

No. 1 | ONE
ROYAL
CRESCENT

HISTORY

OF NO. 1 ROYAL CRESCENT



1767 BUILDING THE ROYAL CRESCENT

Constructed between 1767-1775 the Royal Crescent is the final building in a sequence of spaces designed by father and son architects, John Wood the Elder (1704-1754) and John Wood the Younger (1728-1782). During the 1720s the Elder Wood had introduced into Bath the fashionable architectural style of Palladianism. He perfected this style through the creation of Queen Square (1725-1736) and the Circus (1754-1768), ensuring that Palladianism would define the city as it continued to develop during the 18th century. At the Royal Crescent John Wood the Younger created plots for 30 individual houses.

United behind a single elevation and looking out over open countryside, these houses were designed to offer fashionable visitors to Bath city residences that had the same style and grandeur as the houses that they owned at their country estates.

Wood's design was made even more impressive through the use of rich, golden Bath stone from the mines on the

southern slopes of the valley. Highly skilled craftsmen took the rough stone and turned it into smooth blocks of ashlar and the intricately carved 114 giant Ionic columns. When it was completed in 1775, this combination of scale, style and stone made the Royal Crescent one of the finest buildings in 18th century England.

1776 THE FIRST RESIDENT

Mr. Henry Sandford, described in the Bath Chronicle as 'a gentleman of the most benevolent disposition', was the first known resident of No. 1 Royal Crescent, appearing on the city rates book for the property from 1776 until 1796.

When he moved to No. 1, the last house in the Crescent to be occupied, Henry Sandford was a comfortably wealthy man of fifty-seven, the owner of a large family estate in Castlerea, County Roscommon, Ireland. He had retired from a thirty-five year career as a local MP and was a widower with four grown up children. Presumably leaving the estate in the hands of his son

(also Henry), Henry Sandford probably moved to Bath to take advantage of the healing properties of the 'Bath waters' and to enjoy the bustling society of one of England's most popular cities.

It is from Henry Sandford's 'commonplace book' (where he made notes of things that he had seen and read) that we know he was an active member in certain circles of Bath society: visiting the Bath market, attending scientific demonstrations and joining the local agricultural society.

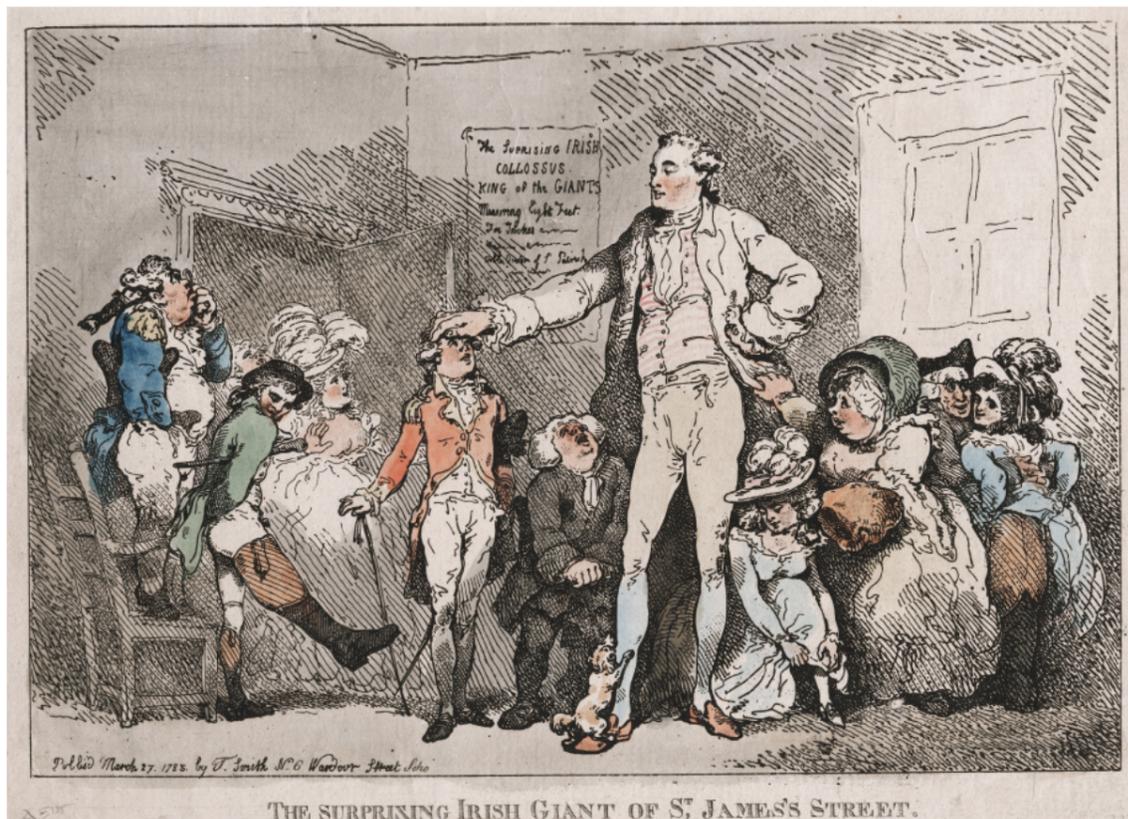
The Surprising Irish Giant of St. James's Street, 1785
Etching by Thomas Rowlandson, (1756-1827)
Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library

Henry Sandford records the arrival of the Irish giant in Bath in his commonplace book:

"Burn the Irish Giant shown in Bath in the year '82 was so tall that I could scarce touch his nose standing on my tip-toes, this I computed to be about 7 feet 6 inches and allowing 6 inches from the tip of his nose to his crown, he was 8 feet high. HS."

1830 CHANGING HANDS

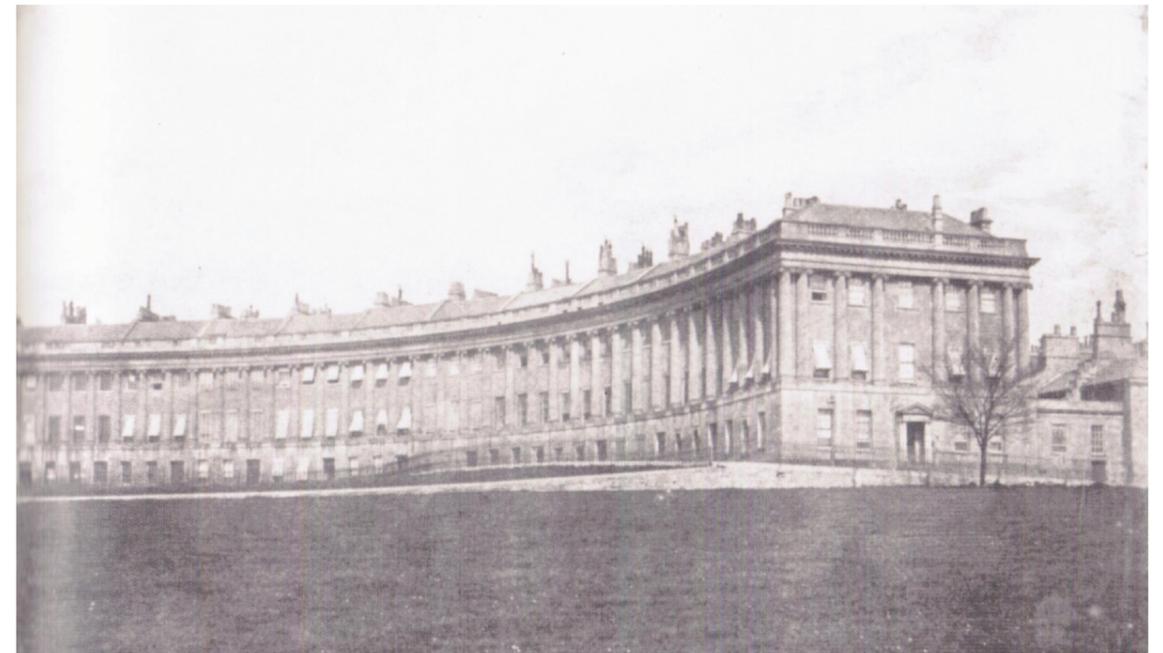
Following the death of Henry Sandford in 1796, No. 1 Royal Crescent was leased to Henry Milsom - the first in a line of leaseholders who ran the building as a lodging house. By this point, Bath had ceased to be the most fashionable resort and it entered a period of genteel decline and industrial growth that characterised the nineteenth century.



Recent archaeological investigation has shown that the kitchen was moved from the ground floor to the basement level around this time. The dressers in the basement kitchen, the copper and the fire openings survive from this period and reveal a kitchen with features that are characteristic of the Georgian period.

Between 1839 and 1847, Miss Eliza Evans ran The Seminary for Young Ladies at No. 1 Royal Crescent. In 1841 Miss Evans was described as a school mistress, along with three other mistresses, one an assistant, and three servants. They had 11 pupils aged between 11 and 15 in their charge.

The first known photograph of the Royal Crescent including No. 1 was taken by the Reverend Francis Lockey circa 1857 (top) and we have recently acquired a photograph taken a few years later (c. 1860-1867) by Dutton (bottom).



© Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute



These two photographs show before and after a major reorganisation of the servants' wing in the 1860s when the building was completely refurbished.

1916 WRITER IN RESIDENCE

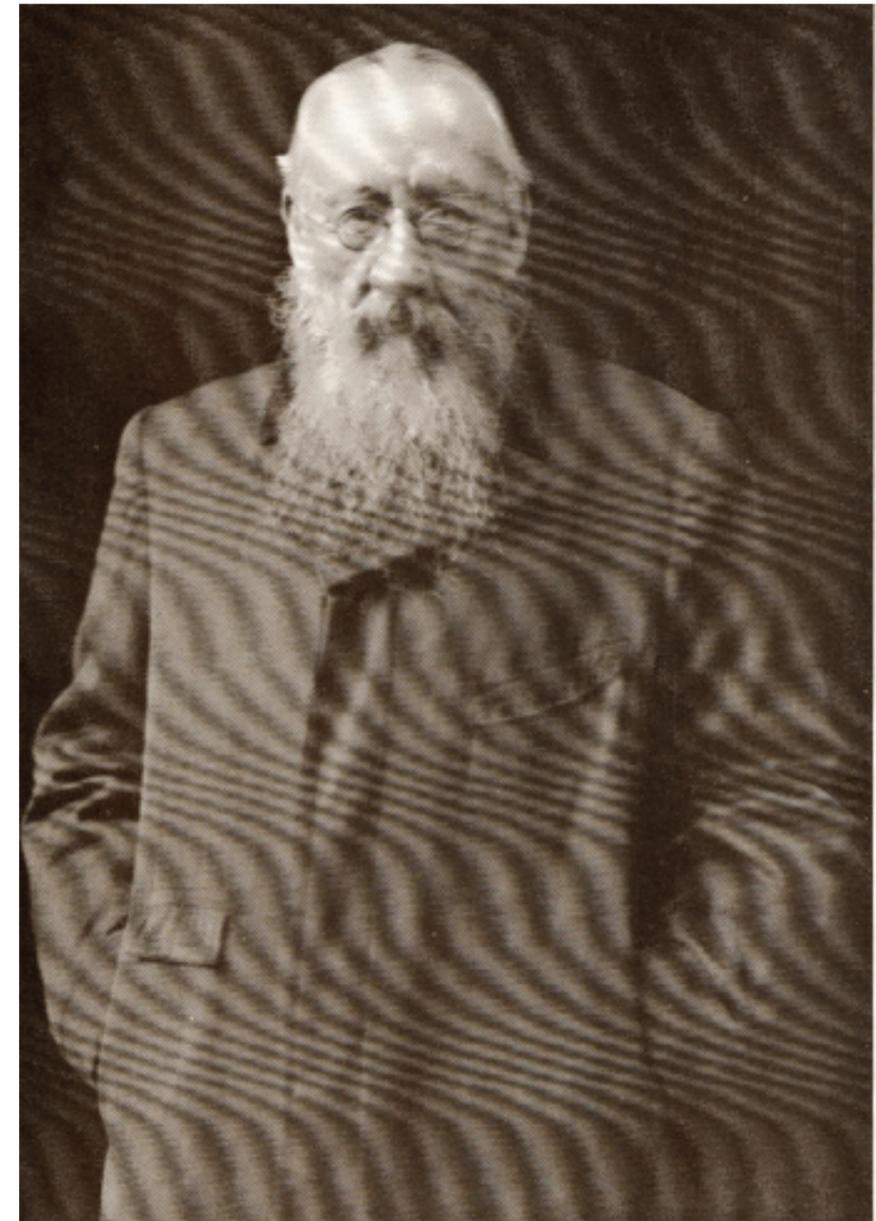
Professor George Saintsbury retired to Bath in 1916 having been Emeritus Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at the University of Edinburgh. He took lodgings in No. 1 Royal Crescent in the part of the building that was formerly the servants' wing. He lived there until his death in 1933.

Friends with Robert Louis Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling, Saintsbury was a renowned literary figure in his day. His most well-known work, *Notes on a Cellar Book*, was written in No. 1 Royal Crescent and published in 1920. The book had a big influence on the world of wine and the Saintsbury Vineyard was named in his honour.

Writing in 1950, Dorothy Margaret Stuart recalled visiting Saintsbury at No. 1 Royal Crescent in 1926:

“After being admitted to a bleak entrance hall – I was led through an interminable, dim and tortuous passage to the suite of chambers occupied by my host... I entered the large, light, book-encumbered room looking out on the Crescent Fields, and a figure in a black skull-cap

rose from behind a table by the window... Many passers-by used to glance up to get a glimpse of the picturesque figure at the chaotic writing table.”



George Saintsbury, from A. Blyth Webster's book, 1933
© Elliott & Fry

THE NORMAN FAMILY

No. 1 and 1a became a lodging house in 1905 when Sue Vines' grandparents became residents. Sue and her mother and brothers lived at No.1 during the war when her father left for military service. Sue remembers that the residents' rooms were not self-contained, therefore, occupants would have to collect water from the pantry located in 1a. An occasion, Sue recalls, which brought all the occupants together was the Queen's coronation in 1953.



Sue and Tony's engagement party, 1 May, 1964
Bath Preservation Trust Archives (in the No. 1a Kitchen)



Sue Vines with her brother Michael and Peter in the allotments, 1944



Sue Vines's mother Charlotte aged 21

1968 THE FIRST RESTORATION

Since 1934 the Bath Preservation Trust has been campaigning tirelessly for the protection and conservation of Bath's historic buildings. Between 1963-75 the Trust was immensely active in attempting to save buildings from demolition during a period that became known as the 'Sack of Bath'.

It was during this period that No. 1 Royal Crescent was divided from its service wing in No. 1a and in 1968 the main house was purchased by Mr. Bernard Cayzer. A great supporter of the Trust and its work, Mr. Cayzer generously gave the house and sufficient funds for its restoration and conversion into a Georgian house museum. It was then that it became the new headquarters of the Bath Preservation Trust.

An extensive restoration and refurbishment of the house took place between 1968-70, which once again saw highly skilled craftsmen employed at the Royal Crescent. The most noticeable external work during the 1960s restoration was the raising of the first floor windows back

to their original 18th century levels.

The internal refit and decoration was overseen by a committee chaired by Bernard Cayzer. The committee included Philip Jebb architect, Jean Monro interior designer and Peter Thornton, Keeper of Furniture and Woodwork from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.



A photograph showing No. 1 Royal Crescent before its restoration in 1968. Theo Williams Collection, Bath Preservation Trust Archives

NICOLE DEVEREUX PHOTOGRAPHY

Before work started on reuniting No.1 Royal Crescent with its original service wing in 2012, Nicole Devereux was commissioned to photograph No.1a Royal Crescent. These examples of her exquisite work beautifully capture the remaining aspects of life in the building before restoration work began and offer a collection of images for posterity.



2010 THE WHOLE STORY PROJECT

2006

1a Royal Crescent came up for sale presenting the Bath Preservation Trust with the opportunity to reunite the main house with its original servants' wing. The Brownsword Charitable Foundation stepped in to buy 1a Royal Crescent and agreed to finance its restoration.

2008

An initial application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support a project to enhance the existing museum which would incorporate 1a.

2009/10

Planning and research took place

2011

A major grant award was made in March allowing detailed design to commence.

2012

Building work began in January.

2013

The finished museum opened in June

Statistics

- There were 40 project meetings
- 18 Site meetings
- More than 450 students attended a series of 50 education workshops (ages 4-21)
- 100 Metres of bubble wrap were used for packing
- 1,132 objects packed
- 2 ½ miles of acid free tissue paper were used for packing (With all this tissue paper you could run up and down the Royal Crescent 6 times and still have some left over)
- Over 3,500 hours of volunteer time used
- 630 hours of interpretation meetings
- 89 new volunteers recruited
- 13 volumes produced for the Heritage Lottery Fund grant application

2013 - THE FUTURE

No. 1 Royal Crescent continues to welcome visitors from all round the world. We hope it will inform, educate, entertain and inspire. The house continues to be the headquarters of the Bath Preservation Trust, as well as its flagship museum, thereby helping to fulfil the Trust's mission

- to encourage and support the conservation, evolution and enhancement of Bath and its environs with regard to its historic setting and its sustainable future, and
- to provide educational resources, including museums, which focus on the architectural and historic importance of the city.



Supported by

The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



No. 1 Royal Crescent, Bath BA1 2LR
01225 338727
Charity No: 203048

Our education work is
generously supported by
the



THE WOLFSON FOUNDATION



Medlock Charitable Trust



LOTTERY FUNDED

BROWNSWORD CHARITABLE FOUNDATION