

## The Early life of John Nash, Architect: Family, Marriage and Divorce; Speculation, Bankruptcy and Litigation\*

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John Nash was the greatest of the Regency architects and London was central to his family and professional life. Yet Nash seems to have regarded himself as a Welshman, certainly from his family connections but also from residence in Carmarthen between 1785–96, where his admiring fellow burgesses were to describe Nash in later life as ‘our countryman’. The Carmarthen years have been regarded as Nash’s ‘lost’ decade but this was actually the period when Nash ‘found’ himself professionally. It was a decade of intense activity that had profound consequences for Nash personally and more generally for the future development of Regency architecture. Residence in Carmarthen allowed Nash to distance himself from the personal and professional disasters of his earlier career that might well have crushed a lesser personality. These disasters are the subject of this paper, and the opportunity has been taken to make available for the first time some newly-discovered documentation, including a personal statement made by Nash (Appendices 1 and 2). The significant locales of Nash’s early life – Lambeth and Bloomsbury, Neath and Carmarthen – will have special resonance for this Honourable Society whose origins reach back to John Nash’s London.

### *Reputation*

Nash was a paradoxical figure. There were two sides to Nash’s reputation – respectable and disreputable. The portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, which Nash presented to Jesus College, Oxford, where it still hangs in the hall, shows

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\* Based on a lecture at the Society’s AGM held on 14 May 2008 at the British Academy in John Nash’s Carlton Buildings, with the President, Professor Prys Morgan, in the chair. I have taken the opportunity to discuss more fully some themes first explored in my *John Nash - Architect in Wales: Pensaer yng Nghymru* (NLW & RCAHMW, 1995). I must thank fellow Nash enthusiasts, especially Edna Dale-Jones (over many years) and Geoffrey Tyack, for sharing some of their discoveries with me.

how the architect wanted to be remembered.<sup>1</sup> It captures Nash at the height of his fame in the 1820s as architect to the king. Lawrence, the foremost portraitist of the day, was credited with the ability to capture the essential character of his sitters – and yet his Nash is curiously enigmatic. This is of course the point. Despite Nash's immense success there was something not quite 'sound' about him.

Nash in his later years was rich and extraordinarily successful as architect to the Prince Regent (the future George IV), the designer of the Brighton Pavilion, Regent's Street and Regent's Park, and a string of admired country houses. However, scandal always threatened to puncture Nash's respectability. There had been bankruptcy, a strange divorce, unfortunate speculation and building disasters in his early career. It was widely believed that his later and – to some of his contemporaries – surprising success was a reward for marital complaisance: his second wife was supposed to have been the Prince Regent's mistress. No evidence for their liaison has ever been adduced, and the affair may have been an invention of the satirists of the day. A scurrilous but undeniably funny broadside depicts Prinny in the saloon of his royal yacht, braces dangling, informing a corpulent Mrs Nash, 'I like to visit all parts of my kingdom'.<sup>2</sup>

A miniature survives which shows the 'other' Nash in about 1798, probably painted on the occasion of his second marriage, when he was on the verge of great professional success. It is an interesting face, although Nash described himself self-deprecatingly as having a 'dwarf figure, with round head, snub nose and little eyes.' Nash may have thought of himself as unprepossessing but he certainly had a strong personality: you either took to Nash or you didn't. A revealing diary entry by a Miss Butt, who encountered Nash at the dinner-table in 1795, records how she found 'the little man [. . .] pert, impudent and ugly'. But this sort of shallow aversion must be countered by the rueful comment of Humphry Repton, the famous landscaper and Nash's discarded business partner, who was captivated by Nash at their first meeting in 1790, and recalled that 'he had powers of *fascination* beyond anyone I have ever met with'. If a client fell under Nash's spell – as many did – it was never clear quite

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Garlick, *Sir Thomas Lawrence: a Complete Catalogue of the Oil Paintings* (Oxford, 1989), pl. 76, no. 592. The portrait was painted for Jesus College at Nash's request in lieu of payment for professional work. For details of Nash's portraits, see Richard Walker, *Regency Portraits* (London, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 356–57.

<sup>2</sup> M. Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 10 (London, 1952), no. 13,854.

how it would all end, although the results were sometimes unexpected and usually expensive.<sup>3</sup>

Although Nash dominated the architectural profession until the 1830s, there was no nineteenth-century biography of him. This is somewhat surprising given his extraordinary success. There was of course a reaction against Regency taste, which Victorians regarded as frivolous and indulgent. Nash's preference for stucco was regarded with some horror as the antithesis of architectural honesty, suspected of disguising inferior materials and workmanship. Nevertheless, as a professional man Nash had the qualities of self-help and perseverance admired by the mid-Victorian Samuel Smiles school of moral biography. Pugin held up Nash as a model of determination and industry, repeating for his pupils original anecdotes (a 'mixture of gravity and drollery') showing how Nash was never deterred by the difficulties in his early life.<sup>4</sup> But for the Victorians there were probably too many disreputable elements in Nash's career, which had ended with his ignominious dismissal from public service. In any case, the raw materials for a biography were just not available after Nash's death, as several brief but error-strewn memoirs showed.<sup>5</sup> Nash seems to have done his best to suppress knowledge of his early life and career, though Britton revealed obliquely that Nash was 'guilty of some irregularities and eccentricities'. In later life, Nash reinvented his early biography, presenting himself in rehearsed fashion as a gentleman with a small estate in Wales, whose architectural achievements had been attained rather effortlessly and almost as a diversion after John Vaughan of Golden Grove had challenged him as a *jeu d'esprit* to design a cold bath. The actuality was that Nash was from a family of artisans and driven to succeed. Nash had flair in abundance, and he worked quickly, and his apparently effortless success in later life rested on two decades of relentless application in London and Wales.

### *Nash's early life*

John Summerson's pre-war biography (1935) effectively rehabilitated Nash's architectural reputation, and the revised biography (1980) gave the outline of

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<sup>3</sup> Quotations from John Summerson, *The Life and Work of John Nash Architect* (London, 1980), pp. 13, 17-18; Humphry Repton's Memoir, British Library Add. MS 62112, fol. 87. Repton actually adds that Nash's charm was all the more to be wondered at given that his personal appearance was 'far from prepossessing'.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Ferrey, *Recollections of A.W. N. Pugin and his Father Augustus Pugin* (London, 1861), pp. 10-12.

<sup>5</sup> Article on 'Nash, John' in C. Knight, *The English Cyclopaedia: Biography*, vol. 4 (1858), pp. 430-32; J. Britton, *Autobiography* (1850), Part 1, pp. 345-46, corrected by Ferrey, *Recollections of A.W. N. Pugin*, pp. 14-15; *The Builder*, 13 (1855), pp. 585-87; 14 (1856), pp. 441-42.

Nash's surprising early career for the first time.<sup>6</sup> We can now piece together more, but certainly not all, of Nash's remarkable early life.

Characteristically, one of the key pieces of the biographical jigsaw is missing: it remains to be established exactly when and where Nash was born, and indeed the name of his mother is unknown. However, almost certainly Nash was born in September 1752, possibly in London but probably in south Wales, to Welsh parents. His cousins, surnamed Edwards, were millwrights and engineers from the Neath area. Iolo Morganwg knew the family, describing how for several generations they had been 'greatly distinguished for their genius and skill' in constructing machines.<sup>7</sup> On the paternal side, the Nashes were artisans whose mobility had followed the changing geography of the eighteenth-century industrial dynamic. A genealogy, possibly compiled for a grant of arms, shows that the Nashes originated from Broseley, near Ironbridge, an early industrial centre on the river Severn.<sup>8</sup> A family tradition plausibly related that 'the Nashs in Shropshire were shipbuilders, [with] some in Gloster car[ry]ing on a great trad[e] in both places.'<sup>9</sup> At about the turn of the century, Thomas Nash, the architect's grandfather, and his brother, another John Nash, had followed Sir Humphrey Mackworth from Shropshire to Glamorgan after Mackworth had married the heiress of the Gnoll estate. Thomas Nash settled in Neath, apparently bringing with him several families of Broseley artisans attracted by Mackworth's development of industrial undertakings on his wife's estate. Nash eventually became surveyor or agent of Mackworth's coalworks, and remained at Neath for the rest of his life. Thomas Nash married Elizabeth Evans and they had several sons and daughters, including John Nash (1714–72), a millwright and the architect's father. His daughter, Mary Nash, married Humphrey Edwards, a millwright and engineer, and the fortunes of both families became interlinked (Appendix 3). Nash had a large cousinage in Neath, many sharing his surname, but the Edwards family proved to be his most important relatives.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> John Summerson, *John Nash: Architect to King George the Fourth* (1935); idem, *The Life and Work of John Nash Architect* (London, 1980).

<sup>7</sup> Edward Williams, *Vox Populi, Vox Dei! or, Edwards for Ever!* (Swansea, 1818), p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> 'Genealogy of the Families of the Nashs as Extracted from the Register books of the Parish Church of Brosley in Shropshire', undated but watermarked 1818. I must thank Peter Laing for showing me this document which is kept in Nash's trunk (marked 'John Nash, Hamstead, I of W 1835'). Related papers retained by the Edwards family (discovered by Malcolm Pinhorn) are in the Cameron (Vaughan-Lee) Papers, Somerset Record Office.

<sup>9</sup> Somerset Record Office, Cameron (Vaughan-Lee) Papers, DD/CA/160, family memoranda noted either by Thomas or Humphrey Edwards.

<sup>10</sup> The details of Nash's paternal ancestry and the connection with the Edwards family have been established by Malcolm Pinhorn, *The Diaries of John Nash Architect, 1832 and 1835* (2 parts, Leominster, 2000), vol. 2, pp. 117–19 (Edwards family) and pp. 120–23 (Nash family). Nash's Neath cousins can be traced in the parish registers (West Glamorgan Record Office) and bishops' transcripts (NLW). Nash's close relative who resembled the architect was probably one of these cousins rather than a sister; cf. the intriguing note by J. Deffett Francis quoted by Cecil Price, *The English Theatre in Wales in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cardiff, 1948), p. 88n.

About the middle of the eighteenth century, John Nash senior, followed by his nephew John Edwards, migrated to London. Both were millwrights and settled in Lambeth, the bustling commercial area on the south bank of the Thames that offered numerous opportunities to the capable artisan. John Edwards seems to have specialized in the engineering required by the water companies. He occurs in the London directories as a pipe-borer and millwright of Narrow Wall, Lambeth, in 1785, as engine- and pump-maker of Park Street, Southwark, 1790–93, and later (1794–1800) as millwright and engineer of Vine Street off Belvedere Road.<sup>11</sup> The family were successful entrepreneurs; it was said that John Edwards had invented the first water-cart used in the streets of late-Georgian London. John Edwards acquired Belvedere House, a former pleasure garden and house, in whose grounds Lambeth Water Works was established in 1785. Eventually, John Edwards junior was to amalgamate two ancient water companies to form the Southwark Water Works, which took water directly from the Thames. He, like Nash, attracted the attention of the late-Georgian satirists, and in 1828 was lampooned by Cruikshank as the Welsh adulterator of London's water supply. John Edwards was memorably depicted as an ancient Welsh chieftain (Cadwallader-ap-Tudor-ap-Edwards-ap-Vaughan), enthroned on a close-stool and crowned with a chamber-pot, surveying the foetid but profitable water supply.<sup>12</sup>

John Edwards senior, eventually styled esquire, lived on until 1818 at Belvedere House. His gravestone in the old Lambeth burial ground recorded that he died in his eightieth year after '56 years an Inhabitant of this parish'.<sup>13</sup> John Nash senior's career, by contrast, was cut short by a relatively early death in 1772. Nevertheless, the family had had the means to apprentice (more strictly, to indenture as a pupil) John Nash junior to Sir Robert Taylor, the principal architect of the day. There (as Sir John Summerson observed) Nash had the opportunity to learn the best that architectural practice in England could offer. Documentary confirmation of Nash's apprenticeship has proved elusive but it is provided by John Nash senior's recently rediscovered will. The will of John Nash of St Mary Lambeth, styled millwright, was witnessed in July 1772, and (evidently a widower) he bequeathed everything to his son John Nash, described as 'now living with Robert Taylor Esquire of the parish of St Martins in the Fields, Architect'.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Summerson, *Life and Work of John Nash*, pp. 1–2; Pinhorn, *Diaries of John Nash Architect*, vol. 2, p. 117.

<sup>12</sup> D. Rhys Phillips, *The History of the Vale of Neath* (Swansea, 1925), p. 422n; George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 11 (London, 1954), no. 16,956. For Belvedere House, see *Survey of London* 23 (London, 1951), p. 51 and plate 37a.

<sup>13</sup> Somerset Record Office, Cameron (Vaughan-Lee) Papers, DD/CA/160. John Edwards had evidently arrived in Lambeth in 1762.

<sup>14</sup> The National Archives, Prob 11/981.

Nash, having finished his apprenticeship in 1774 or 1775, set up on his own account as a surveyor and – a most important distinction – architect. An architect was still a rarity in the 1770s. During Nash's painful litigation in the 1780s, we have his insistence that 'he is by profession an architect', although his professional earnings were small, with the denial that he was ever in trade as a carpenter or builder (Appendix 1). We can imagine Nash as very much at home in later eighteenth-century Lambeth 'Marsh', the commercial area between Lambeth Palace and Southwark defined by a loop of the Thames, which provided many services for London and beyond. Thomas Pennant was impressed by the range of industrial undertakings in north Lambeth, which included mills (with the Albion Flour Mills under construction in the 1780s), potteries, glassworks, wineries and distilleries with 'Brobdingnagion' vats and vast barrel yards. Nash was retained as the surveyor of one brew-house and vinegar yard. His Edwards cousins lived near Narrow Wall, the old boundary with the river. Mrs Coade's famous artificial-stone works had been established here since 1767, and Nash was undoubtedly familiar with the range of architectural ornament produced at the manufactory. On the riverside there were wharfs and great timber-yards, and Nash was involved in a significant partnership with a prosperous timber merchant, Richard Heavyside.<sup>15</sup> Besides, Lambeth had been a centre for entertainment and sociability since the seventeenth century, with taverns, public pleasure gardens (some disreputable), and theatres. Nash was very sociable, contemporaries agreed, and as he prospered he was able to indulge his taste for the theatre. Eventually Nash was to acquire an interest in the playhouse in Carmarthen and took the stage there as a gentleman-amateur, probably against a backdrop painted by the elder Pugin.<sup>16</sup>

### *Marriage and divorce*

John Nash, styled architect, was married by license on 28 April 1775 in the parish church of St Mary Newington, Surrey. His bride was Jane Elizabeth Kerr, the daughter of a Surrey surgeon, Hugh Kerr of Dorking. The witnesses were Abraham Ewings of Newington, gent., probably a business associate, William Blackburn, a fellow architect, and Ann Burrowes, presumably a friend of the bride's.<sup>17</sup> It was the match of an up-and-coming professional man to an established professional man's daughter. The Kerrs had connections with

<sup>15</sup> *Survey of London* 23, pp. 1-2; Thomas Pennant, *Some Account of London* (5<sup>th</sup> edition, London, 1813), pp. 41-47; Graham Gibberd, *On Lambeth Marsh: The South Bank and Waterloo* (Jane Gibberd, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Edna Dale-Jones's discovery that Nash was rated for the play-house in Carmarthen is reported in *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 28 (1992), pp. 117-19. On Nash's involvement with the theatre, see Price, *The English Theatre in Wales*, pp. 88-89. Pugin, whom Nash employed as a draughtsman, is specifically noted as a scene-painter at the Swansea Theatre in 1795 in John Lewis's *The Swansea Guide* (Swansea, 1851), p. 37.

the upper middle class, as is suggested by the bequest to Jane Elizabeth of £50 by Hon. Mrs Ann Mallet. Nash was later accused of appropriating this legacy. After marriage, the Nashes lived at Newington with Abraham Ewings until Christmas 1775. Nash then returned to Lambeth with Jane and they set up home in Royal Row (Road).

After marriage, Nash was said to have leasehold property worth a significant amount, as well as valuable household goods. His professional earnings were variously estimated at between £200-£800 per annum (by his wife), at no more than £200 a year on average by Nash himself, and at between £500 to £1000 by a Mr Richard Woodings, who seems to have known the Nashes intimately. Nash was described as 'in a very extensive way of business as a surveyor, builder and carpenter'. He was in partnership with Richard Heaviside, timber merchant, and also business partner of the Carpenter to the Board of Ordnance. He received an annual salary as surveyor of Thomas Fassett's vinegar manufactory in Lambeth.<sup>18</sup>

John and Jane Nash lived together in Lambeth for several years. The registers of St Mary Lambeth record the baptisms of two children: John on 9 June 1776 and Hugh on 28 April 1778.<sup>19</sup> The Nashes were to all intents and purposes a conventional married couple, naming the children after their paternal and maternal grandfathers. Then, in June 1778, the couple separated, Nash alleging that because of the 'ill conduct' of his wife he had found it necessary to send her to Wales 'in order to work a reformation on her'.

What had happened? Nash made two allegations against Jane, one commonplace but the other extraordinary.<sup>20</sup> The first was a complaint made by innumerable husbands against their wives. Jane Nash was accused of extravagance. Unknown to her husband, Jane had (Nash alleged) run up millinery bills of nearly £300 which her husband had been obliged to pay in 1777. An associate, Richard Woodings, claimed that he had paid several bills for Mrs Nash, and that John Nash had been arrested for the non-payment of two milliners' bills (each for about £80). Nash had repeatedly remonstrated with Jane, and he decided to send her into the country where there would be

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<sup>17</sup> Certified copy of the marriage entry in L[ondon] M[etropolitan] A[rchives], DL/C/559/105.

<sup>18</sup> *Survey of London* 26 (London, 1956), p. 41, notes that Fassett took over Sir Joseph Mawbey's distillery at Vauxhall in 1779-80 and probably built a house there. On Heaviside, timber-merchant of Parliament Street, Westminster, see Appendix 2 and Pinhorn, *Diaries of John Nash Architect*, vol. 2, p. 110.

<sup>19</sup> Microfilm copies of register in the Greater London R.O., ref. X38/3-4.

<sup>20</sup> Libel dated 1 March 1781 in *Nash v. Nash* in the London Consistory Court, LMA, DL/C/179/334.

fewer opportunities for extravagance, believing that her expenses in London were more than he could support.<sup>21</sup>

The second allegation was astonishing. John and Jane Nash (as we have already noted) were acknowledged as the parents of two children baptised in 1776 and 1778. Nash then repudiated the children, making the extraordinary claim that Jane had ‘imposed two spurious children on him as his and her own, notwithstanding she had then never had any child.’ In plainer terms, Nash claimed that Jane had simulated pregnancy and had bought or otherwise acquired the infants, passing them off as her own. Nash’s allegations, made in the Bishop of London’s Consistory Court, were reported in the press. The original report has not been found but it recirculated several years later when Nash was petitioning for his divorce. According to *The World* in 1787, Mrs Nash ‘was the dame [a somewhat derogatory term], of whom a very extraordinary tale was not long ago related in the newspapers. She used to impose upon her husband with a simulation of pregnancy, and actually bought children whom she brought up as her own, to carry on the imposture.’<sup>22</sup> It is now impossible to know what the exact circumstances were. However, as in cases of child abduction or baby snatching reported in the twentieth century, Jane may have bought or stolen babies in an attempt to retrieve an already failing marriage.<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, in the twentieth century – as in the eighteenth century – husbands were readily deceived by these mock pregnancies and fake births.

Nash sent Jane down to south Wales to board and lodge at Aberavon with cousins, Thomas and Ann Morgan, having ‘furnished her with every necessary for her journey’ as well as ‘a sum of money for her pockett’. What was Jane to do in Aberavon, a Welsh-speaking village in Glamorgan, two hundred miles from her friends and home? She certainly cut quite a figure in Aberavon because (according to her landlady) ‘she was provided with good Cloaths, that excelled all her Neighbours’. Nash asked ‘a particular friend’, Charles

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<sup>21</sup> *Journals of the House of Lords*, 37 (1783-7), p. 639, evidence of Mr Richard Woodings. The identity of Woodings is unclear but he may have been Nash’s clerk. He had known the Nashes since 1775, but particularly around 1777, had paid some of Mrs Nash’s bills, and had lived with Nash in Russell Street, and was acquainted with the details of Nash’s household.

<sup>22</sup> *The World*, 30 March 1787, cited by Summerson, *Life and Work of John Nash*, p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. a report in *The Guardian*, 2nd July 1994. John Rabun of the U.S. National Centre for Missing Children investigated 140 baby abduction cases from U.S. hospitals. He concluded that it was a myth that abductors are single and childless women desperate for a child, as many were married and had children of their own. However, the loss of a baby through a miscarriage, or an intense desire to be pregnant, could trigger abductions. Women who committed such acts were usually in disintegrating relationships with men to whom they wanted to hold on. Some had undergone a miscarriage and were desperate to produce an infant by the date the baby was expected. Some women disguised their loss of pregnancy from their partners, and then stole a baby and presented it as their own.



Charles, a clerk at the Mackworth's coal-yard in Neath, 'to attend Mrs. Nash and take Care of her'. Charles was described by Nash's cousin (Humphrey Edwards) as 'intimately acquainted with Nash from a child'; presumably they had been childhood friends in Neath. Charles, a single man with a yearly salary of £50, was very attentive and frequently visited Jane, sometimes staying for two or three days at Aberavon. Charles was instructed 'to ride out with her and shew her the pleasures of the country'. A friendship developed and Charles began to stay with the Morgans in Aberavon. Indecent familiarities between Charles and Jane were soon suspected and the couple were watched. In December 1778, Thomas Morgan witnessed Jane in shift and nightcap running from Charles's bedchamber to her own chamber. Morgan's wife and daughter determined to catch Jane *in flagrante*, and in February 1779 surprised Jane lying in Charles arms on his bed, though Jane pretended to have had a fit and was helped back to her chamber. The familiarities continued, though they moved from bedchamber to parlour. On one occasion, in November 1778, the parlour door was not fully closed, allowing Elizabeth Morgan to witness intimacies between the couple with Jane lying across two of the Morgans' best chairs. There were other incidents. In March 1779, Charles and Jane went to the seaside and a cockle-gatherer surprised the couple making love on Aberavon sands; then as now a favoured spot for lovers.

Nash visited his wife at Christmas 1778, though apparently these incidents were kept from him. The Morgans and Charles reported that Jane was penitent, and the couple were reconciled, Nash staying with Jane at Aberavon for several days. Nevertheless, Nash wanted further proof of his wife's contrition and returned alone to London, leaving Jane still lodging with the Morgans. Jane remained at Aberavon until the following June when she complained by letter about 'some ill treatment' from the Morgans. Nash sent for Jane and they cohabited for ten weeks, but there were considerable tensions.

According to Nash, once Jane returned to London she resumed her extravagance, repeating her 'frauds and impositions' by contracting and leaving unpaid several bills, including a milliner's bill for £40. Nash, 'for his own safety and to prevent his being totally ruined', sent her back to Wales at the beginning of October 1779. This time, Jane was under the supervision of Nash's cousin, Humphrey Edwards, at Neath. It was soon apparent that Jane was pregnant. She asked Edwards to write to Nash for some old shirts that she could make into baby clothes. None was sent but Humphrey's brother came down with fifty or sixty pounds. On 29 December, Jane gave birth to a baby girl. Jane insisted that the baby was given Nash's name, though she apparently

acknowledged later that Charles was the father. The baby's full name is unknown.<sup>24</sup>

Nash never again cohabited with Jane, and it is not clear where Jane and her baby subsequently lived. Nash initiated divorce proceedings (separation from bed and board) against his wife in the Bishop of London's Consistory Court. The libel is dated 1 March 1782. Simultaneously Nash brought an action in the King's Bench against Charles Charles for damages for criminal conversation. The case was tried at the Hereford assizes (as was usual for Welsh cases brought in the King's Bench). Nash obtained judgment against Charles with total costs and damages of £76. Charles seems to have been remanded in prison, unable or unwilling to pay damages and costs, and was dead by 1787.<sup>25</sup> If Charles and Nash had been complicit the outcome was unexpectedly tragic.

Jane Nash, for her part, seems to have been resigned to the separation. Nash gave his address as St James, Westminster; Jane may have continued to live in Lambeth. The children, John and Hugh Nash, seem to have been completely rejected and are never referred to again. One can only suppose that they had been removed from Nash's household when Jane was sent into Wales. As to the baby born in Neath, Nash (according to Jane) had contributed small sums towards the infant's maintenance until December 1781. Jane had apparently remained penniless in Neath until 1785 when she was awarded maintenance of £10 quarterly from Doctors' Commons. Definitive sentence of divorce from bed and board was finally read on 26 January 1787. Jane made a further petition for her maintenance and that of her child, now aged seven, on 20th March 1787. Nothing more is heard of them.<sup>26</sup>

### *Bankruptcy*

Nash's personal life had been in turmoil since 1778, but his business affairs were also failing. Nash's personal answer to the Consistory Court shows how he felt that his personal and business lives were interconnected. According to Nash, Jane's extravagance and deceptions had induced his creditors to demand payment of outstanding bills amounting to some £5,000. Unable to pay their demands, Nash had been obliged to mortgage his properties in Lambeth and Bloomsbury. The details of his interests in Lambeth are obscure, but the nature of his building speculation in Bloomsbury can be established.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> However, the following baptism at Neath may be noted: Jane Elizabeth, daughter of John Nash and Jane, baptized 18 Jan. 1783 (NLW, Bishops' Transcripts for Neath).

<sup>25</sup> Record of the King's Bench action in LMA, DL/C/560/11. The jury awarded £20 damages with 40s costs, increased by £54 by the court.

<sup>26</sup> HLRO, Large Parchment 279/48.

<sup>27</sup> But see Pinhorn, *Diaries of John Nash Architect*, vol. 2, p. 108 (n.6), for Nash's Lambeth interests.

Nash was anxious to make an impact, as well as a profit, in the metropolitan building scene, as both architect and speculative builder. In September 1777, he had agreed with Sir John Rushout (a Worcestershire squire) to redevelop Rushout's town-house in Bloomsbury Square with some adjoining land. This would allow a new residential block on the north-west corner of Bloomsbury Square with Great Russell Street. The development formed two larger houses (nos 16–17) in the square and six smaller houses (nos 66–71) at the upper end of Russell Street. The design of the elevations was to be approved by Thomas Leverton, an older and more experienced surveyor and architect. The agreement between Nash and Rushout was supported by a bond with a penalty of £2,000 for non-completion of the development by September 1778. Nash's sureties were two business associates: Abraham Ewings, who had been witness at his wedding, and Richard Heavyside, the timber merchant. The building lease was presumably of the standard type with the developer responsible for a substantial ground rent after completion until the houses had been sold.<sup>28</sup>

The development must have been substantially finished by September 1778 because rates were levied on the houses in that year. Nevertheless, the houses remained unoccupied and became a target for thieves. In spring 1779, large quantities of lead, as much as 300 lbs weight, were stolen from the roofs of the empty houses. Eventually, a suspect was apprehended in Bloomsbury Market with a quantity of lead wrapped in coarse cloth. Nash's foreman, Edward Watkins, was able to prove from the pattern of nail holes that the lead had been removed from the corner house at Bloomsbury Square. The thief was found guilty of stealing 42lbs of lead and the trial reported in the Old Bailey Sessions papers.<sup>29</sup>

The completed development, with its stuccoed front, dignified by pilasters above the rusticated ground floor on the Bloomsbury Square side, was a 'humble imitation' of Chambers' Somerset House front to The Strand, but it was also a significant pointer to the future. The interiors included boldly cantilevered stairs, an octagonal room of the type that Nash was to favour in his Welsh villas, and his radial fluted motif. Nash's houses were undeniably stylish but, nevertheless, the completed houses failed to sell. Nash himself

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<sup>28</sup> Summerson, *Life and Work of John Nash*, p. 6 (citing documents in the Bedford Office); Donald J. Olsen, *Town Planning in London: the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (2nd edn, New Haven & London, 1982), pp. 27–38.

<sup>29</sup> Old Bailey Sessions Papers for 1779, pp. 346–47, available on-line at <<http://www.oldbaileyonline.org>>.

moved into one of the empty houses with his wife Jane during their brief reconciliation.<sup>30</sup>

Nash was in an increasingly difficult financial situation and his creditors lost patience. At the end of September 1783, Nash was declared bankrupt. The case file has not survived but it is clear that the building speculation in Bloomsbury had stretched Nash to breaking point. In particular, Nash owed a considerable sum to the Adam brothers' firm for Liardet's patent cement or 'composition'. William Adam & Co. had applied the stucco to the house fronts in Bloomsbury Square (1778) and then (1779) to the Great Russell Street houses for a total cost of £688 12s. 6d. This (according to litigation over the stucco patent) was a bad debt that should never have been incurred. It was one of several debts run up by persons concerned in the building trade with whose characters Messrs Adam ought to have been better acquainted. Nevertheless, the Adam brothers went on to lend Nash £2,000 on the security of the Bloomsbury Square houses. Nash had evidently charmed the business-like Adam brothers into a temporary rescue of his finances; but significantly there was never any further association between Nash and the Adams. Nash (according to his personal answer) assigned the whole of his property to his creditors in about May 1782 and was allowed three years to pay his debts. However, Nash, oppressed by debts and legal charges, was insolvent and on 30 September 1783 was declared bankrupt. Nash managed to reach an accommodation with his creditors and was discharged on 31 December 1783. Presumably, as Summerson puts it, Nash had acted ingeniously, but his business reputation was in ruins.<sup>31</sup>

### *Carmarthen*

Nash, with his personal and business affairs in crisis, disappeared from the London building scene in 1784. He is next heard of in Carmarthen in 1785. We know exactly what brought Nash to west Wales; he had responded to a

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<sup>30</sup> Michael Mansbridge, *John Nash: a Complete Catalogue* (Oxford, 1991), p. 35; reconstructed elevation in Terence Davies, *John Nash: the Prince Regent's Architect* (Newton Abbot, 1966), fig. 1. The Edwards family may have tried to rescue Nash's finances by acquiring an interest in the development. Summerson, *Life and Work of John Nash*, pp. 26-27, points out that by 1810 John Edwards resided in Bloomsbury Square and his firm (Edwards & Lyons, attorneys) practised from 72 Great Russell Street.

<sup>31</sup> The details of Nash's debts emerge in litigation over Liardet's stucco patent: The National Archives, C12/921/11. See further Frank Kelsall, 'Liardet versus Adam', in *Design and Practice in British Architecture: Studies in Architectural History presented to Howard Colvin*, ed. by John Newman, [a special volume of] *Architectural History*, 27 (1984), 118-26. Summerson, *Life and Work of John Nash*, pp. 7-9, has further details of Nash's bankruptcy.

small advertisement placed in the provincial press by the churchwardens of St Peter's Carmarthen seeking contractors for a new church roof.<sup>32</sup> The churchwardens accepted Nash's estimate of £670 for taking down the old roof and erecting a new double roof of oak, with lead gutters and ridge and Pembrokeshire slates, and for making a plain floated plaster ceiling. The contract was signed on 22 June 1785 by Nash and a business partner, Samuel Saxon (1757–1831), another London architect. The project was successfully completed, although the profit margin was probably quite small; visiting antiquarians complained that Nash's workmen had ground up irreplaceable alabaster monuments, presumably to save money on plaster. Nash decided to stay on in Carmarthen and continued in partnership with Saxon.

These early years were probably difficult for Nash. Nash was primarily a contractor and supplier of building materials rather than an architect, as the evidence of Nash's litigation suggests (Appendix 2). Nash's business partners were Richard Heaviside and Samuel Saxon but the agreements between them were short-lived and had ended in litigation by 1790–91. Nash and Saxon apparently leased Taliaris woods in Carmarthenshire, though the venture may have lost money; litigation over the non-payment for fir and other trees suggests that Nash was either selling or growing on saplings. Nash's association with Heaviside, the London timber-merchant, dated back to his Lambeth days, although Heaviside may have had independently some connections in Wales. In 1786, Nash and Saxon supplied timber and other materials for roasting an ox at the coming of age celebrations of the heir to the Dynevor estate; earlier in the year, 'Nash & Co.' delivered timber and laths worth £10 6s. 9d. for the repair of Westmead on the Golden Grove estate. In October 1787, Nash leased from Carmarthen Corporation a piece of land near the quay with a newly-built lime-kiln. In 1789, there is reference to Nash's quarrymen; Nash had probably leased a quarry for roofing slates. Nash, one imagines, could supply most building materials from his yard near Carmarthen quay.<sup>33</sup>

The bill-book of Nash's attorney, the acquisitive and sometimes patronising Herbert Lloyd, shows that Nash was involved in a web of litigation that extended from the Mayor's Court to the assizes and the central Westminster courts (Appendix 2).<sup>34</sup> One case related to the wreck of his London affairs, but most actions were connected with Nash's new business affairs and the partnership agreements with Saxon and Heaviside. The fees of Nash's attorney during 1790–92 alone amounted to £61 16s. 5d. Nash was not perhaps especially litigious but he understood that legal action could enforce

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<sup>32</sup> *Hereford Journal*, 17 March 1785.

<sup>33</sup> Suggett, *John Nash – Architect*, p. 14; Carmarthen R.O., Golden Grove 1332.

<sup>34</sup> R. G. Thorne, 'Herbert Lloyd of Carmarthen', *Ante* (1977), 103–30.

agreements and prompt the settlement of debts. Nash's successful action against William Knox was particularly significant as it netted Nash over £500 after an arbitrated agreement. Knox, a wealthy London merchant, had bought the Slebech estate in Pembrokeshire for £90,000 in 1784, and set about realizing the value of the timber on the estate. It remains to be established whether Nash's litigation related to the estate's timber resource or to building work at Slebech.<sup>35</sup> Nash's recovery of this large sum may well have been the origin of the story told to Farrington that within a few years after arriving in Carmarthen 'he had employment which produced him £500'.

Nash took some time to establish his credentials as an architect and was at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* established metropolitan architects. In 1788, the Cardiganshire magistrates turned to William Blackburn (who had been a witness at Nash's marriage) when they sought a plan and estimate for the new county gaol. In 1789, Nash was engaged to survey the cathedral fabric by the Chapter of St David's but the restoration of the west front was to be handled by James Wyatt. However, the turning point was reached in 1789 when Nash's proposed designs for the new county gaol at Carmarthen were accepted; henceforward Mr Nash of Carmarthen, architect, was to become a well-known figure in west Wales and beyond.<sup>36</sup>

It is important to appreciate that in the later eighteenth century a successful architect need not live in London but could be based in a provincial town. Nash took full advantage of the building opportunities provided by the improving Georgian towns and the magistrates' enthusiasm for new public buildings. During his residence in Carmarthen Nash designed three prisons, a market hall, a poor-house, an asylum, and several bridges. These were large projects which Nash handled with flair. Supervision of the projects provided Nash with a regular income, and brought Nash into prolonged contact with the magistrates who approved and scrutinized the building projects. Quite soon Nash was designing villas for these magistrates in Wales and the March.

Carmarthen was not an absolutely clean break from London. In particular, Nash's divorce was still unresolved when he arrived in Carmarthen. On 6 January 1787, he obtained a definitive sentence of divorce against Jane Elizabeth Nash for adultery. This was judicial separation from bed and board but did not allow remarriage. He then embarked on the extraordinary and

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<sup>35</sup> Knox employed Charles Hassell, the agriculturalist, under the direction of Richard Foley of Haverfordwest (for whom Nash later built Foley House), to value and sell the timber on the Slebech estate subject to existing contracts with colliers and others: The National Archives, *Knox v. Symmons*, C42/10/Part 2. Further details of the purchase in NLW, Slebech 5549-55, 8991ff.

<sup>36</sup> NLW, Cardiganshire QS/OB/4, 28, 36; NLW, SD/Ch/B/8, p. 169.

expensive step of seeking a full divorce by act of Parliament. The first reading was had on 28 February 1787; the second reading on 19 March 1787 with Nash's witnesses travelling from Neath to give evidence before the Lords.<sup>37</sup> The witnesses recapitulated the evidence already given in the ecclesiastical court about Jane's adultery with Charles Charles. However, the divorce bill was rejected. The Lords suspected (it is clear from the shorthand notes of the case) that Nash had been complicit in the affair and collusion, if discovered, was fatal to a divorce bill.<sup>38</sup>

What was the point of Nash's divorce bill? A parliamentary divorce allowed remarriage with the children from the second marriage regarded as legitimate heirs. Nash did marry again a decade later after the failure of his divorce bill and it must be assumed that his first wife had died in the interval. Nash was convinced of his genius, and years later revealed to George IV's secretary that he viewed himself as 'the founder of a family of honour'. George IV intended in 1829 to reward Nash with a baronetcy with remainder (as Nash and his second wife were childless) to John Edwards, whom Nash regarded as his 'only relative'. The king described Edwards as a most loyal man who was well known to him personally. It was not to be, but had George IV created the baronetcy, Nash would have founded a family with an hereditary title.<sup>39</sup> As it was, Rheola – the house built by Nash for Edwards – contained a shrine to what might have been.<sup>40</sup>

Nash certainly managed to achieve greatness even if he did not found a family of honour. Nash's residence in Wales was fundamental to his later achievements. In Wales, Nash was able to distance himself from his London disasters; in Wales, Nash was able to learn and to experiment. Nash had built very little in London, and Wales provided Nash with experience of a whole range of public and private building projects. His public buildings, especially the prisons, demonstrated Nash's competence in handling large building projects. The idiosyncratic inscription on Carmarthen gaol announced that it had been begun in 1789 and finished in 1792. Nash's villas showed his flair for

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<sup>37</sup> Nash's witnesses included: Thomas and Ann Morgan of Aberavon; Mary Lewis of Margam; Elizabeth Morgan of Aberavon; Humphrey Edwards of the Neath; Thomas Edwards of Neath.

<sup>38</sup> House of Lords Record Office, Large Parchments 279/47-8; Main Papers 28 Feb. 1787, with a modern transcription of the shorthand note. On marriage litigation, see generally, Lawrence Stone, *The Road to Divorce* (Oxford, 1990).

<sup>39</sup> Summerson, *Life and Work of John Nash*, pp. 174-75, 177-78.

<sup>40</sup> An inventory of the pictures at Rheola (1868) shows that the room between the billiard room and the dining-room contained life-size three-quarter length portraits of John Nash, John Edwards, and George IV, the latter by Sir Thomas Lawrence with letters respecting the picture kept in a case: Glamorgan Record Office, Rheola Collection. Phillips, *History of the Vale of Neath*, p. 422, citing *The Mirror* for 1828, notes that Edwards had presented George IV with the largest pineapple ever grown in the kingdom, cut from the hot-house at Rheola.

planning. His earlier villas, with bows and canted bays, inevitably reveal the influence of his old master, Sir Robert Taylor. Nash's later box-like villas shorn of projections are entirely his own. They are rather like boxes full of surprises since it is impossible to predict from the outside what one will find inside. These small villas, planned around a surprise stair, are best described as proto-picturesque. Nash went on to build villas that were more explicitly picturesque, including the marine villa at Aberystwyth for Uvedale Price. A series of encounters with the theoreticians and enthusiasts of the picturesque movement gave Nash the intellectual platform from which to become a brilliant and innovative metropolitan and country-house architect.

By the end of 1796, Nash was ready to return to London. He had formed a business partnership with Humphry Repton, the landscaper, that would allow him to work on a national stage. He returned briefly to Carmarthen in 1797, and in 1798 married Ann Bradley after establishing his London home and office at 11 Dover Street. Sir John Summerson refers rather grandly to Nash moving to a dignity and sophistication beyond the local Welsh gentry. There was a sense in which this was true, of course – but it has to be said that many of Nash's clients were glad to see the back of the litigious and expensive architect. More fundamentally, one must emphasize that Nash's later sophistication was inseparable from his professional experience in Wales. Nash's residence in Wales allowed him to rebuild a wrecked career. Without it, Nash might well have sunk without trace in the London building world. In Wales, Nash was able to distance himself from his London affairs, and was able to learn and to experiment. Nash's great discoveries in Wales were his flair for planning, the importance of relating buildings to landscape, the capacity to design buildings that were explicitly picturesque, and the related freedom to be stylistically eclectic. These were the innovations that Nash brought to the metropolitan scene, reversing the usual direction of innovation. There was certainly something of the genius about Nash, but he was a genius in a hurry with lost time to make up. When in 1796 Nash had teamed up with Repton, they were (as Repton recalled) ready to carry all before them. The rest of Nash's story is well-established architectural history.



## **Appendix 1: Documents Relating to John Nash's Divorce**

*Transcript of the allegation of Jane Elizabeth Nash and the personal answer of John Nash in Nash (the husband) against Nash (the wife), a cause of divorce by reason of adultery (London Metropolitan Archives, Diocese of London records). Note: some repetition and common form have been omitted; minimal punctuation has been introduced.*

### The Allegation of Jane Elizabeth Nash, 29 April 1782 (LMA, DL/L/179/340)

- [1] That the said John Nash was at the commencement of this cause and now is possessed of divers freehold messuages lands tenements and herditaments with their appurtenances situate in divers places within the Kingdom of Great Britain or elsewhere [. . .] which after deducting the Kings Tax and all other taxes and outgoings whatsoever amount to the value or sum of three hundred pounds, two hundred pounds, one hundred pounds or at least fifty pounds of lawful money of Great Britain, and this was and is true publick and notorious and so much the said John Nash doth know and hath confessed and in his conscience believes to be true [etc.].
- [2] That the said John Nash was at the time of the commencement of this suit and now is possessed of divers leasehold lands, messuages, stock [. . .] monies due to him on mortgage [. . .] household goods furniture plate china linnen and other estate and effects to the amount or value on the whole of one thousand pounds [. . .] or at least one hundred pounds of good and [lawful] money of Great Britain after payment of all his joint debts, and this was and is true publick and notorious [etc.].
- [3] Thirdly that the said John Nash hath for some years past been and now is in a very extensive way of business as a Surveyor, Builder and Carpenter and now is and for some time past (but how long in particular the party proponent cannot set forth) hath been in partnership in the several branches of business with [blank] Heavyside carpenter to his Majestys Board of Ordnance and for these three years past hath gained and now doth gain [in the] said several branches of business one year with another the clear [?] annual sum of profit of eight hundred [. . .] or at least two hundred pounds of good and lawful money of Great Britain exclusive of all deductions and outgoings whatsoever. And he the said John Nash hath also for some time past (but how long in particular the party proponent cannot set forth) been employed and now is employed as surveyor to a very large brewhouse and vinegar yard belonging to Mr [blank] Fasset and for and in consideration of his said employment hath received and doth receive the clear annual sum of two hundred or at least one hundred pounds of good and lawful money of Great Britain one year

with another inclusive of all deductions and outgoings whatsoever and inclusive of his profits in his several branches of business [etc.].

- [4] That some years ago, and when the said Jane Elizabeth Nash was about nine years of age, the Honorable Mrs Ann Hallet departed this life [. . .] and by her last will and testament given and bequeathed to the said Jane Elizabeth Nash, then Jane Elizabeth Kerr, a legacy or sum of fifty pounds of good and lawful money of Great Britain to be paid to her on her attaining the age of twenty one years with lawful interest for the same from the time of the deceased's death; and the said John Nash since his intermarriage with the said Jane Elizabeth Nash (to wit) sometime in or about the year 1779 hath in right of his said wife received and wholly converted to his own use the said legacy of fifty pounds together with the further sum of fifty pounds [. . .] or at least twenty pounds of good and lawful money of Great Britain for interest then due [etc.].
  
- [5] That the said Jane Elizabeth Nash hath one child living lawfully begotten on her body by the said John Nash her husband, which child now doth and ever since the commencement of this suit hath lived with and is and has been wholly maintained and supported by the said Jane Elizabeth Nash, the said John Nash not having contributed in the least towards the support of such child and not having been made subject or liable to the payment of any debt contracted on that account [etc.].

The Personal Answer of John Nash, 13 November 1782 (LMA, DL/L/203/392-5)

- [1] To the first position or article of the said pretended allegation this respondent answers and says that he was not at the time of the commencement of this cause, nor is at this present time, nor ever has been possessed of any freehold messuages, lands, tenements or hereditaments whatsoever within the dominions of the King of Great Britain or elsewhere, and therefore denies the said article to be true in any part thereof.
  
- [2] To the second position or article of the said pretended allegation this respondent answers and says that he admits himself at the time of the commencement of this suit to have been possessed of divers leasehold houses with their appurtenances in the parishes of St. Mary Lambeth in the county of Surr[e]y and St. George Bloomsbury in the county of Middlesex, but that the whole of the same were mortgaged, and by reason of their unfinished state productive of no profit to this respondent, and the report of the extravagance and deceptions of the said [Jane] Elizabeth Nash his wife inducing all his creditors to demand their bills to the amount of five thousand pounds at least, he was unable to finish the said houses and obliged in that state to mortgage them for further sum[s]; and also finding himself seven

hundred pounds and upwards in debt for debts which his said wife had clandestinely and without his privity contracted, and oppressed by law expenses on account of the disagreeable state of his affairs occasioned as aforesaid, was in fact from before the time of the commencement of this suit reduced to an insolvent situation, and the small profits of his profession as an architect which has not amounted to more than two hundred pounds a year on an average from the time of the commencement of this suit to the present time having been all or the greatest part employed in vain attempts to finish the said houses and in the discharge of accumulating interests and law expenses in consequence of the aforesaid mortgages, he was reduced to the necessity in satisfaction of part of his debts at various times of assigning over different parcels of the said leasehold houses until about six months since when he made over the whole which then remained to his creditors and obtained from them the allowance of three years for the payment of three hundred pounds and upwards for which he had no further assignable property to answer.

And he further says that the remainder of his household goods furniture plate and china, linnen and other personal estate and effects not sold or otherwise disposed of or made away with by his wife before he sent her away from him does not as he believes amount in value to more than the sum of eighty pounds or thereabouts, and is subject to his remaining debts, and that he has no stock in the public funds or money due to him on mortgage, but admits that he has debts by bonds notes or otherwise now due and owing to him to the amount of £1500 or two thousand pounds, but says that the several persons from whom the same are due have either taken the benefit of insolvent acts, quitted the kingdom or are otherwise unable to pay so that he looks upon the whole of such debts as absolutely desperate, and does not believe he shall ever receive one shilling therefrom, and further to the said position or article he cannot answer.

- [3] To the third position or article of the said pretended allegation this respondent answers and says that he is by profession an architect but never was in trade as a carpenter or builder but for the purpose of finishing the said leasehold estates mentioned and set forth in his answer to the next preceding article and of course obtained no profit, but on the contrary loss by such employ, and that the whole or the greatest part of his profits as an architect the average amount of which from the commencement of this suit to the present time he has stated in the said answer went or was applied equally in vain. And this respondent denies that he was ever in trade as a surveyor carpenter or builder in the said several branches of business or either of them with Mr Heaviside articulate, and says that the said Mr Heaviside is not as he believes or ever has been Carpenter to His Majesty's Board of Ordnance, but that Mr. James Morris lately deceased was Carpenter to the said Board and Mr. Heaviside in partnership with Mr Morris, but this respondent with neither of

them; and he further says that he is informed and believes that on the death of Mr Morris, Messrs. Adams were made Carpenters to the Board of Ordnance and that Mr. Heaviside did not succeed his partner in such office. And this respondent further says that he admits that he was at the time of the commencement of this suit and now is employed as surveyor to Mr. Fassett's brew house and vinegar yard as articulate for which he receives the annual sum of fifty guineas and no more, and further to the said article referring himself to his answer to the next preceeding article he cannot answer.

- [4] To the fourth position or article of the said pretended allegation this respondent answers and says that he admits that at or about the time articulate, the articulate Ann Hatton departed this life having in and by her last will and testament given and bequeathed to this respondent's said wife then Jane Elizabeth Kerr a legacy or sum of fifty pounds to be paid to her as articulate, that this respondent and the said Jane Elizabeth Nash his wife since his intermarriage with her and before the time of the commencement of this suit assigned the said legacy or sum of fifty pounds together with all interest due or to grow due thereon to Mr. William Bray of Great Russell Street Bloomsbury attorney at law in discharge or upon account of a debt contracted with him by the said Jane Elizabeth Nash after her intermarriage with, and unknown to this respondent, and further or otherwise this respondent denies the said pretended position or article to be true.
- [5] To the fifth pretended position or article of the said pretended allegation this respondent answers and says that he admits the said Jane Elizabeth Nash hath one child living, but denies that it was lawfully begotten on her body by this respondent, and he further admits that it now doth and ever since the commencement of this suit hath lived with the said Jane Elizabeth Nash, but denies that it now is or hath been wholly supported or maintained by her, for that he hath contributed by the payment of several small sums of money at different times for the support of the said child, having been advised that as the same was born before he had obtained a sentence of separation from his said wife he was legally bound and might be compelled to the payment thereof notwithstanding the said child was not begotten on her body by him this respondent as aforesaid. And further referring himself to his foregoing answers, he answers and believes as he has therein answered and believed and denies and disbelieves as he has denied and disbelieved.

John Nash [signed]

## **Appendix 2: Summary of Nash's Litigation**

This appendix reproduces the details of Nash's litigation set out in the bill-book of Nash's attorney, Herbert Lloyd. This bill-book lettered 'D' is a fortunate survival and covers the years 1790–92; its predecessor bill-book C beginning in August 1788 has been lost, and with it details of Nash's earlier litigation, as has bill-book E with details of Nash's later litigation.

*[The account of] Mr John Nash in the County Borough of Carmarthen (NLW, G.E. Owen MS 442, ff. 7-14).*

- [1] In the King's Bench. John Bradley v. John Nash  
Vacation before Easter Term 1788. Easter 1788 searching for declaration filed conditionally. Attending defendant many times, taking instructions to plead and advising him as to his defence. Paid agent attending at Bankrupt's Office to search when Commission issued. Drawing plea of bankruptcy (fo. 4). Easter 1789 notice of motion for nonsuit, plaintiff not proceeding to trial. Judgment of nonsuit.

*An action relating to Nash's London affairs. John Bradley, coal merchant of Abingdon Street, Westminster, was presumably a relative (uncle, father or brother) of Nash's second wife, Mary Anne Bradley. See generally, Pinhorn, The Diaries of John Nash, Architect, II, p.117.*

- [2] In the King's Bench. John Edwards v. James Canter  
Instructions in order to draw agreement between you [J.N.] and your quarrymen. 1789. Journeys to St Clears to meet Mr Jeffreys of Bath, Lord Mountalt[s] solicitor to settle accounts.

*An action that probably relates to Nash's leasing a slate quarry from Lord Mountalt, owner of the Abermarlais estate. It is interesting that John Edwards, Nash's cousin, is plaintiff.*

- [3] In the Great Sessions, Carmarthenshire. Messrs Nash & Saxon v. John Mansell [of Llandefaelog, ship's carpenter]. [Action of trespass upon the] case for the payment of £60 due to the plaintiffs for goods sold and delivered to the def. June 1789. Declaration 18 Aug. 1789; Spring 1790, judgment. Writ of inquiry 5<sup>th</sup> March 1790. (Great Sessions 28/99-2; Great Sessions 28/77)

*Presumably an action relating to the supply of timber by Nash & Co.*

- [4] In the Mayor's Court, County Borough of Carmarthen. Thomas Morris v. John Nash  
Mayor's Court 11 Jan. 1790 certiorari [to remove case to another court]. 27 Dec. 1790: attending you several hours, perusing several agreements between you and Mr Heavyside & Mr Saxon, advising you therein and on several other matters. Writing a letter to Mr Vandercom to give you time to February to pay Mr Car. Lewis £60 by your direction.

[5] In the King's Bench. John Nash, gent. v. William Knox, esq.

13 Feb. 1791: J. Gwynne's attendance on Mr. Knox several times to demand of him the payment of £563 1s. awarded to be paid on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb. when he refused and said he was determine[d] to dispute the award. From thence to Messrs Hill & Meredith and giving them directions to commence an action against him for the recovery thereof, and coach hire.

Hilary term 1791, bill of Middlesex. Easter 1791, letters and attending Mr Knox with respect to his discharging the monies awarded to Mr Nash, when my agents were referred to his attorneys, Messrs Chamberlayne & White – who requested we would not proceed in action commenced as they hoped to induce Mr Knox to comply with what was equitable and fair.

24 May 1791, paid agent attending you, Mr Knox & White, solicitor, upwards of 2 hours when you agreed to make a deduction of £46 from the sum awarded and Mr Knox paid the remainder by his draft on Harley & Co.

*This was clearly an important action although the matter in dispute is uncertain.*

[6] In the Exchequer. Richard Heaviside v. John Nash

Vacation before Easter 1791. Easter 1791 copy of declaration. Agent attending you.

[7] High Court of Chancery. John Nash, gent. v. Richard Heaviside & S S Saxon

Easter 1791 filing bill. Trinity 1791 Saxon appears.

*These actions and counter-suits evidently relate to Nash's early business activities in Carmarthen.*

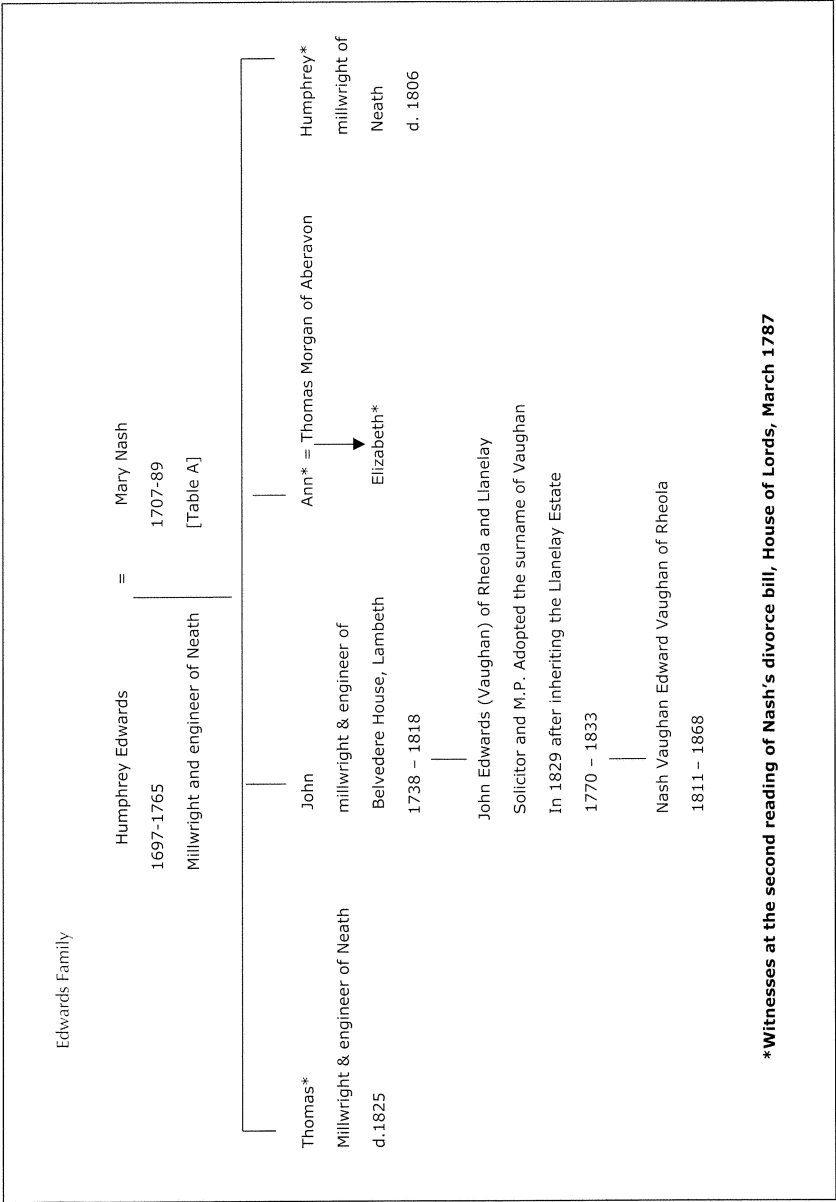
Additional cases:

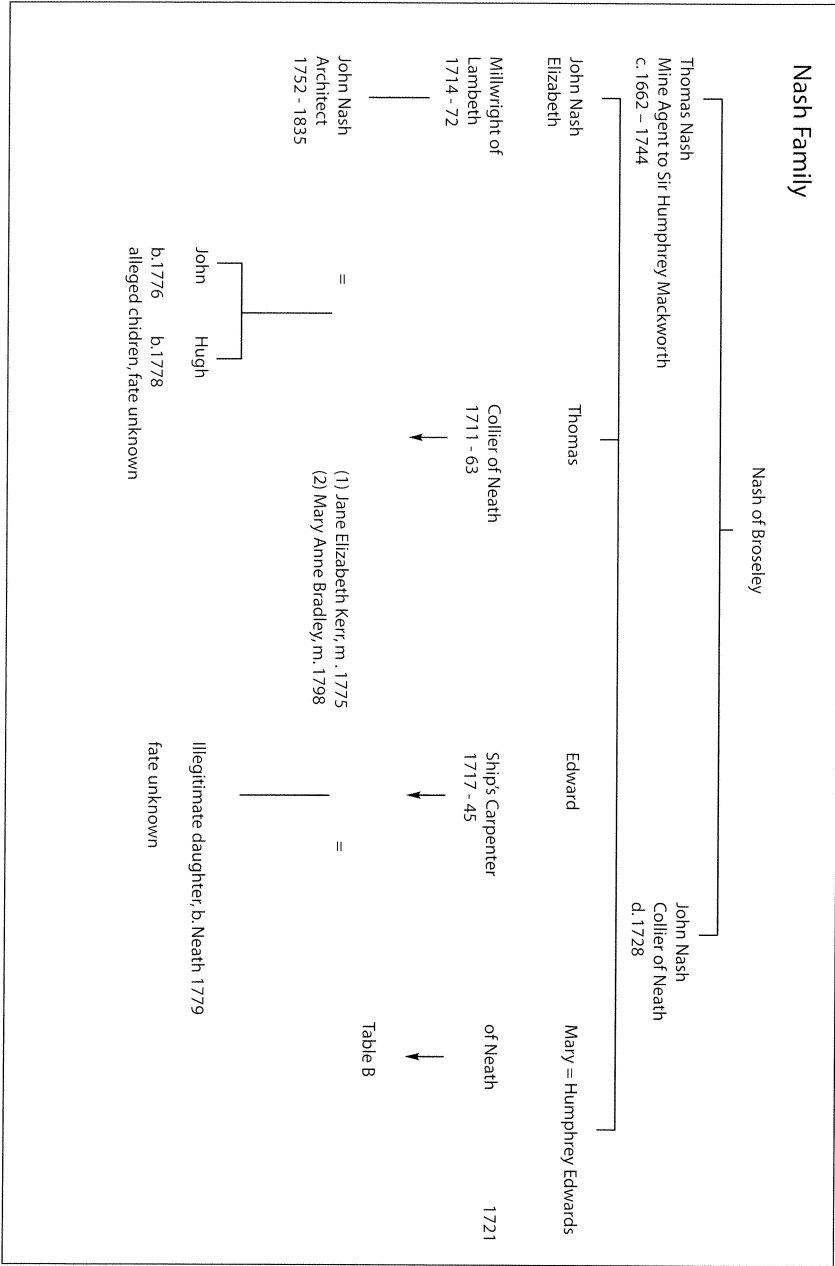
[8] Court of Great Sessions, Spring Sessions 1791. Thomas Merry v. John Nash of St Peter's parish, Carmarthen, gent. Debt for £70 according to the terms of a bond dated 7<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1789 which the def. entered into in Carmarthen. Nash pleads that the bond was not made. Action enrolled. Great Sessions 28/100-2; Great Sessions 28/77 (4 April 1791); Great Sessions 19/384/m.2d).

[9] Court of Great Sessions, Autumn Sessions 1792. Andrew Leslie, James Cunningham & Henry Robertson, seedsmen v. John Nash of St Peter's parish, Carmarthen. Writ served 2 June 1792; declaration filed 23 July 1792. Action of trespass on the case for the payment of £9 for divers sorts of fir and other trees that the plts. sold and delivered to Nash on 1 May 1792.

*Interesting evidence for the supply of seedlings, presumably for Nash's wood.*

Appendix 3: the Nash and Edwards Family Connections







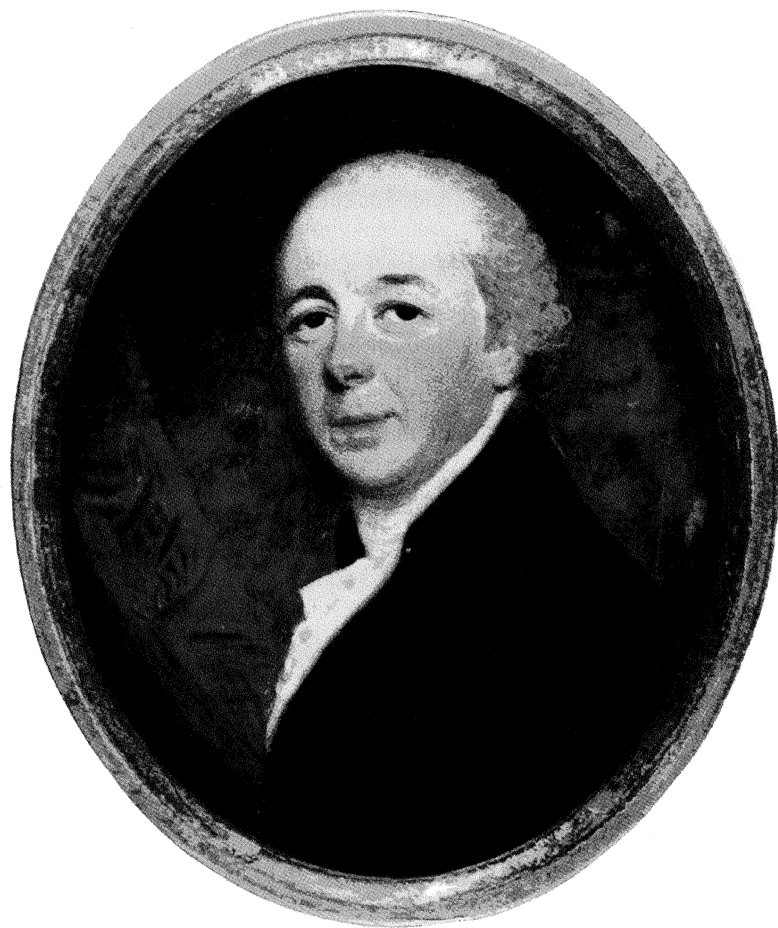


Fig. 1 John Nash aged about 46, a portrait painted on his second marriage. Photograph by Ian Sherfield of a miniature in the possession of Peter Laing.



Fig. 2 Nash's development in Bloomsbury Square (no. 17), now the premises of the German Historical Institute London. Photographed by author in October 2009.

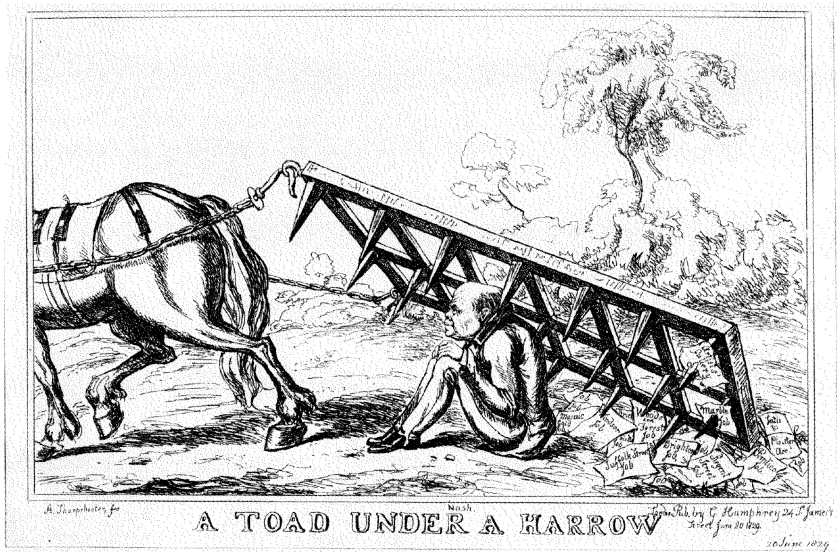


Fig. 3 *A Toad under a Harrow*. Satirical print by John Phillips published by George Humphrey (1829). A print attacking John Nash's architecture. Copyright: Trustees of the British Museum (BM Satires 15813).



## ROYAL ADDRESS

CADWALLADER AP. TUDOR AP. EDWARDS AP. VAUGHAN

WATER-KING OF SOUTHWARK.

WATER-PIPE OF SOUTHWARK,  
 SOVEREIGN OF THE MISTED STREAMS.—AVOUGHT OF ALL THE MISTERS.—RAISING PRICE OF THE MISTERS' MISTERS.

PROTECTOR OF THE CONSERVATION OF THE FOREST—APPROPRIATOR OF THE DIET OF WORMS,  
PASSAGE OF THE SLOW EARTH—WARRIOR OF COALS—LORD OF THE STRAY OIL—AGITATOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE INTESTINAL CANALS  
SIGHT-CHIEFMAN OF THE BOARD OF FLEAS—LORD OF THE MARCH OF SHEPHERD—WARRIOR OF THE SINK PORTS,  
RECEIVER GENERAL AND DISTRICT OF SEWERS—GRAND CROSS OF THE MOST MUCKY ORDER OF THE RIVER

TO HIS SUBJECTS OF THE BOROUGH.

My People of Southwark! your Monarch addresses you,  
And deigns to declare, that with pride he possesses you,  
Yet shoulders to bear of the bloody excesses you  
Project in the cause of Reform—  
Reformation by Law, he is told, will not quiet you,  
But a War-Reform, both in Washing and Diet, you  
Insist on effecting, or kick up a riot you  
Will—and a terrible storm! (1.)

As your King, I demand—What the drone can the native be!  
What can the mousing of all this land matter be?  
What would ye indicate can in the Water be,  
Except what it ought to contain?  
Such as small living creatures, and large ones too—dead  
The insected bodies of man and of beast,  
Slough'd with sauce from the sewers, in all quite a host,  
And yet you presume to complain!

Oh! how could you dream there was any thing vicious  
In water potent, or excrementations,  
Or refuse of gas-works, that poisons the fishes,  
Which run in the water you drink!  
Nay! chop me no logic, no way that is fallow;  
That a man must be poison'd if poison be swallow'd;  
As sure as a sow must be danc'd when she wallows

In the mire of a puddle or sink.  
For a wholesome fluid can't be, to my thinking,  
Since it serves you at once both for eating and drinking.  
Then gobble it down, my good Fisk! without thinking  
Why be chary that has chaw'd been before?  
Your minds first of prejudice nobly divorcing,  
Tant is good for weak stomachs you'll own in just time.  
Having already quite through a course of digestion,  
In whole or in part—less or more.

Just between SOUTHWARK Bridge, and its New London brother, THREE CRANE WHARF on one side, HORSE SHOE ALLEY on t'other, You may scent out the *same*—there is not such another—  
(Should such vain curiosity seize you)

Where I pump up the stream all your wants to supply  
No other you get but what drops from the sky,  
And if it won't suit you, you needs must go dry :  
I despair to make water to please you.

*"He is all the History of Me!"* Genoa of the West, bearing his true, good, honest, and noble character; being a gentleman and a nobleman.

[illegible]

For the use of your *Hospital* look at my liquor!  
Oh, pray do not fancy it makes the sick sicker,  
Though in *brewing* arises a scum that is thicker  
Than if meat had been boiled in the copper; (3.)  
And though in the *bath*, when prescribed for your good,  
If dissolved in your bowels, your nerves, or your blood,  
You find yourself stuck in a mass of my mud,  
For your health it is all over agreed.

For your health it is all very proper.  
The dots of the City concern it a virtue.  
To transfer from their dwellings all things that are dirty  
To the great Common Sewers—a hundred and thirty,  
And plump in my Wet the muck and sores;  
And should they be touched with the Sanderling gripes,  
The balmy effects of their stomachs and tripe  
Are infinitely destined to roll through the pipes  
By which I replenish your houses.

By which I replenish your houses.  
Then why with alarm do you tremble and gape,  
Since should you not, wholy the Marston escape,  
You'll have it, no doubt, in a modified shape.  
If thus second-hand you can catch it;  
And some lucky night there may come a great fire,  
Which, in cases of pest, is a good purifier:  
You need have no fear it too soon should expire,  
Without water sufficient to match it (14).

Without water sufficient to match it. (3.)

King WILLIAM and I are of different opinions :  
I oppose all Reform within both our dominions,  
And should your BILL pass, I shall sweep without remorse,  
And look on your leaders in my sorrow.  
Then let not Reform, though she daily grows stronger,  
Decree that no borough shall not any longer ;  
Still buy postredaction of me, the old manager.

And there yet shall be one more BOTTLE.  
Your thirsts, my brave People! still venture to quench,  
To hold all your victuals, your skins all to drench,  
With my liquid forerunners—regardless of stench,  
And every one of you, shall

And every unnameable thing :  
At defects no unknowns continue to stick,  
And without further stir for any West give your stink,  
For the more that you stir it, the more it will stink :—  
And so ends the Search. —

Ho! ho! with his water, pray why should you differ  
You never had friend that would stick to you sister:  
Like clay it will harden,  
And taste like a candle,  
And smell like the snuff;  
'Tis exquisite stuff!  
And so long as it sells in his honesty seen:  
Should it lie on his hands, they should never be clean.

[illegible]

PUBLISHED BY S. KNIGHT, SWEETING'S ALLEY. — *Printed along 1s. coloured.*

Fig. 4 *Salus populi suprema lex*. Satirical print by George Cruikshank published by S. Knight (1832). A print attacking John Edwards, 'Water King of Southwark'. Copyright: Trustees of the British Museum (BM Satires 16956).

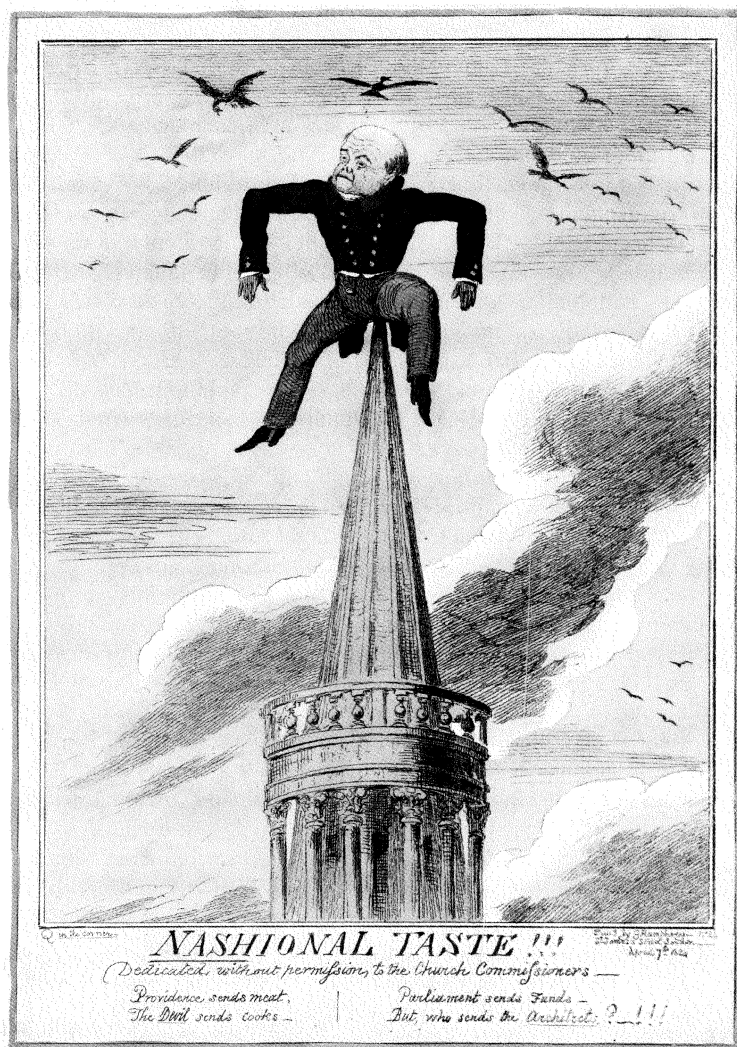


Fig. 5 *Nashional Taste!!!* Satirical print by George Cruikshank published by George Humphrey (1824). A print attacking Nash's design for All Souls' Langham Place. Copyright: Trustees of the British Museum (BM Satires 14644).