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Pleasure and Utility
Domestic Bathrooms in Britain, 1660–1815

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Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Edinburgh
2013
This is to declare that this thesis is all my own work and has not been previously published or submitted for examination elsewhere

Elizabeth Graham

Date
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Abstract

The insertion of the bathroom into the floor plan of the traditional gentry house at the end of the seventeenth century disrupted the established sequence of rooms and the social order embodied in it. The gradual and unco-ordinated trend towards bathroom ownership partook of the evolution of ideas about privacy, comfort and the specialisation of rooms in the grand house, and culminated in the compact bathroom. The revival of bathing took place against the backdrop of the Scientific Revolution, and was initiated by physicians. At first, the benefits of different methods of bathing were hotly contested. However, by the end of the century, physicians were beginning to believe that cleanliness, rather than cold water, was the key to good health. Although the rich often continued to build large plunge baths, this shift paved the way for the eventual dominance of the compact bathroom.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a specialised bathing room within the house was out of reach for people of ordinary means. Changes to the plumbing trade were intertwined with developments that were to bring bathroom ownership within reach. In eighteenth-century Scotland, increasing numbers of bathroom projects might have been expected to expand the work of plumbers, but technological, commercial and legislative change—in particular the separation of design from construction—undermined their monopoly on their craft. Goods that had been manufactured on site and with local materials at the beginning of the eighteenth century were, by the beginning of the nineteenth, designed by a new breed of entrepreneur—inventor, manufactured by less skilled workers, and could be purchased in a shop and installed by a handyman with no particular trade identity.

However, knowledge about the health benefits of bathing and technical advances are, in themselves, inadequate to account for the growing importance of bathrooms. The explanation lies in social, not technological or scientific change. Visiting public bathhouses exposed bathers to physical, moral and social pollution, at a time when failure to comply with the dictates of bodily cleanliness could provoke the disgust of one’s peers. Disgust constructed and policed the boundaries between social groups. Private bathing facilities met the requirements of bodily propriety without the risk of contamination. Moreover, a privately owned bathhouse in the grounds provided a focus for tourists or a site for intimate sociability. Bathhouses were a means of displaying wealth, taste and the fruits of the Grand Tour. Visitors could identify themselves with owners through the consumption of culture, improve their aesthetic skills through writing and drawing, and make claims to gentility through their appreciation of what they saw. As owners began to withdraw from the ever-increasing numbers of tourists, and from the formal sociability of the country seat, their bathhouses became a place for sociability in retirement which offered all kinds of entertainments, from boating and fishing, to cards and music.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Evolving Bathroom: The Quest for Form and Place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quacks, Empiricks and Rational Men: The (Re-)Invention of Bathing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade in Transition: The Industrialising Building Site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civility’s Conflicting Demands: The Bathroom Foreshadowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the Bathhouse in the Garden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database of bathing spaces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathing before the Eighteenth Century</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Illustrations

0.1 Design for a garden building
0.2 Sir Richard Worse-than-sly, exposing his wife’s bottom; o fye!, 1782, James Gillray
0.3 Rufford bathhouse circa 1729
1.1 A lady in her bathroom, James Green, 1746–1800
1.2 Principal floor, Ham House, Middlesex
1.3 Basement floor (modern plan), Ham House, Middlesex
1.4 North elevation and cross section, Coleorton, Leicestershire
1.5 Plan of a principal story of ... a house for Sir Thomas Ackland baronet in Devonshire
1.6 The plan of the first floor of Lessly (Fife)
1.7 Plan of the ground story of Cullean Castle ... for the Earl of Cassillis (Ayrshire)
1.8 Plan of the ground story of Oxenford Castle the seat of Sir John Dalrymple baronet
1.9 Bath at Georgian House, Bristol, Somerset, 1791
1.10 Plan of the basement story of Shelburne [Lansdowne] House in Berkley Square
1.11 Plan of the Ground Story of His Grace the Duke of Roxburgh’s House, Hanover Square
1.12 Mr Baron Grants House, Soho Square, Parlor Story
1.13 Principal Story of Mr Baron Grants House in Soho Square
1.14 Principal Storey of a Country House
1.15 The Cold Bath Room, 8 May 1847
1.16 Maidstone Whim, 1782, publisher William Wells
1.17 The bath at Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire
1.18 Design for a bath, 1756
1.19 Marble bath, Chatsworth, Derbyshire
1.20 Section, Royal Infirmary Baths, William Adam, 1738–48
1.21 Plan, Royal Infirmary Baths, William Adam, 1738–48
1.22 Queen Caroline’s Bathroom, Hampton Court, 1995 reconstruction
1.23 Plan for the ground floor of Dalkeith Palace
1.24 Plan of private rooms, ground floor, Lyme Park
1.25 Thirlestane Castle: Plan of the dining and drawing room floor
2.1 The Maidstone bath or the modern Susannah, Ancient and Modern Print Warehouse, 1782
3.1 The plan of the city and castle of Edinburgh, William Edgar, 1742
4.1 Bathing in the King’s Spring, Bath, by John Nixon, 1801
5.1 Plan and elevation of the bagnio in the garden at Eastbury in Devonshire, the seat of the Right Honorable George Dodington, John Vanbrugh
5.2 Bath in the fishing house, Kedleston, Derbyshire, 1759–65
5.3 Design for a bath at Dunkeld for His Grace the Duke of Atholl (Perthshire), [G?] Stewart, 1779
5.4 Bathroom–grotto at Gunnersbury Park, London, c. 1763–86
5.5 Chart of surviving decorative materials, south wall, Gunnersbury Park, 1996
5.6 Reconstruction based on surviving decorative materials, south wall, Gunnersbury Park, 1996
5.7 Plan and elevation of an hermitage in the Augustine style
5.8 Grotesque, or Rural Bath
5.9 Side view of the bathhouse at Corsham Court
5.10 Gothic temple front of bathhouse at Corsham Court, Wiltshire, 1797–8
5.11 A Bath
5.12 Section of the Bathhouse
5.13 Chinese Grotto
5.14 Design for a Bath and Garden Seat: Elevation
5.15 Design for a Bath and Garden Seat: Floor plan
5.16 Elevation of a Dairy House in the Moresque Stile
5.17 Plan of the Dairy House
5.18 Plan of the Ground Story of Lowther Hall, detail, Adam Office,
5.19 Plan of the Water Tower at Carshalton
5.20 Reconstruction of baths, Carshalton, Surrey
Introduction

Explaining the silences

In 1778, the second edition of William Smellie’s *Encyclopaedia Britannica* outlined the distinctions between science, the useful arts and the polite arts:

Arts are commonly divided into *useful or mechanic, liberal or polite*. The former are those wherein the hand and body are more concerned than the mind; of which kind are most of those which furnish us with the *necessaries* of life, and are properly known by the name of *trades*, ... The [polite arts] are such as depend more on the labour of the mind than that of the hand; they are the produce of the *imagination* ... The essence of the polite arts ... consists in expression. The end of all these arts is *pleasure*; whereas the end of the sciences is *instruction* and *utility*. Some of the polite arts indeed, as eloquence, poetry, and architecture, are frequently applied to objects that are useful ... but in these cases, though the ground-work belongs to those sciences which employ the understanding, yet the expression arises from the inventive faculty. It is a picture that is designed by Minerva, to which the muses add the colouring, and the graces the frame.¹

Smellie conceded that the polite and the mechanical arts could not be separated into discrete categories, for what the human hand constructed was also the product of human imagination, taste and knowledge: the picture that Minerva painted, was given depth by the muses, and embellished by the graces.

In his address to the American Society of Architectural Historians in 2006, the then chairman of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain, Frank Salmon, teased out the implications for twenty-first-century architectural historians of the complexities to which Smellie referred. According to Salmon, the challenge is to ‘recognise our current practices to be inherently and positively interdisciplinary, intradisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, transdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary’. Amidst fears that architectural history as a discipline might be lost in this labyrinth of approaches, Salmon exhorted architectural historians not to regard the discipline as fragmented, but rather as facets of a polyhedron that coheres ‘around a central understanding ... in which the unifying factors ... [are] careful material analysis of buildings and close study of primary documentary and

drawn evidence’. These facets, he elaborated, involve the production, use and consumption of buildings, their material and spatial character and their place in the urban landscape, and must be the subject of systematic research and writing. In this, historians are assisted by the survival of material objects and spatial configurations.²

Minerva’s room— to extend Smellie’s metaphor—is therefore an even more nuanced space than the one he described. It was the product, not only of the mechanical and polite arts, but of history, culture, urban form, science, and morality and religious belief. Moreover, the room was not solely a product of these processes, completed by agents who then walked away; it was an organic space, the character of which was brought to life, and even changed, by the culture, values, perceptions and practices of those who inhabited it. A room is not just a physical structure, it is also a cultural construct, and it is, as a consequence, more or less demonstrably associated with the whole culture and history surrounding its creation and use. While Salmon rightly urged architectural historians to immerse themselves in material objects and their spatial configurations, as well as documentary sources, this poses problems for the student of the eighteenth-century bathing space. Here material form has been compromised, changed, lost or lies hidden and unidentified. The documentary evidence is, indeed, fragmented, and blanketed by a silence that makes reading between the lines necessary. The history of bathing spaces in the long eighteenth-century is not so much a polyhedron as a jigsaw, from which some of the pieces are missing, perhaps irrecoverably.³ Accordingly, the multi-disciplinary approach of this study not only reflects the multifaceted nature of architectural history, but makes a virtue of necessity by piecing together a multiplicity of sources to offer a glimpse of bathing spaces and the people who built and used them. Here, Minerva’s room is not only coloured and framed, but peopled by its owners and users.


The key source for a study of bathing spaces is, of course, the surviving material fabric, but in the case of bathrooms, surviving bathrooms are likely to have been compromised in a number of ways. As a space that involves both water and dirt, and which is transformed by technological change, bathing facilities are more likely to be remodelled than low-technology spaces. Changes to bathing practices also impose functional change on the bathroom. In low-technology spaces, social change can take place against an enduring backdrop. For example, the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century occupants of the drawing room drew their armchairs away from the walls into an intimate circle to serve the ends of a new model of sociability, but for this it was not necessary to remodel the fabric of the room in which they met.\(^4\) The common location of bathrooms in the basements of country houses has added to their vulnerability as the use of the houses has changed. At Culzean Castle in Ayrshire and Lyme Park in Cheshire, the bathrooms have been a convenient spot, away from the tourist circuit of the grand rooms, where the bath could be floored over to provide office space. At Aynhoe in Northamptonshire the bath was filled with concrete in recent times, so that visitors would not fall into it on the way to the tearoom.\(^5\)

The problem of the damage or loss of bathing spaces is compounded by a lack of knowledge about pre–nineteenth-century bathrooms. The website account of restoration work at Moggerhanger Park (1809–11) in Bedfordshire between 2002 and 2003 offers an account of the discovery of ‘a large well’ in the basement, some two metres wide. In March 2003, the ‘“well” continues to cause intrigue!’, and in July, the writers were able to announce with pride that a new system of boilers had been installed in the basement and were ready for use. Renovations at Moggerhanger were conducted with professional advice, and my researches into this house at the Sir John Soane’s Museum did not reveal that there had ever been a bath in the basement of this house. However, the Mystery of Moggerhanger does give rise to fears that the pre-existence of baths often goes unrecognised. For the same reason, owners of baths seem sometimes to be


unaware of their rarity and historical value. My request to see the bath at Rousham House, Oxfordshire, which was documented by Mark Girouard in 1978 met with the reply ‘I regret Rousham no longer has an 18th c bathroom’. Even in recent times, surviving bathrooms are continuing to be neglected, damaged or demolished.

Although damage to the physical fabric of bathing facilities has no doubt tended to veil this space from the historian’s eye, damage and loss of bathing spaces cannot entirely account for the silence surrounding the subject of eighteenth-century bathrooms and bathing. One possibility is that the Victorian literature about bathing, both medical and civic, is so voluminous that the assumption that bathing was a nineteenth-century invention is often accepted unquestioningly. Indeed, it is not too much to characterise the Victorians as obsessed by health, cleanliness and their bowels. Less understandable is the silence of eighteenth-century writers on the subject. Since, as I will argue, bathroom ownership was a relatively new development in the eighteenth century, one would expect builders’ manuals and architectural treatises to explain their construction. Popular authors like William Halfpenny, whose 1724 Practical Architecture had run to seven editions by 1741, made no mention of them. Nor did James Gibbs, whose Book of Architecture was perhaps the most widely read manual of its time. Batty Langley, another prolific eighteenth-century stalwart, made only a single passing reference to baths.

The possibility that architects and builders avoided the subject of bathrooms out of a sense of delicacy, besides defeating the purpose of for which a manual is written, is rendered improbable by the well-known earthiness of that century: it was, as Marie Roberts has said, the age of the belly laugh and, as its political caricaturists have shown, not one which shied away from scatological subjects. That the bathhouse itself was a site of sociability supports this view. A

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8 Batty Langley, The City and Country Builder’s and Workman’s Treasury of Designs, Harding, London, 1745, plates XCIV to CV.
more probable reason for the neglect is that knowledge about the construction of bathing spaces was not hard to acquire but, on the contrary, quite easy. The number of surviving bathhouses suggests that in the eighteenth century there were hundreds, if not thousands of them throughout Britain (see appendix 1). This being the case, the architects and owners of bathing spaces drew not on the information available in printed manuals, but rather on the body of inherited and shared knowledge within the plumber’s trade. This knowledge was imparted verbally and experientially within the social and familial networks of the trade incorporation, and not through books or formal education. This view is supported by the words of James Playfair, the only eighteenth-century architect to devote a book, albeit a very short book, to the subject of bath construction. The preamble to his 1783 *Method of Constructing Vapor Baths* suggests that whereas the knowledge to build a bathroom might once have been abstruse it was, by 1783, within the reach of ordinary people. However, a footnote directing readers to the publisher for the names and addresses of suitable tradesmen does suggest that Playfair still expected a level of unfamiliarity with methods and materials, even by this late date.\(^{10}\)

If architects could *assume* knowledge on the part of tradesmen, they were then freed from practical considerations and could focus on the architectural place and form of the bathing space. In this way, references to bathrooms fell victim not to their uniqueness, but to the generic and adaptable form of the bathhouse. In 1750, architect Robert Morris recorded several conversations he had had about a plan he had executed for a bathhouse (illustration 1): a rabbi suggested it would make a good synagogue, another proposed a chapel, another a mosque. A young surgeon told him it would make ‘excellent private Dissecting Room, and the adjoining Cells, as he calls them, a proper Repository for their Instruments, and other Aparatus’s’; someone else proposed an auction room, and a friend wanted it for a library. ‘I can only say’, Morris continued, ‘my first Intentions were to make it for a cold Bath, but as there are so many Conjectures and Opinions about its Utility, I shall submit to better Judges, to assign a Use for it, most agreeable to

\(^{10}\) James Playfair, *Method of Constructing Vapor Baths so as to Render Them of Small Expence and of Commodious Use in Private Families*, J. Murray, London, 1783, pp. 5–6, note to p. 15.
Illustration 1

Design for a garden building
Robert Morris, Rural Architecture, London, 1750, plate XLVII.
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
their own Sentiments’. Morris’s design did, in fact, show the outline of the bath with steps descending into it, but two other designs for bathhouses in the same book did not. This account demonstrates that any of the multitude of published designs for garden pavilions and summerhouses could be adapted to a bathhouse at the whim of the owner. Indeed, it is probable that there are, even now, many bathhouses all over Britain languishing unidentified because they are thought to be summerhouses.

The silence in the primary sources is reflected in, and perhaps explains, a silence in the secondary literature, and has proved fertile ground for misinformation—the history, according to Sellar and Yeatman’s 1066 and All That, that ‘everyone knows’. A brief survey reveals the scope of the problem. Perhaps one of the greatest impediments to giving this subject the attention it deserves is the levity it arouses, which tends to trivialise discussion and which, as we shall see, is often found in the English, but not the French, secondary literature. Alexander Kira accounts for this behaviour plausibly in a discussion of humour based on taboos about defecation, which he suggests is sex-surrogate humour for those unable to talk about sex. That the bathroom, in which water closet and tub co-exist becomes code for all that is unmentionable, and therefore funny. Of course, this association is, as we shall see, a post-Victorian one, since water closets and bathing facilities never occupied the same room in the eighteenth century. The tendency to treat matters of cleanliness with humour has also been noted by Virginia Smith in her Clean: A History of Personal Hygiene and Purity of 2007. In many cases, misinformation is not central to authors’ arguments, but the passing on of misapprehensions as part of historians’ obiter dicta leads to the creation of a body of hearsay that attains its own authority and is difficult to dispel. One of the most prevalent beliefs is that ‘Before Victorian

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12 Morris, plates 17 and 24.
14 Not, of course, that a lively and amusing account devalues historical work, but in some cases it risks becoming the aim of the work.
times, most people did not wash or bath at all, but by the 1830s some doctors were saying that bathing was good for health'. That this date must be strongly qualified will be discussed in chapter two. Nor, indeed, was the Duke of Wellington’s Indian experience the source of British bathing practices, as has been claimed. Steven Parissien places the cold ‘plunge bath’ near the beginning of the eighteenth-century to be replaced by a portable wooden or ceramic tub filled from jugs by the end of the century. David Adshead supports him by suggesting that the plunge bath at Wimpole was rather old-fashioned for its late eighteenth-century date. However, John Cornforth quotes nineteenth-century antiquarian Henry Shaw, who suggested a warm bath and a shower bath be installed in the house, and a cold bath for an ornamental building in the park by a stream. By this analysis, although large, hot plunge baths were superseded by the domestic plumbed-in tub, the cold plunge bath may have survived elsewhere long into the nineteenth century. As chapter one will show, the evolution of the eighteenth-century bathroom was gradual and unco-ordinated, resulting in the co-existence of a number of types of bath from the simple tub to sophisticated hot, cold and vapour baths well into the first half of the nineteenth century. Baths were not, as Binney et al maintain, mainly confined to garden buildings. Parissien’s and Girouard’s view that the shower was a nineteenth-century invention is also a misapprehension, although it does appear to have appeared in the late eighteenth century.

In addition to the lacunae in the primary sources, and misinformation in the secondary sources, the survival of bathing spaces has often been compromised

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22 Binney et al, p. 11.
by the interpretation of historic houses for tourists, in which bathing and service spaces are damaged or ignored in favour of displaying the grand sequences of rooms to their best advantage. This is surprising in the light of this thesis, which shows that, in the eighteenth century, the bathhouse, in particular, could also be a site of display. Even where bathrooms in the house (which were more likely to be private) are in question, their destruction has partaken of a version of history in which grand people and grand rooms have been privileged over the private, functional and bodily aspects of the Enlightenment world, and in which bathrooms are, by definition, not grand. In the past, the heritage sector has implicitly accepted this discourse in the rooms it has chosen to open to the public. That this is now changing can be seen at Erddig (Wrexham), where visitors now enter the house through the servants’ quarters, and in the renovation of a number of bathhouses (Gunnersbury Park, Kenwood, Langton, Carshalton and Kedleston), although these spaces are not yet fully integrated into the interpretation of the houses, and are often locked. It is the Great Men and Grand Rooms version of history that historians of Foucault’s generation challenged by beginning to write, at first in the face of considerable opposition, about women, children and servants, who had formerly been written out of history. Now that such work as Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, Ariès and Duby’s *A History of Private Life* and Leonore Davidoff’s *Day in the Life of a Victorian Domestic Servant* have made respectable the study of the body, the family, social conditions and private life, the study of bathrooms need no longer remain in the realms of the unmentionable.²⁴

**The Secondary Sources**

As Kathleen Brown comments, the history of cleanliness is complicated, and cannot be untangled by recourse to any single theorist.²⁵ The multifaceted nature of the project, bridging as it does a diversity of materials and trades, the history of bathing and washing, and a broader approach to cultural history has meant that the


story of the bathroom has had to be pieced together from a variety of sources. The first, of course, is the work of those who have focused on the bathing spaces themselves. If there is no single, mature body of literature on bathing spaces, but a number of works nonetheless touch on the subject from different angles. For many writers, bathing spaces have been a minor aspect of their study, sometimes suffering from the kind of misinformation discussed earlier. Dorothy Hartley’s 1964 *Water in England* roams widely around the topic, contributing much of interest, but without a core argument or consistent footnoting. Desmond Eyles’s history of the Royal Doulton factory did not touch on pre–nineteenth-century bathrooms, and Miles Oglethorpe on ‘The Bathroom and Water Closet’ mentioned eighteenth-century squalor in passing, before engaging with Victorian attempts to deal with urban dirt and disease.\(^{26}\) Binney et al’s *Taking the Plunge* briefly surveyed British bathing from Roman times through to the nineteenth century, hardly touching on the eighteenth century and then, in common with others, merely to stress the absence of bathing and the disreputability of eighteenth-century public bathhouses.\(^{27}\) Again, in *Sanitation through the Ages*, Eyles passed over the eighteenth century to focus on the nineteenth, pointing out that in 1837, Buckingham Palace had no bathroom, perhaps unaware that at some time between 1703 and 1718, a bathroom had been attached to the greenhouse at Buckingham House, which was still there on the drawings of 1743. This experience supports the notion that nineteenth-century concern about bathrooms has blinded historians to their previous existence.\(^ {28}\)

Christina Hardyment’s *Behind the Scenes: Domestic Arrangements in Historic Houses*, however, touches lightly but accurately on the subject of baths. She suggests, in passing, that sociability was an aspect of bathroom use, and mentions that the sulphur bath at Kedleston drew visitors from afar, but her aims are too general for her to develop these promising leads.\(^ {29}\) Alexander Kira’s 1977


\(^ {27}\) Binney et al, p. 11.


The Bathroom is a work of sociology and, while it provides useful insights into issues relating to bathroom use and attitudes to bathing, it does not deal with the historical evolution of the bathroom as a physical space. He does, however, connect the growth in numbers of domestic bathrooms with the great nineteenth-century infrastructure project that brought clean water and waste water disposal to large cities. He is undoubtedly right that large-scale bathroom ownership would not have been possible without these developments, but does not account for the dearth of bathrooms in the country before this period, or attempt to trace the genesis of the modern British bathroom.

David Eveleigh’s Bogs, Baths and Basins emanates from the heritage sector as a response to questions from visitors to country houses. As the title implies, this 1960 work covered the history of privies as well as baths and bathing, and the broad focus of the survey of habits from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, in France as well as Britain, prevent it from coming to grips with the eighteenth-century British story. Similarly, Steve Dobell’s 1996 Down the Plughole: An Irreverent History of the Bath is a brief survey of bathroom history starting in Knossos in 1700BC. This modest book traces British bathing practices from Francis Bacon, and touches on seventeenth-century public bathhouses in London, before declaring that there was little progress on bathing in the eighteenth century. While I will take issue with this conclusion, the book is well researched and, although written for the general reader, its title undervalues it. More recently, popular travel writer Bill Bryson has written a history of the home, which offers a reasonably accurate overview of bathing history, and one that avoids the temptations of jocularity, but makes no mention of bathrooms in houses before the nineteenth century. In 2011, Lucy Worsley published If Walls Could Talk: An Intimate History of the Home, based on her television series of the same name. She recalls the prevalence of bathing in medieval times, its fall from grace after the Reformation and, quite rightly in my view, attributes its revival to

30 Kira, pp. 8–9.
late seventeenth-century physicians like Sir John Floyer. She dates a more widespread acceptance of bathing to John Wesley’s influence in the second half of the eighteenth century, and points out that, in the early nineteenth century, the daily bath was still far from standard in a middle class family. However, she dates the plumbed-in bath to the 1860s. 34 While she is right that a plumbed-in, upstairs bathroom in a middle class house was still a rarity before this date, the origins of the modern, plumbed-in bath must be sought further back.

The history of cleanliness has attracted more attention, and more serious attention, than the history of the bathroom or bathhouse as an architectural space. Here again, some authors have dealt with the subject outside the mainstream of academic writing. Jane Hugget’s *Did They Wash in Those Days?* is a short overview of washing history from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. 35 Although directed at the large and enthusiastic re-enactment community, it has the merit of making pre–nineteenth-century practices the subject of serious enquiry and accurate reporting. Until recently, the eighteenth-century story has been dominated by Lawrence Wright’s 1960 *Clean and Decent.* 36 Written for a general audience and in a light tone, it nevertheless attempts to uncover the history of modern bathing, and is a good introduction to the subject. Its broad focus, starting in the sixteenth century and covering France and Britain, should have been a trigger for more focused and scholarly enquiry, which has, however, been slow in coming. Katherine Ashenburg’s recent *Clean: An Unsanitised History of Washing* has come from the same stable, being an overview of European bathing customs from antiquity to the 1950s. 37 While the range of Ashenburg’s enquiry is impressive, it was not an in-depth scholarly work dealing with British practices. I shall pass over Reginald Reynolds’s *Cleanliness and Godliness* of 1953, which is written in a pseudo–eighteenth-century style intended to be jocular, and which

perpetuates a large number of the clichés and much of the misinformation this subject attracts.\footnote{As, for example, that bathing was introduced by the duke of Wellington, who had learnt it in India. See, Reginald Reynolds, \textit{Cleanliness and Godliness, or the Further Metamorphosis: A Discussion of the Problems of Sanitation Raised by Sir John Harington}, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1953, p. 79.}

The writers who have approached the subject seriously have often produced surveys that range over a large period of time and usually more than one European country. George Scott’s ambitious 1939 work covers the history of bathing for the whole Western world since ancient times, but does not touch on the development of domestic bathrooms in the eighteenth century. While he acknowledges the key importance of Sir John Floyer’s late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century books on bathing, he was one of the first to establish Vincent Priessnitz’s nineteenth-century water cure as the founding experiment in bathing treatments.\footnote{George Ryley Scott, \textit{The Story of Baths and Bathing}, T. Werner Laurie, London, 1939, p. 165. For another account of Priessnitz, which attributes to him nineteenth-century ideas about the water cure, see Ingram.} Henry Sigerist’s 1956 series of lectures for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, \textit{Landmarks in the History of Hygiene}, has been an acknowledged starting point for historians of cleanliness, and offers a brief overview of the subject since ancient times. Although it shows a broad grasp of the subject and the complex intertwining of narratives of empirical medicine, urbanisation, poverty and public health, it is too short a work to offer a detailed consideration of any of these issues, and does not touch on the evolution of bathrooms as a physical space.\footnote{Henry Sigerist, \textit{Landmarks in the History of Hygiene}, Oxford University Press, London, 1956.}

More recently, Virginia Smith’s 2007 \textit{Clean} offers a ray of hope that this subject will at last attract the serious attention of a sufficient number of scholars to create the broad scholarly base it needs. Based on her PhD for the University of London, Smith’s account starts outside the discipline of history, with a discussion of animal grooming and its relation to survival, family bonding and pleasure. The survey that follows places cleanliness and grooming within its European cultural context from Classical times to the present day, with reference to the religious, moral and social framework that informed it at every point. The Wellcome Trust’s recent (2011) exhibition entitled \textit{Dirt: The Filthy Reality of Everyday Life}, and its
accompanying publication (to which Virginia Smith was a contributor) suggests that cleanliness is, at last, becoming the subject of mainstream discussion in Britain.\textsuperscript{41} With exhibits starting in Delft in the seventeenth century, this exhibition passed lightly over the eighteenth century to deal with the Great Stink of nineteenth-century London and Joseph Lister’s work on asepsis, before touching on twentieth-century eugenics in Germany, modern Indian sewage disposal and American garbage dumps. Although it was a little disappointing that this exhibition lacked a coherent narrative on the history of dirt, it is to be hoped that the attention of such a prestigious organisation will do much to render this subject a respectable field of enquiry.

The growing body of secondary literature on cleanliness is not the only secondary literature within which the history of bathing can assume a place: there is a much more developed field within which an interest in cleanliness can find a context. In the last thirty years, increasing attention has been paid to the place of medical history within discussions of the Scientific Revolution, although the re-invention of bathing has not yet been considered as an outcome of the experimental method. The \textit{oeuvre} of Roy Porter does, however, successfully bridge the boundaries between medical history, social history and the history of the body in a way that offers a way forward for bathing as a field of study. Indeed, the history of the body has, in the last forty years, reached full maturity, and offers a natural starting place for an interdisciplinary approach to bathing and bathing spaces. Foucault’s \textit{History of Sexuality}, while not dealing directly with the subject of bathing, does offer a new, nuanced, and multi-causal way of reading history, in which silence itself can tell a story, and the use of language can transform social practice. For Foucault, the seventeenth century marked the ‘advent of the great prohibitions, the exclusive promotion of adult marital sexuality, the imperatives of decency, [and] the obligatory concealment of the body’, and he believed that this repression had begun with the privileged classes, who had the most to gain in the exchange of sexual freedom for tangible benefits.\textsuperscript{42} As we shall see, these


imperatives were conflated with ideals of civility to hasten women’s withdrawal from the public bagnio to the domestic bathing space.

French scholars have been less reluctant than the British to discuss the history of bathing and bathrooms, and have framed their discussion in terms of the awakening of the senses, and the history of comfort and of private life. This awakening was not just about pleasure and eroticism, but highlights Enlightenment thinking about the nature of existence itself, the senses came to be seen as providing humans with prima facie evidence for existential reality. Issues relating to sexuality do, of course, play a part in this discourse, not the least because these issues were a part of eighteenth-century consciousness about bathing. Eighteenth-century French discussions about modesty in bathing focused on the naked body, in contrast to British discussions, which focused on adultery and fornication. French fiction and drawings showed a preoccupation with voyeurism, whereas British examples appear to apply to a single, real-life incident, which inspired a proliferation of caricatures. This was the notorious divorce case between Sir Richard Worsley and his wife, whose adultery with Captain Bisset was set against the backdrop of a bathhouse at Maidstone in 1782 (illustration 2). Worsley received minimal damages for his action, because he had encouraged Bissett to spy upon his wife, and had warned her by knocking on the door and saying ‘Bissett is going to get up to look at you’. The Worsley

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Illustration 2

Sir Richard Worse-than-sly, exposing his wife’s bottom; o fyel!
1782, James Gillray
British Museum, Prints and Drawings, Satires 6109
© Trustees of the British Museum
divorce case is one of the few sources of the pictorial representation of bathing in eighteenth-century Britain. While the pictorial representations of the occasion belong to the category of satirical prints, my interest here is not in the personalities, events and legalities of the Worsley divorce, but in the bathing room as a backdrop. Caricaturists who exaggerates and distorted the parties to the divorce nonetheless drew on their experience of bathing rooms to provide architectural detail. The exception to this is The Modern Susannah (illustration 2, chapter 2), where the caricaturist seizes the opportunity to represent the tap as a drooping penis—clearly a satirical and not an architectural device.

The French writing on bathing has focused on three interconnected values—privacy, comfort and pleasure. Georges Vigarello has dealt with the relationship between comfort and hygiene, and Renzo Dubbini has discussed the origins of the idea of comfort, with particular reference to the relationship between a growing value for privacy and changing floor plans, as have Julia Csergo and Ornella Selvafolta.47 Ideas about convenience and pleasure in relation to house design and, in particular, bathrooms have also been explored by Monique Eleb-Vidal and Anne Debarre-Blanchard in their Architecture de la vie privée, in which they approach the discussion from the perspective of design and plan in the context of social change. Dominique Massounie, too, is at home with this synthesis of architectural and social history in her discussion of plan form and the evolving value for privacy and sensory pleasure.48 Gabrielle Joudiou’s analysis of the bathhouse of M. de Sainte-James outside Paris touches on the building’s erotic past, but explains the design of the building in terms of the rituals of freemasonry.49


Like British historians, Ornella Selvafolta has discussed eighteenth-century French bathing in terms of the evolution of medical opinion on bathing, as has Wolfgang Cilleßen, who placed the medical revolution in bathing in the 1780s, rather later than I will do. Cilleßen’s *Exotismus und Kommerz*, although it deals with eighteenth-century Parisian public baths, casts valuable light on beliefs and cultures of bathing that can inform a study of domestic spaces.\(^{50}\) However, in his discussion of bidets and their role in sexual hygiene and contraception, Jean-Pierre Goubert has shown that, despite a growing value for hygiene, washing was not seen as morally neutral. Julia Csergo has thoroughly examined the relationship between cleanliness and morality in nineteenth-century France and linked it to changing ideas about privacy.\(^{51}\) Recently, the centrality of the body within the discipline of history has been confirmed by the publication of the *Histoire du corps*, edited by Georges Vigarello, Alain Corbin and Jean-Jacques Cortine.\(^{52}\) This publication marks the acceptance of a body of earlier work in the mainstream of scholarly consideration: Alain Corbin’s 1982 *The Foul and the Fragrant* was a landmark in the history of the body through its success in charting the history, meaning and social power of smells, particularly bodily smells. Three years later, the publication of Georges Vigarello’s *Concepts of Cleanliness* provided a most valuable introduction to the history of cleanliness, and makes important links between culture, cleanliness and the body, especially in his analysis of the relationship between cleanliness and civility as the eighteenth century progressed, and the value for naturalness and simplicity in the body mirrored cultural change.\(^{53}\)

In the English-speaking world, the history of comfort and privacy have also received increasing attention in recent years. However, John Crowley’s 2001 *Invention of Comfort*, excellent though it is, does not extend to a discussion of bathing but, rather, focuses on warmth, light and ventilation. On the other hand,


\(^{51}\) Selvafolta, pp. 299–307; Jean-Pierre Goubert, ‘Le bidet, ou le mot impudique’, pp. 51–6; and Csergo, p. 239.

\(^{52}\) Vigarello, Georges, Corbin, Alain and Cortine, Jean-Jacques (eds), *Histoire du corps*.

Elizabeth Shove offers a chapter on bathrooms in her 2003 *Conflict, Cleanliness and Convenience*, a sociological work that shows how what is considered normal is constructed through a shared cluster of beliefs and conventions. Bathing habits, she claims, are a product of attitudes to duty and pleasure, and send out messages about identity and social position.\(^{54}\) Kira discusses bathroom usage in terms of privacy, though in sociological and not historical terms.\(^{55}\) Erving Goffman’s 1959 *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* deserves a mention here because, although a sociological not a historical work, it makes vital links between self-representation through every aspect of the body—including things that can be manipulated (e.g. dress) and things that cannot be changed (e.g. age)—within the context of its physical and spatial setting.\(^{56}\) At this time, concepts of cleanliness were more likely to be discussed by anthropologists than historians, and Mary Douglas’s *Purity and Danger* of 1966 has been a foundational text for later discussions. Douglas set aside the then current approaches to dirt and defilement, which made distinctions between primitive and major religions, to discuss dirt as a cultural construct. For Douglas, what was considered dirty varied between culture, and dirt itself was a metaphor for disorder or danger.\(^{57}\) In this way, she was able to construct a model for understanding dirt, which could be applied across cultures, although her view that all defilement is culturally constructed has been criticised in recent times.\(^{58}\)

Norbert Elias’s work on civility is known for leading the way in making connections between ideas about filth and pollution and historical changes to the codes of civility. His *History of Manners*, the first of two volumes on the civilising process made links between the codes outlined in conduct manuals and


\(^{55}\) Kira, p. 294.


the evolution of notions of civility. He proposes Erasmus’s *De civilitate morum puerilium* (on civility in children) of 1530 as a watershed in the history of manners, after which codes of conduct became increasingly internalised through a process of repression to the point that they were the product of self-censorship taught in the home, giving the appearance, though not the reality, of being instinctive. As with many works that change the direction of history writing through following an idea through a broad sweep of history, it has fallen to others to draw out the nuances in the story and discuss and qualify their difficulties. Of those that followed, Anna Bryson’s 1998 *From Courtesy to Civility* focusing on early modern Britain has elucidated this process by placing codes of manners in historical context, and showing how they operate in changing historical and social circumstances.59

While preoccupied with discussions of nineteenth-century dirt, William Cohen and Ryan Johnson’s 2005 compilation, *Filth, Dirt, Disgust and Modern Life*, deals with the relationship between dirt and defilement in the context of urbanisation.60 More recently, Kathleen Brown’s 2009 *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America* provides an excellent account of all aspects of what she calls body care, in which issues of aesthetics, heath, purity and gentility are examined on the understanding that the body is a product of culture. While this book is an American history, and she discusses notions of purity in relation to the native American and enslaved ‘other’, she bases her discussion solidly in the attitudes and aspirations that white settlers brought with them from Europe. Brown points out that the body is a crucial and largely unexplored link between domestic life and public culture, and discusses the role of women’s domestic labour in creating the ‘civilised’ European body.61 Brown’s response to this lacuna is broad and deep, and its thoroughness serves to point up, in even greater relief, the absence of the material artefact of the bathing space itself from this discourse.


60 Cohen and Johnson.

Cohen and Johnson’s collection, and Brown’s discussion is a reminder that matters of cleanliness and the body also hold an important place in women’s history. In his introduction, Cohen reminds the reader of the application of ideas about defilement to sexual intercourse and, in particular, women’s bodies. This issue is taken up in much greater detail by Brown, who discusses the evolution of perceptions of the female body from the dirtiest to the most pure body. She also considers the tensions between the presentation of female refinement, and the production of this refinement through women’s own labour as wife, mother and domestic servant—roles that were, by their nature, dirty.62 In her 2004 Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century, Karen Harvey also discusses the role of taste and smell in sexual attractiveness, and the importance of place to erotic encounters. She points out the powerful association between ideas about women’s sexuality and privacy, and the importance of soft, shaded and secluded settings as a site of sexual action. This association provides an explanation for the prominence of the bathhouse as a site of adultery in divorce cases, which has been commented upon by Lucy Worsley, and explains why an eighteenth-century Worsley divorce captured the imagination of contemporary caricaturists. Harvey’s discussion of the grotto as both symbolic of female genitalia, and an erotic space in its own right adds another layer to the mood evoked by grottoes, which will be discussed further in chapter 5.63 Harvey holds that to ask who read erotica in the eighteenth century is not as useful as to ask ‘who was thought to read it, who was supposed to read it, and who said they had read it’.64 This approach to subject matter provides a useful model for considering the relationships between bathrooms and their owners in the eighteenth century. As we shall see, for some, the display of gentility, morality or cultural superiority was sometimes as important an aspect of owning a bathroom as its utility.

Such aspects were revealed by both the builders and the consumers of the bathhouse in the garden. Studying the bathhouse in the garden has involved two

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64 Harvey, p. 36.
strands of history: histories of tourism and of gardens. Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley have provided a comprehensive understanding of the process of constructing country houses and the importance of travel to those planning a new house and grounds. John Dixon Hunt’s seminal work on garden design has provided the model for understanding how bathhouses were to be viewed in the grounds, and Esther Moir’s work on industrial tourism has been important to understanding how the waterworks could be as much of an attraction to visitors to the bathhouse as the bathing and entertaining facilities. Zoë Kinsley, Malcolm Andrews and Carole Fabricant have done much to explain the motives and aspirations of eighteenth-century country house tourists.65

We have seen that the history of the body has been a fertile source for a consideration of the bathing space. However, works on the bathing space as an architectural artefact have been few, and still fewer make links between cultural and architectural history. While the discourse on the body has reached maturity, architectural histories of the bathing space are still seeking acceptance in the mainstream. As with histories of the body, much of the serious analysis of bathrooms as an architectural space seems to emanate from continental Europe. The pioneering work is Siegfried Giedion’s Mechanization Takes Command.66 Giedion’s study traces the European history of bathing since classical times, with a focus on the bathing space. While noting the importance of such authorities as Sir John Floyer and Dutch botanist and physician Herman Boerhaave to an awakening value for bathing in eighteenth-century Europe, he maintains that ‘bodily care in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sank to the point of almost total neglect’. Like Scott, he places the revival of bathing in the 1830s with a ‘back to nature’ movement spearheaded by Vincenz Priessnitz, whose

Gräfenburg sanatorium pioneered the ‘water cure’ that was to become fashionable throughout the Western world. It is perhaps on Giedion’s authority that too little attention has, until recently, been paid to the large body of eighteenth-century medical literature promoting the revival of bathing, and the early experiments in domestic bathrooms to which it gave rise. Even articles about eighteenth-century bathhouses sometimes discuss them in terms of nineteenth-century bathing treatments.

The true value of Giedion’s work is that he broke from the tradition in which history was composed of the lives of great men, and integrated the history of mechanisation into the wider story of social change. His analysis of bathing practices was not framed in terms only of medical opinion, but also within the context of technological advance, and philosophical thought. His is the kind of integrated, multi-causal history, alive to cultural difference, that has become common in the last fifty years. Mark Girouard has also taken up the challenge to integrate architectural history, and with it bathroom history, into a wider historical framework. The nexus between social and architectural history is Girouard’s Life in the English Country House. His chapter on ‘Early Country-House Technology’ remains the first port of call for the enquiring scholar and shows his usual broad and sure grasp of the technology of privies, water supply, and water closets as well as bathrooms, and appears to be the standard source in both academic and heritage circles. However, a single chapter in a 1978 work spanning nearly a thousand years of country house history cannot do full justice to the subject. There are, at present, a growing number of scholars who are giving the subject serious attention. Pre-eminent among these is Susan Kellerman, whose ‘Bath Houses: An Introduction’ in the winter 2001 issue of The Follies Journal, which she edited, is a brief, sound introduction to the subject of bathing and, in particular, of bathhouses in the landscape. Her ‘Bath House Gazetteer’ in this and the subsequent issue of the journal is an invaluable source for those wishing to engage with the subject; it lists some 122 baths from all periods and notes their state of repair (her finds are marked with an asterisk in appendix 1).

67 Giedion, pp. 628, 662.  
68 Thornborrow, p. 39  
69 Giedion, p. 655.
The 2001 issue of the journal also contains three other brief articles on bathhouses. Architect William Hawkes describes the restoration work on Walton Hall’s bathhouse in Warwickshire; Peter Thornborrow does the same for the bathhouse at Wharfedale Lawn, Wetherby in West Yorkshire where, incidentally, there are the remains of what seems to be an eighteenth-century fixed shower; and Karen Lynch describes the changing hut by the open air bath at Gipton Spa, Leeds, which dates, at the latest, from 1671. In the 2002 issue, a brief article by Oliver Bradbury enquires into the neo-classical beginnings of the bath at Ston Easton Park, Somerset, and Michael Cousins refers in one line to the cold bath as one of a number of interesting garden buildings at Enville Hall in Staffordshire.\(^{70}\) Mark Newman, Hans van Lemmen and Michael Symes have also referred to bathhouses in passing in the same journal.\(^{71}\) In addition to these articles, Andrew Skelton has written for the *Journal of the Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society* on the magnificent tiles at Carshalton Water Tower and for the *Georgian Group Journal* on the bathhouse–greenhouse at Wanstead. Skelton has done considerable research on the association between baths and greenhouses, an association that will be touched on in chapter one. His work on the bathhouse–greenhouse at Wanstead makes links with the bathhouse–orangery at Carshalton.\(^{72}\) However, these articles are brief and descriptive and do not attempt to build bridges between the bathing spaces and the cultural conditions that gave rise to their construction. More recently, Vivien Rolf has published a brief monograph on bathhouses and plunge pools. Rolf adds a handful of new discoveries to the growing list of known bathhouses, and sketches the eighteenth-century story of bathhouses, touching on important figures such as Alexander


Pope and Mrs Delany. She also publishes a number of new drawings and photographs. However the work is too short to bring new depth to the subject.73

A number of works in architectural history have illuminated discussion of the fabric of buildings, construction methods, and the designers, tradesmen and planners who contributed to the process. Hugh Murray Baillie’s 1967 ground-breaking article on the planning and use of state apartments has been elaborated upon in articles by John Heward and, in particular, Alison Maguire.74 Maguire has also co-authored, with Andor Gomme, what is now the definitive work on design and plan in the early modern country house.75 In spite of this body of specialised work on the evolving floor plan of the country house, and its relationship to the symbolism and use of royal establishments, more work is needed on the relationship between social usage and design. Christian Norberg-Schultz’s consideration of the close relationships between space, symbol systems, meaning and society is a useful introduction to approaching this complex area.76 However, because of his encyclopedic grasp of both social and architectural history, Mark Girouard’s Life in the English Country House is still a leading example of how to synthesise buildings, their meanings and their use.77 An understanding of the classical influences on British architects and style has been provided by Frank Salmon’s Building on Ruins.78 A constant source of information on a surprising number of details of the fabric, arrangement and social use of buildings, has been

73 Vivien Rolf, Bathing Houses and Plunge Pools, Shire Publications, Oxford, 2011. See, for example, p. 35.
Peter Thornton’s *Authentic Decor: The Domestic Interior, 1620–1920* and, to a lesser extent, his *Italian Renaissance Interior, 1400–1600*.79

For the approaches to analysing the bathing space as part of the built environment and the community in which it grew, I am indebted to James Ayres, whose understanding of building a Georgian city spans the changing role of designers, the industrial techniques employed by tradesmen and the social conditions that nurtured them. In the late nineteenth century, James Colston wrote engagingly on the subject of Edinburgh’s incorporated trades.80 Since then, this subject has, more been broadly and thoroughly explored by Joan Lane in her study of apprenticeship in England.81 More recently, Celina Fox has produced a nuanced discussion of eighteenth-century trades, and the way in which drawing and model-making contributed to advances in technology and the separation of design from production, and Andrew Saint has teased out the tensions, oppositions and common threads in the history of the architecture and engineering professions.82

**Primary Sources**

Because of the lack of a direct body of literature about the construction of bathhouses, or any substantial discussions of bathing either in memoirs or novels, I have pieced together the story of bathing spaces from a diversity of sources. While, as I have said, eighteenth-century British architectural works say little about bathrooms, the French architects Jacques-François Blondel’s *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance* (1737) and Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières’ *Genius of Architecture* (1780) dealt specifically with the design and decoration of bathrooms. In addition, eighteenth-century writer Jean-François Bastide’s *Little House* (1753) explored the erotic potential of interior décor, including that of the


bathroom and water closet. Although these works do not provide direct evidence of British thinking on bathrooms, they do sometimes make sense of aspects of the question that are not explained in British sources.

However, if architectural manuals offer little, there are many floor plans, and a number of surviving buildings, from which inferences can be drawn. In the use of floor plans, and architectural remains, as text, I am indebted to Jules Prown, whose *Art as Evidence* crystallises a growing consensus that artefacts can be used actively as evidence about the values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions of a particular community at a particular time, not just as illustrations of conclusions formed on the basis of documentary evidence. While the bathing space was made for use and functional requirements constrained materials and technologies, it also carried a cultural burden of sociability and display. Prown reminds us that artefacts can reveal aspects of mind that differ, complement, supplement or even contradict what can be learned from literary or behavioural sources, and that utilitarian objects can be more truthful than written sources because what they reveal is often not conscious. He suggests that the value of an artefact can be dissected through examination of the rarity of its materials (as we shall see in the discussion of grottoes in chapter five), the utility of the object, its aesthetic and spiritual qualities, and what it reveals about attitudes to others and the world. He warns, however, that material culture is not a complete route to understanding.

Also of use has been Dana Arnold’s *Reading Architectural History*, which considers the relationship between the metaphorical and physical aspects of the country house, and the difficulties of reconstructing knowledge about it. Her discussion of the problem of interrogating the voices that are absent from the records has particular resonance for this project. Andrew Ballantyne points out that buildings tell us about values because they are expensive. Buildings, he

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85 Prown, pp. 72, 76.

maintains, are very powerful evidence, because they are so closely implicated in the social and economic processes that brought them into existence. However, he warns, designs for the super-rich might be novel and striking, but can still be insignificant in the context of the development of the society under consideration. Ballantyne’s reflections are of particular pertinence for the bathroom historian. Bathing spaces were extremely expensive, and technologically complex and experimental. As we shall see, they carried a heavy symbolic burden for the people who built them but, more importantly, eighteenth-century bathing spaces were a vital model for the nineteenth-century hygiene project that lies outside, or rather ahead of, this thesis. In the same collection, Fikret Yegül underlines the complexities of architectural historical research, since buildings involve technical and design expertise, but also have implications for politics and patronage, economy and power, and ideology. Yegül proposes that such research be approached by starting with technology and design; accordingly, I intend to move from fundamental questions about the place and shape of, and the technical and theoretical background to the bathroom before theorising about consumers. A close adherence to known factors of design and materials is a starting place for attempting to achieve reliable knowledge about a space.

In order to find enough plans and drawings to build a picture of eighteenth-century bathing spaces, I have searched widely through archives and published plans as well as sought out surviving fabric. The archives held by the Sir John Soane’s Museum were a particularly fertile source, especially their Adam drawings. Likewise, Vitruvius Britannicus, a collection published by Colen Campbell, and Vitruvius Scoticus, collected by William Adam rather later, have been a rich vein.

Appendix 1 offers an aide-memoire of the surviving bathing spaces I have discovered, and builds on the list of bathhouses already published by Susan

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Kellerman. It was compiled from a variety of sources, of which word of mouth was by far the most important. I also used Michael Good’s consolidated index of all the Pevsners of England, English Heritage’s Pastscape database, and the Royal Commission for the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland’s (RCAHMS) Pastmap database. I trawled through the photographic library of RCAHMS and through SC Ran, its online photographic database, and through the catalogue of the Royal Institute of British Architects. I checked the indexes of the Public Record Office, the National Archives of Scotland, the A2A index to British archives, and the portfolios of the National Trusts for England and Scotland, English Heritage and Historic Scotland. The full-text search function of Eighteenth-century Collections Online offered a breadth of enquiry that would not have been possible until recent times. I looked at books and archives of floor plans, not just of the eighteenth century, but also of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to ensure that bathrooms were, in fact, an eighteenth-century phenomenon, and not a permanent, but neglected, feature of British country houses.  

As the illustrations to this thesis show, the Adam collection of drawings held by the Sir John Soane’s Museum was the most fruitful source of bathroom plans. I have skimmed through many eighteenth-century memoirs, but do not doubt that there are many references to bathrooms still waiting to be discovered in these sources, lying unpublished in archives. However, by far the most useful source was word of mouth. The acknowledgements to this thesis are inadequate to express the debt I owe to many generous scholars and custodians of bathrooms. The expanded version of the database summarised in chapter one records precise information about the source, or sources, of my knowledge, whether it be a person, a document or a book, and I shall explore the possibility of depositing it with some agency such as the Monuments Record.

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90 Alison Maguire with Howard Colvin (eds), *A Collection of Seventeenth-century Architectural Plans: Bodleian Library MS, Rawlinson D 710*, Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain, London, 1992. While none of these plans for houses and townhouses included bathing rooms, not all were without conveniences. Six had washhouses combined with privies (cat. nos 13, 18, 32, 37, 154, 156; and several more had privies sometimes upstairs (cat. nos 114, 115, 121, 147, 154).
However, it would be dangerous to assume that appendix 1 is in any way definitive. Kellerman’s study of the bathhouses to be found in Yorkshire gardens from 1688 to 1815 has shown how many bathhouses can be uncovered by a minute study of a single area.91 It will not be until such studies have been made for the better part of Britain that there will be enough data to justify generalisations based on recorded bathing spaces. It is possible, for instance, by putting the dimensions of known baths together with medical sources, to infer that the large baths known as plunge baths were typical of the eighteenth century. The most frequently recorded depth (4 feet and 5 inches) is consistent with all but the smallest people’s being able to stand with the head above water. This suggests that the measurements of known baths probably indicate the depth of most eighteenth-century baths.

Surviving fabric reveals that many baths were cold, but that there were also a large number of heated baths, but does not provide a basis for any assumptions about the ratio of hot to cold baths. In addition, only about fifteen of over a hundred bathrooms on the database date from the seventeenth century. It is probable that, in the light of other evidence, this represents a fairly true ratio of seventeenth-century to eighteenth-century bathrooms, but given that possibly hundreds remain undiscovered, the point can only be made tentatively. Even less can we assume that the concentration of surviving bathing spaces on the database represents a true map of the prevalence of bathhouses. Only eighteen of the bathhouses were discovered through the consolidated index to the English Pevnser guides and what can be discovered from the indexes of the Scottish guides, even though these guides must be considered as one of the most authoritative overviews of Britain’s existing buildings, and yet Kellerman and I have identified bathhouses vastly in excess of this number. My database necessarily favours bathhouses that are well documented or open to the public, and in areas where bathing researchers live. Consequently, appendix one must be regarded as a work in progress only, and it is to be hoped that future research will

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incorporate it into a much larger study, just as I have incorporated Kellerman’s discoveries into mine.

Apart from the fabric of surviving baths themselves, the real richness in the primary source material lies in medical texts, manuals and manuscripts, with some help from literary sources. Unlike the architectural material, the medical sources provide ample material for a dozen monographs of every aspect of bathing to do with sea- and spa-bathing, health care, medical treatment, leisure and health tourism—there were over a hundred books over the long eighteenth century that advocated bathing for health. For a study of construction techniques, I have turned to estate records and the records of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. Here, invoices have been the most fertile source, supplemented by handbills, trade cards, and advertising material. The reception of bathing spaces, however, has posed difficulties both in sources and interpretation. Here, memoirs and diaries have provided the best indication of bathing practices. However, personal accounts cannot be considered unselfconscious sources of evidence. Diaries ostensibly written for the writer’s own pleasure nevertheless are an instrument of self-presentation through accounts of the seemingly neutral events of daily life.

**The Thesis**

Although people had bathed in Britain for centuries, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, domestic bathrooms were relatively rare, and bathing took place in the sea, or at holy wells or spas (see appendix 2). In September 1648, Dr Peter Chamberlen petitioned both houses of the English parliament for a monopoly on the construction of baths and bath stoves (saunas). He maintained that he had made a detailed study of baths, and had gone to great expense to establish ‘the true way and manner of making the same’. He had constructed baths in the Low Countries under the aegis of the state, and now wished to construct some in England out of zeal for his native country. Parliament took the view that bathing and sweating were good for the preservation of health and the treatment of sickness, and increased the strength of young and old, even though the use of baths ‘hath yet never been brought ouer into this kingdom unless in the old Roman times’. It was disposed to accede to Chamberlen’s request by granting him
a monopoly on construction of baths and the power to license others to construct them. This document was forwarded to the Royal College of Physicians for their opinion. In October, the registrar, Francis Prujean, responded, rather sourly, that since Chamberlen had not been required to consult the college on the design of the baths, he could not comment. He did, however, warn that even in ancient Greece and Rome, the custom had been so deleterious in ‘effaeminating bodyes, and procuring infirmityes, and morrall in debauching the manners of the people’ that when the Christians had taken power in Rome, the baths had been closed and the custom abolished. In a somewhat self-contradictory statement, he assured parliament that ‘there are in the houses of divers persons of this Kingdome Cradles, tubs, boxes, chaires, Baths and Bathstoves in which by the help of fumes, vapors water Oyle etc according to the prescriptions of Physitians sweat may be procured Payne asswaged and all necessary ends of bathing attained’.  

It appears that Chamberlen’s petition was ultimately rejected, perhaps because the civil disturbance during the Interregnum left no time for major public health initiatives. However, Chamberlen’s proposal does suggest a notional starting date for an examination of the history of bathrooms. As Jeremy Black discussed in his *Eighteenth-century Britain, 1688–1783*, choosing beginning and end dates for a historical study imposes a unity on a period that is always, to some extent, artificial. As for most projects, the story for his period is one of change and continuity that extends beyond his chosen limits, and is not necessarily teleological.  

Since my theme is architectural, I intend to start this discussion in 1660, when returning royalists started to repair, rebuild and modernise estates forfeited during the Civil War—a date also chosen by Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley in their study of the English country house. It was with the Restoration that British royalists, including architects and gentlemen–architects, returned to Britain full of the sophisticated ideas they had gained on the Continent, and began

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92 Peter Chamberlen, ‘To the honorable house of commons assembled in parliament, the humble petition of Peter Chamberlen … to the honorable committee for bathes and bath-stoves (1648)’, *Annales Collegi Medicorum*, vol. 4, 1647–1682, 15a–17b, pp. 10–11. Virginia Smith attributes these doubts to parliament itself. See Smith, *Clean*, p. 206.  
to build their own bathrooms. However, I may at times cite older examples where it casts light on my subject.

1815 was the date chosen by Giles Worsley to mark the end of the architect’s eighteenth century:

> Arbitrary cut-off dates are always hard to find in architectural history, but 1815, with building in the trough of another depression and the ending of the long war with France heralding many decades of peace, is better than most. It was a year of potential. No one architectural style was dominant, and many architects such as Wyatt and Nash accepted Thomas Hopper’s dictum that “it is an architect’s business to understand all styles and be prejudiced in favour of none.”

It is convenient that this date also marks the beginning of the period, in which the compact bathroom would begin to hold sway over the grander facilities of the élite eighteenth-century bathroom. While this is the date of the last site used in this thesis—Lyme Park, Cheshire—I will often refer to the later evolution of the bathroom or its components in the nineteenth century. This is because the technological and spatial evolution of the bathroom was not linear. As a result, the trend of eighteenth-century bathroom design often makes sense only in the light of a certain stasis achieved in the nineteenth and twentieth, a stasis that is constantly being challenged and remade.

It is also important to define what I mean by *British* bathrooms. There is a view that until the eighteenth century, Scotland can be said to have had a characteristic architecture, but that after that, building types assimilated, making it possible to talk about a generically British architecture. Charles McKean has challenged this notion and proposes that Scottish architecture continued to have its own national character after the eighteenth century. Whether or not this is the case, the fashion for building bathrooms and bathhouses in the eighteenth century was seized upon by the well-travelled and well-educated and intended to display exactly these experiences. Accordingly, whether the bathing space was Scottish or Welsh, English or Irish, its primary inspiration was classical and modern, not vernacular and traditional. Some bathhouses did, of course, exhibit vernacular

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details, because tradesmen, unlike their employers, did not make the Grand Tour, and because British weather implacably refused to smile upon buildings inspired by the architectural styles of the Mediterranean basin.

If bathrooms themselves were a novel space in the eighteenth century, it is not surprising that it was only during this time that a standardised language for bathing evolved. It is to the eighteenth century that we owe such expressions as ‘going for a dip’, and ‘taking the plunge’. There was ambiguity about what a bath, as an object, was—for the poor, any receptacle that could contain water; for the rich, a variety of tubs; and for the learned, perhaps, the Roman or Turkish bath. There was no distinction between a bath for bathing, and a pool for bath(e)ing, an ambiguity that survived into 1950s and 60s municipal ‘baths’. Accordingly, there was no way of differentiating between the large, heated indoor bath at Wimpole, and the vast, cold outdoor pool at Rufford Abbey (illustration 3). There was no consensus on the desirable temperature or duration of a bath or even, as we have seen, the necessity for it to contain water, hence the terms ‘blood bath’ and ‘sunbathing’. Washing to get clean was only one, and perhaps not the most important, of the functions of bathing. Furthermore, there was no established distinction between indoors and outdoors, between exercise, medical treatment and washing—or even between applying water externally and internally. And while such distinctions did not exist, other distinctions were given a high value such as, for instance, niceties of temperature and water quality. Since bathing was a newly revived practice, there were no established rituals with regard to washing and the importance of washing tongues, eyes and nostrils, and the rival benefits of partial or full immersion were debated. In short, at the outset of the eighteenth century, the notion of bathing was yet to be negotiated, and the terms we now accept are the outcome of those discussions.

Some terminology can be disposed of quickly, while other expressions may be the subject of dispute between scholars for some time to come. For example, in the seventeenth century, the term ‘hothouse’ signified a bathing house (usually public) with hot baths or vapour baths, as well as a place for growing fruit and vegetables. Samuel Pepys noted in 1665 that his wife was ‘busy in going ... to a hot-house to bathe herself’. Hothouse could also be used to signify
Illustration 3

Rufford bathhouse circa 1729
Courtesy of Nottingham City Council
a brothel. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the last English use of this term was in 1699.\textsuperscript{97} Public bathhouses offered a range of bathing facilities, including hot baths and vapour baths (now usually called a sauna), and were sometimes called ‘hummums’ after the Eastern examples, which they often imitated. John King, apothecary and author of *An Essay on Hot and Cold Bathing*, described the ‘Warm Bath, together with a Bagnio or Hummums, with all Conveniencies’ that he had installed for the use of his patients. Chapter nine of this work was entitled ‘Of Sweating in Bagnio’s or Hummums’. These phrases suggest that the term hummum and bagnio were sometimes interchangeable. He described his patients’ sweating and bathing in a bagnio, which implies that bagnio was sometimes a generic term for an establishment that provided both baths and a sauna.\textsuperscript{98} Some bagnios appear to have also supplied a dry heat for sweating patients.\textsuperscript{99}

The word ‘bagnio’ gives rise to the first difference of opinion. According to Iain Gordon Brown, the word retained its literal meaning in Scotland well into the nineteenth century, where in England, the primary meaning of sweating and bathing place was lost by the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when it referred exclusively to a brothel.\textsuperscript{100} However, Smellie’s 1778 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines it as ‘an Italian word, signifying a bath: we use it for a house with conveniences for bathing, cupping, sweating, and otherwise cleansing the body; and sometimes for worse purposes’.\textsuperscript{101} The placement of the brothel definition, together with the word ‘sometimes’ suggests that even in 1778, it was still a secondary meaning, just as the *Oxford English Dictionary* places the euphemistic meaning of massage in the sense of sexual services after its primary,

\textsuperscript{97} Oxford English Dictionary, entry for ‘hothouse’,<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/88811?rskey=m5T3Ac&result=1&eid>, accessed Thursday, 14 February 2013. There is a 1966 reference to an orgy being held in a hothouse, but this relates to a private house, not a commercial brothel or a public bathhouse.


\textsuperscript{99} Dr William Cullen, in *Clinical Lectures in the Years 1765 and 1766* (London, 1797), referred to ‘the dry heat of the bagnio’, p. 203.


\textsuperscript{101} Smellie, vol. 2, p. 954.
therapeutic sense.\textsuperscript{102} Admittedly, Smellie’s book was published in Edinburgh, but again the {	extit{Oxford English Dictionary}} describes a bagnio in almost the same terms as Smellie as ‘a bath or bathing-house esp. one with hot baths, vapour-baths, and appliances for sweating, cupping and other operations’, and only in the third definition as a brothel.\textsuperscript{103} In the 1775 edition of his Dictionary, Samuel Johnson described the bagnio simply as ‘A house for bathing, sweating, and otherwise cleansing the body’, continuing dourly ‘I have known two instances of malignant fevers produced by the hot air of a bagnio’, but made no mention of the secondary meaning.\textsuperscript{104} A number of other English dictionaries did not mention the secondary meaning at all.\textsuperscript{105}

If there is a generalisation about the word ‘bagnio’, it is that it nearly always applied to public bathhouses, not to privately owned ones. Even the term ‘private bagnio’, which comes up from time to time, seems to have referred to a bathhouse to which one belonged, like a private club, rather than to a domestic bathhouse. There are, however, repeated references to the bagnios at Wanstead (near London) and Petworth (Sussex).\textsuperscript{106} This could be because that is what their owners called them, or because these bathhouses contained steam baths. Other exceptions are found in the drawings of two early domestic baths, one of a bathhouse for Eastbury Park (Dorset, Vanbrugh, illustration 1, chapter 5) in c.

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\textsuperscript{104} Samuel Johnson, \textit{A Dictionary of the English Language}, 4th edn, 2 vols, Strahan, Dublin, 1775, entry for ‘bagnio’.  \\
\textsuperscript{105} See, for example, Thomas Browne, \textit{The Union Dictionary}, Myers, London, 1800; and \textit{The Builder’s Dictionary or Gentleman and Architect’s Companion}, n.p., London, 1734, vol. 1.  \\
\end{flushright}
1718 and a bathroom for Leslie House (Fife, Bruce, illustration 6, chapter 1) c. 1667–72. Both of these were called bagnios: perhaps at this early date, the name was not yet well established, which is consistent with their relative rarity at this time.107

The next term requiring clarification is the word ‘bathroom’ itself. In the heritage industry, and in some Pevsner guides, the large baths I shall describe in chapter one are usually called ‘plunge baths’ or ‘plunge pools’.108 However, the eighteenth-century term most in use appears to have been ‘bath’ or ‘bathing room’. The Earl of Mar, a gentleman–architect executing speculative drawings from exile in the early eighteenth century, called it a ‘bathing room’. That his plans were amply provided with bathrooms, in one case based on the château de Marly, was an early hint of the effect of foreign travel on British bathroom design.109 William Adam’s plans for the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh use the term ‘bathing room’. The plans from the Adam brothers’ office held at the Sir John Soane’s Museum call it a ‘bath’ (4 times); a ‘bathing room’ (3); a ‘cold bath’ (3) and a ‘hot bath’ (1). Isaac Ware also calls it simply a ‘bath’ as does Stewart’s 1779 plan for a bathhouse–greenhouse at Dunkeld; and George Dance, in his plan for Coleorton. An 1847 drawing of the bath at Aynhoe calls it ‘a cold bath room’. A search of Eighteenth-century Collections Online (ECCO), an online database containing 150,000 works published during the eighteenth century, reveals that the most used term was ‘bath room’ or ‘bathroom’ (369); followed by ‘bathing room’ or ‘bathingroom’ (288); trailed by ‘bath house’ or ‘bathhouse’ (124). Hence, for the sake of simplicity, I shall use the term ‘bathroom’, in its modern form, and occasionally bathing room, to distinguish it from the other rooms in the sequence of a bathhouse or bathing suite. There is no reference to ‘plunge’ or ‘plunge baths’ in ECCO, nor in Smellie’s Encyclopaedia: the earliest reference to ‘plunge baths’ that I can find is in the Statistical Accounts of Scotland for 1834–

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108 For example, at Gunnersbury Park and the Georgian House, Bristol. In the Pevsner accounts of Painswick House and Barton Abbots.
109 Earl of Mar, house plan based on Marly, National Archives of Scotland, RHP 13256/16.
45, and the *Oxford Dictionary*’s earliest example dated from 1856.\footnote{Description of a public bath. See, ‘Leith, County of Edinburgh’, *Statistical Account*, 1834–45, vol. 1, p. 767; and Simpson and Weiner (eds), vol. 9, p. 1085, entry for ‘plunge’.} Since this term was picked up in Girouard’s influential discussion of baths, and is now common currency among architectural historians in the field, I may, from time to time, use this term for a large bath to distinguish it from an ordinary bath-tub.\footnote{Girouard, p. 256.}

The only category left to define is that of ‘domestic’, a word attained great importance in the nineteenth century, but that was beginning to imprint itself on house design in the eighteenth century. Johnson defined it as ‘Belonging to the house ... Private; done at home; not open’, but during the period under consideration, it was an evolving notion.\footnote{Johnson, entry for ‘domestick’.} In the eighteenth-century, the very idea of a domestic bathroom must have taxed the imagination. Although the ancients had bathrooms in their own houses, since the fall of Rome, bathrooms in the home were exceptional in all but the richest houses, and uncommon even then. Kedleston (Adam, Derbyshire, 1759–65), for instance, had three bathrooms: one was by the gun room in the basement of the house, evoking boots, dogs and mud, and was probably purely functional in intention; another was by the lake, with a fishing and entertainment room above and a boat dock beside it, clearly sociable in purpose; and the third was yet further from the house, built over a sulphur spring, and open to visitors from far and wide who came to try its medicinal qualities. Such was its popularity, that the local inn had to build extra rooms for all the visitors.\footnote{Conversation with Simon McCormack, house manager, Kedleston.} None of these fits comfortably into the post–nineteenth-century notion of ‘private’ and ‘domestic’, all would have been available to visitors beyond the family circle upon occasion. And yet, these arrangements contain the germ of ideas that were enshrined in the late nineteenth-century, middle-class villa.

Before outlining what *I will* discuss, I wish to mention aspects of bathing which, although they are well covered by the sources, I will *not* discuss. One subject I will not discuss, except in passing, is water closets, because until Alexander Cummings invented the S-bend in 1775, water closets were so noisome that the idea of placing a water closet and a bath in the same room was
unimaginable.\textsuperscript{114} As we shall see, installing water closets in bathrooms is one innovation that really can be attributed to the nineteenth century. In order to contain the subject, I will not allude, except in passing, to sea- and river-bathing, public bathhouses (with one exception), spas, seaside resorts, holy wells or the drinking of mineral waters. In addition, while the wealth of eighteenth-century medical works provide ample primary material to furnish a chapter on the medical view of bathing for women, children and the elderly, I will not discuss medical opinion on age or gender and bathing, although I shall mention the way in which ideas about modesty may have motivated women to wish for bathing spaces at home.

We have seen that there is a large body of literature, in both French and English, on cleanliness, the body, and the evolution of ideas about privacy and comfort. We have seen, too, that there is rapidly growing enquiry into British bathhouses, spearheaded by Susan Kellerman. This gives rise to the question where, in these bodies of work, is there space for a thesis on eighteenth-century British bathing? The answer lies in the intersection between works on hygiene, cleanliness and the body, and the existing literature on bathing spaces. Only in the French literature has the attempt been made to integrate the bathroom into discussions about privacy, comfort, the evolution of the floor plan, hygiene and the body. In Britain, the architectonic work on bathing spaces, discussed above, is mainly descriptive or relates to architectural or tourism history. Works on the history of hygiene often, like Smith’s \textit{Clean}, span a long period, and do not turn aside to examine buildings in detail. More work is needed to take the architectural space as the starting point for historical enquiry.

In this thesis, I wish to ask where the idea for the revival of bathing came from; what bathing spaces looked like; how one bathed; whether there was a relationship between how one bathed and the design of the physical space; what impact bathing spaces had on the plan and form of British houses and gardens; who built and used them and why; and how bathing spaces evolved over time. There is much to be discovered about eighteenth-century bathing spaces and, because of the breadth of the subject, the variety of the sources, and the

\textsuperscript{114} Eveleigh, p. 21.
superabundance of material in certain areas, and the dearth in others, this thesis can only open certain areas for discussion, it cannot offer either a definitive account or an overarching narrative of the period. Instead, I aim to shine a spotlight on five different aspects of bathing spaces in the period under discussion and, in this way, to illuminate certain elements of their production and consumption.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first is intended to show how the insertion of the bathroom into the floor plan of the traditional gentry or noble house at the end of the seventeenth century disrupted the established sequence of rooms and the social order embodied in it. While the situation and form of the bathroom was dictated, in part, by practical considerations, the gradual and uncoordinated trend towards bathroom ownership also partook of the evolution of ideas about privacy, comfort and the specialisation of rooms in the grand house, and culminated in the compact bathroom. In the second chapter, I wish to explore the place of the revival of bathing in the narrative of the Scientific Revolution. Certain physicians influential in this revival were motivated by a new value for observing, measuring and recording the effects of bathing on illness. For the first half of the eighteenth century, the benefits of different methods of bathing were hotly contested, and medical practitioners, as well as patients, had concerns about its dangers. However, by the end of the century, although many patients were still afraid of bathing, it was no longer regarded with suspicion by the medical profession. By this time, although cold bathing was still practised, physicians began to believe that cleanliness, rather than cold water, was the key to good health. Although the rich often continued to build large plunge baths, this shift paved the way for the eventual dominance of the compact bathroom. In the third chapter, I turn my attention to the builders of bathing spaces, specifically plumbers. The discussion starts with the records of the Royal College of Surgeons’ bathhouse, and expands to look at plumber work across Scotland in general. Eighteenth-century Scotland saw a period of transition for plumbers. At the beginning of the century, their work practices were little changed since medieval times and their craft was corporate and familial in character. While increasing numbers of bathroom projects might have been expected to expand the
work of plumbers, technological, commercial and legislative change—in particular the separation of design from construction—undermined their monopoly on their craft. Goods that had been manufactured on site and with local materials at the beginning of the eighteenth century were, by the beginning of the nineteenth, designed by a new breed of entrepreneur–inventor, manufactured by less skilled workers, and could be purchased in a shop and installed by a handyman with no particular trade identity. While such changes eroded the power of the profession and, especially, the capacity of plumbers to make fortunes in lead dealing, they did bring a bathroom in the home within the buying power of the middle classes.

However, knowledge about the health benefits of bathing and technical advances are, in themselves, inadequate to account for the growing importance of bathrooms. The explanation lies in social, not technological or scientific change. Visiting public bathhouses exposed one to physical, moral and social pollution, at a time when failure to comply with the dictates of bodily cleanliness could provoke the disgust of one’s peers. Disgust constructed and policed the boundaries between social groups. For those who could afford it, and who had access to a plentiful water supply, private bathing facilities met the requirements of bodily propriety without the risk of contamination. Finally, no discussion of bathing spaces from 1660 to 1815 can be complete without a consideration of bathhouses, and such a consideration cannot be undertaken without reference to their setting, which was all important. The bathhouse in the grounds of the country house was an enduring feature of a changing landscape, adapting itself to evolving fashions for emblematic and expressive gardens. As tourism within Britain increased in popularity, gardens and their bathhouses were a means by which owners displayed wealth, taste and the fruits of the Grand Tour. Visitors, on the other hand, could identify themselves with the owner through their visits to country houses and gardens, and improve their taste and aesthetic judgement through writing, drawing and painting. As owners began to withdraw from the ever-increasing numbers of tourists, and from the formal sociability of the country seat, their bathhouses became a place for sociability in retirement which offered all kinds of entertainments, from boating and fishing, to cards and music. By
turning a spotlight on different aspects of bathroom history in this way, I wish to show that the bathing space lay at the centre of a number of histories involving science, philosophy, culture and the makers and users of this space. I make no claims to offer a definitive analysis. Instead, I hope that a study that focuses on bathing spaces in this period will prompt historians to look past the nineteenth century for an understanding of the revival of bathing, to make a plea for the preservation and interpretation of surviving bathing spaces, and to propose bathing space as a subject for further study by architectural historians, study that will, I hope, make further and better links between aspects of social and cultural history, and the history of science than I have done.
CHAPTER ONE

The Evolving Bathroom

The Quest for Form and Place

Introduction

In 1833, Sir Robert Peel visited Apethorpe Hall, Northamptonshire. In a letter to his wife, he complained that the grand sequence of state rooms in which he was accommodated were uncomfortable, draughty, inconvenient, and plagued by an inexplicable proliferation of doors, cupboards and stairs. Sir Robert’s generation prized comfort, convenience and privacy over the amenities offered by the seventeenth-century house. The facilities at Apethorpe had not changed since 1624, when they were the *dernier cri* in modern planning.¹ What had changed were the social values that informed the use of space, by which measure, the accommodation at Apethorpe was no longer fit for purpose.² In the nineteenth century, the bathroom became increasingly necessary to the health, comfort and well-being of the householder, and an increasingly ‘normal’ part of the houses of the well-to-do. At the end of the seventeenth century, its insertion into the floor plan of traditional gentry or noble houses, like Apethorpe, disrupted the established sequence of rooms and the social order embodied in it. Furthermore, the gradual and unco-ordinated trend towards bathroom ownership partook of the evolution of ideas about privacy, comfort and the specialisation of rooms in the grand house.³

³ Gomme and Maguire describe the trend towards greater compactness in the seventeenth-century house as ‘gradual and unco-ordinated’. This is such a good way of summing up the evolution of the bathroom through the long eighteenth century, that I intend to apply it. Andor Gomme and Alison Maguire, Design and Plan in the Country House: From Castle Donjons to Palladian Boxes, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, London, 2008, p. 220.
In order to understand the spatial and social place of the bathroom at the period when it passed from being a rarity to being a more or less common feature of a grand house, it is necessary to understand, in broad outline, how social meaning was embodied in the gentry and noble house before the moment in the early 1670s, when Elizabeth, Duchess of Lauderdale, decided to install a bathroom for her private use. Accordingly, I will outline the evolution of the sequence of state rooms in the formal house in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and explain how the social order was embedded in the floor plan. A detailed examination of the state rooms will reveal how the insertion of a new room disrupted not only the sequence of spaces, but the ritualised social interactions intended to be acted out in them. This will be followed by a broader survey to establish whether there was a pattern to the form of the bathroom of 1660 to 1815 and, if so, to identify which factors shaped the bathroom over this period. Some factors may be dealt with quite simply in this chapter, but other, more complex influences will be picked up for discussion in later chapters.

**Design, Plan and Social Order**

Since human beings exist in space, every human action or activity has a spatial dimension. As a consequence, buildings express the belief systems of the human beings who plan, build and occupy them. For Christian Norberg-Schulz, buildings are symbols or tools whereby we bring meaning into the relations between humans and the physical environment. Taken together, symbol systems coalesce into what we call ‘culture’. A socially agreed notion of space is the point of departure for the further development of spatial meanings. In this light, seventeenth-century country houses were not just walls and a roof to keep the rain out, they were a stage on which the cultural values of their time and place were acted out.⁴ Although theoreticians like Norberg-Schulz and Norbert Elias focus mainly on its continental expression, baroque architecture in Britain also carried a symbolic load.⁵ A short review of the evolution of the seventeenth-century gentry or noble house will illuminate the system of meaning underlying its spatial

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configuration. The most detailed study of floor plans in gentry houses of the early modern period is Andor Gomme and Alison Maguire’s *Design and Plan in the Country House* and, for them, the origins of the great country house lay in the medieval hall house. In the hall, social rituals were acted out within a multi-functional cube wherein the social meanings were announced by the performers, rather than the setting, in the same way that Elizabethan theatre was presented on an almost bare stage, in which the location was announced or indicated by a minimum of props. However, gradually, social change was incorporated in the fabric of the building.\(^6\)

Hugh Murray Baillie has established the royal household as the core model for the evolution of the aristocratic household.\(^7\) At first, in royal palaces, the outer (or great) chamber led to the presence chamber (containing the royal throne under its canopy), then the privy chamber, withdrawing room and bedchamber. Over time, peers and petitioners, ever anxious for the ear of the ruler and the privileges of intimacy, steadily pressed forward through the monarch’s range of rooms while the monarch just as steadily withdrew to increasingly private regions. Thus the outer chamber, open to peeresses and out-of-livery servants in Tudor times, was open to anyone in respectable dress by Charles II’s time. Likewise, the presence chamber, the very seat of anointed kingship in Tudor times had, by the time of the Georges dwindled into a waiting room. So also the privy chamber, where Henry VIII dressed and ate attended by his gentlemen of the privy chamber, was augmented, perhaps in his daughters’ time, by the insertion of a withdrawing room acting as a buffer between it and the bedchamber. By Charles II’s reign, anyone of good rank, including military and naval officers could enter the privy chamber. Whereas Charles II limited access to his bedchamber to his brother, ministers, the secretary of state, and peers or privy counsellors, if called upon, a short time later, his brother James II and, later,

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\(^6\) Gomme and Maguire, p. 1.

\(^7\) Alison Maguire, while agreeing about the importance of the royal household, puts forward the idea that the suite of state rooms is an extension of the idea of ‘capsule accommodation’, an extrapolation of the lodge, in which a set of rooms supplies the total needs of the visitor. See Alison Maguire, ‘Great Apartments in the English Baroque Country House’, in *Baroque and Palladian: The Early Eighteenth-century Country House*, ed. Malcolm Airs, Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, Oxford, 1996, p. 69.
William III were forced to lock the door against encroachment. Perhaps the culmination of this evolution is still to be found at Queen Victoria’s Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, where her bedroom door has one keyhole on the outside, but two on the inside, essential for a monarch whose conjugal felicity was legendary. This suggests that the ritual and etiquette embodied in the Baroque plan was not sufficient to control it, because the interests of various individuals and groups were constantly placing it under tension, as they negotiated the power relations played out within it.

The significance of this for the noble household was, firstly, that grand country houses installed sets of state rooms (then known as great rooms); and, secondly, that owners began to build comparable sequences of rooms for themselves. The evolving sequence of rooms, and their increasingly discrete functions illustrate how the physical substance of the building, as much as its use, was culturally constructed—in Baillie’s language, palaces were ‘not ... empty architectural shells but ... machines for living’. The seventeenth century saw a period of experiment, in which a new value for privacy was accompanied by an increased specialisation of rooms and a trend towards compactness. By the end of the century, the hall was no longer used for dining, the distinction between the great and the family sides of the house, hinging upon a central great hall, was being eroded, and the old great parlour, behind the hall, had evolved into the saloon. The old common parlour might still exist, but was beginning to be supplemented by specialised spaces like the drawing room; music room; library; smoking room; billiard room; nursery; guest quarters; quarters for particular members of the household; and perhaps even a business room so that the master would not be distracted by the ‘unsteddyness of thought, which the objects apperteining to different concernes brought into his mind’. Members of the household now often had their own bedrooms, while the master and mistress had

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9 ‘The Victorians’, written and narrated by Jeremy Paxman, BBC 1, 9 p.m., 22 February 2009.
10 Roger North mentions that the court has led, and the country has followed, experiments in distribution since the reign of Henry VI. See Roger North, Of Building: Roger North’s Writings on Architecture, eds Howard Colvin and John Newman, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981, p. 65.
11 Baillie, p. 98.
12 North, p. 139.
their own apartment, often with separate cabinets or closets—small rooms where the householder could read, write or drink tea in warmth and seclusion. Servants now slept in garrets, or in closets tucked away within call of their masters until, some time before 1744, the invention of the servants’ bell made it possible to protect privacy further by calling them from afar. In such a house, backstairs made servants’ movements around the house invisible, and senior staff and the steward had their own rooms. Moreover, wrote Roger North, a new ‘affectation of cleanliness hath introduc’t much variety of rooms, which the ancients had no occasion for, who cared not for exquisite neatness’.

Ham House
Ham House (Middlesex), remodelled between 1672 and 1675 by William Samwell, gentleman–architect, for the Duke and Duchess of Lauderdale, was a handsome example of the aristocratic house of the time. For John Evelyn, it was ‘inferior to few of the best Villas in Italy itselfe, The House furnishd like a greate Princes; The Parterrs, flo: Gardens, Orangeries, Groves, Avenues, Courts, Statues, Perspectives, fountains, Aviaries, and all this at the banks of the sweetest river in the World, must needes be surprizing’. Ham was originally an H-plan house, but Samwell filled in the central bar of the H incorporating the end pavilions to create two apartments arranged symmetrically on either side of a central dining room, placed correctly behind a hall on the central axis, with a great stair to one side. Avoiding the fault so deplored by Roger North, of placing different parts of the grand sequence of rooms on different floors of the house, Samwell introduced a suite of great rooms for the master and the mistress at the entrance level, and a further sequence of state rooms above—true state rooms, in this case, because of the Lauderdale’s close relationship with Charles II. The

15 North, p. 126.
17 North, p. 124. It is true that the duke’s library on the first floor was considered part of his suite of rooms, as was the duchess’s bathroom in the basement. However, since the key rooms required in an apartment were all on one level, Ham House escaped North’s censure.
possession of three sequences of state rooms placed the house among the grandest of the grand, and drew North’s favorable comment:

This house is, in its time, esteemed one of the most beautyfull and compleat seats in the kingdome, and all ariseth out of the skill and dexterity in managing the alterations, which in my opinion are the best I have seen ... And there are all the rooms of parade, exquisitely plac’d ... So the visto is compleat from end to end, with a noble room of entry in the midle, which is used as a dining room.

The gardens, ‘made with unlimited cost and excellent invention’ complemented the building and gave ‘perfection to the whole’.

North’s approbation is not surprising, as the apartments met his own prescription for a range of great rooms. After advocating a central entrance, he recommended that the sequence of rooms after the withdrawing room include a ‘state bedchamber, and inner rooms suitable to it. And in that case it is very proper, as also for the master, to have his appartment and conveniences neer his eating room’. The bedroom, he declared, should be furnished with four doors, two opposite each other by the windows, to preserve the enfilade, and two on either side of the bed head, one for a stair so that servants could pass invisibly and one for the ‘disposition of the less clean and sightly utensils belonging to the persons of them that are to lodge there ... now ease and convenience is made the rule; we demand these accommodations’. Here the bedroom is described in terms of the newest ideals of cleanliness, discretion and elegance. After the bedchamber, North suggested a closet and, if possible, a dressing-room for the master and perhaps one for the mistress too. However, despite North’s provision for ‘less clean and sightly utensils’, his recommendations do not include a bathroom.

By the seventeenth century, the state rooms might offer a sequence of three to five rooms, laid out in an enfilade, by placing the doors opposite each other by the windows for the full length of the house. Only in the finest houses was there a separate and equal range of rooms for the mistress, as at Ham, where the second range displaced the less formal, family rooms. (This might be partly because the mistress of Ham was a countess in her own right.) At Chatsworth,

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18 North, p. 144.
19 North, pp. 131, 133–4.
21 Heward, pp. 62, 65.
this second range was present only symbolically in the placement of a huge mirror at the end of the enfilade suggesting, in appearance if not in fact, that there was an equal and corresponding enfilade on the other side. According to Maguire, seventeenth-century designers explored different versions of the bedroom and closet arrangement, designed for the comfort, privacy and convenience of the principal householders. The pattern can be summarised as follows: saloon ➔ anteroom (or withdrawing room) ➔ bedchamber ➔ closet (or dressing-room). Ham exceeded this benchmark, by offering, on the duchess’s side of the central dining room, a drawing room, bedchamber and two closets, where the duke had a dressing-room, bedchamber and closet and, in addition, a library with two closets of its own upstairs.

In 1672, Elizabeth Murray, Countess of Dysart and owner of Ham House, married John Maitland (soon to be Duke of Lauderdale), an intimate of Charles II’s circle. Both had spent time on the Continent during the Interregnum, and were eager to bring their house up to date. As there is no mention of the bathroom in the c. 1654 inventory of Ham House, it is possible that the duchess’s desire to install one dated from her 1670 visit to Paris, where bathrooms were, at this time, more common than in Britain. We are fortunate that the fabric, decoration, furniture and pictures at Ham House (now in the care of the National Trust) remain little changed, and that there are detailed inventories from 1677, 1679 and 1683, bound together in one volume, and transcribed with a commentary by Peter Thornton and Maurice Tomlin.

The bathroom, listed on all three inventories, was recorded as part of the duchess’s suite, although it was in the basement not on the entrance floor, where

24 Thornton and Tomlin, editors’ note and p. 36.
the state rooms were to be found. The bathroom itself was paved with black and white quarry tiles, and the bath, which was not plumbed, stood in the centre of the room under a wooden bar, suspended from the ceiling, which may have supported the curtains that often enclosed a warm bath at this time (illustration 1). A hook in front of the bath may have held a vessel for replenishing the hot water when required. Two steps down from the bathroom, and through an archway with double doors, was what the inventory described as an ‘anteroom’, and I shall call a resting room, which contained an Indian painted bedstead with painted satin hangings, a painted chair en-suite, two chairs with wooden seats and an armchair with a cane seat. As we shall see in chapter two, bedrest was a customary sequel to the delicate operation of taking a bath. It is possible that the arrangement, so admired by Evelyn and North, of birdcages outside the windows added to the privacy of the downstairs bathroom.

However, we are not concerned here with the details of the interior of the bathroom, but with the impact of the bathroom on the established sequence of the great rooms and, by analogy, on the social relations embodied in them. For the great rooms were not just a sequence of impressive spaces, they were a stage on which social relations were acted out. Baillie and Heward have both referred to the use to which great sequences were put; but perhaps the best description of the use of state rooms in the English context is provided by Mark Girouard in his *Life in the English Country House*. He describes the way that status was choreographed along the symmetrical axes of what he calls the ‘formal house’ of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. He details the visit of the King of Spain to Prince George of Denmark (Queen Anne’s husband) at the Duke of Somerset’s Petworth in 1703. On this occasion the prince progressed along the formal axis from his own bedchamber, to be greeted by the king at the door of his bedchamber—the person of lesser status being the one to travel farthest. The prince was then admitted and sat talking to the king in his bedchamber. Had the meeting been between two kings, Girouard maintains, this conversation might

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25 Thornton and Tomlin, p. 91.
26 We shall see that birdcages may have been used in this way at Chatsworth. Evelyn, p. 583; and North, p. 144.
27 See, for example, Elias, *Court Society*, pp. 44–5, on the Paris hôtel.
Illustration 1

A lady in her bathroom, James Green, 1746–1800
British Museum, Prints and Drawings, 1962,0714.35
© Trustees of the British Museum
have taken place in the cabinet or closet. When the king returned the visit, Prince George, as the person of inferior status, came as far as the stairs (the central point) to greet him, and returned with him to his own bedchamber. The Duke of Somerset—until now reduced to a minor player in the performance that was taking place in his house—then accompanied the prince and king to the duchess’s quarters, and she came out to the staircase to meet them. The king proceeded with her as far as her drawing room but, out of deference to her sex, no further.  

While the Duke and Duchess of Lauderdale may have received guests in the sequence of state rooms on the first floor that were for the king’s use, on ordinary occasions, they would have used their own, heavily decorated, great rooms on the entrance floor below. As North observed, these rooms were set en enfilade, so that one could see the whole length of the house. They shared a central vestibule, usually a saloon, but in this case the family dining room (illustration 2). To the left side of the dining room, as one enters, was the withdrawing room, known in the 1674 inventory as my lady’s dressing-room. The bedchamber that it introduced was to have an alcove, and was decorated with pictures of birds inserted into the panelling for the duchess’s pleasure. Following this room were not, as was more usual, one but two closets. The first, called the White Closet, was originally hung with white silk with white-marbled woodwork. The second, clearly a room for utility only and equipped with a scriptor for writing, was reached through a discreet jib door. But both were luxurious, being provided with double-glazing and tea-making facilities.

On the other side of the dining room was the duke’s dressing-room, ornately decorated, followed as custom dictated by his bedchamber, decorated with a masculine theme of men o’ war on a tossing seascape. Then followed his cabinet, furnished, perhaps overfurnished, with a ‘sleeping chair’ under a canopy, two chairs and two scriptors for writing. At the time of his death in 1683, this room was known as the reposing closet. Plans suggest that a stair led from this room to the new library above which, like the bathroom, was listed as part of his

29 Thornton and Tomlin, pp. 48–9, 117–18.
**Illustration 2**
Principal floor, Ham House, Middlesex
Courtesy of The National Trust
suite in spite of being on another floor. This too, was equipped with a closet, and both the upper and the lower closets were double-glazed.\textsuperscript{30}

Thus far, the picture is of two apartments typical of a particular moment of the evolution of the great house in the seventeenth century. The suites of rooms each had closets that met an increasing need for privacy—her most private closet for writing, his, perhaps for dozing and writing—and that reflected a new value for comfort represented by equipment for tea-making and double glazing. But now the bathroom intervenes. In an act of indecision for which bathroom historians can only be grateful, the duchess decided that she needed a bathroom and needed to be able to reach it easily from her bedroom.\textsuperscript{31} The bathroom, of necessity, had to be near the kitchen for the provision of hot water (illustration 3). The kitchen lay beneath the duke’s apartment. The duchess swapped bedrooms with her husband, and a spiral stair was constructed, too narrow for two to pass each other (and therefore for use not display), linking the bedroom with the bathroom. This swap must have taken place by the time of the inventory of 1677. For the duchess, an additional advantage of the duke’s bedroom was that there was a little extra space here for another closet, and a bedroom for her lady-in-waiting (shown as the grey area in illustration 2).

The ad hoc nature of the arrangement is revealed by the need for the duchess to pass through the gentlewoman’s bedroom to reach the stair, and the provision of another scriptor in the functional (therefore not for display) closet, so that she would not have to traverse the duke’s bedchamber to use her own writing materials. Instead, the couple could have swapped suites of rooms, rather than just bedrooms, but perhaps the duchess did not want to lose her two elegant cabinets, or the duke did not want to relinquish the convenience of his closet connected with the library above. Whatever the reasoning, the duke now had to cross the duchess’s bedchamber to reach his closet, newly furnished with a portière over the

\textsuperscript{30} Thornton and Tomlin, pp. 47–9, 53, 62, 67, 71, 77–78. While the library will not be discussed here, it is worth noting that these two new rooms often evolved in parallel, and were still linked in the nineteenth-century, when civic conscience led to the establishment of public facilities where the urban poor could both wash and read. The current argument about the disruption of the state rooms at Ham, could also have been made using the library, which had to be placed on another floor, linked to the main sequence by a staircase.

\textsuperscript{31} The value of the duchess’s afterthought lies in its having been inventoried so soon after the renovations.
Illustration 3

Basement floor (modern plan), Ham House, Middlesex
Courtesy of The National Trust
double doors in a rather pathetic bid to shore up the privacy of his inmost sanctum, while the duchess had to pass through the duke’s bedroom to reach her jewel-like cabinet and writing room. Likewise, the duke’s dressing-room, which was also his place of business, now lay on the other side of the dining room from his bedchamber. He slept in a garden of birds, while she slumbered amidst the clamour of men-o’-war, since the decorations, fitted into the panelling, could not be moved when the occupants swapped. Here was the beau ideal of the late-seventeenth-century house, symmetrical on the outside, symmetrical on the inside, with a central great hall, a central axis, and two suites of rooms reflecting each other perfectly, ready for the ornate dance of social status that would take place in it when guests were received. And all this splendour, not even quite finished, was now irremediably disrupted by the mistress’s need to be close to her bathroom. Here, in physical form, is the triumph of comfort and convenience over ritual and status.

**The Bigger Picture**

Within certain limits, the form and location of the new bathroom were constrained only by the fancy of the architect and the imagination (and the purse) of his client. As a consequence, both form and location varied, although along lines that can be predicted and explained. However, throughout the long eighteenth century, progress towards a standard form remained gradual and unco-ordinated. Although, in the nineteenth century, what Giedion calls the ‘compact’ bathroom—containing a suite comprising bath, wash-basin and water closet—became the norm, the grand, the bizarre, the makeshift and the non-existent continued, well into the twentieth century, to coexist with the convenient. In sum, the evolution of the bathroom was erratic and, although generalisations are possible, particular instances often gave the lie to the trends. Since the writers of architectural and builders’ manuals offered little guidance on the design and building of bathrooms, it is perhaps surprising that bathrooms were not still more diverse. That they were not must be attributed to the factors that will be touched

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32 Thornton and Tomlin, pp. 48, 62, 71, 90.
33 This is not to say that the uses of rooms were not sometimes varied by the dictates of pragmatism.
34 For the ‘compact bathroom’, see Giedion, p. 699.
on here, and discussed later at length. In spite of the variations, functional limitations did, to some degree, impose form on the bathroom. Logistical constraints were a major factor in the placement of bathrooms, but they were by no means the only influences: medical opinion, classical precedent and the desire to create a Picturesque space for leisure and display also played a part.

**Situation**

The location of many baths was dictated by their volume: many contained two or three thousand gallons of water, and could take all night to fill.\(^{35}\) A basement location meant that the weight of the bath could be supported by the ground, that rapid water flow could be ensured by a maximum drop from the cistern in the roof, and that, as at Ham, the bath was close to furnaces and fuel supply, freshly warmed linen, and servants. Towels were not only needed after the bath, but were also often used to line the tub itself to protect the bather’s back from the cold surface.\(^{36}\) Moreover, a basement location limited damage from leaking pipes. Illustration 4 shows a cross-section of Sir George Howland Beaumont’s house, Coleorton, in Leicestershire (George Dance the Younger, 1802–3). Here, the walls of the bath in the basement were strengthened by piers, and the water descended from a cistern in the attic. At Lord Clive’s house, Claremont, Surrey (Capability Brown and Henry Holland, 1771–4) it is possible that the basement situation made it easier to drain the bath, as there does not appear to have been a waste pipe.\(^{37}\) The furnace on the wall of a small room adjoining the bathroom at Sir Thomas Ackland’s house in Devonshire (Adam office, not built\(^ {38}\)) could be stoked without disturbing the bather. This practical arrangement was relatively common.\(^ {39}\) Ackland’s bathroom was flanked on the other side by a water closet—

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\(^{36}\) As Jacques-Louis David’s famous 1793 portrait, *La Mort de Marat*, shows.

\(^{37}\) There is no plughole in the floor of the bath today. As the front lawn slopes away from the house, it is possible that the water was pumped out onto the lawn.


\(^{39}\) For example, it is found at Mellerstain and Oxenfoord (Borders), Mr Baron Grant’s house in London, at Lord Kerry’s House (not built?), Yester (Lothian) and Wimpole (Cambridgeshire), as well as in Stewart’s sketch for Dunkeld (not built). Other examples could be found at Chatsworth (Derbyshire) and Abbotsbury (Dorset).
Illustration 4

North elevation and cross section, Coleorton, Leicestershire
Sir John Soane’s Museum, [73].58 SM, D1/11/27
By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum
one of the rare occasions when the two rooms are found in close proximity (see illustration 5). What is conspicuously absent from this drawing is a space to dress or rest. In the absence of social usages that associated bathing with rising or going to bed, there was no need for the bathroom to be near the bather’s bedroom—as we shall see in the next chapter, bathing was a medical procedure, not a domestic ritual—but Sir Thomas’s arrangement must nevertheless have been inconvenient. He would have had to return to his dressing-room behind the opposite quadrant link, and his lady must have passed through the hall, anteroom and bedroom to reach her dressing-room. Still more uncomfortable was the Earl of Rothes at Leslie House, Fife (William Bruce, 1667–72, illustration 6). He would have had to brave the courtyard to reach the corner stair.

The inconveniences of the insertion of a bathroom into an existing floor plan often brought with it a further, social, awkwardness. We have seen how the increasing privacy required by the master of a seventeenth-century house was reflected in the provision of increasingly intimate spaces. Not only North, but also that other eminent seventeenth-century gentleman–architect, Roger Pratt, commented on the desirability of being protected from the comings and goings of the servants. Pratt recommended a common eating room for servants apart from the kitchen, so that staff would not get under the kitchen workers’ feet, and help themselves to food. He recommended a broad central corridor on the basement level with a door at the end, so staff would not disturb the work of other departments by having to walk through their areas. But corridors also:

serve for conveying anything from below into the rooms above, and so reciprocally from those likewise above without the servants passing to and fro either to their own inconvenience, or to your disturbance and dislike of all those who shall see them ... let [each room] be so furnished with backstairs and passages to them, that the ordinary servants may never publicly appear in passing to and fro for their occasions there ...  

40 The introduction of a new room and one, moreover, that had perforce to be near the kitchen was at odds with the growing desire to distance the servants. Architects and owners found a range of solutions to this problem (not the least of which was the freestanding bathhouse), but as the plans and descriptions of the

Illustration 5

Plan of a principal story of ... a house for
Sir Thomas Ackland baronet in Devonshire
By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum
Illustration 6

The plan of the first floor of Lessly (Fife)
William Adam, Vitruvius Scoticus, Edinburgh, 1812?, plate 66
Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland
evolving bathroom in this chapter will show, for a long time, the possession of a bathroom obliged the bather to trespass upon the servants’ territory. The absence of dressing-rooms attached to some basement bathrooms meant that the owners were not only out of place, but presumably also dressing-gowned. What the servants thought of these incursions is, owing to the silence that enshrouds many aspects of servants’ lives, not known. It does, however, reinforce the impression that, in matters of bathing, the new desire for a bathroom prevailed over the demands of social position.

At Culzean Castle (Robert Adam, 1777–92, illustration 7), the Earl of Cassillis was rather more comfortably accommodated with a bathroom connected to a dressing-room, with a servant’s room within call and a stair, probably linked to his quarters above. The external door serving the bathroom also served the bakehouse and brewhouse—cosy neighbours for a bathroom and all rooms that require firewood or coal. Culzean also boasted sea baths by the shore below the house. At Mellerstain in the Borders (Robert Adam, 1770–8), as at Mr Johnston’s house at Alva (Robert Adam, c. 1790), the bathroom commanded a central position with a more agreeable outlook than the bathroom at Claremont, which was tucked under the front stairs. All three of these rooms, at Mellerstain, Alva and Claremont, were equipped with resting areas, but a return to the family’s rooms above involved passing through the servants’ quarters. The pleasant views at Mellerstain and Alva was possibly a result of French precedent, as Jacques-François Blondel, in his influential 1737 Maisons de plaisance, recommended that a bathroom be placed on the ground floor so that the bather could benefit from fresh air, fountains and the shelter of trees, a theme that will be revisited in chapter five.\(^{41}\) At Mellerstain, the Earl of Haddington benefited from contiguous hot and cold baths, opening into a resting room overlooking the garden, and in close proximity to the stairs. In only one case do contiguous baths survive (at

\[^{41}\] Jacques-François Blondel, *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance et de la décoration des édifices en général*, Paris, 1737, vol. 1, part 1, p. 72. Chapter five will show that a further precedent linked bathrooms with basements: in mid–sixteenth-century Florence and Rome, the nymphaeum or grotto was often in the basement of a villa. The association between grottoes and bathing spaces was to prove of long duration. See Michel Saudan and Sylvia Saudan-Skira, *From Folly to Follies: Discovering the World of Gardens*, 2nd edn, Evergreen, Cologne, 1997 (1987), p. 48.
Illustration 7

Plan of the ground story of Cullean Castle ...
for the Earl of Cassillis (Ayrshire)
Sir John Soane's Museum, R. and J. Adam, vol. 37, no. 8
By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum
Lyme Park in Cheshire, 1815), but it is fair to assume that they were less uncommon in the eighteenth century.\(^{42}\)

Often, these baths could only be reached by a common area in which the family might not only be seen, but be seen in a state of disarray, by the servants. Perhaps—like the intimacy between nurse and nursling (however old the latter might become), groom and horseman, gamekeeper and master, valet and lady’s maid and their master and mistress—it was an area that was exempted from the growing distance between master and servant. In contrast, although the bathroom was still in the basement, the separation between master and servant in the bathing suite was complete.\(^{43}\) A door connected the suite with the servants’ quarters so that an attendant could stoke the furnace and wait on the bather, but a private stair ensured that the owner could retire upstairs quite unseen.

On the basis of the number of bathhouses traced in appendix 1, together with a number that must remain as yet unidentified, it is probable that, in the eighteenth century, there were hundreds, perhaps thousands, of privately owned bathrooms.\(^{44}\) Of these, the overwhelming majority appear to have been attached to country houses, where fuel and abundant water were more readily available. Of the bathrooms in appendix one, only 4 were in Bristol, 4 in London, 2 in Cambridge and 1 in each of some half a dozen other towns.\(^{45}\) The problems of installing a bathroom in a city house were manifold. Apart from the scale of the baths themselves, intermittent and inadequate water supply, and the need for large fuel storage areas, the wide choice of public bathhouses made bathroom-building, arguably, unnecessary.

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\(^{42}\) There are hot and cold baths in adjoining rooms at Lyme Park in Cheshire; a downstairs cold bath at Mr Baron Grant’s house in London was connected by a stair to a hot bath above; and a hot tub (the earliest example (1780) I have found of a tub’s being plumbed in) stood outside the door to the cold bath at Oxenfoord in the Borders.

\(^{43}\) The specialisation of rooms was, by this time, advanced, but the existence of a separate dining room, accessible in this case from outdoors, nonetheless attests to the modernity of this plan.


\(^{45}\) There was, as far as Susan Kellerman and I can ascertain, one privately owned bathroom/house in each of Lichfield, Dartmouth, Durham, Portsmouth, York and Tenby. See appendix 1.
Illustration 8

Plan of the ground story of Oxenford Castle the seat of Sir John Dalrymple baronet (Borders)
By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum
Such as there were, however, were little different from country baths and, like them, most were at ground level. In sharp contrast to the pleasure pavilions found in the country gardens of chapter five, a city location could limit the space available, resulting in a room that was purely functional. John Pinney’s 1791 bathroom in Great George Street, Bristol (illustration 9), for example, provided only enough space for the bather to reach the steps into the bath. There was no room here to dress or rest, let alone for any kind of sociability. As this bath was cold, fuel supply was not a problem, and fields sloping away from the rear of the house made draining the bath simple. On the other hand, Lansdowne House in Berkeley Square (Adam, 1768, illustration 10) boasted an entire suite of rooms, now demolished, which contained a bath, dressing-room and a separate ice house, concealed, for the sake of exterior symmetry, by judicious plantings. Here, a private stair led to the rooms above, but the suite could also be reached from the servants’ quarters. As a concession to limited space, the gallery leading to the backstairs had to be shared with the servants. As in Bristol, this bath did not need to be heated. In contrast, the large coal cellar by the bathroom in the Duke of Roxburgh’s house in Hanover Square may have supplied the furnace in the kitchen wall (illustration 11)—the kitchen’s needs being met from the nearby scullery. The firebox of the furnace on the kitchen wall opens into the kitchen, since a furnace door directly into the coal cellar would have been a fire hazard. Backstairs, just outside the small lobby to the bathing chamber, provided a speedy departure from the servants’ quarters. Next to the scullery was a substantial engine (pump) room, which must have been used to pump water from the duke’s source of supply into the water closet beside it, and the scullery and kitchen furnaces.

Mr Baron Grant’s house at 20 Soho Square (Adam office, 1771–2, illustrations 12 and 13, demolished 1924) offers the first glimpse of a bath on the first floor. On the ground floor, sandwiched between the coach house and the

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46 The bath in Great George Street was fed from a rainwater cistern in the lower basement, which was pumped up to the upper basement bath. I am indebted to Caroline Hancock, house manager, for this information.

47 I am indebted to Stephen Astley, of the Sir John Soane’s Museum, for this interpretation.

48 Christine Hiskey suggests that Thomas Coke’s wife may have had a bath upstairs in her closet in c. 1742. However, because closets were not large rooms, this is likely to have taken the form of a
stables, was a cold bath, connected to the garden by a door, and by a staircase to a small, elegantly shaped suite comprising anteroom, bathroom and bedroom. Although a simple rearrangement of a water closet and secondary stair would have provided access to the house through the gallery or library, Mr Grant must have reached his bathing facilities through the garden. Perhaps the waste bathwater was used for washing the stables, carriages or even horses. By 1792, George Richardson also proposed that a bathroom be on an upper floor, but this time for the sake of convenience—a consideration that was to be of growing importance by this time. At plate 36 of his *New Designs in Architecture*, he placed relatively modest cold baths in ‘closets’ of about 7 by 10 feet, adjoining the two bedrooms on the principal storey of a country house (the water closets still safely confined in separate rooms), in an early exercise in en-suites (illustration 14).⁴⁹ That this idea did not long remain purely theoretical is evidenced by the survival of an en-suite bathroom dating from 1820 at Lethangie in Perthshire.

**Privacy**

In city bathrooms, privacy was of particular importance. At Hanover Square, the bathroom gave onto an internal light well; in Bristol, the bathroom was windowless (though ventilated); and the bathroom suite at Berkeley Square appears to have been top lit. In the country, too, privacy must sometimes have been an issue. An 1847 drawing of the bathroom at Aynhoe, on the Cartwright estate in Northamptonshire (probably Soane, c. 1802, illustration 15), shows creepers growing over a trellis on the window. Another caricature of the Worsley divorce mentioned in the introduction shows a triangular metal sheet set like an inverted fireplace hood, which permitted light from above to reach the windows while blocking sightlines from the ground (see illustration 16). Andrew Douglas describes light being permitted to glimmer through the painted windows of a Paris actress’s bathroom, and there is no reason why this solution might not also have been employed in Britain.⁵⁰ The windows of the Chatsworth bathroom were

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⁴⁹ The closets were 9’6” x 6’9”. See George Richardson, *New Designs in Architecture*, London, 1792, plate 36.
Illustration 9

Bath at Georgian House, Bristol, Somerset, 1791
Author’s photograph
Illustration 10

Plan of the basement story of Shelburne [Lansdowne] House in Berkley Square
By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum
Illustration 11

Plan of the Ground Story of His Grace the Duke of Roxburgh’s House, Hanover Square

Sir John Soane’s Museum, R. and J. Adam, vol. 37, no. 34
By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum
Illustration 12

Mr Baron Grants House, Soho Square, Parlor Story
Sir John Soane’s Museum, R. and J. Adam, vol. 42, no. 52
By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum
Illustration 13

Principal Story of Mr Baron Grants House in Soho Square
By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum
Illustration 14

Principal Storey of a Country House
George Richardson, New Designs in Architecture, London, 1792, plate XXXVI
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
**Illustration 15**

The Cold Bath Room, 8 May 1847


Courtesy of Random House Group and National Library of Scotland
Illustration 16
Maidstone Whim, 1782, publisher William Wells
British Museum, Prints and Drawings, Satires 6107
© Trustees of the British Museum
made out of ‘private’ (probably frosted) glass. We are also told that the room adjoining the bathroom, which by 1818 was the housekeeper’s room, was reglazed in 1694 (the year in which the bathroom was installed): ‘ye lowest windows are made with Grates before them and are for birds—an Averye—and so looking glass behind’. The replacement of the bottom sashes with aviaries backed by mirrors and, in 1697, the introduction of marble flooring suggest that this room functioned as an ancillary room to the bathroom, the aviaries providing privacy in a room that would otherwise have commanded an attractive outlook.

**IN THE BATHROOM**

Insofar as a generalisation can be made, the 1660–1815 bathroom contained a sunken bath of varying dimensions, but usually around four and a half feet deep, ‘sufficiently deep to reach up to the Neck’, and as wide and as long as the owner could afford, often around 10 or 12 feet long, and 8 or 10 feet wide (see table 1). Such baths were entered by four or five steps, usually without railings, as were the baths themselves, presumably because they did not constitute a danger if the bath was full. Many of these baths were rectangular (Corsham, Carshalton, Antony); some were oval or had rounded ends (Kenwood, Culzean); but a significant number were quatrefoil (Claremont, Wimpole Hall, Sir Thomas Ackland’s and Isaac Ware’s. See illustrations 17 and 18). The short ‘wings’ of a quatrefoil design provided a safe corner into which to tuck a stair. These deep baths were lined with marble, stone or tiles, and Batty Langley published patterns of marble pavements suitable to halls and baths. Bath tubs, on the other hand, could be copper, lead, tin or iron or, for the sake of show, marble (as at Chatsworth, see illustration 19). The 1807 reclining bath-tubs at Ardrossan’s tontine baths were wood, one

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53 Thompson, p. 131.
56 Copper was expensive, and iron (until a varnish was invented in 1770) rusted. See Lawrence Wright, *Clean and Decent: The Fascinating History of the Bathroom and the Water Closet and of Sundry Habits, Fashions and Accessories of the Toilet Principally in Great Britain, France and America*, Routledge Kegan Paul, London, 1960, p. 126.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date (Approximate)</th>
<th>Measurements (Imperial)</th>
<th>Allow for silting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antony</td>
<td>1788–90</td>
<td>20’ square approx. x 2’6”/5’ †</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carshalton</td>
<td>1750s renovation</td>
<td>10’9” x 8’6” and 4’6” deep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corsham</td>
<td>1791–8</td>
<td>11’9” x 6’1” and 4’4” deep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enville</td>
<td>1773</td>
<td>21’7” x 12’9”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian House Bristol</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>10’ x 4’5” and 5’3” deep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunnersbury Park</td>
<td>Early 19th century?</td>
<td>12’ x 8’ and 4’9” deep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham</td>
<td>1677</td>
<td>tub</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Court</td>
<td>1737</td>
<td>tub</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kedleston</td>
<td>1759–65</td>
<td>8’10” diameter semicircle x 4’ deep*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenwood</td>
<td>1793–6</td>
<td>11’8” x 11’4” and 3’5” deep‡</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyme Park</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Cold bath 9’6” x 7’9” and 6’ deep Hot bath 6’10” x 3’ and 3’3” deep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powis</td>
<td>1771–79</td>
<td>9’2” x 7’8” and 4’8” deep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufford Abbey</td>
<td>1728</td>
<td>bottle-shaped; over 100’ long; 5’ wide at neck; 12’ wide at body; floor slopes from 2’ to 6’ deep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimpole</td>
<td>c. 1800</td>
<td>12’9” x 6’7” and 4’9” deep◊</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* allow 6” for sludge
† Antony has a split staircase into the water, which is 2’6” on one side (down to silt level) and 5’ (to silt) on the other, and a foot deeper at high tide.
‡ Oval in shape
◊ quatrefoil 8’8” at its widest
and three quarters of an inch thick, dovetailed at the corners, and dressed on the inside to receive marble (or stone from Stevenston quarry, which produced stone of comparable quality). There was a moulded coping to the bath, wide enough to cover the edges of both the stone and the wood.\textsuperscript{57}

Water entered the bath through a spout, and left it through a plughole or was pumped out. Water flow was controlled by a brass tap or cock. At Wimpole, a control panel on top of the water tank regulated hot, cold and also waste water, which left by drains beneath a gravel strip between the terrace and the parterre, where they could easily be accessed for maintenance. Illustrations 20 and 21 show the arrangement of boiler and cisterns proposed for the baths at Edinburgh’s Royal Infirmary (William Adam, 1738–48, plans not as built). Illustration 20 shows, on the left, a cold water cistern for flushing the women’s water closet below. To the right of it is a boiler where, it appears, water is heated above, and hot air circulated below the floors (on the axes A–B and E–F on illustration 21). In illustration 21, the cold water cistern serving the water closet is on the far left, near the boiler, and in each bathing room, there are two cisterns for hot and cold water.

‘IT MAY BE CONVENIENT…’

So far, the picture has been one of a large bath, varying in length and breadth, but not often in depth. This bath was found in the basement or the garden, and more often in the country than in the city. Where then, is the gradual and uncoordinated development stressed at the beginning of the chapter? In the first place, although there were many more baths in the eighteenth century than is popularly believed, in the vast majority of houses, people were still making do, at best, with a tub in front of the fire. Where purpose-built bathrooms did exist, technologically advanced facilities co-existed with the most basic arrangements. At Carshalton in 1721, for instance, there was a sophisticated suite of rooms, two elegant baths, and probably running hot and cold water; while at Hampton Court in 1737, Queen Caroline, who believed in a daily bath and inflicted it on her family, had only a

\textsuperscript{57} James Cleland, \textit{Description of That Part of Ardrossan in the County of Ayr on which Baths Are to Be Built by Tontine}, Glasgow, James Hedderwick, 1807, pp. 10, 42.
Illustration 17
The bath at Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire
Author’s photograph
Illustration 18

Design for a bath, 1756
Isaac Ware, A Complete Body of Architecture, London 1756, plate 102
Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland
Illustration 19
Marble bath, Chatsworth, Derbyshire
Author’s photograph
**Illustration 20**

Section, Royal Infirmary Baths, William Adam, 1738–48
Edinburgh University Archives, LHB1/6811
Courtesy of Edinburgh University
Illustration 21
Plan, Royal Infirmary Baths, William Adam, 1738–48
Edinburgh University Archives, LHB1/6811
Courtesy of Edinburgh University
wooden tub (illustration 22). Although cold water was pumped into the buffet in the queen’s room, the hot water still had to be carried, and the queen washed sitting on a stool, after a fashion more common in the seventeenth century, when fears about full immersion had greater authority. In addition, her bathroom was separated from the principal enfilade of her suite only by a doorless partition. In spite of her noted predilection for daily washing, and a social position that enabled her to command the latest comforts, her facilities were no more convenient than those commonly available a century earlier and less convenient, in fact, than those available in the Duchess of Cleveland 1670s bathing suite at the Tudor watergate at Hampton Court over sixty years before. 

Moreover, magnificent as they often were, basement bathrooms were usually not convenient. Such large baths were not quick to fill (although, as we shall see in chapter five, Sir Godfrey Copley’s pump would fill a thirty-five-foot bath to four-and-a-half feet in depth in under five hours), and it also took a long time to heat the water, so baths could not be taken on impulse. And, as we have observed, they were not always equipped with convenient dressing-rooms. There was no direct correlation between the date of the bathroom and the convenience of its arrangements. Chatsworth, the Earl of Mar’s drawings and Carshalton, in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, had convenient arrangements for dressing and resting, while Kenwood and the Georgian House in Bristol, later in the century, did not. The convenience of bathrooms did not increase at an even pace across the eighteenth century. At all periods, some were convenient and some were not. Some had a dressing or a resting room; another had access to a water closet; some had private stairs, others had stairs that were closer or farther away, but which nevertheless exposed the bather to the gaze of the staff. Few had all the conveniences: resting and dressing-rooms, stair and water closet. As it was

58 Hampton Court Palace audio tour, item 411, accessed 16 July 2006. Perhaps it is a testimony to maternal influence that her son, Frederick Prince of Wales, had a magnificent one at Carlton House. See The Agreeable Historian, or the Compleat English Traveller, London, 1746, vol. 1, pp. 592–3.
61 Earl of Mar, house plan based on Marly, National Archives of Scotland (hereafter NAS), RHP 13256/16.
Illustration 22

Queen Caroline’s Bathroom, Hampton Court, 1995 reconstruction
Crown copyright
Courtesy of Historic Royal Palaces
often not possible to insert such a large and technologically demanding space into an existing floor plan, the addition of bathrooms to houses was often ad hoc, and the resulting space more modest than the bathrooms discussed so far.

An example of the ad hoc bathroom was the Duchess of Buccleugh’s bathroom at Dalkeith Palace (Midlothian, c. 1815, illustration 23). Here, an architectural drawing shows a sequence of rooms comprising the couple’s bedroom, flanked on either side by dressing-rooms. Beyond one dressing-room lies the duke’s sitting room, and beyond the other, the duchess’s boudoir. The duchess has pencilled in an amendment to her dressing-room—a new door and a bath—and a marginal note that the door ‘may be convenient’. Locating a bath in the dressing-room may have been dictated by the constraints of the existing floor plan or, indeed, the couple may have wanted to save money to spend at their much larger houses at Bowhill and Drumanrig: however, the word ‘convenient’ is suggestive. If what the duchess wanted was a quick bath in a warm room close to her own suite, then a bath in her dressing-room was the most obvious solution. Adding a bath to an existing bedroom or dressing-room was the most convenient solution to bathing arrangements in an existing house, and it continued to be adopted well into the twentieth century.\(^{62}\) The more often one bathed, the more convenient the bathroom needed to be. The duchess’s modest pencilled request, then, marked a significant shift in attitude from just a few years before, and heralded the dominant form—the compact bathroom—of the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This shift from public to private life, underlies the arrangement of the 1815 bathroom at Lyme Park in Cheshire, the last year of the period under study. Although bathrooms of the eighteenth-century type continued to be built after this date—at Fieldgrove House (Gloucestershire, mid-nineteenth century), Wightwick (West Midlands, 1880s) and Cragside (Northumberland, 1878), for example—the compact bathroom began to dominate, and the plunge bath, if it was built at all, became a luxury ‘extra’.\(^{63}\) Thomas Legh, the young owner of Lyme Park (Cheshire), was a scholar, a traveller beyond the customary limits of the Grand

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\(^{62}\) For instance, at Chatsworth.

\(^{63}\) Since there are so few books written about eighteenth-century bathhouses, it is possible that some baths attributed to the nineteenth century are, in fact, eighteenth-century.
Illustration 23
Plan for the ground floor of Dalkeith Palace
NAS RHP9687-3
Courtesy of the National Archives of Scotland
Tour, a soldier and a member of the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries. Between 1814 and 1818, he employed architect Lewis Wyatt (1777–1853) to modernise his house. With a rare lightness of touch, Wyatt did not disrupt the state rooms, but confined himself to adding a dining room and a library, rooms that were, by now, no longer a novelty, but essential to any gentleman’s residence. At the opposite end of the house, he constructed a cluster of private rooms, comprising a private study (as distinct from the library), a bedroom, a water closet (on the stair) and a sequence of two bathing rooms (illustration 24. In the built version, the cold bath was in the room where the warm bath is on this plan, and the warm bath was in the room marked dressing room, but small enough to allow for a bed and chair as well.).

In the first bathing chamber was an unusually deep cold bath and, in the second, a smaller bath, decorated with delft tiles and offering hot and cold water, and a steam function. Despite the importance of classical precedent, to find hot and cold baths in sequence in the long eighteenth century was relatively rare, suggesting that eighteenth-century owners baulked at the price. Mellerstain (Adam, Borders, 1773) had two contiguous baths, which have since been filled in. Oxenfoord Castle (Adam, Borders, 1780) had a hot tub in the room next to the cold bath, now gone. The arrangements at Mr Baron Grant’s House in Soho Square (Adam, London, 1771–2) involved a hot bath above the cold bath, and were not suited to the kind of sequential use practised by the ancient Romans. Abbotsbury (Dorset, 1791) appears to have had hot and cold baths and a dressing-room in a bathhouse near the beach, and Wanstead (Essex, c. 1710) and Carshalton probably had two baths side by side. A reconstruction of this can be

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65 I am deeply indebted to James Rothwell, curator for the National Trust in Cheshire, and David Morgan, house manager at Lyme, for moving the administrative staff out of the 1815 bathing rooms, which had been covered over in a renovation in the 1840s, and lifting the floors to permit a full examination of the baths below. I am also grateful to Carolanne King (surveyor) for sending me the measurements she made.

66 Email, Andrew Skelton to Elizabeth Graham, 21 May 2008.
Illustration 24

Plan of private rooms, ground floor, Lyme Park
The plans are not as built, but show the intention to create a private suite
Courtesy of the National Trust
seen at illustration 20 in chapter 5. However, Lyme Park offers the only known surviving example of adjoining hot and cold baths.

The bathrooms at Lyme should be seen in contradistinction to the great rooms at Ham. Instead of sleeping in the penultimate room of a sequence of increasingly private rooms, Legh withdrew to completely separate quarters, at the opposite end of the house from the state rooms. Here he could keep a few treasured books, sleep, and bathe in bathrooms that were conveniently close to his bedroom, and which were replete with up-to-date technology. All this he could do in privacy, away from his household and visitors.  

This accords with the French pattern identified by Dominique Massounie, who has found that the early-eighteenth-century French bathroom was a magnificent and jewel-like culmination of the formal sequence of rooms, but that by the end of the century, it formed one of a cluster of small rooms designed to minister to the whole person: a bedroom for resting, a library, food for the intellect, a boudoir where the spirit and the imagination could roam at will, and a bathroom, for the care of the body. By the second half of the eighteenth century in France, this combination of private rooms—quite detached from the formal enfilade—was quite common, as ‘the high point of refinement was to know how to unite the intellect and the senses’.  

This story ends, as it began, with a Duke and Duchess of Lauderdale, this time at their seat at Thirlestane Castle in the Scottish Borders. A glance forward in time to the 1840 renovation of Thirlestane offers a snapshot of the impact on the country house of this new value for convenience. There is a cold bath and two water closets on the ground floor. This is a model with which we are, by now, familiar. Above this bathroom, on the dining and drawing room floor, is another

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67 An earlier example of such a cluster of private rooms can be found in Sir John Soane’s drawings for Lord Mulgrave at Mulgrave Hall in Yorkshire (1788). Here Lord Mulgrave’s room, writing closet, strong room, and bathroom and water closet (next to the bathroom) appear in the west pavilion with the summer breakfast room. See Sir John Soane, Plans, Elevations and Sections of Buildings, Architectural Library, London, 1788, plate 32.

bathroom, this time with hot and cold water, a tub and a wash-basin. The water closet, which has no wash-basin of its own, is separate from, but close to the bathroom. On the right-hand side of the house are the duke and duchess’s quarters—a sequence of rooms comprising an anteroom, his sitting room, their bedroom, a converted dressing-room with a bath-tub and hot and cold water, but no wash-basin (illustration 25), her boudoir, and another dressing-room. Here, at last, is the convenient bathroom—close to the bedroom—but not yet Giedion’s compact bathroom, with tub, wash-basin and water closet. And it is still called a ‘dressing-room’, even though there is little room in it for any function but bathing. But on the first bedroom floor, again a pencilled annotation offers a glimpse of a new model in the making. Here, we see for the first time in this sample, a water closet inserted into a bathroom—the invention of the S-bend in having by now made a separate room unnecessary. Here the writing suggests that the addition was made for the convenience of someone occupying the adjacent rooms. The compact bathroom has been invented.

**Conclusion**

Buildings are as much cultural as material constructions. As Roger North put it:

> the severall ways that men affect to live doe much alter the propositions wee have to regard; and in this respect fashion is not a meer caprice of fancy, but a solid reason, which oblidgeth all dispositions in a habitation to conforme. And therefore beauty is not onely relative to the severall conditions of men, but also to the severall modes of living which different ages and countrys affect.70

The development of the domestic bathroom was a response to the ‘severall modes of living which different ages ... affect’. These modes were to include several quite new rooms apart from the bathroom. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Humphry Repton (1752–1818) was to reflect on the impact of these new rooms on the floor plan:

> After thus mentioning the uses of ancient apartments, it is necessary to enumerate those additions which modern life requires. 1st. The Eating Room, which does not exactly correspond with the ancient hall, because it is no longer the fashion to dine in public. 2d. The Library, into which the gallery may

69 Alas, this was too faint to reproduce, but it can be found at the National Archives of Scotland, RHP20748.
70 North, p. 125.
Illustration 25

Thirlestane Castle: Plan of the dining and drawing room floor
NAS RHP20747
Courtesy of the National Archives of Scotland
sometimes be changed with propriety. 3d. The Drawing-room, or saloon. 4th. The Music-room. 5th. The Billiard-room. 6th. The Conservatory attached to the house; and lastly the Boudoirs, wardrobes, hot and cold baths, &c. which are all modern appendages unknown in Queen Elizabeth’s days. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to preserve the ancient style of a mansion without considerable additions. 71

The evolution of the bathroom over this period was gradual and uncoordinated. Sophisticated bathrooms (like Carshalton) co-existed throughout the period with technologically unsophisticated spaces (like Queen Caroline’s) and with houses with no facilities at all. However, certain overarching themes can be identified. Their appearance, in the late-seventeenth century, disrupted the prevailing sequence of rooms in which social status was physically acted out in progress through the enfilade of state rooms, and inflicted the bathroom’s user on the increasingly segregated domain of the servants in the basement. While disrupting some cultural values, the bathroom nonetheless partook of other trends that affected the evolution of the plan—in the trend towards the specialisation of rooms, towards comfort, convenience and compactness and, ultimately, towards privacy. The one constant, as the succeeding chapters will show, was that the form and use of the bathroom continued to be culturally constructed, evolving in response to changing scientific, technological, bureaucratic and social pressures.

CHAPTER TWO
Quacks, Empiricks and Rational Men
The (Re-)Invention of Bathing

Introduction
In the seventeenth century, the battle lines were being drawn between physicians versed in traditional medicine—the wisdom of Galen and Hippocrates, and the application of pure reason—and a new kind of physician—one who collected, documented and shared observations of individual cases, and conducted controlled experiments with a view to developing new treatments for disease. These skirmishes took place in a complex setting comprising many different approaches to healing in a relatively unregulated environment, and an eclectic approach to treatment on the part of patients. However complicated the backdrop, one of the points of issue was an emerging advocacy of bathing, in which not only the benefits of bathing itself were contested, but the manner of it. At a period when there was no fixed ritual of bathing, physicians, theologians and moralists argued about every aspect of the procedure from temperature, depth and frequency, to times of day and the composition of the fluid. Above all, they argued about whether, and to what degree, bathing was beneficial, and when and how it might be dangerous.

Bathing had been established as a healthful social ritual in classical times. By the early modern period, baths, especially warm baths, for health were sometimes recommended by physicians like William Turner (1562) and William Vaughan (1633), but others made no mention of it (Sir Thomas Ely (1541), Everard Maynwaring (1670)) and still more warned of its dangers.¹ Historians of bathing attribute the sudden rash of publications advocating bathing for health—

over a hundred by the end of the long eighteenth century—to the influence of one physician or another. Mark Girouard points to Dr William Oliver of Bath’s *Practical Dissertation on the Bath Waters* (1707); Lawrence Wright notes the importance of Robert Pierce and George Cheyne of Bath, and Richard Russell of Brighton, while Katherine Ashenburg discusses the impact of a number of physicians, such as Sir John Floyer, but reminds us that ideas about nature, philosophy and child-rearing, like those of John Locke, also played a part.² Virginia Smith traces the treatment to the work of Thomas Sydenham and Richard Mead.³ Certainly the patronage of certain famous invalids must have given respectability to the new practice, and George Cheyne expatiated on the usefulness of bathing for swellings of the joints, claiming to know a ‘very considerable Person’, perhaps Queen Anne, who bathed daily in a tub of cold water.⁴

The theories that brought these physicians to advocate bathing integrate them into the broader discourses of the Scientific Revolution, in particular, into the conflict that raged between the Royal College of Physicians in London, a conservative force, and the reforming virtuosi, who drew on the powerful, pan-European network that lay behind the Royal Society. The volume of writing about bathing after 1660 is very considerable, but three figures stand out—Sir John Floyer (1649–1734), Dr George Cheyne (c. 1671–1743) and Sir John Pringle (1707–1782). Together, these physicians span most of the period under discussion, not just through their lifetimes, but also through the enduring influence of their writing.⁵ As we shall see, Floyer was a defining influence on the popularity of bathing at an early period. Apart from being a powerful voice at a turbulent moment in the history of science, he was, more than later physicians, forced to confront the profound social and religious implications of the new

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³ Smith, *Clean* p. 219.
⁵ Each of them wrote books that ran to many editions.
practice of bathing. Cheyne, also an influential writer and an early apologist of bathing, was an eminent proponent of the new approach to science, and an early voice in the medical discourse of the diseases of affluence, before the radical impact of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s thinking on the way of life of the élite. Sir John Pringle, also influential as a physician and a writer, has left behind him a remarkable manuscript collection of correspondence and case-notes, only recently made available to the public, which exemplifies the experimental approach to research into and treatment of illness, and illustrates the kind of network of intellectual enquiry, most often cited in terms of the correspondence network of Henry Oldenburg. Such correspondence networks caused scientific knowledge to advance more rapidly than the efforts of any single person could have achieved. By the end of the eighteenth century, physicians had come close to a consensus about the value of bathing for health: one that was to culminate in a veritable passion for all kinds of bathing therapy in the nineteenth century.

The upheaval that took place in science and medicine in the late seventeenth century has sometimes been described as one of the great disjunctions of history, and the philosophical shift and the far-reaching consequences of that period justify the term. However, this disjunction had its roots in antiquity. Although the authority of the physicians of classical times, in particular Hippocrates and Galen, dominated medicine for fourteen hundred years, and stifled innovation, Galen carried out dissection, and both practiced a systematic method not altogether unlike those who, centuries later, were to consign their theories to the history books. Aristotle, too, built on the ideas of Plato, Xeno and Elea to advocate a systematic approach to knowledge on the basis of observation. In spite of this, their enduring prestige was to hamper new research, and institutionalise the theory of the humours until after the Renaissance.

During the Renaissance, the belief that a patient’s constitution was defined by the dominance of one of four humours continued to prevail. According to this

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theory, blood, phlegm, yellow bile or black bile, each of these modified by a hot–cold and a wet–dry polarity, governed patients’ reactions to disease, and the physician’s task was to re-establish a balance between them. However, new thinking was beginning to undermine this certitude. In Britain, Francis Bacon urged scholars to question ancient learning, and called for a systematic approach to knowledge, through exact observations of many patients, to trace the pattern of diseases in the body. Meanwhile, at universities in Italy (especially Padua) and Leiden, scholars were beginning to make meticulous observations, resulting in more acute analysis of disease. In France, René Descartes placed systematic enquiry into the natural world on the agenda, and established the metaphor of the body as a machine. While the refrain of a growing chorus of voices was that only by the combination of many experiments and observations on the part of many scientists and physicians could universal truths be established, certain physicians stood out as particularly influential. Among them were Thomas Sydenham (1624–1689), a pioneer of bedside medicine, whose experience of the plague in 1665 led him to postulate that disease had its origin outside the body, rather than in the constitution of the sufferer. A professor at Leiden University, Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738) influenced physicians throughout Europe, including many in this thesis, who had visited the Netherlands for their training. Boerhaave brought the classification of disease, and its cause, nature and treatment into one clear system, and integrated it with clinical medicine, through establishing a teaching hospital where theory could be tested on real cases.

9 Wightman, p. 45.
In the first decades of the period of this study, the British medical landscape offered a diversity of treatments from a diversity of health practitioners, and academic medicine was undergoing a period of conflict and upheaval. Remedies were on offer from physicians, apothecaries, quacks, empirics, midwives, traditional healers and priests. Patients were eclectic in their response to illness, seeking advice from a range of sources, which included family and folk remedies. It is important to describe some of the participants in this shifting landscape, because a new kind of physician was soon to enter the lists, and the importance of bathing for health was one of the theories they tested. First among these participants were quacks or mountebanks, itinerant peddlers of remedies, who knew or suspected that their nostrums were valueless. A second group of practitioners were called empirics. This term was used differently from today: empirics, unlike learned (or rational) physicians, offered a single remedy for a single illness, and their treatments achieved popular acceptance by analogy with family remedies. They had no formal education, but depended on experience, and were eager to dissociate their practice from that of quacks. As we shall see, the new empiricist physicians were often confused with empirics and, indeed, scholars have pointed out that there were overlaps, not only between the practitioners of scientific medicine and empirics, but also, in practice, a greater blurring in the clinical practice of learned physicians than the conflicts suggest.16

Learned physicians were university educated MDs whose power was institutionalised in the incorporation of the Royal College of Physicians of London. They developed their clinical skills working for practising physicians, while their formal study was based on an understanding of ancient medical texts, the study of Latin, sometimes Greek, and philological approaches to analysing canonical texts. In addition, they studied the scholastic method of reasoning, which valued philosophical measures of proof over new discoveries. Learned physicians’ clinical approach was to consider six factors—air, diet, evacuations, exercise, sleep, and mental and emotional stimulation—in relation to the patients’ humoural type. This was intended to maintain patients in health, rather than to treat illness, although they also used purging, sweating, vomiting or bleeding to

drain off humours that had become excessive.\textsuperscript{17} As market forces began to place pressure on learned physicians to adjust their focus from theories of wellness through regimen to the cure of disease, they were forced to engage with other kinds of health practitioners, who promised cures.\textsuperscript{18} However, they also tried to limit other practitioners’ power through membership of the College of Physicians, which attempted to assert dominance over the other two incorporated practitioners’ groups, the College of Barber–Surgeons, and the Society of Apothecaries, as well as unincorporated healers. In this they were threatened by the formal establishment of the Royal Society in 1660, which was supported by royal favour.\textsuperscript{19}

The virtuosi, as they were called, of the Royal Society pioneered the experimental method, and believed that physicians should study nature rather than philosophy.\textsuperscript{20} Joseph Glanvill was a member, whose asseveration that traditional learning never fixed even a cut finger was widely reported and contributed to changing the expectations of patients. The College of Physicians, already beleaguered by disputes with the apothecaries and some of its own members, reacted to a perceived challenge not only their prestige, but to their livelihood. While hindsight makes it attractive to accept a model in which the ‘ancients’, represented by the Royal College of Physicians, resisted the ‘moderns’, represented by the Royal Society, several scholars have warned that this is an oversimplification, and point to practitioners with multiple allegiances such as, for instance, the large number of physicians who were members of both institutions.\textsuperscript{21}

The healing professions at this period were diverse, their disputes and allegiances were complex, and their rivalry was not simply a matter of methodological disagreement, but was also about market share, about power and

\textsuperscript{17} Cook, The Decline of the Old Medical Régime, pp. 20, 24–5, 49–52, 61–3.
\textsuperscript{19} Cook, The Decline of the Old Medical Régime, pp. 24, 34, 68, 70–1; and French and Wear, ‘Introduction’, p. 8.
about royal favour. And this is true also of the champions of bathing. Although it might be said, broadly, that the moderns (empiricists) advocated bathing for health, while the ancients (learned physicians) warned against it, the battle lines did not divide neatly along these lines. Even those learned physicians who railed against the new fashion for bathing and warned of its dangers, conceded that at times, in certain conditions, and under (their) medical supervision, it might be beneficial.

Sir John Floyer and Cold Bathing
Modern British speculation about the desirability of research into bathing can be traced to that proto-empiricist Francis Bacon, who, in 1605, enquired why no one had tried to replicate chemically the virtues of ‘Naturall Bathes, and Medicinale fountaines’, when there was already much known about their chemical composition, so that their use could be made more convenient, and physicians would have more control over their composition. Nearly a century later, Sir John Floyer’s *The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived, or, An Essay to Prove Cold Bathing Both Safe and Useful* of 1702 sparked a debate that was to last the best part of a century. His cause was quickly picked up by Joseph Browne. Although Browne had damaged his reputation by disputing William Harvey’s work on the circulation of the blood, his allegiance to the moderns, and to Floyer, was demonstrated in his 1703 *Modern Practice of Physick Vindicated*, and through his translations of foundational empiricist works like Boerhaave’s *Institutiones medicæ*. In his 1707 book on the benefits of cold baths, Browne spelled out the radical scientific reasoning that lay behind the newest health craze, and his declaration was both a manifesto and a battle-cry:

> I can truly say without Boasting, I am Unprejudiced in all my Sentiments of Physick or Philosophy, that are not evidently Demonstrable. Every Hypothesis I either retain or reject, according to the next best Reason that offers itself; and I think it no dishonour to a Philosopher, to change his Opinion every Day as often as he finds Reason or Occasion so to do: Such a one cannot be call'd Fickle, but

22 Cook, *The Decline of the Old Medical Régime*, p. 25.
23 Bacon, p. 102.
a Rational Man, and is only then fit to make a Physician, when he has got Knowledge enough to know he's only Nature's Handmaid, and consequently must watch her Motions, not Dogmatically teach her, but Modestly let her instruct him. The Business of a Physician is to attend the Disease diligently, to observe the Windings and Turnings, the Change and Variety of the Distemper. For while Nature is in a regular Course, she wants not the assistance of the Physician; but when she is put out of Order, he is then to reduce her by Tracing out her Steps, and following her in all her Vagaries.  

Thomas Guidott, too, had been quick to respond to Floyer’s work, in a book larded with the Greek and Latin terms and references to classical authorities that marked him as a learned physician. His *Apology for the Bath* of 1705 attacked Floyer’s advocacy of cold baths, with many sarcastic references to him as a ‘great Philosopher’ and a ‘sage Author’, whose opinions he refuted, concluding, ‘Thus we see when New Philosophers forsake antient Notions, without due Consideration or Reason sufficient, what Absurdities many times they commit, and how awkwardly they propose their Minds to be understood by any but themselves …’  

The second edition of *The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived*, containing testimonies from Floyer’s supporters, must have come out before Guidott’s book went to print, for he fired a final salvo. Describing Floyer’s supporters as ‘deserters’, he claimed they ‘might have done a wiser Act than assisted an Enemy’, and accused them of acting in the hope of financial advantage. The accounts by Floyer’s champions, he believed, were of no more worth than the testimonies used by quacks to sell their wares:

And as for the Cures [that] are said to have been done by the use of the Cold Bath, ‘tis too well known to be the common Artifice of all Quacks and Empiricks, who ought to be at a greater distance from rational Physicians, to create a good Opinion in the Admirers of their Medicines; and if every Mountebank on a Stage … should give himself the Trouble to require a Certificate, true or false, from all his Patients, with Hear-says, Letters and merry Discourses, they would swell into a Volume of twenty times the Volume of [Floyer’s book]. If Reason answer not Experience in some proportion, the matter is more Empirical than Rational.

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Guidott’s diatribe appears to support the ancients versus moderns model. His own declaration, ‘Not that I *contemn* any new Discovery, if it do not *obscure* a more *antient* Truth’, can (in view of the venom of the rest) be dismissed as rhetorical and insincere. Guidott’s biographer, Mark Jenner, calls for a balanced view of Guidott on the basis that he was well enough acquainted with the new learning to have been offered a position at Leiden. However, his vehement defence of the College of Physicians in a book of 1684 does place him with the conservatives, and he warned, ‘*That many use the Bath without advantage, and some go away much worse than they came*’. If we are to achieve a more nuanced view of Guidott’s attack on Floyer, it is not to be found by discrediting the ancient–modern perspective, but rather by identifying another motive for Guidott’s attack. And this is not hard to find. Guidott had moved to Bath in 1667, and his patients were drawn from those who went there to bathe in its natural warm waters. Like many physicians who wished to improve their practice, he published books and associated himself with other, better known, physicians. For instance, in 1669, he published the third edition of Edward Jordan’s 1632 book on the natural baths, an act that reveals his stake in promoting warm bathing.

Floyer’s advocacy of bathing in cold water posed a financial threat by suggesting that the health tourists to Bath could just as well stay at home, and heal themselves with cold baths. Guidott’s opposition to Floyer was couched in the language of the old guard, but his motive may have been primarily financial.

Sir John Floyer himself was a physician of Lichfield, a graduate of Queen’s College, Oxford, and a student of the new learning represented by Robert Boyle, John Locke and John Mayow. In the way that was to become intrinsic to Enlightenment thinking, he used direct experience—taste and smell—in developing hypotheses about nature although, unlike some of his contemporaries, he remained deeply rooted in the traditional learning of Galen and Hippocrates. He was a modern, but not a revolutionary, and he attempted to reinterpret Galenic law in the light of recent discoveries. In line with the new passion for measuring

27 Guidott, pp. 98–99; 24.
29 Cook, *The Decline of the Old Medical Régime*, p. 43.
every aspect of the body’s functioning, he invented a machine for monitoring the pulse. His first book, Φαρμακο-Βασανός; or, the Touch-stone of Medecines, Discovering the Virtues of Vegetables, Minerals, & Animals, was published in two volumes (1687, 1690), and used the new observational method to analyse the pharmacopoeia. He was a prolific writer of books relating to both medicine and religion. For Floyer, as for many other physicians of the period, science and religion were not in conflict. Rather, advice about bathing was embedded in a wider discourse, in which physical, spiritual and moral health could be obtained through healthy diet, exercise and an orderly way of life. Mark Jenner maintains that, in his studies of bathing, Floyer saw himself as reviving an ancient practice, rather than introducing a revolutionary new one. His first book on bathing, An Enquiry into the Right Uses and Abuses of the Hot, Cold and Temperate Baths (1697) was republished in Latin in 1699 and 1718. The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived or, the History of Cold Bathing both Ancient and Modern, which he co-authored with Edward Baynard (1641?–1717), was even more influential, and had run to six editions by 1732; it was translated into German in 1749, and was republished in English during the next wave of bathing mania in 1844. However, although ancient bathing practices were his starting point, his interest in cold bathing was a response to new, warming, habits of tea and coffee drinking, smoking, and the taste for spicy food. While the eighteenth century abounded with books and health manuals advocating bathing, Floyer’s ground-breaking work was the most often reprinted, and his views on bathing were still being quoted as a definitive source by Sir John Pringle some sixty years later. Indeed, an 1805 manual on bathing was published by someone purporting to be Floyer’s ghost.

What is surprising, given the fertile spirit of enquiry of the times, is that many physicians and apothecaries for the best part of a century were to quote

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33 See, for example, physician Thomas Short’s Discourses on Tea, Sugar, Milk, Made-wines, Spirits, Punch, Tobacco, Longman, London, 1750.
Floyer and Baynard uncritically, as if the first words on bathing had also been the last. Some medical professionals directed patients to Floyer’s and Baynard’s books for information, some quoted them verbatim, and some, such as William Black (a pioneer of medical statistics), listed them in the context of older authorities such as Hippocrates and Celsus. This last strategy shows that many physicians, at least implicitly, were prepared to include modern authorities with the old. Other physicians were warm in their praise. Faced with intractable health problems, the physician and preacher Francis Fuller made early experiments on achieving health through lifestyle change. In his book on the value of exercise, he praised Floyer and Baynard’s work on cold bathing as a counterbalance to the dangers of a warm regimen, that is, warm beds and warm rooms, together with the hot drinks and spicy food that were becoming increasingly available through new trade networks. The physician Thomas Short, too, deplored the warm regimen and welcomed Floyer, Baynard and Browne’s work on cold bathing as of ‘inexpressible benefit to Mankind’. The physician and antiquary Richard Wilkes testified to the cures he had seen as a result of Floyer and Baynard’s bringing cold bathing in to fashion; and Joseph

37 Short, p. 319.
Browne and the apothecary John King paid the Floyer the ultimate compliment of constructing cold baths to his specifications.\(^3^8\)

Despite Guidott’s venom, Floyer and Baynard had few wholehearted opponents, although Francis Atterbury, a bishop, not a physician, sneered that the two had quoted ancient precedents for cold-water cures, and suppressed the contrary evidence of the death of Marcellus from the cold bath.\(^3^9\) In 1787, the physician Richard Kentish deplored Floyer’s work, which

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\text{with all its crudities and inaccuracies, is the only express book upon the subject [of cold bathing] with which I am acquainted: and whoever peruses it, must agree with me, that, exclusive of a few facts, it is little more than the correspondence of a few inebriated physicians of the age, who did not scruple to publish the effusions of their cups, and confess that the imperfections of their writing proceeded from intoxication, and the internal use of something stronger than cold water.}\(^4^0\)
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However, this was not a criticism of cold bathing itself, but of his predecessors’ alleged approach to it, and contained legitimate concerns about the dearth of further research since Floyer’s time.\(^4^1\) Kentish was not alone in his concerns about the lack of research into cold bathing. Although physicians who applauded Floyer and Baynard’s work were by far more common, many were concerned about a lack of clarity surrounding the illnesses bathing was supposed to cure, and the precautions that would ensure its safety.\(^4^2\) The German physician, scientist and university lecturer, Friedrich Hoffmann visited the Netherlands and England in the early 1680s to meet practitioners of the new science. In his own work on mineral waters, which was first published in English in 1731, he directed readers to Floyer and Baynard’s work, but cautioned that further experiments were

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\(^{39}\) Francis Atterbury, *The Epistolary Correspondence*, Nichols, London, 1783, vol. 1, p. 371. It must be understood that clergy were also perceived as healers, and might just as readily be called to a sickbed as another kind of practitioner.


\(^{41}\) Kentish, p. 13.

needed to render it as safe as warm bathing. In 1786, an anonymous author deplored the paucity of work on cold bathing since Floyer’s time. He pointed to the dangers of a practice that relied on old research, and which had been used as a catch-all cure. He highlighted the problem of patients’ undertaking this cure without precise instructions from their physicians on how it could be conducted in safety, leading to a dangerous reliance on the saws of bathing attendants. In an advice manual based on both ancient and modern authorities, surgeon Peter Kennedy was afraid that, by closing the pores of the skin, thereby shutting illness in, cold bathing would do more harm than good. However, he directed his readers to Baynard and Floyer as to a higher authority. Like Kennedy, physician John Quinton, author of two books on warm bathing, directed his readers to Floyer and Baynard, but warned that although some could take hot or cold baths without harm, others would exacerbate their condition.

In spite of those who deplored the lack of research, there were others who, while reiterating such concerns, also published the results of their own observations. Patrick Blair was a surgeon and a botanist, and a member of the Royal Society, whose interest in cold bathing had led him to visit Lichfield to learn about it from Floyer. He accepted the value of cold bathing but, in an open letter to Baynard, proposed improvements, which included observations on the use of a fall of water to increase water pressure on weak limbs. Glasgow physician William Henderson suggested that the value of cold bathing for infants had been overrated by Floyer, but added his own evidence of cures when used ‘prudently and seasonably’. Not all physicians found the new fashion for cold bathing to be a threat to their existing practice in warm bathing as therapy.

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William Oliver, a graduate of Leiden and a fellow of the Royal Society, was a Bath physician whose *Practical Dissertation on the Bath Waters* of 1707 ran to several editions, and was still being published in the 1760s. He was quick to support Baynard’s work, as well as to advocate the warm baths of Bath. Unlike Guidott, Oliver did not see cold bathing as a threat to his livelihood, and proposed that a cold public bath be established in Bath to complete the range of services that would be available to invalids in that city.

It was not strange, in the seventeenth century, that a bishop, such as Francis Atterbury, should comment on the conclusions of a medical man. For educated and uneducated alike from the 1630s to the 1730s, the physical and spiritual worlds were one, and clergy were involved in the physical as well as the spiritual care of patients. New scientific discoveries were not seen to negate the existence or the power of God, but merely to illuminate the workings of God’s creation. As a consequence, bathing was contested on broad grounds that were not always medical, and which impinged on the delicate subject of the sacramental. Floyer’s views were not without political ramifications. Full immersion baptism had been abolished by the Puritans in the 1646 directory of worship, and the wording of the 1662 prayer book permitted this disuse to continue. As a result, there was a measure of suspicion of any practice that smacked of a belief in the healing power of holy wells (for Catholics), or of full immersion baptism (for a number of dissenting groups including Baptists). As a result, Floyer was forced to justify plunging his patients into water on a combination of biblical, as well as medical, grounds, and his approach was rigidly Tory and high church. Nonetheless, his views could be seen to fuel the case of dissenters and Baptists.

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54 He argued, for instance, that the Church of England had countenanced full immersion baptism until 1600. The implication is that the opponents of full immersion were Puritan or low church. See Sir John Floyer, *The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived: or, an Essay to Prove Cold Bathing Both Safe and Useful*, Smith & Walford, London, 1702, p. 59. For arguments from scripture and church history, see pp. 59–80.
Thomas Guidott strongly opposed Floyer’s attempts to bring bathing within the medical and religious fold, by maintaining that the prayer book prohibited full immersion baptism not for its papist overtones, but because it was unsafe.\textsuperscript{55} The religious and moral implications of bathing form a strand that runs throughout bathing’s eighteenth-century story, and which will be touched on again. However, Celia Fiennes’s account of her 1698 visit to St Winifred’s Well in Flintshire showed that she, at least, took a more pragmatic view of the religious dimension of cold bathing. Nine stones at the bottom of the well were stained red with what was believed to be the saint’s blood, and tales of miracles had brought the devout in search of cures. Herself an inveterate bather, Fiennes’s only response to Roman Catholics’ walking in the icy water of the well, or kneeling by it on the stones, was that they were ‘poor people … deluded into an ignorant, blind zeal and to be pity’d by us that have the advantage of knowing better and ought to be better’.\textsuperscript{56}

In spite of his modernity, Floyer respected the ancients, and the starting point for his writings was a discussion, in the manner of the learned physicians, of classical authorities. He did not see the old and new learning as a matter of simple opposition as Browne had done:

Let us always acknowledge the diligence and faithful Descriptions of the Antients, of most Diseases, and their Method of Cure, and the Medicines we now use; the Moderns use their Observations; and have improved all parts of Physick by their new Experiments; but they will leave many things to be farther discovered by Posterity …\textsuperscript{57}

Floyer and his contemporaries were still some way from rejecting humoral theory altogether. However Floyer did belong to the new science in his value for the evidence of the senses, in his fascination with weighing, measuring and recording all that he observed, and in his commitment evaluating treatment through observing its effect on patients. And it was this value that contributed to his ground-breaking work on bathing:

… the Description of the Effects of Hot and Cold Baths, are not the Suppositions of Ingenious Men, … but the certain Experiment often tried on Humane Bodies,

\textsuperscript{55} Guidott, p. 84.
which were evident to our Senses, and we only by our Reason discern the
Causes of those Effects; and by divers Experiments of the same kind made, we
prove that the Effect mentioned depends on the Cause found out by reasoning.\textsuperscript{58}

Floyer’s value for certain experiments, often repeated, led him, sometime
before 1702, to build a cold bath for the townsfolk of Lichfield. He chose a spring
rising from a rock at the top of a hill about a mile from the town, and named the
baths St Chad’s after an early English bishop, a practitioner of full immersion
baptism. In the absence of recent precedent, Floyer devised a form for the bath,
which would be best adapted to the kinds of medical treatments he recommended
to his patients:

The figure of these Baths in Oblong, 16 Foot long, and about 10 broad. The
Baths lie close together, but are divided by a Wall, and the lower receives the
Water from the other; the upper I call for Distinction, The Ladies Bath; and the
lower, The Men’s Bath. The Water is sufficiently deep to reach up to the Neck,
and can be conveniently emptied [sic] as oft as we please, and will fill both Baths
in a Nights time: The Descent into the Baths is by Stone-steps, and there is a
convenient Room built to each Bath, for Undressing, and Sweating upon great
occasions.\textsuperscript{59}

The form taken by Floyer’s baths at Lichfield was to dominate bath design for the
next century.

\textbf{Patients of the early eighteenth century}

John Burnham has pointed out that, before the mid-twentieth century, accounts by
physicians were the primary source material for historians. Since then, historians
have turned increasingly to non-medical sources, including the letters and diaries
of patients.\textsuperscript{60} Accounts by the subjects of bathing therapy tell a story in which fear
is the dominant theme, although from time to time, patients themselves engaged
with the experimental method. In a culture of the rapid expansion of knowledge
and fluid boundaries within knowledge, the patient could be both subject and
researcher. However, even in cases where physicians agreed on the benefits of
bathing, the assent of the patient could not be taken for granted. Bathing was

\textsuperscript{58} Sir John Floyer, \textit{The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived}, pp. 34–5.
\textsuperscript{59} Floyer, \textit{The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived}, pp. 16–19. The depth of the water may to some
degree have been influenced by the ancient Jewish ceremony of ablation, in which they sat in a
river up to the neck (p. 79).
\textsuperscript{60} Burnham, pp. 32, 24–5.
‘look’d upon, by many, as a great hardship and extremity, [which] … some are pleas’d to call Barbarous and Cruel’.

Floyer complained that it was hard to build patients’ trust in new treatments, although he conceded that ‘Cold Baths cause a sense of chilness, and that as well as the Terror and Surprize’. Browne, however, was less tolerant of those who eschewed the bath as ‘a sort of Effeminate Luxurious [sic] Men, who have Debauch’d their Constitutions by Ease and Delicacy, and cannot think of such rough Treatment as Cold Water, so directly opposite to a Bagneo, warm Bed, or Flannel Shirt’. One patient confessed that ‘the thought of Cold-bathing was very terrible to me, but when I reflected on my long Illness, my acute Pains, and my little prospect of Recovery, I soon took your Advice’. Hot baths, too, had their risks. Floyer maintained that, as a result of the blanket prescription of warm baths by quacks, many patients left Bath in worse health than they came or even died. He believed that 'healthful Persons receive much Prejudice by hot Baths, which colliquate the Humours, and occasion Fevers and Defluxions of Humours, Pains, Inflammations, [and] Obstructions' among other ills. Writing seven years later, William Oliver did not agree. He pointed out that although Bath had a high concentration of sick visitors, in fact, there were more healthy, old people there than elsewhere. Some physicians were prepared to compromise: an anonymous work of 1726 encouraged patients, who were frightened to bathe, to wash the affected area instead. Perhaps most telling of all was the prayer supplied by John Quinton in his treatise on warm bathing. To be said before bathing, it acknowledged sin as the source of all illness, and petitioned that the waters be efficacious, and that the petitioner be able to withstand the experience.

It is perhaps symptomatic of the desperate lack of options for early century sufferers that Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (c. 1649–1722), who kept notebooks

charting the effect of bathing on his own illnesses, forced himself to overcome his
fears one night in 1705. A sufferer from kidney stones, ‘I found it a very hard task
at first to Reconsile my self to ye Exercise of Cold-bathing, q\textsuperscript{th} upon ye first
consideration causes terrour enough in it, & is reputed by y\textsuperscript{e} most part of people a
severe methode either of preventing, or, curing diseases’. Hearing that bathing
had curative powers, he had a lead cistern of spring water carried up to his
bedroom, but did not dare use it for eight or ten days. One midnight, tormented
with pain, he plunged in, and found immediate relief, and later painlessly passed
some two or three sharp angled stones. Sir John himself experienced difficulty in
accounting for his fears, since ‘I had been bred wt swimming & fishing & wyding
in waters from my infancie’.\textsuperscript{69} It is curious that, given that many professions
involved immersion in water, so many people were afraid of bathing. Perhaps the
kernel of such fears was immersing the head, a practice that physicians now
required. Even on the occasion of his nighttime plunge, Sir John did not get his
head wet and, at the end of the century, Elizabeth Grant, although well
accustomed to the procedure, recounted of her family’s seaside visits that they
‘used to laugh and dance, and splash, and push, anything but dip, we avoided that
as much as possible’.\textsuperscript{70}

Sir John’s first bath was a Damascus road experience. As patient turned
researcher, he read Floyer’s and Baynard’s history of cold bathing, and became an
ardent convert both to cold-bathing and to the whole package of dietary and
lifestyle injunctions of contemporary physicians.\textsuperscript{71} He participated in the new
scientific passion for record-keeping, by maintaining a daily diary of his baths and
their impact on his health for five years, but later destroyed it, leaving the torn-out
edges in his notebook to distress the researcher.\textsuperscript{72} His voluminous notes of
published works on bathing do survive, together with explanations for the efficacy
of the procedure (containing some details probably taken from the destroyed

\textsuperscript{69} National Archives of Scotland (hereafter NAS), ‘Method of Treating Anent ye Cold Bath’,
Letters and papers of Sir John Clerk, GD18/2133.

\textsuperscript{70} Elizabeth Grant, \textit{Memoirs of a Highland Lady}, ed. Andrew Tod, Canongate Classics, 1992
(1898), p. 92.

\textsuperscript{71} ‘Dissertation on Cold Baths and Other Medical Matters’, NAS, GD18/2146 RM 34; and

\textsuperscript{72} There is a note on the outside of the notebook to say that the contents, and that of another
notebook, have been destroyed. See Sir John Clerk, diary on cold bathing, NAS, GD18/2137.
diary), and ruminations on religious and moral matters.⁷³ We have already seen that religious scruples could act as an impediment to the development of bathing practices at this early period, and Sir John’s notes are a foreshadowing of a time when bathing would be associated with moral growth, rather than religious reaction.⁷⁴

Sir John’s approach to bathing showed that some patients, as much as physicians, were considering bathing in the context of the experimental method. Not only did he read and take notes of his own experience of bathing but, like many physicians, he participated in the network of correspondence that was forming around the subject. He wrote to Dr Baynard, telling him proudly that ‘I am now called yᵉ Scotish Baynard wᵗ qᶜʰ title I please my self very much & gloat not a little’.⁷⁵ More surprising is the tone of the draft letter, which is fulsome even taking into account the effusive compliments customary at that time:

Being intimately acquainted [with] yow (tho I never had ye honour to see your face Ill creak off [with] out any apologies & begin my letter [when] others end theirs, viz: I am yours, I admire & praise I love, I think upon you in ye day time I dream upon you in ye night I speak of you wt raptures of joy to others, I think upon you in ye woods, & at water sydes ... I dream of you in ye night ... [I am in] great hazard of Idolazing yow & yet after all I’m under no temptation of flattering [you].⁷⁶

He accused Baynard and Floyer’s detractors of envy, before relating the sequence of ailments and their remedies with which members of the public have always liked to regale medical practitioners. Another draft of this letter is labelled ‘Double of my letter to The honorable Edward Baynard’, and as this version omitted the more extreme transports, it can be supposed that this was the version that was actually sent. What the draft does show, however, is that patients, once converted to the practice of bathing, might have felt a zealous allegiance to the person who relieved them of their woes, an allegiance that is not so surprising

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⁷³ ‘Method of Treating Anent ye Cold Bath’, Letters and papers of Sir John Clerk, NAS, GD18/2133; and Sir John Clerk, diary on cold bathing, NAS, GD18/2137.
⁷⁴ Sir John Clerk, diary on cold bathing, NAS, GD18/2137. The note on fasting can be found at point 6 of p. 7 of the ms, and God’s desire for our physical well-being on p. 9.
⁷⁵ Marginal note to letter to Dr Baynard, 6 September 1710, NAS, GD18/2133.
⁷⁶ Draft letter, Sir John Clerk to Dr Baynard, 6 September 1710, NAS, GD18/2133.
considering the desperate situation of those who had to rely on early–eighteenth-century remedies.

**George Cheyne and the Writers of Health Manuals**

That patients were active participants in the quest for healing is evidenced by the large body of eighteenth-century health manuals written for the general reader. Virginia Smith has charted the evolution of the health manual from Thomas Elyot’s *Castel of Helth* (1539), which achieved five editions by 1560 through to the Puritan age, in which health, civility and virtue were all stressed in a literature that promoted the value of moderation in eating, drinking and sleep, and the benefits of exercise together with social and religious virtues. Peter Shaw’s two-volume *New Practice of Physic* of 1726 attempted to describe illnesses in an orderly manner and suggest treatments, albeit in a scholarly shorthand that would have been opaque to a general readership. In spite of this, the publication of seven editions by 1753 attests to its success. Shaw recommended cold bathing in certain cases of palsy, madness and ague (but only in summer), syncope (blackouts), anorexia, diarrhoea, diabetes; and warm baths for jaundice, constipation and kidney stones, among other things.

Published over forty years later, William Buchan’s *Domestic Medicine* was to prove the most enduringly popular health manual published before the twentieth century, running to some 142 English-language editions, and translations into seven languages. Influenced by Edinburgh University lecturer John Gregory, Buchan believed that medical knowledge should be freely available to the public. Accordingly, the book laid out rules for healthy living, and described illnesses and their remedies. Buchan was a firm advocate of cold bathing, blaming its failures upon the superstitions of nurses, who would put their faith in dipping children a certain number of times, or in dedicating the water to a particular saint, rather than the efficacy of cold water itself. Every child should, he opined, have its extremities washed in cold water daily through the winter, and

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77 Smith, *Clean*, pp. 190, 199–200, 214.
might benefit from full immersion in summer. Cold baths were also helpful to children and babies during teething. They also benefited students, and those with a weak nervous system or rheumatism, as well as women with menstrual disorders or those suffering from infertility. While a staunch advocate of cold bathing, Buchan was not indifferent to its perceived dangers, and inserted a precautionary eighteen-page chapter on the pitfalls of cold bathing and mineral water into the ninth edition of his book. Warm baths, on the other hand, could relieve rheumatism, as long as the patient took care not to catch cold afterwards. Warm baths could also revive victims of drowning or prolonged exposure to cold.

The anonymous author of Observations on the Use of Bathing, Warm and Cold (1759) discussed the ills that bathing could cure without recourse to professional medical advice, and declared that more diseases could be cured by bathing than by medicine. Warm baths, the author advised, would cure colds, and all headaches although, in contrast to Shaw, he thought it dangerous for jaundice and dropsy. Bran soap could be used in a warm bath to treat skin diseases. Cold baths were also good for lowness of spirits, and could help men in cases of impotence and cure discharges after treatment for venereal disease. In his 1795 health manual, Robert Squirrell also recommended cold water for headaches, gout, fever, jaundice, dropsy, hemorrhages, diarrhoea, fainting and anxiety. This book, which ran to three editions in four years, warned that if cold bathing were undertaken ill-advisedly, it could entrench the illness or even cause death. In the last years of the century, Samuel Solomon promoted cold bathing for venereal diseases, vaginal discharge and rheumatism. By the end of the century, there was little disagreement about the benefit of cold-bathing (after due preparation) as a preventative for colds.

81 William Buchan, Cautions Concerning Cold Bathing, Strahan, London, 1786.  
82 Buchan, Domestic Medicine, pp. 75, 538, 656, 668, 495, 498, 741, 751.  
83 Observations on the Use of Bathing, Warm and Cold, Davis, London, 1759, pp. 5, 32–3, 38–9, 42.  
85 Squirrell, p. 60.  
In contrast to France, where some architects thought bathing induced melancholy or even suicide, in Britain it was increasingly thought to refresh the mind and spread ‘over the whole system a sensation of ease, activity and pleasantness’ and was thought to help melancholy in young men and lovers.\textsuperscript{87} Some thought bathing to be helpful for impotence—in more than one case it had ‘wound up their Watch, and set the Pendulum in Statu quo’—and, according to Floyer, cold-bathing was known among the common people to make ‘Old John to hug Old Joan’.\textsuperscript{88} Oddly, bathing could also restrain ‘unchast desires’, and could also help against fear and panic attacks.\textsuperscript{89} Described as ‘one of the most powerful and universal restoratives with which we are acquainted’, it slowed the pulse and revived the bather from travel, exercise, exertion or perturbation, and was to be recommended for hypochondria, hysteria and insanity.\textsuperscript{90}

What emerges from this recital is that the recommendations of the writers of health manuals differed: some promoting bathing for diseases where others found dangers. What does not emerge, contrary to the prevailing wisdom, is that women were considered too delicate to bathe.\textsuperscript{91} Prescriptions for bathing took into


\textsuperscript{88} ‘Cold-bathing has this Good alone,
It makes Old John to hug Old Joan.
And gives a sort of Resurrection
To buried Joys, through lost Erection’.
Floyer, \textit{An Enquiry}, pp. 278, 292. However, an opponent of George Cheyne declared of cold bathing for impotence, ‘We may as well hope to give a Man Titillation, by clapping a Snow-Ball into his Breeches’. Pillo-Tisanus, \textit{An Epistle to Ge—ge Ch—ne}, M.D. F.R.S. upon His Essay of \textit{Health and Long Life}, Roberts, London, 1725, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{89} Vaughan quoted Persius and St Augustine in support of his contention. Vaughan, p. 67; and Willich, pp. 353, 373.


\textsuperscript{91} See, for example, Susan Kellerman, ‘Use and Ornament: Bathhouses in Yorkshire Gardens and Parks, c. 1688–1815’, in \textit{With Abundance and Variety}, eds Susan Kellerman and Karen Lynch,
account class, sex and age, but prohibited it to no one. In his health manual, A.F.M. Willich, whose lectures on regimen achieved five editions in English from 1799 to 1810, deplored the confinement of bathing to the wealthy and leisured, but early in the century, it was thought that the working classes, because they sweated more than the upper classes, were less in need of bathing. Floyer observed that women, children and old men could faint in hot baths whereas cold baths were good for everyone, though George Cheyne recommended caution for old people. Some physicians did consider bathing less necessary for women and the working classes, but they were nevertheless routinely included in physicians’ recommendations. In a field where there was much disagreement, the bathing of children, especially for rickets, was widely accepted, especially by the end of the century.

There was also a high level of agreement on regimen. Throughout the century, the core message of health manuals was temperance and exercise. Health writers preached against excessive alcohol, late hours, overeating, sedentary habits and the harmful effects of patent medicines and cosmetics. Their ideas about bathing formed part of a package of attitudes to what now might be called ‘lifestyle issues’. In an age of excess, these physicians preached that prevention was better than cure. They advocated regular, gentle exercise, especially walking and riding, to bring about perspiration, which lay at the core of good health. Cold bathing itself was understood to be a kind of exercise rather than a

Yorkshire Gardens Trust, n.p., 2009, p. 96. Kellerman maintains that bathing was not exclusively, but was predominantly, a male preserve.

92 Willich, p. 27.
93 Cheyne, Essay on the Gout, p. 78; and Floyer, An Enquiry, p. 79.
94 ‘This Spring I advis’d a Maid Servant, Living over-against Doyley’s in the Strand to Mr. Bayn’s Bath in Town’. See Browne, An Account of the Wonderful Cures, p. 102. For servants bathing, see also Pringle, ‘Medical Annotations’, vol. 9, p. 468. Floyer described a Turkish servant, who got a fever and the treatment made him mad. Two countrymen visited him in the night and took him and ducked him in the Thames, whereupon he recovered. See Floyer, The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived, p. 247.
95 Floyer, An Enquiry, p. 55; The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived, pp. 146–8; Willich, pp. 45, 47, 146; and Smith, Clean, p. 241.
96 See, for example, Vaughan, pp. 66–7; Willich, footnote to p. 150; A Physician [Benjamin Rush, the elder], Sermons to the Rich and Studious on Temperance and Exercise with a Dedication to Dr. Cadogan, Edward & Charles Dilly, London, 1772, pp. 52, 61; and George Cheyne, Health and Long Life, p. 106.
means to cleanliness. George Cheyne was a pre-eminent advocate of lifestyle reform, and his recommendations on bathing cast light on physicians’ understanding both of the effect of bathing on the body, and on how medical opinion influenced bathroom design. Cheyne had studied medicine at Edinburgh University. A fine mathematician, he moved to London and was made a fellow of the Royal Society in 1702. By now, scientific medicine had gathered strength, and Cheyne’s credentials enabled him to be numbered among the virtuosi physicians of that institution. For Cheyne, the best natural philosopher (scientist) was always the best physician. His admiration for Isaac Newton led him to publish a discussion of his method before Newton himself had published, a mistake that led to his departure from the Royal Society. Overfond of alcohol, and weighing thirty-two stone, Cheyne experienced an emotional and physical collapse between 1705 and 1715, during which he turned to religious writing, and developed his ideas on regimen, embracing the vegetarianism proposed in the writings of Thomas Tryon in the seventeenth century. In 1718, Cheyne moved to Bath, and there founded a successful practice based on his popular medical writings, his own theories about the diseases of lifestyle, and the relationship between spiritual, emotional and physical illness. His works were reprinted well into the nineteenth century and were strongly influential on later writers, including John Wesley. In spite of Cheyne’s popularity as a writer, his views met with as much contempt as had Floyer’s. An anonymous fellow of the Royal Society penned an attack on George Cheyne’s Essay on Health and Long Life, which was every bit as vitriolic as the attack of Guidott on Floyer nearly twenty years earlier. For this author, Cheyne’s advice about dipping the head when bathing was a harmless, but

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99 Porter, in French and Wear, p. 303.
useless, refinement upon which Cheyne had constructed a meretricious reputation.¹⁰¹

Since Cheyne, and other writers of health manuals, were addressing a lay readership, it is from them that the clearest explanations of the physical reactions to bathing can be obtained. The key benefit of cold-bathing, he believed, lay in elasticity and blood flow. The ‘violent and sudden shock [the cold water] gives to the whole System of the Fluids’ was thought to contract the fibres (of which the body was composed), producing gooseflesh, which was a sign that both perspiration and blood circulation to the capillaries had temporarily ceased.¹⁰² The blood would then withdraw to the large vessels within the body, and the skin and muscle, thus deprived, become more solid and compact through contraction. At the same time, the interior vessels were enlarged by this sudden in-flow of blood, increasing blood flow to the heart. When the external pressure (from water pressure and the cold) was removed, the blood would rush back to the extremities with renewed vigour. The muscles and fibres had acquired increased elasticity and resistance through their previous contraction and the inner vessels, too, had been expanded and exercised without diminishing their natural contractile force. Thus, free circulation of the blood was stimulated and harmony in the interior organs restored.¹⁰³ Upon getting out of the bath, the renewal of blood flow and perspiration could be further stimulated by the application of a ‘flesh brush’ or a brisk rub with a towel, which exfoliated and stimulated the skin.¹⁰⁴

By contrast, hot baths were thought to relax and soften the muscles and the skin, mixing with the blood supply to wash away obstructions, especially if the patient also drank wholesome waters. The chief merit of warm baths was to induce perspiration, which lay at the core of good health. The importance of sweating had been accepted for a long time.¹⁰⁵ Perspiration was thought to reinvigorate circulation thereby sweeping away the obstructions that lay at the

¹⁰⁴ Cheyne, Health and Long Life, pp. 104–5; and Willich, p. 147.
¹⁰⁵ See, for example, le sieur Domergue, Moyens faciles et asseurez pour conserver la santé, Nicolas le Gras, Paris, 1687, pp. 43–4, 46–7; and Vaughan, p. 68.
root of many medical problems such as gout. Dirty skin was thought to block the pores, inhibit perspiration and cause ill health, resulting in haemorrhoids, cramps, spasms and obstinate gout and rheumatism, especially in sultry weather, when the bath itself was a refuge from ‘noxious particles’ in the atmosphere. Warm baths opened the pores, through which impurities could leave the body in sweat. However, the dangers inherent in this treatment were that the pores, once opened, could also allow impurities to enter the body. For this reason, the physician Benjamin Rush maintained that ‘Too much cannot be said in praise of SWIMMING’, because of its double function of exercise and a means to wash away the mixture of dirt and sweat adhering to the body in warm weather, without the dangers of opening the pores.

The manner of entering the bath, especially a cold bath, was seen to be important to health. For one anonymous health writer:

It is not easy to prevail, particularly on those that are nervous, to adopt a proper manner of going into the bath.——They hesitatingly creep into it, by which means they become so cold as to shiver. This is extremely injurious, and destroys the good effect of bathing. As soon as undressed we should leap into it, so as to come down on our breech or sideways in the water, and immediately on our rising up, we should come out, give two or three springs, be well rubbed, and dress quickly. I should never advise more than one dip, for I find that where more is taken the re-action is imperfect … the patient feels disagreeably cold, and head-achs frequently succeed, so that the patient … is frightened [of bathing].

Once ready for a dip, the patient should get in quickly, ‘not only because it is less felt than when we enter the bath slowly and timorously’, but also so that the shock would be felt uniformly by all parts of the body: ‘The Demersion ought to be sudden, and not gradual, to prevent a Horror’. Willich later recommended moving

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around in the water to promote circulation to the extremities and to prevent becoming too cold.\textsuperscript{111} In 1702, a patient wrote a letter to Dr Baynard, describing in detail the process of ‘taking a dip’, which was prescribed for his young son:

My boy was at Cold Bath about three weeks, and was dipt twenty-eight times, that is first nine time and then rested some Days; and he was oft dipt twice in a Day, Morning and Afternoon, and after each time, he was put to Bed and Sweat but very moderately (he being a weak Child); but others, who are stronger are Sweat more, and after the Rest mentioned, they dip him three times more, and so a third time: The way of Dipping was thus, a Woman plunges the child over Head and Ears, and then sets them on their Feet in Water, and rubs them all over, especially their Limbs, Back, and Belly; they plunge and rub them thrice, and that is called one Dipping; they must not be above three minutes in doing this. If the children does [sic] not Sweat, then put their Maids to Bed to them.\textsuperscript{112}

In contrast, some physicians recommended a cautious approach to cold water to reduce the dangers of cold baths. Some recommended washing the head and sometimes the whole body with a cloth first. In Cheyne’s opinion,

I cannot approve the precipitant way of jumping in, or throwing the Head foremost into a Cold Bath; it gives too violent a Shock to Nature, and risques too much the Bursting some of the smaller vessels. The Natural Way is, holding by the Rope, to walk down the Steps as fast as one can, and when got to the Bottom, bending their Hams (as Women do when they Curt’sy low) to Shorten their length, so as to bring their heads a good Way under Water, and then popping up again to take a Breath; and this alternately for two or three Times and out again, rubbing and currying well before they are dressed.\textsuperscript{113}

This method of entering the bath explains both the depth of the ‘plunge’ baths described in chapter one and the importance of the steps. In The Modern Susannah, another caricature of the Worsley divorce, Lady Worsley is captured in the moment of descending the steps, while her maid stands by holding a towel (illustration 1). There was also a diversity of views on bathing techniques, for instance, whether to shower or bath, and for how long. Some physicians recommended exercise before bathing, while others insisted that the shock of a

\textsuperscript{111} Willich, pp. 146–7; Cheyne, The Natural Method, p. 257; and Floyer, An Enquiry, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{112} Dr Baynard forwarded this letter to Sir John Floyer. It was dated 28 September 1702. Floyer, The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived, pp. 323–4.
\textsuperscript{113} Quotation from Cheyne, Health and Long Life, p. 103. See also Floyer, The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived, p. 113; Cheyne, The Natural Method, pp. 256–7; and Willich, p. 146.
Illustration 1

The Maidstone bath or the modern Susannah, Ancient and Modern Print Warehouse, 1782
British Museum, Prints and Drawings, BMSat 6105-7
© Trustees of the British Museum
warm body in cool water was dangerous. Others maintained that cooling down before bathing resulted in getting too cold.  

Mrs Watts, a patient of Dr Hartop, suffered from vomiting, colic, pains in the limbs and head, convulsions, windiness and hysterical fits. In 1699, she undertook a course of bathing and drinking the waters in London. She sometimes took twenty-two baths in a morning, but more often six or seven, staying in no longer than the time of immersion—each immersion being described as ‘a bath’. For Cheyne, like ‘all other medical Operations, it is better to be perform’d often, and but little at once,’ but later in the century, there was a little more flexibility about the duration of a cold bath. Hot baths were taken for longer, although Guidott spoke out against staying in for more than an hour or, at the most, two, because it ‘debilitates and procrasitates the Cure’. After bathing, patients were to anoint themselves with oil to prevent excessive perspiration and to protect thin skins from the air. Although, as we have seen, the prevailing wisdom favoured resting in bed after a bath, later in the century, Willich was to recommend moderate exercise out of doors afterwards. In spite of the diversity of medical opinion on bathing, it is clear that both the plunge pool and its nearby resting room containing a bed owed both their form and arrangement to medical opinion.

‘Hear-says, Letters and merry Discourses’: Sir John Pringle and Scholarly Networks
We have seen how Sir John Floyer, combining ancient knowledge with modern during the Scientific Revolution, became an early advocate of bathing. His work heralded a spate of publications by physicians, apothecaries and herbalists, who continued to advocate bathing through health manuals written for patients who were eclectic in their choice of healers in a diverse market. While the end of the

115 Mrs Watts would go to the bath warm from bed. Floyer, The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived, pp. 137–8.  
117 Guidott, p. 72.  
118 Willich, pp. 147–8; and Sir John Floyer, Medicina Gerocomica: Or, the Galenic Art of Preserving Old Men’s Healths, Explain’d, Isted, London, 1724 (1704), p. 20.  
119 Bedrest was a well-established practice by the eighteenth century. See, for example, Huggett, p. 3; Pringle, ‘Medical Annotations’, vol. 3, pp. 360–1, vol. 8, p. 153; and Willich, p. 147.
seventeenth century was notable for an upheaval in the foundations of knowledge, this upheaval could not be said to be complete by the turn of the eighteenth century. Humoural theory continued to inform the reasoning of physicians into the second half of the century. Although many health manuals promoted bathing, bathing theory continued to be contested.

By the time Sir John Pringle’s influence reached its height in the 1750s to 70s, many of the advances of the Scientific Revolution—the circulation of the blood, for instance—had gained acceptance. However, the disruption to the medical canon in the late seventeenth century had undermined old certainties, and a new approach to how knowledge could be verified required the re-evaluation of received wisdom. Not only did knowledge have to be tested through the experimental method, but a vast project was launched in which information was gathered in from all the corners of the known world. One of the pioneers of this form of collecting was Henry Oldenburg (c. 1619–1677). Born in Bremen, Oldenburg was a polymath who, through his travels, met many of the great minds of Europe, and through his correspondence, translations and publications, disseminated scientific knowledge throughout Europe. Secretary of the Royal Society at its formal inception, he soon founded the Philosophical Transactions, the world’s oldest continuously published scientific journal. He took detailed notes of Robert Hooke’s experiments, thus formalising a Baconian programme of information collection and dissemination. His work on the properties of mineral springs and spas added fuel to a discussion that was to amount to an obsession in the eighteenth century. He established a network of communication in which cures were described, and he advocated the careful testing of claims. Oldenburg’s approach to information gathering was carried forward by others, such as Floyer’s co-author, Edward Baynard, whose enquiries into the effects of cold bathing included correspondence with William Penn on the bathing practices of the native Americans.120

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Sir John Pringle was the archetype of the Enlightenment physician, and an inheritor of the advances of the Scientific Revolution and the internationalism pioneered by Oldenburg. He studied at Leiden and Paris, as well as St Andrews and Edinburgh, and was first a fellow and then president of the Royal Society, from which he was forced to resign after a disagreement with George III on the conductivity of electricity. Through his work as physician to the army he was one of the first to recognise the role of military hospitals in spreading contagion, and became a pioneer both of hospital administration and epidemiology. Published in 1752, his *Observations on the Diseases of the Army* established the relationship between close contact between patients, dirt and illness. His marriage to Charlotte, daughter of Dr William Oliver (1695–1764) of Bath, is a reminder that close social, as well as intellectual, bonds united the medical community—and the advocates of bathing. Indeed, William Buchan was also related to Pringle, and dedicated his *Domestic Medicine* to him.\(^\text{121}\) Pringle’s correspondence network was extensive and international, showing that, in the mid-eighteenth century, physicians were continuing to communicate widely in the tradition of Oldenburg, and that discussion on bathing was integral to the conversations physicians were having at the time.

Many of the treatments discussed here have been extracted from Sir John Pringle’s ten volumes of notes held by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, made available to the public in 2004. The volumes contain case-notes relating to his own and others’ patients; newspaper and journal articles; letters from physicians as far afield as France, Italy, Russia, Portugal, Germany and America; accounts of discussions with colleagues on every aspect of health; chemical analyses; recipes for remedies; trials; observations; successes and failures; disputes; and evaluation of the effectiveness of treatments and drugs. The

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notes show a wide-ranging eclecticism with regard to anything that might advance medical knowledge, and exemplify the genesis of scientific method through collecting case studies which, fifty years earlier, had been dismissed as 'Hear-says, Letters and merry Discourses'. While Pringle prescribed bathing for a wide range of ailments, he did not prescribe water indiscriminately, for he clearly considered the uses of water to be an exact, if experimental, science. The cases that follow show that bathing, whether hot, cold or sea, was part of a broader treatment plan, which was adjusted according to the condition of the patient. Medical accounts of successes with bathing must have done much to increase its prevalence and respectability as a treatment, and fuelled the rush to build domestic facilities.

In 1764, Dr Huck informed Pringle of the successes of Lyons physicians with hysteria and hypochondria through bathing combined with other treatments. They recommended that the patient give up alcohol, drink water and take a tepid bath lasting four hours. The patient’s head should be wrapped in a towel dipped in cold or iced water. When the patient began to recover, drinking mineral water and horse-riding were prescribed. This success with hysteria was repeated the same year by Dr [Serno?] of Naples who, not surprisingly, was able to revive hysterical women from a faint with iced water or a block of ice in the mouth. The length of time that patients were sometimes required to pass in the bath explains both the lavish decoration of many bathhouses, and their facilities for entertainment. In cases where patients were required to spend upwards of four hours in the bath, it is possible that adjoining social spaces were used as a place where musicians could perform to pass the time.

In October 1766, Miss F—, a thirteen-year-old with intractable diarrhoea, was returned to better health than she had ever enjoyed, through being put in a bagnio (here probably a sauna), washed with soap and water, and then given a tepid bath. Her physician concluded that her perspiration had been blocked by

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122 See, for example, Pringle, ‘Medical Annotations’, vol. 7, p. 523; vol. 8, p. 604; vol. 9, p. 465; and Guidott, p. 84.
124 We know that a gallery ran around above the bath in the house of Mlle Dervieux in Paris so that musicians could add to the luxury of the bath with their performance. See Andrew Douglas, Notes of a Journey from Berne to England through France, n.p., London, 1797, p. 87.
dirty skin, and that the perspiration had therefore turned inwards to the intestines. Emboldened by this success, Dr H—advised Mrs Campbell, similarly afflicted, to take a long bath in a warm tub, wash with soap suds and then go to bed and sweat. This she did and was better the next day. Clearly, Mrs Campbell’s treatment involved an overnight stay in the bathhouse. The plans of bathing spaces illustrated in chapters one and five show that patients could often move directly from the bath to bed. Facilities that included a space for heating drinks, as well as a bed, meant that patients such as Mrs Campbell could recover in a warm room, and receive whatever sustenance the physician ordered, even perhaps a full meal.

The capacity of hot baths to relax contracted fibres was as beneficial to rheumatism, palsy, nervous atrophies and wasted limbs as to gout, because they removed obstructions from nerves and vessels. It is not surprising, therefore, that Pringle reported considerable success with hot and cold baths for paralysis, weak backs, palsy, sciatica and chorea (spasmodic twitching). Mr Qu[arne?], who caught a cold that developed into sciatica, was cured by sea-bathing. Since his lameness and pain lingered, he continued sea baths through the winter until he had completely recovered. Although sea-bathing was usually a summer activity, bathing in winter was by no means uncommon, and must have been made easier by indoor facilities that made treatment regimens less dependent on the weather. Physicians’ practice of combining a number of strategies as well as various types of bath is illustrated by the case of Mr Robert Rich. Rich’s sciatica was so bad that he almost lost the use of his legs. His treatment reveals the caution with which physicians approached the unknown powers of the bath. Luckier than Mr Qu[arne?], the sea baths prescribed for him were hot. The bath was to be 92˚F (hotter than the average), and he was to take it at 8 p.m. and stay in for 15–20 minutes, at first only every second day, and then every day. He was to sit up for one hour after the bath, during which time he was to drink a small basin of white wine whey to ensure sweating once he went to bed. The precision of these instructions may have suggested to the patient that the physician had a detailed

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125 Pringle, ‘Medical Annotations’, vol. 8, p. 64.
127 See, for example, Pringle, ‘Medical Annotations’, vol. 5, p. 283; vol. 7, p. 571; vol. 7, pp. 450–1; and vol. 5, p. 432.
knowledge of the exact effect of each aspect of the treatment: duration, frequency, time of day, temperature and tonic. At times instructions appear to have arisen from impulse or an irresistible temptation to make adjustments to the judgements of other practitioners, and the reasoning is rarely explicit in physicians’ notes, but what is clear is that physicians believed themselves to have precise knowledge of the impact of bathing on disease. However, it is equally possible that the gradual introduction to regular bathing, and the limits placed on duration, may be attributed to physicians’ caution about the effects of a relatively unknown remedy. Mr Rich was clearly happy with his treatment, because he afterwards continued to bath about forty times in each summer bathing season.¹²⁹

Sir John Pringle suggested that the vigorous could use a cold bath of 32–65˚ Fahrenheit for cleansing and bracing for longer, although the benefits of the first shock were reduced by remaining in.¹³⁰ In a letter to Pringle dated 4 June 1766, Dr Gusthart preferred the warm bath for his patient, Dr Cathcart, ‘I am much inclined to think, that the going into the … bath for five or six minutes, three times in the week’ would help the skin to function. The resultant improved elasticity of the skin and increased perspiration would prevent Cathcart’s insomnia.¹³¹ Although physicians recommended frequent bathing and there is plenty of evidence of patients’ taking a course of daily bathing, it seems that two to four baths a week was more normal.¹³² Willich suggested that there was already a certain level of acceptance of bathing in England: ‘In this country, the children of people in middling and lower ranks are perhaps better managed, than in most of the countries upon the Continent; because frequent and daily bathing is, to my positive knowledge, no where so generally practised as in England’. However, he lamented, children over ten or twelve were neglected, by comparison, laying the foundation for a number of ills.¹³³

Apart from the frequent references to bathing, Sir John Pringle’s notes reveal a remarkable geographical reach through formal and informal networks. As

¹³³ Willich, p. 27.
we shall see again in chapter five, Turkey was acknowledged to be the fount of all knowledge about truly authentic bathing practices, and Sir John was able to hear about them through his acquaintance with Dr Turnbull, who had been physician to a factory in Smyrna. In September 1766, Dr Turnbull, furnished Sir John with an account of Turkish baths. Together, Turnbull and Pringle visited the hummums at Covent Garden and the bagnio at Charing Cross, where cocks were opened to release hot water over the floor to produce steam in a way that, Turnbull averred, resembled an authentic Turkish bath. According to Turnbull, the Turks never bathed by immersion in water but, going to the bath early in the morning on an empty stomach, would stand or sit in the vapours of the bath for half to one hour. Once they were sweating, an attendant would rub their body all over with soap, pour on warm water and rub the skin with gloves, and then rinse them with more warm water. The bathers would then retire to a slightly cooler room, and thence to an unheated room where they would go to bed in warm dry sheets, some to sweat, some not. In bed, they would drink one or two cups of coffee. Since bathing stimulates appetite, some women would have their dinner brought to the bagnio and eat it when they got out of bed. Turks of all ages and both sexes would go to the bath once or twice a week and it was to this that Turnbull attributed their superior looks and lifespan. Turnbull used this knowledge of Eastern practices to advise his own patients.

Over the period under study, the most divisive issue among physicians who were in favour of bathing was the optimum temperature for bath-water. The controversy tapped into discourses about folk traditions. The disciples of cold-bathing cited instances of remarkable healings among the common people of many nations, transforming folk practices into the case material for modern science. According to Browne, ‘the constant successful Practice of the common People in the North of England, at this day Bathing in Cold Waters, is a sufficient and living Authority for any Physician to lay a foundation for a general Practice’. The testimony of the common people, he concluded, was particularly valuable

because they were unlikely to persevere with a treatment that did not give them immediate relief.\textsuperscript{136} Other physicians cited the practices of Russian peasants, the Irish, the Tartars of Central Europe, the Germans and the people of the Scottish Highlands and Wales.\textsuperscript{137} Welsh women, who washed their children morning and night in cold water, declared that 'no Child has the Rickets unless he has a dirty slut for his Nurse', and the Picts, Islanders and Orcadians were supposed to have preserved health and beauty by rubbing themselves with snow, sleeping out and 'observing their old Parsimony; and that their Ignorance of the nice and luxurious ways [of] Living, conduced more for preserving their Health, than any Medicinal Art'.\textsuperscript{138} A lady of quality, a near relation of the Duke of Hamilton, had a succession of healthy babies, who soon dwindled and died. On the advice of a Highland woman, she began to bath her babies in cold water, after which they throne.\textsuperscript{139}

Physicians also drew on folk traditions to prolong the experience of bathing. Floyer and Browne justified keeping patients in their wet shirts all day by citing the practices of peasants who washed their smocks, put them back on, and remained wet all day. Sheep-washers and fishermen were also wet all day, and there was a tradition of sweating jockeys to make them lose weight by wetting their shirts and wrapping them in blankets. Although Browne declared this practice safe, it understandably provoked complaints from patients.\textsuperscript{140} Browne recalled wading through snow as a schoolboy without catching cold, but catching cold frequently once he had grown out of this practice, and cited the case of a goldsmith in Lombard Street who deliberately put holes in the bottom of his shoes to let in water in wet weather, claiming that it was good for his health, which it must have been, ‘else we might reasonably imagine he wou’d never submit to so nasty and disagreeable a method’.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{136} Browne, \textit{An Account of the Wonderful Cures}, pp. 7, 41–2.
\textsuperscript{138} Floyer, \textit{The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived}, p. 111; and Floyer, \textit{An Enquiry}, p. 173.
\textsuperscript{139} Floyer, \textit{The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived}, p. 246.
\textsuperscript{140} Floyer, \textit{The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived}, pp. 114, 167; and Browne, \textit{An Account of the Wonderful Cures}, pp. 42–5.
\textsuperscript{141} Browne, \textit{An Account of the Wonderful Cures}, pp. 44–5, 73–4.
Patients of the Late Enlightenment

While, as Pringle’s notes attest, the volume of medical material on bathing had become an avalanche by the middle of the eighteenth century, patients appear to have been little more confident when it came to cold bathing than had been Sir John Clerk in 1705. In 1766, Tobias Smollett published a journal of his travels through France and Italy for his health. As a physician himself, Smollett was qualified to comment on bathing both as a medical man and as a patient. He cited the case of Dr C—, who was ill and spitting up matter. The unfortunate physician was thrown from his horse into the pond in Hyde Park one frosty morning and, despite fears about his imminent demise, got much better. Smollett ‘advised him to take the hint, and go into the cold bath every morning; but he did not choose to run any risk. How cold water comes to be such a bugbear, I know not’. The consequences of choosing not to bathe could be severe, as Smollett knew:

a gentleman afflicted with a continual headach, and a defluxion on his eyes, who was told by his physician, that the best chance he had for being cured, would be to have his head close shaved, and bathed every day in cold water. “How!” cried he; “cut my hair? Mr doctor, your most humble servant!” He dismissed his physician, lost his eyesight, and almost his senses, and is now led about with his hair in a bag, and a piece of green silk hanging like a screen before his face.

The writer of a 1786 health manual reported a variety of responses to cold water:

When we attentively view a number of people undressing in order to bathe, it is really curious to consider their different feelings, strongly expressed in their countenances and gestures. Among the healthy there is an air of sportive hilarity diffused, while the irritable and nervous contemplate the approaching plunge with a kind of horror …

However, the writer affirmed, both bold and timid benefited from the bath unless they had stayed in too long.

Anxieties about cold bathing persisted into the nineteenth century, even among those who were converts to the practice. Diarist Elizabeth Grant’s father was a Whig politician with modern attitudes to cleanliness. Grant’s account of the

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142 Even Smollett, however, had some reservations. Against the advice of some of the physicians at Bath, he both bathed and took the waters with great benefit. However, he would not have defied them had he been of the ‘rigid fibre, full of blood, [or] subject to inflammation’. Smollett, p. 17.
143 Smollett, p. 80.
compulsory, daily cold bath taken by all the children of the family shows a continuing aversion to cold (in this case icy) water, but also the kind of ad hoc arrangement that enabled the family to continue to bathe in the limited facilities of their London house:

In town, there was a large, long tub stood in the kitchen court, the ice on the top of which had often been broken before our horrid plunge into it. We were brought down from the very top of the house, four pair of stairs, with only a cotton cloak over our night gowns, just to chill us completely before the dreadful shock. How I have screamed, how I have begged, prayed, entreated to be saved from such horror, half the tender hearted maids in tears beside me; all no use, Millar had her orders—so had our dear Betty, but did she ever mind them when they revolted her! Nearly senseless I have been taken to be dried in the housekeeper’s room at hand, which was always warm; there we dressed, without any flannel, and in cotton frocks with short sleeves and low necks.145

That the children’s fears were not solely attributed to a natural dislike of freezing water is evidenced by another occasion, when Grant’s young sister was accidentally drenched with water from the shower bath during a game. On that occasion, there was a very active fear that young Jane would suffer damage to her health through immersion without preparation.146 By the end of the eighteenth century, there was a decline in the popularity of cold-bathing, which was reflected in the growing use of the bath-tub or, as at Wimpole Hall, the provision of hot water to plunge baths for those who could afford it. Emerging attitudes suggested that it was not the temperature, but bathing itself that braced and invigorated the system. Perhaps the decline of cold-bathing was market-driven, since many patients must have agreed with Willich that ‘The cold bath belongs to the class of heroic remedies, and in its sudden and powerful effects nearly resembles electricity’.147

**Medical Opinion and the Bathing Space**

Just as the development of bathrooms over the long eighteenth century can be described as gradual and unco-ordinated, so the evolution of medical opinion on bathing was neither linear nor uncontested. If, as Wear and French have claimed,

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145 Grant, pp. 63–4.
146 Grant, p. 39.
147 Willich, p. 40.
the story of the Scientific Revolution in the seventeenth century is a journey from sixteenth-century Classicism to eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the route was not a direct one.\textsuperscript{148} As Rupert Hall puts it, ‘The impact of empiricism was in all cases gradual, [and] subject to variations in emphasis’.\textsuperscript{149} Accordingly, although one can draw parallels between medical opinion and the built form of baths and bathing spaces, such links must necessarily be as loose and variable as the medical opinion that forged them. What can be argued with a fair degree of certainty is that the fashion for bathing was initially a response to medical opinion, therefore bathing spaces owed their existence and their form to medical practitioners. However, although medical opinions were various, there were nonetheless links between the advice physicians gave, and the built form of baths, bathrooms and bathing pavilions.

As we have seen, Sir John Floyer built public baths near Lichfield, and in publishing their dimensions, he no doubt intended to set a precedent for others to follow, and we know that the apothecary John King and the physician Joseph Browne, did indeed adopt his model. If Floyer had not provided this prescription, it would have been possible to formulate it on the basis of medical recommendations. Whether one followed George Cheyne in walking carefully down the steps before plunging into the cold bath, or with the more Spartan advice to leap in sideways, the cold bath needed to be deep to cover the whole body in a rapid immersion, wide for a sideways leap, and provided with steps for getting in or out. Physicians often advised going to bed to sweat after the bath, and this is reflected in the provision of a resting room or bedroom near bathrooms from Elizabeth Dysart’s bathroom and ‘anteroom’ in the 1670s at Ham House through to Thomas Legh’s 1815 suite. Indeed, the need for domestic bathrooms at all was partly based on this requirement, since some writers warned of the dangers of catching cold on the way home from a public bagnio.\textsuperscript{150} Furthermore, whether physicians recommended a herbal infusion, tea or a meal after bathing, refreshments of some kind often formed part of medical advice, with the result that bathhouses, in particular, were sometimes equipped with cooking facilities.

\textsuperscript{149} Hall, \textit{The Revolution in Science}, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{150} See, for example, \textit{Observations on the Use of Bathing, Warm and Cold}, p. 30.
while a bathroom in the house might, like the room containing the hot bath at Lyme Park (1815), have a hob grate for keeping drinks warm. As we shall see in chapter five, bathing was not necessarily a solitary occupation, with the result that bathhouses, in particular, were extensive and often equipped with two dressing rooms for the sexes to prepare for the bath. However, for the purpose of the present discussion, it is important to point out that a bath might be taken in the presence of a physician, and the patient might have a professional bath attendant in the water with them, necessitating a large room and a large bath.

While cold plunge baths continued to be built well into the nineteenth century (as at Cragside in 1878), and even grew in popularity as a medical treatment in spas and sanatoriums, and while the practice of cold bathing endured in boarding schools in the twentieth century, there was nevertheless a discernable trend away from domestic cold bathing during the long eighteenth century. Where physicians had described cold bathing as a form of exercise and a treatment for illness, by Pringle’s time, physicians were beginning to believe that the value in bathing lay principally in its cleansing properties, even though this opinion predates germ theory. We have seen that physicians believed perspiration, brought on by warm baths, to open the pores and allowed impurities to leave the body, but through his work for the army, Pringle was also groping towards a theory of infection through dirt and overcrowding. Some decades later, Willich, while complaining that bathing was still too infrequent a practice, maintained that cleanliness should extend to every object connected with the body—the preparation and consumption of food and drink, dress, bedding, linen, habitat and household furniture—and that everywhere people went or breathed should be clean. He asserted, ‘Cleanliness is a principal duty of man, and an unclean of filthy person is never completely healthy. It is better to wash ourselves ten times a day, than to allow one dirty spot to remain on the skin’. Once the emphasis had begun to shift from exercise to cleanliness, the need for large, cold plunge baths was obviated and, although change was, as said, gradual and unco-ordinated, it

151 For a bathhouse with its own servants hall and space for preparing refreshments, see the key to plate 30 in John Carter, The Builder’s Magazine, Newbery, London, 1774, p. 18.
152 Willich, pp. 129, 130, 132.
153 Willich, pp. 136, 419.
opened the way for the compact bathroom, with its tub and hot and cold water, to become the norm. However, this norm must, in part, have been dictated by changing notions of convenience, as much as by medical opinion. Financial considerations, too, must also have played a part. The very rich, as the bath at Wimpole Hall testifies, could afford to heat the water supplied to a plunge bath, but for most, the bathtub was financially and spatially more achievable.

Although it is important not to underplay the tolerance for a dirty body, even among the well-to-do, until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, advances in bathroom technology and, no doubt, the creation of aspirations through bathroom ownership among the rich, made it increasingly possible for the middling sort to own a bath, if not a bathroom. It is this idea that underpinned the 1783 Method of Constructing Vapor Baths by architect James Playfair. The dedication of this short work to eminent physician Sir William Fordyce gives point to theories about the relationship between medical opinion and bathroom design. Playfair cited the disadvantages of not owning a bathroom: the expense of visiting a public bathhouse; the limited opening hours of public establishments; the disagreeableness of bathing where others have bathed before; the dangers of exposing oneself to air on the homeward journey; and the inadequacy of public bathing facilities away from the big cities. However, he wrote, the technological advances pioneered by the rich soon become affordable to the middling and even the lower ranks of society. On this basis, he designed a vapour bath, adapted to the purse, and the accommodation, of an ordinary family, and supplied from an ordinary tea kettle on a small boiler. Bathing in steam, rather than warm water, meant that a satisfactory bath could be had at the expense of heating only a small amount of water. Steam progressed along pipes lapped with flannel to a covered tub, wherein the bather, swathed up to the neck, could perspire without being forced to dedicate a whole room to the process. This meant, Playfair concluded, that a domestic bath could be constructed for five guineas compared with half a guinea per visit to a public vapour bath near London.154

scores of grand country houses, and suggests a very simple reason for the ultimate ascendancy of the humble bathtub.

**Conclusion**

The bathrooms and bathhouses that sprang up in houses and gardens across Britain after 1660 were evidence of a fashion that had its origin in changes to medical opinion about bathing for health. The upheaval in medical theory and practice in this period was inextricably intertwined with the scientific and philosophical movement now known as the Scientific Revolution. Physicians of the late seventeenth century were not as clearly divided between ancients, personified by Hippocrates and Galen, and moderns, devotees of the experimental method, as has sometimes been thought. Nor were the advocates of a revival of ancient bathing practices exclusively modern, experimental scientists, since bathing had the full authority of the ancients. However, it might be broadly stated that the revival of bathing was a by-product of a new approach to medicine, in which knowledge was based on observation and repetition, and theory was handmaiden to tested outcomes.

Although bathing had never entirely died out in Britain, the most influential writer of the first wave of physicians to advocate bathing was Sir John Floyer. A mechanist with a thoroughly modern obsession with observing, measuring and recording the workings of the human body, Floyer sought to make bathing—in particular cold bathing—respectable, and to free it from its associations with Roman Catholicism. His work on bathing sparked a flurry of debate, and he was to remain a key authority well into the second half of the eighteenth century. That the public, eager for knowledge and eclectic in its choice of health professionals in a diverse market, was keen to learn about bathing can be established from the wealth of oft reprinted health manuals that dealt with it. While conflicts continued to rage, the vast data-gathering project of the Enlightenment continued, exemplified in the scale and diversity of sources on the benefits of bathing included in Sir John Pringle’s notes. However, throughout the century, there remained a wide diversity of opinion on the safety of bathing, methods of bathing and the diseases for which it offered a cure. Jane Austen has shown that this apparent confusion persisted into the early nineteenth century:
The sea air and sea Bathing together were nearly infallible, one or the other of them being a match for every Disorder of the Stomach, the Lungs or the Blood; They were anti-spasmodic anti-pulmonary, anti-sceptic, anti-bilious + anti-rheumatic. Nobody could catch cold by the Sea, Nobody wanted appetite by the Sea, Nobody wanted Spirits, Nobody wanted strength—They were healing, … relaxing—fortifying and bracing—seemingly just as was wanted—sometimes one, sometimes the other.—If the sea breeze failed, the Sea-Bath was the certain corrective;--and where Bathing disagreed, the Sea Breeze alone was evidently designed by Nature for the cure.155

As with the story of the built fabric of bathrooms, the medical narrative was not linear or conclusive. However, certain tendencies can be isolated. Although bathers’ fears persisted, their reluctance to bathe was not reflected in the opinions of the medical profession, within which the value of bathing became, by the end of the century, increasingly accepted. As the empirical method began to reveal, albeit slowly, the role of dirt in contagion, the focus moved from bathing as exercise or medical treatment, to cleanliness as essential to health. For this reason, bathing in cold water, although it continued, began to be regarded as unnecessarily rigorous. Meanwhile, bathroom design meandered on a more or less parallel course as medical opinion towards a period in which a bathtub, with hot and cold water, where householders could bathe regularly and often, would prevail over the larger and more expensive plunge bath.

After 1660, the practice and the very form of bathing were dictated by medical thinking. Physicians introduced new beliefs about the safety, frequency, temperature and benefits of bathing, which eventually displaced patients’ fears, and often inspired their gratitude. Some of the bathing cures carried out by eighteenth-century physicians were very like the ones advocated by Vincenz Priessnitz and imported to Britain in the 1840s.156 The work of eighteenth-century physicians paved the way for the revolution in hygiene that was to take place in the nineteenth century, first with Edwin Chadwick’s Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain of 1842, and then with the discovery of the link between dirt and infection by Joseph Lister in the

156 Smith, Clean, pp. 293–4.
1860s.\textsuperscript{157} Such was the importance of their work that it is only proper to agree with Sir John Floyer that ‘Of late, Cold Bathing began to revive in England, as is well known, and the Ingenious Physicians, whose Experiments have given it a new Birth, and have established its Credit, deserve a great Honour’.\textsuperscript{158}


\textsuperscript{158} Floyer, \textit{The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived}, p. 125.
CHAPTER THREE  
Trade in Transition  
The Industrialising Building Site  

Introduction  
No matter how convincing the evidence of the health benefits of bathing and no matter how widely accepted the habit of bathing became, a specialised bathing room within the house was out of reach for people of ordinary means. Widespread bathroom ownership was to depend on at least three factors: most importantly, the availability of clean, abundant water through improvements to urban infrastructure; but also cheaper bathroom components; and increases in wages to the point where building a bathroom became cheaper than employing a maid or a water man to carry water at a time when the preparations for taking a bath involved hard labour. My concern here is with the availability and cost of bathroom components. At the end of the last chapter, we saw that the architect James Playfair had published a short book in 1783, showing how people of more modest resources could construct simple bathing facilities at home. In it, he declared:

Art is progressive in her nature, and, as she advances, acquires greater rapidity, as well as ease, in her motions. The ends which she attains at first, by means complicated and difficult, she afterwards brings about without labour, and in a simple manner.

Thus her inventions are rendered of more general utility. They are not confined to the opulent and the great, but diffused among the middling, and even lower ranks of the people. They become at last a general blessing, and alleviate the miseries, and multiply the enjoyments, of human life; the only purposes, without doubt, to which all the views of Science and Art ought ultimately to tend.


Playfair was writing at a time of rapid industrialisation that had, for the first time in history, begun to bring the world of goods within the reach of even a modest purse. In his view, the innovations paid for by the rich brought with them improvements to knowledge and techniques that made once unaffordable goods cheaper to produce. Maxine Berg describes how advances in British manufacturing processes had brought goods that were beyond basic necessities within the reach of the middling classes, and shows how an abundance of goods imitating global luxuries had changed the aspirations of consumers. The bathroom, too, was affected by this revolution in the making of things. Facilities that, at the end of the seventeenth century, required the expertise of tradesmen operating within a regulatory framework largely unchanged since medieval times, could, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, be manufactured through an industrial process; purchased at an ironmonger; be installed by a competent workman operating outside the structure of the trade incorporation; and be purchased for a modest outlay.

The previous chapter dealt with the physicians who initiated and shaped the practice of bathing. This chapter deals with the key contributor to the making of the bathroom: the plumber. For a bathroom was not a thing of stucco and wood, of fireplaces and furniture, like the rooms that the rich had occupied for centuries. The bathroom was a place of plumbing and pipes; pumps and furnaces; and tiles and tubs. It brought together old trades and new technologies, and it bore witness to the professionalisation of engineers. Until the revival of bathing, plumbers were principally associated with roofing, flashings and lead glazing bars. Now, they turned their old skills to new objects in an environment of rapidly changing technology. Changes in technology and the trade structure within which plumbers worked were, by 1783, having an impact on the cost to the consumer of installing a bathroom. In order to understand how this came about, I discuss changes to plumbers’ work, their trade structure and community, finances, and the impact of new technology and, importantly, new industrial processes—developments that were to undermine the trade just as the fashion for bathrooms had begun to expand their practice.

The Bathhouse at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

In the 1720s, Daniel Defoe visited the premises of the surgeon apothecaries of Edinburgh, and noted that they had ‘a Chamber of Rarities, a theatre for dissection, and the finest bagnio in Britain; ’tis perfectly well contrived, and exactly well finished, no expense being spared to make it both convenient and effectually useful’. The story of the bagnio at the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh in the early eighteenth century is more than the material expression of developments in medical knowledge. The building lay at the centre of a complex web of industrial, technological, trade and municipal interrelationships, and illustrates, albeit at a local level, the ramifications of bathroom-building for industry across Britain. The records of building the bathhouse at the Royal College of Surgeons provide a starting point for a broader discussion of the structure and history of the plumbing trade.

On 17 March, 1703, the surgeons’ incorporation made a contract with John Valentine to complete a twenty-foot square room and furnish it with cupolas and furnaces within its new Royal Bagnio outside the walls of what is now called Old Surgeons’ Hall in Edinburgh’s High School Yards. It was to be a grand building equipped with furnaces and adorned with cupolas. James Miller, a coppersmith of the Canongate, had been commissioned to produce a copper globe and sun to adorn the room, which was furnished with a table with legs decorated, like the cornice, in black with white veins, to counterfeit the luxury of marble. A study of William Edgar’s 1742 map of Edinburgh raises the possibility that the buildings associated with the bathhouse may have been tucked in behind the rear wall of the high school, between the surgeons’ hall and the Royal Infirmary, but rather closer to the infirmary (illustration 1). While the building appears to be in the grounds of the Royal Infirmary, it must be remembered that the land between the Cowgate, what is now Old College, and the backs of the buildings on South Bridge (not yet built at the time) was originally all in the ownership of the

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Illustration 1
The plan of the city and castle of Edinburgh, William Edgar, 1742
Map Library, National Library of Scotland
Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland
Dominican order. The land was taken over by the town council in the
Reformation with a view to building some rental properties, and constructing a
hospital to replace the Dominicans’ services. In fact, no hospital was built, and the
surgeons bought some of the land in 1656, and constructed a hall and an anatomy
theatre there in 1697. When Edgar’s map was published, building works for the
new infirmary had been underway for four years, and were to continue for another
four before completion. Because of the ad hoc nature of development, it is
possible that the new infirmary had not yet taken over the entire area up to the
wall of the surgeons’ garden.7 Whatever the case, the buildings circled in
illustration one are consistent with the accommodation described in the records of
the Royal College of Surgeons. The map shows one fairly large, symmetrical
building with a projecting central bay, separated from the infirmary by a large,
rectangular building, and from the surgeons’ hall by a wall, which encloses the
three sides not protected by the rectangular building, and which formed a private
space or garden. The wall culminates in a small, square construction, that can only
have been a shed or service area.

The building must have been a considerable size, as there were two
bagnios—a great (called the royal bagnio) and a small (called the little bagnio)—
as well as five bathtubs and, possibly, a sauna or sweating room. In addition, there
were bedrooms upstairs which could be hired out to clients to rest or to stay the
night after the bath. A considerable amount of coal was needed for fuelling the
furnaces, and it could have been stored in the small building or shed abutting the
garden wall. It is possible, then, that the rectangular building that blocked the
fourth side of the garden was a separate house for John Valentine, who was
retained, together with his daughter, to serve coffee, tea, chocolate and other
‘cordiall liquors In the house where he must have two Rooms on for his Coffee
house and another for his Bedchamber’.8 Against the notion that bathing and
refreshment took place in separate buildings were physicians’ warnings against

7 A. Logan Turner, Story of a Great Hospital: The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, 1729–1929,
Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1937, pp. 76, 78–9; and Günther B. Risse, Hospital Life in
Enlightenment Scotland: Care and Teaching at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Cambridge
going straight out into the cold after bathing. However, there are several further
mentions of the bagnio and a house as if they were separate buildings.\textsuperscript{9}

Within the bathhouse were two contiguous rooms containing plunge baths,
with a very large cold bath preceding the smaller bath. The latter was probably
hot, not just because it was more practical to heat a smaller bath, but also because
clients were described as ‘washing’ in it, rather than ‘dipping’.\textsuperscript{10} The enfilade
culminated in a window, which explains a prohibition on men’s entering the
garden on women’s bathing days.\textsuperscript{11} There were five lead bathing tubs, which were
probably located in five separate rooms or cubicles, as medical advisers often
accompanied the bathers.\textsuperscript{12} A reference to the bagnio’s being ‘after the Turkish
fashion’, together with references to being ‘sweated’, as distinct from being
bathed, suggests that a separate sweating room, along the lines approved by Dr
Turnbull in chapter two, formed part of the sequence.\textsuperscript{13} The bagnio also employed
men and women masseurs.\textsuperscript{14} It opened for business on 26 January 1704, some
seven years after the bagnio was said to be ‘shortly readie’, and was open to men
on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and to women on Tuesdays
and Fridays. In 1707, a servant was sacked for allowing men near on women’s
bathing days, and the surgeons’ committee ordained that thereafter, the doors to
the bedrooms should be locked and no man allowed within the garden.\textsuperscript{15} This
incident foreshadows concerns about the propriety of public bathing facilities that
will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. The cost of visiting the bath
was three pounds Scots, but six pounds for the bather who wished to use a bath
alone.\textsuperscript{16} (As we shall see, a master plumber might earn £2 10s a week, so this is a
substantial sum.)

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\textsuperscript{9} RCSEd, ‘Records, 1708–1737’, 27 March 1729, p. 372. Unless, of course, ‘house’ in this context
referred to the surgeons’ hall itself.
\textsuperscript{12} Invoice, Joseph Forster, 20 September 1703, RCSEd/11/24.
\textsuperscript{13} For references to ‘sweating’ and ‘bathing’ as separate activities, see RCSEd, ‘Records, 1695–
\textsuperscript{14} For payment of men and women masseurs, see ‘Records’, volume for 1708, pp. 309–12.
\textsuperscript{15} Helen Dingwall, ‘A Famous and Flourishing Society’: The History of the Royal College of
Surgeons of Edinburgh, 1505–2005, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2005, p. 65; and
C.H. Creswell, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh: Historical Notes from 1505–1905,
Edinburgh, 1926, p. 54.
The bathhouse at the Royal College of Surgeons is a symbol of transition. Built at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the construction of the bathhouse illustrates the skills of the traditional building crafts. But it also hints at changes that were already beginning to take place as the Industrial Revolution gained momentum: changes not just to building technology, but also to the identity and structure of professions and trades. According to James Ayres the industrialising building site was marked by changes to the transport of materials and tools; the production and processing of materials, and of tools, equipment, and components; mechanisation on and off the site; and of regulatory constraints. For Ayres, developments in these aspects of building depended on three conditions: the decline of the power of the guilds; the separation of design from production; and, finally, the development of factory production. Factory production, in turn, devalued the skills of the apprentice and led to the further decline of the guild system. The surviving financial records of the Royal College of Surgeons project provide a snapshot of an early stage of bathroom construction within the period under discussion. Here traditional crafts and new technologies co-existed. Some of the processes described by Ayres had already begun, while others still lay in the future, and can only be inferred from the silences in the records, or drawn out of the briefest of references.

Plumbers were not the only tradesmen engaged in the construction of the bagnio. There were many other skills involved, including some that assisted the plumbers in their work, for instance, the carters who transported lead, and the masons who constructed the drains. However, the unique skills of plumbers were essential to the core function of this space, and their work was expensive and required long-term maintenance. In July 1703, Joseph Forster (later to become master plumber to the king) provided 15 stone 4 lbs of lead to the building site for which he charged about 3s per stone. In the next six months, the surgeons

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19 In 1714. Variant spellings are Fforester and Forrester. See 27 August 1714. Appointment by Board of Ordnance of Joseph Forrester as master plumber to office of Ordnance in Scotland, National Archives of Scotland (hereafter NAS), GD220/6/1800 (7).
bought a further 132 stone 7 pounds of lead from Forster, at 4s per stone. In January 1704, they ordered 87 stone 9 lb from another plumber, George Shirreff, and in July 1704, another consignment of 98 stone 2 lb. This time, the orders were filled by John Marjoribanks. Unfortunately there is no record of what they paid for it, but it does suggest that by ordering first through Shirreff and then Majoribanks, they were trying to get a better price by cutting Forster, the middle man, out of the transaction. Although Majoribanks was the supplier, Forster continued to do the plumbing work, and the records reveal charges for work on the bagnio, and casting and laying 54 ells of quarter-inch pipes, casting 5 bath-tubs out of lead, setting 17 brass cocks (taps), and items for solder and cartage. The three yards of large pipe and 10 feet of one-inch pipe in the bagnio, compared with the standard quarter-inch pipe, suggests that the royal bagnio was of some considerable size and needed larger pipes to fill it. It is probable that the water from the wellhead was carried in quarter-inch pipes to cisterns, and the water from the large bath then travelled only a short distance from cistern to bath through the larger pipe.

In the absence of evidence about client numbers, detailed information about the capital cost, running expenses and pricing structure at the bagnio provide no insight into its financial state. However, it is clear that the bagnio was expensive to build and maintain, and that it was, to some degree, mismanaged, as the frequent adjurations to the committee regarding staff supervision suggest. In spite of some missing figures, and some builders’ being employed on a weekly rather than a contract basis, it is possible to estimate the initial cost of the building at over £4000 scots—not counting furnishing it and buying the linen that, at William Paul’s bagnio (opened in Leith in 1654) had to be provided by the client. The records of the surgeons’ committee show constant borrowing to meet

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20 Invoice, Joseph Forster, 14 July 1703, RCSEd/11/17; and invoice, Joseph Forster, 20 September 1703, RCSEd/11/24.
21 John Majoribanks, order, 15 December 1703, RCSEd/11/38; John Majoribanks, order, 18 December 1703, RCSEd/11/39; invoice for lead, [Joseph Forster?], 6 January, 1704, RCSEd/11/40; and Joseph Forster, invoice, 10 July, 1704, RCSEd/11/47.
23 The linen was in the charge of Andrew Raeburn, and his wife’s sister was to wash it. See RCSEd, ‘Records, 1695–1708’, 26 January 1704, pp. 257–8. For clients’ bringing their own linen at William Paul’s bagnio, see W.N. Boog Watson, ‘Early Baths and Bagnios in Edinburgh’, Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, vol. 24, no. 2, 1979 p. 58.
the charges of building and maintaining the bathhouse. In 1719, there was a flurry of entries in the minute book: requiring the keeping of better accounts; ordering the treasurer to hand over the accounts to the clerk; and providing for the election of a new treasurer. Such entries suggest if not impropriety, then at least some level of financial mismanagement. In 1728 and early 1729, the committee was discussing leasing its buildings to help it out of its difficulties, since ‘the incomes of their Bagnio Does not sufficiently Answer the charges they are at about it’, but they did not manage to lease it until 1731. However, even privatisation could not save the facility. The committee agreed to demolish the bagnio in April 1740 and use the materials to make alterations to its rental property. Tradesmen to carry out the alterations were engaged in 1743, and the treasurer was authorised to dispose of materials not needed for the alterations in 1744.

The surgeons’ experience testifies to the great complexity and expense of building a bathhouse. Probably, a number of factors contributed to their ultimate failure. Repeated borrowings showed that the final cost of the bagnio was far beyond the expectations of the surgeons’ council, and problems with water supply caused delays. A major expense was maintenance—the tenant of the College of Physicians’ bagnio in Fountain Close near the Netherbow Port asked for a remission of six weeks’ rent while it was being repaired in 1716, and the whole bath needed to be replaced in lead some years later. The town council first gave the surgeons permission to draw extra water from Niddry’s well in 1701, and yet in September 1703, only two years later, Joseph Forster began to charge for mending the pipes, and the pipes needed mending again in May and July 1704. It is not surprising that the incorporation ended up, in 1712, retaining Forster at

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26 Even then, the surgeons had to pay for new linen and ‘other necessaries’ for the leaseholder. RCSEd, ‘Records, 1708–1737’, pp. 358, 369, 372, 381, 382, 389–91.
28 9 May 1701, Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1962, p. 280. This was possibly the expensive, but undated work carried out by Patrick Skirving.
29 Boog Watson, pp. 61–2. See also Turner, p. 42.
30 Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1689 to 1701, Oliver Boyd, Edinburgh, 1962, p. 280; invoice, [Joseph Forster?], 2 May 1704, RCSEd/11/44; and invoice, Joseph Forster, 10 July, 1704, RCSEd/11/47.
half a guinea a year for life to maintain them.\textsuperscript{31} In addition to the luxury of the facilities, Edinburgh posed particular difficulties for the makers of conventional lead piping, since in the south, water full of lime calcified in the pipes to form a hard (and healthier) lining. In Edinburgh, however, lead precipitated in the soft water and, eventually, the pipes would wear away. This process would have accelerated if the suppliers of the lead sold it with a high zinc content to save money, since zinc precipitates in water faster than lead.\textsuperscript{32} All these factors must have compounded to bring about the demise of what must have been not only a very handsome building, but also a landmark in the history of bathing and plumbing technology. Within twenty years, the loss was replaced by the Royal Infirmary, whose public bathhouse was completed in 1756. Perhaps the larger catchment of a hospital with 228 patients and their visitors worked to the hospital’s advantage, for their bagnio was still operating successfully in 1823.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{Guilds and Corporate Identity}

The surgeons’ project offers a snapshot of a building site at a particular time. Whether they knew it or not, the plumbers involved with the site were entering a period of change to their work practices and techniques, their control over the design and manufacture of components and, finally, the corporate structure of their trade itself. At the end of the seventeenth century, the organisation of the plumbing trade, as of other traditional crafts, was feudal and familial, with a strong corporate identity, and formal and informal structures that closely mirrored each other. Trade incorporations (or guilds) probably evolved from the monastic model, met in chapels, and often used the language of religious vocation.\textsuperscript{34} The client, too, was sometimes enmeshed in this community structure, on terms that were not always comfortable for the client or the tradesman. The culture was one of interdependence—between tradesmen, their families, incorporations and clients. In Edinburgh, there were fourteen incorporations similar in structure and

\textsuperscript{32} Conversation with Peder Aspen, geologist. In this light, the breaking up of the pipes at Taymouth, within twenty years of their being laid by Robert Dickson, was not the result of poor plumber’s work.
\textsuperscript{33} Risse, pp. 29, 31, 33, 29, 80–1; and Turner, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{34} As, for example, when the surgeons referred to themselves as ‘the Calling’. RCSEd, ‘Records, 1695–1708’, 9 November, 1697, pp. 87–8.
function to English and Continental guilds. Guilds regulated trade matters and underpinned the structure by which cities, or burghs, governed themselves. In Edinburgh, the provost (mayor), dean (chief officer of the council), treasuer and the magistrates were drawn from the guilds, the merchants’ guild being the most powerful. Here, the council superintended weights and measures; regulated all building—public and private; resolved disputes between trades; and took responsibility for the provision of water supply. The individual incorporations were, however, responsible for their own internal regulation: defining the boundaries of their trade, regulating market days, conferring qualifications, binding apprentices and enforcing quality control.

The plumbers and glaziers joined the incorporation of wrights and masons in 1703, in the very year when construction of the bagnio at the surgeons’ hall commenced. Plumbers and glaziers belonged to the same trade, since the skills for roofing, pipes and glazing bars for windows all involved leadwork. Plumbers also made rainwater heads, flashings and cisterns, sash weights and, occasionally, a lead damp proof course. Apprentices were bound to their masters in their mid- to late teens. After serving their term, which varied between cities and trades (it was eight years in London), they became journeymen (for at least two years in Edinburgh) before they were admitted to the incorporation and could employ others in their turn. To become a plumber’s apprentice could be more expensive even than to be apprenticed to a jeweller because, as we saw when Shirreff and Marjoribanks cut Forster out of lead supply on the surgeons’ building site, large capital sums were involved in the plumbing business through dealing in lead. Apprenticeship to a good master could mean a good start in business, and

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38 The wrights’ and masons’ guild was formed in 1475.
39 Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, p. 177.
40 Lane, p. 17.
plumbers used their past master as a testimonial. For instance, the trade card for John Anderson’s early nineteenth-century plumbing and supplies business in Perth described him as ‘late with Mr Mackie’, and then again, for good measure, ‘twelve years with Mr Mackie’. Mr Mackie’s was obviously a name to conjure with, and twelve years’ service showed that Mr Mackie had valued John Anderson enough to keep him on after the term of his apprenticeship had elapsed.\(^{42}\)

Although plumbers were not the most prestigious tradesmen in their guild, sources show that they took pride in their corporate identity. On Friday, 10 August 1832, Richard Stodart complained to architect William Burn that although all the tradesmen had been working from 4 a.m. to 9 p.m. to make repairs to the cupola at Prestonhall in Midlothian, the Edinburgh plumbers had downed tools to return home for the ‘great procession … which nothing would keep them back from and I don’t expect to see them again befor [sic] Monday’.\(^{43}\) The procession that they were prepared to down tools to join was undoubtedly the one that took place on the guild’s patron saint’s day, in this case St Mary. It is a testimony to the conserving power of the guild that, in spite of the Reformation, such a custom retained its influence. Together with other archival sources, it also suggests that large numbers of tradesmen from the same trade, and the same place, were employed together on big projects.\(^{44}\)

Joan Lane notes that tradesmen’s distinctive dress was another marker of this corporate identity.\(^{45}\) Plumbers’ pride in their community was also expressed in the songs they sang to the rhythm of their hammers:

> A Plumber I am, and I work for my bread,  
> Nor ashamed of my craft tho’ a dealer in lead,  
> And men of my calling tho’ that they’ll not own,  
> May always be found from the cot to the throne.

\(^{42}\) Trade card, filed before correspondence from 1833, Secretary’s Correspondence, John Ferguson, NAS, GD112/74/115. See also, Lane, p. 241.  
\(^{43}\) Letter, Richard Stodart to William Burn, 10 August 1832, NAS, NRAS 2953/bundle 83. As St Mary’s Day is 22 August, it seems impossible that he would see them again before Monday. ‘Online calendar of saint’s days’, <http://gunhouse.tripod.com/calendar/home.htm>, accessed 17 April 2006.  
\(^{44}\) This is supported by John Gifford, \(William Adam, 1689–1748: A Life and Times of Scotland’s Universal Architect\), Mainstream Publishing, Edinburgh, 1989, p. 38), who recounted that on a single day in 1684, there were 31 masons, 9 wrights, 2 smiths, 6 quarriers and 15 barrowmen all together at Drumlanrig.  
\(^{45}\) Lane, p. 243.
The lawyer so grave, with a twang in his nose,
With his hums and his ha’s and his ekes and also’s,
With each knotty point he is scratching his head,
He’ll find that like me he’s a dealer in lead.

The captain perhaps may despise a poor glazier,
Because his bluff countenance comes from the brazier,
Though he struts in his lace, and swaggers in red,
Yet his brains like his bullets are nothing but lead.

Let no loving damsel a plumber despise,
For his lead soon will melt at the beam of her eyes,
And be brisk as quicksilver when she finds him in bed,
Though all the day long he’s a dealer in lead.

And be, &c.'

Although plumber–glaziers’ work was essential, it was often unmentionable (water closets) or necessary but dull (guttering), so these comparisons with the more prestigious sea captain or the lawyer (whose ‘twang in his nose’ revealed the Frenchified accent that, in Edinburgh, denoted social status) reveal a certain bravado. There is some pathos in their boasts about lovemaking, when it is compared with Charles Turner Thackrah’s 1831 commentary on plumbers’ health:

The plumber … requires a tolerable good Genius, but no very nice Hand; but a moderate Share of Strength, yet a strong and healthy Constitution, to withstand the Effects of the Lead, which is apt to unbend his Nerves and render him paralytic.47

Indeed, according to Thackrah, handling lead caused nausea, tightness in the chest, colic and palsy, and few reached the age of fifty.48 He described one survivor of a white lead manufactory, now unable to work:

... partially paralytic; he has scarcely any motion in either wrist, and his lower extremities are so weakened that he can scarcely trail himself along even with the aid of a crutch. His haggard countenance and ematiated [sic] frame give the appearance of the age of 80 rather than of 54.49

The effect of working with lead accounts for the disproportionate number of women masters in the plumbing trade compared with other trades, since widows

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46 Anon., The Last Dying Speech and Travels of William Walker ... to which is added The Plumber, Chalmers, Aberdeen, n.d. This version is bound with random other handbills. Some of the other items are dated from 1796 to 1802, but most have no date. There are other, slightly different, versions of this song in other sources.
49 Thackrah, pp. 104–5.
were allowed to carry on the business of their husbands.\textsuperscript{50} Moreover, plumbers, together with braziers, hatters, glass-blowers and chandlers, were famous for heavy drinking, which Lane attributes to the hot environment they worked in. Drinking in turn led to a high incidence of industrial accidents—for the plumber, accidents involving molten lead or high roofs.\textsuperscript{51}

By the early nineteenth century, the guild system was under serious threat. The formation of a journeyman plumbers’ association in Edinburgh in 1810, the regulations of which had more to do with sick and funeral benefits, and standards of conduct, than with standards of workmanship and demarcation, suggests that the natural progression had begun to break down—a progression in which a journeyman would eventually have become a master or, if he chose not to, was required to work for a master.\textsuperscript{52} The breakdown in the structure and duties of the trade had multiple causes, of which industrialisation was perhaps the most important. At this time, the decline of the guilds was acknowledged in legislative change and, in 1814, working in a craft to which one had not been apprenticed was decriminalised, and the Reform Bill of 1833 reduced the power of the trade incorporations.\textsuperscript{53} However, this was but the legislative expression of a sea change for which, as we shall see, the process of industrialisation had already prepared the way.\textsuperscript{54}

\textbf{Plumbers and Their Clients}

The guilds were the formal and legal expression of relationships that were strongly based in the community and the family. While the client–plumber relationship had no formal expression, in practice, many clients were also enmeshed in such communities. In the records relating to plumbers at the National Archives of Scotland, the same surnames recur over a period of decades, suggesting that not only were plumbing businesses passed down from father to son, but also that clients were often loyal to the same families of plumbers for

\textsuperscript{50} Lane has identified 6 out of 31 plumbing businesses in Coventry in the eighteenth century as having women masters. See Lane, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{51} Lane, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{52} ‘Articles of the Journeymen Plumbers Society of Edinburgh’, 26 January 1810, NAS, FSI/17/87.
\textsuperscript{53} Ayres, ‘Building Crafts’, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{54} Colston, \textit{The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh}, p. 25; Lane, p. 247.
several generations. Well run estates like the Duke of Buccleugh’s showed a
definite pattern of employment relationships with plumbers. From 1768, the
invoices relating to Dalkeith Palace showed Robert Selby to be regularly
employed for roofing and plumbing. Only twice in succeeding years was another
workman employed—in 1778 and 1782 when William Bruce mended some
pipes.\(^{55}\) However, Bruce was described as doing ‘plumber work’, not as a plumber
and, as he was employed to do paving on another occasion, it is reasonable to
assume that he was a labourer, who was called upon in an emergency or if Selby
were unavailable, because he could turn his hand to a variety of tasks. However,
in 1786, after eighteen years of service, Selby was asked for a quotation. By 1789,
there are invoices from William Scott so, at some stage, Selby either lost the work
or, after eighteen years, had retired. Nearly twenty years later, in 1807, we find
estimates for work at Dalkeith from Robert Dickson and John Scott and Son (John
was probably William Scott’s son), both plumbers of Edinburgh.\(^ {56}\) That the
buying power of Buccleugh was eagerly sought is evident in both the quotations.
Dickson offered to maintain the duke’s pipes for forty years at his own expense.\(^ {57}\)
Scott chose to pass up the money to be made out of lead-dealing, instead offering
to pass on to the client savings made through fluctuations in the market.\(^ {58}\) The
plumber chosen was Scott, perhaps partly as a continuation of the patronage
offered to his father, at a time when an estate’s community was still regarded by
some as a ‘family’, and perhaps also because his work was already known
through jobs on which he had accompanied his father.

The pattern that emerges from the Dalkeith invoices is one of fidelity to a
single tradesman interrupted, at long intervals, by a re-evaluation of the
tradesman’s usefulness, quite possibly prompted by his advancing age. Of course,

\(^{55}\) Robert Selby invoices, 18 May 1778, November 1776, May 1778, September 1777, and William
Bruce, 20 May 1778, NAS, GD224/728/4.
\(^{56}\) Another John Scott billed the Marquess of Lothian for a lead pump for the cold bath in 1752,
suggesting a family business of some longevity. Invoice John Scott, plumber, to Hon. Marquess of
Lothian, 16 December 1752, NAS, GD40/8/498 (23).
\(^{57}\) A guarantee was not unprecedented. In recommending William Carnaby to Lord Ross in 1732,
William Adam declared that he ‘is a sufficient man, & will oblige himself to maintain what he
does for a Term of years after; at his own Expence’. However, forty years seems an extravagant
promise, especially in view of a plumber’s short lifespan. Letter, William Adam to Mr Whyt, 27
June 1732, NAS, GD20/7/96.
\(^{58}\) Robert Dickson estimate, 22 April 1807, and John Scott estimate, 2 April 1807, NAS,
GD224/584/7.
the relationship between the Duke of Buccleugh and his plumber was not, at this time, a personal one—all the records are of dealings between factor and plumber. Nor was it an exclusive one from the plumber’s point of view: Robert Selby also earned £147/8/5 from his work on St Cecilia’s Hall in Edinburgh in 1761 and 1762, and John Scott, notoriously, had the official contract for maintaining the pipes of Edinburgh’s water supply. However, a long association weaves even a duke and a plumber together in a single story, and John Scott’s invoice for £7/17/6 of 13 January 1812 shows that he was called upon to perform one last, intimate, service for his former employer: ‘To a plain inside leaden coffin for the remains of the late duke’. If good clients were loyal to their plumbers for their short lifetime, it seems that at times, plumbers participated in an immediate way in the passing of their clients.

If an estate and its dependents were a family, then not all families were happy ones. Some records show employers who frequently changed plumbers in the quest to get themselves a better, or a more convenient, deal. The story at Lord Breadalbane’s Taymouth Castle started predictably enough, with tidy records showing the employment of John Graham plumber from 1746 until the final bills were settled with William Graham, his brother and executor, in 1767. Over forty years later, in 1808, when very substantial plumbing work was done, all was still well. Lord Breadalbane paid Robert Dickson, and the masons and workmen who worked with him, a total of £855/12/10 for clearing springs, creating a cistern at the spring, and installing water closets and cesspools. The water was then conducted through some 998 yards of trench, and fed into a cistern located at the top of a tower in the house.

59 Charge of building St Cicillias Hall, 1761–2, NAS, GD113/5/209/1. Notoriously, because Scott’s work was a focus for criticism and litigation. When the contract ended in 1737, Patrick Campbell, in his rival bid, cited instances of holes in pipes being plastered up with rags and cord. See Printed memorial for Patrick Campbell, plumber, burgess of Edinburgh, to the Right Honorable the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Town Council of the said city, NAS, GD113/3/913. Scott was also involved in drawn-out litigation with the Incorporation of Carters, which accused him of wrongfully using non-guild labour to transport lead from Leith in 1729 and 1731. See ‘Answer to complaint by John Scott, plumber in Edinburgh, against the carters’, NAS, GD399/90. 60 Invoice, 13 January 1812, NAS, GD224/669/18. 61 See, for example, John Graham, invoice, 9 August 1746, NAS, GD112/51/96; Earl of Breadalbane, accounts from John Graham, 25 November 1757, NAS, GD112/15/349; John Graham, receipt for lead, 17 December 1757, NAS, GD112/15/349/37; and John Graham account for work, January to March 1761, NAS, GD112/15/369. 62 Plumbers’ accounts, 1808?, NAS, GD112/20/4/3.
However, by the mid 1820s, the work appeared to have been wearing thin, and so, it seems, was the patience of the management at Taymouth.\textsuperscript{63} The physical records at this time show signs of stress, with torn fragments of lists of fruit mixed in with invoices, letters and trade cards. Here, there is no sign of the meticulous management of William Cuthill at Drumlanrig, or Mr Alves at Dalkeith on the Duke of Buccleugh’s estates. A letter from Lady Breadalbane in January 1833 informing a shop that Lord Breadalbane only read his \textit{private} correspondence suggests that Lord Breadalbane was sick or elderly, and all the correspondence at this time was dealt with by Lady Breadalbane. The content and tone of her letters reveal that not only was she not a systematic businesswoman, but that she did not share the sense of \textit{noblesse oblige} that united other estate communities:

Lady Breadalbane has much cause to complain of the Gardener’s want of attention and vigilance in protecting the evergreens. She is likewise extremely displeased with Anderson who has shown great negligence in not reporting Trespasses.

or

[Lady Breadalbane] does not approve of any more opening Schools or Classes in the village of Killin, nor can she suppose the tenantry can wish it.\textsuperscript{64}

Lady Breadalbane’s management of the estate was not long to be mediated by a factor. Robert McGillewie appears to have been Lord Breadalbane’s factor in 1823, but ten years later, Lady Breadalbane sacked Donald McGillewie, possibly his son, with the declaration that he had no legal redress, but that she would rid herself of his importunity by giving him £30.\textsuperscript{65}

But a breakdown in loyalties worked both ways. Whereas the plumber Robert Dickson had not charged for travel from Edinburgh to the Breadalbane’s remote Highland home in 1808, in 1829 Lindsay and Co. charged 7 shillings and 10 shillings on different invoices for travel to work done on the house, church and manse at Taymouth.\textsuperscript{66} It is not fair, however, to blame Lady Breadalbane’s character entirely for this, or for the high turnover of tradesmen at Taymouth. A

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\textsuperscript{63} Letter, Robert McGillewie to Breadalbane, 26 September 1823, NAS, GD112/74/73.
\textsuperscript{64} Lady Breadalbane, complaints, 6 November 1833, and of 10 December 1833, NAS, GD112/74/164/1–47.
\textsuperscript{65} Letter, Donald [?] to Lady Breadalbane, 26 April 1825, NAS, GD112/74/73; Lady Breadalbane, complaints, 6 November 1833, and of 10 December 1833, GD112/74/164/1–47.
\textsuperscript{66} Lindsay and Co., accounts for plumbing at Taymouth, 1829, NAS, GD112/74/513. Inevitably cartage for a load as heavy as lead was difficult and expensive.
\end{flushright}
trade card in her papers advertised, in a prominent position, a ‘pointed attention to
country orders’, suggesting that others also had difficulties in attracting tradesmen
to remote areas.\(^{67}\) The growth of cities and improvements to roads must have
increased the catchment of work available to plumbers within reach of major
transport hubs, and made more distant clients, on worse roads, less appealing.

Faced with damp walls, cracked pipes, malfunctioning cocks and water
closets, and overflowing cesspools, Lady Breadalbane conceived a not entirely
original solution.\(^ {68}\) In April 1833, she commissioned Mr Burns, architect of 131
George Street, to find for her a:

- young man who may have served his apprenticeship to a respectable plumber
- and glazier to take charge of the House at Taymouth … [He will] take charge of
  all the Lead pipes, Gutters, and Roofings etc, to repair and clean windows,
- generally to take charge of and assist the Housemaids in cleaning the house …
- To assist in trimming and taking charge of the lamps in the best Rooms. In short
to make himself generally useful …

The wages for such a man were to be

- equal to what any of the Living Servants get viz twenty-five guineas and two
  suits of clothes per annum. I consider the charge of such a man very important
- and I shall not be averse to bettering his situation if I find him deserving … I
  should wish to engage such a man by the month.\(^ {69}\)

In the light of plumbers’ pride in their trade, and their potential income, Lady
Breadalbane’s request seems not only parsimonious, but also optimistic. Joseph
Forster, working on the surgeons’ bathhouse in Edinburgh more than a century
earlier, charged a rate that might earn him £130 Scots a year, not counting what he
could make from lead dealing.\(^ {70}\) A master plumber could expect to own a
workshop in the Canongate, then a suburb of Edinburgh outside the town wall,
with a dwelling above it; he could marry; make a living or even a fortune; and
enjoy high regard in the town hierarchy. All the accounts refer to plumbers as
‘Mr’, where a servant might be known by their first name or surname without the

\(^{67}\) Lady Breadalbane herself referred to the difficulties of finding anyone in ‘our remote situation
in the Highlands’. See John Anderson, copper- and tin-smith, and plumber, Perth, trade card. NAS,
GD112/74/115.

\(^{68}\) Letter, Donald McGillewie to Lady Breadalbane, 26 April 1825, NAS, GD112/74/73.

\(^{69}\) Letter, Lady Breadalbane to L. Davidson, 12 April 1833, NAS, GD1/1017/5; and fragment of
letter from Langton, dated 24 June 1833, NAS, GD112/74/119.

\(^{70}\) Since most of the payments made by the Royal College of Surgeons were made in Scots pounds,
I have assumed that Joseph Forster was also being paid in Scots pounds.
honorific. Knowing this, it seems surprising that a qualified plumber would contemplate being reduced to a servant’s status, to cleaning lamps and helping housemaids, to accepting a servant’s wages for undertaking skilled work, especially as it appears that substantial repairs were required, and as Lady Breadalbane was prepared to offer employment only on a monthly basis. In this, she was unsuccessful and, in July 1833, she had to give up her scheme to acquire a man with trade skills for a servant’s wage, and advertise for a lamp boy.\textsuperscript{71}

From what we know about plumbers in the eighteenth century, is it possible to say that client relationships were altered by the changes that were affecting the trade? Any impact was gradual. By far the biggest impact on the client–plumber relationship must have come through industrialisation. We have seen how hard Lady Breadalbane found it to attract plumbers to her remote estate in a context of growing cities and improved roads in the immediate catchment of those cities. While she was clearly not an ideal client, the estate and its waterworks were extensive, and there was much work to be had from it. Her response to the difficulties of getting plumbers to come Taymouth was to try to employ a qualified plumber on servants’ wages. Yet, she would have done better to seek an untrained worker. Ayres has shown that unskilled labourers had been employed to do some kinds of plumbing work throughout the century, the surgeons had employed the general factotum John Valentine to ‘furnish’ the Royal Bagnio with furnaces in 1703, and the Duke of Buccleugh had employed William Bruce to do ‘plumber work’ in 1778 and 1782, and in the early nineteenth century, Lady Breadalbane had failed to find an accredited plumber to live in and had, instead, employed a lamp boy. We do not know whether Valentine purchased a furnace ready-made or constructed one himself; or how difficult the work William Bruce carried out really was. However, the increased availability of factory-made components as the century progressed must have made it increasingly easy for unskilled labourers to carry out plumbers’ work.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{71} Unsigned letter to ‘Sir’, 11 July 1833, NAS, GD112/74/119.
\textsuperscript{72} Ayres, \textit{Building the Georgian City}, p. 185.
**Finances**

Although plumbing was not the highest status trade in the guild system, it was nonetheless highly profitable. However, cash flow could be a problem.\(^{73}\) The account of Elizabeth Banner, plumber of 141 St Martin’s Lane in London, to the Earl of Dalkeith for nine different plumbing services, spanning the period 31 October 1795 to 9 March 1798, shows that slow cash flow was quite normal in the plumbing business. Banner appeared only to present her bills once a year or less—a lengthy billing period. However, Banner’s records also show that the increasingly sophisticated technology of plumbing within the house could be a steady source of income for plumbers. Out of the nine items on her account of 1798, on seven occasions, her men worked on the mechanism of water closets.\(^{74}\)

At Dalkeith, tradesmen submitted their invoices at the beginning of each year and they were usually, but not always, paid within one to four months. If they completed a job early in the year, they did not bill for it until the following January, and would then have to wait for payment. For instance, Robert Selby’s work on gutters and rainwater pipes was completed in the spring of 1777, but not invoiced until early in the following year and was not paid until 18 May 1778, about a year after completion.\(^{75}\) In cases where the money was an exceptionally long time in coming, it seems that tradespeople were entitled to charge interest: Hatchett, a coachmaker, was paid on 2 June 1799 for a bill of 3 November 1795. The bill was for £46/4/1 and the interest on it was £5/15/6.\(^{76}\)

Besides the problem of persuading plumbers to travel, distance required special arrangements for payment. John Graham was paid for his work at Taymouth by a draft on the Royal Bank in Edinburgh. Presumably Lord Breadalbane forwarded the invoice to the bank and it was duly returned, countersigned by the plumber, once payment had been made.\(^{77}\) In another case, a payment of £4/16/8 on behalf of the Marquess of Lothian was made by Mr Robert

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\(^{73}\) Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, p. 190.

\(^{74}\) Eliz. Banner, Plumber, No 141 St Martins Lane, invoice addressed to the Rt Honble Earl of Dalkeith, March 1798, NAS, GD224/15/24.

\(^{75}\) See, for example, Estimates, Robert Dickson and John Scott, plumbers, April 1807, NAS, GD224/584/7; and Robert Selby and William Bruce, invoices, paid 1778, NAS, GD224/728/4.

\(^{76}\) Bill addressed to the Earl of Dalkeith, NAS GD224/15/24.

\(^{77}\) See, for example, Earl of Breadalbane, accounts for John Graham, NAS, GD112/15/349(31); and John Graham account, 9 August 1746, NAS, GD112/51/96.
Habron, writer to the signet, to John Scott, for a lead pump for a cold bath.\footnote{16 December 1752, NAS, GD40/8/498.} We can suppose that Habron both disbursed and received payments on behalf of his employer, and statements were regularly remitted to the nobleman. Sometimes it was the plumber himself who was the intermediary. Acting for Mr Grame (Graham), John Graham ordered lead from Mr Shirah (probably Shirreff) on behalf of Lord Hopetoun. However, Mr Shirah being out, his servant was reluctant to accept a promissory note which was now fourth-hand, and preferred to take a receipt from John Graham for the lead and allow his master to organise payment directly with Grame and Hopetoun.\footnote{Letter, John Graham to Grame of Gorthe Esq at Buchanan by Glasgow, December 1747, NAS, GD220/5/1659.}

Then, as now, a plumber might be the victim of his own over-optimistic quotation, and Patrick Skirving, having lost money over working and laying pipes to the surgeons’ bath in the High School Yards, threw himself, unsuccessfully it seems, on the mercy of the treasurer:

I am willing to declare that I am no gainor of the forsaid works but rather a looser by a great part of my workmanship. Therefore I refer my selfe to the forsaid Incorporation what they will be pleased to give unto me out of their owne free motive and will that I be no looser of the forsaid works and obliges me to warrant this my discharge at all hands ... \footnote{Patrick Skirving, plumber, payment, n.d., RCSEd/11/1.}

We must not, however, assume from this that plumbers were necessarily financially insecure. In his invoices for work at the surgeons’ bathhouse, Forster made a distinction between work he performed himself, and work done by ‘my man’, the journeyman. It quoted his own rates—\(8s 3d\) a day (nearly £2/10 a week for a six-day week, a tidy sum)—compared with \(4s 6d\) for three days of his man’s labour when Forster himself was away in the country (probably attending a landed client). By this reckoning, a master plumber was worth nearly four times the daily rate of a journeyman.\footnote{Joseph Forster invoice, 10 July 1704, RCSEd/11/47.} But another financial implication emerges from the invoices. Forster was constantly charging for mending pipes, even as the bagnio was being built. He charged for soldering for joints and mending old pipes (September 1703), mending the pipes in several places (May 1704), getting the water to run again when it had stopped, mending pipes which were broken in
penetrating the wall to the bagnio, and mending pipes in St Mary’s Wynd (July 1704).\textsuperscript{82} Forster was undertaking major repairs to pipes within seven years of Skirving’s having laid them from the well-head to the High School Yards. These repairs were occasioned in part by new building work, but the water supply also stopped completely—which could have been caused by air bubbles in the pipes, requiring the installation of an outlet tube or a small box-valve, or by the wearing away of the fabric of the lead pipes themselves, especially if Skirving had not complied with the recommended pipe thickness in the first place.\textsuperscript{83} By 1712, tired of this problem, the surgeons offered Forster a retainer of half a guinea a year for life for the continued maintenance of the pipes which, given that they had paid him over £5 for maintenance in 1704 alone, suggests that they had driven a good bargain.\textsuperscript{84} By 1830, there was a fixed price for certain aspects of labour, for instance, the price of fixing cisterns was set at 5s, but the expense of laying lead was usually based on a daily rate unless otherwise agreed.\textsuperscript{85} If the man-hours involved in laying lead pipes were not easy to calculate in 1830, then Patrick Skirving had done himself a disservice in quoting for the whole job on the surgeons’ hall pipes since, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, lead pipes were hand made by craftsmen, not by less skilled workers in factories and workshops. Accordingly, the time required for their manufacture was less easily calculated.\textsuperscript{86}

However, plumbers did not become wealthy by working for an hourly rate. Ayres tells us that plumbers like Thomas Atwood of Bath became rich through

\textsuperscript{82} That the surgeons were paying for pipe repairs in St Mary’s Wynd at this point suggests that some of their water was coming from the wellhead in the Netherbow. 
\textsuperscript{84} Compare this, however, with Robert Dickson’s offer to maintain the pipes at Dalkeith for forty years free of charge. 
\textsuperscript{85} *Practical Masonry*, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{86} Patrick Skirving’s bill had come to £636/1s scots (£53 sterling) altogether. It seems that, having brought the water from the Niddry’s Wynd wellhead, Skirving either washed his hands of the job that had caused him such a loss, or was not asked to work for the surgeons again, because his place was then taken by Joseph Forster in 1714. See appointment by board of ordnance of Joseph Forrester as master plumber to office of ordnance in Scotland, 27 August 1714, NAS, GD220/6/1800 (7).
being commodity brokers, rather than through the use of their hands. As their song said, plumbers were ‘dealers in lead’: they handled considerable volumes of lead, and lead prices varied. The shrewd plumber bought lead when prices were favorable and passed it on to the client at the market rate in times of higher prices. Plumbers who carried shrewdness to the point of crooked dealing rolled lead roofing very thin and sold it by the square foot, to maximise profits. For this reason, Isaac Ware insisted that lead be paid for by weight, and practical handbooks advised on the ideal weight of different expanses of lead sheeting and of different bores of lead piping. Clearly abuses were common enough that by 1830, the price of sheet lead per hundredweight was fixed by the warden and court of assistants of the Plumbers’ Company, although the cost was still dependent on the current prices of pig lead.

A client could sometimes offset the expense of a project by selling old lead back to the plumber at a reduced rate, which varied according to the dirtiness and condition of the lead. For instance, in 1830, old lead could be sold to the plumber at £1/5s per cwt, while a new water cistern would be purchased at £3 per cwt. Mid-eighteenth-century accounts for plumbing at Taymouth routinely contained discounts for ‘trade-ins’ of old lead. This lead was presumably recast on the site by the plumber and used in the new works, rather than carted back, at great expense, to Edinburgh to be recast. This practice must have gradually ceased once pipes and tubs were made of iron and purchased ready made. There was also a market for second-hand joints, pipes, pumps, socket pipes, brass gratings, ferrules and bosses, and lead air traps for sinks and water closets. The profitability of dealing in lead is revealed by the way plumbers spent money as

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87 Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, p. 178.
88 Isaac Ware, *A Complete Body of Architecture*, Osborne & Shipton, London, 1756, p. 88; the writer of *Practical Masonry, Bricklaying, and Plastering Both Plain and Ornamental* (Thomas Kelly, London, 1830) stated that every square foot of cast sheet lead should weigh 5, 5½, 6, 6½, 7, 7½, 8, or 8½ lbs, p. 219. This manual also advised that 3/4-inch pipes be 10lb/yard; 1-inch be 12½lb/yard; and a quarter-inch pipes be 16½lb/yard and so on. See *Practical Masonry*, p. 146.
89 *Practical Masonry*, pp. 223, 145.
90 See, for example, account of William Carnaby, 13 January 1740, NAS, GD112/30/box 1/51–23; account of John Graham, 25 November 1757, NAS, GD112/15/349; and account of John Graham, 17 December 1757, NAS, GD112/15/349(37).
well as the way they earned it. George Chalmers, master plumber in the Canongate, made enough money to endow a hospital.\(^{92}\)

What then can we learn about the changes to the plumbing profession over the long eighteenth century from plumbers’ finances, and what were the implications of this for bathroom owners? We have seen that the complex technology involved in increasingly convenient indoor waterworks—especially bathrooms and water closets—increased the work available to plumbers like Elizabeth Banner. We have seen, too, that a master plumber stood to earn a great deal more than one of his own journeymen or day labourers. We have seen that the precipitating of lead pipes, and perhaps the manufacturing techniques of the early to mid-eighteenth century meant that plumbers were constantly called in to make repairs even, in the case of the surgeons’ bagnio, while construction was still under way. Indeed, Roger North, in whose lifetime the bagnio was built, roundly condemned Samuel Vincent of Buckenham Hall, who had water piped into every room of his house, causing enormous damage, and necessitating running repairs at vast expense.\(^{93}\) We have seen that plumbers stood to make not just a good living, but fortunes, through lead dealing. But at the same time as all this was happening, contrary forces were also at work. The process of industrialisation was making inroads on these gains. The availability of improved pipes was reducing maintenance; the availability of ready made components to bathrooms, and machines was reducing both the amount of work for the plumber, and the skill required to perform it. Most serious of all, as components were made off-site and sold in shops, plumbers no longer acted as lead dealers—the most lucrative part of their trade. All these factors, working together, reduced the power of the guilds, and exposed plumbers to the competition of less skilled workers. The motive force, driving all these changes, was industrialisation.

**Industrialisation and the New Professions**
The key to the changed status of the plumber, changes to bathroom components and, in the end, changes to the cost of installing a bathroom is industrialisation. It

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\(^{92}\) Plaque on wall on south side of Canongate.

is an irony of plumbing history during the long eighteenth century that, just when plumbing work was augmented by the new requirements of public water supply and bathroom construction, other changes weakened the plumbing trade. In 1703, when the surgeons’ bathhouse was commenced, and plumbers had at last been admitted to the traditional bastion of the masons guild, the nature of a plumber’s work was beginning to be affected by new technologies, which would blur the boundaries of their calling and transfer some of their traditional tasks from the building site to the factory. New technology and the proliferation of new building types (bathrooms among them) were to trigger a process of professionalisation, in which artisan skills began to be separated from the design component of the project, and the designers were, ultimately, to learn their skills in universities rather than on building sites. The separation of the ‘higher’, creative and cerebral functions from the manual—the separation of design from production—also applied to other professions; for instance, as design began to be carried out by architects rather than masons and, indeed, as the surgeons themselves had separated from the barbers in 1722.

More importantly for this discussion, it was the emergence of a new kind of technician, industrialist or engineer that undermined plumbers’ monopoly on the construction of bathrooms and service areas. Andrew Saint places the beginnings of the separation of technical and design virtuosity from craft skills with the engineer George Sorocold of Derby in the 1690s. For Saint, Sorocold and his like did not belong to the band of educated diletanti represented by the great gentlemen—architects of the era, but were instead practical mechanics of good education. In a discussion of the iron-working trades, Saint shows how the expert artisanal serruriers and smiths of the eighteenth century gave ground to engineering contractors, factory-owners, inventors and mechanics, whose expertise led to the fabrication of components off site, and created a divide between the design and execution parts of the construction process. Saint rejects a

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simplistic model for this process that attributes it to increased access to printed sources, in favour of a more nuanced approach which points to the weakening of craft control, which enabled experts to concentrate on the design element of a project without membership of a trade incorporation. What we know of the experience of Scottish plumbers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries suggests that the situation might have been yet more complex, as advances in design weakened the grip of craft control, as much as weaker control empowered a new class of designers. Also of relevance to bathroom history is Saint’s view that the multiplication of building types during the Industrial Revolution gave designers as a professional class more importance through an increased need for the division of labour.\textsuperscript{97} Celina Fox contributes to this analysis in a discussion of the increasing importance of models and, more importantly, drawings enabling engineers to move ever more easily between mechanical knowledge and empirical experience. The accumulation of knowledge and experience among engineers and inventors led to a growing professionalism and increased influence in the second half of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{98} The impact of this on traditional crafts was exponential, as advances blurred the boundaries between crafts, the legislative framework protecting traditional structures weakened, and entrepreneurs were able to take advantage new opportunities, further disrupting traditional hierarchies. From now on, the largest profits would be made in factories by entrepreneurs, and not in family-owned workshops.

Components that were traditionally manufactured on site or in the plumbers’ workshop at the beginning of the eighteenth century, could often be purchased in a shop at the beginning of the nineteenth. However, we have seen that plumbers were able to manufacture all the components of the new bathroom; what they could not do, busy working on site, is keep pace with the rapidity of design improvements coming from factory production, or replicate the quality of components produced in new ways. Mechanical devices such as pumps and furnaces were to be the subject of rapid improvement over the long eighteenth century and, in the nineteenth century, could usually no longer be manufactured to

\textsuperscript{97} Saint, pp. 67, 76, 485–6, 488–9.
the same standard on site by a tradesman using locally sourced materials. Machines like pumps and furnaces were swept up in the separation of design and production, and increasingly sophisticated design and manufacture became beyond the capacity of a single tradesman to produce on site.

At the outset of the surgeons’ project, the use of craft skills to manufacture components appeared to be standard practice. In 1703, Forster cast five lead bathing tubs on site for the surgeons at 20s per tub.\(^9^9\) In 1704, he charged £5 for casting a lead cistern, which included the labour of mending pipes and joints in the ‘kettle’ (furnace). There was a further charge of 16s for the manufacture of the lid for the cistern, based on its weight, and another (2s 2d) for two pounds of solder to attach a brass tap below the cistern.\(^1^0^0\) The cistern and the tubs would have been cast in sand on the site, a pre-industrial practice that was soon to be superseded: indeed, around the turn of the nineteenth century, physician A.F.M. Willich directed patients who wished to shower at home to seek out the equipment at a ‘tin-shop’.\(^1^0^1\) However, as with other developments in bathroom history, it cannot be assumed that the journey from a skilled tradesman’s crafting components on site to the purchase of a factory-made component in a shop was a linear one. Although, by the nineteenth century, it was possible to buy bath-tubs, pipes, pumps and sheet lead ready-made from a plumbing supplier, the construction of baths from wood and stone at Ardrossan’s tontine baths as late as 1807 shows that, a century after the construction of the surgeons’ bathhouse, traditional construction techniques were still in use, even though the latest pumps, steam and central heating at these baths were provided at Ardrossan.\(^1^0^2\)

\(^9^9\) Joseph Forster, invoice, 20 September 1703, RCSEd/11/24.
\(^1^0^0\) Joseph Forster, invoice, 10 July 1704, RCSEd/11/47.
\(^1^0^1\) Ware, p. 88; and A.F.M. Willich, *Lectures on Diet and Regimen: Being a Systematic Inquiry into the Most Rational Means of Preserving Health and Prolonging Life: Together with Physiological and Chemical Explanations Calculated Chiefly for the Use of Families, in Order to Banish the Prevailing Abuses and Prejudices in Medecine*, 4th edn, Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1809 (2nd edn 1799), pp. 147–8.
\(^1^0^2\) John Anderson, copper- and tin-smith, and plumber, in Perth in the nineteenth century, sold baths, common pumps, milled and cast sheet lead and lead pipes of all sizes that he had purchased from the manufacturers. Trade card, NAS, GD112/74/115; and James Cleland, *Description of that Part of Ardrossan in the County of Ayr on which Baths Are to Be Built by Tontine*, James Hedderwick, Glasgow, 1807, pp. 10–13, 42, 51. See also, the case of Archibald Cook, cabinetmaker, who in November 1799, charged the Duke of Buccleugh 2s 6d for the timber for a bathing tub and 8d for its construction. See Archibald Cook, invoice, November 1799, NAS, GD224/15/24, Room 52.
Accordingly, it is not possible to assume that the industrialisation of the building site was a purposeful project that was complete by the nineteenth century.

Pipes, of course, were the staple of the plumber’s work and, in September 1703, Joseph Forster billed the surgeons £8 2s 9d for leadwork to the bagnio and for casting and laying fifty-four ells of quarter-inch new pipes. These, too, would have been made on site or in the plumber’s workshop. At this date, plumbers received lead in pigs weighing between 80 and 120 lb. Pipes were made by milling—by bending a piece of sheet lead around a piece of wood and soldering the seam. Solder, a mixture of lead and tin, was paid for by weight and would melt at a lower temperature than pure lead.\(^{103}\) A more modern technique was to cast pipes by pouring lead into a hinged brass mould, two feet six inches long, with a removable iron core. The junction of the pipes was created by widening one end of the pipe on a wooden cone called a tan-pin to form a socket for the insertion of the narrow end of the next pipe.\(^{104}\)

As late as 1830, lead continued to be regarded as the best material for pipes because of its malleability.\(^ {105}\) At times, oak, elm and freestone had also been used for pipes, but they needed to be double the thickness of iron to resist water pressure. Later, iron superseded lead as the most desirable material from which to make pipes and, in 1814, John Smallwood at Drumlanrig Castle recommended, ‘The Cast Iron pipes for conveying the water to the House is I think much the Best, they are not liable to be injured by the Frost, and there is scarcely any other sort used in or near London’.\(^ {106}\) By this time, plumbers purchased pipes from a manufacturer or ironmonger.\(^ {107}\) Iron pipes were made in a factory, and were cast in an iron mould with a cylinder of the correct bore within it. This resulted in a short, rough pipe some three or four times thicker than the intended product. This pipe was then drawn through diminishing holes in pieces of steel until it was the right thickness, a process which elongated the short pieces, while also hardening

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\(^{103}\) In the eighteenth century, solder was 2 parts lead to one part tin, and in the nineteenth, equal parts lead and tin.

\(^{104}\) Ware, pp. 87–8. See also Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, pp. 182, 184–5.

\(^{105}\) *Practical Masonry*, p. 220; and Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, p. 185.

\(^{106}\) Letter, John Smallwood, Drumlanrig, to ‘Sir’ (the duke’s secretary?), 17 July 1814, NAS, GD224/653/1/10.

\(^{107}\) By the 1780s, pipes would have been readily available in a shop. See, for example, David Allen’s estimate for work for Grant, August 1786, NAS, GD 248/365/5.
them. Lead, because of its softness, needed to be ten times the thickness of iron pipes, and during the nineteenth century it was gradually abandoned in favour of iron. The consequence of this, as iron pipes gradually gained ground over lead pipes, was that the intensive maintenance of lead pipes of the kind that happened at the surgeons’ bath was no longer required.

Pumps, too, involved a complex mechanism, and like furnaces, their importance to the mining industry led to steady improvements in design over the long eighteenth century. The gradual move towards manufacturing pumps by industrial processes rather than making them in a workshop or on the site eroded the work of plumbers. In 1712, when the committee of the surgeons’ incorporation decided to install a pump to empty the cold bath, a pump was a complex item to construct and maintain. While the plumber was responsible for installing and maintaining the pump at the surgeons’ cold bath, within a few decades, engineers, technicians or industrialists were to improve upon it, often to their very great profit, and would take the task of construction out of the skilled hands of the tradesman, and into the factory or workshop, where they could be made by less skilled workers.

By the nineteenth century, plumbers still sometimes built pumps from scratch but, more often, assembled kits that had been designed by engineers, and manufactured in factories which had better equipment for boring the barrels. The records at Dalkeith suggest that, throughout the eighteenth century, pumps had been a continual source of work for plumbers in kitchens, sculleries, laundries, dairies, kennels and stableyards, if little, as yet, in bathrooms. In the period from 1793 to 1802, William Dickson mended the pumps at Dalkeith many times. The laundry pump broke down the most often (27 times), followed by the stableyard pump (10 times), the kennels (8 times) and the kitchen and force pump for the garden less often. The leathers and the bucket were the parts that needed renewing the most often, and there is no record of a pump supplying a

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108 *Practical Masonry*, p. 221.
112 North was one of the few architects to discuss pumps. See North, pp. 92–3.
bathhouse. During this time, he also constructed new pumps for the laundry (twice, in 1793 and 1800), the stables (1795) and an unnamed location (1799).

There are two things worth noting about the employment of Dickson at Dalkeith. The first is that the glazing was done by Patrick Crighton, the plumbing (as we have seen) by Selby then Scott, and pump repairs by Dickson, even though a plumber might have undertaken all these tasks. The only exception was a 1795 invoice from William Scott for the kitchen pump and a window top. This hints at a greater degree of specialisation than the surviving invoices from the early century. The invention of timber sash and case windows made a plumber’s work on windows, except for flashings and sash weights, redundant, while developments in pump technology, especially in the light of the need for frequent repairs, must have called increasingly for the work of a specialist, even if he was, by training, a plumber. The second is that, even so late in the century, Dickson undertook all his repairs on the site and made the parts he needed by hand. His pumps, too, were handmade, not purchased from a manufacturer. On three occasions, he made new pumps from the duke’s own wood, using the pre-industrial practice of exploiting natural materials from the estate. Dickson tackled the metal as well as the wood and leather components of the pump. A new pump fashioned in this way cost 3s 9d in 1802. In 1800, however, the duke had purchased two new pumps from Thomas Mark for £4/1. After 1802, records of repairs and the making of pumps by Dickson stop abruptly. It is possible that Mark’s pumps, made through an industrial process, were more reliable, if more expensive, than pumps made by the old methods.

By Jamieson’s time, the uses of pumps in industry were manifold, and were expanding even in the domestic sphere with the introduction of gas lighting. These modern pumps were vastly superior to the old-fashioned hand pump, which could raise water little more than twenty-eight feet above the surface of the

\footnote{William Dickson invoice, paid 1794, NAS, GD224/206/3.}
\footnote{Robert Selby invoices, 1767–8, Patrick Crighton invoice, 1768, NAS, GD224/208/1; and Patrick Crighton invoice, William Scott invoice, 29 April 1795, William Dickson invoice, paid 1794, NAS, GD224/206/3.}
\footnote{Lane, p. 145.}
\footnote{William Dickson pump repairs, and Thomas Mark, for two new pumps in 1800, NAS, GD224/206/3.}
\footnote{Jamieson, vol. 2, p. 856.}
ground.\textsuperscript{118} By 1830, as the author of \textit{Practical Masonry} related, there were two different kinds of pump suitable for domestic purposes.\textsuperscript{119} By the Great Exhibition of 1851, William Shalders junior, hydraulic engineer, was able to display five different kinds of pump for every domestic use from drawing water from running sources, to brewing, greenhouses, cesspools, wells, and baths, and offered a pump with a pedestal lined with wood against frost damage. These pumps cost from £1/10 for baths and greenhouses, to £4/12 for a brass pump for brewing and distilling.\textsuperscript{120} By this time, it is unlikely that many bathroom owners would have commissioned plumbers to produce pumps, which were cheaper if made in a factory, and better if designed by an engineer and produced by an entrepreneur.

\textbf{Conclusion}

At the end of the last chapter, we saw how, in the penultimate decade of the eighteenth century, James Playfair, in a discussion of bathrooms, pointed to technological advance as making complex and expensive goods available to the less well off. Hitherto the preserve of the rich with ample water, fuel and space, a bathroom had required intensive labour from those that built it, and from the staff that served in it. Playfair suggested that a bath, if not a bathroom, was now something to which an ordinary family could aspire. Born in the year Playfair published his book, and writing exactly fifty years later, John Loudon appeared to celebrate the truth of Playfair’s analysis. He described the plumbed-in bathrooms as:

\begin{quote}
a cheap and useful luxury, which would be considered by many persons an indispensable requisite in a perfect villa. A room of moderate size would contain the warm and shower baths; the cold bath would be in the park, in an ornamental building on the side of a stream. I would place the bath-room in such a situation that it could be supplied with hot water from the offices, by means of a pipe connected with the boiler, say in the kitchen or scullery. There should also be a supply of cold water by another pipe, and a drain to convey away the waste
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Practical Masonry}, p. 222.
\textsuperscript{120} Class 5, Exhibition of 1851, No. 402, Shalders’ Patent Fountain Pump, Hydraulic and Leather Works, Norwich, NAS, GD112/74/898.
water ... The bath-room would be most conveniently placed near the family sleeping-rooms.\textsuperscript{121}

By Loudon’s reckoning, a convenient, compact bathroom with hot and cold running water, close to the bedrooms was, by the 1830s, ‘indispensable’ to many. However, his instructions do, to a certain extent, give the lie to his assertion, since if bathrooms had indeed been indispensible to many at this time, he would not have had to describe its arrangements in such detail.

Nevertheless, the records of plumbers’ work in Scotland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century tend to confirm Playfair’s contention that technology had transformed the world of goods. The eighteenth century in Scotland had been a period of transition for plumbers. When Patrick Skirving and Joseph Forster began work on the site of the bathhouse at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh at the beginning of the eighteenth century, they belonged to a community of tradesmen little changed since medieval times. Their guild regulated every aspect of their work, and their relationships within their community and with their clients were traditional and familial. They identified strongly with their trade community and were proud of their place in it. Their work was labour intensive and many of the goods they provided were manufactured on site, sometimes from materials that were available on or near the work site. In spite of the damage to their health caused by working with lead, and of their relatively low status in the hierarchy of guilds, they stood to make a good, sometimes a handsome, living from their work and, more particularly, from dealing in lead.

Industrialisation was to change the plumbing trade in a number of complex and interrelated ways, as increased numbers of bathrooms and water closets brought plumbers down from the roof and into the house. However, while bathrooms and water closets initially increased plumbers’ work, the factory production of bathroom components eroded their monopoly, reduced the power of their guilds, and made more tasks easier for less skilled workers to carry out. The weakening of the trade was reflected in legislative change that weakened it still further. Industrialisation increased the size of cities and improved roads between

urban hubs, making it easier for plumbers to travel to clients on major routes. However, the separation of design from production led to more reliable furnaces, pumps and pipes, reducing plumber work to the installation of equipment designed and manufactured elsewhere and, most importantly, the production of iron pipes led not only to a decrease in maintenance work but, most importantly, the end of plumbers’ most prosperous source of income from lead dealing. By the same token, the worst symptoms of occupational illness were transferred from the building site to the factory until conditions became the subject of industrial action. By the end of the nineteenth century, Playfair was proved right in that all the components and machinery needed to construct a bathroom could be purchased from an ironmonger and installed by a handyman.
Civility’s Conflicting Demands: The Bathroom Foreshadowed

Introduction

There is no doubt that the revival of bathing was initiated by medical opinion. Moreover, as industrialisation progressed, bathing facilities in the home became available for an increasing number of people, as it became easier for less skilled workers to install factory-made components. However, these factors fail to provide a completely satisfactory explanation for the revival of bathing in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. After all, the technology of bathing had been known for 2000 years, and yet it fell into disuse in the sixteenth century. What fuelled its return? Not medical opinion alone: as the obesity epidemic of recent years in the West has shown, medical consensus alone does little to change behaviour. No, the explanation for the proliferation of domestic baths in Britain in the eighteenth century must lie in cultural change. As Norbert Elias and Alexander Kira have commented, the demand for technology is the result of transformations in human relations. This chapter is not about domestic bathrooms themselves, but the cultural evolution that accounts for their growing importance. Without these developments, the bathroom would have remained a rich man’s toy or, like sewers, been provided by the authorities as a requirement of public health, rather than becoming an essential feature of any place where people reside.

While I will say little about the bathroom as a domestic space in this chapter, the silhouette of the domestic bathroom looms behind the narrative of social change. An anonymous poem of 1737 introduces several of the themes that underlie the changing relationship of culture to cleanliness. Here, the deterrents to public bathing are graphically depicted:

Here long e’er Lucifer leads the Dawn,
Each greasy Cook has seeth’d away his Brawn;
And Sweepers from their Chimneys, smear’d with Soot.

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2 Banks will not lend money for the acquisition of a dwelling that does not contain a bathroom.
Hither have brought, and left behind, their Smut.
Jilts, Porters, Grooms, and Guides and Chairmen bring
Their sev’ral Ordures to corrupt the Spring.
Add to these Nusances the ’wild’ring Noise
Of splashing Swimmers, and of dabbling Boys;
Whose bold, loose, rustick Gestures move my Rage,
Which Celia’s presence scarcely can asswage.
Here Lepra too, and Scabies more unclean
Divest their Scurf t’invest a purer Skin:
Whose pealing Scales upon the Surface swim,
Till what th’Unwholesome shed the Wholesome skim.
Nor this the greatest Grievance in the Flood:
The worst I scarcely wish were understood:
All (from the Porter to the courtly Nymph)
Pay liquid Tributes to the swelling Lymph.  

Although this poem describes various kinds of dirt in graphic detail, it reveals a repugnance that goes beyond simple dirt. One kind of dirt described is acquired through work and brought to the public bath: cooks bring grease, chimneysweeps bring soot, and other kinds of worker bring the dirt accumulated through their labours and deposit them in the shared water. The second kind of dirt is intrinsic to the assorted bathers: skin diseases are washed here, and flakes of skin, blood and pus are shed in the water, endangering those whose skin is ‘purer’. Most horrible of all, bathers of every degree feel free to urinate in the water in which others bathe. But there are other kinds of pollution to be feared in the public bathhouse. The ‘splashing Swimmers’ and the ‘dabbling Boys’ indulge in language and gesture to which no lady, in the form of the nymph Celia, should be exposed. In addition, their splashing and dabbling implies an approach to bodily propriety to which Celia, less and less robust in these matters as the century progressed, would not wish to be exposed. These splashers and dabblers are all the more threatening because of the low estate of other bathers, from whose walk of life Celia is eager to dissociate herself. They represent a threat to social position, as does the presence of the jilt, whose moral failings cast a shadow over Celia’s own purity. A close reading of the cultural and moral dimensions of dirt

shows that even something as neutral as dirt acquired through work—dirt that
does not result from any moral failure—carries a negative cultural burden.

Although published more than sixty years later, the social types described
in this poem nevertheless seem to be reflected in an 1801 caricature (illustration
1) of bathers at the King’s Spring at Bath. In the right foreground is just such a
sooty type as the poem depicts, with brawny shoulders and dark skin. Next to him
stands someone whose face hints at some intellectual disability, accompanied by
an older woman. In the middle of the foreground, two figures support a third with
closed eyes, perhaps a sick child brought in search of a cure. At the left are a man
and a woman, too close for propriety, her features coarse and plain. Against the
rear wall are two people in close conference; the shadow in which they stand
suggests that the subject of their discussion will not bear the light of day. In front
of them and to the left stands an elderly man, whose a foolish expression may
betoken senility. To his right stands a young woman, the only figure to lock eyes
with the viewer. Her neat headdress, delicate features and fashionable dress
betoken a lady of some gentility. She is the only participant in this scene whose
dress, bearing and physical beauty is not marred by associations of age, disease,
eccentricity or moral turpitude, in an environment where physical infirmity was
thought to denote moral qualities.4 Her presence in this crowd points to the
perceived undesirability of her surroundings, and reminds the historian that, even
at this late period, she was unlikely to have bathing facilities at home. As with the
anonymous poem, the caricature draws attention to the physical, moral and social
contamination to be met with at the public baths.

**Dirt and Civility**

William Cohen and Ryan Johnson stress the interdisciplinary nature of dirt and
disgust in their definition of filth: ‘filth represents a cultural location at which the
human body, social hierarchy, psychological subjectivity, and material objects
converge’, and the associated themes of civility and disgust are illuminated by
sources in anthropology, sociology, psychology, medicine and history.5 In this

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5 William Cohen, and Ryan Johnson (eds), *Filth: Dirt, Disgust and Modern Life*, University of
Illustration 1

Bathing in the King’s Spring, Bath, by John Nixon, 1801
Ref: 9ac4d704e4f9b6c66c36afad7a11
Courtesy of the Wellcome Library, London
chapter, I shall not focus on works belonging to a particular discipline, but rather on discussions of two aspects of human organisation and human emotion— civility and disgust—and their role in changing bathing habits. Discussion of civility literature was pioneered by Norbert Elias in the 1930s, and has since been given further depth and sophistication in a detailed study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England by Anna Bryson. Their work provides a framework within which to examine the social meanings of cleanliness, and this in turn explains the trend towards domestic bathroom ownership. Bryson has shown that changes in social context caused a shift in the reception of ideas about civility in the early modern period, and her observations do much to make sense of the reactions of the eighteenth-century gentry and rising middle classes. However, as we shall see, notions of pollution and disgust have also acted as a powerful agent both in the adoption of bathing and in the move away from public facilities. Disgust acts as an effective agent of civility because of its visceral, physical affect. The close links between disgust, contempt and shame play a powerful role in the internalising of cultural codes, and in defining boundaries between groups.

A pioneer of the scholarship on dirt was Mary Douglas, whose 1966 *Purity and Danger* was the fruit of her anthropological research. Douglas’s cross-cultural study convinced her that dirt was not an absolute idea. Instead, it was a metaphor for disorder, and purity rituals and the punishment of transgressions were a way of imposing system on an untidy reality. Although she found a correspondence between avoidance of contagion and ritual avoidance, this did not exclude explanations in which defilement could be seen in the context of a ‘systematic ordering of ideas’. She also observed a correspondence between morality and fears of pollution, but this correspondence was complex and relative. Dirt carried a symbolic load, and was defined by its context, not by its essence: dirt was matter out of place. At times, to do what might normally be unclean could show proper submission, as when a Havik wife (of Malrad in Mysore) would eat off her husband’s dinner leaf once he had finished as a sign of submission.6 We might draw parallels between this and the custom, in Welsh

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mining families, of offering the father the fresh bathwater, followed by the sons in descending order of age. However, Kathleen Brown notes that this hierarchy did not always prevail. In the Drinker family of Philadelphia in 1806, the family shared the bathwater in descending order of age, and then the servants also bathed. However, the Drinkers’ two young children, William and Nancy, took exception to being forced to use others’ water, and insisted on going first.\(^7\) This example does not, of course, overturn the principle of hierarchy in bathing; merely, it suggests that the hierarchy could at times be successfully challenged. Douglas’s analysis of the importance of context is important for understanding eighteenth-century British ideas about bodily cleanliness, and it is reflected in the work on civility carried out by Elias and Bryson.

Civility was to be thought of as a desirable state, and discussion of civility was value-laden.\(^8\) In her 1998 *From Courtesy to Civility*, Bryson defines civility as living together in good order. She traces the notion of civility from its ancient Roman association with the art of government, to its late Roman association with citizens and courtesy. By the early sixteenth century in England, it had to do with the ethical value of conformity to the principles of political order.\(^9\) Her book was a response to and an amplification of earlier work by Norbert Elias on the civilising process which, he held, needed to be understood historically. In the first of two books (*The History of Manners*, 1939), he traced the evolution of civility from medieval times to the 1930s through the study of books of manners. For Elias, Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *De civilitate morum puerilium* (on civility in children) of 1530 was the pivotal moment in this evolution. Erasmus’s book gave a new impetus to an existing concept about the behaviour of people in society, just as the codes of chivalry and the dominance of the Roman Catholic church were beginning to decline.

As chivalric notions of ‘courtois’ or courtly manners declined, ideas about civility gained ground.\(^\text{10}\) Civility had particularly, but not solely, to do with notions of outward bodily propriety, and included bearing, gesture, dress, facial expressions and modes of behaviour, which were coming to be seen as reliable expressions of the inner man.\(^\text{11}\) Using the language of Freudian repression, Elias suggests that new thresholds of shame and embarrassment are constantly being constructed through which the social codes of civility are internalised.\(^\text{12}\) Hygiene, he maintains, is learned, but shame and disgust are conditioned, and Erasmus’s work heralded a new, more sensitive, standard of shame and repugnance.\(^\text{13}\) As courtly hierarchies became weaker, even higher status people came to experience shame about their bodily functions in front of their social inferiors.\(^\text{14}\) Restraint that had once been imposed by others came to be cultivated from an early age though the family and the structure of social life, so that prohibitions become the result of a strictly regulated superego.\(^\text{15}\) Shame and repugnance were a response to the fear of social degradation, of others’ superiority or of the loss of the love and respect of those on whom one has placed value, resulting in self-censorship.\(^\text{16}\)

Anna Bryson takes issue with Elias’s account of increasing levels of shame and inhibition about bodily matters. She points out that courtesy literature does not offer enough evidence to measure levels of inhibition, or to assume a direct correlation between codes of good manners and levels of shame or repugnance. She adds that there is, in fact, a high level of correlation between the rules of manners of feudal, courtly and modern bourgeois societies, so there is little to be gleaned from instances of different rules between books of manners belonging to different periods. She proposes that instead of looking at civil behaviour as a standard of conduct alone, it should also be understood as a flexible code for defining relationships in society. The difference between her approach and that of Elias is not levels of disgust, but the context of disgust—the

\(^{10}\) Elias, *History of Manners*, p. 53.
\(^{11}\) Elias, *History of Manners*, pp. 556.
\(^{13}\) Elias, *History of Manners*, pp. 70, 135, 142.
social assumptions that relate to the conduct. For Bryson, civility was a complete
code, not just a compilation of rules for various occasions. Manners were part of a
system of meaning (a discourse) rather than a shared manifestation of
psychological symptoms. The importance of the rules was not to be found in the
rules themselves, but in the assumptions and preoccupations that gave rise to them
or reinterpreted them. Through this approach, it becomes possible to link
changing codes to social and ideological change.

Accordingly, the early modern upper classes sought to define the
superiority of European societies, and their own superiority in the social order in
terms of their refinement, sensitivity and control of bodily (therefore animal)
instincts. In this way, the care of the body was a sign of superior humanity. 17
Kathleen Brown’s research appears to bear out this view. For Brown, the clean
body was the product of society’s deep convictions about spiritual purity, health,
manners and decency as the hallmarks of civilisation. The importance of society’s
values was given additional power in her study of cleanliness in early America,
because of the exigencies of travel in a frontier society, and the threat posed by
the Other in the form of native Americans and slaves. 18 Both Bryson and Brown
see civility not just as a set of rules, but as a key concept governing and being
governed by the discourses of social action and interpretation. 19

Bryson explores the nature and development of early modern conceptions
of good manners, including forms of sociability, standards of cleanliness and
concepts of privacy, not just as rules of conduct, but as the framework of social
meanings. 20 Like Douglas before her, she finds that the act of codifying manners
imposes order on the complex language of social interaction. 21 Just as eighteenth-
century bathrooms offer insights only into élite society, books of courtesy and
civility were written for the élite, and are not useful for understanding the lives of
the lower orders; Bryson demonstrates how élite status was conveyed in everyday

17 Bryson, pp. 10–12, 96–107; and Paul Goring, The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-century
18 Brown, pp. 4–5, 147.
19 Bryson, p. 14. Pierre Bourdieu has also shown how the cultural codes of a restricted peer group
produces a shared recognition of its values. See Pierre Bourdieu, The Field of Cultural Production,
20 Bryson, pp. 3, 6.
21 Bryson, p. 7.
Of puts of illustration level of only return perceived Schools become political, rudeness accompanied philosophers The both propriety. that centuries, was it was accompanied by the expedition of political thought in the Enlightenment. The defenders of commercial society among the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers redefined virtue in terms of the civilised social mores that accompanied its development, and used manners as a measure of evolution from rudeness to refinement, or the savage to civil condition of man. In this way, civil society was regarded as a human association in social and economic, not just political, terms. For Bryson, the association of civility with gentlemanliness had become explicit in Richard Weste’s ‘The Books of Demeanour’ in his *The Schools of Vertue* of 1619. For a number of writers of conduct manuals, it was the perceived brutishness of the common people that made them uncivil. If we return to the poem that opens this chapter with this in mind, we see that it is not only the grease from the cook or the soot from the chimney sweep that defile Celia, but their inherent brutishness, which threatens her gentility. Here, the force of disgust lies not in the visible pollution of dirt, but at a deeper, more visceral level of contamination. This is given visual form in the caricature shown in illustration one, where all but the young lady display some physical manifestation of their brutishness through age, infirmity, eccentricity or coarseness. As Bryson puts it, it is through the beast metaphor that manners become the external symbols of internal, ethically loaded characteristics.

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22 Bryson, p. 8.
23 Bryson, pp. 35, 40, 42, 87.
25 Bryson, p. 108.
As courtliness gave way to civility in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was a new value for accommodating the sensitivities and sensibilities of others, accompanied by an increased desire to please and to avoid giving offence, and a fear of provoking disgust. Now, civility made one not just acceptable, but praiseworthy, and became a weapon in the art of self-presentation, and political persuasion. This, and what Bryson calls ‘urbanity’, as opposed to ‘lordship’, provide the key to understanding the role of cleanliness in self-presentation in the eighteenth century. Bryson defines urbanity as the modes ‘of an élite whose members tend to vest their sense of social identity in their possession of a shared culture principally expressed and elaborated in the conduct of social relations with each other’. 26 This is opposed to the courtly modes of lordship, in which social identity was derived from hierarchies of service and networks of allegiance and, therefore, was more dependent on rural hierarchies, where change happened more slowly. Urbanity was chiefly, but not solely, a product of urbanisation.

Where the country gentleman valued hierarchy, service and hospitality, and enjoyed the respect of his social inferiors, whom he knew by name, the city gentleman cultivated qualities of learning and virtue, and enjoyed the society of like-minded intimates of equal status. 27 In urban society, especially London, the social position of an individual was not necessarily known to all and, as a consequence, pleasing behaviour became more important as social currency. 28 In the relative anonymity of urban life, where social place could only be advertised through dress, manners and keeping up appearances, it became important to maintain the persona of a gentleman of quality. Where the country gentleman’s social position was defined by relation to his inferiors, and he could associate freely with them, the urban gentleman stood to lose status by inferior associations, and low company could give rise to misunderstanding, or even corrupt or defile the gentleman through contact. Consequently, the company of social equals or betters was desirable, and that of servants or people of unknown status was a potential source of danger. Civility had become a mark of status in a fluid society.

26 Bryson, pp. 110–113.
27 Bryson, pp. 113–6.
28 Bryson, pp. 123, 132.
Bodily control, once a mark of deference to superiors, now appeared an absolute standard of behaviour, because in the company of persons of unknown status, it was safer always to show deference. The simple hierarchy of lordship has become, in urban life, a more complex negotiation involving acquaintances and intimates, and civility was the tool that facilitated that negotiation.29

If civility was the agent of self-presentation, then disgust was the agent that policed the boundaries of social groups and punished malefactors. The word ‘disgust’ entered the English language in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, in time to become a powerful motivator by the eighteenth. Its relationship to the French word goûter—to taste—marks it as an emotion that is strongly embodied in the sensations of taste and smell, but it also involves touch, sight and hearing.30 William Miller’s 1997 Anatomy of Disgust teases out the character and social function of disgust, and shows parallels to the work of Elias and Bryson, in that disgust has a social and moral role to play.31 Like Douglas, Miller sees disgust as expressing aversion to or fear of something that is dangerous, something that can contaminate or pollute physically, morally or socially by proximity or contact.32 Like the theorists of civility, Miller finds Freudian theory useful, as disgust works with shame to inhibit or repress unconscious desire.33 He finds disgust a complex emotion in which appearances are linked with deeper similarities in moral reality, that is to say that the emotion of disgust is linked to social and cultural context and personal history.34

Of key importance to this chapter is the role of disgust and its close cousin contempt in carrying out social purpose by maintaining hierarchy, presenting claims to superiority, and indicating social position.35 Disgust declares the meanness and inferiority of its object, while announcing the claim of the person who feels it to distance him or herself from contamination.36 In this capacity, it is

29 Bryson, pp. 129–38.
30 Miller, pp. 1–2, 169–70.
31 Miller, p 2.
32 Miller, pp. 2, 4.
33 Miller, p. 5.
34 Miller, pp. 69, 169–70, 194–5.
35 Miller, pp. xii–xiii, 9.
36 Miller, p. 9.
both the product and a creator of culture. Brown challenges the notion that most significant historical changes take place in the public realm of politics, economy and the law when, instead, domestic life is in a dynamic relationship with public culture, and the body is a crucial link. She notes that body care engages with society’s standards of spiritual purity, health, manners and decency, and articulates society’s beliefs about what civilisation is. The body maintains society’s frontiers against pollution. Indeed, both Miller and Brown see disgust as a major factor in the invention of privacy as a means of withdrawing from the potential for shame in the public world, and of producing the self-presentation necessary for civilised behaviour. In this light, the clean body, of this chapter, and the privately owned bathroom of the next, are a tangible statement of cultural value.

The new fashion for bathing, then, took hold at a period when the discourse about civility was already established. How could this trend be understood in the context of the culture of civility? If we accept that medical opinion alone cannot effect social change, the widespread adoption of medical advice appears to lie in its contemporaneity with a period of urbanisation and social mobility when traditional, courtly and hierarchical measures of status were breaking down. As a result, bathing was incorporated into a code, in which bodily propriety became one of the indicators of gentility, and the unclean came to be regarded with disgust as a source of pollution. Because aesthetic and moral disgust are often undifferentiated, disgust has a coercive power to change behaviour and increase personal responsibility for body care. However, the compulsion towards bodily cleanliness contained within it a fundamental dilemma. To please others, it was necessary to become sweet and clean—Alain Corbin has shown how, as the century progressed, it became increasingly desirable to present the self as natural with clean hair, light, flowery scent and little makeup—but the means to achieve cleanliness carried connotations that

37 Miller, pp. 18, 20, 206, 216–7.
38 Brown, 3–7.
39 Miller, pp. 20–1, 24, 178; and Brown, p. 7.
40 Miller, p. 21.
undermined the desired self-presentation. Bathing involved the risk of physical and moral contamination, while remaining dirty made one a source of contamination. I shall discuss the physical and moral pollution that drove the well-to-do to build facilities of their own, and the social consequences of self-neglect. The unspoken consequence of these conflicting pressures was the construction of privately owned bathing spaces. Since bathroom ownership was within the reach only of the rich, the plight of the poor, who had to pay to get clean in public facilities, is beyond the scope of this chapter.

**Dirt and Disgust**

The physical pollution to be met with at the public bathhouse is the easiest category of disgust to define. As we saw in the last chapter, the architect James Playfair offered a way for people of ordinary means to install a bath at home. Apart from the expense and inconvenience of seeking out public facilities, Playfair alluded to the ‘most serious dangers’ of bathing in public bathhouses. Although germ theory was a product of the nineteenth century, sanitary reformers were aware of the dangers of crowded places and poor ventilation from the 1740s, and Sir John Pringle warned against dirt and crowded facilities in military camps. Although Tobias Smollett made his living from writing, he was a physician who had published on bathing. In view of the opinions that Smollett expressed elsewhere, it is probable that his character, Matthew Bramble, writing to his friend Dr Lewis in *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*, was a mouthpiece for his creator:

Two days ago, I went into the King’s Bath, by the advice of our friend Ch—, in order to clear the strainer of the skin, for the benefit of free perspiration; and the first object that saluted my eye, was a child full of scrofulous ulcers, carried on the arms of one of the guides, under the very noses of the bathers. I was so shocked at the sight that I retired immediately with indignation and disgust—

Suppose the matter of those ulcers, floating on the water comes into contact with

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my skin, when the pores are all open, I would ask you what must be the consequence.—Good Heaven, the very thought makes my blood run cold! we know not what sores may be running into the water while we are bathing, and what sort of matter we may thus imbibe; the king’s-evil, the scurvy, the cancer, and the pox; and, no doubt, the heat will render the virus the more volatile and penetrating.\footnote{Tobias Smollett, \textit{The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker}, London, 1771, vol. 1, pp. 90–1.}

Here, disgust was experienced as a response to physical dirt, backed up by medical knowledge about the potential of dirt as a source of contagion. The skin was a particular focus of anxiety, as it was a container for all that is disgusting within and a barrier between self and other, but a barrier that was vulnerable, and permeable, through the pores that opened in the bath.\footnote{Miller, pp. 52–3.} On a psychological level, the visible evidence of contamination serves as a breach of the territory of the self, in which the traces of other users is a symbol of privacy violation.\footnote{Kira, pp. 361–2.}

However, even discussions based in the physical dangers of shared baths betray deeper fears of pollution. In a non-fictional account, Dr William Alexander of Harrogate added his own warning about the resting rooms in public establishments:

\begin{quote}
I would advise all those who intend to go through this process, only to sit down five minutes, and consider, that they are going not only into the same bed, but into the very blankets, where hundreds have lain before them, and where hundreds have not only lain, but sweated; that these blankets must be filled with sweat; and that it did not arise always from sound and healthful bodies, but from bodies diseased both internally and externally: And if, after these reflections, they can calmly lie down in it, they must have little delicacy. Were declamation the purport of this essay, I could paint the going into this bed in still more disgusting colours ... But where is the advantage of going into this common bed?\footnote{William Alexander, \textit{Plain and Easy Directions for the Use of Harrogate Waters}, 2nd edn, Harrogate, [1780?], pp. 34–5.}
\end{quote}

In spite of the basis of his argument in medical knowledge, Dr Alexander appealed to deeper fears about pollution that were social rather than medical. In addition to \textit{knowledge} about contagion, his readers could be expected find his description ‘disgusting’, and to find their ‘delicacy’ offended. Medical knowledge has been subsumed under a system of values, in which the gently bred could be
expected to react with disgust to anything that was ugly, dirty or coarse, and in which the most basic bodily functions had to be sanitised, sweetened or concealed. Alexander played upon deep-seated fears about a contamination that was not physical through contact with other bodies.  

‘we should judge of her from her company’: Women and Public Bathhouses

However, unpleasant the water in public facilities, it was nothing to the reputation of bathhouses as a place of immorality, and a woman who bathed there risked the loss of her own reputation. 49 Samuel Pepys’s wife famously visited the bathhouse regularly to gossip with her friends, but bagnios or bathhouses were also used as cheap hotels by young men, or a place to take an unfortunate who had been injured, or even killed, by footpads. 50 The public bagnio was a place of ill repute, where lovers could meet in bedrooms, which could be rented by the hour. 51 In some cases, the word ‘bagnio’ was a euphemism for a brothel. In the 1780s, Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz, a traveller to England, remarked that one could send out from a bagnio for a prostitute. 52 In 1760, the prostitute Anne Bell died as a result of her ill use by rakes at a bagnio near Charing Cross. 53 Here, too, young women like Hogarth’s innocent from the country were sometimes tricked, or forced, into prostitution. In one case, an aunt ‘Under pretence of taking her [niece] to visit a friend … brought her to a private bagnio, or one of those houses called convents’, and sold her into prostitution for the sum of 500 pounds, the niece’s

48 Brown, p. 6.
49 See, for example, Brown, p. 16.
50 Samuel Pepys, Pepys Diary, 21 February 1664–5, quoted in J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner (eds), The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd edn, Clarendon Press, 1989, entry for hot-house. For the use of a bagnio as a hotel see, for example, the anonymous Adventures of Dick Hazard, where the hero carries the victim of an attack by footpads to a nearby bagnio (London, 1755, p. 102). See also, The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, for the Year 1760 (5th edn, London, 1775, p. 159), where a man in a coma from excessive alcohol consumption was taken to Long Acre bagnio, and visited by a surgeon there.
51 For example, Mr Delaval, believing his wife to be unfaithful, invited friends to come and surprise her with her lover at the bagnio. See E. Ambross, The Life and Memoirs of the Late Miss Ann Catley, the Celebrated Actress: With Biographical Sketches of Sir Francis Blake Delaval, Bird, London, 1789, pp. 21–2. A scene in William Hogarth’s Marriage à la Mode series shows the husband bursting in to the bedchamber of the bagnio, where his wife is meeting her lover.
virginity, presumably, being the reason for the high premium for her enslavement.\textsuperscript{54} In sum:

To rake about town and lodge in a bagnio, is to associate with the vilest and most abandoned of human beings; it is to become familiar with blasphemy and lewdness, and frequently to sport with the most deplorable misery.\textsuperscript{55}

Not all bagnios showed visible signs of the moral disorder within, and a lady with a social position to uphold might meet her lover there discreetly in surroundings as quiet and dignified as her own home.

Such houses stand in back courts, narrow lanes, or the most private places, and seem to be uninhabited, as the front windows are seldom opened, or like some little friary, where a company of visionaries reside; but within are elegantly furnished, and remarkable for the best wines. The woman who keeps the house is the only person to be seen in them, unless it be sometimes, that a high-priced whore, who passes for the gentlewoman’s daughter, by accident appears.

In these brothels the Sieur Curl was well known, and as the wine in them is always excellent, (but a shilling a bottle dearer than at the tavern,) and one sits without hearing the least noise, or being seen by any one, I have often gone with this ingenious man to such places, on account of the purity of the wine and the stillness of the house; as there are no waiters there, nor any well-drest hussies to come in the way. You are as silent as in a cave; nor does a woman appear, … unless it be by appointment at this kind of meeting-house, as such places may well be called: for there not seldom does many a married woman meet her gallant.\textsuperscript{56}

In this light, it is not surprising that the Royal College of Surgeons had taken urgent steps to ensure the bagnio’s reputation as a medical establishment, by locking the bedroom doors and banishing men from the garden on ladies’ days.\textsuperscript{57}

For a woman, who frequented a bagnio for the sake of health or cleanliness, there was a powerful moral imputation, summed up by Lord North: ‘If we see a woman

\textsuperscript{56} Amory, vol. 2, pp. 387–8.
frequently coming out of a bagnio, we cannot swear she is not virtuous; yet we should judge of her from her company.\textsuperscript{58}

Supposing a woman were prepared to brave the risk to her reputation from being seen entering a public bathhouse, there was still a real risk of a more direct assault upon her dignity and the reserve that she might cultivate as a barrier against pollution. At the Cross-Bath at Bath, for example:

is perform’d all the Wanton Dalliances imaginable; Celebrated Beauties, Panting Breasts, and Curious Shapes, almost Expos’d to Publick View; Languishing Eyes, Dashing, Killing Glances, Tempting, Amorous Postures, attended by soft Musick, enough to provoke a Vestal to forbidden Pleasure ... The Vigorous Sparks, presenting the Ladies with several Antick Postures, as Sailing on their Backs, then Embracing the Element, sink in a Rapture, and by Accidental Design, thrust a stretch’d Arm; but where the Water Conceal’d, doth ought my Pen.\textsuperscript{59}

Such an experience might be expected to shake not just a lady’s moral opinions, but the sensibility she cultivated to distance anything that seemed coarse or brutish. Her fear in this situation was not of coming to physical harm, but rather that of being tainted by association. In the socially equalising environment of the public bath, unable to signal her social position through dress, or to keep the lower sort at arm’s length, her greatest danger was of social contamination.

Furthermore, the process of taking a bath exposed even the most careful woman to the dangers of involuntarily offending against modesty in her dress. For this reason, women were less able than men to avail themselves of river, lake and shore, a fact that was made explicit by Tobias Smollett:

There is, however, no convenience for this operation [sea bathing], from the benefit of which the fair sex must be entirely excluded, unless they lay aside all regard to decorum; for the shore is always lined with fishing boats, and crowded with people. If a lady should be at the expense of having a tent pitched on the beach, where she might put on and off her bathing dress, she could not pretend to go into the sea, without proper attendants; nor could she possibly plunge headlong into the water, which is the most effectual and least dangerous way of

\textsuperscript{58} Lord North was using this image as a metaphor for Charles Fox’s association with members of the opposition. See Robert Bisset, \textit{The Life of Edmund Burke}, George Cawthorn, London, 1798, p. 216.

bathing. All that she can do is, to have the sea-water brought into her house, and
make use of a bathing-tub, which may be made according to her own or
physician’s direction.60

Only in the home, Smollett suggested, could women bathe with modesty.

Glimpses of women’s skin implied moral laxity.61 In the previous century, Celia
Fiennes had watched the bathers at St Winifred’s Well enter the stream at one end
and walk to the other before getting out, and declared ‘I think I could not have
been persuaded to have gone in unless [I] might have had curtains to have drawn
about some part of it to have shelter’d from the streete, for the wet garments are
no covering to the body’.62 Fiennes herself travelled with her bathing dress from
Bath, which was carefully designed to conceal:

The Ladies goes into the bath with garments made of a fine yellow canvas,
which is stiff and made with great sleeves like a parson’s gown, the water fills it
up so that its borne off that your shape is not seen, it does not cling close as
other linning which looks sadly in the poorer sort that go in their own linen.63

In spite of these expedients for concealing the body, Fanny Burney’s Evelina, the
archetype of feminine sensibility, ‘was amazed at the public exhibition of the
ladies in the bath: it is true, their heads are covered with bonnets; but the very idea
of being seen, in such a situation, by whoever pleases to look, is indelicate’.64

The requirements of civility placed two equal and opposite demands upon
women. On the one hand, a clean body was analogous to civic virtue; bodily
propriety met an increasing social compulsion to be mannerly, not just to
superiors, but all the time; a clean body bore witness to the individual’s
sensibility; and outer appearances were increasingly becoming seen as an
indicator of inner virtue.65 In early modern Europe, women’s bodies were

60 Tobias Smollett, Travels through France and Italy, ed. James Morris, Centaur Press, Fontwell,
1969, p. 240. Two other doctors, Floyer and Browne also tacitly accepted this limitation by
commenting on the river as a good place for men and boys to bathe. See Sir John Floyer, The
Ancient Ψυχρολουσία [Psychrolousia] Revived: Or, an Essay to Prove Cold Bathing Both Safe and
Useful, Smith and Walford, London, 1702, p. 109; and Joseph Browne, An Account of the
61 Miller, pp. 523.
62 C. Morris (ed.), The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes, c. 1682 – c. 1712, Webb & Bower,
63 Morris, p. 45.
64 Fanny Burney, Evelina or the History of a Young Lady’s Entrance into the World, London,
1794, vol. 2, p. 243. Paul Goring has shown how bodily responses assumed moral status in the
culture surrounding sentimental novels. See Goring, p. 142.
65 Brown, p. 11.
considered disgusting or polluting, through moisture and menstrual blood. This was of particular moment because of their responsibility for domestic cleanliness, and the preservation and preparation of food. While this image changed during the eighteenth century, women needed to meet a higher standard of bodily restraint and order than men, because not only their claims to civility, but the civility and perceived purity of the whole household were invested in their bodily propriety. On the other hand, visiting the public baths exposed women to physical pollution, and affront at the sexual licence and coarse behaviour to be seen there. Worst of all, she would be tainted by the implications of sexual misconduct that, however virtuous she may be, would attach to her if she frequented such a place. In this light, it is not surprising that those who could afford it, and had access to a reliable water supply, installed bathrooms at home.

**The Apparent Incivility of Sir William Cumming: Dirt and Social Order**

We have seen that cleanliness was only one aspect of the code of civility, but it might also be said that hygiene was only one aspect of the code of cleanliness. Hygiene was only one, and perhaps not the most important, reason for bodily cleanliness. Cleanliness was fundamentally about purity, and contained ideas about decorum, industry, the desire to please, good character (both moral and sexual), good order and—in a society with a growing and increasingly rich middle class—gentility. The failure to be clean connoted disorder, contempt for others, moral laxity and, for those with social ambitions, partaking more than others of an animal nature. Indeed, some thought that bodily cleanliness was a function of individual sensibility, and doubted that everyone were capable of it. Transgressing the codes of cleanliness undermined society’s deeply held values and disrupted what was a ‘systematic ordering of ideas’, and could be punished. A few examples illustrate how ideas about cleanliness defined the boundaries of

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67 Brown, p. 119; and Kira, pp. 17–18.
68 Brown, pp. 11, 121; and Bryson, p. 108.
69 Douglas, pp. 42, 74.
gentility, especially at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.

The Grant family lived at 5 Charlotte Square in Edinburgh in the 1790s, and had an estate at Strathspey in the Highlands. According to Elizabeth Grant, born in the 1790s and writing her memoirs in the late 1840s and early 1850s, the children in this family bathed every day. As we saw in chapter two, when the family was in London (their father was a member of parliament), they were forced to bathe even if the ice had to be broken to do it. Grant recorded the reaction of a houseguest, Sir William Cumming, to a woman who was seated next to him at breakfast, and who declared that ‘she never took more than ten minutes to dress in the morning’. At this, ‘he instantly got up, plate and cup in hand, and moved off to the other side of the table’. This brief encounter raises several questions: what harm did Sir William fear from his neighbour; what compelled him to offer her the insult of moving places; and why did he appear disgusted by her hasty toilette when he was almost certainly being served, and eating food prepared by staff who washed less often than his fellow guest?

Sir William Cumming cannot have feared physical harm from his neighbour at breakfast. Had she been really dirty, he would have smelled her and not needed her confession to trigger his disgust. Sir William moved away from the woman because she posed a threat, and the threat she posed was not to cleanliness, but to purity. As secularism grew towards the eighteenth century, cleanliness took on some of the moral burden once carried by purity. Where bodily cleanliness had once implied chastity, it now took on the broader character of virtue. The notion of purity implies a level of discreteness and inviolability. A threat to purity or moral order is defiling, and can arouse fear, loathing and disgust. The harm that Sir William feared was of defilement or contamination, and his emotional response was to withdraw from the threat. The moral order that was threatened with defilement takes a little longer to unpick, but it seems

71 Grant, pp. 215–16.
73 Miller maintains that the higher the person’s status, the larger the space within which offences against the person can take place. See Miller, p. 50.
that the value that Sir William was defending was status or class. As courtly society gave way to civil society, bodily cleanliness emerged as an indicator of gentility, and a mark of respect for others. Bodily cleanliness was a way of expressing gentility, recognising peers and maintaining class distinctions. For bathing was a private preparation for a public appearance, and provided contextually significant information about identity and social position.\(^74\) As bourgeois tastes were elevated into moral demands, it became increasingly possible to insult a social equal, by flouting a code of bodily propriety. As a guest of the Grants, Sir William’s breakfast companion might be expected to be genteel, and yet she insulted the company by her failure to live up to a communal standard of gentility. Although standards of bodily cleanliness applied to both men and women, Brown has suggested that there was a higher level of onus on élite women to support class distinctions through her bodily self-presentation.\(^75\)

However, Sir William’s action in moving places at the table does not seem consistent with civility’s aim of being pleasing. On the contrary, his reaction seems uncivil. In what way was he promoting the cause of civility through his snub? Miller has shown that disgust, and contempt, police the boundaries of social norms and social groups, and imbue norms with the character of moral values. The context to Sir William’s action was one of an increased value for the social function of toilette as an aspect of good manners which, according to Corbin, had by now been codified in a strict manner.\(^76\) In this case, Sir William was doing more than expressing disapprobation (although he did that as well), or withdrawing from a personal threat (as social distance was used to guard against pollution), he was using disgust as an instrument of social control to preserve social ranking and, through shaming the offender, to enforce compliance or effect punishment through social isolation. His disgust acted as the nexus between emotion and social order. Contempt was also a means of reasserting his own social position, by re-establishing the boundaries between himself and the low. In this way, criticism of others, and especially criticism of women’s bodies, could be

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75 Miller, pp. 50, 217; Bryson, p. 87; and Brown, pp. 230–1, 142–3, 148.
76 Miller, p. 207; and Corbin, p. 11.
used to repress the disgusting and maintain one's own status. In a culture that was anxious about status, the uncivil acquired the character of the immoral, and Sir William’s action assumed the character of protecting, judging and punishing, rather than that of incivility. His withdrawal was not only a reasserting of the boundaries of the self, it was a rebuke to the transgressor. Sir William’s reaction was out of proportion to any physical threat, but in proportion to the social danger embodied in his neighbour. His indignation was a response to a transgression against purity, not hygiene.

If Sir William’s sensibility was so acute, why was he not equally offended by the servants who, it is fair to assume, prepared and served his food, and were also unlikely to spend more than ten minutes on their toilette? The answer lies in historical context. Both Elias and Georges Vigarello have used the example of the marquise de Châtelet who, in 1746, took a bath in front of her servant Longchamps. As a servant, he was so far beneath her that she was not constrained by any consciousness of immodesty, and even rebuked him when his confusion caused him to splash the water he was pouring. Shame was a social function governed by hierarchy, so the marquise had no call to be embarrassed but, by the end of the century, social hierarchy had weakened to the point where even social superiors might feel ashamed of their bodily functions before social inferiors. Bryson explored this idea further in her nuanced analysis of the complexity of codes of civility in varying social relations. For Bryson, where bodily dirt has sometimes been represented as intrinsically disgusting, in fact, shame and disgust are socially conditional and vary with the circumstances. Accordingly, civility is not a fixed code of good manners, but a symbolic language that can be adapted to time, place and the social message to be communicated. It defines and redefines relationships in society according to the requirements of social deference and assertion. Perhaps because social distinctions were becoming harder to maintain (and intimacy was becoming the safe retreat of the genteel), servants of Sir

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77 Miller, pp. 25, 35, 50, 80, 179, 181–2, 195–8, 207, 217; Brown, pp. 121, 142–3; and Bryson, p. 134.
79 Bryson, pp. 86–7, 96.
William’s time were increasingly hidden, through geographical and temporal separation within the house. However, if we apply Bryson’s reasoning, their invisibility in the matter of toilette was also a result of their exemption from the class of person to whom Sir William’s standards were applied.80 Sir William was disgusted by his breakfasting companion and not by the servants, because the servants were not a category of person to whom the code of civility applied.

If Sir William was defending his own social status, punishing the transgressor and policing the boundaries of gentility, it is clear that, at least in this last objective, he was successful. How the lady breakfaster responded, we do not know, but the impact on Elizabeth Grant herself was significant: and Grant’s reaction was one of shame and anger: shame at her own transgressions, and an anger with the cause of them. Miss Elphick, daughter of a sub-ranger at Bushy Park, was the children’s governess. Grant described Miss Elphick’s toilette thus:

Miss Elphick began her course of instruction by jumping out of bed at six o’clock in the morning, and throwing on her clothes with the haste of one escaping from a house on fire. She then wiped her face and hands, and smoothed her cropped hair, and her toilette was over. [Sir William] would not … have sat near me, for Miss Elphick considered ten minutes quite sufficient for any young lady to give to her dressing upon week days. We could ‘clean ourselves’ properly, as she did, upon Sundays. She could not allow us time for such unnecessary dawdling. We must get an hour of the harp or the pianoforte before breakfast, and our Papa chose that we should be out another; therefore, we must give ourselves a ‘good wash’ upon Sundays, and make that do for the week, as she did and as she made her shift do, for that only went on clean after the thorough scouring and then served by night and by day till cleaning day came again. Her stock of linen indeed would not have permitted a more profuse use of it. We were thoroughly disgusted. In after days I am sure she herself would have had difficulty in believing she had ever had habits so unseemly.

Grant concluded, her ‘habits were those of a servant’.81

Since she came from a modern, hygiene conscious family, Grant did not need Sir William to model high-born disgust. However, her reaction to her governess’s habits mirrored Sir William’s, while making the elements relating to gentility and to the policing power of disgust more explicit. Grant’s contempt was

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80 Bryson, pp. 91, 104.
81 Grant, pp. 215–6.
prompted not only by Miss Elphick’s sketchy toilette but, implicitly, the paucity of linen that made frequent changes of clothing impossible. We infer that an insufficient wardrobe was a culpable omission for one of her status, not the necessity of poverty. The word ‘unseemly’ is important here. One dictionary definition of unseemly is ‘unbecoming, unfitting’, and a glance at the definition of ‘seemly’ points up the kind of failure to which Grant refers. Seemly is defined as ‘conformable to propriety or good taste; becoming, decorous’. Miss Elphick was condemned, not for poor hygiene, or stinking or spreading disease, but for dressing and grooming in a way that was not suitable to her status as a governess, not refined, even improper. Miller has already pointed out the role of the sense of taste in the word dis-gust. Although a physical sense, the word taste also encompasses notions of the capacity for refined discernment, distinction, class, education, wealth and talent, as well as elegance in speech and dress. Dis-gust, then, indicates a failure in matters of propriety and civility. Grant’s condemnation of her governess spells out the application of the notion of disgust to matters of gentility, so that we hardly need her to compare the governess’s habits to those of a servant for the point to be made.

Two further elements of this scenario show that the position of Miss Elphick and her pupil was one of vulnerability. The first is that Miss Elphick’s social position was one of great ambiguity, and therefore one of great social danger. Grant recounted that Miss Elphick’s father had been a sub-ranger at Bushy Park (the ranger was William IV, then Duke of Clarence), a cue that class is important to any understanding of the governess. As a sub-ranger, her father had a position of trust and some power, but no high social position, and had died leaving her without financial provision. His daughter had spent the winter after his death studying under various masters to equip herself for teaching. She was, by Grant’s analysis, dowdy, morally conservative and middle class, horrified by the

83 Miller, p. 170. Vigarello has shown that a parallel association between cleanliness and propriety was embedded in the language when, in the seventeenth century, the word ‘propre’ came to apply to matters of propriety and not just cleanliness. He noted, in particular, that the cleanliness of linen was seen as an outward symbol of the internal. See Vigarello, pp. 78–9, 80–2.
children’ propensity for playing at dice and for inventing and loudly performing their own operas or reciting Shakespeare. The children quickly detected the superficiality of her learning, and asked questions to which they knew she would not know the answers, unmoved by her prolonged weeping as they travelled north.\textsuperscript{84} Miss Elphick is precisely the kind of person of rising, but precarious social status that, the civility literature shows, needed to assert and defend her social position through the display of refinement. And as a woman, she was judged by a higher standard. Not for Miss Elphick were the freedoms in which libertines could indulge without loss of social position. As a governess, that sad figure depicted by the Brontës some years later, she belonged neither to the gentry nor the below stairs world, and would not be exempted from condemnation by belonging to the servant class. More than those above her or below her, she would need to announce her social position through the presentation of her body and through her manners. This is why Grant predicted that she would, in later (wiser) years, be horrified by her own unseemliness.

The second source of vulnerability was, of course, that while under Miss Elphick’s tutelage, the children had to obey her despite their acute sensitivity to the social meanings of uncleanliness. That Grant attacked her governess for infrequent bathing, rather than Sir William for his display of contempt, shows that she accepted his view of social order. Her disgust signalled her acceptance of the social imperative articulated by Sir William and that, for her, his code had moral force. No doubt, Grant’s indignation was fuelled by haste to disown responsibility for her own shame, but also by showing contempt, she could attempt to shore up the boundaries of her own status, and identify herself with Sir William and not her governess.\textsuperscript{85} Writing her memoirs (written for her children and her niece) gave Grant the opportunity to explain and correct any unspoken accusations of unseemliness that might be laid at her own door, and to shift the burden of shame onto her governess.\textsuperscript{86} For, although hygiene was learned, shame and disgust were conditioned responses, which had become internalised to the

\textsuperscript{84} Grant, pp. 201, 204–5.
\textsuperscript{85} Miller, pp. 194, 198, 216–7.
\textsuperscript{86} Bear in mind that when these memoirs were written in the mid-nineteenth century, cleanliness had even more social power than at the turn of the century.
degree that conformity was an automatic part of the self, rather than a response to force, law or medical injunctions. In Elias’s terms, the personality structure of the individual had changed to accord with the codes of behaviour and structure of society. Shame was both a response to social disapproval, and the means by which social values were internalised to become a matter of self-regulation: shame was the cue that prompted the individual to take action to avoid disgusting others.\textsuperscript{87}

The next step in the process of internalising the codes of civility was for these codes to become unspoken, even unspeakable. An example from Jane Austen’s Sense and Sensibility demonstrates codes of bodily propriety that were, by the early nineteenth century, internalised to the point where even speaking of them was an infraction. Literary texts provide valuable, if not unproblematic, insights into culture.\textsuperscript{88} There are two advantages of a fictional account for this purpose. First is that a novelist shows, rather than discusses, the behaviour she wishes to critique, as a philosopher or historian might do; and second, that the novelist deliberately manipulates her characters to illustrate her point, where historical accounts must show human beings in the context of their messy inconsistencies. In 1811, the elder Miss Steele in Sense and Sensibility commiserated with the Misses Dashwood on their removal from their ancestral home and, she assumed, the numerous beaux that they must have left behind:

\begin{quote}
But perhaps you young ladies may not care about the beaux, and had as lief be without them as with them. For my part, I think they are vastly agreeable, provided they dress smart and behave civil. But I can’t bear to see them dirty and nasty. Now there’s Mr Rose at Exeter, a prodigious smart young man, quite a beau, clerk to Mr Simpson you know, and yet if you do but meet him of a morning, he is not fit to be seen.\textsuperscript{89}
\end{quote}

Austen intended us to dislike Miss Steele, and to compare her with the superior model of civility in Miss Eleanor Dashwood, and even her more mercurial sister, Miss Marianne. Although Miss Steele paid lip-service to the value for civility by


expressing her dislike of nasty and dirty young men, she betrayed herself by mentioning the matter at all. The constraints of civility were automatic and internalised for the Misses Dashwood to the point that they did not need to be taught to be disgusted by a dirty and nasty man—to the point that dirt itself had become unmentionable. The objects of disgust were no longer discussed, but were effaced from the social environment, and repressed within the individual. For the same reason, although the pursuit of young men was as much a preoccupation for the Dashwoods as for Miss Steele, the maintenance of reserve on the subject was the frontier for their respectability. By naming the object of her disgust, poor Miss Steele had relegated herself to a lower social rung than her companions, whose social boundaries were guarded by silence.

**Dirt and Libertines: A Coda**

Vic Gatrell has made much of the supposed dirtiness of eighteenth-century men. He mentions Dr Johnson, who was famously dirty, and Johnson’s friend Topham Beauclerk, who was said to be so dirty that vermin bred on him. Gatrell mentions a William Byrd, who washed his feet every few weeks, but washed the rest of himself only when he went to a bagnio with a woman. Radical author Charles Piggott was known affectionately to his friends as ‘Louse’, and Charles Fox would walk to his club unwashed and in a dirty nightgown. The eleventh Duke of Norfolk was so dirty that his servants would wait until he was dead drunk, strip him and wash him down. However, it is not safe to assume that these examples typify their age. These cases were likely to have found their way into the written record not because they were normal, but because they were exceptional, since everyday habits are not thought to be worth recording. Charles Fox had been a dandy in his youth, and only became dirty in middle age, adopting habits that were, by their very nature, bound to be seized on and passed into the written

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record by caricaturists. No one pretends that his walking to his club in night attire was normal eighteenth-century practice, so there is no reason to suppose that stories about his filth were not also on account of its oddity. It is clear that his servants, at least, thought his state was unworthy of his station, or they would not have washed him. Bryson has discussed cases where men of high status were filthy, and explains why this does not invalidate arguments about the coercive power of civility. She explains that, at times, social status may have been advertised through a deliberate and ostentatious reversal of codes of conduct. She points to this reversal as a refutation of linear theories of the civilising process. Accordingly, individual instances of personal slovenliness cannot necessarily be said to negate the social functions of bodily propriety.

**Conclusion**

In Hamilton Murray’s satirical novel, a physician was discovered by his wife dipping their son in a bathing tub. She rescued the boy, knocked her husband into the water, and cried ‘What, you villain kill my son? Not content to poison him with your d---n’d slip-slops, but you must drown him also?’. Here is a case, where the ability to perceive the humour of the situation lies only in the observer’s competence to decipher and appropriate the codes of civility, and thereby gain admittance to a high status community. The wife signals her brutishness by her failure to recognise a socially consecrated ritual, her violence against her husband, and her bad language. The reader’s amusement is warmed by a glow of self-satisfaction at their own membership of a more discerning and laudable élite.

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97 I am here extrapolating upon Bourdieu’s idea that it is the acquisition of the values and knowledge of a shared cultural code that creates individual competence to participate in that ‘select club’. See Bourdieu, pp. 75–7, 220.
As the hierarchical structure of courtly society gave way to civil society under the pressures of urbanisation and a growing and wealthy bourgeois élite in the early modern period, codes of civility grew in importance as a way of identifying oneself as genteel. One aspect of this kind of self-presentation was cleanliness. But the cultural compulsion towards bodily sweetness presented a dilemma in a society where attendance at a public bathhouse exposed the bather to contamination: physical, moral and social. This was particularly true for women. Social status was acquired and maintained through disgust and contempt, by which people maintained and defined boundaries and punished transgressors, and confirmed their own superiority and refinement. The stress on hygiene, then, was not a direct result of growing medical opinion, but was a byproduct of the requirements of civility.\(^98\) For those who could afford it, and had access to abundant clean water, the demands of civility made bathroom ownership a solution to the conflicting requirements of bodily, social and moral propriety. However, while technology facilitated the adoption of bathing in the home, the basis of technological advance was sociogenic.\(^99\) In William Buchan’s words, ‘Whatever pretensions people may make to learning, politeness, or civilization, we will venture to affirm, that so long as they neglect cleanliness they are in a state of barbarity’.\(^100\)

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\(^{98}\) Miller, p. 173.


CHAPTER FIVE
Visiting the Bathhouse in the Garden

Introduction
Chapter one showed that decisions about the form and place of the bathroom in the house were informed, in part, by functional requirements. The need for access to water and fuel often meant that it was easier to provide services for a bathroom in the country. At Eastbury in Devon, for example, the proposed bathhouse by John Vanbrugh (1664–1726) showed the building straddling a watercourse (illustration 1). At Kedleston in Derbyshire (Adam, 1759–65), the stream supplying the cold bath still flows into the bath from the slope behind, and empties into the lake before it, constantly replenishing it (illustration 2). A c. 1779 plan for a bathhouse for the Duke of Atholl at Dunkeld (illustration 3, unexecuted), shows that bathhouses in the country could be combined with other areas for which similar technologies were required. At Dunkeld, the copper was to service the bath, and the vinery and greenhouse, while the bathhouse itself, equipped with separate dressing-rooms for men and women, turned its back on purely functional facilities, to offer a view through long windows in a curved wall. These were not the only functional requirements of bathing spaces, as the windows had to meet the users’ need for modesty, and the bath needed to meet the requirements of medical opinion in depth and temperature. In addition to such functional requirements, we have seen how privately owned facilities resolved the conflict between the demands of civility, and the moral and physical pollution of public bathhouses.

Just as social virtues and moral qualities came to be enshrined in a clean body, the material artefact of the bathing space itself also carried a burden of social and cultural meaning. The meanings embodied in the bathing space were flexible and relative, changing with time and place, with owner and visitor. However, it is possible to identify some common strands among a diversity of sources. These strands combine to tell a story about the production and consumption of bathing spaces, in which both producer (the owner) and the consumer (the guest or country house tourist) used the bathing space as a tool for
Illustration 1

Plan and elevation of the bagnio in the garden at Eastbury in Devonshire, the seat of the Right Honorable George Dodington, John Vanbrugh Colen Campbell, Vitruvius Britannicus, London, 1725, vol. 3, plate 19

Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland
Illustration 2

Bath in the fishing house, Kedleston, Derbyshire, 1759–65
Author’s photograph
**Illustration 3**

*Design for a bath at Dunkeld for His Grace the Duke of Atholl (Perthshire), [G?] Stewart, 1779*

From the collection at Blair Castle, Perthshire
While owners might continue to bathe for health, cleanliness or pleasure, the bathroom or bathhouse also enabled owners to display the fruits of their travels, wealth, learning and what was often called ‘propriety of taste’. By the same token, the bathhouse enabled visitors, whether invited or tourists, to express and improve their taste by the ‘consumption’ of the country house and, for the purposes of this discussion, garden. Visitors could appropriate some of the cultural credentials of the owner through the act of consuming the country house experience. However, for guests, as opposed to uninvited visitors, the bathhouse would become ‘the theatre of polite exercises and amusements’.

In the absence of a single unified body of writing about bathrooms and bathhouses, this chapter is based on several types of sources. The first recourse for the architectural historian is to references in architectural manuals. Since references to bathhouses are all too few, it must be supposed that technical information was carried within the oral traditions of builders and plumbers from generation to generation, without at any time being set down in a significant body of writing. However, there are enough comments by the writers of builders’ manuals to suggest themes that can be supported by other evidence. In second place, plans (executed or unexecuted) and the remains of built fabric often bear out the comments of architectural writers. As seen in chapter one, plans, and not literary references, form the largest body of direct contemporary evidence about bathing spaces. Plans not only tell us the layout of a bathing space, they tell us much about culture through their place in the house or garden, their style and the types of accommodation provided and, sometimes, the materials from which they are constructed.

The secondary literature on garden design provides a context in which to examine builders’ manuals, plans and surviving buildings. However, with a few exceptions, the value of this writing lies in what may be understood from a

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1 The designers of bathhouses were sometimes gentlemen–architects like Lord Burlington, but for the purposes of this discussion, I include owners who employed professional designers like William Kent or Humphry Repton, since the goal of the client was self-representation through building, and the architect merely the means by which he attained it.


general discussion of gardens and their buildings, rather than from particular references to bathhouses. The illustrations to this chapter will show that bathhouses could be built in any architectural style and incorporated into the grounds of any country house, and were adapted to the language of the garden of the period to which they belonged. While maintaining its core function, the design and decoration of the bathhouse could respond to the values and fashions of the day: whether it be the cerebral, classical language of the early-eighteenth century emblematic garden, or the direct, emotional language of the expressive garden. There is, in addition, another body of secondary literature that helps to bring to life plans for bathhouses or surviving fabric, and that is that of country house tourism. It is often only in combination with what we know about how spaces, indoor and outdoor, were used, that the style and accommodation of bathhouses begin to make sense.

Finally, however seductive the inferences suggested by the secondary literature on the use of gardens and their buildings, these inferences must be confirmed by first-hand accounts. Fortunately, the fashion for country house tourism coincided with a burgeoning of diarists, whose comments may be used to test them. Since eighteenth-century diaries were often not published until the nineteenth or twentieth centuries, and some significant diaries have still not been published, they are often not included in the rich, searchable databases that have been developed in recent years, so there may yet be useful eyewitness accounts lying undiscovered. Nonetheless, there are enough contemporary accounts, discovered in my own researches, or published by others, to test hypotheses.

In medieval times, people travelled for reasons of society (especially family), necessity or piety, rather than for any aesthetic purpose. For family connections or feudal dependents, owners of country houses offered food and shelter. This hospitality extended to prestigious travellers from abroad or from the court. Chapmen and merchants were also peripatetic, but were largely utilitarian in their approach to their travels. The structured leisure experienced by pilgrims

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4 For example, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/product-highlights/history/eighteenth-century-collections-online.aspx>, on 19 December 2011. A searchable database of Horace Walpole’s rich and voluminous correspondence would, no doubt, bring to light many treasures.
was the most akin to the tourism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as pilgrimages offered opportunities for sociability, storytelling and sightseeing, in addition to pious discipline. By the seventeenth century, the rage for collecting curiosities, or for improving skill at dancing, fencing and foreign languages drove men abroad. No doubt the numbers travelling on the Continent for pleasure or diplomacy was swollen by exiles during the Interregnum. By this time, visitor numbers to country houses within Britain had also grown although, at that stage, the visitors’ interest was more in the curiosities collected within the house than with the building itself.

After the Restoration, taboos about the contaminating influences of travel to Catholic countries weakened, and visiting the Continent became a normal part of the formation of rich young men, architects and artists. Travel was now motivated by personal, rather than utilitarian, considerations, including the fashion for European dress and manners, but also a desire to make business and political connections, and to indulge in sexual experiment. However, a prime attraction of travel abroad was a passion for collecting. Sir Richard Colt Hoare of Stourhead in Wiltshire, a significant British travel diarist, spent four hours a day for five weeks in Rome seeking the acquisition of antiquities with his agent. Collecting artefacts while travelling served multiple purposes: such objects served both as souvenirs of the journey and tangible evidence of the owner’s experience. Collections were also an outward sign of the owner’s taste and learning, and provided a reason for visiting and being visited. Even after domestic touring and visiting became more common, the Grand Tour continued to be a popular way of maintaining status, adding to collections and keeping up with rival Grand

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10 Girouard, pp. 178, 180.
Tourists, until revolution and war in Europe made travel harder.¹¹ Even then, some travelled in order to monitor social and political change.¹²

Tourism as self-improvement

Early domestic tourists within Britain, like Celia Fiennes and Daniel Defoe, were consciously patriotic, while travellers like William Stukeley, antiquarian and natural philosopher, took an active interest in Britain’s prehistoric and Roman past.¹³ Some Grand Tourists were beginning to think in terms of a truly British aesthetic tradition in their plans for their estates. For Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (1676–1755), the better known son of the Sir John Clerk (1649/50–1722) of chapter two, the study of antiquity was ‘above other trifling studies and ... nothing will tend more to promot the true British Spirits in the love of their Country, Liberty & glory’.¹⁴ He expanded on this idea in his long poem, The Country Seat:

We need not travel foreign Lands to see
How Arts when cultivate by bounteous hands
A fruitful Harvest yeild, for those who have
Their Devons, Pembroke’s or their Burlington’s
Want neither Raphael nor Palladio
Do we not see the Treasurer of the world
The sacred Reliques of old Greece and Rome
Transferred to this our Isle, do we not see
Italia’s self left naked and expos’d
To glut our senses all the richest spoils
of her great Painters and chief Architects
Submitted to our censures and our choice¹⁵

The ‘censures’ and ‘choice’ of the last line of this poem form an important theme of this chapter, as it was not just possession that conferred status, but also the ability to evaluate them with knowledge and discernment. However, although Clerk believed that British houses contained much of what was best among

¹¹ Wilson and Mackley, pp. 82–3.
¹⁴ Letter, Sir John Clerk to Roger Gale, 2 June 1726, National Archives of Scotland (hereafter NAS) GD18/5029.
classical antiquities, he did not think the wholesale transposition of classical ideals of architecture always elegant or practical in a British setting. In a letter to William Stukeley, he wrote:

> I shall be glad if you take under your consideration as much of Architecture & Gardening as may be fit for our Climate, for I have some Reason to believe that we have not fixed on a standard in these matters, for Instance, it may be a Question If the ornaments of an ancient Greek temple be fit for a modern house. If vast capacious halls or Salons be fit for our climate or if we doe not affront our selves & our Country in forcing such things by artificial heat Which are naturally produced in other places of the World.\(^{16}\)

Later in the century, there was a rapid increase in country house tourism, as distinct from country house visiting. This is attributable, in part, to improved roads and toll roads, and advances in carriage design, and institutionalised map-making and military survey.\(^{17}\) At the same time, the growing literature of tourism, from guidebooks and travel writing, to letters and diaries contributed to the fashion for domestic travel.\(^{18}\) Certainly the dangers of foreign travel made domestic touring attractive to women and, in 1760, Henrietta Pye wrote that ‘ladies in general, visit those places [country houses and villas], as our young gentlemen do foreign parts … These little excursions being commonly the only travel permitted to our sex, & the only way we have of becoming at all acquainted with the Progress of the Arts …’.\(^{19}\)

There is some debate about just how far down the social scale the fashion for country house tourism reached.\(^{20}\) Certainly, travel within Britain appealed to increasing numbers of the middling classes, with money to spend, but who were

\(^{16}\) Letter, Sir John Clerk to Dr Stukeley, 2 June 1726, NAS GD18/5029.

\(^{17}\) See, for example, Girouard, pp. 190–1; Kinsley, pp. 5–6; and Tinniswood, *A History of Country House Visiting*, p. 66.


\(^{20}\) Peter Mandler claims that tourists were both fewer in number and richer than is often held, whereas Fabricant describes even labourers as visiting country houses. See Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home*, Yale University Press, London, 1997, p. 10; and Fabricant, pp. 256, 264.
less able to afford prolonged periods away from their businesses. It was these responsibilities that famously prevented Jane Austen’s Mr Gardiner of Cheapside from visiting the Lakes, so that he had to take his wife and niece instead to Derbyshire, paving the way for Elizabeth Bennet to meet Mr Darcy on her family’s tour of his estate at Pemberley.\(^{21}\) However, apart from the convenience of domestic travel, tourism presented travellers with the opportunity to fashion themselves through the consumption of culture. For tourists, travel enabled them to cultivate their aesthetic judgements through a new vocabulary of aesthetics, the classification of different kinds of prospects, the skill of finding viewpoints from which to frame the view, and the technical skills of drawing and painting.\(^{22}\)

Writing skills, too, were cultivated through keeping a journal or writing letters. Visits to great houses and estates enabled tourists to identify themselves with the owners, demonstrate their good breeding, improve their knowledge and judgement, and indulge in vicarious and voyeuristic pleasure at the amenities enjoyed by their peers or social superiors.\(^{23}\) A further pleasure, according to Esther Moir, lay in displaying discernment, passing judgement and reporting on what they had seen.\(^{24}\) Country house tourism permitted the tourist to cultivate taste and learning by visiting great houses and gardens, and owners, to display taste and learning in design and decoration. The desire and ability to make complex aesthetic judgements was now a part of the formation of an educated gentleman or woman and, through their travels and their written reflections, visitors could place themselves on a level with the creators of country houses. The Duchess of Northumberland showed just how systematic country house tourists could be when she prepared a 150-point questionnaire as a basis for her evaluation of the places she visited.\(^{25}\)

\(^{21}\) He was to have had six weeks leave; instead he had only three weeks, which was enough to visit Derbyshire, but not the Lakes. Even Elizabeth Bennett, who was genteel, but neither noble nor rich, intended to add to her collection. Afraid of meeting Mr Darcy in Derbyshire, she thought, ‘[surely,] I may enter his county with impunity and rob it of a few petrified spars without his perceiving me.’ See, Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Reader’s Digest, London, 2000 (1813), pp. 204–5.

\(^{22}\) Andrews, p. 67.

\(^{23}\) Fabricant, pp. 254–7; and Mandler, 9–10.

\(^{24}\) Moir, p. 67; and Mandler, p. 8.

While utilitarian bathrooms like the one at Ham House were not intended for the tourist trail, several kinds of literature reveal that bathhouses in the garden were sometimes a tourist attraction. Apart from tourist guides and travel diaries, baths that might attract country house tourists also appeared in histories, books of views, and accounts written by travellers for a variety of reasons. As we have seen, Celia Fiennes commented regularly on baths and bathing. John Aubrey referred to surviving baths of historical figures such as Sir Francis Bacon (at Verulam) or Sir Francis Carew at Bedington. Aubrey was much impressed by Sir Francis’s ingenious pump that washed out the latrines, showing that the mechanism of waterworks was itself an object of interest to travellers. W. Watts’s collection of sketches of the seats of the nobility made much of the aqueduct that, at Carshalton, served the house (including the cold bath). Likewise, the Swedish artist Fredrik Magnus Piper made detailed drawings of the machinery of the waterworks at Painshill (Surrey), which served the cascade, canals, bathhouse and drains. 26 Technological ingenuity also earned a place in the guidebooks for the Carshalton watertower, which contained baths and rooms for entertaining. 27 The fascination of some of these travellers with machinery is explained through secondary literature on industrial tourism, which I will discuss later. However, not all travellers were interested in technological advance. The outdoor bath at Powis Castle was the subject of a sentimental poem. Guidebooks also mentioned bathhouses: the bath and greenhouse at Wentworth Woodhouse (Yorkshire) was mentioned in several guidebooks and, as we shall see, the bathhouse at Piercefield was mentioned both in guidebooks and in the travelogue of Arthur Young. 28

27 The Ambulator; or, the Stranger’s Companion in a Tour round London within the Circuit of Twenty-five Miles, London, 1774, p. 22.
Houses, Parks and Gardens as Self-presentation

The chief motivation of the landowners who opened their houses and gardens was, according to Carole Fabricant and Peter Mandler, the exercise of cultural power. By admitting the public, landowners could be seen to be continuing medieval traditions of hospitality, even though their houses were becoming ever less open to the local community. During the eighteenth century, country house owners withdrew from the village (or physically removed the village from sight). The house was now sealed within its park and, while landscape gardeners skillfully cultivated the illusion that the grounds were part of the natural landscape, ha-has, earthworks, lakes and careful planting concealed the mundanities of villages, hedges and cultivated fields. The landscaped park created a physical barrier to the farmers and workers who were traditionally a part of the community, and enclosures and keepers reduced their traditional rights still further. Anna Bryson has commented that modes of urbanity filtered even into country life, and we can see that this physical withdrawal from the people who belonged in the social hierarchy of the great house and its dependents mirrors the reserve of city-dwellers who do not know the precise social position of everyone they meet, and who respond with aloofness. Opening the house and gardens to tourists helped owners to bridge the gap between modes of lordship and urbanity by assuming the moral authority of tradition and exploiting the emotional power of nostalgia, while actually withdrawing from their dependents.

Opening their houses also enabled owners to outshine their rivals through conspicuous consumption and display. They could display the fruits of their travels to countries that the middling classes would never visit. These included fine and decorative arts, scientific artefacts—minerals and exotic species of animals and plants—and, importantly for this study, they could create a landscape designed to display their taste and judgement, and construct garden buildings and structures, which offered variety and interest that could not be fully exploited in

29 Girouard, pp. 50, 60, 82–3; Mandler, p. 8; and Fabricant, pp. 264–5.
30 Mandler, pp. 7–8.
32 Fabricant, pp. 257–9, 265.
the house alone. In this way, country house owners could please and impress their circle and, through tourism, a much wider audience. A letter to Sir James Lowther, the richest man in England in the mid-eighteenth century, from his father-in-law, the third earl of Bute, showed he expected proposals for Sir James’s house and grounds to attract house and garden tourists, writing ‘I rave about your place, & have made twenty people declare they wont pass another year without seeing it’. Bute’s further rhapsodies showed that he believed the rugged Cumbrian setting—a British rather than a classical scene—would be a key attraction of the garden he hoped Sir James would create. For the garden was as important as the house for many tourists. And the bathhouse was a valuable opportunity for a particular kind of display in the landscape, and a particular kind of sociability for the owner’s guests. The functional need for a bathhouse offered the country house owner an opportunity to create garden building, which could draw on ideas about retirement, healing nature and water in a particular way, and which could be designed and placed within the fashionable language of the period to serve as the object of a walk, or the backdrop for sociability.

**Bathhouses in the Emblematic Garden**

For more than a century after the Restoration, the evolution of the garden mirrored the changes taking place within the country house itself, with the axial pattern giving way to a circular progression. At the beginning of the period under discussion, British gardens were very strongly influenced by Renaissance Italian gardens. The garden created by the wife of the fourth earl of Powys at Powys Castle, where an open air bath can be found, shows a marked resemblance to the early seventeenth-century garden of the villa Aldobrandini in Frascati. The aesthetic underlying this shaping of nature was primarily pictorial, and was inspired by the seventeenth-century landscapes of Nicolas Poussin, Claude

33 Moir, pp. 88, 101; and Fabricant, p. 256.
34 Letter, Earl of Bute to Sir James Lowther, 5 November 1765, Cumbria Record Office (hereafter CRO) D LONS/L1/1/54.
35 Kinsley, p. 77.
37 Gardeners were forbidden to enter this part of the garden after eleven in the morning so that the ladies could bathe in peace. Paula Deitz, Of Gardens: Selected Essays, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2011, p. 246.
Lorraine, and Salvatore Rosa.\textsuperscript{38} From about 1730, the Picturesque came to dominate ways of creating and seeing gardens, whereby nature was shaped by art into a landscape of unfolding effects and surprise views in which the dominating aesthetic was one of painterly effects.\textsuperscript{39}

According to John Dixon Hunt, landscape gardeners exercised control over space and nature to express cultural ideas. He divided gardens into emblematic gardens, where visitors needed learning to read the precise meanings embedded in it, and expressive gardens, to which viewers primary response was emotional.\textsuperscript{40} The distinction between emblematic and expressive gardens was not intended to be an alternative to the Picturesque, as Picturesque gardens could be either emblematic or expressive. In the 1740s, banker Henry Hoare commissioned Henry Flitcroft, a protégé of gentleman–architect Lord Burlington, to build a circuit of garden buildings around the lake at Stourhead representing themes from Virgil’s \textit{Aeneid}. Here the bathhouse has survived: it took the form of a grotto based on a complex iconographic scheme that incorporated Classical, pagan and Christian themes.\textsuperscript{41}

The visitor would enter through a door, the pediment of which once carried an inscription from the \textit{Aeneid}, reading ‘Within, fresh water and seats in the living rock, the home of the nymphs’, a reference to grottoes as the habitation of nymphs, especially Egeria, who was thought to have conversed with the muses in her famous grotto near Rome.\textsuperscript{42} Inside the door, visitors found themselves in a long, dark tunnel, at the end of which a dim light outlined the river god. Moving towards this light, the visitor passed first through a narrow chamber, to the growing sound of water, and then into a circular hall lined with tufa, floored with pebbles and contained under a vaulted dome. Here there were four arched openings alternating with four niches containing stone seats. To the right of this

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Tinniswood} Tinniswood, \textit{A History of Country House Visiting}, p. 76.
\bibitem{Miller} Miller, p. 86; and Hunt, pp. 88–92, 110, 112.
\end{thebibliography}
chamber lay the bower of the nymph, possibly Ariadne, who presided over the cold bath fed from the source of the River Stour. In front of her, a verse by Alexander Pope (1688–1744) was inscribed on the pavement—a translation of a spurious Latin source, *Huius nympha loci*:

> Nymph of the grot, these sacred springs I keep,
> And to the murmur of these waters sleep;
> Ah, spare my slumbers, gently tread the cave.
> And drink in silence, or in silence lave.\(^{43}\)

Passing across the central chamber, visitors would continue through another passage towards the distant river god, who held an urn from which gushed the source of the Stour. The river god was possibly modelled on Pliny’s description of the source of the Clitumnus, where there was an ancient temple and a statue of him. From here a rustic arch framed a view of the lake, the Chinese bridge and Alfred’s Tower. With his right hand, the river god pointed towards another garden building in the form of the pantheon, which was originally called the temple of Hercules, and which presided over the garden at the central point of creation.\(^{44}\) As in the *Aeneid*, a steep path led from the grotto, past the Gothic cottage and to the pantheon, after which the visitor passed through green bowers arcaded like the grottoes to the temple of Apollo, which was based on the temple of Baalbeck. Then, like Aeneis on the shore of Latium, the visitor has reached the end of the journey.\(^{45}\) The background to this bathhouse lay in the re-creation of ancient legend in material form. That the experience of using it was also magical, was expressed by its owner, Henry Hoare, who bathed there in the hot summer of 1764, and declared, ‘A souse in that delicious bath and grot, filled with fresh magic, is Asiatick luxury, and just too much for mortals, or at least for subjects’.\(^{46}\)

When John Britton visited the bathhouse–grotto at Stourhead around 1800, he recounted:

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\(^{43}\) Miller, p. 85.

\(^{44}\) Girouard, pp. 210, 261–2; Mack, p. 78; and ‘Stourhead House and Garden: A Souvenir Series’, Channel A.V. Television, 1996.


It will be impossible for me to describe the awful sensations which I experienced on entering [the grotto’s] gloomy cells; my fancy was set afloat on a sea of conjecture, and imagination conjured up thousands of those ideal images that poets have described, and such painters as Fuselli and Mortimer have delineated … This grotto is truly admirable for its natural beauty and simplicity.

‘The walls are cover’d with the choicest spar,
And curious fossils gather’d from afar.’

Its seclusion among the woods, contiguity to the waters, subterranean approach, rattling cascades, marble basin, and silent statues——

‘Gleaming with imperfect light,’——

Cannot fail of inspiring the solitary wanderer with plaintive musings and interesting reflections … The most judiciously, indeed most fortunately placed grotto, is that of Stourhead where the river bursts from the urn of its god, and passes on its course through the cave.47

Such feelings of awe at the grotto’s gloomy entrance were akin to the experience of the sublime which, according to Edmund Burke, applied to any experience that suggested the terror that was ‘the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling’. For Burke, the contrast between light and dark created an impression of the sublime, but darkness was even more conductive to sublime ideas.48 Grottoes were well adapted to producing such effects. They showed, as we shall see, that a visitor could react emotionally and with pleasure to an emblematic garden after the fashion for them had ended.49

**Grottoes**

Grottoes, like the one at Stourhead, were not only a fashionable form for the garden building well into the eighteenth century, but were a popular style for bathhouses, perhaps because of Classical association of grottoes with water. In ancient times, many Italian villas had a nymphaeum as a place of retreat in hot weather, a space that was revived in Renaissance Italy. According to Simon Schama, the Renaissance Italian garden was often a carefully planned progression towards a primal source or spring, sometimes guarded by grotesque or giant figures. Walls of shells or rocks in a cave or grotto prompted the viewer to see

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49 Hunt, pp. 42, 75–6.
themselves as on a journey towards the symbolic boundary between the visible and invisible worlds. To understand this, the visitor had to be learned in myth; to produce it, the architect or owner also had to be learned in the technology of ornamental hydraulics. Diarist John Evelyn brought back new ideas for villa and garden design from his travels during the Civil War and, in the 1660s, helped the grandson of the Earl of Arundel remodel his grandfather’s gardens at Albury Park (Surrey). Inspired by the grotto at Posilippo, reputed to be Virgil’s tomb, Evelyn built a 160-yard tunnel into a hillside and constructed at its mouth an exedra and pool, below which were terraces supporting a bathhouse–grotto.

The bathhouse–grotto enabled builders and owners to create fantastic effects with light and dark and, as the century progressed, to create a simulated ‘natural’ environment, as the cult of nature took hold. These effects were often manipulated by the use of moving water and light reflected in mirrors or glittering minerals. While not, in fact, a natural space, the constructed naturalism of the grotto was a metaphor for nature. It provided an opportunity for the display of minerals, shells and found objects, as well as elaborate reconstructions of limestone caves. Many owners of grottoes kept lists of the specimens that appeared on their walls, and goodwill gifts of interesting rocks, minerals and shells were offered through the same intellectual networks that informed scientific advance. Dr Oliver of Bath sent Alexander Pope stones to adorn his famous grotto at Twickenham (which led to his cold bath), declaring that they would have acquired ‘new Lustre from it’s [sic] artful disposition’. Pope was explicit about the relationship between nature and art, in which nature was the progenitor of art, but art was responsible for arranging nature to its best advantage.

Renaissance Italian grottoes often involved what were called giochi d’acqua—aquatic conceits. In Italy, these jokes were fashionable from the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the Marquis Nicola Santini at Carmigliano...
near Lucca had a grotto where weight on a step near the entrance triggered a jet of water that doused the visitor, who then entered the grotto behind a curtain of water. It appears that such witticisms were less acceptable to visitors the further north the grotto; in France, only Cardinal Richelieu enjoyed soaking his guests; and there does not appear to have been a British example. However, this kind of playfulness was picked up in the treatment of the bathhouse–grotto at Roxford Manor, Hertfordshire (possibly late seventeenth century). Here, after being shown through a garden replete with the representations of Classical stories that typified the emblematic garden, Richard Dick, an eighteenth-century visitor to the estate went into the bathhouse–grotto:

then you go into the Grotto which is richly ornamented with Shells and coloured Flints, a large Bason in the middle of it and fine marble Seats where you set, then the Gardiner turns a cock and fountains all round from the outside into the inside and [one fountain] from the rock and several play over your head into the Bason. then you go down a few steps into the Cold Bath paved with Marble and fine Stone and richly Ornamented with Painting.

Imprisonment within a cage of water was one of the fancies that could be realised through technical ingenuity of a grotto’s designer. The creation of such effects often involved vast financial outlay. Lady Fane’s c. 1720 grotto on the Thames at Lower Basildon was three times the cost of her house. The materials alone for such grottoes could be very expensive. Although famous decorators of grottoes, such as Mrs Mary Delany and Alexander Pope, made expeditions to collect shells from the beach when they were needed in great numbers, the need for rare minerals and shells occasioned the importing of shiploads of shells from around the world, in particular from the West Indies. In 1788, Lord Donegal paid £10,000 for shells. Rare shells were sold for high prices at auction, and the owners of grottos sought out dealers or begged their friends for specimens.

58 Miller, p. 90.
Although there were builders who specialised in the construction of grottoes, their decoration was often, but not exclusively, the work of women.\(^\text{60}\) The second duchess of Richmond and her daughters, sometimes assisted by the duke, spent years in the adornment of her grotto. The duchess of Portland killed a thousand snails for the alcove of her grotto. The third duchess of Leinster embellished her grotto at Carton in Kildare with shells, twigs, wood, coral, mirrors, tufa, tiles, birds eggs of all sizes, minerals, and pine and cedar cones.\(^\text{61}\) Mrs Delany, an acknowledged expert in shellwork, was in great demand from hostesses, directing work at Killala in Ireland (1731), at her uncle’s house in North End, London (1736), at Delville in Ireland, at Walton in Warwickshire (1750s), at Bulstrode in Buckingham (1770s), and in work for the Duchess Portland.\(^\text{62}\) By doing the shell-work themselves, Mrs Delany and the ladies of the house associated themselves intimately with the layers of historical and mythological significance that went into its design, and expressed their claims to good taste in material form.

Richard Payne Knight had a bath in a hermit’s cave and grotto in the grounds of Downton Castle in Herefordshire (1780s). The bathing room in the Gothic bathhouse for Princess Amelia (daughter of George II) at Gunnersbury Park was studded with different kinds of rock, shells, glazed tiles, crystal and even a clay pipe (illustration 4). Many of these found objects would have glittered magically by candlelight. Shell artist Diana Reynell’s analysis and reconstruction of Gunnersbury’s bathing room charts surviving materials on the south wall, and shows how these diverse objects might be incorporated in an overall design of putti and a dolphin from the mouth of which water could spout (illustrations 5 and 6). Like the bathhouse in Pope’s garden, baths were not in, but associated with the grottos at Clandon House (Surrey, 1776), at Corsham Court (Wiltshire, 1791–8), and the eighteenth-century landscape garden at Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire. Hermitages were less often associated with bathhouses, because they were often intended to provide an environment in which to reflect on mortality, whereas

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\(^\text{60}\) Mr Castle of Grotto Lane in Marylebone and father and son Joseph and Josiah Lane of Tilbury (who worked on many grottoes in Wiltshire and Surrey, in particular Painshill) were all specialists in grottoes. See Miller, p. 87; and Jones, p. 159.

\(^\text{61}\) Jones, pp. 154–6.

\(^\text{62}\) Jackson, pp. 15–16, 34; and Kellerman, ‘Use and Ornament’, p. 103.
Illustration 4

Bathroom–grotto at Gunnersbury Park, London, c. 1763–86
Author’s photograph
Illustration 5
Chart of surviving decorative materials, south wall, Gunnersbury Park, 1996
Courtesy of Diana Reynell
Illustration 6
Reconstruction based on surviving decorative materials, south wall, Gunnersbury Park, 1996
Courtesy of Diana Reynell
bathing was about life and health. An exception was William Wrighte’s speculative design for a hermitage containing a library and a bath, the skull and crossbones in the triangular pediment announcing the building’s solemn purpose (illustration 7). Wrighte’s 1767 ‘Grotesque, or Rural Bath’ might have served equally for either bathing or retreat from the world (illustration 8). Apart from the associations of scientific knowledge and the passion for collecting, shell and rock work furnished buildings with opportunities for a play of light and texture that was to be increasingly valued as the Picturesque took hold.63

In some early examples of baths in grottoes, the grotto was located within the house. On a visit to Chatsworth in 1697, Celia Fiennes wrote:

There is a fine grottoe all stone pavement roofe and sides, this is design’d to supply all the house with water besides severall fancys to make diversion; within this is a bathing roome, the walls all with blew and white marble the pavement mix’d one stone white another black another of the red rance marble; the bath is one entire marble all white finely veined with blew and is made smooth, but had it been as finely pollish’d as some, it would have been the finest marble that could be seen; it was as deep as ones middle on the outside and you went down steps into the bath big enough for two people; at the upper end are two cocks to lett in one hott the other cold water to attemper it as persons please; the windows are all private glass.64

There was also a bath in a grotto within the house on the north side of the old house at Woburn Abbey, which Jackson places in the seventeenth century.65 Barbara Jones suggests that the locating of early British grottoes under the stairs was to do with the British weather. However, it seems more likely that this had its origin in the mid–seventeenth-century Italian practice of locating the nymphaeum in the basement. Indeed, perhaps it was the separation of house and grotto that had its origin in the British weather, which prompted owners to relegate this clammy space to the garden. Certainly, the water in the bath at the bathhouse–grotto in the garden at Oatlands in Surrey was, according to Charles Greville (1749–1809) ‘as clear as crystal and as cold as ice’.66

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63 Hunt, p. 135.
65 Jackson, p. 6; Jones, p. 145; and Saudan and Saudan-Skira, p. 48.
**Illustration 7**

Plan and elevation of an hermitage in the Augustine style
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
Illustration 8
Grotesque, or Rural Bath
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
it cost £40,000. Like the one at Painshill, it was modelled on a cave, and contained three rooms, one of which was a card room with a fireplace, a chandelier and bamboo chairs in the Chinese style.\footnote{Jones, p. 159; and Jackson, p. 36.}

The icy chill explains why grottoes were not universally admired: as Sir John Clerk had already foreshadowed, the Classical ideal did not translate well in British conditions. A Lincolnshire lady, showing off her nymphaeum to Dr Johnson, asked ‘Would it not be a pretty, cool habitation in summer, Dr Johnson?’, he replied, ‘I think it would, madam, —for a toad.’\footnote{Hunt, p. 77.} By the mid-century, the vogue for emblematic gardens had passed, and, to Horace Walpole, its excesses had begun to seem ridiculous.\footnote{Horace Walpole, \textit{On Modern Gardening}, Brentham Press, London, 1975, pp. 20–1.} Nevertheless, the bathhouse–grotto, which had accorded so well with the Classical language of the emblematic garden, continued to survive after its demise. Because the grotto’s adaptability to the creation of a variety of moods, from gloom to richness, was well suited to Picturesque effect, bathhouses and grottoes continued to be associated as late as the 1790s.\footnote{For example, at Corsham Court.}

\section*{Expressive gardens and the Picturesque}

As we have seen, John Britton responded to the dense iconography of the bathhouse–grotto at Stourhead in a way that was primarily emotional. Although he was aware of the classical ideas behind it, his emphasis on his ‘awful sensations’, ‘plaintive musings and interesting reflections’, and his reference to the fantastic visions of Henri Fuseli (1741–1825) shows that Classical learning had become the handmaiden of sensibility. Classical style continued in use, but was exploited for the way it could create mood, rather than for pointed references to particular stories. In 1756, Isaac Ware (1704–66) described a Classical garden bathhouse in such a way to evoke melancholy and a nostalgia for the antique, rather than to refer to an actual story or event from the past:

\begin{quote}
In some retired part of the garden there may burst at once upon the eye a temple with its dome, plain, elegant, and proportioned ... Its depth will give room for useful purposes, and in the centre may be a noble bath. The building will allow a hall before it; and a recess behind for dressing and undressing ... This
\end{quote}
construction will give air of cleanness and solidity: the water in the bath will be preserved more cool, and whether in its new and unsullied beauty, or stained with mossy green and various tincts of meer antiquity, it will become the place with equal splendour.\footnote{Isaac Ware, \textit{A Complete Body of Architecture}, London, 1756, pp. 647–8.}

The inspiration for garden design remained pictorial, but the way scenery was composed and received began to change, with a growing taste for Dutch, as opposed to Classical, landscapes, and with a shift in patronage from élite Grand Tourists to the gentry and the well-to-do middling classes. Designers looked to the British, not the Italian, landscape for inspiration, and individuals’ sensibility, mood, feelings and associations gained in importance. Nature, and not learning, was the inspiration of the garden designer. \footnote{Hunt, pp. 122–3, 136, 140; and Deitz, p. 234.} In contrast to set pieces like Kent’s Vale of Venus in the emblematic garden at Rousham (Oxfordshire), the natural seeming parkland of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown played down the readable aspects of the garden and, though considerable ingenuity had been employed, art was concealed. Here, the landscape was to be appreciated as a whole rather than read at each feature on an established circuit. \footnote{Hunt, pp. 128, 149–50.} Now, there was no certain recipe for the use of line, colour and massing to please the eye or the senses. Rather, the success of a view or walk consisted in its capacity to arouse associations in the mind of the viewer. Learning had not become irrelevant, but now the accumulation of knowledge and the experience of art and landscape formed viewers’ taste and judgement, and their capacity for creative visualisation. Instead of the designer’s offering a single reading of the landscape to the spectator, the response to the landscape was the fruit of a creative relationship between the garden designer and the visitor. \footnote{Caroline Van Eck, ‘“The Splendid Effects of Architecture, and Its Power to Affect the Mind”: The Workings of Picturesque Association’, in \textit{Landscapes of Memory and Experience}, ed. Jan Birksted, Spon Press, London, 2000, pp. 246–7, 249, 254. See also, Hunt, pp. 136, 179; Tinniswood, pp. 86–7; and Hussey, p. 4.}

Irregularity was a key aspect of design in both the Picturesque landscape and late century buildings, in which a closer relationship between the building and nature was increasingly valued. \footnote{Tinniswood, pp. 187, 217–8; and Girouard, pp. 214, 229.} In his 1753 \textit{Analysis of Beauty}, William Hogarth asserted that symmetry quickly grows tiresome, and that it is variety that offers...
the eye unfailing delight. Irregularity suggested that a building had been added to incrementally and was, therefore, of great antiquity. Such irregularity can be seen on the right elevation of the spring-fed bathhouse in the grounds of Corsham Court, remodelled in 1797–8 by John Adey Repton (Sir Humphry’s son) assisted by John Nash (illustration 9). The temple front emerging from the glade is symmetrical and connects the bather with nature on three sides (illustration 10), but its gothic form and stained glass window to the dressing room above place it within the indigenous tradition, and create a Picturesque effect. The doorway to the right of the bath leads to the grotto, on the walls of which patterns of pinecones and moss are still beautifully preserved after two hundred years. The grotto connects the bagnio pavilion to a walled garden through what is now a modern doorway.

The approach to the Corsham bathhouse exemplifies the Picturesque value for unfolding effects, because wanderers are unaware of the building until they are almost upon it. Where Poussin placed people at the centre of his pictures, in a real garden, Hunt observes, participant–observers are a temporary and constantly moving aspect of the scene. Whereas the human action in a painting is fixed and complete, in reality, the garden provides the materials and a backdrop for human activities, and shifting tableaux, while the plantings themselves are constantly growing, changing and dying. Bathhouses have a very particular place in this model. As long as the garden is consumed through the visual appreciation of the beholder, the relationship is a passive one, in which the action takes place in the visitor’s mind. Moving through the garden, and engaging in sociability in the garden and its buildings transforms this relationship into an active one. In addition, the bathhouse provided an opportunity for a much more active experience of the materials of the garden—the water—in a new and immediate way, and not only for experiencing it but, if medical opinion was to be believed,
Illustration 9
This side view of the bathhouse at Corsham Court affects to have been built incrementally
Author’s photograph
Illustration 10
Gothic temple front of bathhouse at Corsham Court, Wiltshire, 1797–8
Author’s photograph
for being healed by it. Nature was not being experienced through the eye only, but was changing the visitor.

It is this movement around the grounds that later bathhouse designers exploited by creating tableaux in which buildings, objects, topography, water and vegetation were combined to create a unified and pleasing landscape. No longer was the bathhouse to be used as a vehicle for the display of classical learning, but as the object of a walk or a feature in an ever-changing scene. By Repton’s time, visual and social considerations took precedence over the readable narrative of the garden. As Repton matured, he became more aware of the visitors’ progression around the garden. Consequently, the garden was no longer treated as a picture that could be viewed from fixed points, but an unfolding experience, and Repton became less concerned if a viewer could not see the entirety of a building from a single aspect. To do this, he often removed, rather than added, trees or buildings from existing gardens to create better views and circuits. For this reason, he opened up a path to the existing bathhouse by the water at Antony (Cornwall, 1789). The building tempted visitors by terminating a view, but also provided them with a walk enlivened by rocky scenery, as well as the amenities of the bathhouse at their journey’s end.

Susan Kellerman has discovered a number of first-hand accounts of bathhouses being used as the object of a walk or a significant milestone on a circuit. In her article on bathhouses in Yorkshire gardens, she tells how Dorothy Richardson visited Wentworth Castle in 1761 and 1767, as a tourist, not a friend of the family, and described her visit to the bathhouse in the park. Several visitors to Studley Royal described the bathhouse there, suggesting that it was a frequent attraction on the standard tour. Moreover, Kellerman points out, place names such as Bath Walk and Bathingwell Walk suggest that baths were regularly the object of a garden walk. Francis Douglas’s visit to the house and five-acre garden of Mr Lesly (probably in Aberdeenshire) in 1782 shows how elements of both learned and intuitive

81 Hunt, p. 146.
approaches could inform the aesthetic of a late eighteenth-century garden tourist. In addition to the narrative of the garden as a space, Mr Lesly, an apothecary, was able to make claims to gentility through the display of good taste in the amenities of his house, and the layout and features of his garden. As the following passage shows, the technology, convenience and elegance of a bathhouse provided an opportunity to add variety to the landscape and the buildings it contained:

From the south-east corner of the house, we descend by a small serpentine gravel-walk, to a hollow in the bottom, where a murmuring rill runs along, the banks of which are planted with a great variety of trees, flowers, and flowering-shrubs. Crossing it, we ascend a steep eminence, about the middle of which we come up with a pretty little green-house, well furnished with plants, which bear not the open air in this climate. On one of the end-walls hang the royal arms of Scotland cut in oak … This antique, tho’ still fresh and fair, must have been cut 566 years ago, and may have been cut earlier; for William came to the crown in 1165, and died in 1214.

On the summit of the eminence, a little to the north-west of the greenhouse, stands a rude obelisk, over which are the ribs of a large crown, in imitation of that over the belfry of the King’s college; constructed of vitrified matter, the refuse of a brick kiln. At a little distance, it has much the appearance of an old ruinous abbey. On the west side of the eminence, is a winding gravel-walk, the borders of which are planted with flowers and shrubs, along the bank of the rivulet; about the middle of this walk, you come up with an elegant bathing room, where by turning a cock you may raise the water to what depth you please, or let it run off at the other end.

After ascending a steep acclivity, a little north of the bathing place, we come up with a grotto, or hermitage, adjoined to the brow of a rock, which at a distance has a fine effect upon the prospect. The hermitage consists of a small room and a closet, beside which there is a cell devoted to serious contemplation; here, besides some natural curiosities, there is a small urn, with a label upon it, in memory of a lady who has been some years dead. The largest apartment has a concave cieling [sic], on which the Copernican system is delineated with talk [talc] and other shining substances. The circular side-walls are curiously finished off with shells of various colours and sizes: when candles are lighted up, it must have a very brilliant appearance. I was much pleased with a belt round the walls, divided into little squares, on each of which is pasted up, in a fair hand, an

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84 Of course, as Stana Nenadic reminds us, in Scotland, the younger sons of the aristocracy and gentry were often forced by poverty to pursue a profession. Stana Nenadic, Lairds and Luxury: The Highland Gentry in Eighteenth-century Scotland, John Donald, Edinburgh, 2007, p. 65 et ff.
excerpt of some striking sentimental passage from an author of repute. Such of
them as I read, shewed a good taste in the person who selected them. The closet
is shell-work, prettily ornamented. The outside is of vitrified brick. From this
description, you can have but a very faint and imperfect idea of the pleasure I
enjoyed, in this pretty little romantic place.

... Mr Lesly ... enjoys, on a small scale, all that a man of sense would
value in a retreat from the noise and bustle of a town; fine air, pure water, rising
shelter; his fields produce bread-corn, his garden roots, and his milking-pails
overflow. In his morning walks, while the ascending vapour is just seen on the
mountain top, he inhales fragrance; herbs innumerable emit the treasures of the
atmosphere, and flowers of a thousand dyes reflect the golden ray. The happy
songsters salute the master of the grove, and fearless of danger, vibrate on the
twig, or trip upon the lawn before him. If his presses groan not with the sun-
enlivened grapes of France and Italy, he dreads not the all-grasping hand of
despotic power; but can say, with just confidence, ‘This villa is mine.’

Although the obligations of Mr Lesly’s profession presumably prevented
him from making the Grand Tour, his garden showed him to be not unlearned.
Apart from the hermitage with its Renaissance Italian associations, the focus was
on the indigenous antiquarianism promoted by Sir John Clerk and William
Stukeley: the decorative objects placed strategically around the circuit of the
visitor’s walk are the royal arms of Scotland and an obelisk over-arched by a
crown resembling the steeple of the King’s College chapel in Aberdeen. From the
point of view of Francis Douglas, the consumer of Lesly’s garden, the tasteful
disposition of artefacts with predominantly British associations appeared to
compensate for the absence of presses groaning with the produce of France and
Italy, that is, classical antiquities. Although the antiquarianism of Mr Lesly’s
garden is British, the curiosities collected in the garden showed him to have broad
interests in the advances of the day: his greenhouse was stocked with exotic
species; he had collected and displayed the vitreous matter from a brick kiln; and
showed his familiarity with the Copernican system. The layout of paths, shrubs
and views displayed Mr Lesly’s taste in the shaping of nature, and his
womenfolk’s attention to the effect that would be created by the shell-work in the

85 Francis Douglas, *A General Description of the East Coast of Scotland, from Edinburgh to
grotto by candlelight showed that the family understood the use of light and shade to create atmosphere.

The path that meandered through the garden had been designed in such a way as to distract the mind from the reality that it was, after all, a circuit walk on a limited plot, by presenting the visitor with a judicious variety of buildings, plants, objects and views, often designed to trigger associations in the visitor’s imagination, such as the obelisk recalling a ruined abbey. These features were pleasantly varied: nature offered a prospect and a rivulet; art offered interesting contrasts between the obelisk and a hermitage–grotto, both with associations of antiquity; and the bathhouse laid claim to modernity through its elegance and its technological sophistication. The urn within the hermitage memorialising a lady was intended to prompt the visitor to melancholy contemplation. The tasteful selection of sentimental passages from well-chosen authors was intended to place Mr Lesly and, in particular, his womenfolk in the company of the well-read, and enhance claims to refined sensibility. In addition, references to contemplation and the enjoyment of rural restoration were implicit in the garden and its buildings and, as Mr Lesly intended, Douglas read them there. These references helped Mr Lesly to associate himself with Virgilian ideas about rural retirement, with their concomitant overtones of piety, simplicity, studiousness and domestic felicity. In his garden, the apothecary had constructed a site of cultural tourism, and acquired a title to be considered a man of genteel taste and judgement.  

It is not safe to assume, as Kellerman does, that the bosky planting around surviving bathhouses establishes that, in the eighteenth century, bathhouses were usually set among trees. However, the only written source to prescribe a situation for the bathhouse supports her assumption. Mentioned in passing in chapter one, architect Jacques-François Blondel, in his 1737 *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance*, was forced, for want of space for a bathroom within a château, to combine bathing apartments with an orangery in the grounds. In this case, a lack of space in the house could have other advantages:

As [the bathing apartments’] use requires solitude, it is quite appropriate that they be separated from the main house, especially when one needs the space that

86 Douglas, p. 172.
they would have occupied, and when one can place them elsewhere to
advantage. These have a very happy aspect: on one side, they give onto the main
courtyard, and on the other, they communicate with the garden of the orangery. I
have located the bathroom and the resting room on the courtyard side rather than
the garden side in order to shelter them from the southerly aspect. The function
of these rooms requires coolness, and this is why we most often locate them on
the ground floor of a building, in the shelter of trees and near some fountain; so
that on leaving, one can breathe cool air in the shade of some pleasant
greenery.  

It is this need for freshness and coolness that explains the situation of the
apothecary John King’s commercial bathhouse at Bungay, Suffolk: at the foot of a
hill among trees, but looking out at the front upon a stream and a spacious
common.

Building a bathhouse in a sylvan setting provided the designers of
Picturesque gardens with a particular opportunity. In the 1760s, inveterate
traveller Arthur Young visited Piercefield (near Chepstow, Monmouthshire). The
grounds were laid out by a Mr Valentine Morris, who bankrupted himself in the
endeavour, and ended up in the King’s Bench debtor’s prison, but not before
creating a set piece that would figure largely in all the tourist guides for some
decades: Laid out in such a way as to maximise the impact of the topography
and proximity to the Severn and Wye, Young found the landscape ‘too beautiful
for such a daubing pencil as mine to attempt to paint; Mr Dodsley, with his dells
and his dingells, and such expressive terms, might make amends for the want of a
Claud Loriane’.

88 ‘Comme leur usage demande de la solitude, il est assez à propos qu’ils soient détachés du corps
du Château, sur tout quand on a besoin du plain-pied qu’ils auraient occupé, & qu’on peut les
placer ailleurs avec avantage. Ceux-ci sont dans une exposition très heureuse; ils donnent d’un
côté sur la grande Cour, & de l’autre, ils ont communication avec le Jardin de l’Orangerie. J’ai
placé la Salle des Bains & la chambre à coucher plutôt du côté de la Cour que de celui du Jardin de
l’Orangerie, afin d’éviter le Soleil du midi. La destination de cet appartement demande la
fraîcheur, & c’est pour quoi on les place le plus souvent dans le bas étage d’un Bâtiment à l’abri
de quelque bois & près de quelque fontaine; afin qu’en sortant de ces sortes de lieux, on puisse
respirer un air frais à l’ombre de quelque agréable verdure.’ My translation. Jacques-François
Blondel, De la distribution des maisons de plaisance et de la décoration des édifices en général,
89 Kellerman, ‘Use and Ornament’, p. 120.
90 Monmouthshire: Descriptive Accounts of Persfield and Chepstow, including Caerwent, and the
Passages, selected from … Young … Wyndham, Monmouth, 1793, n.p. See also A Collection of
91 Probably Robert Dodsley (1704–64), bookseller and poet.
Morris’s extensive gardens offered all the variety that was desirable in a Picturesque garden, including contrasts between views of wilderness (the sublime) and cultivated land, and a plethora of garden buildings, rails and benches in a variety of fashionable styles. Arthur Young considered the ‘small, but neat’ bathhouse unremarkable in itself but, with its white walls, it provided a happy effect of brightness when viewed from the heights. Here, too, the ‘cool’, ‘agreeable’ and ‘sequestered’ location of the bathhouse accorded with Blondel’s recommendation, while playing a part in providing the grounds with a walk that was conducive to melancholy.

The surroundings of the bathhouse provided Young with an opportunity for the display of taste and knowledge by proposing that the watercourse that served the bathhouse could have been improved by the introduction of a cascade. Cascades such as he proposed were associated with bathhouses at Enville Hall (Staffordshire, 1773), Lucan House (Co. Dublin, c. 1785), at Rousham (Oxfordshire, c. 1735), and at Stourhead (Wiltshire, from 1721). Young was an eminent example of the new kind of well-informed and inquisitive travellers described by Jocelyn Anderson—travellers who augmented their observations with research, and who then published their considered opinions on the houses and gardens they visited. Genteel but not noble, his detailed description and carefully thought out criticism of the grounds of Piercefield were typical of an increasingly discerning number of travel writers. His use of terminology—the sublime and the beautiful, the genius of the place—showed that he was one of a growing number of country house tourists who were well educated in theories of beauty. Young’s description shows that, while integrated into the kind of garden fashionable at the time, the bathhouse also served as a vehicle for the owner to advertise his taste, and the tourist to display his judgement.

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Eclecticism and Design

Just as Valentine’s garden at Piercefield offered buildings in a variety of styles, the bathhouse could draw on a number of different design traditions, and offer an eclectic range of facilities for the interest or convenience of visitors. Roman baths were a part of the standard tour for eighteenth-century Grand Tourists and students of Classical times, and it would be surprising if classical buildings had not frequently provided the inspiration for British bathhouses. The ruins of Roman baths were sketched by successive waves of artists, architects and tourists, of whom Giovanni Battista Piranesi was one of the best known.95 Robert Castell’s 1728 The Villas of the Ancients described in detail Pliny’s sequence of bathing rooms at his villa of Laurentnum, and Charles Cameron’s Baths of the Romans of 1772 was the only considerable British work (pace James Playfair) on bathing spaces and one, moreover, by an architect who had himself built a lavish bathhouse for Catherine the Great at her palace of Tsarskoye Selo.96 However, although architects borrowed freely from a range of architectural styles to be found around the Mediterranean basin, there is little evidence of sequences of baths on the Roman model. Even bathrooms with hot and cold baths rarely offered steam.97 Antiquity inspired stylistic imitators, but the function of eighteenth-century bathrooms remained little affected.

John Plaw’s classical temple with a dome modelled on Rome’s Pantheon (illustrations 11 and 12, 1800), shows his value for a correct knowledge of antiquity; and bathhouses based on classical models can also be seen at Corsham and Antony among others. However, the bathhouse also presented the builders of follies with an opportunity both to evoke literary associations, and to draw on a variety of styles, from Classical to Gothic, which were sometimes mixed with a fine disregard for continuity, as at Lucan House (Co. Dublin), where the bathhouse was Classical without, and Gothic within. Wrighte’s design for a bath

95 Piranesi sketched the ruins of the baths of Titus, and reconstructed the floor plan in the first volume of his Le Antichità Romane of 1756. See Luigi Ficacci (ed.), Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Taschen, Cologne, 2006, p. 111.
97 We saw in chapter one that the bathrooms at Lyme Park offered a sequence of hot and cold baths, and that the hot bath had a steam function, but the sequence of rooms was guided more by convenience than by Roman precedent.
Illustration 11

A Bath
John Plaw, *Sketches for Country Houses, Villas and Rural Dwellings*, 1800, plate 14
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
Illustration 12
Section of the Bath
John Plaw, Sketches for Country Houses, Villas and Rural Dwellings, 1800, plate 15
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
in the right hand pavilion of a Chinese grotto (illustration 13, 1767) is a further example of this mixing of architectural styles, being decorated with shellwork to be done in the ‘Mosaic taste’. These examples show that owners would construct buildings in any style that evoked wide travels or deep learning. However, pattern books like Plaw’s 1796 Rural Architecture or Designs also made such effects readily available to those who had never travelled abroad.

As well as mixing architectural styles freely, Sir John Soane’s designs for a bath and garden seat show that bathhouses often offered facilities for more than one kind of pleasure (illustrations 14 and 15, 1790). His garden seat offered an opportunity for visitors to the garden to rest and view the prospect, as well as for bathers for health to cool down a little before braving the cold bath. Soane’s drawing of a dairy (illustrations 16 and 17, 1790) is eclectic both in architectural style and in its visitor attractions. It shows a domed tearoom, flanked by a dairy and a bathing room supporting a pair of obelisks in the Egyptian style, capped by Islamic crescent moons. While Soane’s bathhouse was inspired by Egypt, the combination of a dairy, tearoom and bathing room shows that, whatever the architectural influences on the building, the diversity of activities it offered under a single roof were very much a product of the fashionable pastimes of the moment. Soane’s proposal also shows that the designers of bathhouses were not unconscious of the Middle Eastern associations of the practice of bathing. Oliver Bradbury has commented on Egyptian hummums as a possible influence on Soane. In particular, he suggests that the hummum at the Gate of Qaramey in Cairo influenced Soane’s designs for vaulting in parts of the Bank of England. He attributes Soane’s knowledge of the hummum to the Description de l’Egypte published from 1809 to 1828. However, Soane’s Egyptian bath and dairy predate the Description by nearly twenty years. Whatever Soane’s model, it is clear that by his time, the association of bathing with the exotic was well established. The eclectic style of this bathhouse, and entertainments drawn from British, not Classical, country life show that although architects (and presumably those who commissioned them) drew freely on a range of precedents for the style of their

98 Wrighte, notes to plate 11.
Illustration 13
Chinese Grotto
William Wrighte, Grotesque Architecture, London, 1790 (1767), plate 11
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
Illustration 14
Design for a Bath and Garden Seat
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
Illustration 15
Design for a Bath and Garden Seat
Sir John Soane, Designs in Architecture, London, 1790 (1778), plate 10
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
Illustration 16

Elevation of a Dairy House in the Moresque Stile
Sir John Soane, Designs in Architecture, London, 1790 (1778), plate 33
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
Illustration 17
Plan of the Dairy House
Sir John Soane, Designs in Architecture, London, 1790 (1778), plate 34
Courtesy of Eighteenth-century Collections Online
buildings, bathhouses did not usually imitate the functional layout of well known Classical examples.

This is not to say that Westerners were unfamiliar with the interior layout and functioning of the baths of eastern and southern Europe and the near East. We saw in chapter two that Dr Turnbull found the public baths near Covent Garden to be an accurate interpretation of those he had known in Smyrna, but there was one other, more famous, traveller to recount her experience of baths on the Turkish model. In 1717, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had taken the opportunity to communicate a unique perspective on women’s bathing in Sophia, famous for its hot baths:

Designing to go incognita, I hired a Turkish coach … In one of these covered wagons, I went to the bagnio about ten o’clock. It was already full of women … There were four fountains of cold water in this [first] room, falling first into marble basins, and then running on the floor in little channels made for that purpose, which carried the streams into the next room, something less than this, with the same sort of marble sofas [as the first room], but so hot with steams of sulphur proceeding from the baths joining to it, it was impossible to stay there with one’s clothes on. The two other domes were the hot baths, one of which had cocks of cold water turning into it, to temper it to what degree of warmth the bathers have a mind to.¹⁰⁰ Montagu was wearing riding dress, but the oddness of her attire was not met with any of the ‘disdainful smiles, or satiric whispers, that never fail in our assemblies when any body appears that is not dressed exactly in the fashion’. The ladies of the bath were:

without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them …[it was beautiful] to see so many fine women naked, in different postures, some in conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions, while their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in several pretty fancies. In short, it is the women’s coffee-house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented &c.—They generally take this diversion once a-week,

and stay there at least four or five hours, without getting cold by immediately coming out of the hot bath into the cold room, which was very surprizing to me … I have now entertained you with an account of such a sight as you never saw in your life, and what no book of travels could inform you of.101 Montagu was able to send an account not included in any book of travels, because at this period few men and no women but Montagu herself had travelled beyond Italy.102 The death penalty for a man who went near the women’s bathhouse explains how Eastern bagnios avoided the reputation for immorality of British public bathhouses, a reputation that the bagnio at the Royal College of Surgeons, despite the utmost vigilance, was unable completely to avoid. Lady Mary’s account heralded a period during which the exotic East was to grow rapidly in cachet, and the Wortley Montagu’s experience announced a long period of Turkomania.

**Technology Tourism**

References to the ancient and exotic worlds were not the only opportunities for display provided by the bathhouse. The technological requirements of the building were an opportunity for a decidedly modern fashion. Hungry for novelty, the newly rich middling classes and the élite alike were fascinated by the advances of science and industry. Burgeoning industrial cities like Birmingham became a Mecca for tourists, who wished not only to buy the products of newly established factories, but to visit them and see how they were made. Tours of factories like the one belonging to Matthew Boulton were popular among British and continental tourists alike.103 Moir recounts how industrial tourists descended mines, and visited bridges, kilns and blast furnaces. John Lombe’s silk mills in Derby was also an attraction, and Robert Clutterbuck described Lombe’s water mill at some length after a visit in the 1790s.104

One bath, in particular, was an early essay in technological virtuosity. Alice Dugdale recounts that Sir Godfrey Copley of Sprotborough Hall in

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101 Montagu, p. 286.
102 Montagu, p. 287.
104 Moir, pp. 90, 95, 98, 101.
Yorkshire constructed an outdoor bath which, together with the one at Rufford Abbey, is the largest in this study. Copley, a member of the Royal Society from 1691, belonged to the broad intellectual community described in chapter two, and was particularly interested in hydraulic engineering. In 1694, he wrote to Sir Hans Sloane requesting a copy of Edmé Mariotte’s 1686 *Traité du mouvement des eaux et des autres corps fluids*. In addition, he consulted Ralph Thoresby (who had installed a pump for his own corn mill), George Sorocold (an engineer involved in constructing water supply systems for a number of towns, including London) and his architect, John Etty. As Copley recounted, the pump, which survives in modified form, lifted water from the Don to the roof of the house was able to fill a large pool in a remarkably short time:  

I have succeeded past my expectation in making such a bath for pleasure and convenience as I think no one in this kingdom hath ye like. It is between 34 & 35 foot long & about 16 foot broad with a convenient pair of stairs to go down to the bottom & sides lined with lead & holds water six foot and four inches deep, but when we use itt for bathing and swimming wee fill it but to 4 foot & half, which the water engine will do in less than 5 hour. Two or three faggots and a sack of coales doth warm it equal to ye heat of your body but wee can make it hotter if wee please. I never met with any bath more agreeable & there is room enough for four or five to swim up and down very well. I have gone in severall times, & it is very pleasant in an evening or morning. My wife and some Ladys of her acquaintance have gone in together & are much delighted with it. I’m sure this fancy of mine will be followed by some who perhaps may be willing to outdo me in making one 3 times as large.  

Sir Godfrey and his circle shared a fascination with the technology that lifted water from the Don to the cliff top where Copley’s house stood, and this fascination must have been the driving force behind a very considerable endeavour, because the desire for a bath itself could have been satisfied more simply.  

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107 This passage suggests how common baths were at this period: Sir Godfrey claimed to have seen many baths, and he, his wife and her friends knew how to swim.
The juxtaposition of facilities for scientific enquiry and rooms for sociability and relaxation in the unexecuted plan for a garden temple at Chartley, Staffordshire (1770) for the fifth earl Ferres show that their zeal for scientific enquiry could be one of the attractions of an expedition to the bathhouse in the garden. Here there was to be an observatory, hot and cold baths, a study, a room for billiards and rooms for music and mathematical instruments. If star-gazing or bathing were not to be the main attraction of every gathering in this building, the facilities for them would mark its owner as a man of culture and up-to-date interests. It is possible that a similar sequence of rooms proposed for Lowther Hall (Adam, 1767, Cumbria) for Sir James Lowther might also be intended for display. While both laboratories and baths may have been intended for use, it is possible that the juxtaposition of laboratories and the sequence of hot and cold baths might also have served the interests of display. (illustration 18).

For some, the construction of a bathhouse was an opportunity both to impress visitors eager for new experiences and to experiment with new technologies. The bathhouse at Carshalton was constructed for wealthy city merchant Sir John Fellowes, whose estate was sequestered when the South Sea Bubble, of which he was a director, burst in 1720. The Inventory of 1721, produced as a result of his bankruptcy, offers a snapshot of the construction of the bathhouse which, unfortunately for posterity, was not yet furnished at the time. Fellowes’s grounds were laid out by fashionable landscape architect Charles Bridgeman, and boasted a grotto, temple and a lake, in addition to the bathhouse. The bathhouse cost in excess of £1000, a very considerable sum when, by 1790, a gentleman might have an income of a modest £200 to a generous £3000 a year, only the very richest having up to £5000 a year. Most

109 That Lady Mary Lowther, Sir James’s wife, did need to bathe for health is known. Her Maastricht physician was Dr Pelerin, who recommended hot baths, and cold baths with caution. Letter, Dr Pelerin to Lady Mary Lowther, July 1763, Sir John Pringle, mss, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (hereafter Pringle mss), vol. 6, p. 521.
Illustration 18
Plan of the Ground Story of Lowther Hall, detail, Adam Office, D/LONS/L11/3/20
Courtesy of the Cumbria Record Office
London merchants in the 1730s spent £400 to £600 a year.\textsuperscript{111} By comparison, the c. 1783 bathroom at Dumfries House in Ayrshire cost a total of £70/3.\textsuperscript{112} The bath at Dumfries House was a simple rectangle, only unusual in being some six feet deep, accessed through the laundry and standing in the service courtyard.\textsuperscript{113}

The location of the bath at Dumfries House reveals its purely utilitarian purpose. By contrast, that at Carshalton was intended to be seen. The bathhouse itself was built hard upon the public road and served both to hide the road from the windows of the house, and to create the illusion of symmetry when viewed across the lake from the house.\textsuperscript{114} The windows and arches in the tower above are surmounted by strongly marked keystones of Portland stone.\textsuperscript{115} The tower, which resembles a bell tower contains, instead of a bell, a lead cistern measuring 12 feet 6 inches square and 8 feet six inches deep.\textsuperscript{116} This tower supplied the bath, garden features and the house, with piped spring water.\textsuperscript{117} Water was channelled through a mill race from a weir at the lake edge to the west, and was lifted by a water wheel through pipes attached to brick piers in the pump chamber.\textsuperscript{118} When water was not required, it could be diverted to a by-pass culvert.\textsuperscript{119} Here were such highly sophisticated engineering works, some sixteen years before Queen Caroline introduced a modest wooden tub to Hampton Court, that the estate was singled out in a guidebook for its ‘curious waterworks’.\textsuperscript{120}

Unlike Queen Caroline’s bathroom, however, this pavilion with provisions for hospitality shows that the engineering was intended to be seen. The bathhouse was entered through the central bay of a 40-foot long, south-facing greenhouse, now called the orangery, stretching the full length of the south side of the

\begin{itemize}
\item 111 Berg, p. 207. The cost of the bathhouse was estimated on the basis of the Inventory, pp. 10–11; and ms notes for inventory, Norfolk Record Office (hereafter NRO) FEL702,554x7.
\item 112 Mt Stuart Archives, DU/6/44/7–83. I am grateful to Simon Green of the Royal Commission for the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland for looking this up for me.
\item 113 Plans exist at Mt Stuart Archives, DHP/8. I am grateful to Jen Austin for sending me the plans.
\item 115 Skelton, p. 1; and Knight, p. 32.
\item 116 Measurements were taken on the outside of the cistern. The lead vessel within must have been some eight inches smaller.
\item 117 Carshalton Water Tower and Historic Garden Trust, yellow leaflet, n.p. (p. 3); Jones, p. 51.
\item 118 Knight, pp. 345.
\item 119 Carshalton Water Tower and Historic Garden Trust, n.p. (p. 3).
\item 120 A Description of England and Wales, Containing a Particular Account of Each County, London, 1769–70, vol. 9, p. 118.
\end{itemize}
pavilion, and lit by five tall windows. After this long, light and leafy room, the visitor would enter a saloon or card room lined with six niches and facing west along the main garden axis to the house. This room was originally domed with an oval within a rectangle, and the payment of £149/16 to Robert Hartshorne for statuary may offer a clue to the original decorative scheme.\footnote{121} The saloon connected the orangery with the bathing chamber along the west enfilade of the pavilion (illustration 19). Behind the bathing room, along the wall by the road, was a dressing room, and behind the saloon was the engine room containing the water wheel and pump.

Jean Knight speculates that the arch connecting the dressing room with the pump room would originally have been a blind arch, introduced for the sake of symmetry, and that the engine room was purely industrial in function.\footnote{122} However, this is to misunderstand the place of mechanisation in the eighteenth-century mind. What we have learned about industrial tourism, together with the conspicuous site of the building, its facilities for sociability and mentions in tourist guides, suggests that the water wheel was actually one of the attractions of the bathhouse. The water engineering was interesting and expensive, and the orangery and card room would have delighted the eye, but the \textit{combe de luxe} was the bathing room. The spacious room (12’6” wide by 15’ 4” long) was paved in black slate and white Carrara marble, and striking Delft tiles defined the edges of the three niches over the bath, divided the walls into panels, and may once have decorated the tops of the doors to the salon and the dressing room.\footnote{123} To the early–eighteenth-century spectator, the tiles must have recalled the collection of blue and white belonging to the late Queen Mary, displayed at the Water Pavilion (formerly a bathhouse) at Hampton Court. In spite of government protection for British manufactories, Dutch tiles continued to dominate the market, until they

\footnote{121}{Fellowes, p. 10; and discussion with the warden at Carshalton Tower, John Thornton, 17 July 2006. Knight also attributes the urns topping the pinnacles attached to the tower to Hartshorne. See Knight, p. 31.}
\footnote{122}{Knight, p. 37.}
\footnote{123}{Knight, pp. 35–6; and Skelton, pp. 3–4.}
Illustration 19

Plan of the Water Tower
'A Short Historical and Descriptive Note on the Water Tower', unpublished leaflet
Courtesy of Carshalton Water Tower and Historic Garden Trust
became less fashionable around 1730. A luxury import, at Carshalton they were a symbol of the owner’s taste, as much as his deep purse.

The orangery, card room and water wheel at Carshalton, taken with other evidence, suggest that the building was intended for sociability and display, and yet, as we have seen, notions of retirement, even solitude have also been applied to bathhouses in the grounds of a country house or villa. However, it seems that in writing of solitude, commentators like Blondel had a particular kind of solitude in mind. After his comments on solitude, Blondel added that there were few bathrooms with only one bath, and two should be provided so that ‘two people could keep each other company, and amuse each other in their solitude’. When Blondel wrote of solitude, he was in fact, discussing a certain kind of companionship. As in Blondel’s scheme, it has recently been confirmed that at Carshalton, too, there were two baths. The surviving large bath was possibly installed in Robert Taylor’s 1750s renovation, as the 1720 manuscript inventory of the bathhouse mentions two marble baths. Andrew Skelton and David Wrightson have worked out a convincing reconstruction of the original, based on the configuration of the three niches, to accommodate the two marble baths (illustration 20).

**Sociability and retirement**

The passage from Blondel shows that the use of the word ‘solitude’ in relation to bathing indicated a certain kind of quiet sociability in which two people bathed together. This is borne out by the arrangements for entertaining shown in floor plans, and sometimes mentioned in accompanying notes. Soane’s Egyptian

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125 Berg, pp. 92, 109, 189.

126 ‘La Salle des bains est d’une grandeur suffisante pour contenir deux baignoires: Il s’en voit peu où il n’y en ait qu’une; soit afin que deux personnes puissant s’y tenir compagie & s’amuser reciproquement dans leur solitude …’. He added that a second bath could also provide a cool bath and a warm bath for those who wanted it. Blondel, p. 73.

127 Email, Andrew Skelton to Elizabeth Graham, 24 January 2012. An advertisement in the *London Evening Post* for 24 April 1732 describes the property as having hot and cold baths.

128 ‘Trustees Inventory of Goods in the Old Jewry and at Carshalton’, ms, NRO, FEL 703,554x8.

129 Conversation with Andrew Skelton, 6 March 2009, and David Wrightson, September 2008. For a discussion of how hot water may have been provided, see Jones, p. 51; and Knight, p. 37.
**Illustration 20**

Reconstruction of baths, Carshalton, Surrey

Image courtesy of David Wrightson
bathhouse mentioned above for its exotic appearance (illustrations 16 and 17), also provided the decidedly un-Egyptian amenities of a tearoom and an ornamental dairy, so that visitors could bathe, and afterwards to take tea and visit the dairy, or visitors who did not choose to bathe, could amuse themselves drinking tea. The bathhouse–boathouse at Kedleston (Derbyshire, 1759–65) offered several pastimes to privileged visitors: boating; or bathing in the spring-fed bath with a window onto the lake; or visiting the a highly ornamented fishing room where ladies, in particular, could drop their lines from the windows while sheltered from the injurious sun, or where a group could dine or play cards (the inventory lists a card table) under Claudeian landscapes set into the panelled walls. Repton, too, proposed combined facilities for boating and bathing at Hooton, Cheshire for Sir Thomas Stanley (unexecuted). Here, the river views were to be enjoyed from the very banks of the Mersey and, when tired of boating, visitors could repair to the keeper’s lodge, which was to be ‘an ornamental building which will contain a small cottage for the keeper, a handsome prospect room over it and the convenience of hot and cold baths, which by pipes may be supplied with either fresh or salt water’. The nearby wood and dell was to be fenced off from cattle, and would offer bathers and boaters a pleasure ground ‘near the Prospect room which from its situation will I trust become one of the most favorite appendages to Hooton Park’. Likewise, in 1792, George Richardson, at one time an employee of the Adam office, designed a bathing room with facilities for other entertainments. The bathroom was linked by a loggia to a tea room. He suggested that the bath itself be concealed beneath moveable flooring, to give flexibility to the social uses of the building. In another plan for a bathhouse–orangery, he elaborated on the potential of the bathhouse for multiple uses. In this plan, the orangery could be

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130 The Adam plan for a cold bath with two dressing rooms in a design for Vaughan, as well as the example at Dunkeld shown above, suggests that it was by no means unusual for men and women to bathe together. Plan of a Cold Bath for __ Vaughan Esq, Sir John Soane’s Museum, R. and J. Adam, vol. 45, no. 43.

131 Kate Felus, ‘Boats and Boating in the Designed Landscape, 1720–1820, Journal of the Garden History Society, vol. 34, no. 1, summer, 2006, p. 40. The use of the bath at Kedleston would, however, involve some negotiation, as there is no way of protecting the bathers from the comings and goings of boaters.

132 Humphry Repton, Red Book for Hooton, Cheshire (1802) for Sir Thomas Stanley. Quoted in Felus, p. 42.
adapted to a banqueting hall or a ballroom by laying down floorboards, the bath would be fenced off by iron railings to prevent unfortunate accidents, and the dressing room could double as an anteroom to the banqueting hall.\textsuperscript{133} Taken together with the card rooms to be found at Oatlands and Carshalton already mentioned, it is clear that bathhouses were often intended for social purposes. In addition to Copley’s account that his wife and her friends enjoyed his swimming pool together, there is a further, fictional, reference to group bathing from Whig playwright Thomas Shadwell. In his 1679 \textit{The Woman–Captain}, a character seeking his lady-love is told, ‘You cannot come at her: The Ladies are in one bathing-Room and the Gentlemen in another just by ‘em’.\textsuperscript{134}

What is not clear from this is just what kind of sociability could be so frequently discussed in conjunction with words like ‘solitude’ and ‘retirement’. According to Johnson’s dictionary, the word ‘retirement’ could be understood to be a ‘private abode’ or ‘secret habitation’, or refer to a ‘private way of life’. The example he used to illustrate a private way of life was ‘An elegant sufficiency, content, Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books, Progressive virtue, and approving heaven’.\textsuperscript{135} We have already seen that Ware proposed a bathhouse for some retired part of the garden, Young found the path to the cold bath sequestered and agreeable, and Douglas praised Mr Lesly’s rural retreat. We have heard that British gardeners picked up on the Renaissance Italian revival of Classical, particularly Virgilian, ideas about the virtues and pleasures of rural retirement. Taken together, ideas about rural retirement and eye witness accounts suggest that gardens in general, and bathhouses in particular, were a place where owners could enjoy intimate friendships away from the country house at the hub of their financial activities and public duties.

If this is the case, it is not surprising to see bathing spaces and libraries associated once again: this time, not because the sequence of rooms in the formal house gave bathrooms and libraries no natural home (as at Ham), but because bathrooms and libraries belonged to a new ‘private way of life’, in which ‘rural

\textsuperscript{133} George Richardson, \textit{New Designs in Architecture}, London, 1792, plate 28, p. 24; and plate 32, p. 29.
quiet, friendship [and] books’ could be enjoyed as a matter of private preference, not public duty. Owners were, moreover, aware that in re-establishing an association between bathrooms and libraries, they were reviving the arrangement in the Classical gymnasium, where mind, body and friendship were cultivated in the same building. Sir John Clerk of Penicuik planned a library–museum (1741) for the garden of his seat at Penicuik, in which the library was below, and a collection of antiquities above. As this project was not realised, it fell to his son, Sir James, to design a handsome bathhouse–library (1755–78), which has been discussed in detail by Iain Gordon Brown. Brown examines Sir James’s bathhouse against the backdrop of Classical precedent, as Sir James’s bathhouse was intended to recreate the splendor of the Pantheon. The combination of a bathhouse and library in this building was also a response to a practical problem: fire. In his long poem, The Country Seat, Sir James’s father, Sir John proposed that, since the library was the room which most needed to be warm, and yet was most vulnerable to fire, owners should adopt the ancient solution of heating rooms with hot water, conveyed from a vault below through lead or clay pipes inserted in the walls.

Mason and architect John Carter (1748–1817) explicitly linked ideas about sociability in retirement, and the revival of the ancient association between bathrooms and libraries in his Builder’s Magazine. In comments to plate 26, a plan for a thermae or public bath, he wrote,

> Who can reflect on the general utility and magnificence of the Roman baths, without being lost in amazement, that there should be nothing in these days on a similar plan! Buildings of that kind, exclusive of the elegance and magnificence which they display, would be conducive to health, and become the theatre of polite exercises and amusements.

He continued with a description of the luxury of ancient baths quoting, among others, Pliny and Seneca. Carter showed that he intended visitors to the baths to spend time in reading, conversation and refreshment, as well as bathing and

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resting, and he recommended such facilities to private owners.\textsuperscript{138} Plate 30 of the manual was a design for:

> an Insularium, or house of pleasure, to be erected on some small island in the park, at a convenient distance from the main building: dedicated to the deities of learning, painting, music, love and friendship.

> The Insularium, is meant for the reception of company immediately after dinner. Being surrounded by wood and water, [it] will render the fabric extremely cool and refreshing.

> When fatigued with heat, or exercise, the bath will exhilarate the spirits, brace the nerves, and enable the company to pursue their amusements and exercises with alacrity and vigour.\textsuperscript{139}

The exercise and dancing to which Carter referred, was to take place, on the model of the antique, in the portico. There was also a saloon for concerts, a drawing room, library, billiard room, cabinet, and dining room. Such an ambitious pleasure pavilion required its own services, and there was a servant’s hall, water closet and ‘Room for preparing necessaries for the company’.\textsuperscript{140}

Carter’s bathhouse in the park was a place of retirement for the refined social arts—dancing, painting, music and reading—and intimacy. Here privacy was not about being alone. It was about being with intimates—Bryson’s code of urbanity—in a semi-secluded retreat. As tourism became easier and the middling classes travelled in greater numbers, half-hidden buildings begin to suggest a secret life open only to intimates. In the 1790s, paintings of gardens, too, began to reflect a more intimate, domestic sphere, showing husbands and wives enjoying everyday activities surrounded by their children and dogs.\textsuperscript{141} Inside the house, guidebooks increasingly constrained visitors’ experience by confining them to a set path, or by varying the rooms they were allowed to see depending on whether the family was in residence. At Corsham, the plan of the house was itself altered to create a divide between public and private.\textsuperscript{142} While garden buildings offered opportunities for the cultivation of private friendships, some landowners built

\textsuperscript{139} Carter, vol. 2, pp. 17–18, comment to plate 30.
\textsuperscript{140} Carter, vol. 2, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{141} Hunt, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{142} Anderson, pp. 200, 202.
separate villas, where they could retreat from the obligations of the country house and estate.\textsuperscript{143}

**Conclusion**

The bathhouse in the garden was an enduring feature of the eighteenth-century landscape, adapting to, rather than being rendered obsolete by, changing fashions and social behaviour. As long as the emblematic garden held sway, the bathhouse was one of a number of garden features, from obelisks to summerhouses, which could be read by an educated viewer. While both emblematic and expressive gardens drew on the landscape traditions of Poussin, Rosa and Lorraine, the impact of later Picturesque gardens relied on a creative relationship between the participant–observer and the landscape designer, in which the spectator’s sensibility contributed to the effect. Grottos, with their roots in Renaissance gardens and classical ideas, enjoyed enduring popularity, perhaps because their classical references could be reinterpreted through the love of mood and texture of a later, more romantic, age.

Throughout the long eighteenth century, the garden was a social space in which the bathhouse could be used as the object of a view, or the destination for a walk. We have seen that bathhouses were sometimes mentioned in guidebooks, poems, diaries and travelogues, because of the contribution of the building in the composition of a view (as at Piercefield, Powys, Wentworth or Verulam), for its intrinsic interest (as at Chatsworth), or for its own technological or aesthetic merits (as the waterworks at Carshalton, the grotto at Stourhead). As country house tourism grew, the grounds of country houses were increasingly a place where owners could display learning, familiarity with advances in technology, and collect the fruits of not just the Grand Tour, but also exotic plants and shells, or rare minerals, through waterworks, pumps or grottoes. There was a symbiotic relationship between owners and cultural tourists, in which tourists, through visiting, judging and writing about their experiences, appropriated the wealth,

learning and social credentials of the owners.\textsuperscript{144} By opening their houses and
gardens, owners could appear to be maintaining older traditions of \textit{noblesse oblige}
and hospitality, while in fact distancing their community to beyond the ha-ha and
the park, and limiting the access of tourists through the use of guidebooks and a
prescribed trail through the house and grounds.

As the value for privacy increased, garden buildings, including
bathhouses, offered owners a place of retirement, where they could be freed from
the obligations of their social position to spend time with friends, and enjoy
books, music, tea—and bathing—away from the great house and the constraints
of their public duties. In this, the pattern in the garden mirrored the changing
pattern within the house, in which the family and their intimates progressively
withdrew to increasingly private rooms. One thing does become clear through a
closer examination of the bathhouse in the garden: social and cultural purposes,
not bathing for health, lay at the core of much of the life that took place in this
garden building. Perhaps the main contribution of such buildings to health was
their capacity to give pleasure. Certainly Lord Bathurst, writing in 1736, declared
that he had derived more benefit from the pleasures of his estate at Wentworth
Castle, than from all Dr Cheyne’s prescriptions.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{144} See, for example, Tinniswood, \textit{A History of Country House Visiting}, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{145} Letter, Lord Bathurst to Thomas Wentworth, first earl of Strafford, 17 July 1736, in \textit{The
Kellerman, ‘Use and Ornament’, p. 103.
Conclusion

‘Not all facts about the past,’ declared E.H. Carr in 1961, ‘are historical facts, or are treated as such by the historian’. He explained that although Caesar crossed the Rubicon and, throughout human history, millions of other people have crossed it too, only Caesar’s crossing has entered the historical canon, while all the others have not. The key, according to Carr, is selectivity. Historical facts are a jumble of jigsaw pieces, from which historians make a selection to form a coherent and convincing picture. Whether these facts attain the status of historical facts, or languish among the myriad facts about the past that do not enter history depends, he believed, upon whether the interpretation is taken up by other historians.¹ Eighteenth-century bathrooms, their owners and their builders, and the physicians who promoted the reinvention of bathing have wasted away too long in the shadows of ‘the facts about history’, to which they have been banished by the clamour of nineteenth-century physicians, civil engineers and reformers. This study is an appeal for the reinstatement of the eighteenth-century story to the ranks of architectural historical facts. An army of historians is needed to scour the countryside for summerhouses, follies and garden buildings that conceal forgotten baths, and to sift the sources for traces of what must surely lie hidden.

The insertion of the bathroom into the floor plan of the traditional gentry or noble house at the end of the seventeenth century disrupted the established sequence of rooms and the social order embodied in it. While the situation and form of the bathroom was dictated, in part, by practical considerations, the gradual and uncoordinated trend towards bathroom ownership also partook of the evolution of ideas about privacy, comfort and the specialisation of rooms in the grand house, and culminated in the compact bathroom. The revival of bathing took place against the backdrop of the Scientific Revolution, and was initiated by physicians. Certain physicians influential in this revival were motivated by a new value for observing,

measuring and recording the effects of bathing on illness. For the first half of the eighteenth century, the benefits of different methods of bathing were hotly contested, and medical practitioners, as well as patients, had concerns about its dangers. However, by the end of the century, although many patients were still afraid of bathing, it was no longer regarded with suspicion by the medical profession. By this time, although cold bathing was still practised, physicians were beginning to believe that cleanliness, rather than cold water, was the key to good health. Although the rich often continued to build large plunge baths, this shift paved the way for the eventual dominance of the compact bathroom.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a specialised bathing room within the house was out of reach for people of ordinary means. Widespread bathroom ownership was to depend on a number of factors, including the availability of abundant, clean water and the cost of employing servants. In addition, the narrative of bathroom history is intertwined with the story of plumbers, who were central to their construction. The eighteenth century in Scotland was a period of transition for plumbers. At the beginning of the century, their work practices were little changed since medieval times and their craft was corporate and familial in character. While increasing numbers of bathroom projects might have been expected to expand the work of plumbers, technological, commercial and legislative change—in particular the separation of design from construction—undermined the monopoly of their craft. Goods that had been manufactured on site and with local materials at the beginning of the eighteenth century were, by the beginning of the nineteenth, designed by a new breed of entrepreneur–inventor, manufactured by less skilled workers, and could be purchased in a shop and installed by a handyman with no particular trade identity.

However, medical opinion and the existence of new technologies cannot of themselves bring about social change, so it is necessary to look for the sociogenic origins of the acceptance of bathing in codes of civility. In the eighteenth century, visiting public bathhouses exposed one to physical, moral and social pollution. On the other hand, failure to comply with the dictates of bodily cleanliness, an aspect of civility, was a social solecism that could provoke the disgust and contempt of one’s
peers. Such disgust constructed and policed the boundaries between social groups. For those who could afford it and who had access to a plentiful water supply, private bathing facilities met the requirements of bodily propriety without the risk of contamination. The growing importance of bathing led to new opportunities for display among those who could afford grand bathhouses in their parks or gardens. The bathhouse in the grounds of the country house was an enduring feature of a changing landscape, adapting itself to evolving fashions for emblematic and expressive gardens. As tourism within Britain increased in popularity, gardens and their bathhouses were a means by which owners displayed wealth, taste and the fruits of the Grand Tour. Visitors to the bathhouse in the garden could identify themselves with the owner through the consumption of culture, improve their aesthetic knowledge and skills through writing, drawing and painting, and make claims to gentility through discerning criticisms. As owners began to withdraw from the ever-increasing numbers of tourists, and from the formal sociability of the country seat, and as connection with nature became increasingly valued, bathhouses became a place for the intimate sociability that Mark Girouard attributes to the late eighteenth-century house. Nature played an enhanced role in this kind of sociability in retirement, and the bathhouse–retreat offered all kinds of entertainments, from boating and fishing, to cards and music.

By the 1840s, rapid urbanisation, poverty and poor water supply and sewerage systems resulted in epidemics causing tens of thousands of deaths, and had brought matters to a crisis point, at which cleanliness for the first time became the responsibility of government. This resulted in the great age of public works, as part of a massive project of social improvement, which once again threw libraries and bathing facilities into juxtaposition, as philanthropists, reformers and civic authorities built libraries and baths for the working classes. One of the ironies of this is that now bathrooms came to be associated with the lower orders. Christina Hardyment

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recounts that, in 1920, Lady Fry declared that bathrooms were ‘only for servants’, and when the Savoy installed wash-basins in its rooms, Oscar Wilde remarked that if he wanted hot water, he would ring for it.\textsuperscript{4} In the early twentieth century, Agatha Christie’s mother was disgusted by the idea that one had to bathe in a plumbed-in tub where others had bathed before, and when Compton Mackenzie’s fictional John Pendarves Ogilvie goes to stay with the Reverend George Damson (Rugby and Cambridge) at his country vicarage, Mrs Damson remarks ‘‘You don’t mind a tub-bath, I hope? ... We’re so old-fashioned here that we haven’t installed a bathroom. The Vicar always says that he will not put in a bathroom until the Oxford and Cambridge colleges have them’’.\textsuperscript{5} In the eighteenth century, a domestic bathroom had been a sign of great wealth, now wealth was measured by whether one could afford enough servants to labour up the stairs with hot water cans. Indeed, so prevalent was this practice, that Americans advertising to attract British servants made explicit mention that they had bathrooms and therefore that carrying water would not be part of the servant’s duties.\textsuperscript{6} By the early twentieth century, to remark with false humility that one’s country place did not have a bathroom was to make a statement about the antiquity of ones house, and the availability of servants. For those who could no longer afford servants to carry water, to submit gracefully to the encroaching grime was better than to resort to the middle class convenience of installing a bathroom. In this atmosphere, the pioneering role played by some of those very same country houses in the design and construction of domestic bathrooms was forgotten.

Nor should we assume that the compact bathroom is the final word of the bathroom story. The late twentieth century has been a period of almost unimaginable wealth in the West, with consumer spending up, and household sizes down. During this time, baths have once more begun to steal out of the bathroom, and imitation


Victorian tubs have proliferated in the bedrooms exhibited on aspirational television programmes. The truly fashionable bathe in a glass pod in the middle of their up-market warehouse conversions. Bathing, which had been a very public affair in the seventeenth century, gradually withdrew into privacy and intimacy in the eighteenth, nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, only to emerge again since then. It will be interesting to see if, in an environment of global warming and progressively scarce commodities, another century will reverse the trend, and people will once more bathe in public bathhouses, bathe less often, and take their food to the cookshop for baking, so that these services can be provided with the lowest environmental cost. One thing is sure: our debt to the eighteenth-century pioneers of British bathing is a large one.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>First Owner</th>
<th>Architect</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Bathroom Still There?</th>
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<td><strong>bathroom</strong></td>
<td>20 Portman Square</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Adam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bath house</strong></td>
<td>* 3 Kenilworth Road</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Henry Thomas Fox</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>John Hutchins, The</td>
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<td>*Altyrodyn Mansion</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>carew/nat trust</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>English Heritage but on</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1791</td>
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<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
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<td>c. 1765</td>
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<td><strong>reservoir/bath</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>17th c.</td>
<td>Binney n. 1, p. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bath house</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>outdoor swimming bath</strong></td>
<td>Avington Park</td>
<td>Sarah and Charles</td>
<td>late 17th c.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Aynhoe</td>
<td>Cartwright-</td>
<td>Cartwright-</td>
<td>probably Soane</td>
<td>by 1802</td>
<td>Cartwright-</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>18th c.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Ref</td>
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<td>Hardymen, p. 87, 205</td>
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<td>1741</td>
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<td>Bruce</td>
<td>1667-72</td>
<td>Vitruvius, p. 66</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Soane drawings, vol.</td>
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<td>yes but</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1800</td>
<td>pevsner</td>
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<td>1740s</td>
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<td>Stephen Wright</td>
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<td>Colvin p. 1099</td>
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<td>1752; eng her: 3rd</td>
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<td>date</td>
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<td>1738 gothic</td>
<td>Girouard p. 262</td>
<td>no (house)</td>
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<td>late 17th or early 18th c.</td>
<td>Soane drawings, vol.</td>
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<td>Mr Brasee the 18th c.</td>
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<td>Bagenal, Patience,</td>
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<td>Sir George Saville, 7th</td>
<td>John Hallam, native of</td>
<td>Colvin p. 449;</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>Saltram</td>
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<td>Robert Adam</td>
<td>late 18th c.</td>
<td>Pevsner, Devon vol. p.</td>
<td>no</td>
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<td>*Savile Lea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>early 19th c.</td>
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<td>Shelburne</td>
<td>Lord and Lady</td>
<td>2nd Earl of Shelburne,</td>
<td>Robert Adam</td>
<td>1762–1768</td>
<td>Vickery, Behind Closed</td>
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<td>early 19th c.?</td>
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<tr>
<td>turkish bath</td>
<td>sledmere, yorkshire</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Soverby Croft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1725-50</td>
<td></td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Spitchwick Manor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1774</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
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<td>before 1763</td>
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<td>Stella Hall</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1700-1715</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Stockeld Park</td>
<td>William Middleton</td>
<td></td>
<td>1790s</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
<td>Ston Easton Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mid to late 18th c.</td>
<td>binney p. 11,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bath</td>
<td>*Stones House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mid 18th c.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Stoney Middleton Hall</td>
<td>Lord Denham</td>
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<td>Early C19.</td>
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<td>cold bath</td>
<td>Stourhead</td>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>Mr Hoare</td>
<td>Colen Campbell</td>
<td>1721 on</td>
<td>Girouard p. 210, 261–2;</td>
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<td>site</td>
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<td>owner</td>
<td>first owner</td>
<td>architect</td>
<td>date</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>bathroom still there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>stowe</td>
<td>viscount Cobham</td>
<td>vanbrugh and Charles</td>
<td>1719-24</td>
<td>colvin, Nattes drawing</td>
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<td>Stratfield Saye [sp?]</td>
<td>Duke of Wellington</td>
<td></td>
<td>early 19th c.</td>
<td>Ely Hargrove, History</td>
<td>probably</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>Studley Royal Water</td>
<td>John Aislabie</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>no</td>
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<td>Swallowfield</td>
<td>Pitt?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>bath house</td>
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<td>bathroom</td>
<td>The Georgian House</td>
<td>Museums and Art</td>
<td>John Pinney</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>bath</td>
<td>*The Grove</td>
<td>Thomas Kynaston</td>
<td></td>
<td>pre 1791</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>open air</td>
<td>The Hollins</td>
<td></td>
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<td>19th c.</td>
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<td>no</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>*The Lady’s Tower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1740s</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
<td>*the ranger's house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
<td>*The Wilderness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1820</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Thirlestane Castle</td>
<td>Lauderdale</td>
<td>William Bruce</td>
<td>1670s</td>
<td>RCAHMS, box marked</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Thundercliffe Grange</td>
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<td></td>
<td>before 1783</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>Trevor Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18th c.?</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
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</tr>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Trumpeter's House</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Upton House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Sir Francis Bacon</td>
<td>Bacon and Mr Dobson</td>
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<td>Walton Hall</td>
<td>Landmark Trust owns</td>
<td>Sir Charles Mordaunt</td>
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<td>1748</td>
<td>Colvin, in Vit. Brit; A</td>
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<td>bathroom</td>
<td>Wanstead</td>
<td>Sir Josiah Child.</td>
<td>Colin Campbell.</td>
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<td>*Wardour Park</td>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Woods</td>
<td>1766</td>
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<td>no</td>
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<td>Warnford House</td>
<td>William Thuillier,</td>
<td>Earl of Clanricarde: de</td>
<td>pre-1789</td>
<td>Hampshire Record</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Well House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 18th c.</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>site</td>
<td>house</td>
<td>owner</td>
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<td>architect</td>
<td>date</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>bathroom still there?</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Welwyn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>bathroom</td>
<td>*Wentworth Castle</td>
<td>Marquis of Rockingham</td>
<td>John Carr before 1769</td>
<td>Cox, Thomas. Magna</td>
<td>before 1767 and 1730</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>Wentworth House/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Carr, poss based</td>
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<td>West Bath House</td>
<td>James Paine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>before 1770</td>
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<td>*Weston Park</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Wetherby Grange</td>
<td>John Carr</td>
<td></td>
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<td>bath house</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Wetherby Grange</td>
<td>John Carr, poss based</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>*White Wells</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Whitfield Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>bath house</td>
<td>*Wilton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Earl of Pembroke before 1768</td>
<td></td>
<td>A six weeks tour</td>
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<td>Wimpole Hall</td>
<td>national trust</td>
<td>Lord Hardwicke</td>
<td>Gibbs, Flitcroft, Soane.</td>
<td>1792?</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>bathroom</td>
<td>Windsor Castle</td>
<td>queen</td>
<td>George IV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>no</td>
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<tr>
<td>bathing pavilion</td>
<td>*Wintershill Estate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>bath</td>
<td>*Witham</td>
<td></td>
<td>Philip Southcote pre 1762</td>
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<td>no</td>
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<td>bathing pavilion</td>
<td>*Witley Park</td>
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<td>Woburn Abbey</td>
<td>duke of bedford</td>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>Flitcroft and Holland.</td>
<td>1626 says Jackson, p. 6</td>
<td>try walpole</td>
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<td>bathroom</td>
<td>Wollaton Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Smythson</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>bath</td>
<td>*Wollerton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Ripley</td>
<td>c. 1740</td>
<td></td>
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<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bathroom</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>Woodlands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1800</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>Wreth Park</td>
<td>English Heritage</td>
<td>Jemima, Marchioness</td>
<td>Edward Stevens 1769</td>
<td>c. 1769-71; 1779;</td>
<td><a href="http://www">http://www</a>.</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>bath house</td>
<td>Wynnstay</td>
<td>Sir Watkin Williams-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1780</td>
<td>Girouard, p. 262; P.</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>bathroom</td>
<td>Yester House</td>
<td>Charles Hay, 3rd</td>
<td>James Smith and</td>
<td>c.1699-1710JL says</td>
<td>Vitruvius Scoticus,</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
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</table>
Appendix 2

Bathing before the Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth-century British bathroom did not, of course, emerge from a vacuum. There is evidence that, in the Bronze Age, wooden pits were filled with water and heated with hot stones for bathing and, of course, the existence of Roman baths in villas and army camps is well known, and was beginning to be well known in the eighteenth century.\(^1\) Medieval and Renaissance times abounded with conduct manuals, which reveal that regular washing was regarded as an essential part of courtly behaviour.\(^2\) Inevitably, the habits of kings and queens were the best documented: King John bathed every month and his son, Henry, purchased a French bath of stone carved in the shape of a peacock; Edward III had a bath with hot and cold running water; Henry VIII, Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth Tudor all bathed regularly, and sixteenth-century schoolboy manuals revealed that Sir John Harrington, the sixteenth-century inventor of the water closet, called for daily washing. Jane Huggett has mined fourteenth- and fifteenth-century coroner’s reports for deaths by drowning or scalding to show that regular washing was also common practice among ordinary people.\(^3\) Thornton maintains that the washtubs kept in sculleries and washhouses were often pressed into service for personal cleanliness, while disguised in inventories as laundry and kitchen equipment.\(^4\) Indeed, it seems likely that the association of dirt and poverty was mainly due to rapid urbanisation, which made access to clean water difficult for the poor. Kira rightly attributes the history of public bathing facilities with

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\(^1\) ‘Time Team Special’, channel 4, 27 June 2005; there is a reconstruction of a Roman bathhouse at Wall’s End on Hadrian’s wall; the hypocausts of Roman bathhouses can be seen in York and at Ravenglass in Cumbria. For instance, Elizabeth Grant described a visit, in 1809, to a dig in Scotland, which had revealed a Roman bath. See Elizabeth Grant, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, ed. Andrew Tod, Canongate Classics, 1992 (1898), p. 124. Nearly a century earlier, Sir John Clerk (1676–1755) had sent accounts of Roman digs taking place in the Scottish Borders. See letter, Sir John Clerk to the Earl of Hartford, 1 November 1725, National Archives of Scotland, GD18/5029.


urbanisation. It is no accident that the expression ‘the great unwashed’ is an eighteenth-century term.

Although washing, rather than bathing was the main way that previous generations had stayed clean, there were houses with bathrooms before the Restoration. Sir Francis Bacon had one at Verulam House near St Albans, and John Aubrey recounted that ‘there were two Bathing rooms, or stuffes, [from stufa meaning hot] whither his Lordship retyr’d afternoons as he saw cause’. Sir David Lindsay installed a bathhouse at the corner of his walled garden at Edzell in Angus around 1604, where it complemented his garden retreat the opposite corner, linked by walls inserted with carved panels depicting the liberal arts, the cardinal virtues and the planetary deities. However, these were the exception: the evidence suggests that there were few bathrooms and bathhouses built before 1660. There are no references to bathing rooms in most seventeenth-century inventories, and the cumulative index to the English Pevsner guides lists only two bathhouses for the seventeenth century and none for the previous centuries. We know that although people washed, they did not habitually take baths in which they immersed their bodies fully because they, and onlookers, feared full immersion. Moreover, if bathing had been a regular practice, eighteenth-century doctors would not have had to explain how to take a bath, and British writers

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6 Andrew Tod, editor of Grant’s memoirs, attributed the term to a friend of the memoirist’s politician father. See Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, ed. Andrew Tod, Canongate Classics, 1992 (1898), note 2 to p. 148.
10 Grant, pp. 39, 92.
abroad would not have needed to describe Russians, Germans and Scandinavians bathing regularly without ill effect.\textsuperscript{11}

The secondary literature points to a decline in bathing from Renaissance times across the whole of Western Europe. Giedion cites the case of Spain, where, after c. 1500, bathing was suspect because of its association with Moorish practices; Thornton describes the surprise of the French ambassador to Sweden in 1634, when he discovered that every house of any consequence had its own bath and steam bath; and Ashenburg recounts that Louis XIV and his brother Philippe would change their shirts thrice daily as a substitute for bathing.\textsuperscript{12} The decline in bathing in Britain was influenced by several factors. The stews—the public bathhouses from medieval times—were closed down from time to time because of public immorality, and bathhouses continued to be associated with adultery and prostitution until the end of the eighteenth century. Public bathhouses were also at the epicentre of epidemics (especially the syphilis epidemic of the early sixteenth century), to which was added the fear of total immersion. It is also possible that bathing was regarded as suspiciously papist. Phyllis Hembry recounts that there were 450 holy wells in medieval England, many with chapels and, sometimes, monasteries by them. Some were famous for the cure of particular diseases. Many were closed by Henry VIII as part of English religious reform. At Buxton in Derbyshire, for instance, Sir William Bassett destroyed the wells (where Mary Queen of Scots had bathed), removed the image of its patron saint, St Anne, and defaced and sealed the chapel, removing the relics of pilgrim healings—like crutches left behind by the lame. Apart from Reformation iconoclasm, pilgrimages were feared as a source of covert assembly and dissidence. However, pilgrimages to holy wells continued and, under Elizabeth I, visits to certain spas were tolerated, their religious significance somewhat toned down by the


medicalisation of the practice. James VI and I’s queen, Anne of Denmark, was
advised to bathe for her gout, and visited what was to become known as the
Queen’s Bath at Bath, placing the Stuart stamp of approval on the spa.\textsuperscript{13}

Traveller and diarist Celia Fiennes mentioned the presence of Roman
Catholics at several of the springs and wells that she visited. At Knaresborough,
Catholics came to say their prayers at the spa, and at also St Mungo’s Well near
Copgrove. St Mungo’s Well had been, Fiennes recounted, owned by a learned and
devout man, and many came for the healing available at the well. After his death,
his heirs stopped up the well so that they would not be inconvenienced by the
pilgrims, whereafter a series of misfortunes befell them before they saw the error
of their ways and re-opened it: ‘this the papists made use of very much ... some of
the Papists I saw there had so much Zeale as to continue a quarter of an hour on
their knees at their prayers in the Well, but none else could well endure it so long
at a tyme’.\textsuperscript{14} Later, Sir John Floyer, a doctor and influential author of several
works on the benefits of bathing at the turn of the eighteenth century, was to
promote the healing properties of St Mungo’s Well on the basis that ‘If we had
not these Practices from the Romans, we may be supposed to have learnt them by
our own Country Experience; for Nature seems to have taught all Nations the Use
of Cold Water, where the Art of Physick has never been yet known’.\textsuperscript{15} At St
Winifred’s Well, more Catholics worshipped, observed by an unusually tolerant
Fiennes: ‘there I saw an abundance of the devout papists on their knees all around
the Well; poor people are deluded into an ignorant blind zeale and to be pity’d by
us that have the advantage of knowing better and ought to be better’.\textsuperscript{16}

The history of wells, spas and sea bathing reveals many parallels with that
of domestic bathing. The association of water with healing probably dates from
pre-history, with the thermal baths at Bath, for instance, being associated with the
Celtic goddess Sulis.\textsuperscript{17} The baths at Bath and Buxton were developed by the

\textsuperscript{14} Fiennes, pp. 92, 94.
\textsuperscript{15} Sir John Floyer, \textit{The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived: or, an Essay to Prove Cold Bathing Both
Safe and Useful}, London, 1702, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{16} Fiennes, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{17} Peter J. Neville Havins, \textit{The Spas of England}, Robert Hale, London, 1976, p. 13; Joseph
Wechsberg, \textit{The Lost World of the Great Spas}, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1979, p. 11; and
Romans, who brought their bathing practices with them.\textsuperscript{18} When Christian missionaries first came to Britain, it was with a policy of establishing centres of worship at or near existing religious sites. A spring dedicated to pagan worship, for instance, would serve for the sacrament of baptism, and thereafter the waters would become associated with Christian rites: St Columba bathed in and blessed a well dedicated to a Pictish spirit, which thereafter became a site of Christian pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{19} The association of water with healing continued, and certain wells became known for particular cures, and particular saints. Many wells that had been dedicated to the Celtic goddess Brigantia were, by analogy, rededicated to St Brigid (or St Bride) because of the similarity of their names.\textsuperscript{20} By medieval times, the healing wells at Walsingham (Norfolk) and Holywell (Flintshire) were sites of pilgrimage and, in 1180, a monastic hospital dedicated to St John was founded at Bath.\textsuperscript{21} As late as the 1830s, there were accounts of the common people bathing and leaving gifts at holy places in a practice unbroken since pre-Christian times.\textsuperscript{22} William Thomson suggests that, for the common people, washing in holy wells was both cheaper and safer than professional medical advice.\textsuperscript{23} In addition, some landowners, on whose property the springs were to be found, continued to encourage visitors because of the financial benefits.\textsuperscript{24}

While most commentators place the revival of interest in Britain’s mineral springs and thermal baths in the seventeenth century, Allan Brodie and Gary Winter have traced revived interest to a physician, William Turner, who promoted the natural waters of England after a visit to continental Europe in 1562.\textsuperscript{25} Undoubtedly, however, the seventeenth century was a period of major growth for spas and bathing. New springs were discovered at Harrogate (1571), Tunbridge

\textsuperscript{18} Wechsberg, p. 11; and Neville Havins, pp. 11, 13.
\textsuperscript{20} Neville Havins, pp. 16–17.
\textsuperscript{21} Neville Havins, p. 12; and Wechsberg, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{22} In Wigtownshire. See \textit{Statistical Accounts of Scotland}, vol. 4, 1834–45, p. 208.
\textsuperscript{23} Thomson, pp. 6, 15.
\textsuperscript{24} Neville Havins, p. 18.
(1606), Epsom (1618) and Scarborough (c.1626). Interest in spas as a source of medical, rather than spiritual, healing was stimulated by the publication of a number of books by physicians, influenced by the work of the iatrochemists, on the benefits of mineral waters and, in the late seventeenth century, Celia Fiennes diaries show that she visited twenty-seven healing waters that were in active use. During this period, too, the reputation of spas and wells was somewhat redeemed by royal patronage and an aristocracy broadened by foreign travel during the Interregnum.

In the eighteenth century, the fashion for visiting spas grew exponentially, fuelled by a proliferation of medical texts promoting, in ever more scientific terms, the benefits of one spa or another. While some physicians’ work was clearly motivated by a desire to improve their own practice in a particular resort, the unfortunate, sometimes fatal, consequences of the intemperate consumption of purgative waters led to increasingly careful analysis of the chemical composition of spa waters. Alkaline waters were prescribed for dyspepsia, liver and gall bladder problems; effervescent waters for kidney and bladder stones; and chalybeate (iron-bearing) waters for anaemia. By the mid-eighteenth century, the fashion for visiting health resorts had taken hold, and many visited them without drinking or bathing in the waters at all. For this reason, much of the secondary literature on spas deals with the evolution of health tourism, and the fashionable life that was carried on at such resorts.

The secondary literature on seaside resorts is more voluminous than that on spas. Many place the revival of sea bathing in the 1730s, with the publication of the physician Peter Shaw’s work on the mineral composition of Scarborough’s spa waters, which identified salt water as heavier than fresh, thus exerting greater pressure on injured limbs. Others point to the rapidity with which the fashion for

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26 Neville Havins, pp. 21–2.
27 Thomson, p. 9; and Bruce Osborne and Cora Weaver, Aquae Britannica: Rediscovering Seventeenth-century Springs and Spas in the Footsteps of Celia Fiennes, Cora Weaver, Malvern, 1996, p. ix. Osborne and Weaver record nine works by seventeenth-century physicians on mineral springs, and a further nineteen in the eighteenth century.
28 Queen Henrietta Maria, Catherine of Braganza, Charles II and Queen Anne all visited spas. Wechsberg, p.16; and Neville Havins, pp. 23–4.
29 Thomson, pp. 9–10.
30 Peter Shaw, An Enquiry into the Contents, Virtues, and Uses, of the Scarborough Spaw-Waters, Osborn & Longman, London, 1734; and Brodie and Winter, p. 93.
sea bathing grew in the 1750s in response to the 1752 work of Dr Richard Russell of Brighton entitled *Dissertation on the Uses of Sea Water in the Diseases of the Glands*, while James Walvin reminds the reader of the importance of the physician Sir John Floyer’s work.\(^{31}\) Most locate the origins of sea bathing in the fashion for spas. The literature is, however, dominated by the development and urban form of Britain’s great seaside resorts, fashionable society in the eighteenth century and the mass tourism that was made possible by the coming of the railways.\(^{32}\) Allan Brodie and Gary Winter have offered the most nuanced account of the origins of sea bathing and the development of the seaside resort, while John Walton has provided a useful social history of resorts after 1750. Brodie and Winter locate the genesis of sea bathing in ancient times, with the Greeks establishing resorts around the Mediterranean by the sixth century B.C.. They were known as Asklepia after Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine and healing and, like British tourists after them, the resorts offered theatres, gymnasia and sea baths, in addition to the open sea, and the fasting and ritual sacrifice accompanying bathing for health. Public baths in Roman cities throughout the Roman Empire offered salt-water, in addition to fresh-water, baths.\(^{33}\)

Indeed, in the eighteenth century, fresh water was not yet considered the gold standard of bathing. Physicians sometimes offered recipes which replicated the benefits of sea water at home, or sometimes sea water and spa water were transported long distances for use in a domestic setting.\(^{34}\) Recipes for washes included a cooling wash for summer made with milk, fresh calf’s blood, leek juice, white lily flowers, rose, myrrh and distilled liquor; or myrrh water for winter made from goat’s milk, lamb’s blood, leek juice, lemons, strawberries and twelve egg whites, distilled in Balneo Mariae, sack, rosewater and myrrh; and a

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\(^{32}\) Walton, p. 3.

\(^{33}\) Brodie and Gray, p. 8.

\(^{34}\) Water was brought from the spa at Spa near Liège in Belgium for Lady Mary Lowther in 1765. Lady Mary also visited this resort. See letter from Rob and W.S. Stirling to Sir James Lowther, 8 February, 1765, Cumbria Record Office, D LONS/L1/1/54 1763–8.
beautifying wash of bull or ox’s galls separated from the faeces, briony juice, honey, sack, myrrh, oil of Tartar per Deliquium and sal gem. Floyer recommended blood baths for leprosy; wine baths to heat, strengthen and ease pains, and cleanse ulcers and heal wounds; oil baths for convulsions, pains, and suppression of urine; and hydro laeum baths for pains, headache, wounds, convulsion, colic and hard labour. Like the Romans, physicians sometimes dispensed with both water and receptacle, and promoted fresh air and light clothing and, especially, sea air. In the late eighteenth century, the physician A.F.M. Willich proposed that clients take regular air baths by setting aside a spacious apartment with open windows and moving about naked in the free air. Cold air would act upon the body in much the same way as the cold bath, spreading an agreeable sensation of warmth when the patient dressed again. He particularly urged sedentary and literary people to walk with heads uncovered even in the coldest air to cure complaints arising from thought and intense concentration.

The physician Sir John Colbatch built his own salt-water baths, accompanied by a steam bath, at his bathhouse in Cheshire in 1696, and a Cambridge physician sent patients to bathe at Great Yarmouth as early as 1619. However, it seems likely that sea bathing before 1730 was rare. A number of commentators do, however, refer to a continuing tradition of sea bathing among the common people of Lancashire, in which bathing in the August spring tide would cleanse and protect the bather, suggesting that the practice of sea bathing in Britain has a longer history than the written record suggests. Certainly by the 1730s many were visiting Scarborough, and sea baths had been constructed in Margate. At first, many bathed in the sea at ports like Liverpool, because of the

36 Floyer, An Enquiry, pp. 61–3.
40 Walton, p. 10; Travis, p. 9; Walvin, pp. 16–17; and Brodie and Winter, p. 13.
availability of accommodation and medical advice. 41 Baths were constructed on the shore at Great Yarmouth by 1759, and bathers were probably visiting Blackpool in the 1750s. Sea bathing naked remained common into the 1790s, and attempts to regulate men’s and women’s bathing periods were not always successful. This is relevant to the discussion of women’s bathing options discussed in chapter 4. 42 Improvements to roads in the last quarter of the eighteenth century meant that the number of coaches from London to Scarborough increased from 12 to 20, and from London to Weymouth from 12 to 73. 43 Royal patronage placed the final imprimatur on sea bathing, with George III visiting Weymouth for his health and George, Prince of Wales, patronising Brighton from 1783. 44 As with spas, by this time, visiting the seaside had become a social, rather than a health, ritual.

41 David Hussey, ““From the Temple of Hygeia to the Sordid Devotees of Pluto”: The Hotwell and Bristol: Resort and Port in the Eighteenth Century”, in Borsay (ed.), pp. 50–1.
42 Brodie and Winter, p. 94; and Travis, pp. 8–11, 14.
43 Brodie and Winter, pp. 11–13, 21–22.
44 Walton, p. 12.
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