and military conflict. As such, this dissertation will seek to contribute to the wider historical debate which seeks to explain

¹ P. Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), p. 19.

² R. S. Neale, *Bath: A Social History 1680-1850 or A Valley of Pleasure, yet a Sink of Iniquity* (London, 1981), pp. 329-80.

particular British reactions to the tumultuous events in France and the ensuing war, and, in so doing adds a new local perspective to the existing literature.³ More specifically, the dissertation will contribute to recent research which has begun to establish the importance of the provincial press in the later long eighteenth century in shaping the societies they served.⁴

Much of the existing literature on British reactions to the French Revolution is focused on the national ideological conflict between radical reformers and conservative loyalists. In his seminal *The Making of the English Working Class*, E. P. Thompson argued that events in France triggered the emergence of a class consciousness among working people, which the authorities sought to suppress, an idea that Gwyn. A. Williams reiterated.⁵ By contrast H. T. Dickinson argued that the conservative intellectuals achieved a victory over the radical and reforming writers in the ideological conflict. Dickinson further argued that a popular conservatism emerged, independently of the ruling elite, which appealed to the long established beliefs and to the deep prejudices of the middling sort and the lower orders, a view endorsed by Ian Christie.⁶ For Christie the British social order itself lacked the clear divisions evident on the Continent, while at the same

³ For an excellent historiographical review of this subject, see E. V. Macleod, 'British Attitudes to the French Revolution', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3, (Sept. 2007), pp. 689-709.

⁴ K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People. Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995); H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998); H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society, 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000); H. Barker, 'England, 1760-1815' in H. Barker & S. Burrows (Eds.), *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere in Europe and North America, 1760-1820* (Cambridge, 2004); J. Black, *The English Press 1621-1861* (Stroud, 2001); C. Y. Ferdinand, *Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Newspaper Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1997); V. E. M. Gardner, *The Business of News in England, 1760-1820* (Houndmills, 2016).

⁵ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1984); G. A. Williams, *Artisans and Sans Culottes* (London, 1973).

⁶ H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property. Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1977); H. T. Dickinson, 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism 1789-1815' in H. T. Dickinson, ed., *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815* (London, 1989), pp. 103-25; H. T. Dickinson, 'Popular loyalism in Britain in the 1790s', in Eckhart Hellmuth (Ed.), *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century* (London, 1990), pp. 503-33.

time promoting paternalism, which along with established systems of relief for the poor enabled all Britons to a relative share in the prosperity of the nation.⁷ Both Dickinson and Christie highlighted the active opposition of the Church of England and the emergent Methodist movement to radicalism and revolution. Jonathan Clark also emphasised the importance of the Church of England in the defence of the established order, as one part of what he saw as a triumvirate along with the monarchy and the aristocracy.⁸ Both Clark and Philip Schofield also affirmed Dickinson's emphasis of the inherent strength of the conservatives' case.⁹

In response to what he dubbed the 'Dickinsonian consensus', however, John Dinwiddy questioned the underlying assumptions of those historians who suggested that the conservative ideology had 'an intrinsic strength and superiority'. Rather, he argued that the conservatives' victory was a result of circumstances permitting their misrepresentation of English reformers as 'French-style Jacobins'.¹⁰ Similarly Mark Philp took issue with Dickinson's assertion that reformers failed because they were ideologically divided and factional. Where Dickinson saw weakness, Philp saw strength; the variety of ideas and traditions enriched the reform movement, driving popular agitation against dearth and war and in favour of parliamentary reform.¹¹ Philp's work on radicals and reformers, in fact, follows a well-trodden path in demonstrating the political agency of ordinary

⁷ I. R. Christie, *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth Century Britain: Reflections on the British avoidance of Revolution* (Oxford, 1984), p. 182; I. R. Christie, 'Conservatism and Stability in British Society' in M. Philp (Ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 169-87.

⁸ J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1688–1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice During the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, 1985); J. C. D. Clark, *English society, 1660–1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice During the Ancien Regime 2nd Ed.* (Cambridge, 2000).

⁹ T. P. Schofield, 'Conservative Political Thought in Britain in Response to the French Revolution', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Sep., 1986), pp. 601–22.

¹⁰ J. Dinwiddy, 'Interpretations of Anti-Jacobinism', in Philp (Ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, pp. 38-49.

¹¹ M. Philp, 'The Fragmented Ideology of Reform' in Philp (Ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, pp. 50-77.

people in the period. He applied the same approach to those who actively engaged with loyalism and patriotism. By analysing the development of John Reeves' Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, he also argued that rather than merely acting as the tools of elites and intellectuals, these members of the middling sort widened the political debate to include those members of the lower orders that the association originally sought to exclude from such discussions.¹² Similarly, David Eastwood examined the often fragile relationship between a conservative governing elite and the popular loyalism it attempted to mobilise to secure its position. By doing so Eastwood countered both Christie's and Robert Dozier's portrayal of a loyalist consensus.¹³ Building on these ideas, Kevin Gilmartin explored the paradox of a state needing to mobilise public opinion while limiting it as a political force. In so doing he demonstrated the way in which loyalism transformed itself and the political arena by becoming more inclusive while remaining opposed to calls for a more inclusive political nation.¹⁴ Jennifer Mori, however, took another approach to the study of loyalism in her examination of state sponsored propaganda, which she found to be less monolithic than previously depicted. Yet, she crucially noted the Pitt ministry's success in focusing such a wide spectrum of loyalist opinion against the dual challenges of war abroad and subversion at home.¹⁵ In his work on popular politics in the south west of England, Steve Poole has argued that the abstract constitutional qualities of the ideological consensus of the 1790s were

¹² M. Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 110, No. 435 (Feb., 1995), pp. 42-69.

¹³ D. Eastwood, 'Patriotism and the English State in the 1790s' in Philp (Ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, pp. 146-68; R. Dozier, *For King, Constitution, and Country: The English Loyalists and the French Revolution* (Lexington, KY, 1983).

¹⁴ K. Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution: Loyalist Association and Conservative Opinion in the 1790s', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (July, 2002), pp. 291-328.

¹⁵ J. Mori, 'Languages of Loyalism: Patriotism, Nationhood and the State in the 1790s', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 118, No. 475 (Feb., 2003), pp. 33-58.

not the preserve of the Pittite loyalists; rather, they were equally integral to radicalism. In so doing Poole questioned the notion that loyalism and radicalism were antithetical, while also arguing that radicalism had a role within the maintenance of social cohesion.¹⁶ More recently scholars have further problematized our understanding of loyalism. Frank O’Gorman proposed that ‘loyalism went far forwards towards incorporating not only the middling orders into the hierarchical structures of Hanoverian England but a wider, patriotic public as well’, extending the boundaries of ‘legitimate politics’.¹⁷ Matthew McCormack has been critical of the way historians have conflated terms like ‘loyalism’, ‘patriotism’, ‘conservatism’ and ‘counter-revolution’, because they ‘involve different commitments and exclusion’. He suggests the term ‘anti-Jacobinism’ to refer to a movement that was ‘both xenophobic and anti-revolutionary’.¹⁸ He also argued that since the term ‘loyalism’ was not current in the eighteenth century, better attention should be paid to the variety of ways that ‘loyalty’ was used at the time.¹⁹ Each of these challenges to the ‘Dickinsonian consensus’ inform this dissertation, particularly those by Philp and Gilmartin, which are expanded to include other cooperative responses to the French Revolution.

Stuart Andrews, Marilyn Butler, Rebecca Klein and Karl Schweizer have all examined printed publications in the period of the French Revolution, although

¹⁶ S. Poole, ‘Popular Politics in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1791-1805’ (University of Bristol PhD thesis, 1992); S. Poole, ‘Pitt’s Terror Reconsidered: Jacobinism and the Law in Two South-Western Counties, 1791-1803’, *Southern History: A Review of the History of Southern England*, No. 17 (1995), pp. 65-87; C. Emsley, ‘An Aspect of Pitt’s ‘Terror’: Prosecutions for Sedition during the 1790s’, *Social History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (May, 1981), pp. 155-84; S. Poole, ‘Radicalism, Loyalism, and the “Reign of Terror” in Bath, 1792-1804’, *Bath History*, Vol. 3 (1990), pp. 114-37.

¹⁷ F. O’Gorman, ‘English Loyalism Revisited’ in A. Blackstock & E. Magennis (Eds.), *Politics and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland 1750-1850. Essays in Tribute to Peter Jupp* (Belfast, 2007), pp. 223-41.

¹⁸ M. McCormack, *The Independent Man. Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 140-61.

¹⁹ M. McCormack, ‘Rethinking ‘Loyalty’ in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Sep., 2012), pp. 407-21.

they have tended to focus on what Butler termed 'the Revolution Controversy' as it was played out in the metropolitan press.²⁰ In an ambitious study, Lucyle Werkmeister used the London daily press to reconstruct how its readers viewed contemporary politics, but actually she says little about the social role of the newspapers.²¹ While research on provincial newspapers in recent publications by historians such as Hannah Barker, Jeremy Black, Christine Ferdinand and Victoria Gardner have expanded our knowledge of the eighteenth-century provincial press, limited attention has yet been given to the role that particular provincial newspapers played in their local society.²² Barker, in particular, has done much to repudiate earlier historians such as Arthur Aspinall, who dismissed the provincial press as amateurish and lacking in local flavour.²³ She countered Geoffrey Cranfield's contention that 'the local newspaper was local only in the sense that it was printed locally' by stating that 'the provincial press may have been localized not just in its production, but also in the views and opinions which it expressed'.²⁴ Barker also identified the provincial press as a 'valuable, but as yet largely unexplored, indication of provincial sentiment', something this dissertation seeks to remedy.²⁵ Donald Read concentrated on four newspapers published in Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield, and their relationship with middle-

²⁰ S. Andrews, *The British Periodical Press and the French Revolution, 1789-99* (Basingstoke, 2000); M. Butler (Ed.), *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy* (Cambridge, 1984); K. W. Schweizer & R. Klein, 'The French Revolution and Developments in the London Daily Press to 1793' in K. W. Schweizer & J. Black (Eds.), *Politics and the Press in Hanoverian Britain* (Lewiston, NY, 1989), pp. 171-86.

²¹ L. Werkmeister, *A Newspaper History of England, 1792-1793* (Lincoln, NE, 1967).

²² Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion*; Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*; H. Barker, 'England, 1760-1815' in Barker & Burrows (Eds.), *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere*; J. Black, *The English Press 1621-1861*; Ferdinand, *Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Newspaper Trade*; Gardner, *The Business of News in England*.

²³ H. Barker, 'Catering for Provisional Tastes: Newspapers, Readership and Profit in Late Eighteenth-Century England', *Historical Research*, Vol. 69, No. 168 (Feb., 1996), pp. 42-61; A. Aspinall, *Politics and the Press c. 1780-1850* (Brighton, 1973).

²⁴ G. A. Cranfield, *The Press and Society: From Caxton to Northcliffe* (London, 1978), p. 180; Barker, 'Catering for Provisional Tastes'.

²⁵ Barker, 'Catering for Provisional Tastes'.

class opinion in these cities. Read showed that the development of 'public opinion' brought about, in part, by the rising popularity of newspapers had its origin points in the regions rather than merely emanating from London, an argument he further developed in his survey of the English provinces, in which he emphasised the innovative role of radical provincial newspapers in the promotion of local popular political opinion.²⁶ By contrast John Brewer boldly conceived of the national newspaper network as an 'alternative structure of politics' which was 'the single most important factor in obtaining any degree of *national* political consciousness'.²⁷ Similarly Kathleen Wilson described the newspaper press as the 'preeminent instrument of politicization in the eighteenth century', having a 'singular importance in structuring the national political imaginary, helping to shape the social, political and national consciousness of middling and artisanal people living in the localities'.²⁸

Peter Clark emphasised the role of newspapers in the development of what he called the 'associational world', particularly with regard to the dissemination of London societies, encouraging the establishment of similar organisations in the provinces. He described the press network as an 'engine of growth' for the culture of association, which 'contributed heavily to the progress of new forms of sociability'.²⁹ The role of newspapers in promoting an associational culture was not limited to Britain, as Martyn J. Powell found in his study of

²⁶ D. Read, *Press and People 1790-1850: Opinion in Three English Cities* (London, 1961); D. Read, *The English Provinces, c. 1760-1960. A Study in Influence* (London, 1964).

²⁷ J. Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 16.

²⁸ Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, pp. 29 & 37.

²⁹ P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800. The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000).

convivial clubs in Ireland.³⁰ R. J. Morris has argued that the voluntary societies of the period acted largely independently of the aristocracy and government, rather they were middle-class institutions based upon local communities, even when they were part of national movements.³¹ He described the variety of forms taken by associational societies and argued for their positive influence on social cohesion as an important response to the challenges brought about by an increasingly changing and complex world.³² Peter Borsay also recognised the role of clubs and societies in revealing a new spirit of sociability during the 'English Urban Renaissance'.³³

The philanthropic association was one important response to such challenges. It provided a means by which the middling-sort could ameliorate the lives of the poor, while at the same time reforming their morals. Yet, as Peter Borsay rather cynically noted, it was also an effective device for self-promotion, whereby those that donated to charitable causes would have their names printed in the newspaper notices that listed subscribers, associating themselves with the cream of society.³⁴ Anne Borsay's social history of Bath's General Infirmary paints a vivid picture of the organisation of charities in the city. In this broad study she explores a variety of themes, including civic virtue, social status, political power and the influence of the middling sort.³⁵ The subscription list also gave a visible

³⁰ M. J. Powell, 'Beef, Claret and Communication': Convivial Clubs in the Public Sphere, 1750-1800' in J. Kelly & M. J. Powell (Eds.), *Clubs and Societies in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2010), pp. 353-72.

³¹ R. J. Morris, 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850: An Analysis', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Mar., 1983), pp. 95-118.

³² R. J. Morris, 'Clubs, Societies and Associations' in F. M. L. Thompson (Ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain. Vol. 3. Social Agencies and Institutions* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 395-443.

³³ Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 2002).

³⁴ Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance*, pp. 251-2.

³⁵ A. Borsay, *Medicine and Charity in Georgian Bath: A Social History of the General Infirmary, c. 1739-1830* (Aldershot, 1999).

role to women in society. In his study of philanthropic women, Frank Prochaska noted that the political and social challenges of the French Revolution 'enhanced the status of women and stimulated their interest in good works', although their participation in philanthropic causes was usually limited to the roles of patroness or subscriber, a fact also noted by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall.³⁶

The role of the provincial press is important to our understanding of British society in the late eighteenth century. Newspapers printed much material that simply was not recorded elsewhere, particularly with regard to the local content of provincial titles. Furthermore, the regular publication of newspapers enables the historian to study incremental social developments over a period. By looking at the Bath newspapers in the period of the French revolution, this dissertation will reveal the ways in which the press responded to and shaped public opinion and identity, and how it facilitated collective action in the face of uncertainty. At the same time it will reveal some variations in editorial policy between the newspapers, demonstrating that while they were broadly loyalist, they represented a variety of opinion from the staunchly anti-Jacobin to moderate patriotism.

Sources

This dissertation naturally concentrates on the era of the French Revolution from the Storming of the Bastille until the Peace of Amiens (1789-1802). The key primary sources the work will use are the Bath newspapers printed during this period, particularly the local content, much of which would not be available in any

³⁶ F. K. Prochaska, 'Women in English Philanthropy, 1790-1830', *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Dec., 1974), pp. 426-45; L. Davidoff & C. Hall, *Family Fortunes*. Revised Edition (Abingdon, 2002).

other sources. These titles appeared weekly on a single sheet of paper folded to form four pages. Almost complete runs for each of the three newspapers used are extant, in all around fifteen-hundred issues; although they are illegible in some places. These newspapers, their printers, their distribution and their readers are all explored in more detail in the first chapter of this dissertation. The local content of the Bath newspapers is supplemented by other titles, printed in the capital and the provinces, providing a comparison with similar content in other provincial titles as well as demonstrating how other newspapers reported on Bath and its neighbourhood at that time.

Chapter 1 will describe the political culture of Bath in the period of the French Revolution. It will demonstrate that the well-developed forms of association and sociability extended far beyond serving the visiting company. It will also introduce Bath newspapers and their proprietors and examine their content, their distribution and their readership.

Chapter 2 explores the way that the newspapers portrayed Britishness at a time when the simple contrast with the Catholic French was altered to accommodate sympathetic representations of émigrés and the charity shown to the exiled clergy. This compassion was later tempered with suspicion on the outbreak of war and the passing of the Aliens Act. The presence of émigrés in Bath also provided the city's newspapers with the opportunity to portray their home city as united and cosmopolitan. They also associated the city with generosity directed at both the impoverished priests and even prisoners of war; although both were mitigated by traditional prejudices and fears.

Chapter 3 charts the way in which the Bath newspapers reported on both civic and commercial celebrations of royal anniversaries in the city. It contrasts

the rather perfunctory reporting of bell-ringing and flag-flying with the effusive accounts of balls and galas. Yet, it also shows the revitalisation of civic ceremony following the outbreak of war, as the anniversaries were marked with military pageantry which offered an opportunity for all the city's social classes to share the spectacle, as compared to the more exclusive commercial festivities, tailored to the visiting Company.

Chapter 4 considers the changing fortunes of radicals and reformers in the local content of the Bath newspapers from the early advertising of radical prints, the establishment of corresponding societies in the city and beyond, letters to the editor defending the cause of reform, to the subsequent suppression of their activities both by intimidation and the force of law. It analyses the reporting of sedition trials held in Bath and the region, which no doubt proved to be a great solace to those who felt threatened by any change in the established political order, while at the same time occasionally giving a voice to the radical opinion.

Chapter 5 charts the unprecedented growth of the loyalist association movement that owed so much to the national news network. It demonstrates the newspapers' role in promoting the spate of populist effigy burnings of Thomas Paine, the *bête noire* of the anti-Jacobins. The newspapers also hinted at a disquiet among the city's ruling elite with certain elements of independent popular politics. It also assesses the buoyant conservatism of those readers who submitted a variety of letters and poems to be published.

Chapter 6 focuses on the development of the armed nation in Bath and its environs, from the recruitment of men to serve in the regular forces and county militia, to the eventual establishment of volunteer corps to defend against the threat of invasion. It considers the advertising of militia associations that provided

subscribers with insurance should they be drawn in the ballot. It demonstrates the way in which the Bath press reassured its readers of the martial prowess and loyalty of the amateur soldiers. Somewhat conversely it also shows how the armed sociability of the volunteer corps could result in antagonism within the ranks and with members of the public.

The war put a strain on those who served in the armed forces, the families of casualties and the nation's finances. Chapter 7 thus considers the ways in which the Bath newspapers promoted various charitable endeavours to provide relief. It assesses the notices placed in newspapers by associations raising funds to provide for widows and orphans of those who died in combat. It looks at the charitable provision of warm winter clothing for those serving under the Duke of York in Flanders and shoes for the Somerset Militia, particularly the role played by women in these causes. It considers the requests for relief placed by, or on behalf of, individuals affected by the conflict. It also reassesses the establishment of the system of voluntary contributions to the public funds to further prosecute the war, demonstrating the largely forgotten role of the city's mayor in popularising the idea.



Plate 1: Map of Bath in the 1790s

Chapter 1: The Cultures of Politics, Sociability and Print in Bath

Introduction

The City of Bath is situated in a fine fruitful valley, in the north-east part of the county of Somerset, distant thirteen measured miles from Bristol, and 107 from London; environed by a number of fertile hills, abounding with springs of excellent water, which is conveyed by leaden pipes to almost every house in the city.¹

This idyllic portrayal opens the 1789 edition of *The New Bath Guide; or Useful Pocket Companion*, which continued with a largely mythic account of Bath's history before providing useful information to those visiting the city. The guide acknowledged that the development of Bath owed much to the healing properties of its spa waters. It described the baths and the regulations that pertained to their use, as formulated by the city's Corporation.² The guide also expressed the city's debt to Richard 'Beau' Nash and successive masters of ceremonies in establishing Bath's position as the premier resort in the country.³ Central to the culture of association, that Nash instituted, were the pump rooms and the assembly rooms, which the guide described along with their rules and regulations.⁴ Other spaces of association also featured heavily in the guide, including coffee houses, pleasure gardens, the theatre, tennis courts, public walks and places of worship, Anglican, Catholic and Nonconformist.⁵ The guide's authors were eager to promote other associations established with charitable aims, including those that administered the General Hospital, the Pauper Charity

¹ *The New Bath Guide; or, Useful Pocket Companion* (Bath, 1789), p. 3

² *Ibid.*, pp. 10-21.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-66.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-46.

'for medical and chirurgical assistance for the poor', the charity school and Sunday schools.⁶ The guide also made mention of other formally established associations, such as the Bath Society of Guardians established to provide financial aid to those subscribers who were victims of criminal activity.⁷ The membership of the Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture, Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce included both visitors and Bathonians.⁸ Should the entertainments of Bath not satiate the appetites of visitors, the guide described attractions in the surrounding country that the company might visit. For those seeking scenic serenity there were descriptions of Lansdown and Claverton Down.⁹ It also provided details of the nearby stately homes, and the less bucolic attractions of Wells and Bristol, as well as information about the available means of conveyance and advice for those who wished to venture further afield.¹⁰ As well as attracting visitors from around the kingdom, Bath served the surrounding countryside as an urban centre. Its two annual fairs and its markets brought in traders and customers alike.¹¹ While the last section of the guide listed services aimed mainly at the visiting company such as lodging houses and artists, it also detailed other facilities available in the city that would have served all those who ventured to the city as well as its permanent residents such as banks, medical practitioners and lawyers.¹² Notably, the first list to appear in the guide comprised the names and positions of the members of the Corporation; although, somewhat disconcertingly, the details were three years out of date, an oversight that the

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-40.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-78.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 70-5.

publishers remedied in the 1790 issue of the guide.¹³ As part of its earlier description of the old Guildhall, the guide also provided a brief explanation of the governance of the city:

The city is governed by the Mayor, Recorder, (Earl Camden) and Aldermen, besides twenty Common-Council; though the number of Aldermen (out of which the Mayor and Justices are chosen) is not to exceed ten, or be less than four, and a town-clerk.¹⁴

It also noted that the gentlemen of the Corporation elected the city's two Members of Parliament; although, somewhat tellingly, it does not provide their names. The guide provided much greater detail about the regulations of the city's chairmen administered by the Corporation, 'by a late act of parliament'.¹⁵ This disparity in detail should come as no surprise, considering its target audience. Nevertheless, it still paints an accurate picture of the city in the first year of the French Revolution.

This chapter will build on this promotional image of Bath. It will describe the political culture of the city, focusing on the Corporation and its reputation for independence. It will also explore Bath's well-established sociable culture, not only as a place of leisure, but also as a city with a rich tradition of cooperative action, not least with regard to charity. It will also demonstrate the importance of Bath as a regional urban centre by looking at the reach of the city's newspapers. Oddly enough, considering that it was printed by the publisher of the *Bath Chronicle*, the *New Bath Guide* makes only a passing mention of the city's press, when detailing their parcel delivery services.¹⁶ This chapter will remedy this omission by providing details of the Bath newspapers that were printed during the

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 69; *The New Bath Guide; or, Useful Pocket Companion* (Bath, 1790), p. 75.

¹⁴ *New Bath Guide* (1789), pp. 41-2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

period of the French Revolution, their publishers, their content, their distribution and their readership. While unique in many ways, Bath also naturally displayed many features typical of a late-eighteenth-century provincial town, and the same is true of its newspapers. As such they serve as a valuable source for analysing the local role of newspapers, beyond being purveyors of the latest news, particularly with regard to the promotion of forms of association and in offering reassurance to a society faced with ideological and military conflict.

Political Culture

The Bath Corporation dominated the city's political life. As has already been mentioned, the thirty members of that body elected the city's two parliamentary representatives. When sitting as the Aldermen and Common Council, the thirty men of the Corporation not only elected the city's two Members of Parliament, but also managed and regulated the city, its denizens and visitors. It passed by-laws, and oversaw the magistrates' courts, as well as managing the public finances, the town estates, the baths and the markets. They nominated the Rector of Bath, elected the Town Crier and appointed themselves to the positions of Aldermen, Justices of the Peace, Bailiffs, Constables and City Surveyors.¹⁷ The Bath Corporation was a self-perpetuating oligarchy, which, upon the death of one of their number, duly elected a freeman of the city who shared their concerns. Consequently, this created a close-knit group with similar occupations and commercial interests who tended to be intimately involved with the city's continued prosperity as a health and leisure resort. As such, nineteen of the thirty Corporation members in 1789-90 were apothecaries, physicians or surgeons.

¹⁷ T. Fawcett, *Bath Administer'd: Corporation Affairs at the 18th-Century Spa* (Bath, 2001), pp. 25, 31-34, 126-127.

Name	Position	Profession
Leonard Coward, Esq.	Mayor	Lace dealer
William Anderdon, Esq.	Justice of the Peace	Apothecary
Jacob Smith, Esq.	Justice of the Peace	Attorney
John Chapman, Esq.	Alderman	Saddler
Edward Bushel Collibee, Esq.	Alderman	Apothecary
Henry Wright, Esq.	Alderman	Surgeon
Walter Wiltshire, Esq.	Alderman	Wagon owner
Francis Bennett, Esq.	Alderman	Linen Draper
Simon Crook, Esq.	Alderman	Apothecary
James Leake, Esq.	Alderman	Bookseller
John Horton, Esq.	Chamberlain	Apothecary
Harry Atwood	Sheriff	Surgeon
Robert Forman	Sheriff	Attorney
Joseph Phillott	Constable	Surgeon
Thomas Rundell	Constable	Surgeon
Abel Moysey, Esq.	Common Council	Physician
Henry Harington, M.D.	Common Council	Physician
Thomas Harford	Common Council	Attorney
John Symons	Common Council	Surgeon
John Palmer	Common Council	Theatre owner
George Chapman	Common Council	Linen Draper
Charles Phillott	Common Council	Apothecary
William Watson, M.D.	Common Council	Physician
Henry Parry	Common Council	Apothecary
William Edwards	Common Council	Attorney
Edmund Hutchinson	Common Council	Apothecary
Charles Crook	Common Council	Apothecary
Joseph Spry	Common Council	Apothecary
Morgan Nicholls	Common Council	Surgeon
Edmund Anderdon	Common Council	Apothecary

Table 1: Professions of Bath Corporation Members, 1789-90.¹⁸

¹⁸ *New Bath Guide* (1790), p. 75; T. Fawcett, 'Bath City Council Members 1700-1835', *History of Bath Research Group – Publications*, <http://historyofbath.org.uk/Publications.aspx> (Accessed on 4th September 2014).

The remaining members included four lawyers, two linen drapers, a lace merchant, a bookseller, a saddler, the theatre owner and the postal innovator John Palmer and Walter Wiltshire, who owned a fleet of wagons that carried passengers between Bath and London.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Corporation was the major landlord within Bath and the owner of substantial areas of land outside the city walls. According to Ronald Neale, the Corporation developed and rented these holdings according to its own financial self-interest: actions he described as part of the Corporation's 'economic corporatism'.²⁰ As O'Gorman notes, the corporate wealth and self-interest in Bath – as in some other corporate towns, such as Devizes and Salisbury – was a great source of civic pride and political independence, enabling the Corporation to develop reciprocal relationships with the powerful rather than being dominated by them.²¹

Even the political reformer Thomas Oldfield had to acknowledge the political independence of the Bath Corporation in his book *An Entire and Complete History, Political and Personal, of the Boroughs of Great Britain*. While declaring that the election of members in Bath 'is as complete a political farce as that of Old Sarum', because 'it is of very little consequence whether they are chosen by that number of burgage-holders, or by the same number of aldermen and common-council', he accepted that,

The corporation of this city are not of that degraded description, who put their suffrages to public sale, or submit to the domineering insolence of a powerful individual. They have manifested an honourable attachment to the exalted virtues of their venerable recorder, earl Camden, and to the convivial hospitalities of their opulent neighbour, the marquis of Bath, whose sons are their present representatives.²²

¹⁹ See Table 1.

²⁰ Neale, *Bath: A Social History*, p. 176.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²² T. H. B. Oldfield, *An Entire and Complete History, Political and Personal, of the Boroughs of Great Britain &c. Vol. 2* (London, 1792), p. 440.

As Oldfield noted, this independence did not prevent the Bath Corporation from electing the sons of the two nobles. It was common for peers to seek to secure seats for their eldest sons. The general election of 1761 returned twenty-three eldest sons of English peers to Parliament.²³ In 1780, the Bath Corporation elected the eldest son of Baron Camden, John Jeffreys Pratt, commonly known as Viscount Bayham, as one of the borough's two representatives. On the death of his father in April 1794, he became Marquess Camden and took over as Recorder for Bath.²⁴ Between 1790 and 1794, he was joined as representative for Bath by Thomas Thynne, commonly known as Viscount Weymouth, son of the newly created Marquess of Bath and Elizabeth Cavendish. Elizabeth was the eldest daughter of William Bentinck, the second duke of Portland, and sister to the Whig leader William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, third Duke of Portland.²⁵ Portland held the position of prime minister during the Fox-North coalition government, and remained leader of the opposition party following the installation of the Pitt government in 1783.²⁶ Thus, the two representatives of Bath had connections to leading politicians in both the government and the opposition, a balance that the Corporation often maintained. It was not only the sons of peers who used a Commons seat as 'a stepping-stone to the House of Lords', the reward of elevation to the Lords was bestowed upon those who faithfully served the ministry or the Crown.²⁷ This was the case for Richard Pepper Arden, who

²³ L. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (London, 1968), p. 2.

²⁴ S. M. Farrell, 'Pratt, John Jeffreys, first Marquess Camden (1759–1840), politician' at the *Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22705> (Accessed on 23rd November 2008).

²⁵ H. M. Scott, 'Thynne, Thomas, third Viscount Weymouth and first marquess of Bath (1734–1796), courtier and politician' at the *Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27425> (Accessed on 23rd November 2008).

²⁶ D. Wilkinson, 'Bentinck, William Henry Cavendish Cavendish-, third duke of Portland (1738–1809), prime minister' at the *Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2162> (Accessed on 23rd November 2008).

²⁷ Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, p. 11-2.

served Bath as MP between 1794 and 1801, when he was made Baron Alvanley. A friend of Pitt's, Arden served as Solicitor-General, Attorney-General, Master of the Rolls and as a privy councillor. He represented Newton on the Isle of White, Aldborough and Hastings in the Commons before his election in Bath, possibly at the recommendation of Pitt.²⁸ On occasion the Corporation also returned one of their own number to the Commons. In October 1774 they elected Abel Moysey, who had been a councilman since 1768. Moysey supported the Fox-North Coalition, and nearly lost his seat in April 1784 when the recently installed administration decided that Pitt himself would stand in the city. Despite his having already been returned as a member for Cambridge University, Pitt still received fourteen votes, as compared to the seventeen for Moysey, who retained his seat until his retirement in 1790, after which he twice served as the city's mayor.²⁹ Following Arden's elevation to the House of Lords, in June 1801 the Bath Corporation elected their former mayor, John Palmer, fulfilling his long-term parliamentary ambition. He served until 1808 when he made way for the election of his son, Charles.³⁰

Not everyone in the city was willing to let the Bath Corporation's control of the city remain unchallenged. In May 1789 a group of freemen presented the Corporation with a petition to consider the state and condition of the common

²⁸ D. Lemmings, 'Arden, Richard Pepper, first Baron Alvanley (1744–1804), judge' at the *Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/634> (Accessed on 6th April 2010).

²⁹ J. A. Canon, 'Bath, 1754-1790', *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/constituencies/bath> (Accessed on 14th December 2015); T. Fawcett, 'Bath City Council Members 1700-1835', *History of Bath Research Group – Publications*, <http://historyofbath.org.uk/Publications.aspx> (Accessed on 4th September 2014).

³⁰ R. G. Thorne, 'Bath, 1790-1820', *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/constituencies/bath> (Accessed on 14th December 2015).

land and its improvement by making it available for building development.³¹ This petition was the culmination of a campaign that started the year before. The 23rd October 1788 edition of the *Bath Chronicle* included 'An address to the Freemen of Bath, On the subject of improving the Commons' by 'A Bath Man'. In this lengthy and detailed proposal, the anonymous author explained that he had previously addressed the Corporation with his plan to build on the common. He claimed that the plan would not only be in their best interests but also those of the city's Freemen. Of the Corporation he wrote, 'as a collected body, they seem inattentive to their interest, whilst as separate individuals, they are not only mindful, but so observant of it that they let no opportunity offer without improving it.' The author goes to great lengths to not attribute the Corporation's rejection of his plan to 'narrow or selfish motives', but notes that other great plans had been rejected for such reasons in the past. Having failed to secure the support of the Corporation, the author was 'induced' to put his scheme before the city's freemen, noting that it was a 'well-known fact' that they were the 'owners and proprietors of the commons', which 'never produced more than a guinea a year.' By appealing to the Freemen, the author believed that collectively they had the political influence required to induce the Corporation to accept the scheme for the benefit of all, if only they had 'spirit enough to stand forth'. He did not intend to 'inflame [their] passions'; rather, he wanted to 'appeal to [their] understanding' asserting that 'The Freemen of Bath are no Fools.'³²

The Corporation's response to the petition further demonstrates their opinion of themselves as the absolute governors of the city. In the council

³¹ *Bath Chronicle* (7th May 1789), p. 2b.

³² 'An address to the Freemen of Bath, On the subject of improving the Commons', *Bath Chronicle* (23rd October 1788), p. 4ab.

minutes they declared that should any future improvements to the Commons be made, it would only occur 'under the sanction of a Mayor and not a minor part of the Citizens'.³³ The *Bath Chronicle* printed the Corporation's dismissive response at the request of the freemen's lawyer, William Burge, along with his retort in which he bemoaned the tardiness of the Corporation's response, and asserted that the petition was made on behalf of 'a major part of the Freemen.'³⁴ In fact this conflict, which continued for a number of years, demonstrates the ability of a number of Bath's freemen (whether the major or minor part) to organise a political campaign in their joint interest by following legal procedure and respecting civic tradition. It also serves as a harbinger of the political transformation in Bath that would occur in the early decades of the nineteenth century that resulted in the election of the radical politician, John Arthur Roebuck, as the one of the city's MPs in 1832.³⁵ Another step in this transformation was the active participation of people from all strata of society in response to the French Revolution that this dissertation explores.

Sociable Culture

The commons aside, the Bath Corporation was heavily engaged in the development of the city during the eighteenth century. As the 1789 edition of the *New Bath Guide* enthused: 'Within these last fifty years, the city of Bath has so considerably increased in the number of its inhabitants, that it is become one of the *most agreeable* as well as *polite* places in the kingdom'.³⁶ The growth continued during the period covered in this dissertation. Neale estimated the

³³ Bath Record Office [hereafter BRO], *Council Minute Book*, p. 272.

³⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (13th August 1789), p. 2c.

³⁵ Neale, *Bath*, pp. 329-80

³⁶ *New Bath Guide* (1789), p. 44.

population of Bath in 1789 to be 22,000.³⁷ By 1801, according to the returns of the first national census, it had risen to 27,686, but as *The Original Bath Guide* pointed out,

had it been taken earlier in the year, there would have been a probable increase of some thousands, and the number would have been equally diminished had it been postponed till the Summer was farther advanced; such is the difference of Bath, in and out of season.³⁸

The growth of population in Bath towards the end of the eighteenth century resulted in the city becoming home to over a dozen different types of formal association, putting it in the same league as regional centres such as York and Exeter, and not far behind Bristol, Newcastle and Norwich.³⁹ These various formal associations included the aforementioned Bath and West of England Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture, Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, founded in 1777 by Edmund Rack, a Norfolk draper who had moved to Bath two years earlier. The founder-members mostly comprised local professionals, including four doctors, two clergymen and importantly Richard Cruttwell, printer of the *Bath Chronicle*, who we shall meet below. In 1787 the society had 266 ordinary members, only forty-six of whom lived in Bath, while the majority were engaged in agriculture. It also attracted aristocratic members; attendees of the 1796 annual meeting included the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Earls of Stafford, Peterborough and Galloway, and Lord Somerville.⁴⁰ Another association to attract aristocratic patronage was the Bath Harmonic Society, founded in 1795 by the former mayor Dr Henry Harington and Rev. Bowen, following the decline of the

³⁷ Neale, *Bath: A Social History*, p. 44.

³⁸ C. Greenwood & J. Greenwood, *Somersetshire Delineated* (London, 1822), p. 18; *The Original Bath Guide* (Bath, 1811), p. 142.

³⁹ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800*, p. 133-5

⁴⁰ H. L. H. Lim, 'Bath & the Bath and West of England Society', 1777-1851', *Bath History*, Vol. VI (1996), pp. 108-31.

Bath Catch-Club, possibly brought about by a political controversy.⁴¹ The lengthy list of society-members published in 1799 included such luminaries as William V, Prince of Orange and Stadtholder of the Dutch Republic, the Duke of York, the Marquises of Lansdowne and Bath, and several lords and Members of Parliament, along with many other regular visitors to the city. The members of the Bath Corporation were well represented on the list, as were local businessmen, including William Meyler, publisher of the *Bath Herald*.⁴²

As well as formal associations, the city had long provided its fashionable visitors with the opportunity to form impromptu associations. The 1789 *New Bath Guide* directed the visiting company to the social spaces available in the city, such as the pleasure gardens. It described the Spring Gardens as ‘very pleasantly and judiciously laid out by Mrs. Purdie, for the summer amusement and recreation of the inhabitants and company in this city’.⁴³ The guide also provided details of the city’s ‘principal Coffee-Houses’, declaring that Prichard’s on the North Parade, ‘is thought to be one of the pleasantest in England, commanding a most delightful view of the country’.⁴⁴ Brian Cowan draws a distinction between the coffee houses of spa towns and those in London, noting that the former ‘strove to offer a haven from partisan divisions and conflicts that were common in metropolitan coffeehouses’.⁴⁵ While free from factionalism, the city’s coffee houses still provided a space in which like-minded individuals could form *ad hoc* associations, as Viscount Percival noted in his diary entry for 19th

⁴¹ J. Britton, *The History and Antiquities of Bath Abbey Church* (London, 1825), p. 119; See Chapter 4.

⁴² *A Selection of Favourite Catches, Glees, &c: As Sung at the Bath Harmonic Society*, 2nd ed. (Bath, 1799), p. 11-6.

⁴³ *New Bath Guide* (1789), pp. 43-4

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁴⁵ B. W. Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven, CT., 2005), p. 248

November 1730,

I spend two hours in the evening at the Coffee House [...] because of the great resort of gentlemen thither for their health and amusement, out of whom a few who are of the same turn of conversation [...] naturally select one another out and form some sort of society; when the season is over, if we think it worth while, we preserve the acquaintance; if not, there is no harm done, no offence taken.⁴⁶

This entry hints at what Peter Borsay describes as a ‘uniquely sociable milieu [...] persistently attributed to the equality said to be displayed by members of the “company” ‘in their relations with one another’.⁴⁷ Many other contemporary accounts of Bath suggest that it was one place where such social distinctions were often set aside, at least within the upper echelons of society; the *New Bath Guide* revelled in this uniqueness:

No place in England, in a full season affords so brilliant a circle of polite company at Bath. The young, the old, the grave, the gay, the infirm, and the healthy, all resort to this vortex of amusement. Ceremony beyond the essential rules of politeness is totally exploded: Every one mixes in the Rooms upon an equality.⁴⁸

John Money argues that this egalitarian approach to social relations also pervaded many formal associations nationwide; they ‘provided a bridge between the different ranks of society, and an outlet through which the aspirations of professional men, the ambitions of the middling tradesmen and the hopes of skilled artisans could find expression and satisfaction’.⁴⁹ This is evidenced by the egalitarianism of the company and other associations in Bath within the traditional political culture of social hierarchy and subordination. From the king down to the lowly vagabond via bishops, master craftsmen and maidservants, every person

⁴⁶ J. Percival, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont. Diary of Viscount Percival afterwards first Earl of Egmont, Vol. 1 1730-1733* (London, 1920), p. 117.

⁴⁷ Borsay, *The Image of Georgian Bath*, pp. 26-28.

⁴⁸ *New Bath Guide* (1789), p. 27.

⁴⁹ J. Money, *Experience and Identity: Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760-1800* (Manchester, 1977), p. 99.

occupied their place within a highly stratified society. Each rank of society had its own associated title; only professionals of high regard and men of property could call themselves “Esquire”.⁵⁰ This stratification fitted within the conception known as “the Great Chain of Being”, which, according to Arthur Lovejoy, achieved its ‘widest diffusion and acceptance’ during the eighteenth century.⁵¹ As the Bishop of Lincoln, George Pretyman, explained in his 1794 address to his clergy, ‘God himself makes one man differ from another; that the distinctions of high and low, rich and poor, are the appointments of Divine Providence, and are made the sources of various duties, the bonds of mutual affection.’⁵² Whether “mutual affection” was much in evidence or not, Pretyman’s reference to “duty” demonstrated that even though the social relationships may be unequal they were at least reciprocal. The higher orders of society depended on their social inferiors, who in turn sought the benefits of the customary paternalism in the form of employment, charity or preference.⁵³

As with other formal associations, Bath had a long and established tradition of philanthropic activities. This became a matter of civic pride, as the *Original Bath Guide* of 1811 boasted,

In no place is the hand of true benevolence more liberally employed than in this city; nor can any place boast more excellent charitable institutions than are established in Bath, and generally supported by voluntary subscriptions of the residents and visitors.⁵⁴

The guide then provided details of the city’s charitable institutions. Unsurprisingly perhaps, considering the city’s prominence as a centre of healing, foremost

⁵⁰ P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p. 65.

⁵¹ A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA., 1963), p. 183.

⁵² G. Pretyman, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln at the Triennial Visitation of that Diocese in May and June 1794* (London, 1794), p. 21.

⁵³ F. O’Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political & Social History. 1688-1832* (London, 1997), pp. 105-6.

⁵⁴ *The Original Bath Guide* (1811), p. 58.

among these were those that provided medical care to those who could not otherwise afford it. The General Infirmary was founded in 1739 to provide access to the spa waters to indigent non-residents.⁵⁵ Eight years later, the Bath Pauper Scheme was instituted to provide medical treatment to the city's poor. In 1792, the charity took up residence in a building on the Lower Borough Walls, which became the Bath City Dispensary and Infirmary. The Bath Casualty Hospital in Kingsmead Street was founded in 1788 to provide treatment for those who had suffered injury, a timely innovation considering the amount of building work then under way in the city.⁵⁶

The 1790s saw what Anne Borsay has described as a 'philanthropic bonanza which swept across Britain in response to the popular unrest and moral disquiet of the later Georgian period.'⁵⁷ Indeed, the use of charity as a means of moral improvement of the lower orders was nothing new. During the eighteenth century the charity school movement oversaw the founding of numerous establishments offering free education to indigent children across the nation, based on religious instruction.⁵⁸ In 1711 the non-juring religious writer Robert Nelson instituted a subscription which resulted in the building of a charity school known as the Bluecoat or Blue School eleven years later.⁵⁹ By the end of the century the school offered places for fifty boys and fifty girls between the ages of six and fourteen years.⁶⁰ By 1789 free education was also made available to a further 560 children in the city's six Sunday schools following a subscription

⁵⁵ Borsay, *Medicine and Charity in Georgian Bath*.

⁵⁶ K. Clarke, *The Royal United Hospital: A Social History 1747-1947* (Bath, 2001), pp. 10-1.

⁵⁷ Borsay, *Medicine and Charity in Georgian Bath*, p. 238.

⁵⁸ M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge, 1938), p. 19.

⁵⁹ *New Bath Guide* (1789), p. 39.

⁶⁰ R. Warner, *A New Guide through Bath, and its Environs* (Bath, 1811), pp. 93-4.

instituted by Henry Southby four years earlier, which was so successful that the charity's committee could also afford to rent the failing Bath School of Industry to offer full time employment of 110 of the pupils.⁶¹

Print Culture

As with many other charitable subscriptions of the time, that for the Sunday schools was advertised in the local newspapers.⁶² Similarly other formal associations and places of sociability made use of the local press as a promotional space. British newspapers formed one part of what John Brewer called an 'alternative political nation', which also comprised 'the local debating societies, the coffee houses, and tavern politicians'.⁶³ Of these, the growth in production of the printed word, especially newspapers, is arguably the most important development within the national political culture during the long eighteenth-century. In 1695, the Government's failure to renew the 1662 Licensing of the Press Act meant that printing was no longer subject to government restriction and that printers could set up businesses outside London, York and the two university towns. The resultant growth of the newspaper press in London and the provinces created what Jürgen Habermas described as 'A public sphere that functioned in the political realm', in which, 'Forces endeavouring to influence the decisions of state authority appealed to the critical public in order to legitimate demands before this new forum'.⁶⁴

Both Brewer's and Habermas' ideas are very useful in a historical understanding

⁶¹ *New Bath Guide* (1789), pp. 39-40.

⁶² *Bath Chronicle* (17th February 1785), p. 2b.

⁶³ Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics*, p. 268.

⁶⁴ J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 57.

of the role of newspapers in the development of public opinion.

To feed this nascent public opinion, the first daily London newspaper, the *Courant*, appeared in 1702 followed by the first provincial newspapers that were published later that same decade in the major towns of the nation: Bristol, Exeter and Norwich. Others quickly joined these pioneering newspaper proprietors, so that by the early 1720s there were more than twenty provincial newspapers.⁶⁵ In Bath alone, businessmen established eight newspaper titles during the eighteenth century. While the majority of these failed to maintain any longevity, three titles persisted to the end of the century: the *Bath Journal*, the *Bath Chronicle* and the *Bath Herald*, each of which will be explored in greater detail later in this chapter. Newspapers were not the only printed sources of political opinion. Printers in towns and cities across England produced untold pamphlets, handbills, song sheets, cartoons and squibs. This incredible growth in political print culture coupled with a literacy rate of the urban bourgeoisie estimated at between 75 and 85 per cent suggests an unprecedented degree of political awareness within the middling sort by the end of the eighteenth century.⁶⁶

Provincial newspapers came relatively late to Bath, but as the city grew in size and reputation many printers and publishers created journals to serve both citizens and visitors. Bath joined those other towns with their own weekly newspapers when Thomas Boddely published the first issue of the *Bath Journal* on Monday 27th February 1743 (1744 by modern reckoning), priced at 2d.⁶⁷ At the beginning of the French Revolution, two newspapers served the city: the *Bath Journal* and the *Bath Chronicle*, which first appeared in 1760. In 1792, these were

⁶⁵ Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, p. 29.

⁶⁶ J. Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics*, pp. 142-8.

⁶⁷ T. Fawcett, *Georgian Imprints: Printing and Publishing at Bath, 1729-1815* (Bath, 2008), p. 17.

joined by two new titles, the *Bath Herald and General Advertiser* and the short-lived *Bath Register and General Advertiser*. Whereas the early Bath newspaper proprietors served their apprenticeships with Boddely, those that established the later titles came to the city from outside, as demonstrated by the following histories of the three newspapers that were extant at the end of the century.

Following the inception of the *Bath Journal*, Thomas Boddely acted as its proprietor, editor and printer at his offices in King's Mead Street until his death on 9th June 1756. The business passed to Boddely's brother-in-law, John Keene. He renamed the newspaper to *Boddely's Bath Journal*, probably to maintain an impression of continuity in spite of the change of ownership.⁶⁸ Indeed, the first issue following Boddely's death began with an announcement 'To the Publick' that declared:

Whereas it has been industriously reported [probably by the *Bath Advertiser*], that on the Death of Mr. Thomas Boddely, his Journal, together with all his other Business, would be entirely dropt: This is to give Notice, That the same will be carried on by his Brother-in-Law John Keene, with proper Assistance: And the publick may be assur'd that this Journal will be printed on the same Plan, and in the same Manner, it was in the Life-Time of the said Mr. Boddely.⁶⁹

The newspaper title then reverted back to the *Bath Journal* in March 1773.⁷⁰

Apparently Keene had no experience of the printing business and consequently left the day-to-day management of the newspaper to Cornelius Pope, who had previously served his apprenticeship with Boddely. Following Pope's departure in 1760 to establish his own newspaper, the *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, management of the *Bath Journal* passed to John Hooper. Hooper received a reward for his services following the death of his employer in February 1777,

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-21.

⁶⁹ *Bath Journal* (14th June 1756), p. 1.

⁷⁰ *Bath Journal* (8th March 1773), p. 1.

becoming co-owner of the printing business along with John Keene's son, Thomas.⁷¹ When John Hooper, Thomas Keene and his brother John all died within fourteen months of each other in 1798-9, management of the newspaper then fell to Thomas Wood, while Thomas Keene's widow, Ann, fought for control of the business before eventually losing her case at the Court of Chancery.⁷² The court ruled that the newspaper was a trust concern, and rather than work with those who had instigated legal proceedings against her, Ann Keene established the Book, Stationary, Music, Perfumery, and Patent Medicine Warehouse on Union Street.⁷³

On Thursday 16th October 1760, Cornelius Pope published the first edition of the *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* at his printing office in Stall Street. In response, another of Boddely's former apprentices, Stephen Martin, changed the name of his *Bath Advertiser*, Bath's second newspaper that he first published on Saturday 18th October 1755, to the *Bath Chronicle and Universal Register*. Martin also changed the day of publication to Thursday, with the first issue of the new title appearing on the same day as Pope's new venture. Whereas Martin's newspaper only survived another three years, Pope's *Chronicle* went from strength to strength, although not under his supervision. In August 1768, he sold his printing business along with his newspaper to William Archer, who had previously joined Pope as an assistant not long after Pope moved his printing office to St James Street three years earlier. The new proprietor changed the name of the newspaper to *Archer's Bath Chronicle*, but after only eight issues he took on a partner, Richard Cruttwell, and renamed the newspaper the *Bath and*

⁷¹ Fawcett, *Georgian Imprints*, pp. 25-43.

⁷² The National Archives, Kew [hereafter TNA], C 13/1382/5 Keene v Ferris. Bill only; *Bath Chronicle* (25th August 1808), p. 3a; Fawcett, *Georgian Imprints*, p. 74.

⁷³ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd November 1808), p. 2c.



Plate 2: *Richard Cruttwell of Bath* by Thomas Beach.⁷⁵

Richard Cruttwell was the third child of William Cruttwell, a peruke maker of Wokingham, and his wife Elizabeth. At the age of fifteen, Richard started an apprenticeship with the printer John Carnan of Elliott's Court, Old Bailey, London. His eldest brother, William, was also a newspaperman, founding *Cruttwell's Sherborne Journal* in 1764. Having inherited enough wealth to buy into Archer's business following his father's death in 1768, Richard Cruttwell bought out his

⁷⁴ Fawcett, *Georgian Imprints*, pp. 25-28

⁷⁵ H. A. Cruttwell, *The History of the Cruttwell Family of Wokingham, Berks, and Bath* (Camberley, 1933).

partner in October 1769, the partnership lasting little over year. Archer moved away to Devizes, to become landlord of the White Swan (as it turned out, not the first Bath printer to leave the trade to become a publican).⁷⁶ Cruttwell stamped his mark on the newspaper, renaming it *R. Cruttwell's Bath & Bristol Chronicle*, before dropping his name and 'Bristol' from the title from 13th September 1770.⁷⁷ In May 1772, he moved his business to Union Passage on Stall Street, and then again to the corner of St James Street and Weymouth Street in November 1775, where he built up a successful business. In his will, which he wrote in 1797, he estimated the value of the property of the *Bath Chronicle* to be four-thousand pounds.⁷⁸

Beyond his commercial endeavours, he also involved himself in civic matters, sitting on the committee of the Bath Society of Guardians for the Protection of Persons and Property from Felons, Forgers, Cheats, Receivers of Stolen Goods, Swindlers, Highwaymen, &c., which offered rewards to members of the public and law enforcement officials who helped convict felons in the city.⁷⁹ Richard Cruttwell died on 1st June 1799 following a lengthy illness. Obituaries appeared not only in the Bath press, but also in national publications such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which extolled his virtues and his professional abilities in raising the newspaper 'to its present respectability'.⁸⁰ His eldest son and apprentice, Richard Shuttleworth Cruttwell, took control of the business, soon becoming a freeman and then liveryman of the Stationer's Company.⁸¹ He went

⁷⁶ Cruttwell, *The History of the Cruttwell Family*, pp. 30-67.

⁷⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (13th September 1770).

⁷⁸ TNA, PROB 11/1326/226 Will of Richard Cruttwell of Bath, Somerset, f. 483.

⁷⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (16th April 1789), p. 4c.

⁸⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (6th June 1799), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (8th June 1799), p. 3c; *Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle. For the Year MDCCXCIX. Volume LXIX. Part I* (London, 1799), p. 531.

⁸¹ Cruttwell, *The History of the Cruttwell Family*, pp. 68-76.

on to be elected to the Bath Corporation in February 1816, before becoming a Justice of the Peace in 1834 and the City's mayor in 1839, by which time he had sold his printing business, including his interest in the *Bath Chronicle*.⁸²

In 1792, following a period of housing development in the city, two publishers thought that the time was ripe for a third Bath newspaper: J. Johnson created the *Bath Register and General Advertiser*, and William Meyler – already a successful businessman in the city – founded the *Bath Herald and General Advertiser*, printed by the recently arrived Mr. Paddock on Green Street. Whether by strange coincidence or by intent, both printers decided to publish the first copies of their new ventures on the same day: Saturday 3rd March. The first issue of the *Bath Herald and General Advertiser* addressed its new readers:

It was presumed the great increase in the buildings and inhabitants of this city rendered a third paper necessary. We were, it seems, not singular in this opinion; for a numerous co-partnership have figured a fourth at least expedient. To this measure, which will serve to augment our industry, though it may lessen the fruits of it, we cannot object. The road to public favour is open to every man who has the ability to merit it. It is to be hoped, however, that the competition in the present case, will proceed with equal spirit and liberality, and that the sole contest between rival prints will be which shall be made most useful and entertaining to the public.⁸³

While the 'equal spirit and liberality' may have continued in public, in private Meyler displayed his contempt for the rival journal. Joseph Hunter recalled an epigram written by him:

If a story you'd wish to be spread the town round,
Go tell it to Blab as a secret profound;
But if 'tis a secret you'd hush every word of,
Let the Register print it — 'twill never be heard of.⁸⁴

⁸² Cruttwell, *The History of the Cruttwell Family*, pp. 76-7; BRO, *Council Book From the year 1807 to the year 1821*, 2nd February 1816.

⁸³ *Bath Herald and General Advertiser* (3rd March 1792), cited in *The History of the Bath Herald From 1792 to its Centenary, 1892* (Bath, 1892), p. 7.

⁸⁴ J. Hunter, 'Memoir of the late William Meyler', *Weekly Entertainer and West of England Miscellany*, Vol. 2 (Sherborne, 1821), pp.381-85.

As it was, eighteen months after their inception, the two newest Bath newspapers merged to form the *Bath Herald and Register*, the first edition of which appeared on 5th October 1793.⁸⁵ In June 1795, Meyler bought out the other shareholders in the *Register*, who had been sleeping partners in the business, and set up his own press in Kingston Buildings, not far from his Orange Grove bookshop, Paddock having given up printing to become an innkeeper in Taunton.⁸⁶

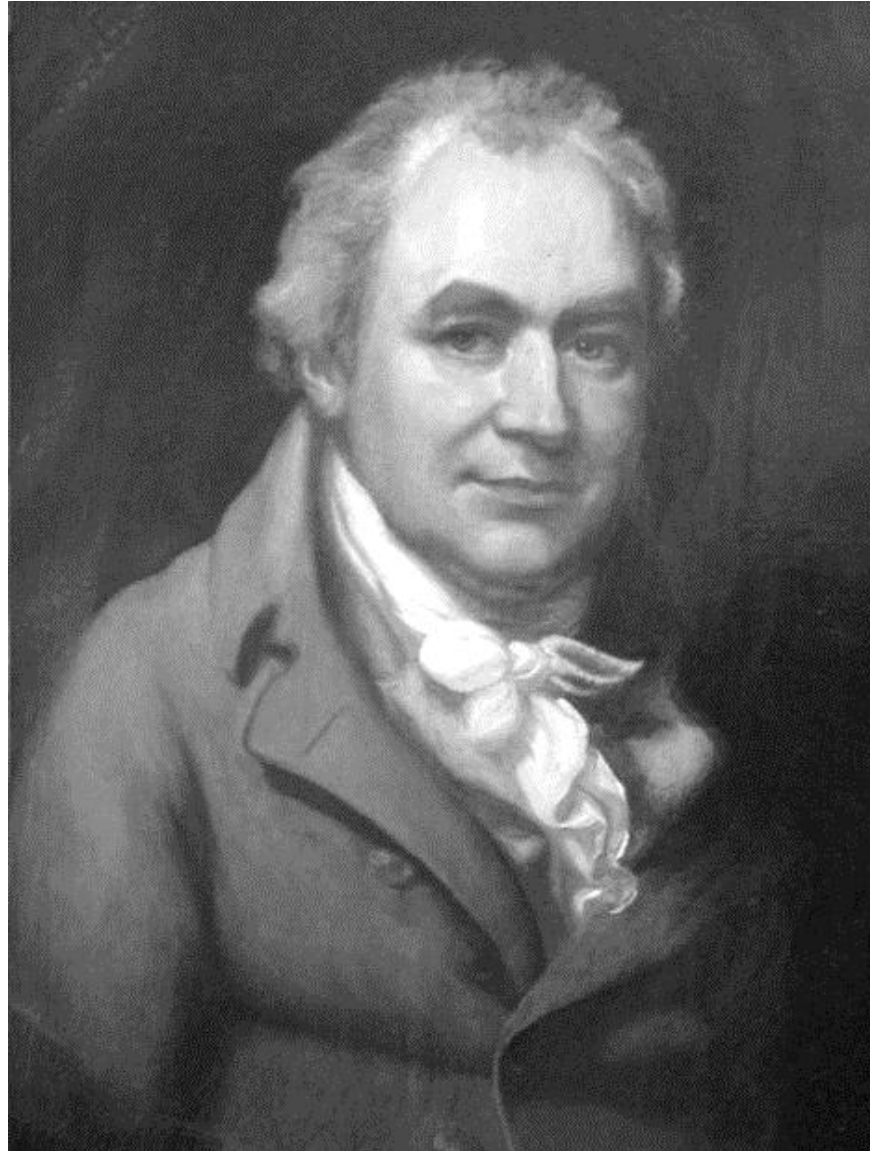


Plate 3: *William Meyler* by Mather Brown.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ *Bath Herald* (5th October 1793), p. 1a.

⁸⁶ Fawcett, *Georgian Imprints*, p. 65.

⁸⁷ From the private collection of Bud Sandbrook.

Born in Newburg on the island of Anglesey in 1755, Meyler had received an education at the Free-Grammar School at Marlborough, where his uncle was master.⁸⁸ At the age of twelve he started an apprenticeship as a bookbinder with the Bath bookseller, Andrew Tennant.⁸⁹ In 1776, Meyler went into partnership with the artist and teacher, Joseph Sheldon. Together they bought Tucker's circulating library and bookshop in the Orange Grove, before Meyler became sole proprietor in 1781. He quickly made his mark on Bath society. His poetic compositions, for example, found him a welcome at Lady Anna Miller's Batheaston literary salon. He joined the Bath Harmonic Society, and wrote prologues, epilogues and addresses that were performed at the Theatre Royal. He also involved himself in civic affairs, acting as secretary for the Bath Society of Guardians, and the Bath Association for Preserving Liberty, Property, and the Constitution of Great Britain.⁹⁰ Since Meyler involved himself with so many associations, societies and circles it is unsurprising that he also joined the Freemasons, which would have enabled him to make new contacts and improve his social standing, as was the case when he achieved the lofty position of Deputy Provincial Grand Master sometime before 1805.⁹¹ On 2nd January 1801 the Bath Corporation elected Meyler as a member of the Common Council.⁹² He went on to serve as one of the two Chief Constables and as Bailiff, before becoming a Justice of the Peace in September 1818.⁹³ In the summer of 1808, he took on his twenty-six year old son, Thomas Salway Meyler, as his partner and moved to new premises in the

⁸⁸ For a more detailed biography, see my article K. Grieves, 'A Literary Entrepreneur: William Meyler of Bath (1755-1821)', *Bath History*, Vol. XII (2011), pp. 81-93.

⁸⁹ Hunter, 'Memoir of the late William Meyler', pp.381-85.

⁹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (10th April 1783), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (13th December 1792), p. 3d.

⁹¹ *Monthly Magazine; or, British Register*, Vol. 19, Issue 1 (London, 1805), p. 528.

⁹² BRO, *Council Book from the Year 1794 to the Year 1807*, 2nd January 1801,

⁹³ BRO, *Council Book from the Year 1794 to the Year 1807*, 28th September 1802, 22nd September 1806; *Council Book from the Year 1807 to the year 1821*, 6th September 1808, 28th September 1818.

Abbey Churchyard, next to the Pump Room.⁹⁴ William Meyler died on the 10th March 1821, and was buried in the Abbey Church. In his will, he bequeathed to his wife and four children shares in his fortune of over £4,000.⁹⁵ His son, Thomas, took over the businesses, but died only two years after his father, from which time his widow, Mary, successfully managed the firm.⁹⁶

The J. Johnson who printed the *Bath Register* at his premises at 16 Stall Street may well have been John Johnson, former printer of the *Salisbury Journal*.⁹⁷ In his announcement 'To the Public' in the first issues of the *Bath Register*, J. Johnson declared that he had been 'many years concerned as Conductor of a News-Paper in the Western Part of England'.⁹⁸ Furthermore, his inclusion of a separate local news section for Salisbury suggests that he had a connection with that city. From the 8th September issue John Cunningham Butler Campbell and G. Gainsborough took over publication of the *Bath Register* at their premises on Burton Street where they sold and bound books as well as running a circulating library.⁹⁹ Johnson continued as printer of the newspaper. Campbell was an American-born Wesleyan Methodist.¹⁰⁰ The following month Gainsborough died at the age of twenty-nine, leaving Campbell to continue as publisher until mid-December when control reverted to Johnson.¹⁰¹ The dissolution of the business arrangement does not appear to have been acrimonious; Campbell placed an advertisement for his edited volume of Pierre Jurieu's *Predictions of the singular events which have recently taken place in*

⁹⁴ Fawcett, *Georgian Imprints*, p. 99.

⁹⁵ TNA, PROB 11/1643/20 Will of William Meyler, Bookseller, Printer of Bath, Somerset, ff. 284-5.

⁹⁶ Fawcett, *Georgian Imprints*, p. 63.

⁹⁷ Ferdinand, *Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Newspaper Trade*, p. 66.

⁹⁸ *Bath Register* (3rd March 1792), p. 1a; *Bath Register* (10th March 1792), p. 1a.

⁹⁹ *Bath Register* (8th September 1792), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁰ Poole, 'Radicalism, Loyalism, and the "Reign of Terror" in Bath, 1792-1804', pp. 114-37.

¹⁰¹ *Bath Herald* (20th October 1792), p. 3c. *Bath Register* (20th October 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (15th December 1792), p. 3b.

France in the *Bath Register*, which also printed copy of Campbell's poetic call for peace, 'The Field of Battle'.¹⁰² He may have been the same Campbell whose poetry appeared in John Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*. Both of his compositions, 'The Setting Sun' and 'The Moths', appeared following Campbell's bankruptcy following the destruction of his house by a Church and King Mob.¹⁰³ The issue of 28th September 1793 announced that henceforth it would continue as the *Bath Herald and Register*, although it made no mention of Meyler, who would conduct the merged title. The merger was necessitated by the heavy losses sustained by the proprietors due to maintaining a price of 3½d, while the prices of the other Bath papers were fourpence.¹⁰⁴

The provincial newspaper businesses of the eighteenth-century were small-scale operations that looked to the London press as the main source for national and international news. In effect the provincial newspaper was a digest of the metropolitan newspapers, reprinting carefully selected and edited news reports from a variety of titles for local consumption. Yet, the relationship between the London and Bath newspapers was reciprocal. The London newspapers intermittently included the lists of notable persons recently arrived in the city that appeared every week in the Bath newspapers. One such list printed in the *Bath Chronicle* of 1st January 1789 later appeared in editions of the *Morning Herald* and the *Times*.¹⁰⁵ The London newspapers also included more detailed reports about important arrivals, as with the visit of the Duke of York in July 1796 that appeared in the *Times* using much the same text as a report published two days

¹⁰² *Bath Register* (2nd March 1793), p. 3b; *Bath Register* (24th August 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁰³ *Arminian Magazine, For the Year 1795* (London 1795), pp. 160 & 264; See Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Bath Register* (28th September 1793), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (1st January 1789), p. 3; *Morning Herald* (2nd January 1789), p. 3; *The Times* (2nd January 1789), p. 3.

earlier in the *Bath Chronicle*.¹⁰⁶

Each of the Bath newspapers also dedicated column space to local news. The *Bath Chronicle*, the *Bath Herald* and the *Bath Register* all placed their local news on the third page. By printing it on the inner forme, they ensured that their local news was as fresh as possible, as that was printed after the outer forme. Hooper and Keene took a different approach by printing the local news, such as it was, on the fourth page. Indeed, the *Bath Journal's* reporting of events in Bath and region was cursory at best. There were other differences in the way each newspaper approached their local news coverage. Meyler's *Bath Herald* carried much more editorial comment than the other newspapers. Similarly his taste for literature and theatre informed the content of his local news. Cruttwell's *Bath Chronicle* included the most regional news, albeit in a decidedly matter of fact style.

This local news came from a variety of sources. The proprietors would have had social contacts with members of the city's other institutions, including other businessmen and the corporate body. They also received 'authentick Articles of Intelligence' at their print offices.¹⁰⁷ In the absence of records of the day to day management of the Bath newspapers, it is impossible to identify the means by which each title gathered its news, apart from when they copied items from the city's other newspapers, which they frequently did. Nevertheless, the reports themselves often provide clues as to their sources. The use of 'we hear' is suggestive that the story was acquired by word of mouth and the mention of 'our correspondent' implies that they received the report in letters. As Gardner points out, the various notices and advertisements that appeared in the newspapers

¹⁰⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (14th July 1796), p. 3; *The Times* (16th July 1796), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1792), p. 4; *Bath Herald* (3rd March 1792), p. 4;

constituted local news, and they also would have gleaned stories from the handbills and other items that they printed.¹⁰⁸ Hooper and Keene printed material for the Bath theatre, while Meyler did work for the Bath Corporation.¹⁰⁹

It is also likely that the Bath newspapers paid their agents for providing local news. The Southampton printer and newspaper agent Thomas Baker received payments for the regular reports that he sent to both the *Salisbury Journal* and the *Hampshire Chronicle*. As Christine Ferdinand states, 'A deliberate arrangement to collect country news from agents who were already in constant communication with the newspaper office made good sense'.¹¹⁰ Similarly the newsmen who carried the weekly issues to local towns and villages would have brought back stories they heard on their rounds, as was the case when Stephen Gay collected accounts of a lightning strike in Alford that was printed in the *Bath Chronicle*.¹¹¹

The publishers of the Bath newspapers, like many other provincial titles, avoided overt party bias in their local news, possibly due to their wariness not to offend local potentates or to alienate prospective readers.¹¹² Their influence in the election of the city's two Members of Parliament would have been minimal at best, the franchise being limited to the members of the Corporation. The Bath newspapers were, however, widely read in the county seats of Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, in each of which freeholders had a vote. The voters of Somerset resisted aristocratic influence resolving 'not to give their votes either to the brother or son of a peer of the realm, nor to any candidate supported

¹⁰⁸ Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, pp. 28-9.

¹⁰⁹ Fawcett, *Georgian Imprints*, pp. 86-9.

¹¹⁰ Ferdinand, *Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Newspaper Trade*, p. 73.

¹¹¹ *Bath Chronicle* (19th July 1797), p. 3d.

¹¹² Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, pp. 113-4.

by such an interest', much to the approval of Oldfield.¹¹³ He had similar praise for 'spirit of independence' exhibited by the leading families of the Wiltshire gentry who chose the candidates resulting in the uncontested election of members.¹¹⁴ In Gloucestershire the Duke of Beaufort and the Earl of Berkeley had reached an accommodation whereby they each nominated one of the counties two representatives.¹¹⁵ Without serious political contests in the three counties served by the Bath newspapers, there was no reason for them to fall under the influence of any local magnate. Indeed, the proprietors of the Bath press clearly made plain their political neutrality. In the *Bath Chronicle* of 1st January 1789 Richard Cruttwell made a statement to that effect: 'Several Party advertisements and paragraphs, tending *unfairly* to bias publick opinion, are omitted; as the Printer conceives the parliamentary debates will give his readers a fair representation of the state of the present political warfare.'¹¹⁶

This is not to imply that the newspaper were void of political expression; as demonstrated in subsequent chapters, each title made pains to express their loyal support for the king and constitution. Yet this did not prevent them criticising particular policies adopted by the government. In June 1789 both William Meyler and Richard Cruttwell were on the committee acting on behalf of the shopkeepers of Bath as part of the national campaign to secure the repeal of the 1785 Shop Tax. In June 1789 the committee placed a notice in the city's newspapers announcing their success, lauding the role of Charles James Fox and Abel

¹¹³ Oldfield, *An Entire and Complete History*, Vol. 2, pp. 430-1.

¹¹⁴ T. H. B. Oldfield, *An Entire and Complete History, Political and Personal, of the Boroughs of Great Britain &c* Vol. 3 (London, 1792), pp. 112-3.

¹¹⁵ D. R. Fisher, 'Gloucestershire, 1790-1820', *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/constituencies/gloucestershire> (Accessed on 14th December 2015).

¹¹⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (1st January 1789), p. 3b.

Moysey in the repeal.¹¹⁷ The *Bath Journal* went so far as to print an editorial comment in celebration of the repeal of the 'dangerous' tax.¹¹⁸ Whereas the Bath newspapermen took an active role in opposition to the Shop Tax, they grudgingly accepted the 1789 increase of stamp duty by a halfpenny to two pence per copy. Despite the reduction in profits, they maintained the price of their newspapers at 3½d until the end of 1791, when the proprietors of both the *Bath Journal* and the *Bath Chronicle* carried a jointly authored announcement of the price rise in their respective papers to 4d, declaring that without the rise a printer would not make 'a shilling profit in a year' from sales of his newspaper.¹¹⁹ Indeed, as has already been mentioned, the proprietors of the *Bath Register* blamed their attempt to sell issues at 3½d for the eventual demise of the title.¹²⁰

A further halfpenny increase in 1797 prompted Meyler to use an editorial in his *Bath Herald* to complain about the 'intended severe impost on newspapers' that would 'make Mr. Pitt more unpopular than any act of his administration'.

Meyler went on to reassure his readers:

Should this prejudicial, impolitic act pass, we will endeavour to make the tax as little burthensome to our readers as possible, convinced that the load will be felt but a short time, as experience and real interest in the country will convince administration that the present duties on newspapers and advertisements are as heavy as the public can bear, and that a repeal of the act in another session must inevitably ensue.¹²¹

His attempts not to pass the burden on came to nought. In June the rise in duty obliged him to announce an increase the price of the *Bath Herald* to sixpence.¹²² He took a more philosophical tone in his announcement, acknowledging the

¹¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (11th June 1789), p. 3b; *Bath Journal* (15th June 1789), p. 4c.

¹¹⁸ *Bath Journal* (22nd June 1789), p. 4d.

¹¹⁹ *Bath Journal* (26th December 1791), p. 4c; *Bath Chronicle* (29/12/91), p. 1c.

¹²⁰ *Bath Register* (28th September 1793), p. 3c.

¹²¹ *Bath Herald* (6th May 1797), p. 3d.

¹²² *Bath Herald* (24th June 1797), p. 3d.

governmental financial crisis by stating that ‘the Exigencies of State superseded every other Consideration’ and went as far as to echo Pitt’s advice that those readers who could not afford the raised price should club together to purchase newspapers.¹²³ When announcing a similar price rise for the *Bath Chronicle*, Cruttwell also cited the ‘exigencies of State’ as the determining factor in the failed opposition of newspaper proprietors to the price rise.¹²⁴

As information, parliamentary and otherwise, flowed from London to Bath, where it was reproduced in the resort’s newspapers, so it then flowed on into the city and beyond. The development of distribution networks during the eighteenth century enabled the urban public sphere to reach out into the countryside. By the end of the eighteenth century, provincial newspaper proprietors had a variety of distribution methods at their disposal. The oldest of these was to sell their weekly newspapers over the counter at their printing offices. To ensure as many sales as possible, most provincial proprietors published issues on market days when the towns swelled with visitors from the country.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, when Boddely commenced publishing Bath’s first newspaper, he chose Monday as the day of publication, rather than one of the city’s two market days: Wednesday and Saturday.¹²⁶ By contrast, Boddely’s former apprentice, Stephen Martin, picked Saturday as the day of publication for his *Bath Advertiser*, but he later changed this to Thursday in order to compete with Cornelius Pope’s *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, which also appeared on that day.¹²⁷ The two newspapers founded in 1792, Johnson’s *Bath Register* and Meyler’s *Bath Herald*, were both

¹²³ Aspinall, *Politics and the Press*, p. 9.

¹²⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (29th June 1797), p. 3c.

¹²⁵ Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, p. 190.

¹²⁶ P. M. Hembry. *The English Spa, 1560-1815: A Social History* (London, 1990), p. 157.

¹²⁷ Fawcett, *Georgian Imprints*, p. 25.

published on Saturdays, although Meyler did announce that his paper would be available on Friday nights from March 1794 while maintaining Saturdays as the day of publication on each issue.¹²⁸ They may have wished to ensure extra sales to market-day visitors in a city already served by two well-established newspapers. Whatever the case, reliance on such visitors does not appear to have been as important for Bath newspapers as it was for those serving smaller towns. Any bi-weekly influx was certainly of less importance than that of the “Company” who came to Bath for the spring and autumn seasons, which had merged into one long nine-month season by the end of the century.¹²⁹

Rather than wait for the public to come to them, newspaper proprietors employed newsboys to deliver issues to subscribers on the day of publication. In the larger towns they also employed hawkers to cry their wares on the streets, and newsmen to travel the countryside delivering them to subscriber’s addresses. Occasionally these roles merged, as in 1771 when Richard Cruttwell announced that he was looking for ‘Some Industrious Men of good character, who have clear audible Voices [...] to distribute this Paper in different Country Circuits’ in his *Bath Chronicle*.¹³⁰ Such vocal and trustworthy men could also find employment with the agents that publishers appointed not only to sell and distribute their newspapers in neighbouring towns and villages but also to take in adverts for publication, as was the case of the Glastonbury based printer and bookseller, Charles Hewitt, who was an agent of the *Bath Chronicle*, which he distributed locally using his own two hawkers each of which walked their own circuits of surrounding villages.¹³¹

¹²⁸ *Bath Herald* (8th March 1794), p. 3b.

¹²⁹ Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance*, pp. 141-2.

¹³⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (25th April 1771), p. 3d.

¹³¹ *Bath Chronicle* (30th September 1790), p. 3c.

Agents, such as Hewitt, enabled provincial newspaper owners to develop extended local distribution networks through which they not only circulated their newspapers, but also sold their other wares such as books and medicines. The newspaper carrier networks provided another source of revenue for them by carrying parcels along their routes on behalf of the public. In his 1753 publication, *The tradesman's and traveller's pocket companion: or, the Bath and Bristol guide*, Thomas Boddeley listed twenty-six towns and villages to which the men who distributed his *Bath Journal* would deliver parcels on the day of publication of the newspaper. These included towns as far away as Taunton in the west, Shaftesbury to the south, Marlborough to the east and Cirencester in the north.¹³² These distribution networks grew over the course of the century. Cruttwell's 1799 edition of *The New Bath Guide* listed well over one-hundred towns and villages to which parcels could be delivered along with his *Bath Chronicle*, these included places as far afield as Minehead, Salisbury, Hungerford and Gloucester.¹³³

Similarly, the number of agents and their distance from Bath increased over the course of the century. The *Bath Journal* of 7th January 1793 listed agents in the major towns in the neighbouring counties, and also in many of the major towns and cities in the country. These included a number of agents in London, including the principal coffee houses – 'where it is constantly read by the Company' – and other agents in Birmingham, Cambridge, Exeter, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Swansea; whereas, the issue published on 19th August 1776 listed only agents in the larger towns of neighbouring counties, four London booksellers and an agent in Birmingham.¹³⁴

¹³² *The Tradesman's and Traveller's Pocket Companion: or, the Bath and Bristol Guide*, 2nd ed. (Bath, 1753), p. 9.

¹³³ See Plate 4.

¹³⁴ *The Bath Journal* (7th January 1793), p. 1; *The Bath Journal* (19th August 1776), p. 1.

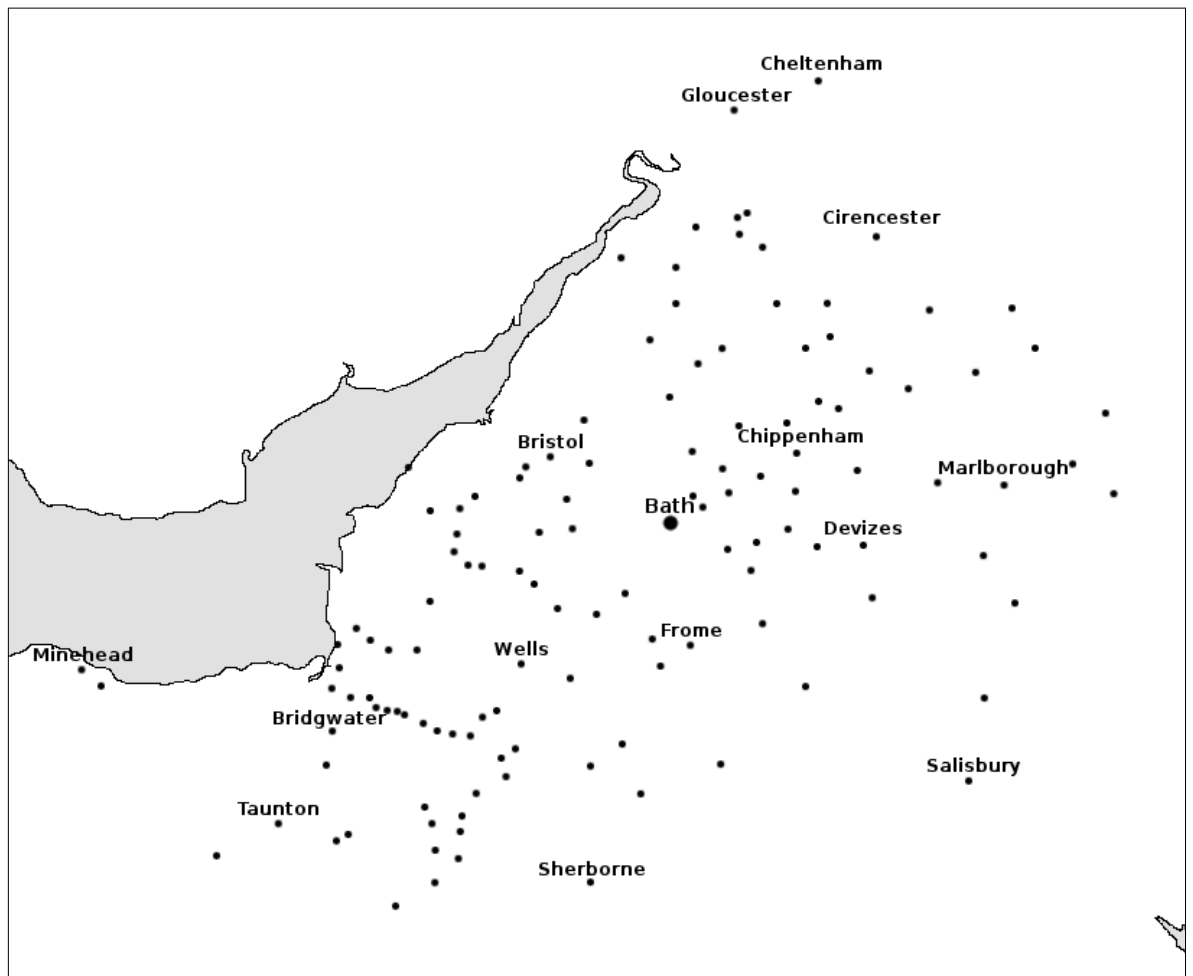


Plate 4: *Bath Chronicle* distribution network, 1799.¹³⁵

As well as having their newspapers distributed by agents, the Bath proprietors also acted as agents selling other provincial newspapers. A 1789 issue of *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* lists 'Mr. Cruttwell, and Messrs. Hooper and Keenes, Bath' as agents for that title.¹³⁶ Meyler appears in a 1796 list of agents of the *Oxford Mercury and Midland County Chronicle*.¹³⁷

The Post Office provided another, albeit suspect, means for newspapermen to disseminate their publications to the public. From 31st May 1787, issues of the *Bath Chronicle* stated that 'Persons residing in the Country at

¹³⁵ *The New Bath Guide; or, Useful Pocket Companion* (Bath, 1799), p. 80.

¹³⁶ *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* (17th January 1789), p. 4; For a more in depth study see K. Grieves, 'Spreading the News: The Distribution of Bath Newspapers in the Eighteenth Century', *Bath History*, Vol. XV (2017). [Forthcoming]

¹³⁷ *Oxford Mercury and Midland County Chronicle* (17th February 1796), p. 4.

a Distance from any place through which the Newsmen pass, may have this Paper left where they please to appoint, or may have it free of Postage to any Part of Great-Britain or Ireland.’¹³⁸ This free distribution of newspapers via the Post Office was made possible by the abuse of franking, which became widespread during the eighteenth century. Initially only the Clerks of the Road, postmasters and Members of Parliament enjoyed the privilege of signing franks, many of whom were willing to circulate newspapers for a fee. A 1764 act intended to reduce the number of franks issued had the opposite effect whereby MPs could nominate others to sign their franks causing an explosion in the number of newspapers being sent through the post. In response to this widespread corruption, the Post Office had little choice but to allow the free distribution of any stamped newspapers during the 1790s, a practice made official by Act of Parliament in 1825.¹³⁹

The methods of distribution employed by the Bath newspapermen not only shed light on the mechanics of the public sphere in the city and surrounding towns and villages, but also demonstrates the commercial concerns of the proprietors. Distribution networks also describe the reach of the Bath newspapers and the influence of them as sources of Bath opinion within the regional and national public sphere. Analyses of these distribution networks indicate the geographical reach of the Bath newspapers; yet, they provide little solid evidence of who read them. The *Bath Journal* listed the London coffee houses ‘where it is constantly read by the Company’, who no doubt wished to stay informed of the

¹³⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (31st May 1787), p. 1.

¹³⁹ S. E. Whyman, ‘Postal Censorship in England 1635 - 1844’ (2003) at *The Center for the Study of Books and Media, Princeton University*, <http://web.princeton.edu/sites/english/csbm/> (Accessed 14th February 2010).

activities of fashionable visitors.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the available evidence does provide clues for establishing a likely readership of the newspapers. The main limitation would have been the ability to read. Roger Schofield produced estimates of adult illiteracy rates based on an individual's ability to sign their own name on the marriage register. His findings for the last decade of the eighteenth century indicate a male literacy rate of around sixty per cent with the female literacy rate at about forty per cent. He also produced figures for a variety of occupational groups that demonstrated the previously held logical assumption that those of a higher social standing were more likely to be literate. The figures suggest a literacy rate of the gentry and professionals approaching one-hundred per cent, that of yeomen and farmers exceeding eighty per cent, and that of labourers and servants of around thirty-five per cent.¹⁴¹ Schofield did not produce similar figures for women of different social strata, but it is fair to assume that elite women were more likely to be able to read than those of the labouring classes.

Another limiting factor would have been the price of newspapers. Many would not have been able to afford to purchase a newspaper, especially considering that the price of the *Bath Journal* rose from three and a half pence in 1790 to sixpence by the end of the century, mainly as a consequence of an increase in stamp duty, while the real wages of labourers decreased over the same period.¹⁴² Literacy levels and the increasingly prohibitive cost of these publications suggest that the core readership comprised men of the middling sort, that is, those with sufficient disposable income and education to regularly purchase and read newspapers. Bob Harris identified this group as

¹⁴⁰ *Bath Journal* (7th January 1793), p. 1.

¹⁴¹ R. S. Schofield, 'Dimensions of illiteracy in England 1750-1850', *Explorations in Economic History*, Vol. 10 (Summer, 1973), pp. 437-54.

¹⁴² Neale, *Bath: A Social History*, pp. 79-87.

encompassing 'farmers, smaller freeholders, manufacturers, merchants, professionals, tradesmen and shopkeepers', whose increasing prosperity in the second half of the century did much to fuel the expansion of the newspaper industry.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, there is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that the audience for printed news extended beyond this social group to include those literate women and men of the labouring classes, who had access to printed news. Furthermore, the social act of reading meant that while somebody may not be able to read newspapers for themselves, they may have the news read to them, either within a family setting or in some other social space. Accordingly, the content of newspapers, including those published in Bath, penetrated deeply into society. As a letter to the *Bath Herald* stated, 'Your weekly Paper seems calculated to please the Members of the great Societies at Somerset-House, as well as to amuse the honest labourer of a Somerset ale-house.'¹⁴⁴ There is further evidence that the reading of the Bath newspapers percolated down to the lower ranks of society. Cruttwell's 1771 job advertisement in his *Bath Chronicle* for 'Industrious Men of good character' to carry copies of his newspaper around the local countryside indicates that those willing to undertake such work were aware of the contents of his newspaper, whether they had read it themselves or not.¹⁴⁵ Even though the appetite for news may have spread through all orders of society, the Bath newspaper proprietors were businessmen, interested in making a profit from their weekly publications, or at least not incurring significant financial losses. Consequently, they targeted their newspapers at a particular section of the public: those that could afford to buy the newspapers, and, probably more

¹⁴³ B. Harris, *Politics and the Rise of the Press: Britain and France, 1620-1800* (London, 1996), p. 15.

¹⁴⁴ *Bath Herald* (31st March 1792), p. 4a.

¹⁴⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (25th April 1771), p. 3d.

importantly, those who would purchase the various items or attend the entertainments advertised in their pages. This targeting may not have been conscious; rather, it was a response to economic fact or simply a case of them speaking to their peer group. Nevertheless, the majority of products and events advertised would have been beyond the reach of many of those denizens of Bath who still had a thirst for news.

Some of these advertisements provide evidence of a female readership by addressing them directly. The 6th February 1792 issue of the *Bath Journal* included three such advertisements. The first, for a London-based Bengal Muslin Warehouse, 'begs leave particularly to recommend to the attention of the Ladies, a quantity of Bengal Muslins, purchased at the East India Company's private trade sale in October last'; in the second, a Bath based stay-maker called Francis Allwright directed his advertisement directly 'To The Ladies'; the third announced the Bath Catch-Club's 'Ladies Night'.¹⁴⁶ Contemporary literature provides further evidence of women reading the Bath press. In *The Good Mother's Legacy*, a Cheap Repository tract written by Hannah Moore's sister Sarah, the good mother, Mrs. Adams tells her daughter, 'There is a great deal of sin and wickedness in the world, Betty, beyond what I could ever have imagined, if I had not sometimes read Cruttwell's Bath Journal.'¹⁴⁷ In Tobias Smollett's novel, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), Lydia Melford writes to her companion Miss Willis of a visit to Bath. She explained that while she and other young women were not permitted to enter the coffee-house for the ladies, situated near the Pump Room, because 'the conversation turns upon politics, scandal, philosophy, and other subjects above our capacity', she was permitted to enter the booksellers, which

¹⁴⁶ *Bath Journal* (6th February 1792), p. 4c.

¹⁴⁷ S. Moore, *The Good Mother's Legacy* (Bath, 1795), p. 12.

she described as

charming places of resort; where we read novels, plays, pamphlets, and newspapers, for so small a subscription as a crown a quarter; and in these offices of intelligence (as my brother calls them) all the reports of the day, and all the private transactions of the Bath, are first entered and discussed.¹⁴⁸

Similarly, in his biography of Richard Nash, Oliver Goldsmith wrote that 'The ladies too may subscribe to the booksellers, and to an house by the pump-room, for the advantage of reading the news, and for enjoying each other's conversation.'¹⁴⁹ The anonymous female author of 'A Sentimental Journey' printed in the October 1772 edition of the *Lady's Magazine* further extolled the virtues of the provincial booksellers as a place where women had access to newspapers:

A bookseller's shop in the country is, in a great measure, what a coffee-house is in town; and with this advantage, that the door of the former is equally open to the ladies and to the gentlemen. Here we never fail to be entertained, not only with the chat of the day, but with the news papers, the magazines, and every new publication.¹⁵⁰

The very existence and continued success of the *Lady's Magazine* indicates the existence of a market for periodical publications aimed primarily at women. Yet, Jan Fergus' study of subscription lists of provincial booksellers demonstrates that some men read the *Lady's Magazine*, just as some women subscribed to male gendered periodicals.¹⁵¹

The availability of newspapers in public spaces such as booksellers, coffee-shops, circulating libraries and taverns meant that many readers could peruse a single copy of a newspaper. In 1728, the owners of the principal London

¹⁴⁸ T. Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* Vol. 1 (London, 1771), pp. 79-80.

¹⁴⁹ O. Goldsmith, *The Life of Richard Nash, of Bath, Esq; Extracted Principally from his Original Papers* (Dublin, 1762), pp. 41-2.

¹⁵⁰ *The Lady's Magazine; or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex*, Vol. III (London, 1772), p. 443.

¹⁵¹ J. Fergus, *Provincial Readers in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 197-211.

and Westminster coffee shop published a remonstrance against the newspapermen, in which they claimed that a single issue could daily pass through twenty thousand hands in their places of business.¹⁵² While they may have overstated their case, there is little doubt that a single issue of a newspaper could pass through many hands. The newspapers and journals maintained a symbiotic relationship with the coffee house where they were made available for the customers to read. Meanwhile, journalists set articles in coffee houses; although, as Cowan contends, the journalists' use of the coffee house milieu was not necessarily a promotion of a Habermasian "public sphere" of rational debate, but rather the perpetuation of existing political traditions.¹⁵³ Either way, the coffee house along with the society, the social club and the tavern provided a social space for politics out-of-doors, away from the traditional political spheres of the Court and Parliament.¹⁵⁴ In these social spaces the members of levels of society traditionally excluded from politics developed political sentiment resulting in the emergence of "public opinion". This public distribution of information and opinion meant that the word "politician" not only referred to parliamentarians but also to journalists, members of societies, and coffee house patrons.¹⁵⁵ As Wilson describes it, the newspaper press was 'preeminent instrument of politicization in the eighteenth century'.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² *The case of the coffee-men of London and Westminster. Or, an account of the impositions and abuses, put upon them and the whole Town, by the present set of news-writers.* &c (London, 1728), p. 17.

¹⁵³ B. W. Cowan, 'Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Spring 2004), pp. 345-66.

¹⁵⁴ J. Black, *The Politics of Britain, 1688-1800* (Manchester, 1993), p. 99.

¹⁵⁵ Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics*, p. 140.

¹⁵⁶ Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, p. 29.

Conclusion

For all Bath's uniqueness as England's premier fashionable resort its cultures of politics, association and print shared many features with other towns and cities across the nation. The gentlemen of the city's Corporation were not alone in asserting their political independence; the same was true of other corporations in the region, as well as the gentry of the counties of Somerset and Wiltshire. The numerous visiting company fostered a long-established sociability, which contemporaries described as markedly egalitarian in character; yet, the same was true of many formal associations across the nation. Bath had its own formal associations, many of which engaged in philanthropic endeavours, particularly those involved with medicine and education, which made good use of the city's newspapers in attracting subscribers. The growth of the city meant that by the end of the century three newspapers served Bath and its region. These newspapers were typical of provincial titles of the time, printing a digest of the international and national news taken from the London press, as well as local content in the form of news and advertisements. They also used the same distribution methods as other provincial newspapers, reaching out into the surrounding country, where they attracted readers from a variety of social classes.

Chapter 2: Émigrés and Prisoners of War: The French in Bath and District

Introduction

The first tangible effect of the French Revolution experienced by Bath residents was the presence of émigrés fleeing the tumult across the Channel. Several waves of émigrés left France in response to various turning-points in the Revolution. The first waves mainly comprised aristocrats who departed in 1789 spurred on by the Great Fear (July), and following the remarkable session of the National Assembly during which the delegates effectively dismantled the *ancien régime* (4th – 5th August). Other waves followed the Flight to Varennes (June 1791) and the September Massacres (1792).¹ The violence meted out to clergymen during this latter event resulted in the emigration of many Catholic clerics, joining those who had chosen exile rather than take the oath required by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (July 1790).

In her study of émigrés in London, Kirsty Carpenter describes the changes in British attitudes to them; sympathy for the plight of émigrés manifested after British enthusiasm for the political developments of the early Revolution was dampened following Varennes and the Champ de Mars Massacre (July 1791).² As the number of arrivals increased after the September Massacres, so did the fear that they included Jacobin *agents provocateurs*. In response Parliament passed the Aliens Act in early 1793, which ‘enabled the government to monitor the movements of anyone whom they had reason to suspect’.³

¹ K. Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution: Émigrés in London, 1789–1802* (London, 1999), p. xix, 18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-7.

Naturally the government placed even tighter restraints on the liberties of French prisoners of war. Some captured naval officers were permitted to return home on the condition that they would not return to service until an exchange with a British prisoner could be arranged. The remainder were required to give their oath not to escape in return for which they were paroled to live in designated towns. These paroled officers enjoyed a degree of freedom that contrasted starkly with the treatment of ordinary sailors who faced incarceration in a number of prisons, including one in Stapleton, near Bristol.⁴

This chapter will consider the way in which the portrayal of émigrés and prisoners of war in the Bath newspapers' local content varied and changed over time, with particular reference to the way in which these various portrayals affected expressions of British national identity. As such it demonstrates a complexity that challenges Colley's argument that notions of Britishness were constructed in stark contrast to the French antithetical 'other', although such contrasts were often evident, even being enshrined in law.⁵ The very fact that the newspapers related actual encounters with émigrés and prisoners of war gave rise to forms of national identification that were 'fluid and differentiated', rather than monolithic.⁶ The sympathetic responses to the plight of émigrés and prisoners of war also permitted more positive associations with the British national character, such as religious toleration and charity directed at the French,

Émigrés in Bath

⁴ P. K. Crimmin, 'Prisoners of War and British Port Communities, 1793-1815', *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord*, Vol VI, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), pp. 17-27.

⁵ L. Colley, 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Oct., 1992), pp. 309-29; Colley, *Britons*.

⁶ Williams, 'Encountering the French'.

Bath's position as Britain's premier spa resort made it an attractive destination for foreign visitors, and the French Revolution did little to change this. According to Fawcett, there was much to recommend the city to émigrés as a place where 'a smattering of Gallic culture and language had status value' and where Catholics were 'well served' by places of worship.⁷ The Bath newspapers provide evidence of the presence of émigrés in the city by including them in the weekly lists of recent arrivals. The *Bath Chronicle* of 5th November 1789 included the 'Marquise [and] Vicomtesse de Roncherolles' along with the 'Comtesse de Canillac', who later registered as a resident alien in the city in 1798.⁸ The Bath newspapers had a general policy of not reporting the exploits of members of the Company while in the city, and this also applied to the visiting émigrés. Consequently there is scant evidence in the city's press of how they interacted with residents and other visitors. The local news did, however, include details of notable deaths, as was the case for the Marquis de Gage and his wife. He appeared in the list of new arrivals in the *Bath Journal* of 11th July 1791 and less than two years later the *Bath Chronicle* reported that, 'Monday se'nnight died in this city, the Marquis du Gage, aged 80, a French Refugee Nobleman, universally respected.'⁹ A few months later his widow arrived at Bath, where she resided until her death six years later, again reported in the *Bath Chronicle*: 'Friday [...], about noon, departed this life, Madame la Marquise de Gage, a lady universally respected and beloved in this city, by all who had the happiness of being acquainted with her.'¹⁰ At least one émigré visitor to Bath had already settled into a new life: Jean

⁷ T. Fawcett, 'French Émigrés at Bath, 1789-1815', *Somerset Archaeology and Natural History*, Vol. 141 (1998), pp. 161-9.

⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (5th November 1789), p. 3a; Fawcett, 'French Émigrés at Bath, 1789-1815', pp. 161-9.

⁹ *Bath Journal* (11th July 1791), p. 4d; *Bath Chronicle* (25th April 1793), p. 3c.

¹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (11th July 1793), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (30th May 1799), p. 3b.

Baptiste Armand de Choiseul, the self-styled Marquis de Choiseul, who became a naturalised Briton in 1791 by Act of Parliament.¹¹ He appeared in the list of visitors to the city in the 7th April 1796 edition of the *Bath Chronicle*.¹² Six months later the same newspaper reported that he had 'married a lady of good estate in the neighbourhood of Swansea' and was 'one of the best practical Farmers in the Country, and the most abundant returns reward his industry and ingenuity'.¹³ Despite the praise from the Bath newspaper, according to Michael Gibbs, the Marquis' agricultural innovations proved costly and his marriage to the heiress Mary Dawkins was not a particularly happy one.¹⁴

The arrival of émigrés in the city shaped the impressions of events in France for those who came into contact with them. As William Doyle explains, this contact with émigrés, 'lent sober reality to a revolution that could otherwise only be experienced through the newspapers. Accordingly, they were able to influence their hosts' picture of conditions in France.'¹⁵ According to Carpenter, the popular image of émigrés for Britons

was one of sadness, hardship, distress and stoic determination to endure. [...] They found themselves in exile, short of money and of all the other comforts of life but they had their self-respect, and there was nothing the British admired more.¹⁶

In November 1796, the *Bath Chronicle* certainly exemplified these sentiments:

A correspondent, who had had opportunities of observing the conduct of several illustrious French Emigrants, remarks, that it is but justice to say, that the French bear calamity with a fortitude truly heroick; if they are apt to triumph, perhaps, a little too much, in prosperity, they evince a noble constancy in adversity, that would have reflected honour on the stoicks of

¹¹ *The Journals of the House of Commons*. Vol. 46 (London, 1803), p. 362.

¹² *Bath Chronicle* (7th April 1796), p. 3b.

¹³ *Bath Chronicle* (8th September 1796), p. 3c.

¹⁴ Michael Gibbs, 'A Family Passing Through', *Gower: Journal of the Gower Society*, Vol. 30. (1979), pp. 16-8.

¹⁵ W. Doyle, 'Introduction' in K. Carpenter & P. Mansel (Eds.), *The French Émigrés in Europe and the Struggle Against Revolution* (Houndmills, 1999), p. xviii.

¹⁶ Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution*, p. 35.

ancient times.¹⁷

This fortitude in the face of adversity is amply demonstrated by those émigrés forced to find employment by making best use of their abilities. In the case of Bath this commonly involved seeking employment in, what Fawcett describes as, 'the already oversubscribed profession of teaching French'.¹⁸ In August and October 1794 a Mr D'Ostang advertised his services as a teacher of French in the *Bath Herald*.¹⁹ The following year the same title carried a wanted notice for a French person to teach at an unnamed school in the city.²⁰ An advertisement in the *Bath Chronicle* in September 1798 announced the imminent opening of an English and French Grammar Day-School for Young Ladies administered by Mrs H. Lefanu (Richard Brinsley Sheridan's sister, Elizabeth) and Mrs Middleton. The advertisement also mentioned that abbé Denais, 'many years principal of the college of *Beaupreau in Amiens*', would be teaching French, 'including the Elements of Geography and History'.²¹ Two more émigrés also advertised their services as teachers in the Bath press. The abbé Rudemare, a former curate of the 'Royal Parish St Germain L'Auxerrois', who had 'upwards of five years residence in this City', offered French, Latin and Geography. His fee was eight lessons for one guinea.²² M. Gouyon offered better value in his advertisement as a teacher of French and Latin by offering twelve lessons for the same fee. The former *parlementaire* was willing to provide tuition at schools, family houses, or his residence at 12, Trim Street.²³ French language tuition was not the only skill

¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (17th November 1796), p. 3b.

¹⁸ Fawcett, 'French Émigrés at Bath', pp. 161-9.

¹⁹ *Bath Herald* (16th August 1794), p. 1e; *Bath Herald* (23rd August 1794), p. 1e; *Bath Herald* (30th August 1794), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (4th October 1794), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (11th October 1794), p. 1e; *Bath Herald* (18th October 1794), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (25th October 1794), p. 1d.

²⁰ *Bath Herald* (27th June 1795), p. 355.

²¹ *Bath Chronicle* (27th September 1798), p. 3d.

²² *Bath Chronicle* (21st June 1798), p. 3d.

²³ *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1799), p. 3e.

offered by émigrés in Bath; Monsieur Nylmah advertised lessons to female visitors and residents in the art of painting on velvet. In his advertisement, which was in French, he numbered the Duchess of York among his customers.²⁴

Unlike in London, the Bath newspapers did not print advertisements for the services of émigré women, 'unaccustomed to working for their living'.²⁵ The Bath newspapers, however, did carry job advertisements that would particularly have suited émigré women, as attested by this notice from 1794:

Wanted, a Native of France or Switzerland, to attend Young Ladies, where an English Governess is kept. She must read and speak correctly, understand making children's cloaths and have an undoubted character. Enquire at No. 1, Burlington-street, Bath.²⁶

One apparently genteel French woman not only found employment in Bath, but also found a place in the hearts of the city's residents. Madame de Sisley first came to the attention of the London public in the summer of 1791 before singing in a series of performances in Bath in the following winter, attracting a great deal of press attention. The newspapers made great pains to portray her as an aristocratic woman forced into exile, relying on her musical talents to survive. Yet there was some disagreement about how she found herself in such dire straits. The day before her first public appearance in Salomon's Concert at Hanover Square, the *Gazetteer* included an article which stated that her father 'had a considerable place in one of the offices of finance in France, the loss of which in the late revolution, reduced him to poverty, and, shortly after, to his grave', while her husband was 'a relation to M. Bertien, the unfortunate victim of 14th July, 1789' by whose patronage he expected an elevation in status. When this did not

²⁴ *Bath Journal* (6th February 1792), p. 4d; *Bath Journal* (13th February 1792), p. 4d; *Bath Chronicle* (16th February 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (3rd March 1792), p. 3d.

²⁵ Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution*, p. 27.

²⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (16th January 1794), p. 3d.

occur, he spent the family fortune and abandoned his wife and two children, forcing her to better her fortunes in England by use of her musical talents.²⁷ On her arrival at Bath to sing for Venanzio Rauzzini, the director of the New Assembly Rooms Concerts, the Bath press described her as 'a French woman of education and Family', whose 'father was one of the under-intendants to the late unfortunate Mr. Bertier, intendant at Paris, who was massacred by the mob 3 years ago'.²⁸ The following week's editions included another longer introduction:

She has a claim to their indulgence and pity as a foreigner, and as a female of birth and education, whom the distress of her country have obliged to attempt to turn those talents of emolument, which were originally cultivated for grace and amusement. The father of Madame *de Sisley* was, before the present revolution in France, possessed of a very profitable and respectable situation in the Finance office of that kingdom; and her husband (who is a man of a very noble family) was equerry to one of her Sovereign's brothers.²⁹

'Bertier'/'Bertien' was most likely Louis Bénigne François Berthier de Sauvigny, Intendant of Paris from 1766 until his murder by a Parisian crowd on 22nd July 1789.³⁰

The Bath newspapers also followed the lead of the metropolitan press, emphasising her breeding and her fall into hard times to make her appear as a poignant symbol of the embattled French aristocracy. The *Diary: or, Woodfall's Register* noted that 'Her manners were very expressive of her former rank, but wholly exempt from any appearance of unbecoming pride or mortified dejection'.³¹ Similarly, the *Morning Herald* declared that 'her manner displays an air of dignity, without any appearance of unseemly pride'.³² The *Bath Journal*

²⁷ *The World* (2nd June 1791), p. 1c; *Gazetteer, and New Daily Advertiser* (2nd June 1791), p. 2d.

²⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd November 1791), p. 3b; *Bath Journal* (7th November 1791), p. 4d.

²⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (10th November 1791), p. 3b; *Bath Journal* (14th November 1791), p. 4d.

³⁰ D. Sutherland, 'Urban Crowds, Riot, Utopia and Massacres, 1789-92' in P. McPhee (Ed.), *A Companion to the French Revolution* (Chichester, 2013), pp. 231-45.

³¹ *Diary or Woodfall's Register* (6th June 1791), p. 3b.

³² *Morning Herald* (8th June 1791), p. 3a.

reported on her first performance at Bath in glowing terms:

The French lady who sung at Mr. Rauzzini's Concert, was received by a polite and numerous audience, with that attention and indulgence to which the peculiarities of her situation entitled her. In spite of the embarrassment necessarily attendant upon her first appearance in public, Madame de Sisley possesses great pretensions to public favor. Her voice is extremely sweet, and was manag'd with that skill which a thorough knowledge of music can only supply. Her person is very pleasing, and the elegance of her manners plainly discovers the French woman of Fashion and education.³³

The mistake about that being her first public appearance was probably a result of that claim appearing in an advertisement for the concert.³⁴ In its next issue the *Bath Journal* gushed,

As to a very beautiful and graceful person, and to the correct and polished manners of an accomplished woman of fashion, she adds a voice of great compass, sweetness, and of infinite expression, managed and modulated with the taste and judgment which a thorough knowledge of music alone can effect.³⁵

As well as making her an emblem of the French aristocracy, the Bath newspapers also used its reporting of her as way of extolling the British virtues of compassion and support for victims of bad circumstances. The *Bath Chronicle* editorialised:

To what a *miserable* situation must many of the poor *Aristocrats* in France be reduced, when we see a young lady of Madame Sisley's manners and talents obliged to appear for her subsistence as a singer in publick. She has however done this country the honour of chusing it as her place of refuge, and as the theatre of her musical talents, instigated most certainly by the widely-extended fame of the humanity and liberality of its inhabitants. These virtues no doubt this elegant singer will find again realized in herself during her stay in England.³⁶

A later issue continued in the same vein:

For the honour of the country in which this elegant French-woman has taken refuge, we trust that her Concert next Wednesday will be well attended. The British nation, indeed, have ever, like the ancients, considered a person under the pressure of calamity as something sacred. But when the sufferer possesses beauty and talents, is a woman, and a

³³ *Bath Journal* (21st November 1791), p. 4d.

³⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd November 1791), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (14th November 1791), p. 4a.

³⁵ *Bath Journal* (28th November 1791), p. 4d.

³⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (1st December 1791), p. 3a.

stranger; how irresistible must be her application to the protection and liberality of that feeling and human nation!³⁷

As a mark of her public acclaim, the Bath press printed no less than six poems dedicated to her.³⁸ While each of the writers were clearly enamoured of her beauty and her charm, some of them used the opportunity to extol British virtues by contrasting them with French vices in a manner that certainly fits with Colley's conception of British national identity as being defined against the French 'other'.³⁹ The first poem appeared in the *Bath Journal* on 21st November 1791, entitled 'On Mrs. Sisley'. Prefaced with a description of her as a 'French lady of Fashion, driven from her country by the Revolution – and forced to sing in publick for a more decent subsistence', the poem contrasted the hard-hearted French with the considerate British:

"Music has charms (so poets say)
"To sooth the savage breast,"
And Beauty's unresisted sway
Even Tyrants have confess'd.

Is it then true, what we are told?
(Though strange we must confess)
That Frenchmen could, unmov'd, behold
Such beauty in distress.

Alas! such foul dishonor stains
That once more gallant race
Deaf to fair Sisley's heavenly strains;
Blind to her lovely Face.

But Britons; to such powers united
More just, more generous prove
To rapture by her notes excited,
And, by her charms to love.⁴⁰

³⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (29th December 1791), p. 3b.

³⁸ *Bath Journal* (21st November 1791), p. 1c; *Bath Journal* (21st November 1791), p. 4d; *Bath Chronicle* (24th November 1791), p. 4a; *Bath Chronicle* (22nd December 1791), p. 4a; *Bath Chronicle* (29th December 1791), p. 4a; *Bath Chronicle* (19th January 1792), p. 3b.

³⁹ Colley, *Britons*; L. Colley, 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Oct., 1992), pp. 309-29.

⁴⁰ *Bath Journal* (21st November 1791), p. 1c.

This poem was deemed worthy of inclusion in a 1793 collection published by Richard Cruttwell, long after its subject had departed the public scene.⁴¹

The writer of 'To Madame de Sisley, the French Lady who sung last Wednesday at Mr. Rauzzini's Concert', which appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* of 24th November, was even more denunciatory of the Revolution, taking its lead from Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* with references to 'Proud Austria's daughter, Gallia's beauteous Queen'. Madame de Sisley's story is again used to contrast Britain, 'Where temper'd Liberty has deign'd to smile; Where equal Laws the Prince and Peasant bind, And Kings taught to venerate mankind', with the French 'horrors' of 'hell-born rapine' carried out by a 'furious rabble' of 'traitors'. As with the earlier poem, the Revolution is blamed for a fall from grace for 'Gallia's modern race' that disgraced the 'ancient fathers of their soil'.⁴² While the poem was attributed to 'Bathoniensis' in the *Bath Chronicle*, it had previously appeared in the *Public Advertiser* on 6th June under the simpler title 'To Madame de Sisley, The Aristocratic Syren', with the author identified as 'An Englishman'.⁴³ The *Public Advertiser*, along with the *European Magazine*, reprinted two of the poems that originally appeared in the Bath press, albeit under a new title and with some minor changes in the case of the second.⁴⁴ Originally titled 'To Madam Sisley', this poem appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* of 19th January 1792. The short verse ended with yet another declaration of British virtues:

So may'st thou turn from thy own shores away,
Meek exile! Thy regretful look, and find
Britons to talents true, to sufferings kind.⁴⁵

⁴¹ [R. Graves], *The Reveries of Solitude: Consisting of Essays in Prose, A New Translation of the Muscipula, and Original Pieces in Verse* (Bath, 1793), pp. 165-6.

⁴² *Bath Chronicle* (24th November 1791), p. 4a.

⁴³ *Public Advertiser* (6th June 1791), p. 2cd.

⁴⁴ *Public Advertiser* (3rd January 1792), p. 2a; *The Public Advertiser* (14th February 1792), p. 1d; *The European Magazine: And London Review*, Vol. 21 (London, 1792), p. 143; *Ibid.*, pp. 70-1.

⁴⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (19th January 1792), p. 3b.

Madame de Sisley was equally affected by her time in Bath. A note of humble gratitude, written in French and referring to her in the third person, appeared in the city's newspapers in January 1792: '*Madame de Sisley est tres touchée de la maniere favorable avec laquelle le public a bien voulu accueillir ses foibles talents*'. ('Madame de Sisley is very touched by the positive way in which the public was willing to accommodate her feeble talents.')

⁴⁶ She returned to London after her stay in Bath, but interest in her fate was sufficient for the *Bath Chronicle* to report that she 'cleared 320 guineas at her concert in Hanover-Square.'⁴⁷ This no doubt referred to her benefit concert that took place at Hanover Square on 28th March.⁴⁸ It is possible that the remuneration she received for her appearances and her benefit concerts was enough for her to retire from public performance. Her last appearance may well have been at a benefit concert for Madame de Musigny on 2nd May at Willis's Rooms on King Street.⁴⁹ After that performance she apparently retreated from public life. She was, however, not immediately forgotten. An advertisement for 'Six Sonatas for the Piano Forte [...] by Mr. Lentz, and dedicated to Mr. [Ignaz] Pleyel and Madame de Sisley' appeared in the *Morning Herald* in June.⁵⁰ Yet, for all the fame that Madame de Sisley achieved, at no stage did any of the printed material give her first name.

The Bath newspapers' reception of Madame de Sisley contrasts with those of a group of notable French women in the city at the same time. The list of arrivals printed in the *Bath Chronicle* of 3rd November 1791 included 'Madame de

⁴⁶ *Bath Journal* (9th January 1792), p. 4d; *Bath Chronicle* (12th January 1792), p. 1c.

⁴⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (12th April 1792), p. 3b.

⁴⁸ *Morning Herald* (28th March 1792), p. 1b.

⁴⁹ *Morning Herald* (2nd May 1792), p. 1b.

⁵⁰ *Morning Herald* (9th June 1792), p. 1b.

Brulart (la Duchesse d'Orleans)' and 'Madame Adele'.⁵¹ The former was Stéphanie Félicité du Crest de Saint-Aubin, now better known as Madame de Genlis, governess to the latter: Louise Marie Adélaïde Eugénie d'Orléans, daughter of the Duke of Orléans, who was by then calling himself Philippe Égalité. The names on these lists were ordered according to social status, with the most important visitors listed first. Unsurprisingly, the *Bath Chronicle* placed them at the top of the list in recognition of Adélaïde's status as a member of the cadet branch of the French royal family, whereas the *Bath Journal* relegated 'La Duchesse d'Orleans and Suite' and 'Madame Adele' further down the list of arrivals, placing them after members of the British nobility and even a 'Mr. Cook'.⁵² This snub may have been in recognition of the popular disdain felt for the former duke in response to his apparent enthusiasm for the Revolution and his relinquishing of his titles. This is reflected in the following week's issues that corrected the erroneous identification of Madame de Genlis as the Duchess of Orléans, while also providing the *Bath Journal* with an excuse for implying their reduced status:

Among the arrivals in our last paper was mentioned *la Duchesse d'Orleans*. The Lady, who is arrived, was long known as *Comtesse de Genlis*, the title of her first husband. On succeeding to the estate of *Sillery*, he assumed, according to the custom of the French Noblesse, the title of that estate. By a decree of the National Assembly, of which that Nobleman was a member, titles are abolished. *Le Comte de Sillery* is now *Monsieur Brulart*. The young Princess, whom Madame Brulart accompanies, is daughter of *Philip Bourbon*, formerly known as *Duc d'Orleans*. By another decree of the National Assembly, the children of Princes are to be distinguished by their Christian names. The name of the Princess is *Adèle*.⁵³

According to her memoirs, Madame de Genlis had a strong desire to leave

⁵¹ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd November 1791), p. 3b.

⁵² *Bath Journal* (7th November 1791), p. 4d.

⁵³ *Bath Chronicle* (10th November 1791), p. 3b; *Bath Journal* (14th November 1791), p. 4d.

France following the king's flight to Varennes, and his forced return to Paris. Her chance came when doctors ordered that Mademoiselle d'Orléans take the waters at Bath. The memoirs go on to describe their stay in England, including the two months spent in Bath. While staying in the city, the group did not take part in the social whirl of the season. They did, however, regularly attend the theatre to familiarise themselves with spoken English.⁵⁴ The Bath newspapers showed their usual respect for the privacy of visitors, printing no other reports of their time in the city. The *Bath Chronicle* did, however, later print a report of a ball held at Stourhead, describing them as 'the illustrious and lovely foreigners, Madame de Sillery and her eleves'.⁵⁵ Also attending the ball was the governess Agnes Porter, who kept a journal in which she detailed her time at Stourhead. In one entry she described the French girls and their governess: 'Mademoiselle Orléans very little, but extremely pretty; Pamela beautiful; Harriot agreeable; Madame Genlis lively, entertaining.'⁵⁶ Pamela – born Nancy Syms in England – was taken to France while still young, to be brought up with and improve the spoken English of Adélaïde. Harriot was Henriette de Sercey, identified as an orphaned niece of Madame de Genlis.⁵⁷ The young ladies had a close relationship, which may go some way to explain a vaguely witty report that appeared in the *Bath Chronicle*:

The Misses Egalité [sic] are now at Bury in Suffolk. One of these Ladies is so highly accomplished, and so lovely a person, that she may (without a pun) be said to have no *equal*. She is with Madame de Sillery, who has educated her and her sister; they are perfectly English in appearance and manners - *tant mieux!*⁵⁸

⁵⁴ C.S.F. Du Crest Genlis, *Memoirs of the Countess de Genlis, Illustrative of the History of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London, 1825), pp. 95-7.

⁵⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (19th January 1792), p. 3b.

⁵⁶ J. Martin (ed.), *A Governess in the Age of Jane Austen: The Journals and Letters of Agnes Porter* (London, 1998), pp. 128-9.

⁵⁷ B. A. Robb, *Félicité de Genlis: Motherhood in the Margins* (Cranbury, NJ, 2008), pp. 34-5.

⁵⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (4th October 1792), p. 3b.

This report had previously appeared in the London newspapers, which identified them as the 'Misses Equality'.⁵⁹ The mistaken identification of Pamela as a daughter of the duke may well have been intentional. Rumours circulated that she was his illegitimate child by Madame de Genlis.⁶⁰ If this were the case, then the newspaper editors were employing a degree of subtlety. They rarely held back on invective towards the duke, but they may have been more circumspect because they were writing about young women.

The portrayal of Madame de Sisley also bears comparison with another exile who had taken up public performance to make ends meet. The Chevaliere D'Eon arrived in Bath in December 1795 to perform in an exhibition of swordplay at the Lower Assembly Rooms. The *Bath Herald* announced the arrival of 'Mademoiselle D'Eon; formerly known by the name of *Chevalier* D'Eon', declaring that, 'She stands as yet unrivalled in history; any other Eulogium, therefore, on her accomplishments and extraordinary talents, are not necessary for her introduction to the favour of the Public in this polite City.'⁶¹ The report skilfully skirts around the colourful life of d'Eon, who was born Charles d'Eon de Beaumont, but had been living for many years as a woman. Having served as a diplomat and spy before court politics resulted in him falling out of favour. In response d'Eon resorted to blackmail by publishing secret correspondences.⁶² This resulted in Louis XV granting a pension of twelve-thousand *livres* on the understanding that he would remain in exile working as a spy, and that he would

⁵⁹ *The Oracle* (27th September 1792), p. 2b; *Public Advertiser* (28th September 1792), p. 2b.

⁶⁰ C. Ó Gallchoir, 'Gender, Nation and Revolution: Edgeworth and de Genlis' in E. Eger *et al* (Eds.), *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 200-16.

⁶¹ *Bath Herald* (26th December 1795), p. 3e.

⁶² S. Burroughs, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution: London's French Libellistes, 1758-1792* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 40-41

surrender any diplomatic papers that he still had in his possession.⁶³ The accession of Louis XVI allowed d'Eon to return to France. In 1776 the king permitted d'Eon to be identified as a woman as long as he dressed accordingly. D'Eon was again living in Britain when the Revolution began, depriving him of his pension. In order to support himself, d'Eon sold his library along with the rights to his unfinished autobiography, and entered fencing competitions for the prize money.⁶⁴ Simon Burroughs maintains that d'Eon initially supported the Revolution, and also notes that while d'Eon himself claimed that he was prevented from returning to his homeland due to the outbreak of war in February 1793, the threat of the Terror and the possibility that d'Eon could be treated as an émigré would also have provided ample dissuasion.⁶⁵

According to the advertisement for d'Eon's first performance in Bath, admittance for 'Ladies and Gentlemen' was five shillings with tickets available in advance from Meyler and Cruttwell.⁶⁶ Whereas the Bath newspapers portrayed Madame de Sisley as an elegant victim of events in France, the Revolution had no bearing on reports of d'Eon. Furthermore the usually bellicose *Bath Herald* made no mention of the war in its reports of fights that pitted English against French, no doubt, in recognition of the 'numerous [and] more respectable company' that attended the exhibitions of swordplay, 'many of whom addressed her with warmth and friendship; recollecting her in those important offices she once filled with so much ability'.⁶⁷ Even when the newspaper described d'Eon as

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁶⁴ K. Chrisman-Campbell, 'Dressing d'Eon' in S. Burroughs *et al* (Eds.), *The Chevalier d'Eon and his Worlds. Gender, Espionage and Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2010), pp. 97-112.

⁶⁵ Burroughs, *Blackmail, Scandal and Revolution*, pp. 43-4.

⁶⁶ *Bath Herald* (2nd January 1796), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (7th January 1796), p. 3b.

⁶⁷ *Bath Herald* (16th January 1796), p. 3d.

the 'most celebrated Master of the Sword, that ever France produced', it avoided any contrasts between the characters of the two nations and made no mention of the war.⁶⁸

The *Bath Chronicle* printed 'The Farewell Address of Mademoiselle D'Eon, On quitting the City of Bath, March 24, 1796'. As with Madame Sisley, d'Eon had flattering words for the city and its inhabitants that chimed with their civic self-image:

Mademoiselle D'Eon very sensibly feels the obligations which she owes to the Nobility and Gentry, who have honoured her with their protection; and cannot leave, without regret, a City which reminds her of ancient Athens, in the cultivated taste of its inhabitants; in the magnificence of its buildings; in its neatness, order, quiet, and the establishment of a well-regulated police; in the assemblage of beauty and elegance; in the splendour of its amusements, and in the encouragement extended to every thing which can adorn and embellish life.⁶⁹

D'Eon's departure prompted one Madame le Boucher to compose a poem that appeared in the *Bath Herald*. Written in French, it favourably compared the 'Chevaliere' with Virgil, Homer and Milton, and declared that her courage would 'Animate the Great Heart, of all brave soldiers', a far cry from the patriotic vitriol that appeared elsewhere in the Bath press at that time of conflict.⁷⁰

The French Clergy

The plight of the exiled French clergy provided the Bath newspapers with another opportunity to extol a British virtue. Charity does not figure in scholarly evaluations of eighteenth-century British identity. Colley mentions Thomas Coram's founding hospital, but only in terms of 'society's noisy cult of

⁶⁸ *Bath Herald* (12th March 1796), p. 3e.

⁶⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (31st March 1796), p. 3c.

⁷⁰ *Bath Herald* (16th April 1796), p. 2c.

commerce'.⁷¹ Yet, contemporary commentators emphasised charity as a particularly British virtue. As Henry Fielding wrote in *The Covent-Garden Journal*, 'Charity is in fact the very Characteristic of this Nation at this Time.— I believe we may challenge the whole World to parallel the Example which we have of late given this sensible, this noble, this Christian Virtue.'⁷² Tobias Smollett echoed these sentiments, declaring 'the virtues of benevolence are always springing up to an extraordinary growth in the British soil'.⁷³

The plight of the impoverished exiled French clergy gave the Bath newspapers further opportunity to contrast British and French national characters, albeit one that required discretion with regard to traditional religious animosities; although, as Clark points out by the latter part of the century 'Catholicism' is better replaced with the 'popery', the 'heady cocktail of power, luxury, uniformity, universal monarchy, and pride', which does not fully apply to the indigent exiled priests.⁷⁴

The flight of French clergymen began with the enactment of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in July 1790 that required all members of the clergy to swear an oath of loyalty to the state. Those who refused to do so became known as 'non-jurors' or 'refractory priests'. Further repressive legislation followed depriving them of their pensions, preventing them from holding services, placing them under surveillance, and deporting them at the request of citizens. The wholesale slaughter of clergymen during September Massacres of 1792 resulted in another wave of priests going into exile. In total more than five-thousand

⁷¹ Colley, *Britons*, pp. 56-61.

⁷² *The Covent-Garden Journal*, Vol.1, No. 39, (21st September 1752), p. 1.

⁷³ T. Smollett, *Continuation of the Complete History of England*, Vol. 2 (London, 1760), p. 409.

⁷⁴ Clark, 'Protestantism, Nationalism, and National Identity'.

French clergy sought refuge to England.⁷⁵ Denied their endowments, the majority of them relied on charity to survive.

In August 1792 a notice appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* that brought to the attention of the public the plight of the exiled priests. It announced that donations were being taken in for the relief of the 'Virtuous *Ecclesiastics*' at four banks in London and one in Bath. In an evocation of national virtue, it declared that 'It would be injurious to the liberal spirit of this country to suspect that a difference in religious opinions shall close the hand of charity, where it is considered that distress is of no particular religion or country'.⁷⁶ While this advertisement appeared in nine issues of the newspaper, intriguingly this advertisement does not appear to have been placed in the metropolitan press nor any other provincial newspapers outside Bath, suggesting it was aimed at the particular philanthropy of the city's residents and fashionable visitors.

The September Massacres provided added impetus to the charitable venture. In an editorial the *Bath Herald* floridly described 'the horrid tumult and dreadful massacres of a Neighbouring Kingdom', which had driven 'a host of affrighted wretches, that they may avoid the murdering pike and the brandished axe, [...] to seek an asylum on the hospitable shore of England'.⁷⁷ The Coventry MP, John Wilmot, chaired a meeting at the Free-Mason's Tavern in London on 20th September, to form a committee and decide how to proceed with relief of the new influx of exiled clergy. The committee placed notices about their meeting in

⁷⁵ D. Bellenger, 'The Émigré Clergy and the English Church, 1789–1815', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (July, 1983), pp. 392-410.

⁷⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (16th August 1792), p. 3e; *Bath Chronicle* (23rd August 1792), p. 3e; *Bath Chronicle* (30th August 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Chronicle* (6th September 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Chronicle* (13th September 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (20th September 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Chronicle* (27th September 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (4th October 1792), p. 1c.

⁷⁷ *Bath Herald* (15th September 1792), p. 3d.

the London press, listing its members and the amounts donated by subscribers.⁷⁸

Within weeks, the committee inserted a notice in the Bath newspapers, providing a list of Bath and Bristol bankers who would receive subscriptions.⁷⁹ The *Bath Herald* appended the amount donated in Bath thus far to the notice (£176) and in the same issue it also reported the formation of a committee to open a subscription for the cause in Bristol.⁸⁰

Beginning in November another notice appeared in numerous issues of the Bath newspapers under the title 'Humanity'.⁸¹ Like the August notice it addressed possible anti-Catholic feeling by praising the English character and quoting Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*:

Between Three and Four Thousand *French Clergymen*, who have escaped a cruel death by a precipitate flight into this country, depend altogether for their present subsistence upon the bounty of the people among whom they have sought asylum – a people as compassionate, and as liberal, as they are affluent. Surely it is not in the power of narrow prejudice to blunt the feelings of Englishmen, or to prevent them from exercising towards their fellow Creatures, and fellow Christians, in distress, that Mercy which - "*blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.*"

There again followed a list of local establishments receiving donations which was expanded to include Meyler's circulating library and the New Rooms Coffee House. The first three subscriptions in Bath raised over £438, which Bellenger partly attributed to the city's 'transient population of infirm rich'. This 'spectacular'

⁷⁸ *Morning Chronicle* (22nd September 1792), p. 1c; *World* (24th September 1792), p. 1a.

⁷⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (11th October 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (18th October 1792), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (13th October 1792), p. 2d.

⁸⁰ *Bath Herald* (13th October 1792), p. 3d.

⁸¹ *Bath Chronicle* (1st November 1792), p. 3e; *Bath Chronicle* (8th November 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Chronicle* (15th November 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (22nd November 1792), p. 1e; *Bath Chronicle* (29th November 1792), p. 1e; *Bath Chronicle* (6th December 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (13th December 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 1e; *Bath Chronicle* (27th December 1792), p. 1e; *Bath Herald* (20th October 1792), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (27th October 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (3rd November 1792), p. 2b; *Bath Herald* (10th November 1792), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (17th November 1792), p. 1b; *Bath Herald* (24th November 1792), p. 2d; *Bath Herald* (1st December 1792), p. 2d; *Bath Herald* (8th December 1792), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 4d; *Bath Herald* (29th December 1792), p. 1c.

generosity contrasted with that of other locales, such as the £150 collected in Winchester, where a significant number of exiled clergy had settled.⁸²

Irrespective of the healthy sum collected in Bath, the *Bath Herald* questioned the nation's generosity and tweaked their national pride:

The sum collected in London for the relief of the distressed French Clergy is as yet inadequate to the benevolent object. It does not amount to Four Pounds for each person [...] And what is Four Pounds each for English generosity to bestow upon men who have been used to every comfort of life, and are now our pensioners even for the smallest necessary.⁸³

The Bath newspapers reported the generosity shown in local towns. The *Bath Chronicle* lauded the citizens of Bristol, 'ever forward in the cause of humanity', for raising six-hundred pounds in only five days.⁸⁴ A report of the Trowbridge subscription made particular mention of donations by both the wealthy and the poor. Alongside the five guineas donated by 'Rev. Mr. Hey, the worthy rector of Steeple-Ashton' it declared that '(like the widow's mite) there were several farthings'.⁸⁵

The most poignant report of the French clergy in the city appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* of 31st January 1793 and the *Bath Register* two days later:

Sunday in several churches and other places of religious worship, funeral sermons were preached on the death of the unfortunate Louis; and on Monday the Catholic Church was hung with black, and solemn mass was said; at which all the French refugee Clergy now in Bath assisted; all the people of that nation, who have here found a shelter from the distractions in their own unhappy country, were also there. The scene was distressing – not a dry eye was within the walls of the Chapel.⁸⁶

Following the execution of Louis XVI, Wilmot's United Committee of Subscribers for the Relief of the Suffering Clergy of France met again at the Freemason's

⁸² D. Bellenger, *The French Exiled Clergy in the British Isles after 1789: An Historical Introduction and Working List* (Bath, 1986), p. 16.

⁸³ *Bath Herald* (20th October 1792), p. 3c.

⁸⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (18th October 1792), p. 3c.

⁸⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (29th November 1792), p. 3b.

⁸⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1793), p. 3b; *Bath Register* (2nd February 1793), p. 3c.

Tavern. The Bath press carried the subsequent notice that announced the continuation of the subscription. The committee admitted that they had 'every reason to believe, that in the course of a few months' the exiled clergy would have been able to return to their native land. The notice also appealed to national pride, saying that the amount thus far collected

cannot fail to exhibit the British character in its true light to surrounding nations: it has happily proved, that no national prejudice, no difference of religious persuasion, or political principles, can suppress, in the hearts of Englishmen, the sense of true Christian charity and benevolence.⁸⁷

The *Bath Herald* was appreciative of the continuation of the subscription:

We are happy to find the fund for the relief of the unfortunate French exiles is likely to receive a seasonable addition from the benevolent inhabitants of this city. To pour the healing balm on the wounds of the afflicted, is certainly the first and noblest office of every true Christian.⁸⁸

The 'seasonable addition' was certainly evidenced by the list of subscriptions, including a one-hundred pound donation by Lady Salisbury, which appeared later that month in the Bath press.⁸⁹

The charitable subscription received royal sanction on 12th April as a result of a petition put to the king by the relief committee on the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury.⁹⁰ The *Bath Register* reported this mobilisation of the Church of England in a patriotic tone:

The Lord Bishop of this Diocese has communicated to the Clergy his Majesty's commands for making a collection at every dwelling in their respective parishes for the French Clergy – a circumstance which will afford permanent relief to the unfortunate objects, and redound to the lasting glory of the British nation.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (7th March 1793), p. 1e; *Bath Chronicle* (14th March 1793), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (2nd March 1793), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (9th March 1793), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (16th March 1793), p. 1d; *Bath Journal* (11th March 1793), p. 2a; *Bath Journal* (18th March 1793), p. 2a.

⁸⁸ *Bath Herald* (9th March 1793), p. 3d.

⁸⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (21st March 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (23rd March 1793), p. 1c; *Bath Journal* (25th March 1793), p. 4b.

⁹⁰ Bellenger, *The French Exiled Clergy*, p. 33.

⁹¹ *Bath Register* (25th May 1793), p. 3b.

The *Bath Chronicle* reported that following the reading of the king's letter, along with those written by the senior clergy, recommending 'the unfortunate French Refugee Clergy to the benevolence of the affluent and humane', at the Abbey church, there was a 'collection at the church door amounted to upwards of 40l. and a further collection is to be made from house to house by the Churchwardens and Overseers'.⁹² The Bath press reported the sums collected at other Anglican churches: St Margaret's Chapel raised sixty-three pounds, the collection at the Queen Square Chapel exceeded twenty-six pounds, St James's collected over sixteen pounds, St Michael's contribution was over thirteen pounds and the Walcot parish church collected over eleven pounds. The most generous congregation was that at the Octagon chapel which raised an excess of one-hundred-and-thirty pounds, hardly surprising considering the chapel's popularity with the city's wealthier visitors.⁹³ Following its report of these collections the *Bath Herald* waxed lyrical about the national character:

The generosity thus shewn by Great Britain to the unhappy fugitives of France – applying to us for refuge from persecution – is a circumstance which must make her revered by surrounding nations: The native dignity of this country was never better displayed than on this occasion; stifling all reflection on former insult and injury, she nobly declare, by her actions, that "to be miserable, is to claim her protection" – Without ostentation, it may be asserted, that the title of *Briton* is another term for "*the friend of mankind*."⁹⁴

The religious virtue of charity extended beyond Anglicans, as the *Bath Register* emphasised when it reported that 'Persons of every denomination' donated to the '88l. 17s.' collected in Frome.⁹⁵ British Protestants were enthusiastic in their

⁹² *Bath Chronicle* (30th May 1793), p. 3bc.

⁹³ *Bath Chronicle* (6th June 1793), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (8th June 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Register* (8th June 1793), p. 3c.

⁹⁴ *Bath Herald* (8th June 1793), p. 3d

⁹⁵ *Bath Register* (15th June 1793), p. 3c.

support for the cause, donating over forty-one thousand pounds.⁹⁶

According to Carpenter the presence of Catholic émigrés did much to ‘whittle away prejudices which had shallow foundations’.⁹⁷ The Bath press was certainly sympathetic to their predicament, although the *Bath Herald* somewhat insensitively placed a charitable notice for the French clergy next to an advertisement for a new edition of *Fox’s Complete Book of Martyrs*, which began with the declaration ‘NO POPERY’ before continuing in a similarly anti-Catholic vein.⁹⁸ This does, however, endorse Clark’s notion of a popular distinction between an acceptable Catholicism and a repugnant ‘Popery’.⁹⁹ A letter to the *Bath Herald* satirised the way that such a subtle distinction may cause confusion for common rural folk. Written in the vernacular, the letter detailed the confusion of its author, one ‘Tom Plain’, about whether the collections had been on behalf of ‘Martirs’ as the ‘Pason’ had called them, or ‘Papishes’ as ‘the Clark blundered out’.¹⁰⁰

Other correspondents used the opportunity to draw attention to impoverished English clergymen and other native indigents. The first of these was a short letter printed in the *Bath Herald* written by ‘A Curate’, who declared, ‘There is no country, where Christianity is professed, that makes so poor a provision, for the *labouring part of the Clergy* as England does.’¹⁰¹ The following week’s *Bath Register* carried a letter sent from London. The author, simply signed ‘L’, made pains ‘to obviate the objections that may be made to our favourable reception of these unfortunate and deluded foreigners’: the possible rise in the

⁹⁶ Bellenger, *The French Exiled Clergy*, p. 33.

⁹⁷ Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution*, p. 180.

⁹⁸ *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 4cd.

⁹⁹ Clark, ‘Protestantism, Nationalism, and National Identity’.

¹⁰⁰ *Bath Herald* (20th October 1792), p. 2c.

¹⁰¹ *Bath Herald* (22nd September 1792), p. 3b.

price of provisions and the threat of them spreading sedition or ‘meddling with the public religion’, before taking issue with the ‘public subscriptions for their support’ by declaring that ‘Charity begins at home’. The author concluded that he did not see any good reason ‘to look abroad for objects of our benevolence, when there are so many at home that stand in need’.¹⁰² Similarly a letter in the *Bath Chronicle*, signed ‘Humanus’, avoided promoting the ideal that charity begins at home by lauding the charity of ‘all classes of men in this country’ to provide relief to the émigré clergymen, paying particular attention to the contributions made in Bath. The correspondent went on to bemoan the poverty experienced by some of the ‘lower orders of the Clergy in this country’, particularly ‘a Reverend Gentleman of the established church’ who was reduced to ‘publicly begging for alms’ by means of an advertisement that had appeared in the previous week’s issue of the newspaper.¹⁰³ The advertisement in question was placed on behalf of a ‘distressed clergyman [...] confined in the Gaol of Carmarthen, [...] for a debt of under 10l.’ It requested that subscriptions be sent to the printer of the paper.¹⁰⁴ This advertisement prompted the writer of the second letter, ‘A Son of the Clergy’, to enquire about the ‘situation of the poor Clergyman’.¹⁰⁵ The following weeks’ newspapers contained details of charitable donations made in Bath to settle the clergyman’s debts totalling over seventy-one pounds, which helped ensure his liberation from confinement.¹⁰⁶

Even following the king’s intervention, concerns about the presence of French clergymen in Britain seem not to have abated. In a letter titled ‘On the

¹⁰² *Bath Register* (29th September 1792), p. 4ab.

¹⁰³ *Bath Chronicle* (6th June 1793), p. 3cd.

¹⁰⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (30th May 1793), p. 3e.

¹⁰⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (6th June 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁰⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (13th June 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (20th June 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (18th July 1793), p. 3c.

Collection for the French Clergy' signed by 'A Christian', its author railed against the 'numbers of people of liberal education and extensive fortunes, who have set themselves against the collection' by frightening 'people from church, under the notion there would be riots' and by identifying 'these unhappy men as ferret enemies'. As well as lauding the charitable collections, the writer also suggested that 'the money attached in the bank of England, as belonging to the Convention, would, with utmost propriety and justice, be appropriated to the relief of those [...] driven by violence out of France'.¹⁰⁷

Suspicion and Regulation

The sympathy that Britons felt for émigrés was not without limits. In October 1794, following a story about a Frenchman who 'among other *grateful* remarks, on speaking of the violent storm of Sunday last, he expressed, with considerable glee, his hopes that Lord Howe's fleet had felt its full effects!', the *Bath Herald* felt the need to pass editorial comment:

The very hospitable asylum which the Emigrant French have found in this country, should have stirred up a general spirit of gratitude in them While occasional censures are passed upon the dissipations of some of the *Emigrant Noblesse* who took shelter in this country, it is but justice to bear testimony to the good conduct of the poor *Priests*, who demean themselves with exemplary meekness. Full well is the altered situation of these half-famished wanderers calculated to operate as a *warning* to some, and excite the commiseration of others.¹⁰⁸

The newspaper clearly had a view of how the exiles should conduct themselves, hinting at the lack of humility shown by some aristocratic émigrés. As Carpenter relates, the Royalist elite in particular, often displayed a degree of haughtiness and intolerance that even drew criticism from their fellow exiles.¹⁰⁹ A more

¹⁰⁷ *Bath Herald* (6th July 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁰⁸ *Bath Herald* (11th October 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁹ Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution*, pp. 62-4.

pressing concern was the possibility that republican agents could slip into the country posing as émigrés.¹¹⁰ The *Bath Herald* contained tantalising evidence that supporters of the Revolution may have visited the city in November 1792:

On Tuesday last, two foreigners in this city made an itinerant street musician, play their favourite air *Ca Ira*, which they appeared to enjoy with a degree of extacy. An English officer passing by, gave the fellow a severe reprimand and *commanded* "God Save the King." The Frenchmen vociferated *Ca Ira! Ca Ira! Ca Ira!* A large mob assembled on the occasion, and joined the loyal burthen with their huzzas for upward of an hour, to the great mortification of the foreigners; who certainly acted imprudent, at least, on the occasion, whilst so many of their unhappy countrymen experience the benevolence and hospitality of British generosity.¹¹¹

The following month the *Bath Register* used its local news to relate the story from Chatham of a Frenchman arrested on suspicion of 'treasonable correspondence'. The report declared that 'Many others deserved the same attention'.¹¹²

In an attempt to salve these fears, in January 1793, the government hastily passed the Aliens Act, which required the registration of all foreign nationals in Britain; although, as Carpenter points out, it was clearly an attempt to control French emigrants. As such it granted the authorities the right to deport any foreigner who posed a threat to the nation. While the legislation enabled the government to monitor the movements of suspects, it did so by imposing 'enormous amounts of bureaucracy on the émigrés'. They had to register at the port of arrival, obtain a passport and report to a Justice of the Peace when they reached their destination.¹¹³ The legislation was clearly political rather than practical, being enacted at a time of heightened fears of republicanism.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6.

¹¹¹ *Bath Herald* (10th November 1792), p. 3d.

¹¹² *Bath Register* (15th December 1792), p. 3c.

¹¹³ Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution*, pp. 35-8.

¹¹⁴ See Chapter 5.

GUILDHALL, BATH, Nov. 1st, 1794.

ALIENS.

NOTICE is hereby given to all Aliens now resident in the city of Bath or Liberties thereof, that they are required by the Magistrates of the said city to produce their Certificates, Passports, and Licences of Residence, to be examined as the Act of Parliament in such case directs, at the Guildhall of the said city, on Thursday the 6th of November, at 12 o'clock at noon. On failure hereof the said Act will be duly enforced.

AUX EMIGRES.

ON fait avertir les émigrés, & autres étrangers, résidant actuellement à Bath & dans ses environs, qu'ils sont sommés de comparaitre Jeudi le sixième jour de Novembre, à midi devant les Magistrats à la maison de ville, pour y rendre compte de leurs personnes en produisant leurs certificats, passeports, ou lettre de licence pour qu'ils soient examinés conformément à l'acte du Parlement passé pour cet effet sous peine d'encourir les suites & inconvénients de non-conformité, en vertu des réglemens pourvus par ledit acte contre ceux qui s'en font tenir en déiant.

Donné à l'Hôtel de Ville de Bath,
ce 1^r Novembre, 1794.

[3050]

Plate 5: Notices to 'Aliens' and 'Aux Emigres'.
Bath Chronicle (6th November 1794).¹¹⁵

To accommodate the number of émigrés resident in Bath, the magistrates took the singular step of inserting notices in the city's newspapers to announce dates when all foreign residents should produce their papers at the Guildhall.¹¹⁶ These notices occasionally appeared in French as well as English, as was the case for first mass registration on 6th November 1794, the notice for which

¹¹⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (6th November 1794), p. 1c.

¹¹⁶ The Lord Provost and magistrates of Edinburgh also used this technique in September 1796: *Caledonian Mercury* (10th September 1796), p. 1a; *Caledonian Mercury* (12th September 1796), p. 1d.

appeared in the *Bath Chronicle*.¹¹⁷ The scheme does not appear to have been very successful, as testified by a notice in the *Bath Herald*, without French translation, stating that 'reasonable time [is] to be allowed for all Aliens now resident in the City and Liberties, to procure letters of licence'.¹¹⁸ The next issues of the Bath newspapers contained a notice, again only in English, requiring resident aliens to produce their documentation at the Guildhall on the 26th November.¹¹⁹ The notice also announced that the magistrates would apply another provision of the act, requiring any lodging house keepers to provide them with a written account 'of all Aliens resident within such houses, with their respective ranks and occupations, and the time they have resided therein, under the penalty of 50l.'¹²⁰ In so doing, the magistrates required the active participation of many ordinary citizens in the implementation of the law.

The next mass registrations of January 1795 and September 1796 were again announced in the Bath newspapers.¹²¹ In the latter case the notices were partially successful, as reported in the *Bath Herald*:

Near 300 Emigrants appeared at our Guildhall this morning, in consequence of the notice from the Magistrates; only *twenty-five* of whom had licences of residence; many have quitted the city on account of this investigation.¹²²

The lacklustre response from the émigrés prompted the justices to place a rather surly notice in the Bath newspapers:

Whereas it appears that notwithstanding the repeated Notices given by the Magistrates of the City of Bath in this and the other public Bath papers,

¹¹⁷ See Plate 5.

¹¹⁸ *Bath Herald* (8th November 1794), p. 3c.

¹¹⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (13th November 1794), p. 1c; *Bath Chronicle* (20th November 1794), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (15th November 1794), p. 3e.

¹²⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (13th November 1794), p. 1c; *Bath Chronicle* (20th November 1794), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (15th November 1794), p. 3e.

¹²¹ *Bath Chronicle* (15th January 1795), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (22nd January 1795), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (8th September 1796), p. 1b; *Bath Chronicle* (22nd September 1796), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (17th January 1795), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (19th September 1796), p. 1b.

¹²² *Bath Herald* (10th September 1796), p. 3e.

requiring all Aliens resident within the said City to appear at the Town-hall, and produce their Passports and Licences of Residence, it has hitherto been ineffectual, as many of them have never appeared or produced such Passports or Licences in open contempt of the Law.¹²³

The notice went on to remind the keepers of lodging houses and ale houses of their legal duty to pass to the authorities in a timely manner the details of any of foreign lodgers in their establishments, along with a further requirement that particularly reflected the fear of a French invasion at that time; the housekeepers were further required to provide a written account 'of all Weapons, Arms, Gunpowder, or Ammunition, which shall be in such dwelling-house, for or at the use or disposal of such Aliens, or a Certificate subscribed in like manner, that none of the articles aforesaid are therein to be found'. Any failure to comply carried the penalty of a £100 fine.¹²⁴ The fear of invasion continued into 1798, when, in response to a rumour of the discovery of a cache of arms in the city, both the *Bath Herald* and the *Bath Chronicle* printed denials, with the latter reading:

We have authority to state, that the report of arms having been found in the lodgings of some Emigrants in this city, is totally void of foundation; and further to add, that no circumstance whatever has come within the knowledge or observation of the Magistrates, that should lessen the esteem or attention hitherto shewn to those unfortunate respectable persons.¹²⁵

Suspicion had also fallen upon another émigré in Bath, as the *Bath Chronicle* reported:

Monday, in consequence of a letter from the Secretary of State, a French emigrant, calling himself Comte de Bombel, was brought before the Mayor, but not giving a satisfactory account of himself, he was committed to our

¹²³ *Bath Chronicle* (27th October 1796), p. 1e; *Bath Chronicle* (3rd November 1796), p. 1e; *Bath Chronicle* (10th November 1796), p. 1e; *Bath Chronicle* (17th November 1796), p. 1e; *Bath Herald* (29th October 1796), p. 1a; *Bath Herald* (5th November 1796), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (12th November 1796), p. 2d.

¹²⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (15th September 1796), p. 1b.

¹²⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd May 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (28th April 1798), p. 3c.

gaol for further examination.¹²⁶

Two days later the *Bath Herald* announced that the count (most likely Louis Philippe de Bombelles) had been released by order of the Duke of Portland, any suspicions having been found groundless. The count had 'been found in rank and conduct, worthy every attention which he has received here, from Persons of the First Fashion'.¹²⁷ The next issue of the *Bath Chronicle* similarly restored the nobleman's good name.¹²⁸

Prisoners of War

Not every French person found themselves in Bath by choice. Naval victories resulted in the taking of French prisoners of war, many of whom were held at Stapleton prison near Bristol. Completed in 1779, Stapleton prison replaced an earlier prison in Knowle, which no longer had a viable water supply.¹²⁹ The prisoners to be held at Stapleton marched under the supervision of militiamen from the ports on the south coast, occasionally resting in Bath. The city's newspapers showed a degree of sympathy for the French prisoners as well as concern for their wellbeing. This was nothing particular to the Bath press; rather, it was fundamental to the British conception of themselves as particularly humane, as Mark Williams argues in his exploration of national identity in eighteenth-century England as formed by encounters with the French, including prisoners of war.¹³⁰

These public concerns were conveyed by the *Bath Register's* descriptions

¹²⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (16th March 1797), p. 3c.

¹²⁷ *Bath Herald* (18th March 1797), p. 3e.

¹²⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd March 1797), p. 3c.

¹²⁹ D. Vintner, 'Prisoners of War in Stapleton jail, near Bristol', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, Vol. 75 (1956), pp. 134-70.

¹³⁰ M. A. Williams, 'Encountering the French', pp. 160-85.

of Stapleton prison as 'spacious' and 'commodious' in its reports of the arrival of the first groups of prisoners.¹³¹ In its report of the lodging of the 250 prisoners at Ryles' amphitheatre the *Bath Chronicle* described them as 'unfortunate men', who despite their circumstances 'appeared in general in very good spirits'.¹³² The *Bath Herald* emphasised that the prisoners were escorted by 'a strong guard' before reporting that

As they passed through the streets much money was liberally given to them – which exemplifies the character of Britons, for however detested the cause in which these men were engaged, their distress was a sufficient recommendation to our benevolence.¹³³

The *Bath Chronicle* described how prisoners became something of a public spectacle:

They were comfortably lodged in Ryles's amphitheatre, and liberally supplied with money by various persons who went to see them, they were mostly in high spirits, singing their favourite revolutionary songs, and crying Vive la Nation!.¹³⁴

Significantly these reports in the Bath press of charity being limited to individual donations contrasts with the nationally organised subscriptions opened for the relief of prisoners of war undertaken during the Seven Years War.¹³⁵ At a time when subscriptions were opened for émigré priests and for the widows and orphans of British soldiers and sailors who fell in battle, there were no subscription notices for French prisoners in the Bath newspapers.¹³⁶ This may be due to the ideological nature of the war, as evidenced in a vitriolic report that appeared as part of the local news in the *Bath Chronicle*:

Nothing can equal the audacious insolence of the Republican French plunderers confined at Plymouth. Their diabolical threats and menaces

¹³¹ *Bath Register* (22nd June 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (29th June 1793), p. 3c.

¹³² *Bath Chronicle* (27th June 1793), p. 3c.

¹³³ *Bath Herald* (29th June 1793), p. 3d.

¹³⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (4th July 1793), p. 3c.

¹³⁵ Williams, 'Encountering the French', pp. 170-1.

¹³⁶ See Chapter 7.

exactly correspond with that turbulent wicked spirit which at present directs the councils of France; they have even planted their Tree of Java in the prison yard, and are continually uttering the vilest imprecations against the English nation.¹³⁷

The same newspaper also included a less bombastic report of prisoners'

revolutionary fervour:

As soon as the first division of the Gloucester militia came into Corsham, the French prisoners placed there on their parole, very infuriatingly put their national cockades into their hats; upon which the militia men insisted upon their being delivered up; and having collected them, the soldiers carried them to their officers. This display of spirit has gained them much credit.¹³⁸

The *Bath Register* copied this report with the minor clarification that the event took place in Corsham (now Cosham) near Portsmouth, rather than in the nearby Wiltshire town.¹³⁹

According to Williams, 'the effect of an increasing association in the public mind of humanity with Britishness by the period of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars meant that the neglect of the French prisoners of war became a source of national shame'.¹⁴⁰ Conditions in Stapleton were certainly desperate, as Louis-Guillaume Otto, the French Commissioner responsible for prisoners of war found during his review of those incarcerated there: 'Those who are not quite ragged and half naked, are generally very dirty in their scanty apparel, and make a worse appearance as to health than they would do had they the power in such a dress to be clean'.¹⁴¹ The state of their dress was the least of their problems; as the war continued the prison became increasingly overcrowded, resulting in prisoners being malnourished to the degree that in 1801 prisoners held there died

¹³⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (25th April 1793), p. 3c.

¹³⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (4th July 1793), p. 3d.

¹³⁹ *Bath Register* (6th July 1793), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁰ Williams, 'Encountering the French', p. 179.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19-20.

at an average rate of fifteen per week. It comes as no surprise that so many of these prisoners chose to attempt escape. According to Dorothy Vintner the most common escape method used was the digging of tunnels using roughly manufactured tools.¹⁴²

While the Bath newspapers were devoid of reporting on the prison conditions they occasionally printed brief accounts about the escapes. In July 1793 the *Bath Chronicle* informed its readers that 'ten of the French prisoners confined in Stapleton prison made their escape, but by Wednesday evening they were all retaken, and conducted to their former lodgings', with the *Bath Register* carrying much the same report.¹⁴³ In January 1794 one group of escapees made it as far as Bath, but as the *Bath Chronicle* reported, 'Sunday three French prisoners, who had escaped from Stapleton the preceding Thursday, were apprehended in an unfinished house in Kingsmead, and committed to our prison.'¹⁴⁴ Another report in May 1796 followed the same pattern of reporting the swift capture of the escapees:

Tuesday night 14 French prisoners, confined at Stapleton, effected their escape from prison. Nine were taken and secured the next day, but the remaining five found their way to the mouth of the Avon, where they embarked in an open boat, but being shortly after pursued by the excise boat, were retaken about four leagues below the Holmes, and re-lodged in their old quarters.¹⁴⁵

The Bath newspapers also reported on riots at the prison with no mention of the conditions to which the prisoners were subjected. The *Bath Chronicle* reported in May 1794:

Sunday se'nnight at night, near 100 of the French prisoners (in the sick ward of the prison) at Stapleton, near Bristol, rose on the guard, and nine of them escaped. Several have since been taken. The guard fired upon

¹⁴² Vintner, 'Prisoners of War in Stapleton jail, near Bristol', pp. 134-70.

¹⁴³ *Bath Chronicle* (11th July 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (13th July 1793), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (9th January 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (5th May 1796), p. 3b.

them several times before they quelled the riot.¹⁴⁶

In November 1797 the *Bath Herald* carried a report of the tragic consequences of another riot:

Sunday evening a melancholy accident happened in the French prison at Stapleton, near Bristol. The prisoners being very riotous and disorderly, one of the centinels, apprehending that some of them were attempting to break out, fired his piece, and unfortunately shot one of his companions through the body, in consequence of which he died in a short time.¹⁴⁷

A month earlier Bath newspapers had reported on an inquest held at the prison following the shooting of a prisoner named Louis le Briton by one of the guards of the Royal Buckingham Militia, during which the jury 'after a full investigation, found a verdict of *justifiable homicide*'.¹⁴⁸ As the war entered its third year, the sympathetic reporting of prisoners had dissipated, as evidenced by a sour report that appeared in the *Bath Herald*:

Lately marched out of the Prison at Bristol, 450 of the French Libertarians, where they have actually fared better than the soldiers who guarded them; several of them were far better equipped on leaving the prison than on their arrival there, not only by outward appearance, for their pockets were well lined with English Guineas, which they acquired by converting the bones of English Oxes, &c. into Tooth-pickers, Dominoes, and that principal instrument in supporting their liberty called the Guillotine.¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

Many émigrés went to Bath either as visitors or to make a new life for themselves. Yet their portrayal in the Bath press was far from monolithic. While the newspapers respected the privacy of émigré visitors, as they did for all of the Company, those émigrés who were in the public eye did attract comment.

Madame de Sisley served well as an emblem of an aristocracy visited by tragedy,

¹⁴⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (1st May 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁷ *Bath Herald* (18th November 1797), p. 3d.

¹⁴⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (5th October 1797), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (7th October 1797), p. 3e.

¹⁴⁹ *Bath Herald* (6th February 1796), p. 3d.

while also providing a means whereby the newspapers could contrast British virtues with French vices. Madame de Genlis and her charges required circumspection from the newspapers; their connection with the vilified Philippe Egalité gave opportunity to attack him but also the dismantling of French aristocratic privilege; yet their own aristocratic bearing in the company of the British nobility spared them from press invective, but not from subtle calumny. The ageing Chevaliere d'Eon was reported in neutral tones, treated neither as a victim of the Revolution and her (or his) martial talents were treated as virtues. Again this was a reflection of the company that he (or she) kept.

The relief of the distressed French clergy and the donations made to prisoners of war provided opportunity for the Bath press to emphasise the national virtues of compassion and charity, even for those perceived as adversaries. The charitable donations did not pass without comment, and it is noteworthy that the many other calls on the generosity of Bathonians and visitors that the Bath newspapers eagerly acclaimed did not engender the same critique from correspondents. Clearly they were willing to unquestioningly associate themselves with patriotic causes such as the relief of widows and orphans of deceased servicemen.¹⁵⁰

The role of the Bath newspapers was somewhat complex when it came to suspicion of émigrés; by printing the notices relating to the Aliens Act, scotching rumours of armed foreigners and reporting the release of suspect individuals they provided a degree of reassurance to their readers; yet, the news they printed was a major factor in the creation of these fears. The same is true in its reporting of escapes by French prisoners of war. Their frequency would have been a cause

¹⁵⁰ See Chapter 7.

for concern for readers, but the quick recapture of those who had absconded would have ameliorated their anxiety.

Chapter 3: Bells, Balls, Galas and Parades: Royal Celebrations in Bath and Region

Introduction

In the early eighteenth century the commemoration of days of particular political importance were often violently contested between Hanoverians and Jacobites, each adhering to their own political calendars. Yet, as Brewer explains, 'by the mid-century and with the triumph of the Whig oligarchy, a more sedate, consensual calendar had emerged'.¹ The Hanoverian calendar remained largely unchallenged until the end of the century, with the exception of the threat of a Wilkesite calendar in the early years of the reign of George III. While Brewer downplays the importance of an official political calendar in the maintenance of the Hanoverian state, he accepts that Britons of the time believed such commemorations to be an effective political tool.² This included the king himself, who was much impressed with Jacques Louis David's state festivals.³

Colley recognises the importance of newspapers in the increasingly popular appeal of the monarchy during the reign of George III. She also points to increased civic pride and 'a growth in the number of voluntary organizations which aided mobilization and control of civic events'. She also emphasises 'the wartime context which allowed the king to be celebrated not only for his royalty but also because his uniquely long reign had become the prime symbol of

¹ J. Brewer, 'The Number 45: A Wilkite Political Symbol' in S. B. Baxter (Ed.), *England's Rise to Greatness, 1660-1763* (Berkeley CA, 1983), pp. 349-80.

² Brewer, 'The Number 45', pp. 349-80.

³ D. M. Craig, 'The Crowned Republic? Monarchy and Anti-Monarchy in Britain, 1760-1901', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2003), pp. 167-185.

Britain's national identity'.⁴ Indeed, according to Colley, the 'cult of monarchy' was 'the only outlet for popular nationalism which the British government felt able safely and consistently to encourage during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars'.⁵ By contrast, Sack urges caution not to ascribe unquestioning loyalism to 'the eighteenth-century right-wing British press', arguing that they contained 'very little evidence of any cult of royalty or cult of George III'. He maintains that during the French Revolution even the pro-Ministry *Sun* and *True Briton*, would criticise senior members of the royal family.⁶

Such criticisms were absent from the Bath newspapers in their reporting of the royal family. Nevertheless, their often cursory reporting of the civic celebrations of royal anniversaries does not suggest a 'cult of monarchy', nor does it provide evidence of a bolstering of corporate identity, as Borsay argues. Contrastingly the vibrant advertising and reporting of commercial celebrations do show Bath's strong 'relationship with the wider local and national society'.⁷ This chapter endorses Colley's emphasis on the effect that war had on royal celebrations and the importance of volunteer organisations by demonstrating the way in which the military associations with anniversaries breathed new life into civic festivities as reported in the Bath press, while at the same time encouraging the participation of residents of a more humble social status, in contrast to the wealthy clientele at the cities pleasure gardens and assembly rooms.

⁴ L. Colley, 'The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation 1760-1820', *Past & Present*, No. 102 (Feb. 1984), pp. 94-129.

⁵ L. Colley, 'Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain 1750-1830', *Past & Present*, No. 113 (Nov., 1986), pp. 97-117.

⁶ J. J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain, c. 1760-1832* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 131-3.

⁷ P. Borsay, 'All the Town's a Stage': Urban Ritual and Ceremony 1660-1800' in P. Clark (Ed.), *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns 1600-1800* (London, 1984), pp. 228-58.

Civic Celebrations

The key date in the Hanoverian political calendar was the king's birthday (4th June), albeit with significant variation depending on location, as Harris and Whatley note in their comparison of such birthday celebration for George II in Scotland with those in England and Wales.⁸ Nevertheless, according to Colley, urban authorities made good use of royal celebrations to promote their town's 'affluence, identity and culture'.⁹ The Bath Corporation had a particular incentive to promote the loyalty of the city, in order to achieve the royal patronage that would maintain the status of the premier spa resort in the country. The celebrations in Bath comprised religious, civic, commercial and private components, as described in this *Bath Chronicle* report from 1786:

His Majesty's birth-day was observed here on Sunday last by ringing of bells, and hoisting of flags on the towers. On Monday at noon the platform of 21 guns was fired at Spring-Gardens, as a royal salute, and a token of the splendid amusements prepared there for the evening; at eight o'clock there were above a thousand people in the gardens, and before the display of fire-works, near fifteen hundred; who all departed highly delighted with every art of the evening's entertainment, and with the great propriety with which it was conducted. Mr. Williams at the Tuns illuminated his house in a very pleasing stile. And the Mayor gave an elegant cold collation at the Guildhall, when many loyal toasts were drank, and the evening spent in a great convivial good-humour.¹⁰

Local civic authorities, both temporal and spiritual, took a leading role in marking these dates of national celebration. The ringing of bells and flying of flags, in particular, emphasised the king's position as head of the Church of England and was thus a regular demonstration of the success of the Protestant Succession. While this association of Church and King was less contentious in Bath than in

⁸ B. Harris & C. A. Whatley, "'To Solemnize His Majesty's Birthday': New Perspectives on Loyalism in George II's Britain", *History*, 83 (July, 1998), pp. 397-419.

⁹ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 2003), p. 222.

¹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (8th June 1786), p. 3b.

other parts of the kingdom, particularly Ireland, such displays still marginalised Protestant Dissenters and Catholics.¹¹

By the outbreak of the French Revolution, the Bath newspapers' reportage of the civic components had become somewhat perfunctory, as with the *Bath Chronicle*'s report from 1789: 'The anniversary of his Majesty's birth-day was observed here Thursday with the usual demonstrations of loyalty.'¹² The following year's report provided little extra detail: 'Friday being the anniversary of his Majesty's birth-day, (who entered the 53rd year of his age) was observed here by ringing of bells and the usual demonstrations of loyalty'.¹³ On the occasions that the *Bath Journal* reported on the king's birthday, it did so in the same pithy manner; in 1791 it reported that the anniversary 'was observed here with the greatest loyalty: The morning was welcomed by ringing of bells, &c.'¹⁴ Despite their brevity, subtle changes in these reports hint at shifts in the relationship between monarch and people. The 1792 reports reflected the growing political tensions in the nation. Rather than mention the 'usual demonstrations of loyalty', both the *Bath Chronicle* and *Bath Register* declared that the birthday 'was observed here with every public mark of affectionate loyalty'.¹⁵ Mark Harrison asserts that royal anniversaries were 'not a mere formality', but one could be forgiven for thinking otherwise when considering the brevity of these reports. He explains the similar brevity in the Bristol newspapers' reporting of these events in the second half of the decade as 'a lull in loyalist enthusiasm' brought about by

¹¹ J. Kelly, 'The Glorious and Immortal Memory': Commemoration and Protestant Identity in Ireland 1660-1800', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, Vol. 94C, No. 2 (1994), pp. 25-52.

¹² *Bath Chronicle* (11th June 1789), p. 3c.

¹³ *Bath Chronicle* (10th June 1790), p. 3b.

¹⁴ *Bath Journal* (6th June 1791), p. 4d.

¹⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (7th June 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (9th June 1792), p. 3c.

war weariness.¹⁶ It seems more likely that the newspaper publishers felt the need to mark these events, even if only briefly, in order to demonstrate continued allegiance to the crown, 'endowing local activities with national significance, and giving form and substance to the political nation'.¹⁷

According to McCormack, 'Time of war were notable for ritual expressions of loyalty'.¹⁸ So unsparingly the outbreak of war in February 1793 certainly revitalised the reporting in the Bath press, which took on a suitably martial aspect. Alongside the usual demonstrations of loyalty, the *Bath Chronicle* reported that 'At noon a salute was fired on the parade by the Herefordshire militia, who were each presented with a pint of beer to drink his Majesty's health'.¹⁹ The *Bath Herald* was even more effusive:

The anniversary of his Majesty's birth-day [...] was observed here with every mark of affection and attachment, as a testimony of regard to a Sovereign whose reign has been marked with mildness unequalled, by a due reverence for the religion and laws of his country, and by an unexampled love of his people and attention to their interests.—The morning was ushered in by a display of flags and the ringing of bells from the various churches: At noon two companies of the Herefordshire Militia were drawn up on Parade, and fired several rounds; from thence they marched into the Grove, when a pint of beer was given to each man to drink his Majesty's health, which they did with loud huzzas.²⁰

Nevertheless, subsequent years saw a return to the customary cursory coverage.²¹ The threat of invasion by French forces in 1798 may have prompted the *Bath Herald* to report that 'At noon a party of the Berkshire Militia drew up before the Town-Hall, and fired some excellent vollies; and the Magistrates

¹⁶ M. Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 237-9.

¹⁷ Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, p. 36.

¹⁸ McCormack, 'Rethinking 'Loyalty''.

¹⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (6th June 1793), p. 3b.

²⁰ *Bath Herald* (8th June 1793), p. 3d.

²¹ *Bath Chronicle* (5th June 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (4th June 1795), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (9th June 1796), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (14th June 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (7th June 1794), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (10th June 1797), p. 3d.

ordered each man a pint of beer to drink his Royal Master's health.²² While the firing of vollies was only rarely mentioned in the Bath press, other provincial newspapers regularly reported on these displays of royal authority in their places of publication, even before the war. Such reports were virtually an annual fixture in the *Derby Mercury*, which only failed to mention the firing of vollies in two years between 1789 and 1801.²³

Vollies were most evident in Bath in 1799, when the Bath volunteer corps chose the king's birthday as the date to consecrate their colours and banner. Embodied two years earlier to protect the Bath area in case of a French invasion, the volunteer force had become an active participant in civic ceremony.²⁴ In its extensive report, the *Bath Chronicle* explained that the event was witnessed by 'a prodigious croud, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather'.²⁵ The *Bath Herald* reported that

His Majesty's Birth-Day was observed in this city with more than usual demonstrations of joy and had the weather proved favourable it is supposed that there would have been a greater concourse of persons from the surrounding country than ever were witnessed here.²⁶

Such reports of those attending royal events were uncharacteristic in the Bath press. Harrison also found this to be the case in other provincial newspapers.²⁷ The corps were a source of pride for the city as demonstrated by the attendance at the ceremony of the mayor and Corporation, who gave an 'elegant public dinner' to the corps at the Guildhall following the consecration. This intimate

²² *Bath Herald* (9th June 1798), p. 3b.

²³ *Derby Mercury* (4th – 11th June 1789), p. 4c; *Derby Mercury* (3rd – 10th June 1790), p. 4c; *Derby Mercury* (9th June 1791), p. 4b; *Derby Mercury* (7th June 1792), p. 4c; *Derby Mercury* (11th June 1795), p. 4c; *Derby Mercury* (9th June 1796), p. 4c; *Derby Mercury* (8th June 1797), p. 4c; ²³ *Derby Mercury* (7th June 1798), p. 3b; *Derby Mercury* (6th June 1799), p. 3c; *Derby Mercury* (5th June 1800), p. 4d; *Derby Mercury* (11th June 1801), p. 4c.

²⁴ See Chapter 6.

²⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (6th June 1799), p. 3cd.

²⁶ *Bath Herald* (8th June 1799), p. 3b.

²⁷ Harrison, *Crowds and History*, p. 237.

association of the corporate body with the volunteers would not only have demonstrated civic robustness, but also enhanced the social authority of both parties.²⁸ They would have undoubtedly been grateful that, 'The whole ceremony was conducted with the utmost order, regularity, and accuracy, and fortunately without accident.'²⁹ The volunteers reprised their role, albeit without the same degree of pageantry the following year when they 'fired three excellent vollies on the occasion'.³⁰

The Bath newspapers only occasionally reported on the marking of the king's birthday in neighbouring towns. In 1799 the *Bath Herald* printed an editorial comment that goes some way to explain this scant coverage:

All the provincial papers as well as private letters which we have received this week are full of the most pleasing accounts of the general manifestation of joy, exhibited throughout the kingdom, on the late birth-day of our much-loved Sovereign – a day that has been celebrated with as much fervour and loyalty as at any period of his august reign. We trust our kind correspondents will accept of this general acknowledgement, as the limits of a weekly paper will not allow us to particularize the number of places that have been required of us.³¹

When they did report on civic celebrations, they only did so in the context of a particular event, as in 1793 when the *Bath Register* reported that

On Tuesday last, being his Majesty's birth-day, the Members of the Association of Friends to the King and Constitution, established at Devizes, dined together at the Town-Hall. The day was spent in the highest festivity; and in the evening there was a grand display of fire-works.³²

The reports appeared more often as the anniversary was marked by armed volunteers. In 1795 various local corps of volunteers marked the king's birthday with ceremonies, some of which attracted a large number of spectators. The *Bath*

²⁸ Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, 34.

²⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (6th June 1799), p. 3cd

³⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (5th June 1800), p. 3b.

³¹ *Bath Herald* (15th June 1799), p. 3c.

³² *Bath Register* (8th June 1793), p. 3c.

Chronicle reported that,

the respective corps of Volunteers from Honiton, Sidmouth, Exeter, Cullompton, Exmouth, Kenton, Newton, and Sir Stafford Northcote's troop of Light Dragoons, (in all about 800 men) were reviewed at Bicton park, by Col. Mackenzie. The concourse of spectators was immense, notwithstanding the heavy and incessant rain all the day, a line of more than 100 carriages was in the field.

The same day, the Weymouth Local Volunteers and the Honiton Volunteers received their colours.³³ Similarly, in 1798 'Capt. Sanford's troop of yeomanry paraded at Wellington, and after having performed some evolutions, they fired a *feu de joye*', after which the captain hosted 'a handsome entertainment for them, in honour of the day'. On the same day, the Wellington volunteer infantry dined together.³⁴ The following year the Frome volunteer associations chose the king's birthday to hold a 'grand field-day', which also involved neighbouring volunteer corps.³⁵ In these last examples, the exploits of the armed volunteers overshadowed the king's birthday, which was only mentioned in passing. This fitted a national trend, identified by Morris, in which 'the military component became increasingly integral'.³⁶

In Bath the celebrations of the queen's birthday (18th January) did not develop a military component as they did elsewhere. In the second half of the decade, newspapers in Leeds and Reading frequently reported on the firing of volleys to mark the day.³⁷ The *Norfolk Chronicle* even reported on a '*feu de joie*'

³³ *Bath Chronicle* (11th June 1795), p. 3d.

³⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (14th June 1798), p. 3c.

³⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (6th June 1799), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (8th June 1799), p. 3c.

³⁶ Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution*, pp. 149-50.

³⁷ *Leeds Intelligencer* (19th January 1795), p. 3c; *Leeds Intelligencer* (18th January 1796), p. 3b; *Leeds Intelligencer* (23rd January 1797), p. 3b; *Leeds Intelligencer* (22nd January 1798), p. 3b; *Leeds Intelligencer* (21st January 1799), p. 3b; *Reading Mercury* (25th January 1795), p. 3c; *Reading Mercury* (25th January 1796), p. 3b; *Reading Mercury* (23rd January 1797), p. 3c; *Reading Mercury* (22nd January 1798), p. 3c; *Reading Mercury* (21st January 1799), p. 3c; *Reading Mercury* (20th January 1800), p. 3; *Reading Mercury* (26th January 1801), p. 3c.

being fired in Norwich before the outbreak of war.³⁸ The Bath newspapers reported on the civic marks of respect for the birthday of Queen Charlotte only occasionally. These reports were as perfunctory as many of those that described the king's birthday, mentioning little more than the ringing of church bells and the flying of flags from the city's steeples.³⁹ Both the *Bath Herald* and the *Bath Register* printed reports at the height of the loyalist association movement in 1793, describing her as 'the amiable Consort of our beloved Sovereign' and 'the best of Queens', respectively.⁴⁰ In 1796 the *Bath Chronicle* and the *Bath Herald* did mention that the flags were replacements for those ruined by the storms during the Duke of York's recent residence in the city.⁴¹ In 1797 the *Bath Herald* reported that Lord John Thynne had chosen the date appointed for celebrating the queen's birthday for the traditional dinner given by the city's newly elected MPs at the Guildhall, where 'Many admirable constitutional toasts were given'.⁴² The *Bath Chronicle* also printed a brief report of the dinner.⁴³ The anniversary also provided an opportunity for paternalism by local elites. The *Bath Chronicle* and *Bath Journal* reported on one such case in 1792, during which Viscount Sidney and family celebrated the queen's birthday with a largesse of food, alcohol, blankets, clothes and firewood to the residents of Ludgershall, Wiltshire.⁴⁴

While the king and queen were arguably well suited to the roles of father and mother of the nation, the image of their sons was one of 'gambling,

³⁸ *Norfolk Chronicle* (22nd January 1791), p. 2c.

³⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (20th January 1791), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (23rd January 1794), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (25th January 1794), p. 3b.

⁴⁰ *Bath Herald* (19th January 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (19th January 1793), p. 3c.

⁴¹ *Bath Chronicle* (21st January 1796), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (23rd January 1796), p. 3d.

⁴² *Bath Herald* (21st January 1797), p. 3d.

⁴³ *Bath Chronicle* (19th January 1797), p. 3c.

⁴⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (26th January 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (23rd January 1792), p. 4d.

wenching, and extravagant lifestyles' which, according to Morris, only encouraged increased support for George III.⁴⁵ Similarly Harrison put it, 'part of the reason for the popularity of George III after 1789 was his relative dignity and morality when compared with the profane conduct of his sons'.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, George's eldest sons found their places on the Hanoverian political calendar. The *Bath Chronicle* reported civic celebrations to mark the Prince of Wales' birthday (12th August) every year between 1789 and 1801 with the exception of 1790.⁴⁷ By contrast, the *Bath Herald* reported civic celebrations of the birthday of the heir to the throne only four times.⁴⁸ These reports appeared in the usual perfunctory manner throughout the period.

Whereas other provincial newspapers occasionally reported on the heir's birthday being marked by martial spectacle, as in the *Reading Mercury*, those in Bath did not mention any military component, which became more associated with the Duke of York.⁴⁹ This was evident in the *Bath Register's* 1793 report of the birthdays of the two eldest royal princes; the Prince of Wales' birthday 'was observed in this city with the usual demonstrations of joy', whereas that of the Duke of York, 'the gallant Commander of the British forces now reaping laurels in France, was yesterday celebrated here by ringing of bells, the display of flags from the churches.'⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution*, p. 192.

⁴⁶ Harrison, *Crowds and History*, p. 245.

⁴⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (13th August 1789), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (18th August 1791), p. 3a; *Bath Chronicle* (16th August 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (15th August 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (14th August 1794), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (6th August 1795), p. 1b; *Bath Chronicle* (18th August 1796), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (17th August 1797), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (16th August 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (15th August 1799), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (14th August 1800), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (20th August 1801), p. 3c.

⁴⁸ *Bath Herald* (17th August 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (20th August 1796), p. 3e;; *Bath Herald* (17th August 1799), p. 3c.

⁴⁹ *Reading Mercury* (17th August 1795), p. 3c; *Reading Mercury* (20th August 1798), p. 3bc.

⁵⁰ *Bath Register* (17th August 1793), p. 3c.

Civic celebrations of the Duke of York's birthday only appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* following the outbreak of war in 1793, in recognition of his role in commanding the force serving in Flanders.⁵¹ In 1793, just six months after the declaration of war, the people of Bath honoured the Duke of York by marking his thirtieth birthday. The *Bath Chronicle* reported the 'hoisting of flags on the churches' and the bell ringing, while the *Bath Herald* described him as 'our truly gallant Prince'.⁵² The *Bath Chronicle* also carried accounts of similar celebrations held at Salisbury, Warminster, Frome and Devizes, noting 'the general affection for the Royal Family, and the high sense entertained of the Duke's important military services', and 'the loyalty of the inhabitants and their entire approbation of his R. Highness's conduct at the siege of Valenciennes'.⁵³ Similarly, both the *Bath Register* and the *Bath Herald* somehow printed exactly the same report on the same day:

Our correspondent at Frome informs us that the birth-day of his Royal Highness the Duke of York was observed there with every demonstration of joy: the ringing of bells commenced at an early hour of the morning; and the evening a general illumination was made throughout the town, which, with bonfires, fire-works, transparencies, &c. produced a most pleasing effect, and at once testified the loyalty of the inhabitants, and their entire approbation of the valorous conduct of the Royal Duke at the ever-memorable siege of Valenciennes.⁵⁴

In 1797 the *Bath Herald* declared

This week the birth-days of the two Royal Brothers were both celebrated in this city, with that testimony of respect and affection due to Princes, who have lately particularly honoured Bath by their personal attention.⁵⁵

The Duke's regular visits to the city probably gave the *Bath Herald* cause to

⁵¹ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd August 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (21st August 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (18th August 1796), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (17th August 1797), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (23rd August 1798), p. 3c.

⁵² *Bath Chronicle* (22nd August 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (17th August 1793), p. 3d.

⁵³ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd August 1793), p. 3c.

⁵⁴ *Bath Herald* (24th August 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (24th August 1793), p. 3c.

⁵⁵ *Bath Herald* (19th August 1797), p. 3e.

report on civic festivities in his honour in the years following his ignominious return from the continent, doing so every year from 1796 to 1799.⁵⁶ Newspapers in other towns that did not have this personal association with the duke only rarely reported his birthday. In 1793, both the *Reading Mercury* and the *Norfolk Chronicle* reported on local celebrations of his birthday alongside festivities held in honour of his older brother, again most likely in recognition of his service in Flanders.⁵⁷ Unlike in Bath, other provincial newspapers rarely mentioned the duke's anniversary in its own right. One such example did appear in the *Reading Mercury* in 1795. The celebration took on an understandable military tone with the 64th Regiment firing three volleys followed by a parade by the Reading Volunteers.⁵⁸ Similarly, in 1798 the *Bath Herald* reported on the military exercises of the Bath Volunteer Cavalry on Claverton Down held on the duke's birthday. While this report focused on the volunteers' manoeuvres, that which later appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* explicitly stated that the cavalry took to the field in honour of duke's birthday attracting 'many thousands of spectators'.⁵⁹ As with the consecration of their colours, the choice of a royal anniversary served to imbue the volunteers with legitimacy.

The Corporation, church and armed volunteers were not the only institutions to celebrate royal birthdays. In 1786, the *Bath Chronicle* contained a report of a Masonic event in Wells, where the Provincial Grand Master, Thomas Dunckerley, hosted 'a Provincial Grand Lodge for this county at the Assembly Room'. While this procession, the service at St Cuthbert's church and the dinner

⁵⁶ *Bath Herald* (20th August 1796), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (19th August 1797), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (18th August 1798), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (17th August 1799), p. 3c.

⁵⁷ *Reading Mercury* (19th August 1793), p. 3c; *Norfolk Chronicle* (17th August 1793), p. 2d.

⁵⁸ *Reading Mercury* (24th August 1795), p. 3c.

⁵⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd August 1798), p. 3c.

were all held 'in honour of his Majesty's Birth-day', they seem to have been as much a promotion of freemasonry as a celebration of the monarch.⁶⁰ Three years later Dunckerley again presided over a Grand Lodge at Bridgwater, this time honouring the birthday of the Prince of Wales, as advertised in the *Bath Journal*. The announcement was signed by William Meyler in his role as Provincial Grand Secretary.⁶¹ That same year, 'the most Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons for the city and county of Bristol', placed an advertisement in the *Bath Chronicle* for a 'Grand Lodge' to be held at the 'Merchant Taylors Hall' in honour of the birthday of the Duke of York. The ceremony included a procession to a stone laying ceremony, divine service and a dinner.⁶² In 1792 Dunckerley held two grand lodges, the first in Bristol in honour of the Duke of York's birthday, the second in Wells in honour of the Duke of Clarence's (21st August), both of which were advertised in the Bath press.⁶³ Reporting the latter, the *Bath Chronicle* declared that procession, service and dinner were carried out 'in that social harmony characteristick of all Masonic meetings'.⁶⁴ This report was copied with only minor changes in the *Bath Register*.⁶⁵ The *Bath Herald*, however, printed a more detailed report, probably because Meyler was in attendance, giving details of a particular toast to 'His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, and those defences of our country – the wooden walls of Old England', a reference to the duke's naval career. It also related that 'Several charming constitutional songs were sung'.⁶⁶ Three years later the same newspaper carried

⁶⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (8th June 1786), p. 3b.

⁶¹ *Bath Journal* (3rd August 1789), p. 4c.

⁶² *Bath Chronicle* (13th August 1789), p. 1d.

⁶³ *Bath Herald* (11th August 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (18th August 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Journal* (13th August 1792), p. 4c.

⁶⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd August 1792), p. 3c.

⁶⁵ *Bath Register* (25th August 1792), p. 3b.

⁶⁶ *Bath Herald* (25th August 1792), p. 3d.

a report of masonic meeting of the Royal Clarence Lodge at Frome to celebrate the Duke of Clarence's birthday, having received a dispensation from Dunckerley to do so. After the procession to church and divine service, the masons had 'an excellent dinner' which ended with 'many loyal and constitutional toasts'.⁶⁷

Dunkerley was clearly keen to associate masonic events with the royal princes, not least because they were patrons of the order. He also claimed to be related to them as the illegitimate son of George II, gaining recognition as such from George III in 1767.⁶⁸ As with the consecration of the Bath volunteer's colours, the masonic processions confirmed their social authority and contributed to civic vitality.⁶⁹

The anniversary of King George's coronation (22nd September) was another important date on the Hanoverian calendar. The civic authorities traditionally celebrated it with the usual marks of respect, as the *Bath Chronicle* reported in 1789:

The thirtieth anniversary of their Majesties' coronation was observed here yesterday with bell-ringing and the usual demonstrations of loyalty; in the evening the Corporation and many of the principal citizens, by invitation from the Mayor, partook of an elegant cold collation at the Guildhall, and afterwards drank to their Majesties' health, &c. &c.⁷⁰

After this milestone anniversary the *Bath Chronicle* reported the civic celebrations relatively frequently, albeit in a cursory manner.⁷¹ The *Bath Herald* also occasionally reported on the festivities associated with the anniversary. Its 1796 report was customarily brief, while that of the following year was more effusive,

⁶⁷ *Bath Herald* (29th August 1795), p. 3e.

⁶⁸ H. Sadler, *Thomas Dunckerley, His Life, Labours, and Letters* (London, 1891), p. 17; S. Mitchell Sommers, *Thomas Dunckerley and English Freemasonry* (Abingdon, 2016), pp. 3-16.

⁶⁹ *Wilson, Sense of the People*, p. 34.

⁷⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (24th September 1789), p. 3c.

⁷¹ *Bath Chronicle* (27th September 1792), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (25th September 1794), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (24th September 1795), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (28th September 1797), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (27th September 1798), p. 3b.

most likely reflecting fears of an imminent French invasion:

This being the Anniversary of his Majesty's Coronation, the morning was ushered in by ringing of bells, and with the earnest prayer of every loyal subject, that his Majesty's long reign of thirty-seven years, may through divine Providence yet be many years extended over these Kingdoms, which have long experienced his benign authority.⁷²

In 1798 the *Bath Herald* reported that the volunteer corps of Bradford-on-Avon held a review in honour of the anniversary of the coronation, after which they dined at the Swan Inn at the officers' expense.⁷³

The anniversary of George III's accession to the throne (25th October) also featured in the civic calendar in Bath, although the city's newspapers only sporadically reported on the celebrations. In 1791, the *Bath Chronicle* used the occasion to give a glowing report on the state of the monarchy and the nation, at a time when the French king was facing the aftermath of his Flight to Varennes.

Exactly one and thirty years yesterday, his Majesty acceded the throne. We are happy to say, that at no period during his reign was there ever a greater prospect of National or Domestic felicity; and it is the universal wish of all good subjects, that he may long continue to sway the sceptre of these realms. The morning, as usual, was ushered in by the ringing of bells, &c.⁷⁴

The following year the *Bath Herald* used the occasion to emphasise the 'prevailing sentiment of loyalty and contentment through the city'.⁷⁵ The latter half of the 1790s saw further brief mention of celebrations in the *Bath Chronicle*.⁷⁶

As with the birthdays of the king and the Duke of York, the commemoration of George's accession took on a distinctly military tone. In 1798, the city's civic authorities chose the anniversary as the day to celebrate the recent naval victories at the battles of the Nile and Tory Island. The *Bath Herald*

⁷² *Bath Herald* (24th September 1796), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (23rd September 1797), p. 3d.

⁷³ *Bath Herald* (29th September 1798), p. 3b.

⁷⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (27th October 1791), p. 3b.

⁷⁵ *Bath Herald* (27th October 1792), p. 3d.

⁷⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (27th October 1796), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (26th October 1797), p. 3c.

pointed out the 'peculiar propriety' of the mayor's selection of date for the celebrations not only because it was the anniversary of the king's accession, but also because it was St Crispin's Day.⁷⁷ In its local news section, the *Bath Chronicle* announced the 'very appropriately' timed festivities:

Two oxen, we hear, are to be roasted whole and distributed to the populace; a general illumination is to take place in the evening; and various other demonstrations of loyalty and patriotism will be displayed. We sincerely hope that our fellow-citizens will attend to the Magistrates' publick Caution that they will hold in remembrance the letter of Lord Nelson, and in testifying their joy, behave peaceably, and forget not to "give the Glory to GOD!"⁷⁸

A week later the *Bath Chronicle* also reported that the Bradford corps of armed volunteers marked the date of the accession, as well as the recent naval victory, with a field day; although, bad weather forced them to postpone the event for four days. Following their exercises,

The whole corps sat down at three o'clock, to a very good and plentiful dinner, to which the officers had been invited by the non-commissioned officers and privates, in return for the entertainment given by the officers on the Anniversary of the King's Coronation.⁷⁹

In 1795 the Warminster troop of Yeomanry cavalry chose the anniversary of the Restoration of Charles II (29th May), commonly known as Oak Apple Day, for public display. They marched in procession to attend a divine service before returning 'to their head-quarters at the Bell Inn, where they dined and spent the afternoon with conviviality and good order'.⁸⁰ The *Bath Chronicle* reported this anniversary only sporadically, as in 1792 when it made only a brief mention of the marking of the day. The usual demonstrations of loyalty were augmented with particular symbolism associated with the day: the display of 'oak branches in the

⁷⁷ *Bath Herald* (27th October 1798), p. 3b.

⁷⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (25th October 1798), p. 3c.

⁷⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (1st November 1798), p. 3c.

⁸⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (4th June 1795), p. 3b.

streets'.⁸¹ The 1793 celebrations were coloured by the struggle between the city's Corporation and its freemen with regard to the latter's wish to develop the Bath commons. In a rare admission of disunity in the city, the *Bath Chronicle* reported the usual civic displays of affection, the attendance of divine service by the mayor and Corporation, along with the freemen's perambulation of the commons, the status of which was then in dispute.⁸² This was the only year that the *Bath Herald* reported on the public marking of the anniversary, although its account focused on freemen's perambulation.⁸³ Earlier in that most politically charged year the *Bath Herald* reported on the marking of the 'Anniversary of the Martyrdom of King Charles the First':

Abel Moysey, Esq. our present worthy Mayor, accompanied by the Members of the Corporation, several of the County Magistrates, the Committee of the Bath [Loyalist] Association, and many other Gentlemen, dressed in mourning, went in Procession to the Abbey Church, where divine service was performed, and an excellent sermon, suitable to the solemn occasion, was preached by Dr. Phillott.⁸⁴

The *Bath Chronicle's* 1794 report of the anniversary of the Restoration took a markedly unifying and loyalist tone, contrasting the British constitution with that of republican France:

We never saw a greater number on the occasion – and we viewed them with more pleasure, as holding out an opinion favourable to our present Constitution, and hostile to any principle that could lead to the destructive system of the French tyranny. The Mayor and Corporation attended divine service at the Abbey, as usual.⁸⁵

As Harrison observes, newspapers were susceptible to describing crowds attending civic celebrations as a single homogenous being to emphasise social

⁸¹ *Bath Chronicle* (31st May 1792), p. 3b.

⁸² *Bath Chronicle* (30th May 1793), p. 3c; See Chapter 1.

⁸³ *Bath Herald* (1st June 1793), p. 3c.

⁸⁴ *Bath Herald* (2nd February 1793), p. 3c.

⁸⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (5th June 1794), p. 3d.

unity.⁸⁶

Commercial Festivities

Whereas the civic demonstrations of royal anniversaries could have been enjoyed by all ranks of society in Bath, the city's assembly rooms and pleasure gardens provided more exclusive entertainments to the dates. Colley notes the symbiotic relationship between the monarchy and commerce: 'As the scale of royal celebration widened, so did its attraction for commercialization which, in turn, helped to publicize events and heighten public anticipation of them.'⁸⁷ In 1786, an advertisement announced the second annual grand fête at the Spring Gardens, Vauxhall, held in honour of the king's birthday with 'Illuminations, Catches, Glees, &c'.⁸⁸ The advertisement for the first annual grand fête, that had taken place the year before, made no mention of any royal connection as it took place after the king's birthday.⁸⁹ In 1789 both the Spring Gardens and Villa Gardens held events not only to mark the king's birthday, but also to celebrate his 'happy recovery' from mental infirmity.⁹⁰

The use of the king's birthday as a promotional tool must have proven popular because the gala became an annual event which dominated the newspaper reports of the celebrations. Whereas the reporting of civic marks of respect was often perfunctory, the reporting of commercial entertainments was often much more detailed. This is understandable because whereas the civic celebrations followed the same format each year, the pleasure gardens'

⁸⁶ Harrison, *Crowds and History*, p. 170.

⁸⁷ Colley, 'The Apotheosis of George III', pp. 94-129.

⁸⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (1st June 1786), p. 3b.

⁸⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (9th June 1785), p. 3d.

⁹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (4th June 1789), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (1st June 1789), p. 4d; *Bath Journal* (8th June 1789), p. 4bc.

entertainments offered a degree of novelty. This was certainly the case in 1790 when the Grand Gala at the Spring Gardens was marred by the theft of musical instruments and sheet music which ‘occasioned a scene of laughable confusion’ witnessed by ‘above 2000 persons, among whom were most of the principal Gentry of the city and neighbourhood’.⁹¹ In 1791 the *Bath Journal* applauded the festivities:

in the evening near Two Thousand people assembled at Spring-Gardens Vauxhall.—The illuminations were so nouvelle, so beautiful as well as applicable to the occasion, that they truly merited the warm approbations they received. The Fire-Works were grand beyond conception, and did honour to Signor Invetto, the inventor.— In short, nothing was omitted by the proprietor, to render the entertainment worthy of the Festival it meant to celebrate.⁹²

As a reflection of Meyler’s taste for performance, the reports in his *Bath Herald* detailed the entertainments at the galas. In 1792 it reported an ‘amazing concourse assembled’ to witness the festivities at Spring Gardens that included the first appearance of an unnamed lady in the orchestra, ‘who added much to the amusement of the evening by her abilities as a singer’.⁹³ Two years later it again detailed the performances, noting that ‘the loyal and constitutional songs, and glees were received with heart-felt approbation’.⁹⁴ In 1795 it related that

the Concert went off with great applause, and the Fire-works were as grand as any ever produced by the ingenuity of Invetto, or the liberality of Mr. Pritchard, who this night took his leave as Conductor of the entertainments at these Gardens, which he has many years carried on, much to the satisfaction of the public.⁹⁵

The Spring Gardens continued to host similar Grand Galas until their closure in 1796.⁹⁶ The same year, a rival Grand Gala in honour of the king’s birthday took

⁹¹ *Bath Chronicle* (10th June 1790), p. 3b.

⁹² *Bath Journal* (6th June 1791), p. 4d.

⁹³ *Bath Herald* (9th June 1792), p. 3d.


⁹⁴ *Bath Herald* (7th June 1794), p. 3e.

⁹⁵ *Bath Herald* (6th June 1795), p. 3c.

⁹⁶ Hembry, *The English Spa*, p. 127.

place at Sydney Gardens, which James Gale had opened in May 1795. In the advertisement for the gala, Gale further demonstrated the value of establishing a royal connection with places of entertainment:

J. Gale, being determined to exert himself to the utmost for the accommodation of the company, informs the public that there will be erected at a very great expense, a most elegant Room, which he humbly dedicates to his Royal Highness the Duke of York, to be called *The Duke of York Gallery*, and which will be superbly illuminated for Supper Parties.⁹⁷



SPRING GARDENS,
VAUXHALL, BATH.

ON FRIDAY the 4th of June, will be a GRAND GALA, in honour of His MAJESTY's BIRTH-DAY, When these Gardens will be BRILLIANTLY ILLUMINATED with a Variety of FANCY PIECES and DECORATIONS suitable to the occasion.—*The Concert to begin precisely at Seven o'Clock.*

Principal Vocal Performers,
Miss BRETT, Mr. WORDSWORTH, and Mr. FOX.

<i>First Violin, Mr. Brooks</i>	<i>Violoncelle, Mr. Herschel</i>
<i>Oboe, Mr. Ashley</i>	<i>&c. &c.</i>

Act I. Overture.—A new loyal Song, *Old England great in Art and Arms*, Mr. Fox.—Glee.—Symphony.—Song, Mr. Wordsworth, *The British Flag shall still maintain*, Hook.—By desire, a favourite Duetto from *The Haunted Tower*, by Miss Brett, and Mr. Wordsworth.—Full Piece.

Act II. Overture.—New Hunting Song, set to Musick by Mr. Shield, *To the Chase, &c.* Mr. Fox.—Glee, *Sigh no more, Ladies*, Miss Brett, Mr. Wordsworth, and Mr. Fox.—Concerto Violin, Mr. Brooks.—*Fen of Aberdeen*, a new favourite Scotch Song, Miss Brett.—Full Piece.

Act III. Overture.—Song, *The Soldier tir'd of Wars alarms*, Miss Brett.—Concerto Oboe, Mr. Ashley.—Symphony.—*The Banished Must*, an Ode for his Majesty's Birth-Day, Mr. Wordsworth, (composed by Mr. Boyton.)

End of Act 3d, will be a Superb Display of
F I R E - W O R K S,
By the ingenious Artist Signor INVETTO;
In which the Artist has not been sparing of his labour or skill, nor the Proprietor of any expence, (if novelty, elegance, and grandeur, are allowed to be recommendations) to render it the best ever exhibited at Bath on any occasion.

Tickets to be had of Mr. Pritchard, at the Parade Coffee-House, and at the Gate of the Gardens, at 1s. each. [4131]

Plate 6: Advertisement for a Grand Gala at Spring Gardens.
Bath Chronicle (3rd June 1790).⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (2nd June 1796), p. 3d.

⁹⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd June 1790), p. 1b.

The *Bath Herald* reported extensively on the ‘first public night at these very elegant and extensive Gardens [...] with the exhibitions that were intended for His Majesty’s birth day’, a fact that was only mentioned in passing. The report focused on a ‘crowd [that] was so great that many were obliged to wait nearly an hour before they could procure admittance’, the entertainments that were provided and the ‘astonishment’ of those present. The report ended by declaring that ‘When the whole plan of Sydney Gardens is complete they will surpass every public garden in this Kingdom, or perhaps in Europe’.⁹⁹ The newspaper was similarly effusive in its report of the preparations of the following year’s Grand Gala, declaring them to be ‘in a stile superior to any thing ever exhibited in a public garden, out of London’.¹⁰⁰ Its report of that years’ festivities again made particular mention of performers.¹⁰¹ It later printed a poem written about the gala that was ‘dropped by an unknown hand in the Rustick Alcove at Sydney Garden’. While it waxed lyrical about the gardens and the entertainments on offer, it had nothing to say about the king’s birthday, suggesting that the anniversary had become somewhat lost in the spectacle.

The Sydney Gardens established itself as the main venue for annual galas and fêtes in Bath, but not without competition. In 1798 a rival gala that took place at the Grosvenor Gardens Vauxhall, in honour of the king’s birthday, which offered ‘A Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music’ accompanied by the same band that appeared at Sydney Gardens.¹⁰² Possibly in response to this competition the gala at Sydney Gardens included a further attraction

⁹⁹ *Bath Herald* (18th June 1796), p. 3e.

¹⁰⁰ *Bath Herald* (27th May 1797), p. 3e.

¹⁰¹ *Bath Herald* (10th June 1797), p. 3d.

¹⁰² *Bath Chronicle* (31st May 1798), p. 3e.

exhibited in a stile never before attempted in this kingdom, A Minute Representation of The Glorious Action between Lord Duncan and the Dutch Fleet, Under the command of Admiral De Winter, on the memorable 11th of October 1797. Shewing the different Positions and Manoeuvres of the two Fleets, with the Capture and Striking of the Dutch Admiral and Eight Ships of the Line. To conclude with a Hornpipe in Character by a British Sailor.¹⁰³

This re-enactment illustrates the connection between the monarchy and the prosecution of the war, but as we shall see below, the pleasure gardens' use of martial themes to mark royal anniversaries pre-dated the outbreak of hostilities. It is more likely that the proprietors of the gardens tapped into a taste for military spectacle to attract custom.

The *Bath Chronicle* only provided a report of the Sydney Garden event, claiming that it was attended by 'near three thousand persons of fashion and respectability'.¹⁰⁴ The *Bath Herald* equitably reported on both events, emphasising the attraction of Sydney Garden: 'During the day the streets were filled with Ladies and Gentlemen from the Country, who came on purpose to attend the Evening Gala'. The report agreed with the *Bath Chronicle*'s estimate of the number in attendance, while also noting that Grosvenor Gardens attracted a 'very respectable Assemblage'.¹⁰⁵ The following year again saw events at both of the pleasure gardens, with Sydney Garden's scheduled for the 4th June and Grosvenor Gardens on the 12th June.¹⁰⁶ Inclement weather severely impacted the numbers attending the former event, which the *Bath Herald* estimated at 'many hundreds'.¹⁰⁷

Reporting the number of attendees at these galas held to mark the king's

¹⁰³ *Bath Chronicle* (31st May 1798), p. 1d.

¹⁰⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (7th June 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁵ *Bath Herald* (9th June 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁰⁶ *Bath Herald* (1st June 1799), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (8th June 1799), p. 3d.

¹⁰⁷ *Bath Herald* (8th June 1799), p. 3b.

birthday was particularly important to the Bath newspapers. The *Bath Chronicle*'s report in 1792, which stated that Spring Garden's gala had 'a greater appearance of company than ever before seen there, in number exceeding 2200'.¹⁰⁸ The next year the *Bath Register* reported that 'nearly two thousand persons were assembled' at the gala.¹⁰⁹ In 1794 the *Bath Herald* numbered those in attendance at Spring Gardens as 'near 1500', and the following year as 'nearly to two thousand'.¹¹⁰ In 1797 it gave a figure of 'upwards of eighteen hundred'.¹¹¹ By relating these figures, the newspapers not only showed the popularity of these events with those who could afford to attend, but also testified to the affection felt to the monarch. For the historian they demonstrate that Bath was an exceptional case, as according to Morris the number of guests attending birthday galas around the nation declined between 1795 and 1798.¹¹² Yet, the reports in the Bath press gave no indication of this; rather, the figures from the *Bath Chronicle* demonstrated a growth in numbers attending: over 2,000 in 1790, over 2,200 in 1792, near 2,000 in 1795, near 3,000 in 1798 and 3,000 in 1801.¹¹³ This may have been due to Bath's singular position as the country's most popular resort, or the particular attraction of the gardens.

During the 1780s, the Bath assembly rooms had hosted subscription balls in honour of the king's birthday, such as the one Mr Gyde advertised at the Lower Assembly Rooms in 1780, and another advertised three years later at the Upper Assembly Rooms.¹¹⁴ From the middle of the decade these balls were supplanted

¹⁰⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (7th June 1792), p. 3c; Also in *Bath Register* (9th June 1792), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁹ *Bath Register* (8th June 1793), p. 3c.

¹¹⁰ *Bath Herald* (7th June 1794), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (6th June 1795), p. 3c.

¹¹¹ *Bath Herald* (10th June 1797), p. 3d.

¹¹² Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution*, p. 144.

¹¹³ *Bath Chronicle* (10th June 1790), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (7th June 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (11th June 1795), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (7th June 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (11th June 1801), p. 3b.

¹¹⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (1st June 1780), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (29th May 1783), p. 3c.

by grand fêtes and galas held at the city's pleasure gardens. Yet, Bath's two Upper and Lower Assembly Rooms continued to stage balls in honour of the date appointed for Queen Charlotte's birthday, taking it in turns to host the event each year. The date appointed for celebrating the queen's birthday was 18th January, even though she was actually born on 19th May. In his *Memoirs of Her Most Excellent Majesty Sophia-Charlotte*, John Watkins provided an explanation for this inconsistency:

As Her Majesty's birth-day came within three weeks of that of the king, it was deemed advisable, for the benefit of trade, and public convenience, to celebrate the former at an earlier period: accordingly, notice was given that the same would be observed on the eighteenth of January following, and every after on the same day.¹¹⁵

The choice of date certainly benefited the city's assembly rooms. Even though the balls were commercial endeavours, they were not advertised in the Bath press, as were the galas that took place in honour of the king's birthday, rather each of the newspapers announced them as part of the local news, a sure sign that these venues were considered of great importance to the city's prosperity.

In 1794 the *Bath Chronicle* went even further with the free promotion of the ball as part of the local news, listing the nobles who intended to attend:

It is with sincere pleasure we announce to the publick, that the Ball at the New Rooms on Saturday next, in honour of the birth-day of our most gracious and amiable Queen, promises to be, what it ever ought to be, extremely *brilliant* and *fashionable*. Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cumberland, their Graces of Devonshire and Ancaster, the Earls of Peterborough, Hadinton, Howth, and Enniskillen; Lords Lisle and Northland, Ladies Lisle, Foster, Ely and Clifden, &c. &c. have already honoured the subscription; and there is no doubt the present pleasing opportunity for the display of *Loyalty*, will be embraced with equal zeal by our numerous fashionable visitors, and our worthy respectable residents.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ J. Watkins, *Memoirs of Her Most Excellent Majesty Sophia-Charlotte, Queen of Great Britain, from Authentic Documents* (London, 1819), p. 152.

¹¹⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (16th January 1794), p. 3c.

Since the appointed day of celebration for the queen's birthday was in winter, it is quite understandable that commercial events linked to the day took place indoors. Yet in 1792 the proprietors of the Amphitheatre on Monmouth Street advertised 'a most superb display of fire-works' along with 'a variety of other Performances'.¹¹⁷ Unsurprisingly this event failed to become an annual fixture on the Bath social calendar.

These balls certainly fitted the public persona of the queen, having a stronger link to her than the galas had to the king, as evidenced by the newspapers' occasional reports. In 1793 the *Bath Herald* declared that

The Ball at the Lower Assembly Rooms will be brilliantly attended on this occasion, to testify the high esteem that is universally entertained of the BEST of QUEENS; who it may be truly said
Hath borne her faculties so meek, hath been
So *clear* in her GREAT OFFICE, that her Virtues
Speak like ANGELS, trumpet tongued.¹¹⁸

Despite the peculiar paraphrasing Macbeth speaking about King Duncan, at a time when Louis XVI faced execution, the report again shows the literary tastes of Meyler's newspaper. In 1794 the *Bath Journal* briefly mentioned the Ball at the New Rooms, but also that an additional verse had been added to 'God Save the King' at the theatre in honour of the queen's anniversary was met 'with the most unbounded applause'.¹¹⁹ The *Bath Herald's* report claimed the birthday ball to have been the 'most numerous and splendid [...] ever known in this city', and that of two years later was 'very brilliant, truly elegant and agreeable, and crouded by beauty, fashion, and loyalty'.¹²⁰ The 1797 ball 'was attended by a numerous assemblage of persons of the first rank, anxious to shew their respect to a

¹¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (19th January 1792), p. 3a.

¹¹⁸ *Bath Herald* (19th January 1793), p. 3c.

¹¹⁹ *Bath Journal* (20th January 1794), p. 4e.

¹²⁰ *Bath Herald* (25th January 1794), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (23rd January 1796), p. 3d.

virtuous and much loved Queen, the consort of the best of Sovereigns, and the mother of the finest family in Europe'.¹²¹

Judging from the lack of reports in other provincial newspapers, the commercialisation of the princes' birthdays appears to have been limited to Bath and London. Beginning in 1784 the Spring Gardens offered an annual evening of fireworks, illuminations and music in honour of the Prince of Wales' birthday – two years prior to the first fête to mark the king's birthday.¹²² The following year the rival Villa Gardens hosted a similar event, including a display of hot air balloons.¹²³ These continued every year until 1788, when the festivities included the added attraction of a recreation of the Great Siege of Gibraltar.¹²⁴ In 1782 Marrett the wine merchant opened these gardens in Bathwick, catering 'mainly for the lower ranks' until their closure in 1790.¹²⁵ The annual celebrations continued during the Regency crisis of 1788, indicating that neither the prince's lifestyle nor his opposition to his father presented sufficient reason for the gardens not to honour his birthday. As they did with the king's birthday, Sydney Gardens took over the celebration of the prince's birthday with an annual Grand Gala when the Spring Gardens ceased operations.¹²⁶

The reports in the Bath newspapers followed much the same format as they did for the galas held in honour of the king. Again there was an emphasis on showing the popularity of the events. In 1789 the *Bath Chronicle* announced that Spring Gardens were to hold 'a grand gala in the evening, to which the fineness of the day and the variety of the entertainments will draw a vast crowd of

¹²¹ *Bath Herald* (21st January 1797), p. 3d.

¹²² *Bath Chronicle* (5th August 1784), p. 3c.

¹²³ *Bath Chronicle* (11th August 1788), p. 3d.

¹²⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (7th August 1788), p. 3c.

¹²⁵ Hembry, *The English Spa*, p. 127.

¹²⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (11th August 1796), p. 1b.

company'.¹²⁷ Two years later it reported that despite the rain 'there was a numerous appearance of company at Spring-Gardens, where there was a Concert, and a splendid display of Fire-Works on the occasion'.¹²⁸ Its 1792 report related that 'more than two thousand persons from the city and country were present'.¹²⁹ The following year it numbered 'a genteel and crouded assemblage of company' at over 2,400 'who expressed the most general satisfaction at the whole of the evening's entertainment'.¹³⁰ The *Bath Register*'s brief report mentioned 'a numerous assemblage of spectators'.¹³¹ The *Bath Herald* reported that the gardens attracted 'the greatest concourse of people we ever witnessed at that place', before waxing lyrical about Signor Invetto's recreation of the Siege of Valenciennes, which

highly delighting all the country *Lasses* and their *Loviers*, "who never saw any thing so shockingly pretty in their born days;" whilst many a hapless damsel, whose destined partner is actually engaged in these perilous, though glorious enterprises, shewed evident marks of the sensations of her heart, at the real danger which her absent Soldier must encounter. The entertainment for ear, eye, and appetite, which the proprietor had provided on this crouded occasion, was the subject of general encomium.¹³²

Clearly the galas not only attracted patrons from the city and the visiting Company, but also from the surrounding country. This is borne out by the 1797 report in the *Bath Chronicle*, which stated that 'a numerous assemblage of genteel company were present, from the city and country', despite that years' gala being postponed because of inclement weather.¹³³ Its report from the following year compared Bath favourably with London;

The fashionable and elegant parties of this city, added to the numerous

¹²⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (13th August 1789), p. 3c.

¹²⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (18th August 1791), p. 3a.

¹²⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (16th August 1792), p. 3c; Also in *Bath Register* (18th August 1792), p. 3b.

¹³⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (15th August 1793), p. 3c.

¹³¹ *Bath Register* (17th August 1793), p. 3c.

¹³² *Bath Herald* (17th August 1793), p. 3d.

¹³³ *Bath Chronicle* (17th August 1797), p. 3c.

parties from Bristol and the neighbouring country in carriages, exhibited in Pulteney-street and appearance similar to the streets round St. James's on a birth-day. The splendid illuminations, fire-works, music, excellent wines, provisions, &c. were so admirable, as to call forth expressions of high approbation from every individual present.¹³⁴

The *Bath Herald* declared that 'Great Pulteney-street was lined with carriages that came from Bristol and all the surrounding country to attend this delightful scene'.¹³⁵



Prince of Birth- *Wales's Day.*

SPRING VAUXHALL, GARDENS, BATH.

THE ANNUAL GRAND FESTIVAL,
In Honour of his Royal Highness
The PRINCE of WALES's BIRTH-DAY,
Will be held at these Gardens, on MONDAY the 12th
of August, 1793.
Consisting of Vocal and Instrumental MUSICK,
ILLUMINATIONS, TRANSPARANCIES, &c. &c.
SUITABLE TO THE OCCASION.
And a Superb DISPLAY of FIRE-WORKS,
By the Ingenious Signor INVETTO.
Principal Vocal Performers,
Mr. KELLY, Mr. ASHLEY, Mr. THOMAS, Mr.
WOOLLEY, Mr. DIBBENS, and Mastr. GOULD.
WITH A FULL INSTRUMENTAL BAND.
The Concert to begin at Six o'Clock.
The Fire-Works will be between the 2d and 3d Acts,
and to conclude with
A GRAND REPRESENTATION OF
The Siege and Surrender of VALENCIENNES.
Servants in Livery will not be admitted.
Tickets 1s. each, to be had of Mr. Pritchard, at the
Parade Coffee-house, and at the gate of the Gardens.
590] VIVAT PRINCEPS CAMBRIÆ.

Plate 7: Advertisement for the Annual Grand Festival at Spring Gardens.
Bath Chronicle (8th August 1793).¹³⁶

¹³⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd August 1798), p. 3c.

¹³⁵ *Bath Herald* (18th August 1798), p. 3b.

¹³⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (8th August 1793), p. 3e.

That year's Grand Gala Fete at Sydney Gardens took place 'In Honour of the Birth-Days of their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and Duke of York', made possible by the proximity of the royal brothers' birthdays, although this dual celebration was not to be repeated. Fittingly at a time when the country was celebrating the victories of the Royal Navy it included

*A Descriptive View of Shipping in a Storm, With a minute Representation of A Grand Naval Engagement, Between an English Squadron of Four and a French Squadron of Six Ships of the Line, besides Frigates, Sloops, &c. with the sinking and burning of Three French Ships of the Line, Two taken, and One escaped. The English having only One Ship of the Line disabled, and One Frigate sunk. To conclude with a Hornpipe in Character, By a British Sailor.*¹³⁷

The Duke of York had been indirectly acknowledged five years earlier in 1793 as part of the Spring Gardens' 'Annual Grand Festival' in honour of the Prince of Wales that concluded with a 'grand representation of The Siege and Surrender of Valenciennes' at which the Duke of York commanded the Coalition armies.¹³⁸ The pleasure gardens of Bath occasionally hosted gala evenings in honour of the duke's birthday, in 1796 at Spring Gardens and in 1797 at Sydney Gardens.¹³⁹ In its report of the former event, the *Bath Herald* again emphasised the attraction of the events to 'the crowds which flock to them from the surrounding country'.¹⁴⁰

In 1793 the gala scheduled to take place in his honour at the Spring Gardens had to be cancelled 'on account of the preceding day's rain'. Yet, the proximity of the birthdays of the king's three eldest sons came to the rescue, as the *Bath Chronicle* informed its readers; 'the fire-works are to be displayed to-night, in honour of the Duke of Clarence, who this day completes his 28th year.'¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (16th August 1798), p. 3d.

¹³⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (8th August 1793), p. 3e.

¹³⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (11th August 1796), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (17th August 1797), p. 3e.

¹⁴⁰ *Bath Herald* (20th August 1796), p. 3e.

¹⁴¹ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd August 1793), p. 3c.

Such outdoor events were always at the mercy of the weather, as had been the case in 1789. That year Marrett advertised a Grand Fete at his Villa Gardens to mark the birthday of the Duke of Clarence, which recognised his naval career by including an appropriate representation of 'A Curious Sea Engagement', along with the usual illuminations, music and a fireworks display conducted by the ubiquitous Signor Invetto.¹⁴² On that occasion bad weather worked against the future King William IV, but as the *Bath Chronicle* reported, the ever enterprising Invetto, 'By Desire of several Benevolent Ladies and Gentlemen', prevailed upon Marrett to return the fireworks in order that he could display his pyrotechnic skills at the Spring Gardens 'in Commemoration of His Majesty's Coronation'.¹⁴³ Again in 1790 the Spring Gardens dedicated the last 'Publick Night' of the season to the anniversary of the coronation.¹⁴⁴ In 1795 Spring Gardens held another entertainment in honour of the anniversary of the king's coronation as a benefit night for Invetto.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, in the following year, Sydney Garden dedicated its last Gala of the Season to the anniversary.¹⁴⁶ The *Bath Herald* reported that the event 'was most brilliantly illuminated, Mr. Gale closing his public nights by this mark of affection to the best of Sovereigns'.¹⁴⁷ In the following year the fates again interfered with the plans of Signor Invetto, this time to the benefit of the Spring Gardens:

On Thursday next the 22nd September inst. being the Anniversary of his Majesty's Coronation, these gardens will be brilliantly illuminated with Grand Fire-Works, Prepared by Signor Invetto, And intended to be displayed before their Majesties at Weymouth, but an unexpected hindrance arising, the Proprietor of these Gardens has purchased them to

¹⁴² *Bath Chronicle* (20th August 1789), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (17th August 1789), p. 4c.

¹⁴³ *Bath Chronicle* (17th September 1789), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (16th September 1790), p. 3d.

¹⁴⁵ *Bath Herald* (19th September 1795), p. 3d.

¹⁴⁶ *Bath Herald* (3rd September 1796), p. 3d.

¹⁴⁷ *Bath Herald* (24th September 1796), p. 3d.

celebrate at Bath the return of this joyful day.¹⁴⁸

In 1796 Sydney Gardens also dedicated the last night of that season to a 'Superb Gala, In Honour of His Majesty's Coronation'. The entry fee for the event was one shilling, significantly less than the two shillings charged for their birthday galas.¹⁴⁹

The anniversary of the coronation did not become a fixture on the calendar of celebrations in Bath as did royal birthdays, suggesting that it was the persons of the king and queen particularly (and to a lesser extent, those of the princes) that the citizens celebrated, rather than the institution of monarchy, which does not chime with Colley's argument for a 'cult of monarchy'.¹⁵⁰

Conclusion

The commemoration of dates in the Hanoverian calendar provided the residents and visitors in Bath to associate themselves, not only with one another, but also with the nation as a whole, as exemplified by the royal family. This is not to suggest that the calendar was in any way immutable, as revealed in the changing pattern of dates celebrated at different stages of the period, as well as in the variety of festivities. At the beginning of the French Revolutionary period, the Bath press reported civic celebrations of events on the Hanoverian calendar in the most perfunctory manner. This contrasted starkly with the vibrant advertisements, announcements and news reports of commercial celebrations. It is possible that the news reports may have been "puffs", although it seems unlikely that the proprietors of the pleasure gardens would pay for advertisements *and* to have their events "puffed up". A more reasonable explanation would be that the

¹⁴⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd September 1791), p. 3b.

¹⁴⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd September 1796), p. 3d.

¹⁵⁰ Colley, 'Whose Nation?', pp. 97-117.

newspaper proprietors felt a kinship with the owners of the places of entertainment, which may also explain why the conductors of the city's assembly rooms did not feel the need to advertise their balls in honour of the queen, when the newspapers would be happy to announce them gratis.

The outbreak of war changed this situation in a number of ways. The Duke of York's command of the forces in Flanders resulted in recognition of his birthday in both civic and commercial celebrations, which were continued in Bath even after the end of the campaign as a result of his personal association with the city. The civic festivities associated with royal anniversaries took on a more martial aspect, not least because volunteer corps chose those dates for their ceremonies, thereby acquiring legitimacy. The reporting of these events suggests that the participation by soldiers, both professional and amateur, breathed new life into civic commemoration of dates on the Hanoverian calendar, offering a chance for Bath's resident population and visitors of all social statuses to associate with one another in support of the monarchy. Yet, this martial component did not come to dominate these celebrations. Unlike elsewhere celebrations of the day appointed to mark Queen Charlotte's birthday did not take on a military tone in Bath, neither did the civic commemorations of the birthday of the Prince of Wales.

Chapter 4: Radicals and Reformers

Introduction

To use John Mee's phrase, 'Popular radicalism was the creature of print'.¹ That creature certainly had a presence in the Bath newspapers. They carried advertisements for publications that argued the case for political reform, in a pamphlet war with those that defended the existing political order.² They also carried notices placed by societies founded in Bath and further afield. These had formed as the French Revolution breathed new life into the rather moribund campaign for reform. These societies took particular inspiration from the writings of Thomas Paine, the popularity of which resulted in an organised conservative reaction. This zealous suppression of radicalism resulted in attacks, both physical and verbal, on those perceived to be a threat to the existing order.³ This climate may have been the reason why the Bath newspapers stopped printing letters support, or more usually in defence, of reform. Those accused of harbouring radical sympathies used the newspapers to distance themselves from such allegations, for fear that the damage caused to their reputation would affect their prosperity. Following the outbreak of war, the government took an active role in the suppression of radicalism in a period that became known as "Pitt's Terror", marked by a wave of prosecutions for sedition.⁴ The Bath press printed reports of those arrested and tried for sedition in the city and region as part of its local news.

¹ J. Mee, *Print, Publicity, and Popular Radicalism in the 1790s: The Laurel of Liberty* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 113.

² Butler (Ed.), *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy*.

³ See Chapter 5.

⁴ C. Emsley, 'An Aspect of Pitt's "Terror": Prosecutions for Sedition during the 1790s', *Social History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (May, 1981), pp. 155-84.

While the Bath newspapers' content provides evidence of the actions and fates of radicals and reformers in the city, it is particularly worth noting what they did not report. This chapter will explore two instances in which the actions of anti-Jacobins failed to make the pages of the Bath press. In January 1794 the city's mayor, Henry Harington, a fervent adversary of the cause for reform, entered the bookshop of J. C. B. Campbell, the reform-minded former publisher of the *Bath Register*, and took down a notice on the grounds that it was seditious. Five months later a mob demolished Campbell's house resulting in his bankruptcy. These events certainly give credence to Poole's description of the period as a 'reign of terror' in Bath.⁵ This chapter argues that while the actions of the city's authorities and loyalist association did not match those of the terrorists in France, they certainly engendered a climate of fear in which radicals and reformers alike were effectively silenced.

Radicals in the Bath Press: Advertisements, Notices and Letters

The meteoric rise of the loyalist movement in the winter of 1792-3 (explored in greater detail in the next chapter) resulted in a campaign against prints that were critical of the existing political order; yet prior to that the public sphere was the battlefield in what became known as the "pamphlet war".⁶ Many writers responded in print to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, including Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin and James Mackintosh. The Bath newspapers carried advertisements for some of these prints, and the city's booksellers had them available for sale. Several issues of the *Bath Chronicle* carried an advertisement for the first part of Paine's *Rights of Man*, announcing

⁵ Poole, 'Radicalism, Loyalism, and the "Reign of Terror" in Bath'.

⁶ Butler (Ed.), *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy*.

that it was 'sold by the booksellers of Bath'.⁷ The *Bath Journal* also printed an advertisement for the sixth edition of Paine's tract and in 1793 it also advertised his *Prospects on the War, and Paper Currency of Great Britain* by which time its author was firmly demonised by anti-Jacobins.⁸ The Bath newspapers also carried advertisements for Mackintosh's *Vindiciae Gallicae: A Defence of the French Revolution and its English Admirers*, which was sold by W. Meyler, J. Marshall, and Campbell and Gainsborough in Bath.⁹ Aimed at a polite and educated audience, his text resulted in his becoming secretary of the moderate Society of the Friends of the People.¹⁰ The *Bath Register* and *Bath Herald* both carried advertisements for *The Birth-Right of Britons*.¹¹ Arguing against Paine's assertion that Britain had no constitution, its anonymous author argued that the constitution, 'or several important and fundamental maxims', had been subverted over time, concluding that they could be restored by instituting religious toleration and 'a *general* representation' in which 'every souled inhabitant should have a voice', while also promoting 'the diffusion of political knowledge'.¹²

William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness* appeared during the height of the loyalist movement, yet it did not result in him being vilified as was Paine. This may have been because of the price of the book. According to Godwin's daughter, Mary Shelly, when the Privy Council debated the book, Pitt said 'a three guinea book could never do

⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (14th April 1791), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (21st April 1791), 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (26th May 1791), p. 3c.

⁸ *Bath Journal* (13th June 1791), p. 1a.

⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (17th November 1791), p. 2a; *Bath Chronicle* (15th December 1791), p. 4a; *Bath Herald* (3rd March 1792), p. 1d;

¹⁰ I. Hampsher-Monk, *The Impact of the French Revolution: Texts from Britain in the 1790s* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 166.

¹¹ *Bath Herald* (21st July 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (28th July 1792), p. 2d; *Bath Register* (14th July 1792), p. 1d; *Bath Register* (21st July 1792), p. 2d.

¹² *The Birthright of Britons: or the British constitution, with a Sketch of its History, and Incidental Remarks* (London, 1792), pp. 131-8

much harm among those who had not three shillings to spare'.¹³ Advertisements that appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* and *Bath Herald* priced the book at one pound and sixteen shillings. The advertisement also stated that the book was sold by the city's booksellers.¹⁴ The *Bath Herald* carried an advertisement for *The Patriot's Calendar, for the Year 1796*, by John Lawrence, an admirer of the French Revolution.¹⁵ While that year's edition was not overly inflammatory, the previous edition included the words and music for several revolutionary songs, including 'Ça Ira', the 'Marseillaise' and the 'Carmagnole'.¹⁶ The advertising and sale of these books in no way implies that these proprietors supported the cause of reform, although J. C. B. Campbell clearly did, as demonstrated later in this chapter.

Campbell was not the only reform-minded person in Bath. In late October 1791 the *Bath Chronicle* and *Bath Journal* included a notice announcing a meeting to be held in one of the city's inns: 'The meeting which was held last year at *Warminster*, for the purpose of commemorating the glorious Revolution of King William in 1688, will be held on the 4th of November next, at the Bear Inn, Bath.'¹⁷ Both newspapers carried the same report of the 'anniversary meeting to commemorate the glorious Revolution of 1688', which detailed the various 'loyal and constitutional toasts' made by those present:

The King, the Queen, and Royal Family. - The Prince of Wales. -To the immortal memory of our glorious deliverer King William III. -May every great event that does honour to human nature warm the feelings of Englishmen. -May timely and adequate Reforms prevent the necessity of Revolutions. -To the memory of all the illustrious champions of British Liberty. -May the whole world be one city, and the inhabitants thereof

¹³ C. K. Paul, *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries*, Vol. 1 (London, 1876), p. 80.

¹⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (11th April 1793), p. 4d; *Bath Herald* (9th March 1793), p. 1d.

¹⁵ *Bath Herald* (5th December 1795), p. 1b.

¹⁶ [J. Lawrence], *The Patriot's Calendar, for the Year 1795* (London, 1794); [J. Lawrence], *The Patriot's Calendar, for the Year 1796* (London, 1795).

¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (27th October 1791), p. 3d; *Bath Journal* (31st October 1791), p4b.

presented with its Freedom. –May bigotry and party spirit be swallowed up in the vortex of universal liberty. –May the happiness of mankind be the most favourite study of man. –The liberty of the press, the sacred flame that is to purify all opinions. –May every man speak truth, and that truth not be deemed a libel. –The sacred rights of Man; may all nations have wisdom to understand, and courage to defend them. –May swords be beat into ploughshares, and men of war into merchantmen. –Consolation and support to all those that have suffered the cause of Liberty.¹⁸

While these toasts fitted well with Whiggish sentiment, they also hinted towards the very Enlightenment ideals that informed the French Revolution. Some of the toasts indicate that those present wished for some measure of reform without espousing any particular cause, whether with regard to religious toleration or parliamentary reform. This commemoration of past events was still distinctly forward-looking, which goes some way to explaining the shift in emphasis during the following year's dinner. An advertisement for the dinner, to be held at the same location on 4th November, gave no hint that the gathering served any other purpose than 'for Commemorating the Revolution of 1688', which opens the possibility that the discussions over the meal resulted in the diners deciding to take a more active political role.¹⁹ The *Bath Chronicle*'s report on the dinner is rather suggestive that this was indeed the case:

We hear the Gentlemen who dined at the Bear Inn in this city, for the purpose of commemorating the Revolution of 1688, came to a conclusion, thenceforward to decline a particular commemoration of that event; and resolved themselves into a Society for promoting a Parliamentary reform, by procuring a more equal representation of the people.²⁰

The *Bath Chronicle* later included an announcement from the newly formed society.

At a meeting of the Committee appointed by a Society established on the 4th of Nov. 1792 for the purpose of obtaining Parliamentary Reform; It was resolved unanimously, That the Chairman do, in the name of the Committee, correspond with the Society of Friends of the People and such

¹⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (10th November 1791), p. 3b; *Bath Journal* (7th November 1791), p. 4b.

¹⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (18th October 1792), p. 3d.

²⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (15th November 1792), p. 3c.

other Societies as are instituted for the sole purpose of obtaining, in a legal and peaceable manner, a Reform in the Representation of the People.²¹

The same notice also appeared twice in the *Morning Chronicle*, the London newspaper that was most sympathetic to the cause of reform.²²

In many ways the Bath society reflected the London Revolution Society which was also founded on the centenary of the Glorious Revolution. Richard Price's sermon at their 1789 dinner, subsequently published as *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, resulted in widespread criticism, not least that of Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.²³ The Bath society's announcement identified the chairman of the committee as Benjamin Hobhouse. Hobhouse was the son of a Bristol merchant who entered the legal profession before taking up a career in politics as a reformist Whig. While he was brought up an Anglican, his two marriages drew him into dissenting circles becoming active in the cause of religious equality.²⁴ He chaired a committee appointed by the Protestant Dissenters of Wiltshire 'to co-operate with the London and other Committees, in an application for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts', which placed numerous notices in the Bath press between 1789 and 1791.²⁵ Similarly, Hobhouse was good to his word with regard to opening correspondence on behalf of the Bath Society for the Purpose of Obtaining Parliamentary Reform with other similar societies. During the trial of Thomas

²¹ *Bath Chronicle* (10th January 1793), p. 3e.

²² *Morning Chronicle* (14th January 1793), p. 1b; *Morning Chronicle* (16th January 1793), p. 1b.

²³ R. Duthille, 'London Revolution Society' at *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/96833> (Accessed on 5th September 2014).

²⁴ R. Thorne, 'Hobhouse, Sir Benjamin, first baronet (1757–1831), politician' at *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13402> (Accessed on 10th March 2014).

²⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (17th September 1789), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (24th September 1789), p. 2c; *Bath Chronicle* (21st January 1790), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (28th January 1790), p. 1b; *Bath Chronicle* (8th April 1790), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (27th May 1790), p. 2d; *Bath Chronicle* (14th April 1791), p. 1b.

Hardy, one of the founders of the London Corresponding Society (LCS), the government spy, George Lynam, gave testimony to this effect. Lynam stated that at a meeting of a committee of LCS delegates held on 17th January 1793,

Benjamin Hobhouse had formed a society at Bath agreeable to ours, he had advised us to point out a conveyance; a correspondence proposed, to know how they went on; a letter to be sent by post, and if not answered, to send by Mr. Richards, bookseller, at Bath.²⁶

Lynam's testimony also suggested that communications between the Bath Society and the LCS were sporadic at best. Recalling another meeting held on 7th February he said that a letter had been sent to Bath but no reply had been received for fourteen days.²⁷ The only other explicit mention of a corresponding society in Bath appeared in the *Bath Herald* in 1799, which related that the books of the LCS had revealed that it had contact with branches in Bath, Bristol and Norton St. Philips. The editorial comment that followed this report showed the newspapers' idiosyncratic literary pretensions:

The firm and vigorous measures which have been pursued in dispersing these Societies, whose object appears to have been the overthrow of all Law and Order, will, we trust, effectually prevent their ever rallying again, and that we may now securely say, we have not only
 "—Scotch'd the snakes, but kill'd them.—
 Never to close and be themselves." ²⁸

These 'firm and vigorous measures' clearly persuaded Hobhouse and the other members of the committee that discretion was the better part of valour in a time when the notices of loyalist associations and reports of the burning of Thomas Paine in effigy dominated the Bath press.²⁹

Hobhouse was certainly no supporter of armed insurrection or levelling principles. The *Bath Chronicle* printed his letter addressed 'To the several

²⁶ M. Sibly, *The Genuine Trial of Thomas Hardy for High Treason, Vol. II* (London, 1795), p. 50.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁸ *Bath Herald* (22nd June 1799), p. 3c.

²⁹ See Chapter 5.

Patriotic Societies in London and its neighbourhood'. It copied the letter from the *Times*, acknowledging as much in a rare case of attribution of a London newspaper source other than the *London Gazette*.³⁰ In this letter Hobhouse expressed a distinctly moderate view not only bemoaning the 'riotous disposition which the lowest classes of people discover in many places', but also deriding the 'absurd and wicked' notions of equality. He called on the reform-minded and radical societies 'to tell these disorderly persons' that they would be better served by employing 'peaceable methods'. Hobhouse also revealed that he had been elected, without his solicitation, as an honorary member of the Constitutional Society at Manchester', yet he emphasised that he wished 'to forward the design of obtaining a more pure representation, by every peaceable endeavour'.³¹

The *Bath Chronicle* prefaced his letter by suggesting that it 'speaks not only the sentiments of the writer, but also, we conceive, the sentiments of the great and respectable body of Protestant Dissenters', not only casting Hobhouse as a voice of moderation, but also calming any fears that dissenters may be forming a radical vanguard. This letter was later published in *Three Letters, by Benjamin Hobhouse, Barrister at Law*.³² A reply to Hobhouse's letter under the title 'To Mr. H——' appeared in the *Star*. The author of this scathing response, using the alias 'Anti-Leveller', certainly lived up to their name, deriding Hobhouse for assuming a position of leadership of those 'whose licentious depravity, and desperate machinations, have drawn upon them the just resentment of the country', while suggesting that Hobhouse should consider himself to be 'an accomplice and accessory to their crimes'. The letter ended on a more

³⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (13th December 1792), p. 1b.

³¹ *The Times* (6th December 1792), p. 4ab; *The Times* (7th December 1792), p. 4a.

³² B. Hobhouse, *Three Letters, by Benjamin Hobhouse, Barrister at Law* (1792).

conciliatory note, recognising Hobhouse's inclination to be 'a good Citizen' who could yet prove to be 'a valuable Member of Society'.³³ Hobhouse also wrote political and religious treatises, some of which were published by Cruttwell, such as *An Address to the Public, in Answer to the Principal Objections urged in the House of Commons against the Repeal of the Test Laws*, published under the pseudonym 'A Master of the Arts of the University of Oxford'.³⁴ He stood as a parliamentary candidate in Bristol in 1796, but was defeated, as reported in the *Bath Herald*.³⁵ Undeterred he entered parliament in February the following year, purchasing the seat of Bletchingly in Surrey (again reported in the *Bath Herald*) and represented Grampound in Cornwall, and Hindon in Wiltshire.³⁶ Despite his opposition to the war, Hobhouse also served as a captain in the Bradford Volunteers, by which time his flirtation with radicalism was no doubt a thing of the past.³⁷ By contrast, his son, John Cam Hobhouse, embraced radical politics, following his father into the House of Commons, and serving in a number of government posts before being raised to the peerage as Baron Broughton.³⁸

Reforming societies from elsewhere in the country made use of the Bath newspapers to promote their cause. According to Mee, these societies 'eagerly exploited formats that had been that had been extending the reach of the press,

³³ *Star* (17th January 1793), p. 4c.

³⁴ [B. Hobhouse], *An Address to the Public, in Answer to the Principal Objections urged in the House of Commons against the Repeal of the Test Laws* (Bath, 1790).

³⁵ *Bath Herald* (4th June 1796), p. 4a.

³⁶ *Bath Herald* (4th March 1797), p. 3e; R. Thorne, 'Hobhouse, Sir Benjamin, first baronet (1757-1831), politician' at *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13402> (Accessed on 10th March 2014); B. Murphy & R. G. Thorne, 'HOBHOUSE, Benjamin (1757-1831), of Westbury College, Glos. and Cottles House, Wilts.' at *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/hobhouse-benjamin-1757-1831> (Accessed on 6th September 2014).

³⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (1st November 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (29th September 1798), p. 3b.

³⁸ D. R. Fisher, 'HOBHOUSE, John Cam (1786-1869)' at *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/hobhouse-john-1786-1869> (Accessed on 6th September 2014).

especially newspapers and periodicals'.³⁹ The *Bath Chronicle*, along with other provincial newspapers, carried a notice inserted by the Manchester Constitutional Society. At a meeting held on 13th March 1792 at the Bull's Head Inn, they unanimously resolved to offer thanks to Thomas Paine for the second part of his *Rights of Man*, which they declared to be 'of the highest importance to every Nation under Heaven'. They went on to express their hope that Paine's influence would further the cause of 'a complete reform in the present inadequate state of the representation of the People'.⁴⁰ In October the society also placed a short notice in the *Bath Herald* in which they recommended to the public Thomas Cooper's *Reply to the Invectives of Mr. Burke against Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Watt, in the House of Commons*.⁴¹ That same month the *Bath Journal* printed the 'Letter of Thomas Paine to the People of France' dated 25th September, which had been distributed for free by the London Corresponding Society, in which he related his gratitude for having been elected to the National Assembly.⁴²

The *Bath Chronicle* carried a notice placed by the recently founded Friends of the People, Associated for the Purpose of Obtaining a Parliamentary Reform. The announcement detailed a meeting held at the Freemason's Tavern on 26th April. A significant portion of those attending were members of Parliament, including William Baker (the society's chairman), Charles Grey, Samuel Whitbread, John Wharton and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, all of whom were on the society's committee. Those present resolved to adopt an 'Address to the People' and have it printed and published along with a declaration of intent and a

³⁹ J. Mee, *Print, Publicity, and Popular Radicalism in the 1790s*, p. 7.

⁴⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd March 1792), p. 1c; *Chester Chronicle* (23rd March 1792), p. 3b; *Leeds Intelligencer* (26th March 1792), p. 4a; *Norfolk Chronicle* (24th March 1792), p. 1c; *Oxford Journal* (24th March 1792), p. 1b.

⁴¹ *Bath Herald* (6th October 1792), p. 3c.

⁴² *Bath Journal* (15th October 1792), p. 2bc.

list of its signatories.⁴³ Accordingly the notice appeared in both the London and provincial press.⁴⁴ The following week's issue contained another, smaller notice informing readers of which address to use for any communication with the society.⁴⁵ The *Bath Chronicle* did not carry the notice of a further meeting of the Friends of the People held on 12th May, which was again widely printed in other provincial newspapers.⁴⁶ The following March the *Bath Herald* printed an advertisement for *Report on the State of the Representation of England and Wales, Delivered to the Society of the Friends of the People*.⁴⁷ Two months earlier the same newspaper printed a notice detailing the resolutions of a meeting of the 'Hertford Society, Associated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform'. One of the resolutions declared their 'extreme concern and alarm' at the

formation of loyalist certain Associations under the specious pretext of preserving the Constitution against Republicans and Levellers, but whose proceedings being totally abhorrent from the principles of every free government', tend to sap the foundation of that Constitution which they profess to maintain; to interrupt social intercourse, to prevent the freedom of discussion, and to destroy that great that great pallidum of our Liberties the Freedom of the Press.⁴⁸

The notice was printed without editorial comment, despite Meyler's active role in the Bath loyalist association, and the anti-Jacobin tenor of the newspaper at that time.

In 1783 Cruttwell's *Bath Chronicle* advocated Pitt's attempts to pass legislation for a reform of parliament. The newspaper's local news expressed a reform-minded correspondent's surprise that the topic was not more widely

⁴³ *Bath Chronicle* (10th May 1792), p. 4cd.

⁴⁴ *Chester Chronicle* (4th May 1792), p. 2cd; *Hampshire Chronicle* (7th May 1792), p. 4abc; *Newcastle Courant* (5th May 1792), p. 1cd; *Norfolk Chronicle* (5th May 1792), p. 1cd; *Stamford Mercury* (4th May 1792), p. 4ab;

⁴⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (17th May 1792), p. 1d.

⁴⁶ *Chester Chronicle* (25th May 1792), p. 4ab; *Norfolk Chronicle* (26th May 1792), p. 4ab; *Stamford Mercury* (25th May 1792), p. 4ab.

⁴⁷ *Bath Herald* (2nd March 1793), p. 1d.

⁴⁸ *Bath Herald* (19th January 1793), p. 2b.

discussed in the Bath area. The unnamed correspondent hoped that ‘some portion of that patriotic flame that warms and glows so bright in Yorkshire could be communicated to animate and rouse the supineness of Somerset’.⁴⁹ In response a series of letters written in favour of reform by ‘A Somersetshire Man’ appeared in the *Bath Chronicle*.⁵⁰ As Poole points out, Cruttwell chose not to back the cause of political reform during the 1790s.⁵¹ Nevertheless, in 1792 Cruttwell was prepared to provide space in his newspaper for letters written by reformers.

TO the PRINTER of the BATH CHRONICLE.

BY your excellent paper of last week we are informed, that a petition to the House of Commons, for a repeal of penal statutes affecting religious opinions, is set on foot by the Dissenters throughout the kingdom.

As one of that numerous and increasing body, I cannot help suggesting the impropriety of Dissenters appearing again before the *present* representation of this country, in a manner that looks like asking a favour for *themselves*. No sooner will the matter be discussed in the House, than the silly cry “the Church is in danger” will ring in our ears, whereas nothing can be more clear than that the danger to the Church would be in enforcing such statutes, not in repealing them.

It is not long since the Test Act was solemnly declared to be “the great bulwark of church and state.” *Risum teneatis!* while men can talk so absurdly, in vain may Dissenters petition. Much as I honour the good intentions of my brethren, heartily concurring in sentiment with them as to the iniquity of those penal laws, I wish them to honour themselves, and rather than waste their time in unavailing petitions, let them direct the publick attention to the necessity of a **PARLIAMENTARY REFORM**; if this be neglected, farewell to the liberties of Englishmen. As a matter of universal concern it merits the serious attention of every true friend to his country.

X. Y.

Plate 8: Letter ‘To the Printer of the Bath Chronicle’.
Bath Chronicle (8th March 1792).⁵²

⁴⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd January 1783), p. 3b.

⁵⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (30th January 1783), p. 1a; *Bath Chronicle* (13th February 1783), p. 1ab; *Bath Chronicle* (6th March 1783), p. 1ab; *Bath Chronicle* (3rd April 1783), p. 1ab; *Bath Chronicle* (1st May 1783), p. 1ab;

⁵¹ Poole, ‘Popular Politics in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire’, p. 42.

⁵² *Bath Chronicle* (8th March 1792), p. 2b.

The anonymous author of the first of these argued that there was no hope of a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts without parliamentary reform, a cause which he urged his fellow dissenters to adopt in order to prevent a 'farewell to the liberties of Englishmen'.⁵³ The next letter was a defence of Thomas Paine written in somewhat archaic language suggesting that the correspondent may have been a Quaker:

Friend Cruttwell,
Thee hast incautiously copied from the London newspapers a paragraph unworthy of thine. It states, that the *rights of man* were violated in the person of Thomas Payne (degradingly called *Tom Payne*) being arrested for a debt of two hundred pounds. On enquiry, I hear the fact is not true; but admitting it, the *rights of man* are not violated by an arrest for a just debt, therefore it contains two untruths. Let not the rancour of party stain thy impartial paper; but, as the Editor of a paper, thou art a watchman for the public; let meekness to *men*, but severity to *bad measures*, be ever told in the language of TRUTH.⁵⁴

The contentious paragraph mentioned in the letter appeared in the previous week's issue as part of the London news. It read, 'The *Rights of Men* were very *daringly* violated last Friday (at the dinner of the Constitutional Society) in the person of their champion TOM PAINE, who was arrested for a debt of 200l'.⁵⁵ Despite the protestations of the letter's author, the story seems to have had some basis in fact. The incident took place at the Society for Constitutional Information's anniversary dinner held on 13th April, which the pro-Ministry London press reported with relish.⁵⁶ The more reform-minded *Morning Chronicle*'s report made no mention of any arrest, merely stating that Paine's withdrawal was followed by the diners toasting his health.⁵⁷

⁵³ See Plate 8.

⁵⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (26th April 1792), p. 3c.

⁵⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (19th April 1792), p. 3b.

⁵⁶ *Public Advertiser* (17th April 1792), p. 2d.

⁵⁷ *Morning Chronicle* (14th April 1792), p. 3a.

The following month, another letter in defence of reformers appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* signed with the name 'Aristides' (borrowed from the ancient Athenian statesman and general). As with the previous correspondent, the writer wished 'to correct an error into which many people have been led' having read an account of the debate in the House of Commons that appeared in the previous issue. The debate followed Charles Grey's motion for a reform bill on the subject of parliamentary reform having taken place on 30th April. The correspondent particularly disapproved of the inclusion of a speech by Edmund Burke, which was 'an attack on the character of some very respectable individuals', and that the *Bath Chronicle* '(from oversight no doubt) omitted to give the public the vindication of those Gentlemen by Mr. Sheridan'.⁵⁸ In the speech, Burke named 'Mr. Walker, of Manchester' as a member of 'an avowed Party [...] whose object is to overthrow, and change the Constitution'. Burke charged this party with guilt by association because of their approval and dissemination of Paine's 'infamous libel on the Constitution'. Of Sheridan's rebuttal, the *Bath Chronicle*'s story clumsily stated 'Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Lambton, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Baker, Mr. Francis, and Mr. Whitbread, defence the Reform'.⁵⁹ 'Aristides' did not deny this charge, but he did defend Walker as 'a man whose abilities, integrity, and humanity, are in universal esteem with every one who has the happiness of knowing him'. Taking a more combative posture he continued,

As a man of sense and integrity, is it to be wondered at that he should decry the errors and abuses, or detest a venal tribe of placemen and pensioners? As a friend to humanity, is it to be wondered at that he should heartily desire that the labouring poor of this kingdom should be relieved from the enormous burthen of taxes instituted for these locusts?

He goes on to defend Cooper and Watt against Burke's charges that they were

⁵⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (10th May 1792), p. 2c.

⁵⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd May 1792), p. 3ab.

engaged in 'forming a confederacy in the name of the people of England and the people of France' by subverting the lower ranks of the armed forces. He claims that from his own knowledge that no such attempt was made, rather suggesting that he was in some way involved in, or at least privy to, the business conducted by the two men during their visit to Paris. He declared that they were not sent there by the society, but rather they went there on their own private business, and

they were requested, by the Manchester Constitutional Society, to make known to the Patriotic Societies there, its joy at the entire emancipation of the French from the chains of servitude, and its desire that a good understanding might always be maintained between the two nations.

The *Bath Register* was also amenable to printing reforming opinion, even before Campbell and Gainsborough took the reins. As such it carried a letter by 'Marcus', contained the text of another letter he had earlier sent to the *Bath Herald* in response to a droll article that newspaper had published titled 'Dialogue between John Bull and Monsieur Frog', which mocked Horne-Tooke and other reformers.⁶⁰ His letter having not appeared in the *Bath Herald*, 'Marcus' decided to send it to the rival title hoping that the *Bath Register's* 'impartial manner' would result in its inclusion. The author argued against the notion that the French sought 'to destroy all subordination in society', but rather they only meant 'to destroy that aristocratic monster' on which he blamed the ills then besetting that nation. He went on to argue that 'defending the cause of freedom' did not make him 'an enemy to our happy Constitution', the 'true principles' of which he revered. He also professed his love for the King, 'because he is a good man, and makes his people's happiness his own'. The author's position was not inconsistent, since the language of patriotism was not mutually exclusive with a desire for reform.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Bath Herald* (25th August 1792) , p. 2c; *Bath Register* (1st September 1792), p. 2bc.

⁶¹ E. Evans, 'Englishness and Britishness: National identities, c. 1790-c. 1870', in A. Grant & K. J. Stringer (Eds.), *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London, 1995), pp. 223-43.

These last two letters argue that reformers were being misrepresented as 'French-style Jacobins'. According to Dinwiddy this was the key tactic employed by conservative polemicists, who used circumstances in France to sway popular opinion against political reform.⁶²

The next issue contained another letter, signed 'The Observer' that decried those that 'prostitute their talents to the fabrication of calumnies, and waste their time in arranging despicable dialogues between *Bulls and Frogs*', before condemning the 'barbarous Manifesto by that blustering hector of Prussia, the Duke of Brunswick', who the author portrayed as an irreligious warmonger.⁶³ A letter from 'Investigator' called upon the government to regulate the price of provisions and other commodities to 'remove the repeated complaints of the lower orders of people, and the consequences which must inevitably follow'.⁶⁴

While under the auspices of Campbell and Gainsborough, the *Bath Register* also gave voice to anti-Jacobin correspondents, particularly one using the alias 'A True Briton', who lamented 'the repeated acts of cruelty committed upon the persons of one another throughout France', a country 'absorbed in all the horrors of war, civil discord, and anarchy'.⁶⁵ This letter prompted 'Marcus' to respond in another apologia for the French revolutionaries, in which he argued that 'A True Briton' was 'reprobating the old System [of aristocratic excess in France], while he thinks he is branding the new'.⁶⁶ The same issue contained a continuation of the letter from 'A True Briton', in which the author described Paine's *Rights of Man* as 'a publication tending to create civil dissention and

⁶² Dinwiddy, 'Interpretations of Anti-Jacobinism', in Philp (Ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, pp. 38-49.

⁶³ *Bath Register* (8th September 1792), p. 4bc.

⁶⁴ *Bath Register* (22nd September 1792), p. 4ab.

⁶⁵ *Bath Register* (13th October 1792), p. 4c.

⁶⁶ *Bath Register* (20th October 1792), p. 4bc.

bloodshed throughout the land'.⁶⁷ It seems that the short-lived Habermasian debate was over, as the newspaper printed no further correspondence by either 'Marcus' or 'A True Briton'.

Despite demurring from printing the letter sent by 'Marcus', the *Bath Herald* did occasionally give voice to critics of the established order, such as the following intriguing epigram, which appeared without comment and with no apparent sense of irony:

HAIL, truly philosophical age,
We shan't forget the soon;
We owe thee Tom's enlightening page—
We owe thee the Balloon.⁶⁸

The rhyme had previously appeared in the pro-Ministry *St. James's Chronicle*.⁶⁹

The newspaper included an even more striking poem during the following year, entitled 'The Humble Petition of the Females of Great Britain Against the late much agitated Bills' and signed by 'Tabitha R'.⁷⁰ Whether intended as irony or not it said much about women's position in society. After describing male opposition to the two bills, it continued

Shall *Women*, who constitute half this good Nation,
In silence behold such a gross innovation
Of *Rights*, which their *Grand Dames* without e'er a flaw
From Eve had deriv'd, and saw sanction by Law?
How! deprive them at once, or what they're most proud,
The *Freedom of Speech*, and to *meet in a crowd*?
May it please you Good Commons, our Petition to hear,
For a curb on our Tongues we never can bear;
The free use of that member is all we can boast,
In pity then, Sirs, let it never be lost!

It seems that Meyler's taste for the poetic allowed the newspaper to give voice to

⁶⁷ *Bath Register* (20th October 1792), p. 4cd.

⁶⁸ *Bath Herald* (23rd August 1794), p. 3b.

⁶⁹ *St. James's Chronicle: or British Evening Post* (19th – 21st August 1794), p. 4a; Werkmeister, *A Newspaper History of England*, p.178.

⁷⁰ *Bath Herald* (12th December 1795), p. 4a.

such opinions.

Social Exclusion, Suppression and Sedition Trials

The Bath newspapers are often noteworthy not for what they did print about the fate of those perceived to be radicals, but rather what they did not, as shown in the cases of Wordsworth and Campbell. In January 1794 the Bath press carried the news that 'Mr. James Brooks was elected Secretary to the Bath Catch-Club in the room of Mr. Wordsworth.'⁷¹ The *Bath Herald* carried a notice of a meeting of the 'Gentlemen of the Catch Club' during which they resolved not to accept Wordsworth's resignation; rather they decided that his conduct was 'so improper in nature, that he is unanimously dismissed from the office of Secretary to this Society'. The notice also contained the text of a letter in which Wordsworth attempted to explain his actions:

At a *late hour*, and in the *moments of thoughtless hilarity*, on the last Club night, I imprudently repeated (*not gave*) a sentiment, the tendency of which has been deemed improper; but at the time I conceived no such idea could be possibly attached to it.⁷²

While the city's newspapers offered no further details of the controversial event, other provincial newspapers did provide more information of the events that resulted in Wordsworth's dismissal.⁷³ The report stated that Wordsworth had made a toast hoping that the 'Tree of Liberty take root in the center of the earth, and its branches extend from pole to pole'. While the toast was warmly received 'by some few Irish members', it was not to the taste of the president, who immediately quit his chair. Similarly the mayor, Henry Harington, threatened to

⁷¹ *Bath Herald* (4th January 1794), p. 3b; *Bath Chronicle* (9th January 1794), p. 3c.

⁷² *Bath Herald* (4th January 1794), p. 3d.

⁷³ *Reading Mercury* (6th January 1794), p. 2d; *Hereford Journal* (8th January 1794), p. 3e; *Oxford Journal* (11th January 1794), p. 3b; *Hampshire Chronicle* (13th January 1794), p. 3c

cancel his membership of the club and to prevent them using the Guildhall unless Wordsworth was dismissed. In his role as chief magistrate he also questioned Wordsworth, who recanted any revolutionary principles.

The management of the Theatre Royal felt it necessary to place a notice in the *Bath Journal*, distancing themselves from Wordsworth, while remaining circumspect about the details of the scandal:

The Circumstance which has lately happened at the Catch-Club in this City, having given rise to a report that the matter originated with a Person belonging to this Theatre:- we have Authority to say, that Mr. Wordsworth, the late Secretary of that Club, was discharg'd by the Managers more than two Years since – the only Person then present in the most distant manner belonging to the Theatre was Mr. Taylor, who quitted the Company at the same time with Mr. Howell, whose Conduct has met the approbation of the Committee convened to make enquiries on that occasion *nem. con.*⁷⁴

This statement was most likely in response to a letter that the Archbishop of York and the Duke of Ancaster sent to the theatre's manager, William Keasberry. While the Bath press did not report this correspondence, two London newspapers did pick up on the story. *Lloyd's Evening Post* quoted the letter that demanded

That such Members of the Theatre as were inimical to the present King and Constitution, (by whom they were generously protected) might be dismissed from their respective employments; if not, no person of character or distinction could be expected to support either the Theatre, or any one of its branches.

According to the report, when the letter was read in the Green-room the astonished 'mimic Kings and Queens [...] could not conceive how any of them should be suspected of disaffection to characters, which they are all desirous of representing'.⁷⁵ The opposition *Morning Post* printed a similar report before mocking one of the letter's authors a few days later:

There is not doubt but that the Bath Theatre will become truly moral, edifying, and amusing, since an *Archbishop* has *assumed* the management of the Stage. His *Pastoral Letter* read a few days ago in the

⁷⁴ *Bath Journal* (6th January 1794), p. 4e.

⁷⁵ *Lloyd's Evening Post* (8th - 10th January 1794), p. 4c.

Green Room, has caused much pleasantry among the Gentlemen of Sock and Buskin. Many of them exclaim bitterly against being put thus under *petticoat* government.⁷⁶

Needless to say, the Bath press demurred from printing this acerbic commentary, rather the *Bath Journal* and *Bath Herald* printed a denial as part of their local news:

We are authorised to say that no such letter or message was sent to the Managers of the Bath Theatre, as lately mentioned in many of the London newspapers. The error, we know, originated in the business concerning the late Secretary of the Catch Club; and we believe was *confirmed* for the purpose of begetting an opinion of *improper interference* on the part of the high and worthy characters who are said to have sent their *commands* to the Managers, and to create an unwarrantable suspicion of disaffection against those who belong to the Theatre.⁷⁷

Late that same year, the *Bath Herald* did include a report that linked the city's theatre with radicalism:

Mr. Campbell Browne, whose name has been so often mentioned in the course of Hardy's Trial, as the reputed author of the Patriot, as Secretary of the Sheffield Constitutional Society, and one of their Delegates to the Scotch Convention, is the Mr. Browne who for several Seasons, filled a respectable situation in our Theatre.⁷⁸

The *Morning Post* also set its sights on Harington, printing a cutting report of a recent incident in Bath in which it displayed disdain for the standard of provincial governance.⁷⁹ The *Morning Chronicle* had previously reported on the incident in a gentler, yet still mocking, tone:

Last week the Mayor of Bath, by virtue of the authority in him *supposed* to be vested, entered the shop of a bookseller, and took down from the window a bill giving notice that an evening paper, containing the last Extraordinary Gazette, was to be had there. The bookseller wrote to the Mayor, that he should seek redress in a Court of Justice, for what he conceived to be an illegal and oppressive act; but we trust his worship will anticipate the bookseller, by prosecuting the Secretary of State and the Printer of the Gazette, for publishing such a Jacobinical paper as that

⁷⁶ *Morning Post* (8th January 1794), p. 3b; *Morning Post* (11th January 1794), p. 2c.

⁷⁷ *Bath Journal* (20th January 1794), p. 4e; *Bath Herald* (18th January 1794), p. 3c.

⁷⁸ *Bath Herald* (8th November 1794), p. 3b.

⁷⁹ See Plate 9.

same Extraordinary Gazette.⁸⁰

In a later issue, the *Morning Post* gleefully continued lampooning its subject:

The institution for teaching all future Mayors, Magistrates and Justices of Bath how to read is to be supported by subscription; at present they are so extremely illiterate, that Alderman Waggoner is deemed the most *larnd* man in the Corporation.⁸¹

As with the incident at the Catch Club, the Bath newspapers did not report on Harington's actions.

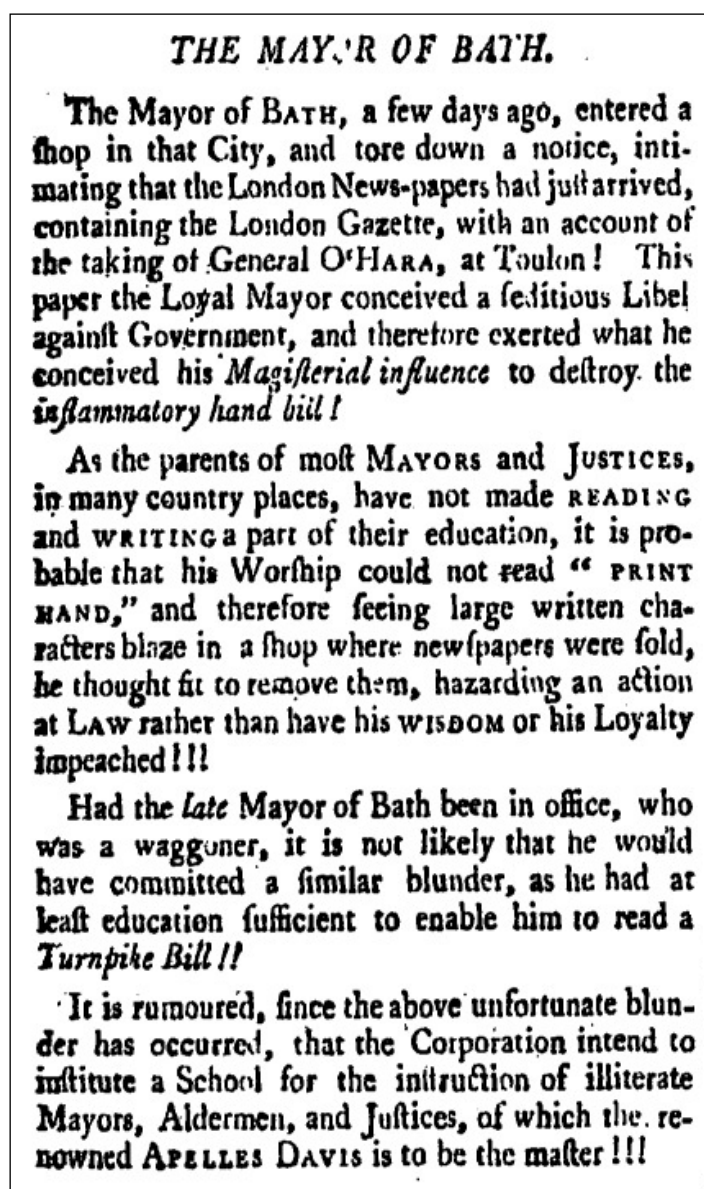


Plate 9: 'The Mayor of Bath'. *Morning Post* (3rd January 1794).⁸²

⁸⁰ *Morning Chronicle* (31st December 1793), p. 4b.

⁸¹ *Morning Post* (9th January 1794), p. 3c.

⁸² *Morning Post* (3rd January 1794), p. 3a.

The subject of the mayor's ire may well have J. C. B. Campbell former publisher of the *Bath Register*. In June 1794 he became the target of a drunken mob in what Martin Smith described as 'the most spectacular instance of the misfortunes of an agent' of a radical newspaper.⁸³ The radical newspaper in question was the *Courier, and Evening Gazette*.⁸⁴ This was not an isolated case; according to Barker, the rise of the loyalist associations and their objective of suppressing seditious prints inspired attacks on newspapers. She provides examples of assaults on newsmen who delivered provincial newspapers that promoted the cause of reform, as well as an attack on the shop and house of the proprietor of the *Manchester Herald* by a violent 'Church and King' mob.⁸⁵

In the month before Harington's actions, an informer, identifying themselves as 'a friend to Government', wrote to the Home Office, stating that

One of the links of the chain of the treacherous Corresponding Societies lies in Bath. The behaviour of one Campbell, a bookseller, is outrageous [...] affixing to his shop window and door manuscript information of every Article of intelligence that appears adverse and offering every Seditious inflammatory publication that comes out.

According to the informer, Campbell held frequent meetings of dissenters, and 'in defiance of the Magistrates, he has sold great numbers of Payne's Rights of Man'.⁸⁶ For whatever reason, the city's magistrates took no action, but a Church and King Mob took the law into their own hands. In his *Memoirs*, Henry Hunt wrote that he had been informed that 'the *hired wretches* [...] acted under authority', while 'many of the loyal inhabitants of that loyal town, who were standing by looking on, excited them to persevere' in their attempts to pull down

⁸³ Smith, 'English Radical Newspapers', pp. 194-5.

⁸⁴ *Courier, and Evening Gazette* (10th June 1794), p. 4; Werkmeister, *A Newspaper History of England*, p. 166.

⁸⁵ Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, p. 74.

⁸⁶ TNA, HO 42/30/21 Anon – Dundas 12th May 1794, ff. 54-5.

Campbell's house.⁸⁷ No such allegations appeared in the press at the time, not even in the *Courier's* emotional report of the assault:

A lawless mob without any provocation whatever, assembled and surrounded the house of Mr. Campbell, a most respectable Bookseller in Bath. Part of the house was, in a few minutes demolished; and the owners of it, Mr. Campbell and his Family, were obliged to fly, that they might save their lives. Mrs. Campbell, was big with child.⁸⁸

The day before the *World*, included a lengthy article titled 'Bath. A Riot There'.

After drawing parallels with the Priestley Riots of 1791 the article gave a report sympathetic to the victim, noting that Campbell's 'Library must be well known to every fashionable and clever reader who has been at Bath'. It decried the mob for ignoring Mrs Campbell's pregnancy, 'a cause for tenderness among the most uncouth and vile barbarians'. The article ended with the suggestion that there was more to the story than met the eye, asking why Campbell, his friends or the bystanders did not appeal for aid from the city's 'independent and enlightened' magistrates.⁸⁹ The destruction of his house left Campbell bankrupt, as announced in several issues of the *Bath Herald* in a notice that added insult to injury by printing his initials as 'J. B. C.'. ⁹⁰ Again, the Bath newspapers chose not to report this event. There may have been a number of reasons for this. They may not have wished to portray the city in a bad light, but the fact that their silence did not prevent the story appearing elsewhere mitigates this. It seems more likely that they either wished to avoid the censure of the Corporation and the loss of any benefits gained by their goodwill, or that they feared stronger reprisals from the active opponents of reform.

⁸⁷ H. Hunt, *Memoirs of Henry Hunt, Esq. Written by Himself, in his Majesty's Jail in Ilchester, in the County of Somerset. Vol. 1* (London, 1820), pp. 141-2.

⁸⁸ *Courier, and Evening Gazette* (10th June 1794), p. 2a.

⁸⁹ *World* (9th June 1794), p. 2c.

⁹⁰ *Bath Herald* (28th June 1794), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (5th July 1794), p. 2d; *Bath Herald* (12th July 1794), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (19th July 1794), p. 2d.

TO THE PUBLICK.

A Report having been lately propagated by some evil designing persons, (manifestly with a view to injure me in my business) that I had expressed myself in terms unfavourable to the present Government, I think it incumbent on me to declare that such report is absolutely false and void of the least foundation; as I have never associated with any person disaffected to his Majesty or his Government, or have either privately or publicly used a single word expressive of disloyalty. But can conscientiously declare that I am sincerely attached to his Majesty and our present most excellent Constitution.

As my welfare solely depends on my reputation, the loss of it would deprive me of the means of supporting myself and family, I therefore respectfully entreat my friends and the publick will excuse the liberty I take in addressing them on this subject, and permit me to solicit a continuance of those favours, which they have liberally conferred on me for so many years past, to merit which the utmost endeavours will unremittingly be exerted, by the Publick's most grateful and obedient servant,

Bath, THOMAS COWARD,
JUNE 7, 1794. LINEN-DRAPER, BOND-STREET.

A reward of TEN GUINEAS will be paid by T COWARD to any person who will discover the first propagators of the above malicious Report.

TO THE PUBLICK.

FINDING myself injured as a Publick Character, and an Individual, by having my Name mentioned as one of those who are Enemies to the King and Government; I thus publicly *deny the Charge*, and challenge any person to repeat a *Word spoken*, or produce an *Action* done by me, coincident with such sentiment. As to Republican Principles, *I entirely disapprove of them*, and am ready as far as my circumstance and situation will admit, to testify my Loyalty.

I love my King and Country, and am thankful for the privileges I enjoy under so mild a Government. Having been resident in Bath many years, I feel gratitude to those who have honored me with the Tuition of their Children, and to my Friends in general for favors received, soliciting a continuance of the same.

I remain with due respect,

The Publick's obliged servant,

J. FOWLER.
JUNE 6th, 1794. ACADEMY, BEAUFORT-SQUARE.

Plate 10: Notices 'To The Publick'. *Bath Chronicle* (12th June 1794).⁹¹

The destruction of Campbell's livelihood due to his political affiliations appears to have prompted two other Bath businessmen to place notices in the

⁹¹ *Bath Chronicle* (12th June 1794), p. 3d.

city's newspapers, although neither mentioned the attack directly.⁹² In his notice dated 7th June Thomas Coward, a linen draper on Bond Street, wrote that 'some evil designing persons, (manifestly with a view to injure me in my business)' of accusing him of making statements 'in terms unfavourable to the present Government'. He denied these accusations in the strongest manner, declaring himself to be 'sincerely attached to his Majesty and our present most excellent Constitution'. He also offered a reward of ten guineas to anyone who identified the originators of the 'malicious Report'. J. Fowler, who ran an academy for young gentlemen and ladies with his wife in Beaufort Square, was equally forceful in his notice dated 6th June, in which he emphatically denied accusations that he entertained 'Republican Principles', declaring his love of his 'King and Country'.

The accusations against Coward and Fowler could have done far more than damage their reputations and business, they could also have seen them facing legal proceedings for sedition. In the wake of John Reeves' formation of the Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers in November 1792 and the resultant prodigious spread of similar loyalist associations, radicals and reformers became subject to a wave of prosecutions for seditious libel known as "Pitt's Terror". The government passed no new legislation regarding sedition, but rather applied existing laws. Fortunately for many of those brought to trial Fox's Libel Act of 1792 resulted in a number of high profile acquittals of radical reformers.⁹³ Poole contends that the Bath magistrates were particularly vociferous in their oppression of radicals of the lower orders.⁹⁴

⁹² *Bath Chronicle* (12th June 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Journal* (9th June 1794), p. 4e; *Bath Journal* (16th June 1794), p. 4d; *Bath Herald* (14th June 1794), p. 3e; See Plate 10.

⁹³ C. Emsley, 'An Aspect of Pitt's 'Terror': Prosecutions for Sedition during the 1790s', *Social History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (May, 1981), pp. 155-84.

⁹⁴ Poole, 'Radicalism, Loyalism, and the "Reign of Terror" in Bath, 1792-1804', pp. 114-37.

While Benjamin Hobhouse, a man of wealth and position, escaped prosecution despite his position as chairman of the city's Society for the Purpose of Obtaining Parliamentary Reform, the same could not be said for those of more modest social status.

The first arrest for sedition in Bath happened in November 1793, as initially reported in the *Bath Herald*:

A journeyman printer was yesterday committed to our prison, by H. Harington, Esq. Mayor of the city, charged, on the information of Thomas, Mills, Thomas Brookman, and John Silcock, printers, with having used, at various times and places, expressions of seditious tendency, highly subversive of the peace and good government of this kingdom.⁹⁵

The *Bath Chronicle*'s brief report also mentioned that the arrested man was 'late an Irish volunteer'.⁹⁶ Even the *Bath Journal* felt to make a brief report of the arrest.⁹⁷ The printer, George Wilkinson, carelessly made his remarks while he was working for Samuel Hazard, the arch-loyalist publisher of Hannah More's Cheap Repository Tracts.⁹⁸ Wilkinson's trial began in January the following year. The *Bath Chronicle* reported,

At the quarter-sessions for this city, on Monday last, George Wilkinson, a journeyman printer was tried and found guilty of uttering the following seditious expressions: "Success to the French and down with the Allies;" – "The K— and his Ministers are villains;" and, (alluding to the Declaration lately published on the causes of the war) – "That will make their villainy more clear." He was sentenced to pay a fine of 40s. to the King, to be imprisoned four months, and to find security for his good behaviour for one year, himself in 50l. and two sureties in 10l. each.⁹⁹

The *Bath Herald*'s report was less squeamish in its reporting, being prepared to print, without redaction, Wilkinson's comment about the king. It also provided

⁹⁵ *Bath Herald* (2nd November 1793), p. 3d.

⁹⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (7th November 1793), p. 3b.

⁹⁷ *Bath Journal* (4th November 1793), p. 4e;

⁹⁸ Poole, 'Radicalism, Loyalism, and the "Reign of Terror" in Bath, 1792-1804', pp. 114-37; A. Stott, *Hannah More: The First Victorian* (Oxford, 2003), p. 175.

⁹⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (16th January 1794), p. 3c.

more information about the trial:

[Wilkinson's] expressions were proved by the testimony of four witnesses, who worked in the same house with the prisoner. Mr. Lens, in conducting the prosecution, displayed an equal degree of ability and candour. Mr. Hutchinson, of Bristol, was counsel for the prisoner. The Court sentenced him to four months imprisonment, to pay a fine of 20s. And find security for one year's good behaviour:— himself in 50l. And two sureties in 10l. each.

It described Wilkinson as 'a native of Ireland, a young man of decent appearance, and, it is said, reputably connected'. Wilkinson 'challenged two of the Jury, one of whom thanked him, as he considered his being objected to on such an occasion a pointed compliment'.¹⁰⁰ The story was picked up by the London newspapers, both pro-Ministry and Opposition, which regularly reported other trials for sedition from around the country.¹⁰¹ The story also appeared widely in the provincial press.¹⁰² The politically charged trial became a national news story at the time, encouraging anti-Jacobins that sedition was being rooted out in the provinces. Wilkinson's conviction did not dissuade him from radical political activity; he later served as an emissary to the French on behalf of the exiled leaders United Irishmen.¹⁰³ He even managed to join the Bath Volunteers, and led thirty-nine privates in a strike protesting the disciplining of one of their comrades.¹⁰⁴

On 3rd April 1794 Sergeant William West of the Twenty-Eighth Regiment of Foot, a grocer called William Garland, a musician called Simon Smith and Henry Denbery, a shop clerk, made statements under oath regarding 'Treasonous and Seditious words and Expressions' repeatedly spoken by Thomas Wilde (or Wylde

¹⁰⁰ *Bath Herald* (18th January 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁰¹ *General Evening Post* (14th – 16th January 1794), p. 4d; *London Chronicle* (14th – 16th January 1794), p. 7a; *Lloyd's Evening Post* (15th – 17th January 1794), p. 3c; *Morning Post* (16th January 1794), p. 3b; *Public Advertiser, or Political and Literary Diary* (17th January 1794), p. 3d; *Star* (16th January 1794), p. 4b; *Sun* (15th January 1794), p. 2d.

¹⁰² *Chester Courant* (21st January 1794), p. 3e; *Derby Mercury* (23rd January 1794), p. 4d; *Ipswich Journal* (18th January 1794), pp. 2e-3a; *Norfolk Chronicle* (18th January 1794), p. 2c; *Northampton Mercury* (25th January 1794), p. 3b.

¹⁰³ Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1791-1805', p. 115.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

or Wyld), a hairdresser and valet to Henry Middleton.¹⁰⁵ That same day, Wilde was taken into custody, as reported by the *Bath Chronicle*, which also provided concise details of his treasonous comments:

Thursday Thomas Wylde, a gentleman's servant, was committed to our prison for seditious expressions, having repeatedly wished destruction to the Duke of York and all the Allied Powers.¹⁰⁶

Wilde did not have to wait long for his trial, which was also briefly detailed in the *Bath Chronicle*:

Yesterday at the quarter-sessions for this city, Thomas Wilde, a gentleman's servant, was tried and found guilty of uttering seditious and treasonable expressions at various times and places. He was sentenced to pay a fine of 40s. To be imprisoned six months, and at the expiration of that term to find sureties for his good behaviour for one year.¹⁰⁷

The even shorter report that appeared in the *Bath Journal* made no mention of any fine and said that his good behaviour was to be for seven years.¹⁰⁸ Having served only a month of his sentence, on 5th June Wilde escaped from the city's gaol with four other men. The details of the escape appeared in the city's press; the *Bath Herald* reported 'Last night, as the turnkey of our prison was locking up two deserters, he was knocked down by them, thrust into a cell, and the keys taken from him, through which means five prisoners escaped'.¹⁰⁹ Wanted notices appeared in the city's newspapers that same week describing four of the fugitives. As if to highlight his danger to the public, the description of Thomas Wyld (as he was called in this case) appeared first on the notice, which also offered a considerable reward of ten guineas for his recapture, along with the

¹⁰⁵ TNA, TS 11/1071 Rex v Thomas WILDE for uttering seditious words at Bath on 30 Mar 1794: City of Bath quarter sessions, 28 Apr 1794.

¹⁰⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (10th April 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (1st May 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁸ *Bath Journal* (5th May 1794), p. 4e.

¹⁰⁹ *Bath Journal* (9th June 1794), p. 4e; *Bath Chronicle* (12th June 1794), p. 3c.

usual bounty for the recapture of the deserters.¹¹⁰ The *Bath Herald* reported the recapture of one of the deserters, James Maguire, but there was no further mention of Wilde's fate.¹¹¹ The trial was not as widely reported in the metropolitan and provincial newspapers than that of Wilkinson, and his escape attracted little more attention.¹¹²

Whereas the first two prosecutions related to seditious comments made by the defendants, the third was brought about by the distribution of what were deemed to be seditious prints. On 15th August 1794, a tailor called James Howe, testified to Harington that while visiting Hannah Best, an acquaintance of his, at a house in Wine Street, he met Benjamin Bull, a lodger there who was also a tailor. Bull explained that he had recently ceased working for Mr Denie 'on Account of a Difference in Politics'. Howe asked whether Denie was a 'Loyalist' or a 'Jacobine'; Bull replied that his previous employer was a loyalist. The two men then conversed for some time before Bull gave Howe 'a Printed Pamphlet called Rights of Man'. Bull was active in distributing the print, having previously given Best four copies for her to pass on to others, leading Howe to believe that Bull had more copies of the print.¹¹³ Harington sent two officers to arrest Bull. After finding him in the Market Place they marched him to his lodgings, where indeed they found thirty-nine more prints, ensuring his incarceration. The *Bath Chronicle*

¹¹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (12th June 1794), p. 2b; *Bath Chronicle* (19th June 1794), p. 2d; *Bath Chronicle* (26th June 1794), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (7th June 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (14th June 1794), p. 2d; *Bath Herald* (21st June 1794), p. 3c.

¹¹¹ *Bath Herald* (14th June 1794), p. 3b.

¹¹² *London Packet; or, New Lloyd's Evening Post* (4th - 7th April 1794), p. 4d; *Whitehall Evening Post* (1st - 3rd May 1794), p. 3d; *Chester Courant* (6th May 1794), p. 3e; *Derby Mercury* (8th May 1794), p. 4d; *Hereford Journal* (7th May 1794), p. 4c; *Reading Mercury* (5th May 1794), p. 2b; *Morning Herald* (10th June 1794), p. 2c; *Sun* (10th June 1794), p. 2c; *Hereford Journal* (11th June 1794), p. 3e; *Norfolk Chronicle* (14th June 1794), p. 2c; *Norfolk Chronicle* (14th June 1794), p. 3d; *Sun* (10th June 1794), p. 2c..

¹¹³ TNA, TS 11/506 Rex v Benjamin BULL for publishing on 12 Aug 1794 a seditious libel entitled Rights of Man etc.: city of Bath sessions.

reported the arrest, suggesting that Bull was part of a larger conspiracy to ferment sedition in the city: 'It is said he has several accomplices here, and that he acts under the direction of a Jacobin Society in London'.¹¹⁴ By contrast, the *Bath Herald's* report was notably less impartial:

Benjamin Bull, a journeyman taylor, of Castle-Cary, in this county, is committed for trial at the next Quarter-sessions for this city, charged on oath with dispersing seditious pamphlets; in which iniquitous employ; it is supposed he has been long engaged by persons, whose names he has hitherto concealed—but who, it is hoped, will not long elude the punishment the injured laws of their country, under which they enjoy every blessing, demand should be inflicted upon their heads.¹¹⁵

The same newspaper's report of the trial again emphasised that Bull was part of a larger conspiracy:

Yesterday, at the Quarter-Sessions for this city, Benjamin Bull was convicted for dispersing certain seditious pamphlets, entitled "Rights of Man." Mr. J. Anstey attended as Counsel for the Crown, and conducted the business with much candour and legal ability. The prisoner was sentenced to one year's imprisonment, and to find securities for good behaviour. He is a native of Castle-Cary, a journeyman taylor, and has a wife and five children. He was certainly the instrument of some disaffected villains to spread the poison of sedition through the lower orders of society, and we hope his sentence will put other upon their guard against the commission of the like offence.¹¹⁶

The *Bath Chronicle's* report was much the same excluding the emotive postscript, but including further details of his fine (twenty shillings) and two securities (forty pounds).¹¹⁷ While Bull's arrest was not widely reported elsewhere, but his trial and conviction did attract more attention.¹¹⁸

Nine months into his sentence, Bull apparently redeemed himself in the eyes of the Bath loyalists. Notices appeared in the Bath press announcing a

¹¹⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (21st August 1794), p. 3d.

¹¹⁵ *Bath Herald* (23rd August 1794), p. 3d.

¹¹⁶ *Bath Herald* (11th October 1794), p. 3d.

¹¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (16th October 1794), p. 3c.

¹¹⁸ *Whitehall Evening Post* (19th – 21st August 1794), p. 4c; *Chester Courant* (26th August 1794), p. 3d; *Morning Herald* (14th October 1794), p. 4a; *St. James's Chronicle: or, British Evening-Post* (16th – 18th October 1794), p. 1a; *Whitehall Evening Post* (9th – 11th October 1794), p. 4c; *Chester Chronicle* (24th October 1794), p. 3e; *Derby Mercury* (23rd October 1794), p. 4e.

subscription towards his relief, declaring,

This Man was tried found guilty, and justly imprisoned, for dispersing Seditious Publications; the principles of which he has now solemnly renounced, and being *truly penitent* for his former errors, he is resolved (like an honest Englishman) to become a loyal subject to his King and Country; and earnestly recommends the same laudable conduct to his *late* associates, before (like him) they *lose* their Liberty!!!

The notice continued with a quote taken from Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in which Proteus begs forgiveness from Valentine, before describing Bull's wife and five children as 'almost *destitute* of Food and Clothing'.¹¹⁹ The list of subscribers lends credence to Poole's contention that the charitable relief to the Bull family was conditional on his public declaration of penitence.¹²⁰ Bath's two sheriffs not only arranged the subscription, but also each donated five shillings. William Meyler, proprietor of the *Bath Herald* and secretary of the Bath loyalist association, also subscribed two shillings and sixpence. In total the fourteen subscriptions listed in these notices only amounted to two pounds, five shillings and sixpence, which was hardly a ringing endorsement of Bull's public rehabilitation.

Whereas Benjamin Bull faced destitution as a result of his actions, members of the armed forces were subject to much stiffer penalties should they be found to have uttered seditious words, as was the case with Sergeant Seagar of the King's Dragoon Guards. According to the *Bath Chronicle* of 24th August 1794, while he was stationed in Bath, 'three respectable witnesses' accused him of 'having at different times in their company made use of seditious expressions against the King and the Constitution of this country'. He appeared before Harington and his commanding officer, Major Flood, who committed him to the

¹¹⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (30th July 1795), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (25th July 1795), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (15th August 1795), p. 2d.

¹²⁰ Poole, 'Radicalism, Loyalism, and the "Reign of Terror" in Bath, 1792-1804', pp. 114-37.

city gaol 'till further orders from the Secretary of War; being a soldier, he will be tried by a Court-Martial'.¹²¹ The next issue of the *Bath Chronicle* included a clarification of the charges against Seagar; rather than uttering seditious words the sergeant had said 'that he imagined Mr. Pitt had enough of the war by this time; and that if his Majesty would give him a Captain's commission in the regiment, he would sooner dig in a ditch at a shilling a day, than fight against the French'.¹²² As the *Bath Herald* put it, 'the words he was charged with having spoken, are far less atrocious than they were reported to have been'.¹²³ There being no case against him, Seagar was released after seven days.¹²⁴ Whereas some London newspapers reported the arrest, they apparently did not consider Seagar's release to be newsworthy.¹²⁵

Nearly three years passed before the next arrests for sedition in Bath appeared in the city's press. The 12th August 1797 edition *Bath Herald* reported,

In consequence of information laudably given to the Magistrates of this city, by two honest Chairmen and another person, two men, named Bennet and Robins, were apprehended here on Wednesday, and a variety of handbills and pamphlets of a seditious tendency from the *London Corresponding and Reforming Society*, were found upon them. They were yesterday examined at the Guildhall, and committed to our prison. Bennet was discharged at Bristol last Quarter Sessions, on a charge of a similar nature; since which he has been to London, and met the Corresponding Society on the 31st of July, hoping to get some reward for his past services, but in this he says he was disappointed. Robins is a taylor, and has sometime worked in this city.¹²⁶

The arrest of the two men was widely reported in newspapers across the

¹²¹ *Bath Chronicle* (28th August 1794), p. 3d.

¹²² *Bath Chronicle* (4th September 1794), p. 3d.

¹²³ *Bath Herald* (6th September 1794), p. 3d.

¹²⁴ Poole 'Pitt's Terror Reconsidered', pp. 65-87.

¹²⁵ *St. James's Chronicle; or, British Evening Post* (26th - 28th August 1794), p. 4d; *Whitehall Evening Post* (28th - 30th August 1794), p. 4d; *Sun* (29th August 1794), p. 4c; *True Briton* (30th August 1794), p. 4b;

¹²⁶ *Bath Herald* (12th August 1797), p. 3d; Also in abridged form in *Bath Chronicle* (17th August 1797), p. 3c.

country.¹²⁷ The wide reporting of the arrests testifies to the increased anxieties of loyalists at that time, particularly in response to the failed attempt by the French to land a force in Ireland in December 1796 to aid the Society of United Irishmen. The general public may have been even more shocked if they had discovered that some English radicals had decided to co-operate with the United Irishmen in a wider insurrection. It was to this end that Thomas Evans created a national network of United Britons, sending William Bennett to Bristol to act as an agent.¹²⁸ Following his arrival in the city, Bennett served as secretary of the Bristol Corresponding Society. His political activities resulted in him twice being subject to questioning from the mayor of Bristol, James Harvey, for distributing subversive handbills days after the French landed at Pembroke and again three weeks later for selling radical newspapers. Yet Bennett was released without charge on both occasions.¹²⁹ His arrest in Bath with Thomas Robins followed him having been active as part of a group including 'six journeymen shoemakers and a journeyman smith'. John Jeffreys, the town clerk, informed the Home Secretary of the arrests in a letter in which he described the group as being 'much addicted to inflame and promote sedition'. In the letter Jeffreys also asked how to proceed.¹³⁰ Portland advised against prosecution as he was not yet ready to take action against the United Britons, and consequently both men were discharged at

¹²⁷ *Evening Mail* (11th – 14th August 1797), p. 3a; *General Evening Post* (12th – 15th August 1797), p. 2a; *Lloyd's Evening Post* (11th – 14th August 1797), p. 7c; *The Times* (14th August 1797), p. 4a; *True Briton* (15th August 1797), p. 3d; *Craftsman, or, Say's Weekly Journal* (19th August 1797), p. 1c; *Observer* (13th August 1797), p. 3b; *St. James's Chronicle: or, the British Evening-Post* (12th – 15th August 1797), p. 3b; *Oracle and Public Advertiser* (14th August 1797), p. 2b; *Whitehall Evening Post* (12th – 15th August 1797), p. 3b; *Northampton Mercury* (19th August 1797), p. 3a; *Stamford Mercury* (18th August 1797), p. 3e; *Hampshire Chronicle* (19th August 1797), p. 4c; *Oxford Journal* (19th August 1797), p. 4b; *Leeds Intelligencer* (21st August 1797), p. 3c; *Norfolk Chronicle* (19th August 1797), p. 2b; *Derby Mercury* (17th August 1797), p. 2b.

¹²⁸ Poole, 'Radicalism, Loyalism, and the "Reign of Terror" in Bath, 1792-1804', pp. 114-37.

¹²⁹ Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1791-1805', pp. 98-101.

¹³⁰ TNA, HO 42/41/55 Letter from John Jefferys, Town Clerk of Bath, f. 176.

the next Quarter Sessions with only a reprimand, which passed without comment in the Bath press.¹³¹

The local news in the Bath press also included arrests and trials for sedition in the surrounding country. The first such case occurred long before the emergence of corresponding societies and the resultant conservative reaction. In April 1791, the justice at Chippenham committed George Johnson to gaol 'for publishing a paper tending to sedition, and to a breach of the peace'.¹³² While this report makes no mention of the form that Johnson's sedition took, a report printed in the *Bath Chronicle* in December 1792 made clear the nature of the offence: 'Committed to Fisherton gaol. John Richardson book-binder, of Salisbury, charged on oath with having, in a publick-house, drank "health to Tom Paine, and d— to the King and Royal Family." He was admitted to bail, for trial at next assizes'.¹³³ His trial took place in the following March as a result of which Richardson was discharged.¹³⁴ Thomas Brimble did not get off so lightly. That same month, at the Somerset Assizes, he received a stern the punishment of six months imprisonment and to stand on the pillory 'for cursing the King and Constitution'.¹³⁵

Brimble apparently had a change of heart, as the *Bath Chronicle* reported:

The man who was convicted at the last Somerset assizes of having uttered several treasonable expressions, stood one hour in the pillory at Keynsham, on Thursday. When his head was liberated, he loudly shouted, *God save King George and all the Royal Family*, which the surrounding multitude answered by repeated huzzas, and then made a collection for him, in consequence of his loyal exclamation, which amounted to some pounds. He was afterwards re-conducted to Ilchester gaol, to undergo the remainder of his six months' imprisonment.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Poole, 'Radicalism, Loyalism, and the "Reign of Terror" in Bath, 1792-1804', pp. 114-37.

¹³² *Bath Chronicle* (7th April 1791), p. 3b.

¹³³ *Bath Chronicle* (13th December 1792), p. 3b.

¹³⁴ Poole, 'Pitt's Terror Reconsidered', pp. 65-87.

¹³⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (4th April 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (6th April 1793), p. 3d.

¹³⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (2nd May 1793), p. 3c; Also reported in *Bath Herald* (27th April 1793), p. 3d.

The tale of Brimble's redemption was not widely reported elsewhere.¹³⁷

The pillory also formed part of the punishment meted out to William Roberts of North-Bovey on his conviction at the Devon assizes in Exeter. According to the report that appeared in the *Bath Chronicle*, he was found guilty of 'speaking treasonable and seditious words' and 'sentenced to be imprisoned for one year, to stand in the pillory at Moretonhampstead one hour on Saturday se'nnight'.¹³⁸ The story of Robert's fate attracted more attention in other newspapers than that of Brimble.¹³⁹ Notably, the Bath press did not follow up on the report, unlike newspapers elsewhere.¹⁴⁰

While the county assizes heard these last two cases, the cases in Bath were heard at the city's quarterly sessions. As Clive Emsley points out, 'for many of the cases of seditious libel and seditious words it is not possible to follow the reasoning by which one offence went to the Assizes and another to the Quarter Sessions'.¹⁴¹ The trial of William Winterbotham, a Baptist minister, was heard before a special jury at Exeter assizes in July 1793; yet he was sentenced at the Court of the King's Bench in November. Winterbotham had been preaching at How's Lane Baptist church since January 1790, and it was there that he gave the two sermons on 5th and 18th November 1792 that eventuated his prosecution.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ *St. James's Chronicle: or British Evening Post* (30th April – 2nd May 1793), p. 4d, *Sun* (3rd May 1793), p. 4c; *Derby Mercury* (2nd May 1793), p. 4c.

¹³⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (1st August 1793), p. 3c.

¹³⁹ *Stamford Mercury* (2nd August 1793), p. 3b; *Derby Mercury* (1st August 1793), p. 4d; *Hereford Journal* (7th August 1793), p. 4c; *Lloyd's Evening Post* (31st July – 2nd August 1793), p. 8b; *London Evening Post* (1st – 3rd August 1793), p. 3b; *Sarah Farley's Bristol Journal* (3rd August 1793), p. 3e; *Morning Post* (31st July 1793), p. 2b; *Star* (31st July 1793), p. 3d.

¹⁴⁰ *Sun* (10th August 1793), p. 2d; *Diary: or, Woodfall's Register* (13th August 1793), p. 2d, *World* (13th August 1793), p. 2c; *Ipswich Journal* (3rd August 1793), p. 2e.

¹⁴¹ Emsley, 'An Aspect of Pitt's 'Terror'', pp. 155-84.

¹⁴² Mills, S. J., 'Winterbotham, William (1763–1829), Baptist minister and political prisoner' at *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29771> (Accessed on 31st August 2015).

According to the charges against him, in the first sermon he argued that since the Glorious Revolution, British laws had been 'abused and brought into disuse', and as with the present system of taxation, they were oppressive, resulting in destitution for many people. He admitted that he approved of the revolution in France and declared that he did not doubt that it had 'opened the eyes of the people of England', who 'have as much right to stand up as they did in France for our liberty'.¹⁴³ Unsurprisingly, the sermon aroused consternation with the city's loyalists, who spoke of prosecution. Winterbotham attempted to clarify his position in the second sermon to avoid legal proceedings, but to no avail; he was tried for both sermons on 25th and 26th July 1793. Emsley notes the possibility that the jury may have been packed and 'was certainly biased against the accused'. The audience greeted the prosecution's case with rapturous applause, and the judge, Baron Perryn, directed the jury to disregard certain witnesses and ignore contradictory testimony.¹⁴⁴ Yet, the report of the trial that appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* painted a very different picture of the proceedings:

Thursday the Court was engaged the whole day in the trial of an indictment against Mr. William Winterbotham, a baptist preacher, of Plymouth, for uttering seditious words in a sermon the 5th of Nov, last. The charges were clearly made out by the testimony of several respectable and disinterested persons; and the jury pronounced him *guilty*. And on Friday, a second indictment was tried against the same person for seditious words uttered in a sermon of the 8th of November, and he was again found *guilty*. Sentence will be passed in the Court of King's-Bench in November next.¹⁴⁵

Much the same report appeared in the next issues of the *Bath Register* and *Sarah Farley's Bristol Journal*.¹⁴⁶ The brief report that appeared in the *Bath*

¹⁴³ W. Winterbotham, *The trial of Wm. Winterbotham, assistant preacher at How's Lane meeting, Plymouth before the Hon. Baron Perryn, and a special jury, at Exeter &c.* 2nd Ed. (London, 1794), pp. 1-4.

¹⁴⁴ Emsley, 'An Aspect of Pitt's 'Terror'', pp. 155-84.

¹⁴⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (1st August 1793), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁶ *Bath Register* (3rd August 1793), p. 3d; *Sarah Farley's Bristol Journal* (3rd August 1793), p. 3e.

Herald made no such assertions regarding the fairness of the trial, but it did give the wrong date for Winterbotham's first sermon.¹⁴⁷ In December the *Bath Chronicle* reported on the sentencing of the preacher:

Mr. Winterbottom, the Dissenting minister, for preaching two seditious sermons at Plymouth, was sentenced to pay two fines of 100l. each, and to be imprisoned two years for each offence in Clerkenwell Bridewell.¹⁴⁸

Winterbotham clearly felt he had been the subject of a miscarriage of justice. In 1794 he published an account of the trials, with the unfortunate Campbell's bookshop listed among the places where it could be purchased.¹⁴⁹ This book was advertised in the *Bath Journal*, appropriately including a quotation taken from the Book of Jeremiah.¹⁵⁰

Another case heard by a special jury was that of the Robinson family, booksellers of Paternoster Row, London. The trial of George Robinson, his son (also called George), and his two brothers, John and James, took place in August 1793 at the Somerset Assizes in Bridgwater. The Bath newspapers carried lengthy reports of the proceedings.¹⁵¹ Mr Pile, 'a bookseller and distributor of newspapers' (including the *Bath Chronicle*) from Norton, near Taunton, had ordered three copies of the second part of Paine's *Rights of Man* from the Robinsons. After having been threatened with 'hanging, transportation, or being sent to the devil' by zealous loyalists he sought legal advice. His attorney contacted the Solicitors of the Treasury, resulting in a case being brought against the Robinsons. Despite Pile's testimony that they had also sent him copies of 'a strong constitutional pamphlet' that argued against Paine that they requested that

¹⁴⁷ *Bath Herald* (3rd August 1793), p. 3d.

¹⁴⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (5th December 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁴⁹ Winterbotham, *The trial of Wm. Winterbotham*.

¹⁵⁰ *Bath journal* (10th January 1794), p. 1b.

¹⁵¹ See Plate 11.

he 'distribute gratis wherever he thought they might be of service' and 'an excellent speech in their favour' by their lawyer, the jury found the Robinsons guilty of publishing Paine's work.¹⁵² Understandably, the trial was widely reported in the London press, since that is where the Robinsons resided and did business.¹⁵³ A number of provincial newspapers also carried the same story.¹⁵⁴

Yesterday came on at Bridgwater, before Judge Heath and a special Jury, the trial of Messrs. Robinson, very eminent booksellers in London, for selling the Second Part of Paine's Rights of Man. It appeared by the evidence of Mr. Pile, bookseller and distributor of newspapers, of Norton near Taunton, that in November last he had ordered from Messrs. Robinson three copies of the book in question, *two of which he delivered to his employers*; but being threatened by some gentlemen of the county, with "*hanging, transportation, or being sent to the devil,*" if he did not give up the persons from whom he had procured them, he locked up the remaining copy, determined not to sell it, and applied to an attorney for advice, to whom he shewed the book; which the said attorney keeping in possession, wrote up to the Solicitors of the Treasury. Upon the delivery of this book, the prosecution was commenced. The bill of parcels and note for payment were produced in court.—Pile declared, that he received from Messrs. Robinson in July 1792, several copies of THE PROTEST AGAINST PAINE'S RIGHTS OF MAN, (a strong constitutional pamphlet) which they requested him to distribute *gratis* wherever he thought they might be of service.—The defendants produced no evidence, resting their cause upon their not *willfully or intentionally* sowing sedition, but merely selling a pamphlet in the course of their immense business which was then in general sale. Mr. Bond made an excellent speech in their favour, which he delivered with peculiar energy; but the jury conceiving the publication proved found a verdict GUILTY. Counsel for the prosecution, Serjeant Rook, Serjeant Lawrence, Mr. Morris, Mr. Franklyn, and a Junior Counsel.—For the defendants, Mr. Bond and Mr. Gibbes.

Plate 11: Report of the trial of the Robinsons.
Bath Chronicle (8th August 1793).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² *Bath Chronicle* (8th August 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (10th August 1793), p. 3cd; *Bath Register* (10th August 1793), p. 3c.

¹⁵³ *World* (9th August 1793), p. 3b; *Evening Mail* (7th – 9th August 1793), p. 4c; *General Evening Post* (8th – 10th August 1793), p. 1ab; *Lloyd's Evening-Post* (7th – 9th August 1793), p. 8b; *Diary: or, Woodfall's Register* (10th August 1793), p. 3b; *Gazetteer, and New Daily Advertiser* (12th August 1793), p. 3ab.

¹⁵⁴ *Ipswich Journal* (10th August 1793), p. 2cd; *Leeds Intelligencer* (12th August 1793), p. 3a; *Hereford Journal* (14th August 1793), p. 2c; *Derby Mercury* (15th August 1793), p. 4d; *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury* (16th August 1793), p. 1c.

¹⁵⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (8th August 1793), p. 3c.

Two weeks after reporting the trial, the *Bath Chronicle* and *Bath Herald* printed a letter in which Pile defended the role of his lawyer in the affair, Mr Beadon, who had, in Pile's opinion been besmirched by 'many of the publick papers'.¹⁵⁶ The 'publick papers' in question included the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Star* which both printed an indictment of Beadon, while not mentioning him by name:

Crop I win; Pile you lose. - Old Proverb. Mr. Pile's Attorney adopted a safe practice for himself in the business of Messrs. Robinsons' prosecution, by sending the papers with which Pile, his client, furnished him, to the only people who could prosecute the offence. Great encouragement this, to confide in *Gentleman* of the Law.¹⁵⁷

Pile's letter also appeared in a number of London newspapers.¹⁵⁸ Whether or not the Robinsons felt aggrieved by the outcome of their prosecution, their punishment was relatively light when compared to the other cases detailed above. As in the case of Winterbotham, the Robinsons received their sentence from the Court of the King's Bench on 26th November. The court fined John Robinson one-hundred pounds and the other three defendants, fifty pounds each. As the *Bath Chronicle* reported, the fine 'was immediately paid'.¹⁵⁹

Another defendant who received relatively lenient treatment was an unidentified publican of Keynsham. As the *Bath Chronicle* of 23rd August 1798 reported,

At our late assizes, a publican of Keynsham was tried and convicted of an indictment for sedition, in saying in public company - "I wish success to the French, God bless them!" - It appeared in evidence that the defendant had, in many instances before and since the commission of the offence, given many proofs of his loyalty and attachment to the King and Constitution, and that the seditious words were not spoken in a manner which demonstrated a disaffection to either; the Jury under that impression found

¹⁵⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd August 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (24th August 1793), p. 2c.

¹⁵⁷ *Morning Chronicle* (13th August 1793), p. 3b; *Star* (13th August 1793), p. 3b.

¹⁵⁸ *Star* (22nd August 1793), p. 4b; *Evening Mail* (21st – 23rd August 1793), p. 2d; *True Briton* (22nd August 1793), p. 4b.

¹⁵⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (28th November 1793), p. 3b.

the defendant guilty of speaking the words, but not with any criminal intention; whereupon the Judge refused to record the verdict, and told them it was their duty to find the defendant guilty generally, or acquit him, and they thereupon returned a general verdict of guilty. The defendant was fined 1s. and ordered to be imprisoned for one month. In pronouncing the sentence, the Judge, after expatiating on the magnitude of the offence, said, it appeared to him that defendant was not in the free exercise of his intellectual faculties at the time the words were spoken, and he therefore took the same into his consideration in the measure of punishment.¹⁶⁰

The defendant may have been the Keynsham resident arrested three months earlier, although in its report of the time, the *Bath Chronicle* identified him as a 'basket-maker', who 'was taken into custody, for making use of improper language respecting the success of the French'.¹⁶¹ The story was not well reported in other newspapers, although it did appear in a slightly edited form in the *Ipswich Journal*.¹⁶²

While stories of arrests and the subsequent trials of local radicals were common in the Bath press, reports of prisoners being released without trial or acquitted did not appear. Such was the case with Thomas Meeker and Thomas Stone. The *Bath Chronicle* reported their committal 'to Shepton gaol, by the Right Hon. James Grenville, and Henry Gould, clerk, for uttering seditious expressions'.¹⁶³ A week later the newspaper gave further salacious details of the reasons for their imprisonment. According to the report they had been apprehended at the Kingweston Inn by Reynolds the innkeeper and Mr Clarke of Castle Cary after 'tampering with a countryman, who agreed to assist in some scheme that was an agitation, and to engage his two sons, and as many of his neighbours as possible'. Meeker and Stone then 'acknowledged that they were members of the Sheffield association, and that their business was to sound the

¹⁶⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd August 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁶¹ *Bath Chronicle* (17th May 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁶² *Ipswich Journal* (25th August 1798), p. 2e.

¹⁶³ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd July 1794), p. 3c.

inclinations of the lower sort of people'.¹⁶⁴ A much abridged version of this report also appeared in the *Bath Herald*.¹⁶⁵ The prosecution accused the men of attempting to ferment insurrection to assist a French landing. Yet the rather imaginative prosecution case failed to sway the jury, and they were discharged at the following assizes.¹⁶⁶ Their release went unreported, as did the acquittal of Bennett and Robins. Even when the *Bath Chronicle* corrected its earlier report on the arrest of Sergeant Seager, it did not mention his release. By contrast, in May 1798 the *Bath Herald* scotched rumours of a cabal of Jacobins in a nearby town:

We are happy to inform the Public, that part of the rumours which have spread abroad respecting the inhabitants of Glastonbury setting up a Tree of Liberty, is false. The fact is this: A few idle men assembled at fixed a bush upon the Cross. Information being given to the Mayor, (J. Ivie, Esq.) — whose conduct in the business does him great honour — the ringleaders were secured, and upon examination fully convinced his Worship that they had no ill design against their Country, and were willing, at this period to lend their aid in any way that may be thought necessary. They also readily took the oaths of allegiance, &c.¹⁶⁷

Conclusion

The winter of 1792-3 proved to be a turning point for the Bath newspapers. While none of them could be considered radical prints, not even the *Bath Register* when it was published by Campbell, they still made space for content that promoted the cause of parliamentary concern. Advertisements for books and other prints were a mainstay of newspapers at that time, so it comes as no surprise that some reforming publications would be promoted in the Bath press. Whether they agreed with the political positions of these prints or not, newspaper proprietors wished to maintain with their fellow printers and booksellers. The narrow

¹⁶⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (10th July 1794), p. 3d.

¹⁶⁵ *Bath Herald* (12th July 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁶ Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1791-1805', p. 81; Poole, 'Pitt's Terror Reconsidered', pp. 65-87.

¹⁶⁷ *Bath Herald* (12th May 1798), p. 3c.

economic margins of provincial newspapers meant that they could not reject advertising income.¹⁶⁸ Similarly they would have charged advertising rates for reform-minded societies to place their notices in their newspapers. They were, however, free to show much more discretion when it came to the printing of letters. The *Bath Herald* chose not to print at least one letter written in defence of the principles of the French Revolution and the cause of reform. The *Bath Chronicle* and the *Bath Register*, by contrast, were willing to print letters expressing a variety of political opinions, at least until the rise of the loyalist association movement. Perversely, the only Bath newspapers to print submissions expressing, what might be considered, radical ideologies after this was the fervently conservative *Bath Herald*.

The climate of fear created by the conservative reaction resulted in some of those accused of supporting the enemies of the established order using the Bath newspapers as a public forum in which to protest their innocence. While others who fell afoul of the government's campaign to root out sedition were exposed to public scrutiny in the newspaper reports of their arrests and trials. These paint a particularly complex picture. While anti-Jacobins would have been reassured that they had felt the weight of justice, the reports still contained details of their opinions, which as a consequence received public exposure. Although it is interesting that the newspapers tended to focus on arrests and trials, rather than the release of those falsely accused. The absence of reporting of some events in the Bath press is also intriguing, as it opens up the prospect that the newspaper proprietors themselves felt the effect of the climate of fear that placed some forms of association became beyond the pale.

¹⁶⁸ Gardner, *The Business of News*, p. 72.

Chapter 5: Displays of Loyalism

Introduction

John Reeves founded the Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in London on 20th November 1792. The association intended to form a national network of societies 'to suppress seditious Publications, and to defend our Persons and Property against the innovations and predations that seem to be threatened by those who maintain [...] mischievous opinions'.¹ Within weeks dozens of similar associations arose across the country, and by the early months of the following year around one-thousand associations had affiliated themselves with the London committee.² Newspapers provided a powerful medium by which the association disseminated its message around the country. The *Bath Chronicle* was among the first provincial newspapers to carry the announcement.³ The notice also appeared in the *Bath Herald* and the *Bath Register*, as well as many other provincial titles.⁴ The *Bath Journal* was effusive in its praise of the newly founded association's declaration, stating that 'it does honour to the head and heart'.⁵

Recently, historians have reappraised the association movement and the popular loyalism it engendered.⁶ Rather than use simple pictures of aristocratic

¹ Association for Preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, *At a Meeting of Gentlemen at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, November 20, 1792* (London, 1792), p. 3.

² Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution', pp. 291-328.

³ *Bath Chronicle* (29th November 1792), p. 1bc.

⁴ *Bath Herald* (1st December 1792), p. 1ab; *Bath Register* (8th December 1792), p. 4abc; *Reading Mercury* (3rd December 1792), p. 1bcd; *Northampton Mercury* (8th December 1792), p. 2c; *Leeds Intelligencer* (10th December 1792), p. 4ab.

⁵ *Bath Journal* (3rd December 1792), p. 4e.

⁶ Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution'; McCormack, *The Independent Man*; McCormack, 'Rethinking 'Loyalty''; Mori, 'Languages of Loyalism: Patriotism, Nationhood and the State in the 1790s', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 118, No. 475 (Feb., 2003), pp. 33-58; O'Gorman, 'English Loyalism Revisited' in Blackstock & Magennis (Eds.), *Politics and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland*.

repression or middling-sort reaction, they have created a complex image of variation and contradiction. The loyalists appropriated radical strategies of civic assembly and public correspondence to combat radicalism. They widened the political debate to include those who were excluded from the political nation, and in so doing challenged the existing order that they sought to defend. In order to properly explain this paradoxical image, McCormack has questioned the use of the terms 'conservatism', 'loyal', 'loyalist', 'loyalism' and 'patriotism' because their interchangeable usage by historians gives rise to a sense of a monolithic phenomenon. This chapter makes a humble contribution to this new thinking, by exploring the ways in which the newspapers facilitated the participation of all strata of society, both urban and rural, in the loyal association movement and the subsequent wave of effigy burnings of Thomas Paine and, in the case of Bath, Philippe Égalité. It also explores the way in which correspondents publicly contributed to popular loyalism by submitting poems, letters and essays to the Bath press.

Loyalist Associations

In May 1792 the government issued a royal proclamation against the distribution of seditious prints, which the *Bath Journal* and *Bath Chronicle* printed in full.⁷ According to Mori, while this proclamation had 'no status as an enactment', it did serve as a 'precautionary statement of official concern' about the threat that the second part of Paine's *Rights of Man* posed to public order.⁸ It also served as a means by which the government could rally, and to some degree measure, public

⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (24th May 1792), p. 4a; *Bath Journal* (28th May 1792), p. 2d.

⁸ J. Mori, *Britain in the Age of the French Revolution 1785-1820* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 94-6.

opinion.⁹ Newspapers played a role not only in disseminating the text of the proclamation but also in publicising the loyalist response. The *Bath Register* of 2nd June 1792 carried a notice requesting that ‘principal Inhabitants and Residents [...] meet at the UPPER ROOMS [...] to consider the propriety of testifying their Loyalty and Attachment to the Constitution, by an ADDRESS to His Majesty’ on the following day.¹⁰ The *Bath Chronicle* reported on this gathering of ‘a numerous and respectable body of the inhabitants of this city and neighbourhood’ who prepared and approved their address, which they ‘left at the New Rooms’ to receive signatures.¹¹ The *Bath Herald* announced that the address had been relocated to its proprietor’s library where it was available ‘for public Inspection and Signature’.¹² The *Bath Chronicle* and the *Bath Register* printed the text of the address as part of their local news.¹³ The address stressed ‘the Freedom of the Press as the unalienable Right of Freemen’, but soon after deferentially conceded that it was an ‘inestimable privilege’, which was open to abuse.¹⁴

The conflation of rights and privileges continued in the *Bath Herald* which declared in its reporting of the presentation of the address to the king that the ‘inestimable privilege of an Englishman – the Liberty of the Press [...] can only be secured to posterity by curbing its licentiousness’.¹⁵ The same issue also included the text of another suitably obsequious loyal address from the Bath Corporation that made no mention of press freedom, an omission which in no

⁹ F. O’Gorman, ‘Pitt and the “Tory” Reaction’ in Dickinson (Ed.), *Britain and the French Revolution*, pp. 21-37.

¹⁰ *Bath Register* (2nd June 1792), p. 3b

¹¹ *Bath Chronicle* (7th June 1792), p. 3c; The same report also appeared in the *Bath Register* (9th June 1792), p. 3c.

¹² *Bath Herald* (9th June 1792), p. 3c.

¹³ *Bath Chronicle* (14th June 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (16th June 1792), p. 3ab.

¹⁴ See Plate 12.

¹⁵ *Bath Herald* (16th June 1792), p. 3c.

way diminished the newspaper's praise:

The force, brevity, and elegance of the foregoing Address, reflect honour on the Members of the Body who adopted it. Every Reader of Taste will admire the composition, and every Friend of the Constitution must approve of its zeal and principles.¹⁶

The following Address, signed by 516 inhabitants of this city and neighbourhood, has been transmitted to the Secretary of State, to be presented to his Majesty :

"To the KING's Most Excellent MAJESTY.

" MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

" WE, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Inhabitants of Bath and its Neighbourhood, humbly beg leave to thank your Majesty for the Proclamation lately issued against the Authors, Printers and Dispersers of sundry wicked and seditious Writings, which have of late industriously been circulated through this kingdom, tending to unsettle the minds of your Majesty's subjects, and to weaken their well-grounded confidence in the Constitution of this Country, as by Law established.

" We rejoice to find that your Majesty's most gracious care for the peace and welfare of your people has been so well seconded by the general and decided opinion of both Houses of Parliament; and are truly happy in this opportunity of marking out (by this our humble Address of Thanks to the Throne) our abhorrence of all those seditious publications, which have deservedly occasioned your Majesty's present interference, in support of that proper submission to the laws; in maintenance of that just confidence in the wisdom and integrity of Parliament; and in continuance of that zealous attachment to the Government and Constitution of this kingdom, which has ever prevailed in the minds of your Majesty's subjects.

" Considering the Freedom of the Press as the unalienable Right of Freemen, and as the principal support of our Liberties and happy Constitution, we are filled with indignation at the late audacious and repeated abuses of that inestimable privilege.

" Convinced as we are, of the value of this branch of our Freedom, we are the more anxious to preserve it, and to transmit it entire to posterity; which we apprehend can by no means be so effectually done, as by censuring that licentiousness, which affords the only plausible pretence to designing persons to object against the privilege itself.

" We are confident that upon this occasion your Majesty will receive not only the thanks, but the earnest co-operation, of all your loyal subjects, in carrying into execution every legal measure, tending to secure to us the possession of that happiness, which, by the blessing of God, we now enjoy under your Majesty's government; still farther to promote your Majesty's gracious and parental wishes for the welfare and happiness of your people."

Plate 12: Loyal Address to the King. *Bath Chronicle* (14th June 1792).¹⁷

¹⁶ *Bath Herald* (16th June 1792), p. 3d.

¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (14th June 1792), p. 3c.

As the *Bath Journal* reported, the city's corporation was not the only one to send addresses to their monarch.¹⁸ The following week it announced that

The Address to his Majesty, on his late Proclamation, signed by the principal Inhabitants of this City and Neighbourhood, will be presented to the King this week.— Our Corporation, we hear, intend voting their Address this day.¹⁹

There was no suggestion that the mayor was slow in his response or that he felt his authority challenged by those who had met at the assembly room, but a curious event that happened during the formation of the Bath Association for Preserving Liberty, Property, and the Constitution of Great-Britain, Against Republicans and Levellers at the Guildhall on 5th December suggests that this may have been the case. A notice inserted in the *Bath Chronicle* giving details of the unannounced initial meeting of the association included the following resolution:

That the Mayor of this City be requested to inform Mr. Stroud, Master of the Upper Assembly Rooms, that an inflammatory hand-bill has been dispersed, purporting that a meeting has been advertised to call the inhabitants towards forming an Association to be holden at his Rooms on Friday the 7th instant, and that in consequence thereof he should advise him of the illegality of his admitting any such meeting for the purposes mentioned in the said hand-bill.²⁰

At this point Abel Moysey, the former MP for the city and incumbent mayor, vacated the chair, presumably to run his errand. An announcement of this rival meeting previously appeared in the *Bath Journal*, but there was little inflammatory in the request 'to take into consideration the propriety of entering into an ASSOCIATION similar to that in London, for protecting LIBERTY and PROPERTY, AGAINST *Republicans and Levellers*'.²¹ London newspapers had

¹⁸ *Bath Journal* (4th June 1792), p. 4e.

¹⁹ *Bath Journal* (11th June 1792), p. 4e.

²⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (6th December 1792), p. 3b.

²¹ *Bath Journal* (3rd December 1792), p. 4e.

also reported this announcement:

Public notice was given at Bath on Saturday for a Meeting to be held at the Upper Room, on Friday next, for the purpose of forming an Association upon the same plan and principles with that at the Crown and Anchor Tavern.²²

Whereas the Bath newspapers chose not to report on the mayor's intervention, the *Morning Herald* later reported that: 'A Meeting was to have taken place this day at the new Assembly Rooms, convened by some of the Jacobins, but the interference of the City Solicitor and the Mayor has prevented it.'²³ It seems unlikely that the loyal citizenry of Bath faced a cabal of Jacobins publicly using one of the assembly rooms as their base of operations; it is much more likely that, by exercising his authority, the mayor ensured that the association that met at the Guildhall became the recognised voice of loyalism for the city, a position that was jealously guarded. When leaflets particularly malevolent prints appeared in the city, purporting to be the work of the Bath Association, the *Bath Journal* declared,

We are authorised to say that the many papers which have been distributed, violent in their tendency and levelled at particular sects or persons, were never issued by the order, nor have they ever received the countenance of the Committee.²⁴

The committee took steps to distance themselves from these incendiary prints by putting a notice in the Bath press, informing the public that 'no papers or other publications are authorised by this Committee, but such as shall be signed by their order'.²⁵

Apart from Moysey, the initial committee of eleven men included only one other member of the Corporation, William Watson. The association, however,

²² *London Evening Post* (4th – 6th December 1792), p. 1d; *St. James's Chronicle: or, British Evening-Post* (4th – 6th December 1792), p. 1c.

²³ *Morning Herald* (11th December 1792), p. 3c.

²⁴ *Bath Journal* (31st December 1792), p. 4e.

²⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd January 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (5th January 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (5th January 1793), p. 2b.

took the same oligarchic form as the Corporation, with the committee members empowering themselves to elect to the committee a further ten inhabitants of the city.²⁶ The notice of their 11th December meeting listed the expanded committee, which included members of a lower social order. Whereas the original committee was something of a squireocracy, with all but one of the members being identified as esquires, the ten new members were simply gentlemen. Nevertheless, the new intake still included at least one other member of the Corporation, George Chapman, who would later serve as mayor. It also included 'Mr. John Palmer' who may have been the theatre proprietor, former Comptroller-General of the Post Office, Corporation member, and later MP for the city, or, less likely, the city architect of the same name. If it was the latter, then he would have represented those responsible for the recent growth of Bath, along with the builder Charles Spackman, who also appeared on the list. Meyler, a later member of the Corporation, became secretary to the association, making his library available as one of the places to take in subscriptions to cover the association's expenses.²⁷ The committee also resolved that Charles Phillott, another Corporation man, 'be requested to accept the officer of Treasurer to this Association.'²⁸ The Corporation also provided the Guildhall for all future meetings and voted fifty pounds to cover its expenses.²⁹ The Bath association was not alone in having official sanction. As Mitchell points out, it was usual for the committees in corporate towns to include the mayor, aldermen and common councillors. He

²⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (6th December 1792), p. 3b.

²⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (10th December 1792), p. 4e; *Bath Register* (15th December 1792), p. 3a; *Bath Register* (22nd December 1792), p. 2b

²⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (13th December 1792), p. 3d; *Bath Journal* (17th December 1792), p. 4b; *Bath Register* (15th December 1792), p. 3a; *Bath Register* (22nd December 1792), p. 2b.

²⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (22nd December 1792), p. 3d.

gives the examples of Newcastle where 'the committee included the mayor, the recorder, and nearly all the aldermen', and Durham where the committee included 'seven aldermen and the mayor'.³⁰ Furthermore, the chairmen of the committee of the Bath association appears to have been linked to the position of mayor, for when Moysey's tenure as mayor came to an end he was replaced as chairmen by the new mayor, Henry Harington.³¹

Not everyone appointed to the committee was a Bath resident. Despite having appeared on the *Bath Chronicle's* list of recent arrivals less than two months before, the Irish peer, Lord Portarlington, was appointed to the committee.³² He was, however, later replaced on the committee by John Strode as he was 'obliged to attend his parliamentary duties in Ireland'.³³ The committee soon expanded again, apparently rendered necessary by the volume of work. The four extra members added on 22nd December included the two Members of Parliament for Somerset: Sir John Trevelyan and Henry Hippisley Coxe.³⁴ As with the inclusion of Corporation members, the Bath Association was not alone in enlisting the help of Members of Parliament. Mitchell cites two similar examples; the Woodstock committee included three MPs, while Robert Peel, the Bury manufacturer and MP for Tamworth, served on the Manchester committee.³⁵ The addition of the two parliamentarians inspired the *Bath Journal* to make special mention of their presence on the committee in its local news:

Upwards of fourscore signatures have been sent to the Bath Association from Stone-Easton – Mr. Cox, one of our worthy representatives in

³⁰ A. Mitchell, 'The Association Movement of 1792-3', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1961), pp. 56-77

³¹ *Bath Chronicle* (14th November 1793), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (16th November 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (18th November 1793), p. 1d.

³² *Bath Chronicle* (25th October 1792), p. 3b.

³³ *Bath Journal* (31st December 1792), p. 4c.

³⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (27th December 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (29th December 1792), p. 3b; *Bath Journal* (24th December 1792), p. 4c; *Bath Register* (29th December 1792), p. 2bc.

³⁵ Mitchell, 'The Association Movement of 1792-3', pp. 56-77.

Parliament, is on this Committee, and the circumstance is a proof of his Parishioners attachment and his own sentiments on this important crisis. - Sir John Trevelyan has likewise assured the Committee how much he approves the measures they have adopted.³⁶

Whether or not the addition of the two MPs was symbolic, it certainly secured the authority of the Bath Association, while at the same time it cemented a divergence from the founding principle of Reeves' original association: that it was made up of 'private men, unconnected with any Party'.³⁷ Nevertheless, the *Bath Herald* warmly greeted the formation of the association before warning those 'thoughtless persons against the danger to which they expose themselves by propagating inflammatory opinions, or by forming unlawful assemblies' citing 'riots of 1780, when an incendiary justly forfeited his life to the injured laws of his country'.³⁸

The issue of the *Bath Chronicle* that heralded the formation of the Bath Association also contained a report of apparently spontaneous expressions of loyalty to the king at the Bath and Bristol theatres where '*God save the King!* Has been called for by the audience [...] every night for some time past'. Similarly at 'Mr. Rauzini's concert last Wednesday it was called for, and played in full chorus', uniting all strata of the city's residents and visitors, as 'the company in the boxes joined the chorus with their loyal brethren in the pit and galleries'.³⁹ The *Bath Register* also reported that 'the loyal Song of *God save the King* was repeatedly sung at our Theatre, the company, in every part of the House, joining in the Chorus'.⁴⁰ These vocal demonstrations of loyalism received mention in the

³⁶ *Bath Journal* (31st December 1792), p. 4e; the same report also later appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* (3rd January 1793), p. 3b and the *Bath Register* (5th January 1793), p. 2b.

³⁷ Association for Preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, *At a Meeting of Gentlemen at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, November 20, 1792* (London, 1792), p. 3.

³⁸ *Bath Herald* (8th December 1792), p. 3c.

³⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (6th December 1792), p. 3c.

⁴⁰ *Bath Register* (8th December 1792), p. 3c

London press, with the *Morning Herald* reporting that 'The people here are wonderfully loyal - "God save the King" was sung in the Theatre last night five times'.⁴¹ The *Bath Chronicle* eulogised on the appeal of the Bath Association to all strata of society.

The loyalty and unanimity with which the inhabitants of this city, *high and low, rich and poor*, manifest their zeal for the support of mutual happiness, in a determination to defend "Liberty, Property, and the Constitution," appears in a most pleasing and forcible degree, by the crowds which have already joined the association at the Guildhall, the numbers of which in a few days will amount to several thousands! The builders and masons' workmen, and the honest and industrious labourers of all descriptions, feel great pride and pleasure in uniting with their superiors in the above laudable association.⁴²

The *Bath Herald* struck a similar tone:

It is particularly pleasing to see with what alacrity the inhabitants flock to the Guildhall, to enter into the Bath Association. A spirit of attachment to the British Constitution is diffused throughout all orders and degrees, and every mind is impressed with a due sense of the envied blessings we enjoy. In short, we may rejoice at the downfall of false philosophy, and the triumphant renovation of common-sense and genuine liberty.⁴³

The *Bath Chronicle* declared that 'Numerous parties from the neighbouring villages, and frequenters of our markets, flock to the Guildhall to join the Loyal Bath Association; the signatures to which amount to nearly 7000!'⁴⁴ The *Bath Herald* was more conservative in its estimate, while still attempting to recruit members to the association, no matter how humble their circumstances:

That the number of Associators in this small circle should amount to upwards of six thousand is almost incredible. The books are still open: let every man who has a chair, or bedstead, that he can call his own, immediately repair to the Guild Hall, avow his principles and put the factious and discontented to the blush.⁴⁵

As it was, the association's committee later declared the number of members to

⁴¹ *Morning Herald* (11th December 1792), p. 3c.

⁴² *Bath Chronicle* (13th December 1792), p. 3a.

⁴³ *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 3c.

⁴⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 3c.

⁴⁵ *Bath Herald* (22nd December 1792), p. 3d.

be 5,919 in a notice in which they also announced that the membership books were to be relocated to Meyler's library where they would 'remain to receive the signatures of such good and loyal subjects as may be inclined to become Members of this Association.'⁴⁶ The *Bath Journal* was also typically emphatic in its approval: 'The various publications of the Bath Association have been marked with so much candour and moderation that they have received the sanctions of persons of almost every description – the really disaffected we are happy to find are Few indeed!'⁴⁷ London newspapers also emphasised the unanimity of loyalist sentiment in Bath, as the *World* reported, albeit in highly gendered terms:

No place in England is perhaps more distinguished for the loyalty of its inhabitants, than Bath the number of signatures to the books of the Association formed here against Levellers and Republicans can only be guessed at by the total of the male inhabitants and visitors of Bath and its environs; for all have signed, even the boys from ten years of age bred by their parents to respect the King and Constitution by which they are protected, have crowded to the Town, and supplicated to put their names with their friends and relations.⁴⁸

The *Public Advertiser* printed a story clearly intended to show the association's appeal to all strata of society:

A labouring man coming to put his name as an Associator very lately at the Guildhall at Bath, was asked whether he knew what he was about to sign "Yes Sir" replied he to the excellent Magistrate who asked him the question; "I am going to shew my regard to the king and Constitution of my country, and to endeavour to protect my little property which I have gained by the sweat of my brow against a parcel of rascals who never did a day's work in their lives, and who would very readily plunder me of it."⁴⁹

The Bath committee later prepared 'an Alphabetical List of the several persons who have already become Members', which was made available at Meyler's premises, somewhat disquietingly, 'for the inspection of such persons who may

⁴⁶ *Bath Journal* (31st December 1792), p. 4c.

⁴⁷ *Bath Journal* (31st December 1792), p. 4e.

⁴⁸ *World* (17th December 1792), p. 3b.

⁴⁹ *Public Advertiser* (31st December 1792), p. 3d.

be desirous of perusing the same'. The announcement also declared that 'the original List of the Members still lies open' providing an opportunity to 'such persons as have not signed the same, but are desirous of becoming Members of this Association'.⁵⁰ This public exhibition of signatures suggests that social pressure may have been applied to those who signed, contrasting with the newspapers' portrayal of queues of eager signatories. The opposition *Morning Chronicle* mockingly suggested a number of other reasons why individuals were prepared to add their names to the rolls of loyalists:

Some sign because they imagine their names will be seen by the king;
Others, because their names are put on the same paper, or parchment,
with the knight or esquire of the parish; and not a few to shew that they can
write.⁵¹

The presence of collective signings in the Bath list gives further pause for thought as an indicator that some employers coerced their workers to sign. Poole found 471 examples of this type, including the architect John Eveleigh's entire workforce, a total of 156 names all signed in the same hand.⁵²

As well as building up their membership, by means fair or foul, the Bath Association also recruited to their cause entire trades within the city. On receiving an address signed by all of the city's three-hundred and twenty-six sedan chair carriers, the committee included it in one of their notices. The address declared the chairmen's willingness 'to promote, as far as is in our humble abilities, the intent of your association'. Noting that their livelihood's depended on 'the prosperity and peace of the kingdom in general, and of this city in particular', they enrolled in the association *en masse*, declaring, 'We love and honour our King, and are ready to lay down our lives to serve him, to protect his laws, and to obey

⁵⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (21st February 1793), p. 3c.

⁵¹ *Morning Chronicle* (25th December 1792), p. 3b.

⁵² Poole, 'Popular Politics in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1791-1805', pp. 157-8.

the commands of all who are in authority under him'.⁵³

The publication of this notice served not only to demonstrate the loyal support of the lower orders for the current constitution, albeit support strongly contingent on economic concerns from a group that Poole argues were engaged in 'the most overtly deferential occupation the city's service economy could support'.⁵⁴ The employment of chairmen by the city's authorities, of which the Bath Association was surely an extension, was not without precedent. In the aftermath of the Gordon Riots of 1780, which resulted in the burning of the new Catholic chapel, the Bath Corporation enrolled them as part of a paid force to patrol the streets at night. Yet, despite their declaration, the chairmen's deference to authority was not without limits. Less than a year after their address to the association they engaged in industrial action in response to the failure of the Corporation to take into account the spread of the city up the steep Lansdown Hill in their new regulations.⁵⁵ In response to the new regulations, on 20th September 1793 they held a meeting at which they 'unanimously resolved' to present the Corporation with a petition, 'praying them to repeal, amend, alter, or make other Bye-Laws and Orders, instead of those already made or intended by their Worships', which the chairmen found 'to be very oppressive and impossible [...] to comply with'. They also resolved to place a notice in the *Bath Herald*.⁵⁶ No compromise having been reached, on the evening of 25th November 1793, the chairmen went on strike. A detailed report of the industrial action appeared in the *General Evening Post*, according to which the city's five-hundred chairmen 'struck

⁵³ *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (15th December 1792), p. 3c.

⁵⁴ Poole, 'Radicalism, Loyalism, and the "Reign of Terror" in Bath, 1792-1804', pp. 114-37.

⁵⁵ T. Fawcett, 'Chair Transport in Bath: The Sedan Era', *Bath History*, Vol. II (1988), pp. 113-38.

⁵⁶ *Bath Herald* (21st September 1794), p. 3c.

their poles, and proceeded in a mutinous manner to the Guildhall, respecting the granting of their licences'. They surrounded the building, hurling insults at Harington, the incumbent mayor, 'and broke to pieces the chairs of all those who came forward to obtain their licences', after which they refused to take any passengers. The city's magistrates had little option but to accede to the demands chairmen who 'once more fixed their poles, and gave a general shout of "God save the King."' ⁵⁷ By contrast, the *Bath Chronicle's* brief report neglected to mention the chairmen's demonstration at the Guildhall, instead saying that 'the men retired peaceably home', and that 'the difference was this day settled to the satisfaction of the chairmen'. ⁵⁸

Whereas the boisterous chairmen willingly offered their services to the Bath Association, the committee actively encouraged the support of representatives of another sector of the Bath economy. The notice of the Bath Association meeting of 18th December included a resolutions made at a meeting of the innkeepers and victuallers of Coventry, in which they declared that,

we will suffer no person or persons to hold any Society in our respective houses, or make use of any language which tends to subvert the Government of this Kingdom, without giving immediate notice to the Mayor and Magistrates of this City. ⁵⁹

This resolution had previously appeared in a notice inserted in London and provincial newspapers. ⁶⁰ The dissemination of this notice resulted in the example being quickly adopted elsewhere, as the *Bath Journal* relayed, in a rare editorial piece:

⁵⁷ *General Evening Post* (28th – 30th November 1793), p. 1a.

⁵⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (28th November 1793), p. 3c.

⁵⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 3a; *Bath Herald* (22nd December 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (24th December 1792), p. 1b; *Bath Register* (22nd December 1792), p. 2c; *Bath Register* (29th December 1792), p. 2b.

⁶⁰ *Northampton Mercury* (15th December 1792), p. 2b; *Oxford Journal* (15th December 1792), p. 2b; *London Chronicle* (13th – 15th December 1792), p. 3c; *Star* (15th December 1792), p. 4a.

'Tis hoped the Publicans of this City will convene a meeting to adopt the same laudable measures as are now taking in the cities of London and Westminster, to prevent seditious persons assembling, or inflammatory publications to be read in their houses, which only tend to corrupt the minds of well disposed persons.⁶¹

The Bath Association also recognised the value of enlisting the help of the city's 'Publicans and Victuallers' to 'strike at the very root of all Seditious and Treasonable Conspiracies'.⁶² To this end, another announcement, dated 19th December, appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* requesting their attendance at a meeting the following day at the Bear Inn.⁶³ The meeting took place with William Stroud of the New Assembly Rooms in the chair. Those present resolved

that they would suffer no meetings or clubs, in which seditious subjects should be agitated, to be held, or language, tending to disturb the public tranquillity, to be made use of by any person or persons, in their respective houses, without immediately giving information thereof to the Civil Magistrate.

In another resolution they thanked the Committee of the Bath Association 'for their judicious recommendation of a line of conduct'. They also resolved to arrange the printing of the resolutions 'in several of the Bath & London newspapers'.⁶⁴ True to their word an announcement appeared in the Bath press and a number of London newspapers.⁶⁵ The notice boasted that 'Near One Hundred Innkeepers and Victuallers immediately signed the preceding Resolutions' and optimistically announced that 'those few remaining Victuallers of Bath and its Neighbourhood, who had not timely notice of the above Meeting' had a few days during which they would be able to add their signatures. In later

⁶¹ *Bath Journal* (10th December 1792), p. 4e.

⁶² *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 3a; *Bath Journal* (31st December 1792), p. 1b.

⁶³ *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 3e.

⁶⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (27th December 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (22nd December 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (24th December 1792), p. 1a; *Bath Register* (22nd December 1792), p. 2c.

⁶⁵ *St. James's Chronicle: or, British Evening-Post* (1st January 1793), p. 2c; *Star* (1st January 1793), p. 4b.

issues of the Bath newspapers, the announcement was reprinted with an appended list of over one-hundred signatories.⁶⁶ In an editorial comment the *Bath Herald* speculated, 'Were the tavern-keepers and publicans of every town in Great Britain to follow the loyal example of those in this City and Bristol, Sedition would not find a single hole to skulk in'.⁶⁷

With the services of the sedan chair carriers gratefully accepted and the pledge of vigilance by the city's innkeepers secured, the Bath Association turned their attention towards another group that may be liable to disaffection: domestic servants. At a meeting held on 29th December, the association's Committee resolved

That all Heads of Families residing in this City, as well as those who resort to it, be requested to caution their domestics against assembling or meeting together in a disorderly manner, or using any language disrespectful to the King and Constitutional Government of this Country, and that this request be fixed up in the Pump-room, Town-hall, Assembly-rooms, and in other conspicuous places in the City.⁶⁸

The inclusion of visitors to the city suggests that the Bath Association had a particular fear of servants from other parts of the country importing radical ideas into the city, so much so that they were willing to run the risk of insulting worthy visitors by suggesting that they may have Jacobins in their midst.

The loyalist association movement was short-lived, with most associations ceasing to meet in early 1793 and the original association publishing its final declaration in June of that year.⁶⁹ The saturation of the press with loyal advertisements may well have reassured conservatives that the radical threat

⁶⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (10th January 1793), p. 1b; *Bath Herald* (5th January 1793), p. 2cd; *Bath Journal* (24th December 1792), p. 1a; *Bath Journal* (31st December 1792), p. 1b; *Bath Journal* (7th January 1793), p. 3b; *Bath Register* (29th December 1792), p. 2b; *Bath Register* (5th January 1793), p. 3b.

⁶⁷ *Bath Herald* (12th January 1793), p. 3d.

⁶⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd January 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (5th January 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (31st December 1792), p. 4c; *Bath Register* (5th January 1793), p. 2b.

⁶⁹ Mitchell, 'The Association Movement of 1792-3', pp. 56-77.

was at an end.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the Bath Association found reasons to continue its existence by associating itself with charitable causes brought about by the outbreak of war in February.⁷¹ The first of these was its publicising of subscriptions opened for the relief of the widows and orphans of servicemen who may die in service to their country in the notice of their meeting held on 5th March.⁷² The second was the philanthropic provision of warm clothes for the troops serving under the Duke of York in Flanders. The association's notice of 12th November announced its donation of twenty-five guineas of its funds to the cause, as well as subscriptions made by individual members of the committee.⁷³ In January of the following year, the *Bath Herald* announced that the committee of the Bath Association had given 'directions to their Secretary to prepare an account of their receipts, and the sums hitherto disbursed, in order that the same may be open to the inspection of the several subscribers and publicly dispersed'.⁷⁴ Good to their word, the Association published their accounts in the Bath press. Of the 236 pounds, 3 shillings and sixpence received by subscription, by far the greatest expense was 'Printing Addresses, Resolutions, and Advertisements, inserted in the Bath, Bristol, Sarum, Gloucester, Sherborne, Hereford, and several London Papers', amounting to nigh on one-hundred pounds.⁷⁵

Cruttwell not only received a portion of this substantial sum in return for

⁷⁰ D. E. Ginter, 'The Loyalist Association Movement of 1792-93 and British Public Opinion', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1966), pp. 179-190.

⁷¹ See Chapter 7.

⁷² *Bath Chronicle* (7th March 1793), p. 3e; *Bath Chronicle* (14th March 1793), p. 2b; *Bath Herald* (9th March 1793), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (16th March 1793), p. 2d; *Bath Journal* (11th March 1793), p. 1c; *Bath Journal* (18th March 1793), p. 1d; *Bath Register* (9th March 1793), p. 2c; *Bath Register* (16th March 1793), p. 1c; *Bath Register* (23rd March 1793), p. 1c.

⁷³ *Bath Chronicle* (14th November 1793), p. 3ce; *Bath Herald* (16th November 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (18th November 1793), p. 1b.

⁷⁴ *Bath Herald* (11th January 1794), p. 3a.

⁷⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (1st May 1794), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (26th April 1794), p. 2e.

printing handbills for the committee, but also in return for the placing of notices in his *Bath Chronicle*.⁷⁶ Similarly the other proprietors of the Bath newspaper received payments for the frequent insertion of notices in the Bath newspapers, especially in its early days. The Bath Association inserted the lengthy announcement for the meeting held on 8th December, in which the committee stated their beliefs and programme of action based on the announcements of Reeves' Association, in a number of newspapers around the country.⁷⁷ The Bath Association were not alone in this declaration of loyalty in the capital's newspapers; the issue of the *Star* that included the notice from Bath also carried similar announcements from the Parish of St James in Westminster, Portsmouth and Portsea, Brighthelmston (Brighton), and Redruth.⁷⁸ These notices not only acted as statements of loyalty, but also as demonstrations of civic pride with each association wanting their own town to be recognised as part of this national movement.⁷⁹

In an editorial comment the *Bath Journal* expressed the fervent belief that every town would have an association 'for the laudable and necessary purpose of expelling the poison which has been industriously infused into the minds of the People'.⁸⁰ As testimony to this foresight the *Bath Register* editorialised,

It must afford the truest satisfaction to every lover of his country to observe with what spirit and alacrity Associations are forming on every part of the kingdom, to testify their loyalty to their Sovereign, and attachment to our excellent Constitution. It shews that they are perfectly sensible of the

⁷⁶ BRO, Minutes of the Bath Loyal Association, 1792-1797. Ref: BC/9/2/1.

⁷⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (13th December 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 1a; *Bath Journal* (10th December 1792), p. 4b; *Bath Journal* (17th December 1792), p. 1a; *Bath Register* (15th December 1792), p. 1a; *Star* (20th December 1792), p. 4b; *Morning Herald* (21st December 1792), p. 1b; *London Chronicle* (22nd – 25th December 1792), p. 4b; *Morning Chronicle* (28th December 1792), p. 2b; *Hereford Journal* (9th January 1793), p. 2c; *Gloicester Journal* (7th January 1793), p. 2b.

⁷⁸ *Star* (20th December 1792).

⁷⁹ .

⁸⁰ *Bath Journal* (3rd December 1792), p. 4e.

blessings they enjoy, and that they are determined to preserve them.⁸¹

The *Bath Chronicle*, in particular, carried many notices of other associations founded in local towns, and even one as far afield as Manchester.⁸² The newspaper was clearly the most recognised outside of the city, printing twenty-one of these notices, which was many more than appeared in the other three

Location	Date of Formation	Reference
Bradford-on-Avon	17 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (20 th December 1792), p. 3e.
Calne	18 th January 1793	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (24 th January 1793), p. 2d.
Chippenham	22 nd December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (3 rd January 1793), p. 4c.
Crewkerne	1 st January 1793	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (17 th January 1793), p. 2d.
Devizes	28 th November 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (6 th December 1792), p. 1c.
Frome	13 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (20 th December 1792), p. 3d. <i>Bath Herald</i> (29 th December 1792), p. 1c. <i>Bath Register</i> (22 nd December 1792), p. 2d.
Honiton, Devon	13 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (27 th December 1792), p. 1b. <i>Bath Herald</i> (29 th December 1792), p. 1b.
Horsley	4 th January 1793	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (10 th January 1793), p. 3e.
Ilminster (now Ilminster)	9 th January 1793	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (31 st January 1793), p. 2c.
Ivelchester	5 th January 1793	<i>Bath Journal</i> (4 th February 1793), p. 1d. <i>Bath Register</i> (9 th February 1793), p. 2c.
Langport	7 th January 1793	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (24 th January 1793), p. 1d.
Launceston, Cornwall	26 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (3 rd January 1793), p. 2b.
Manchester	11 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (27 th December 1792), p. 4e.
Marlborough	10 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (20 th December 1792), p. 4b.
Shepton-Mallet	10 th January 1793	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (17 th January 1793), p. 3d.
Taunton	18 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (27 th December 1792), p. 4b.
Tetbury	18 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (27 th December 1792), p. 4c.
Trowbridge	10 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (13 th December 1792), p. 3d. <i>Bath Herald</i> (15 th December 1792), p. 2c.
Warminster	19 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (27 th December 1792), p. 2c. <i>Bath Journal</i> (24 th December 1792), p. 1d.
Wellington	26 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (10 th January 1793), p. 4d.
Wells	24 th December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (3 rd January 1793), p. 4e. <i>Bath Herald</i> (29 th December 1792), p. 2b.
Wincanton	21 st December 1792	<i>Bath Chronicle</i> (17 th January 1793), p. 2e.

Table 2: Loyalist association formation notices printed in the Bath press

⁸¹ *Bath Register* (15th December 1792), p. 3b.

⁸² See Table 2.

combined. Nine of the sixteen association announcements that included a resolution to place notices in newspapers referred to the *Bath Chronicle* by name: Bradford-on-Avon, Calne, Devizes, Horsley, Langport, Marlborough, Tetbury, Trowbridge and Wellington. Only the Trowbridge association mentioned the *Bath Herald*, and none referred to the *Bath Journal* by name, even though it was the longest established of the city's newspapers.⁸³ The Ivelchester association was the only one not to place its foundation notice in the *Bath Chronicle*, choosing the *Bath Journal* and the *Bath Register* instead.

The first association to announce its formation in the Bath press was the Association of Friends to the King and Constitution founded in Devizes on 28th November. They resolved to 'discourage and suppress the publication of all unconstitutional and seditious Doctrines, tending to subvert our present happy establishment, or disturb the peace and good order of the Community', and to 'promote and encourage, in every class of people, that due subordination and respect to the Laws of the Country'. As with the Bath Association, they also resolved to spread word of their establishment by having their resolutions published in two local newspapers, the *Salisbury Journal* and the *Bath Chronicle*, as well as London's *General Evening-Post*.⁸⁴

The announcement of the foundation of the association in Frome, on 13th December, was followed by another notice of a further meeting dated 18th December. During this meeting they received a 'Declaration of six of the Dissenting Ministers of the town [...] expressive of their loyalty to the King and their attachment to the present Constitution, and of their resolution to recommend

⁸³ *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 2c.

⁸⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (6th December 1792), p. 1c.

the same to others.’⁸⁵ As was the case with the Bath Association, the initial meeting of the Marlborough Committee on 10th December, had the town’s mayor, John Ward, in the chair.⁸⁶ This role was taken on by senior naval officers at similar meetings held in Wellington and Crewkerne, where the chair was occupied by Rear-Admiral Sawyer and Sir Alexander Hood, later Lord Bridport, and brother of Admiral Samuel Hood respectively. The associations that placed the most announcements in the Bath press, with the exception of the city’s association, were those in Devizes and Wells. Again these generally appeared in the *Bath Chronicle*, although the Wells association frequently placed theirs in the *Bath Herald*.⁸⁷ The second notice by the Devizes Association put a particular onus on the ‘masters of families, manufacturers, and other persons having servants or workmen in their employ’ that should the ‘flattering and specious the alteration proposed by the chimerical and absurd writers’ be enacted, it would rob them of ‘that real social liberty they now possess’ by destroying the economy of the nation.⁸⁸ As with the Bath Association, the outbreak of war prompted them to open subscription books, but rather than donate the money to charity, they resolved that ‘the sum subscribed, be applied exclusively to the service of the Navy’.⁸⁹ The *Bath Chronicle* and the *Bath Register* both lauded this plan.⁹⁰ This subscription was a precursor of the collections of funds made for the defence of the realm in the latter half of the decade.⁹¹ The outbreak of war also inspired the Wells Association to raise funds for the relief of widows and children of casualties

⁸⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (29th December 1792), p. 1c; *Bath Register* (22nd December 1792), p. 2d.

⁸⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 4b.

⁸⁷ *Bath Herald* (5th January 1793), p. 1b; *Bath Herald* (19th January 1793), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (26th January 1793), p. 1b.

⁸⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 4c.

⁸⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (7th February 1793), p. 2d; *Bath Chronicle* (21st February 1793), p. 3e.

⁹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (7th February 1793), p. 3; *Bath Register* (9th February 1793), p. 3c.

⁹¹ See Chapter 7.

in the armed forces.⁹²

Whereas notices heralded the establishment of local loyalist associations in the *Bath Chronicle*, the *Bath Register*, in particular, briefly reported the formation of associations at Devizes, Marlborough, Westbury, Blandford, Romsey, Weymouth and Chippenham'.⁹³ At Ilminster 'the business of the day was conducted with the utmost propriety, and that a great number of loyal and constitutional toasts were drank, and songs sung on the occasion', followed by the burning in effigy of Thomas Paine, a popular display of anti-Jacobin sentiment that will be explored in the next section.⁹⁴

The Paine Burnings

Thomas Paine, in particular, was often vilified in the anti-Jacobin content of the Bath newspapers. In May 1792 the *Bath Register* printed a poem entitled 'Burke and Paine' attributed to 'J. S.' of Salisbury, who wittily dismissed both men as 'tumult excitors', while at the same time accepting a widespread acceptance of a desire for reform.⁹⁵ Three weeks later, following the king's proclamation, the newspaper made an editorial comment that took a distinctly negative position regarding Paine: 'It is with sincere regret we find, that letters were *yesterday* circulated, recommending the perusal of Paine's Rights, &c. that vile libel on our HAPPY CONSTITUTION.— *Shame where is thy blush?*'⁹⁶ In December the *Bath Journal* printed a 'Song, addressed to every Loyal Breast in Great-Britain', in

⁹² *Bath Chronicle* (21st March 1793), p. 3e; *Bath Chronicle* (18th April 1793), p. 4c; *Bath Herald* (13th April 1793), p. 3b.

⁹³ *Bath Register* (8th December 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (15th December 1792), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (29th December 1792), p. 3c.

⁹⁴ *Bath Register* (26th January 1793), p. 3b.

⁹⁵ *Bath Register* (5th May 1792), p. 4a.

⁹⁶ *Bath Register* (26th May 1792), p. 3b.

which the author imagined the execution of Thomas Paine, most likely inspired by the wave of effigy burnings then sweeping across the nation.⁹⁷

Rogers suggests that the earliest burning of Paine in effigy took place on 12th November 1792 in Manchester, most likely staged by a Church and King club in that most politically fractious of towns. By surveying both metropolitan and provincial newspapers, Rogers identified 208 separate burnings, with them being most popular in the South-West, where over one third of those identified took place.⁹⁸ O’Gorman asserts that, ‘The sheer scale of the burnings, and the richness and variety of their ceremonial components together constitute the most dramatic expression of English loyalism in the 1790s.’ He also emphasises the role of newspapers, particularly the provincial press, in disseminating details of the ‘gruesome festivities’.⁹⁹

The earliest report of this public form of anti-Jacobin display appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* of 13th December, no doubt with pun intended:

Tuesday evening the 4th instant, the effigy of that political incendiary Thomas Paine, and his publications, were burnt at the Cross at Carmarthen, to testify the loyalty of the inhabitants to their King, and most sincere attachment to the present happy Constitution in Church and State.

That issue’s local news also briefly mentioned other burnings in Plymouth, Portsmouth and Croydon.¹⁰⁰ Two days later the *Bath Register* reprinted the report from Camarthen.¹⁰¹ Whether or not the Bath newspapermen intended that the inclusion of these reports would inspire Bathonians to follow suit, the next week’s *Bath Chronicle* reported on the macabre carnival of loyalism that took place just

⁹⁷ *Bath Journal* (24th December 1792), p. 2e.

⁹⁸ N. Rogers, ‘Burning Tom Paine: Loyalism and Counter-Revolution in Britain, 1793-1793’, *Histoire Sociale / Social History*, Vol. 32, No. 64 (1999), pp. 139-71.

⁹⁹ F. O’Gorman, ‘The Paine Burnings of 1792-1793’, *Past & Present*, No. 193 (Nov., 2006), pp. 111-56.

¹⁰⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (13th December 1792), p. 3b.

¹⁰¹ *Bath Register* (15th December 1792), p. 3c.

outside the city. Despite an unfortunate incident, the newspaper again added a tinge of humour, not least the purposeful misspelling of Paine's surname:

Last night the effigy of Tom Pain, placed in a cart loaded with faggots, with his seditious pamphlet in one hand and a pair of stays in the other, was drawn to the top of Beechen-cliff, and there hoisted on a pole, his body filled with combustibles, was set fire to and his head blown off; his carcase was then thrown into a large bonfire and consumed amidst the firing of cannon and the loudest acclamations of a numerous multitude. By the bursting of the cannon, Luke Lappam, a mason, was wounded in the breast, but not dangerously; he was taken to the Casualty hospital.¹⁰²

The *Bath Herald* provided the reason for the location of the burning:

The Mayor of this city having been informed that some persons had prepared an effigy of Paine in order to hang and burn it, very prudently ordered that no such exhibition should take place here, as it was peculiarly incumbent on the inhabitants of Bath, for the sake of its infirm and sick visitors, to prevent every kind of disorder; and the intent of the Bath Association was to promote peace and suppress tumult; and by every legal means to destroy faction. The populace however, were determined to shew their abhorrence of the culprit, and they took it up to Beechen Cliff (out of the Mayor's jurisdiction,) where it was filled with combustibles and consumed amidst the loudest plaudits, the firing of cannons, &c.¹⁰³

Similarly the Bath magistrates requested that there be no public celebrations of later naval triumphs. Following Howe's victory on the Glorious First of June, the *Bath Herald* again cited the inconvenience of invalids.¹⁰⁴ They also made the same request after Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile, again, so as not to 'disturb the numerous invalids' resident in the city and also 'in case of fire' when the city has 'very scanty supplies of water'.¹⁰⁵ These concerns may well have been genuine, but they may also reflect that the leading citizens were suspicious that gatherings of the lower strata of Bath society may become unruly; as the *Bath Herald* declared on the former occasion, 'In heights of loyalty and affection

¹⁰² *Bath Chronicle* (20th December 1792), p. 3c; An abridged version of the same report appeared in the *Bath Register* (22nd December 1792), p. 3d.

¹⁰³ *Bath Herald* (22nd December 1792), p. 3d.

¹⁰⁴ *Bath Herald* (14th June 1794), p. 3b.

¹⁰⁵ *Bath Herald* (6th October 1798), p. 3b.

intemperate zeal may be productive of much evil.'¹⁰⁶ This may have been a guarded reference to the recent attack on Campbell's house.

Whatever the case, the Bath's mayor chose not to allow a Paine burning in the city, even though he was chairman of the loyalist association. In other locations the associations sanctioned these spectacles.¹⁰⁷ In the same issue that it related the effigy burning in Bath, the *Bath Register* reported:

Paine was burnt in effigy on Tuesday last at Lymington.— Sir John Doyley, Bart. And all the principal gentlemen, farmers, and inhabitants assembled, to the number of some thousands, who testified their zealous attachment to the King and Constitution, and entered into an association for the preservation thereof.¹⁰⁸

Similarly it reported that following the loyalist association at Ilminster, 'The effigy of Tom Paine (with a fox's tail in his hat) was hung at the market-place, and afterwards burnt in the common field, amidst a vast concourse of loyal subjects, singing God save the King, Rule Britannia, &c.'¹⁰⁹ The Bath press also reported the many other burnings that took place in nearby towns and villages. In this way the Paine burnings reached further into the countryside than the loyalist association movement, and also encouraged the active participation of more of the populace. Indeed, Bath was not the first local town to stage a burning of Paine in effigy. The *Bath Herald* reported that at Trowbridge,

The populace testified their abhorrence of Paine, and his principles by hanging him in effigy on a gibbet, round which a large bonfire was made, where it was consumed, with his publications, attended with hearty execrations and reiterated huzzas.

At Bradford 'the effigy of Tom Paine was burnt, and volleys of gun-powder exultingly fired over his remains. The *flaming* embers were kicked about the

¹⁰⁶ *Bath Herald* (14th June 1794), p. 3b.

¹⁰⁷ J. A. Caulfield, 'The Reeves Association: A Study of Loyalism in the 1790's' (University of Reading PhD thesis, 1988), p. 123.

¹⁰⁸ *Bath Register* (22nd December 1792), p. 3d.

¹⁰⁹ *Bath Register* (26th January 1793), p. 3b.

streets, with as much violence as the Leveller wrote'.¹¹⁰ The newspapers made no mention that these two burnings were instigated by officers of the 2nd Dragoon Guards (The Queen's Bays) who were stationed in the area. Having found that 'the Levellers have been very busy in distributing scraps of Paine's works in the houses where our men are quartered, that is in fact all the publick houses', and that even though they had every confidence that the common soldiers were 'all true to a man', the officers decided that a public demonstration of loyalty would not only serve to boost morale, but also to forestall any chance that the ranks be seduced by radical ideas.¹¹¹

At Wells an enterprising hawker sold copies of a pamphlet during the mock execution that the *Bath Herald* gleefully reprinted.¹¹² It contained a brief biography of Paine that made no mention of his time in America, and a fictional account of his death. It described him as having endeavoured 'to disturb the happiness of his Majesty's subjects, in divers parts of the kingdom, and has really been the occasion of murders, massacres and insurrections, in a neighbouring kingdom'. After this suggestion that he had somehow instigated the French Revolution, the pamphlet went on to describe his acknowledgement of 'justness of his sentence, and said that his being too much addicted to idleness, drunkenness, and all manner of debauchery, together with the spirit of irreligion and that of inhumanity, were the first steps that brought him to this shameful and ignominious death', which it then described. According to the *Bath Chronicle*, wet

¹¹⁰ *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 3d.

¹¹¹ TNA, HO 42/23/210 Letter from [Captain Charles Craufurd] at Dorchester [Dorset], in command of the 2nd Dragoon Guards (The Queen's Bays), describing the burning in effigy of Paine and his works at each place where the regiment was quartered: Dorchester, Bridport, Weymouth and Poole in Dorset, Bradford and Trowbridge in Wiltshire, and asserting the loyalty of the troops, ff. 466b-c.

¹¹² See Plate 13.

weather did not prevent 'more than a thousand people' of Box assembling on Kingsdown where they sang 'God Save the King'. Every young person received a printed copy of the lyrics to act 'as a future memorial of the loyalty of their fires!' Similarly, an 'immense concourse of spectators' at Keynsham united in song 'to express their loyalty to their Sovereign, and abhorrence of the authors of sedition and treason' following the hanging and burning of an effigy 'conducted with a mock solemnity similar to that of the execution of a criminal'.¹¹³ Bands were a regular feature of the burnings, appearing at Devizes and Shepton Mallet.¹¹⁴

Some accounts suggest that various locations sought to outdo each other as the ceremonies became increasingly elaborate and spectacular. At Lacock, after parading the effigy 'on a sledge round the town and parish', it was 'hung on a gibbet thirty feet high'.¹¹⁵ The *Bath Register* used biblical allusion when describing the burning at Marshfield, where the gallows were 'as high as *Haman's*', the vizier whose murderous plot was foiled by Queen Esther. Of Paine it declared that his 'designs [...] (privately abetted by some whom it is hoped will in due time receive their deserts) are full as blood-thirsty against England, as *Haman's* were against the Jewish nation'. It also reported that 'All the inns freely distributed liquor, and the town at large, and the neighbouring gentry, contributed handsomely to keep up the spirit of loyalty'.¹¹⁶ Free alcohol was a traditional mainstay of the 'familiar purgative rite' of effigy burnings, as Rogers acknowledged, as such it enabled the consolidation of 'loyalism in a traditional idiom'.¹¹⁷ The reports of Paine burnings contain frequent mentions of free alcohol,

¹¹³ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd January 1793), p. 3b.

¹¹⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (27th December 1792), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (12th January 1793), p. 3d.

¹¹⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (10th January 1793), p. 3c.

¹¹⁶ *Bath Register* (12th January 1793), p. 3c; An abridged version of the same report appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* (17th January 1793), p. 3bc.

¹¹⁷ Rogers, 'Burning Tom Paine', pp. 139-71.

as at Batheaston, where ‘two cart loads of strong beer were given to the populace’, and at Marshfield where ‘Liquor was freely distributed at the Inns, and in the town at large’, and at Mells where ‘Mr. Horner [...] gave a hogshead of strong beer to the populace’. ¹¹⁸ The free availability of alcohol backfired on one occasion. As the *Bath Register* reported,

A ludicrous circumstance attended the execution of Tom Paine’s effigy at Saltford. A great crowd assembled, with drums beating, colours flying, &c. and the culprit was hung with due formalities; but lo! while they retired to regale over a refreshing pot, till the hour for conflagration, some rogue or humourist carried off the effigy with its clothes, to the great disappointment of the eager expectants. ¹¹⁹

There was no mention of the incident in the *Bath Herald’s* account, although it did remark that the gallows towered some forty-five feet high. ¹²⁰

It is possible that the burnings became increasingly grand in order to ensure a mention in the press. The burnings were so numerous that the Bath newspapers could only mention some of them in passing, as with the fifteen towns and villages listed in one issue of the *Bath Chronicle*. The newspaper apologetically stated that ‘We are sorry our limits will not permit us to particularize the ceremony of execution at several of the above places, transmitted by our correspondents’. ¹²¹ The *Bath Herald* admitted that to provide details of every burning ‘would be somewhat humorous, but yet too tedious for our readers’. ¹²² The Bath press was not alone in apologising to its readership for the lack of space in which to detail the burnings. As O’Gorman notes, similar apologies appeared in the *Newcastle Chronicle*, the *Bury and Norwich Post* and the

¹¹⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (17th January 1793), p. 3bc; *Bath Herald* (12th January 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Journal* (4th February 1793), p. 4e;

¹¹⁹ *Bath Register* (19th January 1793), p. 4a.

¹²⁰ *Bath Herald* (19th January 1793), p. 3d.

¹²¹ *Bath Chronicle* (10th January 1793), p. 3c.

¹²² *Bath Herald* (12th January 1793), p. 3d.

Newcastle Advertiser.¹²³ Despite these apologies, the Bath newspapers continued to include numerous reports of further burnings, with the notable exception, the *Bath Journal*, which only reported on the mock execution conducted at Batheaston, and even then the report was a copy of one that appeared earlier in the *Bath Register*.¹²⁴ The *Bath Journal* did however follow up its report by printing a poem about the events at Batheaston entitled 'Miscellaneous Stanzas on the Removal of Paine's Effigy'.¹²⁵ At Tetbury the proceedings were 'conducted with great solemnity', after which 'A long dying speech was published on the occasion; a copy of which was dispatched by post to the President of the National Convention at Paris.'¹²⁶ The residents of Edington and its nearby villages paraded around their parishes 'preceded by a band of musick, decorated with ribbons having mottos of the *King and Constitution, Long live the King*, and singing the favourite loyal song of *God save the King*, in full chorus' and a similar festive mood prevailed at Castlecombe where the populace wore cockades and waved flags.¹²⁷

By the end of January, most towns and villages appear to have staged burnings, yet the *Bath Chronicle* recorded a brief and limited resurgence of burnings in March, describing the Kingswood colliers' 'grand procession through the streets of Bristol' during which they distributed his 'dying speech' while singing 'God Save the King'.¹²⁸ The last report to appear was a brief mention of the 'execution of Tom Paine' that 'was conducted with great solemnity on Friday at

¹²³ O'Gorman, 'The Paine Burnings of 1792-1793', pp. 111-56.

¹²⁴ *Bath Journal* (4th February 1793), p. 4e; *Bath Register* (2nd February 1793), p. 3c.

¹²⁵ *Bath Journal* (11th March 1793), p. 2e.

¹²⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (24th January 1793), p. 3b.

¹²⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1793), p. 3c.

¹²⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (7th March 1793), p. 3b.

Dirham, Gloucestershire'.¹²⁹ The *Bath Herald* summed up the conservative view of the burnings in an editorial comment:

Had Tom Paine as many lives as his writings by their murdering principles, tend to produce deaths, he would by this time most probably be no more if the general disapprobation of his conduct may be at all judged of by the numerous illuminations which his justly-hated effigies have afforded throughout the kingdom.¹³⁰

There was no room for dissenting voices in such an atmosphere of excessive loyalism. Indeed, the *Bath Chronicle* reported the burning in effigy of a fiddler at an unnamed village 'not five miles from Devizes'. He apparently deserved such treatment because he refused to play 'God Save the King' during the earlier burning of Paine's effigy.¹³¹

While Paine was the prime target for the loyalist reaction, in Bath an enterprising individual selected another target for public anger in the wake of the execution of Louis XVI. As the *Bath Herald* announced:

An Artist of this city, who has had frequent opportunities of seeing the justly execrated *kindless* regicide Philip d'Orleans, *alias* Equality, is preparing an effigy of him, which he intends to make as horrible as the life, and to have him exhibited and executed to shew the general abhorrence that Britons have of so unnatural a wretch.¹³²

According to the *Bath Chronicle* the artist knew 'the person of the infamous M. Egalité, (late Duke of Orleans)'.¹³³ As the *Bath Herald* reported,

Some good may be produced from the worst of men.—The figure of the Monster Egalite has brought some pounds to the Casualty Hospital.— He had a respite till Monday next — on which day, the execution will take place.¹³⁴

The *Bath Herald* later vividly described the demise of 'the effigy of the reprobated

¹²⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (28th March 1793), p. 3b.

¹³⁰ *Bath Herald* (12th January 1793), p. 3d.

¹³¹ *Bath Chronicle* (17th January 1793), p. 3b.

¹³² *Bath Herald* (26th January 1793), p. 3c.

¹³³ *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1793), p. 3c.

¹³⁴ *Bath Herald* (16th February 1793), p. 3d.

regicide', which had 'a dagger and bloody handkerchief in each hand'. At Castle Hill the 'vast concourse of spectators' watched as 'several recruiting parties' drummed 'the Rogue's March', and undoubtedly used the opportunity to swell the ranks to fight in the recently declared war. Rosenberg, the artist responsible for the effigy, 'addressed the populace in a well conceived harangue, which wanted only the English accent to have rendered it eloquent', before executing the effigy at the insistence of the crowd. The report also announced that the exhibition had raised seventeen pounds and ten shillings which Rosenberg donated to the city's Casualty Hospital.¹³⁵ The other Bath newspapers also carried shorter reports of the event.¹³⁶ While there was no mention of it in the city's press, the location of the effigy burning suggests another prohibition placed by the Bath Corporation.

Loyalist Content in the Bath Press

As was the case with prints promoting the cause of reform, the Bath newspapers occasionally carried advertisements for publications that took an opposing view.¹³⁷ In May 1790 an advertisement announced the publication of *A Free Examination of Dr. Price's and Dr. Priestley's Sermons on the Revolution* by Rev William Keate, rector of the nearby parish of Laverton. This attack on those who sought the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was available at Meyler's bookshop.¹³⁸ An advertisement for a collection of sermons written by the late Reverend Fowler Comings also mentioned the publication of a third edition of Burke's *Reflections*.¹³⁹ The following summer the *Bath Chronicle* carried

¹³⁵ *Bath Herald* (23rd February 1793), p. 3d.

¹³⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (28th February 1793), p. 3b; *Bath Journal* (25th February 1793), p. 4e; *Bath Register* (23rd February 1793), p. 3c.

¹³⁷ See Chapter 4.

¹³⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (13th May 1790), p. 1b.

¹³⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (9th December 1790), p. 1c.

advertisements for another publication authored by a clergyman, Rev William Bowles' *Poetical Address to the Right Hon. Edmund Burke*, which was also printed by Cruttwell, the newspaper's proprietor.¹⁴⁰

On 1st October 1792 the first edition of the *Sun* appeared. It was funded by the Treasury, and was under the direction of members of Pitt's government.¹⁴¹ A week before its first issue, an advertisement for the *Sun* appeared in the *Bath Journal*, describing it as 'a strong constitutional paper', which 'will challenge the patronage and support of every Friend to his Country'.¹⁴² As already mentioned with regard to reform-minded publications, the printing in a newspaper of an advertisement or the vending of a book does not necessarily endorse that publication's politics.¹⁴³ Yet, the *Bath Herald's* praise for Hannah More's Cheap Repository tracts further indicates its political position:

We know no plan so likely to reform the conduct of the lower orders of society, and to benefit the rising generation, as spreading amongst them books of religious and moral tendency, to counteract the evils which have been occasioned by the wretched trash long hawked about this kingdom, and whose ribaldry is shamelessly exposed against the walls in every village. A series of moral and entertaining little publications has lately been printed by Mr. Hazard of this city, at the expense of a society, patronized by the first characters in the kingdom, and they were this week delivered to a numerous body of hawkers, in order that they may have a general circulation.— This noble plan must be productive of the happiest effects, and yield the most exalted sensation to the lady with whom it originated—the justly celebrated and benevolent HANNAH MORE.¹⁴⁴

The *Bath Chronicle* also reported that 'the demand for the cheap and entertaining tracts' was so great 'that it is with the utmost difficulty the presses employed can print off fast enough to supply the calls from all parts of the kingdom'.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd June 1791), p. 1c; *Bath Chronicle* (30th June 1791), p. 1b.

¹⁴¹ Werkmeister, *A Newspaper History of England*, p. 118.

¹⁴² *Bath Journal* (24th September 1792), p. 1d.

¹⁴³ See Chapter 4.

¹⁴⁴ *Bath Herald* (7th March 1795), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (16th April 1795), p. 3c

Another local writer received particular attention in the Bath press. In 1794 Cruttwell printed a treatise called *Desultory Thoughts on the Atrocious Cruelties of the French Nation*, which while published anonymously, was written by Edward Harington, the son of the incumbent mayor, to whom he dedicated the work.¹⁴⁶ Cruttwell also printed extracts of the text in his *Bath Chronicle*, as part of an article in which he wholeheartedly supported the position of the author (identified as 'Mr. H').¹⁴⁷ The *Bath Herald* carried advertisements for the tract, explaining that

The Whole of the Money received for this Publication (without Deduction for Paper or Print) is intended by the Author to be presented to the Benevolent Subscriptions at Lloyd's Coffee-house, for the Benefit of the Widows and Children of the Brave Seamen and Marines, who fell in the Glorious Victory of Earl Howe on the First of June.¹⁴⁸

The same title also published an extract, identifying its author as 'Harington', taken from the conclusion, 'An Address to all ragged-breeched English Jacobins', in which Harington contrasted British and French governments, before and after the revolution.¹⁴⁹ The *Bath Journal* serialised the treatise over four issues, including a direct address to radical reformers:

I hope you will seriously reflect that a change cannot be of any service to you, and that you will not only heartily and cordially join against your natural enemies the French, but against any of your unnatural countrymen, who might wish to imitate them. Let me then earnestly intreat you, for the sake of your innocent wives and children, and every thing dear to yourselves, to take care you do not speak against your lawful sovereign, and the excellent constitution of your country.¹⁵⁰

Despite the author's generosity, this publication may well have resulted in what

¹⁴⁶ [E. Harington], *Desultory Thoughts on the Atrocious Cruelties of the French Nation: With Observations on the Necessity of the War* (Bath, 1794).

¹⁴⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (4th September 1794), p. 3de.

¹⁴⁸ *Bath Herald* (30th August 1794), p. 1a; *Bath Herald* (6th September 1794), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (13th September 1794), p. 3e.

¹⁴⁹ *Bath Herald* (30th August 1794), p. 4ab.

¹⁵⁰ *Bath Journal* (22nd September 1794), p. 2cde; *Bath Journal* (29th September 1794), p. 3de; *Bath Journal* (6th October 1794), p. 2de; *Bath Journal* (13th October 1794), p. 2de;

Poole described as an act of 'clandestine discontent'.¹⁵¹ The *Bath Chronicle* printed a notice placed by the author offering a two guinea reward to the person who discovered the identity of those who 'daubed with filth and mire, the paleing belonging to a House in Harington-Place', most likely his home.¹⁵² If this act had been committed by those who took umbrage with Harington's loyalist polemic, then it surely contradicts the view so often expressed in the Bath newspapers that the city was united in its support of the king and constitution.

As well as providing a promotional space for loyalist publications, each of the Bath newspapers printed poetry, songs, essays and letters extolling the virtues of the established political order and vilifying radicals and reformers. Yet, it was the *Bath Herald*, in particular, that became an organ for anti-Jacobin sentiment, hardly surprising, considering Meyler's active role in the Bath loyalist association. The *Bath Herald* printed a variety of loyalist compositions over the period, with a notable increase while the loyalist association movement was most active, and following the invasion scares of 1797-1798 as part of what Catriona Kennedy describes as a national 'flood of patriotic propaganda'.¹⁵³

Meyler used his 'First Christmas Address of the Newsman of the Bath Herald' to state the paper's position:

I've oft been asked, for talking's sake,
 What *party* does this Herald take?
Party? says I – Lord bless thy pate,
 Why – Firm Supporters to the State;
 And of no *party*, nor such thing,
 But, Friends to all who love their King.¹⁵⁴

Despite this declaration, the *Bath Herald* occasionally printed material that

¹⁵¹ Poole, 'Radicalism, Loyalism, and the "Reign of Terror" in Bath, 1792-1804', pp. 114-37.

¹⁵² *Bath Chronicle* (25th September 1794), p. 2e.

¹⁵³ C. Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* (Houndmills, 2013), p. 143.

¹⁵⁴ *Bath Herald* (5th January 1793), p. 4a.

attacked those politicians sympathetic to the cause of reform. The poem 'Dumourier to the Master of the London Tavern' imagined an invitation from the French general, Dumourieux, to Whig politicians and reformers, including Sheridan, Grey, Lord Lansdowne and Harriet Bouverie to a cannibalistic feast, before which Priestley would say grace. The bill of fare included bishops' brains, the tongues of Burke, Windham and Pitt, and the king 'split and broiled, a most excellent steak'.¹⁵⁵ The writings of 'Causidicus' – a regular contributor of both poems and letters to the newspaper – were more circumspect when attacking politicians, using the time honoured tradition of using replacing part of a name with dashes. A loophole in the libel laws meant even the most blatant innuendo could not be considered libellous.¹⁵⁶ It is unclear whether the choice to obscure the names was made by the author or the printer, although when the same texts appeared in other newspapers, the names were similarly obscured. The poem 'A Persuasive to my Countrymen, at the Present Tremendous Moment, to Spirit and Unanimity' condemned those who praised the French 'foe', particularly a statesman identified as 'S——' (most likely Lord Stanhope).¹⁵⁷ Similarly 'An Invocation to Liberty' assailed 'L——le' and 'S——pe' (Lauderdale and Stanhope) for their support of reform. The author was particularly damning of Fox:

Tho F— and all the factious crew unite
To paint the prostitute *with honest white*.
Perdition seize his execrable name,
And blot him from the book of well-earn'd fame!¹⁵⁸

The Francophobic 'Dialogue between John Bull and Monsieur Frog' that had so

¹⁵⁵ *Bath Herald* (2nd March 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁵⁶ A. Toner, *Ellipsis in English Literature: Signs of Omission* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 58-9.

¹⁵⁷ *Bath Herald* (3rd May 1794), p. 4a; Also in *Chester Courant* (20th May 1794), p. 4a.

¹⁵⁸ *Bath Herald* (27th September 1794), p. 4a; *Sun* (29th August 1794), p. 4a; *True Briton* (29th August 1794), p. 3a.

incensed 'Marcus' mentioned no parliamentarians by name.¹⁵⁹ Although, according to 'Monsieur Frog', the French had 'de credit of all de Wigs' along with 'de great Napper Tandy in Irelande, [...] Monsieur le Reverende, le Grande Reverende *Horn Tooke*, and all de Societies in Angleterre', including the Society of Friends of the People.¹⁶⁰

The author clearly had no fears of naming non-parliamentarian reformers, who were the targets of particular bile in the Bath press, especially in the winter of 1792-3. The *Bath Journal* included a poem clearly inspired by the recent formation of loyalist associations titled *Liberty, Property, Old England Forever*. The poem lauded the king and the nation's mercantile strength before addressing reformers in the final stanza:

These sons of Sedition can never be quiet.
We know that they wish to stir up a Riot,
But if they molest us, we'll lead them a Dance,
And send them to join the disturbers of France.¹⁶¹

The poem later appeared in the first edition of *The Anti-Levelling Songster*, to be sung to the tune of 'Hearts of Oak'.¹⁶² It also appeared in *Gower's Patriotick Songster*, an advertisement for which made special mention that it was sold in Bath by Cruttwell and Hazard.¹⁶³ The *Bath Journal* printed a letter from Bath signed 'Amor Patria', who beseeched their fellow citizens 'to oppose the daring and audacious attempts of weak and disappointed men, whose whole aim is to see their fellow creatures brought into contempt and poverty which their vices and their fellows have ultimately drawn upon themselves'.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ See Chapter 4.

¹⁶⁰ *Bath Herald* (25th August 1792), p. 2c.

¹⁶¹ *Bath Journal* (10th December 1792), p. 2e.

¹⁶² *The Anti-Levelling Songster*. No. 1 (London, 1793), p. 14.

¹⁶³ *Gower's Patriotick Songster; Or, Loyalist's Vocal Companion* (Kidderminster, 1793), p. 8; *Bath Chronicle* (21st March 1793), p. 4c.

¹⁶⁴ *Bath Journal* (3rd December 1792), p. 2e.

The *Bath Chronicle* only infrequently printed anti-Jacobin submissions, but it did include a markedly sober letter from an anonymous correspondent who requested that the newspaper 'procure and publish the names of the members of the Constitutional Society, who have thought fit, in this inauspicious moment, to elect as honourable members two Regicides, M. BARON and M. ROLAND'.¹⁶⁵ The Monsieur 'Baron' was in fact Bertrand Barère, journalist and politician, whom the London Constitutional Society elected along with the leader of the Girondist faction as honorary members on 25th January 1793, despite them having voted for the execution of King Louis XVI.¹⁶⁶ The newspaper did not fulfil the author's request. The *Bath Chronicle* also printed the first of three poems that appeared in three of the city's newspapers in the early months of 1793, a rare example of political poetry in that title. Entitled 'The Snake in the Grass', it was 'addressed to all Levellers': the titular serpents. Nevertheless it was clearly an attempt to motivate loyalists:

In such perilous times, when our freedom's at stake,
We should strive our brave sires to surpass;
And each firm loyal hand, for his country's sake,
Strike the treacherous snake in the grass.

A note followed the poem reminding readers that books were available at Meyler's library to be signed by 'every loyal subject'.¹⁶⁷ The *Bath Herald* printed the anonymous poet's 'Botany Bay. A Political Ballad', which revelled in the prospect of the transportation of reformers to Australia:

May our flaming Reformers be launch'd from the shore,
And the gales prove propitious in wasting them o'er,
That each friend to his country may laugh and be gay,
While its foes are transported to Botany Bay.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (7th February 1793), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁶ J. Horne Tooke & J. H. Blanchard, *Proceedings at Large on the Trial of John Horne Tooke for High Treason, Vol. I* (London, 1795), p. 54.

¹⁶⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (10th January 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁶⁸ *Bath Herald* (26th January 1793), p. 4b.

The third poem appeared in the *Bath Journal* under the title 'The Triumph of Loyalty, In Contrast to French Republicanism', equated reformers with Jacobins:

May no Jacobin traitors our comfort destroy,
But each subject prove loyal and true.
Where true Liberty shines with so splendid a ray,
Let us cherish her fostering beams;
While we spurn at the wretch who wou'd lead us astray,
By wild projects and levelling schemes.

It did, however, concede that 'e'en *Paine* wou'd have taught [the French regicides] *some* mercy to shew'.¹⁶⁹ The *Bath Register* printed 'The True Briton's Advice to his Countrymen', another poem that contrasted British freedom with French despotism, which urged Britons to hold in contempt the 'monster Sedition' that 'with Tom Paine did 'rise'.¹⁷⁰

Unsurprisingly Paine was the subject of much invective in the Bath press. In 'Ça N'Ira Pas; or, A Dialogue between Two Sailors', the two mariners discuss 'a letter from one Thomas Bull'. One declares 'as for Master *Tom Paine*, and the rest of the Gang that have kicked up this dust, if I came athwart of any of them – we'll – I say no more – we shall have a lick at some of them soon'.¹⁷¹ The 'letter' was most likely one of a series of tracts written by William Jones or one of his collaborators in a similar populist style.¹⁷² 'Britain in Gude Order' – set to the tune of 'Moggy Lauder' – and fittingly written in a Scottish dialect, referred to 'Goths an Vandals, leagu'd wi Paine'.¹⁷³ The *Bath Herald* printed an anonymous epigram, 'To Tom Paine', which compared him with James Aitken, a saboteur during the American War of Independence:

¹⁶⁹ *Bath Journal* (4th February 1793), p. 2e.

¹⁷⁰ *Bath Register* (29th December 1792), p. 4a.

¹⁷¹ *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 4b.

¹⁷² K. Gilmartin, *Writing Against Revolution. Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1790-1832* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 13.

¹⁷³ *Bath Herald* (14th January 1797), p. 2c.

What language, Miscreant, can thy vileness paint,
To thee, e'en *John the Painter* was a Saint:
Thou shuld'st be hang'd on gallows ten times higher;
He but burn'd ships—thoud'st set the world on fire.¹⁷⁴

With the outbreak of war approaching, the *Bath Herald* printed a timely verse that attacked the "levelling principles" with which he was associated:

"All Kings delight in War." cries Paine,
"They are such testy Things."—
Then grant us Heav'n a *single* Reign,
And not a Mob of *Kings*!¹⁷⁵

The *Bath Herald* printed an essay under the rather unwieldy title 'An old Fable tells us, that the teeth of Serpents sown in the Earth, sprung up together a large army, ready for battle, and devoured each other'. It argued that

Every man, not intoxicated with Paine's chimerical notions, knows that a state of nature ever was in subordination. God, the supreme lawgiver, never brought into being a number of human creatures independent of each other to settle a civil polity, by compact among themselves.¹⁷⁶

While the author this treatise engaged critically with the philosophy of reform, others took a more devious approach, albeit in a humorous manner. 'The Times' written by 'Yearsley' engaged in *reductio ad absurdum*:

You, Democrat! cry out, "bereave him
"Of half his meal, and give it me!
"All things are common, we'll be free."
Why aye! – replies yon rake – this strife
I'll quickly,-- bring me thy wife.¹⁷⁷

Similarly the author of 'The Rights of Infancy' infantilised Paine's philosophy:

Unhand me, Nurse! Thou fancy queen!
What does this female *despot* mean?
[...]
Have I not right to kick and sprawl?
To laugh and cry; to squeak and squall?
Has ever, by my act and deed,
Thy right to rule *me* been *decreed*?

¹⁷⁴ *Bath Register* (19th January 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁷⁵ *Bath Herald* (26th January 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁷⁶ *Bath Herald* (15th December 1792), p. 3b.

¹⁷⁷ *Bath Herald* (4th August 1792), p. 4a.

How darest thou, Tyrant! then controul
Th' exertions of a free-born soul?¹⁷⁸

'Tobit', took a zoomorphic approach in 'Dog-Rail Rhymes, or A remonstrance of those Faithful Domestics the Dogs, against the Tyranny of Man!' The remonstrance called for the return of Paine 'high fed with frogs' to 'vindicate "the RIGHT OF DOGS"'.¹⁷⁹

While some content belittled the philosophy of reform, other examples played on popular fears. In the 'Dialogue between John Bull and Monsieur Frog', 'Monsieur Frog' admitted

I was sent par Monsieur Jacobin, the eldest son of La Liberte, to convert de English, and make dem all kings, dat de might be our own brudders, and throw away their one King, their Constitution, and their religion for La Liberte.¹⁸⁰

This text was not alone in stirring up fears that French agents were at large in Britain; the anonymous author of 'A Series of Facts' stated that

they sent their emissaries over to London, and to all the great towns, to distribute seditious publications, and to excite dissensions among us [...] To put us out of humour with the King, Lords, and Commons, and by throwing us into confusion at home, they thought to incapacitate us from punishing their perfidy and treachery.¹⁸¹

Other literary insertions in the Bath press sought to ameliorate fears rather than stir them, often by making a rallying-cry to show defiance in the face of perceived threats. The *Bath Journal* printed a letter containing an 'elegant composition' sung by the Peckham loyalist association to the tune of 'Rule Britannia' that had the pugnacious chorus, 'In *Freedom's cause*, we'll firmly live or die, Defend our *King*, our *Liberty*.'¹⁸² 'Rule Britannia' also provided the tune for

¹⁷⁸ *Bath Herald* (16th March 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁷⁹ *Bath Herald* (15th August 1795), p. 4a.

¹⁸⁰ *Bath Herald* (25th August 1792), p. 2c.

¹⁸¹ *Bath Herald* (8th December 1792), p. 2b.

¹⁸² *Bath Journal* (23rd December 1793), p. 2e.

‘Great and Free’ that appeared in the *Bath Register*, which urged Britons to venerate the current laws in the face of ‘Faction, leagu’d with wild Uproar’.¹⁸³ In the notes following the poem ‘A Persuasive to my Countrymen, at the Present Tremendous Moment, to Spirit and Unanimity’, ‘Causidicus’ declared that ‘Britons still feel bold; [...] a glorious enthusiasm pervades the whole island’ and ‘The universal cry is—*God save the King, and the Constitution of England!*’¹⁸⁴ This poem was prefaced by a muscular call for ‘the long Pull, the strong Pull, and the Pull all together’ in the face of crisis, as was another of the author’s poems, ‘An Invocation to Liberty’, which had previously appeared in two ministerial newspapers. The poem itself contained references to Raleigh, Walsingham, and Drake, and eulogised John Hampden, who ‘with heav’n-directed soul’ checked ‘the tyrant’.¹⁸⁵ ‘Causidicus’ also used other compositions to stir the martial spirit with frequent references to historical heroes and victories. In ‘A Solemn Invocation to the Genius at the Present Perilous Crisis’, Causidicus recalls the spirits of Agincourt, Cressy, Caractacus, Boudicca, Marlborough and Henry V, before portraying the loyalist cause as divinely ordained:

Believe the Prophet, lo! his doctrines true.
Crush, crush the *Jacobins*, or they’ll crush you.
Crush, crush the Jacobins, at home, abroad,
‘Tis *Reason’s mandate*, ‘tis the *Voice of God!*¹⁸⁶

‘An Invocation to Father Thames’, printed in 1798, again mentions past military victories, albeit drenched in fluvial metaphor, but without any mention of domestic threats; the author’s sights were set firmly on the French during invasion scare.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ *Bath Register* (13th April 1793), p. 4a.

¹⁸⁴ *Bath Herald* (3rd May 1794), p. 4a.

¹⁸⁵ *Bath Herald* (27th September 1794), p. 4a; *Sun* (29th August 1794), p. 4a; *True Briton* (29th August 1794), p. 3a.

¹⁸⁶ *Bath Herald* (10th January 1795), p. 4a.

¹⁸⁷ *Bath Herald* (5th May 1798), p. 4a.

Fears of threats to the established order had abated sufficiently by 1799 for the *Bath Herald* to print the rather disrespectful rhyme 'Aristocrat or Democrat' by 'Senned':

SAYS Thomas the Porter to Waggoner Ned,
Who gaping around stood scratching his head,
"Don't worry and teize those already distrest,
"Leave scratching, and let the poor Democrats rest"
Quoth Ned, You are wrong, you must certainly own,
"They are Aristocrats; for they stick to the Crown. ¹⁸⁸

Conclusion

The growth of the loyalist association movement amply demonstrates the role of newspapers as an 'engine of growth'. ¹⁸⁹ As the *Bath Herald* declared during the loyalist association movements' meteoric rise:

Every provincial paper is full of the most fervent and affectionate resolutions from the various associations throughout the kingdom. To enumerate them only would fill a newspaper – will any one presume to say, that the sentiment of loyalty is not universal? It is, and may it ever be the prevailing one of every honest Briton! ¹⁹⁰

While not everyone participated willingly in the associations and the Paine burnings, there is no denying their popularity when reading the contents of the Bath press. The sheer amount of material suggests that communities were eager to associate themselves in the defence of king and constitution. Nevertheless, the participation of all ranks of society in public displays caused disquiet in some quarters, as with the Bath Corporation's prohibition of effigy burning within the city limits. The city's newspapers, particularly the *Bath Herald*, provided a medium for various expressions of loyalist sentiment, from scathing anti-Jacobinism to wartime patriotism, from fear-mongering to calls for unity. While both the loyalist

¹⁸⁸ *Bath Herald* (16th February 1799), p. 4a.

¹⁸⁹ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800*, pp. 172-5.

¹⁹⁰ *Bath Herald* (22nd December 1792), p. 3d.

associations and the spate of effigy burnings soon petered out, the dominance of loyalist ideology was maintained by the French declaration of war in February 1793. Indeed the fact that Britain was now in open conflict with the French Republic may well have removed the need for such overt displays.

Chapter 6: 'The Patriotic Military Spirit': Militiamen and Volunteers

Introduction

During the early years of the revolution the British government maintained, in Mori's words, 'a studied neutrality'. Pitt had no wish to be drawn into a war with France, or indeed any conflict that threatened British commercial interests.¹ Yet, events quickly spiralled following the French invasion of the Austrian Netherlands. They declared the Scheldt River to be open for trade on 16th November 1792, a clear threat to British commercial interests and a violation of the Peace of Westphalia. Three days later the French issued a Decree of Fraternity, pledging to aid revolutionaries in other countries. The following month saw the beginning of the trial of Louis XVI that culminated with his execution on 21st January 1793. Eleven days later the French Republic declared war on Great Britain and the Dutch Republic.² Initially the British government did not anticipate a lengthy war; Pitt and his ministers pinned their hopes on a naval blockade of trade that would bring the French Republic to its knees, while sending ground forces commanded by the Duke of York to fulfil their only military obligation on the Continent, the defence of the Dutch Republic.³

This chapter considers the defence of the nation while the regular army was engaged against the French. As such it contrasts the reticence of the men of the upper strata of society to serve in the militia with the enthusiasm they showed in joining the volunteer corps. The first wave of volunteering started in 1794,

¹ J. Mori, *William Pitt and the French Revolution 1785-1795* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 95-101.

² W. Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution. 2nd Ed.* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 199-200

³ Mori, *William Pitt and the French Revolution 1785-1795*, pp.143-7.

administered by the county authorities. The second, larger wave broke in 1797-8, organised by associations formed in towns and villages in and around Bath. Both of these were funded by subscription.

The volunteering movement of 1797-8 has been the subject of much historical debate, particularly regarding its relationship with the loyalist association movement of 1792-3. Western and Dickinson argued for continuity, whereas Eastwood, Cookson and Gee emphasised the many differences.⁴ In an analysis of the formation and activities of the local volunteer corps, this chapter shows that while there was some continuity, it was outweighed by the differences.

The County Militia

The English and Welsh county militia regiments served two roles, not only to defend the nation from invasion, but also to suppress insurrection. While it was the latter of these that was the reason for their partial embodiment in December 1792, it was the former that resulted in their 'long embodiment', once British regular troops were occupied in prosecuting the war.⁵ The following month the Somerset Militia was embodied as the *Bath Herald* and the *Bath Register* reported in the local news.⁶ By order of the Lord Lieutenant for Somerset, Robert Bryant, the Clerk of the General Meetings, placed a notice in the *Bath Chronicle* requiring the attendance of the men of the militia on 21st January, warning that 'if any Militia-Man shall not appear at the time and place aforesaid, such man will be

⁴ J. R. Western, 'The Volunteer movement as an anti-revolutionary force, 1793–1801', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 71 (1956), pp. 603–14; H. T. Dickinson, 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism 1789-1815' in Dickinson (Ed.), *Britain and the French Revolution*, pp. 103-26; Eastwood, 'Patriotism and the English state' in Philp, (Ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, pp. 146-68; J. E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation 1793-1815* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 211-3; A. Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement 1794-1814* (Oxford, 2003), p. 20-1.

⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (6th December 1792), p. 2a; M. McCormack, *Embodying the Militia in Georgian England* (Oxford, 2015), p. 84.

⁶ *Bath Herald* (5th January 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Register* (5th January 1793), p. 3c.

apprehended and punished as a deserter'.⁷ Similarly Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, placed a notice in the same issue requiring that the militia assemble in Devizes on two days later.⁸ In theory, the militiamen of England and Wales numbered 30,840, with the size of each regiment having been set by the Militia Act of 1757. Each county militia was recruited by a ballot of able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, with numerous exemptions. Any man drawn in the ballot could also exempt themselves from service by either paying a £10 fine or finding a substitute.⁹

According to McCormack these payments constituted a 'de facto tax' whereby the government funded the militia. Many of those drawn in the ballot, who could afford to do so, chose to pay the fine, resulting in corps of privates from the lower orders of society.¹⁰ Those of middling means could purchase a form of insurance, as offered by the Bath and Somerset Militia Association, administered by the Bath printer, William Gye. In June 1793 he placed an announcement in the *Bath Chronicle* that explained the scheme:

For a small Deposit of Half-a-Crown, an Indemnity will be given to each Subscriber, to find a Substitute, or the sum of Ten Pounds, on producing a Certificate signed by the Clerk of the Subdivision Meeting, of his being duly drawn and sworn in the present Militia Laws.¹¹

This was followed by regular advertisements placed in all the Bath newspapers until the scheduled date for the drawing of the ballot.¹² Similar schemes had existed previously in time of war. Notices appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* in 1762

⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (17th January 1793), p. 3d.

⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (17th January 1793), p. 3c.

⁹ Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, p. 12.

¹⁰ McCormack. *Embodying the Militia*, p. 84.

¹¹ *Bath Chronicle* (11th June 1793), p. 3d.

¹² *Bath Chronicle* (11th July 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (18th July 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (25th July 1793), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (1st August 1793), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (13th July 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (20th July 1793), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (3rd August 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (8th July 1793), p. 4c *Bath Journal* (22nd July 1793), p. 4c *Bath Journal* (29th July 1793), p. 4d *Bath Journal* (5th August 1793), p. 4d; *Bath Register* (13th July 1793), p. 2c.

for the 'Bradford Militia Office', which offered a similar scheme for a payment of nine shillings, and in 1781 for 'The Original Universal Militia Office' founded by Mr Brown of Chippenham and Mr Savory of Calne, with William Meyler acting as their Bath agent.¹³

The five shilling subscription was clearly beyond the means of many Bathonians, despite the association's claims that this was a small sum.

Nevertheless, following the ballot the *Bath Journal* reported on the value of the scheme to those who could afford the subscription:

We are happy to inform our readers, that the major part of the persons who were drawn in the Militia on Friday last, were Subscribers to the Bath Militia Association, and many of them must have severely felt a very great difficulty in raising a Sum sufficient to provide proper persons according to the advanced price now demanded by Substitutes.¹⁴

Gye used his next advertisement to thank the 'several respectable Gentlemen' for their 'kind patronage'. He also announced that he was henceforth 'jointly concern'd with Mr. Holloway, Post-Master, Bridgwater'.¹⁵ The partnership further expanding their area of operations to include 'the City and County of Bristol'.¹⁶ Gye and Holloway's was not the only militia society operating in Bath; Cruttwell acted as agent for a rival society established in London, although the higher subscription of five shillings and six pence probably explains why this arrangement was only short-lived.¹⁷

In an October 1796 advertisement placed by Gye and Holloway, the cost of membership was still five shillings. The advertisement stated that the

¹³ *Bath Chronicle* (4th February 1762), p. 4a; *Bath Chronicle* (19th April 1781), p. 4c.

¹⁴ *Bath Journal* (17th February 1794), p. 2c.

¹⁵ *Bath Herald* (1st March 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Journal* (24th February 1794), p. 4d.

¹⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (24th December 1795), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (26th December 1795), p. 3b.

¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (28th January 1796), p. 4b; *Bath Chronicle* (4th January 1796), p. 2e; *Bath Chronicle* (11th February 1796), p. 2e; *Bath Chronicle* (18th February 1796), p. 2e; *Bath Chronicle* (10th March 1796), p. 1e.

certificates were only valid until the next January and would not apply for those balloted to join the 'New Militia'.¹⁸ This 'new militia' was the result of a government scheme to raise a Supplementary Militia of sixty thousand men nationwide. As with the existing county militia, these men were to be chosen by ballot and to receive training, although they would not be immediately embodied.¹⁹ Another rival society based at the Post-Office in Salisbury offered insurance to those drawn for either the 'old' or the 'new militia', costing fifteen or thirty shillings, which entitled those drawn in the ballots to receive five or ten pounds respectively, or have a substitute found for them, on the condition that fifteen shilling subscribers 'do pay to the Society, the amount of the bounty to be allowed by the parish to a poor man'.²⁰

Gye and Holloway responded with their own scheme for the Supplementary Militia, setting the subscription at the much inflated rate of one guinea, but any subscriber drawn in the ballot would receive any surplus funds once the expenses of providing substitutes were defrayed. If, however, the funds proved insufficient to provide all the required substitutes, then the subscriber would be expected to make up the difference.²¹ Gye and Holloway's increased price of subscriptions at the Original Militia Society may have been the impetus for Mr Cook at the Ring of Bells in the Grove to open his own subscription for the Supplementary Militia, charging only five shillings.²² Similarly a group of men associated together at the White Lion Inn 'to consider the Propriety of raising a FUND, [...] for RAISING SUBSTITUTES, or paying the Sum required by the Act'.

¹⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (13th October 1796), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (1st October 1796), p. 3b.

¹⁹ Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, p. 53.

²⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (17th November 1796), p. 3e.

²¹ *Bath Chronicle* (1st December 1796), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (5th November 1796), p. 3b.

²² *Bath Herald* (5th November 1796), p. 3c.

They also resolved to meet again, but the scheme appears to have come to nothing.²³

In an editorial comment the *Bath Herald* explained that anyone drawn for the Supplementary Militia would be 'trained and exercised 20 days', with each private receiving 'one shilling a day, besides provision made for his family however numerous, during his service', or five shillings per day if they were a substitute, 'besides having their wives and families maintained'.²⁴ Whether swayed by the cost of subscription to one of the militia societies or by the less onerous requirements of service in the Supplementary Militia, the *Bath Herald* reported that

Many reputable persons drawn for the Supplementary Militia in this city are determined not to procure Substitutes, but to serve themselves; It is certain the twenty days' exercise will take place in the vicinity of Bath, and they will rather feel it is a pleasure than a task to acquire such a use of arms, as in case of an invasion (and on no other account are they to be called into actual service) will render them of so much utility to themselves and their Country.²⁵

The report in the *Bath Chronicle* provided some welcome news to those who had been drawn:

The number of Men drawn for the new Supplementary Militia, in the Bath-forum division, on Friday last, amounted to 498. We learn with pleasure that the men are to perform their twenty days exercise in the vicinity of this city, so that every man may sleep at his own house, and the providing of substitutes, if at all necessary, will be attended with very little expense.²⁶

Further ballots for the 'old militia' were required in order to bring the regiment up to strength, as the *Bath Chronicle* reported in July 1797:

Yesterday five persons were drawn for the Militia of this county, to make up the deficiencies from desertions, &c. We have authority to say there will be no other ballot during the war, but in case of similar circumstances.²⁷

²³ *Bath Herald* (19th November 1796), p. 2d.

²⁴ *Bath Herald* (3rd December 1796), p. 3d.

²⁵ *Bath Herald* (14th January 1797), p. 3d.

²⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (12th January 1797), p. 3b.

²⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (13th July 1797), p. 3c.



ORIGINAL AND LONG-ESTABLISHED
BATH and OLD SOMERSET
MILITIA SOCIETY OFFICES,
At W. GYE's, Printer and Bookseller,
Market-Place, BATH,
And J. HOLLOWAY's, Postmaster, BRIDGWATER,
Where upwards of THREE THOUSAND POUNDS
have been paid for Substitutes.

THIS Society was instituted for the purpose of
providing SUBSTITUTES for such of its Mem-
bers on whom the Lot may fall, to be paid out of the
Society. — All Persons liable to be drawn for the City
of Bath, its neighbouring Parishes, &c. by paying
HALF-A-GUINEA
At Mr. GYE's, as above, will be provided with SUB-
STITUTES in case they are legally DRAWN, without
further expence. — The Subscriber will also receive a
Certificate, which will be in full force for all and every
Ballot until the 31st of December next.

Persons in the Country sending a List of their Names
and Parishes, may be supplied with any number of Cer-
tificates on payment for the same. 3547

Plate 13: Advertisement for the Militia Society Offices.
Bath Chronicle (28th February 1799).²⁸

In 1799 Gye and Holloway once again changed the name of their association, once again, to the 'Original and Long Established Bath and Old Somerset Militia Society Offices'. They increased the cost of subscription to half a guinea and decided to focus their business on their home county.²⁹ An earlier report from the *Bath Herald* may shed some light on the scaling down of the business by pointing out that substitutes must be 'of the same county as the

²⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (28th February 1799), p. 2d.

²⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (21st February 1799), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (23rd February 1799), p. 2d.

Principals', with no offices in Bristol, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, the partners may have struggled to find suitable substitutes.³⁰ The change of name may have been a reaction to a rival scheme that had connections to local government, with subscription books opened at the home of Samuel Blatchley (a chief constable of the division of Bathforum) and at the Bath Guildhall; although, Blatchley made no attempt to undercut Gye and Holloway by also charging half a guinea.³¹

Volunteers

The continued existence of these various schemes demonstrates the continued reticence of the middling-sort to serve in the militia. This contrasts starkly with the eagerness with which they signed up as volunteers. Even before the outbreak of war the government drew up plans for mobilisation. In order to keep the cost of war to a minimum, these plans included the raising of self-funded volunteer corps.³² This was no innovation; the first volunteer corps formed at Whitehaven in April 1778, following a raid by John Paul Jones during the American War of Independence. In September of that year parliament passed an act permitting the attachment of volunteer corps to the militia, the government's preferred method of defence. A Commons amendment to a bill to drastically increase the size of the militia, in response to the Spanish entrance into the war, authorised the formation of local independent companies of volunteers. A decision that, according to Ian Beckett, was more attractive to 'society as a whole' than having volunteers serve under militia regulations.³³ One correspondent to the *Bath Chronicle* saw volunteering as part of a much older tradition, observing

³⁰ *Bath Herald* (21st January 1797), p. 3d.

³¹ *Bath Chronicle* (14th February 1799), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (16th February 1799), p. 2e.

³² Mori, *William Pitt and the French Revolution*, p. 126.

³³ I. F. W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945* (Manchester, 1991), p. 69.

that the arming the Yeomanry is reviving the ancient Feudal System, without the inconvenience of Military Tenures – a system that not only established, but preserves to this day, most governments of Europe.³⁴

In the winter of 1792 with the prospect of war looming, Pitt was considering other means to preserve his government. He contemplated attaching corps of volunteers to the militia, but the success of the loyalist associations persuaded him to discourage the formation of armed associations at that time.³⁵ By March 1794 attitude in government had changed, the loyalist association movement was in decline with the fear of insurrection being replaced with the fear of a French invasion. Consequently Henry Dundas sent a circular letter, dated 14th March, to the lords lieutenant of England and Wales proposing the formation of volunteer corps by 'Gentlemen of Weight or Property' funded in part by general subscription.³⁶ The circular contained five proposed measures: the augmentation of county militia regiments with volunteer privates; the formation of volunteer companies to protect towns, particularly those on the coast; the raising of volunteer troops of fencible cavalry, to serve wherever needed in the country; the raising of bodies of cavalry to serve in case of invasion; and the enrolment of pioneer corps to assist regular forces in case of emergency.

On March 29th the Grand Jury for Somerset met during the Taunton assizes having been summoned by Earl Poulett, the Lord Lieutenant of the county. In a notice that they placed in the Bath press (as per one of their resolutions) they declared that they 'shall be at all times ready to stand forward in the protection of this kingdom' and 'to obtain the sense of the county as to what plan will be best in the present state of public affairs' at a meeting of the

³⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (15th May 1794), p. 3d.

³⁵ Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 19.

³⁶ 'Copy of a Circular Letter to the Lords Lieutenants of Counties', *The Journals of the House of Commons*. Vol. 49 (London, 1803), pp. 378-9.

‘Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders’ at the Swan Inn, Wells.³⁷ The *Bath Herald*

shed further light on the meeting:

When Lord Poulet [sic] proposed a Subscription to support Government at this time, to the Grand Jury, Justices, and the Gentlemen at Taunton Assizes, he was given to understand by them, that they considered the matter of such importance, that they recommended the County to be convened, for the Freeholders and Gentlemen at large to consider the propriety of the measure.³⁸

In the same issue as the notice and the news report there appeared a letter sent by ‘Stimulus’, who requested that ‘every one, possessing property – or valuing the liberties he enjoys’ to attend the public meeting and have their say.³⁹

The meeting took place on 9th April chaired by Charles Knatchbull, the High Sheriff of Somerset. Those in attendance passed a number of resolutions, which they duly had published in the Bath press in notice that included Dundas’ proposals.⁴⁰ Those present resolved ‘to co-operate with Government in every measure that has for its object the safety and preservation of the Kingdom, and our most excellent Constitution’. They also resolved to open a subscription for that purpose with donations to be collected by clergymen. Those subscribing fifty pounds or more to form a committee, a sure sign that they heeded Dundas’ call to mobilise ‘Gentlemen of Weight or Property’.

The *Bath Herald*’s report of the meeting mentioned a single dissenting voice; Pearce, a surgeon from Wells, left the meeting after those present chose not to adopt his proposal that those present subscribe ‘one eighth of their annual income (which he himself was ready to do) to employ Prussian troops on the Continent, instead of subscribing for an internal defence’. The article made the

³⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd April 1794), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (5th April 1794), p. 1e.

³⁸ *Bath Herald* (5th April 1794), p. 3b.

³⁹ *Bath Herald* (5th April 1794), p. 3c.

⁴⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (17th April 1794), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (12th April 1794), p. 3de; *Bath Journal* (14th April 1794), p. 3bc.

point 'that the regiment of Cavalry that Lord Poulett is raising had nothing to do with this Subscription, but that the Gentlemen who took commission in the regiment were to advance for the purpose of raising it'.⁴¹

Despite this statement the notice of the meeting listed those who had contributed to both subscriptions. Poulett contributed £1000 to his regiment along with John Strode and John Berkeley Burland who each paid £500 becoming the regimental colonel and major respectively. Three men paid £300 to receive captaincies and six unnamed men subscribed £100 each to become lieutenants. Poulett also subscribed £300 to the 'General Subscription'. Knatchbull and the county's two MPs subscribed £200 each. The *Bath Herald's* report of the meeting noted that the two subscriptions had raised 7,800 pounds on the first day.⁴² The *Bath Journal* reported that 'The Subscription for raising Voluntary Corps for the Defence of the Kingdom, goes on with great Spirit – at our County Meeting at Wells on Wednesday last it amounted to near 8000l.'⁴³ The following week it reported that

The alacrity with which the County Subscriptions have been entered into, forcibly speaks the sense of the Nation upon the present situation of public affairs, and yields the most grateful testimony to the feelings of every Briton, of that impenetrable barrier which his Country can easily set up, when the apprehension of danger inculcates the necessity of preparation.

It then listed the amounts subscribed in thirteen counties, but did not boast that only Kent had a larger subscription than Somerset.⁴⁴ The *Bath Herald* estimated that the national contribution thus far was £100,000.⁴⁵ It also reported on a county meeting at Devizes to open 'a subscription for the defence of the

⁴¹ *Bath Herald* (12th April 1794), p. 3c.

⁴² *Bath Herald* (12th April 1794), p. 3c.

⁴³ *Bath Journal* (14th April 1794), p. 4e.

⁴⁴ *Bath Journal* (21st April 1794), p. 4c.

⁴⁵ *Bath Herald* (26th April 1794), p. 3c.

kingdom', at which 'nearly £7000 was 'immediately deposited with the Treasurer', and a general meeting at Bristol to the same purpose.⁴⁶

Along with the notices placed by the county committee, the *Bath Herald* printed lists of subscriptions that its proprietor had received at his library, and also announced that the Bath Corporation had voted two-hundred guineas for the fund.⁴⁷ The newspaper also printed a list of subscriptions made at Frome, the only one for a local town.⁴⁸ This list like the county and Bath subscriptions included donations made almost solely by men, the only exception being the twenty pounds donated by Mrs Bright.⁴⁹ This contrasts starkly with the other subscriptions opened for the defence of the nation and the relief of widows and orphans of deceased servicemen.⁵⁰

The Bath newspapers also included a notice announcing the formation of Poulett's Somersetshire Light Cavalry as directed by the king, requesting applications from 'such Somersetshire Youths as are ambitious to signalize themselves in the defence of *Old England*, their *Liberties*, and *Property*, attempted to be destroyed by the most lawless banditti that ever disgraced the annals of the world'.⁵¹ The language of this notice closely resembles that of the loyalist associations, and this is unlikely to be a coincidence. Dozier contends that 'a surprisingly large percentage of the [volunteer] military units had direct connections with the loyal associations'.⁵² This was certainly the case with the Somerset light cavalry. Of the thirteen members of the troop's committee listed in

⁴⁶ *Bath Herald* (3rd May 1794), p. 3b.

⁴⁷ *Bath Herald* (19th April 1794), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (26th April 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (17th May 1794), p. 3c.

⁴⁸ *Bath Herald* (14th June 1794), p. 2e.

⁴⁹ *Bath Herald* (5th July 1794), p. 1d.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 7.

⁵¹ *Bath Chronicle* (17th April 1794), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (12th April 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Journal* (14th April 1794), p. 3b.

⁵² Dozier, *For King, Constitution, and Country*, p. 153.

a later notice, at least nine had taken an active role in the loyal association movement, appearing as listed committee members in notices placed in the Bath press.⁵³ John Strode, who also held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the cavalry, served on the committee for the Bath Association for Preserving Liberty and Property, and the Constitution of Great Britain against Republicans and Levellers.⁵⁴ He also chaired the meeting which resulted in the formation of a loyalist association at Shepton Mallet.⁵⁵ Similarly, Matthew Brickdale and John Hanning acted as chairmen of the Taunton and Ilminster associations respectively.⁵⁶ As mentioned previously, Henry Hippersley Coxe was a committee member of the Bath association.⁵⁷ John Tyndale Warre, John Fisher and James Coles all sat on the committee of the Taunton association, while Peter Sherston and Richard Thomas Coombe were committee members at Wells and Ilminster respectively.⁵⁸ William Hyatt, the secretary to the committee, also performed that same role for the Shepton-Mallet loyalist association.⁵⁹ Furthermore, a number of officers in the light cavalry had previously been on the committees of loyalist associations.⁶⁰ Major John Berkeley Burland chaired the association at Wincanton.⁶¹ Captains John Lethbridge and John Raw Collins were committee members at Taunton and Ilminster respectively.⁶² Such connections may be taken as evidence of an ideological continuity from loyal association to volunteer

⁵³ *Bath Chronicle* (15th May 1794), p. 1d.

⁵⁴ *Bath Journal* (31st December 1792), p. 4c.

⁵⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (17th January 1793), p. 3d

⁵⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (27th December 1792), p. 4b; *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1793), p. 2c.

⁵⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (27th December 1792), p. 1c.

⁵⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (27th December 1792), p. 4b; *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1793), p. 2c; *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1793), p. 2e.

⁵⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (24th January 1793), p. 4d.

⁶⁰ The list of officers is taken from H. Symonds, 'Somerset Volunteers of the Eighteenth Century', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological & Natural History Society for the Year 1921*, Vol. LXVII (Taunton, 1922), pp. 56-64.

⁶¹ *Bath Chronicle* (17th January 1793), p. 2e.

⁶² *Bath Chronicle* (27th December 1792), p. 4b; *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1793), p. 2c.

regiment as espoused by Dozier, Western and Dickinson, who saw volunteer regiments as a means to 'intimidate the radicals and to promote patriotism'.⁶³ While Gee disagrees with this view, he does concede that political considerations did play some part in the volunteer movement.⁶⁴ It seems unlikely that these considerations could remain wholly dislocated from the recent loyalist rhetoric that was so prevalent in the provincial press.

The volunteering of 1794 differed from the loyalist association movement in terms of scale, taking place at a county rather than local level, with the only local exceptions being Taunton and Wells.⁶⁵ But that was all to change in 1797-8 with a mass volunteering movement motivated by the increased fear of invasion. Even towards the end of 1796, as the *Bath Chronicle* reported, Britons began to associate as military bodies: 'We hear that upwards of 100 members of the Benefit Societies in this city have agreed to learn the use of arms, with a view to offering their services to Government in case of invasion, or on any other emergency.'⁶⁶ The mention of an 'other emergency' may well demonstrate a lingering anxiety about insurrection. Nevertheless, it was the attempted invasion of Ireland in December 1796, when only bad weather prevented the combined French and Spanish fleets landing nearly fifteen thousand men, which provoked an explosion of volunteering with the establishment of armed associations across the country, reminiscent of the rapid growth of the loyalist association movement of 1792-3.⁶⁷

⁶³ Dozier, *For King, Constitution, and Country*, p. 153; Western, 'The Volunteer Movement'; H. T. Dickinson, 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism 1789-1815' in Dickinson (Ed.), *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815*, pp. 103-26.

⁶⁴ Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 20-1.

⁶⁵ *Bath Herald* (3rd May 1794), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (24th May 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (29th November 1794), p. 3c.

⁶⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (24th November 1796), p. 3d; Also reported in the *Bath Herald* (19th November 1796), p. 3d.

⁶⁷ Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*. 2nd Ed, pp. 215-6.

Two months after the failed invasion the *Bath Herald* reported on the formation of a volunteer corps of cavalry at Bristol. It followed this with an editorial comment:

We are authorised to say that several gentlemen of this city are ready to enroll themselves, in the same spirited manner, and only wait for some person, animated with courage and a love of his country to step forward as a leader in the business: the present is not the hour for delay and supineness; energy and unanimity are pressingly required; immediate vigorous exertions may prevent the dreadful consequences which Holland, Germany and Italy have fatally experienced from the ravaging strides of an inveterate Enemy. It is our duty to awaken our Countrymen to a sense of their danger, and to rouse that spirit which can alone preserve us as a powerful and happy Kingdom, hitherto the envy and admiration of the world!⁶⁸

Henry Harrington was the one to step forward. Under the auspices of the committee of the Bath loyalist association, he placed a notice in the next week's issue calling all who signed up as members of the association to attend a meeting to be held at the Guildhall to decide how best to arm themselves.⁶⁹ The *Bath Herald* briefly reported on the meeting at which they recognised 'the necessity and expediency of raising a body of men for the protection of the city' to which end 'a General Meeting' was scheduled.⁷⁰ There then followed a lengthy editorial which appreciatively acknowledged 'that the Loyal and Martial Spirit which we endeavoured to rouse in our last paper, has diffused itself generally through all ranks and degrees of our Fellow Citizens'. While recognising opponents to the war and the ministry, it called for unity in the face of the 'mad Republican'. It insisted that 'every man capable of wielding a gun should know its use, and every town become a Garrison of its natural Defenders, protecting their own properties, their families, and every thing that can render life valuable' and in so doing to

⁶⁸ *Bath Herald* (18th February 1797), p. 3d.

⁶⁹ *Bath Herald* (25th February 1797), p. 3c.

⁷⁰ *Bath Herald* (4th March 1797), p. 3b.

‘preserve inviolate the Rights, Privileges, and Constitution of Great-Britain’. The language of this editorial and the leadership role taken by the loyalist association certainly fits Western’s conception of the volunteers as the armed wing of the ‘party of order’.⁷¹ By contrast the forty plus ‘actors and other dependants of the theatre’ who ‘enrolled themselves as a volunteer corps to serve on any emergency’ surely better fit Cookson’s model of an ‘all-inclusive patriotism’.⁷²

The Bath Armed Volunteer Association placed a notice in the Bath press following their general meeting, chaired by Henry Seymour, who was on the committee of the Bath loyalist association. They resolved to form a corps of volunteers consisting of both cavalry and infantry who would serve without pay ‘unless called upon by any particular emergency to act for the public service’, with the exception of ‘an Adjutant, two Quarter-Masters, one Serjeant-Major, six Drill Serjeants, [and] twelve Drummers’ who would be remunerated by the government. They set their area of operations to be ‘the jurisdiction of the Magistracy of this City, except in case of invasion, and on no occasion whatever shall the whole or any part of the Corps, be removed beyond a moderate day’s march from Bath’. While they decided to solicit the government ‘to furnish Arms, Accoutrements, Ammunition and Drums’, they would provide their own clothing that ‘shall be as little expensive as possible, though strictly uniform’. They also drew up a list of senior officers to be recommended to the Lord Lieutenant, with each company choosing their own lieutenants. Two books were to be opened and left at the Guildhall: the first for the enrolment of volunteers; the second for a subscription ‘to defray such expences as may be found necessary’.⁷³

⁷¹ J. R. Western, ‘The Volunteer movement as an anti-revolutionary force, 1793–1801’, *English Historical Review*, Vol. 71 (1956), pp. 603–14.

⁷² *Bath Herald* (24th February 1797), p. 3e; Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, pp. 66–73.

⁷³ *Bath Chronicle* (9th March 1797), p. 1b; *Bath Herald* (4th March 1797), p. 3b.

Whereas the *Bath Chronicle* printed a sober report of the meeting, the *Bath Herald* carried another lengthy editorial, in which it again called for unity, while also revelling in the conspicuous zeal manifest in the city.⁷⁴ It related that ‘Gentlemen who have retired to this City from the fatigues of long service have again unsheathed their Swords, and cheerfully come forward on this occasion’ joined by ‘Persons of Opulence’ and the ‘industrious Tradesman’. It declared that ‘it will be held disgraceful for any Inhabitant, in possession of Health and Activity, and where Engagements will possibly permit, not to have his Name enrolled in the Bath Armed Volunteer Association’. Of those whose age, infirmity or gender precluded them from ‘actual Service’, it requested that they contribute to the subscription.⁷⁵

Despite receiving local sanction, with the city’s Corporation subscribing fifty pounds, and the lord lieutenant forwarding their offer of service to the Home Office, central government decided against authorising the association.⁷⁶ As the *Bath Chronicle* reported the ‘Duke of Portland has sent a very handsome letter [...] declining their offer’. It explained that ‘the number of regular, militia, and volunteers, already raised’ was judged sufficient to defend the region. In a further demonstration of the city’s attachment to the Duke of York, the article claimed that had their offer been accepted they would have been called the York Volunteers..⁷⁷

In its report the *Bath Herald* gave more information of Portland’s reasoning: The arming of the inhabitants of sea ports and towns on the coast, Government highly approves of—but thinks the safety of the kingdom in other

⁷⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (2nd March 1797), p. 3c.

⁷⁵ *Bath Herald* (4th March 1797), p. 3d.

⁷⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd March 1797), p. 3c.

⁷⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (13th April 1797), p. 3c.

respects is perfectly secure'. A position that J. H. Acherley reiterated in a letter printed in the same issues, also opining that many volunteer corps had been rejected because they had not offered 'to *march* and *co-operate* with any of his Majesty's Forces in case of Invasion, in any part of the Kingdom'.⁷⁸ Indeed, the Bath volunteers were not alone in failing to receive government sanction; by April 1797 the inundation of offers had forced the Home Office to instruct the lords lieutenant to use their discretion in submitting any further offers from armed associations.⁷⁹

The following year saw a change in the priorities of government with regard to the defence of the nation, and as a result the next iteration of a volunteer force in Bath achieved greater longevity. The *Bath Chronicle* of 26th April 1798 reported on their first meeting:

A very numerous and respectable meeting was this day held at the Guildhall, Charles Phillot, esq; Mayor, in the chair, at which it was resolved, that a Military Association be immediately formed for the protection of this City and its vicinity; and a Committee was appointed to prepare a plan of enrollment, &c. for the approbation of another General Meeting to be held on Friday next at 11.

The volunteering spirit seems to have captured the Bathonian imagination with Mr Dash offering his riding school on Montpelier Row as an exercise ground as well as 'any other services that he could render the corps'. The performers at the city's theatre again 'formed themselves into a military corps, to act with the above association'.⁸⁰ The *Bath Herald* reported on the meeting with typical bombast: 'we have not a doubt, from the eager zeal of the inhabitants and spirit of unanimity now so happily prevailing, [...] that a Corps will soon be complete, which will do honour, and prove a perfect protection to the city of Bath and its suburbs'.

⁷⁸ *Bath Herald* (15th April 1797), p. 2c.

⁷⁹ Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 39.

⁸⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (26th April 1798), p. 3c.

Underlining Meyler's taste for the literary, the piece went on to quote Sheridan and Addison.⁸¹ The following week's newspapers contained notices of the first three meetings of the Bath Military Association.⁸² Two committees were to be instituted: the first made up of two members chosen by each company; the second being a 'Financial Committee' in part elected by those subscribers who were not enrolled.

The *Bath Herald* printed another lengthy editorial, which gleefully observed that 'one general enthusiastic sentiment' pervaded 'every rank of his Majesty's subjects' with 'a spirit of bravery, and loyalty warming every breast'.⁸³ While not diminishing the perceived threat of invasion, it defiantly declared that 'Should France by force, chance, or treachery, ever obtain a footing in this kingdom, she shall find every Village a Garrison, and every Town a Citadel!' As before it expressed the public contempt that would be felt by the 'dastardly' man, 'who, having the means and ability, shrunk in the hour of peril from the glorious Contest!' It went on to provide a report of the formation of the armed association, declared that while the city faced a particular threat,

There is not a doubt that this Corps will be as numerous as it is respectable and prove a firm security to the City, from all intestine commotion, and from marauding Parties of the Enemy, who, in case of an Invasion, allured by the report of the Grandeur, Elegance, and Opulence of Bath, might stray from the main Army, and endeavour to make it one of the first scenes of their plunder and carnage.

The article ended with another call for 'the Invalid, the wealthy Aged, and the opulent Female to open their purse-strings [...] and thereby lend their aid, in the only manner they have the power'.

Some women had already decided to offer pecuniary assistance to the

⁸¹ *Bath Herald* (28th April 1798), p.3c.

⁸² *Bath Chronicle* (3rd May 1798), p. 2d; *Bath Herald* (5th May 1798), p. 2e.

⁸³ *Bath Herald* (5th May 1798), p. 3c.

city's armed association; the same issue of the *Bath Herald* included a small notice that announcing the opening of a subscription book 'At the desire of several LADIES'. The notice also made it clear that the book was for 'the exclusive Subscriptions of such Ladies as are willing to contribute' and emphasised that the name of every subscriber would be published.⁸⁴ The *Bath Chronicle* enthused that in the two weeks since the founding of the volunteers, four-hundred men had enrolled and nearly £500 had been subscribed.⁸⁵ The list of subscribers duly appeared in the Bath press, with names listed alphabetically. Even though they had a separate book, women subscribers were thus listed alongside their male counterparts, in much greater numbers than had appeared in the earlier county subscription.⁸⁶ The last subscription list included belated twenty guinea donations from the Bath Corporation and the city's two MPs.⁸⁷

This may have been a result of the lack of administrative control that the corporate body could exert over the volunteers, as they were usually quick to contribute to patriotic causes. Nevertheless, it was to the mayor that the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset related the news that 'the offer of the Bath Military Association will be graciously accepted by his Majesty'.⁸⁸ In its report of the king's acceptance the *Bath Herald* declared that the 'the principal inhabitants and the young men in their employ' that formed the 'four respectable Companies' of infantry along with 'the Bath troop of Cavalry' would 'insure local tranquillity'. It also noted that the 'subscription of each of such persons (ladies and invalids in

⁸⁴ *Bath Herald* (5th May 1798), p. 3c.

⁸⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (10th May 1798), p. 3b.

⁸⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (17th May 1798), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (19th May 1798), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (2nd June 1798), 2d; *Bath Herald* (28th July 1798), p. 3d.

⁸⁷ *Bath Herald* (17th November 1798), p. 3e

⁸⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (17th May 1798), p. 3b.

particular) who are precluded from personal services, has already been liberal'.⁸⁹

This authorisation no doubt renewed any loss of civic pride lost when the previous corps failed to achieve official sanction one year earlier.

The city's newspapers also carried details of similar associations formed in the local region and beyond. In March 1797 the *Bath Chronicle* reported the formation of a volunteer corps of one hundred infantry at Dorchester, the training of infantrymen at Castle-Cary, and that several associations had formed in South Wales in the aftermath of the farcical invasion at Fishguard.⁹⁰ An incident for which the Duke of Portland passed on the king's 'highest approbation' of the conduct of the Fishguard Volunteers, as reported in the *Bath Herald*.⁹¹ The *Bath Chronicle* reported the formation of a volunteer corps in Bristol, which had been the target for the invasion.⁹²

A report in the *Bath Herald* again extolled the notion of social unity, while also making a direct connection between volunteering and loyalism. It described 'the inhabitants of all ranks and distinctions' at Ilchester, who were 'animated by one sentiment of patriotism and loyalty' to form a volunteer company.⁹³ Similarly it reported that at a meeting at Offwell in Devon 'there was not a single man, even of the lowest labourers and mechanics (and almost all the male inhabitants of the parish, between 15 and 60 were present) who was not eager to enroll his name' to assist with 'the suppression of insurrections, and repelling invaders'.⁹⁴ The *Bath Chronicle* reported that the gentlemen of the Bristol Volunteer Military Association had 'resolved to form a nightly patrol for the protection of their fellow

⁸⁹ *Bath Herald* (30th June 1798), p. 3c.

⁹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd March 1797), p. 3c.

⁹¹ *Bath Herald* (25th March 1797), p. 3d.

⁹² *Bath Chronicle* (6th April 1797), p. 3c.

⁹³ *Bath Herald* (18th March 1797), p. 3e.

⁹⁴ *Bath Herald* (3rd March 1798), p. 3d.

citizens, against the base attempts of incendiaries'.⁹⁵

These examples may go some way to endorse Dickinson's emphasis of the volunteers' role in the intimidation of radicals as a continuation of association loyalism.⁹⁶ Yet, as Cookson argues, there were differences between the two movements in both practice and rhetoric.⁹⁷ While the rush to volunteer echoes the astounding growth of the loyalist associations, both of which can be partially credited to newspapers, the way that the volunteer associations their use of and their reception in the press does demonstrate some differences in approach. While the loyalist associations placed notices in both local and national newspapers to announce their formation, the local armed associations rarely did so. The *Bath Chronicle* carried only two such notices in 1798. Apart from that placed by the Bath Military Association, only the Chippenham Armed Association placed a notice of their first meeting.⁹⁸ Another notice did appear in Bath newspapers announcing a meeting in the Hundred of Chew and Chewton, but no notice of the resolutions adopted followed.⁹⁹ This contrasts starkly with the volume of such notices that loyalist associations placed in the *Bath Chronicle* during the winter of 1792-3. Furthermore, unlike the city's loyalist association, the Bath Military Association did not place notices in the London press, although at least two of the capital's newspapers did reprint the report of their foundation that appeared in the *Bath Chronicle*.¹⁰⁰ The Bath newspapers used local news reports, rather than notices, to inform readers of the formation of armed

⁹⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd May 1798), p. 3d.

⁹⁶ Dickinson, 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism', pp. 103-26.

⁹⁷ Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, pp. 211-3.

⁹⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (10th May 1798), p. 2d.

⁹⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (5th July 1798), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (30th June 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁰⁰ *St. James's Chronicle: or, British Evening-Post* (24th – 26th April 1798), p. 4d; *London Packet; or, New Lloyd's Evening Post* (25th – 27th April 1798), p. 2c.

associations both locally and further afield.

From April to June 1798 the Bath press carried many such reports. In one the *Bath Chronicle* announced that the king had 'graciously accepted' the service of a volunteer infantry at Gloucester, which may have spurred the second attempt to form a volunteer force in Bath.¹⁰¹ In Oxford two separate volunteer forces formed, 'the Heads of Houses, Proctors, Fellows, Students of Colleges, servants' in one and the other of citizens, 'chiefly housekeepers'.¹⁰² Oxford was not alone in having more than one independent volunteer corps; at Keynsham, 'The Gentlemen belonging to the Brass Company intend their men to be separate from their parish' volunteer corps.¹⁰³ For the vast majority of locations a single association sufficed. At Sherborne 'a number of the inhabitants have formed themselves into an independent troop of volunteer cavalry; and are also raising a company of infantry' and at Dorchester where 'an association is entered into for learning the use of arms'.¹⁰⁴ At Wells the Justice of the Peace, John Rock, 'summoned the inhabitants to meet on Friday last, to form themselves into a Military association', at which 'fifty respectable gentlemen, immediately enrolled themselves'.¹⁰⁵ The civic authorities took a leading role in volunteering elsewhere, as was the case in Glastonbury where 'the Magistrates and other inhabitants of Glastonbury [...] resolved to form a military association, and to go one day's march if required'.¹⁰⁶

The *Bath Herald* expressed the popular mood in its local news: 'It is with pleasure we announce the spirit of loyalty that pervades every part of Great-

¹⁰¹ *Bath Chronicle* (12th April 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁰² *Bath Chronicle* (26th April 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁰³ *Bath Chronicle* (17th May 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd May 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁰⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (17th May 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (24th May 1798), p. 3c.

Britain, independent Corps of Volunteers, for active service in case of Invasion, and armed Associations for local defence are every where forming', before providing examples in North-Petherton, Wells and Glastonbury.¹⁰⁷ Other reports suggested that in less populous parishes, the closer knit of the communities resulted in mass enrolment. As in Wily where 'every man in the parish capable of bearing arms, and not previously engaged in the cavalry' signed up.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, the parish of Burrington 'agreed to turn out nearly to a man, in different capacities, in case of invasion' with the local farmers agreeing to lend their teams gratuitously'.¹⁰⁹ The men of North-Petherton 'unanimously resolved to form themselves into an independent corps of Volunteers'. Following which, in an echo of the largesse so often evident after the forming of loyalist associations, 'The privates were regaled with roast-beef and strong beer'.¹¹⁰ In an example of what Cookson's 'all-inclusive patriotism', the Foxite Duke of Bedford was paraded into Tavistock on Oak Apple Day by the town's volunteers, appropriately with 'oak-leaves in their hats'. His business there was to raise four more companies of volunteers in the town and to propose raising two more companies of his tenants in nearby villages.¹¹¹

The enrolling of volunteers caused concern in some quarters. The *Bath Chronicle* printed the following warning in the same issue that announced the formation of the Bath Military Association:

The Gentlemen who wish to shew their loyalty to their country, by forming Associations, cannot be too much on their guard in carefully inspecting and enquiring into the characters of those who offer to enlist. The Partizans of the French in this country depend a great deal on the success of this part of their plan, which is to introduce disaffected persons into different military

¹⁰⁷ *Bath Herald* (19th May 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (17th May 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁰⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (24th May 1798), p. 3c.

¹¹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (24th May 1798), p. 3c.

¹¹¹ *Bath Chronicle* (7th June 1798), p. 3d.

corps. This was the trick which the Jacobins played off in breeding a mutiny among the navy.¹¹²

The same text appeared in other newspapers both in the capital and the provinces.¹¹³ Clearly the report placed the blame for the recent mutinies at Spithead and the Nore squarely on radicals, rather than the long standing grievances of sailors. There existed a common belief that those sailors raised by the Quota Acts included many troublemakers, but, as Christopher Doorne argues, while some magistrates treated the acts as a means of ridding themselves of undesirable elements that may have included radicals, 'the number of such offenders was very small and their influence has been exaggerated'.¹¹⁴

Other features of the volunteer movement prompted some contemporaries to argue that armed volunteers posed a threat. As Colley notes, 'many members of the governing élite regarded [mass mobilisation] with apprehension', particularly the volunteer movement.¹¹⁵ Indeed, Gee points out the potential that 'the volunteers were as much a danger to the existing order as they were a bastion against invasion and insurrection'. In the eyes of some critics, the armed associations embodied many of those values that threatened the established order. Not only the corps themselves, but their organising committees encapsulated egalitarian principles that were closer to those of clubs or societies than military organisations, enabling men of lower status to exercise a degree of authority. The election of officers also elicited criticism for its promotion of democratic values, even though the practice had precedents, particularly in the

¹¹² *Bath Chronicle* (26th April 1798), p. 3d.

¹¹³ *The Times* (20th April 1798), p. 3b; *Sun* (20th April 1798), p. 3d; *Manchester Mercury* (24th April 1798), p. 4e; *Leeds Intelligencer* (28th April 1798), p. 3a; *Chester Courant* (24th April 1798), p. 3e.

¹¹⁴ C. Doorne, 'A Floating Republic? Conspiracy Theory and the Nore Mutiny of 1797' in A. V. Coats & P. Mac Dougall (Eds.), *The Naval Mutinies of 1797: Unity and Perseverance* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 179-93.

¹¹⁵ Colley, 'Whose Nation?', pp. 97-117.

Irish volunteer movement of the 1770s.¹¹⁶ Undoubtedly these critics looked at the more recent examples of military democracy in the French National Guard with trepidation. Nevertheless, the election of officers by the Bath volunteers was reported without further comment by the city's newspapers.¹¹⁷

As already mentioned, the armed associations were also able to raise subscriptions to be used as they saw fit without any scrutiny, making it possible that they could become self-sufficient. Furthermore, the volunteers were not subject to the same military discipline as regular soldiers and militiamen, rather each association was responsible for its own discipline.¹¹⁸ A report in the *Bath Chronicle* quelled fears that the city's volunteer corps included discontented radicals or other rabble-rousers, describing the volunteers as 'entirely composed of the most respectable Citizens, their sons or connections'.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, these lingering concerns resulted in both the *Bath Chronicle* and the *Bath Herald* printing a proposal that armed volunteers take an oath of allegiance to the king and constitution.¹²⁰ The *Bath Herald* had earlier carried a report of two companies of Exeter Volunteers taking 'the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and with such solemnity as to convince their Fellow-Citizens that they were determined to support, with their lives, the laws, religion, and liberty of this happy kingdom'.¹²¹ Similarly when it came to the Bath Volunteers receiving their arms at the Guildhall, 'the Oath of Allegiance was administered on both corps'. The report in the *Bath Herald* also related that

The address delivered by the Mayor on the above occasion was very appropriate, and expressive of his satisfaction at the just test they had

¹¹⁶ Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, pp. 204-5.

¹¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (10th May 1798), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (12th May 1798), p. 3b.

¹¹⁸ Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, pp. 204-5.

¹¹⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (28th June 1798), p. 3c.

¹²⁰ See Plate 14; *Bath Herald* (1st September 1798), p. 3c.

¹²¹ *Bath Herald* (21st July 1798), p. 3c.

given of their Loyalty, and of the attention they had uniformly paid to their military duty. We cannot forbear repeating, that this Association reflects as much honour as it gives security to the City.¹²²

At a time so critical as the present, it is evidently necessary to require every test and assurance of the good intentions of those persons to whom our defence is entrusted; and though no jealousy is entertained of those who have enrolled themselves for the very laudable purpose of preserving the peace and supporting the administration of justice in this City and its neighbourhood, yet for the sake of example, and the manifestation of those good intentions which it is presumed all who have entered into this Association possess, it is highly incumbent on the Magistrate, and indeed indispensable in point of law, to require that every person who receives the arms from Government should take the oath of allegiance to his Majesty, at the time of their delivery, as a publick pledge that they shall be employed only in defence of his Majesty's lawful title to his Crown, and in support of the peace, laws, and constitution of the country.

It is proper to notice that there is nothing particular in this requisition, the oath having been taken by all the associated bodies of the same kind.

Plate 14: Proposition that volunteer corps take an oath of allegiance. *Bath Chronicle* (30th August 1798).¹²³

‘A Very Fine Military Appearance’

The Bath volunteer's uniform went through several permutations; the first company decided to alter the committee's original choice; this choice proved unacceptable, ‘not being allowed by the King to any but Royal Regiments’; before being, as the *Bath Herald* explained, ‘unalterably determined by a considerable majority of the company’.¹²⁴ The final choice amply demonstrated their civic pride:

¹²² *Bath Herald* (8th September 1798), p. 3b.

¹²³ *Bath Chronicle* (30th August 1798), p. 3c.

¹²⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd May 1798), p. 2d; *Bath Chronicle* (3rd May 1798), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (5th May 1798), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (5th May 1798), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (12th May 1798), p. 3c.

'Their uniform is blue with red cuffs and collars, faced with white, white waistcoat and breeches, black cloth gaiters, helmet hats, with plates of the Bath Arms on their hats and breasts'.¹²⁵ When the newly uniformed Bath Armed Association made their first appearance in Queen Square, before parading 'in military procession to Walcot church', the *Bath Chronicle* confirmed that 'they made a very fine military appearance'. The report went on to praise the armed associations as whole, stating that

With pride we look to the Volunteers of this kingdom, for the safety of the country against its internal enemies, and external foes. They have a stake, an interest in defending the country, its laws, and constitution.¹²⁶

A month later when they attended another service at the Abbey Church, the *Bath Herald* described their uniform as 'a very handsome, well-adapted military dress'. It also commented on their 'good order, martial appearance, and mature discipline'. As with the *Bath Chronicle*, it also had praise for the whole volunteering movement: 'the name of a Volunteer must be dear to every lover of his country, and the establishment of such military associations, meet the general concurrence of all good subjects'.¹²⁷

While the Bath volunteers certainly looked the part, the city's newspapers also printed praise of their martial abilities. The *Bath Herald* reported that 'The Gentlemen who have enrolled their names in the Bath Volunteer Association, meet every morning and evening in small parties, to learn the use of arms—and, for the time, have made themselves very expert.'¹²⁸ It later reiterated its praise, focussing on the infantry corps who applied themselves with exemplary earnestness to their Exercises morning and evening, and are already very

¹²⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (12th July 1798), p. 3c.

¹²⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (12th July 1798), p. 3c.

¹²⁷ *Bath Herald* (4th August 1798), p. 3c.

¹²⁸ *Bath Herald* (12th May 1798), p. 3c.

expert.’¹²⁹ A few months later the volunteer cavalry held a field day on Claverton Down to mark the birthday of the Duke of York. The *Bath Herald* reported that

the fineness of the day attracted a great number of spectators, who were exceedingly gratified and surprised by the very expert manner in which they performed their various manoeuvres: they went through the Six Divisions of the Broad Sword Exercise with wonderful precision, and their commander, Capt. Wiltshire, gave the word in a manner that would have done credit to a veteran.¹³⁰

In September 1799 the *Bath Herald* described the city’s celebrations of the recent ‘surrender of the Dutch fleet’ in the Vlieter Incident, during which ‘the Bath Volunteers were called out, and mustering numerously, were shortly under arms and fired [...] three as perfect vollies as were ever heard’.¹³¹ The *Bath Chronicle* echoed the praise: ‘The volunteers paraded in the Market-place, and three better, closer, or more exact vollies, could not be fired.’¹³²

A month later the newspaper reported Earl Camden’s review of the Bath Armed Association that took place in Sydney Gardens. According to the report, the former Member of Parliament for the city expressed his satisfaction ‘at the accuracy with which this body performed a variety of military evolutions, and the steadiness with which they fired’. The report continued to say that ‘When the review was concluded, the corps marched to the Crescent, Queen-square, and the Market-place, at each of which they discharged a remarkable good volley’.¹³³ The newspaper repeated these sentiments in a report of a review of the corps by a professional soldier that happened two years later:

The Volunteers of this city, both infantry and cavalry, were reviewed by General Horneck, the former on Thursday, the latter on Friday. The General declared “their appearance and performance were extraordinary, perfectly correct, and truly military; and that he should report them with

¹²⁹ *Bath Herald* (26th May 1798), p. 3c.

¹³⁰ *Bath Herald* (18th August 1798), p. 3b.

¹³¹ *Bath Herald* (7th September 1799), p. 3d.

¹³² *Bath Chronicle* (12th September 1799), p. 3c.

¹³³ *Bath Chronicle* (24th October 1799), p. 3b.

every mark of approbation to the commander in chief of the district.” The officers of the infantry entertained the General and his suite, with an elegant dinner at Sydney-Hotel, after the review.¹³⁴

Bath newspapers also heaped similar praise on other volunteer corps in the city’s vicinity. In June 1795 the *Bath Herald* reported Colonel Mackenzie’s review of volunteers from Exmouth, Exeter, Kenton, Newton, Sidmouth, Callumpton and Honiton, held on the king’s birthday. It declared that ‘the manner in which they went through their several evolutions, manoeuvres, and firings, was such as would do them honor as a regiment of Veterans’.¹³⁵

In September 1795, the *Bath Chronicle*’s report on the consecration of the colours of the Bridgwater Volunteers noted that the reviewing officer, Earl Poulett, ‘expressed his satisfaction at their soldier-like appearance’, and that during his speech the volunteers commanding officer, Major Allen, stated that the corps ‘would be ready to sacrifice their lives in support of the King and Constitution; that they were sensible of the importance of the charge with which they were entrusted’.¹³⁶ The *Bath Chronicle*’s report of a parade by the Chippenham troop of the Wiltshire Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry stated that they went ‘through a variety of manoeuvres with great precision, considering the short time of instruction’, and that ‘they were entertained by their Captain with a dinner at the Angel Inn; after which many loyal and constitutional toasts were drank, and the evening concluded with the greatest harmony and festivity’.¹³⁷ Four years later the ten troops of the Wiltshire Yeomanry Cavalry, which had never gathered together before, paraded on Beckhampton Down, to be reviewed by their colonel, Lord Bruce, and receive their colours from Lady Bruce. The *Bath Chronicle*’s

¹³⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (8th October 1801), p. 3b.

¹³⁵ *Bath Herald* (19th June 1795), p. 3c.

¹³⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (10th September 1795), p. 3c.

¹³⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (6th November 1794), p. 3c.

report on this event stated that 'The desire of viewing the improved military movements of so fine a body of cavalry, added, solely to the spirit of patriotism, to the strength of the country at this important crisis, attracted a great concourse of spectators.'¹³⁸

Other reviews of troops garnered similar praise from the Bath press. In May 1797 the *Bath Chronicle* described the Bristol Volunteer Cavalry, while being reviewed by Lieutenant-General Rooke, as going 'through the various military evolutions with great adroitness and precision'.¹³⁹ The following month Rooke reviewed the city's volunteer infantry; the *Bath Herald* reported that he was 'highly gratified by their martial appearance'.¹⁴⁰ The following year Rooke again reviewed the Bristol Volunteer Infantry; according to the *Bath Herald*, he 'expressed the great satisfaction he felt on the occasion, and paid the corps high commendation for the soldier-like manner in which they performed their different evolutions'.¹⁴¹ The Somerset Provisional Cavalry received similar plaudits while they were also quartered in the city. The *Bath Chronicle* declared that 'The polite behaviour of the officers, the good deportment of the privates, and the strict attention to military discipline, merit universal approbation'.¹⁴²

The Bath press also emphasised the military prowess of the militia regiments. The *Bath Chronicle* reported on Major-General Rooke's review of the Northamptonshire regiment, then billeted in the city, which apparently garnered the approval of expert observers:

The business of the day had brought together a considerable concourse of spectators, amongst whom were many military characters of some eminence – the whole were loud in their commendations of the correct

¹³⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (14th June 1798), p. 3c.

¹³⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (25th May 1797), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁰ *Bath Herald* (17th June 1797), p. 3e.

¹⁴¹ *Bath Herald* (26th May 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁴² *Bath Chronicle* (25th October 1798), p. 3c.

manoeuvring, exact timing, and great steadiness of the regiment under arms.¹⁴³

During the previous month Rooke had similar praise for the Taunton Volunteers Captain Warren's troop of yeoman cavalry. According to the *Bath Chronicle*, after witnessing their weekly exercises 'he spoke in terms of high commendation'.¹⁴⁴

The local supplementary militia regiments also received similar approbation. The *Bath Chronicle* praised the dedication of the second division of the Eastern Regiment of Somerset Supplementary Militia, who were assembled in Bath, declaring that they 'make a very respectable military appearance; they proceed rapidly in learning their exercise, being in the field seven or eight hours every day'. The report also allayed any fears that military training would result in disorderly behaviour by the militiamen, asserting that the 'conduct of the whole division is truly exemplary'.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, the *Bath Herald* said of the third division, when they assembled at Bath, that they 'already begin to have a good soldier-like appearance, and are very orderly'. During their training they 'conducted themselves much to the satisfaction of their Officers and are very expert in their exercises'.¹⁴⁶

The *Bath Chronicle*, in particular, also expressed a degree of local pride when reporting on the good behaviour of the militiamen of Somerset and neighbouring counties while on duty around the country. Following their departure from Yarmouth, the newspaper noted that both 'officers and men behaved with the greatest order, during their stay' and that 'the inhabitants in general regretted their leaving the place'.¹⁴⁷ Similarly the Wiltshire Supplementary Militia gained

¹⁴³ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd September 1795), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (20th August 1795), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (6th April 1797), p. 3c.

¹⁴⁶ *Bath Herald* (1st April 1797), p. 3d.

¹⁴⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (1st June 1797), p. 3b.

‘the esteem of the inhabitants’ of Plymouth by virtue of their ‘good conduct’ while stationed there under the command of the Duke of Somerset.¹⁴⁸ The newspaper also praised the first division of the Dorsetshire militia on occasion of their arrival in Sherborne following service in Ireland ‘where their good conduct gained them such distinguished credit’.¹⁴⁹ The Somerset Fencible Infantry also served in Ireland. On their arrival at Coleraine it declared, ‘For the honour of Somersetshire, we have authority to say, that the men behave remarkably well, that they are firmly attached to their King and Country, and are in good health and spirits’.¹⁵⁰

While the Bath press went to great lengths to portray the defensive forces as well-disciplined and soldier-like, they also occasionally printed stories that contrasted starkly with this image. Indeed, their repeated assurances may have been an attempt to downplay incidences such as the murder of Francis Rogers in Bath by ‘one or more’ men ‘belonging to the Ninth Regiment of Dragoons’ that was reported in the *Bath Herald*. Although the report did note that the ‘Commanding Officer assured the Jury that he would use every means to discover the perpetrators [...] in order that they may be delivered up to justice’.¹⁵¹ The same newspaper also reported on ‘the most wanton savage ferocity’ of recently arrived recruits from Ireland, who attacked a watchman and ‘a poor labourer’. In both cases the culprits were disciplined.¹⁵²

Following a report on the impending court martial of the Spithead mutineers in 1797, the *Bath Chronicle* reported,

We are sorry to observe that the demon of discord has shewn his cloven

¹⁴⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (19th December 1799), p. 3a.

¹⁴⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (31st October 1799), p. 3b.

¹⁵⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (27th July 1797), p. 3c.

¹⁵¹ *Bath Herald* (23rd May 1795), p. 3b.

¹⁵² *Bath Herald* (10th October 1795), p. 3d.

foot in the Swindon Troop of Volunteer Yeomanry Cavalry, where very lately – King, a corporal, – Buy, a private, and three others, quitted the field, and refused to return on the order of the Commanding Officer. They a few days afterwards sent in their clothes, accoutrements, &c. The spirit of loyalty, however, prevailed so strongly among the residue (notwithstanding K. and B. had endeavoured to bring others over to their party) that the Troop, after dining with the Captain, A. Goddard, esq; were drawn and formed a circle, and marched round with arms reversed during the time their cloaths, &c. were hung on a high gallows and there burnt.¹⁵³

The *Bath Chronicle* also reported on the burning in effigy of a member of the Gloucestershire volunteer cavalry who resigned following the agreement of the rest of the troop ‘to follow their Captain, P. Sheppard, esq; wherever duty, danger, or glory, may call him’.¹⁵⁴ The *Bath Herald* later set the record straight, stating that the ‘disgraceful ceremony took place in a very different part of the county’, and that of Sheppard’s troop,

The only one who could not agree to follow him, was a professional Gentleman of extensive practice; the interest of his Client not permitting his absence. He, however, provided an able Substitute, gave him a horse, well accoutred, and behaved in a manner highly creditable to himself, and to the satisfaction and honour of the corps.¹⁵⁵

As Gee notes the armed associations applied the heaviest sanctions to those who resigned from the corps, despite the fact that they were at essence voluntary organisations. He explains that the punishments normally took the form of some manner of public degradation, as in the above two cases, or the levying of a large fine. Although the latter sanction was not legally enforceable until 1803.¹⁵⁶ This shortcoming was amply demonstrated in a notice that the officers of the Devizes Loyal Volunteers placed in the *Bath Chronicle*, according to which, ‘James Howell, of Potterne, taylor’ and ‘John Chivers, of Devizes, cabinet-maker’ had

¹⁵³ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd June 1797), p. 3b.

¹⁵⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (29th March 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁵⁵ *Bath Herald* (21st April 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁵⁶ Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 223.

entered and enrolled as Privates in this Corps, having severally withdrawn themselves, and refused to attend according to the rules, have each forfeited the sum of Five Guineas; which penalty they have severally refused to pay, within three days after demand hath been thereof respectively made by one of the Serjeants;- their names are therefore published (agreeably to the rules) as DESERTERS.¹⁵⁷

Another sanction available to the volunteer corps was dismissal, which, as Gee points out, carried further penalties, including the immediate loss of exemption from serving in the militia, had the dismissed volunteer been drawn while serving as a member of the corps.¹⁵⁸ The included the following clarification for those who sought exemption from the ballot:

A person merely *enrolling* in a Volunteer corps *is not* exempted being ballotted for as a Militia-man. Every person is liable to be ballotted who does not produce a certificate from the commanding officer, that he has punctually attended the exercise of the corps.¹⁵⁹

The loss of exemption from service in the militia would have made for ironic justice if it had applied in the case of a private in the Sherborne Loyal Volunteer Association who was drummed out of the corps 'for disobeying the orders of and otherwise insulting his Commander, whilst under arms'.¹⁶⁰ If he were to have done so while serving in the militia he would have been subject to the full extent of military discipline. While not facing the threat of military discipline, volunteers were subject to civil laws. In another incident that happened in Sherborne: when 'Thomas Isles, a private in the Somerset Provisional Cavalry, was committed to Dorchester-castle, charged with attempting to commit a rape on a married woman'.¹⁶¹

The threat of military justice did not always prevent ill-discipline in militia

¹⁵⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (25th July 1799), p. 3d.

¹⁵⁸ Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, pp. 222-4.

¹⁵⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (4th July 1799), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (28th March 1799), p. 3c.

¹⁶¹ *Bath Chronicle* (11th July 1799), p. 3c.

corps, as was the case in 1793 when, following the arrest of a private of the Royal Cornwall Militia for assault, his fellow privates attempted to forcibly release him from Exeter prison. They were only prevented from doing so by arrival of the officers and sergeant-major.¹⁶² In August 1799 when about four-hundred and fifty militiamen from Dorset and Lancashire arrived in Bath having recently returned from voluntary service in Ireland. The *Bath Chronicle* reported that they had travelled from Pill ‘in coaches, chaises, and other carriages, that had been impressed to convey them expeditiously’, but no such conveyances had been procured in Bath, because no forewarning had been received. While waiting for transport ‘the soldiers, being all in a state of intoxication, became quite ungovernable, paying little attention to the officers who accompanied them’, not only prompting the local authorities to requisition ‘Gentlemen’s carriages travelling the road, as well as all other carriages, without discrimination’, but also to call out the Bath volunteer corps, ‘who assembled with the greatest alacrity, and by their appearance prevented any disagreeable consequences from arising’.¹⁶³ Of the same incident, the *Bath Herald* reported that the volunteer corps ‘mustered promptly and numerously, and their appearance was so respectable, that very little disturbance afterwards ensued’.¹⁶⁴ To emphasise that this had been an exception circumstance, the *Bath Chronicle* article went on to note that when volunteers of the Cardigan militia arrived in a similar manner, ‘the requisite number of carriages were waiting their arrival in the Market-place, by which they were forwarded without any delay’, as ‘previous notice having been given’ of their arrival.¹⁶⁵ Similarly the *Bath Herald* declared that ‘Several large

¹⁶² *Bath Herald* (21st September 1793), p. 3d.

¹⁶³ *Bath Chronicle* (15th August 1799), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁴ *Bath Herald* (17th August 1799), p. 3d.

¹⁶⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (15th August 1799), p. 3c.

parties have since been taken from the city in the best order.'¹⁶⁶

While violence was averted in Bath on this occasion, the same could not be said about an earlier incident in July 1795. The *Bath Chronicle* reported that Colonel William Handcock's Regiment of Fencible Infantry arrived at Pill from Ireland, and on receiving orders to embark for Jersey, they refused to obey orders, becoming 'very riotous'. General Rooke having failed to appease them, dragoons and militia arrived to quell the fencibles, resulting in several casualties, including the dragoons' commander, and the arrest of eighteen men.¹⁶⁷ Such reports of military ill-discipline were rare in the Bath press, with most disputes being settled without violence, as was the case when the Wiltshire militia left their encampment at Brighton. According to the *Bath Chronicle*, 'The regiment was much disgusted at being obliged to quit their ground at Brighton, and the officers petitioned the Duke of York not to be removed, but in vain, as the Duke of Richmond, who commands the district, had thought it necessary.' The article laid the blame for the relocation to Danbury in Essex on a 'misunderstanding betwixt the D. of Richmond, and Earl Carnarvon, colonel of the Wilts regiment'.¹⁶⁸

Duelling was explicitly forbidden under the Articles of War; yet military officers were disproportionately more likely to settle disputes with pistols, which they had easy access to. McCormack suggests that officers in the militia would have felt a greater pressure than regulars to seek this means of redress, if only to prove their 'soldierly credentials'.¹⁶⁹ The Bath press reported on two such engagements involving men of the local militia. The first contest was between Lieutenant Butt of the North-Gloucester Militia and a civilian 'T. Tolboys, esq; of

¹⁶⁶ *Bath Herald* (17th August 1799), p. 3d.

¹⁶⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd July 1795), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (25th June 1795), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁹ McCormack. *Embodying the Militia*, pp. 116-7.

Doughton, in consequence of some personal dispute in company the previous evening'. According to the *Bath Chronicle*, 'The parties exchanged one shot each without experiencing any ill effect; the seconds then interfered, and the matter was amicably terminated.¹⁷⁰ The second duel, between two men of the East-Somerset militia while quartered at Fareham, also ended without bloodshed. Samuel Bridge and Samuel Kelson discharged 'a case of pistols without effect'.¹⁷¹ The *Bath Herald* reported that 'through the mediation of the seconds', Sir Edward Harington and Lieutenant Edgell, 'the quarrel was adjusted & the parties shook hands'.¹⁷² Neither newspaper was indelicate enough to comment on the lack of military prowess displayed by the duellers.

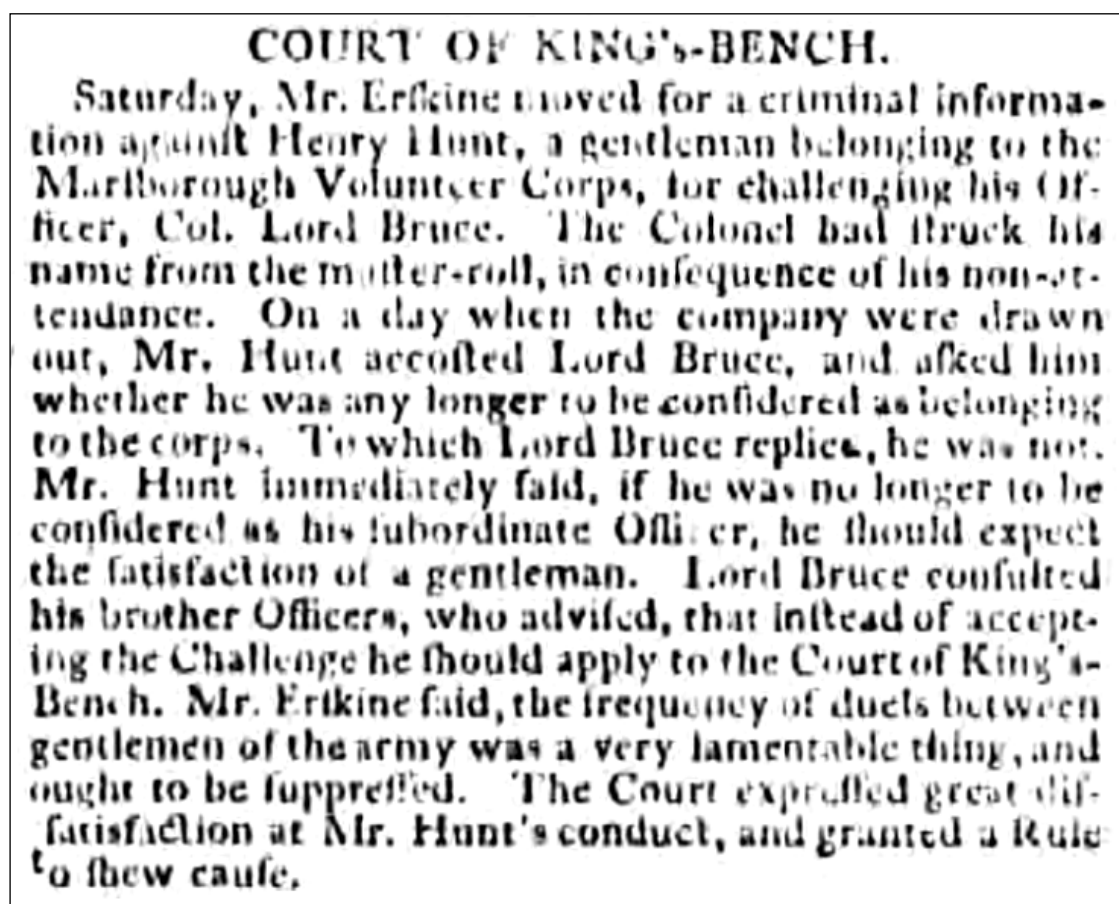


Plate 15: 'Court of the King's-Bench'. *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1799) ¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (4th January 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁷¹ *Bath Chronicle* (19th September 1799), p. 3c.

¹⁷² *Bath Herald* (21st September 1799), p. 3e.

¹⁷³ *Bath Chronicle* (31st January 1799), p. 4b.

Gee maintains that volunteers only rarely resorted to duels and that disputes between them were usually unconnected with their service.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, reports of duels between volunteers were absent from the Bath newspapers. Nevertheless, one dispute between volunteers nearly ended with pistols drawn. While the initial incident was not reported in the city's press, the resulting trial was. As part of their regular reporting of trials at the Court of King's Bench the *Bath Chronicle* and the *Bath Herald* detailed how Lord Bruce avoided a challenge from Henry (later 'Orator') Hunt, following a dispute ostensibly regarding Hunt's membership of the Marlborough Volunteer Corps.¹⁷⁵ Hunt gave his account of his dispute with Lord Bruce in the first volume of his memoirs. He had already resigned from the Everly (now Everleigh) troop, because his fellow volunteers voted against offering their services in defence of the whole military district, despite his urging.¹⁷⁶ He quickly joined the Marlborough yeomanry at the request of Lord Bruce, with whom he was on 'particularly good terms'.¹⁷⁷ This changed dramatically following a day Hunt had spent pheasant shooting in the company of his fellow volunteer cavalryman, Thomas Hancock, on land owned by Lord Bruce. Both men received letters of dismissal from the troop for poor attendance sent by Lord Bruce. In his memories, Hunt claimed that he 'had never been once *fin*ed, or received the slightest reprimand', which surely would have been the case if Hunt been guilty of non-attendance. When Hunt and Hancock attended the troop's next field day, Hunt confronted Lord Bruce to demand a reason for the dismissal. Having not received a response to his liking, Hunt declared that since Bruce was

¹⁷⁴ Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 199.

¹⁷⁵ See Plate 15; *Bath Herald* (2nd February 1799), p. 4de.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

¹⁷⁷ Hunt, *Memoirs of Henry Hunt*, p. 349 & 410.

no longer his superior officer, he required 'that satisfaction which is due from one gentleman to another'.¹⁷⁸ Despite being repeatedly offered the chance to apologise to Lord Bruce and end the affair, Hunt declined. Consequently in November 1800 the court sentenced Hunt to six weeks imprisonment, and to pay a fine of one-hundred pounds along with a security of one-thousand pounds and to secure two other sureties of five-hundred each for his keeping the peace for three years.¹⁷⁹ The financial burdens of the penalty resulted in Hunt selling his flock of sheep while incarcerated. In the advertisement of the sale that he placed in the *Bath Chronicle*, he not only explained his predicament, but also expressed

his gratitude to those Gentlemen Volunteers in the Yeoman Cavalry, whom he has not the pleasure of being personally acquainted with, for their good wishes and flattering approbation of his Conduct as a Soldier, whilst he was a Volunteer therein.¹⁸⁰

Another dispute, between an officer in the volunteer corps and a local clergyman, played out in a series of acrimonious letters printed in the Bath newspapers during May and June 1798.¹⁸¹ The dispute began when Lieutenant Deverell of the Somerset Light Troop accosted Reverend William Shaw of Chelvey during the troop's exercises on Broadfield Down, accusing the clergyman of saying that he had contacted the Duke of Portland to offer the services of the troop outside county, an accusation that Deverell firmly denied. Shaw responded with a public attack on Deverell's character. Deverell received the support of his fellow officers, who accused Shaw of sewing discontent within the troop. Following a meeting of 'the Field-Officers and Commanders of Troops

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 417-26.

¹⁷⁹ *The Morning Chronicle* (27th November 1800), p. 4a; *The Morning Post and Gazetteer* (27th November 1800), p. 2b; *Star* (29th November 1800), p. 3d; *The St. James's Chronicle: or, British Evening-Post* (27th – 30th December 1800), p. 2ab.

¹⁸⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (11th December 1800), p. 1b.

¹⁸¹ *Bath Chronicle* (10th May 1798), p. 3e; *Bath Chronicle* (17th May 1798), p. 2d; *Bath Chronicle* (24th May 1798), p. 1b; *Bath Chronicle* (28th June 1798), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (26th May 1798), p. 1a; *Bath Herald* (23rd June 1798), p. 3b.

of the Eastern Regiment' at Crewkerne, another letter appeared in the *Bath Chronicle*, addressed to Earl Poulett, Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, and signed by four senior officers, in which they again defended the character of Lieutenant Deverell. Having involved such an influential figure as the Lord-Lieutenant in such a public way it appears that the squabble had ran its course. The honour and the unity of the cavalry corps had been preserved by the public vilification of a man of the cloth.

Notwithstanding these occasional disputes, the county militias and volunteer regiments became the focus of sociability. The volunteer associations in particular projected an image of congeniality. As Gee points out, 'the public activity of volunteer corps combined military exercise with fraternal and convivial aspects that were characteristic of civilian clubs and societies'.¹⁸² The *Bath Chronicle* carried a report of the Bath volunteers' public display of sociability and loyalism during a public tea at a pleasure garden:

Monday last between fifty and sixty of the Bath Loyal Volunteers, principally of the original second company, commanded by W. H. Winstone, esq; wishing to compliment Mr. Gale for his having obligingly offered them the use of Sydney-garden for their place of parade, met there, together with several of their friends, when an excellent dinner was provided for them; the utmost good-humour and harmony prevailed throughout the whole company;- a great many loyal and constitutional toasts were drank, and several convivial songs were sung on the occasion.¹⁸³

The article went on to describe how 'the ingenious Mr. Rebecqui, proprietor of the inimitable Fantoccini' honoured the Bath volunteers by performing his puppet show while dressed in their uniform, much to the delight of those present.¹⁸⁴ The Bath press carried numerous other examples of such social occasions attended

¹⁸² Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement*, p. 190.

¹⁸³ *Bath Chronicle* (16th August 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁸⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (16th August 1798), p. 3c.

by both the officers and the privates of local volunteer forces, cutting cross divisions of social class.

Bath newspapers carried reports which demonstrated the volunteers' connection not only to one another but also to the church and state, as well as local notables. In October 1798 'the Volunteer military of the town of Frome assembled, and swore allegiance to the Sovereign.' Following a service at the church, 'The respective corps dined with their officers, and gentlemen of the neighbourhood; and the day was spent in the most harmonious, loyal, and convivial manner'.¹⁸⁵ On other occasions local volunteers simply gathered to socialise, as when the volunteer association of Rode and Woolverton met for 'an elegant dinner [...] at Mr. Thomas's, the Cross-Keys inn, *Road* [now Rode]' at which 'Many loyal and constitutional toasts were given, and the utmost harmony prevailed'.¹⁸⁶ Often these entertainments were arranged by the officers for their men, as when Thomas Champneys entertained the town's yeoman cavalry at the George Inn in Frome, accompanied by more than fifty 'of the most respectable Inhabitants' of the town and neighbourhood. The *Bath Herald* reported that 'No less than Sixteen Loyal and Constitutional *Bumper* Toasts were given from the Chair', to the king, to the prosperity of the town, to peace, to the Somerset Militia, to the justices, to Lord Bath, and, displaying soldiers' humour, 'May the Promoters of all future Wars ever be placed foremost in The Ranks'.¹⁸⁷

James Montagu, commander of a troop of Wiltshire yeoman cavalry provided for his men a dinner at the Angel Inn, Chippenham following a parade. The *Bath Chronicle* declared that following their meal 'many loyal and

¹⁸⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (18th October 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (20th October 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁸⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (1st November 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁸⁷ *Bath Herald* (8th July 1797), p. 3e.

constitutional toasts were drank, and the evening concluded with the greatest harmony and festivity'.¹⁸⁸ Similarly in Wellington Captain Sanford 'prepared a handsome entertainment' for his troop of yeomanry cavalry at his house following their parade to mark the king's birthday, while the town's volunteer infantry 'under Capt. Jones, also dined together' to mark the occasion.¹⁸⁹ Following their review on the anniversary of the king's coronation, during which Benjamin Hobhouse gave the command, the volunteers of Bradford-on-Avon 'adjourned to the Swan inn [...] where an elegant and plentiful entertainment [...] was provided at the expence of the officers', after which 'humorous and excellent glees were sung' by their band. The *Bath Herald* declared that 'the evening was dedicated to loyalty and conviviality, perfect harmony and good order'.¹⁹⁰

The conviviality of volunteer regiments also extended to senior military officers and other troops, as was the case when the officers and privates of the Bristol Volunteer Cavalry invited Lieutenant-General Rooke and the officers of the Sussex Fencibles, then stationed in the city, to a dinner at the Bush Tavern following Rooke's review of the volunteers on Durdham Down.¹⁹¹ The Wiltshire yeomanry cavalry appear to have developed a strong bond with their colonel, Lord Bruce, with one notable exception as already mentioned. In June 1797 following his review of the Salisbury, Warminster, Swindon and Melksham troops near Yarnborough Castle, he invited them all to 'a cold collation of fowls, ham, &c. plentifully spread in a tent erected in the ring of the Castle', while 'the Ladies Bruce, and some other Ladies of fashion, partook of the entertainment in their carriages, and highly commended the flavour of the ale, handed to them in brown

¹⁸⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (6th November 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁸⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (14th June 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁹⁰ *Bath Herald* (29th September 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁹¹ *Bath Chronicle* (25th May 1797), p. 3c.

jugs by Lord Bruce, and thus, as his Lordship said, they drank it *genuine!*.¹⁹² The following year Lord Bruce reviewed all ten troops of the cavalry on 'Beckhampton-down, between Devizes and Marlborough', during which Lady Bruce presented the colours to the regiment followed by a cold collation for all six-hundred men.¹⁹³ According to the *Bath Chronicle* both reviews attracted a great number of spectators, with the 1798 report stating that, 'the desire of viewing the improved military movements of so fine a body of cavalry, added, solely to the spirit of patriotism, to the strength of the country at this important crisis, attracted a great concourse of spectators'. The general public also took part in social occasions organised for the volunteers, as when a local landowner William Ballard 'gave an elegant and sumptuous entertainment to the Westbury volunteer cavalry, at which many of the ladies of the town and its vicinity were present'.¹⁹⁴

The volunteer corps also played a role in civic ceremonies including the celebrations of royal anniversaries.¹⁹⁵ The Bath newspapers made particular mention of this public ceremonial role taken on by volunteers, as described in the *Bath Chronicle*:

The respectable Corps of Bath Volunteers, with their band of martial music, attended the Mayor and Corporation on Sunday last to the Abbey church – which was re-opened on that day, after having been repaired and the flooring new-laid.¹⁹⁶

Following the Royal Navy's victories at the Battle of the Nile and the Battle of Tory Island the king proclaimed a day of general thanksgiving to be held on 29th November. The *Bath Chronicle* published that day announced that 'the corps of Bath Volunteers will attend divine service at the Abbey church, and hear a

¹⁹² *Bath Chronicle* (29th June 1797), p. 3c.

¹⁹³ *Bath Chronicle* (14th June 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁹⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (15th August 1799), p. 3c.

¹⁹⁵ See Chapter 3.

¹⁹⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (2nd August 1798), p. 3c.

sermon preached by their chaplain, Dr. Phillott, the arch-deacon of this city'.¹⁹⁷

Following the event, the *Bath Herald* reported that 'The Bath Volunteers appeared in their uniforms, attended the Body Corporate to the Abbey Church; and by their numbers and respectability added to the solemnity of the day.'¹⁹⁸

The next year saw another British victory at the Battle of Callantsoog. In its report of the resultant celebrations in the city the *Bath Chronicle* took the opportunity to again praise the abilities of the Bath volunteers:

In consequence of the glorious intelligence of the capture of the Dutch fleet, which we had the inexpressible satisfaction to announce in our last; the bells were instantly set ringing, and continued, with little intermission, during the day. The volunteers paraded in the Market-place, and three better, closer, or more exact vollies, could not be fired.¹⁹⁹

On a more sombre note the *Bath Chronicle* reported the role played by the Fonthill volunteers in the funeral of William Beckford. They formed a guard of honour 'with reversed arms, drums muffled, fifes bound round with black crape, and playing the Dead March in Saul', before taking part in the funeral procession.²⁰⁰ Similarly when Captain Charles Cobbe of the Bath armed association passed away in 1798, he was honoured by his fellow volunteers, as the *Bath Chronicle* announced, 'out of respect to his memory, we hear that the four companies will attend his remains to Weston, where they are to be interred on Sunday morning next; a captain's guard is appointed to fire over his grave'.²⁰¹ Unfortunately, as the *Bath Herald* reported, heavy rain 'prevented the firing being so regular as it would otherwise have been'.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (29th November 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁹⁸ *Bath Herald* (1st December 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁹⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (12th September 1799), p. 3c.

²⁰⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (9th August 1798), p. 3d.

²⁰¹ *Bath Chronicle* (12th July 1798), p. 3c.

²⁰² *Bath Herald* (21st July 1798), p. 3c.

Conclusion

Judging by the local content of the Bath newspapers, the city's wealthier residents took very different views of serving in the county militia and joining the volunteer corps. The former had little to recommend it. Service in the militia would not only have meant that they would have to leave the city and their working lives behind, but they would also be subject to military discipline. It is therefore no surprise that they associated together for their mutual benefit in an insurance scheme that offered them a chance of hiring a substitute. By contrast, joining the Bath Armed Association had many benefits. They could stay in their home town, with little disruption to their lives. They would receive a smart uniform in which they could parade during civic occasions. They would enjoy the camaraderie of military service with, as it turned out, none of the danger. Above all they would receive the respect of their fellow citizens. As Cookson notes, volunteering 'was a genuinely popular movement' in which men of lower social rank could increase their standing.²⁰³ Colley goes further, arguing that by treating men from all classes 'indiscriminately as patriots, the authorities ran the risk of encouraging demands for political change in the future'.²⁰⁴

The Bath newspapers generally described the volunteers and militiamen in the best possible light, giving their readers a sense that they were well defended both locally and nationally by men of good character, allaying the fears that some harboured towards armed civilians. Nevertheless, this did not always prevent the press reporting on situations where these amateur soldiers behaved in an unseemly manner. On those occasions, prurient interest trumped the wish to portray the nation's defenders as gentlemen. On other occasions the

²⁰³ Cookson, *The British Armed Nation 1793-1815*, pp. 91-2.

²⁰⁴ Colley, *Britons*, p. 318.

camaraderie offered by being a brother in arms could undermine the social fabric. The loyalist association movement was never subject to negative reporting of this sort, even though the volunteers often had the same personnel in positions of authority and often used similar rhetorical flourishes in their notices to the loyalist associations.

Chapter 7: War Philanthropy

Introduction

Philanthropy had a crucial form of association in the eighteenth century.¹

Newspapers, in particular, lent themselves to this public display by printing notices containing lists of subscribers to charitable causes. It was not enough to be generous; one had to be seen to be generous. Furthermore, as Peter Borsay explains, a person could enhance their sense of social standing by having their name appear in the same list as those of a higher status.² This was particularly true in Bath where the names of the visiting *beau monde* can often be found in the lists, confirming a link between the city's population and the fashionable company. The provincial newspapers' inclusion of subscriptions lists along with news reports of the sums collected in their place of publication also promoted civic identity.³

Even though charitable associations were based in towns, they still received contributions from those living in rural settings, thereby creating links between town and country. Moreover, national philanthropic campaigns created links not only between London and the provinces, but also between provincial urban centres. This was particularly true of the voluntary donations made to the Treasury to ensure the continued prosecution of the conflict. While not strictly speaking philanthropic, the lists of donations that appeared in the Bath press provide further evidence of a collective action undertaken by individuals from a

¹ J. Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort' in J. Barry & C. Brooks (Eds.), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800* (Houndmills, 1994), pp. 84-112.

² Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance*, pp. 251-2.

³ J. Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort' in Barry & Brooks (Eds.), *The Middling Sort of People*, pp. 84-112.

wide variety of social strata, both male and female. As Davidoff and Hall explained, 'Strict divisions between men and women were least sustained in philanthropic societies', although they admit that men still dominated the founding and management of the most prestigious of these societies.⁴ Nevertheless, as Prochaska's seminal study demonstrates, women were ever-present in subscription lists in the late eighteenth century, although the proportion of their contributions varied considerably, as can be seen in this dissertation.⁵ Of the French Revolutionary wars, Colley goes as far as to argue that 'Far more than in any previous war, British women discovered in patriotic activism [...] an outlet for their energies and organisational capacities, and a *public* role of a kind.'⁶ This sense of collective action by men and women from a variety of social classes, and incorporating different parts of the kingdom was exemplified by the philanthropic ventures put in place to ameliorate the sufferings of those most affected by the war with France and the voluntary contributions to the public purse to fund the conflict.

This chapter will systematically analyse the various calls on the generosity of the readers of the Bath press. These included national campaigns such as for the relief of the widows and orphans of those who fell in battle, and the collection and provision of flannel waistcoats to the soldiers serving in Flanders, in which newspapers had a central role. It will show that Bath was a particularly generous place, when compared to other urban centres, a fact that the city's newspapers were all too happy to share. It will also look at local philanthropy such as the notices placed in the newspapers by, or on behalf of those individuals who were

⁴ Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 429-34.

⁵ Prochaska, 'Women in English Philanthropy, 1790-1830', pp. 426-45.

⁶ Colley, *Britons*, p. 260.

personally affected by war. Another local endeavour reveals the increasing role of women in philanthropic causes, not only as contributors, but also as organisers. This chapter will also reveal the largely forgotten role of John Palmer, then serving as the city's mayor, in the institution of a voluntary contribution to the depleting national purse.

The Relief of Widows and Orphans

Within weeks of the outbreak of war William Devaynes – a London banker, director of the East India Company, and Member of Parliament – chaired a meeting of 'near fifty gentlemen of known opulence and character' at the Crown and Anchor tavern in London to open 'a subscription for the purpose of relieving the wives and families of those men who may fall in defence of their country'.⁷ Those attending the meeting resolved to also give relief to servicemen injured during the war, 'should the Subscription be found adequate', and that their resolutions 'be signed by the Chairman and inserted in the public papers'. A notice duly appeared in several of the London newspapers, although it remained notably absent from the provincial press.⁸ This was a far cry away from the press saturation achieved by Reeves' loyalist association. The *Bath Journal* did, however, include a report of the meeting in its national news.⁹

On 5th March the committee of the Bath Association for Preserving Liberty, Property, and the Constitution of Great-Britain resolved to place notices in the Bath press to recommend the charitable subscription by reprinting an address sent to them by Devaynes' Committee of the Society for the Relief of the Widows

⁷ *General Evening Post* (19th - 21st February 1793), p. 1d.

⁸ *The True Briton* (20th February 1793), p. 1b; *Diary; or Woodfall's Register* (21st February 1793), p. 1d; *St. James's Chronicle or, British Evening-Post* (21st - 23rd February 1793), p. 1d.

⁹ *Bath Journal* (25th February 1793), p. 3e.

and Children of Seamen and Soldiers, who may die or be killed in his Majesty's service during the War. The committee of the Bath loyalist association also resolved to open subscription books at the city's banks, the New Assembly Rooms, and at William Meyler's library, having each already made a donation themselves.¹⁰ The proprietors of Bath newspapers appeared in later lists of subscribers: Richard Cruttwell subscribed two guineas, Meyler donated one guinea, and Hooper and Keene donated one guinea between them. The city's Corporation also donated fifty-two pounds and ten shillings.¹¹

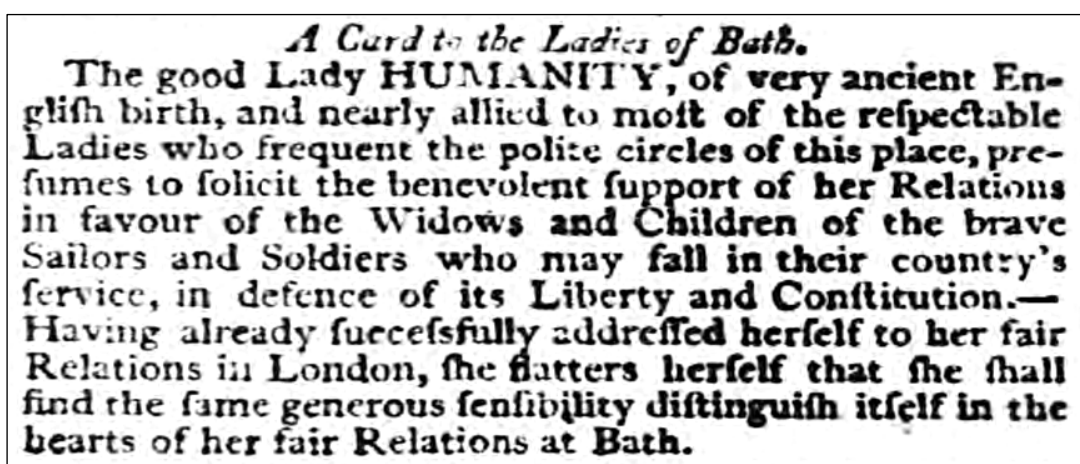


Plate 16: 'A Card to the Ladies of Bath'. *Bath Chronicle* (14th March 1793).¹²

An address under the title 'A Card to the Ladies of Bath' the *Bath Chronicle* and the *Bath Herald* made a particular appeal to 'the Ladies who frequent the polite circles of this place' to contribute to the cause.¹³ The *Bath Journal* similarly printed a poem entitled 'Invocation to Humanity' that was 'addressed to the worthy Proposers, of the laudable Subscription'; yet, the opening stanza clearly indicated its target audience:

Benign Protectress! Soft-ey'd Maid;
Whose bosom melts at poignant woe,

¹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (7th March 1793), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (9th March 1793), p. ; *Bath Journal* (11th March 1793), p. 1c; *Bath Register* (9th March 1793), p. 2c.

¹¹ *Bath Chronicle* (14th March 1793), p. 2b; *Bath Herald* (16th March 1793), p. 2d; *Bath Register* (16th March 1793), p. 1c.

¹² *Bath Chronicle* (14th March 1793), p. 3b; Also in *Bath Herald* (16th March 1793), p. 3d.

¹³ See Plate 16.

Attend, and lend thy generous aid
Where copious streams of sorrow flow.¹⁴

The requests met with a positive response, as the *Bath Herald* enthused, 'Ladies of Fashion, we are happy to see, have taken up this cause with a degree of zeal that does them great honour'.¹⁵ Possibly to highlight women's generosity to the cause, the next notices included a separate list of 'Ladies' Subscriptions'.¹⁶ Tellingly the later lists of additional subscribers showed women – both residents and visitors – in the majority, listed with their male counterparts.¹⁷ The total subscribed in Bath was £437 16s 6d.¹⁸ A group of women decided to set up their own 'Ladies' Subscription', for which they placed a single notice in the *Bath Register*, which listed five subscriptions totalling ten pounds and fifteen shillings.¹⁹

Judging by the lack of notices from neighbouring towns and villages in the provincial press, the cause of providing relief for the widows and children of fallen servicemen did not capture the public imagination to any great extent in 1793. The *Bath Herald* reported the opening of a subscription at Wells, for which a notice later appeared in that newspaper and the *Bath Chronicle*, placed by the city's loyalist association.²⁰ While not on the same scale as in Bath, women were well represented in the list of subscribers. The *Bath Herald* also reported on a subscription in Trowbridge and the *Bath Journal* and the *Bath Register* briefly

¹⁴ *Bath Journal* (25th March 1793), p. 2e.

¹⁵ *Bath Herald* (16th March 1793), p. 3c.

¹⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (21st March 1793), p. 2c; *Bath Herald* (16th March 1793), p. 2d; *Bath Journal* (18th March 1793), p. 1d; *Bath Register* (23rd March 1793), p. 1c.

¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (28th March 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (4th April 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (11th April 1793), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (30th March 1793), p. 2d; *Bath Herald* (25th May 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (1st April 1793), p. 1b; *Bath Journal* (27th May 1793), p. 1e.

¹⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (30th May 1793), p. 2e.

¹⁹ *Bath Register* (22nd June 1793), p. 3b.

²⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (18th April 1793), p. 4c; *Bath Herald* (16th March 1793), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (13th April 1793), p. 3b.

mentioned one in Devizes.²¹

Following Lord Howe's naval victory on the Glorious First of June, subscription books were once more opened in Bath. The *Bath Chronicle* announced that

In Gratitude to the Brave Seamen and Soldiers who have fallen in the late Glorious Action, a Subscription is opened for the relief of the Widows and Children of the Warrant and Petty Officers, Seamen, and Soldiers who fell gloriously in the Service of their King and Country.²²

The notice contained no suggestion that the city's loyalist association nor that the Bath Association for the Relief of Widows and Families of such Seamen and Soldiers had any role in the subscription. Neither did the notice in next week's issue that listed thirteen subscriptions already entered at Bull and Hensley's Library, eight of which were pledged by women.²³ Meyler's and Barratt's libraries also collected subscriptions listed in a series of notices printed in the *Bath Herald*. Again, women, both residents and visitors, were well represented in these lists.²⁴ This contrasts starkly with the subscriptions made at the male preserve that was Lloyd's Coffee House in London. On 11th June the 'Subscribers and Frequenters' of the establishment opened subscription book, raising one-thousand guineas in just two hours.²⁵ Despite the promotion of the cause the Bath press contained only one report of a collection in the local area. The *Bath Chronicle* reported that 'The respectable tradesmen and other inhabitants of Wiveliscombe [near Taunton] have generously subscribed near 30l.'²⁶

The subscriptions opened following Howe's triumph set a precedent for

²¹ *Bath Journal* (6th May 1793), p. 4e; *Bath Herald* (13th April 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Register* (11th May 1793), p. 3c.

²² *Bath Chronicle* (19th June 1794), p. 3d.

²³ *Bath Chronicle* (26th June 1794), p. 3e.

²⁴ *Bath Herald* (28th June 1794), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (28th June 1794), p.3b; *Bath Herald* (5th July 1794), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (12th July 1794), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (19th July 1794), p. 2e.

²⁵ *The Times* (12th June 1794), p. 2a; *Oracle, and Public Advertiser* (13th June 1794), p. 2a.

²⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (17th July 1794), p. 3d.

remainder of the war; after each major victory those who had lost husbands and fathers in the action became the focus of public sympathy. Following Admiral Duncan's defeat of the Batavian Republic's naval forces at the Battle of Camperdown on 11th October 1797, the Bath press once again carried announcements of the opening of a subscription book in the city.²⁷ The subsequent notice included a lengthy list of subscriptions made at the city's banks, libraries, and at Cruttwell's printing office, in which women were again well represented.²⁸

In another notice the city's magistrates expressed their gratitude to the 'Inhabitants for so generally attending to their recommendation in suppressing their zeal upon the late Glorious National Events' so as not to disturb 'the Comfort of the Invalid'. They also declared their approval of the subscription recommending 'the Inhabitants and Visitors to further such measure, as a much more lasting and respectable mode of testifying their gratitude and veneration, than could have been effected by the most brilliant spectacle'.²⁹ The *Bath Chronicle* clearly approved of the measure, stating that,

In this city, the well-timed request of the Magistrates had the good effect to prevent the confusion of a general illumination; and their recommendation of a subscription for the widows and orphans of those that were wounded, met with the universal concurrence of their fellow-citizens, as will be seen by the list of donations.³⁰

The *Bath Herald* was equally effusive in its praise, declaring that 'the contributions of the Affluent doubtless will be universal, nor will the Widow's Mite be rejected'. It also reported that 'Palmer's last Act as Mayor of this City has certainly been a most pleasing one – having summoned the Corporation to meet

²⁷ *Bath Herald* (21st October 1797), p. 3c.

²⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (26th October 1797), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (28th October 1797), p. 2de.

²⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (26th October 1797), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (21st October 1797), p. 3c.

³⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (26th October 1797), p. 3c.

on Monday next to vote a sum for the Widows and Children'.³¹ The newspaper's approbation continued in its next issue:

The zeal of the Inhabitants of this City would have been conspicuous as on former occasions, had not the well-timed recommendations of the Magistrates been attended to; and instead of expending money in dangerous glare, and creating disorder, a Subscription for the Relief of the Families of our hardy Tars was opened, and, as will be seen by the lists inserted in this paper, filled with unexampled avidity.³²

The *Bath Chronicle* applauded Palmer's promotion of 'a corporate, as well as individual subscription' – fifty and ten guineas respectively – proudly relating that it 'has been meritoriously followed by most of the other Chief Magistrates, as well as the inhabitants of most towns in the kingdom'.³³ The subscription also received the support of the city's two MPs, Lord John Thynne and Richard Arden (listed as 'Master of the Rolls'), who each subscribed twenty one pounds. As ever, the proprietors of the Bath newspapers demonstrated their generosity: Cruttwell subscribed one guinea and Meyler pledged a half guinea, as did Hooper and Keene. Other notable subscribers included those visiting the city for the season, such as the Archbishop of Dublin who donated ten guineas and the Earl of Plymouth who subscribed five guineas. The local landowner Walter Long matched the fifty guineas subscribed by the Bath Corporation. He had been the subject of Samuel Foote's satirical play *The Maid of Bath*, concerning his short engagement to the singer Elizabeth Linley, who was over forty years his junior and who later married Richard Brinsley Sheridan.³⁴ Long's two sisters, Ann and Catherine, also donated twenty-one pounds each. The Long sisters were joined by many other women on the subscription list, which included the Marchioness of

³¹ *Bath Herald* (21st October 1797), p. 3d.

³² *Bath Herald* (28th October 1797), p. 3d.

³³ *Bath Chronicle* (2nd November 1797), p. 3b.

³⁴ W. Chitty, *Historical Account of the Family of Long of Wiltshire* (London, 1889), pp. 37-45.

Waterford, who subscribed five guineas (as did her husband). In its report announcing the imminent closure of the subscription, the *Bath Herald* enthused that sum collected 'evinces the loyalty and liberality of the Inhabitants of Bath'.³⁵ It later reported that 'Nine Hundred and Fifty-Three Pounds, Twelve Shillings, and Five Pence' had been remitted to 'the Chairman of the Committee for managing the Subscription for the Widows and Children of the Seamen who so bravely fought, and so gloriously fell under Admiral Lord Duncan'. The report proclaimed that 'Never was a sum so cheerfully subscribed, nor more laudably bestowed'.³⁶

Again, the reporting of other local collection was somewhat scant. The *Bath Herald* reported that the privates of the Wiltshire militia, then stationed in Exeter, had agreed to each donate a day's pay to the cause, 'without the least interference or knowledge of their officers'. On hearing of the generosity of the common soldiery, the officers decided to follow their example.³⁷ The *Bath Chronicle* reported that the militiamen had collected £100, and also urged other towns to follow the example of the gentlemen of Frome who had opened a subscription book: 'May it be said without offence to other towns, *Go ye, and do likewise?*'³⁸

The Bath newspapers printed advertisements of other fundraising activities. The first of these was for a benefit ball held at the New Assembly Rooms, 'Under the Patronage of the Ladies'.³⁹ The *Bath Herald* reported that 'about 700 persons attended' the ball, following which the New Assembly Rooms inserted a notice in the *Bath Chronicle*, which listed the subscriptions collected

³⁵ *Bath Herald* (4th November 1797), p. 3d.

³⁶ *Bath Herald* (18th November 1797), p. 3d.

³⁷ *Bath Herald* (28th October 1797), p. 3e.

³⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (26th October 1797), p. 3c.

³⁹ *Bath Herald* (21st October 1797), p. 3d.

during the event and gave an account of the sum raised, amounting to nearly £185.⁴⁰ Another notice announced that half of the profits from Miss Taylor's Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Musick at the same venue would be donated to the cause.⁴¹ The advertisement for a subscription print by John Edwards and John Smart, costing two guineas, declared that half of the profits would be donated for the relief widows and orphans of those seamen, 'Who fell bravely fighting for their country'. The advertisement announced that subscriptions were received at various locations in London, Bristol, and by Richard Cruttwell and the Bath libraries.⁴² The *Bath Chronicle* praised Edwards and Smart as 'Artists of the first reputation, and as men who are universally esteemed for their philanthropy' and reported that the 'elder part of the Royal Family head the subscription'.⁴³ Whereas the advertisement for the print did not appear in the London newspapers, they did carry notices of another generous subscription at Lloyd's Coffee-House.⁴⁴

The next victory to spur the country into charitable action was the Battle of the Nile in August 1798. Nelson's defeat of the French fleet prompted unprecedented generosity to the bereaved families. Once the news had reached the city the denizens of Bath were again quick to open a subscription book. As the *Bath Herald* reported, the city's magistrates again 'cautioned the inhabitants against' an illumination, so as not to 'disturb the numerous invalids' and also 'in case of fire' when the city has 'very scanty supplies of water'; rather 'they prayed

⁴⁰ *Bath Herald* (28th October 1797), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (2nd November 1797), p. 1b.

⁴¹ *Bath Chronicle* (26th October 1797), p. 3b.

⁴² *Bath Chronicle* (2nd November 1797), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (28th October 1797), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (11th November 1797), p. 1b.

⁴³ *Bath Chronicle* (16th November 1797), p. 3d.

⁴⁴ *Evening Mail* (16th - 18th October 1797), p. 1a; *Star* (18th October 1797), p. 1b; *The Times* (18th October 1797), p. 2a; *Morning Post and Gazetteer* (19th October 1797), p. 1a; *Oracle and Public Advertiser* (19th October 1797), p. 1b.

them to turn the torrent of their [...] zeal to a subscription for the Widows and Orphans'.⁴⁵ The same issue included a notice with a substantial list of those who had already subscribed at the Guildhall, the Pump Room, and the city's libraries, including Meyler's.⁴⁶

The notice that appeared in the next issue of the *Bath Chronicle* included a much expanded list of subscribers. While numerous, the individual amounts subscribed were less generous than during the previous subscription. The list includes no donation from the city's Corporation, although individual members did contribute, including the mayor, Charles Phillott, who subscribed two guineas. The city's newspaper proprietors again appeared in the list; Richard Cruttwell subscribed a guinea, while Hooper and Keene donated half that amount, as did William Meyler. Women subscribers were again very well represented, with Lady Bandon making the most generous subscription of twenty-one pounds.⁴⁷ The notices placed in the subsequent issues of Bath newspapers listed further subscriptions amounting to a total of in excess of £660.⁴⁸

The *Bath Chronicle* also carried a notice placed by the subscribers at Lloyd's coffee-house, who had formed a committee and taken it upon themselves to promote subscriptions around the country. They resolved 'That the Chairman be desired to write Letters to the Mayor, or other Chief Magistrate, in the principle towns in Great-Britain and Ireland, requesting that subscriptions might be opened, and that the amount thereof be transmitted to this committee', and to

⁴⁵ *Bath Herald* (6th October 1798), p. 3b.

⁴⁶ *Bath Herald* (6th October 1798), p. 3e.

⁴⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (11th October 1798), p. 2d.

⁴⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (18th October 1798), p. 2e; *Bath Chronicle* (25th October 1798), p. 3e; *Bath Chronicle* (1st November 1798), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (13th October 1798), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (20th October 1798), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (3rd November 1798), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (1st December 1798), p. 3e.

publish notices in the newspapers.⁴⁹ The committee duly placed notices in many London and provincial newspapers.⁵⁰ Whether due to the actions of the committee at Lloyd's or because of a deepening feeling for the plight of the widows and orphans, the provincial press printed numerous announcements and notices of subscriptions opened in towns and cities.⁵¹ As the *Bath Chronicle* declared, 'Subscriptions are generally going on through the kingdom, for the widows and orphans'.⁵² The newspaper also reported on the opening of a subscription in Wallingford, where at the request of the mayor and 'following the example of the Mayor of this city' regarding the celebrations of the victory at Camperdown, 'the inhabitants, instead of an illumination, opened a subscription for the widows and Orphans of the brave tars who fell on the 1st of August'.⁵³

As well as notices about subscriptions, the Bath press printed advertisements for publications in aid of the widows and orphans, such as *A Sermon, preached at Fonthill-Gifford, Nov. 29th, 1798, on Occasion of Lord Nelson's Victory* by John Still, Rector of Fonthill-Gifford and Chicklade in Wiltshire. It was printed by Richard Cruttwell and sold by the city's booksellers as

⁴⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (11th October 1798), p. 3e.

⁵⁰ *True Briton* (6th October 1798), p. 1c; *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* (8th October 1798), p. 1d; *Star* (8th October 1798), p. 1c; *The Times* (8th October 1798), p. 1d; *Evening Mail* (10th - 12th October 1798), p. 1b; *Chester Chronicle* (12th October 1798), p. 3b; *Hull Advertiser, and Exchange Gazette* (13th October 1798), p. 2b; *Ipswich Journal* (13th October 1798), p. 1c; *Northampton Mercury* (13th October 1798), p. 3c; *Aberdeen Journal* (15th October 1798), p. 4c; *Sherborne Mercury* (15th October 1798), p. 1e; *Chester Courant* (16th October 1798), p. 3d; *Hereford Journal* (17th October 1798), p. 1c; *Leeds Intelligencer* (22nd October 1798), p. 4a.

⁵¹ *Ipswich Journal* (6th October 1798), p. 2e; *Oxford Journal* (6th October 1798), p. 3c; *Reading Mercury* (8th October 1798), 3c; *Leeds Intelligencer* (15th October 1798), p. 3b; *Aberdeen Journal* (15th October 1798), p. 3e; *Reading Mercury* (15th October 1798), p. 3d; *Reading Mercury* (15th October 1798), p. 1c; *Manchester Mercury* (16th October 1798), p. 4b; *Hereford Journal* (17th October 1798), p. 3e; *Chester Chronicle* (19th October 1798), p. 3c; *Aberdeen Journal* (22nd October 1798), p. 1d; *Sherborne Mercury* (22nd October 1798), p. 4c; *Ipswich Journal* (27th October 1798), p. 3b; *Stamford Mercury* (2nd November 1798), p. 2d; *Newcastle Courant* (10th November 1798), p. 1a; *Derby Mercury* (22nd November 1798), p. 4d.

⁵² *Bath Chronicle* (11th October 1798), p. 3c.

⁵³ *Bath Chronicle* (18th October 1798), p. 3c.

well as similar establishments in London, Salisbury and Shaftesbury.⁵⁴ Similarly another clergyman, Rev. W. L. Bowles of Dunhead, Rector of Dumbleton in Gloucestershire, contributed *An Ode on the Battle of the Nile* printed for Cruttwell and two London booksellers to make a contribution to 'The Fund now raising for the Widows & Children of those brave men who fell in the engagement'.⁵⁵

The last subscription list of the war was markedly different to those that followed the three naval victories. It was in aid of the wives and children of those soldiers killed and wounded during the unsuccessful Anglo-Russian invasion of the Batavian Republic in 1799. The *Bath Chronicle* included a notice which stated that the city's mayor had received a letter from the committee managing a fund 'for the Relief of the Widows, Wives, and Children, or British Soldiers killed, wounded, or deceased, in the late Expedition to Holland', requesting that he open a subscription in Bath. The Corporation agreed to subscribe fifty pounds and to unanimously request 'the generous consideration of every well-wisher to his Country' to follow their example. Apart from the corporate donation, the notice listed one other subscription of ten pounds by Thomas Taunton.⁵⁶ The notice in the following issue included one further subscription of three guineas from C. Worthington.⁵⁷ The number of subscriptions did increase in the last notice that was printed in the newspaper's Boxing Day edition, but to nowhere near the number that followed the naval victories. Of the five new subscriptions listed, four had been made by women, including three guineas from Lady Elizabeth Noel, and two guineas each from Mrs Smyth of Bennett Street and Mrs Bunney. The lack of popular support for the subscription could not be explained by a lack of

⁵⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (17th January 1799), p. 3d.

⁵⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (14th February 1799), p. 3d.

⁵⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (12th December 1799), p. 3b.

⁵⁷ *Bath Chronicle* (19th December 1799), p. 3d.

money or philanthropic spirit; the very next notice on the page for the relief of the city's poor listed many more subscriptions.⁵⁸ The notices placed over the next two weeks showed only one further subscriber.⁵⁹ According to a list of subscribers published by the London committee, the inhabitants of Bath contributed 83l. 16s. 6d., less than one tenth of the total subscribed following the Battle of Camperdown.⁶⁰

Flannel Waistcoats

On 16th February 1793 a resurgent France invaded the Dutch Republic, directly threatening British commercial interests. A reappraisal of British war aims resulted in the sending of a British force, commanded by the king's son, Prince Frederick, Duke of York, to defend the Dutch.⁶¹ The troops serving under the Duke of York in Flanders were poorly outfitted to deal with the cold weather while remaining on the Continent following the autumn campaign of 1793. By custom, the colonel arranged the clothing of a regiment, expecting to make a profit from the funds received for that objective. The haste of recruitment and deployment resulted in many recruits arriving in Flanders in 'linen slop-clothing, quite unsuitable for campaigning'.⁶²

The first subscription to provide the soldiers with warm clothing opened not in London, but in Edinburgh, instigated by the Lord Provost and magistrates of that city, as announced in the *Caledonian Mercury* on 30th September.⁶³ Early the

⁵⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (26th December 1799), p. 3c.

⁵⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (2nd January 1800), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (9th January 1800), p. 3d.

⁶⁰ *List of Subscribers to the Fund, for the Relief of the Widows, Wives, Wives and Children of Killed and Wounded British Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Expedition to Holland in 1799* (London, 1800), p. 70.

⁶¹ Duffy, M., 'A particular service': the British government and the Dunkirk expedition of 1793', *English Historical Review*, Vol. XCI, No. CCCLX (1976), pp. 529-54.

⁶² C. Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars 1793-1815* (London, 1979), p. 37.
Caledonian Mercury (30th September 1793), p. 1a.

following month, the government-subsidised London newspaper the *Sun* carried a report of the charitable enterprise, but no similar collections were made in the capital until the editor of the same newspaper received a letter accompanied by twenty flannel waistcoats at the end of that month. The author of the letter was a woman who noted that a subscription to purchase warm winter clothing 'will take too much time, as the season is so far advanced' but 'if the Ladies would order their Maids of Habit-Makers to make them, the whole Army might be provided in a very short time.'⁶⁴ The proprietor of the *Sun*, John Heriot, undertook to receive further donations and to ensure their conveyance to the troops. Heriot claimed, 'I am prompted to this measure by motives neither of interest nor vanity' on a front page of his newspaper dominated by details of donations, including a list of contributors and the number of waistcoats they had donated. Many of those listed were the very ladies of note that the originator of the plan intended to inspire. Foremost among these was the Duchess of Devonshire who donated no less than two-thousand waistcoats.⁶⁵ The manufacture of these occupied 'all the fine ladies' at Devonshire House, according to Edward Gibbon in a letter to Lord Sheffield.⁶⁶

Females of all stations had already started making warm clothing in Bath, as the *Bath Herald* reported:

We are informed that not only the girls in the various Charity Schools of this city are employed in making Flannel Waistcoats for the Army, but the several Ladies of distinction have thrown aside their elegant needle-works, and have themselves become the fair fabricators of those useful garments, to protect the shivering houseless soldier.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Sun* (4th October 1793), p. 2c; *Sun* (1st November 1793), p. 3a.

⁶⁵ *Sun* (11th November 1793), p. 1bc.

⁶⁶ J. H. E. Sheffield (Ed.), *Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon, Esquire: With Memoirs of His Life and Writings, Vol. I* (Dublin, 1796), p. 292.

⁶⁷ *Bath Herald* (9th November 1793), p. 3d.

A report in the *Bath Chronicle* commended this endeavour using language reminiscent of the loyalist associations:

The benevolent and humane subscription, for furnishing with warm clothing the brave soldiers who are fighting in a cold climate for the protection of the liberty and property of their country, goes on, with that zeal and success which a charity so truly important and essential to the lives of our fellow creatures calls for. All the girls in the charity-schools are employed in making flannel waistcoats; and the Ladies of the first fashion of this city are employed in the same laudable work.⁶⁸

The newspaper also sought to encourage the women of Bath to further exertions in the cause by reprinting a handbill distributed in Leicester that had previously appeared in a letter sent to the *Sun*.⁶⁹ The highly embellished appeal contrasted the 'base dishonourable villains' of the French forces with the British regiments 'formed of men of gallantry and honour', who would be 'amply rewarded by your smiles when they return' and would 'pant for an opportunity to convince [their] fair countrywomen that they have not lavished their favours on unworthy objects'.⁷⁰

While rather suggestive, this incentive fits with the 'widespread awareness of women's predilection for men in military attire' at the time.⁷¹ On a more practical note, the newspaper also suggested that the flannel be washed before being made up so 'that the waistcoats may not afterwards be either unpleasant to the wearer, or useless from shrinking', before quoting 'Dr. Rush, Physician-general to the American army' on the value of flannel waistcoats in preventing disease.⁷²

While the ladies and charity-schoolgirls of Bath made waistcoats, the gentlemen formed a committee to organise their conveyance to Flanders and a charitable subscription to purchase more winter clothing for the troops. The *Bath*

⁶⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (14th November 1793), p. 3b.

⁶⁹ *Sun* (8th November 1793), p. 2a.

⁷⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (14th November 1793), p. 3b.

⁷¹ J. Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army in the Long Eighteenth Century*. 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' (Oxford, 2014), p. 92.

⁷² *Bath Chronicle* (14th November 1793), p. 3b.

Chronicle announced the opening of a subscription ‘at the Libraries, Coffee-Houses, and Pump Rooms in this city, for the purchasing of Flannel Waistcoats for his Majesty’s Forces serving in Flanders’, noting that ‘Similar Subscriptions are opened at Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, and various other places.’⁷³ The *Bath Herald* carried a notice confirming the opening of subscriptions and announcing an upcoming meeting, ‘with the approbation of the mayor’, to appoint a committee.⁷⁴ The Bath press printed the obligatory notice detailing the meeting at which luminaries as the city’s mayor, Dr Henry Harington, and the writer Christopher Anstey were appointed to the sixteen-strong committee that shared six members with the committee of the Bath loyalist association. Similarly Charles Phillott took the role of treasurer, and, unsurprisingly, Meyler found a role in the committee; the notice ended with a request that all correspondence for the committee be sent to him.⁷⁵ The *Bath Herald* also included a notice inserted by the Bath loyalist association who resolved to donate twenty-five guineas of their funds to the army supplemented by one guinea donated by each committee member, while Meyler donated half that amount.⁷⁶ In the same issue, the newspaper announced that the former mayor, Walter Wiltshire, had ‘kindly permitted all packages from this city, containing the benevolent articles for the use of the army, to pass to London free of expense’ on his wagons.⁷⁷

While the organisation of the subscriptions was left to the local elite, the subscribers came from a cross-section of the community, as Atle L. Wold found in

⁷³ *Bath Chronicle* (7th November 1793), p. 3b.

⁷⁴ *Bath Herald* (9th November 1793), p. 3c.

⁷⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (14th November 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (16th November 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (18th November 1793), p. 1b.

⁷⁶ *Bath Herald* (16th November 1793), p. 3c.

⁷⁷ *Bath Herald* (16th November 1793), p. 3b.

his analysis of the subscriptions in Edinburgh.⁷⁸ The committee in that city published lists in the city's newspapers that included details of the donors' professions, but the Bath committee did not. Nevertheless, the *Bath Herald* lauded 'the eagerness with which persons of every class now contribute towards the relief and comfort of those who are to pass their winter in the perilous and damp scenes of Flanders'.⁷⁹ The subscription list in a notice dated 19th November provides further evidence of the social class of the subscribers. Six subscriptions were made by servants, either individually or as a group. The Bath elite were well represented on the list; the former mayor, Leonard Coward subscribed five guineas, yet Alderman Edward Collibee only donated five shillings. The committee's chairman, Dr Falconer subscribed two guineas, and the other committee members pledged one guinea each. Meyler subscribed a half guinea, as did Cruttwell. A number of visiting aristocrats also made subscriptions, including two guineas from the Earl and Countess of Howth, and one guinea from Lord Colvill. Aristocratic women were well represented with Lady Sidney, Lady Napier, Lady E. Noel and Lady Glynn each subscribing one guinea. At least one third of the individual subscribers were women, and the 'Ladies at Calne' collected close to fifteen pounds.⁸⁰

The committee placed notices addressed directly to women. The first of these announced that the committee had ordered sufficient flannel to make 1,500 pairs of socks. It invited any 'Lady who is inclined to assist' to send a signed order to the Blue-Coat School, 'mentioning the number of socks which she intends to

⁷⁸ A. L. Wold, 'Loyalism in Scotland in the 1790s' in U. Broich *et al* (Eds.), *Reactions to Revolutions: The 1790s and their Aftermath* (Berlin, 2007), pp. 124-5.

⁷⁹ *Bath Herald* (16th November 1793), p. 3a.

⁸⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (21st November 1793), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (23rd November 1793); p. 2cd; *Bath Journal* (25th November 1793), p. 1d.

have made *in the course of the ensuing week*.⁸¹ The following week's newspapers carried a further notice that announced a similar scheme for making five-hundred flannel shirts.⁸² The ladies of Bath certainly rose to the challenge, as testified by a paragraph in the *Bath Herald*, which had been 'taken from one of the London prints':

The patriotic ladies at Bath, who are most busy and laudably employed in making warm cloathing with their own fair hands, for the troops on the continent, have changed the forms of invitations to their friends, and it is now usual to see cards in these words:— "Mrs. F——r desires the favour of Mrs. ——'s company to tea and flannel waistcoats this evening." — "Mrs. B——w, &c. to dinner and socks." — "Mrs. M——n, &c. to supper and night-caps."⁸³

In a further notice the committee detailed their distribution of not only the waistcoats, socks and shirts, but also gloves, stockings and caps. At the same meeting they resolved to also provide 'woollen trowsers [...] at the particular recommendation of his Majesty's Secretary at War'. In order to provide the trousers, the report ended with a request that

Any poor Women who can bring a recommendation from a creditable Housekeeper, and who are capable of making up the Woollen Trowsers intended for the Army, are desired to attend on Saturday or Monday next at the Guildhall, when cloth cut out for the above purpose will be ready to be delivered to them; and when their works is finished, to the satisfaction of the Committee, a competent and adequate recompence (to be previously agreed on) will be paid for their trouble.⁸⁴

The subsequent notice stated that 'nearly the whole quantity of *Trowsers* had been made up' and that the 'poor women [...] employed in making these articles of clothing [...] have been paid an adequate compensation'.⁸⁵ This not only further illustrates the role of the city government in the charitable endeavour by

⁸¹ *Bath Herald* (16th November 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (18th November 1793), p. 1c.

⁸² *Bath Chronicle* (28th November 1793), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (23rd November 1793), p. 3c; *Bath Journal* (25th November 1793), p. 4d.

⁸³ *Bath Herald* (14th December 1793), p. 3b.

⁸⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (12th December 1793), p. 3d.

⁸⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (26th December 1793), p. 3d.

making use of the Guildhall, but it also demonstrates the willingness of the committee to mobilise the local poor while ameliorating their poverty. Similarly, the *Bath Herald* heaped praise on the Countess of Orkney for sending three-hundred pairs of stockings to 'a gentleman of this city, [...] an example worthy of the imitation of all classes of a loyal people, as her Ladyship, by this charity, has not only comforted the meritorious soldier, but given employment to the neighbouring poor'.⁸⁶ As Jennine Hurl-Eamon points out, this was not only the case; 'the poorer seamstresses who sewed the garments free of charge' were only occasionally acknowledged. She surmises that 'these women saw their uncompensated labour as part of their duty toward the war effort'.⁸⁷ This effort was not only directed at the soldiers, but also to their wives and other camp followers. The *Bath Chronicle* reported the dispatch of '17 Petticoats' and '16 Round Shirts for the Children that may be with the Army'.⁸⁸

The committee again placed notices in the Bath press as the weather turned colder in the next year. The first of these reproduced a notice sent to them by William Devaynes, treasurer of the London-based General United Society for supplying British Troops upon the Continent with Extra Warm Clothing. To this was added an announcement that Meyler would receive any subscriptions in the city.⁸⁹ Subsequent notices listed these subscriptions, but these were not on the same scale as during the previous winter, nor did the soldiers benefit from a

⁸⁶ *Bath Herald* (1st February 1794), p. 3b.

⁸⁷ Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army*, pp. 46-7.

⁸⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (26th December 1793), p. 3d.

⁸⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (9th October 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (11th October 1794), p. 3e.

concerted community effort to make warm clothing for them.⁹⁰ The Bath subscription amounted to over £260 including twenty guineas from Bath Corporation.⁹¹

In December 1793 the *Bath Herald* reported on a letter it had received, signed by 'An Old Soldier' who commended 'the laudable spirit of providing comfortable articles for our honest fellows in Flanders' before advising 'from professional experience, the purchasing of good, sound, substantial shoes'.⁹² While this suggestion was not followed for those serving on the Continent, shoes were donated as part of another charitable endeavour to furnish troops. In January 1794 the *Bath Herald* reported that

A Party of Ladies of this city have commenced a most benevolent subscription to supply the honest Militia of Somerset with a pair of shoes each.— The success has been hitherto promising; the particulars will appear in our next. We have no doubt of this example being followed through every county in the kingdom, thereby, shewing a proper regard to our internal defenders.⁹³

As promised, the newspaper printed a notice in its next issue, as did the other titles. It declared,

Whilst so many benevolent exertions are making for our Brave Countrymen Abroad, a Party of Ladies, now in the City of Bath, wish to propose the seasonable relief of a Pair of Shoes for our honest Militia at home; in consideration of the long and toilsome marches they have had, and may have, to prevent the invasion of a foreign foe.⁹⁴

This somewhat contradicts an article that appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* only a

⁹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (23rd October 1794), p. 1d; *Bath Chronicle* (30th October 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (6th November 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (13th November 1794), p. 3e; *Bath Chronicle* (20th November 1794), p. 3e; *Bath Chronicle* (25th December 1794), p. 1e; *Bath Chronicle* (29th January 1795), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (18th October 1794), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (1st November 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (8th November 1794), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (15th November 1794), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (22nd November 1794), 3e; *Bath Herald* (20th December 1794), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (31st January 1795), p. 3d.

⁹¹ *Bath Chronicle* (25th December 1794), p. 1e; *Bath Herald* (20th December 1794), p. 2e.

⁹² *Bath Herald* (23rd November 1793), p. 3b.

⁹³ *Bath Herald* (25th January 1794), p. 3b.

⁹⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (30th January 1794), p. 2e; *Bath Journal* (27th January 1794), p. 1c.

few weeks earlier: 'The Somersetshire militia, now quartered in Salisbury, have lately been entirely new clothed, and make a truly handsome, martial appearance.'⁹⁵ While the London press made mention of the charitable subscription, the cause did not capture the national public imagination in the same way as the donation of warm clothes to the troops in Flanders.⁹⁶ Apart from in Somerset, other subscriptions were opened for the militia in Leicestershire and Lancashire.⁹⁷

The *Bath Herald* revealed that the subscription had received criticism that 'the men would not receive all the advantage'. The newspaper assured its readers that it was 'meant as a little additional comfort and encouragement' above and beyond what the militiamen received from the government.⁹⁸ In its next issue the newspaper continued its defence:

The humane intention of supplying the Militia with shoes having been opposed from an idea that the Colonels are obliged to supply them fully with that article, it is certain that the fixed allowance is only one pair; the comfort therefore of an additional pair, in their long marches, is evident.⁹⁹

Always ready with a poetic commentary on the affairs of the day, the newspaper further expressed its support for the subscription in an epigram entitled 'The Ladies of Great Britain to the Militia':

Against mad GALLIA's vain pretenders,
Who threat our coast in shoals,
Brave Youths! ye are *our* SOLE defenders,
And we'll defend *your* SOLES.¹⁰⁰

The *Bath Herald* later reported that the inspiration for the subscription

⁹⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (12th December 1793), p. 3c.

⁹⁶ *Sun* (8th February 1794), p. 3a; 'To the Conductor of the Sun', *Sun* (13th February 1794), p. 4a; *Sun* (1st March 1794), p. 2d;

⁹⁷ *The Oracle and Public Advertiser* (21st March 1794), p. 2d; *Bath Herald* (22nd February 1794), p. 3b

⁹⁸ *Bath Herald* (1st February 1794), p. 3b.

⁹⁹ *Bath Herald* (8th February 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁰⁰ *Bath Herald* (22nd February 1794), p. 3c.

came from a group of ladies 'meeting the Militia of a Northern County on their march'. They found the 'poor fellows' to be 'half crippled, their shoes in general displaying horrible chasms'.¹⁰¹ In a later issue the *Bath Chronicle* revealed the identity of the party of ladies who instigated the collection for the Somerset Militia:

The Miss Mores, who so charitably set on foot, and by their interest and exertions completed, the subscription for buying shoes for our militia, we hear, have received the thanks of the Colonel and the whole corps of officers, for the seasonable act of benevolence. The brave fellows stood in great need of new shoes after their long march, and each man received a pair of excellent made strong shoes, with a grateful sense of the favour; and the health of the ladies has been drunk by the whole regiment.¹⁰²

In a diary entry for 9th February 1794, Hannah More wrote that she had been so busy 'trying to raise money for the militia shoes; so much writing and talking, that there has been little leisure for reading, – little disposition for communion with God.'¹⁰³

Not only were women integral in the organisation of the charitable endeavour, they also made a notable contribution as subscribers. Half of the individual subscribers listed in one notice were women.¹⁰⁴ These included the Duchess of Devonshire, the Countess of Corke, Lady Georgina Cavendish, the More sisters, and Mrs Phillott. The children of Hazard, More's publisher, subscribed seven shillings. The final notice provided details of how the 223 pounds and 11 shillings collected were spent. In all 879 pairs were sent from Bristol to Dover, where the militia were then billeted. Once again Wiltshire provided free carriage of the donated clothing to London.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ *Bath Herald* (22nd March 1794), p. 3b.

¹⁰² *Bath Chronicle* (24th April 1794), p. 3c.

¹⁰³ Roberts, W., *The Life of Hannah More with Selections from her Correspondence* (London, 1872), p. 180.

¹⁰⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (30th January 1794), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (1st February 1794), p. 3d; *Bath Journal* (3rd February 1794), p. 1c.

¹⁰⁵ *Bath Herald* (26th April 1794), p. 2c.

Voluntary Contributions to the War Effort

In 1793 Pitt and his ministers had not anticipated a prolonged war with the French Republic. As such he decided to continue the financial policies he instituted at the beginning of his ministry. His central policy was the reduction of the national debt by means of a sinking fund, under the control of independent commissioners. Pitt was determined that the war would not threaten his policy of debt reduction, yet in order to fund military action he followed the traditional system of taking out loans and only increasing taxation to cover the interest on this additional debt. As the conflict dragged on, both war debt and taxation increased as did the interest rates at which new loans could be secured.¹⁰⁶ In late 1796, Pitt faced the need to raise a further eighteen million pounds, but having consulted the directors of the Bank of England, he decided that he would struggle to secure a loan from traditional lenders at an acceptable rate. Pitt decided to appeal to patriotic feeling by offering government stock to the public at a more manageable rate of interest.¹⁰⁷ On 1st December 1796 subscriptions opened on what became known as the “Loyalty Loan”. It proved so popular that the whole sum was subscribed within fifteen and a half hours; although, as Emsley suggests, this may have demonstrated a fear that government would institute a compulsory contribution if the loan had not been raised.¹⁰⁸ This may go some way to explain why it was also known as the “Voluntary Loan” at the time.

With a mind to the financial health of the nation, John Palmer, the postal

¹⁰⁶ R. Cooper, 'William Pitt, Taxation, and the Needs of War', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Autumn, 1982), pp. 94-103.

¹⁰⁷ W. Newmarch, 'On the Loans Raised by Mr. Pitt During the First French War, 1793-1801; With Some Statements in Defence of the Methods of Funding Employed', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (June, 1855), pp. 104-140.

¹⁰⁸ Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars*, p. 51.

service reformer, theatre owner, and serving Mayor of Bath, sent a letter to the printers of the city's newspapers:

You will be so good as to advertise in your Paper the following proposals of Subscription. It would be a great presumption in me as a private Individual to address the publick on this occasion; but some person or other must stand forward; and as first Magistrate of this City, I hope it will not be considered as improper or unbecoming in me to set the example to my Fellow-Citizens and other Inhabitants, to prove themselves worthy the Constitution they live under by using every exertion for its defence and protection.

The sum I subscribe for the further prosecution of the War, should it unhappily be found necessary, I consider about a tenth part of what I am worth, and as given up to secure the remainder, as well as preserve the Throne, our Liberties, Religion and Laws.¹⁰⁹

There then followed a list of subscribers and a list of locations where donations could be made. Palmer made two donations. The first amounting to two-hundred and ten pounds, 'For the most vigorous prosecution of the War, should the French Executive Directory refuse to accede to safe and honourable Terms of Peace with Great-Britain and her Allies', and a further £1,400, 'For the discharge and interest on the late Loan Subscription, or the most vigorous prosecution of the War, if found necessary'. The other subscribers listed were the siblings Walter, Anne and Catherine Long. Walter subscribed £2,100, while Anne and Catherine donated £525 each.

The *Bath Chronicle* was optimistic that the example set by Palmer would be followed elsewhere:

It is with great pleasure we hear that the Subscription for the further prosecution of the war, if found necessary, is likely to go on with spirit, a meeting being shortly called for that purpose; and that the County of Wilts is about to take the lead in this great national object.¹¹⁰

This optimism was far from blind; the story of the voluntary contributions proved

¹⁰⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (15th December 1796), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (10th December 1796), p. 3d.

¹¹⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (15th December 1796), p. 3c.

popular with both the metropolitan and provincial press. Many London newspapers reprinted Palmer's letter prefixed with approving editorials.¹¹¹ Palmer's scheme certainly chimed with the *Times*, which reprinted his letter under a rallying call that those 'who were too late in their applications' for the "Loyalty Loan", make small donations 'to pay the interest of it, and prevent any new public burthens, which must in some degree fall on the poor as well as the rich'.¹¹² The *Reading Mercury* also reprinted the letter beneath an abridged form of the *Times*' acclamation.¹¹³ Other provincial newspapers reported on the contribution in similarly glowing terms.¹¹⁴

Clearly buoyed by this positive reaction, Palmer wrote another letter to the Bath newspapers, which they printed in their next issues. In this lengthy missive he explained his scheme. He stated,

It is indeed time that the Nobility, Gentry, and Clergy, the rich Merchants, and Bankers, the opulent Manufacturers, Traders, and Farmers, of this glorious, happy, and admirable Country, whose riches are almost incalculable – That those who are chiefly interested in the War, should subscribe some proportion of their vast wealth for its prosecution, if necessary, and give security to the poor and the necessitous, and no further demand shall be made on them during its continuance.

He explained that since 'the Supplies are provided for the ensuing year, no person can be called on for one shilling of this Subscription till the year 1798, if Peace should not be obtained before that period'. He intended his scheme should 'guard against and defeat every possible difficulty and danger' in the future.

¹¹¹ *Evening Mail* (9th - 12th December 1796), p. 3b; *London Chronicle* (10th - 13th December 1796), p. 2b; *St. James's Chronicle: or, British Evening-Post* (10th - 13th December 1796), p. 2b; *Whitehall Evening Post* (10th - 13th December 1796), p. 1b; *True Briton* (13th December 1796), p. 3a.

¹¹² *The Times* (13th December 1796), p. 2d.

¹¹³ *Reading Mercury* (19th December 1796), p. 1bc.

¹¹⁴ *Chester Chronicle* (16th December 1796), p. 3e; *Chester Courant* (27th December 1796), p. 3e; *Derby Mercury* (15th December 1796), p. 4d; *Ipswich Journal* (17th December 1796), p. 4b; *Manchester Mercury* (13th December 1796), p. 4e; *Norfolk Chronicle* (17th December 1796), p. 1a; *Northampton Mercury* (24th December 1796), p. 1b; *Staffordshire Advertiser* (17th December 1796), p. 4d.

Somewhat presciently he wrote, 'I look to the *possibility* of a continuance of the War for *five* or *six* years longer'. He also acknowledged the propaganda value of the subscription, which would counter the deception perpetrated by 'the French Government, with Paine, and many other delusive Writers [...] of the exhausted state of our Finances'. He ended the letter by calling on the patriotism of the 'many persons of fortune and great character' who had signed the Bath Association for Preserving Liberty, Property, and the Constitution of Great-Britain, Against Republicans and Levellers' membership book to 'exert themselves with the same zeal and patriotism on this as on the former occasion'. He requested that the committee of the loyalist association 'will take into consideration, what I have the honour to propose, and form it into some shape as their superior judgement may direct, that shall best answer the ends proposed'. Palmer was 'confident that their public virtue and energy will be crowned with a success equal to that which distinguished them at the former memorable and most awful period'.¹¹⁵

This second letter again received the approbation of a number of London newspapers. The *Whitehall Evening Post* drew attention to Palmer's 'zealous and unfeigned patriotism', trusting that the measure 'will operate by its example far beyond the limits of our single city!'¹¹⁶ The *True Briton* was equally effusive in its praise of Palmer, declaring that 'the sentiments contained in which do infinite honour to his patriotism and public spirit', and that they 'shall take an early opportunity of Laying this Letter before our readers'. The newspaper reiterated that the scheme 'will prevent the Poor from suffering under the impression of new Imposts, and as those who may contribute will subscribe according to their

¹¹⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd December 1796), p. 1ab; *Bath Herald* (12th December 1796), p. 3de.

¹¹⁶ *Whitehall Evening Post* (17th - 20th December 1796), p. 2c.

situation, it will not be felt at all, except as a patriotic effort grateful to the heart of every Englishman.¹¹⁷ Good to their word the *True Briton* included Palmer's second letter in the Boxing Day issue.¹¹⁸ Yet, even with this widespread approval in the nation's press, the scheme did not motivate similar subscriptions elsewhere. This did not escape the attention of the *Morning Post*, which printed a scathing indictment:

The *patriotism* and *generosity* of the Subscribers to the new Loan may now be estimated. Mr. Palmer of Bath, has proposed a voluntary contribution of money to be *given* to relieve the necessities of the State; but not one shilling has been raised in the City of London. *Pitt's plan* is approved more than *Palmer's plan*, as it gives the Subscribers a large profit in return for their generosity!¹¹⁹

The *Bath Herald* printed a letter from 'Equitas', who, while generally approving the plan, declared that 'before the middle ranks of men are applied to, the example should come first from the fountain head'. The author continued,

Was this measure adopted as it ought by the Higher Orders, and those enjoying the most lucrative places, *then* indeed the Middle Ranks might be applied to with a *much better* grace (for their own sakes) to contribute in proportion to their means, though they cannot be so blind and infatuated as wilfully to cherish the sloth, luxury and excesses of those whose enormous wealth is already too disproportionate to admit any just excuse in their favor.¹²⁰

The next issue contained another letter, in which 'A Briton' expressed their disappointment that the plan had not been better subscribed: 'Surely the numerous Rich and high in Rank in this City will not be backward in coming forward with their honourable and patriotic aid.' According to the author, the 'noble' plan was 'calculated to keep the lower classes of the People free of those burthens and calamities ever attendant on a War' and to 'strike terror and dismay

¹¹⁷ *True Briton* (19th December 1796), p. 3c.

¹¹⁸ *True Briton* (26th December 1796), p. 4ab.

¹¹⁹ *Morning Post and Fashionable World* (19th December 1796), p. 2d.

¹²⁰ *Bath Herald* (24th December 1796), p. 4a.

amongst those Internal foes to the Constitution, whose corrupt political creed, whose vain and equalizing philosophy, whose repugnant doctrines to truth and nature are domination, evil and tyranny'.¹²¹

Palmer's plan was not more widely implemented in 1796, but by the end of the next year the notion of voluntary contributions was resurrected, this time under the direction of the government. In his 1797 budget, Pitt introduced the Triple Assessment as a means to increase tax revenue by seven million pounds, meaning that he could borrow only fifteen million pounds at a more favourable rate of interest.¹²² This measure sparked protests around the country, not only from opposition politicians and newspapers, but also from the middling sort who feared that they would bear the majority of the burden.¹²³ Newspapers of all political affiliations carried notices of parish meetings, and the Bath papers were no different.¹²⁴

These notices appropriated some of the language of the loyalist associations, while at the same time echoing Paine's plan for a graduated income tax. The notice of the Parish of Saint James vestry meeting asserted 'that all Taxes ought to be equitably and proportionately levied, according to the Property of Individuals, more especially towards supporting a War, which has, for its principal object, the PRESERVATION OF PROPERTY'. Similarly the vestry meeting at the Parish of Lyncomb and Widcomb resolved that because 'the avowed present object of this calamitous war is the Preservation of Property, all legal contributions for its support ought in equity to be proportioned to the

¹²¹ *Bath Herald* (31st December 1796), p. 3e.

¹²² Cooper, 'William Pitt, Taxation, and the Needs of War', pp. 94-103.

¹²³ D. Wahrman, *Imaging the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 108-124.

¹²⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (21st December 1797), p. 1bcd; *Bath Chronicle* (21st December 1797), p. 3e; *Bath Herald* (23rd December 1797), p. 1bc; *Bath Herald* (23rd December 1797), p. 2d.

property possessed'. Even the more sober resolutions made at the meeting in the Parish of St Peter and Paul, chaired by the ubiquitous Meyler, included the assertion that 'the proposed Assessments' were 'inconsistent with the principles of a free Constitution'. Meyler's *Bath Herald* struck a more conciliatory tone:

Our Readers will perceive that the parishes of this City, with those of Walcot, and Lyncomb and Widcomb, have had meetings respecting the proposed increase of the Assessed Taxes. The measure as originally brought forward, gave great consternation and universal alarm. Every man holding property in houses, or dependent on trade, or on lodging house-keeping, appeared sensibly affected by the dread of its operation. That these alarms were well grounded is evident; the complaints have been acknowledged just, and will be relieved by the Legislature; very considerable modifications have already been introduced, and we trust that the Bill will still be shaped into a form that will make the Affluent submit to it, as urged by the imperious necessity of the times, and pay their large *quota* cheerfully. The middling ranks will not, we presume, be materially affected by its pressure; and those in a lower station are entirely exonerated from its effects.¹²⁵

The report went on to quote a letter sent to the mayor by the city's MPs, in which they declared that 'they will be happy to contribute as far as they are able to give every relief consistent with the general object of the Bill'.

Rather than an increase in taxation, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Henry Addington, suggested that the affluent be permitted to make voluntary contributions to help pay for the war effort, in place of their assessed taxes, as long as their contribution exceeded the assessed amount. As it was, both schemes were enacted by Parliament on 12th January 1798. William Pitt, Henry Dundas, and Addington himself each subscribed £2,000, while the king donated £20,000 from his Privy Purse.¹²⁶

A month later the *Bath Herald* suggested that the 'Government ought to open Books at the Banking-Houses in some principal Cities and Towns in the

¹²⁵ *Bath Herald* (23rd December 1797), p. 3d.

¹²⁶ C. Emsley, *Britain and the French Revolution* (Abingdon, 2014), p. 64.

Kingdom to receive Voluntary Subscriptions', declaring that 'several persons in this City are now ready to come forward with their Subscriptions if such a plan were adopted, and their Example would be followed by others who only wait for such a local opportunity to testify their zeal.'¹²⁷ A week later it announced that

a Meeting in the course of a few days, will be holden at the New Rooms, for the purpose of opening and furthering a Subscription to assist Government at the present crisis.— The numerous Personages in the City, who now enjoy ease, opulence, and happiness, under the present Government, and whose state, in case of the Enemy succeeding in his ambitious attempt, would perhaps be indigence and misery – will here have an opportunity of contributing to and effectually securing their own, and the general safety; whilst those in an humble station may evince their attachment to a Constitution which their Forefathers prized above all Riches, and which they should endeavour to hand down unsullied to their Posterity.

In a display of civic pride, it declared, 'In all public measures the inhabitants and visitors of Bath have ever shewn an example of liberality to the rest of the kingdom.— On the present occasion it were criminal to doubt their loyal zeal and patriotic spirit.'¹²⁸

Charles Phillott, Bath's incumbent mayor placed a notice in the *Bath Chronicle* of 15th February 1798, 'Under the Authority of Parliament', announcing a meeting of the 'Inhabitants of the city and its Vicinity' to be held at the Guildhall on that day, 'for the purpose of taking into consideration a Plan for raising VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS for the DEFENCE of the COUNTRY at this highly important crisis, and for carrying the same into effect'.¹²⁹ The same issue included a report that Phillott and the city's Corporation had voted one thousand pounds 'as a Contribution towards the Defence of the Country', and 'at the same time determined to abolish all public feasts during the war'.¹³⁰ In this they

¹²⁷ *Bath Herald* (3rd February 1798), p. 3d.

¹²⁸ *Bath Herald* (10th February 1798), p. 3d.

¹²⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (15th February 1798), p. 3e.

¹³⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (15th February 1798), p. 3b.

followed the example set by other corporations, as reported in the *Bath Herald*.¹³¹ The next issue of the *Bath Herald* printed a detailed report of the 'most respectable Meeting of the Inhabitants and Visitants' of Bath, giving details of the speeches. The report ended with another expression of civic pride: 'we have not a doubt but the City of Bath will now give substantial proof of its fidelity and zeal, by these Voluntary Contributions, as it did a few years since by avowed professions of warm attachment to their King and Country'.¹³² At no time did this civic pride extend to any reference of its former mayor's earlier scheme in the Bath press.

Subscription lists appeared in notices printed weekly in the Bath press until the end of April. The first such notice listed the twenty-four men that formed the committee, 'who shall attend and receive such monies as may from time to time be subscribed'. The committee included Charles Phillott, the former mayor, Henry Harington, the rector of Bath Abbey, Rev. Dr. Phillott, and the printers Hazard and Meyler. They were joined by four military men – General Monkland, Colonel Strode, Colonel Chapman and Captain McConnell – possibly in recognition that the funds were being raised for the defence of the country.¹³³ One notable absence from the committee was John Palmer.

The most generous donors included William Dawson of Milsom Street, who subscribed three hundred pounds; Rev. Martin Stafford Smith subscribed one hundred pounds, as did the physician Daniel Lysons and Colonel Chapman. The proprietors of the three Bath newspapers pledged five guineas each. As with the more charitable endeavours mentioned previously, women were also well

¹³¹ *Bath Herald* (10th February 1798), p. 3d.

¹³² *Bath Herald* (17th February 1798), p. 3d.

¹³³ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd February 1798), p. 2de; *Bath Herald* (17th February 1798), p. 3b.

represented on the list; Lady Nelson subscribed twenty pounds, while Lady Hesketh subscribed fifty pounds. Mrs Pratt subscribed five guineas and her servants contributed a further fifteen shillings. As with these servants who were not listed by name, numerous subscribers were identified by their job, such as Mr Chatterton's workmen, who subscribed one guinea. The whole staff of the New Assembly Rooms appear to have subscribed: the waiters raised two pounds, eleven shillings and sixpence; the porters subscribed one pound, three shillings and sixpence; the bar maid and cloak maid offered ten shillings and sixpence each, and the other female servants collected fourteen shillings and sixpence. Some clearly did not wish to be omitted from the list of subscribers in Bath despite having already subscribed elsewhere, as was the case with Mrs Lockhart who added twenty pounds to the ten guineas she had previously subscribed in London. The list even included 'Two Children' who subscribed five shillings, and 'Five sisters' who donated five shillings and sixpence 'from their pocket money'. The members of organisations made joint subscriptions. Those of the Amicable Society, held at the Druid's Head, pledged five guineas, as did the Amicable Society, held at the Black Swan on Broad Street; whereas 'The Amicable Society, meeting at the Belvedere Inn, Walcot, included in a very loyal and patriotic letter' the sum of two pounds. Similarly, fifty pounds was subscribed 'From the Fund of the Harmonic Society'.¹³⁴ The variety of people subscribing in Bath was by no means exceptional. The *Bath Chronicle* was eager to depict the voluntary contribution as a unifying influence, reporting that throughout the kingdom, 'Noblemen, Gentlemen, the Clergy of all ranks, ladies, the military and naval officers and privates, clerks in public offices, schools, servants, &c. all appear in

¹³⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd February 1798), p. 2de.

the patriotic list of subscribers, according to their abilities and circumstances'. It argued that the conflict was 'not connected with any political attachments or party prejudice, but rests merely between France and England'.¹³⁵ Similarly the *Bath Herald* declared that the flood of contributions 'must make the heart of every true British Subject exult at the loyalty and determined resolution, which are manifest in every class of the people', and that this loyalty 'must convince our inveterate insatiable Enemies, as well as the disaffected few at home, that we can have no other choice but death, or the preservation of our King and Government'.¹³⁶

The following week's issues of the Bath newspapers dedicated several columns to subscription lists, including two noteworthy contributions of one hundred pounds each from 'A Family' and 'A Well-wisher to the Country'. Clearly neither wished the public recognition of their generosity.¹³⁷ The city's newspapers carried a notice from John Strode, the chairman of the Bath committee, encouraging 'the Church-wardens of the different Parishes of Bath and its Vicinity to promote, in imitation of the London Parochial Subscriptions, a similar mode for the Loyal Inhabitants to exhibit their attachment and affection for their present Happy Constitution and Country'. The notice ended with a call for contributions from the whole community: 'As this Subscription is intended to testify the Loyalty and Attachment of every class of his Majesty's Subjects, the smallest sums will be most respectfully received'.¹³⁸ This stands in marked contrast to Palmer's idea that the burden of voluntary contributions should fall on the rich.

The writer of a letter printed in the *Bath Chronicle* appears to have shared this sentiment. The correspondence included a poem titled 'On the liberal

¹³⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd February 1798), p. 3c.

¹³⁶ *Bath Herald* (17th March 1798), p. 3d.

¹³⁷ *Bath Herald* (24th February 1798), pp. 1cde & 2de; *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1798), p. 2cd.

¹³⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (3rd March 1798), p. 3b.

Subscription (2,000l.) of a Country Gentleman, (resident in Bath.)' The writer declared that 'if many people of higher rank would follow such an example, and be less idly profuse, and more truly generous, it would contribute greatly to the benefit of the public, and I am convinced, to their own real enjoyment'.¹³⁹ The author of the letter may have been referring to Walter Long's subscription to Palmer, rather than a more recent contribution, as no subscription for that amount appeared in the lists of the Bath committee notices; although the *Bath Herald* had reported that he had made a voluntary contribution of £2,000 along with £500 each from his two sisters.¹⁴⁰

The vicar and parish officers in Batheaston had already opened a subscription book, 'in consequence of a letter addressed to them from the Committee of London', collecting seventy-three pounds in addition to 'the sum of 32l. 6s. 6d. already paid to the Committee in Bath'.¹⁴¹ As per Strode's recommendation, notices appeared in the Bath newspapers inserted by the churchwardens of St James' parish in the city and the minister and churchwardens of Bathwick announcing when and where the parishioners could make contributions.¹⁴² Subsequent donations from nearly forty neighbouring parishes appeared in the Bath committee's notices alongside those received at the Guildhall.¹⁴³

The Bath press also carried notices of the opening of subscriptions in other

¹³⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd March 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁴⁰ *Bath Herald* (10th March 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁴¹ *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁴² *Bath Chronicle* (8th March 1798), p. 3a; *Bath Herald* (10th March 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁴³ *Bath Chronicle* (8th March 1798), p. 2d; *Bath Chronicle* (15th March 1798), p. 4cd; *Bath Chronicle* (22nd March 1798), p. 2d; *Bath Chronicle* (29th March 1798), p. 1c; *Bath Chronicle* (5th April 1798), p. 1b; *Bath Chronicle* (12th April 1798), p. 1d; *Bath Herald* (10th March 1798), p. 1cde; *Bath Herald* (17th March 1798), pp. 1abcd & 2d; *Bath Herald* (24th March 1798), p. 2cd; *Bath Herald* (31st March 1798), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (7th April 1798), pp. 1c & 2e; *Bath Herald* (14th March 1798), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (21st April 1798), p. 2e.

towns and villages served by the city's newspapers. The 8th March edition of the *Bath Chronicle* contained such notices from Farmborough, Kelston, Trowbridge, Swindon, and the Gloucestershire parishes of Marshfield and Dodington.¹⁴⁴

The Farmborough subscription included nineteen shillings donated by the local colliers and 'Dr. Gunning's female servants'.¹⁴⁵ The Bath newspapers later printed notices from many local towns and villages listing subscribers in Frome, Corsham, Chipping Sodbury, Kingston St Michael, Kilmersdon, Box and Grittleton.¹⁴⁶ The notice from Shepton Mallett included a separate list of women's contributions, reminiscent of the notices for the relief of widows and orphans.¹⁴⁷ The *Bath Herald* also carried a notice from St Davids, no doubt due to Meyler's Welsh heritage.¹⁴⁸

The city's newspapers also printed reports of voluntary contributions as part of the local news. An advertisement for an upcoming performance of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* at the Theatre Royal, 'In Aid of the Voluntary Subscription for the Defence of the Country' announced that the play would be followed by a performance of Walsh Porter's *Voluntary Contributions*.¹⁴⁹ The *Bath Chronicle* commended the theatre's manager:

The very liberal manner in which Mr. Dimond has voluntarily resigned his benefit night, for the laudable purpose of aiding the patriotic Contributions for the Defence of the Country, deserves to be mentioned in terms of the highest praise; and we doubt not but his liberality will meet with ample remuneration. The spirited loyalty of the performers too, in offering their gratuitous services, merits great commendation.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (8th March 1798), p. 3de.

¹⁴⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (8th March 1798), p. 2de.

¹⁴⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd March 1798), p. 2e; *Bath Chronicle* (29th March 1798), p. 1b; *Bath Herald* (24th March 1798), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (31st March 1798), p. 1c; *Bath Herald* (14th April 1798), p. 2d; *Bath Herald* (21st April 1798), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (19th May 1798), p. 2e; *Bath Herald* (26th May 1798), p. 1a.

¹⁴⁷ *Bath Herald* (28th April 1798), p. 2e.

¹⁴⁸ *Bath Herald* (14th April 1798), p. 2e.

¹⁴⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd February 1798), p. 3b; *Bath Herald* (24th February 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁵⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd February 1798), p. 3c.

The *Bath Herald* also noted that Dimond's 'liberality has on all occasions been conspicuous, yet this is an instance that demands particular notice'.¹⁵¹

In their next issues, both newspapers were equally effusive in their praise of the 'laudable zeal of the Manager and Performers in appropriating a night for the defence of the nation, [which] was followed up with avidity by the Public', raising 'near 140l'.¹⁵² Another Bath institution also subscribed to the cause, as the *Bath Chronicle* reported:

The Young Gentlemen of the Rev. Mr. Morgan's Grammar-School have made a subscription amounting to near 40l. for the service of their country; reflecting with pride and pleasure, that some of our bravest officers were educated in the same seminary, under the present worthy master, viz Sir Sidney Smith, now a prisoner in France; Capt. Clavey, who behaved so gallantly at Port Royal, Grenada, but was unhappily lost on his passage home; and the unfortunate Lieut. Western, the first officer who fell in the present war.¹⁵³

The grammar school boys' donation warranted special mention in the Bath committee's notice of the following week by including an address signed by eight students 'on behalf of ourselves and School-fellows'. The first signatory was 'C. Cruttwell, captain', most likely Clement Wilson Cruttwell, the third son of Richard Cruttwell.¹⁵⁴

The Bath press also reported on the total amount subscribed in the city, with the *Bath Chronicle* reporting that it exceeded nine-thousand pounds in its 22nd February issue; in the next issue it exceeded twelve-thousand pounds; two weeks later it was in excess of fifteen-thousand pounds; the next issue reported that the subscriptions collected 'exceed 15,599l'.¹⁵⁵ At the end of March, the *Bath*

¹⁵¹ *Bath Herald* (24th February 1798), p. 3e.

¹⁵² *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1798), p. 3d; *Bath Herald* (3rd March 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁵³ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd February 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁵⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1798), p. 2cd.

¹⁵⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd February 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (15th March 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (22nd March 1798), p. 3c.

Herald said that the total was ‘nearly £16,000’.¹⁵⁶ Similarly the local news in the Bath newspapers contained reports of subscriptions in the towns and villages that they served. The *Bath Herald* announced the opening of books in Wells, and that following a meeting held in Chipping Sodbury, ‘upwards of One Hundred Pounds were immediately subscribed’.¹⁵⁷ It later reported that the corporation of Marlborough voted £100 ‘in support of the state’ before opening books for individual subscriptions, and that the residents of Bitton had thus far subscribed ‘159l. 12s. 6d.’¹⁵⁸ Similarly the inhabitants of Marshfield and Dodington subscribed ‘637l. 12s.’¹⁵⁹ The *Bath Chronicle* reported that 206l. 4s. 6d. was subscribed at Corsham.¹⁶⁰ The Bath press was particularly pleased to announce the sums contributed in more rural settings, including the fifty pounds subscribed in the ‘United parishes of Orchardleigh, Buckland, Laverton, and Lullington’.¹⁶¹ It also drew attention to the ‘small parishes of Southstoke and Monckton-Combe’ who subscribed twenty-seven pounds, and the ‘loyal inhabitants of the small village of Bromham’, who ‘contributed the sum of One Hundred Guineas for the defence of the country.’¹⁶² The *Bath Herald* reported that the subscriptions collected at the village of Winckfield (now Wingfield) amounted to just over twenty-six pounds.¹⁶³ Of the two-hundred and thirty pounds ‘collected in eight small parishes and hamlets in Gloucestershire’, the *Bath Chronicle* declared that it ‘shews what immense sums might be raised if parochial collections were general’.¹⁶⁴ The newspaper later announced that ‘there is scarcely a town or

¹⁵⁶ *Bath Herald* (21st March 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁵⁷ *Bath Herald* (10th March 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁵⁸ *Bath Herald* (17th March 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁵⁹ *Bath Herald* (7th April 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd March 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁶¹ *Bath Chronicle* (12th April 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (14th April 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁶² *Bath Chronicle* (26th April 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁶³ *Bath Herald* (21st April 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1798), p. 3c.

parish throughout the kingdom, that has not voluntarily and liberally contributed their aid in support of government', and with an eye to posterity suggested that

if the minister and churchwardens of the several parishes were to enter a list in their parish-book, not only of the names of the subscribers, but likewise of the sums by them subscribed, it would serve as a lasting and proper record of the zeal and loyalty of those who stood forward in the defence of their King and Country at this important and critical juncture.¹⁶⁵

The Bath newspapers played their part in recording the contributions made by individuals, not only as part of the lists in official notices, but also as part of their local news. The *Bath Herald* made special mention of contributions made by local notables, including the £5,000 by Sir William Pulteney, £1,000 by Charles Knatchbull, 'Major of the Somerset Sup, Militia', and the £300 annual subscription of John Palmer.¹⁶⁶ The same paper also reported on the '24l. 18s. 6.' donation made by Christopher Codrington's servants.¹⁶⁷ The *Bath Chronicle* reported on 'Mrs. Mary Petter, Dartford, Kent, spinster', who subscribed the substantial sum of '2389l. 3s. 6d.', possibly to encourage other women of means to follow suit.¹⁶⁸

The *Bath Chronicle* also used its local news to relate the amounts subscribed in the major cities of the kingdom. Its 22nd February issue reported that 'At Liverpool, on Sunday, at a public meeting, upwards of 500l. was instantly subscribed.'¹⁶⁹ Three weeks later it announced that subscriptions in Liverpool exceeded sixteen-thousand pounds, while those in Manchester totalled over nineteen-thousand pounds, and in Bristol more than twenty-five thousand.¹⁷⁰ It later reported that Charles Bragge and Lord Sheffield, the MPs for Bristol had 'paid into the Bank of England [...] the sum of 17,629l. 3s. [...] being the first

¹⁶⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (19th April 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁶ *Bath Herald* (10th March 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁶⁷ *Bath Herald* (7th April 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (12th April 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁶⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (22nd February 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁷⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (15th March 1798), p. 3c.

remittance of the Voluntary Subscription from that city and its vicinity'.¹⁷¹

Other provincial newspapers reciprocated by reporting on the voluntary contributions in Bath, as did the London press. *Jackson's Oxford Journal* carried an article listing voluntary contributions from around the country made by individuals, organisations and locations, including eight thousand pounds from the City of Bath.¹⁷² The *Ipswich Journal* reported that 'The voluntary Contributions at Bath, amounted in 4 days to upwards of 9000l.'¹⁷³ A later edition of the *Aberdeen Journal, and General Advertiser for the North of Scotland* gave slightly different figures, declaring that 'Eight Thousand Pounds have been subscribed at Bath in the short space of five days.'¹⁷⁴ Three London newspapers reported that 'The Voluntary Contributions at Bath amount already to 12,000l. - the whole exclusive of Assessed Taxes', and the *Observer* declared that 'The Bath Voluntary Contributions on Friday amounted to 15,110l. 2.s 9d.'¹⁷⁵ Some individual contributions also appeared in the news of other provincial newspapers. The *Northampton Mercury* printed a list of subscriptions from around the country including the thousand pounds from the Bath Corporation, while the subscriptions made by the theatre and the grammar school boys both appeared in the *Oxford Journal*.¹⁷⁶

The Bath press also made a point of reporting on voluntary contributions made jointly by those directly engaged in the defence of the nation. The *Bath Chronicle* of reported that

Capt. Thornborough, and the ship company of his Majesty's ship Robust

¹⁷¹ *Bath Chronicle* (3rd May 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁷² *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (24th February 1798), p. 2c.

¹⁷³ *Ipswich Journal* (24th February 1798), p. 2b.

¹⁷⁴ *Aberdeen Journal* (6th March 1798), p. 2d.

¹⁷⁵ *Sun* (28th February 1798), p. 2d; *Express and Evening Chronicle* (27th February – 1st March 1798), p. 4d; *Evening Mail* (28th February – 2nd March 1798), p. 3b; *Observer* (18th March 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁷⁶ *Northampton Mercury* (17th February 1798), p. 2ab; *Oxford Journal* (3rd March 1798), p. 2d.

have all (except two) voluntarily subscribed for the defence of the country one month's pay, and some two and three months; one man, a carpenter's mate, 5l. down and 5l. a year during the war.

The Western Regiment of Supplementary Militia went as far as to place a notice in the *Bath Herald* to announce that the privates would each subscribe three days' pay and the non-commissioned officers would donate a week's pay. In an addendum to the notice, the officers agreed to also subscribe ten days' wages.¹⁷⁷ The Bath newspapers also reported that the privates of the Old Somersetshire militia subscribing half-a-crown while their officers contributed one week's pay, and the Warminster troop of yeomanry cavalry's subscription of one-hundred guineas during their field day.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, 'the Melksham troop of Volunteer Yeomanry after their exercise subscribed a purse of one hundred guineas as a voluntary subscription in aid of government', the Chippenham troop of yeoman cavalry subscribed 73l. 10s., and the Everly troop of Wiltshire yeoman cavalry contributed 142 guineas.¹⁷⁹ The Taunton volunteers jointly subscribed 377l. 6s., and the Bristol Volunteers, 'a body of near 1000 of the most respectable, merchants, traders, &c. of that opulent city, [...] most patriotically subscribed to the exigencies of the State 1075l. 12s. 6d.'¹⁸⁰ Similarly the Fishguard Corps of Fencibles 'subscribed a *Month's* pay to support Government'.¹⁸¹

Not all of Pitt's ministers had been enamoured of the idea of voluntary contributions, Lord Grenville expressed his concerns in a letter to his brother, the Marquis of Buckingham, dated 2nd February 1798,

[...] not that I am very much attached (but quite the contrary) to the idea of raising public supplies by voluntary contributions, and still less by

¹⁷⁷ *Bath Herald* (24th March 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁷⁸ *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Herald* (24th February 1798), p. 3d.

¹⁷⁹ *Bath Chronicle* (8th March 1798), p. 3c; *Bath Chronicle* (26th April 1798), p. 3d; *Bath Chronicle* (3rd May 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁸⁰ *Bath Chronicle* (5th April 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁸¹ *Bath Herald* (31st March 1798), p. 3d.

contributions soi-disant voluntary, but in reality extorted by popular clamour and prejudice.¹⁸²

The notices and reports in the Bath press provide evidence that Grenville's concerns had some merit. The *Bath Chronicle* reported on a parallel scheme for voluntary contributions for the defence of Ireland, 'to which Latouche and Co. have given 2000l. Lord Ely, Sir John Parnel, Sir John Tydd, 1000l. each'. The report provides an inkling into the social pressures the subscription unleashed: 'To this national subscription, we understand members of Irish families, in this city mean to give liberally, and which is a proper plea for their names not appearing in the list of voluntary contributors in Bath'.¹⁸³ A notice about the Swindon subscription stated that 'little doubt is entertained, but that many others will still come forward and embrace the opportunity of approving of this measure, and of convincing their adjoining neighbours of the same sentiments of loyalty and liberality'.¹⁸⁴ The local authorities also applied gentle pressure at Bathwick where every house in the parish received delivery of handbills 'to inform the Inhabitants, that the Minister and Church-Wardens will attend at Bathwick Church on Thursday, Friday and Saturday next, from Twelve o'clock to Three each day, in order to receive their Voluntary Contributions', and at Trowbridge where the minister and churchwardens resolved to 'call on every inhabitant who has not then subscribed'.¹⁸⁵ To avoid this social pressure escalating into sectarianism, the *Bath Chronicle* printed a rebuttal of reports that had appeared in other newspapers:

The paragraph in several papers, stating that the Dissenters in Birmingham had determined not to subscribe to the voluntary contribution,

¹⁸² Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, *Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George the Third from Original Family Documents, Vol. II* (London, 1853), p. 387.

¹⁸³ *Bath Chronicle* (1st March 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁸⁴ *Bath Chronicle* (8th March 1798), p. 3e.

¹⁸⁵ *Bath Chronicle* (8th March 1798), p. 3ad.

is without the least foundation. Some of those gentlemen have already subscribed liberally; and it is a most unwise and unpatriotic measure, to endeavour to divide Englishmen, at a time when union is so essential to the public safety.¹⁸⁶

Despite the slightly sinister spectre of nationalism, the voluntary contributions proved so popular that they furnished the Treasury with nearly as much money for the war effort as Pitt's Triple Assessment: £2.8 million and £3 million respectively.¹⁸⁷

Conclusion

Newspapers played an important role in the wartime philanthropy of the 1790s. They printed notices announcing the opening of subscriptions by which national campaigns could be set in motion, such as the relief fund for widows and orphans that was instituted by the gentlemen at Lloyd's Coffee House in London. The press played a vital role in the collection of flannel waistcoats for the soldiers serving in Flanders. What began as a scheme formulated by the Lord Provost and magistrates of Edinburgh, and announced in one of that city's newspapers, became a kingdom-wide endeavour due to the influence of John Heriot of the London-based *Sun*. This is a sure indication of the way that newspapers connected the metropolis with the provinces. Nevertheless, the fact that an idea appeared in provincial newspapers did not necessarily ensure that it would be more widely adopted, as was the case for Hannah More's collection of funds to purchase decent footwear for the Somerset militia, and, initially at least, John Palmer's scheme for voluntary contributions to the public purse to aid the war effort. The provincial press also provided a medium by which individuals could

¹⁸⁶ *Bath Chronicle* (15th March 1798), p. 3c.

¹⁸⁷ J. Jeffery-Cook, 'William Pitt and his Taxes', *British Tax Review*, No. 4 (2010), pp. 376-91.

call on the generosity of their community to ameliorate personal tragedies that had been caused by the war.

The content of the Bath newspapers also demonstrates that charity made for a more inclusive associational culture, particularly in the case of the voluntary contribution. Wealthier men and women, both residents and visitors, were joined by working people of both sexes and even children in making donations to the cause. Women in particular demonstrated their generosity and feeling. They were heavily involved in the subscriptions for widows and orphans, the making of flannel waistcoats and in making voluntary contributions. They were addressed directly in some notices, and the *Times* went so far as to 'beg leave also to propose, that a Book should be opened at the Bank, and in *every parish*, for the purpose of receiving Female Voluntary Contributions', so that 'they may contribute to the defence of their country'.¹⁸⁸ They even instigated charitable projects themselves, as was the case with Hannah More. As Colley states, 'Far more than in any previous war, British women discovered in patriotic activism in this conflict an outlet for their energies and organisational capacities, and a public role of a kind.'¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ *The Times* (24th February 1798), p. 3b.

¹⁸⁹ Colley, *Britons*, p. 260.

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the role of Bath newspapers during the period of the French Revolution through a thematic analysis of their local content. This analysis demonstrated the role of the city's press in the encouragement of increasingly inclusive forms of association and in depicting Bath its region as being united, generous and well defended city.

From the simple building blocks of local news, notice, advertisements, letters and poems the newspapers constructed a mechanism of local engagement with national associations on an unprecedented level. This dissertation contains numerous examples of the creation of Bath associations that replicated those already established in London. While the capital can easily be seen as the hub of a national press network, each provincial newspaper was the hub of a localised network. The Bath newspapers catered for regular readers living as far away as Minehead and Gloucester, as well as reaching into the local countryside. Just as Bathonians emulated Londoners, rural communities emulated urban society. Consequently, the most prominent associational forms appeared in the least populated of locales, thereby giving a reassuring sense of national unity during a period of uncertainty.

The events of the French revolution altered this sense of national identity over the period. Any conception of Britishness based on a simple enmity with the French changed in order to accommodate the presence of émigrés, giving rise to the more positive association of charity and religious tolerance with the British character. The Bath newspapers promoted these characteristics in their portrayal of Madame de Sisley, their promotion of the relief of the exiled French clergy and

their more sympathetic reporting of the French prisoners of war who passed through the city.

The celebration of royal anniversaries in the city gave residents and visitors the opportunity to associate with one another and with the nation as a whole. The Bath newspapers reflected changes in these forms of association over the period. The rather perfunctory reporting of civic events at the beginning contrasts with the unique and vibrant advertising and reports of the commercial festivities. The outbreak of war revitalised civic displays of affection for the nation's first family. The pomp and ceremony of military displays held on these dates on the Hanoverian calendar were open to those who could not afford to attend the exclusive balls and galas as well as those who could, giving a great sense of civic and nationally unity. This inclusivity was not without its limits; while at least some Bath newspapers provided a medium by which reformers and radicals could associate and promote their cause, the subsequent conservative reaction created a climate of fear in which opponents of the existing order became marginalised.

The national loyalist association movement encouraged the active participation of all ranks of society in the defence of the king and constitution. The appropriation of traditionally radical practices of civic assembly and public correspondence paradoxically widened the political debate, giving voice to those excluded from the political nation. The exigencies of war similarly required further participation in the affairs of state. While the lower orders were well represented in the county militia, those with sufficient wealth could make use of the insurance schemes advertised in the Bath newspapers. By the middling sort were eager to participate in the volunteer corps that the newspapers did so much to promote.

The volunteer corps opened subscription books to cover their expenses as did those wishing to provide relief for the widows and orphans of servicemen who died in action. The promotion of this cause in the Bath press particularly focused on women, as did the philanthropic scheme to provide warm winter clothing for the troops serving in Flanders and the provision of new shoes for the Somerset Militia, an endeavour that was instituted and administered by women. Yet it was the voluntary contribution to government funds that encouraged the widest participation, attracting subscriptions from males and females of all social classes and all ages. This more participatory civil society undoubtedly provided the conditions for later democratic reforms.

This dissertation has opened up new avenues of research into both provincial newspapers, particularly with regard to their local content, and the forms of association that they fostered. It invites further study into the press' role in the promotion of an associational culture. This study focused on a time of societal stress in order to amplify the role of the press; similar studies of different periods of the city's history would expand our understanding of the ways in which the Bath newspapers promoted participation in civil society throughout the eighteenth century. Similarly, this dissertation provides a framework by which the societal role of other provincial newspapers can be revealed. The somewhat cursory comparison of the local content of the Bath newspapers with other provincial newspapers in this study has demonstrated some degrees of similarity and difference. This does not endorse the view that provincial newspapers had little local flavour. Comparative analyses may reveal regional variations and the unique qualities of particular urban centres.

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