

City of Bath World Heritage Site

18th century society activity

Cartoons and Caricatures



Did you know?

The way Bath developed in the 18th century was directly related to the activities and interests of the wealthy visitors who spent several months in Bath each year for the 'Bath Season'.

Spa culture developed here in Bath. Public buildings and daily routines allowed visitors to 'take the cure' and socialise in fashionable society. Bath's most famous 'Master of Ceremonies' was Richard 'Beau' Nash who planned and oversaw the spa resort's entertainments and set his 'Rules of Bath' for etiquette (appropriate behaviour).

Rich people, famous people and royalty flocked to Bath. Customs for bathing and taking the waters were set here and buildings such as the assembly rooms <https://www.bathvenues.co.uk/venues/assembly-rooms>, the Pump Room <https://www.romanbaths.co.uk/pump-room-restaurant>, libraries, reading rooms, coffee houses, pleasure gardens and shops became established and thrived. The fashion for 'promenading' influenced the design of Bath's streets and gardens, with wide walks and pavements with far reaching views. You can see some of outfits that might have been worn at this time at the Fashion Museum <https://www.fashionmuseum.co.uk/>.

Some of the finest portrait painters of the 18th century took up residence in Bath to win lucrative commissions from rich clients. Some artists made their money drawing caricatures (cartoons) which poked fun at the characters and activities in the town. These caricatures are from a series of twelve prints called 'The Comforts of Bath' produced by Thomas Rowlandson.

The subjects depicted in the series include:



...socialising and playing cards



...dancing at a ball



...bathing in the King's Bath



... drinking in the Pump Room



...attending a private concert

Caricatures were like early cartoons. The characters shown had exaggerated features and were often shown looking silly or doing outrageous things.

Activity:

Think about the activities that you enjoy living in or visiting Bath. Where do you like to go? Who do you like to see? What do you like to do? What are popular past-times for the people you see around you?

Have a go at drawing your own caricature or cartoon strip to show people or activities that you may see in Bath today.

Do share your creations with us. You can tweet us [@BathWHS](https://twitter.com/BathWHS), send us a message on Facebook [BathWorldHeritageSite](https://www.facebook.com/BathWorldHeritageSite) or send us an email World_Heritage@bathnes.gov.uk. We would love to see and hear how you got on.

