

THE VENDERS OF MEDICINES ADVERTISED IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BATH NEWSPAPERS

by

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FROM THE middle of the eighteenth century, Bath was well supplied with weekly newspapers¹ and a prominent feature in their columns was the advertisement of patent or proprietary medicines. In the early issues, these advertisements were conspicuous because of the bold type in which the names of the medicines were printed, and because they often reproduced the pseudo-heraldic device with which the medicine was sealed. Throughout the second half of the century, advertisements for medicines occupied considerable space, frequently filling more than ten per cent of the total column length, and occasionally exceeding twenty per cent. Many products were involved, the *Bath Chronicle* in 1790, for example, advertising 114 different medicines, some of them repeatedly (Table 1). Many types of medical treatment must have been available in Bath at this time, and superficial inspection of these advertisements suggests that self-medication with patent or proprietary medicines made a significant contribution to the total therapeutic effort. The advertisements in a sample² of Bath newspapers from their first appearance in 1744 until the end of the century have, therefore, been studied in an attempt to estimate the importance of medicines sold in this way.

Where available, issues of the *Bath Journal*, *Bath Chronicle*, *Bath Register* and *Bath Herald* have been examined throughout the first year of their publication, and the issues for a year of at least one of these newspapers have been studied in each decade. The *Bath Advertiser* was examined during its third year of publication as this allowed a more complete series. Other issues of some newspapers were included in the sample because the newspaper was under new ownership or, as in the case of *Farley's Bath Journal* and the *Bath Gazette*, because no other issues are available. All patent and proprietary medicines were listed as long as they were offered for sale as distinct items; no entries were made when practitioners of various types advertised treatment in general terms without specifying the separate sale of a medicine. Occasionally it was difficult to decide whether a preparation was a cosmetic or a medicine; if a medicinal use was mentioned in any of the advertisements, the product was included. Donna Maria's Lotion,³ for example, was primarily cosmetic because it was "a Beautifyer and Restorer of relaxed Bosoms, to their former delicate Colour and Shape" but it is included because "it is sometimes effectual in cases of Cancer, if not too deeply rooted." Dental preparations have been included in all cases because their function was described as therapeutic or preventive as well as cosmetic. 302 prepara-

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The venders of medicines advertised in 18th-century Bath newspapers

tions were advertised in the sample and the present report deals primarily with the persons listed as selling these preparations in Bath.

TABLE 1. ADVERTISEMENTS OF PROPRIETARY MEDICINES IN A SAMPLE OF BATH NEWSPAPERS.

Newspaper Year sampled starting:	Number of issues missing	Total number of medicines advertised during year	Number of medicines advertised per issue		Percentage of column length occupied by advertisements for medicines in first issue of each month	
			Average over year	Range of monthly averages	Average	Range
<i>Bath Journal</i>						
5 March 1744	0	27	5.4	0 -10.2	3.8	0 - 8.4
1 January 1750	1	30	10.1	0 -21.8	1.5	0 - 5.8
5 January 1761	0	39	12.5	6.6-21.2	8.0	0 -15.5
3 January 1780	3	38	7.2	2.0-10.9	4.5	0.3- 8.3
1 January 1798	1	43	4.2	2.5- 5.8	6.1	2.5-10.4
<i>Bath Chronicle</i>						
25 December 1760	1	49	7.3	0.7-14.2	5.9	3.0- 9.4
4 January 1770	0	80	20.3	14.5-28.8	12.2	3.3-17.5
7 January 1790	0	114	24.4	21.0-28.0	10.6	6.7-18.4
3 January 1799	0	108	27.9	21.0-33.8	16.8	13.6-20.1
<i>Bath Advertiser</i>						
1 January 1757	3	46	28.7	25.0-37.5	9.4	0.2-21.1
<i>Bath Register</i>						
3 March 1792	1	28	1.5	0 - 4.0	2.1	0 - 5.8
<i>Bath Herald</i>						
3 March 1792	0	40	4.1	1.2- 9.3	3.6	0.8- 9.4

I. THE ADVERTISEMENTS

The advertisements took several forms. Sometimes a series of products was simply listed and a number of venders named; the printer of the newspaper was usually included among them. More commonly a product was named and at least one paragraph was devoted to extolling its virtues, often describing it as the most effectual, safe and pleasant cure yet discovered for several related or unrelated conditions. Another common form of advertisement was the testimonial letter, used widely by many advertisers. It might be appended to the type of advertisement already mentioned, or it might be printed without heading in columns where letters devoid of advertising content would be found. Godbold was able to collect the signatures of lords and ladies to recommend his Vegetable Balsam,⁴ but few advertisers managed this. Clergymen would sometimes oblige, and "Dr." Hammond of Kingsdown, Bristol, published cases attested by the rectors of St. John's and St. Michael's, Bristol.⁵ The situation was reversed in the case of the Rev. Mr. Goodrick, Vicar of

Kilmersdon, Somerset, who was the proprietor of a Powder for Rheumatism (and other ailments); he published many testimonials, some of which were from his parishioners.⁶ An advertisement for Scotch Pills, prepared by Robert Anderson of Bristol, sought reliable testimony by quoting a letter from Thomas Waring of Leominster, “one of those respectable people called Quakers”.⁷

Occasionally advertisements were in verse. One ostentatious testimonial was in the form of “Lines addressed to N. Godbold Esq. . . . Proprietor of the celebrated Vegetable Balsam, on seeing a print representing a view of his elegant Mansion at Godalming, in Surrey. Written by a young Lady of the city of Bath as a small mark of her gratitude for the restoration of her mother’s health . . .”.⁸ More amusing was a verse about Nicoll’s *Beaume de Vie* which reads:

On hearing of Mr. Wilkes’s having a Complaint in his Stomach.

Why is not Wilkes, thro’ Britain’s Pray’rs,
From inward Pains and Bondage free?
When gracious G the sceptre bears,
And NICOLL sells the *Beaume de Vie*.⁹

This verse may have been planned as an advertisement or merely intended to amuse, but it introduces a touch of topicality which is remarkably scarce in the advertisements. They rarely reflect stirring events in the outside world, though in 1792 an advertisement for the Chevalier Ruspini’s Balsamic Styptick contained the following: “many persons in this country must doubtless have relatives and connections interested in the impending warfare. . . . To such persons a more valuable present could not be sent, than a quantity of this admirable Styptick, which may render them important service in the hour of calamity.”¹⁰

If the advertisements for medicines were aimed at the ailing visitors who came for medical purposes, they might be expected to mention the Bath waters. Such references are rare in the earlier portion of the sample but this probably simply reflects the fact that the texts of most advertisements were not composed locally but were supplied by the central distributors of the medicines. By 1761, the Stomachic Lozenges supplied by Mr. Newbery were described as having an excellent effect in disorders of the stomach and bowels “after other Remedies, and even the Bath and Tunbridge Waters, have been used in vain.”¹¹ Towards the end of the century, however, references to the Bath waters were becoming frequent. We are told that British Pills are “a great and necessary Auxillary to the Bath Waters”;¹² that Speediman’s Stomach Pills are “the best medicine that can be taken during a course of the Bath waters”;⁴ that Cox’s Stomachic Pearl Seeds are to be taken “after the Bath, Cheltenham and other Spa Waters”;¹³ and that the Pastilles Martiales de Montpellier, or Aromatic Lozenges of Steel, which are offered to the public as an infallible remedy for impotency, and those complaints incident to females of delicate constitutions, “have been lately recommended by a very learned Physician to be taken with the Bath Waters”.¹⁴ These references suggest that those who came to take the waters were an important target for the advertisers.

If, as these examples suggest, the advertisements were intended to catch the eye of

The vendors of medicines advertised in 18th-century Bath newspapers

the visitor to Bath, their frequency might be expected to vary with the social season. The yearly samples of the *Bath Journal* and *Bath Chronicle* (excluding their first years of publication) have, therefore, been examined for seasonal fluctuations, and various figures for the *Bath Journal* of 1750 are shown in Figure 1. The weekly average of

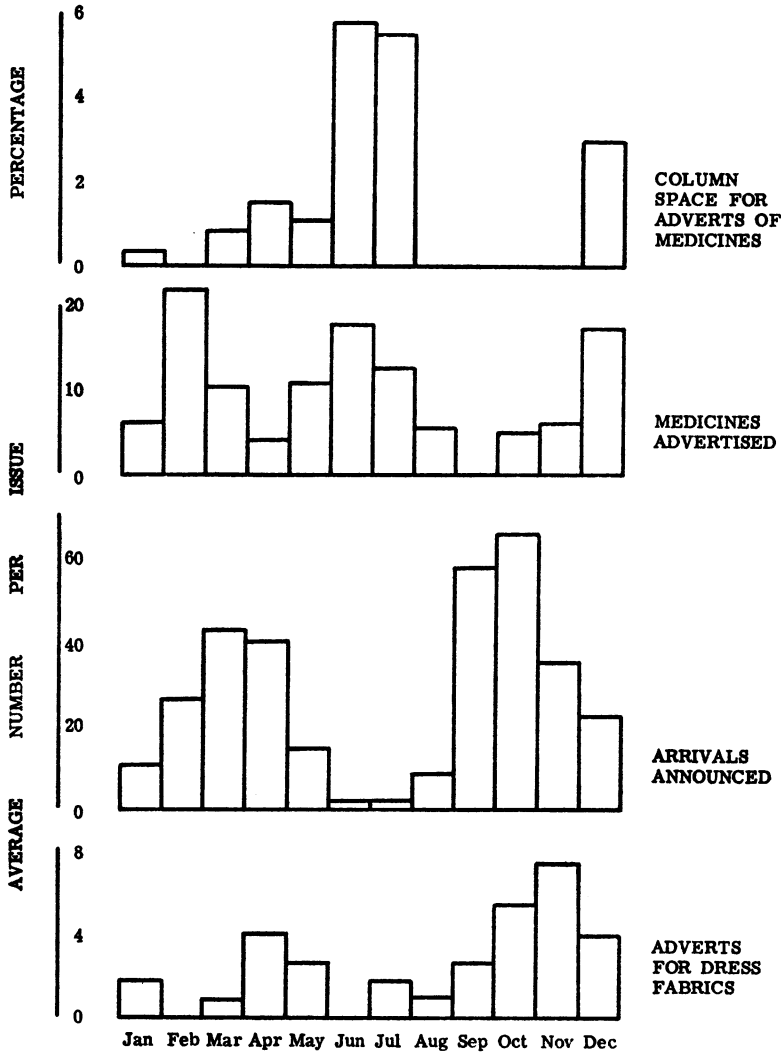


Figure 1. Histograms showing the variation from month to month in the number of advertisements appearing in the *Bath Journal* for 1750. The top row shows the percentage of the total column space of the first issue of each month taken up by advertisements for medicines and the second row shows the average number of medicines advertised per issue in each month. The third and fourth rows show the average number of arrivals noted and the average number of advertisements for dress fabrics per issue.

arrivals noticed in the newspaper shows two large peaks with a trough in June and July. The unfashionable character of these months was still apparent in 1780 when lodging-house charges which were 10s. 0d. a week for the rest of the year were reduced to 7s. 0d. a week for June, July and August: a similar differential persisted through the rest of the century.¹⁵ The average number of medicines advertised in an issue also fluctuated from month to month but in an opposite direction, so that as the number of arrivals fell, the advertisements for medicines increased and vice versa (Figure 1). The negative correlation between the two is not statistically significant ($r=-0.48$; d.f.=10), but a similar and significant negative relationship exists between the percentage of column length taken up by advertisements for medicines in the first issue of each month and the average weekly arrivals for that month ($r=-0.58$; $P<0.05$). This fall in advertisements for medicines during the social season is not simply caused by notices of social events leaving little space for any type of advertisements. Figure 1 also shows the average weekly number of advertisements for fabrics by silk mercers and linen drapers, and for other dress materials. Their number follows the same pattern as that of the average weekly arrivals, their positive correlation approaching statistical significance ($r=+0.57$; $P\sim 0.05$). Thus it seems that advertisements for medicines had to make way for more fashionable ones during the season, but this does not necessarily imply that advertising medicines was considered unimportant. The explanation probably lies in the fact that, as discussed below, the proprietor of the newspaper was also a vender of medicines. When silk mercers or others wished to advertise, their advertisements and their money were accepted: when outside advertisers were not forthcoming, the printer advertised his own wares, which included medicines.

In the *Bath Journal* of 1761 and the *Bath Chronicle* of 1770, there was still significant fluctuation from month to month in the average number of medicines advertised in an issue but the variations were not so clearly seasonal as in 1750. In subsequent samples of these two newspapers, the fluctuations ceased to be statistically significant.

II. THE VENDERS

1. *Newspaper proprietor/printer*

With rare exceptions, the advertisements named venders in Bath from whom the medicines could be obtained. That many venders of patent medicines were book-sellers or printers is well known, and a logical explanation of this situation is offered by Gray writing early in the next century. Speaking of nostrums or patent medicines he says "as most of these are largely advertised, and their virtues vaunted in posting-bills, a connection is hence formed between the preparers and the printers of their advertisements, so that in many places the printers and stationers are the usual venders of this class of medicines".¹⁶ Alden, however, considers this explanation more ingenious than plausible.¹⁷ The occupations of all the venders in Bath mentioned in the sample of newspapers are listed in Table 2.

Newspaper proprietors were important wholesale and retail venders. In most cases the printer was also the proprietor, and the medicines advertised were available from the printing office and from the distributors of the newspaper. The ramifications of this system can be seen, for example, when Charles Hewitt, printer and bookseller of

The venders of medicines advertised in 18th-century Bath newspapers

TABLE 2. OCCUPATIONS OF PERSONS NAMED AS VENDERS OF ADVERTISED MEDICINES IN A SAMPLE OF BATH NEWSPAPERS.

OCCUPATION	NEWSPAPER (abbreviated as in reference ³) and YEAR					
	B.J.1744 B.J.1750	F.B.J.1756 B.A.1756-7 B.J.1761 B.C.1760-1	B.C.1768 B.C.1770	B.J.1780 S.M.1777 S.M.1779 B.G.1779	B.C.1790 B.R.1792-3 B.H.1792-3	B.J.1798 B.C.1799
Newspaper printer/ proprietor	1	4	2	4	3	2
Bookseller, stationer	2	2	8	6	9	11
Perfumer, toyman	2	2	5	2	8	3
Grocer	1	3	3	1	4	2
Dentist	1	3	4	0	5	2
Apothecary, chymist, druggist	0	1	2	4	5	8
Others*	1	0	1	1	0	3
Not stated	8	2	2	3	2	4

*one broker, one corn-cutter, one cutler, two visiting medicine venders (Dr. Brodum and John Gardner) and N. Brooke³.

Glastonbury, was appointed an agent for the distribution of the *Bath Chronicle*. He announced¹⁸ that he sent out hawkers to various towns, including Somerton, Langport, Ilchester, Street, Wedmore and Meare, and that persons residing in these parishes might give their orders to the hawkers for the newspaper and for medicines advertised therein. It may have been this efficient system of distribution as much as the reasons put forward by Gray that made the newspaper proprietors successful venders of medicines. A typical advertisement illustrating the wholesale and retail aspects of the business is that of Cornelius Pope, printer of the *Bath Chronicle*, for Dr. Robert Walker's Patent Genuine Jesuit Drops which were "to be had . . . of C. Pope and Comp. at their Office, in Stall Street, Bath; and of the Distributors of this Paper. At the Printing Office aforesaid may be had, All Sorts of Patent Medicines . . . where country Shopkeepers may be supply'd Wholesale on the London Terms".¹⁹ Boddely of the *Bath Journal* announced similarly that "Good Allowance will be made by the said T. Boddely to those that take Quantities to sell again."²⁰

Boddely was the first printer and publisher of the *Bath Journal*, from February 1744. He was an active advertiser and was named as a vender in most of the advertise-

ments for medicines that appeared in his paper. He also advertised in other publications that he printed, for example the *Bath and Bristol Guide*²¹ which contained a list of thirty-one medicines sold by the printer, and their prices. Subsequent printers of the *Journal*²² continued to sell medicines but the information in Table 1 suggests that they were not as active in this respect as the printers of the *Bath Chronicle*. This paper was started on 25 December 1760 by Cornelius Pope; a note on the title page said that he had been apprenticed to Mr. Boddely and had managed the *Bath Journal* for the previous five years. He clearly had access to the suppliers of medicines and in his first year of publication was able to advertise a greater number of medicines than the *Bath Journal*. For a brief spell in 1768 the title was *Archer's Bath Chronicle* and on 29 September 1768, William Archer was joined by Richard Cruttwell as senior partner. Cruttwell was a member of an interesting and able family and from the time that he became sole proprietor in October 1769 until his death in 1799 he was an active advertiser and vender of medicines.²³ He sold the products of all the leading manufacturers as indicated by an advertisement which listed "all the late Sir John Hill's medicines . . . and all Messrs Dicey's, Newbery's, Wray's, Bayley's and Jackson's Medicines, etc., etc. . . ."²⁴ His son, Richard junior, carried on this tradition at the end of the century.

The *Bath Advertiser* was started by Stephen Martin in October 1755. In the year sampled (1757), the average for the number of medicines advertised in an issue was 28.7, the highest figure found in any newspaper. As well as the main advertisements in the columns, which named Martin as a wholesale and retail vender,²⁵ the front page regularly carried a footnote listing about twenty-four medicines sold at the printing office. These footnotes were responsible for the high average number of preparations advertised each week. Another newspaper which appeared at about the same time was *Farley's Bath Journal* of which only two issues are known.²⁶ In both, Samuel Farley, the printer and proprietor, advertised medicines which were sold at the printing office in the Market Place, Bath, and "by the Men who vend this Journal".

Salmon's Mercury was printed by J. Salmon, at first associated with T. Sketchley. Despite its full title, which at first was *Salmon's Mercury and General Advertiser*, most of the available issues, at least as they survive, do not contain advertisements. One issue in 1777, however, shows that the printer was also a vender of medicines as it was announced that Montpellier Pectoral Drops might be had of J. Salmon, printer in Stall Street.²⁷ Another issue, probably of 1779, advertised fourteen medicines sold by the printer.²⁸ The *Bath Gazette* appeared at about the same time but is represented by only one known issue.²⁹ It was printed by J. Watts, who leaves no doubt of his status as a vender of medicines by announcing that Leyden Pills, Dr. Anderson's Scots Pills and Genuine Patent Medicines of every kind are "sold at J. Watt's Medicine and Stationary Warehouse, St. James's Parade". The description of their premises as medicinal warehouses was used by newspaper proprietors later in the century, as mentioned below.

The *Bath Herald* and the *Bath Register* were first published on the same day, 3 March 1792. The *Herald* was the first Bath newspaper to have a separate printer and publisher: these were Robert Paddock and William Meyler respectively. Both dealt

The venders of medicines advertised in 18th-century Bath newspapers

in medicines. Paddock, as well as being a printer, advertised for sale bibles, prayer books, every kind of writing, printing and drawing papers, wholesale and retail, Riley's and Reeve's colours and "Genuine Patent Medicine".³⁰ Dr. Waite's celebrated Worm Medicine was "sold in Bath only by the Printer of this Paper".³¹ Meyler was a bookseller in the Grove who operated a circulating library described in an advertisement which also listed "all kinds of Patent Medicines".³² In addition, he ran a state lottery office³³ and was described in a directory of 1800 as a printer.³⁴

The *Bath Register* is the exception among the newspapers under discussion in that its printer, J. Johnson, was not apparently involved in selling patent medicines. This presumably accounts for the relatively small amount of advertisement for such items in his paper (see Table 1). For approximately three months, however, the paper was associated with venders of medicines for, during this time only, it was published by Messrs. Campbell and Gainsborough or by J. Campbell at the circulating library in Burton Street, and advertisements used the familiar phrase that medicines "may be had of the Newsmen".³⁵ After this period, it was again both printed and published by Johnson until it was absorbed by the *Bath Herald* in October 1793.

It appears, therefore, that selling proprietary medicines was not merely an occasional side-line for the printers and publishers of newspapers. In eighteenth-century Bath it seems to have been regularly associated with the printing of seven out of the eight newspapers. Even in the one case where it was not, there was a brief period when the paper was published by a vender of medicines, and this newspaper only achieved an independent existence for nineteen months. The importance attached to the selling of medicines has already been suggested in the case of the *Bath Gazette* where the printer wrote of his "Medicine and Stationary Warehouse". The second Richard Cruttwell, a few months after taking over his father's business, used a similar phrase and began to advertise from the "Medicinal Warehouse, St. James Street",³⁶ In 1799 a Mr. John Jeffreys inserted advertisements for a property in each of the three Bath newspapers and fortunately the receipted bills for the advertising are preserved.³⁷ The three bill-heads, from the *Bath Chronicle*, *Journal* and *Herald* respectively, read as follows: "Dr. to Richard Cruttwell, Printer and Stationer, at his Patent Medicine Warehouse, St. James Street, Bath."; "Dr to Keenes, Printers at their Patent Medicine Warehouse, King's Mead Street, Bath"; and "To William Meyler, Bookseller, Stationer and Printer, Orange Grove. Patent and Approved Medicines." These bill-heads leave little doubt as to the importance of the trade in medicines to these newspaper proprietors.

2. Circulating libraries

Another prominent group of venders were the proprietors of circulating libraries and the importance of these institutions in the social life of Bath was considerable. John Wood described how it was customary for the master of a family arriving in Bath to pay various subscriptions, including one "to the Bookseller, for which he is to have what Books he pleases to read at his lodgings; . . . The Ladies too subscribe to the Bookseller".³⁸ Later, Oliver Goldsmith in his *Life of Richard Nash* (1762) simply re-used Wood's description. In 1778, Philip Thicknesse wrote that "Men of Reading will find Libraries always open to them",³⁹ and Kite has described the

proliferation of circulating libraries towards the end of the century.⁴⁰ Among fictitious characters, Lydia Languish in Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775) made use of the libraries run by Mr. Bull and Mr. Frederick, and Smollett's Miss Melford in *The expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) considered them "charming places of resort". The non-fictitious diarist, Elizabeth Collett, used them extensively.⁴¹

James Leake is the best known of the Bath booksellers who operated circulating libraries and was probably lending books well before the publication of the first Bath newspaper.^{42,43} He was the first person to advertise medicines independently, and not in association with the printer, in the *Bath Journal*.⁴⁴ This advertisement was for English's Dr. Anderson's Scots Pills: he also sold Dr. Hill's and John Newbery's medicines,⁴⁵ and others. His son, who succeeded him, advertised a similar range of medicines and was named as the Bath vender of Ward's medicines prepared for Fielding and Dingley.⁴⁶ In 1770, Lewis Bull took over Leake's library on the Lower Walks but announced that "The Jewellery and Toy Trades, at his Shop in the Grove, will be carried on in the usual extensive Manner".⁴⁷ He continued to sell the main groups of medicines and advertised his library, new books, stationery wares and patent medicines all in the same advertisement.⁴⁸ In 1792, his son John Bull, at first associated with John Hensley, took over the business.⁴⁹ His advertisements in our sample up to the end of the century were for various medicines of Francis Newbery.⁵⁰

Another well-known circulating library was that of William Frederick,^{51,52} who advertised various of Newbery's medicines as well as Dr. Hill's.⁵³ This library in The Grove was later taken over by William Meyler, at first in association with Joseph Sheldon.⁵⁴ Meyler has already been mentioned as the publisher of the *Bath Herald* and a vender of medicines. A comprehensive advertisement listed almanacks, ladies' and gentlemen's pocket-books, court and city registers, etc., in a variety of new and elegant bindings, as just published and sold at Meyler's Circulating Library, "where to a very extensive Collection, every New and Entertaining Publication is constantly added".⁵⁵ The newspapers listed as available for reading included seven London papers "and the Reviews", and country papers, three each from Bath and Bristol, and one each from Birmingham, Chester, Exeter, Gloucester, Oxford, Salisbury and York, *The Edinburgh Gazette* and *Dublin Evening Post*. The advertisement ends by announcing that "All Fuller's Approved Medicines; particularly the Patirosa Lozenges may be had here. Likewise the Gloucester celebrated Pearls and Seeds, prepared by Mr. D. Cox—and all Kinds of Patent Medicines from the Warehouses of Messrs. Newbery, Wye, etc."

The evidence concerning other libraries must be summarized briefly. In 1768, William Bally's library in Milsom Street was advertised in conjunction with various patent medicines, and a note was added that youth would be educated as usual at a house fitted up for that purpose in Parsonage Lane.⁵⁶ Subsequently in the present sample, M. Bally and later J. Bally were mentioned as selling various medicines, though not in conjunction with advertisement of the library.⁵⁷ There were numerous mentions of the library run by Joseph Barrett, first in Milsom Street and later in Bond Street; numerous other advertisements were for medicines sold by him.⁵⁸ Campbell and Gainsborough have been mentioned as publishers of the *Bath Register* for a short time; proprietary medicines were often advertised as sold at their circulating library.⁵⁹

The venders of medicines advertised in 18th-century Bath newspapers

There were many advertisements for the sale of medicines by W. Taylor, bookseller in Church Street.⁶⁰ He was presumably the William Taylor, proprietor of the circulating library in Church Street,⁶¹ but records in the 1760s must be interpreted cautiously as there was then a W. Taylor described as a grocer,⁶² and one described as a cutler,⁶³ both of whom sold medicines. Edward Russell's circulating library was advertised in the same context as various medicines,⁶⁴ as was the library run successively by Pratt and Clinch^{65,66} and James Marshall.⁶⁷ The latter had been started by Andrew Tennant⁶⁸ whose advertisements for medicines were frequent, a few referring also to his library.⁶⁹ Thomas Mills, who started a circulating library in Kingsmead Street,⁷⁰ sold Dr. Radcliffe's Drops and a powder for cleaning the teeth.⁷¹ When his library was taken over by Samuel Hazard and moved to Cheap Street, it became a very active centre for the sale of a wide range of proprietary medicines^{72,73} and an advertisement for Walkey's Vegetable Dentifrice referred to its sale at "Mr. Hazard's Circulating Library and Medicinal Warehouse".⁷⁴ At the end of the century, Thomas Gibbons established a library "at one half the charge of any other library in Bath".⁷⁵ This was run from his shop in Bridge Street where he was already selling patent medicines.⁷⁶ Finally, the J. Brown who sold various medicines of Dicey & Co.⁷⁷ in 1799 was probably the John Brown who ran a circulating library in Edgar Building.⁷⁸

Clearly, this socially important institution, the circulating library, was very strongly linked with the sale of proprietary medicines. The only well-known library not identified as selling medicines in the present sample is that of Theophilus Shrimpton;⁷⁹ perhaps he did not do so, or perhaps he simply did not advertise the fact. Lesser-known libraries that do not appear in the sample as places where medicines were sold are those of Benjamin Mathews and Thomas Loggan,⁸⁰ nor does that of David Evans who stated his intention of opening a library⁸¹ but who is not listed by Kite.⁸² With these relatively minor exceptions, however, we can say that the circulating libraries in Bath sold proprietary medicines. Hamlyn⁸³ quotes a pamphlet in the Bodleian Library which suggests that circulating libraries were not highly remunerative but that their profits required augmentation with some other business. The sale of medicines seems a natural choice for Bath, and other associated businesses have already been noted in this sample. Despite the sale of medicines, James Marshall became bankrupt; one of the announcements in the Bath newspapers referred to him as a bookseller, dealer and chapman.⁸⁴

At least one circulating library was a source of medical information as well as of medicines. A surviving catalogue of Hazard's library claimed to list about 10,000 volumes.⁸⁵ Nearly 100 of these were on medical topics and represented a comprehensive collection ranging from two-volume works on *The practice of physic* to William Buchan's *Domestic medicine*.

3. Perfumers and toy-men

Further evidence that the advertised medicines were bought by the socially inclined visitors is provided by the number of perfumers and toy-men listed as venders (Table 2). The two traders are grouped together as probably catering for a similar public. Three advertisers were described as following both trades⁸⁶ and Lewis Bull combined the toy trade with a circulating library.⁸⁷ The need for perfumers is strongly suggested by

Smollett's description in *The expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) of the odours arising from the throng at a ball, and the toy-man seems to have had a place in the polite round. Wood says that "From the Pump Room, the Ladies from time to time withdraw to a neighbouring Toy Shop, amusing themselves there with Reading the News".⁸⁸ Smollett's Miss Melford tells her correspondent that "From the Bookseller's shop we make a tour through the milliners and toy men".

If the perfumers sold medicines, why were they not also sold in the milliners' shops and the lace warehouses? Francis Bennett, in the Church Yard, who sold linen and woollen drapery, mercery, and haberdashery goods also sold all sorts of teas, coffees, chocolate and sugar, and other things including fine snuffs.⁸⁹ Mary Sellen, milliner in Pierpoint Street, also sold powders and Hungary water.⁹⁰ Neither appears to have sold medicines. It is likely that a good proportion of the purchasers of patent medicines were women: many of the medicines were specifically designed for women. Restorative Salo Pills, sold by Cruttwell, were for all obstructions and irregularities;⁹¹ Welch's Pills were sold both by Cruttwell and Meyler and performed a similar function, being suitable for complaints peculiar to virgins;⁹² Dr. Sibley's Lunar Tincture was especially adapted to treatment of the female but it would be "extremely improper" to enumerate the particular cases;⁹³ and there were many others. One might think that the milliners' shops would be ideal for marketing them and, in the next century, Morrison's Pills were at one time sold by three female agents in Bath: two of the three are listed in another section of the directory giving this information as dressmakers.⁹⁴ A possible explanation for the apparent exclusion of milliners, drapers and such like from the ranks of medicine venders in eighteenth-century Bath may have been that their trade was too seasonal. Ferry, weaver and mercer on the Parade, for instance, announced that stocks would be returned to London on 16 April 1744 and that the shop would re-open on or before 20 September for the winter season.⁹⁵ Perhaps an adequate reward for selling medicines required not merely the seasonal trade but also a steady turn-over for the rest of the year. Alternatively, the shops frequented by the ladies may have sold "female pills" but may have considered it unnecessary or indelicate to advertise the fact in the newspapers.

4. *Printers, booksellers, stationers*

Venders who are listed as printers, booksellers and stationers in Table 2 include one printer, one bookseller and two stationers not already mentioned as printers of newspapers or proprietors of circulating libraries. In 1784 and 1792 general directories were published for Bath,⁹⁶ and Pendred's directory has a list for the city.⁹⁷ Between them they name seventeen individuals or businesses classed as printers, booksellers or stationers: all but three (one printer, one stationer and Theophilus Shrimpton) can be identified as advertisers of proprietary medicines in the newspapers sampled. The two general directories list sixteen perfumers of whom seven advertised the sale of medicines in our sample.

5. *Grocers and dentists*

Two classes of venders listed in Table 2 must be mentioned only briefly. The grocers did not form a large group of advertisers, but one business deserves individual mention.

The vendors of medicines advertised in 18th-century Bath newspapers

It was run by various members of the family of Lambe, at India House, opposite the Three Tuns Inn in Stall Street, and had the distinction of being the most persistent advertiser in the sample, apart from the printers of the *Bath Journal*, advertising regularly from 1744 to the end of the century.⁹⁸ The other group to be mentioned only briefly was composed of a very varied collection of dental practitioners. One example was John Goldstone who arrived from London to bleed, draw teeth and cut corns. He settled in Bath and became an “operator for the teeth”, selling dental preparations and various patent medicines.⁹⁹ A very different example was the distinguished surgeon-dentist, the Chevalier Ruspini, who had a fashionable practice in both London and Bath and sold his own dental medicines.¹⁰⁰ Several other dental practitioners in Bath prepared and sold their own dental tinctures and dentifrices.

6. Apothecaries, chemists and druggists

The final group to be considered is formed by combining the apothecaries, chemists and druggists. An increasing number of such persons advertised medicines during the course of the century. The earlier advertisers called themselves apothecaries, or apothecaries and chemists. The designation, “chymist”, was sometimes added with the passage of time as in the case of Thomas Horton. The municipal records show that he was admitted to the freedom in 1778 as an apothecary, but when an apprentice of his was admitted in 1799, Horton was described as an apothecary and chemist. In the 1790s, four chemists and druggists appeared as advertisers, forming a small group distinct from the apothecaries. Such a distinction was not always apparent in the city records early in the next century: William Hayden, for example, was admitted to the freedom in 1837 having served seven years’ apprenticeship to Charles Webb “to learn the art, mystery, trade or profession of a surgeon and apothecary and chymist and druggist”.

Kett concluded from a study of Newcastle and Ipswich newspapers that apothecaries did not deal in patent medicines in these areas.¹⁰¹ The first advertisements for an apothecary selling such medicines in the present sample, however, suggests that selling these medicines may not necessarily be equated with advertising their sale. These advertisements were for the letting of apartments or tenements by Mr. William Street, Apothecary and Chymist, at the Phoenix, next door to the Three Cups in Northgate Street, Bath. Having made the main announcement, the advertisement stated that Street “truly prepares and sells, wholesale and retail, drugs, chemicals, and other medicines, as cheap as in London. He also sells, by virtue of the King’s Letters Patent, Dr. James’s Powders and many other Patent Medicines”.¹⁰² It seems that the reason for advertising was the letting, and the mention of his other wares was secondary. Probably the fact that he was an apothecary and chemist made it unnecessary for him normally to advertise medicines. The public would seek him out when they required that commodity. Such a situation would account for the lack of advertisements by apothecaries in Kett’s sample, even if they were in fact selling patent medicines. William Hawes, himself an apothecary, writing in 1774, suggests that they were doing so in London. He says of James’s Powders that “this Medicine is in such general vogue that almost every Apothecary is obliged to keep it”.¹⁰³

Many of the proprietary medicines advertised in the present sample were produced

by apothecaries. For example, Thomas Greenough prepared, among other items, two widely-advertised dental tinctures in Snow Hill, London.¹⁰⁴ Nearer Bath, Joseph Dalby, apothecary of Malmesbury, Wiltshire, prepared a Carminative Mixture,¹⁰⁵ and, in Bath itself, Messrs. Breuer & Co., chymists and apothecaries, in Broad Street, prepared and sold a Vegetable Lotion for the Itch, though the manufacture may have been carried out at their laboratories in Park Street, Grosvenor Square, London.¹⁰⁶ Many other local apothecaries probably had their nostrums. Two were associated with proprietary medicines but do not appear as venders in the present sample of advertisements, nor were their products advertised by other venders. One was P. Page who described himself as a “chymist and apothecary” of Bath when, in 1772, he announced in a Marlborough newspaper that he had appointed the printer of the paper the sole agent in Wiltshire for his Balsamic Lozenges of Tolu.¹⁰⁷ The other was William Tickell, apothecary of Bath, who patented his Anodyne Aetherial Spirit in 1786.¹⁰⁸ By so doing he came under attack from Dr. James Makittrick Adair who wrote, “I shall leave it to Mr. T to determine how far he can reconcile his *pretensions* as a nostrum-monger, to his *credit* as a regular practitioner . . .”.¹⁰⁹ Tickell, however, was not apparently without allies among the faculty as one of the cases he described in writing of his nostrum was communicated to him by Dr. Lysons, with permission for its publication.¹¹⁰

If apothecaries did not need to advertise the sale of proprietary medicines, the same reasons probably applied to the chemists and druggists. Like the apothecaries, many probably had their nostrums. Thomas Howe, chemist and druggist of Milsom Street, Bath, and Fleet Street, London, sold Howe’s Pectoral Lozenges of Horehound for coughs, asthma, spitting of blood, continued cough and consumption.¹¹¹ This he prepared and had patented in 1786,¹¹² being one of the sixteen chemists or druggists who appear among the eighty patentees of medicines in the eighteenth century whose occupation or status is noted in a chronological index of patentees.¹¹³ This number compares with fourteen described as apothecaries (some as surgeons or chemists in addition) and with fourteen described as surgeons.

III. LITERARY REFERENCES

The frequency with which the proprietors of newspapers and of circulating libraries were also venders of advertised medicines suggests that the sale of the latter was an important part of their business. The occupations of the venders make it clear that the visitors to Bath formed an important market for these medicines though, no doubt, they were not the only purchasers, and advertisements in the papers were not the only means by which medicines were introduced to them. The sections of English society which bought the medicines in Bath, probably also did so when they dispersed to their own homes. We might, therefore, expect to find some comments on the taking of these medicines in contemporary literature, and in this we are not disappointed.

The widespread sale of proprietary medicines, even if some had therapeutic value, must have angered the regular practitioners, and the danger of unsupervised medication was recognized by many non-medical writers. The extreme view, probably fostered by the regular medical practitioners, was that all preparations sold by irregular practitioners were worthless if not actually lethal. Laurence Sterne, in a sermon on murder

The venders of medicines advertised in 18th-century Bath newspapers

(*Sermons*, 1769), wrote: “There is another species of this crime . . . and that is, where the life of our neighbour is shortened, and often taken away as directly as by a weapon, by the empirical sale of nostrums and quack medicines, which avarice and ignorance blend.”

Early in the next century, George Crabbe wrote in *The Borough* (1810);

But now our quacks are gamesters, and they play
With craft and skill to ruin and betray;
With monstrous promise they delude the mind,
And thrive on all that tortures human-kind.
Void of all honour, avaricious, rash,
The daring tribe compound their boasted trash—
Tincture or syrup, lotion, drop or pill;
All tempt the sick to trust the lying bill;

Several writers about Bath in the eighteenth century made their comments on proprietary medicines with less venom and more humour. Tobias Smollett, himself medically qualified, ridiculed Hill’s Essence of Water Dock in *The expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) by attributing its use to the absurd Tabitha Bramble and linking it with her dog’s laxative. Her curiously spelled letter to her housekeeper reads: “William may bring over my bum-daffee, and the viol with the easings of Dr. Hill’s dock-water, and Choders lacksitif. The poor creature has been terribly constuprated ever since we left huom.”

Christopher Anstey, in a similar vein in *The New Bath Guide* (1766) also alluded to two of Hill’s preparations which were taken by Tabby Runt, the maid who was “the queerest animal in nature”. She has to be treated by the doctor:

He gives little Tabby a great many Doses,
For he says the poor Creature has got the Chlorosis,
Or a ravenous Pica, so brought on the Vapours
By swallowing Stuff she has read in the Papers;
And often I marvell’d she spent so much Money
In *Water-Dock Essence and Balsam of Honey*;
Such Tinctures, Elixirs, such Pills have I seen,
I never could wonder her Face was so green.

Some of the most entertaining ridicule of advertised medicines and nostrums is contained in two of Oliver Goldsmith’s *Letters from The Citizen of the World* (1762). They mock both the gullibility of the public and the ignorance of the proprietors, three of whom are selected for personal ridicule. Goldsmith was probably medically qualified and this would have coloured his outlook; it also adds point to a circumstance arising during his final illness. It is reported that, despite contrary advice from his apothecary and a physician, he persisted in taking James’s Powders, a much-advertised patent medicine.¹¹⁴ The attitude expressed in his satirical writing apparently did not apply in the stress of his own illness: but he would probably have claimed that Dr. James’s preparation was an exception among patent medicines. Henry Fielding also sought the aid of celebrated nostrums during his final illness when he wrote in *The journal of a voyage to Lisbon* (1755) that he had become a patient of Joshua Ward and that “the powers of Mr. Ward’s remedies want indeed no unfair puffs of mine to give

them credit.” These sentiments are not quite in line with those of a passage in *Tom Jones* (1749) which cannot be wholly serious: speaking of “interest” he tells us: “This is indeed a most excellent medicine, and, like Ward’s pill, flies at once to the particular part of the body on which you desire to operate, whether it be the tongue, the hand, or any other member, where it scarce ever fails of immediately producing the desired effect.”

Despite the complaints of the regular practitioners, such as Dr. Adair of Bath, who wrote an essay on quacks and quack medicines,¹¹⁵ the public seems to have been very willing to buy proprietary medicines. Their support allowed medicine venders like Joshua Ward¹¹⁶ to flourish and even achieve Royal patronage just as, earlier in the century, Mrs. Joanna Stephens had received powerful support resulting in a grant of £5000 from Parliament to reveal the secrets of her medicines for the stone.¹¹⁷ It seems clear that advertisement could bring considerable success to the vender of medicines, and the words of the anonymous author of the *Pharmacopoeia Empirica*, published in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, may be a fair summary of the situation. He listed 202 proprietary medicines and may not have been entirely disinterested in doing so: the view that he expressed in his introduction to the list was that:

Indeed the rich and great (generally speaking) will seek relief, secundum artem, from the regular physician, and true-bred apothecary; for whom provision is made in the college dispensary.—But the majority of mankind (in hopes of saving charges, and on a presumption of surer help) are apt to resort to men of experience, as they are called, whose remedies they are induced to think, from their advertisements (so often repeated, and at so great expense) have been successful in the cure of the several distempers for which they are calculated.—I cannot but think, therefore, that by publishing the list of nostrums you will herewith receive, you will do a favor not only to the empirics (by pointing them out to observation) but to the greatest part of your countrymen, who would be glad (at least in desperate cases) to know where to apply for a probability of relief.¹¹⁸

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The vendors of medicines advertised in 18th-century Bath newspapers

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6. B.J. 12 November 1750 and 31 December 1750.
7. B.C. 9 May 1799.
8. B.C. 31 October 1799.
9. B.C. 22 February 1770.
10. B.R. 9 February 1793.
11. B.J. 26 January 1761.
12. B.C. 25 February 1790.
13. B.H. 21 April 1792.
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48. B.J. 23 October 1780.
49. B.R. 19 May 1792.

50. B.J. 5 February 1798, 5 November 1798.
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52. Hamlyn, op. cit., note 43 above.
53. B.J. 18 May 1761; B.C. 28 May 1761, 8 February 1770.
54. Kite, op. cit., note 40 above.
55. B.H. 24 November 1792.
56. B.C. 13 October 1768.
57. B.J. 3 January 1780, 25 September 1780, 5 February 1798.
58. B.C. 14 January 1790; B.J. 5 February 1798.
59. B.R. 7 July 1792.
60. B.C. 18 January 1770, 14 January 1790.
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[A subsequent paper, to be published in *Medical History*, April 1976, will discuss the medicines themselves.]