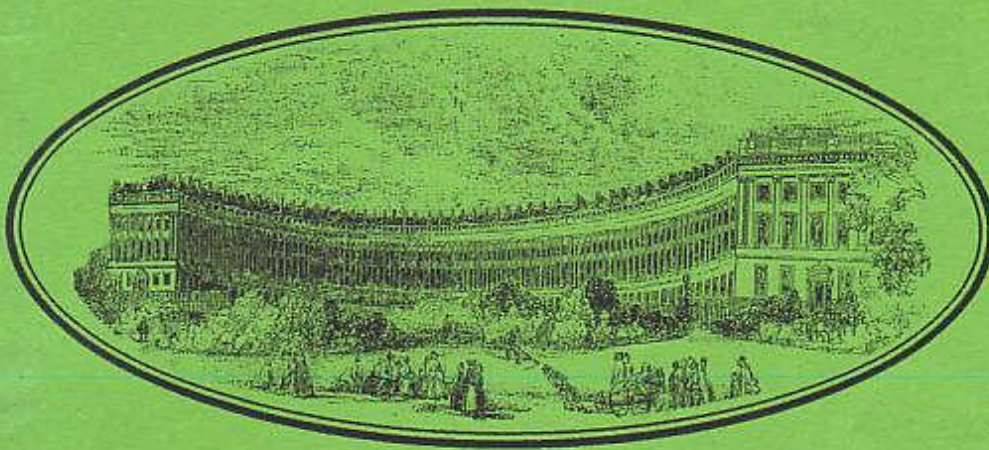


THE ROYAL CRESCENT SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NUMBER 50

SPRING 2003



***ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AT 6.30PM ON SUNDAY 27TH APRIL 2003
IN THE ROYAL CRESCENT HOTEL***

● ALL RESIDENTS WELCOME ●

IN THIS ISSUE:

***CHAIRMAN'S NOTES
TIME TEAM EXCAVATION
OPERA CONCERT IN THE PARK***

Letter from the Editor

Dear Residents and Members,

There's a lot to take in from this Newsletter, much of it involving the Upper Lawn and the use thereof.

The proposed opera concert on the Crescent Lawns in August should give an idea of how the opening night of Bath Festival in May could be. What is called the 'showcase' of the Festival seems to be developing into a mini-Glastonbury, where it is difficult for classical music to find its place. Perhaps the opera concert will show that a focused repertoire, suited to the backdrop of the Royal Crescent, adds up to more of an event than the 'mixum-gatherum' that has prevailed in recent years. Have other residents noticed that the beer tent on the opening night of the Festival seems to double in size each year?

Sadly the Time Team excavation did not unearth Bath's missing amphitheatre in August, which might have added another dimension to discussions about the Crescent Lawns! In case you missed the television broadcast there is a review of the programme in this issue.

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Published by the Royal Crescent Society

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Chairman's Notes: *Stephen Little, No. 22 Royal Crescent, Bath BA1 2IT.*

We are fast approaching a resolution of the current stage in securing the Heritage Lottery Fund grant for the restoration of the Railings and Ha-ha, and by the time of the AGM (April 27th) we anticipate that the Crescent Lawn Company Ltd. will be the holder of possessory title to the Lawn and its boundaries on behalf of the Society. This will not affect the rights that owners and occupiers have over the Lawn, which will be confirmed in the Land Registry's records, nor the routine maintenance of the Lawn, which the Society will continue to undertake on behalf of all residents as it has done since its founding in 1973.

The formation of this Company as a vehicle to hold the title was necessary because the Land Registry informed us that it could not register the title in the Society's name, as it is not a legal entity. The Company is limited by guarantee, rather than by shares, and all ordinary members of the Society will be invited to become members of the Company if they so wish. The Memorandum and Articles will be available for inspection at the AGM; one of these stipulates that no director may receive any benefit from the Company. The next step will be to apply for charitable status for the Company.

You will no doubt have seen or heard about the forthcoming free opera concert in August. This is being held in aid of various charities to mark the opening of the Bath Spa. We expect to be able to give full details of this exciting event, including the benefits for the Society, at the AGM.

Changes to parking regulations for Zone 7 are currently being advertised, inviting the public's comments and objections. These can be seen on the B&NES website (www.bathnes.gov.uk - use 'search' to seek 'Zone 7'). In spite of our frequent requests to extend Zone 7 to include Royal Crescent, this is not part of the proposed changes. Those most affected are urged to join the Society in expressing their disappointment at the continuing difficulties this will cause, and to repeat that streets such as ours, being overwhelmingly residential, should be in a residential zone. Letters should be addressed to Dorothy Miley, TAWM, Floor 2, Riverside, Temple St, Keynsham, BS31 1LA (e-mail dorothy_miley@bathnes.gov.uk), and councillors should also be made aware of the strength of feeling on this matter.

As we are at an important stage in the history of the Society, and indeed of the Royal Crescent itself, the Committee hope that as many of you as possible, whether members or not, will come to the AGM to hear the full details of recent developments, and to take the opportunity to have your say. Non-members and lapsed members are warmly invited to take up or renew membership so that they can vote on Society policy.

Opening Night of the Bath Festival

Friday 16th May 2003

The celebrations will start at 6pm with the traditional Procession, performed by local school and community groups under the guidance of a team of artists co-ordinated by Trish Verrecchia of Samba Sulis.

The procession will start from the Circus and move round the Royal Crescent, down Marlborough Lane, through the Park and back up to the Circus. From 6pm until midnight, the Royal Crescent, Brock Street, the Circus, parts of Gay Street and Bennett Street, Upper Church Street, Royal Avenue, Catherine Place and part of Marlborough Buildings will be closed to traffic. There will also be an additional road closure on either side of the Golf Course (Weston Road up to Royal Victoria Park and Cavendish Road up to Park Place) for one hour between 9.30 and 10.30pm.

The Uyghur Muqam Ensemble from Xinjiang province - superb singers, instrumentalists and dancers from the far west of China - start the festivities on the main stage with their unique blend of lyrical music, dances and love poetry.

West African singer-songwriter Manecas Costa brings his lively rhythms to the celebrations, before the music concludes with sensational 10-piece Cuban band Leo Duany y su MamboChambo.

The bandstand on the lower part of the Park will showcase bands from City of Bath College, whose performance is assessed as part of their course. The fireworks will go off from the Golf Course at 10pm, from the same firing site as last year.

The layout of the Park will be very similar to last year. Stage erection will start on the Tuesday, marquees will be erected on Wednesday, there will be a lighting trial on Thursday night, and soundchecks will take place throughout the afternoon on Friday.

If you have any questions about the event please do not hesitate to contact Lindsey Dear, Head of Music, on 01225 462231 or Steve Hunt, Event Manager, on 01179042275.

The Royal Crescent Society already supports the activities of The Bath Preservation Trust. The Trust is justifiably proud to have a membership in excess of 1400, but we always need more support. The larger our membership, the more weight the Trust's views carry when the historic beauty of Bath and its environs is threatened.

Although many residents of the Royal Crescent will already be members of the Trust in their own right, we have a continuing need to recruit new members.

For as little as £15 for Individuals and £20 for Double Membership per annum members can support the efforts of The Bath Preservation Trust.

In return, members have the opportunity to seek the expert advice of our various committees, which is a very useful benefit to those maintaining Grade-I-listed properties. They may follow the Trust's activities as detailed in our annual publications and take part in our series of annual lectures, walks and tours. Members may also visit Number One The Royal Crescent, The Building of Bath Museum, Beckford's Tower and the William Herschel Museum free of charge.

I do hope you that will mention the work of the Trust to new residents of the Royal Crescent.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Curwen
Chairman, Membership Committee

1 Royal Crescent, Bath BA1 2LR
Telephone: 01225 338727 Fax: 01225 481850

www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk
e-mail: admin@bptrust.demon.co.uk

Forthcoming Events in the Royal Victoria Park

Friday 4 to Bank Holiday Monday 21 April
Rogers Fun Fair

Saturday 3 to Bank Holiday Monday 5 May
annual Bath Spring Flower Show 10am - 6pm

Friday 16 to Saturday 17 May
Rogers Fun Fair

Friday 16 May
Bath Festival Opening Night Celebrations from 6pm.
Please see page 2 for more details.

Saturday 17 May
Children's Dancing In The Park from 12noon to 4pm

Provisional - Friday 23 to Saturday 31 May
Bath Fringe Spiegel Palace

Sunday 25 May
The Rotary Clubs of Bath -Family Fun Day 12noon to 5pm

Wednesday 18 to Saturday 21 June
Rondo Theatre Shakespeare Play 6.00 to 10.00pm

Sunday 22 June
Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society Sponsored Walk 10am

Sunday 20 July
Botanical Gardens Floral Week Event 2.30 to 6pm

Thursday 7 August
Proposed - Opera Concert

Tuesday 16 to Sunday 21 September
Chinese State Circus

Saturday 8 November
Annual RVP Road Races 12noon to 4pm

Beneath the Surface: Channel Four's Time Team comes to Bath

Strange scorch marks on the Lower Lawn have been taken to be indicative of a Roman building, and perhaps more interestingly, under the triangle of grass at the back of the Royal Crescent, sarcophagi were discovered some 130 years ago when Victorians built a church on the site. These were the locations for *Time Team's* visit to Bath. The Church having been destroyed by bombing during World War Two, and with permission for an archaeological dig to take place on both proposed sites, Time Team set out to look for further evidence of Roman occupation on what was then the west end of Roman Bath. The plan was to dig downwards directly above where the sarcophagi were believed to be, and to dig trenches across the areas of interest on the Lower Lawn. Of course, little went to plan. The detailed Victorian drawing showing the location of the sarcophagi was in fact a drawing of the original church structure, and there had been later church building directly over the sarcophagi. The trench on the Lower Lawn did not reveal a Roman building, as had been hoped, but natural variations in the geophysical landscape. However, there was exciting evidence of possible Iron- and Bronze-age settlement.

Initial disappointment led to further digging at the rear of the Crescent, revealing a wonderful section of Roman wall, probably part of a domestic building. Further trenches on the Lower Lawn revealed skeletons buried in coffins in non-Christian alignment i.e. North to South as opposed to East to West, alongside what is believed to be a missing section of the important Roman road the Fosse Way. The upward direction of the road, passing under what appeared to be Number 12 the Royal Crescent, corresponded with the site of the Roman building discovered at the back of the Crescent, confirming the importance of both sites. How many Roman skeletons are waiting to be discovered under the Crescent?

Whilst the Time Team didn't find what they came in search of, they arguably found something much more important, and demonstrated once again that Bath is justly a World Heritage Site. But what will archaeologists of the distant future discover at these same sites, and more importantly how will they interpret their findings? Will there be reconstructions of teenagers bringing their votive offerings of litter, beer cans and other substances to scatter before their shrine to the god of the Ha-ha. Others in uniform will be shown taking away these same offerings the following morning, only for the same ritual to be repeated day after day. What sense will they make of

Opera Concert on the Crescent Lawns

from the Chairman of Wessex Water

I am sure you will have heard the proposals to hold an opera concert using the Royal Crescent as a backdrop. At the invitation of the Royal Crescent Society, I am writing to explain the proposals in more detail and to seek your support and co-operation.

YTL, a Malaysian group which acquired Wessex Water last year, regularly organise public opera concerts in Malaysia and other places where they have businesses. Having acquired Wessex Water they expressed interest in organising a concert in Bath.

Bath and North East Somerset Council recently approached Wessex Water to see whether we or YTL would be willing to support an event around the opening of the new Bath Spa.

As part of YTL's business interests they operate a spa complex in Malaysia, so during a recent visit to the UK, they asked to see the development of the Bath Spa. This visit took place on 9 March and coming out of it was a proposal to organise a major opera concert to celebrate the opening of the Spa.

Luciano Pavarotti has committed himself to the concert on 7 August and YTL have also had commitments from José Carreras and Plácido Domingo - but these arrangements are still subject to contract discussions. If, as seems likely, they are able to arrange the Three Tenors, this will be the first time they will have performed together in the UK.

It is proposed that the concert would be free but with a small donation for charity. Tickets would be allocated by ballot and access and security carefully controlled.

Ideally, the stage would be on the Royal Crescent lawn and seating for around 10,000 below the Ha-Ha. Large screens may also relay the concert in the Royal Victoria Park on the other side of Marlborough Buildings to provide more informal arrangements for around another 30,000 to 40,000 people.

In addition to the stage, it would be necessary to provide back-stage accommodation for the artists to change. It would not be intended to install any other marquees, as any hospitality will be carried out in the Royal Crescent Hotel and in other venues within the city.

The area of lawn used for the concert will be kept to a minimum so that residents can still use the bulk of the lawn. It is envisaged that the total time for set-up to removal would be around ten days.

If we can obtain the agreement of individual residents, the organisers would like to light the Crescent as a back drop and possibly project images as was done on Buckingham Palace for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. Clearly, this can only be done if individual residents agree.

In addition to the night of the concert, it would be necessary to test the lighting on probably two evenings prior to the event.

Since the concert will cause disruption for residents, we will be happy to provide free tickets for all those in the Crescent. We will also make a donation to the Railings and Ha-Ha Restoration Project to help meet its funding gap.

In order to make sure everything runs smoothly, the concert will be organised in conjunction with Bath and North East Somerset and a professional management company used to staging this type of event. There will be regular liaison with the Society throughout the preparations.

I hope you will feel able to support what should be a very enjoyable event and one that will help put the new Bath Spa on the map and encourage the high-quality tourism that Bath's economy needs for the long term. If there are individual concerns or questions we will be happy to answer them through the Royal Crescent Society.

Thank you.
Colin Skelton

The Annual Festive Dinner: *Michelle Little, Hon. Treasurer*

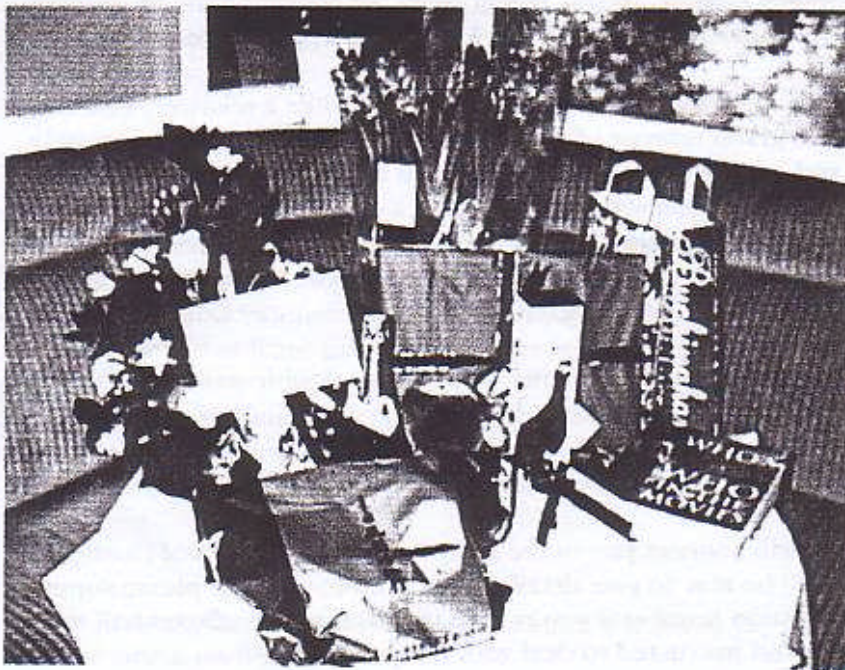
Twelfth Night 2003

The Society's annual Twelfth Night dinner at the Royal Crescent Hotel attend by over 50 members and their guests. This enjoyable evening : with a warm welcome from the Royal Crescent Hotel accompanied by pre-dinner drink. After the Christmas trimmings of turkey and more the menu of baked sea scallops and roasted rack of lamb followed by and Pecan Parfait was greeted with great enthusiasm. The Chairman declined to give any speeches, but the President gave kind words of t on behalf of the members to the Society's Committee for all of their h work. He also took the opportunity to thank the Society's guest of ho Sir Christopher Curwen, on his retirement from the Committee, for a his support and help for the Royal Crescent Society as representative Bath Preservation Trust for the last ten years.



The evening's entertainment finished with a raffle. The Society was particularly grateful for the generous donations from various members including a Restorative Massage from the Bath House, day for two at Bath races, voucher for a hair treatment at Viewpoint and many other exciting prizes. The evening raised a total of £230 towards the Ha-ha and Railings Appeal. The photographs give a flavour of the event, including the prizes.

The Society is always looking for new ideas for events for its members to participate in and any suggestions would be appreciated.



DEATH NOTICE

The Society has just heard of the death of Mary Garden who lived at Number 5. An obituary of Mrs Garden will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter. The death occurred on Saturday 26th March 2003.

Double Jeopardy? Parking in the Royal Crescent

A Royal Crescent resident recently had a discussion with the local uniformed police about criminal activity in the Royal Crescent, and the police advise that the double-parking of vehicles, with or without a parking permit, is a criminal offence. In one recent week the aforementioned resident was unable to move his own car four times because of double-parking.

Now although this may, on first appearance, seem like a relatively minor offence in the grand scheme of things, it can at the very least be extremely annoying and inconvenient if you're 'blocked in' by such thoughtless parking, but in certain circumstances it could be a danger to life. If there were a fire for instance, it's extremely likely that the fire services would have difficulty gaining access to the fire. The willingness of the owner to move the offending vehicle does not mitigate the offence.

The police have advised that anyone who notices double-parking should telephone the following number:

01275 - 818181

This number will connect you to the Portishead Central Control Centre, where you will be able to give details of the double-parking: please supply the car registration number if you're able to. Local police officers will then be contacted and instructed to deal with the problem.

Security companies - Over the last few weeks the Police have heard from members of the general public about phone calls from companies selling security and fire safety products.

The cold callers usually ask for details of what home security measures are already in place, how many occupants there are in the home and whether they work full or part time. They state that the company representatives are in the area and will call between certain times either, on that same day, or the following day.

This method of selling has disturbed many residents. Please emphasise to residents receiving 'sales' calls that they should say they are not interested unless they specifically want something, in which case they should get a range of quotes from reputable local suppliers to compare quality and prices. Please do not give out any personal security details.

● Please report any concerns to your Police Station and local Trading Standards Office on 01225 477000

Theft of small vehicles - There has been an increase in the number of small motorcycles and mopeds stolen in Bath. The worst hit areas have been Larkhall and Swainswick. The majority of the machines stolen have been left parked in front gardens or on the roadside.

The Police are advising owners of mopeds and scooters to park them in secure garages or sheds if possible. Use an extra security device such as a heavy duty chain and padlock or a 'D' lock and do not just rely on the steering lock.

● If you see anything suspicious please contact the Police or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Filming in the Crescent

This fine pair of horses pulling a carriage added an extra sense of history to the setting of the Royal Crescent in February. They were here for a BBC programme apparently concerned with bachelor life. Having conveyed his young lady to dinner in the Royal Crescent Hotel by coach and horses, one can only assume that the next programme will be the marriage. Bring on the horses again.

