



SAMPLE PAGES

The 72-page, A4 handbook for Taking the Waters: the history of spas & hydros, with text, photographs, maps and a reading list, is available for purchase, price £15.00 including postage and packing.

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Taking the Waters: the history of spas & hydros

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interesting breaks with interesting people

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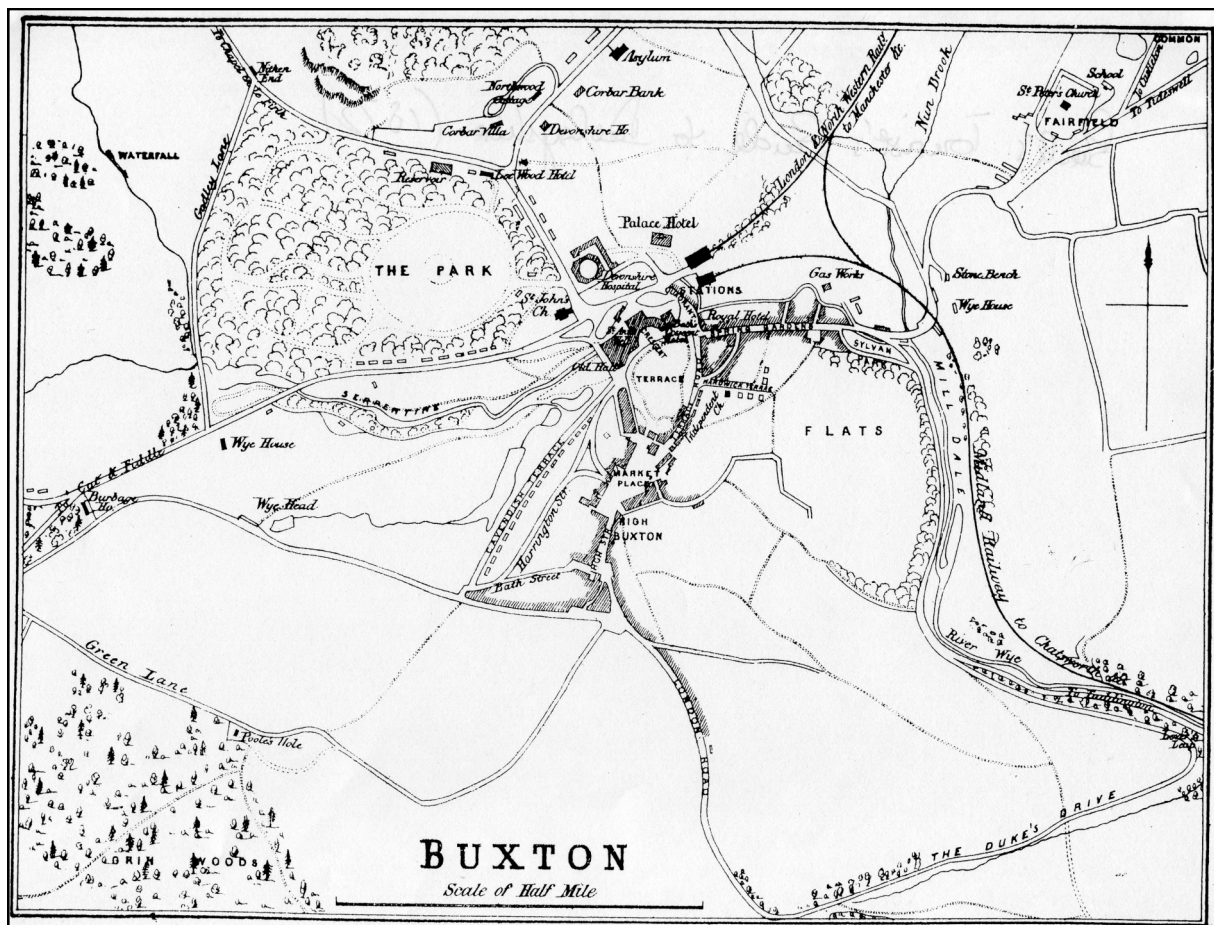


Buxton Crescent (1977)

William, fifth Duke of Devonshire (1748-1811) centred his life on London and the political activity which focused on his residence, Devonshire House. He and his Duchess, Georgiana, and their mutual friend, Lady Elizabeth Foster, were among the most celebrated figures of society and politics in their generation, and were avid visitors of spas in Britain and on the Continent. Though the fifth Duke visited Chatsworth regularly, he made little physical impact on his Derbyshire estates except for his ambitious redevelopment of the town of Buxton, beginning in 1779, in an apparent attempt to rival Bath. This intention was aided by the gradual opening of turnpikes through the region and the Fairfield enclosure of 1771-4, which guaranteed free public access to St Ann's Well.

John Carr of York – who had started his career as a stonemason working for the Duke's grandfather, Lord Burlington, and had risen to become arguably the best northern architect of his day – began work on **The Crescent** in 1780, five years after the completion of John Wood II's Royal Crescent at Bath. The Buxton Crescent took ten years to build, at a final cost of £38,601 18s 4d. This cost is traditionally claimed to amount to one year's revenue from the Duke's Ecton copper mine in the Manifold Valley.

Carr's semicircular design is much more cramped than Wood's magnificent semi-ellipse, mainly because of its valley-bottom site, facing a steep hillside which remained undeveloped because of the refusal of a site-owner to sell at a reasonable price. The giant order of Doric pilasters is supported by a loggia, providing covered pedestrian access around the Crescent. Because of its low-lying position, Carr's Crescent was visible from all angles, especially by arriving travellers, so the elaborate cornice, hiding all thJohn Wood's Royal Crescent, e roof features except the cruciform chimney-stacks, continues right round the building, in



Buxton (Black 1875)



Pre-war aerial view of Smedley's Hydro, Matlock Bank (pre-1939)

[source unknown]

The First District of the Nottingham & Newhaven Turnpike Trust linked Alferton and Oakerthorpe, by what is now the A615, through Matlock and Snitterton to the main Derby-Manchester turnpike at Newhaven: when it opened in 1759 a tollgate was established on Smithy Lane, west of the bridge, but it was removed in 1764 to Causeway Lane. The following year the old Hereward Street to Kelstedge and Chesterfield was turnpiked, approaching Matlock Bridge by the road still known as Steep Turnpike. The hilly route from Matlock Bridge through Dimple and Hackney to Rowsley was turnpiked in three stages, beginning in 1791: the valley route from Darley Dale which is now the A6 was completed in 1824.

The major source of much of the traffic for these succeeding road-systems was lead, which was mined up to the eastern edge of the Gorge. The Arkwright Society Local History Trail no 4, *The Matlocks – 1* (Arkwright Society 1973) takes a route which passes the remains of Wapping Mine, the Cumberland Cavern, Speedwell Mine, Owlet Hole, the Devonshire Cavern, and Masson Cavern.

The railway arrived in Matlock in 1849 when the Manchester, Buxton, Matlock & Midland Junction Railway, intended to link the Midland Railway at Ambergate with Manchester by way of Chatsworth Park and Edale, opened as far as Rowsley. There it stopped, on the fringe of the Duke of Devonshire's estate, until it was extended on a different route *via* Bakewell in 1863. The MBM&MR was very much the brainchild of the Bachelor Duke of Devonshire's famously talented gardener and agent, Joseph (later Sir Joseph) Paxton: the stations at Matlock and Rowsley were designed by him and those at Matlock Bath (in the style of a Swiss chalet) and Cromford (with a miniature French chateau for the stationmaster) by his son-in-law G H Stokes. The railway threads through the east side of Matlock Gorge by a series of tunnels in the limestone.

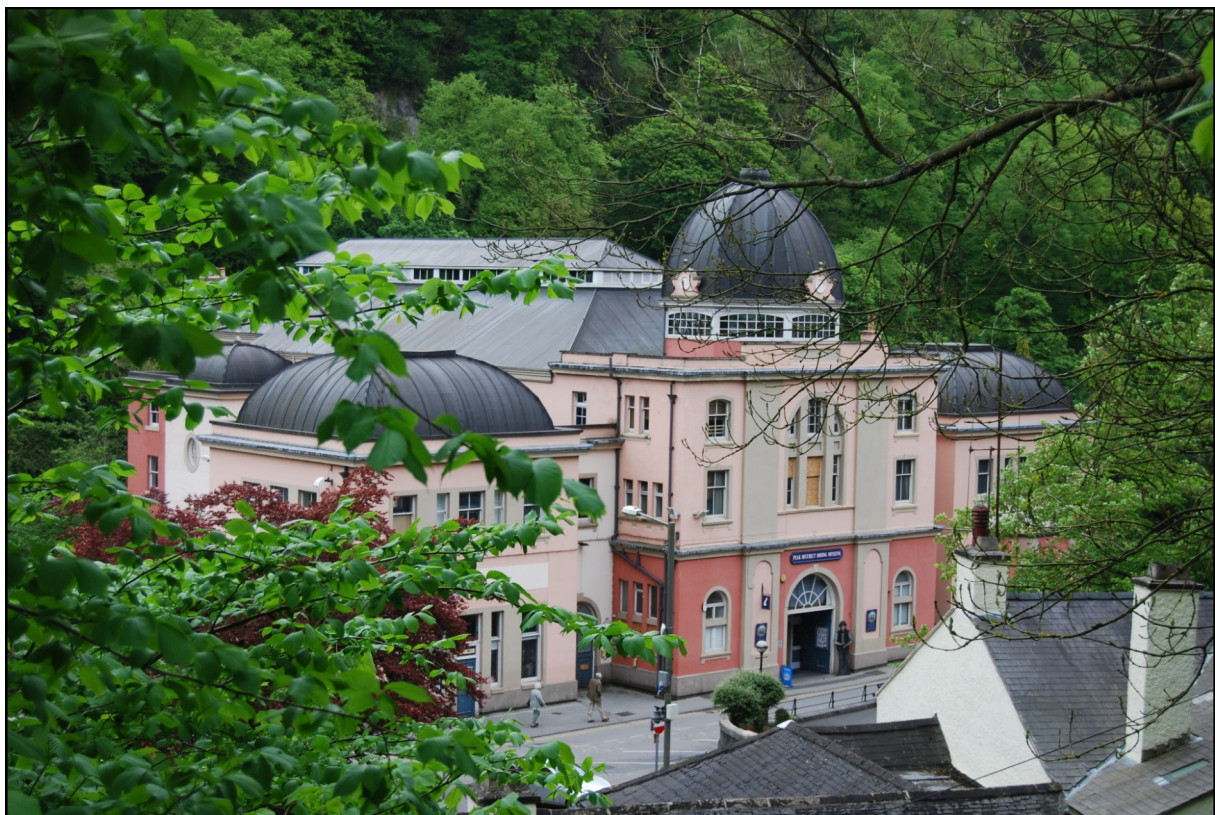
The trains brought a stream of tourists, both on day-trips and for longer stays, which encouraged the growth of Matlock Bath as a Victorian resort and made possible the hydropathic trade in Matlock itself.

anywhere in the world. The service opened on March 28th 1893, charging 2d uphill and 1d down. The service never made a profit: up to the First World War the loss had only amounted to a total of £800 from the opening twenty-one years before, but by September 30th 1927, when the last tram ran, the accumulated loss was put at between £30,000 and £50,000. The original passenger-shelter from Crown Square, donated to the town in 1899 by Robert Wildgoose, the former manager of Lea Mills and chairman of Smedley's Hydropathic, now stands in two sections on Causeway Lane and in Hall Leys Park.

There is a contemporary description of the construction and opening of the tramway in *The Matlock Steep-Gradient Tramway* (1893; reprinted with an introduction by S V Fay, Arkwright Society 1972). M J Arkle, *Tuppence Up, Penny Down: Old Matlock remembered in words and pictures* (All Saints' Junior School, Matlock, 1983) contains numerous reminiscences of the tramway:

...the weight of one tram counterbalanced the other, but this was not the case with the last tram at night. In theory this should have run at 8.30 pm on a Saturday, but it was governed by the time at which the first house at the Picture Palace [...later, the Ritz Cinema,] finished. If it was late then the tram would have to wait and that could be for up to half an hour. This last tram was always fully loaded and [,] having no counterbalancing tram, it struggled up the Bank. Les [Wright, an ex-tram driver] remembers travelling fifty yards, pausing on the brakes while he listened for the cable gathering momentum, going on again, probably having to stop half a dozen times before limping up to the top.

...[The tram] went so slowly that children raced it up to the top[,] and it was reckoned that you could nip off, buy a packet of cigarettes and then catch up with [it]...



Kursall, now the Pavilion, Matlock Bath

a quarter. By 1848 part of the Bath House was used by the Bakewell & High Peak Institute, and from c1888 to 1920 it housed the Bakewell Conservative Club. Charles, 6th Duke of Rutland re-established the baths in 1885, so that they were “very completely equipped with hot, cold and shower baths, private baths, and all the modern luxuries and necessities of the bath house”. An 1893 guide to the district claims that “the waters have come much into repute during recent years, and it seems quite probable that before many years they will become famous for their efficacy in certain nervous and glandular complaints.”

The bath remained as a limited and discouraging facility for swimming: Firth's *Highways and Byways of Derbyshire* (1905) condemns it: “...as bare and cheerless as whitewash can make it... Use it has none... it is no longer thought agreeable to bathe in a sort of prison vault with a reverberating echo which sends even a whisper rumbling round the arch.” The Bakewell Urban District Council's plans to set up public baths on one of a variety of sites, including a 1909 proposal to extend the Bath House, were repeatedly rejected on cost grounds in the early twentieth century.

The UDC purchased the building in 1921, and the bath remained available for public use until trench-cutting on Bath Street in the late 1930s reduced the flow and adversely affected the purity of the water. Even this did not deter the local Boy Scouts, who continued to use Bath House for waste-paper collection and the bath for swimming lessons during the Second World War. By the end of the war the bath was used as a mushroom farm.

In 1946 the local branch of the Royal British Legion first leased and then purchased the Bath House.

Julie Bunting, describing the place in 2006, remarks that the pond in the Royal British Legion Memorial Garden never freezes, and “on the coldest winter days...the water can be seen steaming slightly, whispering perhaps of what might have been”.



Birley Spa Bath House

Sale Room (adjacent to the Main Entrance).

Open from 9 a.m. till 6 p.m.: Closed on Saturdays at 1 p.m.

Bath Bandages and Apparatus of all kinds employed in the treatment at the establishment, with other necessities, including Smedley's Celebrated Hosiery, Merino and Natural Wool, also a choice selection of Fancy Goods.

Bath Blankets, Sheets, &c., may be purchased by Patients averse to using those provided for general use in the Bath-houses.

Books on Sale.—HUNTER'S (Archd.) "HYDROPATHY FOR HOME USE" edition, 4s. 6d. (by post, 4s. 10d.). HUNTER'S (Dr. W. B.) "THE TURKISH BATH: ITS USES AND ABUSES," 9d.; by post 10d. "INFLUENZA," 1d.; by post, 1½d. "COOLING REGIMEN IN FEVERS," 4d.; by post, 4½d.

Orders by Post for goods must always be accompanied by a remittance. A Price List can be had on application, whereby the amount may be ascertained and transmitted in advance. Post Office Orders for Goods to be made out in the name of H. CHALLAND.



The Baths, &c.

THE TURKISH BATHS.—Each Bath (there are two—one for ladies and one for gentlemen) consists of three heated chambers, the first of which is kept at a temperature of 120° only, as being quite sufficient for realising the full effect of the bath for the more feeble and sensitive, while practically free from risk of mishap. The second chamber is kept at 135°, as quite adequate to the requirements of the average patient. The more extreme effects of the bath are obtainable in the third chamber, maintained at 170°, and frequented mainly by visitors taking the bath on their own account. The bath attendants go by definite and detailed instructions reduced to writing, and are required, moreover, to exercise due discrimination in carrying them out. They are prepared also with remedies for the minor discomforts of the bath, and are on the alert to meet the first symptoms of distress. Thus safeguarded, and modified to the capacity of the individual case, the Turkish Bath can be comfortably employed for the relief of many who had otherwise been deemed indigible for it—sufferers from weak heart and congested head—and with excellent effect often through the help it affords to the failing circulation and inactive skin which attend on these conditions. The ventilation of the heated chambers is a special feature of this bath, and chief cause of that immunity from bad effects it affords. A constant circulation of air is carried on through the forced indraught of an air chamber over the furnace, and an outdraught through a flue passing from the floor-level into the great chimney. Another great advantage is the exemption from fatigue enjoyed by the patient quartered under the same roof with the bath. There is provision for the careful handling of those who are much crippled by gout and rheumatism, the passage to and fro from every floor being made without difficulty in a wheel-chair by means of the passenger lift.

A SWIMMING BATH, 35 ft. by 6 ft., is attached to the Turkish Baths.

