

# Women and Protest in Bath

**What would the 18th century founder of the Bluestocking Society talk to a 20th century Bath suffragette about?**

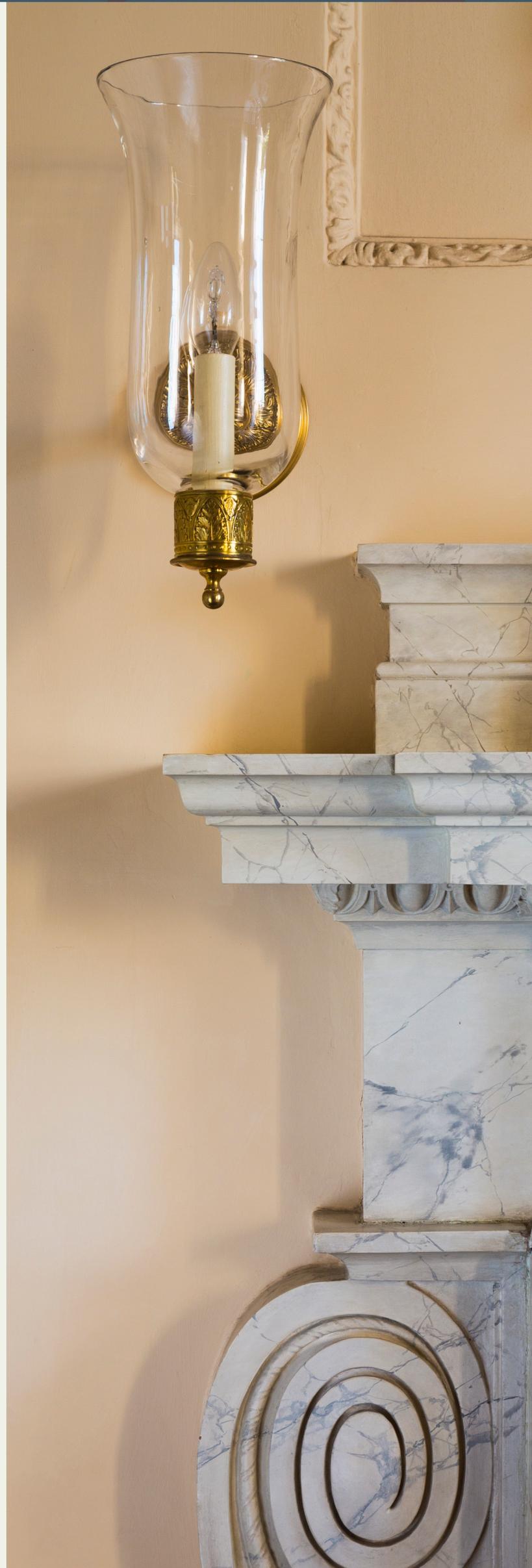
**What role did women play in saving and restoring the city of Bath?**

To mark the centenary of women getting the vote and being able to stand for Parliament we present a new performance in a salon at No. 1 Royal Crescent where Elizabeth Monatagu and Mary Blathwayt discuss the politics and protest of their day.

Experience their discussions and then explore the more recent history of women and protest through the story of the campaigning women of Bath Preservation Trust.

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# Elizabeth Montagu

1718 – 1800

As a young girl Elizabeth Montagu spent time with relatives in Cambridge where it is believed she was first introduced to classical literature and history, as well as an environment that encouraged lively discussion.

In 1742 she married Edward Montagu and the following year their son John was born. Tragedy struck when young John died in 1744. Elizabeth never recovered from the loss of her son, and she often spent time in Bath and Tunbridge Wells taking the waters. In 1777 Elizabeth lived at No. 16 Royal Crescent.

Her reputation as a hostess of literary breakfasts and large evening gatherings grew throughout the 1760s. Card playing and heavy drinking were banned at her parties, in favour of conversation and debate similar to the salons of Europe. Like-minded men and women were encouraged to discuss literature, philosophy and the arts. Intellectual equality was advocated.

At the heart of these events was a group of women who referred to themselves as the Bluestocking Philosophers. Committed to the equal rights of both men and women to education, they supported each other's intellectual and artistic works and became known as the Bluestocking Society.



Mrs Montagu after a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds. 1798.

Bath in Time – Bath Central Library

# Mary Blathwayt

1879 – 1961

In 1882 Mary Blathwayt moved to Eagle House in Batheaston with her parents and was educated at Bath High School. Alongside her mother, Mary was actively involved in the literary and scientific groups in the city and in 1906 attended her first meeting of the Bath Women's Suffrage Society.

By 1908 she was treasurer of the Bath branch of the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) working on suffrage propaganda. Between 1908 and 1909 she was living in Bristol with Annie Kenney, the WSPU's West of England organiser.

Her parents opened up Eagle House to suffragettes recovering from imprisonment and exhausting speaking schedules. Visiting women started planting trees in the garden at the house, often in memory of a fellow suffragette who had died, having been on hunger strike or suffered forcible feeding in prison. The area soon became known as the Suffragettes' Wood.

As the actions of the WSPU became more violent Mary and her mother became less involved, but Eagle House remained open to suffragettes in need of refuge. Mary lived at Eagle House in Batheaston until her death in 1961.



Mary Blathwayt. 1911.

Bath in Time – Bath Central Library

# Ruth Coard

1924 – 2017

Ruth Coard moved to Bath with her husband Peter in 1957 at a time when buildings in the city were under threat from demolition. They joined Bath Preservation Trust and in 1963 helped establish the Bath Buildings Record, a group of volunteers who campaigned against the destruction of historic buildings in the city and recorded those that could not be saved.

The Bath Buildings Record sometimes worked by torchlight in blocked-up rooms or in extreme conditions, in a race to photograph and sketch buildings mere moments before the bulldozers arrived. Ruth organised the volunteers, researched the buildings and collated thousands of images, newspaper clippings and building fragments.

The Coards published *Vanishing Bath* in 1970-3 to create a permanent record of the buildings that were being torn down. Ruth's text questioned the indiscriminate destruction of the city's buildings and highlighted the importance of all the things that were being lost.

Ruth's campaigning may not have created dramatic moments of chaining herself to buildings, but the quiet and emotional tone of her words had an extraordinary power in ensuring that future demolition was prevented.

BATH BUILDINGS RECORD



Ruth and Peter Coard surveying 24 High Street, June 1964.

Bath in Time - Bath Preservation Trust



Southgate Street just before demolition, October 1971.

Bath in Time - Bath Preservation Trust



Chatham Row surveyed by Bath Buildings Record, January 1972.

Bath in Time - Bath Preservation Trust

# Lesley Green-Armytage

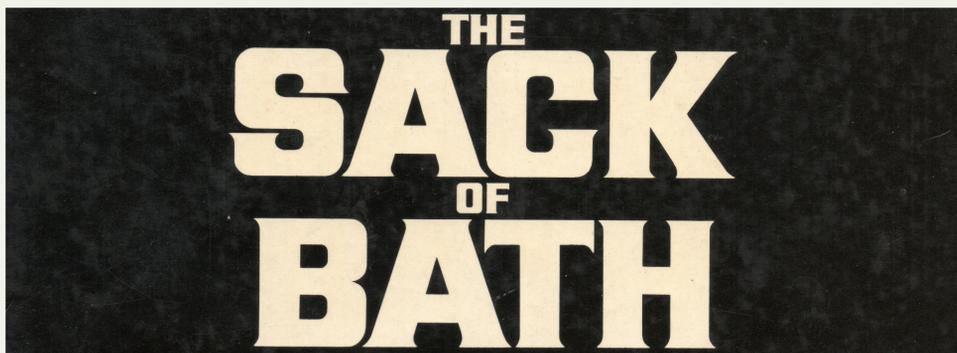
1911 – 2002

Lesley Green-Armytage began photographing Bath in the 1950s and was a dedicated member of Bath Preservation Trust and the Bath Buildings Record. During the Sack of Bath her images became some of the strongest weapons in the fight against further demolition.

With no photographic training she managed to create beautifully framed and lit views where colour, texture and design often outshone the signs of decay that the government was claiming as the reason behind much of the demolition.

She captured far more than just buildings due to be demolished. In a period of immense social, economic and physical change, she captured both moments in time and the lives of those who inhabited the city.

Through her images we are reminded that it was not houses that were demolished, but homes, and that even though they were seen as low rate and decaying, it was the architecture of Georgian Bath, the same architecture that the city celebrated, which was being swept away.



Widcombe Parade, 1964.

Lesley Green-Armytage



Ballance Street, 1966.

Lesley Green-Armytage



Morford Street, 1972.

Lesley Green-Armytage

# Jean Pratt

1923 – 2012

Jean Pratt joined Bath Preservation Trust in 1970 in the midst of the Sack of Bath and worked as the Secretary for the Trust until 1976. She returned again in 1979 when the major threat to Bath's historic buildings had become unsympathetic development.

A lasting memorial to her work can be seen in the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel on the vineyards. Jean was instrumental in the purchase of this Gothic Revival treasure by Bath Preservation Trust in 1983, shortly before she retired.

She worked tirelessly on the campaign, not only to stop the demolition of historic buildings but also to see a programme of repairs developed, which would restore many of the city's buildings to their former glory.

A meticulous researcher, photographer and collector of news clippings, Jean's archives on Bath form a record of the city and the changes to its architecture that is of great significance to our knowledge of Bath's history.

SAVE  
&  
RESTORE  
BATH



Abbey Green, 1971.

Jean Pratt



Lampards Buildings under demolition, February 1972.

Jean Pratt



The Podium and Beaufort Hotel, Jean Pratt, 1972.

Bath in Time - Bath Preservation Trust

# Gillian Sladen

1932 – 2017

A passionate enthusiast of historic gardens and interiors, Gillian Sladen joined Bath Preservation Trust as a Trustee in 1980. She soon established a new Garden Committee dedicated to helping preserve Bath's green spaces from disfigurement and demolition.

She developed a team of volunteers to record the city's gardens and ran the project working with Bath City Council to restore the Georgian Garden at No. 4 The Circus. In 1989 she led the fight by Bath Preservation Trust to purchase Southcot Burial Ground at the bottom of Lyncombe Hill, preventing it from being built over.

Leading a team of volunteers, Gillian established the Interiors Survey of Bath, getting access to private houses in order to document historic features. Records for over 350 properties were created and informed the heritage listings in the city.

Her ceaseless work documenting gardens and interiors created an incredible archive of information about often overlooked parts of the city's heritage. This archive continues to inform the conservation of buildings and gardens in Bath today.

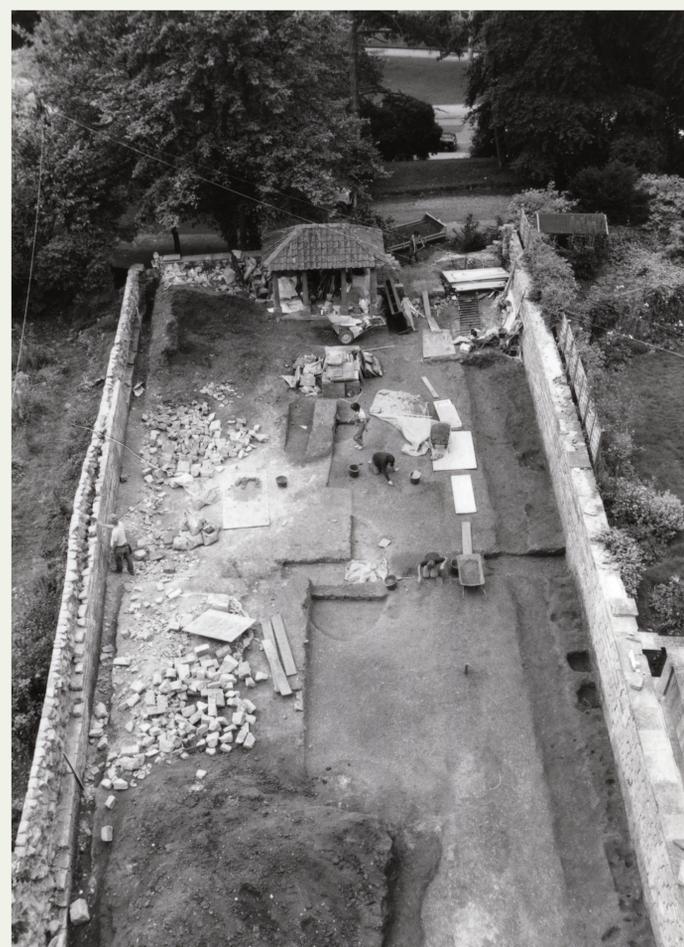
**BATH PRESERVATION TRUST**  
**INTERIORS SURVEY**

**BATH PRESERVATION TRUST**  
**GARDENS SURVEY**



19 Lansdown Crescent, hallway moulding, March 1991.

Bath Preservation Trust Archives



4 The Circus, trial pit for garden excavation, March 1985.

Bath Preservation Trust Archives



41 Gay Street, Delft tiles 2001.

Bath Preservation Trust Archives

# Bath Preservation Trust today

The fight to ensure that the architectural heritage of Bath is conserved and respected continues, led by Bath Preservation Trust's team of staff and Trustees. Currently, our Chief Executive, Conservation Officer, Conservation Assistant and Architectural Historian are all women.

We are determined to advocate design values based around quality and context rather than any particular style. We work hard to highlight that the 21st century pressures of environmental sustainability, contemporary design and equality of access should have a place in considering the future of the historic city.

All of this would not be possible without the work of Ruth, Lesley, Jean and Gillian and all the others who have worked and volunteered at Bath Preservation Trust. Along with those women who fought for political equality in their lifetimes, their enthusiasm, dedication and passion for Bath continues to inspire ours.

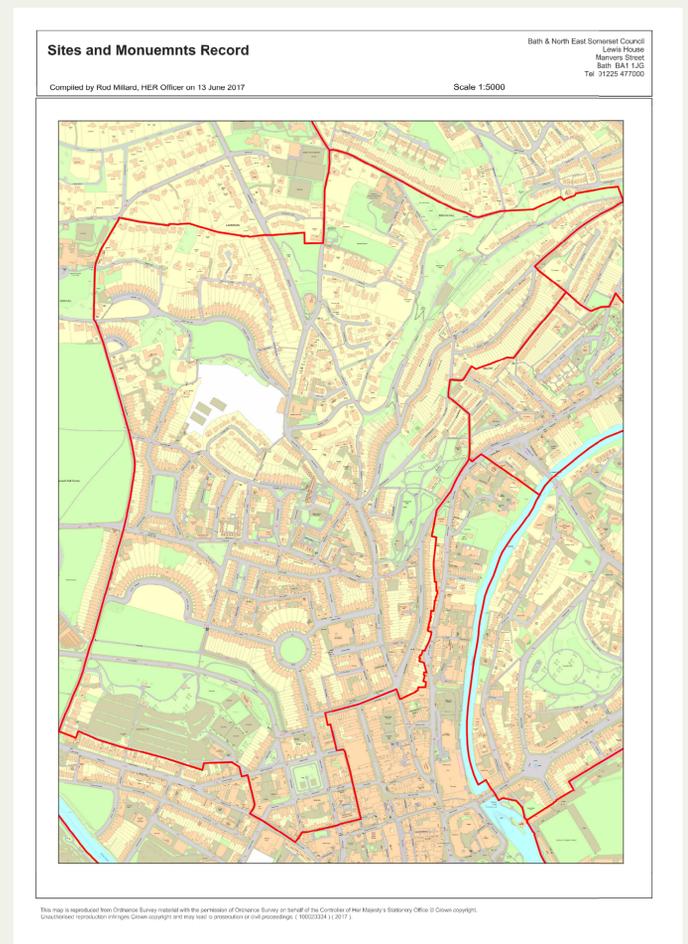


Making Changes, a publication produced by Bath Preservation Trust to protect the special interest of listed buildings.

Piers & Dominic



Our team has been working together for over 10 years to steer change so that it protects and enhances Bath city and landscape.



We are working to produce a Conservation Area Character Appraisal to help guide the future management of the Lansdown sub-area.



City of Bath