

HISTORIC CONNECTIONS

Sir John Wood the Younger

Sir John Wood the Younger was the architect of the Royal Crescent, Bath and numerous other grand Georgian buildings. The Crescent (as it was first called) which only received the prefix Royal some years later, is a row of 30 terraced houses laid out in a sweeping symmetrical crescent built between 1767 and 1774. It is amongst the greatest examples of Georgian architecture in the UK. The Crescent is 500 feet in length with 114 iconic columns. It was the first example of "Rus in Urbe" The country in the city with its views across the parkland.

John Eveleigh

John Eveleigh was an English surveyor and architect in Bath. He began his practice in Bath in the 1780's, but went bankrupt after the failure of the Bath City Bank and moved to Plymouth. He was responsible for many notable grand buildings in Bath including Camden Crescent, Summer Hill Place, Grosvenor Place, Lambridge Place and of course Bailbrook House. He was also involved in the building of 32-44 Caledonia Place in Bristol.

Valentine Jones

Valentine Jones owned Bailbrook House in the early 1800's he purchased the property from Dr Denham Skeet. Valentine Jones was a merchant from Belfast. In those days trade with the West Indies was more important than trade with Continental Europe. The Valentine Jones dynasty had premises at Winecellar Entry off High Street, Belfast. They were wine merchants and rum and sugar importers who had a thriving agency in Barbados where they bought and sold from the planters and also sold goods. He was an intriguing historic figure who knew the value of indulging yourself. He entertained lavishly when in Bath including guests such as

Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger, three Bishops, two Duchesses and two Marchionesses to name but a few.

Jane Austen

Jane Austen was an English novelist known primarily for her six major novels, which interpret, critique and comment upon the British landed gentry at the end of the 18th Century. Austen's plots often explore the dependence of women on marriage in the pursuit of favourable social standing and economic security. Her use of biting irony, along with her realism, humour and social commentary have long earned her acclaim among critics, scholars and popular audiences alike. While she grew up in Hampshire, her father gave up ministry in 1800, and they moved into No 4 Sydney Place, Bath. Austen was shocked to be moving as she loved her family home. She was allegedly unhappy in Bath and this may be shown in her lack of productivity. They left the city in 1805 and moved to Worthing, Sussex.

Thomas Attwood

Thomas Attwood was a builder "architect" and local politician in Bath. He was part of a prominent local family and a member of the City Council from 1760. Although he held no formal professional appointment, he acted as city surveyor and architect. He was able to use his position as a council member to obtain valuable contracts and building concessions on city owned land. He was Mayor of Bath at the time that the council adopted his proposal to build a prison. This caused much controversy in the city due to the fact that he was a plumber by trade and it was solely due to his political connections he was routinely appointed as the architect, surveyor and city planner for all of the city's civic projects including the new prison 1772-1774.

PRESENT DAY

In 2012 Hand Picked Hotels purchased Bailbrook House, a grade II listed property, along with Bailbrook Court and 20 acres of private grounds.

During 2013 sympathetic restoration and refurbishment of the original mansion house has taken place along with full refurbishment of Bailbrook Court.



A TREASURED HISTORY

BAILBROOK HOUSE
HOTEL
BATH, SOMERSET

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Hand PICKED
HOTELS

ORIGINS

Originally built for a wealthy lawyer, Doctor Denham Skeet, Bailbrook House was designed by the well-known Bath architect John Eveleigh. Eveleigh was also responsible for a number of other landmarks in Bath, notably Camden Crescent, Grosvenor Place and buildings in Grove Street, just across Pulteney Bridge.

Work began in 1790 however, due to interruptions and the uncertainties caused by the Napoleonic War, was not completed until early in the 19th century at about the same time as Jane Austen took up residence in Bath.

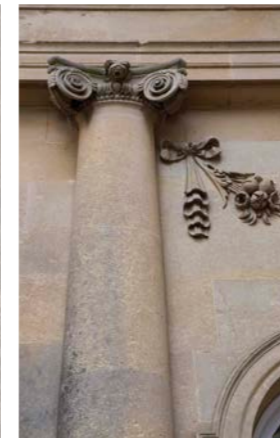


LADY ISABELLA KING

Bailbrook was taken by The Crown as reparation and sold in 1814 to Thomas Walters, ironically the head of the leading Batheaston family from whom Doctor Skeet had originally bought the site in 1790.

The Walters family then let Bailbrook to Lady Isabella King, daughter of the Earl of Kingston. Lady Isabella was never married but instead devoted her time and energy to charitable and benevolent work, becoming associated with many prominent figures in the Evangelical Revival.

As Patroness of a number of charities, her work was particularly targeted at street beggars aiming to 'save the innocent and the unprotected from the dangers attendant on idleness and poverty.' Initiatives included a knitting school and a button-making school for children.



By this time Doctor Skeet had sold the property to Valentine Jones, a merchant and official in the West Indies who became Public Secretary in Barbados and Commissary General for the British forces stationed in the Leeward Islands. When in Bath, Jones entertained lavishly, including among his guests at Bailbrook Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger.

Sadly the temptations of his office proved too great and Valentine Jones was tried and imprisoned for his part in corrupt dealings relating to the misdirection of Treasury bills through an accomplice in Philadelphia and fraudulently supplying the British forces in the West Indies.



The Ladies Association eventually moved from Bailbrook and the house was adapted as a private nursing home, remaining in this use until well into the 20th century.

Eventually Bailbrook was purchased by the Post Office and converted into a training college with new buildings added in the 1970's and later. Passing on to RCA (the Communications Company) and then Serco, the college became dedicated to the training of air traffic control personnel. In 2001 the ownership passed to Sundial Group and became a residential conference centre.