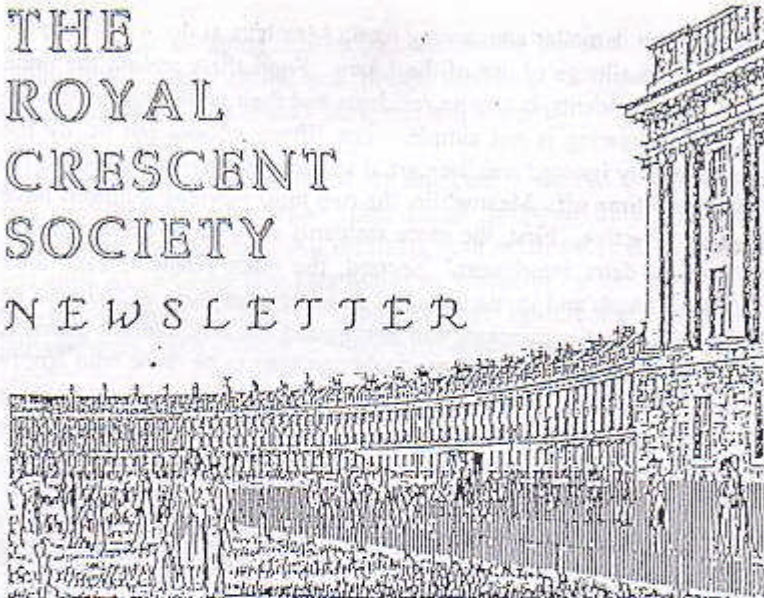


THE  
ROYAL  
CRESCENT  
SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER



Issue No. 31

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## Chairman's Notes

Tearing myself away from the Tennis, having studiously avoided the 1 and preparing for the Cocktail Party, the fortunes of the Society see more rosy than they were at the time of the last Newsletter, with the unfortunate exception of the Lawn Fund. By this time next year we can hope that the dreaded buses should no longer be with us, though the hurdles still to be jumped. The Heritage Lottery Fund Application for the House Restoration is moving better, thanks to the very energetic footwork of Christopher Curwen and the Bath Preservation Trust backing up Hardisty's sterling efforts. Your Committee has acquired two fresh faces who will worthily replace their stalwart predecessors. A very well attended Annual General Meeting not only endorsed most of the Com

actions so far, but in lively and constructive debate, made it clear that Members' views could by no means be taken for granted; your Committee will have to stay on its toes to keep up!

After the buses saga, a matter concerning many Members at the AGM was the two-centuries old challenge of use of the Lawn. Footballers remain the main difficulty for some residents, but some residents and their authorised guests are footballers. Line-drawing is not simple. The fifteen notices put up by the Society are frequently ignored and the partial solution of improving the Ha Ha as a barrier is sometime off. Meanwhile, the two most obvious solutions have been seen to be effective. First, the more residents are seen to use the Lawn, the more this will deter interlopers. Second, the more residents take their courage into their hands and invite intruders to leave (and there will always be "new" ones), the more the message will get around the city that the Lawn is off-limits. There have been and will no doubt continue to be those who ignore such requests and who can be unapproachable with safety. In these cases a very recent experience of one Member may have set a new precedent. She called the Police, who were not only prepared to intervene, but offered help in the future if required, especially when public disturbance was occurring or threatened. This new attitude may derive from recent changes to the Law of Trespass (which your Committee is researching). However, given that there are only a maximum of 6 or 8 policemen for the whole City, it remains to be seen how well or how often they could respond as well as they did on this occasion. Certainly it would not be reasonable to call them in for every single invasion - such calls would soon lose all credibility and could come to be disregarded. The lessons of this Summer's experience are that any solution to the problem (if that is what it is for you) lies in your own hands.

Some residents take a very alternative view. One, despite requests to desist, encourages his very large dog to defecate on the Lawn so as to discourage invaders; that this action makes the place unpleasant for residents seems to make no impression on him. Another resident considers that because there is no consistent control over use of the Lawn, then the Lawn Fund is undeserving of financial support - notwithstanding that the only two bodies who do or who are likely to do anything at all are the residents themselves and the Society as Managers of the Fund, for the specific items (gates, railings, etc.). Finally on this aspect, there is the notion of public duty. Not every "payment" in this life generates a consequent benefit to the payer. If we residents as current custodians of the Lawn failed collectively to maintain it, our image (awful

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word) would be severely damaged and, I believe, we would be seen to be mean and irresponsible.

In any group of some 150 souls, consensus on such issues is probably impossible. More credit and praise therefore to those who actually do something rather than merely complain and abstain.

The other directions of the AGM are reflected in various details in this issue or will be taken up next time. One happy proposal of the Committee was wholeheartedly endorsed. All residents have much cause to be grateful to our erstwhile Avon Councillor Mrs Maureen Wheadon for her "above and beyond the call of duty" efforts to fight our case against the buses through the labyrinths of Avon County Council over many years. As she is leaving local politics on the demise of Avon, the AGM warmly endorsed a special Vote of Thanks to her and the presentation of a small gift - a somewhat exotic houseplant. Mrs Wheadon was - for the first time for many meetings - unable to attend this year, so I had the pleasure of taking the gift, and a suitable letter, to her shortly afterwards. I am happy to report that she was most surprised and touched, wishing us well in what might be the final stages of our campaign.

The gremlins crept into part of my last Notes. Paying tribute to the splendid railings restoration project in nearby Catherine Place I misnamed it Cavendish. Further on, my tribute to the very fine restoration at the end of Brock Street somehow disappeared; as I tried to say, such improvements have a beneficial effect far beyond their specific site and enhance the ambience of the whole area by association. □

## Open Topped Buses

Following the "great news" passed to all Residents in early May that closure of the Crescent at the Marlborough Buildings end is now in the B&NES Budget for completion this financial year, Chairman has had advice of the next step in the bureaucratic process. The Area Engineer will "take a report to the Transportation Sub-Committee on 22nd July seeking authority to advertise the necessary traffic orders". This should be a formality and Committee is of

course continuing to lobby Councillors to ensure that it is, thus continuing their recent excellent support.

Our understanding is that once permission is given, the draft Traffic Order(s?) will appear in the local press and on nearby lamp-posts. They should, in official jargon, advertise the details of the closure, namely extending the pavement down the East side of Marlborough Lane from the back of No. 30, Royal Crescent to where it would meet up with the existing pavement further down the Lane and bordering the Park. The plans shown to Chairman and Vice-chairman last December by Council Officials (who transferred to B&NES) showed bollards along the length of this new pavement, the central ones being susceptible to being crashed down by emergency vehicles (e.g. Fire Tenders, etc.) without damaging the vehicles: this is quite a standard practice. There would also be appropriate signs at the East entrance to the Crescent warning that it was a No Through Road.

The advertised Traffic Orders seek only objections to the proposal and normally allow 28 days for this. Objections from individual and non-commercial organisations are dealt with by Officials and in Committee. Only the Bus Companies objections - if they register them - can force the expense and nausea of a Public Inquiry. We have an official record that the leading Bus Company in the saga, Badgerline, has stated that their Board might not object if any traffic measures affecting the Crescent could be seen as applying to all traffic and not just buses. Your Committee's view is that the plans we have been shown meet this criterion.

Once the 28 days are up, officials prepare yet another report for the Sub-Committee, which considers any new factors etc., and - we fervently hope - gives its approval for the physical implementation. Officials then have to slot the work into their schedule so that the money already approved for it can be spent in the approved period, that is before the end of the 1996/7 financial year by the end of March 1997.

There is of course a built-in gap between each one of these various events. Officials have promised to keep us informed and we will continue to seek our Councillors' help to move things along. However, the end does, finally,

## Loose Ends

Chairman reported the great news to our widespread supporters and has had encouraging responses. Our three local Councillors, Maureen Wheado, David Hawkins and lately but very helpfully Jerry Curran, have all been directly influential in getting us this far. Our MP, Don Foster has lent support and on hearing the news has assured us of more assistance should we need it. Our Vice President, Lord Stockton has been very helpful behind the scenes and always stood ready to ask a Question in the Upper House should we so wish. UNESCO had consistently stood by us and taken effective action at crucial times. We must all be grateful to them all at this stage - but we'll hold it in champagne until the last bollard is in place!

Mrs Vivian Rae-Ellis, leader of the Circus Residents' Association wrote Chairman a charming congratulatory letter on the great news. Given the news too successful - some would say pointless and tasteless - events in her own campaign this was a generous gesture; Chairman replied accordingly.

Those with long memories will recall the appalling delay by officials between July 1994 and late 1995 when they took no action on Councillors' directive to investigate ways and means of the closure. This delay was the subject of a formal complaint to Head of Paid Service, Bath City Council, in October 1995. He put the matter in the hands of the City Solicitor and promised to report back. That report never arrived, though the delayed action was taken with the results above. Imagine Committee's surprise to receive a letter in May 1996 from the former City Solicitor, now the B&NES Head of Legal Services, apologising that our original letter of complaint had been "lost or gone astray" in the chaos of the changeover of local authorities. And would we please send copies. We did, by return, hinting that the matter whilst technically outstanding had been overtaken by events - but as an earnest of his regret would he please speed up the current process? That was on May 27th. As we go to press (one month later) we still await his reaction.

The odd - sometimes very odd - long-distance coach occasionally rumbles through the Crescent in total disregard of the existing coach ban. Sterling residents often flag these down and remonstrate with the drivers, often making their point very effectively. Phone calls to the Coach's operating company headquarters - if there is time to catch the number of the bus and the other

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details - can be even more effective. Chairman recently tackled the director of a company called "The Londoners", whose vehicle double-parked outside No. 1 for well over half-an-hour, empty and with its engine running. Another resident had complained to the driver and the Bath Preservation Trust staff had also taken action, all to no avail. The company Director, unfamiliar with the Crescent finally contacted the driver and got him to move, but requested the details in writing. Yet another letter... However this did elicit a worthwhile reply for once, reprinted below. As Dr. Monica Baly has said many times: we shall only protect this place by "Constant Vigilance".

June 16th, 1996

Dear Mr. Daw,

Re: Incident at the Royal Crescent - June 7th, 1996

Thank you very much for your letter dated June 10th with regards to the misconduct of one of our drivers.

We can assure you that we will be speaking to the driver concerned upon his return from touring, and he will be disciplined accordingly. We wish to stress that such behaviour from our drivers is not the policy of this company and will not be tolerated. It is only from the good as well as the bad reports that we receive, can we judge how well a driver is keeping to our standards, and therefore we are grateful to you for taking the time to write to us.

We do hope you will accept our sincere apologies and trust that this incident will not be allowed to reflect on the service we strive to provide.

## Royal Crescent News

### Anatomy of an Incident - II

The final chapter of last issue's tale of the railing damage and insurance claim, etc., had the new local authority pursuing its absurd claim for £89.00 for the unasked-for provision of temporary railings. Vice-Chairman Tim Forester had summarily rejected their first claim to no avail and they returned to the charge (no pun intended!) with a stiff letter. He fired back an even stiffer one and has heard no more. Our case was pretty clear. There was no contract to supply the temporary railings, the police had told the Council to do it and thus invade our area and neither they nor the Council had consulted us about it beforehand. End - we hope - of story.

### Bollards to your Chevrons!

Because the Lawn railings at the east end have been demolished twice in twelve months, in precisely the same place, by speeding cars, your Committee felt that it was time to seek some formal protection for the site. Their initial idea was for reflective black & white chevrons to be fixed prominently to the railings (both accidents happened late at night). However the AGM rejected this proposal as ineffective and potentially aesthetically unpleasant. Instead, your Committee was directed to seek the erection of a suitably positioned bollard or even bollards, perhaps incorporating red reflective discs. Negotiations have begun with the local authority. Their initial reaction is of course negative, but as longer-standing Members appreciate, your Committee

## Punishment versus Crime

The car removal apparatus have been particularly active in the Crescent recently. The operation is very fast and a recent timing of 4 minutes was clocked between the removal crane thing arriving and departing, complete with offending car. This gives little time for owners to realise the risk and move the car before its wheels leave the ground (rumour has it that doing so can stop the removal process in its tracks, legally). Failure to act can of course result in a penalty of some £120 to retrieve the car from the Pound (plus the time and cost of getting there) and the cost of the Parking ticket itself. Given that one car was about to be removed for infringing a single yellow line for less than an hour one recent morning, in a road (the Crescent) 4 lanes wide, the owner was left baffled by the official logic which could have cost him nearly £150 for his "offence", when he reads regularly in the local press of serious, harmful villainy being let-off scot-free. Thus can ordinary, responsible - but forgetful or careless - citizens be disillusioned or antagonised. □

## The Lawn Fund

Residents have for two and a half centuries mostly fulfilled their obligations under the original house Leases to fund the maintenance of the Royal Crescent Lawn and its boundaries. When collections were first formalised in 1825, the rate per house was set at £2.20 per annum. When the Society was asked to take over management of the task in 1974, the rates were set at £7 for a normal flat, £10 for a large and £20 for a whole house. Despite generous donations from individuals from time to time, a regular handsome annual contribution by the Hotel since its refurbishment in the early 1980s and the irregular but very worthwhile contributions extracted by your Committee from film and TV companies using the Crescent as a backdrop, the fund is now in a state where it can just about support maintenance of the Lawn, but cannot finance even a "fix-up" paint and essential repair job on the railings.

Clearly an increase in the 22-year-old residents' rates is overdue and this was discussed in principle at the AGM. Your Committee will make specific



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proposals in the next Newsletter for approval at the next AGM. Meanwhile the Society has been researching public records to establish the actual Freeholders of all the properties in the Crescent (there are a number of permanent absent owners, Trusts, etc.) and will be approaching those who do not present to contribute. Persistent reminders of this ancient responsibility have also been sent to all residents every year, but some residents ignore the requests or some actively and for their own strongly held reasons consciously decide not to contribute: some of this feeling is reflected and reacted to in Chairman's Notes in this issue.

Your Committee, as Managers of the fund and the maintenance task are also starting fund-raising and as reported elsewhere in this issue, the first event is the long-awaited Summer Cocktail Party. Ross Stevenson, General Manager of the Hotel has very kindly provided the venue free of charge, and is allowing the Society to bring, organise and serve its own drinks without corkage, etc. He has also offered a splendid prize for the on-site Raffle of B & B for two people. Other Members have also generously donated very attractive prizes including very fine original paintings, porcelain, a day at Bath racecourse with lunch, and several bottles of Champagne, wine, etc. As the writer of this article goes to press, we look forward to a jolly evening and a good start to the fund-raising.

### Council's kindness!

As those who regularly attend AGMs will recall, the old City Council has over the years been dilatory about rendering its accounts for Lawn Cutting, scarifying, fertilisation, etc. On at least one occasion in the past persistent pursuit by your Treasurers has produced not only the missing accounts, but offers to reduce the accumulated bills. This happened again last year and the then Treasurer (Simon Crowe) negotiated another reduced bill. However, Council suddenly discovered that we had never been charged for litter clearance (even though it is left by Lawn Invaders, see separate article). It is also curious that as maintainers of a landscape, we are entitled to (and have in the past received) a grant from the selfsame Council for this responsibility! Something of a bureaucratic challenge which your new Treasurer Stephen Little is now sorting out - you may be sure to our advantage.

## Council's "Duty of Care"?

On another front, a well-led group in the City is to press for a formal decision on what responsibilities the local authority has, under the classic legal heading of "Duty of Care", for the damage caused to properties by the effects of heavy traffic. The case is mainly concerned with the traffic's impact on vaults or cellars under the road surface and old World War II surveys have been unearthed (again no pun!) showing where these are. The Council's initial reaction was wholly negative, so the Group is seeking advice by employing a Solicitor to frame the appropriate question to be put to a Barrister expert in such matters, for a Legal Opinion.

This costs money, of course and your Committee was approached with a request for support. Committee took the view that we had an interest in that the heavy traffic here was affecting the railing bases around the Lawn and that some wall cracks had appeared in some houses and under-pavement cellars, since the double deck buses started. However none of these could be positively attributed to the heavy traffic except by inference and we have no cellars under the road. Committee also had to consider that we are currently in a fund raising position ourselves for the railings, Lawn and Ha Ha Restoration. Committee therefore wished the group well and offered moral, but regretfully no financial support.

## Special Deal at the Hotel

The Royal Crescent Hotel is offering three nights for the price of two during August. The cost is £275 per person to include three night's accommodation, breakfast, dinner on two nights, a cream tea and champagne and flowers on the third night. This is a special offer and not of course exclusive to Members.

## Educator, Publisher and now Pundit!

Besides holding down a senior post - or posts - in the local University firmament, a distinguished resident, Dr. Len Fisher generously organises the physical publishing of these Newsletters at rock-bottom bargain cost. His many talents are now being recognised even more publicly with his erudite and witty appearances on national radio. Recently a short series of a Scientific Quiz programme began on Radio 4, in which Dr. Fisher hit several bullseyes with his answers; the temptation to reveal his team's final placing will be resisted!

## Hope Springs Eternal

It seems that after long and complicated negotiations, the garages site at the rear of Nos. 27 and 28 may be properly developed. Estate Agents Cobb Farr have put the garages and two flats above on the market with approved plans for their construction. It is very much to be hoped that this eyesore will be replaced by this development in the foreseeable future.

## The Royal Crescent Ha Ha - An Up-date

As many of you are already aware, the Royal Crescent Society Committee has for the past few years been concerned about the slow but steady deterioration in the condition of the Royal Crescent Ha Ha. Not only have the ditch and bank lost their original profile, but over many years the wall itself has been repaired unsympathetically. This wall is now deteriorating at an increasing rate, no doubt helped by lads clambering over it to play football on the private lawn. Recently, in fact, no less than 18 large stones have been deliberately removed from the wall and were later found in the ditch. These have now been

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replaced and cemented in by members of the Committee, assisted by a non-member Mr Tony House. Since this is the only urban Ha Ha now extant, this state of affairs can not be allowed to continue. With the objective of repairing and restoring the Ha Ha, two related initiatives have been taken, to resuscitate the restoration project started some years ago.

Firstly, with regard to the all-important question of funding. Our initial Application to the National Heritage Memorial Fund for permission to apply for a grant was turned down. It was only by the timely & energetic intercession of Sir Christopher Curwen on behalf of The Bath Preservation Trust, that this decision has been reconsidered, and I am now expecting the full application forms for funding to be forwarded to me. Let us hope that when the forms have been received, completed and returned that our application will be successful.

Secondly, I have obtained from The National Trust the name of a firm who would be capable of carrying out the necessary investigative work on the Ha Ha. They will establish the original profile of the bank, the depth of the ditch, and so allow the height of the Ha Ha wall to be calculated. In their letter they give the opinion of one of their field officers who has visited the site:-

"that a sensible way forward would probably be the hand excavation of one small test pit (say 1m by 2m maximum in plan), plus some hand-augured boreholes across the bank/ditch, to work out their profiles etc. His feeling was that this could be done in a day, by two people. The method would also be minimally intrusive."

I have written to the B&NES Parks & Cemeteries Manager who replied that he would be pleased to assist in our endeavours.

I have also written to the B&NES Built Heritage Manager who gave us the go-ahead for the above initial phase, and also expressed her wish to take an active interest in the project.

These two reactions are obviously helpful and in marked contrast to the dilatoriness of Bath City Council's Conservation Officer and the evaporation of his initial enthusiasm since the project was first mooted several years ago. We can only hope this new attitude will be sustained.

## Real Crime - with Violence

A few days before the Crescent's almost unattended Neighbourhood Watch Meeting (see separate article), two properties in the Crescent were broken into in broad daylight. The perpetrators were respectably groomed and dressed young white men whose appearance belied their ruthlessness. Given their description, the Police advised the owner of one of the properties who almost caught up with the pair, that had he done so, he would almost certainly have found himself seriously injured and in hospital.

The criminals' technique is simple. Ring all the bells in a multiple occupancy house and in the absence of any reply slip the door open using the old credit card technique. Start with the first floor, gaining entry by breaking the door down - in one case with enough force to take the frame of the door out of the wall. Keep watch for anyone entering the house. If they do walk casually down the stairs and away before the new arrival can see the damaged door. Meanwhile concentrate on stealing cash or small valuables. Dress respectably and look like, if anything, removal men. Speak politely but noncommittally to anyone on the stairs claiming to have been to see someone whose name you have got from the doorbells. Once out, move very quickly.

There are many many lessons to be learned from these episodes and several deterrent measures which can be taken: all much too long for this Newsletter, but which can be explored more fruitfully if another Neighbourhood Watch Meeting can be arranged and better attended. □

## Neighbourhood Watch I

Residents stayed away in droves from the Neighbourhood Watch Meeting recently. A total of 8 residents came, with only a further 6 being courteous enough to send their apologies for being unable to fulfil their earlier promises:

This number is far too few to set up a formal scheme and your Committee can only conclude that the majority of residents reject both the proposal and the 40% savings on house insurance premiums which a scheme attracts. How comforting that residents feel so safe - despite recent break-ins and even affluent!

The level of response was particularly disappointing for the organiser Ian Woodhouse who had spent much time with the Police setting up the meeting, provided 2 articles for the Newsletter and written to every resident asking whether they were interested. The Hotel had generously provided a venue with refreshments, without charge and our local Policeman Afan Hale came with videos and copious hand-outs.

The response was in such marked contrast to the enthusiasm for a scheme expressed at two AGMs and in over 30 assurances of attendance sent beforehand, that Ian and PC Hale are prepared to try once more giving residents a second chance to confirm their initial enthusiasm. If this also fails to draw sufficient support, the proposal will have to be abandoned. □

## Neighbourhood Watch II

Following the announcement at the AGM and circulation of the date to all known residents, the Neighbourhood Watch meeting was held on Tuesday 4th June at the Royal Crescent Hotel. However, the number of residents who attended was very disappointing, particularly when many had shown interest initially.

Because of this interest, residents will again be canvassed before a decision is finally made whether or not to proceed further.

Any interested residents can still contact Ian Woodhouse on Bath 337380. □

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"Would you give your impressions of the opening of the Bath Festival?", asked the Editor in her most persuasive manner.

I've never been very good at impressions, but it was, for me, a most memorable evening - though for reasons that would not impress the festival organisers. The opening procession was fun, with its colourful costumes and stilt-legged birds stalking across The Crescent. But the rain dampened the enjoyment and the shake and roll of the percussive music sounded much like the pots and pans I had been rattling in the kitchen, preparing a supper for friends.

What remains in my memory is the cauliflower I had picked that afternoon from my allotment just below Royal Victoria Park. It was perfection: its glossy green leaves cradled its glorious head, fully fourteen inches across and as pristine as a summer's cloud, each unblemished floret glowing with a milky-white sheen. Cauliflowers are a tricky vegetable to grow, and I had never had such a splendid success before. It tasted as good as it looked.

Instead of enjoying the anticipated balmy summer's evening strolling among the bandstands and side-shows, we sat in the dry, around the dinner table, enjoying good talk about this and that - one friend remembering his time in Greenwich Village, where he'd lived with a pet baboon.

As the evening darkened, we all climbed out of our sitting-room window onto the balustrade (living on the third floor has some advantages) to watch the fireworks. As the rockets burst overhead, I thought they made shapes in the sky just like my cauliflower...

Its season is now past, but the time of the courgette approaches. I usually have a glut, and have discovered an unusual way of cooking them, in a recipe for Courgette Nut Bread, which I found in *The Metropolitan Opera Cookbook*.

1 teaspoon of salt  
1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda  
1/2 teaspoon of baking powder  
2 teaspoons of ground cinnamon  
2 cups of shredded courgette  
1 cup of raisins  
1 cup of chopped nuts

To cook: preheat the oven to 180°C (Gas mark 4). Grease and lightly flour two 9 x 5 inch loaf pans. Beat the eggs, oil, sugar, black treacle and vanilla until thick and foamy. Combine the dry ingredients, then add to the egg mixture and stir until just blended. Add the shredded courgette, raisins, and nuts, mixing gently. Fill the pans with the mixture and bake for 1 hour. The bread is improved if you soak the raisins first in hot water for 5 minutes, then blot dry and coat lightly with flour. They will remain plumper and stay evenly distributed in the mixture, instead of sinking to the bottom of the pans.

Happy eating!

Barbara Walker  
10, Royal Crescent. ☐

## Rich Tapestry

Cross-stitchers have been cross, sample-makers, have been sad and tapestry-weavers weary, for centuries that no kit was available for them to "tat" a picture of their home. Suddenly, surreptitiously, help is at hand. In a somewhat quaint magazine called "The People's Friend", subtitled "The Famous Story Paper for Women" which seems neither famous itself nor full of famous stories, there appeared an offer for a "Superb Tapestry Offer" for a tapestry kit of the Crescent for "only" £15.00. The illustration of the 16 by 12 inch result looks colourful if a little simplistic. At least two Crescent devotees are needling away at their kits as we go to print. Any other readers who wish to follow the threads of the story can order the kits (complete with canvas, wools, needle and instructions) from: Customer Services, Readicut Wool, Terry Mills, Ossett, West Yorkshire, WF5 9SA, or call their Order Hotline: 01924 810810, quoting the Kit Reference Number 74177. Good tatting! ☐



## Graven Images

Other better than usual images of the Crescent have appeared from the hands of two local chaps. Artist Peter Brown (427189) has produced limited (300) edition of prints of his (sold) original charcoal drawing of the Crescent taken from the unusual viewpoint of the West entrance to Royal Avenue. It is nicely done, capturing well the brooding, heavy, nature of the architecture and mercifully free of the usual, hackneyed, chocolate-box approach. His work can be seen also in oils at the Summer Queen Square Sunday open-air artists' display, or around the city, as he paints his untypical but very lively and atmospheric views.

Lilliput Lane have for some time produced elegant miniature facades of famous Bath houses: Popjoy's entrance, Ralph Allen's House and the Brock Street archway house (formerly the access to St. Margaret's Chapel, long gone). These can be found at various shops, notably Chinacraft in Milsom Street. Now Ian Macleod has produced an even more attractive 8 inch high plaque of a Royal Crescent house which architecturally pretty accurate and delightfully detailed with open windows and even curtains! These can be seen as part of a series of other buildings, in the windows of the tourist souvenir and model shop on the south side of Pulteney Bridge, or he can be reached at Architectural Fine Arts, 18 Portway, Frome, (01373) 466700.

Meanwhile, on a less commercial basis, it was interesting to see that the Year 5 pupils of Culverhay School have created a 1:200 scale wooden model of the Crescent. Culverhay's Head of Technology was reported as saying that the children found it very satisfying to see the design process from planning to completion. No doubt John Wood would be pleased. □

## Royal Mail matches old GPO - almost

Many years ago, as reported in the Newsletter at the time, a certain resident congratulated the GPO on its ability to deliver on time a letter from the USA addressed simply (after his name) "Royal Crescent, England". He was almost equally impressed more recently when the Royal Mail successfully delivered another letter teasingly addressed to him by name but to the "Royal Chestnut, Bath, England". Neither used Postcodes, but the second may have been harder to crack.... ☐

## Stop Press I

On July 1st a Cocktail party was held at the Royal Crescent Hotel in aid of the Lawn and Railings Fund.

Around 60 people attended the party which was held in two rooms in the hotel by courtesy of Ross Stevenson the Manager who also provided free corkage. Our thanks to him and to Lesley Baker for making the arrangements seem so effortless.

Thanks also to Roy Titchen for transporting the cases of excellent red wine from Bergerac in the back of his car for the party and then unfortunately being unable to attend it.

Thanks too to Bill and Veronique Oswald for arranging the white wine at a very good price for us.

Lastly but by no means least we must all thank Mickey Kersley and her friend (who incidentally was a previous owner of No. 6) for so very successfully arranging the Raffle and collecting the prizes together and dealing with the

## Stop Press II

Who would have thought that when it was suggested at the AGM, to have a Cocktail Party at the Royal Crescent Hotel in aid of the Lawn/Railings Fund on July 1st that the weather would be full of wild winds, grey skies and heavy showers.

It would have been a lovely excuse for the Ladies to display their summer outfits in the gardens.

Nevertheless we enjoyed the ground floor rooms of the Hotel which buzzed with a summer delight of conversation. The showers had lifted by then but the garden was too wet.

At 8pm Mike Daw drew us all together for Lady Barraclough to draw the lucky tickets. Watching those with winning numbers step forward to choose a prize gave the proceedings an almost Cabaret atmosphere. That includes I must admit myself receiving a bottle of champagne.

Lesley Hudson Jessop from No. 30 had the first ticket out of the hat and she chose a night at the Royal Crescent Hotel. I suggested that she might motor down from Anglesey to make it all more exciting.

The evening drew to a close with a happy painless short walk home for most of us.

I thought the evening a success and I hope you did too.

## Stop Press III

Stephen Little at No. 22 has three new-born kittens to be given away. Born June 30th, they are:

- 1 ginger male
- 1 black male
- 1 tabby female

Contact him on (01225) 310180. ☐

## Notes from the Editor

Here is the Summer Newsletter containing the ever continuing sagas regarding the Crescent and there is good news to be found. Also serious subjects such as the Neighbourhood Watch to concentrate our minds.

I am most grateful to Dr Len Fisher for his very necessary assistance with the Newsletter and to Barbara Walker for her report on the Festival Opening and a delicious recipe for us all to attempt.

Please keep these themes in mind and we await your contributions.

I do hope you will find much of interest here.

Caroline Carrier  
No. 5, Royal Crescent. ☐

## BUSES - ROAD CLOSURE TO BE ADVERTISED

On 22nd July, in a 2-minute debate, Councillors agreed that the Traffic Orders to close the West End of the Crescent could be formally advertised. This is a further important step in the bureaucratic process. The Orders will appear in the local press and on notices by lamp-posts and are expected to allow 28 days for objections to be made in writing; letters of support are not <sup>normally</sup> sought and are not always taken into consideration.

This decision generated a lot of local media publicity (press, radio and television) plus an article in the Travel section of the Daily Telegraph of 27th July. The Chronicle's coverage included a very supportive Editorial (July 23rd).

The bus operators refused to appear on television and kept a low profile until the final report. Martin Curtis of Badgerline (First Bus plc) stuck to his oft-repeated and unconvincing hyperbole: "...this ban will effectively stop people from visiting the Royal Crescent..." "...for most people it is essential to travel by bus." "...the implications for tourism are serious." This nonsense contrasted sharply with a quote from the Marketing Executive of Bath's Tourism Bureau: ".....I do not think the ban will put people off visiting the City and the full grandeur of the Crescent is probably best viewed from the Royal Avenue." We couldn't agree more!

More ominously, Mr. Curtis said he would "almost certainly" object to the ban. If he does - thereby going back on his December '95 statement that measures against all traffic (which this is) might NOT cause him to object - he could force a Public Inquiry with all the public delay and expense that would entail. We pin

## HA HA RESTORATION - PROGRESS

On 31st July, contractors recommended by the National Trust were due to begin the long-awaited archaeological dig across the Ha Ha ramp, ditch and foundations. Your Committee decided to fund this, since though Council land is mainly involved - we were getting no co-operation or support from officials (as reported in previous Newsletters and at AGMs), despite their initial enthusiasm. At least this time they gave permission for the dig to proceed.

The contractors will produce a report which will be the basis for establishing what the original profile of the ramp, depth of the ditch and thus height of the wall most likely were. This will be used as part of the support for our bid for National Heritage Lottery Funds - the Formal Application Pack for which has now been promised for delivery to us by the end of July.

## NEW BASEMENT GARDEN COMPETITION - NOW!

The Society's existing Basement Garden Competition has, despite its modest prizes, encouraged the flourishing of several ground-level "fragrant bowers" and it will continue to run as in the past.

At the 1996 AGM, our President, Sir John Barraclough, paid tribute to those who had been so successful at this, but felt that there was scope for acknowledging and modestly rewarding those, perhaps new to the Crescent, or to the gardens, who had made the most improvement to their Basement area during the year. The Meeting wholeheartedly endorsed this idea and so this second Competition - for Most Improved Garden - has now started. Sir John agreed to be lumbered with the Task of Judge and Jury. The gardens give great pleasure to other residents and to our many visitors, besides being a rewarding achievement for those who work so hard and inventively on them. So if your garden could

**SPECIAL ISSUE**  
THE  
ROYAL  
CRESCENT  
SOCIETY  
Newsletter

**!BUSES BREAKTHROUGH!**

Great News! Bath & N.E. Somerset yesterday approved its 1996/7 Transport Capital Budget, which includes closure of the Crescent at the Marlborough Buildings end. This means that, barring Bus Company objections, the closure should happen this year, fulfilling our Access Only petition of 2 years ago. Formal procedures could take up to 6 months once started, but officials are pledged to complete the work within 1996/7, i.e. by March 1997 latest. Fuller details in next Newsletter (or call Chairman, Michael Daw on 315529)

**DIARY DATES**

The Neighbourhood Watch meeting will be held on **TUESDAY 4TH JUNE** at 7.30 pm in the Gainsborough Room of The Royal Crescent Hotel when our Community Policeman, PC Alan Hale, will give a talk. Please come - and save money on your House Insurance!

A **COCKTAIL PARTY** for all residents will be held in The Royal Crescent Hotel Gardens (indoors if wet) on **MONDAY 1ST JULY** from 6.30 to 8.30 pm in aid of the Railing Painting Fund. Many raffle prizes have been donated including B & B at the Hotel, much wine and other goodies. There will be canapes and wine at a cost of £10 per head for members, £12 per head for non-members. Mark the date - a further note will invite commitment to come shortly.

**MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS** are due by 31st May. Do **RENEW** if you have not done so yet - and save on the Party!

**HA-HA RESTORATION**

Our renewed bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund has been well received, thanks to the extremely helpful interventions, initiatives and support by Sir Christopher Curwen KMG on behalf of the Bath Preservations Trust. The Fund has now agreed to send us the Full Application Form which is a major step forward. The National Trust is also helping with advice on the Archaeological Dig.

## BATH FESTIVAL OPENING NIGHT - FRIDAY 17TH MAY

### CARS

The Crescent will be closed at both ends to traffic from 6.0 - 10.0 pm. The Society has arranged for Residents (and guests) to be able to enter from Marlborough Lane ONLY, from 7.0 - 10.0 pm on production of an Official Vehicle Pass. But only a limited number are available. Get yours - first come, first served - from the Royal Crescent Hotel Reception. PLEASE minimise your requirements.

### CANDLES

Do light yours in your windows at dusk. They have been provided free by the Festivals Trust, and it would be nice to help the evening sparkle and to out-do neighbouring streets.

### PROGRAMME

Full details in the Bath Chronicle on Wednesday 15th May; there will be the usual Dome Stage below the Ha-Ha in the public park, which will be put up starting Tuesday 14th May with lighting trials on Thursday and sound checks on Friday. Various musical and choral events are planned on the dome stage, after a colourful childrens' procession through the Crescent between 6.00 and 7.00 pm, including a band, stilt walkers, etc. Last year 25,000 people came to the event - mainly in the public park. The evening climaxes with fireworks on the Approach Golf Course (behind the Crescent).