

THROUGH THE AGES: BATH'S MEDICAL HISTORY

1 Bath Origins and King Bladud

The legend of King Bladud is the origin of the lore surrounding the medical properties of water in Bath. In 863 BCE, King Bladud returned from his travels throughout Europe with leprosy. As lepers were isolated from communities due to fear of contagion, King Bladud decided to live out his days as a swineherd in Avon Valley. After crossing the river Avon in search of acorns, his pigs, which had also contracted his disease, were cured by rolling in the mud produced by the hot springs. King Bladud saw that the mud had cured his pigs of their skin diseases and once he had bathed in the hot springs himself, he was miraculously cured and took his seat as the King of Britain.

Out of gratitude for his cure, King Bladud founded the city of Bath and dedicated it to Sul, the Celtic goddess of healing, wells, and waterways.



Photo of Bladud's statue

2 The Medieval Wall (East)

Glance down the lower road on the left of the alleyway. You should be able to see an old archway. This was the original Eastern gate of Medieval Bath. It was one of the primary routes for the citizens of Bath to access the river and the city mill in medieval times. Bath was a walled city with four main gates leading out of the city. This is one of the only remaining vestiges of the original city wall.

Why is the gate so far down compared to the city's street level today? There are a few reasons. One is that as new buildings were created over the years, the old ones were demolished and levelled out and the new buildings were built on top rather than hauling the debris out of the space. As years went by, the street level gradually rose. Secondly, floods from the River Avon and heavy rains causing erosion in the hills surrounding Bath would have left layers of silt and dirt in the city centre which could slowly build up over time. You will also notice that the Roman Baths exist below the street level for the same reason.



Photo of Bath's East Gate

3 The Roman Baths

The Roman Baths are inextricably linked to the city of Bath. Romans from all over England would travel to visit the baths, which were used for both relaxation and socializing, as well as healing and worship.

Improvements, such as a grand roof over the bath, were added in 300 CE. The large Roman Bath itself was lost after the Romans left England until the Georgian period, but the later baths of the King's Bath, Cross Bath, and Hot Bath were used by the public in the intervening years.

The first Pump Room was erected in 1706 to provide a place where the wealthy and well-to-do in Bath could drink the water from the springs without having to interact with the poor and sick who used the springs for medicinal purposes. In the 1790s it was replaced by the present pump room.

In 1878, Major Charles Davis was carrying out repairs on the King's Bath when he discovered old Roman tiles and pottery during his excavation. Further exploration unearthed the long-lost Roman baths. The Great Bath opened to visitors in 1883, and in its first year, it welcomed 10,000 visitors.

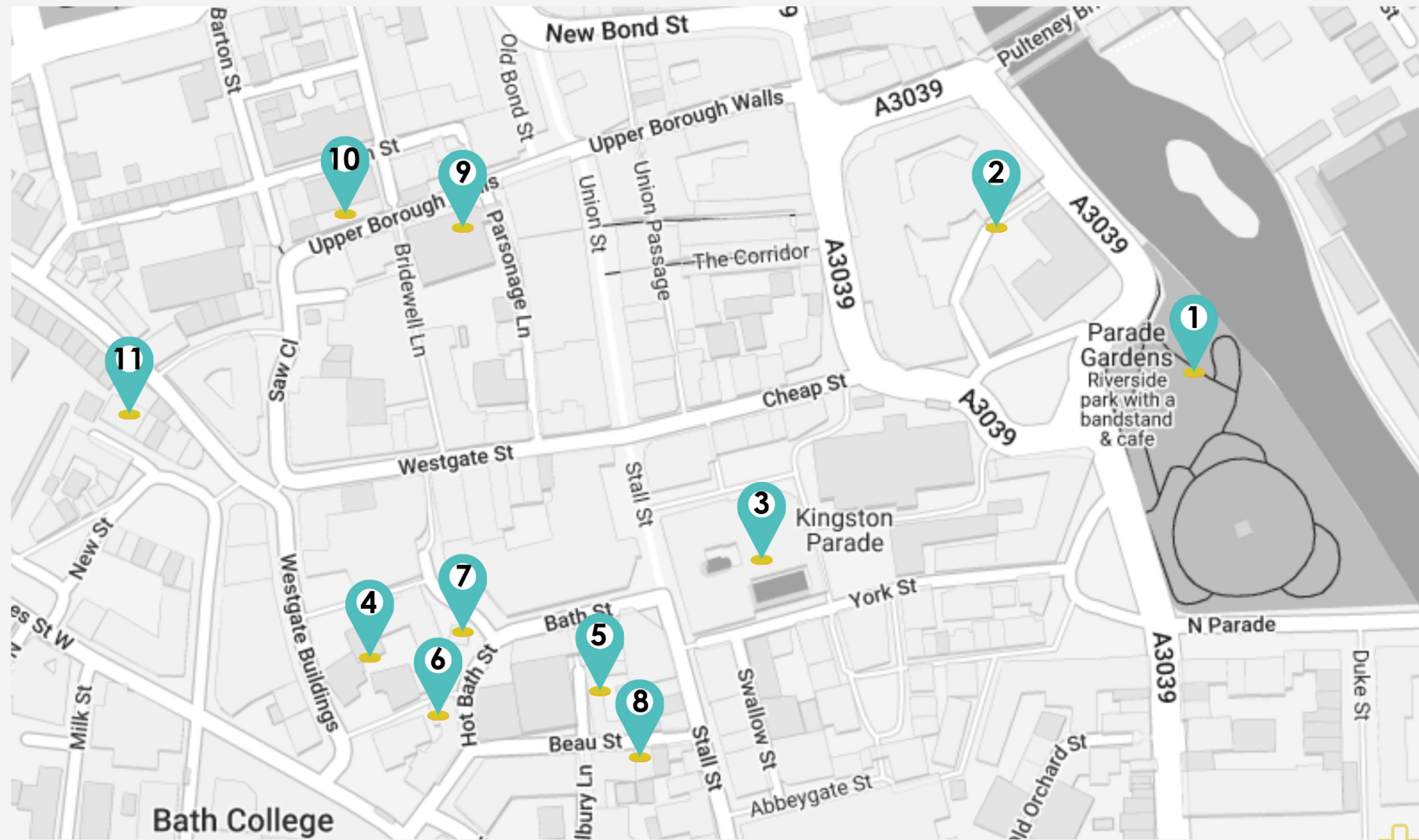
Until 1978, tourists were allowed to swim in the Great Bath once a year as part of the Bath Festival. However, after dangerous micro-organisms were found, swimming was banned permanently. Before 1976, the National Health Service (NHS) had even been prescribing the water to patients as part of their treatment.



Photograph of Roman Baths' excavation



Photograph of Roman Baths' excavation



6 The Hetling Room

The Hetling Room stand on the site of a former hospital for the poor which was located there in the 1570s. This was an ideal location, as it was in the middle of the city and had its own bath that could be used by the sick to avoid contamination of the Hot Bath. After the hospital for the poor was demolished in the early 1700s, the building served as an almshouse for poor travellers coming to the city to use the baths. In 1717, a wealthy apothecary William Skrine developed the building as a bathing facility so that the thermal waters located beneath it could be accessed by the general public.

The man for whom the building is now named did not come to Bath until the mid-18th century. Ernst von Hetling was a member of King George I's Hanoverian court. He came from Germany with King George and decided to build a pump room on this site fed by the spring beneath.

7 The Cross Bath

The Cross Bath originated in Roman times. The origin of the name "The Cross Bath" is a matter of conjecture. Some believe it is named after a dead saint whose body passed through Bath on its journey to Malmesbury in 709, while others believe it was rededicated during the fall of the Roman Empire. The exact origin is unknown, but by the time William Smith created the first map of Bath in 1568, the Cross Bath was known by this name.

The Cross Bath was the least hot of all the city's medieval baths, making it useful for medical treatments in the summer, as it was more tolerable for patients. Due to its location further from the King's and Queen's Baths, the Cross Bath was not as popular until King Charles II brought his wife Catherine of Braganza to the bath in an attempt to cure her infertility. The Cross Bath was most likely chosen due to its surrounding high walls that provided privacy for the royal patient. The treatment did not cure her, but it did turn the attention of the wealthy in London towards Bath.

The Cross Bath gradually fell out of favour and became known as the "second-class" bath due to its tepid water and small size. Boys from a local school would often throw stones and bottles over the walls on their way home from school, leading to a net being strung over the open roof of the Cross Bath. At present, the Cross Bath is managed by Thermae Bath Spa.



Cross Bath

4 St John's Hospital

As the popularity of the baths in Bath increased, people from all over England flocked to the city to try out the miraculous cure for themselves. It was not just the rich and powerful, but also paupers and beggars who needed a free cure. Because they were unable to pay for accommodation, St John's Hospital was founded around 1176 by the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

In the past, a hospital was also a term used for long-term care facilities where people lived but did not receive formal medical treatment. It was a place for poor people to stay, what were later to be termed almshouses.

This spot was chosen specifically because it was next to the thermal baths, which allowed easy access for patients who were ill or frail to still use the baths.

St John's Hospital still functions today providing affordable accommodation for senior residents of Bath.

5 St Catherine's Hospital

St Catherine's was an almshouse for paupers that was founded in 1420 by a wealthy clothier named William Philips. It was built in 1444 around this location, although some maps place it further south on the other side of Beau Street. It was rebuilt in 1553 when money from King Edward was gifted to the hospital at which time the plaque above the door was installed. It eventually came under the same management as St John's Hospital and Bellotts Hospital. It is now used as tourist accommodation, which generates extra income for the work being done at St John's.

8 Bellotts Hospital

Bellotts Hospital was named after Thomas Bellott, the steward of Lord Burghley. Queen Elizabeth I and Lord Burghley had visited Bath in 1576 as part of her royal tour and while there, Bellott became interested in the city and the mineral waters used. After Lord Burghley's death, Bellott was tasked with giving a large sum of Burghley's money to charity. Using this money, he endowed an almshouse for poor male visitors who needed to use the mineral water. The Coat of Arms over the doorway is that of Lord Burghley and the Latin inscription reads "Do not leave dormant in your store that which would relieve the poor. If the poor sleep soundly, so will you."

Within Bellott's, there were 12 rooms for patients, collected around a centralized courtyard. An early admissions book from the hospital has survived giving descriptions of patients' ailments and other details. Bellott's was the first institution in Bath to act more like a modern hospital than an almshouse. It had a master and matron in residence and a visiting physician and surgeon. Patients could only stay for a month.

The original building was demolished in the 19th century and replaced with the present one. Bellott's is now part of the Gainsborough Hotel.



Heraldic plaque on Bellot's Hospital exterior

9 The Royal Mineral Water Hospital

As Bath's reputation for its medicinal waters grew, more and more people came to the city to consult medical practitioners and experience the waters for themselves. The sheer number of visitors led to overcrowding in the city, which lacked affordable accommodation for poorer travellers, and led to beggars and vagrants on the streets. From 1716 to 1723, five leading philanthropists in Bath raised funds to build a public hospital to treat the poor who came to the city.

The Bath General Hospital, designed by John Wood, was opened in 1742 under the direction of the senior surgeon Mr Jeremiah Pierce and physician and treasurer Dr William Oliver. Because it was a voluntary hospital, patients were able to stay for free apart from "caution money" that was collected on admission to offset expenses during their stay. The most common conditions treated at the hospital in the 18th century were skin diseases and disorders affecting mobility like paralysis and arthritis.

The hospital has had three different names during its history. First known as the Bath General Hospital, it was renamed the Royal Mineral Water Hospital in 1837 following a visit from Queen Victoria. In 1936, the name was changed again to become the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases.

The old building now stands empty after the NHS moved the RNHRD to the Royal United Hospital site in 2019. The building was bought by an international hotel chain and is awaiting development.



Royal Mineral Water Hospital



Photo of the King's Ward in the Royal Mineral Water Hospital

10 Grave Ditch/Northern City Wall

At the inception of the Royal Mineral Water Hospital, a site for a burial ground was located just outside the northern city wall. A remnant of this medieval wall can be seen running along Upper Borough Walls near the hospital which was initially on the edge of the enclosed city. The burial ground was used for patients who died during their time in hospital.

11 Bath Casualty Hospital

During the mid to late 18th century, Bath enjoyed a period of major construction. Due to the sheer amount of building that was occurring, workplace accidents were common, often due to workers falling from great heights or drowning in the river. The Bath Casualty Hospital was founded in 1788 to provide care for injured workers who could not afford treatment from private practitioners. At the time, most hospitals only treated patients who could pay or who were sponsored by a wealthy patron. The only criterion for receiving care at the Casualty Hospital was being involved in a severe accident or emergency.

From its inception, Bath Casualty Hospital was plagued by overcrowding. In 1789, Bath Casualty Hospital received an offer from Bath City Infirmary and Dispensary to merge into a single larger organization. This offer was initially rejected by James Norman due to a dispute over admission requirements. Bath Casualty Hospital would treat anyone with a serious injury, while Bath City Infirmary would only provide care to people with parish sponsorship, a much less accessible option for the poor. When the hospital's stakeholders voted to approve the merger, Norman resigned in protest.

The two medical groups joined in 1823 and became the Bath United Hospital. The original hospital building is on Beau Street and has been redeveloped as the Gainsborough Hotel.



3 BATH STATUTORY HOSPITAL - BRASSKNOCKER HILL

Infectious diseases have been a major health concern for centuries. Isolation wards were typically the solution, with sick patients either placed in a special ward or confined to their homes until they recovered or succumbed to the illness.

In 1875, Bath began planning a specialist hospital for infectious diseases. It was one of the first isolation hospitals built in the country. The site at the summit of Brassknocker Hill was purchased in 1876, and the first patient was admitted with scarlet fever later that year. The hospital initially had a capacity of 70 patients and a few resident staff.

The Bath Statutory Hospital treated a number of outbreaks, including smallpox, scarlet fever, and diphtheria. Of the average 137 annual admissions, 78% were scarlet fever patients and 22% were diphtheria patients. Most of the patients were children.

A major outbreak of smallpox in 1880 brought an influx of patients from St Martin's workhouse to the isolation hospital for treatment.

Immunity to scarlet fever increased during the first half of the 20th century and after WWII, the disease had virtually disappeared. Diphtheria immunization became available in the 1920s. Measles decreased in severity in Bath following the 1915 epidemic and later became an uncommon illness due to vaccination efforts.

A new stone hospital was erected on the site in 1934 to replace the original wooden structures. The NHS took over the hospital in 1948 and renamed it Claverton Down Hospital. It continued to operate as an infectious diseases hospital, focusing primarily on polio.

After the development of effective vaccination programs, infectious childhood diseases became less common, making an isolation hospital largely unnecessary. In the years leading up to its closure, the hospital primarily served as an overflow facility for St. Martin's Hospital. The hospital was permanently closed in 1986, and responsibility for infectious diseases was transferred to the Royal United Hospital. The buildings were demolished in 2000, and the site was transferred to Wessex Water. No part of the hospital remains.



Aerial view of Bath Statutory Hospital



A nurse and 3 patients at Bath Statutory Hospital

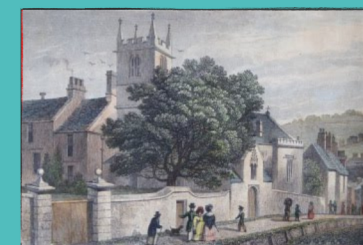
OPTIONAL SOUTHERN ROUTE

1 LEPROSY HOSPITAL - 90 HOLLOWAY

In 1138, Walter Hussey donated his house next to St Mary Magdalene's chapel on Holloway to the church to be used as a leper hospital. There was no cure for leprosy in Norman times, so patients were often isolated and given limited comfort and spiritual care as they awaited the disease to take its course. Only a small number of patients could have been accommodated in the Leper Hospital.

Although leprosy was on the decline in England by the 15th century, patients with scaly skin diseases continued to make pilgrimages to Bath to use the waters. They probably had conditions like psoriasis and eczema which were termed leprosy well into the 18th century.

After a period of mismanagement and reduced funding, a new leper hospital was built within the Bath city walls in 1576 on the site now occupied by the Hetling Rooms where it accommodated poor patients with skin diseases until it was demolished in 1700. They had their own secluded bath, annexed to the Hot Bath, which reduced the risk of contagion.

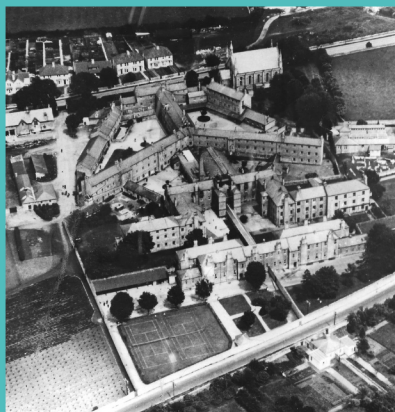


Painting of Chapel - Leper Hospital on the right

2 ST MARTIN'S HOSPITAL - MIDFORD ROAD

St Martin's Hospital, located south of the city of Bath, was opened in 1836 as a workhouse with a capacity of approximately 600 people. The workhouse was dedicated to St Martin, the patron saint of the poor. It was established to relieve the burden of providing accommodation for the poor of Bath from the shoulders of 24 individual parishes and to create a unified system under the Poor Law Amendment of 1834. The inmates at the facility were often sick, old, or incapable of work, thus a workhouse infirmary was needed to treat any inmates within the workhouse. Female inmates often worked as "nurses" in the infirmary, under the supervision of a single-trained Workhouse Medic.

In 1857, the Bath Workhouse Infirmary opened two separate "lunatic wards" for men and women, as it was cheaper than sending inmates to the Wells Asylum. In 1937, the workhouse infirmary was renamed St Martin's Hospital, but the building was not updated. The hospital was financed by the local council. In 1948, the National Health Service (NHS) took over St Martins, and it began to function as an NHS general hospital for the south of Bath and its hinterland. However, St Martins had a bad reputation, particularly among the elderly who remembered it as the hated poor house. In 2000, the NHS started downsizing St Martins and moved many of its units to the Royal United Hospital. The original workhouse hexagon, the "lunatic wards", the chapel and the bakery still stand.



Aerial view of St. Martin's

Important Medics in Bath

Bath would not be the city it is today without the accomplishments of doctors, surgeons, dentists, and inventors. Journey with the Bath Medical Museum looks at some of the most influential medics of the day and how they helped Bath become a leading city in medicine, health and wellness from the Georgian Period until the present.

1 Charles Bavé - 10 Lower Borough Walls

Charles Bavé descended from a family of doctors. His grandfather, Samuel Bavé was born in Germany and travelled to France to study medicine before coming to Oxford as a tutor where he gained his degree in Medicine. His original practice was in Gloucester before moving to Bath to create a lucrative medical practice. Charles Bavé followed in his grandfather's footsteps to practice medicine. He also gained his Doctor of Medicine degree from Oxford and set up a practice in Bath. Charles was seen as a sound doctor, often in correspondence with doctors in London and Bath. Dr Bavé was one of the members who helped set up the Bath General Hospital (now Royal Mineral Water Hospital) in Bath, along with his brother Francis Bavé. The family trade continued with his nephew Henry, a physician at the Bath General Hospital.

2 Jerry Pierce - The Royal Mineral Water Hospital

Jerry Pierce was born in London in 1696 to a wealthy merchant family. Jerry Pierce operated as a surgeon in Bath and his original posting was at Bellotts hospital off of Beau Street. Pierce, along with his contemporaries of Oliver and Bave, were involved in the administration of the Royal Mineral Water Hospital in its early years. In 1740, Pierce was promoted to primary surgeon at the Royal Mineral Water Hospital where he remained until his resignation in 1761. In his daily life, Pierce was a proponent of the arts in Bath and was close friends with prominent members of the community like William Hoare who painted the picture of Pierce and Oliver that hangs in the RUH.



Jerry Peirce (Centre) and William Oliver (Right) treating an injured man

3 John Rudge - New Bond Street Place

Until the late 1800s, doctors had no way to look inside the human body without exploratory surgery. This all changed with the invention of the X-ray. The X-ray allowed doctors in Bath to look at medical problems without invasive surgery and this couldn't have been possible without the work of John Rudge whose plaque resides here on New Bond Street Place.

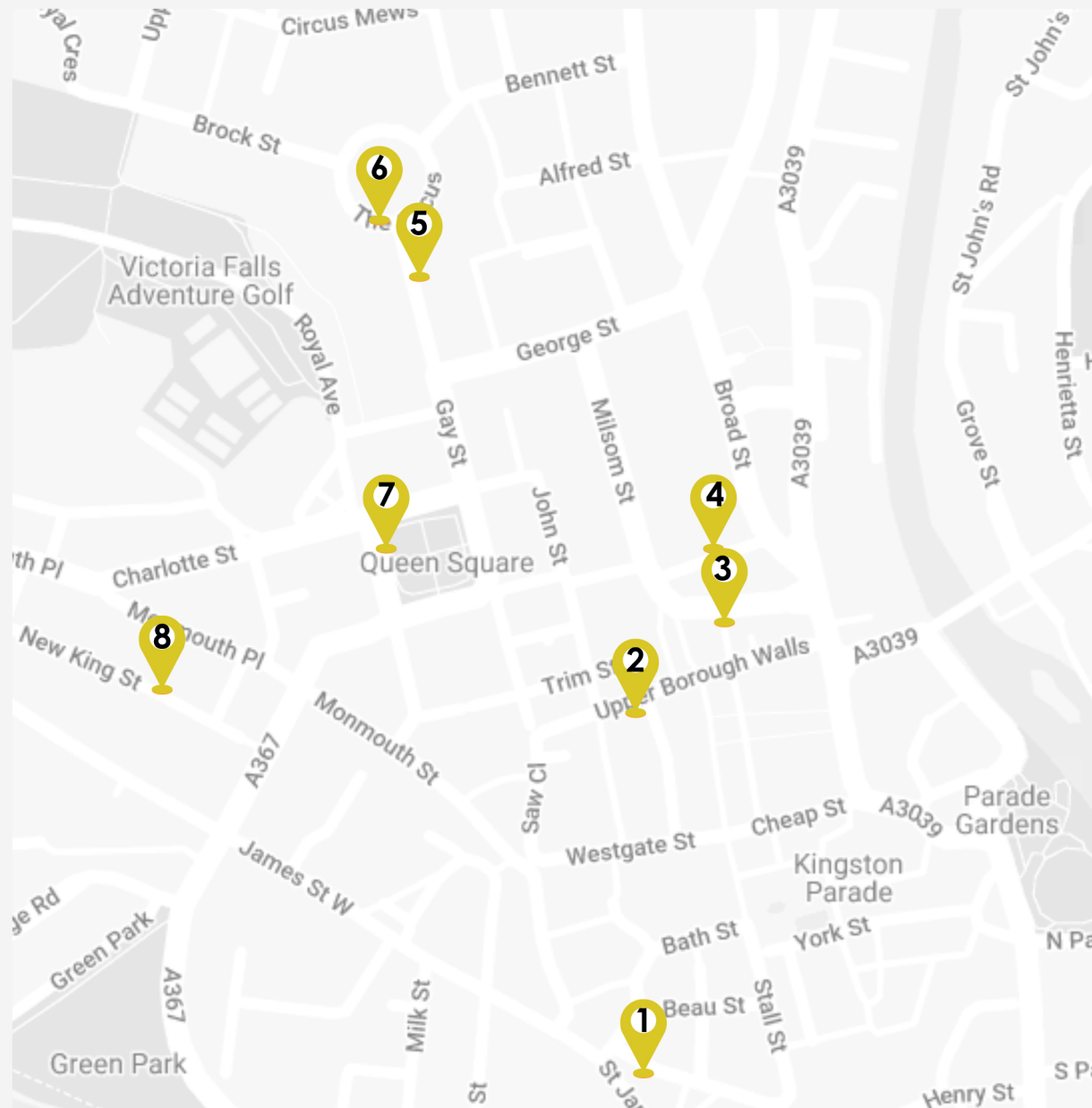
John Rudge was not a doctor. He was an inventor and maker of scientific instruments who saw the use of X-rays as invented by William Röntgen and decided to recreate his findings here in Bath. He used his equipment at the Royal United Hospital to help locate a needle in the hand of a patient, and a bullet in the finger of another. He sold his X-ray equipment to the Royal United Hospital for £30 in 1901. He was also said to be the man who brought electric light to Bath and had a hand in the creation of modern cinema through his work with the Biophantic Lantern.



Early radiograph of an arthritic hand



Early X-Ray machine. Photo credit: Wellcome Collection



4 John Goldstone - Green Street

What do you do when you have a toothache? In the days before dentistry, a toothache meant a visit to the local blacksmith to get your tooth pulled out with pliers - a painful and dangerous process that could lead to a broken jaw, infection, and in some cases death.

Dentistry is a relatively new field in the history of medicine. The first professional dentists were trained in France and then sent out across Europe as travelling practitioners to treat people. These dentists had an almost celebrity status, thanks to their porcelain dentures and tooth powders. The two main dental issues people suffered from at the time were scurvy, which led to gum inflammation and loosened teeth, and gingivitis, an inflammation of the gums. These conditions came with bad breath. Author Tobias Smollett described the smell of the Assembly Rooms in the 1700s as foul due to the bad breath emanating from the socialites.

John Goldstone established a dental practice on Green Street, where he performed tooth scaling, prescribed tinctures for gum disease and scurvy, and provided other dental services such as tooth preservation and whitening.

Cavities were picked clean with a tool before being filled with gold, lead, or a paste to stop the continued erosion of the tooth. Mercury and silver were used as cavity fillings in England until the 1980s.



Painting of a tooth extraction.
Photo credit: Wellcome Collection

5 Dr Mary Morris - 19 Gay Street

Mary Morris was born in Wales in 1873 and grew up in Malta before returning to Wales to gain her medical degree from the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth before finishing her training at the London Society of Medicine for Women in London. She became the first female doctor in Aberystwyth. After a stint working in London, Dr Morris moved to Bath where she became the first female Medical Inspector of School Children as well as having a private practice in Bath.

In her first year as a school medical inspector, she was commended for her skill and efficiency in her duties. She examined over 2,500 children in the first four months of her post and found 200 with physical defects. She published comprehensive reports that aimed to solve issues in nutrition, mental and physical health, dental care and proper development markers.

She was the commandant of the St Johns Ambulance Nursing Division, created and examined scientific studies at the Bathwick Ladies School to ensure girls were getting taught sciences to a proper degree, and trained young people in first aid and hygiene.

Dr Morris also worked extensively with patients with intellectual disabilities. She was the local secretary for the "The After Care Association for Poor Persons Discharged Recovered from Asylums for the Insane" and led training sessions at the Bath Royal Scientific and Literary Institution on the challenges of care for patients with intellectual disabilities.

It should be noted that in 1917, Dr Morris made considerably less than her male colleagues who were paid the Doctor's Union Trade Rate. Dr Morris was also a known suffragist and co-led many of the suffrage meetings in Bath at her house at 19 Gay Street in the early 1900s. In 1910, she was named one of the first female councillors in the country.



Dr Mary Morris

6 George Norman - 1 The Circus

Very little is known about George Norman's early life besides the fact that he was born in 1783 in Bath, soon after his family's relocation to Bath from Bristol. In 1801, George Norman became his father's assistant at the Bath Casualty Hospital. In 1817 he took up the role of the principal surgeon upon his father's retirement and went on to become senior surgeon at the United Hospital when it opened in 1826. By 1833, he was a very wealthy and influential surgeon in Bath, evidenced by his residence at No 1 The Circus, the city's most prestigious address.

George Norman served as the Mayor of Bath in 1834 and 1841 as well as serving as an alderman and a city councillor in the intervening years. He also served as the Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Somerset, all while working as a surgeon at the Royal United Hospital. Upon his retirement, a bust was erected in the RUH in his honour. There is also has a stained-glass window inside the Bath Abbey that was created in his honour for his work in the city.

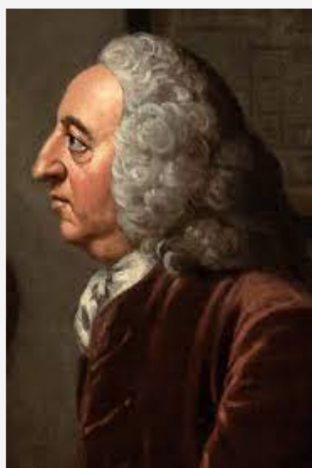
7 Dr William Oliver - 19 Queen Square

The building in front of you at 19 Queen Square was once the residence of Dr William Oliver, a prominent physician in Bath during the Georgian era. While the plaque commemorating Dr Oliver is located at 20 Queen Square, the home of the Bath Royal Scientific and Literary Institution, further research has revealed that Dr Oliver rented the houses on the north end of the block (18a-20) rather than the central house.

Dr Oliver was born in Cornwall. He completed his university education at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he earned his M.D. degree after 11 years of study. He moved to Bath, where he began to practise medicine and network with influential people, including Ralph Allen, a prominent businessman who owned many of the quarries surrounding Bath. Dr Oliver became very successful in Bath and was a very influential man, both as a doctor and as a member of Bath society.

Dr Oliver was involved in the creation of the Royal Mineral Water Hospital in Bath, which was opened in 1742 on Upper Borough Walls. He served as one of the original physicians at the hospital, along with Jeremiah (Jerry) Pierce. Dr Oliver also played a large role in the hospital's administration and created the guidelines for patient admission and discharge.

His work at the Mineral Hospital helped to establish Bath as a destination for medical maladies and miracle cures. Most of Dr Oliver's work has been discredited and questioned on its validity and today he is often best known for being the inventor of the Oliver Biscuit, a bland cracker originally prescribed to patients suffering from indigestion but now often paired with cheese and wine.



Dr Oliver, cropped from painting by William Hoare

8 James Norman - 24 New King Street

James Norman, newly arrived in Bath from Bristol in 1783 where he had trained as a surgeon, saw a major gap in the medical provision being offered in Bath. The workers, injured on the job during the construction boom in Bath, were unable to pay for medical treatment and were left to join the poor in the streets of Bath, unable to work or provide due to their injuries. Mr Norman decided to create a hospital that only had one rule for admission: involvement in a severe accident. Mr Norman worked for free for the first two years to ensure all patients were cared for until funding could be secured for the newly created Bath Casualty Hospital.

Mr Norman began to create revenue for the Bath Casualty Hospital in a variety of ways. One was through parish fundraising. As the care of the poor in Bath was funded almost solely by the parish churches, the Bath Casualty Hospital was an economically sound endeavour as it allowed patients to rejoin the workforce rather than rely on the charity of the parish churches. This funding improved as more parish churches began to see the benefits of supporting the hospital. Another way he increased funding was by offering apprenticeships.

After two years of free services, Mr Norman began to be compensated for his work at a rate of 40 guineas per year with the agreement that his income would grow as the charity grew. This was a very low wage, particularly for a doctor, equal to less than a year's wage for a labourer at the time. During this point, he lived in St John's Court - a working-class area of town across the Avon from Walcot before moving to New King Street as his fortunes increased.

James Norman worked at the Bath Casualty Hospital as the principal surgeon until his retirement in 1820 due to a disagreement over the merger of the Bath Casualty Hospital with the Bath City Infirmary and Dispensary to create the Royal United Hospital. His disagreement was based on the admission requirements as the Bath City Infirmary and Dispensary had a strict policy that excluded the unemployed from receiving treatment. James Norman faded into the background of the medical field in Bath, leaving the space for his son George Norman to step up as the new principal doctor at the newly created Royal United Hospital.

OPTIONAL SOUTH WEST ROUTE

9 CLARA CROSS - MIDFORD ROAD (ST MARTIN'S HOSPITAL)

Dr Clara Cross was born in Sheffield, South Yorkshire in 1900. She grew into adulthood during WWI where her dream of becoming a doctor began. She qualified for a medical scholarship and began practising as a doctor in the early 1920s. She practised as a doctor in Sheffield in the mid-1920s before taking a Locum job in Treeton, just outside Sheffield. Dr Cross became the first female doctor admitted to the Royal College of Physicians.

When WWII broke out, Dr Cross was tasked with turning St Martin's Hospital into a functioning wartime Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Hospital in Bath to receive injured service personnel. She also furthered the medical field through her work with blood transfusions and working to solve the Rh factor issue between expectant mothers and their children.

Dr Cross retired from her role as a Pathologist at St Martin's in 1965 but worked for many more years as a General Practitioner. In her honour, one of the buildings at St Martin's Hospital is named the Clara Cross Building.



Aerial Photograph of St Martin's Hospital

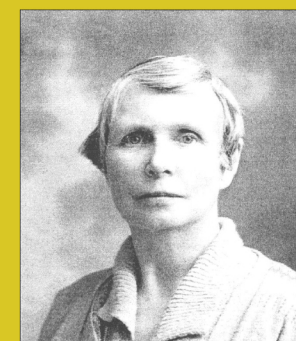


St Martin's Workhouse Staff

10 MAUD FORESTER BROWN - ROYAL UNITED HOSPITAL

Not much is known about the early life of Maud Forrester-Brown. Born in 1885, she studied medicine at the London School of Medicine for Women and she graduated with a Doctor of Medicine in 1914 before getting her Masters of Science in 1920. During her early years as a doctor, Dr Forrester-Brown worked as a house surgeon before completing a scholarship abroad in Orthopaedic surgery. Once she returned to England, Dr Forrester-Brown worked in Bath at the Bath and Wessex Orthopaedic Hospital, part of the present-day Royal United Hospital in Combe Park. Dr Forrester-Brown's speciality was tendon transplants, which she performed at a 99% success rate for restoring function to the damaged limb.

After leaving her residency in Bath, Dr Forrester-Brown went on to establish three children's hospitals in counties around England, pushed for changes in school equipment to ensure children got proper spinal support and collaborated with shoe companies to make children's orthopaedic shoes. In 1931, she was appointed Secretary of the British Medical Association, and she served as vice-president of the Orthopaedic section. Into retirement, Dr Forrester-Brown continued to visit children's hospitals and complete research. Forrester-Brown Ward at the Royal United Hospital is named in her honour and receives patients with trauma and orthopaedic conditions.



Photograph of Maud Forrester Brown

Bath Medicine and Women

Join the Bath Medical Museum on a tour of how women have helped shape medicine in Bath. From Bath's inception as a Roman settlement until the present, women have been a part of the narrative of Bath and its medical history. On this walk, we will explore the fascinating women who have accomplished extraordinary feats in the medical field right here in Bath. Created with thanks to Joy Roberts from Bath City Guides.

1 Lock Hospital - 110 Walcot Street

On June 12, 1816, a committee of men in the city of Bath met at the Guildhall to address the problem of "fallen women" in the city. They decided that the establishment of a Lock Hospital and Penitentiary would allow these women to be treated for venereal diseases and re-educated so that they could re-join society. To achieve this, the penitentiary was expanded at the original site to accommodate 20 inmates instead of the previous 6, a ward was added to the penitentiary specifically for inpatient care, an outpatient surgery and medical facility were created, and a recommendation system was implemented for inpatients to be brought to the hospital. This endeavour was fully supported by private donations from wealthy members of Bath society.

The women, once admitted, were not allowed to leave the premises and spent their days working, either in the kitchens and cleaning on-site, or doing manual labour to create income for the hospital itself. The inmates also had two religious services per day, along with a special Sunday service weekly run by one of the parish fathers on a rotating basis.



Photo of Ladymead House, used in the early 1800s as a Female Penitentiary and Lock Hospital

2 Dr Mary Morris - 19 Gay Street

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Mary Morris (left) with other prominent suffragettes in Bath.

3 Elizabeth Hastings - Royal Mineral Water Hospital

Lady Elizabeth Hastings was a prominent philanthropist in England. She was a major supporter of public health, women's education and evangelical mission. She was given a considerable inheritance upon the death of her father and used that money to further social change in the United Kingdom. A single woman by choice, Lady Hastings held sole responsibility for her income for her whole life.

Lady Hastings did not have a connection with Bath besides its use as a vacation spot, as was common with the rich and powerful at the time. However she was one of the original five philanthropists who fundraised and donated to the creation of the Bath General Hospital.

In 1738, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent a mastectomy, which was done without anaesthesia. She died at the end of 1739 but her legacy continues through her many charitable works across the country.



Portrait of Elizabeth Hastings

4 Rebecca Fountain - Bath Abbey

Hidden in plain sight, the Rebecca Drinking Fountain sits between Bath Abbey and the Guildhall. Featuring the inscription "Water is Best", this fountain showcases a sculpture of Rebecca, a biblical character known for drawing water from a spring with a jar on her shoulder. Created in 1861 by the Bath Temperance Association, the fountain aimed to provide clean public drinking water and offer an alternative to alehouses on the high street. Despite mixed opinions, the statue has faced significant vandalism during its 160-year existence.

5 Sulis Minerva - Roman Baths

It would be remiss to speak about women and medicine in Bath without looking at the female patron of medicine in Bath. Sulis Minerva was worshipped by the Romano-British that inhabited the UK during the Roman times. Sul was the Celtic goddess of healing, water, hot springs and curses. She was the local goddess of the Bath hot springs, known to the Romans as Aquae Sulis. Her Roman counterpart was Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and justice. A large temple to Sulis Minerva stood in this area near the Roman Baths so that visitors could pay tribute to the goddess and ask for healing. This practice was used until the 4th century CE. Notably, mentions of Sulis Minerva are local to Bath except for one inscription in Alzay, Germany.

6 Royalty at the Cross Bath

The Cross Bath has a royal history. Several queens have bathed in this bath looking for a cure for infertility.

Due to its location further from the King's and Queen's Baths, the Cross Bath was not as popular until King Charles II brought his wife Catherine of Braganza to the bath in an attempt to cure her infertility. The Cross Bath was most likely chosen due to its surrounding high walls that provided privacy for the royal patient. The treatment did not cure her, but it did turn the attention of the wealthy in London towards Bath.

Royalty visited the Cross Bath again with James II and his second wife, Mary of Modena, who was also seen as infertile. Mary used the Cross Bath for a year before miraculously becoming pregnant and giving birth to a son. A large sculptural structure called the Melfort Cross was commissioned by James II for the Cross Bath in honour of the medical treatment given to Mary of Modena. It had three stone cherubs as part of its entablature, one of which was moved to a niche on the building at the north end of Old Bond Street. There are also some pieces from the Melfort Cross on view in the Hetling Pump Room.

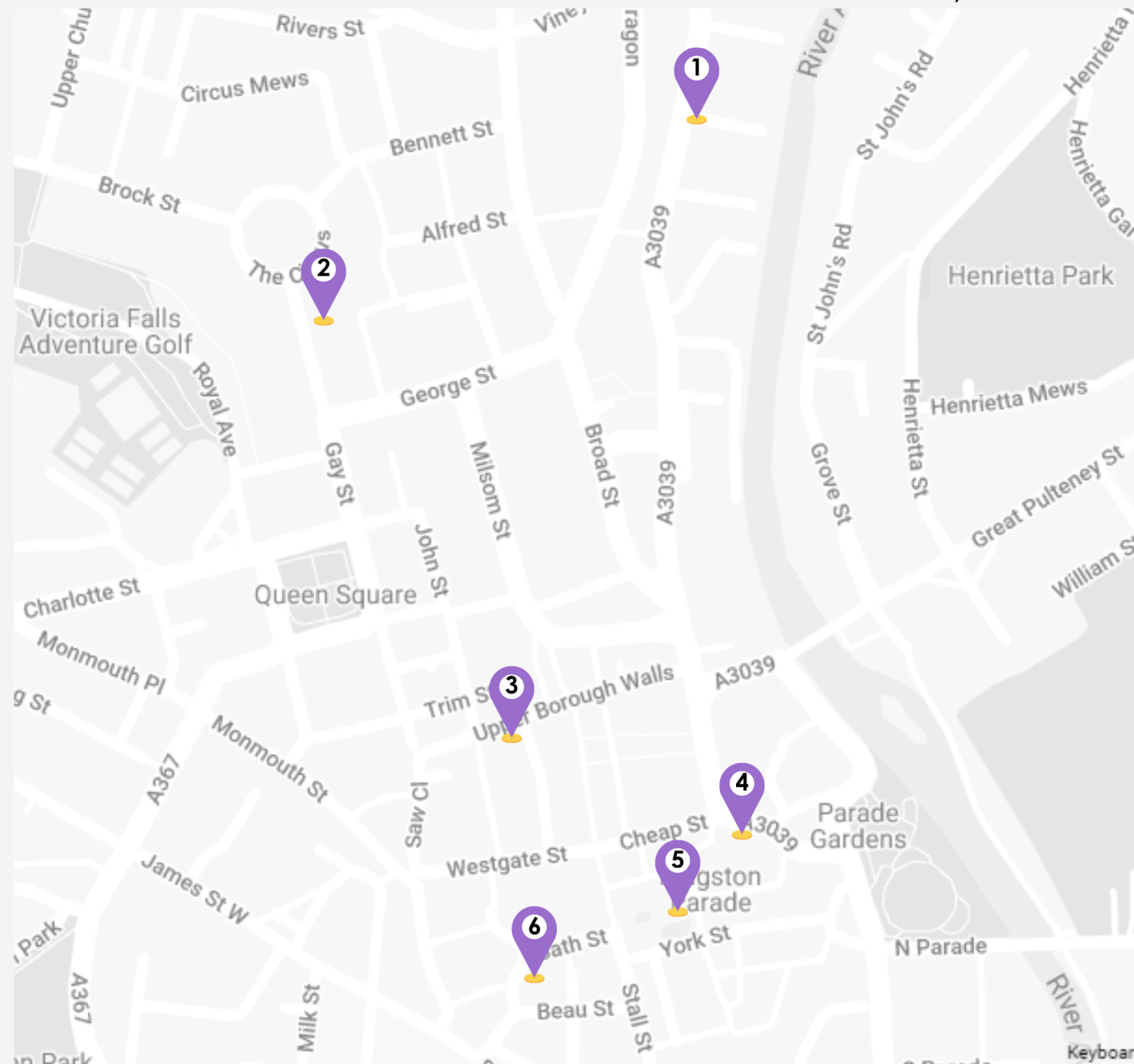
It is likely that Queen Anne also bathed at the Cross Bath during one of her four royal visits to Bath but it cannot be confirmed.



Portrait of Catherine of Braganza



Portrait of Mary of Modena



7 Prue Dufour - Bloomfield Road

One of the major charity shops seen around Bath is in support of Dorothy House, founded by Prue DuFour. Dorothy does not refer to a specific person but the name means "Gift from God".

Prue trained as a nurse at Middlesex Hospital in London where she worked with terminally ill children before taking a position as a staff nurse on the radiotherapy ward in Bath. Prue was inspired by the work done by St Christopher's Hospice in London. In 1976, she opened up her own home in Bloomfield Road as hospice care for terminally ill patients. This then expanded to include the neighbouring property before moving to a site in Winsley, where Dorothy House remains. Prue died in 2004 but her legacy lives on as Dorothy House is the primary hospice centre for North Somerset, West Wiltshire and Bath.



Photo of Prue Dufour



Winsley Location of Dorothy House

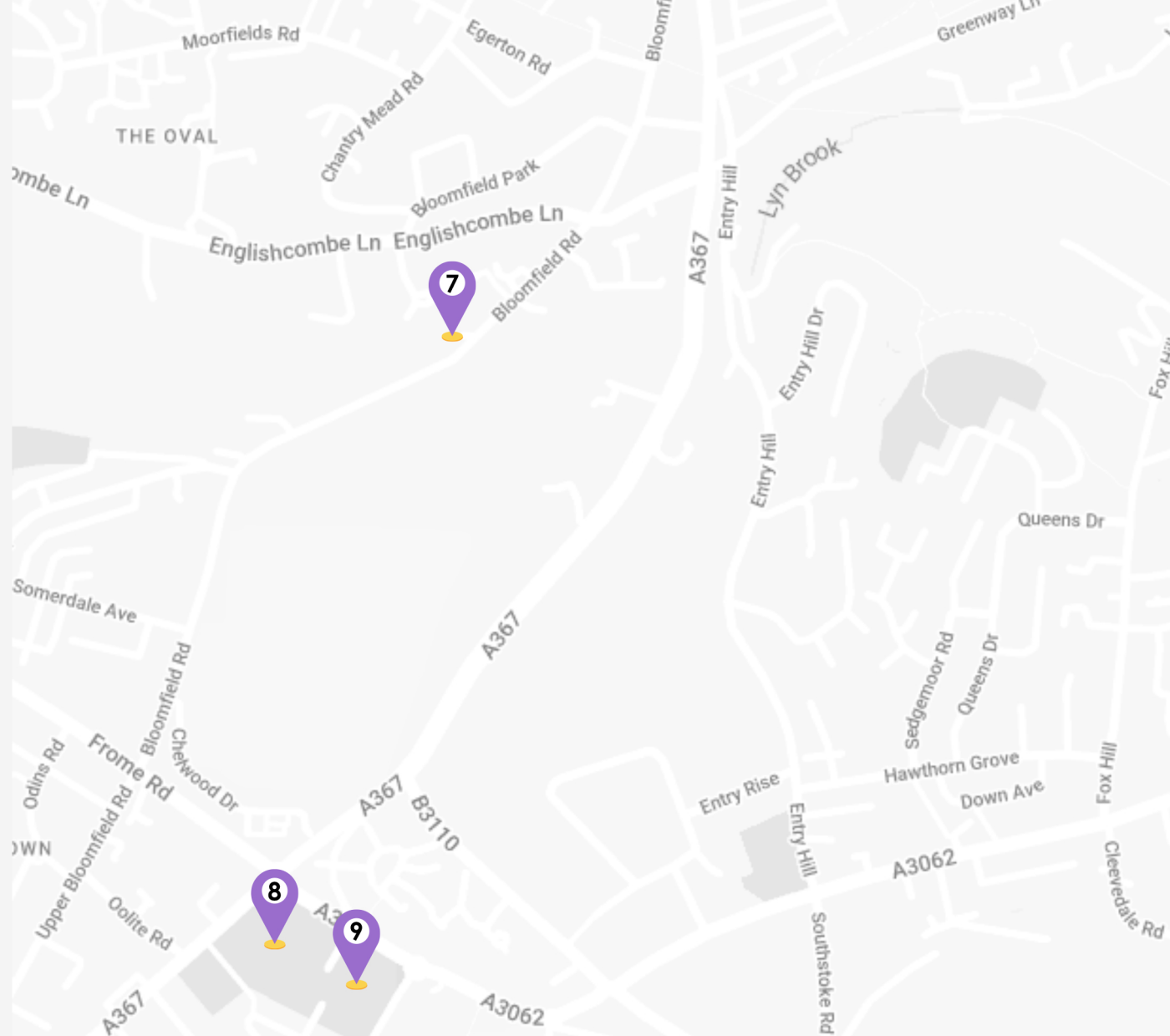
8 Emma Sheppard - St Martin's Hospital

Emma Sheppard was a local woman from Bath who was a social activist and author in the 19th century. Sheppard was highly involved in the community, particularly in the conditions within workhouses and their hospital wards. She wrote a pamphlet detailing her experience as a workhouse visitor and it circulated around Frome and Bath before gaining traction in wider social circles. Sheppard expanded upon these findings to write the book "Sunshine in the Workhouse". A portion of these findings were from her visit to the Bath Workhouse that became St Martin's Hospital.

She also ran a "Magdalen Institute", similar to a Lock Hospital but allowed the patients greater freedom and functioned more like a half-way house than a penitentiary. She died of a stroke in 1871 where she was laid to rest in Frome. In her honour, the dementia day care centre is named the Emma Sheppard Centre.



Photograph of St Martin's Workhouse

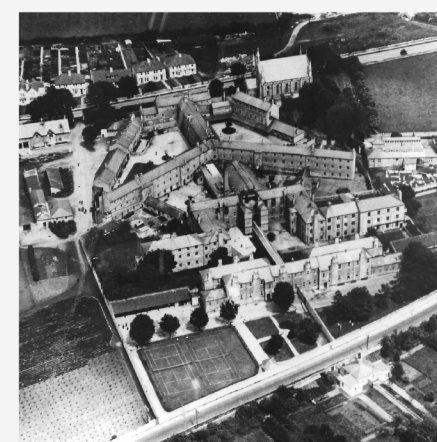


9 Clara Cross - St Martin's Hospital

Dr Clara Cross was born in Sheffield, South Yorkshire in 1900. She grew into adulthood during WWI where her dream of becoming a doctor began. She qualified for a medical scholarship and began practising as a doctor in the early 1920s. She practised as a doctor in Sheffield in the mid-1920s before taking a Locum job in Treeton, just outside Sheffield. Dr Cross became the first female doctor admitted to the Royal College of Physicians.

When WWII broke out, Dr Cross was tasked with turning St Martin's Hospital into a functioning wartime Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Hospital in Bath to receive injured service personnel. She also furthered the medical field through her work with blood transfusions and working to solve the Rh factor issue between expectant mothers and their children.

Dr Cross retired from her role as a Pathologist at St Martin's in 1965 but worked for many more years as a General Practitioner. In her honour, one of the buildings at St Martin's Hospital is named the Clara Cross Building.

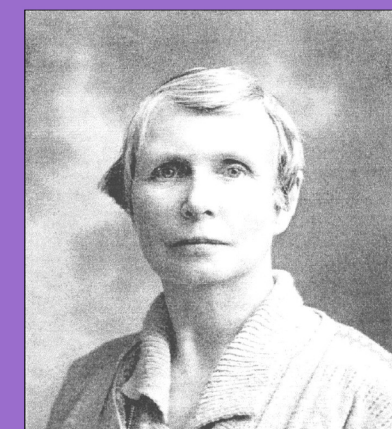


Aerial Photograph of St Martin's Hospital

10 MAUD FORESTER BROWN - ROYAL UNITED HOSPITAL

Not much is known about the early life of Maud Forrester-Brown. Born in 1885, she studied medicine at the London School of Medicine for Women and she graduated with a Doctor of Medicine in 1914 before getting her Masters of Science in 1920. During her early years as a doctor, Dr Forrester-Brown worked as a house surgeon before completing a scholarship abroad in Orthopaedic surgery. Once she returned to England, Dr Forrester-Brown worked in Bath at the Bath and Wessex Orthopaedic Hospital, part of the present-day Royal United Hospital in Combe Park. Dr Forrester-Brown's speciality was tendon transplants, which she performed at a 99% success rate for restoring function to the damaged limb.

After leaving her residency in Bath, Dr Forrester-Brown went on to establish three children's hospitals in counties around England, pushed for changes in school equipment to ensure children got proper spinal support and collaborated with shoe companies to make children's orthopaedic shoes. In 1931, she was appointed Secretary of the British Medical Association, and she served as vice-president of the Orthopaedic section. Into retirement, Dr Forrester-Brown continued to visit children's hospitals and complete research. Forrester-Brown Ward at the Royal United Hospital is named in her honour and receives patients with trauma and orthopaedic conditions.



Photograph of Maud Forrester Brown