

## Michael Daw (1935 – 2015)



Michael was an only child born in Plymouth in 1935 and first came to the Crescent in 1968. He not only saw a great number of changes to the Crescent and our community but he was also instrumental in driving many of them and ensuring that they happened. His determination and tenacity was no more evident than during the long protracted 10 year battle to ban the buses from the Crescent where he was a cornerstone throughout; when all seemed lost, he still persevered to win the day.

In 1990, he took early retirement from a long and distinguished Civil Service career. His duties in support of the Royal Navy had taken him from the West Country via Scotland to London and Washington DC, where he was the Navy's Senior Logistics Representative. In later years, he took command of the Navy's large electronics complex in nearby Corsham. His last posting took him to Whitehall

and he commuted daily from Bath.

The Royal Crescent Society was formed in 1973 and Michael became the first Editor of the Society's Newsletter in 1985 and took a keen interest in the detail of each edition. He strongly supported and helped to launch the Society's website in 2006. He never lost that eye for detail and proof-read every page of the website. Read one of Michael's many articles:

[www.royalcrescentbath.co.uk/HistoryRCPeople.htm#Frederic Harrison \(1829 - 1921\)](http://www.royalcrescentbath.co.uk/HistoryRCPeople.htm#Frederic_Harrison_(1829_-_1921))

In 1987, he became Treasurer of the Society and, the following year, our Vice Chairman under Sir John Barraclough. He outlived all the Society's committee members from the mid 80s and can take credit for not only making changes happen but also helping to shape the community and Society we often take for granted today. The 80s and 90s were significant times when the Society successfully fought off plans to convert two houses into a second hotel, battled to ban buses from the Crescent and successfully lobbied to get the road closure of the west end of the Crescent. His involvement in the HaHa registration and restoration project started when he was Vice Chairman and continued when he became Chairman in 1991. In 1999, Michael stood down as Chairman and became Honorary Vice President of the Society. He became President in 2001, standing down only in 2012. The archive of the Society's Newsletters on its website demonstrates the



Michael with other committee members at public launch of the Society website

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high level of effort Michael gave to the roles he held. To read the detail about the Battle of the Buses:

<http://www.royalcrescentbath.co.uk/battle%20of%20Buses.htm>

Michael became a member of the Bath Preservation Trust in 1989, and threw himself not only into the campaigning issues but also the social side of the Trust. Caroline Kay, the Trust's CEO said, 'He was in fact the best sort of member of the Trust: determined and committed when required, but also recognising that to love Bath one must also enjoy the City and all it has to offer.'

Early in 2006, the Bath and County Club gave a supper and invited representatives from all the resident Associations. They recruited one new member, Michael, who quickly involved himself and became part of a small team which managed the Club's major refurbishment project. As ever, his keen eye to detail and control were invaluable and helped to make the project a great success. He was most popular, equally happy being an effective Committee member or serving his particular brand of cocktails at the Christmas party.

One of Mike's great interests was the theatre. In the years before he moved to the Crescent, he was involved in amateur dramatics, in many backstage capacities, such as stage design. He was a regular theatre-goer, both in Bath and London. Indeed, he had already booked a ticket to go to see *My Night With Reg* in London at the Apollo Theatre later this month. Among his great friends was the three-times Oscar-nominated film and stage director Stephen Daldry (*The Hours*, *Billy Elliot* etc), whom he encouraged when Stephen began his career in amateur productions at the Brewhouse Theatre in Taunton.

Michael adored cats: pure and simple. Many of us will remember Compton, his first cat in the Royal Crescent, who was followed by Tao. She lived to be 20 and was his constant companion at his apartment at number 10. Then, of course, Tao 2 arrived under a different name but she was quickly rechristened. Tao2 has been rehomed with his old committee colleague, friend and former Crescent resident, Jennifer Bereska

Michael appears on some now rare footage from a 1983 BBC TV film narrated by Auberon Waugh. He was one of a number of then residents interviewed and his love and regard for the Crescent clearly comes across. Although Michael loved to travel, most recently by sea, he regarded the Crescent as his anchor.



One week before he passed away, Michael won the prize for the best crown at this year's Society Festive Dinner. The crown was adorned with fairy lights and a tiny battery pack and in his typical fun loving style he jokingly promised to have them flashing next year.

In the last few years Michael battled serious illness with quiet dignity and resolve. He is survived by Roger who lost his father, Michael's first cousin, three days before Michael's death.