

FROM THE CHAIR

Plaques:

Sir Henry Newbolt. On 6 November Barbara Janke, as Councillor for Clifton West and Leader of the City Council, unveiled the first of two plaques on Clifton College Close near Newbolt's boyhood residence in Worcester Crescent. The Old Cliftonian Society has contributed handsomely to this joint venture with us and Clifton College. Their plaque, on the reverse side of the stand, facing the Close, will be completed in time for the final dedication of the structure in the Spring of 2005.

Paule Vezelay (Marjorie Watson-Williams). We received a delightful letter from the artist's niece, Sally Jarman, in Hampshire after she saw news of the plaque in Rodney Place on our website. We are sending her a photo of it.

Triangle Walk. It is not our own work but we commend it as an example of imaginative and agreeable restorative development. Do seek it out.

Award to Clifton Hill House. Again, not our doing but since we meet in the elegant surroundings we can have a happy fellow-feeling as we congratulate Annie Burnside (the Warden) on winning First Prize in the Georgian Group's national competition category for "Restoration of a Georgian Country House", which from its splendid garden side the house looks to be. The prize was presented by Prince Michael of Kent.

Visits. Mike Pascoe, Julia Killingback and I represented the Society at Weymouth, the Civic Trust of which delightful town was celebrating its 60th anniversary. Its almost unspoilt 18th century harbour and nearby streets were a good setting for the topic "Tourism versus Heritage", perhaps relevant to Bristol and Clifton during the Brunel 200 commemorations.

The Paty Project, Redland Parish Church. Representatives of CHIS were invited to the launch of this scheme at the church and nearby hall. At least £70,000 is needed to restore the carvings done by William Paty, the Grinling Gibbons of Bristol. We heard distinguished and enthusiastic speakers, including the Lord Mayor. Constitutionally, CHIS must fund projects in our area but we are contributing as individuals, as other members may like to. If you go to see the carvings in this fine church you may well agree and contact:- *The Paty Project, Redland Parish Church, Redland Green BS6 7HE tel: 0117 946 4690* or www.redland.org.uk/thepatyprojectinfo@redland.org.uk

Challenges.

Closure of Hotwells Post Office. We share the outrage felt by those who have lost their local post office and we supported their protest. Since another office is less than a mile away, in Clifton, they are expected to climb the hill, whatever their age or condition, on foot or bicycle, or add to the traffic and parking pressures by driving.

Massage Parlour, Hotwells Road. This may represent a return to 18th century facilities that would not merit a Georgian Group award. We support the objectors to this development which apparently has no planning permission, as well as for other reasons.

Granby Green. We were saddened that after a long battle against the developers, the Friends of Granby Green have been forced to give up their battle and that three townhouses and nine or ten flats will be built on one of the few remaining pieces of open land in Hotwells.

Avon Gorge Hotel. Robert Peel, the owner, presented details of his plans for the hotel and Rocks Railway. Many residents attended, to a large extent because CHIS alerted the organizers to the fact that few had received leaflets, only a couple of days before the event. The general situation is this: the Victorian terraces have been splendidly cleared. If, properly camouflaged and at reasonable cost, they can be made into necessary car parks, the hotel and ballroom will be improved and the Rocks Railway restored without an application being made to construct four town houses on top of the ballroom.

Streetscape. People have complained that the CHIS-funded seat in front of Clifton Library is dirty. The City Council has not responded to requests from the Library staff, one of whom tried to clean the seat herself. It does not seem reasonable to ask committee members or library staff to be responsible. Any offer from members will be gratefully received.

You may have read about the successful scheme in Kensington High Street to reduce to a minimum traffic and other signs, pedestrian barriers and cluttered street furniture. For some good examples in Clifton see *Streetscape* on our website. We must encourage our Council to follow suit

Website. The CHIS website has been re-vamped by a working group led by Maggie Shapland, whose expertise at Bristol University is proving invaluable, as more and more members and others are discovering. The number of hits has increased steadily and is now averaging 144 per day.

Archives. The CHIS archives are kept up to date, most recently by Gill Blakeman and Mike Pascoe and papers over a certain age deposited at Bristol Record Office.

Photos. The ordering of a great number of photographs is being expertly undertaken by Peter Rendle.

Entertainments. We have regretfully decided to cancel the Christmas Party this year. Despite RoseMary Musgrave's great efforts, not enough places have been booked to make the event viable. However, we have the chance to benefit from a suggestion by the Rodney Hotel: a registered charity may be offered dinner places for £12 per head (including a glass of wine) but the charity charges more; the profit goes to charity. It is a good way to be convivial, add to the CHIS-CHEST and show the attractions of the Marguerite Restaurant, which overlooks the road and gardens which we helped to restore. I hope that 30 or more from our membership of 1,000 will be responsive in principle. Please let any of the committee know. Details will appear in the next newsletter.

Controversy.

MALC. This acronym is Janus-faced, standing as it does for the Movement to Applaud Law-abiding Cyclists and the Movement Against Lawless Cyclists. I have been courteously admonished by a member for my complaint in the last newsletter about "cyclists' behaviour" when of course I ought to have said "bad cyclists' behaviour". Stepping in where Boris Johnson might have feared to tread when he raised the wrath of some of my fellow-Liverpudlians, I shall elaborate. The benefits of cycling are well-publicized, encouraged and supported by the government. Nobody is only a cyclist (we all walk) and most are drivers too. If all three categories behave properly there will be no worry. However, some cyclists ride on the pavements, weave in and out of traffic lanes, carry no lights, fail to signal, cycle across pedestrian crossings and observe Cyclist Traffic Lights – Green, Green, Green; they are too plentiful and bring the majority of cyclists into disrepute. It is disagreeable and even dangerous to walk in Park Street, Queen's Road and the Temple area because of anarchic cyclists (not all youths). Christchurch Green is ridden across, paths and grass, by mature men and women. There are motorists who break traffic laws; they are frequently caught and properly punished. How often does this happen to miscreant cyclists?

MALC might help.

Brian Worthington

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome the following new members: Kevin and Jane Abbey, Kathleen Lane, G Johnstone, M Stacey and R Iles.

CLIFTON VILLAGE CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME

Saturday 4th December

Regent Street Christmas Fair

In aid of the *NSPCC*

10am-4pm

Robin Cousins drawing the **Raffle 3.30**

Signing his book **Frostavia** at 2.00 at **Not Just Words**, 52 The Mall

Bristol Opera Company performing **Carols and Traditional Music** in the afternoon at various locations in the village

Friday 10th December

Vyvyan Terrace/Clifton Park Gardens

Carols in the Garden

6.30pm Mulled Wine

Salvation Army Junior Band

Saturday 11th December

The Waverley Quartet

2.00pm onwards

Hull's Practitioners, Regent Street, Clifton

Carol Singing by Christchurch Clifton

Making Christmas Decorations while listening to stories in

Not Just Words, 52 The Mall

Tuesday 14th December

The Mall Garden Residents' Association

Carols in the Garden

Mulled wine at 6.45pm

Filton Brass Band

Collection for Help the Aged

(torches and wellies)

Saturday 18th December

Salvation Army Band

Princess Victoria Street

CHIS EVENTS

The new talks season begins on 18 January with a talk by Stephen Loft-Simson on *Sedan Chairs*. Stephen has travelled Europe looking at chairs and even owns these forms of personal urban transport. He recently

appeared on Channel 4 talking about the subject. Then, in February, just as your guilt feelings about Christmas over-eating are beginning to subside, Babi Chana, a trained nutritionist from the Regent Practice will tell us why *You Are What You Eat*. In March we welcome back the popular David Eveleigh who will tell us about *Smoke, Grime and Little Sooties – the story of climbing boys*.

NEW LIGHTS ON THE SUSPENSION BRIDGE

Brian Worthington and Mike Pascoe had a discussion about the new lighting scheme with the Bridgemaster, John Mitchell, who kindly answered the questions many members are asking:

Why are new lights necessary?

The Clifton bridge was the only structure still using the former system and spares were extremely difficult to obtain or needed to be specially made at considerable expense. The lights were installed in 1992 and the 10 year guarantee had expired, and birds and corrosion often caused failure of the lights. In addition, new Health and Safety regulations make access to parts of the bridge an unacceptable safety risk

Why not replace the system with fairy lights?

The energy used with 25 watt fairy light bulbs was 97 kilowatts and the last system used 24 kilowatts. The new system is still 'greener', using just 22 kilowatts. Again, Health and Safety legislation means that access to bulbs on the suspension rods on a regular basis would be regarded as an unsafe practice.

Who is designing the new lights?

The Trustees searched hard for a lighting designer with flair and finally chose Pinniger and Partners, an international firm who have designed lighting systems for the Humber Bridge, the Heathrow and Gatwick extensions and even on the Yangtze.

Tell us more about the new lights.

This system is the result of more than two years of trials. Representatives from English Heritage, English Nature, the National Trust as well as Bristol City Council and North Somerset Council were invited to watch the trials which took place last September. With the former system one didn't see the bridge at night, only the lights. The new system will show the bridge in the context of the Gorge and in particular the towers will be presented in a 3D effect. The whole architectural features of the bridge will be seen much more clearly. The walkways will be lit by fluorescent tubes 5 feet long under the handrail with dimmers so that the light intensity can be varied according to what is needed – brighter for a special function, dimmer for normal use. The towers will be lit by carefully directed beams from lamps within the arches.

Along the chains will be more than 3,000 one watt LEDs, each focused on a small section of the chain and throwing into relief the giant nuts which connect the links.

How much is this going to cost?

About £800,000 – a lot of money – but the system should last 20 to 30 years with little maintenance involved.

Some people are worried that the new system will cause light pollution.

The new system will have much more directed light – the sky won't change colour as it did with the previous system or especially when it was lit with fairy lights. It won't be anything like, for example, the light spillage from Cumberland Basin.

What happens next?

We have to gain planning permission from the two authorities.

When will the new system be operating?

We can't work during the winter so we hope to be installing and testing in summer 2005 and be fully operational in time to celebrate the launch of the *Brunel 200* celebrations on Brunel's birthday - 6 April.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Those who have read Richard Bland's excellent descriptions of trees and birds on the CHIS website and the Newsletter were not surprised to see him appear on Alan Titchmarsh's recent TV programme: *The British Isles; a natural history*.

PEGGY PILLINGER

Roy Vaughan writes:

We regret to announce the death at the age of 98 of Peggy Pillinger, a founder-member of CHIS. A Devonian by birth, she managed the family hardware business in Alma Vale Road when her brother was conscripted in 1939.

After the War she moved to Sion Hill and, when a "Rachmann" landlord forced her out, she was able to move to Gloucester Street with a loan from a very kind friend. For many years Peggy delivered our Newsletter in that area.

MISSING PLAQUES

RoseMary Musgrave would like to know what happened to the memorials originally in St Andrew's church commemorating Charles Pinney, the Mayor at the time of the Bristol Riots, and the unfortunate Colonel Brereton, in charge of the Yeomanry on that occasion, who later committed suicide. The letter later in the Newsletter may give some clues.

AGM REPORT

Just under 40 members attended the meeting on 23 November at Clifton Hill House, whose Warden, Annie Burnside, was congratulated on winning first prize in the Georgian Group's national competition for best restoration of a Georgian country house.

Two innovations worked well. Wine, as well as coffee, was served by Sue and Jon Goodland and Carol Clark. An introductory talk was given by the Redland Sector Police Inspector, Ian Wylie (arranged by Sharon Baker). He spoke reassuringly of the fall in registered crime in our area, the success of cycling officers, the forthcoming use of speed laser cameras in our streets and the availability for consultation of our beat officers. Excessive form-filling by the police, good and bad aspects of cyclists, boy racers and the threat of a massage parlour in Hotwells Road were topics deftly handled by the speaker. We were grateful for his talk and the crime prevention documents which he circulated.

The Planning Group's hawk-eyed watch was listed by its leader, Gill Blakeman. Michael Woodman-Smith detailed the elaborate, effective and costly presentations he had made regarding the Canynge Road Rifle Range site, the projected flats at 29 Sion Hill, the Public Enquiry into the Suspension Bridge Road Stopping-Up Order and the projected development at the McArthur's warehouse site behind the SS Great Britain. These important issues will be described in the next issue. Peter Rendle had attended meetings of the Conservation Advisory Panel, an organization to advise the Council's Planning Department which could be reformed and reinforced. Speaking for himself and Roy Vaughan, Richard Bland was helped by David Speller when he recounted the good and bad news about trees in our almost uniquely blessed suburb: trees did decay and die but fine replacements must be planted and gardens must not become car parks.

Sue Goodland again presented her membership report inventively. We have gained 43 new members but more are always needed to increase our impact. All present were urged to take a CHIS brochure and canvass for new members.

Roger Snary was re-elected Treasurer and reassured us that the Society was on an even keel despite a drop in income for the year, largely accounted for by exceptional receipts last year. Total expenditure during the year dropped although subscription income also dropped by eight per cent.

A grateful goodbye was bidden to Julie Faulkner and her husband Ian, who had come from their new home in Wedmore. Elected to replace her and others for three years were: Gill Blakeman, Sue Goodland, Maggie Shapland and Michael Woodman-Smith. The continuing work of RoseMary Musgrave was fully appreciated: she had *pro tem* acted as Secretary and hostess to committee meetings. Her report led us through the miasma of the new Licensing Act and outlined the continuing work whereby the Millennium Project would for one more year increase the planting and clearance of St Andrew's churchyard, including the splendid repainting of the railings by Dorothy Brown's team (to be completed in 2005). Lottery funding will be sought for the proper treatment of the mediaeval church site.

The Chairman stressed the growing impact of the website after the development of Jon and Sue Goodland's original scheme by Maggie Shapland and them. Under Mike Pascoe's tireless editorship the Newsletter, posted to everyone now, continued to report activities and stimulate interest as did his excellent programme of visits and talks. There were other significant matters: plaques to Gertrude Hermes and Sir Henry Newbolt (the latter's stand being designed elaborately by Julia Killingback). Katherine Croft and Mike Pascoe were thanked for their organization. The Tyntesfield visit had gone very well. The Clifton Library railings were repainted; Rodney Place grandly restored with some CHIS help; the least obtrusive placing of new cycle racks in Clifton Village had been urged on Council officers; the problems of studentification were considered at a meeting with Valerie Davey MP; and the Avon Gorge Hotel plan was under close scrutiny. In the near future we must plan our contribution to the Brunel 200 commemorations – all ideas welcomed.

Finally, the membership was thanked for its steady support and the committee for its readiness to act, good-natured co-operation and unaffected devotion to the Society's aims.

Brian Worthington

ST ANDREW'S ABLAZE

Richard Bland explains: "The letter below was addressed to Delmar Banner, a family friend from Magdalen College, Oxford. I was given it by Canon Bothamley's son, Michael, whom I taught at Clifton College in the 1970s. Canon Bothamley was Vicar of St Andrew's from 1936 to 1952.

Clifton Vicarage
4 Dec 1940

My dear Delmar

I have received countless letters expressing sympathy on the loss of our Parish Church. As the Press have mentioned the church by name and have printed a photograph of it after it had been bombed I do not feel that I am divulging anything by giving brief details on what happened on Sunday night Nov. 4th (Our Dedication Festival). As is generally known Bristol suffered a very severe and concentrated attack and as one of the results the Parish Church and Clifton National School (educating 450 children) were completely gutted.

When the raid started we had 250 people in Church at Evensong and the Bishop had just started his sermon. We got them all down into the crypt and after getting community Hymn singing started I made an adventurous journey over to the Vicarage in order to see how my mother and sister were faring. The Bishop in the meantime most kindly consented to lead the Community Singing. Mr Orbell, my curate had previously most kindly offered to go over to the Vicarage whilst I superintended the getting of people to safety. On my arrival at the Vicarage he had an equally adventurous return journey to the church. As soon as there was a comparative lull I once more returned to the Church only to be greeted by the news that incendiary bombs had struck the Church. Already many willing hands were feverishly removing what was possible from the building. We made lightning dashes up the aisles laying hold on what we could until the centre roof fell in, in flames. The police then ordered us out as it was considered a dangerous structure.

What we had salvaged had been stored in the SW Porch by the Tower which we trusted would stand even though the main portion of the building was doomed. Our feelings can better be imagined than expressed when we saw all that we have saved licked up by the flames. We had previously brought away with us what hands could carry, and we had saved two brass crosses, the baptismal ewer, one alms dish, one brass vase and the Union Jack. Mercifully the Church safe, beyond being seared and scorched, withstood the flames and our Communion plate and Registers are safe.

As we have printed in notices placed on our church railings, "our church has been destroyed but 'the Church' remains". Daily services are now taking place in the Vicarage Room, and Sunday Services in Berkeley Place Hall

On Monday night this week we had another intense raid and but for the prompt work of ARP wardens our Berkeley Place Hall would also be in ruins as an incendiary bomb dropped through the roof and has burned a large hole in the floor. However, the hall is still usable, and we shall continue to make that the centre of our Sunday services. A number of heavy high explosive bombs fell in the Parish, one of them only 20 yards from the Vicarage. It is miraculous that the house still stands, and apart from broken windows, doors forced open and large holes in the roof, we have escaped more serious hurt. One thing for which we have to be profoundly thankful is that despite the widespread damage the casualties are comparatively few.

We had another raid on Friday but mercifully not so uncomfortably near.

Love from us all to you and Josephine

Yours affectionately Henry.

(Undeterred, on the church noticeboard which stood amongst the ruins, Canon Bothamley wrote: "Cast down but not destroyed". The Clifton National School stood at the top of Church Lane, Cliftonwood and the Berkeley Hall was opposite Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, next to Hill's Almshouses, at the junction of Lower Clifton Hill and Jacobs Wells Road. It is now occupied by a firm of accountants. It was the Infants and Junior School of the Clifton National School and had been closed in 1937 but re-opened after the destruction of the main school. The Vicarage was then at what is now the Victoria Square Hotel).

LICENSING ACT

The Licensing Act gained Royal Assent on 10 July 2003. It represents the biggest shake up of licensing law this country has ever seen. For the first time there will be a unified system of premises and alcohol licensing which will be administered by the local licensing authority, Bristol City Council. The Council must set up a new licensing committee as part of these changes. The change is not simply one of who does the job. The nature of the legislation governing licensing has changed fundamentally.

What will be new?

1. The granting of licences will be taken from the Magistrates and passed to the City Council.
2. Public Entertainment Licences, Liquor Licences, Special Hours Certificates all go. These will be replaced by:
 - (a) **Personal Licences.** These will be issued to individuals by any Authority and will be valid for use anywhere. They will be rather like a driving licence and should prove that an individual has been trained and is responsible for running a premise.
 - (b) **Premise Licences.** All pubs, bars, restaurants, clubs and shops selling liquor and/or providing 'Regulated Entertainment' need a premise licence. Like planning permission, these run with the premises and are forever, but can be amended. 'Regulated Entertainment' includes live music, recorded music, dancing, film and video. Live TV, including football, are unregulated. Premise licences will include an Operating Schedule, covering hours, type of operation, entertainment *etc.* Approval for changes can be sought. Similarly the Police, other authorities or the public can request the Council to 'review' a Premise Licence. This will be the only chance of obtaining redress. There will be no regular licence review as we now have.
 - (c) **Applications for Premise Licences**
Any application to which there is no objection by 'responsible bodies' (Police, Environmental Health) or objection by residents or businesses in the vicinity must be approved WITHOUT amendment. The Licensing Officer has no power to refuse or impose conditions without representations from one of the above. (I can foresee a flood of applications early next year all asking for the maximum amount of flexibility – vigilance will be needed).

All local authorities had to produce a draft licensing policy for public consultation before bringing in the first phase of implementation in February 2005.

The Act requires the Council to carry out its licensing functions with a view to promoting the following specific objectives “The Licensing Objectives”

These are

- **The prevention of crime and disorder**
- **Public safety**
- **The prevention of public nuisance**
- **The protection of children from harm**

Bristol is a major regional entertainment centre and regularly attracts in excess of 30,000 people into the city centre at weekends. The main entertainment areas are within Harbourside, the Old City, Whiteladies Road and Gloucester Road. However, there are also local entertainment areas such as Bedminster, Shirehampton and Westbury on Trym. There are also licensed venues located in predominantly residential areas. The Council has had to try to achieve a balance that ensures the promotion of these objectives across a variety of urban settings.

The consultation period for comment on this draft licensing policy produced by the Council was lamentably short. It had already been agreed that it would be wise if the societies in Cotham and Redland, St John’s Road, Aberdeen Road, High Kingsdown, Clifton and Hotwells and any others in the area should send in one document of comments on the draft and a separate letter if there were particular matters which only affected a certain area. This was done, but it could not have been achieved without the hours of painstaking work and collaboration put in by Roger Mortimer of the Redland and Cotham Amenities Society and Bob Chambers of the St John’s Road Residents’ Association. The end result was a list of well reasoned comments, suggestions and praise. The thanks of everyone in the area must go to Roger and Bob. I simply did not have the time to give it the attention that they did. Thank you from CHIS.

WHAT CHIS MEMBERS CAN DO

Please read any licence applications which are put up. If you are concerned about them, take down the application number, the name of the premise and the date when letters have to be sent in by and send them to me by letter or email. Also tell me what your concern is.

Address: Garden Flat, 4 Eaton Crescent, BS8 2EJ.

Email: r.musgrave@bristol.ac.uk

RoseMary Musgrave

ST ANDREW'S CHURCHYARD

After years of clearing scrub and cutting back old shrubs it has been a joy to see new ones being planted along the west wall. David Speller chose and planted six *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica' (crimson stems), four *Cornus sericea* 'Flaviramea' (yellow stems), two *Hydrangea macrophylla* (pink lacecap), *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Mme Emile Mouillere' (white with pink eye), *Hydrangea paniculata* (white), *Hydrangea serrata* 'Ramus Pictus' (pale pink lacecap), *Hydrangea serrata* 'Grayswood' (white/mauve lacecap, turning dark red), *Hydrangea quercifolia* (white, oak-leaved), three *Skimmia x confus* 'Kew Green', *Skimmia japonica* 'Fragrans', *Mahonia japonica*, *Mahonia x media* 'Winter Sun', two *Choisya ternata* and several hardy fuchsias. More will be added – the aim is to have shrubs in front of the whole length of the wall with a variety of flowering seasons, colour, shape and size. This should make a pretty backdrop as one looks from the Limewalk as well as something for people to enjoy close to.

In the east corner by the Fosseway we have planted a square bed of scented shrubs where the bramble patch used to be. There are three different kinds of lavender and of rosemary, a lemon verbena, a scented jasmine and several aromatic herbs. These should grow and attract butterflies and other insects, as well as being pretty to look at and to smell.

This winter and spring there will be some removal of trees, for example the black cotoneaster which suddenly died this year and some diseased small trees. There will also be planting. A *Betula pendula* 'Tristis' to replace the recently removed weeping ash adjacent to the war memorial, a *Sorbus intermedia* to replace the dying almond, an *Acer campestre* 'William Caldwell' to replace the recently removed lombardy poplar, and a *Prunus avium* as a future replacement for the over mature wild cherry on the east side of the Limewalk. This is such a splendid tree and so beautiful when the blossom is out, but it is becoming increasingly rotten and soon will have to be removed for safety reasons. Each year we plead for its life, so it is nice to know that there will be another one in place to grow and give equal pleasure in years to come.

Our next task is to clear in front of the wall of the post office buildings and Bishop's House. Planting has started there with a magnolia kindly given from the garden of the Children's Hospital, where it was outgrowing the space. It is a surprisingly large area and we hope to put in some small trees, perhaps acers.

Our thanks go to Dorothy Brown for organising the painting of the railing – it was a fine show of community spirit, but it did need someone with Dorothy’s vision and drive to get it up and running.

We have now completed the five years we said we would give to this project, but we will carry on for one more year. I am going to try for lottery money to pay for the clearance and restoration of the site of the medieval church – so wish me luck!

There will not be a working party in December. We will start up again on Sunday 30 January and Sunday 27 February. Sunday 27 March is Easter Day so watch the notice on the railings to see if we decide on that day or another.

RoseMary Musgrave

PAINTING THE LIMEWALK RAILINGS

During the first half of October, mainly at weekends, about 50 people – volunteers from CHIS, Bristol Visual and Environmental Group and some students from Clifton Hill House – spent some time preparing and painting the long run of railings on each side of the Limewalk which runs through the centre of St Andrew’s Churchyard.

The City Council puts in some effort in maintenance terms: most recently they have pruned the limes and cut down the growth surrounding the densely sited tombs near the Bishops House. But it is RoseMary Musgrave and her small but dedicated band of volunteers who have transformed the appearance of the more open part of the churchyard. The City Council indicated that they cannot put in the resources to have the railings sand blasted and painted professionally. Thus I suggested that we might try to smarten up the railings if we called for volunteers, asking each person to prepare and paint a 16 foot (5m) length of railings and we had quite a good response.

The weather at the weekends in early October was unpredictable and the forecast poor, so it was perhaps understandable that some of the volunteers didn’t turn up. Because the canopy of limes acted like an umbrella, rain showers didn’t prevent us from preparing and wire-brushing the railings. The wind blew them dry quite rapidly and amazingly, we managed to prepare, treat and paint about 150 metres, or about half of the length of railings. The hard core of volunteers, who included Brian Worthington, Francis Greenacre, Mike Pascoe, RoseMary

and other members of the gardening team were fantastic, and though we only got half way, I think it was worth while and I have to thank all the volunteers who had to put up with the weather and my slap-happy organization. YOU WERE GREAT!

It would be nice to finish the church end of the railings. I thought it might be best to do it over two weeks next spring, with volunteers preparing on weekdays if the weather then was good, but confining the actual painting to the weekends because of the danger from wet paint over longer periods. So we may be looking for a new batch of volunteers. Quite honestly, it isn't all bad - I actually lost weight over the fortnight and wire-brushing does wonders for the muscle tone of one's arms.

I also think we need to persuade the Council that pedestrian routes need maintenance just as much as the roads and it is more important to keep traditional stone walls and railings attractive than spending fortunes on ugly, vandal-prone plastic bollards, jumbo kerbs and thousands of unnecessary posts and signs.

Dorothy Brown

THE NATURAL WORLD

Clifton is not merely a precious and magnificent example of Victorian urban development at its very best, it also demonstrates the Victorian passion for rare specimen trees which were one of the best ways of demonstrating your wealth and good taste at the time. Many of them are now at their peak, and, sadly, some of them are becoming too hollow to survive. The Zoo has recently had to fell two magnificent Cedars dating from its foundation in 1835, though it has turned the stumps into lively sculptures. The line of Beeches in Victoria Square, planted up in 1839, now has only one original Fern-leafed Beech, though its Cedar looks thoroughly healthy, and the Tree of Heaven in one corner has had the ivy removed to improve its chances. The Bhutan pine in the other corner is as large and old as they come. The Monkey Puzzle on the Promenade must be one of the oldest and finest in Britain, and the Wellingtonia in Pembroke Vale, dominating the skyline, suggests that the site was once part of someone's extensive grounds. The Pendant Silver Lime in Vyvyan Terrace is certainly an original planting, and the extraordinary Horse Chestnut in York Place must pre-date any development in the area.

This is a glorious time for trees as the leaves change colour daily, and when they fall the history and structure of a tree becomes apparent. Limb

removal to raise the crown, former pollarding, modern thinning, all leave their marks. And the low light of winter shining across and through the branches alters the way trees appear in a very fundamental way. Silhouettes are particularly dramatic, and, as the shortest day is close, so too are the vast shadows cast.

We are the fortunate inheritors of the efforts of plant-hunters in every corner of the globe, and not only should we understand, appreciate and revere the botanical marvels around us, we must also make certain that we leave to our descendants a heritage at least as rich. No tree should be felled without another being planted, and every effort should be made to plant species that are rare and unusual so that the wonderful diversity of our surroundings remains in place.

Richard Bland

COMPETITION

Richard Bland's Sharp-Eyes are closed for the winter but will be wide-open in our Spring issue. We are sorry that the answers to the last competition were on the same page as the questions – due to the usual rush to get the Newsletter out to members while it is still topical.

COPY DATE

Copy for the next Newsletter should be sent to any Committee Member by Wednesday 16 March.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- ? Bristol is in the final 10 to win the title of *Britain's Cleanest City*. Provided that they keep the judges away from central Clifton they may be in with a chance!
- ? A national survey has revealed that residents' spending on alcohol in the BS8 2 postal area is the second highest in England at an average of £575 per person per year. The BS8 1 postal area came 13th in the top 20, with an average of £523 per person per year, beaten by Cotham with £531.

GETTING IT RIGHT

Our apologies for giving the wrong date for the AGM and the time change for the unveiling of the Newbolt plaque.