

Monday 9 June 2003

The Editors will welcome contributions from all sources, but nothing saucy, please. Hand your contribution in at the registration desk, or to an editor.

## **The Great EASE Bath**

The Romans were quick to find the only natural hot spring in England, and built a Great Bath to make maximum use of this treasure. EASE started its Eighth General Assembly in the splendid Banqueting Hall of the Guildhall, followed by Iain Chalmers fascinating Keynote address about the early methods of clinical assessment (have we moved on?) and its connections to Bath. Iain had gallantly stepped in to take the place of John Benfield, who is unable to attend the conference because of family illness. We moved back 1800 years to enjoy a Civic Reception at the Great Bath. The flares were lit, it did not rain, and everything got off to a splendid start. We are all very grateful to Councillor and Mrs Kew, and to The Worshipful The Mayor of Bath for their interest in our conference, and their kind hospitality. We shall see them again at the Dinner on Tuesday evening; there will be no formal duties, no speeches, just a warm EASE welcome.

## **It all began with Bladud . . .**

“It has been well said that a mythical origin crowns the history of a place with an aristocratic character. A myth is not an invention for the sake of fraud; it is a story which somehow, no one knows how, came to occupy the place of history in the popular belief. As Gog and Magog are to London, Romulus and Remus to Rome, so is the myth of Bladud to Bath - a halo of romance gleaming over the trackless waste of an unknown past.” *From: a Ward Lock & Co Guide to Bath, published in 1927.*

What are they talking about? Bladud not a real person, is that what they are hinting at? Good heavens, they must be mad. As we have all been in Bath for twenty-four hours we all know

that Bladud was real. He was the son of the English King Hudibras, thought to have been the real *King Lear*. As a prince he might have expected a bit of respect - well some respect anyway - but he developed a Nasty Skin Complaint (NSC) (is there a dermatologist in the house to explain further?). This nasty skin complaint meant that no one wanted Bladud to come near them. His only course of action was to take himself off to be a swineherd, the man who looked after the pigs, and to spend many happy hours watching his pigs and wishing he could be a prince again. One day he noticed that some of his pigs had a NSC too, but the clever pigs had found a wonderful muddy spot where hot water gushed out of the ground. The pigs wallowed in the mud, and lo and behold they were cured! Bladud, being quite an observant chap, also went to the hot mud and rolled about with the pigs. In no time at all Bladud was smooth, pink and positively princely again. Bath Spa was born. It was only a matter of a few short centuries before those entrepreneurs and travellers, the Romans, discovered Bladud's mud bath, and seeing a temple to Minerva nearby, decided this was serious spa stuff. They renamed the place as Aquae Sulis, and the rest, as they say, is history.

**Additions and corrections** to the List of delegates will appear in *The Bath Soap*, if the editors can find the right file.

## **Where Art meets Science**

The intrepid EASE members who attended the AESE/EASE joint meeting at Halifax, Nova Scotia, know all about Hollywood and the luvvies (those associated, even remotely, with the film industry and the stage). We returned from a very wet and muddy field trip to be greeted in the hotel lobby by an array of shining, bedazzlingly dressed luvvies - and



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they were just the boys - who eyed us hopefully as extras for their next epic on the Retreat from Moscow.

Well, the EASE allure has worked again! Bath will be full of luvvies from Hollywood, and Stars, yes Stars, who are here to make a new version of "Vanity Fair". If you hear a vague underground grinding noise it will be Jane Austen, who wrote Vanity Fair at Bath, revolving in her grave at the thought of her characters with American accents (sorry cousins). We are more broad-minded, however, and hope to have the fun of star-spotting, and seeing a costume drama in the making. If you apply for a job as an extra, don't forget to ask for Equity rates per hour, and free lunches.

Seriously though, this filming may cause us some diversions of the non-amusing kind; roads will be closed, Pulteney Bridge may be closed all day on Monday, but there are other ways to cross the river and the hotels and taxis have all been given lots of notice about closures.

### **Some changes to the programme for Monday 9 June:**

Session M2 has been combined with M6 under the title "Editorial bias".

### **Look out, look out, Kornblith's about**

It was a matter of a few short hours before Carol Kornblith tried to start bargaining with the natives. In Walcot Street Carol spotted a newsagents/bookshop called "The Editor". Professional vibes quivering Carol entered the shop. The assistant in the shop was wearing a shirt with "The Editor" emblazoned on the front. Our intrepid delegate offered good dollars to get the shirt, but the young man

would not part with it; she offered to swap an editorial conference bag (NOT EASE'S) for the shirt, but the young man remained unmoved. So, the question is, what does a gal have to do to get the shirt off the back of a young man in Bath? Answers should be addressed to the Editor (note the big E) and left at the registration desk.

**A word of warning: there is so much to look at in Bath, you might find yourself wandering about looking up; be careful of wallets, purses and cameras - Bath is not immune to the problem of pickpockets.**

### **Our weather**

The British are obsessed about the weather, well, we do get a lot of it to talk about. The only way to be sure of survival is to leave your hotel armed with an umbrella, sun hat, wellington boots, sunscreen factor 30 or above, a large shovel (to dig in if we get a hurricane) and a good torch (to see your way through this fog of information).

### **Bath buns and Bath Oliver's**

Both worth trying while you are here, but be warned that Bath Oliver's can become addictive, the Mmmmm factor is quite high; eat them with Cheddar cheese, from Cheddar just down the road from Bath. Bath Oliver's are the invention of Dr Oliver, who thought they would make a good alternative to rhubarb!

If you feel hungry try a Bath bun, sweet, and also slightly addictive. If you go home several kilos heavier than when you arrived, it is not just the conference bag that weighs you down.