



Chair's Introduction

The Enhancement Fund marked its tenth anniversary in 2019. Over the decade it has received approximately £195k from its main funding partners B&NES Council and Bath Preservation Trust. It has however leveraged (and spent) a return in excess of £600k and the range of completed works (now totalling 56 projects plus 54 'award winning' street signs) shown in our annual newsletters over the years is both impressive and inspiring. There is always more to do. We are using the anniversary to review the performance and wider benefit of our earlier projects, plus continue to explore new avenues of funding. An as yet elusive funding source (requiring central Government approval) is a small visitor tax, as widely levied by hotels (and some cities, like Venice) in Europe. Would it not make sense to ask visitors to contribute to that which they come to see? Meanwhile we remain thankful to our funders and all our partners who have contributed to another successful year.

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Architect Rhys Brooks, Fund Administrator Ainslie Ensom and Fund Chairman Professor Barry Gilbertson receiving the Georgian Group award from the Duchess of Argyll.

Historic Street names

The completion of the Pierrepont Street sign marked the 50th street name restoration undertaken by the Fund. The success of these works was recognised by a Georgian Group Award in 2019 and by being a Bath Life Awards finalist in 2020. Each sign, be it carved or painted, is a piece of hand-made craftsmanship unique to Bath. The popular rationale for placing these signs at first floor level is that it was carriage drivers, sitting aloft with reins in hand, who needed to see them, often in poor light. The rolling programme of restorations continues.



THE 50th
RESTORED
STREET
SIGN



Sydney Buildings lanterns

In the 1800's Bath was one of the first cities to trial electric street lights and by 1910 a widespread roll-out of the Cast Crown Lantern was undertaken.

Original lanterns remained in service until the 1960's when they were removed, but fortunately one was saved by the late Mr Emery of Emery's Builders and stored in his yard. Sydney Buildings resident Steve Kerss, together with his neighbours, led an exemplary community initiative to faithfully reproduce 12 lanterns from this surviving example. With Council co-operation they were then fitted with modern energy efficient LED bulbs and placed in the street. The Fund contributed to the new casting moulds. The superb enhancement is the result of many years of hard work, perseverance and partnership effort.



New lanterns complete with LED lighting (photo: Steve Kerss)

Inset: Sydney Buildings pre-1940. (photo: Steve Kerss)



Firs Field Memorial

Following completion of the stabilisation of Combe Down Stone Mines in 2010, the only visible reminder of the Ralph Allen stone quarries (with easy public access) is a single ventilation shaft on Firs Field.

The Combe Down Heritage Society and Friends of Firs Field have restored a 3m section of the shaft wall as a memorial to the industrial past of the village.

The stonework incorporates a bench and the UNESCO logo, reminding everyone of the important role that local stone and craftsmanship played in building the Georgian (and Roman) city.

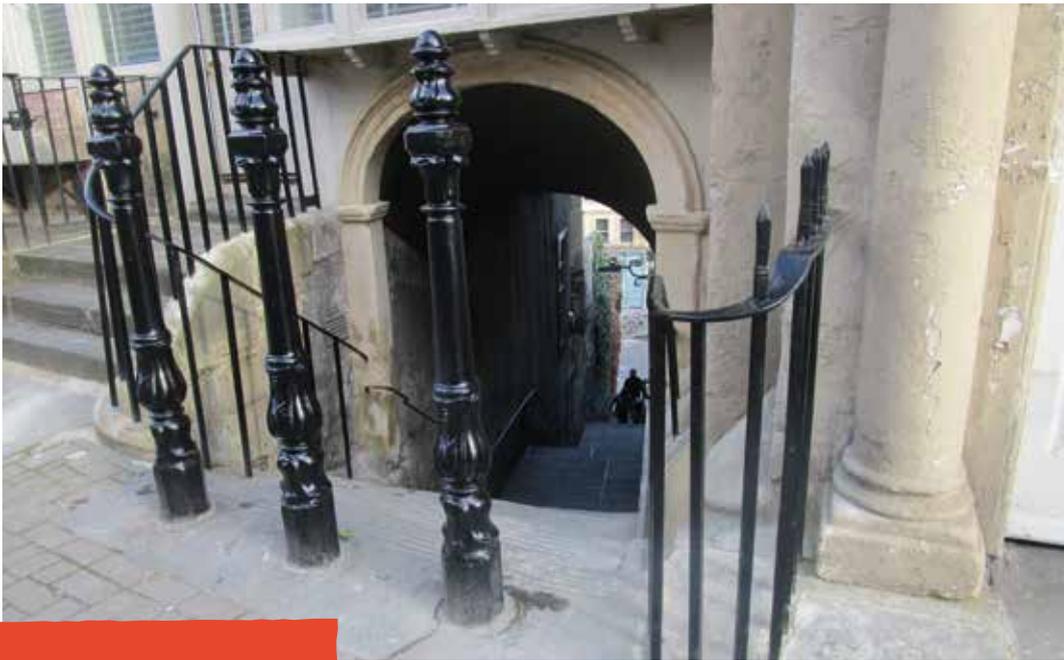
The completed memorial with members of the Combe Down Heritage Society

The Palladian Bridge at Prior Park Gardens

Prior Park dams

The celebrated National Trust landscape gardens at Prior Park centre on 3 lakes, the upper one crossed by a Palladian Bridge, one of only four in the world. The 3 dams holding these lakes were in poor condition, weakened by the burrowing actions of an estimated 100,000 American Crayfish. They were also insufficient to cope with modern flood predictions, revised upward in response to climate change.

A £2.2m project to repair and improve the dams is now underway, with a £7,500 contribution from the Fund supporting the restoration of the historic Georgian cascade.



Walcot Steps

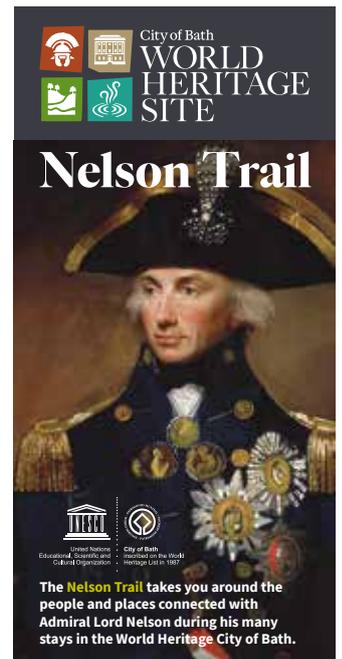
The historic steps leading from the Paragon down to Walcot Street are a hidden delight, flanked by listed buildings and guarded by ornate bollards. Walcot Steps were however in need of repair and lighting improvement, not least to discourage nocturnal anti-social behaviour. The Fund, supported by donations from local residents, has organised and paid for conservation works to the upper archway and stonework, and re-painting of the bollards. Attention will now move to the lighting with historic style lanterns replacing the current modern units alongside regular cleaning, kindly carried out by the Bath BID team.

Elim Pentecostal Church, Charlotte Street

The Fund often provides 'turn-key' grants which pave the way for further works to happen. Such was the case with the Grade II* Listed Elim Church, where a quinquennial survey was funded, which enabled the church to identify and quantify structural repairs to this well-used building.

Hedgemoad Park

The recently formed Friends of Hedgemoad Park (www.hedgemoad.org) have been working hard on improvement projects. In 2018 the Fund contributed toward the restoration of a drinking fountain and work is now underway to repair the Grade II Listed folly The Bastion Tower, which is one of 5 Listed features within the park. It had become covered with ivy and The Fund is standing by to potentially help with stonework repairs.



Nelson Trail

The great British hero Admiral Lord Nelson was a resident of Bath, along with family members and many of his noted naval colleagues. Nelson first came to Bath seeking treatment for fever contracted on his tropical sea voyages, but later resided here and enjoyed the many attractions that society offered. Working with the Nelson Society, the Fund created a walking trail highlighting many places which the Admiral would have known well. This free leaflet has already proved extremely popular with some 25,000 free copies taken by visitors and local residents alike. A downloadable version is currently being produced.

Repeat repairs

Vehicle collision damage is a recurring problem in Bath, with the past year seeing several incidences, most notably at the balustrade on Grand Parade. Insurance covers some repairs, but not all. The Fund has twice helped in repairing iron railings to the steps in George Street and is now in discussions regarding further repairs to the pillars at the top of Ralph Allen Drive. In both instances the Highway Authority is being encouraged to instigate protective measures to stop this damage re-occurring.

Management and Funding

The Fund is controlled by a Management Committee comprising 3 representatives each, from the Council, Bath Preservation Trust and the World Heritage Site Advisory Board. The Fund is administered by the Bath Preservation Trust, which has appointed a part-time Fund Administrator

NLHF Projects

Bath has been very successful in gaining conservation grants for major schemes through the competitive National Lottery Heritage Fund process. This process requires match funding and the Enhancement Fund has contributed to the new World Heritage and Clore Learning Centre in York Street, Sydney Gardens, Bath Abbey Footprint Project, Bathscape, Cleveland Pools and Smallcombe Cemetery.

Contacts

For further information about the Fund, or to suggest any projects, please contact our administrator, Ainslie Ensom at whsef@bptrust.org.uk

For general World Heritage information, please contact B&NES World Heritage Manager, Tony Crouch.

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More on-going projects

- **Canal Towpath, Bathwick Hill** – The Canals and Rivers Trust are undertaking a package of works to the tow path including bank improvements, drainage works and surface restoration. This £200k project will provide visual enhancement plus improved access to this important walking and cycling route. The Fund is paying for a replacement forged iron handrail alongside the historic surface setts.
- **Sydney Buildings raised pavement** – Following the success of the replacement lanterns, attention has now been switched to the listed raised pavement on the opposite side of the street which is in need of repair and, hopefully, more lighting installations.
- **Granville Road** – Visually prominent new development at Granville Road, Lansdown, is to be softened with tree planting to help maintain the green skyline of the city.
- **Walcot Steps** – The project continues with lighting improvements and works to the steps themselves.
- **Street signs** – The rolling programme of restorations continues. If you know of an historic street sign in need of attention please do let us know!
- **Sydney Gardens** – As part of the current National Lottery Heritage Fund supported restoration of this park, £5k has been earmarked toward restoration of the Listed cast iron public conveniences building.
- **Bronze plaques** – In 1898 Bath was one of the first places in the country to erect plaques to commemorate famous former residents. A project is now underway to resurrect the scheme, led by our Chair, with the funds set to contribute if required.

