

## EARLY BATHS AND BAGNIOS IN EDINBURGH

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The first baths in Scotland were those of the Roman occupation along and south of the Antonine Wall. At each of the excavated forts a bath-house has been found which served the needs of the occupying troops and their households. The withdrawal of the Romans from Britain in the beginning of the fifth century was followed by a millenium during which the practice of bathing was in eclipse, though not to the extent often represented. It became rather more common in the later middle ages and by the fifteenth century "baith-fatts" were in use in some Scottish households.<sup>1</sup> These were wooden tubs in which the bather sat, screened, it might be, with a canopy for the sake of modesty. Being portable they could be set up in any convenient apartment in the house but sometimes a special chamber came to be used for bathing.

The first mention of a bath-chamber in Edinburgh occurs in 1518.<sup>2</sup> On 25th February Janet Kennedy, Lady Bothwell, granted to a chaplain serving the high altar in the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Fields "her foreland of tenement olim of Hugh Bar and little chamber adjacent to said land and cellar below same excepting the bath above and a little pencies." A later mention, dated 28th December 1633, is found in a mortification for the benefit of the poor made by Lady Yester; "Adam Fullerton at top of great turnpyke containing hall, fore gallery, kitchen, two small baths, two back bed chambers and a study."<sup>3</sup>

In the Near and Middle East, unlike Europe, the use of hot air sweating baths on the Roman model was kept up in full vigour after the Roman Empire fell. Later the Arabs brought them to Spain and returning crusaders contributed to their spread in other western countries, where the Eastern name *hummum* or the Italian title *bagnio* was applied. Later they came to be known as Turkish baths. At the same time the use of hot vapour sweating baths, habitual in East Baltic lands since very early days, was spreading through the more northern countries of Europe. They were known as Russian or Finnish baths and their direct descendants are the much advertised sauna baths of today. After the beginning of the thirteenth century there were few large continental cities without bathing establishments run on Turkish or Russian lines but it was not until the sixteenth century that they were introduced into London.<sup>4</sup> The simplest kind was called a bath-stove, the more elaborate a hot- or sweating-house. Soon the terms *hummum* and *bagnio* were in use. In the end the latter became synonymous with a bawdy house, for many bagnios were frequented by disreputable characters for disreputable purposes. In the following century they made their first appearance in Scotland, where they seem to have maintained their respectability. They were few in number and situated within the boundaries of the Edinburgh of today with one exception—the double *hummum*, or bath-stove, one for men and one for women, opened in Perth in 1702 by an apothecary and "approved by physicians to be of great use for the cure of several diseases."<sup>5</sup>

The earliest of the Scottish bagnios finds its place in Edinburgh's municipal records in 1654.<sup>6</sup> A minute of a Town Council meeting in March states that "forsamuckle as William Paul has erected a bath stove in Leith the Counsell grants to him ordour and warrand to make publication of his printed papers be towk of drum threw the burgh and liberties

thereof and to affix the same in the usual publict places of the Cittie." The only other thing recorded about this person is that on 7th May 1669, "William Paull, bath stove keeper" married Jakline Shevalier.<sup>7</sup> In the opinion of A. W. C. Hallen both Paul and his wife were foreigners.<sup>8</sup> A description of Paul's bath-stove is to be found in Iron's *Historical Notes on Leith*; "About 1730 an imposter in the healing art established himself in Leith. In a handbill preserved in the Advocates' Library without date he informs the public that 'There is to be found in Alexander Hayes' Close over against the entry to Babylon, betwixt the Tolbooth and the Shore, a Bath Stove, set up by William Paul after the fashion of Poland and Germany, which is approved by all the doctors of physic and apothecaries in Edinburgh and elsewhere.—a sovereign remedy in curing of all diseases and preventing sickness of both old and young with the help of doctors of physic thereto. This bath is able to give content to fourscore persons a day. The diseases which are commonly cured by the said bath are these, the hydropsie, the gout, deafness, the itch, sore eyes, the cold, insensibleness of the flesh, trembling axes,<sup>9</sup> the Irish ague, cold defluxions inwardly, the melancholick disease, the cholic and all natural diseases that are curable, *probatum est*. This bath is to be used all times and seasons, both summer and winter, and every person that comes to bathe must bring clean linens with them, for their own use, especially clean shirts. All the days of the week for men except Friday which is reserved for women and children.'"<sup>10</sup> It is regrettable that search in the National Library (formerly the Advocates' Library) has failed to produce the original handbill containing this puff and that Irons offers no argument in support of the foundation date given by him, which is grossly inaccurate.

In 1686 another bagnio appears in the archives through the action of one of the citizens, James Rae. The Raes were a family of substance owning property in the Canongate. James, a barber member of the Incorporation of Surgeons and Barbers, built Rae's Land on the north side of the Canongate, became a Burgess and Guild-Brother in 1678 and was Treasurer of the Canongate in the same year.<sup>11</sup> In June 1686 the Town Council minutes record that "Anent the petitions given in by James Rae his Majestie's barbar mentioning that he has be advice of the physitiens and chirurgeons erected baith stoves upon the north syde of the head of the Cannongate with several convenienses thereto belonging and his furnished the same the lyke whereof was never erected in this Kingdom which his been great expenses to the petitioner And seeing the same is verrie usefull to the leidges as to ther health and leist other persones may sett up the lyke baith stoves efter they have gotten inspection of his and render the petitioner's labour of noe vallew to him efter he hes bestowed two Hundred pound starling by erecting the saide baith stoves and building the convenienses thereto belonging And therefor craveand the saids provost bailies and counsell to interpon ther authority as to the said erectione And to grant warrand to him to make use of the said baith stoves for the weill and benefit of the leidges And to discharge all other persones fra erecting the lyke baith stoves for such years as the Counsell shall think fitt the Counsel approves of the design and discharges any other person to erect baith stoves within the city or liberties thercof for seven years."<sup>12</sup>

Further information about Rae's bagnio is provided by one of its patrons, Lady Grisell Baillie. From 1692 to 1700 this lady and her husband, George Baillie, lived in Warriston's Land, from where the first visits to the bagnio must have been made. In 1700 the family moved to Foulis Close, which they left when they made their home at Mellerstain in Berwickshire in 1707. The following entries are extracted from Lady Grisell Baillie's house-

book, the prices quoted being in pounds Scots. "1695 (no closer date), For bathing in Rees bathing hows 4-16-0. *June 1695*, to the Bainio in the Canigate 9 lbs. *Feb 5 1701*, To Mr Knox for head bathes 12-0-0. *Aug 26 1707*, For lodging 2 nights in the Banio and 4 times bathing 14-8-0. For drink money £3-4s. drink etc, 2-8-0. For chairs 1-9-0. To Mr Knox apothecar's account 46-0-0."<sup>13</sup>

These entries show that Rae's bagnio, like the London bagnios<sup>14</sup> and that of the Surgeons described later, had bedrooms for the use of clients and that the Baillies took advantage of these when they received treatment in the bagnio from the family doctor.

About the end of the seventeenth century the medical profession in this country was infused with a new interest in the use of baths and bath-houses. The man mostly responsible was an English physician, Sir John Floyer of Lichfield (1649-1734), whose book, *An Enquiry into the Right Use and Abuses of the Hot, Cold and Temperate Baths in England* (1697), was quoted as authoritative for nearly a century after its first publication. Floyer's propagandist zeal was particularly favourable to the regular use of cold baths in health and disease and he may be looked on as the father of the Briton's cold morning tub. Not surprisingly, therefore, it was medical men acting in concert who were the agents responsible for bath-houses in Edinburgh in the eighteenth century. The body first to take action was the Incorporation of Surgeons and Barbers, founded in 1505.<sup>15</sup> After the vicissitudes of early years it erected for itself a hall and anatomical theatre in High School Yards to which a laboratory, library and bath-house were to be attached. This was in 1697, well outside the period of interdict granted by the city fathers to James Rae. In November of that year the Incorporation, considering that the bagnio would soon be ready for use and being resolved to let it out at the best advantage, arranged for the rouping of it to members. There were no bidders, one reason being that the Surgeons' own well was inadequate and the Town Council, in view of the poor water supply throughout the rest of the city, was unwilling to make that supply available to the Surgeons' new hall.<sup>16</sup> No progress was made until 1701 when the Town Council was told that the Surgeons "intend to provyde a Baigneu or Bathing place with all necessar accommodations at their house nigh the High School of Edinburgh, and therefore desyre that they may be allowed to carry the superfluous water from the trochs of the wells upon the High Street to the said Bathing place." The Council, considering that this design deserved all encouragement as a thing to public advantage to the good town and the lieges in general, allowed the Incorporation the use of the surplus water from the well in Niddrie's Wynd or any other well.<sup>17</sup> The Surgeons were hard put to it to find the money and it was not until the spring of 1703 that "being informed that there was a John Valentine, a Venetian by birth, who had the report of being very skilful of such kind of work" they agreed with Valentine and Mr James Smith, architect, to complete the bagnio.<sup>18</sup> In May the walls of the bagnio and dressingroom were ready to be lined and John Forrest, an Edinburgh merchant, was dispatched to Holland to buy four hundred black and four hundred white marble stones, a foot square, for paving the floor, and seven hundred white tiles, five inches square, for lining the walls.<sup>19</sup> The bath-troughs were of copper and a touch of elegance was added to the building by a large copper globe set on the top of the cupola, surmounted by a sun, both globe and sun being gilded.

In January 1704 the Bagnio was declared open and an advertisement issued. This informed the public that "there is now erected at the Surgeon Apothecaries' Hall in Edinburgh two fine Bagnios after the Turkish fashion where all Noblemen, Gentlemen, Ladies



and others may be conveniently sweated and bathed. The men on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and the women on Tuesdays and Fridays (on which days no man is allowed to come into the garden) at the price for each person of three pounds scots." As well as the two sweating rooms there was another room, or rooms, with cold and hot baths. In charge was the Incorporation's officer, Andrew Raeburn, who was responsible for coal, linen, utensils etc. and had a monopoly of the sale of ale to clients. Under him was the Venetian, John Valentine, who with his daughter occupied two rooms in the establishment, one a bedroom, the other a coffee-room where coffee, tea, chocolate and cordial liquors were sold. Valentine received eight shillings scots for each person visiting the place; Raeburn's sister-in-law washed the linen and helped to bath the women clients for six pounds scots a month; finally came Valentine's daughter, Mary, who waited upon the Ladies and Gentlemen for two shillings scots a head.<sup>20</sup>

The rooms on the upper floor of the bath establishment were furnished as bedchambers for the use of those who elected to spend the night at the Bagnio for reasons of convenience or who wished to rest and relax after sweating or bathing.

Among the first of the leading citizens to make use of the place was Sir John Foulis of Ravelston whose town house stood at the head of Foster's Wynd. An entry in his account book reads "March 18 1704. For sweiting in the balnes 3 lib; for canarie 14 sh, coffee and brandie 14 sh. to the servants waited on 14 sh 6d; is all 5-3-6. To the chairmen carried me there and back one pound."<sup>21</sup>

From time to time throughout the years the Incorporation had to concern itself with defects in the water supply, with their Bagnio's meagre finances and with difficulties in the management of the place. In 1709 because of a serious fall in income they raised the cost of a bath to four pounds scots and fixed the price of a year's season ticket at £3:10/- sterling. These prices were affixed upon public places and advertised in the *Courant*. In 1712 new water pipes had to be brought into the building at a cost of half a crown for every ell of pipe laid.<sup>22</sup> Use was again made of the press in 1718 in an attempt to attract custom, this time by cutting prices. An advertisement in the *Courant* stated that people were allowed to come and wash themselves in the little Bagnio for half an hour on payment of eighteen pence.<sup>23</sup> In 1728 the Incorporation was incensed by the discreditable doings of Hugh Paterson, one of its own more distinguished members, whose portrait by Medina is preserved in Surgeons' Hall. At a meeting of members it was learned that he was nightly in the habit of entering the place, taking up his quarters and obliging the officer to provide him with food and drink. The Surgeons, therefore, empowered their officer to refuse Paterson admission to the Hall, the Bath or the Sweat except by warrant from the Deacon.<sup>24</sup>

During the eighteenth century the value of massage was more and more appreciated in the spas and bath-houses of the country, a "rubber" being employed for the work. In the early days of the Surgeons' establishment John Valentine and his daughter no doubt carried out rubbing as part of their duties but no direct mention of this is found in the records. In 1723 however, they were officially designated the rubber and rubberess in an overture concerning the Bagnio. It must have been soon after this that the Valentines left the Surgeons' service, to be succeeded by James Johnston. In 1729 the latter was recommended by the Surgeons to the Town Council and the Barbers "for procuring for Johnston a liberty to shave and make wigs within the town and its suburbs after he left their service." The request was successful and Johnston received his Burgess ticket, gratis. He was still in the Surgeons'



employ in 1731, when he became dangerously ill and the treasurer charitably paid him five shillings.<sup>25</sup>

No farther mention of Johnston is found for by this time the days of the Bagno were numbered. The income derived from it had rarely been substantial and was now grossly insufficient. An attempt to sell the place in 1729 had failed and in 1731 a final effort was made to keep it going by farming it out on lease to the Surgeons' officer. The effort was unsuccessful, the functioning of the Bagno came to a stop and for a time its apartments and certain others in the Hall were leased for thirty pounds a year, all things pertaining to the Bagno being sold except the water cistern. The last act of all, in 1740, was to strip from the walls and sell the tiles brought from Holland by John Forrest nearly forty years before.<sup>26</sup>

The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh was founded in 1681. In 1704 it acquired for its own use as a Hall the house and ground of Sir James Mackenzie in Fountain Close. The property, more extensive than any other in the city, was laid out in gardens and shrubberies. At the lower end of the garden and adjacent to the Cowgate lay an old ruinous house, to the east of which was the well of St Michael, situated where today St Mary's Street and the Pleasance come together in the Cowgate. Here in 1712 the College with the use of stones and timber from the old building constructed a pavilion containing a cold bath. Attached to it was a dressing-room where gowns, bath sheets or "lynnings", sandals and other necessities were provided. Water was supplied from the nearby St Michael's well through a pump and a lead cistern. It was not the purpose of the Physicians to provide a bagno like that at Surgeons' Hall. They, even more than the surgeon apothecaries, had absorbed the teaching of Sir John Floyer and they wished to make the blessings of cold water available to their own patients and also to the general public. In the summer of 1712 the bath was ready and opened at a charge of twelve shillings scots for each visit and two-pence as drink money to the attendant. A committee of management was appointed and every College member was adjured to procure subscribers among the public who would pay a guinea yearly for the use of the bath as often as they wished. The duties of bath attendant were undertaken by the gardener in charge of the grounds of the Hall.<sup>27</sup>

The committee, finding it inconvenient that they themselves should give frequent personal attention in the pavilion, decided to farm out the baths to anyone of their own members who wished to take it. There were no bidders. In 1714 the tack was offered to the public and accepted successively by Alexander Murray, merchant, jointly with John Russell, W.S.; by George Murray, apothecary, brother of Alexander Murray, and in 1726 by two Edinburgh surgeons, James Robertson and John Douglas.<sup>28</sup>

From the beginning the enterprise suffered from lack of funds. Dilapidated material had been used for construction of pavilion and bath, as little as possible was spent on maintenance and there were occasions when the place had to be closed because of defects. Profits to the tacksman were meagre though at times the bath was well frequented. Cold bathing was largely a seasonal activity and its pursuit could be affected not only by the time of year but by social or political disturbances. So it was that in February 1716, at the time of the first Jacobite uprising, the tacksman asked for an abatement of tack duty for the preceding twelve months "because of the Rigore of the Season, the present calamity of the Warr and loss of time the space of six weeks that the Cold-bath was a-repairing." The College allowed two guineas rebate for the six weeks of repair but made no allowance for the Rigore or the

Warre which, we may assume, were looked on as hazards incidental to the course of any tack.<sup>29</sup>

In 1728 the Physicians withdrew the tack from Messrs Robertson and Douglas and undertook to run the bath themselves. Three years later, on the advice of Mr Alexander McGill, architect, the bath pavilion was demolished and rebuilt with new material. It was hoped in this way to ensure efficient working but the bath itself, which had been left untouched, continued to give trouble. By 1742 things had come to such a pass that a plumber was engaged to renew the whole bath with lead, At the same time the Physicians added to their clientele, though not to their income, by allowing the use of the place gratis to any patient of the Royal Infirmary, recently transferred to its new site nearby, who held an order to that effect signed by the physician attending him.<sup>30</sup> Three years later request was made to the Town Council that the well supplying the much used bath which was of public benefit to the town and was in a ruinous state should be repaired and maintained by the Corporation. Instead, the city fathers granted to the Physicians the sum of £20 sterling so that they might themselves take down the masonry of the well, cover it with long stones and install a double pump in the side wall of the pavilion, one section of which was to be connected to the bath, the other to supply water for the neighbourhood. These improvements were effective and no more complaints about insufficiency of water are recorded.<sup>31</sup> Entries in the College minutes show that citizens of rank were glad to bathe in the cold water of the pavilion. In 1736 the Physicians allowed the Marquis of Tweeddale at his own cost to construct a door in the wall separating his garden from that of the College for his more convenient access to the cold bath, and in 1746 a key, cut at his own expense, was granted to Sir Thomas Calder to enable him to come to the pavilion "he being lodged close by the Cold Bath which he uses daily for his lameness."<sup>32</sup>

In 1756 the Physicians reverted to the early form of management by tack and the bath was leased for ten pounds a year to Dr James Walker, surgeon in Edinburgh and agent to the Navy in North Britain. It continued in use until 1767 when the Hall, outbuildings and garden were put up for sale, this being the first step in the Physicians' removal from the Old to the New Town.<sup>33</sup>

When the surgeon, John Douglas, relinquished his tack of the Physicians' bath in 1728 he did not lose interest in the provision of a bath-house in the town. In 1736 he joined John Douglas, architect, in a scheme to construct a bagnio at the foot of Carrubber's Close. In February they got permission from the Town Council to lay a water pipe and at the same time received a grant of five pounds "for encouragement." Seven months later the Corporation showed still farther approval by granting the Douglasses a bond for building the bagnio and instructed Patrick Camell, plumber, to lay a lead pipe from the well in Niddrie's Close at a cost to themselves of £17 4/-. The pipe was laid but the scheme which had promised well at the start never came to fruition. In 1758 during a wrangle between a Mr Charles Butter and the Town Council it was expressly stated that the bagnio in Carrubber's Close was never built. The reason is nowhere explained.<sup>34</sup>

Edinburgh Royal Infirmary was founded in 1729, the original hospital, with only six beds, being a small house at the head of Robertson's Close. Here in 1731 bath appliances for the use of patients were installed in the form of a bathing tub and a sweating box.<sup>35</sup> A sweating box was a bagnio in miniature—a wooden box in which the patient was seated with his head protruding through a hole. Under the stool on which he sat was a tub containing

either boiling water or a mixture of quicklime and water which filled the box with an abundance of hot water vapour. The original hospital being grossly inadequate, the foundation stone of a new building to house two hundred patients was laid in 1738. This was the so-called Old Infirmary at the foot of Infirmary Street, designed by the leading Scots architect of the day, William Adam, father of three architect sons, John, Robert and James.

William Adam's plan included accommodation on the ground floor of the east wing for hot and cold baths for the patients, but these were not, in fact, installed when the east wing was completed in 1741, perhaps because water at that time was provided simply by means of buckets carried into the building.<sup>36</sup> In 1743 a special pipe was laid to connect the place with the main conduit of the city but when the hospital was completed in 1748 there were still no baths. In that year Alexander Monro ("Monro Primus"), professor of anatomy, moved that a bagnio be built such as might serve the general public and this was approved. Four years of inaction followed. At last in 1752 a committee was convened to make the necessary arrangements and moved with dispatch. An appeal was issued asking for subscriptions to meet the cost of a bagnio and cold bath and advice was sought on the planning of the place.<sup>37</sup>

The Infirmary's representative in London at that time was a Mr Anderson, agent for the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. He was now asked for detailed information about the public bath-houses and bagnios in London. By the middle of the eighteenth century the metropolis had several such places, the most famous being the Duke's Bagnio in Long Acre, erected in 1682 and named after James, Duke of York. Mr Anderson replied that these were large establishments, constantly open at all hours and not suitable for Edinburgh to take as models. He went on to say that St Thomas's Hospital had a small bagnio comparable to that projected by the Royal Infirmary and he supplied a plan of the rooms with a description of the place.<sup>38</sup> This shows a suite of three apartments with entrance hall, furnace and cistern room and a coal cellar. Of the three apartments one is the dressing-room with two beds, doubtless for patients to rest on after bathing and receive treatment from the rubbers; one is the bathing room, having two lead-lined bath tubs, each with a hot and cold tap; the third is the sweating room with a couch. The plan shows that sweating must have been achieved by the hot-air, Turkish method, the room being heated with a flue under the floor. No plan or description of the Infirmary bagnio survives but we may assume that it followed the St Thomas's pattern. Certainly the committee sought for no more designs on which to base their plans.

William Adam was dead and his successors, the firm of John, Robert and James Adam, undertook the work. It was John who drew up the plans and he pledged himself to finish the rooms most neatly in all parts of their furniture and to provide marble bath troughs in the most handsome manner. To this end, two hundred and eighty marble paving stones were imported from Rotterdam. Two marble panels for the cold bath were bought from a marble cutter at Abbeyhill, one of which bore an engraved and gilded inscription but the managers drew the line at marble bath troughs and were satisfied with lead-lined tubs made by a local plumber.<sup>39</sup>

In the summer of 1756 a bagnio-keeper was appointed, advertisements of the new venture were published and in July the public was admitted to the bagnio, which was situated in the west wing of the hospital. According to the managers' regulations it was open for fourteen hours daily in summer and ten hours in winter. Different sessions were arranged for men and



women, charges being four shillings for a sweat, two shilling for a warm and one shilling for a cold bath. "Wine, milk and such like" were supplied to clients by the housekeeper out of hospital stores; "Possets, food or such like," prepared by the hospital servants, were also to be had. Clients were attended by rubbers of their own sex who were employees of the bagnio but they had the right to bring with them suitable persons as rubbers if they so wished. A guinea to the bath fund gave bathing rights for a year, ten guineas secured those rights for life.<sup>40</sup>

At that time no bath treatment of any kind was provided in the building for the sick poor who made up the Infirmary's patients. This neglect was not so reprehensible as at first appears for they still had the use free of charge of the cold bath at the Physicians' Hall. That privilege came to an end in 1767 with the selling of the Hall, and two years later on the recommendation of the physicians of the hospital a warm bath was installed in the east wing for the benefit of the patients.<sup>41</sup> For fear of infection strict precautions were taken to ensure that patients had no contact with clients of the bagnio. In 1771 the bath troughs had to be repaired and a suitable servant engaged to attend to them. In particular the cold bath had to be rebuilt and relined with two hundred and eighty square feet of lead.<sup>42</sup> When this was done an advertisement soliciting custom was published in the two leading Edinburgh papers. It reads: "The Managers of the Royal Infirmary having fitted up HOT and COLD BATHS in an elegant and proper manner hereby advertise that they are opened for the Public at the following prices;—For warm bathing 2s beside 6d to the servant; and baths 1s each time. Subscribers of one guinea are entitled to the use of the warm and cold baths for one year from this date ..... N.B. The above hot and cold baths are newly fitted up for the use of the Public and are in a different wing of the house from those which were and still are appropriated for the use of the patients in the Infirmary and are under the care of different servants. If any person chooses to sweat after the warm bath they may be accommodated for two shillings each time."<sup>43</sup>

Among those clients who attended the bagnio about this time were members of the family of John Gregory (1724–1773), professor of medicine from 1766 to 1773, whose account book is preserved in the University Library. In the section evidently written by his wife are these entries: "7th July 1770 2 bathing caps, 9/4; 16th ditto 2 bathing gowns 9/-; 18th ditto to the bathing woman 5/-; 8th Sept. 1771 to the bathing woman 5/-; 17th ditto to the bathing woman 2/6d; 27th October bathing woman for Anne 2/-." These entries must refer to the Royal Infirmary since no other place in or near Edinburgh had facilities for fresh or salt water bathing at that time. The "bathing woman" was the matron of the hospital, whose duty it was to take the entry money.

At the end of the eighteenth century attendances dropped to such a low level that advertisements had to be published in the papers and notices affixed in hotels in the city. At the same time an additional attraction was introduced in the form of a hot vapour bath, this having been asked for by the Royal College of Physicians.<sup>44</sup> For the next fifty years the services of the bagnio were maintained with little change, such scanty references as occur in the archives recording only expenses, replacements of staff and minor repairs. Meantime the work of the Infirmary itself was always increasing and there was growing need of accommodation for patients and for those who ministered to them. Towards the end of 1838 the managers set up a committee to consider the propriety of continuing the public bath establishment on its former footing. In January 1839 this committee put out its report,

advocating closure of the baths and giving two reasons for its recommendation. The first concerned finance; as a rule the accounts showed a small profit derived from the baths but the cost of coal was not included and the committee considered that no profit was really made. The second was summarised in a sentence; "It is not a necessary nor creditable arrangement for managers to be responsible for public baths when space occupied by them is wanted by the Infirmary." The report went on to advise that the patients' baths in the east wing be discontinued for they were very faulty. Instead, the bagnio in the west wing should be closed to the public and given over for use by the patients. Additional vapour and medicinal baths should be provided by taking over adjacent rooms which had served as a dwelling house for the bagnio-keeper. These recommendations at once received the managers' approval.<sup>45</sup>

In 1839 the Infirmary bagnio came to an end and with it the use of the words "sweat" and "bagnio", but the citizens of Edinburgh were not left without facilities to sweat and bathe, for the era of the bath-house run on commercial lines was now well established. The Edinburgh Directory of 1839-1840 no longer lists the Infirmary bagnio but gives the names of six other bath establishments. It is not surprising that four of these were in Leith near the sea, since the use of sea-water had gradually become fashionable all over the country ever since Dr Richard Russell introduced it at Brighton about 1753. No information other than names and addresses has been found about three of those six institutions—the Frithfield Baths at the east end of Leith Links run by P. Macpherson, a grocer; James March's Trinity Baths, Leith, and the Bath at 10 Barony Street belonging to T. Learmonth, a bell-ringer; but advertisements in the *Scotsman* and the *Evening Directory* give details of the other three bath-houses, from which it is seen that the facilities provided were more or less the same as those in the Infirmary bagnio.

The oldest of these, Seafield Baths at the east end of Leith Links, set up in 1813, is described in 1839 as a splendid establishment with comfortable, warm rooms, open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and providing hot, cold, shower, sea-water and superior vapour baths at a cost of one shilling.<sup>46</sup> Leith Baths at no. 6 Broad Wynd, opened in 1831 by the London, Leith and Edinburgh Steam Mill Company and given up by them in 1837, were reopened in 1839 by a Mr Brakinrig who, to quote his own words, "respectfully announces to the Public that these much frequented and old established baths are now re-opened and fitted up in a superior style of elegance and comfort. They are supplied with filtered water upon the same principle as the Liverpool Baths. Open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Hot, Cold, Sea Baths 1/-; Vapour 1/6."<sup>47</sup> Most pretentious of all the advertisements is that of the Bath Establishment at 17 and 19 Hill Street which runs: "Guide to Health. HOT, SHOWER, VAPOUR and MEDICINAL BATHS are prepared and regulated on a system recommended by the highest medical authorities in this country at that splendid Establishment Nos. 17 & 19 HILL STREET, EDINBURGH, which are admirably calculated to insure the *utmost comfort with longevity* to those who are in the *regular practice* of resorting to that truly healthy and delightful enjoyment. Open 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Prices moderate."<sup>48</sup>

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## NOTES and REFERENCES

The abbreviations *Infirmary Minutes*, *Physicians' Minutes* and *Surgeons' Minutes* refer to the minute-books, preserved at the respective institutions, of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. References to the *Physicians' Minutes* come from the typescript copy in the College library. Some of the references to the minutes of Edinburgh Town Council are quoted from the fifteen manuscript volumes of notes and extracts compiled by C. B. Boog Watson, which are available in the Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central Library. To these the description *Boog Watson Notes* is applied.

- <sup>1</sup> J. Warrack, *Domestic Life in Scotland, 1488-1688* (London, 1920), pp. 156-7.
- <sup>2</sup> *Inventory of the Writings in the Charterhouse of the City of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1899), vol. III, p. 225.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.
- <sup>4</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed., 1911), vol. III, p. 516, T. Wright, *A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages* (London, 1862), p. 491.
- <sup>5</sup> R. Chambers, *Domestic Annals of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1861), vol. III, p. 261.
- <sup>6</sup> *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1642-1655* (ed. M. Wood, Edinburgh, 1938), p. 334.
- <sup>7</sup> *Register of Marriages, Edinburgh, 1595-1700* (ed. H. Paton, Edinburgh, 1905).
- <sup>8</sup> *The Account Book of Sir John Foulis of Ravelston, 1671-1707* (ed. A. W. C. Hallen, Scottish History Society, 1894), p. xxxvi.
- <sup>9</sup> Axes, *anglice* access, a hysterical fit; alternatively a fit of the ague.
- <sup>10</sup> J. C. Irons, *Historical Notes on Leith* (Edinburgh, 1897), vol. II, p. 183.
- <sup>11</sup> C. B. Boog Watson, "Notes on the Names of the Closets and Wynds of Old Edinburgh," *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, vol. XII (1923), p. 91.
- <sup>12</sup> *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1681-1689* (ed. M. Wood and H. Armet, 1954), p. 177.
- <sup>13</sup> *House-Book of Lady Grisell Baillie, 1692-1733* (ed. R. Scott-Moncrieff, Scottish History Society, 1919), pp. 3-18.
- <sup>14</sup> J. P. Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum* (London, 1807), vol. IV, pp. 338-47; B. Hill, "Herbs and Hot Water," *The Practitioner*, vol. CLXXXIX (1962), p. 94.
- <sup>15</sup> C. H. Creswell, *The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh; Historical Notes from 1505 to 1905* (Edinburgh, 1926), *passim*.
- <sup>16</sup> *Surgeons' Minutes, 1695-1708*, p. 87 (9 November 1697).
- <sup>17</sup> *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1689-1701* (ed. M. Wood, 1962), p. 280.
- <sup>18</sup> *Surgeons' Minutes, 1695-1708*, p. 260 (11 March 1703).
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266 (25 May 1703); Creswell, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
- <sup>20</sup> *Surgeons' Minutes, 1695-1708*, pp. 288, 309 (26 January, 14 September 1704).
- <sup>21</sup> Hallen, *op. cit.*, p. 340.
- <sup>22</sup> Creswell, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
- <sup>23</sup> *Surgeons' Minutes, 1708-1737*, p. 237 (11 August 1718).
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364 (11 October 1728).
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 309 (14 March 1723), 374 (2 May 1729), 393, 399 (2 February, 2 March 1731).
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 390 (7 January 1731); *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 21 January, 12 May 1729; Creswell, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
- <sup>27</sup> *Physicians' Minutes*, pp. 369 (4 March 1712), 388 (24 July 1713), 418 (2 November 1714), 568 (19 March 1723).
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 390 (4 August 1713), 418 (2 November 1714), 637 (3 May 1726).
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439 (7 February 1716).
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 666 (6 February 1728), 814, 816 (2 February, 3 August 1742).
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 852 (5 November 1745); *Boog Watson Notes*, vol. V, p. 57 (*Town Council Minutes*, 4 September 1745).
- <sup>32</sup> *Physicians' Minutes*, pp. 757 (2 November 1736), 863 (5 August 1746).
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1043 (3 February 1756), 1251 (23 April 1767).



- <sup>34</sup> *Boog Watson Notes*, vol. V, p. 49 (18 February, 8, 15 September 1736), vol. IX, p. 26 (26 April, 14 June 1758).
- <sup>35</sup> *Infirmary Minutes*, vol. I, p. 41 (11 January 1731).
- <sup>36</sup> A. L. Turner, *The Story of A Great Hospital* (Edinburgh, 1937), p. 105.
- <sup>37</sup> *Infirmary Minutes*, vol. II, p. 188 (5 September 1748), vol. III, p. 134 (4 May 1752).
- <sup>38</sup> Royal Infirmery Correspondence, letter dated 16 June 1752.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, letters dated 24 November 1752, 23 February 1753, 19 February 1756; *Infirmery Minutes*, vol. III, p. 164 (3 December 1753).
- <sup>40</sup> *Infirmery Minutes*, vol. III, p. 241 (5 April 1756).
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 206 (2 October 1769).
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. IV, pp. 249, 251 (5 August, 7 October 1771).
- <sup>43</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 22 November 1771; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 23 November 1771.
- <sup>44</sup> *Infirmery Minutes*, vol. VI, p. 107 (1 August 1791); *Physicians' Minutes*, p. 1765 (1 February 1791).
- <sup>45</sup> *Infirmery Minutes*, vol. XII, pp. 141 (30 November 1838), 181, 184 (28 January, 4 February, 1839).
- <sup>46</sup> J. Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh* (London, 1884-7), vol. III, p. 266; *The Scotsman*, 23 February 1839.
- <sup>47</sup> *The Scotsman*, 22 June 1839.
- <sup>48</sup> *The Edinburgh Directory for 1839-1840*, p. 361.