

THE ROYAL CRESCENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue No 37

Summer 1998

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As we go to press fingernails are being bitten to the quick, breath is being held and unhatched chickens are resolutely not being counted. At the same time, but for different reasons, champagne is being gently chilled - and indeed, quaffed.

The two reasons for these contrasting activities? Champagne first. 1998 is the 25th Anniversary of the founding of this Society and modest, but of course stylish, celebrations are in prospect. Firstly, in this issue, Dr Monica Baly records, as only she could, the story of those 25 years from that first gathering of residents on the second floor of No 1 in 1973, through her own, long tenure and tenacity as Secretary and prime mover,

as Newsletter Editor, as temporary Chairman, as Committee Member and now as Archivist. It is a story of achievement in pursuit of the Society's original aims, of development and of expansion. This longevity and record, together with our current 84% membership, puts us in the leading rank of resident groups.

The nail biting etc., is of course because of the - we hope - imminent arrival of the Lord Chancellor's Inspector's Report and Recommendations to Bath and NE Somerset Council on their Application to close the West end of the Crescent to through traffic: the subject of the Public Inquiry in the first five days of June. He anticipated releasing it before departing on Summer holiday in mid-August, in just about 3 weeks time. It is of course impossible to forecast his recommendation: such matters can hinge on tiny details or recondite points of law. However my feeling is that we should allow ourselves to be cautiously optimistic. There are two grounds for this. Firstly the range of support for the proposal together with its (mostly) high quality of research and supporting evidence. Secondly the almost disappointingly thin nature of the evidence produced by most of the objectors. A full report is in a special section in this issue, but I would like here to pay tribute to all who helped so positively to refine the Society's submission to the Inquiry - they are all recorded - and especially your Treasurer, Stephen Little, without whose ever-patient manipulation, processing and constant re-printing of the text, our submission would have been unacceptable. Members also are in debt for fine submissions from our President, Sir John Barraclough, non-Member John Walker, our MP Don Foster, UNESCO, the Georgian Group, the Bath Preservation Trust, the Bath Society, the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations, the Royal Crescent Hotel and immensely important advice from Jonathan Cheal Solicitor at Thrings & Long.

So what should we do to mark these two events? Your Committee has decided to hold a combined "Make or Break and Anniversary" Cocktail Party on the Lawn, profits to the Railings Fund. [Watch for a flier nearer the date - 23rd August]. "Anniversary" is self-explanatory, but "Make or

Break" refers to the outcome of the Public Inquiry. Either we win or we fail this hurdle and gird everything to fight another day. In either event we can celebrate that Members put everything we could into this fight - we did our best - and if we lose we should have on regrets, must pick ourselves up and vow to fight on by any and all means possible.

So, besides the strange activities in my first paragraph, let us keep our fingers crossed - around the stem of a glass of bubbly!

Whilst the Public Inquiry work has soaked up your Committee's available resources for some months, the "Business as Usual" flag has been kept flying. A very well attended and constructive AGM was held, another superb Summer visit was beautifully organised by David and Leslie Brain - this time to the totally private residence at Balcombe Court, a unique privilege. We endured or enjoyed various park activities and the lucrative attentions of film-makers and we made a little progress on the Ha Ha and railings restoration projects. Reports on all these are in this issue, which is the biggest so far published: don't expect such a tome every time!

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Members

This Summer Newsletter has much of interest to everyone - some of it of much importance. We also have a letter from America.

For the first time for a while we are able to include photographs of our social life which in spite of very poor weather we have continued to enjoy - if anyone has any photographs for future inclusion please lend them to us.

I commend to you Dr Monica Baly's history of twenty five years of the Royal Crescent Society which is exciting in itself.

Our Chairman has included a Special Section on the serious matter of the Bus Enquiry for which we must await the outcome.

I must thank Lesley Brain and Barbara Walker for their stalwart support and you will all enjoy reminders of social functions within this third of the year.

Directly from the Royal Crescent Hotel we have news of their exciting Bath House Venture.

I do hope you will find this special 37th Newsletter of great interest.

Caroline Carrier
5 Royal Crescent

OUR NEW LOGO

Observant readers will notice a change to our frontispiece. This is partly as a "refresher" for our 25th Anniversary, but more importantly to bring the Newsletter into line with our new letterhead - itself re-designed to give more writing space on the page.

The "new" picture is taken from a wood-engraving by T.H. Shepherd made in 1829, from James Lees Milne's subscription-only book "Images of Bath" published in 1982. The typeface is named "Roman T", courtesy of Treasurer's computer, made in 1998.

Special Section

THE PUBLIC INQUIRY

The long-awaited Public Inquiry to hear arguments for and against B&NES Council's Application to close the West end of the Royal Crescent to through traffic, so as to save it from further damage, was held from Monday 1st June to Friday 5th June 1998 in the Alkmaar Room of Bath's Guildhall. In this Special Section we look at your Committee's preparation of the Society's Submission to the Inquiry, some of the arguments deployed on both sides, the main participants and the surrounding events.

Your Committee's Preparation

As reported to and approved by the 1998 AGM, your Committee decided to pull out all the stops in preparing its written Submission to the Inquiry and in rallying support for the Council's Application - which had, after all, been prompted by our ten year campaign.

Accordingly your committee set aside all but essential work and met fortnightly throughout the Spring - some eight meetings - to discuss only the closure issue. Almost all Committee Members also took an active role outside these meetings, and Society Members too were encouraged to participate. Amongst these activities were:

- combing the Society's news clippings archives for the past 5 years to identify all members of the public who had written against the buses;
- sending a letter to each of these encouraging them to write again, this time to the Inspector presiding over the Inquiry;
- sending a similar, but separate, letter to all Society Members and Friends;

Special Section

- writing to all known conservation bodies, local and national;
- devising and asking members to conduct a fresh Traffic Survey and analysing the results;
- drafting, revising and developing our main written submission using our own knowledge and taking legal advice;
- advising the Chief Constable of the self-enforcing nature of the closure;
- consulting leading structural engineers about the carriageway;
- meeting with Senior Councillors and Senior Council Officials.

These actions all generated positive and healthy responses - except the last, a meeting with Senior Council Officials. We were anxious not to duplicate, in our submission, the sort of evidence the Council was bound to produce. So President, Chairman and Treasurer, with Councillor Hawkins help, held a meeting with Chief Executive John Everitt and his Engineering and legal staff. To our great surprise Mr Everitt's reaction was one of offering "all support short of actual help". He claimed that the Council could not be seen to be too close to one group more than another - even though that group - us - would be helping his Officials carry out Councillors' directives. Therefore all he could offer was advice on procedure. Virtual end of meeting! At the time we felt hurt, dismayed, and puzzled, but in fact it enabled us at the Inquiry to totally deflect an accusation that we had browbeaten the Council into action and been given favourite treatment.

The Traffic Survey

11 residents (Mmes. Kersley, Baly, Walker, Morgan, Meddins, Parker, McCullough and Titchen and Messrs Little, Stephens and Nesbitt) undertook nearly 45 hours of readings and produced some startling results. Analysis, by Vice Chairman Tim Forrester, and Chairman,

Special Section

showed that the incidence of buses had gone up by a third since the last survey in 1993 whilst occupancy had halved. This was good, hard, factual, current evidence to put to the Inquiry.

Engineering Advice

As we had consulted them in the past and because of their prestigious position at the top of their profession, John Meddins arranged an on-site meeting with the famous engineers Ove Arup, with a view to their producing a report on the structure of the carriageway and the causes of its current damaged state. Verbally, they were clear that the cause could only be the buses, but their fees to produce a formal report were way beyond our funds. They thus withdrew, but in doing so, very courteously provided, free, a copy of an official American study which revealed an astonishing but extremely useful statistic. This was that the impact of one (single-deck) coach on a carriageway was the equivalent of 850 cars. This was more hard evidence.

Legal Advice

Firstly our solicitor Tom Shepherd associated with Thrings and Long put us in touch with the firm's traffic regulation expert, Jonathan Cheal. Chairman and Treasurer had a two hour discussion with him, receiving much useful advice. In particular he reviewed our draft submission, line by line and we adopted his important corrections. Do not be surprised to see him at our next dinner.....!

Secondly Chairman's cousin, a London barrister, also reviewed the final version of the submission and developed 30 of the worst possible questions he could think of. He then coached Chairman into how to answer them - not factually of course but in terms of tone and attitude. Thank heaven for kind relations!

Special Section

Requests for Letters of Support – Residents and General Public

In response to some 160 requests for letters of support, some 60 odd materialised that the Committee know about: there were probably many more. They came from many other parts of the City and beyond, with a special batch from the guides at No 1. Many were deeply thoughtful and detailed, showing the writers' strength of feeling. One resident, Mr Berg, pinned the Council's Legal Services Department to the wall and extracted, only by quoting the Freedom of Information Act etc, all the relevant Council papers from them: this file, proved very useful, and of course they are Public Documents to which the Public has right of access.

Conservation Bodies

UNESCO's representative, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) not only sent a written submission but its Secretary Dr Philip Whitbourn, OBE, (etc), came down specially to the Inquiry and spoke in support. Slightly disappointingly he was in favour only of a trial, or pilot scheme. However he was impressive and at least on the right side.

The Georgian Group, the National Amenity Society for the protection of Georgian Buildings and their settings, sent a brief, but potent statement of full support.

The Bath Preservation Trust and the Bath Society made very strong written submissions and their speakers were as usual erudite, witty, informative and, to our biased ears, very persuasive.

Special Section

The Chief Constable

There seemed to be no comment from the Chief Constable in the official papers produced by the Inquiry process, so Chairman wrote to him, highlighting the fact that closure would be self-enforcing and thus would incur zero resources. A most courteous - and rather relieved - reply was received in time for use at the Inquiry: he had been concerned about this, and having checked our statement with B&NES, would now be making no objection to the closure. "Now" may be significant; maybe he would have objected later on if he hadn't been so advised....

The Society's Written Submission

Chairman produced the first draft of the Society's written submission and, as has been partly described above, it was then vetted, amended, reconstructed and immeasurably improved in Committee, by President and by Thrings & Long. Thanks to Treasurers' skills and limitless patience at word-processing the final version was produced bang on time and the requisite copies hand-delivered to the Council offices on May 7th. Other copies went to principal supporters and our two Councillors. It was well received by all.

Its structure, in several sections, covered: the Society's history, composition, constitution and achievements (i.e. our credentials); descriptions of the Crescent and of the traffic using it; our reasons for supporting the closure; the impact on surrounding streets; tourism and bus operations; and previous options which had failed. This covered some 18 pages plus some 50 pages of Annexes including colour photographs. Spirally bound, it was - after the Council's own input - the largest and most comprehensive submission made to the Inquiry. The Executive Summary is reprinted overleaf.

Special Section

THE ROYAL CRESCENT SOCIETY
Submission to Public Inquiry
on
B&NES (District Council) (Royal Crescent)
(Prohibition of Driving)
Order 199

SECTION 1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ref. Summary
Section

2. The Society, formed in 1973, is fully representative of Residents. Its objectives and achievements have already preserved and enhanced the Royal Crescent and its setting. It fully supports the Order.
3. The Royal Crescent is unique and deserves very special treatment. After 200 years it is still principally residential, and the only significant "cobbled" residential street in Bath. Retention of even its current condition is now under further threat from heavy through traffic, which is many times more damaging than access traffic.
4. The Royal Crescent is not a main thoroughfare. The Order will affect all through traffic, but mainly the principal and most damaging element: the open-top buses. These run almost as frequently as the single deck coaches which were banned in 1989 for reasons similar to those which support the current Order. They have increased by a third since 1993 whilst occupancy has halved.

Special Section

5. The Order:
 - a) would save the Crescent from further physical and environmental damage;
 - b) could benefit and would have little or no adverse impact, on other streets;
 - c) preserves access, is self-enforcing and would reduce repair and maintenance costs;
 - d) would positively "preserve and enhance" the Crescent;
 - e) would have little or no impact on Bath's tourism;
 - f) would have little or no impact on Bus operations or revenues.
 - g) is supported in principle by UNESCO, and both local conservation bodies.
6. Tourism would benefit and bus operations would not be impaired.
7. Various previous options have failed.
8. The Order is essential to safeguard the very special nature of the Royal Crescent.

_____ o _____

[Comparisons are not to be encouraged, but the contrast with submissions by the objectors was marked. None had much factual or hard or current evidence. Only one bus operator produced statistics, most of which did not survive challenge. Most were expressions of opinion. None could adduce support for their view from any other body].

Special Section

The Inquiry

Preparation

In theory all who had an interest in the matter should have attended a Pre-Inquiry Meeting held some weeks before the Inquiry itself. This was presided over, like the Inquiry itself, by the Inspector from the Lord Chancellor's Panel, who would be making the formal Report and Recommendations to the Council. All Councillors, Officials, the two local conservation bodies, this Society and Circus and Marlborough Lane/Buildings reps, Sir John Barraclough and John Walker duly appeared and went through the necessary formalities.

None of the Bus Companies appeared or were represented – even though it was they who had forced the event of the Inquiry and the associated public expense. This discourteous – even contemptuous - attitude was to characterise their performances at the Inquiry itself.

Again, in theory, participants were encouraged to produce any written evidence well before the Inquiry began, though Council Officials appeared unable to produce any legislative backing for this. We and the two other residents' groups complied. The Council did too, two working hours before the Inquiry, followed by one of the bus companies. Much midnight oil was burned over the weekend to be prepared for the Inquiry's start at 10.00am on Monday 1st June.

The Inquiry was held in the Alkmaar Room of Bath's Guildhall. The Inspector, a Mr J E Coyne from Plymouth, explained that whilst this was not a legal or judicial proceeding, the rules of natural justice would apply; his responsibility was to collect all the arguments. There would be a site visit, covering whatever areas participants wished. Many residents attended in the public gallery – this gave a real boost to Chairman and Treasurer who jointly conducted our case.

Special Section

Days 1 – 3

Proceedings opened with the Council's Counsel, a Mr Nardecchia, from Gray's Inn London, summarising the Council's case for closure and then leading his four witnesses, [Council Officials from Traffic and Safety, Transportation Planning, Conservation and Highway Maintenance] as they read their written evidence. As each finished they were cross examined in some detail by the Solicitor leading for Guide Friday and Badgerline, then by the other three bus operators and last by the other objectors. Counsel then summed up after each witness and again after the last.

This process took two and a half days and three of the witnesses stood up fairly well to cross examination. The fourth witness, on Transportation Planning, unfortunately succumbed himself to being tied in knots on his important figures by very aggressive cross-questioning. Counsel proved his worth the next morning by conducting a rescue operation, but some damage had been done. Meanwhile some fascinating facts about the construction of the carriageway came out (and may feature in a separate article in a future Newsletter). Everything was conducted with almost oily courtesy, but the grinding of steely machinery was very perceptible!

After lunch on the 3rd day the Society read its submission – Treasurer Stephen Little taking the first half and Chairman Michael Daw the second. After the hard cross-examination of Council witnesses, and after all our preparation, we were surprised – and almost disappointed – that, uniquely, the Solicitor for two of the Bus Operators declined to ask us any questions at all. President judged that this was because the Solicitor could see the strength of our submission, and this was re-inforced by Mr Nardecchia the Council's barrister who said that the lack of questioning meant that our evidence went into the record "unchallenged". This could only be good for the Council's case; he also commended the quality of the Society's submission.

Special Section

Next up was Sir John Barraclough speaking as an independent resident of long-standing. In typically trenchant, Olympian style, he injected the statesman's view of the matter as seen in the wider context. The gallery, rightly, applauded.

John Walker gave a vivid picture of life amidst the buses, highlighting the impacts of vibration and fumes – a gap in the Society's submission which he filled well. He even offered a seven hour video of his own traffic survey, but this was declined!

There followed excellent submissions from Mr Ray Newbiggin of the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations (which was most telling despite unfortunate attempts by one resident's association publicly to impugn it), Dr Peter Woodward of the Bath Preservation Trust who had much constructive fun with the cross-questioning and Major Anthony Crombie of the Bath Society, authoritative as always. All these inputs stood up well. Also Dr David Dunlop of the London Road Residents' Association spoke effectively in favour.

Day 4

This began with a long site visit covering the Crescent and all surrounding streets, the Circus and the Park.

After lunch the Solicitor presented the case for Badgerline and Guide Friday – apparently two quite separate operations using the same fleet of Bristol Omnibus vehicles. So there are actually five operators, not four as commonly supposed. He led a Mr Leadbeater from Guide Friday's Stratford Office through his evidence – peppered with unsubstantiated assertions. Cross examination by Mr Nardecchia whittled away at this and your Chairman scored at least one hit. Mr L had said that in the several hundred tourist-dependent businesses in Bath, there was general

Special Section

opposition to the closure; he produced two letters to support this assertion. However he had to admit under Chairman's questioning that these represented only 31 businesses, one of which gave discounts to bus passengers!

His colleague from the Bristol Omnibus Company representing Badgerline also put his foot in it by asserting that the view of the Crescent from the alternative route through Royal Avenue was obscured all the time by "these huge flags" (i.e. the 1998-only Bath Festival ones). He retired hurt on that point. His only "evidence" to the Inquiry was an amateur 2½ minute video and 24 photographs. A sign, we thought, of the contempt with which his multi-million pound company viewed the whole proceedings. Indeed as soon as they had given their evidence they left, never to return.

The Bath Bus Company portrayed itself as reasonable and different – the only ones to offer headphones to reduce noise. Ryans City Tours MD was a pugnacious, street-wise, quick-thinking, but illiterate speaker who assumed the role of victimised, honest business man being hounded out of business by a snobbish elite trying to keep their precious Crescent to themselves. He stood up well to cross-questioning.

The Circus Residents' Association, which wanted yet more studies and an "holistic" approach, was revealed by Mr Nardecchia as not formally objecting to the Order, only "not supporting" it, and by your Chairman as seeing the debate not as one of conservation and preservation of the heritage, but as petty squabble between residents' groups; this seemed an unfortunate admission on their part and may have resulted from the heat of the moment.

Marlborough Lane/Buildings Association also wanted a wider area solution but, under questioning by Chairman, withdrew their repeated accusations that closure was a "knee-jerk" action by the Council. They were convinced, despite hard evidence to the contrary that they would get increased traffic.

Special Section

Day 5

After some very minor players spoke against the closure, Solicitor to Guide Friday and Badgerline summed up their case, at very tedious length, reading all the relevant, and some irrelevant, legislation line by line. He too then left. He was followed by Mr Nardecchia who answered all the Solicitor's points and made some important new emphases. He also neatly dealt with a question from the Inspector as to the statutory minimum length (18 months) of an experimental closure should he consider recommending one. Mr Nardecchia threw the ball straight back: "Sir may I say that, in the Council's judgement, if the existing and continuing damage to this over-whelmingly important site justifies any form of closure, the argument is self-fulfilling that it should be permanent".

The Inquiry closed at 3.15.

What Happens Next?

The Inspector said he would try to transmit his Report and Recommendations to B&NES (Legal Department) before he goes on holiday in mid-August. As soon as Councillors have been notified, this then becomes Public Information and Members may rest assured that the result will be sought and publicised ASAP, if not sooner.

Councillors then have to meet to decide whether to accept the Recommendations. If they do not, they can be subject to Judicial Review.

If we win, then Councillors will have to vote for funds in the Budget and space in the Works Programme for 1999/2000: we can call in their promises to do so.

If we lose (like the objectors) we can investigate what Appeals or other procedures are open to us. We shall certainly not give up.

Special Section

Media Coverage

The local press kept low profile stories going, without prompting: they were mainly accurate and emphasised our side of the case. Local TV did their usual act, shooting hours of film and transmitting only a few seconds. Radio, too did two interviews with the Chairman.

However all were eclipsed by a largely very favourable piece with a six column headline, plus photo of Chairman in the Times of June 1st – the first day of the Inquiry. This set a very up-beat tone.

End of Special Section

THE ROYAL CRESCENT HA-HA AND RAILINGS

Late last Autumn I was convinced that by now the Royal Crescent Ha-ha would have been fully restored. I should have known better! Only if the Society could have financed the project entirely out of existing funds, and if your Committee were irresponsible enough to let a jobbing builder loose to have a go at renovation, could this have been achieved.

However, a unique opportunity arose. With funding from Heritage Lottery Funds via B&NES Parks Department, and with help and advice from experts in their field via B&NES Built Heritage Department and English Heritage (to name but two sources), the restoration of both the ha-ha and railings will be carried out (eventually) to the highest possible standards. This, being the first major renovation work since they were first created, will be worth waiting for. The only disadvantage of working closely with the various authorities is that there are several and various bureaucratic channels to go through.

To this end in May your Chairman, Michael Daw, had two site meetings with Mr Gus Astley, the Senior Conservation Officer of B&NES Built Heritage Department. They discussed the works to be done and how we propose to carry them out and finance them. Two sets of forms have now been received, viz: "Application for Listed Building Consent" and "Planning Application". These are actively being worked on and when completed will be submitted together with the necessary plans, drawings and photographs. Gus Astley is willing to help all he can, and will give advice when draft form is reached.

As far as the railings are concerned, further detailed tenders will have to be obtained for the design work for:-

- a) central gate structures (the existing are very questionable historically)
- b) supporting stays (some are missing, others do not match)
- c) finials (several are missing)

Again, Gus Astley has been most helpful in being able to advise us on a selection of reputable companies who would be capable of fulfilling English Heritage's high standards for this design work.

Notices to Residents and Public Notices also have to be produced, and these together with the processes outlined about all take time to complete. Hence the delay in getting started with the actual restoration work.

Jenny Hardisty
Secretary to the Ha-ha Committee

TREASURER'S NOTES

The numbers of Members and Lawn Fund contributors are currently below the final totals for last year, but it is hoped that the imminent round of reminders will eventually bring numbers up to at least match last year's figures. If you have overlooked your payment and are due to receive a reminder, please pre-empt its arrival with a cheque to the Treasurer at No. 22! And if you know of any departures or arrivals, please notify them to the same address, so that reminders are not wasted, and information on joining the Society can be given where appropriate.

It is gratifying that residents have readily accepted the need for the increase in Lawn Fund contributions, and recognised that they are still below the true value of those set in 1974. Consequently, our balance sheet, aided by three donations for filming facilities, looks reasonably healthy, in spite of the expenses incurred in connection with the Public Inquiry.

However this rosy picture is rather superficial when we remember that major expenditure is required for renovations of the Lawn railings. As mentioned in the last article, we expect to get help from the Heritage Lottery Fund via B&NES Council for this, but residents should brace themselves for some major fund-raising either later this year or next year.

S Little

MORE PARKING IN THE CRESCENT?

Residents will have seen a recent flier from B&NES Council sent to all Occupiers notifying the introduction of Pay & Display Parking Charges in the Royal Victoria Park. The aims are to improve the availability of parking for short term parking for the benefit of visitors to the park and nearby shops, and to fund environmental improvements and enhance the amenity and landscape character of the park. The usual notices – very hard to read – are on Park lampposts etc., and can be read more easily in the Council's Offices in Trim Street (call the Council's Engineering Hotline 394041 for an appointment).

We are indebted to the Marlborough Lane/Buildings Residents' Association for alerting us to the not very prominent fact that the scheme includes charges for times (overnight) and days (Sundays) when parking in the Crescent is free (both sides).

Thus there is a risk, during these periods, of even greater numbers of motorists competing for our free spaces to avoid the new charges in the park. Already the Crescent is clogged end-to-end at these times and the new charges could make things even worse.

Councillors have already rejected immediate introduction of the scheme, but will re-examine it in October. If you wish to object to it, and every individual letter counts, you should write quoting reference CH 1107 to

The Policy and Programme Manager
Engineering Services, B&NES Council
Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1LA.

HOLLYWOOD RE-VISITED

Film-makers descended on the Crescent en masse this Spring, some visibly and successfully, others invisibly and unsuccessfully and some yet to come!

The most obvious of course was the filming of sequences for the film "Passion". Negotiations with the film company were cordial but tough, communications were excellent and residents co-operated outstandingly well. The film company was very pleased with the event and the Crescent benefitted in several ways.

Not only did we gain a fair contribution for the Railing Fund, we also had stunning views of the Crescent empty of all twentieth century items and cars. We also gained by the free and permanent removal of several redundant television aerials – part of the Society's environmental enhancement policy which has had some success over the years.

Next came what our American cousins would call a "busted flush". An outfit called "Flying Pictures" sought permission to land and take off by helicopter from our lawn for up to half an hour. Bearing in mind that this would be deemed unacceptable to some residents (the last time being an RAF landing carrying HM The Queen Mother in the 1970's), the Committee considered the request carefully. It purported to be for an educational documentary series on the history of Britain for school children for Channel 4. Your committee decided that to give carte blanche permission for the fee offered – a copy of a 2 minute videotape – would set a dangerous and absurdly under-priced precedent which could encourage future applicants. However the Society does need funds. It was therefore decided to set a very high – deterrent – fee, but before this could be relayed, the company pulled back and said they had already decided to land in the Public Park anyway! So, on Friday 17th June – a day late – we were ogled by a sort of flying eye helicopter on repeated descents in the park for about 20 minutes, and received no benefits: But our policy remained intact.

Next up came what can only be called a "try-on". A television company making programmes, again for Channel 4, called 'Collectors Lot' sought use of a Crescent home to use as a base studio for several half hour programmes. Since Society policy, dictated by AGMs, prohibits release of Members names coupled to addresses, more details were sought. Over an hour-long discussion, it transpired that the Company required use of the premises for up to four days from 8am to 6pm, with a crew of 20, three cameras, lighting and sound equipment, cables through the front door, catering and control vans outside, re-arrangement of furniture etc. For this major disruption the maximum non-negotiable fee offered was a total of £600 - not per day, but overall. This was clearly an insulting nonsense and was firmly rejected and not considered worth passing on to residents. We heard later that the Company "tried it on" elsewhere in Bath, e.g. Sydney Buildings, and were given similarly short shrift.

Bringing up the rear, BBC TV restored the balance of sanity. For their 'Close-up' series they plan in the Autumn to devote a whole programme to the effects of tourism in Bath. Typically they had done plenty of background research and came to interview Chairman well-briefed. They plan to return later for filming, and may even be prepared to buy a copy of our Submission to the Inquiry. Since this is Public Service News Reporting, and potential publicity for our cause Committee does not intend to seek a fee.

Finally, members of long standing will know that almost since the Bath Film Office was set up, they have had a standard letter which they pass to film and TV companies planning to use the Crescent. This sets out who we are, our need for funds to keep the Crescent setting in the condition which attracts them, etc. This letter has done much to ease and set the officially-backed tone of introductions and any negotiations. Some other residents' groups may have like arrangements but others evidently do not: Catherine Place felt very badly treated over the filming of "Passion", for example.

The Film Office has now come up with an overall letter of understanding for film companies for use with all residents' groups, and your Committee will be looking at this closely; at first sight it appears to be broadly based on our existing one.

PARK ACTIVITIES

Bath Festival Flags

This year the Festival gave us a present. For nearly three weeks our brief May Summer was brightened by a huge artistic "installation" of nearly 100 very tall flag poles with changing silk flags rippling in the breeze. They were arranged in an ellipse, reflecting the size and shape of the Crescent, and made a splendid splash of colour: a very effective use of the space and a very public announcement of something happening at Festival time. Many residents were delighted.

Bath Festival Opening Night - and the Morning After

The Opening Night activities started well, with candles and car passes supplied as usual, the Hotel kindly acting as distribution point for the latter. At the last minute a post and rope barrier was put up along the Ha Ha, and the evening got underway with a charming children's parade with quite delightful and ingenious costumes on the theme of fantasy birds and insects.

Meanwhile the usual stage was erected below the Ha Ha and eventually some 30,000 people thronged the area enjoying one of the few warm evenings of this so-called Summer. They also seemed to enjoy what some residents saw as a tawdry new arrangement of food, trinket and sales tents and stands almost completely surrounding the lower park. For

the first time they stretched almost the whole length of the Ha Ha, obscuring the view of the Crescent, which is the justification for holding the event here! At least the crowd was fairly well-behaved and the fireworks rose to new heights of splendour and quality.

The morning after was not so good and Barbara Walker very public-spiritedly cleared much broken glass from the Lawn, not only missed by the Council clearance men, but by at least two young lovers whose entwined forms could just be seen in the long grass as dawn - at least - rose!

Hostage Vigil

A few days in advance the organisers of a candlelit vigil for John and Camilla, the hostages taken in Chechnya courteously advised us of the details. It was to be on July 4th, in the Public Park below the Ha Ha, with a central stage facing away from the Crescent and with soft contemplative music. Fine we said, and good luck.

Two days later, posters appeared across the City advertising the event as being on the Royal Crescent Lawn, to which all were welcome to bring picnics; there were to be balloons, buskers etc. Not fine, so Chairman contacted the organisers.

"Oh dear" came the response "I thought the name "Lawn" included all the park down to the trees, I am deeply sorry for such a stupid mistake". There followed clear promises to vividly correct all the posters, inform the press and notify all to whom the information had been sent.

In the week before the event, the local press continued - in its commendably supportive coverage - to refer to the Royal Crescent Lawn. No posters were corrected and no individual notifications were sent. The Society was deeply concerned by this time that we could easily be seen to

have apparently rejected a (non-existent in fact) request to use our Lawn for a worthy event - thus further boosting our negative image. So, another, careful, but firm, call to the Organisers.

"Oh dear (again) what can I say. I gave instructions but they obviously haven't been followed. We will put up notices and provide stewards to redirect people. Oh and it's going to be down at the bandstand anyway".

In the event only one poster - that in Margaret's Buildings - got changed, the notices did go up, a stage was erected - near Number 1 - and very few people attended. The music was hardly "contemplative" and went on 'til about 11 at night. By this time we felt it was best to retire hurt!

Bandstands "Music"

Last year we thought we had tamed Councillor Lunt (Twerton)'s laudable initiatives for increased use of City Park Bandstands. His engineers agreed to turn the speakers in towards the audience area and not facing us directly. The result was still loud, but just within the bounds of tolerability.

We relaxed too soon. This year, with only the tiniest pre-announcement (3 lines in the What's On section of the Chronicle) another event started at midday on Saturday 11th July. It was pouring with rain and the handful of an audience, plus all residents of the Crescent, Marlborough Buildings, Brock Street, Circus Mews, Circus, (and even Julian Road and beyond) were subjected to a barrage of noise levels not achieved since the blitz. Closed windows and doors had no effect, and soon numerous complaints to the Council's Duty Officer brought in the Environmental Health staff.

These Officers soon established that the decibel levels exceeded those accepted by Statute and the organiser was asked to reduce it. He refused and was subsequently served an Enforcement Order. Before complying, he made a Public Announcement about local snobs trying to shut him down and encouraged the audience to echo his abusive language – which they did. The Officer described this action as “less than conciliatory”. He further revealed that the organiser and the speaker were in fact Councillor Lunt himself.

This example of public conduct by an elected representative did not escape the attentions of the local media and further developments could be interesting. The Society, responding to residents' concerns made representations to Council staff on the day and is following through in conjunction with Circus and Marlborough Lane Residents' Associations, with letters to the Council.

TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF THE ROYAL CRESCENT SOCIETY

'Look! We Have Come Through!' (apologies to D H Lawrence)

In May 1973 Bath celebrated the millennium of the Coronation of King Edgar in Bath by staging a military tattoo for which, in April, they erected large stands in Victoria Park obscuring the Crescent from the park/ while the Crescent looked at the backside of a stadium. it rained most of April and May, the Crescent lawn was a quagmire.

In June the stands were still there. One Sunday in the park I met a group of frustrated visitors who " had come all the way from the States to photograph your beautiful Crescent; say, aren't the people who live there angry? I said they were, but there was nothing they could do, which must have struck Americans as a supremely silly answer.

Returning at noon I met a group of neighbours to whom I related what I thought was an ironic situation, we were joined by others and we agreed with Mr Forrester from No 25, that what was needed was a Residents Association. Mrs Forrester suggested that I sent my story of the aggrieved tourists to the Chronicle, which was taken up by Edward Goring, a journalist who at that time lived at No 10.

Within three weeks, aided by the Bath Preservation Trust, a meeting was held attended by 35 residents, followed a week later by a meeting to approve the aims and a draft constitution. The immediate threat of a Car Rally in the Crescent concentrated minds wonderfully.

The first Annual Meeting of the Society was held in January 1974. Early committee meetings were not always harmonious, Mr Forrester's ideas about the legal limits of the Society and sphere of influence disagreed with the more liberal Edward Goring and at one meeting fists were actually raised. A portent that consensus was not going to be easy in the Crescent.

One subject on which there was no dissent and which needed the committee's attention quickly was the repair of the railings and gates to the lawn. There had been a Lawn Fund since 1825 but since the war few people had contributed and few realised that it was an integral part of the Crescent. The Secretary was instructed to get estimates and, the committee having accepted the best offer, to seek funding from the Department of the Environment who, on inspection were sympathetic and offered 75% of the cost of £2,494. This left the Society owing £550. Their assets were £227.

Coinciding with threatened action by the contractors, the Secretary received a visit from a film director who was proposing making a film of Fieldings' 'Joseph Andrews' and wanted to use the lawn for authentic C18th sheep. I fear the committee did not see this as an ethical dilemma but rather as deus ex machina and drove the hardest bargain possible. We brushed up our Fielding, volunteered as 'extras', and enjoyed the behind the scenes' hospitality in the park in a glorious June. It was not a memorable film but it was fun and we were solvent.

One by-product of the film was the temporary removal of the aerials, many of which were obsolete, adorning the roofs and the realisation of their baleful effect on the beauty of the skyline. This prompted the search for alternatives, a task given to the Secretary. The BBC were helpful and residents were canvassed with various suggestions. It is strange that in the early C19th all householders were 'persuaded' to change their windows to plate glass, a major operation. In the C20th, persuading householders to remove hanging wires and old aerials was to prove more difficult. In the end the fact that roof-space aerials became cheap and efficient, together with a push from the Conservation officers cleared most roofs. The Almighty did the rest in the great gales of 1990.

By 1976 the lawn was restored to its 'manicured' state, railings were restored, gates locked and members had keys to what was marked 'Private Lawn'. However, the ha-ha remained broken and scalable and the public soon discovered that the grass was greener on the other side. Minutes become full of discussions about ways of dealing with the invasion problem, which changed over the years from a few boisterous children to organised, threatening, aggressive louts, from whom even stalwart policemen flinched. Now the problem seems to largely solved by the simple expedient of letting the grass grow and wet, cold summers, and the fear of melanoma when it is hot.

Footballers were not the only invaders. There were dogs, and dogs fouled the lawn. Whose dogs? Some owners fell under suspicion giving rise to vituperation at Annual Meetings. Nor were dogs the only offenders. For a while the Carriage Museum operated horse -drawn carriages around the Crescent, and horses displaced dogs on the agenda. Opinion was divided between requests for the committee to take action against a health hazard in hot weather and those competing for the Basement Garden Competition, who craftily garnered the manure.

In 1978 the Society called a meeting to discuss the problem raised by the purchase of No., '15 &16' as a 'prestige hotel' These houses had been a guest house and then a hotel since the war and permission was not likely to be refused. But the Society had to negotiate the best conditions for residents including the vexed question of parking. It was in the interests of both groups to cooperate and over the 20 years of the hotel's existence relationships have been good.

One hotel was one thing but in 1988 when there was a request for planning permission to turn Nos 21 & 22 into a hotel, that was a hotel too far. The officers and committee took legal advice and started vigorous action to oppose permission which involved hours of work but proved worthwhile at the Public Inquiry in the Guildhall, when permission was refused.

In the late 1970s Bath City Council made a dash for tourism. The number of coaches increased and they started to include the Royal Crescent.. In 1980 the Society made its first official protest, but unfortunately since 1974 responsibility for traffic control was divided between Bath and Avon Councils, which provided a wonderful excuse for 'buck passing'. The Society's 'Traffic File' grew larger and the number of coaches reached 90 in a day. A Traffic Committee was set up and the Society co-opted the administrator from No 1, Capt Burne, who had had experience with such a campaign in Westminster. Evidence was collected, surveys conducted, traffic monitored, letters appeared in the National press and a question was asked in the House of Lords. In 1987 the battle was won and a ban was imposed. It had taken seven years.

It proved a pyrrhic victory. Companies operating sight-seeing buses soon found a loophole in the deregulation of buses act by offering a regular service. At first they were few but within 10 years, with four competing companies, it is now 16 an hour. We celebrate our 25th birthday with another Inquiry in the Guildhall and await the result, but the strife is never o'er nor the battle done. The conflicting needs of tourism, conservation and the interests of residents will ensure the need for eternal vigilance.

After 25 years we can look back on our highs and lows, successes and failures. Yobs on the lawn. Dogs on the lawn, Spanish tenors on the lawn, the legal position of the lawn, the cost of the lawn, the responsibility of living in Grade 1 listed houses and their plaques and being the cynosure of all eyes. Few other residents' associations bear such a burden.

There have been five chairmen all of whom have needed the judgement of Solomon, the patience of Job and the skills of the diplomatic service. They have been supported by a long line of distinguished treasurers, often with little to treasure who have worked beyond the call of duty, some of whom, sadly are no longer with us. The six secretaries who have struggled

'to record and report
What they think, they thought
They ought to have thought'

have all been women. The Chairmen and Treasurers have always been men which tells us something. I calculate that about 200 different residents have served on committees over the years many of whom have undertaken some special task. It is no sinecure.

Through the Society we have enjoyed social events and meeting points, we have come to know our neighbours better, and, hopefully care about them more. Once we called the lawn our village green it is what the psychologists call our 'defensible space' With long grass and changed habits we no longer sit there and meet there. Is it a 'little patch of ground that in it that hath no profit but the name'? Hamlet assumed unwisely, that in that case it would not be defended, only to be told "it is already garrisoned" While we have a strong Society the Crescent and its environs will be garrisoned'

Dr Monica Baly
19 Royal Crescent

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Chairmen

| | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 1973 - 1975 | Edward Goring |
| 1976 - 1986 | Reginald A C Forrester |
| 1986 - 1988 | Cmdr Roy Titchen |
| 1988 - 1991 | Sir John Barraclough* |
| 1991 - | Michael Daw |

* Became President the following year

Treasurers

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 1973 - 1976 | Tim Spenlove-Brown |
| 1976 - 1979 | Brigadier F Spedding |
| 1979 - 1985 | Col J Woollam |
| 1985 - 1987 | Brian Richards |
| 1987 - 1991 | Michael Daw |
| 1991 - 1995 | Ian Nesbitt |
| 1995 - 1996 | Simon Crowe |
| 1996 | Stephen Little |

Secretaries

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1973 - 1988 | Monica Baly |
| 1988 - 1991 | Annabel Trechman |
| 1991 - 1994 | Shirley Parker |
| 1994 - 1996 | Veronique Oswald |
| 1997 | Michelle Morgan |

Editors

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1986 - 1989 | Michael Daw |
| 1989 - 1994 | Monica Baly |
| 1995 | Caroline Carrier |

THREE THOUSAND MILES AWAY

You can't imagine my delight and anticipation of a television program on the Arts and Entertainment channel I saw previewed in early June about Palladian architecture. It was to feature, among other examples, the Royal Crescent. Of course my interest was greatly heightened by the fact that 2 years ago I had visited my dear friends Caroline and John Carrier, who live in No 5 at the Royal Crescent. When the program began on Sunday pm June 14th I alerted my adult children and grandchildren. We all got on the phone and watched the program. I was thrilled to be able to tell them I'd seen the Baths, the Pump Room and downtown Bath with its glorious homes and iron fences and gates. The best part was when the camera panned the Royal Crescent, starting from the high numbers and moving toward the right. Number 10 was clearly shown and we eagerly awaited a view of No 5, which much to our disappointment, was not shown. There was however a view of the public and private lawns.

It was such a pleasure to recapture my wonderful visit to Bath. My 12 year old granddaughter could only say, "Ohhh, I want to go!"

Carolyn Rudolph
Atlanta, Georgia. U.S.A.

THE ROYAL CRESCENT HOTEL

From November 1996 to the present time has seen many changes for the hotel and we are now almost at the end of the complete renovation. The property now has two restaurants and two private dining/meeting rooms – completion will see 45 bedrooms of the highest standard. The investment from Cliveden has seen standards and quality of service improve dramatically and it is our intention to achieve five star status for the property before the end of 1998.

The Bath House

Work to develop a therapeutic spa, the Bath House, will be completed mid-September and the design makes creative use of the beautiful natural finishes, wood, bamboo, stone and water.

Jacqueline Herron, the Bath House Manager, will ensure the ambience of relaxation and the wellbeing of visitors to the Bath House which will offer an environment of peace and tranquility with an emphasis on massage and complementary therapies. There will be an enticing pool of water in which to relax and luxuriate, with an ambient temperature of around 40 degrees centigrade.

The ground floor will comprise the main pool and two water tubs, two large Japanese style wooden structures called Karahafus, one of which will be a steam room and the other a sauna, together with a pre-treatment scrub area.

The second floor will offer a balcony overlooking the pool with an area for guests to relax, either prior to or following their treatments. There will be four massage rooms and two beauty treatment rooms (one of which will offer hairdressing, manicure and pedicure) with the other room available to facilitate all "wet" treatments – mud, seaweed etc.

The Royal Crescent Club

The Royal Crescent Club Administrator, Stephanie Macdonald, arrived at the hotel in June and is on hand to discuss Membership of the Royal Crescent Club. This exciting new venture for the Royal Crescent mirrors the excellent Cliveden Club and offers its Members art and cultural lectures/visits, soirees and special events throughout the year, including the benefits of the spa and the Royal Crescent Hotel.

Ross Stevenson
General Manager

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
ROYAL CRESCENT SOCIETY
Monday April 27th 1998**

People arrived early and discussed the forthcoming evening.

Chairman Michael Daw opened the meeting by thanking all the Officers of the Committee for their hard work and then went on to speak of the crucial forthcoming Bus Inquiry. He then spoke of the success of keeping the footballers off the lawn by growing the grass – there was just one objection to this.

A loud round of applause followed this speech as we all know the tireless effort he puts into everything for the Royal Crescent.

Treasurer Stephen Little then gave a most efficient resume of the years accounts. Sir John Barraclough our President said a few words about the Society and the Crescent Gardens in particular. The garden prize is to be decided later as Mr Hitt no longer does the judging.

We were all glad to see Lady Barraclough amongst us again.

Veronique Oswald has now stepped down as Secretary and was rightly complimented for all her good work and then presented with a large bouquet.

The business was completed and the meeting closed followed by drinks and splendid refreshments which rounded off a truly sociable evening for us all in the gracious setting of the Royal Crescent Hotel so kindly donated by the General Manager who also attended.

It was agreed that this had been one of the best AGMs.

It is so important that we have these gatherings to ensure the preservation of one of the most important architectural treasures for future generations.

I would say to residents of the Royal Crescent who have not attended an AGM that I hope you will join us next year.

John Carrier
5 Royal Crescent.

**FIGURES IN THE CRESCENT II
Stephanie Woodhouse**

Stephanie described herself to me as an actress and gymnast who has lots of jokes and can sometimes be mischievous. Certainly she has a range of activities and interests that leave a much older person envious at her energy and enthusiasm. She has lived all her seven and three-quarter years in the Crescent (I think the three-quarters is especially important to her) although she made the point that she was not born here but in the RUH. Stephanie sounds happy with her school life although I suspect that she needs to be kept busy and occupied both at home and at school. I asked her what she was particularly good at and it seems that computers, art and learning to skip are her key skills. As a Brownie she has taken two badges – a lover to animals and her hostess badge. I expect you will have seen Stephanie out with Burt, her dog. The family has walked dogs at Claverton until finally ‘fostering’ Burt before he came to live with them. He has a lively temperament and an unusual taste in food for a dog, particularly liking apples and oranges. Like Stephanie, who accurately explained the purpose of leaving the lawn to grow, he enjoys the longer grass and takes pleasure in playing on it. Stephanie has strong feelings about the buses and a clear understanding of the problems they create. It seemed to me that with all her out of

school activities the Crescent was a very convenient place to live. She can walk to school if necessary and can occasionally travel by bike - now without stabilisers. She goes to a drama group in Weston although acting it seems is not without its problems. When she appeared in a pantomime called 'Contrary Mary' even Stephanie, who in many ways seems fearless, suffered an attack of nerves, not helped by the sudden bursting of a light bulb and the heat of the occasion. I sympathised. The lambs costume - for indeed our Stephanie had a major role in this production - must have been terribly hot. She has just been in a Festival of Movement which involved hundreds of local school children and she took part in a clown routine. While loving gymnastics Stephanie does prefer, however, to use the lift to get to the family's apartment at the top of the house. Her room is full of her large collection of named stuffed toys. While she quite enjoys watching the Disney programmes on television she is much more interested in activities involving other people and in the evening loves to play Trivial Pursuit with her parents. She looks forward to the family annual trip to Henley - apparently Daddy is the proud possessor of a collection of silver cups for his coxing. She has been to Australia - a trip which Mummy won in a competition and the family goes to France in October, although Stephanie modestly described her French as 'rusty'. News of Geri leaving the Spice Girls has indeed caused a stir especially as she is Stephanie's favourite - 'she is so full of life', a compliment from one so full of it herself. I had to ask that predictable adult question of 'what will you do when you grow up?' Stephanie is a great communicator and it was sometimes difficult to remember as we sat and talked that she is in fact a child. She may be an artist or a vet. She likes all animals and we were impressed with the way she handled Sammi, our own hamster. On the other hand, like many who live in the Crescent, she is an author. But she makes as well as writes her books. She told me about 'The Cat and The Dog on the Roof', a gripping tale which she also illustrated but which has sadly gone missing. Definitely one young lady to watch in the future.

Lesley Brain
30 Royal Crescent.

LETTONIE RESTAURANT WITH ROOMS

Bath has long glittered with good places to eat; but a jewel in its gastronomic crown must be Lettonie, which has recently moved to a pleasing Georgian house in Kelston Road after nine years in Bristol, where it gained a well-deserved reputation as the best restaurant in the South West, and one of only eight in Britain with two Michelin stars.

Its imaginative cooking mixes classic style spiced with Eastern European flavours, reflecting chef Martin Blunos' background: Lettonie is French for Latvia, where his parents were born. His most distinctive (and delicious) starter is scrambled duck egg, served in its shell and topped with Sevruga caviar. It is brought to the table flaming with vodka and served with blinis and a glass of iced vodka - there was a choice of four different flavours, including saffron, cranberry and lemongrass when I ordered it. Even the paintings on the walls show these influences: they are of Latvian painted by Mr Blunos' uncle, who teaches art in Riga.

The restaurant also has five double ensuite bedrooms for those patrons who feel incapable of moving far after dinner (cost: £95-£165 including continental breakfast). But it's no more than five minutes drive from the Royal Crescent, reached down a short, steep drive. The décor at the moment inevitably looks a little new, but no doubt it'll soon achieve a comfortable, lived-in atmosphere. In the bar, you can sit and sip a drink while ordering your meal, and eating the more-ish crisps, feather-light slivers of parsnip or sweet potato.

The pleasant, quiet dining room has long windows overlooking a green and leafy garden, where you may see deer grazing. There's a balcony, too, with a couple of tables, where it would be heavenly to sit on a summer's evening (if we ever get a summer). Service, under the watchful eye of Sian Blunos, is efficient, friendly and unobtrusive.

And the food? In a word: superlative. There's always a little extra surprise at the beginning of the meal. On my last visit, it was a chilled, tomato and chive consomme, as colourless in appearance as the ice packed around its glass bowl, but overflowing with flavour. This is true of all the food; its elegant and delicate appearance belies its robust taste. Another little extra, at half-way point, looked like a boiled egg and a couple of 'soldiers' of bread, but within the shell was a smooth mango puree in a vanilla cream with shortbread biscuits.

This is not the place for a course-by-course description of my meal. It is enough to say that the care that goes into the cooking, preparation and appearance of the food, and the way the ingredients complement each other approaches perfection. There's an interesting wine list, and the house wines are well chosen and not, in restaurant terms, expensive.

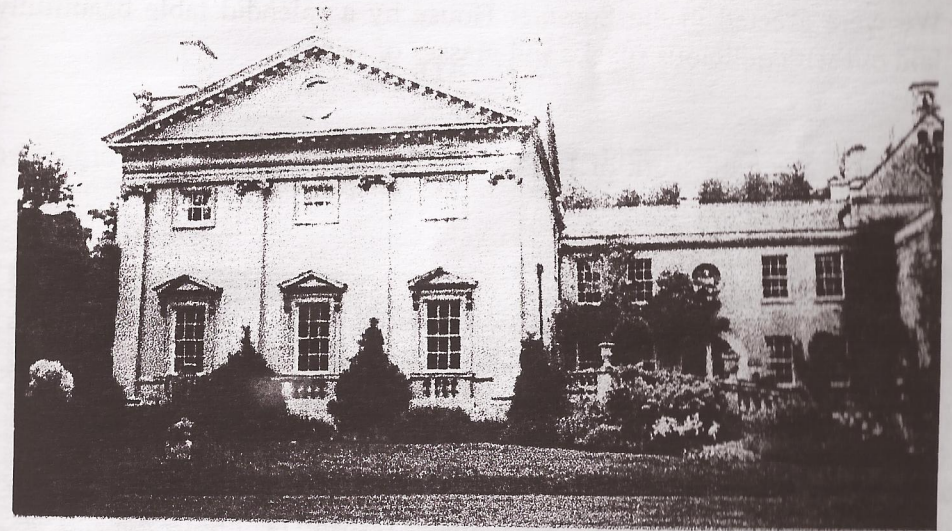
You, of course, have to pay for quality, and a visit to Lettonie's is definitely a treat, rather than an everyday experience. By the time you've had a drink in the bar, wine with your meal and enjoyed the coffee and sumptuous petit-fours, you can expect the bill to come to around £60-70 a head. So I recommend finding someone to take you there!

Barbara Walker
10 Royal Crescent

ROYAL CRESCENT SOCIETY SUMMER VISIT TO BELCOMBE COURT

Once again the Summer visit to a fine house took place on July 8th. Luckily the weather held.

Belcombe Court lies in a lovely valley hidden by trees and high walls next to Bradford on Avon.



We all met in the drive and David Brain gave us an interesting talk and then introduced Dr Tim Mowl whose knowledge delighted us about the house and the connections with Bath and John Wood. His enthusiasm held our attention.

Dr Tim Mowl has just written a fine book on William Beckford which is a must for anyone living close to Lansdown Crescent and Beckford Tower.

We walked around the gardens accompanied by Ed Cross the Head Gardener who spoke of his progress on the Estate.

The flowers and shrubs all looked magnificent owing to all the rain this summer. The Garden went up to a high slope with a swimming pool at the top passing six large olive trees recently imported from Provence.

We were greeted in the Summer House by a splendid table beautifully laid out with delicious snacks and glasses of wine.

This was the hard work of Lesley and David Brain who also organised the evening.



Mike Daw our Chairman made a speech of thanks for the evening - to which we all gave a round of applause.

Much merriment and conversation followed only interrupted by loud whistles from the local trains passing through the valley - really sounding like large peacocks.

We all then said our farewells as we drove back to Bath.

A most pleasant memory and great thanks again to Lesley and David Brain and also the owner Paul Weiland who had so kindly allowed us to see his home.

John Carrier
5 Royal Crescent

IN MEMORIAM

With sadness we record the deaths of two members of our community and send our sincere sympathy to their families.

C.C. Ed.

Alfred Clifford Gibbs

Clifford Gibbs, aged 95 years died in the night of May 26 having been in Bath shopping the day before. Deborah and Clifford Gibbs lived in the third floor flat of No 17 from 1967 till 1989 and were early supporters of the Society; both served on the Committee, and Clifford for some time acted as Auditor. For years Clifford was a familiar, tall and dapper figure, many will remember him sitting in a deck chair on the lawn with his Panama hat tilted over his eyes, reading his Sunday paper. Since they moved to Lansdown Grove both Clifford and Deborah have retained their interest in the Crescent and have enjoyed the Newsletter. We send our sympathy to Deborah and her daughter, Angela.

M.E.B.

Joan Forrester

Members of the Royal Crescent Society whose memory goes back some way will be sorry to hear of the death in May of Joan Forrester. Joan, together with her husband Reggie was one of the founding members of the society 25 years ago. Joan, herself was an authority on the Crescent, her mother had lived in No 25 for years which Joan eventually inherited. She and Reggie, who was a solicitor in practice in Chippenham came to live here in the early 1950s. Always beautifully groomed and elegant, to some she might appear aloof, but once known she was interesting and well read with a great sense of humour. The way to her heart, and Reggie's, was to talk about Cricket; they were both intensely knowledgeable, with Reggie as a Selector attending every Test Match. In many ways they both represented another era, but I remember Joan with affection for the many small kindnesses she showed towards unexpected people and as a link with the pre-war Crescent.

Sadly we have not seen Joan for some time: loss of memory and declining health have kept her from the outside world. Our sympathies go to Reggie and her daughter Charlotte.

M.E.B.



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