



BATH PRESERVATION TRUST

Issue number 76 | Winter 2012

More
work
to do!

Inside this issue

- **No.1 housekeeper retires**
Hazel Seers, housekeeper at No.1 Royal Crescent for forty years, retires.
- **Annual Beckford lecture**
Introducing the inaugural Beckford Lecture, to become an annual event.
- **A matter of planning**
BPT committee members met with senior council officers to discuss consistency in planning decision making and matters of enforcement.

Editor: Caroline Kay

www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk

Message from Edward Bayntun-Coward

The doors to No.1 Royal Crescent were ceremonially closed to the public in mid-October. As I write, a team of staff and volunteers is packing and moving out the last of the 1,001 objects and treasures in order for the restoration and refurbishment of this grand house to commence. Our talented brigade of workmen are about to reopen the original connections to the service wing and we will soon be able to walk around the new rooms and take the lift without hard-hats.

As ever, our swan's feet are paddling fast beneath the surface, not least amongst our fundraising team. We still have £773,000 to raise. If you can help us – either by donating directly or sharing an idea we might not yet have explored – then please do get in touch.

I am asking you to join our final push and support our courage in reaching high. Yes, more words from his recent victory speech but, like President Obama, I am very optimistic that together we'll achieve what we set out to do, in our case to provide unparalleled public access to Bath's Georgian history via the experience of seeing life above and below stairs in the city's 'No.1' house.

I hope you enjoy reading more about the Trust's other activities and achievements since the last newsletter (previous issues are available on the website). I'm very proud of all our successes but do want to emphasise the excellent educational work we've been able to provide this year. Watching our young visitors enjoying activities focussed on history and heritage gladdens the heart.

Edward Bayntun-Coward. Chairman.

“We’ve got more work to do.”

President Obama – victory speech 2012

Introduction from Caroline Kay

It is not every year that you close a museum, thank goodness. And fortunately, our closure of No.1 Royal Crescent this year is an entirely positive one in that it is merely a major milestone in the expansion and transformation of our flagship visitor attraction to be bigger, better and built on its successful 40 year history. None the less, it feels very significant; the more so because our visitor numbers held up in this difficult wet Olympic summer which suggests that next year, when we re-open, the appetite for such visits will be undimmed. At least, we hope so! In fact we will also be increasing access to the Building of Bath Collection, with a new 6-day opening pattern and more joint ticketing. Onwards and upwards!

In the planning area, the Trust is glad to be considered an important enough consultee to be spoken to early by the Council on various major redevelopment projects. However, this does not reduce the necessity to keep up the pressure on various perennial niggles (or worse). Lamp-posts are an on-going problem, with the Trust having called for a coherent lighting strategy which respected the conservation areas of Bath for some time now. But the march of the new lamp stands carries on willy-nilly, with seemingly little thought to design, listed building considerations, location or coherence. This contrasts unfavourably with the conservation areas in the surrounding villages, where heritage lamp-posts are the norm. While this is of itself good, it seems odd that there is a lesser standard applied within the conservation areas of the World Heritage Site. We take seriously our role with the Council as 'critical friend': this is one of the areas where we may need to be more critical than friendly.

Caroline Kay. Chief Executive.

Bath Preservation Trust campaigning

Bath Green Homes

Bath Green Homes is the new name for the Bath Homes Fit for the Future community project which is jointly organised by Bath Preservation Trust, Transition Bath and Bath & North East Somerset Council.

The 2013 project was launched to great fanfare in October and promises to be bigger and better as the groundswell of interest, participation and support grows. There will be a programme of events, workshops and activities throughout March and April 2013, including the very popular and edifying Open Homes weekend where owners showcase their various energy saving measures. Read more at www.bathgreenhomes.co.uk



Former Fuller's earth works, Combe Hay

Longer standing members of the Trust will recall that there have been major concerns for many years about planning issues on this site at the southern gateway to Bath. The council is finally taking the enforcement action which the trust has called for repeatedly over the years, but unsurprisingly the owner of the site has appealed and there will be a further public inquiry to take place on January 29th 2013. We are currently compiling the evidence which we believe will demonstrate that much of the activity on this site is a breach of planning control and should be removed.

If you would like to support the Trust at this enquiry, or have any information you believe may be relevant, please contact Caroline Kay on ckay@bptrust.org.uk

Core Strategy

The Core Strategy examination process has now been suspended, as the Inspector had a number of questions which he required the council to answer before a decision could be made on the 'soundness' of the Strategy. The critical issues largely revolve around the methodology by which B&NES assesses housing need, especially in light of new requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework, and how they will meet that need. We believe the most important point for the Council to note is that determining housing supply is a two-stage process. First it is important to establish the NPPF compliant housing NEED. The second stage, however, refers to how you are going to meet that need. It is possible to fall short of meeting the need, if you can provide evidence to show that fully meeting the housing need would result in adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This is absolutely central for Bath: given its unique status as a city-wide World Heritage Site in a landscape setting, there are very significant constraints with a strong evidence base. These constraints cover both heights of developments and spatial allocation beyond the City boundary. We would suggest that once the housing numbers are determined, a robust argument should be developed in relation to the limitations on Bath's development, and then consider the impact which this has (positive or negative) on housing allocations in the rest of the district or indeed elsewhere in the region.

Having said all that, it is likely that the council may be bringing forward new land options for housing in the Green Belt or AONB. The Trust will expect to be consulted on these but our position continues to be that Bath's green belt should be respected and that housing should be confined to within the existing City boundary. The examination will resume in June 2013.

An aerial photograph of the Fuller's Earth site in Combe Hay. The image shows a large, irregularly shaped plot of land with various structures, including a large white rectangular building, several smaller buildings, and a large area of cleared land. The site is surrounded by fields and trees. The text "...A further public enquiry..." is overlaid on the image in a white serif font.

"...A further public enquiry..."

Fuller's Earth Aerial View

Bath Preservation Trust campaigning

Enforcement

Members of the Architecture and Planning Committee and the Environs Committee met with Senior Council officers to discuss consistency in planning decision making and matters of enforcement. The Trust is increasingly concerned that breaches of planning take place which are then dealt with through retrospective planning applications, rather than firm enforcement. This can result in the erosion of quality and standards and the setting of poor precedents. The Council recently lost a significant case in relation to their failure to enforce in the Woolley Valley, and our view is that many of the long running planning issues in both the City Centre and in the environs of Bath could have been well served by prompt, clear enforcement action. The National Planning Policy Framework is quite clear that effective enforcement is important as a means of maintaining public confidence in the planning system (para 207). To that end we would encourage BPT members to draw to our attention, and preferably to that of the enforcement team at the Council, clear breaches of planning control.

Other city-wide issues

The Council is undergoing a number of public consultations; a project about the City Identity; the roll-out of further elements of the Public Realm and Movement Programme (PRMP) including banners, signage and public art; and the beginnings of a coherent overall transport strategy. These are all encouraging developments and the Trust appreciates being a key consultee in all of these areas.

“These are all encouraging developments and the Trust appreciates being a key consultee in all of these areas.”



Ballance Street, Bath

Bath Preservation Trust

Rebranding

The opportunity to brand No.1 Royal Crescent with its own logo and website which The Whole Story Project gave us resulted in a much wider project and full review of all branded items and website content across the board. We chose an excellent design agency to work with us and as a result have launched new logos, new websites, new headed paper and other printed matter, redesigned the look of our online communications and produced a style guide so that we maintain consistency with our new look in the future. We hope you like it all. Do email Janey Abbott at jabbott@bptrust.org.uk if you want to give us some feedback.



Collections access project

Work on the Archive Strongroom at No.1 Royal Crescent is progressing well, including fire-proofing and floor-strengthening, to make it ready for the return of the Archives next spring. Catalogues of the Archives are being painstakingly compiled by our Archivist, Jo Johnston and her willing volunteers, including a composite catalogue of over 3,000 photographs. Publicity, such as the 'Behind the Scenes' tours at Museums at Night in May, has prompted much greater use of the Archives, especially by those investigating the history of their own houses. Jo can be contacted on 01225 333 895 or at archives@bptrust.org.uk

Bath Preservation Trust | Members' page

Members' drinks

Monday 3 December 12 – 2pm.

In the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel at the Building of Bath Collection, in the Paragon.

Do join staff, Trustees and fellow members for a glass of wine and a chance to see the new branding of the Trust and its museums, and hear the latest news on the development of No.1 Royal Crescent.

The BOBC shop will be open with extra items added including a variety of books on architecture. Members receive 10% on all items.

RSVP to petahall@bptrust.org.uk or 01225 338 727. We look forward to seeing you.

We always need new members!

One of the best ways to recruit new members is by word of mouth from our current supporters. So, any help you can give to encourage friends and family to join the Trust would be greatly appreciated. We need the support of our members more than ever at this time of expansion and development.

Trust tours

Thank you to everyone who attended our Tours programme in 2012 and for your generous comments – such as: "Thank you for such a wonderful day – the crowning jewel was Hughenden Manor – and the warm sunshine made it a real pleasure to see both house and garden....." We weren't so lucky with the weather on our other visits, but as always our members made the most of their time and didn't let the rain put them off!

Tours 2013

We will be mailing out priority booking slips in early 2013 so members can receive details of the 2013 tours programme and book places in advance of its publication in the Spring Newsletter.

Making a legacy in your will

Have you considered making a legacy to Bath Preservation Trust in your Will?

When Bernard Cayzer left No.1 Royal Crescent to the Trust, he gave us a marvellous asset which allowed us to develop a renowned museum. But he also gave us financial independence.

Legacy gifts to the Trust do not need to be as magnificent as No.1 to continue this valuable role. The Trust will be very grateful for any contribution that you are able to make through a legacy.

Bath's 'World Heritage' status means that our campaigning work continues to be an essential part of Bath's development, and our education and interpretation work ensures that the widest possible audience understands our purpose 'to encourage and support the conservation, evolution and enhancement of Bath and its environs within a framework appropriate both to its historic setting and its sustainable future, and to provide educational resources that focus on the architectural and historic importance of the city'.

The Trust's influence and independent voice is needed as much in the C21st as it was in the C20th. But our ability to fulfil this role is directly in proportion to our resources. Together with the support of our members, we need to add to this resource to continue to act for the benefit of the people of Bath.

If your estate is liable to Inheritance Tax, you could reduce the amount due by choosing to give the money to charity. If you leave a gift to a charity in your will, its value will not be included when valuing your estate (your money, possessions and property) for Inheritance Tax purposes. Gifts made to a charity in the seven years before your death are exempt from Inheritance Tax.

If after reading this you decide to leave a legacy to us in your Will, please contact Caroline Kay, in confidence, on 01225 338 727 or in writing at the Trust offices at No.1 Royal Crescent, Bath, BA1 2LR.



World Heritage Day | Sun 22 April



Sedan chair being removed

Restoration in action



Venetian windows



Kitchen corridor

The Whole Story Project | update

The Whole Story project continues to make good progress. Works in the 1a site, which is owned by the Brownsword Charitable Foundation, are close to completion. To date, the reinstated Venetian windows have been unveiled; the original street signs conserved thanks to a grant from the World Heritage Site Enhancement Fund; rooms redecorated using historical paint research; and the contemporary glass roof installed. The lift has been installed opening up parts of the museum for visitors with disabilities. The brand new shop (styled as a Georgian toy shop), Introduction Room and exhibition 'Home Truths' will open to the public in early January, so please do check our website for dates.

In No.1 things have also moved on apace. On 14th October No.1 closed for refurbishment, after a celebratory final weekend with events such as cooking demonstrations by our Georgian Cook Annie Gray, and dressing up. A frantic 6 week period of packing should be complete by the time you receive this. Our sincere thanks to the help received from many of our Green Spot House Guides and some new volunteers too.

Following a two-stage open tender process in May, Ken Biggs Contractors (KBC) were selected as the preferred contractor for No.1 works. Since then, we have been working closely with KBC to ensure that the works stay on track to reopen in summer 2013. To this end, KBC have been working in parts of No.1 since August, with the full building to be handed over at the end of November once the collections have been removed. We very much look forward to updating you on all the exciting developments on The Whole Story project in our next newsletter in Spring 2013!



Guides celebrate No.1 Royal Crescent closing

Housekeeper retires

Past and present trustees, staff and volunteers gathered at the Royal Crescent Hotel in September to say farewell to Hazel Seers, who has retired after an incredible forty years as housekeeper at No.1 Royal Crescent. A surprise guest at the celebration tea included former trustee Brigitte Mitchell, who had travelled from her home in France for the event, as well as previous Chairman Michael Briggs.

It is thanks to Hazel's efforts caring for the furniture and objects on display that the house has always looked its best when the doors opened every day for visitors and although No.1 Royal Crescent will never be quite the same without her, we wish Hazel a very happy retirement.

Closing ceremony 14 October



“It is thanks to Hazel’s efforts... that the house has always looked its best.”



Chairman with Staff members Louisa & Polly

Education

For World Heritage Day in April, the Trust gave the public a chance to try out stone-carving at the Circus which proved popular. In addition, Primary school students worked collaboratively to make a collage of the World Heritage Symbol.

In May, the exhibition 'Repairing War Torn Bath' at the Building of Bath Collection inspired an evening of 1940s music alongside a tour of the archives for the Museums at Night event. Visitors were invited to join in the spirit of the evening by wearing period dress.

Over the summer, five drop-in creative workshops were held at No.1 including designing a Wedgwood plate and making a reticule bag. Southcot Burial Ground was opened to the public on Heritage Open Day in September when an informative talk was given by members of Bath Beekeepers Association about the hives on site.

Students at local school St Andrew's acted as guides for their parents during a 'Take-over No.1' day and returned to help mark the closure of No.1, appearing in the guides photo in elegant costumes.

Fundraising update

Work on No.1 is well underway, however, this means our fundraising is even more pressing! We're tremendously grateful for Members' support so far, but our challenge is to raise the remaining £773,000. As custodians of the house and its many treasures we need your help to restore this iconic building and reveal more of life in 18th century Bath. For details of how you can support us, including opportunities to visit No.1 whilst we are closed to the public and to see at first-hand how the project is progressing, please contact Claire Owen on (01225) 338 727 or cowen@bptrust.org.uk

The Big Give Christmas Challenge

Last year we hit our £20,000 target – don't miss your chance to double your donation for free! The Challenge Fund is limited and match funds are distributed extremely quickly, so please note the dates to donate online – from 10am on Thursday 6th to Saturday 8th December 2012 – the earlier you can give the better, thank you!



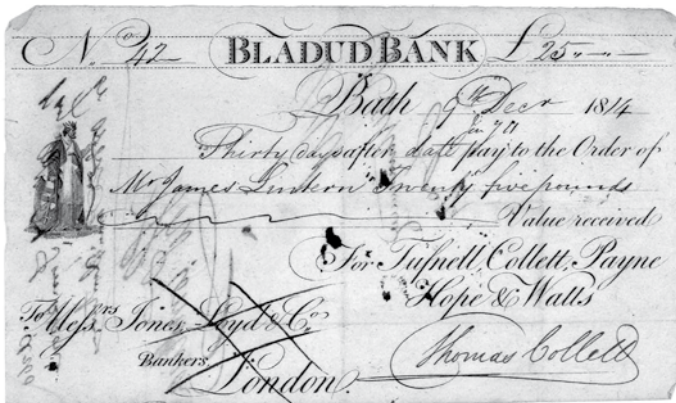
Stone carving

Building of Bath Collection

Bust!

Tales of huge mortgages, construction projects grinding to a halt and buildings left half-finished have not been unfamiliar to us over the last five years, and as the exhibition *Bust: How the Builders of Georgian Bath went Bankrupt* aimed to show visitors to the Building of Bath this year, it is a situation not unfamiliar to the history of Bath's development. Borrowing objects and items from collections across Bath, *Bust* illustrated to our visitors the banking collapse of the 1790's in Bath and the impact it had upon the continuing growth of the city. Original surviving banknotes from the 18th century were displayed alongside day books and records of developers in the 1790s and vividly brought to life the Georgian banking crash, an event that saw the end of mass development of townhouse terraces, and gave rise to the urban villa of the 19th century.

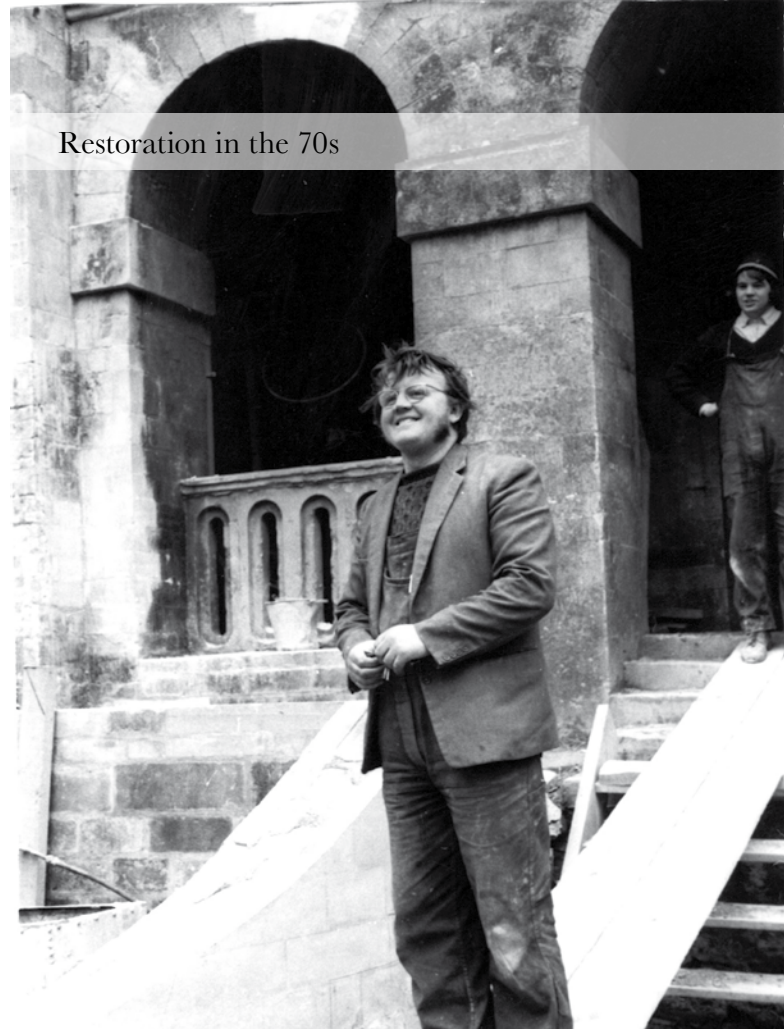
Accompanying the exhibition were a series of lectures that looked in depth at the ideas behind the Bath banking crisis and the impact it had. Generously supported by Handelsbanken the lectures were launched at an evening private view of the exhibition, which included a short talk by exhibition curator Amy Frost. The lecture series itself was highly successful, with large audiences attending that saw a mix of familiar faces as well as people new to the museum. The popularity of the exhibition and lecture series proved to us the striking resonances that the story of the Georgian banking collapse has had for those who live in the city today.



Music recitals

Once again we held an autumn series of concerts at the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel, providing the perfect opportunity to show off both the superb acoustics of the chapel building, but also the glory of our organ that sits for most of the year quiet and unnoticed up in the gallery.

Beckford's Tower



Restoration in the 70s

Saving Beckford's Tower

Commemorating forty years since it was first purchased and effectively saved the exhibition at Beckford's Tower this year celebrated the enthusiasm and dedication of Leslie and Elizabeth Hilliard, the saviours of Beckford's Tower. Using photographs and archives from the Hilliard's collection the story of how the Hilliards purchased the Tower in 1972 and opened it to the public proved to be popular with visitors, who enjoyed seeing the more recent history of the building, displayed alongside the tale of its creation by William Beckford in 1826. It also provided the perfect opportunity to use items from the Tower archives never before seen on public display.

Lecture: The Sugar Barons

This year for the first time we changed venues and held a Beckford's Tower event not at the Tower. Author Matthew Parker delivered a superb lecture on his book *The Sugar Barons*, a tale of sugar planting in the West Indies in which the Beckford family have a central role. The lecture was a great success, with a large audience and was fittingly held at St Swithin's Church, the Walcot parish church whose cemetery on Lansdown the Tower sits adjacent to. So pleased were we with the success of the lecture we shall now be holding an annual Beckford lecture in Bath every September.

Herschel Museum of Astronomy

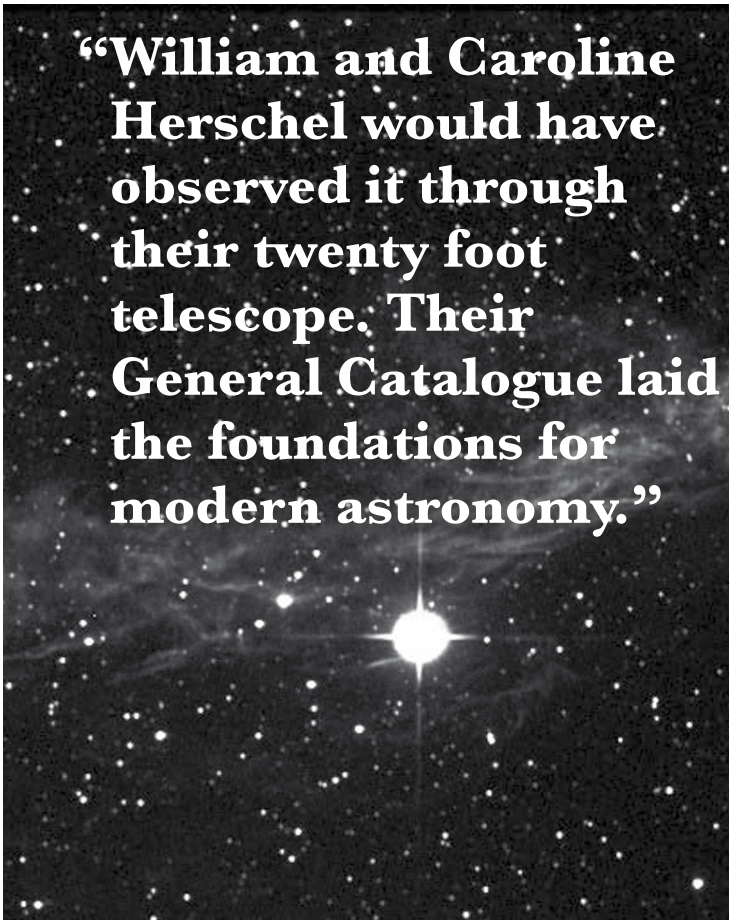
Constructing the Heavens

Constructing the Heavens, the special exhibition this year was curated by award-winning local astronomer Andy Burns. It gave visitors a unique opportunity to see the night sky as William and Caroline Herschel would have observed it through their twenty foot telescope. Their General Catalogue laid the foundations for modern astronomy.

For the 2013 season the museum is planning an exhibition, educational activities and lectures on the theme of 'Light' which will cover Herschel's work on infra red and the sun along with the creative and cultural aspects of these ideas.

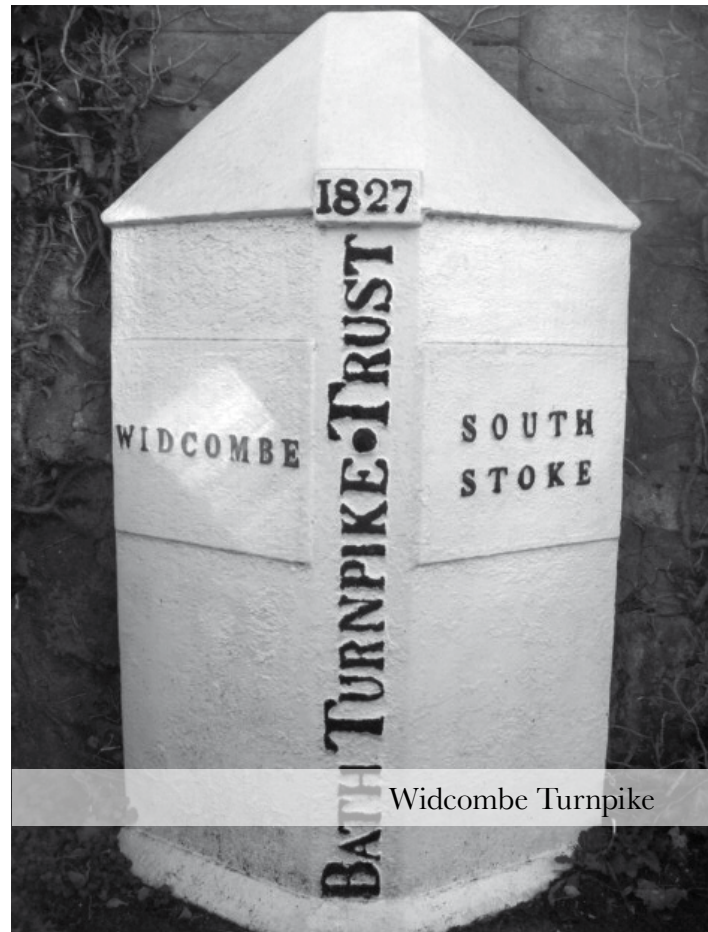
Music was a huge part of the daily life of the Herschels in New King Street. William gave music lessons and recitals and Caroline was a competent soprano. It was music that allowed brother and sister to pursue their passion for astronomy. This year with the help of a V&A Purchase Grant, the Beecroft Bequest and a donation from Mr. Andrew Fletcher, the museum has acquired an exquisite harp by George Cousineau and his son Jacques-George. The handsomely carved and japanned instrument is decorated in the Rococo style. It was commissioned by Mademoiselle Henriette Peyrot-Magenest a fashionable Parisian lady.

The Herschel and Wiltshire Astronomers celebrated midsummer in the middle of Bath with a successful solar viewing session. October 20th saw the only Star Party of the year when over ninety members of the public joined the astronomers to view Jupiter and its moons. Observations included the Andromeda Galaxy 2.5 million light years away!



“William and Caroline Herschel would have observed it through their twenty foot telescope. Their General Catalogue laid the foundations for modern astronomy.”

World Heritage Enhancement Fund



World Heritage Site Enhancement Fund

Bath Preservation Trust administers this Fund which has now completed over 20 projects and has a further 20 in the pipeline.

Together these represent over £400,000 of enhancement works. By working with partners, we have been able to organise and support enhancements costing five times more than the Council's grants to the Fund. The latest projects include Ralph Allen's Tomb, the Chairman's ramp at Portland Place, railings repair in George Street, the conservation of more incised street names, and the completion by our volunteers of the cleaning and painting of all 19 of the 1827 Bath Turnpike boundary markers. Proposals for new projects are always welcome. David Beeton, Chairman, dcbeeton@yahoo.co.uk



BATH
PRESERVATION
TRUST

We are a membership organisation and a registered charity.
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