

BATH MATTERS

THE BATH PRESERVATION TRUST NEWSLETTER

95



Let's get together



With over a thousand like-minded members all possessing a shared passion for our city and a keen interest in its future, it is little wonder that in a members' survey last year special events were voted as being one of the key benefits of BPT membership.

Events are a great opportunity to meet fellow members, plus of course BPT's team of conservation experts and museum staff, who are always keen to hear thoughts on "all things Bath".

Last year The Newt visit (pictured) was a high point of our programme, and our Events Co-ordinator Courtney has been working hard to deliver a 2023 programme that has something to appeal to everyone, including

those below which take place over the spring and summer.

Upcoming member events

31 May 2023: Members Lecture, 'The Beckford Letters' with Dr Amy Frost at The Museum of Bath Architecture. Limited tickets remaining, available online through the following link: <https://bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk/product/EVENT00095>

June 2023: Members Lecture. Details to follow; please check our website for updates.

6 July 2023: Members Visit to Bishop's Palace and Gardens, Wells. Details to follow; please check our website for updates.

11 July 2023: Bath Preservation Trust AGM at Bath Spa University, Locksbrook Campus. **Booking essential, names will be checked at the door.** Details to follow; please check our website for updates.

21 September 2023: Members walk in Bath exploring conservation projects in Bath undertaken by the World Heritage Enhancement Fund with Dr Amy Frost and Ainslie Ensom.

Cover image: The wall mural in The Georgrobe, a new dressing up experience at No.1 Royal Crescent designed to appeal to all ages. Sponsored by HomeLets.



We're going digital

In order to save paper and funds, we are retiring our occasional postal events bulletins.

Events will continue to be listed in our biannual Bath Matters editions, and will be posted to our website and in our monthly email newsletters. To hear about upcoming member events and be the first to know when tickets are released, be sure to subscribe to our monthly newsletter and check our website regularly.

For help subscribing to our email newsletter please email membership@bptrust.org.uk

Welcome to our spring/summer 2023 issue of *Bath Matters*. As always conservation is at the forefront of our activities, and our new campaign “Conservation in Action” is providing much food for thought for staff and visitors alike.

Conservation in Action is an exciting new programme exploring conservation in all its forms, raising awareness of exactly what conservation entails, and why it can be necessary in a range of different contexts. This spans from protecting historic fabrics and artefacts from insects and other destructive elements at No.1 Royal Crescent, to examining the impact of light pollution on our night skies at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy, to advocating for the sustainable management of change and enhancement of the City's architecture. Featuring talks by industry-leading

professionals and interactive activities and events, this programme offers a fascinating look behind the curator's curtain. Do visit our websites for details of “Conservation in Action” and “Dark Skies” themed events and activities.

This issue's front cover features our new dressing up experience, “The Georgrobe” at No.1 Royal Crescent, which incorporates a bespoke wall mural by local artists Jason Dorley-Brown and Emma Taylor and a display cabinet of satirical prints. The contemporary mural features some of Bath's most iconic buildings and characters. More on page 12.

Our Advocacy and Campaigning team have continued to hold local government and developers to the high standards necessary to ensure the protection of our cityscape and surrounding Green Belt. This has included responses to key planning applications such as the Gasworks site at Western Riverside, Sulis Down and Beckford's Ride. More on pages 6-9.

As always, we would like to say ‘thank you’ for supporting BPT and making our work possible, including the protection and sustainable enhancement of our wonderful City and its precious green setting.

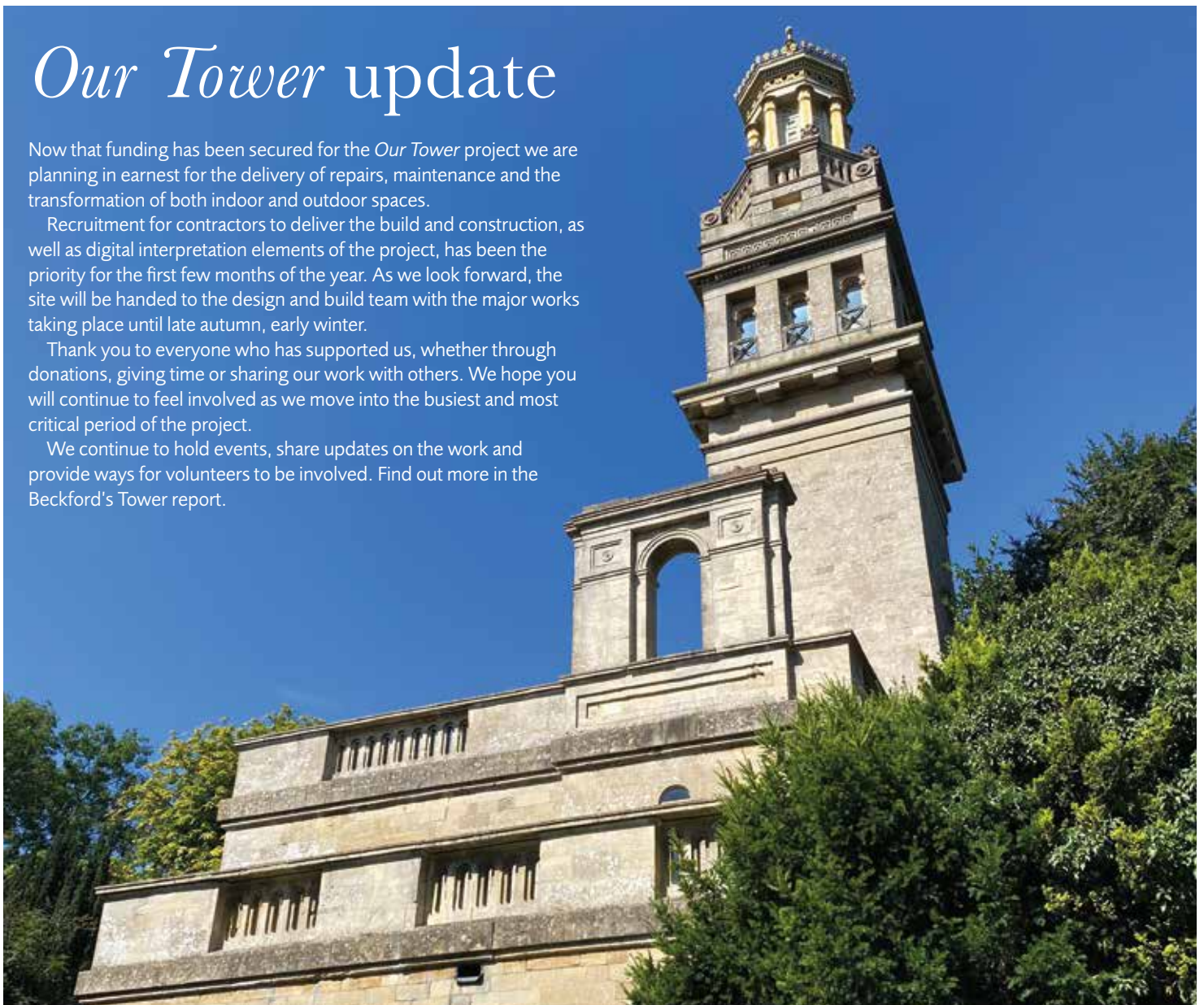
Our Tower update

Now that funding has been secured for the *Our Tower* project we are planning in earnest for the delivery of repairs, maintenance and the transformation of both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Recruitment for contractors to deliver the build and construction, as well as digital interpretation elements of the project, has been the priority for the first few months of the year. As we look forward, the site will be handed to the design and build team with the major works taking place until late autumn, early winter.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us, whether through donations, giving time or sharing our work with others. We hope you will continue to feel involved as we move into the busiest and most critical period of the project.

We continue to hold events, share updates on the work and provide ways for volunteers to be involved. Find out more in the Beckford's Tower report.



Welcome



Comment from the Chair

BPT Chair Thomas Sheppard

Bath Preservation Trust campaigns for the conservation, sustainable enhancement and celebration of the unique historic City of Bath as a World Heritage Site. At our heart are the principles of informed advocacy, learning for all, and the provision of authentic heritage experiences at our four museums, through partnership working and online.

These ambitions are owned and promoted by our trustees, all of whom are unpaid volunteers bringing their own talents and enthusiasm to all we do. Trustees are appointed for three-year terms by our membership and the appointments are staggered to ensure continuity. There are currently 14 trustees, and we look to attract new expertise to maintain an engaged and committed team. As well as the business of the trustee board, we expect our trustees to serve on at least one of our committees, each of which is chaired by a trustee so that all decisions are made by or on behalf of the trustees.

Our newest recruits are a good example of the range of experience and background to join our trustees in the last year. Annabel MacGregor is currently the Director of Education for the English Speaking Union, with a background in education and the creative industries. Donna Speed is currently the CEO of *We the Curious* in Bristol and she brings experience in business leadership in both the charity and leisure sectors. Finally, Julian Gooding is a senior lawyer who has spent his career working with banks across the world. He has held leadership governance roles at board level and advised on international financial regulation, governance, and risk.

One thing Annabel, Donna, and Julian share with all the existing BPT Trustees is a passion for Bath and the work of BPT; a passion they are willing and able to support with the gift of their time and their expertise. BPT would not function without the work of our trustees, and I am very grateful to every one of them for all they bring. There will be a chance to meet

them at our AGM and hear more about all our plans for the coming year. The AGM will be held at the *Bath School of Art, Film and Media and Bath School of Design*, Locksbrook Road, Bath, BA1 3EL on the 11th July; this is the former Herman Miller building designed by Sir Nicholas Grimshaw in 1976 and one of the newest listed buildings in the City.

Finally, I can highly recommend our events schedule as we have plenty to offer; one event which has caught my eye is on Wednesday 31 May at 4pm at the Museum of Bath Architecture. This is a talk by our Dr Amy Frost on the Letters of William Beckford; he was a complex man, and our research has helped us inform our approach to how we tell the story of his life, his relationships, and his wealth from the transatlantic slave trade.

Thank you for supporting Bath Preservation Trust.

Thomas Sheppard

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Architect's insight...

Clive England, Director, Thomas Ford & Partners

The 'Our Tower' project is the first significant piece of work to be undertaken at Beckford's Tower in the past 35 years. During that period, and particularly recently, environmental considerations have come to the forefront of everyone's thinking and now form a significant part of any building project. Preserving our environment is just as important as preserving our heritage and there is a very good synergy between these two important objectives.

The current restoration project at Beckford's Tower is multi-faceted, containing significant elements of repair, conservation, interpretation, and servicing. Reducing the

carbon footprint of the building is a key objective of the project brief. The most significant changes that are being made include the replacement of the old oil-fired heating system with an environmentally-friendly air source heat pump (ASHP, for short). The old heating boilers are being removed and the heat pump will sit in the location that is currently occupied by the oil storage tanks. The ASHP creates no pollution and is very cheap to run, with the added benefit of being able to provide a consistent level of heating to the interior of the Museum rooms. In addition, the flat roof over the Museum rooms will be used to

provide a base for an array of photovoltaic cells, which provide another source of green energy whilst also being invisible from ground level.

The existing metal window frames are in poor condition and will be replaced with new matching frames but this time fitted with slender double-glazed units which will improve the thermal performance of the building. Part of the work to the elevations involves infilling a number of window openings (dating from the 1960s) in order to reinstate the original window layout. This will have the beneficial effect of improving the thermal performance of the building, as the stone is a much better insulator



Comment from the CEO

CEO Alex Sherman

BPT has always been a charity which has confronted successive contemporary threats to Bath, in whatever form those threats may take, to ensure our community, economy and environment can thrive. Bath is thriving but it also continues to face new threats, the most obvious of which include unsustainable development and the climate and ecological emergency.

In response, for the next few years we will focus on two priorities for our advocacy and campaigning: seeking Design Excellence for new built development and enhancements to the historic environment, and Sustainability so that the urban centre may move towards an equilibrium with its luxuriant green setting, rapidly reducing emissions and improving quality of life.

We will of course continue to champion our unparalleled historic environment, promoting sensitive and sustainable enhancement and highlighting the evident shortfalls in what comes through the planning system. BPT will lead by example and show how to decarbonise our unique and challenging historic buildings and the inevitable challenge of enabling appropriate renewable energy sources in a protected urban landscape.

Famed internationally for its strong sense of design, city planning and architectural heritage, the double-inscribed World Heritage status of our City brings millions of people to Bath. It drives many parts of our economy, including tourism, heritage and culture, wellbeing and retail, which bring growth and a strong sense of place and civic pride. Bath has bounced back from COVID more quickly and positively than almost any other city in the UK and it feels vibrant and loved. Our two universities lead the knowledge economy and the University of Bath is one of the most respected schools of Architecture in the world.

Despite the overwhelming prevalence of the respectful, striking and awe-inspiring architecture we have inherited, with the importance of its integrity paramount, Bath continues to be confronted by inappropriate large-scale new development which threatens to dominate and detract from our historic environment. Again, Bath Preservation Trust has needed to raise its voice about the future of Western Riverside in light of plans for a wall of high-rise blocks which would visually separate our beautiful City. Development proposals which are a flagrant breach of local policy - being too tall, too imposing and which completely ignore the aesthetic principles

which created Bath.

We urgently need affordable and sustainable housing in the heart of Bath, which respects the World Heritage status and follows local policy, which states no more than six storeys in height. The St William Gasworks development proposals consisted of eight storey high-rise blocks, taller than the landmark building Sovereign Point on Bath Western Riverside. If low-rise, appropriate and affordable housing can be managed in London, why not in Bath?

After writing an open letter to Bath NES Council, the developer, Historic England, ICOMOS and UNESCO, Bath is now being watched to see what happens next. We hope for the much-needed housing and regeneration the former Gasworks site needs, but without sacrificing the character, views and beauty of what we already have.

Recent events have shown that the threats to Bath are ever-present and that BPT has an essential duty to fulfil. The support of our members and our partners is as important now as it has ever been to ensure we can continue that duty, to stand up for the future of our wonderful World Heritage City.

Alex Sherman

than the glazing that it replaces. There are many smaller details throughout the project that will also contribute to these environmental improvements. These include everything from specifying timber from sustainable sources to the use of energy-efficient LED light fittings, and all have their part to play in reducing the environmental impact of the scheme whilst also reducing running costs.

One of the most interesting and challenging parts of the project is to restore the spectacular Lantern which forms the upper part of the Tower. This is largely made out of timber and is in an incredibly exposed location which, on

several occasions over the building's history, has led to water penetration and damage to both the structure and the internal finishes. The repairs to this element will utilise a specialist timber called Accoya which is modified through a natural chemical process in a way that makes it very robust and highly resistant to rot. However, the most unusual part of the project will undoubtedly be the excavation and restoration of the long-lost Grotto Tunnel which was constructed by William Beckford as part of his private route between the Tower and his home in Lansdown Crescent.

Finally, with any project of this nature, it is

always worth remembering that retaining and reusing historic buildings is inherently sustainable since it avoids all of the many environmental downsides of demolishing old buildings and replacing them with new ones. Fortunately, although it is currently on Historic England's 'at risk' register, demolition was clearly not a risk that faced Beckford's Tower, but removing it from the register, and providing it with a sustainable future will be two key outcomes of the project.

Rewilding the night

Light pollution in Bath and its rural fringes continues to worsen, as our Green Belt is eroded and with the proliferation of cheap to run, blue spectrum LEDs. The night sky over Bath today looks very different to how it did in 1781 when William Herschel discovered the planet Uranus. It is a sad fact that William and Caroline Herschel's discoveries would have been impossible had they stargazed under current light pollution levels.

Recent planning applications have highlighted a potential increase in obtrusive light along the skyline to the south of Bath, and harmful effects of light spill and sky glow on landscape character and views and the World Heritage Site setting. "Dark skies" are one of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape, which is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. AONBs have the same level of protection with regards to landscape and scenic beauty as national parks.

Cumulatively increasing luminosity will have a significant intrusive disturbance to habitats, contrary to B&NES' objectives for the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Blue spectrum LEDs used in street lighting are a real problem for many species of insects, causing populations to crash and upsetting the food chain. LED lights can also impact people and studies have shown higher night-time light levels impact sleep quality and even melatonin production.

BPT will challenge proposals for dusk until dawn illumination, street lighting that is unnecessary and too bright or excessive in its siting, so that we have greater protection for areas of ecological sensitivity that need to be

kept dark and wildlife-friendly. Well-designed lighting must balance the needs for safety with minimised illumination and light spill. Simple solutions, such as late-night dimming or a reduction in the number of street lamps, have worked in other areas and could easily be applied throughout the City. Where lighting is intentionally reduced it is important that residents and businesses do not over-compensate for it.

The BPT and Herschel Museum's "Dark Skies – Rewilding the Night" campaign is raising awareness of the impact of this growing problem and promoting practical solutions for people to take.

In March we led a local call to collectively reduce light pollution for Earth Hour, a global campaign which amplifies how acting differently for just 60 minutes can spark a world of change. Earth Hour, organised by the WWF, inspires people to take climate action by asking people to switch off their lights for one hour as a symbolic stand. Since then, 188 countries have taken part and more than 17,900 landmarks around the world have switched off their lights.

BPT urged residents, institutions, organisations and businesses across Bath to take part in a mass switch-off or dimming of lights, which could temporarily reduce sky glow and lower carbon emissions, restoring the natural darkness of the night sky over Bath for the benefit of people and wildlife. In Bath we have several iconic illuminated landmarks including the Abbey, Prior Park College, Pulteney Bridge and the Roman Baths and the impact of switching off these lights, and "Rewilding the Night" for Earth Hour would be really powerful. We will initiate this call to action again in 2024.

The Herschel Museum is delivering a packed events schedule of themed stargazing sessions and talks throughout the year. Attendees will learn how they can effect change in their own communities, in order that they might one day enjoy a better view of the night sky from their own back gardens.

Dark Skies – Rewilding the Night forms part of BPT's "Conservation in Action" programme across all museums running throughout 2023.

New Local Plan and NPPF set to shape City's future

A greater emphasis on sustainable development, the continued protection of the Green Belt, the need for up-to-date housing target projections, priority for affordable housing, meaningful engagement for communities, and the uncertainty of "beauty" for achieving well-designed places, were all important issues stated in our response to the national consultation on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There has been wider criticism that the changes to the NPPF do not go far enough in terms of addressing the challenges posed by climate change, would do nothing to improve housing quality, and will lead to an under supply of housing. On top of this, new

'national development management policies', still lacking any detail, would take precedence over any policy laid out in a council's Local Plan. For the first time the NPPF brings 'design codes' into focus. However, the timetable for new-style plans and phasing out of Supplementary Planning Documents creates some uncertainty about how design codes will be given weight within local plan documents.

B&NES Council's new Local Plan (2022-2042), which sets out local development management and placemaking policies, is now underway (we responded to the launch consultation in November 2022) and we are calling many of the changes at national level into question.

The Council is currently asking for development sites which will be reviewed for the suitability of housing, economic development and renewable energy. BPT will be actively engaged in reviewing these sites and the evidence base for policy-making ahead of the next stage of consultation in September. By engaging with the Local Plan, we can all play a part in shaping the City's future and help ensure that Bath remains a thriving, accessible, green and liveable city where first-class decarbonised development is respectful, sustainable and responds positively to the unique World Heritage landscape.

Green open homes 2023

Calling all retrofitters! Whether you own or rent, Bath's greenest homes are invited to showcase energy efficiency improvements, best practice design, innovative solutions and whole home approaches to carbon reduction as part of an open homes weekend event in October. The Green Open Homes event is a partnership between Bath & West Community Energy, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Buro Happold, Transition Bath and BPT. If you have undertaken energy efficient improvements and would be willing to join others to create an inspiring trail of open homes fit for the future please contact conservation@bptrust.org.uk.



Hope for old King Edward's School

Without the risk of appearing too optimistic after 30 years of inaction, there are signs that B&NES Council are preparing to take steps to resolve the developer impasse. BPT has made it clear that it wants to work with them to secure a viable future for the building. The building is owned by Samuel Smith Brewery and planning permission was secured for change of use to a hotel in 2010. The Grade II* listed building remains on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.

Planning applications at a glance

Full and detailed responses to planning applications and consultations are available online

Western Riverside Gasworks Site

The Local Planning Authority is considering proposals by Grimshaw Architects and developers St William for 616 new homes on part of the former Gasworks site. BPT supports the opportunity to regenerate this vacant brownfield site and provide new homes on Lower Bristol Road. However, we have raised significant concerns about the height (buildings of up to 8 storeys), massing, and scale of development. Our open letter highlighted the potential for cumulative harm from several 'high rise' developments along the riverside. We have called for the protection of Bath's World Heritage Site status, in line with UNESCO recommendations, with buildings of a height and scale that would work with, rather than against, the special qualities of Bath and its setting. This will ensure the provision of high quality, affordable housing with adequate green outdoor space for future residents. A planning application for much needed affordable housing on part of the Gasworks site owned by B&NES Council is imminent and raises similar concerns in response to height, layout and amenity space. For both sites we are encouraging an approach to residential development that maintains density and space standards while not exceeding 6 storeys.

Former Regency Laundry Site

Following a refused scheme for the development of a 'co-living' scheme with mixed-use residential and shared working space, it is now proposed to develop the former Regency Laundry on Lower Bristol Road to provide a 4-storey self-storage facility. This brownfield site is ripe for redevelopment, but the proposed scheme would be of an excessive height, scale, massing, and depth and would result in harm to local townscape character, as well as overshadowing the gardens of the neighbouring terrace. We have encouraged the consideration of a mixed-use residential scheme that provides much-needed affordable, key worker housing.



Sulis Down Phase 1 As-Built

Phases 3 & 4 of Sulis Down

BPT has responded to amended plans for up to 300 new dwellings on the Sulis Down plateau, just outside of South Stoke. The absence of a comprehensive site-wide masterplan, and the piecemeal approach to development within the Cotswolds AONB and the sensitive landscape setting of the World Heritage Site are seriously concerning given how a masterplan would be of benefit for integrated and well-designed placemaking. Amended plans have highlighted development 'creep' onto neighbouring agricultural land within the Green Belt and the setting of the Wansdyke, a Scheduled Monument. We have challenged the over-dominance of hard landscaping and car parking where this has resulted in a lack of public or private green space, contrary to the scheme's "Garden City" principles.



University of Bath Lightspill © Alex Hansen

Floodlighting at University of Bath Campus

Increased floodlighting on the University of Bath campus in Claverton is proposed as part of works to provide outdoor sports facilities. BPT has highlighted the potential impact of cumulative harm with the observable increase in light spill and 'sky glow' on the Bath skyline, in conjunction with permitted floodlighting on neighbouring courts. Increasing light spill would be of detriment to the landscape setting of the World Heritage Site and 'dark skies' character of the AONB, and would harm wildlife habitats and biodiversity.



Debenhams Visual © Rockhunter

Former Debenhams Store, Southgate

BPT consulted with the architects at pre-application stage on plans to bring the vacant Debenhams store in Southgate back into use. The scheme would see the ground floor reopened as a shop and the upper floors converted to office or research lab use. The upper floor windows would be enlarged to improve the building's access to natural light and ventilation, and the ground floor colonnade opened up to improve this area of the public realm. BPT is strongly supportive of the reuse of this prominent building and has encouraged stronger reference to the architectural principles that informed the design.

Solar Arrays in Rural Areas

BPT has supported several planning applications for the installation of ground- and roof-mounted solar panels within the rural setting of Bath, which were shown to sit unobtrusively within the landscape setting, where harm was outweighed by public benefit - such as the generation of low-carbon energy, reduced energy costs for residents, and an overall contribution towards net zero targets. Applications included proposals for a roof-mounted solar array on the community-run shop and café in Freshford, as well as a ground-mounted solar array at Charmydown Farm House within the Cotswolds AONB.

Waterworks Cottage

Since developers received the go-ahead to demolish the 19th century Waterworks Cottage a new application was submitted for the development of two new dwellings on this garden site, following an earlier refused scheme in 2020. BPT has continued to campaign against overdevelopment of the site due to the harm to local character and setting of the Conservation

Architecture, Planning and Place

Area and World Heritage Site. We have called for the cottage to be retained as a sustainable family home. The application has since been refused as it would fail to "maintain the character and appearance of the surrounding area".

Eco Home on former Folly Inn

BPT has supported plans for a new 'eco home' on the former site of the 19th century Folly Inn, next to the Kennet and Avon Canal. The proposed family home would be entirely off-grid and powered by solar panels. The building would be constructed in hempcrete, a low-carbon material without precedent in Bath. Proposals also integrate ongoing plans for biodiversity improvements to the woodland and the repair of the surviving ruins of the former inn and brewery.

Beckford's Ride

Proposals for the development of a new dwelling on a parcel of land behind Dixon Gardens in Lansdown have been met with local opposition. The site was formerly part of the historic landscape of Beckford's Ride, connecting William Beckford's residence at 20 Lansdown Crescent with Beckford's Tower, and contains a series of Grade II retaining walls and garden terraces. BPT has continued to resist any development on this site, following an initial development attempt back in 2014, on grounds of harm to the setting of multiple Grade II listed structures.



Beckford's Ride

Your voice



Dear BPT,

We bought a listed property a couple of years ago and carried out a full renovation of the house (including new electrics/plumbing). We have now lived in the property for a full 12 months and are keen to explore ways in which we can improve its energy efficiency.

We noticed a nearby listed cottage applying for secondary glazing, which prompted our curiosity as to what options we would have for glazing. Our house is Grade II listed and all glazing is single, which naturally means the thermal efficiency is dreadful.

We were wondering if it would be possible to have a conversation with you about options available for listed properties and how you think the Council planning department is looking at energy efficiency upgrades.

Resident, Bath

We'd love to hear your views and queries on heritage and planning issues that matter most to you.

Please write to us at
conservation@bptrust.org.uk
or call **01225 338727**



Our response

BPT is encouraging of retrofit measures to improve thermal efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, in response to the Climate Emergency and to reach net zero by 2030.

Where a building is listed (and listed building consent may be required), measures are assessed in relation to the 'whole home', looking at what measures could best work together for the building fabric and performance, energy use and waste, and any particular historic or architectural qualities. This is also to try to mitigate unexpected consequences of certain retrofit options such as increased humidity, condensation, or damp. The public benefit of sustaining heritage value and reducing carbon emissions is weight against any degree of heritage harm. BPT is supportive in principle of measures that have no or limited impact on historic fabric, or are reversible.

For windows there are three options advocated by BPT:

- a) Draughtproofing
- b) Secondary glazing
- c) Slim profile timber double glazing

Option a) is the least intrusive, which includes the repair of existing windows. Windows are re-fitted, and any cracks or gaps susceptible to draughts are infilled to minimise heat loss. Draughtproofing strips or seals can be chased into sash frames. Other measures include the use of sash draught excluders which can sit on top of the meeting rail, or the use/enhancement of thermal curtains, blinds, or shutters to minimise heat loss through glazing in the evening.

Option b) is a 'light touch' intervention which, combined with option a), allows for existing windows to be retained and their thermal efficiency improved. There are several options, including magnetically-fixed glazing, or a separate sash/casement frame within the internal reveal. Installation requires listed building consent, which is often granted.

Option c) BPT is generally supportive of the use of timber framed double glazing (typically 12-14mm thickness in Georgian buildings) where this is appropriately detailed and the windows replaced are non-historic. Aspects of detailing include the width and profile of glazing bars, the use of integral rather than 'applied' glazing bars, and a fenestration pattern that matches the typical window style, such as the 6-over-6 sash pattern used throughout Bath's Georgian buildings. We are seeing lots of listed building consents for slim profile double glazing being approved.

The Council's guidance on retrofit measures for windows is set out in their Supplementary Planning Document for Energy Efficiency, Retrofit and Sustainable Construction and BPT's 2011 Warmer Bath Guidance for Improving the Energy Efficiency of Traditional Homes contains information for windows and other measures.

Learning and Engagement

Schools and outreach

2023 began with a bang for our Learning and Engagement team who have welcomed a number of school trips to the Herschel Museum of Astronomy and No.1 Royal Crescent. Enquiries continue to flood in and the team is expecting to welcome 10 more school visits over the summer term.

Conservation in Action is our theme for the year, and we've woven this into all of our experiences for schools and families.

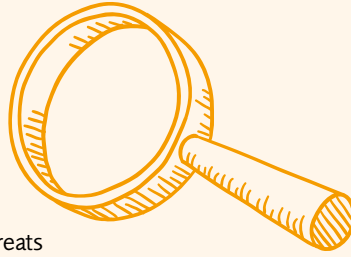
We continue to offer our popular loan boxes; at just £25 per fortnight these represent excellent value as a useful learning aid for primary school Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 students.



Learning and Engagement

Conservator Challenge

Younger visitors to No.1 Royal Crescent can take a look behind the curator's curtain with our new Conservator Challenge. Young investigators can hunt the different threats to artefacts around the Museum, stopping pests and pollution in their tracks!



The Orseis Transportation Fund

We were very pleased to accept a generous donation of £2,500 from the last remaining funds of the Orseis Trust towards our school transportation fund, a sum which will remove the financial barrier of travel for schools already impacted by the cost of living crisis. In gratitude for the generous donation we have renamed the fund the "Orseis Transportation Fund". We hope that this will encourage more schools to visit our museums even in these challenging times.

Dark Skies

The "Conservation in Action" theme continues at The Herschel Museum of Astronomy, where the focus is on light pollution. We gave children the opportunity to make their own star viewfinders as part of the National Star Count during February half-term. We also held a number of stargazing events in conjunction with Bath Astronomers, in which we highlighted the importance of a clear dark night sky not just for astronomers but also for wildlife.

Family Learning Awards

We were thrilled and very honoured to be shortlisted in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) category for the Campaign for Learning Family Learning Awards. These awards celebrate imaginative, innovative and inclusive ways of delivering learning opportunities to families.

Summer activity plan

This summer we will be running a series of family events with Bath Astronomers, along with continued planetarium drop-in sessions at local community centres and libraries. We will also be running activities in both museums' galleries – further information will be on our websites.



Planetarium on tour

The pop-up planetarium was such a hit last year that we are continuing to offer sessions at schools and community centres in the local area (with thanks to the University of Bath for their generosity in lending us the planetarium, and to Bath Astronomers for their assistance with the programming)

No.1 Royal Crescent



Open now
until the end
of 2023

Looking Georgeous

Our Gallery has been revamped as a walk-in wardrobe or “Georgrobe”. Dressing up is optional – but recommended!

Once suitably attired, pose against our stunning bespoke mural wall, created by talented local artists Jason Dorley-Brown and Emma Taylor of Jet Pictures, installed by Minuteman, and kindly sponsored by HomeLets. We love it so much,

it had to be the cover of our latest issue of *Bath Matters*.

The floor-to-ceiling mural weaves together the themes of traditional architecture and historic socialising, in a modern artistic style. It

showcases many of Bath's iconic spots, including our very own BPT museums, all in one place.

The Georgrobe is free to enter (with a voluntary donation for those who feel able to).

Conservation in Action

We kicked off this year's theme of 'Conservation in Action' at No.1 Royal Crescent with a brand-new Conservator Challenge trail and pop-up talks conducted by our Museum Assistants.

Our pop-up talks have proved popular giving visitors more information on how we look after the objects in our collection. We also had our first Conservation in Action lecture with Duncan Campbell; valuer, dealer and regular silver specialist on BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*. Duncan talked us through the processes involved in silver and metalwork conservation, what impacts this conservation, and how to look after silver and metalwork. It proved to be a fascinating evening with great insights and advice on a specialised subject. The Conservation in Action lecture programme continued with a Harpsichord Conservation Talk, Painting Conservation Talk and a guide tour of the Bayntun-Riviere Bindery. Check out our website for other upcoming events.

Gift shop

The shop offering continues to grow with some fabulous new t-shirt designs inspired by strong women. Our range of books has also expanded with literary-themed cocktail recipe books and rewritten versions of Jane Austen's classic novels aimed at children. The literary theme continues with the fantastic Literary Map of Bath produced by our friends at Persephone books. The map highlights 45 authors over three centuries who lived, visited and wrote in and about Bath.

Collection highlights

A series of newly acquired satirical prints are being displayed in the Gallery at No.1 Royal Crescent to complement the interactive Georgrobe experience. These prints cast a mocking eye over the fashions and manners of the wealthy visitors to Bath.

The late 18th century was known as the Golden Age of British satire. Artists and publishers in the fashionable West End streets of London tapped into the new consumer society and produced, displayed and sold thousands of single sheet satirical prints. These prints poked fun at royalty, political figures and situations and the excesses of wealthy society.

The 1770s saw the rise, quite literally, in women's hair. Professional hairdressers were engaged to create towering hairstyles, sculpting natural hair and wigs into inverted pyramid shapes, ornately decorating and powdering them.

As seen in one of the prints on display, *Ridiculous Taste or Ladies Absurdity*, satirists ridiculed these extreme styles, and their mockery was also aimed at the vanity of these women and what they saw as foolish French fashions (where this hair craze began). It was not just women who fell prey to the caricaturist's eye. The flamboyant styles adopted by fashion-conscious men were also frequently lampooned in cartoons.

Another of the prints on display, *A Modern Belle going to the Rooms at Bath*, is by one of the most popular and successful artists, James Gillray. Gillray worked in partnership with his publisher, Hannah Humphrey, establishing a printmaking powerhouse over a 30-year career. Their legacy still has an impact on modern day cartoons.

These prints were part of a generous bequest by the late Dr Derek Gibson, along with an unparalleled collection of 17th and 18th century architectural books and prints related to Bath, and the rare Kirkman Harpsichord on display in the Withdrawing Room at No.1.

By Izzy Wall



Accessible tour and translations

The offering at No.1 continues to become more accessible with new translations of our QR code object information into the most frequently requested languages, and a new accessible tour. This tour allows users who cannot access the whole of the building to see 360° photos of each room and listen to and watch any of the tour they may have missed, all from their own devices.



Bloomberg Connects App

We are pleased to enhance our existing experience at No.1 Royal Crescent with new supporting information on the Bloomberg Connects App, a simple tool which visitors can use to complement the physical interpretation at the Museum.

Beckford's Tower and Museum

The Cane Warriors production team © Richard Budd



Our Tower might be closed but there is plenty going on behind closed doors.

Dancing in the Tower

Following a performance of "Coleridge Unbound" by State of Trust, which involved a dance interpretation in the Tower, we are now looking ahead to a production of Cane Warriors based on the novel by author Alex Wheatle (with thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for their support). Visit our website for further information.

Work begins!

Project Manager Michelle Williams and Capital Works Director Simon Butler have been pushing the *Our Tower* project forwards, securing planning permission and hiring contractors ready for the works to begin. Our curators have carefully packaged and stored the Tower's precious artefacts, books and paintings, ready for when the Tower reopens next year. We are pleased to report that the work is now underway, and we look forward to sharing updates as the Tower is transformed! Please email Michelle Williams on mwilliams@bptrust.org.uk for information on how to get involved, or to sign up to receive our "Our Tower" newsletter.

Engaging with the community

Our Activities Officer Marie has been busy arranging and meeting with focus groups consisting of representatives from the local community and disability groups in order that we are able to sensitively inform the improved access arrangements, facilities and interpretation in the Museum.

To find out more information or to enquire about joining one of our focus groups, please email mbrewer@bptrust.org.uk

Telling the story of Beckford

Our curatorial and interpretation team have been researching the best way to tell the story of Beckford and his Tower, with honesty and sensitivity, and have been informing their research through recent visits to the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, National Museum Wales and the Museum of the Home in London. All of these museums are active in their work to research and appropriately address the themes of colonialism and enslavement. The final interpretation approach will also be informed by the results of the community focus groups.

Collection highlights

New (old) books for Beckford's Tower

The extensive library compiled by William Beckford during his lifetime contained illuminated manuscripts, rare printed works, volumes with interesting provenance, fine proofs of engravings and new publications. Thirty-one works known to have been in Beckford's ownership from the Blavatnik Honresfield collection have recently been donated by the Friends of the National Libraries to Beckford's Tower, with over half of the books containing Beckford's handwritten pencil annotations. It is the most substantial donation of Beckford books to have been received by the Museum.

Included in the Blavatnik Honresfield books are Beckford's copies of Matthew Lewis's *The*

Monk (1796) and Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1799), both known to have been in the library at the Tower in 1844. The new collection also includes a rare set of 56 unlettered proof engravings for Samuel Roger's long poem *Italy* published in 1830, which Beckford obsessively referred to in his letters until they arrived in Bath.

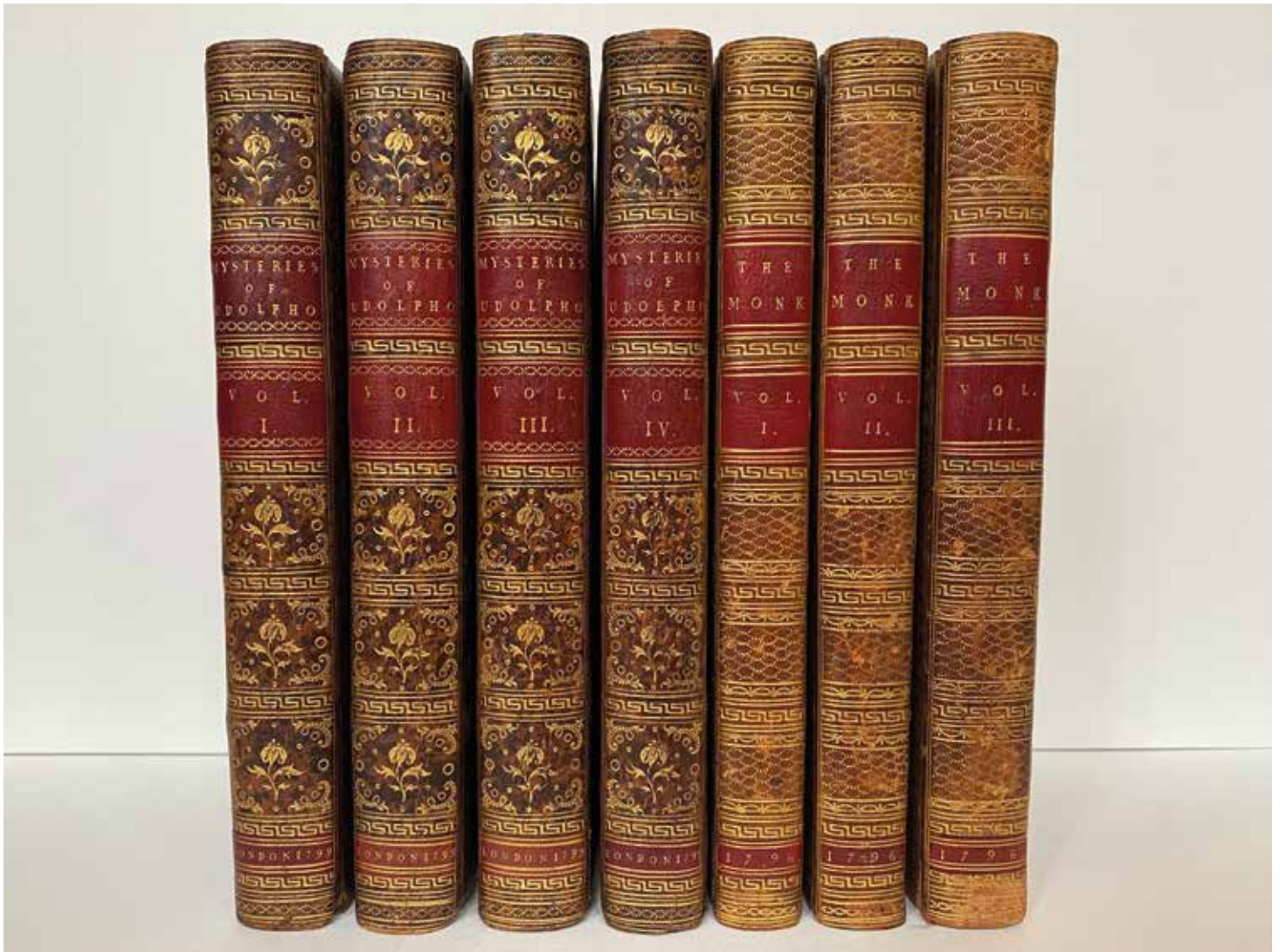
After Beckford's death the complete book collection in Bath passed to his daughter, Susan, Duchess of Hamilton, who moved it to Hamilton Palace in Scotland, and eventually sold it as part of the Hamilton Palace Library sale in 1882. It was from this sale that the majority of the Blavatnik Honresfield Beckford volumes appear to have been acquired.

This donation has doubled the amount of Beckford volumes now in the Beckford's Tower collection. This allows for a wider choice of works to be displayed, linking volumes to specific themes within the interpretation of the Museum. This makes the books central to our ability to tell the complex story of Beckford's life, writing and relationships, as well as his wealth from transatlantic slavery and the collection that it funded.

We are very grateful to the Friends of the National Libraries for their support in donating these important books from the Blavatnik Honresfield Library to us.

By Dr Amy Frost

Beckford's book collection



Herschel Museum of Astronomy

Collection highlights

On display at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy for the first time is the draft manuscript of Caroline Herschel's Memoir. This important document was acquired late last year with support from the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, National Heritage Memorial Fund and Friends of the National Libraries.

The 57 pages of draft recollections in this manuscript were written around 1836-40 and provide content for chapters I and II in *The Memoir and Correspondence of Caroline Herschel*. This Memoir was published in 1876 and edited by Margaret Herschel, wife of Caroline's nephew John.

The manuscript is written in two sequences.

In the first, Caroline writes about her childhood spent in Hanover from 1755. She recounts her childhood experiences and the limited education she received. She recalls fond memories of observing an eclipse with her father in the reflection of a bucket of water, while he explained the phenomenon. It closes with Caroline's description of her journey to England, and arrival in Bath in 1772.

The second sequence, written when Caroline was becoming more elderly and frail, opens with the memories of her arrival at her brother's house on New King Street in Bath on 18th August 1772 and chronicles her first three years in the City. Caroline writes about the education she received from William and her struggles

when she arrived in England, from finding like-minded friends to dealing with dishonest servants. The manuscript offers an important insight into the Herschels' professional lives as musicians in Bath, as well as William's increasing interest in astronomy and his telescope-building endeavours.

To protect the manuscript from light damage, the page displayed will be changed every three months. A transcription project will be launched later in the year, to enable the content of the manuscript to become accessible to all.

By Izzy Wall



Herschel Museum of Astronomy

Caroline Herschel's memoir transcription to begin this summer

Caroline Herschel's Memoir manuscript is one of the number one attractions in the Museum at the moment, and we are very happy for her to have her moment in the spotlight! The Memoir is one of just two original objects of Caroline's that we have in our collection (not including loans from other museums) so we are thrilled to have recently acquired it with the support of Arts Council England / V&A Purchase Grant Fund, National Heritage Memorial Fund, Friends of the National Libraries and private donors. This summer we will be looking for volunteers to help transcribe the manuscript. Subscribe to our email newsletter and/or follow us on social media to be the first to hear about this opportunity.

Caroline to speak her mind

We are planning a modernised interpretation of the manuscript by translating it into an Instagram Reels-friendly format. Keep an eye on the Herschel Museum's Instagram page to see "Caroline" share her secrets and speak her mind on camera.

Bloomberg Connects App

We are pleased to enhance our existing experience at the Herschel Museum with new supporting information on the Bloomberg Connects App, a simple tool which visitors can use to complement the physical interpretation at the Museum.

Dark Skies

Our key theme at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy this year is "Dark Skies", so we've been doing a lot of "looking up" - even by our standards. In February we took part in the National Star Count with a special star-gazing event with Bath Astronomers, highlighting the impact of light pollution on the ability of stargazers to clearly see stars and planets which would have been easily visible over 200 years ago when Caroline and William Herschel were making their discoveries.

Bath Astronomers' member Jonathan Hall is currently undertaking the Herschel 400 challenge to see how many of William Herschel's discoveries he can spot even with today's light pollution; follow his progress on the Herschel Museum's Instagram page.

This year Bath Preservation Trust called for local organisations and individuals to switch off their lights for Earth Hour; a message shared by our CEO Alex Sherman on BBC Radio Bristol back in March.

Keep an eye on our website for further Dark Skies related events over the summer.

Museum of Bath Architecture



Chapel of change

Most meetings held at the Grade II* listed Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel are cold beyond comfort, even in summer.

The gas central heating is on at great expense to purse and planet, yet the Chapel remains draughty and difficult to heat (even with extra electric heaters), and is infrequently occupied or visited by people.

The Museum has been closed to the public since the COVID-19 pandemic and did not generate enough revenue to sustain itself prior. The active use and occupation of any listed building is critical to its conservation, maintenance and repair. Yet here we are, two years on, with a significant, yet inaccessible collection documenting townscape, landscape and change, housed in a building that is underused, falling short of museum industry standards, inflexible and uncomfortable. BPT purchased the Chapel with its 'revolving fund' for saving and restoring buildings in 1984 and it is safe to say we remain just as committed to securing its success and sustainable future.

But something has to change. We are in a time of transition towards net zero emissions and we need to make our hard-to-heat highly significant listed

building warm, low carbon, energy efficient, accessible, flexible, multi-functional and income generating. The mission before us is not an easy one. The Chapel, built in 1765, is the only example of consequential post-medieval Gothic architecture in Bath. As a functioning Chapel, it was airless, with a flat ceiling and a second storey gallery, both of which are still recognisable today. Since the 18th century much has changed within the building, including installation of the 19th century lobbies and gallery we see today, plus museum adaptation works undertaken by BPT in the 1990s.

We have taken steps to assess what parts of the building could be adapted and retrofitted to support its reuse. We commissioned a feasibility study by James Grayley Architects which holistically considers a range of uses, improvements, interventions, necessary repairs, and in particular establishes and quantifies the benefits and consequences of ambitious retrofit works, to ensure long term environmental stability and comfort as part of a long-term end use and sustainable

strategy. Central to this is the understanding of heritage significance and the sensitive management of change that is conservation.

BPT is now in the early stages of developing a project plan and will be consulting on our vision and options for the building. First and foremost, the Chapel will be for learning, an accredited museum, and the home of BPT. It will be a unique, accessible multi-purpose centre, providing inclusive learning for people of all ages, and a hub through which to deliver our Advocacy and Campaigning work through community and sector engagement – a safe space for think-tank discussions with homeowners and the next generation of architects.

As a showcase demonstrating how to achieve environmental sustainability for historic buildings in a World Heritage city, it will be a unique Grade II* listed building made fit for the future. The Chapel will then be actively used to further public awareness of the road to zero carbon in the context of historic buildings.

Recent projects

Grade II listed Stothert lamp post in Sydney Buildings

There is a Grade II listed lamp post in Sydney Buildings dating from 1830 – the days of gas lighting – which was cast by Stothert's before it became Stothert and Pitt and therefore has considerable local significance. In 2012 it was refurbished by the local residents, who also found, repaired and installed an original cast-crown lantern as a more appropriate lamp than the existing modern light. The lamp-post has suffered impact damage to its base, and needs to be removed for repair. A partnership has been formed between the residents, B&NES Council Highways Lighting department, and the WHSEF to effect this. B&NES will organise removal and reinstatement, the local residents will repaint the post, and will also refurbish the cast-crown lantern. The WHSEF will fund the cost of the repair to the lamp post, which is approximately £1,600.



Royal Crescent telephone box

The 1952 telephone box which stands at the entrance to Gravel Walk, opposite No 1 Royal Crescent, needs some repair and minor repainting. The Grade II Listed K6 Box, designed by Gilbert Scott, was painted grey in this location because of the sensitivity of its heritage setting.

The WHSEF organised a refurbishment of the dilapidated Box in 2018, installing some interpretation panels at the same time. These panels explain the history of the box, and an engraving by Malton shows the Royal Crescent under construction, right in front of its finished elegance.

The Royal Crescent Society have generously offered to fund the necessary repairs and repainting at a cost of about £280, and the WHSEF will organise the work. This is another good example of an effective partnership between the Fund and local residents.

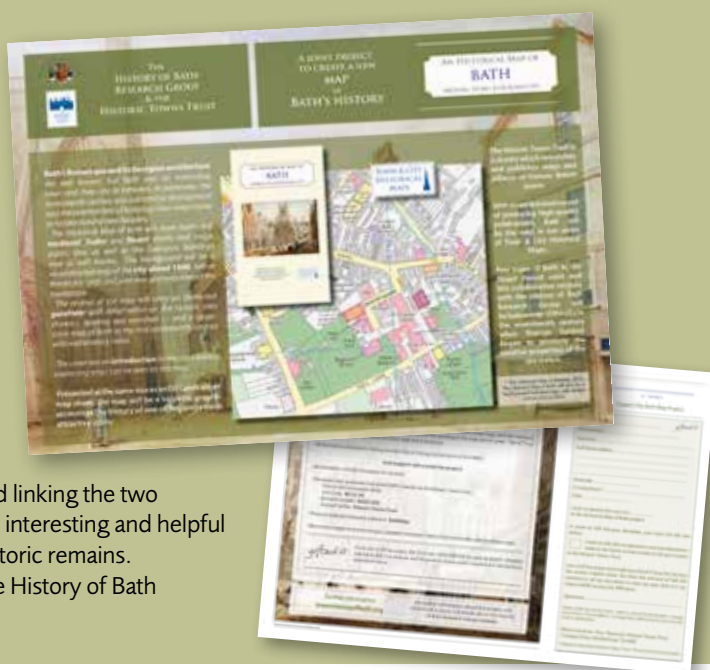
Historic map of Bath

The Historic Towns Trust is working with the History of Bath Research Group to produce a map which shows a summary of Bath's history from Roman times to the 20th Century. This period is currently not well documented, and few maps exist.

Part of the remit of the WHSEF is to support publications which provide practical information on conservation, and also serve to increase and disseminate understanding and knowledge of the World Heritage Site.

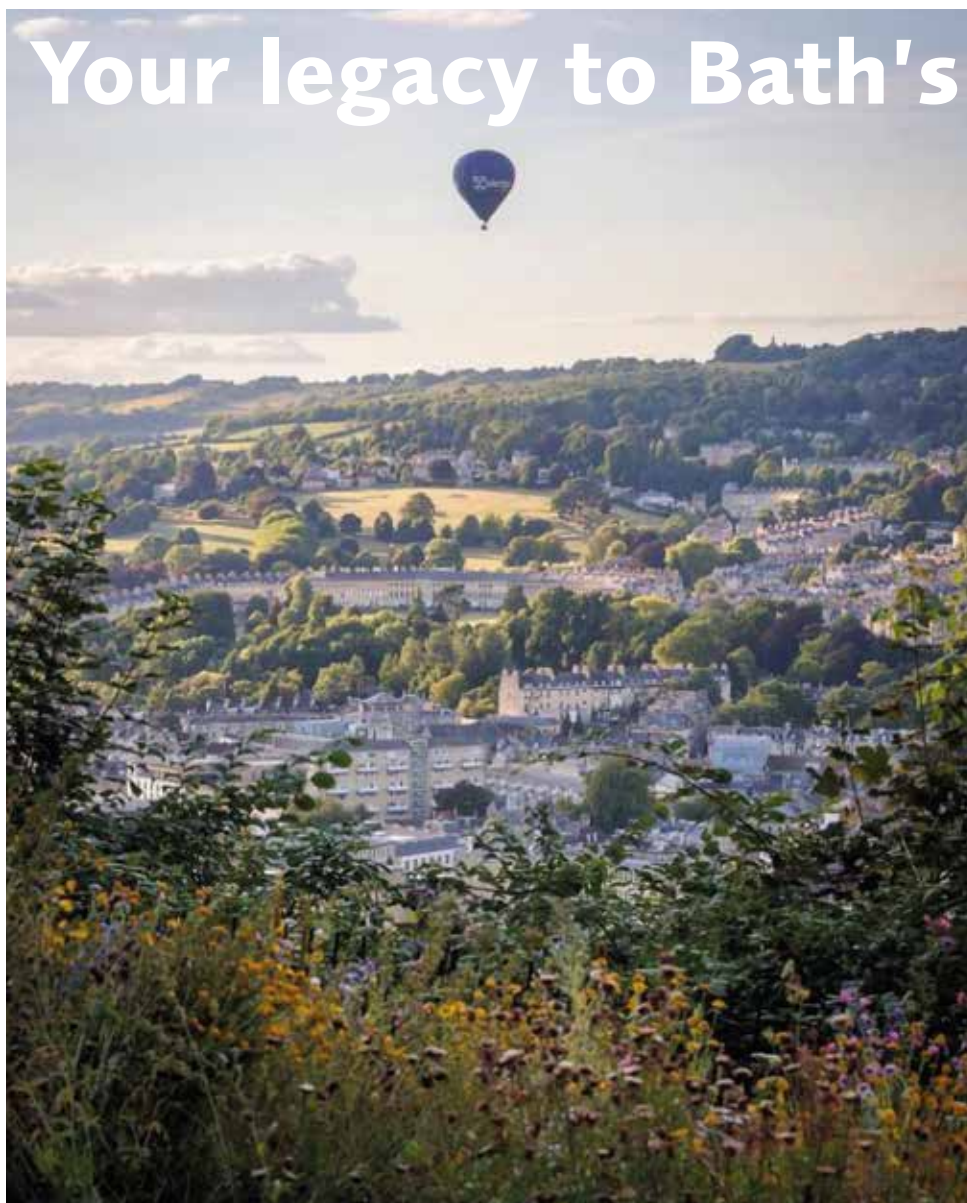
By covering a period in Bath's history which is not well documented, and linking the two important periods of Roman and Georgian, the proposed map will be both interesting and helpful in understanding the development of the City and in dating underlying historic remains.

To donate to support the project visit: Historic Map of Bath leaflet via the History of Bath Research Group at <https://historyofbath.org>



For more information about the Bath World Heritage Site Enhancement Fund, or to propose a project for support, please contact the Fund Administrator, Ainslie Ensom, at whsef@bptrust.org.uk

Your legacy to Bath's future



© Brilliant Bath

If you are considering leaving Bath Preservation Trust a gift in your Will, thank you: your legacy will have a huge and lasting impact on the future of the City that we all love.

A gift in your Will is an enduring legacy for the things that matter to you even after you are gone. Any contribution will be an investment in the future, and will make a huge difference to our work.

As an independent charity with a lot of work to do, legacies are a vital funding source for us. Whether your gift is small or large, all contributions help us carry out our work, ensuring the sustainable enhancement of Bath long into the future.

Once you have taken care of family and friends, we hope that you will consider leaving a legacy gift in your Will so that we can continue to enhance this wonderful City in your name.

To discuss leaving us a legacy gift, please contact asherman@bptrust.org.uk



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