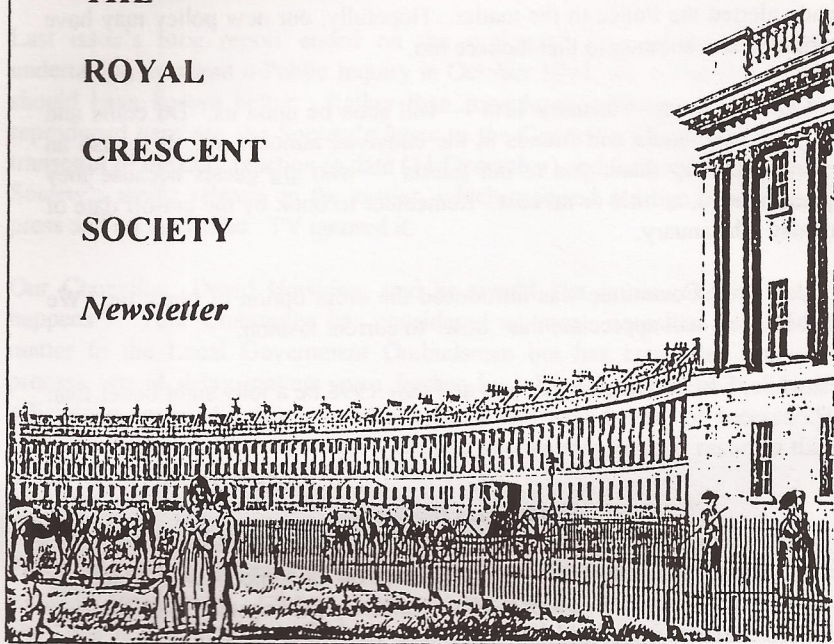


THE
ROYAL
CRESCENT
SOCIETY

Newsletter



Issue No 35

Winter 1997

Chairman's Notes

As winter struggles to get to grips with an extended autumn, this Newsletter brings you tidings of joy and sorrow. Good — excellent — news on the Ha Ha Restoration Project. Not so good news on the buses. Full reports on other pages.

As usual, the Crescent continues to hit the headlines in various ways: TV programmes, *The Times* and *Sunday Times* Travel Sections and plenty of letters in the local press, mainly supporting the bus campaign; all useful sources to re-contact when the Public Enquiry happens.

The population of the Crescent continues to change, though perhaps at a slower pace than in some years. Two notable departures are noted under our "Snippets" section: I hope the departees are not offended by the categorisation!

The new Lawn cutting arrangements have brought several reactions, mainly in favour: Vice-Chairman reports on another page. His comments about drug-dealers are alarming, but not fanciful. The Council's Parks Department had already alerted the Police to the matter. Hopefully, our new policy may have contributed to a solution to that menace too.

The Festive Dinner — January 11th — will soon be upon us. Do come and meet your neighbours and friends in the convivial atmosphere. It is also an opportunity to say thank you to our guests — who are guests because they help us so much, at little or no cost. Remember to book by the cut-off date of Thursday 8th January.

This year your Committee was introduced the dress option of black tie. We hope Members will appreciate this "bow" to current fashion.

Meanwhile, Festive Greetings to you and may 1998 be a jolly sight better than 1997.

Notes from the Editor

This Christmas Newsletter comes with updates on all subjects with which we are constantly involved — buses, Lawn, concerts, etc. together with snippets and a new seasonal item entitled "Christmas Crackers".

We are also reminded of outings and events enjoyed since the Summer Newsletter and are again grateful to all those who made such joys possible.

A new feature for forthcoming Newsletters should be "Letters to the Editor" and I shall be glad to receive contributions from you.

Since the last Newsletter we have unfortunately lost the help of Richard Otten and Helen Croft having produced the last two Newsletters so successfully. However, arrangements are already in hand for the Spring.

I draw your attention to the article on Neighbourhood Watch and on a happier note we do hope that many Members will be at the Royal Crescent Hotel for the Annual Dinner on January 11th — details elsewhere. Don't forget to book — details also here of special offers for us from the Hotel.

A very Happy Christmas to all our Members.

Caroline Carrier, 5 Royal Crescent □

The Battle of the Buses

Last issue's long report ended on the optimistic note of the Council's undertaking to mount a Public Inquiry in October 1997, we assumed.... We should have known better. Rather than paraphrase subsequent non-events reproduced here are the Society's letter to the Council's Chief Executive, a transcript of the only reaction to date (11 December) and for good measure the Society's media release on the matter, which received average cover in the press and on the Radio. TV ignored it.

Our Councillor, David Hawkins, said he would "let it run, and see what happens". Your Committee has considered on many occasions taking the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman but has concluded that the process would delay matters even further by taking the time of the same officials to answer the Ombudsman's enquiry and would thus not necessarily bring the Public Inquiry any earlier. Despite this we may have to resort to this even more tedious strategy.

The only consolation we have is reports from around the City, solicitors, FBRA and other representative groups, that they all face the same grinding and appalling inefficiency. Like us, when one speaks to officials and says things like "this is disgraceful, inefficient, unprofessional etc." they, at functionary level - simply agree!!

12th November 1997

John Everitt Esq.
Chief Executive
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Keynsham
Bristol BS18 1LA

Yr. Ref: JE/PJB

Dear Mr Everitt

Royal Crescent Closure - Public Inquiry

I draw your attention to the continuing lack of progress on this matter, despite even your own intervention, reflected in your letter of 14th October to Council Chairman David Hawkins, who had, I understand voiced his concern to you.

It is now seven months since Chief Engineer accepted (1) that he had funds and resources to mount a Public Inquiry (PI) in October this year. This includes a two-month failure to fulfil his promises of 'no further delay' and to 'keep (me) informed', when he admitted in answer to our enquiry that nothing had been done (EDD/JKWH/102 of 8.9.97). It also includes his seven - week failure to answer this Society's letter of 15.9.97 seeking more detail of the 'other priorities' which he said had intervened, but of which Councillors tell me they are unaware. The legal Services Officer also promised Councillor Cox on 3.10.97 to progress the PI process. On no front is any action visible.

I am sure you will understand that this litany of inaction raises serious and justifiable public concern about the possibility that the democratic process is being frustrated - in what looks like a deliberate, or at least conscious, way. It also calls into question the general accountability and professionalism of the officials concerned and their staffs.

It would be unreasonable to expect you to be aware of the whole history of this matter. However, residents here and our many supporters would be most grateful for your further personal intervention with a view to getting the PI mounted and effectively prosecuted immediately.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Michael G Daw
Chairman

(1) Transportation Sub-Committee, 18th April 1997

*TRANSCRIPT OF TELEPHONE MESSAGE LEFT ON CHAIRMAN'S
ANSWERING SERVICE - 20th NOVEMBER 1997*

"This is Eddie Delaine, County Engineer. It's seven fifteen at night and I am working through my pile of mail. I've come across your letter about err.. closure of the err... Royal, err.. Crescent business. I thought you would be glad to hear the news I've just received today

that contact has been made with an Inspector who should be able to convene a Public Inquiry sometime around March/April 1998. The Legal Section have had some difficulty sorting out the Department of Transport and Environment in the Regions and have had to chase up Inspectors themselves to find one available to do the work.

I am concerned that you say you have not been kept up to date and very surprised that answers to Questions in Committee have not been conveyed back if that was the case, because these are matters of public record.

Your suggestion of interference with the democratic process is far from truth. My reason for ringing now is to tell you that I am passing your letter to Julian House, the responsible official, who has to finish the Draft City Centre Report and then he needs to take two weeks off because of his wife's illness. I hope that you will understand that there will be a formal reply to your letter and that the reason for delay is not as you suggest. We have been extremely busy.

I hope this has been of some assistance; do call if you would like to discuss the matter anytime I am available. Good Night!"

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT.

This fails to answer many of the points in my letter. It fails to be specific about the dates for a formal reply and above all it is still vague about the date for the Public Inquiry. Even with as charitable an attitude as one can muster, I find it a sad reflection on County Engineer's ability to manage or to face up to valid criticism. We shall use it in a further letter to Chief Executive - who has still not had the courtesy even to acknowledge our letter.

*PRESS RELEASE - 14th NOVEMBER 1997
COUNCIL OFFICIALS DOWN TOOLS!*

B&NES officials are today accused of downing tools and refusing to do what they are told - or to answer questions about it - according to residents in Bath's famous Royal Crescent. They are now asking B&NES Chief Executive to sort matters out.

Chairman of the Royal Crescent Society Michael Daw said today:

"It is now seven months since Engineering Chief Eddie Delaine accepted Councillors' orders to set up a Public Inquiry in October about closing one end of the Royal Crescent. In all that time he has done nothing. He says other priorities got in the way, but Councillors don't know what these are and he has refused for nearly two months to answer our questions about them. He and the Legal Services Officer Tony Bevin promised to speed things up weeks ago, but nothing has happened.

This disgraceful conduct of official Council business calls into public question the whole democratic process. Officials are virtually putting up two fingers to Councillors and through them to the citizens who elected them. They keep trying to fob us all off with promises they don't keep. They are saying: "We don't care what you want us to do, if we don't like it we won't do it."

Mr Daw went on to say that he had even heard rumours that the official Council file on the subject had been thrown into the archives. If true and deliberate, this was a case of gross misconduct for which disciplinary action would be justified. It would even raise more serious questions of accountability and professionalism than the known situation had already exposed.

Residents have now put the whole matter before Chief Executive John Everitt asking him to intervene personally.

Background Note

At Transportation Sub-Committee on 18th April 1997, Councillors voiced such concern at the escalating damage to the Grade I Listed fabric and environment of the Royal Crescent by heavy vehicles, especially double-deck open-top buses, that they told officials to take objections to the closure to a Public Inquiry. Chief Engineer said he had funds and other resources to mount an Inquiry in October. Only when residents pursued the matter in September did he admit that nothing had been done, assuring us of "no further delay", promising more information and citing other priority tasks; neither Councillor Hawkins nor we have any idea what these are, and Chief Engineer has refused to answer our letter of 15th September asking for details. He has also not taken any action or kept us informed. Meanwhile the damage to the Crescent gets worse for all to see.

Contact: Michael Daw 01225 315529

The Millennium and Beyond

Already, entrepreneurs are casting their eyes around Bath for suitable sites on which to celebrate the Millennium. And, guess what, The Royal Crescent, in all its glory looks like being a prime target.

Your Committee has been approached by a composer, Adrian Snell, about using the Crescent as a backdrop for the performance of a new musical work, commissioned by the British and Foreign Bible Society, based in Swindon. Whilst the work is planned to go on a national and international tour, the Bath performance would be in co-operation with the local authority. It is proposed for July in the year 2000, in the evening, from about 9.30 until 11pm and would involve an orchestra and 2,000 children.

The organisers would put the usual bandshell in front of our Ha Ha (i.e. nothing on our Lawn) and anticipate an audience of up to 10,000. They are in the very early planning stages and have not yet decided whether the event would be for charity or not, admission charges, etc., etc. They have, however, captured the interest of the Local Education Authority's Senior Educational Adviser, Richard Brock; apparently the EA was already casting around for some sort of Millennium event involving children and this ready-made concept appealed to them. The proposal is being driven by a Working Group calling itself "The Cry, Bath, Project" which also includes the Head of Creative Arts at St. Gregory's. The Chairman is one Simon Edwards (also Adrian Snell's agent).

The musical work itself is entitled "The Cry" and is designed to commemorate all the millions of children who have lost their lives in the 20th century through massacre, starvation, wars, the Holocaust, etc., and to look forward to saving and protecting the children of the 21st Century. A two-page concept briefing note is available from the Secretary, but the following sample of a typical paragraph will serve to give Members a flavour of the whole.

"A Requiem, like the Jewish Kaddish, is not just about the remembrance of those who have died. It is about bringing the perspective of eternity to our understanding of death. And most importantly it is about trying to describe and define a vision of the world as it can be and as it will be when God's love, forgiveness, healing, justice and reconciliation become the very basis on which we live our lives."

Your Committee has so far only "noted" the proposal, expressed concern about the safety and logistics of 2,000 children and 10,000 spectators in the dark and the lack of any obvious link (despite LEA involvement) of the concept of the work to Bath. We await further news - if any.

Concerts in the Park

Councillor Lunt (Lib. Dem., Twerton), for the second time this year, announced at very short notice that he had arranged a "concert" at the bandstand in the Royal Victoria Park, for Saturday 25th October. Once again the music would be his choice, the audience would come and go at their choice, but residents here would be subjected to the event in their own homes with no choice - but to endure it.

Experience of previous events, which caused concern and disturbance to residents led to an arranged "meeting" with the Sound Engineer and - it was promised - Councillor Lunt. The Engineer quickly agreed to our three-year-old, previously unmet, request to at least angle the very large loudspeakers so that they faced the audience and not the Crescent. Councillor Lunt eventually arrived, said a few, unhelpful words and attempted to scurry off, denying our contentions that he was imposing his musical taste on residents who had no escape, and dismissing our proposals for holding the events away from residential areas, there being plenty of suitable venues, claiming that we "should enjoy all types of music". We made the point that that was a matter for us to decide not for him to dictate. He was immovable.

Accordingly, all residents were sent a hastily produced (only hours were available) notice, giving the details and various contact numbers provided by Councillor Lunt - most of which proved unusable.

Of the over one hundred notices sent out, your Committee had written reactions from two residents. One, anonymous, criticised the standard of production of the notice and said the concert was "well done": the second, received as we go to press, enclosed correspondence referring the matter to Lord Razzall, President of the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors, who has in turn sent it on to our MP Don Foster. At least one resident tried the contact number.

About four or five other residents expressed displeasure at the event - when (again) asked for their views. Another resident had written to the Chronicle,

which had given the story and our objections its usual sort of coverage, but failed to print the letter.

This level of reaction - well below 10% of those in receipt of the Society's notice - suggests that the vast majority of residents were not disturbed sufficiently by the event to raise their heads above the parapet. Your Committee takes note of this reaction and will deal with future proposed such events accordingly. It does at least seem evident that the angling of the speakers may have lessened the aural impact.

Snippets

More Morse

The episode of the highly rated Carlton television series "Morse" which had been partly filmed in the Crescent and the hotel back in April was transmitted in November. The Crescent has seldom looked lovelier with stunning low-angle shots taken in very warm sunlight and evening light, including a nice reflection in the wing of the famous detective's equally famous Jaguar. Only vivid close-ups of the rustiest parts of our railings marred the picture! The shots in the hotel also came up well with the real members of staff and the actors vying with each other to portray the luxury, charm and high standards of service and co-operation for which the hotel likes to be known. Good PR for us all - mainly. Tourists can now be heard muttering "Oh yes, you know, this was on Morse..." - clearly of more contemporary importance than its historical, urban, architectural majesty. At least it makes a change from the dreary and long out-dated stories of the Yellow Door.

Rubbish Bin Plan Binned

Residents sighed with great relief when Councillors threw out a proposal for our rubbish bins to be collected only from pavement level "curtilages" - that is by our railings. How the bins got there had clearly not been thought through by officials who had also ignored the impact on heritage environments such as ours (the plan was to apply throughout the whole of the B&NES area). Three cheers to our Councillors.

Parking - a temporary respite again

The doubling of parking ticket prices recently had its usual, but sadly temporary, impact. For a week or two long empty spaces existed in our parking bays, but visitors soon faced up to the new rates and take-up of spaces is now almost back to normal. Visitors still find it irksome and environmentally wasteful to have to fiddle with four tickets in order to park for two hours. Simple overstepping could have saved this nonsense.

Movers and Shakers

The presence of Angela and Julian Groom in the Crescent and at most Society events over the last few years has lent a lively and more youthful image to the Society than that of crusty codgers that the public assumes we all are - merely because of where we are. Julian's work has now taken him away but not before they were courteous enough to find time to send Chairman a charming letter saying how much they had enjoyed being here and joining in the various events. Many residents enjoyed their presence equally and wish them well in their new home.

Reciprocity

As has been mentioned in several past issues, the Society enjoys reciprocal membership of the Bath Preservation Trust (which allows us 10% discount in BPT shops on production of the Society's BPT card, borrowable from Treasurer). It may not be as well known that we also belong to the other main conservation body in Bath, the Bath Society, in a similar way. They organise various talks and other events of interest to conservation-minded folk and send details regularly to the Committee. If you would like to hear more of forthcoming BS matters, Veronique Oswald, your Secretary, has them. The timings of the Bath Society's Newsletters seldom makes them convenient to include in ours.

Newsletter production

After arranging the printing and production of the Newsletter for several issues to a very high standard, Richard Otten has left the Crescent and is sadly unable to continue this help - with the kind assistance of Helen Croft. Naturally all Members will wish to join the Committee in expressing our thanks to them

both and to wish them well in their separate environments. Editor Caroline Carrier has engineered some "swept-up" metropolitan production arrangements ably supported by a lady friend in the North, and this issue is the first sample. Having gone national we shall soon have to consider internationality!

Community Policeman

Many residents will remember with pleasure our community Policeman, Alan Hale, who has been helpful to many over several years. He retired last August after 31 years in the Force and has since taken up the public post of Mace Bearer to the Mayor of Bath - a happy and appropriate appointment for his burly frame! He wrote Chairman a charming letter on his retirement and asked that his sentiments on retirement be passed on. We are most happy to do so.

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for the enjoyment, friendship and respect, that I have received from everyone that I have had contact with in The Royal Crescent.

It has been a privilege to have been able to say that the Royal Crescent was part of my beat, a place where people from the world over come to visit. It has been doubly nice that I have had the opportunity to meet many of these people."

ALAN HALE

Christmas Box

Your Committee welcomed and embraced a suggestion from a very active member, Dulcie Beilin-Morel, that the young man who is so assiduous in keeping the Crescent well-swept, should be given what used to be called a "Christmas Box" as a mark of your appreciation for his Monday, Wednesday and Friday work (throughout the year). Dulcie's idea was for individual residents' contributions to be collected in small envelopes, etc. but your Committee felt that a straightforward donation from General Funds was easier and entirely in line with constitutional objectives. It also spread the load more evenly. Secretary will be handing him a Christmas card naturally, with a snowy Crescent scene on the front with £25 in cash inside (less than £1 per house or about 17p per resident).

The Royal Crescent Society

Festive Dinner: Sunday 11th January 1998

The Royal Crescent Society festive meal has become an eagerly awaited annual event and its increasing popularity has made it a very successful occasion. The Committee has arranged with The Royal Crescent Hotel to hold a dinner this year on Sunday 11th January 1998. The price is £20.00 each and will include a pre-dinner glass of wine. You may supply your own wine with the meal (no corkage charge) but please bring your bottle on Friday 9th January, clearly labelled with your name so that it can be decanted/chilled/opened in good time and placed on your table in readiness. Alternatively, house wine will be available at £15.50 per bottle or £3.50 per glass.

Trayed drinks will be served in the Sheridan Dining Room from 7.15pm and dinner will commence at 8.00pm. Black tie is optional. There is a choice of two menus, one being vegetarian. Please choose one or the other but do not mix.

Menu A	Menu B
Finely Sliced Marinated Salmon in a Chablis and Soft Herb Dressing	Jerusalem Artichoke Soup
-ooOoo-	-ooOoo-
Quail with Lentils and Wood Mushrooms with a Truffled Jus	Lasagne of Leeks with a Tarragon Hollandaise
-ooOoo-	-ooOoo-
Mousse of Chocolate and Banana	Mousse of Chocolate and Banana

This is a splendid opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of The Royal Crescent Hotel in the company of friends and neighbours, so do book early to avoid disappointment.

**NO BOOKINGS WILL BE TAKEN AFTER
THURSDAY 8TH JANUARY**

To make your reservation please complete the enclosed slip and return it together with a cheque for the appropriate amount made out to "The Royal Crescent Hotel" and hand it into the hotel marked "for the attention of Miss Suzanne Clark". If you wish to sit with particular friends, please indicate their names and the hotel will do their best to arrange this for you. Please note a maximum of 10 per table.



The Royal Crescent Hotel

Works at the Hotel continue, with the building of the new very advanced health suite at the rear, on the site of the former garage in Julian Road. Care is being taken to conserve the Gothic arch remains. It is understood that this should open some time next year.

The new restaurant Pimpernels in the mansion is winning high praise in foodie books, and the Brasserie is going from strength to strength. We wish the Hotel every success with its many new policies and approaches.

Amongst these, are several special very attractive offers for residents, which reflect Managing Director John Tham's wish for the Hotel to be very much regarded as an integral and neighbourly part of the Crescent's daily life.

We reported last time that Afternoon Tea is reserved for guests at the Hotel and Blue Ribbon Card holders: this is now extended to all Society Members and residents.

The Hotel's Balloon can also be hired by Members at the Hotel guest rate of £99, a significant saving on other operators who charge well over £100, some as much as £130.

During December, Members may enjoy a one course lunch in the Brasserie from the "du jour" menu plus one glass of wine for £12.50 per person; this of course excludes Christmas, New Year and Sunday Lunch.

Finally, Members are offered 25% off dining in the new Pimpernels restaurant on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in December (excluding beverages of course).

Meanwhile, the Hotel's parent company, Cliveden plc, is to buy a Grade A listed (i.e. Scottish equivalent of English Grade I) building in Edinburgh's St. Andrew Square for development as a 64-bedroom hotel and health club, is "looking hard" for a site in Paris and is the preferred developer for a palace in Prague, pending the outcome of a legal battle over the property's ownership. As most Members will know, the company already owns the Cliveden Townhouse in central London, beside its country club at the stately home, Cliveden, in Buckinghamshire.

Lawn/Meadow Update

Early last summer it came to your Committee's attention that the lawn had not only become the prime pitch for Bath's bottom of the league football clubs but also a popular location for purchasing drugs. Your Vice Chairman and his 13 year old daughter received extensive verbal abuse when the daughter tried to walk the dog on the lawn. Our only solution was to retreat before the

footballers became physical. The police were called but are so short staffed that the likelihood of them answering a call to the Crescent lawn to sort out a battle between Royal Crescent residents and Bath's bottom division football league are slim to none.

While the Committee are pursuing the signs agreed at the AGM our volunteers handling the matter are progressing slowly. We have been advised that it is possible we will not obtain planning permission for the signs.

As a temporary solution your Committee voted to let the grass grow to a height that would diminish the quality of the football pitch - sorry I mean the lawn. The decision required working with the city lawn maintenance crew and the capabilities of height adjustments on their equipment. The experiment has now been going on for approximately six months. It has given the residents a temporary solution to the footballers' invasion and appears to have eliminated the drug dealing by eliminating the punter. We have also eliminated the continuing loud noise of the games invading our front rooms. The lawn can now be used by residents without a feeling of intruding upon the footballers' domain.

While the majority of residents are in favour of the experiment, several have expressed concern at the appearance of the lawn. We have reviewed the state of the lawn at Committee wherein we were advised that for the majority of the lawn's life it was actually a meadow and certainly not a football pitch. We are working with the maintenance crew to find a solution to the browning of the cuttings.

No doubt we will have a long winded discussion at the next AGM. By that time we will have experienced "a year in the meadow" to base our future decision upon. For my money's worth I am happy to financially support a lawn my family can use but would draw the line at supporting maintenance of a football pitch.

Tim Forester, Vice Chairman
12 Royal Crescent []

Treasurer's Notes

Our funds are currently at a slightly higher level than this time last year, thanks to our summer fund-raising event and to a contribution from Carlton TV for our co-operation when they filmed part of an episode of "Inspector Morse" earlier in the year. However the recent broadcast of that product did highlight

the pressing need for a boost to the Lawn Fund when the railings were shown in close-up, revealing their present shabby state. The Lawn Fund is sufficient for routine maintenance of the lawn itself, but is way short of the sum needed to maintain the railings in good order, and so the search is on for methods of financing the necessary work.

An application to B&NES Council for a grant has again been made and we hope to fare better than last year. The Council claims to have adopted Bath City Council's Landscape Strategy for Bath entitled "Cherishing Outdoor Places", which specifically mentions our lawn as having great historical value and contributing significantly to the city's conservation area. In our application we have of course reminded them of this, as well as their stated policies of aiding such heritage-protecting projects as the conservation of our railings. There are various other bodies which may be worth an approach for a grant and these will be investigated in due course. Meanwhile, if anyone knows of any wealthy benefactors with an interest in preserving Bath's heritage, please let them know of this golden opportunity!

Our application to register as a charity has been made and we are awaiting a response from the Charity Commission. It is hoped that if they stipulate any changes to our constitution or *modus operandi*, these will be acceptable to members who will be asked for their approval before the registration takes place. The main advantages will be the possibility of reclaiming tax on covenanted subscriptions and a changed status which should carry more weight when applying for grants or otherwise dealing with official bodies.

In contrast to the Lawn Fund, the Ha Ha Fund does not appear to be sufficient to meet its purpose, for, as you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, assistance towards restoring the Ha Ha is imminent.

Finally a reminder that membership numbers can only be maintained if lapsing and departing members are balanced by new arrivals. Information on changes of residents is useful so that newcomers can be invited to join our Society and will be welcomed by any of the Committee for onward transmission.

S Little

Neighbourhood Watch

This item was originally raised by a resident at the 1995 AGM.

All residents were subsequently canvassed in order to gauge interest and the initial response was encouraging with some 30 residents showing a positive response. A meeting was arranged between residents and our Local Community Police Officer in June 1996 but the very poor attendance was insufficient to form a scheme. This was extremely disappointing taking into consideration the initial interest shown.

A further talk was given to those who attended the 1997 AGM and although there was not an immediate show of interest, Committee Members have since been asked whether a Neighbourhood Watch scheme is likely to be formed.

The main aim of the Neighbourhood Watch is to reduce the opportunities for crime and to make it more difficult for the would-be criminal or vandal to act. It relies on the exchange of information between the Police and Residents and does not expect an individual to risk personal injury by confronting potential criminals.

Another advantage of being in a scheme is that certain Insurance Companies offer discounts on their premiums. However, both the Police and the Insurance Companies like to see that the scheme is effectively operating and that say 50% of all residents are participating.

From January 1996 to February 1997, the number of reported crimes in the Royal Crescent read as follows:-

Burglary Dwelling	3	Burglary Non Dwelling	1
Theft/Attempted Theft from Motor Vehicle	6	Theft/Attempted Theft of Motor Vehicle	3
Other Vehicle Crimes	6	Cycle Theft	2
Theft	4		

Your Committee has decided, therefore, to make one final attempt to establish whether there is sufficient interest amongst the current residents of the Royal Crescent before considering whether to pursue the matter further.

Would any resident who is interested in both participating in a scheme and attending an initial meeting with the local Police kindly contact Ian Woodhouse on Bath 337380 before the end of January 1998.

Ian Woodhouse[]

Letters to the Editor

I was so horrified at the Rock Concert held in the Park on August 10th this summer, that I wrote to Mr Keith Lunt the Liberal Democrat Councillor for Tiverton.

I felt that I must make a protest so I put pen to paper in very strong terms. I had spoken to a number of people in the Park who were of the same view. The noise was hideously intrusive and quite deafening. There were several drunks staggering around, the peace was thoroughly destroyed on a beautiful summer afternoon.

In my opinion this was noise pollution in a residential area.

Radio Bristol then telephoned me to ask whether I would be prepared to "go on air" with Keith Lunt to express my views in opposition to his. This is I did.

Keith Lunt was quite adamant that the series of Rock concerts should continue. I opposed him vehemently. "Have them in front of your house," I said. He said that he would love to "But there wasn't room". So we have to have them instead!

In my opinion the beautiful bandstand opposite the Crescent is an absolutely unsuitable venue for this kind of terribly loud Rock. Not to be confused with Music.

The Editor of The Evening Chronicle wrote a leading article which I found so petty that I wrote to the paper. They printed my letter but got it all wrong, both words and spelling, making me sound illiterate. When I complained about that they sent me a letter of apology.

As it stands, I have got nowhere.

Dulcie Beilin Morel[]

Royal Crescent Society

Summer Outing - Iford Manor - Monday August 21st 1997

The skies were grey with some light rain and everyone looking forward to their evening at Iford Manor must have felt a little disappointed in the weather.

Cars left the Royal Crescent at 6.30pm for the seven mile drive to Iford Manor. En route the sun came out as we turned off the Warminster road into the beautiful endless shady lane - we were almost expecting some of the characters from Wind in the Willows to confront us.

Reaching the end of the lane we crossed the 14th century bridge and parked.

We all gathered below the conservatory terrace while David Brain spoke about the setting and introduced us to Mrs Cartwright-Hignett, the owner, who told us the history of the Manor and hoped that we would enjoy our evening in the Gardens.

This was not hard to do as by now the sun was out and there was enthusiasm from all as we walked around in small groups.

We then moved to the Casita for drinks and food organised by Mr and Mrs David Brain. This was beautifully laid out with local white wine from Bradford on Avon.

I felt personally that I would wish to stay in this setting for a week with a pile of good books and good food sent over from Bath.

People walked along the great terrace to the Cloister with the sun making the late evening shadows on the biscuit stone giving it such an atmosphere of tranquillity.

On return, more wine and food were consumed amidst laughter and chatter. Looking into the sky and seeing the Crescent Moon in a pink glow, we all felt that the Royal Crescent Society had greatly enjoyed another visit with another memory to cross our minds on winter evenings.

John Carrier
5 Royal Crescent[]

Margaret's Buildings

It was my intention to hit the research books to find out the history of this delightful area so conveniently on our doorstep. I was thwarted. Very little has been written about it and it has even been described as "historically unremarkable". Certainly its recent history has been chequered and it is good to see it showing signs of commercial revival as established business show no signs of going away and new ventures are bravely taking off. It is now possible to buy a chic little dress, a set of antique silver cutlery, a ready-made gourmet meal to pass off as your own, unusual gifts of all prices and descriptions, tapestry bags to carry them in and still have time for a leisurely lunch with all the flavour of Provence.

But back to the history books. While Margaret's Buildings may not attract attention Margaret's Chapel which was in Brock Street certainly does. The Chapel was built in 1773 and named after Mrs Margaret Garrard who was Lady of the Manor and patroness of the living of Walcot. It served as a chapel for the use of the residents of The Royal Crescent and the Circus. Contemporary accounts describe the building as "light, spacious and elegant" as it should have been as a building 73 feet by 60 feet ceiled over without the aid of intermediate supporting columns. It seems never to have enjoyed great popularity and ultimately ceased to be used as a chapel. Much more interesting were its subsequent uses - a skating rink(!), a swimming bath and finally a badminton hall before it was completely destroyed by German bombs. All that is left now is the entrance in Brock Street and where one the bright young things of Bath skated, swam and hit their shuttlecocks we have, more prosaically but probably more commercially, valuable lock up garages.

After all that exercise back to eating. Do try "Rendez Vous Provencal", our own touch of France on the doorstep. Perfect if you want to dine locally and informally with all the benefits of being able to drink and roll home. The dinner menu would satisfy all tastes with a vegetarian special for those who can't quite bring themselves to live. However this isn't the place to start your fat and sauce-free diet. Everything is straightforward and committed with strong colour and taste. It is presented in an honest, relaxed French way which will go so far to please but no further. A great place for young and old alike and particularly good if you have a mixed party of ages and tastes. The lunch menu is especially to be recommended where a delicious 2-course meal with a glass of wine will leave change out of £10. Compare that with coffee and bun in a characterless place in the centre and you see what I mean.

Lesley Brain, 30 Royal Crescent

Recipe

Winter vegetables can be boring. But here are three recipes to cheer any table.

Two simple recipes for cabbage: one red, one white.

Caramelised Red Cabbage

*1 red cabbage, finely sliced
5 fl. oz. Port
2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
salt & black pepper*

Throw the sliced cabbage into a thick bottomed saucepan. Add the rest of the ingredients. Bring to simmering point and continue cooking on a low heat for 2 hours.

Cabbage with Bacon and Sage

*1 white cabbage, sliced
4 rashers smoked streaky bacon
Chopped sage leaves
salt & black pepper*

Steam the sliced cabbage for 10 minutes. Fry the chopped bacon in butter. When cooked, add the cabbage, sage leaves and seasoning.

And my favourite recipe for leeks. This one takes rather more time, and is courtesy of the Internet.

Scalloped Onions, Leeks and Shallots

*1 1/2 lbs onions, sliced
1 lb leeks, chopped
1/4 lb shallots, sliced
2 tbs unsalted butter
3 tbs double cream*

*1/2 cup of coarse fresh breadcrumbs
1/2 cup of grated cheddar cheese
a pinch of paprika*

In a heavy pan, cook the vegetables in the butter, with seasoning, covered over a moderate heat for 10 minutes. Reduce the heat and cook for 15 minutes more, until soft. Remove the lid and cook, stirring, until the liquid has evaporated. (This may be done the day before.)

Then, preheat the oven to 370 degrees, transfer the mixture to a baking dish, and stir in the cream. Toss together the cheese and the breadcrumbs, sprinkle over the top and dust with paprika. Bake for 20-30 minutes until the cheese is melted and the mixture bubbly.

Barbara Walker
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Christmas Crackers I

On a bright late summer morning leaving for London I opened the front door of No 5 Royal Crescent to find a group of elderly American culture vultures outside the door.

One man smiling charmingly at me said "Excuse me Sir, are you Mr Anstey?" I thought for a moment and then replied that if I was I would be oldest man in the world and another attraction of the Royal Crescent. The group laughed and I laughed and we all went on our way.

American humour always delights me. The old lady asking a fellow drilling the road in New Year. "How can I get to Carnegie Hall?" "I guess you have to practice, Ma'am!"

Christmas Crackers II

The Bath of Beau Nash

Tradesmen and County Squires and upper classes would not mix. A foolish lady of rank said that her friend should not dance with a tradesman's daughter. Tradesmen then said that they would give no more credit beyond the boundaries and that outstanding accounts must be paid immediately.

The next evening, Class and Tradesmen danced together. People who met in Bath, when in London a state of forgetfulness existed towards whom they had met. Affairs were crushed - they blamed it on the waters!

The Sedan Chair was invented in the French town of Sedan. The Chair-men were strong and had reputations for threatening behaviour. Sedan Chair holders and invalids were taken to the Baths and if they did not pay, the top was taken off and they were exposed to the weather until they found the fare.

John Carrier
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