

## **LANSDOWN CRESCENT ASSOCIATION SECRETARY'S REPORT – 2012/2013**

This, as you know, is the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Lansdown Crescent Association. The field was leased from the Council in 1982 by a group of gentlemen living in the area. They wished to protect the field and to ensure that it remained as an agricultural tenancy hence the formation of the Lansdown Crescent Association. We, living in this area, are reaping the benefits of their action. The sadness is that the last of these gentlemen, Jack Pepler, died recently. Jack was our neighbour for over 50 years and we miss him. He had been very active in Bath, a lawyer, a Councillor and City Coroner - a very special man. We send our deepest sympathy to Judith, his wife, to Gilly, his daughter, and the rest of his family.

I quote from an article which I read recently about Bath when Lansdown Crescent was considered the author's favourite Crescent in Bath. "There is nothing solemn about Lansdown Crescent, however. It smiles down at Bath, its outstretched arms holding attendant crescents dancing forward at each hand. The fact that John Palmer's delightful crescent has sheep grazing below its golden curve only adds to its charm". This just reiterates how lucky we are to live here.

This year has seen some changes on the Committee. Sarah Kerr stepped down. She has been the most stalwart member – always so willing and active. She has been our representative on the Royal High School Safety Committee and vital for the preparation of food at the various parties; in fact she has prepared the food for this evening. Sarah felt she had served long enough on the Committee. She is much missed and we thank her for all that she has done but she will be a great support to Robin who took her place. Robert Coleman is retiring after 5 years of keeping us very informed about Neighbourhood Watch. Anthony Hepworth joined the Committee but found that, with his new gallery in Bath, he could not give sufficient time. We are so pleased that some members have volunteered to join the Committee.

David Machin is moving from Lansdown Crescent and has resigned as a Trustee. He was Chairman for 3 years and has always been a very valued member of the Association. We shall miss him and wish him and Sarah every enjoyment in their new home. The Committee will appoint a new Trustee.

Our main responsibility, the Field, is looking good thanks to the efforts of some members of the Committee. Much to everyone's delight, the sheep are back. Thanks are due to Andrew Fraser who scythed off the nettles which are an ever lasting problem. Delia Jay and James Whatmore looked into the possibility of forming a wild flower meadow at the west end of the field. It turned out to be a rather bigger job than first thought. The cost of the fencing to keep out the sheep together with associated works was prohibitive at this time. But maybe this is something which could be looked at in the future. James, however, has planted some primroses which have flowered around the protected area of the tree but have not appeared elsewhere. We suspect the sheep enjoyed having them for lunch.

The highlight of the year must be the Jubilee Party. Several members of the Committee and their husbands and wives worked hard on finding the band, hiring the chairs and tables, collecting them and setting them out in the rain, making the bunting and handling the tickets – which were still being bought on the morning despite the rain pouring down. Such optimism! But it did bring out the community as neighbours got together to make up parties. Most people managed to eat part of their supper outside on the Crescent before retiring to homes to continue their enjoyment. And we only had one complaint. A profit of approximately £1,000 was achieved which will, we hope, be donated towards the finials. The Chairman also opened her garden in September for an evening party to thank people who had bought tickets. We are very grateful to her.

The finials – Beccy has worked very hard in getting this idea moving. It would be so good to see the railings around the Crescent, Lansdown Places East and West properly refurbished. World Heritage has agreed to pay the initial costs for the architects' fees plus submission of plans and Listed Building Consent at a cost of £1,288 plus VAT. Beccy has kept in constant touch with the owners and she will explain more later in this meeting. It has become a lengthy process but one which I hope you all agree, would enhance the area.

Beccy has also promoted the idea of engraving the street names on either ends of the Crescent. Bath Preservation Trust and Historic Buildings were both in favour of this but the residents of no 1 Lansdown Crescent appear very much against this idea. Beccy will also talk about this.

The Association's big concern has been the development of the High School site. We are very fortunate this evening to have Markham Hanson, the developer, as our speaker. I am sure he will be able to describe what his plans are and answer your concerns.

Planning – there have only been a few applications this year. Some concern has been expressed about the possible development of a garage behind Lansdown Place West and the materials to be used on the ground. We await to

hear what is finally planned. It is not always easy dealing with our City Planners. The owner of no. 15 Lansdown Place East found it a lengthy and expensive process to achieve planning permission for her perfectly reasonable improvements.

There has been general concern (I seem to be using that word a lot!) about the pathway to Park Street adjoining Chapel House. This is used a great deal and is extremely dangerous in wet and icy weather. Beccy will be reporting on her efforts to produce a handrail under Any Other Business.

The idea of the 20 mph scheme around Lansdown Crescent has also created concern because of the probability that large signs will be painted on the road as has been done in other areas. In any case, it is rather difficult to drive at more than 20 mph around the Crescent and the scheme seems a complete waste of money when funds are so tight. The Committee and others have written to the Council in protest.

As you know, members of the Committee and their family collect rubbish from the area, mainly after collection days. However, the Committee would ask that residents put out their rubbish more carefully, covered in such a way as to prevent it blowing away. It is also unattractive to see bundles of rubbish tied to the railings often some days before collection days. Could not residents of flats get together and put their rubbish into one large bag?

It had been proposed by the developers of Somerset Place and the Council that Somerset Lane become one-way. But a meeting was held with the interested parties and common sense prevailed. The Lane will remain two-way certainly for the foreseeable future. Thanks go to Delia Jay for organising this. Speaking of Somerset Place, it is a delight to see the work progressing so well and I understand the houses are selling..

The Association is a member of the Bath Preservation Trust and the Secretary of our Association holds 2 tickets for entry to no. 1 Royal Crescent. David Anderson, our Treasurer, arranged a tour of the extensions which are being carried out into 1A Royal Crescent in February. Approximately 40 members attended a very interesting evening. The Committee agreed to donate £300 to the Trust's building fund.

As you are aware, the Association is a member of FoBRA – Federation of Bath Residents' Associations. Robin Kerr is Secretary and keeps us well informed of its activities in trying to ginger up the Council.

The Association had an active Christmas period with a most enjoyable party held in the lovely home of Simon and Cat Heale. This was followed by Carol Singing on the 21<sup>st</sup> December which raised £272.00 in aid of Julian House. We thank Judith Liddell for her lovely piano playing at the party and for organising the Carols.

The Association are arranging a Summer Party at lunch time on 28<sup>th</sup> July in the garden of 20 Lansdown Crescent thanks to the generosity of the residents.

What has been a very successful move is to have the e-mail addresses of members which, thanks to David, who collected them, saved me a great deal of time and waste of paper when sending out the Agenda. If you have not already done so could you please let either David or Delia Jay have a note of your e-mail address. This is obviously the way forward or so I thought before things went a little array with the Agenda!

I shall be very sad indeed to retire as Hon. Secretary as it has been a large part of my life and I have enjoyed it. But 11 years on the Committee and 8 years as Secretary have stretched me too far and has just become a little too intrusive. I have very happy memories – the Golden Jubilee party in glorious weather and the Diamond Jubilee party in the rain, both of which brought the community together. When I joined the committee the Minutes were just over a page long – they can now sometimes reach 3 pages. Perhaps I write too much but much more activity has evolved over the years. It is very rewarding to see that Beccy and I leave a Committee which I know will continue active responsibility for the very special area in which we have the good fortune to live.

The Association has been so very lucky to have as its Chairman, Beccy Derry-Evans, who has for 7 years lead the Committee with great enthusiasm and energy. Her love and care for this area have shown in the many initiatives she has created. We all owe her a great debt of gratitude.