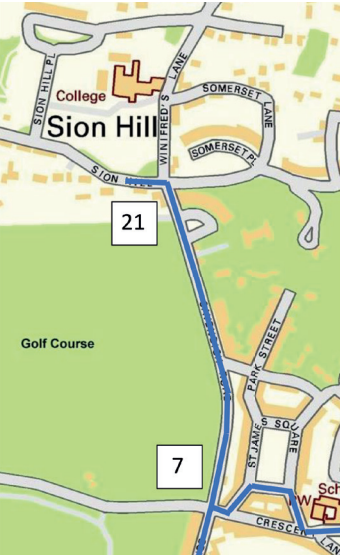


Optional Extensions:

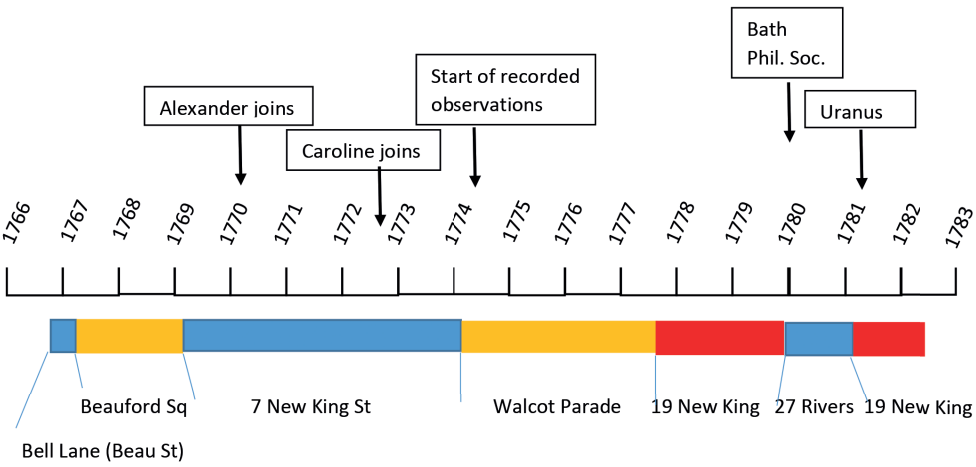
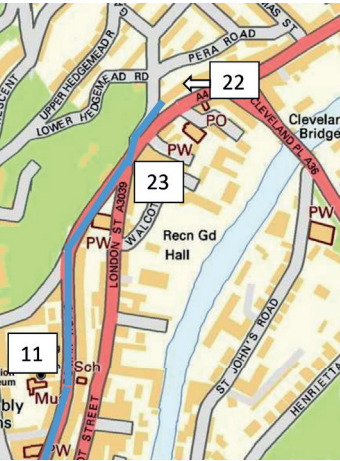
Sion Hill

At [7] walk up Cavendish Hill, passing the imposing but controversial neo-Georgian Cavendish Lodge development on your right, which was designed by William Bertram and built in 2000. A little past the end of the park on your left, a road – Sion Hill – crosses. Turn left. William rented Number 6 Sion Hill in 1799-1800. Walking up the road there is evidence of Georgian houses here, but there are only a few remains of: [21] Number 6 (if this indeed is the same Number 6 that Herschel rented). You can see a "tradesmans" entrance flanked by two columns in the wall on the left, and a little further on (through an entrance on the left) evidence of the original main way in preserved as an arch with the number 6 on it. The Georgian house which was here often served as a school, but was destroyed in the Blitz, and the site re-developed. Retrace your steps down the hill and re-join the main walk at [7]



Walcot Parade

At [11] continue further along the Paragon. The road joins London Street, which comes in from the right. Stay on the left side of the road (looking East) and you will very shortly reach St Margaret's Hill branching up and off to the left. Just a little way up (and hence above London Road) you will find: [22] Walcot Parade, where William and Caroline lived 1774 – 1777. Their reason for moving here from New King Street was to have more room for William's telescope building and observing. Exactly which house in the Parade they occupied is unclear. By July 1776 a 20 ft telescope had been erected behind the house, through which William noted observing Saturn. Alexander became a long-term resident of this area, in particular at the (now vanished) No. 3 Margaret's Place. Now retrace your steps back to [11] the Huntingdon Chapel. On the way, just after the junction of London Street and the Paragon, across the road is the rather lovely: [23] St Swithin's Church. The site dates back to the 10th Century, but the present Church was built between 1777 and 1790, so its construction started just as the Herschels moved back to New King Street and was only completed some eight years after they had left Bath.



Timeline showing where William Herschel lived in Bath. He returned briefly in 1799 and 1800 to Sion Hill and then Little Stanhope Street.

# The Herschels’ *Bath walk*

This walk takes in the sites of where the musical and astronomical family of Herschels lived and performed in Bath. It also passes many of Bath's famous architectural gems, which the Herschels would have known. William lived in Bath from 1766, and Caroline from 1772. Both left to go to Datchet in 1782, and subsequently to nearby Slough. William's brother Alexander arrived in 1770, and stayed much longer, until 1816.

The basic walk takes about an hour and a half. It is circular and can be joined at any point – number [15] is the most convenient for Bath Spa railway station. Two possible extensions are suggested.

[1] START at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy, 19, New King Street. The Herschels lived here twice 1777 – 1779 and 1781 – 1782. It was from the garden that William first observed Uranus on 13 March 1781. Walk West along the street (away from the town centre) and at the first junction turn right into:

[2] Little Stanhope Street. William rented a house here briefly in 1800 (after Sion Hill, see [7] below) when William thought about returning to Bath – at least part-time – from Slough. It was to be his last address in Bath. Walk to the end of the street and turn right along Monmouth Place, before soon forking left onto Charlotte Street. Walk straight on to the North side of:

[3] Queens Square. The North side of this elegant square where you are standing was built between 1728-35, and numbers 16-18 on the West side have been the home of the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution since 1932. The obelisk was set up in 1738 by Beau Nash in honour of Frederik, Prince of Wales. Keep walking along the North side and turn left into Gay Street. Walk up Gay Street – take your time, it’s quite steep – until you reach:

[4] The Circus. This magnificent circle of houses was built between 1754-1769. On the facades of the buildings you can see the three orders of classical columns – Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. Walk clockwise to reach, and take, the first exit – to Brock Street. Walk along Brock street until you reach – on the right – a pedestrianised narrow street known as Margaret’s Buildings. Walk up this for 40 metres. On your left you will see that the row of shops is quite a lot lower than the adjacent buildings. This is the site of:

Please turn over



Particular thanks to Matthew Spring for musical details.  
Mike Edmunds, Spring 2022.



5 St Margaret's Chapel. It was here, on Whitsunday, May 19 1782, that Caroline performed one of William's anthems – with him accompanying on the organ. It was their last public performance. The family moved to Datchet near Slough on the 1 August. The Chapel was destroyed in the Blitz in 1942. Retrace the few steps back to Brock Street, turn right into it. Very soon on your right you will see a covered opening leading to a closed gate. If you are tall enough you may just be able to see through the gate and over a wall to another wall with the remains of gothic-revival window arches from the Chapel. Return to Brock Street and continue to the end where you will encounter:

6 The superb Royal Crescent, built 1767–75 i.e. just after William had arrived in Bath. Enjoy the walk in front of the terrace and go around the far end to turn right up the street called Marlborough Buildings. Continue up the street to the corner, with the Marlborough Tavern on the opposite side.

7 We will be turning to the right here, but if you wish you can go across the road into the park, and look up the hill. Cavendish Road runs up the side of the park and at the top joins Sion Hill. William rented Number 6 Sion Hill in 1799-1800. A visit to this site is one of the optional extensions of the walk (see end of leaflet). To continue our main walk, turn right into Julian Road and fork almost immediately left into:

8 St James Square. A fine residential Bath square, now Grade I listed. It was built 1790 – 94, i.e. between the Herschel's move to Slough, and their brief return. Walk along the South side and fork right to re-join Crescent Lane. Very soon in front of you is a triangle of grass. Head across this to enter:

9 Rivers Street. Walk down the street until you reach number 27 on the North side, currently sporting a red door. This was where the Herschels lived 1779 – 1781. In late December 1779, William brought a telescope out into the street to observe the sky – there does seem to be a reasonable gap looking between the houses opposite – and he and a Dr William Watson who was passing fell into conversation. The result was an invitation for William to join the newly-formed Bath Philosophical Society. The inconvenient arrangements for observing probably prompted the Herschels' move back to New King Street in 1781. From 27 Rivers Street continue along the street and soon turn right down Russell Street. Cross Bennett Street and (slightly to the right) go to the front of:

10 The New Assembly Rooms. Opened in 1771, they were the centre of fashionable society. William played in the orchestra here for about a year from its opening, and was later director of music for some years after 1777. He and Caroline both performed in Handel's Messiah here on 15th April 1778. Pass the front of the main building and turn left on to Alfred Street. At the end go straight across the (busy) Lansdown Road into a small passage called Hay Hill, and down to the The Vineyards at its end. Turn left and walk the short distance up to (on your left):

11 The Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel. Built in 1765, the year before William arrived in Bath. It is now the (currently closed) Museum of Bath Architecture. William used the choir here – reputedly the best in Bath – for his oratorios and other performances. A second optional extension starts here (see end of leaflet) - further along the The Vineyards, the road becomes London Road flanked by Walcot Parade where William and Caroline lived 1774 – 1777, and close to Margarets Place (No 3) – now vanished - where Alexander was a long-term resident. For the main walk, simply turn around and head back down the The Vineyards, crossing the road and turning right into George Street at the foot, and then left into:

12 Milsom Street. The main interest here is the Octagon Chapel where William was appointed organist in 1766 until 1776. It was the reason for his coming to Bath. The remains of the Chapel are

now part of The Botanist restaurant at Number 28 on the East side of the street. Also on Milsom Street (Number 11, but not traceable now) was Martha Bally's bookshop where the first meetings of the Bath Philosophical Society – attended by William – were held. Continue down Milsom Street. It becomes New Bond Street and then the pedestrianised area of Burton Street. Soon turn left into Upper Borough Walls. At the end, wiggle slightly right then left and onto Bridge Street, passing in front of the Victoria Art Gallery. After this you soon arrive at:

13 Pultney Bridge, designed by the famous Robert Adam and built 1769 – 77. After a stroll across the bridge (if you wish) come back and turn right here onto Grand Parade. Looking across the river you are viewing the site of the Spring Gardens. William found work here from his arrival until 1778, including as musical director of the summer season concerts. Continue along Grand Parade beside the river, and above Parade Gardens, with a view of the East end of Bath Abbey (founded in the 7th Century) on your right. A little further on, fixed to the park railings, you will find:

14 A plaque commemorating the site of the first or "lower" Assembly Rooms in Bath, where William put on subscription concert series from 1772/3. Continue along Grand Parade, crossing North Parade, until in about 80 metres you will see an archway in the buildings on the right of the road leading to Old Orchard Street. Enter this and follow around to the left. Near the bottom on the left of this short street you will find Number 12 an imposing entrance to a Masonic Hall with a large plaque beside it:

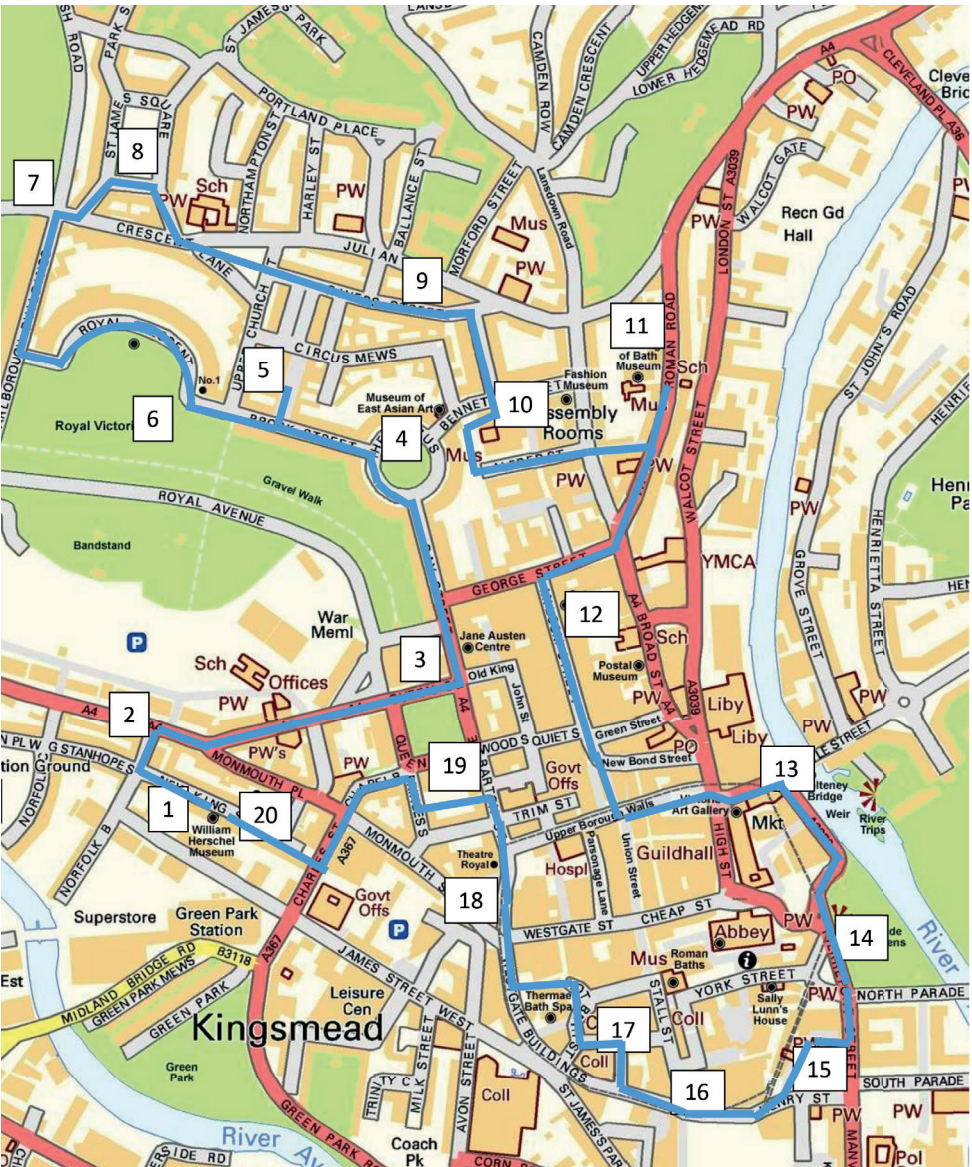
15 This is the Old or original Theatre Royal, opened in 1750 and in use until 1805. William played in the theatre band in his early days, and put on oratorios during Lent. Pre-booked Guided tours are available. We will see the "new" Theatre Royal later [18]. At the end of Old Orchard Street turn right and walk to a pedestrianised area, Old Orchard Street. Continue on a little until to a junction where you will see a big Marks and Spencer on your right. Stop at this junction.

16 You are standing on the site of the South Gate (Porta Flumentana) of the Roman City. Where Marks and Spencer now stands is the site of the Church of St James (built 1768-9, severely damaged in the Blitz of 1942 and subsequently demolished). Here William was involved in what must have been some of his very last Messiah performances at Easter 1782. Carry on in the same direction as you were walking, into Lower Borough Walls and then take the first right into Bilbury Lane. Turn left at the first road crossing, this is:

17 Beau Street, which used to be Bell Lane (or Bell Tree Lane). Herschel lodged here for a short while when he first came to Bath on 9th December 1766. At the West end of the short Beau Street, turn right onto Hot Bath Street, and then left (just past the Hetling Pump Room) into a narrow pedestrian street that will take you down to the road known as Westgate Buildings. Turn right here and walk North until the road veers right at a junction. You should go straight ahead here into Saw Close. Soon on your left will be:

18 The fine (New) Theatre Royal, built in 1805, five years after William's very last residence in Bath. Pass in front of the theatre and straight on through the bollards into Barton Street. In about 30 metres turn left into a street named Beauford Square, and a few steps will take you to the square:

19 Beauford (or Beaufort) Square was built 1727-36, and William lodged here in two houses, the first very briefly, in 1767-69. At the end of the street turn left into Princes Street and almost immediately right onto Monmouth Street. Walk along (Westwards) to the traffic lights. (Can you spot the "Sun" fire insurance sign on one of the house walls on your right?) At the lights turn left. The next street on your right is New King Street. Cross the road and walk a few steps down it:



20 The South side terrace of New King Street was built around 1764-70, and as we have already mentioned [1] the Herschels lived twice at Number 19 in 1777 – 1779 and 1781 – 1782. But the first house that William lived in was Number 7, now lost, but which it is believed was on the North side (i.e. your right), and as you will see there are some more modern buildings which may mark the site. William lived here 1769 – 74, and it is into this house that Alexander (1770) and Caroline (1772) first came to Bath. A short walk down the street will take you back to Number 19, and the start of the walk. Don't miss visiting the fascinating Museum there!