

THE
ROYAL
CRESCENT
SOCIETY
Newsletter



Issue No.22

Spring 1993

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Some members may feel that our affairs have been too much in the public view recently. Certainly the two main issues affecting life here - concerts and buses - have taken up a lot of my time. I hope that my comments as quoted in the press and on radio and television have represented the views of most members, most of the time. I hope you will come to the AGM on Thursday, 29th April and take the opportunity to express your feelings.

Such exposure is of course an almost inevitable fact of living in a unique environment that is so important to so many people outside as well as residents. Whilst discussing the bus problem with senior officers of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO) in Paris and London it was encouraging to see how well they knew the Crescent, how instantly they understood the threat and how willing they were to act quickly in our support. Even during the 'lost' County Council bus debate, more than one Councillor from the far sides of Bristol made clear their concern that the Crescent must be properly protected.

Discussion on the Concert issue has attracted the attention of National and London newspapers. The Mail on Sunday carried one article and is a vehicle for ticket sales. The Daily Telegraph is holding a story ready to print once the lawn problem has been resolved. The Evening Standard Diary ran an item about it, unfortunately misleading, and the editor declined to print my correction dictated the same evening.

Most residents accept all such attention with a degree of tolerance and resignation. However, it is my firm belief that we can and should use this outside interest to further our objective - *'to preserve and protect the Royal Crescent and its environment'*. We

have, asked for contributions to fund the lawn, railings and ha-ha maintenance from those who have made a commercial gain out of the Crescent as a prestige backdrop. This is particularly so when we cannot stop them, for example TV films and commercials. Such companies would expect to pay a fee anywhere else, and here the City Council's marketing department is very helpful. This is not begging but common sense. Why should such organisations make free gifts? Most companies understand and willingly contribute. The amounts may be small but they help our maintenance. There seems no difference in principle to seeking contributions from those who seek to use the lawn providing such use is strictly limited in type and number of events. The City Council's policy would achieve this. The report of the situation this year appears elsewhere in this letter.

As its temporary custodians we can use outside recognition of the Crescent's importance in other ways. I have already mentioned UNESCO's interest in the bus threat. Their UK World Heritage Committee is now actively monitoring progress in this matter in relation to Bath's status as a World Heritage site. Despite the temporary setback of the County Council's recent decision, our own Councillors - Mrs Margaret Wheadon and Mr Brian Pascoe who fought so hard for us - like your Committee have not given up; we have the support of most of the Bath City Councillors and our MP, Don Foster, has written with sympathetic interest. I hope at the AGM to propose, and receive further ideas on how we can pursue the case. We live in a public goldfish bowl with many people watching and taking an interest in our affairs. I hope we can turn this almost unavoidable attention to the benefit of the Crescent, our visitors and all who so rightly cherish it including ourselves.

CONCERTS ON THE LAWN

The position to April 9th 1993

After the Special General Meeting last October the Committee informed IMG, the Carreras organisers, of the residents individual veto rights over the use of the lawn, but for any future events we had a mandate to negotiate to Draft Contract stage on behalf of members only, based on the questionnaire responses. If one member vetoed the D C the Society would withdraw and IMG would have to seek every individual resident's permission (as it would have to do anyhow for non-members).

This produced some dismay in the organisers but no information. Relentless pursuit of both IMG and the Council Officers also produced no information about any specific future event, despite widespread rumour of Dame Kiri and Pavarotti, and comments attributed to IMG that they would be consulting residents. In fact all the consulting was your Vice Chairman trying to get something out of IMG.

Right up to the week end before the press release no information was being provided though the Hotel revealed that IMG had made block bookings for early September. The Council also told us that a contract for the use of the public park within its policy was almost complete but they would not supply a copy.

In desperation your Committee issued what little information it had in the Chairman's note fo 16/3. Then came the press announcement of 18/3 with its carefully worded description

of the location of the Concert in front of the Royal Crescent omitting any mention of the lawn. In spite of this letters of objection to the use of the lawn were instantly received from two members and these objections appeared in features and letters in the Chronicle:

The views of the silent majority of some 150 odd residents got some airing later on BBC Local Radio, when some residents spoke in favour of the use of the lawn and one disparaged the objections, dismissing any suggestion of disturbance during the Carreras event. Then tickets went on sale and IMG were quoted in the media - *'Unfortunately we have around 3000 less seats this year due to moving the stage'* - Thus, this year as last year, we are faced with having a concert anyway. What objectors have achieved is publicity for the individual right of veto, thus making it difficult for IMG to be sure of permission for the use of the lawn, and their decision to abandon it and thus our probable loss of revenue for the Ha-Ha restoration.

Your Committee will of course pursue IMG on those matters we can still try to influence, for example the policing of the lawn (in their interest as well as ours). We shall seek some funds for the Ha-ha restoration and seek to establish their real intentions. But at present it looks as if we have the worst of both worlds because of the difficult legal situation exposed at the SGM and its exposure prompted by the few objectors.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Besides the main topics of Concerts and Buses your Committee has dealt with several lesser matters.

The Crescent Racetrack

A member proposed we seek the installation of 'sleeping policemen' to reduce the traffic speed in the Crescent. In discussion the Committee decided against this on aesthetic grounds. Bath Preservation Trust would also oppose it.

Crescent cul-de-sac

Your Committee has decided to propose to members that the long term objective to protect against traffic erosion and solve the bus problem should be to make the Crescent 'Access only' and no through road, eventually leading to some form of traffic ban, perhaps closing off one end except for emergency vehicles.

Phantom Fence Erector

Despite further pursuit of HM Treasury and Avon and Somerset Constabulary no one

would admit to erecting railings on the law during the visit of the European Finance Ministers last year. After lengthy correspondence your Committee felt that the point of unauthorised intrusion had been well aired and decided to drop the matter.

Rear of No. 20

The Committee noted a new planning application for this half finished site for garage only (without flats above as in the existing un-implemented approval).

Bath Society

We have been invited to join the Bath Society since we have many similar aims, the Committee agreed on a no fee basis since we already send the Society our Newsletter.

Committee Minutes

These are of course confidential to the Society and are neither circulated to members nor read out at General Meetings. However, should any member wish to see them at any time the Secretary will oblige.

MEMBERSHIP ANALYSIS

Last year your Committee was anxious to get as many residents as possible to attend the Special General meeting. So, to identify all the residents, besides the usual methods, the Electoral Roll and the Community Charge records (both Public Documents) were checked at the Guildhall and with several gaps, mismatches and other changes known to the Committee about 150 residents were estimated.

Further analysis shows that of these nearly 50 appear to be single people living alone; a significant sociological change from the mainly family occupancy of the C19th.

NB There are 102 members - 1 co-opted and 4 friends.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

The 19th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Crescent Society will be held on Thursday, 29th April at 7.15pm at the Bath and County Club, Queen's Parade. After the meeting drinks and light refreshments will be available, to which we have invited our Ward and County Councillors.

Formal notice convening the meeting has been sent to all residents together with a request for nominations. Only paid up members are entitled to vote at the meeting. The constitution requires that all Officers retire after serving five years and are not eligible for re-election until after the Annual General Meeting of the following year. Committee members must retire after 3 years, at present no Committee member has served more than 2 years.

For practical purposes the number of Officers and Committee members must not exceed 9. There are now 5 Officers and 4 Committee members. Because of the amount of work undertaken by the Committee each member needs to take on a specific task which includes Remembrancer, Liason with other Committees, Archivist and Public Relations.

PRESENT OFFICERS

Chairman : Mr Michael Daw
(served 2 years) No 10
Vice Chairman : Dr Len Fisher
(served 6 months) No 29
Secretary : Mrs Shirley Parker
(served 2 years) No 10
Treasurer : Mr Ian Nesbitt
(served 3 years) No 3
Editor : Dr Monica Bay
(served 4 years) No 19

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mrs Annabelle Trechmann
(served 2 years) No
Mr Christopher Woodward
(served 2 years) No
Mr John Meddings (served 1 year) No 29
Ms Jenny Hardisty, co-opted for the Ha-ha project.
Special Co-opted member - Mr Pete Greening, adviser from the Bath Preservation Trust.

All existing Officers are willing to stand for re-election except Mrs Shirley Parker (Secretary) and Mr Ian Nesbitt (Treasurer). There are therefore 2 vacancies. It must be stressed that all remaining Officers and Committee members, must, and do stand for re-election and other candidates may be put forward. Candidates must be proposed and seconded by members of the Society.

The Committee has had a busy year and there is much to report. There is the continuing saga of the buses and our struggle to reduce their frequency, planning applications have been considered, there is the pressing problem of the restoration of the Ha-ha and the ever present problem of the use and abuse of the Lawn.

It is important that as many residents as possible come to the Annual General Meeting and give the Committee their views.

It is subscription time again. The subscription year starts on May 1st. Residents who have not already joined or rejoined for 1993/4 are asked to send their subscriptions of £5.00 per person to Mr Ian Nesbitt, 3 Royal Crescent.

Since the 18th century residents have paid towards the upkeep of the Lawn, the railings and the Ha-ha through a Lawn Fund.

It was administered through a firm of lawyers

but since 1973 it has been administered by the Society.

This essential aspect of the Crescent needs constant work

and it is hoped that residents will contribute :

The current scale of contributions to the Lawn Fund is per annum :

Whole House: £20.00

Large Flat or Maisonette on 2 floors: £15.00

Ordinary Flat (1 flat in 1 house): £7.00

Cheques may be composite and made out to the

Royal Crescent Society and the Lawn Fund.

Non-voting members who have an interest in the Crescent may receive the Newsletter and other material published by the Society through the post for £5.00 per annum. Friends of the Society may also attend the Annual Meeting.

EVENTS IN VICTORIA PARK

May 1,2,3	City of Bath Annual Spring Flower Show
May 9	A Life on the Ocean Waves. It's a knockout Family Fun Day Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society
May 21-23	Bath Balloon Fiesta - Victoria Park - pm
May 21 - June 6	Henry Rogers Funfair
May 21 - June 6	Bath International Music and Arts Festival Opening Night Celebrations Friday, May 21 Various events including Sculpting in the Park and Fringe Marquee
May 30	Norwich Union RAC Classic Car Rally - Royal Avenue
June 5	Bath Fringe Carnival
June 6	Micro Car Rally
June 12	Annual Cycle Races
June 19	Pre-School Playgroups Association - Summer Fayre
Aug 8 & 15	World of Music Art and Drama (WOMAD) - Provisional
Aug 28,29,30	Offley Port Classic Car Festival - Family Fun Day
Sept 5	Outdoor Concert Royal Victoria Park

CRESCENT NEWS

Members will be sad to learn of the death of Mrs Elizabeth Shaw on 8th April in the Intensive Care Unit in the Royal United Hospital. Mrs Shaw had been ill for a little while but was thought to be making a recovery. She will be sadly missed from the Crescent, an original supporter of the Royal Crescent Society she was a faithful member and will be remembered as a Viennese lady of great charm and elegance. Our sympathy goes to Christopher her son also a supporter of the Society.

Members will be glad to know that John Walker is making a steady recovery, he is sadly missed but we publish his letter below.

Dear Mike,

I am writing to thank the members of the Society for their very kind good wishes and, especially, the Committee for its very thoughtful and much appreciated gift at the time of my recent hospital stay.

The members' good wishes helped cheer me up during a somewhat unpleasant experience. And the books provided a most welcome escape from my surroundings - particularly as the usual breaks from routine passed me by. I was unable to eat during my fortnight's stay - or even drink for much of the time, though on Christmas Day I was allowed an egg-cup of water every hour! I was very touched by the Society's kindness to a non-member.

*With kind regards,
Yours sincerely*

John

Mr Philip Hall remains ill and suffering.

Mrs Phyllis Stone is now making a good recovery and we wish her well.

BASEMENT GARDEN COMPETITION 1992

Inaugurated by Mrs Phyllis Otley over 12 years ago this competition continues to attract a number of inspiring entries.

This year the

1st Prize goes to Mr J Thornton of No.3
2nd Mr A Le Correé of No 24
3rd Mr B Wilks of No 20

The variety and ingenuity of the basement gardens give pleasure to both residents and visitors alike. Mr Le Correé is not only the runner up in the Crescent Competition but he also received an award in the Bath in Bloom Competition.

THANKS TO THE CHAIRMAN

A Vote of thanks goes to the Chairman for his indefatigable stand on the subject of the Traffic Regulation Order and the open topped buses. In the week ending 27th February, with little warning and most of the Committee away he contacted UNECO in Paris, alerted Councillors, sent round a flyer to members, urged a barrage of letters and spoke on the radio, TV, and at the Avon Council meeting. We Have lost the battle for the moment but not the war, but thanks to our Chairman Avon and Bath are well aware of the strength of our feeling.

RECYCLING IN THE CRESCENT

KERBSIDE RECYCLING

Monthly Collections from your Home for:

Newspapers and magazines
Clothes and rags (in bags)
Drinks and Food Cans
Car Batteries and sump oil

The Collection in the Crescent is on the
THIRD WEDNESDAY IN EACH MONTH
21st April - 19th May - 16th June - 21st July - 18th August - 15th September
20th October - 17th November - 21st December

Letter to the Editor from Commander Parker

*10 Royal Crescent
8th April 1993*

Dear Editor,

I am sure I speak for many members when I ask that our Chairmans efforts in the battle of the buses be recognised.

I know that he has devoted many hours lobbying Councillors, Officials, other preservation groups including UNESCO, the press and television, by letter, telephone and personal contact.

Could you perhaps include a note in the Newsletter expressing appreciation for our Chairman's tireless work on behalf of the Crescent and its residents in this matter.

Let the battle continue !

Yours sincerely

John Parker