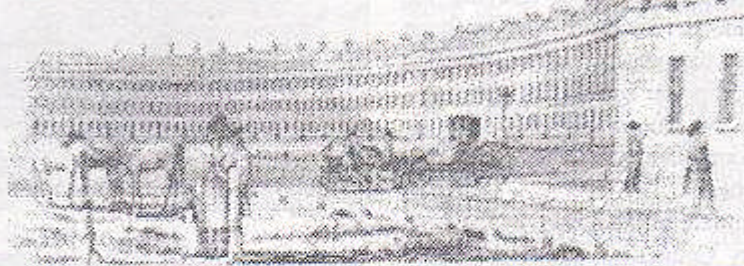


THE ROYAL CRESCENT SOCIETY *Newsletter*



Issue No. 18

Winter 1992

Curbing Some Problems

Our Chairman Michael Daw reports on
new pavements and fresh initiatives

As Winter settled in with the now traditional gales, rain and touches of frost, a cheery note was struck by the Society's Christmas Dinner on the 19th December at the Royal Crescent Hotel. This was a very jolly and enjoyable occasion this year as last.

Meanwhile the major event occupying the Autumn months was the relaying of the Pennant stone pavements. This action was taken as a direct result of the Society's representations to Bath City Council's Director of Property

and Engineering Services, R.F.S. Mimmack. His Contractors have done a good job, with the unexpected bonus of the reconstruction of the railing wall at the West End and new lowered curbs for disabled access at each end.

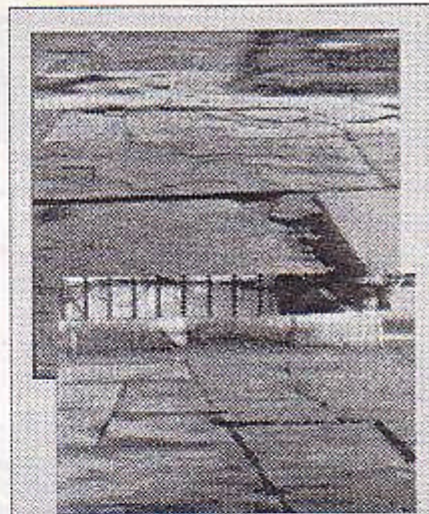
The main curbs have been raised slightly. We can all help to maintain the new standard of the pavement by alerting Council staff to any Public Utility contractors etc., who are seen lifting the paving, so that Council Inspectors can ensure that they are relaid properly. The number to call was given

in the Spring Newsletter and is Bath 46111, Ext 2163, asking for Mr Ingersent, the Principal Engineer, or for Mr Frogatt's Secretary.

The contrast between what has now been achieved can be realised by looking again at Karen Wallis's photographs of the dangerous state of the pavements reprinted from the Summer '89 issue of the Newsletter. Our next action on this front is to open discussions on the timing of relaying the Lawn-side pavement in Pennant Stone to replace the present Tarmac, which is an inappropriate surface for this environment. Mr Mimmack's staff have already bought and earmarked the necessary stone.

Treatment of the Lawn (by the Bath City Council's Parks Department Contractors) is now beginning to show some results. We have so far contracted for several applications of weed-killer/lawn fertiliser, but since the first (and only) application started a little later than intended, the remaining applications will now happen next year. Two hundred years of weeds will take some eliminating, but we are determined to restore the Lawn to the appropriate standard.

Since the last Newsletter went to print, it was necessary to canvass Society Members on two topics - Window Glazing Bars (first floors) and new parking regulations. I am most grateful to those who responded and have sent them resumes of the outcomes. For remaining members, the position on Window Glazing Bars is



The pavement before renovation, photographed by Karen Wallis.

summed up in Dr Peter Woodward's article on another page; the responses to my canvassing enabled me to brief the meeting of interested parties (Bath Preservation Trust, Bath City Council, The Georgian Group, English Heritage, etc).

It is clear that the majority of First Floor Residents have no intention of raising their window sills in the foreseeable future - or ever - and this fact of life injected a note of useful realism into the slightly purist discussion.

Turning to the topic of Parking Regulations, the outcome of that canvassing of opinion was a majority against the extension of the Residents and Card schemes to this area. Most felt that the current £175.00 Annual Resident's Permit was excessively costly, as our MP Chris Patten had

highlighted by comparing it with schemes in other Cities. This reaction was duly reported to Council Officers of both Bath and Avon and to our Councillors and our MP.

However I felt it prudent to acknowledge the concurrent reports (since confirmed) that Avon County Council has decided to review the systems for Residents' parking throughout the County, with the double aim of making them both self-supporting and costing less than £100.00 per year.

Whilst such a conjuring trick would seem to be impossible, it is possible that Members' views on the extension of the scheme to this Crescent may change if the cost was more reasonable.

Meanwhile, the Avon and Somerset Constabulary, using their existing Statutory power, extended the car towaway scheme to the City.

This caused some predictable publicity, not least because a car in this Crescent was 'hit' during the first week, when layman's logic would have suggested that more serious infringements in busier streets than ours might have been more worthwhile targets.

However, discussion with Constabulary officers established that ANY car parked illegally was at risk of being towed away. The decision to tow or not to tow (besides awarding the Parking Fine) is made by the Constabulary's Force Control Duty Inspector and not by the Parking Warden or policeman who may spot the offending vehicle. So we have been warned! The only con-

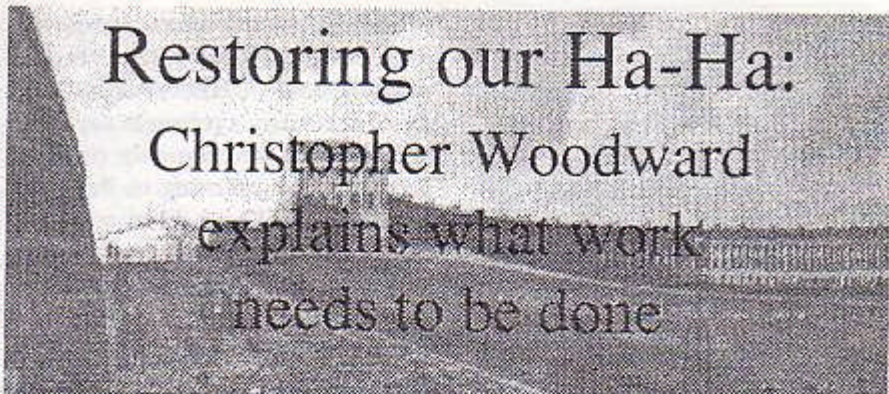
solution is that at present, and for the duration of the 'experimental' twelve-month period of the tow-away scheme, the Constabulary's resources are somewhat limited: there are only two tow-away vehicles operating in Bath, and not all Wardens have direct communication with the Duty Inspectorate: the constabulary also anticipate that habitual offenders will progressively mend their ways and the scheme will tend to move on to other less obstructive or 'serious' offenders.

There have been some developments on the Planning front which have occupied your Committee's attentions recently. Firstly, many residents have expressed serious and justifiable concern at the continuing eyesore presented by the uncompleted garage site at the rear of Nos 28 and 29.

Pursuit of the original developer via his home address and his Bankers (to whom he at first referred us) produced only obfuscation and, ultimately silence. The site remained open to invasion and rubbish-dumping, until the kind and energetic action of the Society's first Treasurer, Mr Tim Spenlove-Brown, caused the present screen to be erected, eliminating the worst of the problem.

Next, an application for a very large, three-house development to replace the existing buildings at No 18 Crescent lane was rejected by Bath City Council, supported by the Bath Preservation Trust and this Society amongst many

Continued on page 11



Restoring our Ha-Ha: Christopher Woodward explains what work needs to be done

Though at first sight the Ha-Ha may seem to be nothing more than a rubble wall and a ditch, its restoration will not be a simple task. As I pointed out in the Summer Newsletter, the wall and ditch were designed subtly to conjure up a pastoral illusion in front of the Crescent. If the restoration of the Ha-Ha is to be worthwhile it should recreate that effect. For example, the ditch must be the right shape and size and the top course of stones should not be visible from the windows.

Also, the wall has been badly repaired in the past - many loose stones have fallen off and others have failed in the frost because cement mortar has been used for repointing.

Archeological digs will hopefully take place in the spring. These should reveal the original outline of the ditch and are being arranged by David MacLaughlin, the City's Conservation Architect on behalf of the Committee. Archaeologists are proving more and

more useful in authentic restorations of gardens - the Georgian Garden at 4 The Circus shows what they can discover. The digs below the lawn will be small in scope and should not cause any disruption.

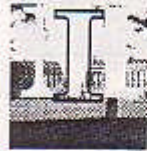
The Society's architects for the project, Design Group Bath, have drawn up a specification that will take account of whatever the digs may throw up. The specification has already involved making a photographic survey of the wall and a thorough examination of the stone work. However, this is only a fraction of the work that needs to be done. ❖

Discount Card

The Society enjoys corporate membership of the Bath Preservation Trust. Mr Nesbitt (No 3) holds the Society Membership card. This entitles users to 10% discount in the Museum Shop in the basement of No 1. Members may borrow this card providing they return it after use.

Closing the great window debate

by
Dr Peter Woodward



IN the last Newsletter I reported briefly on the study carried out by Mr Graham Finch into the history of the changes in fenestration in The Royal Crescent. The principal recommendation of Mr Finch's report is that the elongated windows on the first floor should be allowed to remain but that owners should be encouraged to adopt a standard pattern of glazing with unequal sashes: the top sash three panes wide and two deep, the bottom sash three panes wide and three deep (i.e. 'six-over-nine' sashes).

This pattern confines the individual panes to the shape they would have had if the sills had not been lowered and the original window opening had retained its six-over-six sashes. There can be no question that the appearance of the Royal Crescent would be much improved if all the first-floor windows had six-over-nine sashes.

There is, however, a conflict at the heart of all conservation work between

(1) the accidents and incidents of historical change sometimes lovable but often damaging, and

(2) the architectural design where, in the case of classical buildings at least, every detail must have been pored over by the architect and delineated in great detail.

Do we want to conserve the building, warts and all, to illustrate its passage through the centuries, or do we want to conserve the architecture, which will necessarily involve occasionally putting changes into reverse or repairing the ravages of time by skilful replacement? Because of this, a meeting has been held at No 1 Royal Crescent between representatives of English Heritage, the Georgian Group, the Royal Crescent Society, Bath Preservation Trust, the City of Bath Planning Office and, of course, Mr Finch (architect and historic buildings consultant) who produced the report, to try to formulate a policy. The views put forward were very diverse but were obviously sincerely and strongly held. It is probably fair to say that English Heritage bases nearly all its judgements on a policy of 'Conserve as found', very much along the lines preached originally by William Morris and enshrined in the

Continued on page 10 ❧

Conservation
Architect
David MacLaughlin
tells why
The Crescent's
stonework needs
constant care



Residents and visitors to the Royal Crescent cannot help but have noticed the extensive scaffolding that has surrounded various houses in the Royal Crescent in recent years. Number 19 Royal Crescent was scaffolded during autumn 1990 to enable repairs to the roof, lead gutters, chimney stacks and balustraded parapet to be undertaken. All these works had been carefully surveyed, specified and agreed before work started on site.

However, with the full scaffolding in place it was possible to inspect the condition of the stonework of the front facade in much greater detail. This further inspection revealed an alarming crack in the architrave (the architrave is the lowest bed of the stonework which spans between the great Ionic columns of the Royal Crescent). The height of the architrave is approximately 20 inches (50.8 centimetres), it projects forward from the main front wall of the house by approximately 20

inches and spans approximately 8 foot 4 inches (2.55 metres) between the giant Ionic columns.

What is the function of the architrave? Structurally it supports the frieze, the vast overhanging cornice the balustraded parapet and the coping stones - a total height of approximately 7 feet (2.1 metres) which is a huge weight of stonework as well as taking a component of the loads of both the front mansard roof slopes and the attic floor.

The architrave therefore has a very real and important role to play in transferring the loads and thrusts of all these elements safely to the Ionic column and main wall of the house and, via these elements, down through the structure.

Because of the structural importance of the architrave it was very alarming to discover the first crack in the architrave at number 19. It was even more alarming to discover that the 'crack' was the superficial evidence that the particular stone of the architrave was

completely fractured. It took very little effort indeed to dislodge the fractured stone - it was easily moved by just gently touching it by hand. In fact, its bearing on the Ionic capital was only about half an inch (12.5 millimetres).

What had caused it to fracture? With the stone removed it was clear that an iron clamp had been inserted into the architrave stonework to bond its different stones together either during the construction of the house or during some later repair. When iron is 'buried' in this manner it will readily corrode, that is rust. As the iron corrodes, or rusts, it greatly increases in thickness and therefore the action of this 'corrosion jacking' causes the stone to fracture.

This is not because of any inherent weakness in the stone. As John Wood wrote, Bath stone 'is fit for the palaces of the Princes of Europe'.

With one fracture clearly identified, the rest of the architrave was carefully examined for further defects due to corrosion jacking. To overcome these problems, an elegant structural solution was adopted. This involved drilling a series of vertical and raking holes up through the architrave, frieze, cornice and parapet and injecting a grout under pressure from the bottom of the architrave, allowing the grout to penetrate any internal voids in the stonework until it reached the top of the parapet.

With the pressure of the grout still applied from the bottom of the hole, threaded stainless steel bars were inserted into the vertical and raking

grout-filled holes. A similar process was repeated for horizontal stitching of the architrave stones. The work was completed with a minimum of interference with the historic fabric of the building and is an unobtrusive but highly effective repair.

The financial summary of the repairs outlined above for number 19 Royal Crescent to the architrave only not including the remainder of the roof, lead gutter, chimney stack and balustraded parapet repairs was:-

Structural repairs £15,364.75

Professional fees £2,304.71

VAT (then 15%) £2,650.41

Total costs £20,319.87

A grant at the rate of 40% was made under the Bath Town Scheme, jointly funded by Bath City Council and English Heritage, in the sum of £8,127.00 towards the cost of these specialised repairs.

Following the discovery of the buried, corroding ironwork at number 19 Royal Crescent, a brief inspection from ground level, using field glasses, of this element of the other buildings of the Royal Crescent was made.

As a result of this, number 1 Royal Crescent was scaffolded and repairs to the stonework of the architrave, again affected by buried, corroding ironwork, were carried out. Different drilling and stitching techniques were used, including a stainless steel gauze mesh sleeve inserted into the holes before grouting to control the spread of the grout.

The repairs to Number 1 also involved the piecing in of new stonework. The

Continued from page 7

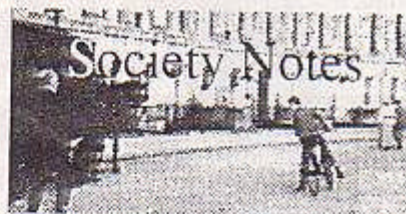
financial summary of the repairs outlined above for Number 1 Royal Crescent was:-

Structural Repairs £7,105.00
Professional Fees £888.12
VAT (then 15%) £1,198.96
Total Costs £9,192.08

A grant at the rate of 40% was made under the Bath Town Scheme, jointly funded by Bath City Council and English Heritage, in the sum of £3,676.00 towards the cost of these specialised repairs.

Following these two cases I have had preliminary discussions with colleagues at English Heritage about the possibility of a jointly-funded further investigation of this problem. One option which will be considered is a pulsed-radar survey of the architrave and associated stonework. Pulsed radar is a non-destructive surveying technique that may be used to determine the location of buried ironwork as well as indicating whether or not such ironwork is corroding.

It is not yet known if it will be possible to arrange funding for this work or when such a survey could be undertaken. However, the results of such a survey would be invaluable in assisting all those responsible for the continuing care of the Royal Crescent, understand their historic buildings and the priorities they will need to adopt in caring for them. I will therefore be doing my best to establish such a survey as soon as possible. Watch this Newsletter for further details! ❖



SHELLARD and Winter, the contractors for the restoration work on No 2 & 22, wrote to the residents of the Royal Crescent expressing their wish that they would cause as little disturbance to the Crescent as possible. Now we rejoice to see the two houses restored to their former pristine glory.

RESIDENTS will join the Committee in expressing pleasure and relief at Mrs Kersley's survival and progress towards recovery from her severe car accident. Mrs Kersley has been a staunch supporter of the Society and served for several years on the Committee to great effect. The Committee sent her a small floral token to accompany the best wishes of the Society for a speedy recovery.

WE are sorry to lose Karen, Bill, Rosie and Bert Wallis from The Royal Crescent and we wish them well in their new home in Newbridge. Bill was a valued member of the Committee for four years. At the same time we congratulate Bill on joining the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford. We have watched Bill's acting career with interest and we enjoyed hearing him again at the Christmas Dinner reading from *The Pickwick Papers*. ❖

Hello, hello,
hello -
meet our
neighbourhood
bobby

The Community Beat Officer for Newbridge and Lower Weston, which includes the Royal Crescent and Royal Victoria Park is Alan Hale (44). He is married to Jane a State Enrolled Nurse at the R.U.H. Accident and Emergency Department. They have two daughters.

Alan has been a police officer for twenty five years. The majority of his service has been spent in Bristol as a traffic officer, latterly a motorcyclist. He was the Police Federation representative for the force wide traffic division representing over 250 officers for thirteen years and served as the Secretary of the Constables Branch Board for the force for ten years.

He transferred to Bath in September and became the 'local bobby' at the end of October 1990.

In January of this year Alan was involved in an incident in the Royal Victoria Park where he arrested a man following a '999' call. He later received a

which read: 'Constable 2413 A.Hale commended for outstanding Police Service in connection with an incident on the 10th of January 1991 when he arrested a man believed to be armed with a revolver and in so doing displayed considerable courage in the highest tradition of the Police Service'.

He is also the Chairman of the Keynsham Saltford and District branch of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, the Keynsham Area Duke of Edinburgh Award, award centre committee and the Avon and Somerset Police Federation Charity Account Committee.

Alan can be contacted at Bath Central Police Station (444343), message can be left. ♦



The friendly face of PC Hale (above)

Flower Power

The Poppy Day Appeal in the Royal Crescent this year raised a total of

☞ *Windows continued from page 5*

practice of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Fortunately, commonsense does also enter in, and English Heritage is prepared, for example, to countenance and grant-aid replacement of the Georgian glazing bars into windows containing Victorian plate glass, even though this is flatly contradictory to 'conserve as found'.

The other extreme view was given by the Trust and in a more moderate degree by the Georgian Group, who would both like to see Grade I buildings restored to their original external appearance. Again, commonsense (not to mention cost) would dictate that drastic alteration can be carried out only where the architectural gain is great.

Whether restoration of windows in the Royal Crescent to their original pattern constitutes a great gain has to remain a matter of opinion.

As far as the Royal Crescent is concerned, the outcome is fundamentally dependent on the wishes of the inhabitants and owners. The Royal Crescent Society made clear its view that, while some residents might be persuaded to insert six-over-nine pane sashes, none would voluntarily raise the sills. The City of Bath Conservation Officers would, I think, go along with this view though they support restoration to original pattern, as in Queen Square.

There is, of course, the major difference that the Royal Crescent is residential while Queen Square is mostly in use as offices. The divergent views

were, therefore, to some extent reconciled, and Mr Finch was delighted. May I perhaps add a personal appeal to residents of the Royal Crescent to help achieve six-over-nine pane sashes, especially those who live in houses which already have subdivided windows of the wrong pattern? These windows (nine-over-nine and even in one case nine-over-twelve) disrupt the rhythm of the Crescent far more than do those windows with plate glass.

The Trust, having conceded that the only immediate practicable solution to the window problem in the Royal Crescent is to encourage six-over-nine panes in the elongated windows, it nevertheless considers that long-term restoration should involve restoration to the original design. The time is not far distant when a great deal of money will be needed for restoration of stonework in the Royal Crescent, as recent experience at Nos 1 and 19 has shown. ♦

OPeter Woodward is a trustee of the Bath Preservation Trust and co-opted member of The Royal Crescent Society Committee.

Basement Winners

The results of the judging of the Basement Gardens in the Royal Crescent by Mr Stanley Hitt is as follows:

1st Number 3 (Mr J Thornton)

2nd Number 24 (Mr Le Corre)

3rd Number 5 (Mrs Annabelle Trechmann)

Congratulations to the winners.

☞ *Chairman's notes from page 3*

others. The Society's view was that the proposal does not enhance the amenities of the site because of its excessive bulk in relation to its neighbours, its inappropriate design and disappointing rear facade and several more detailed points made by the Bath Preservation Trust. The proposal will now go to Public Inquiry.

The Society has recently been consulted by the City Council concerning the City Centre Traffic and Environmental Study, which embodies two proposals which could have an impact on the Crescent. These concern a significant reduction in the number of parking places in the City Centre, and the displacement of some central traffic as a result of closing some central streets. Both would result in increased use of the Crescent to its detriment.

The latter, in particular, could result in a significant increase of high-speed 'short-circuiting' traffic, using the Crescent to avoid the Centre.

Your Committee has voiced its serious concerns to the Council in appropriate terms.

We still await Avon County Council's formal announcement and Public consultation exercise on its planned Traffic Regulation Order designed to restrict the number of Open-topped Buses operating in Bath and this Crescent to an absolute minimum consonant with the need not to inhibit tourism too drastically (reported briefly in the last issue).

If as expected this proposal generates

a Public Inquiry, then your Committee will continue to support it in the strongest possible way.

As Christopher Woodward reports on another page, the Ha-Ha Committee work is progressing and in the New Year the Committee expects to have the first firm indications of the probable cost of the restoration work. Your main Committee has approved a specific limit for the amount which can be afforded from the Lawn Fund in pursuit of this project and fuller details of this will be given at next year's Annual General Meeting. So far the costs generated are within this budget.

Finally on a note of light relief, your Committee has been asked to nominate any adjacent land where the current 'Dog Bye-Laws' could with benefit be introduced (better known as the 'Pooper-scoopers Charter'). We have nominated the triangular site at the rear of the East end of the Crescent bounded by Upper Church Street, Julian Road and Crescent Lane. We await reaction from - of all sources the City Council's Housing Department!

To all who were unable to get to the Dinner, the Committee joins me in wishing you the Compliments of the Season and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. ❖

○ For the first time this Newsletter contains a full list of paid-up member. This is a common practice for similar organisations, but in our case it is also intended to act as a spur to encourage existing members to prompt others to join or re-join.

Members of The Royal Crescent Society

Mr G Andrews
Dr M Baly
Air Chief Marshall Sir John &
Lady Barraclough
Mr & Mrs A Brownsword
Mr & Mrs R Belsey
Mr & Mrs R Berg
Mr & Mrs R Bourdon-Smith
Mr & Mrs D Cameron
Mr Chikaks
Mr Duncan
Rev & Mrs Cotter (Friends)
Mr M Daw
Miss G Eschle
Dr & Mrs L Fisher
Mrs C Francis
Mrs E Garden
Mr A Gray
Miss C Hargreaves
Mr & Mrs P Hall
Mr M Hough
Mr & Mrs A Hughes
Mr L Jessop
Miss R M Kelloway
Dr & Mrs G Kersley
Mr D Kirk
Mr & Mrs C Lang
Miss E Langmaid
Miss S McCullough
Mr & Mrs J F Meddins
Dr L Myers
Mr & Mrs I Nesbitt
Mr & Mrs W M Oswald
Cdr & Mrs J Parker
Mr & Mrs Pickett
Mr & Mrs R B Richards

Miss J Robbins
Mr & Mrs G R K Rodger
Royal Crescent Hotel (Corporate
Member)
Dr D Sandilands
Mrs E Shaw
Mrs P Stone
Mr & Mrs J Thornton
Cdr. & Mrs R Titchen
Mrs A Trechmann
Mrs E Turner
Mr J Vickery
Mrs E Vining
Mr & Mrs G Wadsworth
Mrs J Walker
Maj Gen C West
Mr & Mrs B Wilks
Mr I Woodhouse
Mr C Woodward
Lt Col & Mrs J Woollam

Please notify any errors or accidental omissions to Dr L R Fisher (29 Royal Crescent) so that these can be rectified in the next published list of members. This list was correct as at 27.11.91

*The Royal Crescent Society Newsletter
is published three times a year.
Editor: Dr Monica E. Baly
Design, Typesetting & Printing:
John Walker
With thanks to
Peter Wilks and
Network, Julian Road
for word processing.*