

Victoria Spa

By WCC Timetrail 1999

Introduction

The Victoria Spa was started in 1834 by a consortium of local business people, with the idea of developing a fashionable inland resort. The Spa opened in 1837, to mark the 17th birthday of Queen Victoria but later failed because the social life associated with other Spas of that period was lacking. Members of the consortium bought land in the area, laid down a road (Victoria Terrace) and built houses (Linden house, Bishopton Lodge) in an attempt to attract development around the resort. However the investors lost their money and the Spa closed.

Poor Claims

Kelly's Directory of 1884 claims that the Spa had been popular for 200 years by that date. That's complete nonsense because the surviving buildings, including pump house, lodges and grounds were developed in 1837. This venture had failed by 1870s. Grounds consist of villa type pleasure grounds with walks and pond.

Actual Origins

The Bishopton Waters were first publicised in 1744. The Royal Victoria Spa was apparently the first establishment to be named after the future Queen Victoria and formed part of an ambitious plan to create, not only a medicinal establishment and hotel, but a new residential district. Contemporary illustrations show the pump house and grounds, which remain, with the latter overgrown.

Springs

The springs at Bishopton were first brought to the attention of the public by Dr Charles Perry in 1744. The spring is situated in a field called Shotttery.

The water rose perpendicularly out of the earth into a pretty large pit or reservoir. There was a second pit 2.1m from the first. The spring was covered with a wooden building with thatch roof. The spring was being visited for its curative properties by 1800, but it was not until the 1840s that proposals were put forward to develop it into a fashionable inland resort.

A building replaced the rudimentary sheds in 1831 and a syndicate of four Stratford gentlemen bought the site in 1834 and began to erect a modern pump room, baths and hotel. They acquired a new favourable analysis of the waters and the Spa was launched with great euphoria in 1837. Speculative plans for developing the area S and E of the Spa were initiated in the 1830s. roads and drives were laid out and a church built (PRN 5304). However, a number of building plots did not find purchasers and in 1855 most of the area was sold off as agricultural land. The Spa buildings were reopened in 1868, but were not sold when offered for sale. The Spa and a hotel on the site have been converted to private residences.

4 The OS 1:10560 Sheet Warks 44NW shows the surviving pump house, villas and garden features.

References

RBearman, JLovie, DHooke.

Taken from:

timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/detail.aspx?monuid=WA3784