

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

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refer to: SRL-22529.A

5 November 2014

2 Qudrat 171 B.E.

To the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

Dearly loved Friends,

On two occasions 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited the City of Bristol: once for three days in September 1911 and again for one day in January 1913. On both occasions he stayed at the Clifton Guest House on Royal York Terrace where he was hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Tudor-Pole. Built on elevated ground, the guest house overlooks a valley in which the early city of Bristol was built. Although visiting on the first occasion to gain some rest from His arduous travels and extensive engagements in London, whilst in the guest house 'Abdu'l-Bahá took the time to address large gatherings, meet individuals and groups of friends, shower His tender love upon children, dine with close companions, cheer and advise the staff, give interviews to newspaper reporters and devote time to His extensive daily correspondence. In an account written by Mr. Tudor-Pole we read that the "Master went all over Guest House blessing and dedicating each room to the service of Bahá'u'lláh and promising that the house would become a centre of peace and rest for pilgrims from East and West." The property is now entirely residential and has been divided into a number of apartments.

How extraordinary it is to consider that the Master—He whom Shoghi Effendi reminds us as being "the Centre and Pivot of Bahá'u'lláh's peerless and all-enfolding Covenant, His most exalted handiwork, the stainless Mirror of His light, the perfect Exemplar of His teachings, the unerring Interpreter of His Word, the embodiment of every Bahá'í ideal, the incarnation of every Bahá'í virtue, the Most Mighty Branch sprung from the Ancient Root, the Limb of the Law of God, the Being "round Whom all names revolve," the Mainspring of the Oneness of Humanity, the Ensign of the Most Great Peace, the Moon of the Central Orb of this most holy Dispensation" – twice visited and stayed in this blessed and sacred place. It is thus with untold joy and excitement that the National Spiritual Assembly is pleased to inform you that on behalf of the Bahá'í community it has purchased one of the apartments within the former Clifton Guest House.

It is the intention of the National Assembly to work towards opening the property for visitors. On hearing the news of the final purchase, the Universal House of Justice, in a letter dated 31 October 2014, conveyed that it was pleased to learn of the purchase of the property and that the National Assembly's "intention to carry out renovation work, so that the former guest house can be brought closer in appearance to its condition at the time when 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited it, is entirely appropriate". This will require historical records to be researched and, in light of the information gleaned, the property will be restored to its former condition to the extent possible.

Enclosed with this email letter is a photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá standing on a balcony on the first floor of Clifton Guest House. It is the apartment associated with this balcony that has been purchased.

Given that this apartment is one of many in the building, sensitivity is required in regard to both viewing premises now and visiting it in the future when it is open for this purpose, and we are sure that you will bear this in mind.

We know that you will join us in giving thanks to Bahá'u'lláh for this stupendous and sacred gift which He has chosen to confer upon this already blessed community at this moment in its history. Ours is now the duty to prepare this precious place for future generations of visitors from east and west who will flow to it and draw upon its hallowed spirit of tranquillity and peace to inspire them in their building of His world embracing civilisation.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

National Spiritual Assembly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Patrick O'Mara', written over a horizontal line.

Patrick O'Mara,
Secretary

cc. Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe
Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi