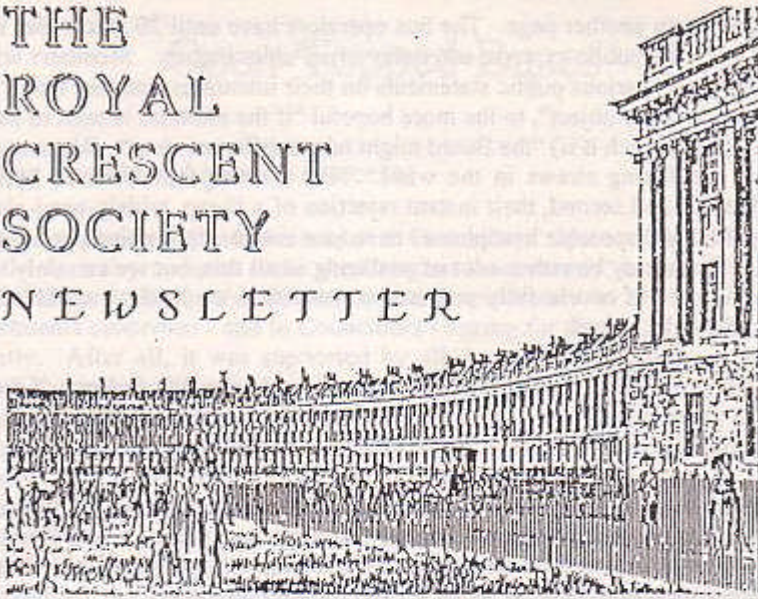


THE ROYAL CRESCENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Issue No. 32

Winter 1996

Chairman's Notes

Writing this in late Autumn, knowing you will read it just before Christmas, is helped by a sudden sharp frost and the premature and sudden festooning of City and shops with festive decorations. Thoughts too, of our now traditionally post-Christmas annual feast, polish the pen! This year, the Hotel's refurbishment (report on another page) compressed the availability of dates and your Committee opted for the first time for a Sunday Lunch. We hope this finds favour with Members and their Guests. By the time you read this you will have received a separate flier. So as a reminder, the date is Sunday, 5 January and do book early please; last year some very late late-comers somewhat stretched resources.

Events on the Bus campaign are extensively reported elsewhere. Again it has suffered from Officials' delays which no amount of our, or our Councillors' pressures seemed able to prevent. However hard and extensive chasing up produced a result - the long awaited Draft Traffic Orders. A Special Issue of the Newsletter was rushed out to all residents, clarifying the somewhat tortuous legal wording - which those wishing to fall asleep easily, can read in the whole

document on another page. The bus operators have until 20 December to object and force the public expense and delay of a Public Inquiry. Members will recall Badgerline's various public statements on their intentions, ranging from "we will almost certainly object", to the more hopeful "if the measure is seen to be against all traffic" (which it is) "the Board might take a different view". We note also two other conflicting straws in the wind. First a change of General Manager at Badgerline and second, their instant rejection of a cheap, widely-used-elsewhere, proposal for disposable headphones to reduce commentary noise elsewhere in the City. There may be rather a lot of posturing in all this, but we can only wait and see. We are of course fully prepared to take them on through a Public Inquiry should that be forced.

On a less fragrant note, action has been taken on the dog-fouling of the Lawn, which so exercised Members at this year's AGM - details on another page. Your Committee hoped it would at last be effective, but the signs are not good.

Details are just emerging of a possible major Concert in front of the Crescent next year. Most residents remember those featuring Jose Carreras and Dame Kiri te Kanawa with great pleasure as blissful evenings. A small group takes a very different view and the story so far is given on another page.

Finally, I wish all Members a very enjoyable Season and look forward to a Bright, Prosperous (and Bus Free ?) New Year. Hope to see you on 5 January. □

Notes from the Editor

The Winter Newsletter now arrives through your letterbox with all manner of news, updates, recipes and a little gossip as always.

As I write today in late November the Crescent looks utterly perfect in the sunshine.

Once again my gratitude for everyone's help with the Newsletter. It would be good to hear from more of you in 1997.

May I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Open-Topped Buses

1 The Society's Actions - Success!

After the euphoria of the last issue, over Councillors' approval for Officials to start the formal process to make the Crescent 'access-only' by advertising the Traffic Orders (TOs), the Society wrote immediately to the two Council Departments concerned - and to Councillors - asking for the job to be progressed urgently. After all, it was supported by all three political parties, was fully funded, the technicalities had been worked out by Avon 6 months earlier and it seemed an easy and short task to take the next step. In particular, Head of Legal Services was asked to use his personal influence as a vindication of his apology for the 1994/5 delays by the old Council (see 'Loose Ends' below); he replied expressing the hope that the TOs would be "in place by the Autumn". Given the long list of other tasks, e.g. Safety measures on his plate, this did not seem unreasonable. However, the Traffic Department replied that their intent was only to "advertise" the TOs "by late Autumn". Clearly the two Departments were as uncommunicative with each other as the two former Councils, Avon and Bath, had been.

Accordingly, the next month, September, we started chasing again, this time through our Councillors. Councillor David Hawkins could get only a promise to "prioritise" the matter from Mr Dillane, Head of Engineering Services (amongst much whining about limited resources); a similar response came from the legal department. Further chasing in October revealed that Councillor Ian Dewey (not representing our Ward) had been forced to take up the general slowing down of all Council business by officials with the Chief Executive. Clearly we were not alone.

So with Councillor Hawkins we tried a pincer movement. Chairman wrote to the two Heads of Department highlighting the now three and half months delay, the deep concern of residents, the escalating damage and the risks of losing the funding for this Financial Year and of repeating the appalling delays of the former Council.

These letters were copied both to our own Ward Councillors and to the Conservative and Labour Group Leaders and to Councillor Dewey asking all to take up the matter with the Department Heads.

Councillor Dewey was the first to respond, both with action - i) he had written to one of the Heads of Department seeking an explanation and ii) with Concern.

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Both he and Councillor Cox raised the matter at a Committee Meeting - Councillor Hawkins was in the Chair.

Suddenly although the Heads of Departments failed to reply to Chairman's letters, all this bore fruit and the traffic orders appeared.

A full copy is printed below.

We now wait to see whether the Bus companies do object and force a Public Enquiry. The Council intends to investigate re-routing ideas as one ploy to try and deflect or deter this action.

(ROYAL CRESCENT, BATH) (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) ORDER 199

The Council proposes to make an Order under sections 1(1) and 2(1) to (3) of the Road Traffic Act 1984 as amended, the effect of which will be to prohibit any motor vehicle entering, proceeding or waiting in the lengths of Royal Crescent, Bath specified in Part I and Part II of the Schedule of this Notice.

Exemptions in the Order permit any motor vehicle to enter, proceed or wait in the length of Royal Crescent referred to in Part II of the Schedule to this Notice in connection with building operations; the removal of obstruction to traffic, maintenance of the road; supply of gas, water or electricity; for any vehicle necessarily proceeding to or from any premises situated on or accessible only from that length of road; for the purpose of gaining access to residents' and card parking places situated in that length of road; the pursuance of statutory powers or duties and police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes in an emergency.

Full details of the proposal are contained in the draft Order, which together with a map and a Statement of the Council's Reasons for proposing to make the Order and a copy of the Order to be varied/suspended, may be inspected at the undermentioned offices (callers should report to Reception and ask for the Planning and Environmental Law Team) and at 9/10 Bath Street, Bath (please telephone for an appointment, Bath (01225) 477172) during normal office hours.

Objections to the proposal, together with the grounds on which they are made must be sent in writing to the Head of Legal Services at The Hollies, Midsomer Norton, Bath BA3 2DP, quoting reference DS/P/1/043 by **20 December 1996**. Please note that all representations received may be considered in public by the Council and that the substance of any representation together with the name and address of the person making it, could become available for public inspection.

**SCHEDULE
PART I**

Royal Crescent - from its junction with Marlborough Buildings eastwards for 3 metres

PART II

Royal Crescent - from Brock Street/Upper Church Street to 3 metres east of Marlborough Buildings

Contact Officer: Dean Shepherd, Planning and Environmental Law Team, Resources Directorate, Telephone 01225 396682.

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

**(ROYAL CRESCENT, BATH)
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) Order 199**

The Bath and North East Somerset District Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Council") in exercise of its powers under sections 1(1) and 2(1) to (3) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended (hereinafter referred to as "the Act of 1984") and of all other enabling powers, after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act of 1984, hereby makes the following Order:

- 1 This Order shall come into operation on the and may be cited as the Bath and North East Somerset District Council (Royal Crescent, Bath) (Prohibition of Driving) Order 199.
- 2 In this Order "residents' and card parking place" means a parking place designated by the County Council of Avon (Residents' and Card Controlled Parking, City of Bath) Order 1987 as varied.
- 3 No person shall cause or permit any motor vehicle to enter, proceed or wait in the length of road specified in Part I of the Schedule to this Order.
- 4 Save as provided in Article 5 of this Order no person shall cause any motor vehicle to enter, proceed or wait in the length of road specified in Part II of the Schedule to this Order.

- 5 (1) Nothing in Article 4 of this Order shall render it unlawful to cause or permit any motor vehicle to enter, proceed or wait in the length of road referred to therein if the vehicle is being used:
- a) in connection with the carrying out on, or on premises situated on that length of road of any of the following operations, namely -
 - i) building, industrial or demolition operations;
 - ii) the removal of any obstruction to traffic;
 - iii) the maintenance, improvement or reconstruction of the road;
 - iv) the laying, erection, alteration or repair in, or in land adjacent to the road of any sewer, or of any main, pipe or apparatus for the supply of gas, water or electricity or of any telecommunication apparatus as defined in the Telecommunications Act 1984;
 - b) in the service of a local authority, the Environment Agency, a water undertaker or sewerage undertaker in pursuance of statutory powers of duties.
- (2) Nothing in Article 4 of this Order shall apply to any vehicle being used for fire brigade, ambulance or police purposes in an emergency.
- (3) Nothing in Article 4 of this Order shall apply:
- a) to any vehicle necessarily proceeding to or from any premises situated on or accessible only from the length of road referred to therein, or
 - b) to any vehicle necessarily proceeding to or from any residents' and car parking place in the length of road referred to therein.

Given under the Common Seal of the Bath and North East Somerset District Council the day of

The COMMON SEAL of the
BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET
DISTRICT COUNCIL
was hereunto affixed
in the presence of:

Head of Legal Services

Part I

That length of Royal Crescent, Bath which extends from its junction with Marlborough Buildings in an easterly direction for a distance of 3 metres

Part II

(includes exemption for access purposes and to residents' and card parking places)

That length of Royal Crescent, Bath which extends from its junction with Brock Street/Upper Church Street to a point 3 metres east of its junction with Marlborough Buildings

2 Loose Ends

In the last issue we reported the sudden realisation in May 1996 by B&NES Head of Legal services that our Formal Complaint over Bath's 94/5 delay in dealing with the bus issue had never been answered and that as the papers had been lost in the re-organisation, "could we send copies"! After further toing and fro-ing, acknowledging that specific action had been overtaken by events, he issued a formal written apology. As noted above we are attempting to use this in the current stages.

3. Council's Other Action

The overall, City-wide Open Topped Bus Service has come under general criticism from all three political parties. They have finally woken up to a factor we recorded and reported some years ago.

That is, that there is no formal or official or legislative means of preventing or restricting the buses. Under the 1980's deregulation of Public Transport, the only barriers to any Public Service are the needs to register a schedule with the Traffic Commissioners (part of the Department of the Environment) and to provide roadworthy vehicles and licensed drivers. We firmly believe that the original purpose of the legislation was with true public transport in mind: that is PT with people from A to B. That the wording was so loose that it allowed circular 'tourist services to emerge does not appear to have been foreseen. Shrewd opportunists of course saw the loophole and our misery ensued.

Councillors, grasping this, approached the Minister for Local Transport, John Watts MP, asking for tougher powers to control what many seen in the City as resulting major contribution to traffic chaos. They have gone on record as saying the Buses are "dirty, noisy, too numerous (36 departures an hour from 7 locations), that they clog already congested streets, cause pollution and are damaging the City's tourist trade". Just what we have been saying for many years! The Minister's reply kicked the action back to the Council and they now have a 12-point plan for more control. Badgerline have already rejected one of these - the use of disposable headphones - on the grounds of cost, ignoring their successful use on similar tours in other Cities....plus ca change!

4. Badgerline Change

Badgerline's General Manager, Martin Curtis, who has led the flight against us, has been promoted to Business Manager for Bristol Omnibus. His former Deputy, Alan Flinders has replaced him, so presumably no change in policy there. ☐

Royal Crescent Ha-Ha - progress report

In the last Newsletter I was able to tell you of our plans and how far we had progressed with them. Our big news this time is that the archaeological dig was carried out in June by Wessex Archaeology.

As expected this consisted of a hand excavated test pit at the centre point of the ha-ha ditch and bank and was one metre wide and two metres in length. In addition to this were two hand augured boreholes, each made between the test pit and the ends of the ha-ha.

The test pit threw up some interesting and unexpected information. It showed that the wall was originally 1.7 metres high at the centre and up to 2.5 metres at each end; thus following the dip down towards the centre of the present contour of the lawn. The bottom metre or so of the wall is currently obstructed by fill-in of the ha-ha ditch but appears to be in a sound condition. The bottom layers of the in-fill contain quantities of bottle glass and pottery of late 18th Century/early 19th Century date, suggesting it was deliberately filled in quite soon after the ha-ha was built.

The question is WHY?? Was it because the ditch, due to its being dug into clay, tended to flood? Or because it was a convenient dumping place for household waste (being largely out of sight from neighbouring households)? Were subsequent layers of in-fill thrown there from footings and rubbish of new building work going on in the vicinity as a casual conversation with a local Conservation Officer has suggested? In other words was the in-fill deliberate or opportunist? We shall need to seek more expert opinions.

Our next step is to ask a qualified structural engineer for his/her opinion on the stability of the wall in the event of the ditch being deepened to the depth of a metre. We have an opinion from some years back but wonder whether there is such a body amongst the Membership of the RCS? If so could he/she step forward and contact me on Bath 313112?

We will soon have to consider costings in greater detail in order to complete our Application for the National Heritage Lottery Funding. I hope to be in a position to tell you of further progress in the next Newsletter.

Jenny Hardisty
Chairman - Ha-Ha Committee ☐

The Lawn Fund

The final figure on funds raised at the Summer Cocktail Party was almost £370. This was a very good start and thanks are due to all who helped and to those who gave donations and such elegant items for the Raffle. Indeed there were so many gifts that it was decided to use some for a second Raffle at the Festive Lunch (on 5 January); there will also be a small "auction" for a particularly fine painting.

Meanwhile, as directed by AGM 96, your Committee has given much thought to the updating of the Lawn Fund Contribution Rates, unchanged since 1974. If the changes in the Retail Price Index were applied they would now be £62 for a single flat and £177 for a whole house! (As against £7 and £20.) Even though we have therefore been getting a bargain all these years - and the Fund can no longer meet its purposes - one straight increase to these levels could, in your Committee's view, be self-defeating. That is it would discourage more people from contributing at all.

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Therefore, your Committee will recommend to AGM 97 that the new contributions should be £20 for a single flat, £40 for a large one (i.e. one extending over 2 floors/houses) and £100 for a whole house. A specific motion on this will accompany the AGM Calling Notice.

Meanwhile, Members' thoughts on these figures and ideas for other fund-raising activities are welcomed by Treasurer Stephen Little at No. 22 or on Bath 310180.

Stephen is also close to resolving with Council Officials the combination of issues mentioned last time about unclaimed costs for Lawn maintenance, litter clearance and grants for our Landscape maintenance. He hopes to have more definitive news next time.

Finally, Stephen's tackling of all identifiable residents/owners/etc. who do not currently contribute (or belong to the Society) has borne considerable fruit. A sizeable number of new or forgetful contributors have emerged, and £119 collected. He plans a second salvo to those who ignored his first letter shortly, again using the information unearthed by John Meddins (see next article). □

Who Lives Here?

Over the 23 years of its existence the Society has made various efforts to keep an up-to-date record of just who lives, leases, owns or its otherwise responsible for each of the properties in the Crescent. This has generally been based on Public Records in Bath, noting new arrivals, changes to doorbells, etc. The aims of such a record are to encourage membership of the Society, thus making it as representative as possible, to target requests for Lawn Fund Contributions and to ensure that everyone with a direct interest in the Crescent can use the Society's forums (AGMs, Newsletters, etc.) if they wish to express a view or influence events - and even volunteer to serve on the Committee!

More recently, John Meddins in his capacity as "Remembrancer" (a President-inspired title), has taken this task by the scruff of the neck and really wrung it dry. He has thoroughly researched all the public records and banged all their gaps and inadequacies together, he charmed the Land Registry into giving us a very special price-break on their standard charges and, finally, he has produced what must be the most comprehensive current record the Society has ever had. The lists have been put to good use already by Treasurer in pursuing Lawn Fund Contributions (see last article) and he has now taken over the

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maintenance of the list. You can help him please, by letting him know of new arrivals or departures at No. 22 or on 310180.

The lists are utterly confidential to the Society and are not disclosable elsewhere. □

Fouling of the Lawn

In his Notes last time, Chairman reported Committee's action in response to the unanimous AGM directive to try and stop fouling of the Lawn by a particular resident's large dog: those actions - verbal approaches by Vice Chairman had met with a fairly blank refusal.

Committee has since discussed this again and one resident generated a "To whom it may concern: letter delivered to President and Secretary. The dog owner expressed his great dissatisfaction to Chairman about (2nd hand reports of) Chairman's Notes, feeling it "underhand" to have been written about and not to have been named: he also claimed that no resident had ever complained directly to him about his dog's activities. This claim does not match comments made by residents at the AGM.

Accordingly your Committee decided to have one more try - writing. Since so many residents spoke on the subject at the AGM, the letter is reproduced in full here. No reply has yet been received and initial reports suggest that the problem has not stopped. It is difficult to see what else your Committee can do. It must be down now to individual residents continuing to write or speak to Mr House directly.

30 October 1996

Mr A House
12A Royal Crescent
Bath
Somerset BA1 2LR

Dear Mr House

The Royal Crescent Lawn

The Royal Crescent Society Winter Newsletter

During the discussion you initiated yesterday, I promised to write to you about your dog defecating on the Royal Crescent Lawn.

At the AGM of this Society at the end of April (to which you were sent an invitation, but which you did not attend), the 50 or so residents present unanimously expressed concern about your dog's actions on the grounds that the faecal matter was pervasive, offensive, inappropriate and possibly dangerous to those, especially children, who might get it on their person. It was also regarded as a serious deterrent to residents making more use of the Lawn. The Committee was directed to ask you to stop causing the mess, approaches to you by other residents have apparently had no effect.

This direction was discussed at the next Committee meeting and the Vice-Chairman, Tim Forester, undertook to speak to you. He later reported back that your reaction to his representation had been that you intended to continue as before, as a deterrent to unauthorised invasions of the Lawn by non-residents. He also felt that you would be equally unresponsive to a written approach, though this feeling was over-ruled by the Committee, who felt that we should at least try. This action was assigned to me, as Chairman. This was reported in the Newsletter.

Meantime, one resident reiterated her concerns in a 'To whom it may concern' letter delivered to the Society's Secretary and President. At the next Committee meeting it was agreed to send this to you under cover of the previously planned letter from me, my action having been delayed by more pressing Society business and private events.

Accordingly I now ask you on behalf of many of your neighbours to direct your dog's defecations away from the Royal Crescent Lawn. I also enclose a copy of the 'To whom it may concern' letter, together with a copy of the Newsletter, second-hand reports of which you told me you found unsatisfactory; the relevant parts are sidelined. (I hope you will also notice the acknowledgement of your very welcome assistance on the Ha-Ha wall on another page - 11/12.)

I hope I may receive a co-operative reply to this appeal, so that neighbourliness and full use of the Lawn can both be restored.

Yours faithfully

Michael G Daw
Chairman □

The Royal Crescent Hotel

Most residents will have heard by now that the Hotel has been sold. The "new" owner is Mr Johann Tham, of Cliveden Hotels plc, who will be well remembered by longer-term residents. It was Mr Tham who, in the early 1980's, transformed the then somewhat crumbling guest house into an establishment of such style and quality that it quickly - and more than once - won the national accolade of Hotel of the Year.

Mr Tham was always supportive of the Society's activities and your Committee much welcomes his return. He intends to spend £1.5 million on refurbishment of the main house (which will close for 12 weeks from 6 January) and additional property in Crescent Lane. We hope to feature more details in the next Newsletter.

Mr Tham has already announced that he intends to make the hotel one of the two most prestigious in the country - the other being his operation at the National Trust property of Cliveden, former home of Lady Astor.

General Manager, Ross Stevenson, has also said that "as part of our development, laundry and flowers will no longer be delivered to the front of the hotel. Hooray! and that this "will further enhance the environment for us all". We couldn't agree more and are delighted that this change which has been asked for many times over the years, is at least being made. □

Graven Images - II

We have reported in the past on some high-standard modern representations of this Crescent. The General Trading Company of Argyle Street, etc. has quietly introduced another, most stunning of all.

It is an exquisitely accurate, bas-relief, architectural elevation of the whole Crescent viewed from dead-centre, in pale cream wood on a museum-green background. The wood is cut (by computer from a photograph) in layers so that each element, pillars, walls, windows, etc. has a different level. The accuracy extends to glazing bars (present and absent), varied door panelling and even the differing heights of the 2nd floor window-sills. It is advisable to go and see it - you'll find it difficult to resist!

Meanwhile Bath Cancer Relief has reintroduced Anthony Bouquet's attractive watercolour of two years ago as one of their Christmas cards and Mementoes of Bath are still selling their card using the familiar snow covered photograph of the Crescent. □

Today the Crescent, Next the World?

A Member has proposed that we consider using the Electronic Superhighway to publicise ourselves and our various campaigns etc. He proposes we set up a Site on the World Wide Web, giving details including how to become a Friend (enhancing our coffers) and up-to-date news of interest to those around the world who may take, or already have, an interest in the Crescent and its conservation.

As a non-computer-literate, the writer understands that such a scheme may involve cost and maintenance time. Committee has so far not been able to provide either and has mixed views. It would be helpful to hear what Members think or could volunteer. Thoughts to Editor, Caroline Carrier, please at No. 5. □

No More Help with Restorations

In case you missed it, English Heritage and our new Council have both cancelled any further conservation grants for at least the current Financial Year. This means that homeowners seeking help for major renovations of properties such as this Crescent, can appeal only to the very limited resources of the Bath Preservation Trust's Renovations Fund. Such grants as it could make can of course not be expected to come anywhere near the 40% of costs which the pre-cancellation combination of grants from the 3 bodies (BPT, EH & Council) could have generated.

The Trust is fighting hard to get the grants re-instated for next year, but their Chairman is "not hopeful". The impact of course will be that some renovations

simply will not happen and the conservation of Bath will be set back. Fuller details are contained in an article by Dr Peter Woodward, Chairman of the Trust's Renovations Committee and a former Member of our own Committee, in the Bath Chronicle of 13 August 1996. □

Bath "Spa"

Plans were announced in March for the 75th Anniversary celebrations of the British Spa Federation to be held in Bath and to include various ambitious events culminating in a candle-lit procession to the Crescent for a fireworks display.

Local reps. Spa Restoration Ltd., Council favourite to restore the spa facilities, failed to fulfil their promise to give Chairman more details and in the end no event seems to have occurred. This may have been a reflection of the company's current moribund image consequent on its failure to raise funds to restore the Spa and its apparent eclipse by the Council's long overdue own action - in the form a Millennium Fund bid.

Your Vice-Chairman wrote to all residents, on behalf of the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations to engender support for the Council's bid. To the 100 letters, there were 18 replies - mostly very supportive, except for one helpful response which written across in large felt-tipped letters "Forget the Spa, stop the Buses". We hope that the author will be heartened by the Bus news in this issue. □

Mini Concert - Maxi Noise

Again this year, Councillor Lunt (Larkhall) and the Bath Festivals Trust arranged a loud concert around the Royal Victoria Park Bandstand just below the Crescent, in August. As before this was part of their campaign to engender more use of the various bandstands around the City. The music this time was more jazz and Gershwin than the heavy rock of the 1995 event, but it was just as loud, the recommendations to lessen the impact on the Crescent made last year having fallen on (understandably) deaf ears. However, no complaints reached the Committee and therefore no protest was made this time to the

Concerts - A Second Bite?

Greg Lynn, Executive Producer under Mark McCormack's International Management Group, for the 1992 Carreras and 1993 Kiri te Kanawa concerts branched out on his own in 1994 and tried to organise a third event. That this did not happen seemed to stem mainly from the lateness of the decision-making and advertising.

This year, well in time for 1997, Mr Lynn has announced to the media plans for another concert in front of the Crescent, coupled with the names of some prestigious artistes - non of whom have as yet apparently been signed up. However, this event will almost certainly happen since it is billed as part of the 2nd BITE (Bath International Taste Extravaganza), for which Mr Lynn is the promoter. Residents may remember the first BITE earlier this year, which provided us with a (to some enjoyable, to others, endless and repetitious) "Balloon Glow" set to very loud music.

It was disappointing that, in common with that event's organisers, Mr Lynn has made no effort to advise Residents or this Society of his plans of intentions. Consequently when approached out of the blue by a Chronicle reporter for his views on "a concert in front of the Crescent as part of BITE '97", Chairman was a little non-plussed. He tried to emphasise that most residents enjoyed not only such events themselves for their own pleasure, but for the chance it gave them to share our wonderful space and those pleasures with so many others - occasionally. This was an attempt to correct the negative image we so often generate. However he had to say that there was a small group who disliked any such event and who would certainly - as recently confirmed - exercise their power to deny use of the Lawn. It was unfortunate that this last fact got rather more prominence than the first, in the Chronicle's coverage.

For those who were not resident for the first two major concerts, it is worth repeating that denial of use of the Lawn stems from the ancient Leases by which, solicitors advise us, we are all bound. The particular point is that they give all residents the inalienable right of free access or use of the Lawn. The objectors have considered therefore that use of the Lawn for, e.g. a stage for a concert, interferes with that right and therefore they are prepared, as we understand it, to go to considerable lengths to prevent such use. The decision

Denial has two main consequences. First, and most important to Members, is that the Society Funds are denied free money (i.e. from "renting out" the Lawn) which could be put to good use on the Railings and/or the Ha-Ha; as a corollary this also puts us in a weak fund-raising position, since we could well be accused of declining to help ourselves. Secondly, denial has, so far, reduced the size of the potential audience from 15,000 (with the stage on the Lawn) to 12,000 (stage in the Park). This, for the great artists could affect the event's financial viability - though obviously this seems to have been resolved this time.

If any such event does happen, residents will, of course be affected. Two to three weeks of visual and aural disturbance for some - excitement for others - as the arena and stage are put up and removed. An inescapable day and evening of memorable music - bliss for most, interference for the small group who object. In all these circumstances, your Committee will be doing its best to find out what is planned and to keep you informed. However since our Lawn is - apparently - not involved, we have little influence over what happens in the Public Park. □

Bollards

The AGM proposal for bollards to be erected to protect the Eastern part of our curved railings is still under discussion with elusive Council Officials. They had so far only acknowledged our request and need even more pursuit. We will hope to have more details in the next issue. □

Neighbourhood Watch

Ian Woodhouse hopes to resuscitate the AGM 1995 proposal for a NW Scheme for the Crescent early in the New Year. As reported last time, too few residents attended the first meeting to form a scheme. A separate flier will be sent out after Christmas, but anyone keen to register an interest in advance who has not done so before can contact Ian at No. 14 or on 337380. □

“The Thunder” Blunders

Those who write and produce this Newsletter sometimes get fussed about spelling, grammatical and other mistakes which seem to creep in of their own accord. We should worry. No less an organ than The Times newspaper on 23 October ran a long feature about renting Georgian property in Bath. The text mentioned that No. 11 is a Council house (“probably the grandest Council address in the country”). Whoever wrote the caption to the accompanying photograph of the Crescent must have been hung-over. It read “11 of these houses are let out as Council homes”. How are the might fallen. □

Prior Knowledge

Some 30 or so Members enjoyed a stunning visit to Prior Park just before it opened to the public in July. Bill Oswald had arranged it and we started with an exclusive tour of the Mansion - not open to all. We wallowed in and some were ravished by the exquisite plasterwork and other fine refurbishments. We were guided by the Bursar and are grateful to him for his kindness and hospitality. This was followed by an even more expertly guided tour of the Park itself, led as it was by the National Trust's Ranger who had been involved in the restoration decision-making process. The third, and major, highlight was an authoritatively detailed talk about the restoration of the beautiful Palladian Bridge, given on it by the architect in charge of its restoration, resident and Member David Brain.

This was a fascinating and exhilarating evening for everyone and our thanks are due to Bill and to David. All agreed such visits should be an annual event if possible. □

Prior Park - 22 July 1996

We gathered on a beautiful evening in the forecourt of Prior Park. Our visit inside the house had been arranged by Bill Oswald for which we greatly thank

The Bursar gave a talk before we entered the house outlining various details of the history and so forth.

The ceilings just took one's breathaway set against the mellow colours of the walls. Furthermore the Music Room was another delight with its wonderful dome - one longed to attend a candlelit concert in such a venue.

Moving upstairs we passed a beautiful inlaid door to the Bursar's Office, then into a long room with a wonderful vista of Bath. Behind this room we found ourselves on the balcony overlooking the Music Room.

We then descended and out onto the terrace and began our walk down to the Palladian Bridge. The going was most exhilarating.

We all met on the Bridge. David Brain who had restored the Bridge gave us a most informative talk on its history.

On return the steep and pleasant walk tested all our sinews. Were one in charge of a health club I would say that the Royal Crescent Residents would score very high marks. The Silver Cup going to Dr Monica Baly for her youthful stride back.

We all said farewell looking down to the deep blue haze of the late evening. Bath looked a sheer dish of pleasure.

Again many thanks to Bill Oswald and David Brain.

Lemon Mincemeat

1 Large Lemon
12 oz/350g/2.5 cups currants
6 oz/175g/1 cup chopped hard green apple
8oz/225g/1.25 cups white sugar
4 oz/110g/2/3 cup mixed peel
6 oz/175g/1.5 cups shredded beef suet
1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg
1.2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground mace
1/4 teaspoon salt
A little freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon orange flower water
2 fl oz/75 ml/5 tablespoons Malaga Wine or Brandy

Squeeze the lemon and strain the juice. Boil the pulp and rind until soft then process to a paste in an electric blender. In a large bowl, mix all the dry ingredients thoroughly then mix in the lemon paste, and lastly all the liquids including the lemon juice. If the mincemeat is to be kept for any length of time, cook in the oven for 1 hour at 225-225°F/110-130°C/Gas mark 1/4-1/2. Fill into 2 x 2 lb/1 kg jars and label.

From the Jane Austen Cookbook. □

A Marriage in the Crescent

Postscript to the Royal Crescent Society Summer Party

Some of you will remember that in the summer we won the star prize in the raffle - a night in The Royal Crescent Hotel. While we were delighted with our good fortune we didn't at that time realise how very special that prize would be - we had packed it away on the mantelpiece but bore in mind John Carrier's typical

witty response that we should travel to Aberystwyth in order to arrive at the hotel in some style.

When it came to organising our wedding arrangements for the end of September we decided to incorporate our prize into the events. The great day was perfect - the sun shone, the world was full of happy, smiling people, and we and the The Crescent looked at our best. We were married in London at The Ritz in a simple and intimate little ceremony aided by dear friends and a son who looked suitably scrubbed and pleased. Returning to Bath Spa Station we took a taxi straight to our local hotel where we found even more kindness, more flowers, Champagne and messages - even a fax from a hi-tech neighbour. In the morning eating breakfast in bed looking out over the previous lawn (and towards our own dear establishment) we knew that we had won the star prize in life's raffle.

David and Lesley Brain
No. 30 Royal Crescent ☐

In Memoriam

Sadly this Newsletter has to report the deaths of the following Residents.

MRS ESTHER ABBOTT, 2 Royal Crescent

Mrs Abbott had lived for some time in the Crescent and was always dressed immaculately in 50's/60's style. She had been a very good pianist. She had nursed her invalid husband with devotion until his death and she herself died in October.

MR & MRS HALL, Basement Flat No. 27, Royal Crescent

Mr & Mrs Hall (Philip & Ann) were well known figures in the Crescent and were often to be seen walking their two dogs. They worshipped at the Abbey and were staunch supporters of the Concerts in the Crescent - Ann Hall outlived her husband by some months before dying in sad circumstances. She had been born into an artistic family and sculptured very successfully in bronze. ☐

