



Gilmore's Map of Abbey Gardens 1694

Among the extensive properties belonging to the monastery at Bath in the 13th century was a riverside ground described as a 'viridarium' or 'green garden' next to their mill on the Avon (see Monk's Mill on map).

18th Century

In 1709 Richard 'Beau' Nash encouraged Thomas Harrison to build an Assembly Room for fashionable visitors to the spa. A gravelled walk lined with sycamores, known as Harrison's Walk, was laid out along the west and north boundaries of the triangular site east of the Assembly Rooms; the remainder of the site appears to have been laid out with lawns. Admission to these gardens was by subscription, ensuring exclusivity.

A further Assembly Room was built by John Wood the Elder in 1730, while at about the same date a formal grove was laid out as a public garden with gravel walks immediately east of Bath Abbey. Named Orange Grove in 1734 in honour of a visit to Bath by the Prince of Orange. The Orange Grove and the subscription gardens associated with Harrison's Assembly Rooms, known as St James's Triangle, provided space for the recreation of fashionable visitors to Bath in the early C18. When John Wood began to develop North and South Parades to the south of St James' Gardens in 1738, these achieved pre-eminence among the places of fashionable resort in the city. Wood planned North or Grand Parade as a shaded summer promenade with steps descending to St James' Gardens which were to be laid out with a central

circular lawn or bowling green and a sheltered spring walk below the retaining wall of the Parade. Harrison's Walk was to be retained along the north-west boundary of the gardens and a further tree-lined walk was to be created along the river. Although Wood's scheme was not fully realised, it appears from C18 and C19 plans of Bath that the layout of the gardens was carried out in accordance with his plan.

19th Century

In 1824 the Royal Literary and Scientific Institution was built on the site of Harrison's Assembly Rooms and the gardens were renamed Institution Gardens. The layout of the gardens appears to have changed little during the C19, but c 1895 an improvement scheme led to the demolition of houses to the east of Orange Grove and Lot Lane, and the northern extension of the gardens. The Bath architect C E Davis constructed an Italianate colonnade along the western boundary of the garden which was continued beneath the new road, Grand Parade, forming a visual link with Pulteney Bridge to the north.



A later map of the area now occupied by Parade gardens, dated 1802

20th Century

Further highway improvements in 1932 led to the demolition of the Royal Institution, and the appropriation of a small area of land at the south-west corner of the gardens. The following year the late C19 colonnade was extended south-west and a new entrance comprising a

domed ticket office and a grand double staircase descending from Orange Grove was constructed. The layout of the gardens remains substantially unchanged from the C19, while significant elements of its design reflect the scheme devised in 1738 by John Wood as part of his development of North Parade.

21st Century

Today (2019), Parade Gardens continue to operate as subscription gardens, while residents of North Parade have access to the gardens by a private gate. Parade Gardens have remained in municipal ownership since the 1930s. The gardens are particularly noted for their displays of traditional carpet and sculptural bedding.

Did you know Parade Gardens also has two locations licensed for civil ceremonies? Contact 01225 395014 for details.



PARADE GARDENS

"FOR LEISURE, PLEASURE AND POLITE SOCIETY"



A part private and part council owned riverside garden with a fascinating history. A subscription garden since 1709, famous for its 3D and carpet bedding displays.



Bath & North East Somerset Council



1 North Parade

Built around 1741, famous residents here have included Admiral Lord Nelson, William Wilberforce and poet William Wordsworth. The large majority of this plot of land still belongs to the residents of the houses in North Parade and it is an obligation of the City Council to remove all visitors at least 30 mins before sunset so that the owners can enjoy their gardens in peace.

2 Abbey

The Abbey Church of St Peter was started in 1499. It replaced a Norman Cathedral, which was in turn built on the site of a Saxon church. The Abbey is a marvellous example of late gothic perpendicular architecture. Inside the stunning fan vaulted ceiling is truly a glorious sight – the Abbey is well worth a visit.

3 The Empire Hotel

The Empire, built in 1898, was a hotel until 1939. In the 1990's it was converted into luxury retirement apartments. Note the interesting rooftops depicting cottages, a town house, a manor house with Dutch style gable and a castle – supposedly representing the different classes of customer using the hotel!

4 Colonnades

The Tuscan style columns of the Colonnades were salvaged at the end of the C19th from a house in nearby Orange Grove, occupied by Prince of Orange in 1734 (which is why Orange Grove is named Orange Grove). The colonnade comprises of a terrazzo paved passage beneath the road, which is open to the east or river side with a series of columns and pilastered piers supporting a cornice and balustrade.

5 North Parade Bridge

Down river is the elegant North Parade Bridge, actually an iron bridge built in 1836, then encased in Bath stone 100 years later.

6 Pulteney Bridge

Pulteney Bridge is exceptional in that it is lined with shops on both sides. Completed in 1774 it connected the city with the land of the Pulteney family which they wished to develop. It is one of only 4 bridges in the world to have shops across its full span.

7 King Edward VII memorial or Angel of Peace

N.A. Irent, sculptor, commemorates King Edward VII's diplomatic tactics in Europe, particularly with his cousin the Kaiser in Germany, and his establishment of an entente cordiale with France. The memorial was moved to its current site from Milsom Street. Many similar versions of this statue, known as 'The Peacemaker,' can be found in public parks and squares all over the country.

8 Monk's Mill

Remains of an old water mill owned by the monks of the abbey. This is an historic ruin – older than the present Abbey – and maybe the only early medieval relic left in Bath – apart from the Norman foundations found beneath the Abbey itself. Set into the stones is a carved block which appears to bear the keys of St Peter. Nobody knows if this came from another part of the building or from the great Norman church.

9 Young Mozart

The young Mozart depicted playing his violin (after the famous Salzburg statue) standing on a raised, pierced and scrolled bronze base, adorned with three doves, two squirrels and a mouse at Mozart's feet. Commissioned by the City of Bath under the terms of the Purnell Trust to copy the huge Salzburg statue, but eventually scaled down. The sculptor was David Backhouse and it was unveiled in 1991.

10 Circular Pathway

This circular pathway was laid out to the same circumference as the stone circle at Stonehenge.

11 Bandstand

The centre of this lawn is occupied by an octagonal bandstand with a pyramidal tiled roof and simple timber supports. This structure replaced an earlier C19 bandstand on the same site in 1925. The circular lawn corresponds to a circular bowling green which formed part of Wood's scheme for North Parade and St James' Gardens (1738), and which is shown on C19 plans of Bath.



12 Statue of Bladud and his pigs

In 836BC Bladud is said to have founded Bath. While he was in Athens he contracted leprosy, and when he returned home he was imprisoned as a result, but escaped. He found employment as a swineherd at Swainswick, about two miles from the later site of Bath, and noticed that his pigs would go into an alder-moor in cold weather and return covered in black mud. He also noticed that the pigs which did this did not suffer from skin diseases as others did, and on trying the mud bath himself found that he was cured of his leprosy. He then went on to become king. In gratitude for his cure Bladud founded a city at Bath and dedicated it to the Celtic goddess Sul and 900 years later the Romans called the city Aqua Sulis – the waters of Sul.

Bladud was succeeded by his son Leir – immortalised by Shakespeare in King Lear.



13 Pet Cemetery

The Victorian pet cemetery was uncovered and restored in 2010. Pet cemeteries became fashionable at the end of the 19th Century. Some of the more legible inscriptions on the stones have the pet dates ranging from 1908-1988. The last burial was 1988 and the pet was called microdot.

14 Xylem Statue

This sculpture designed and made at City of Bath College was unveiled on June 30th 2014. The 150cm stainless steel sculpture was designed by 68-year-old Maureen Hosier who was taking part-time sculpture courses at the college. Bath in Bloom asked the college's art students to design a 50th anniversary sculpture to represent community participation, horticultural achievement and environmental responsibility.

