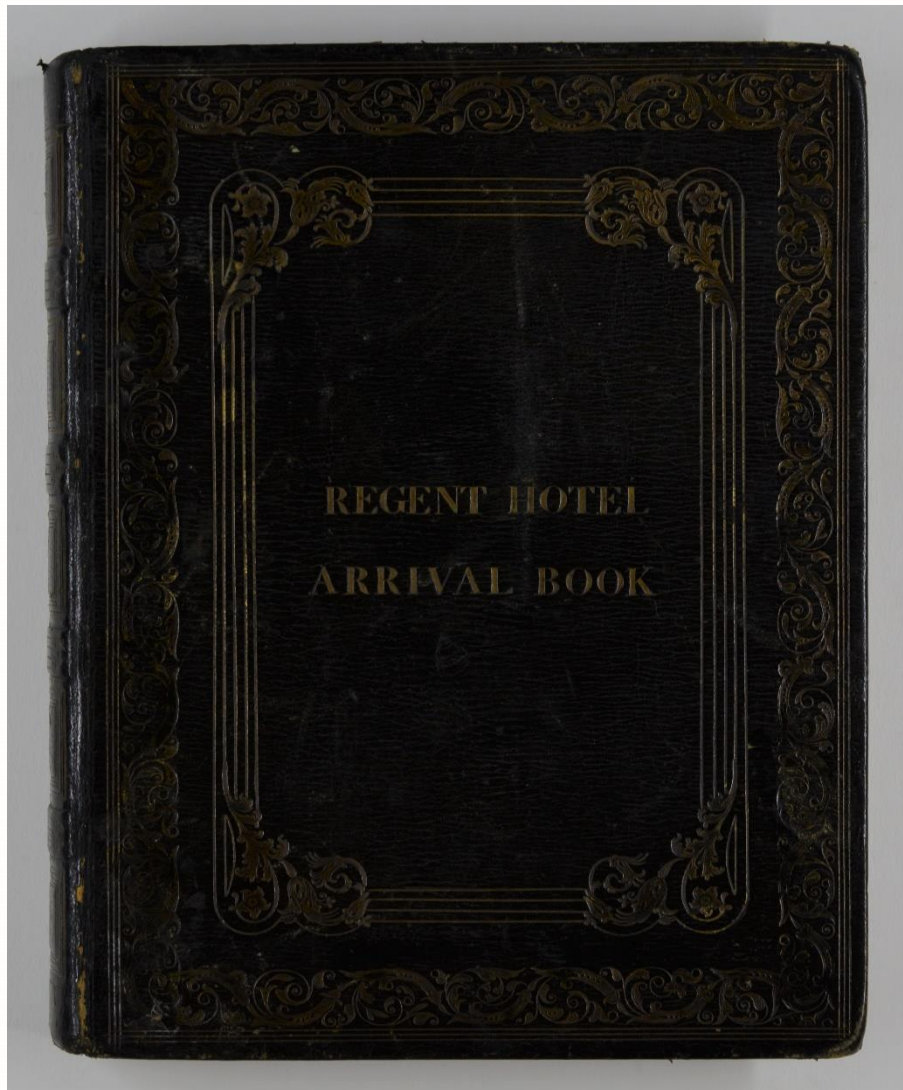


Regent Hotel Arrivals Book, CR4017/1

May's Document of the Month is this Arrivals Book for the Regent Hotel, Leamington Spa. Spanning the dates 1830-1835, it records the names of visitors to the hotel. This volume continued to be used to record the visits of distinguished visitors until 1998.



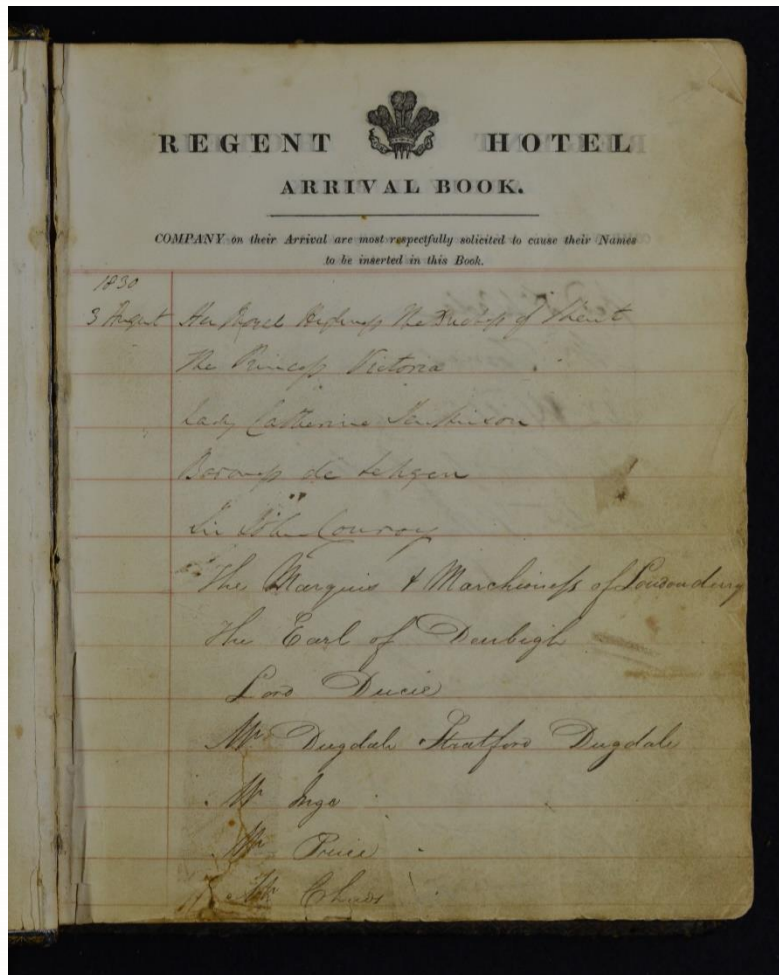
Front cover of the Regent Hotel Arrivals Book, CR4017/1

We have a small collection of Visitors Books for the Regent Hotel in our collections (reference number CR4017) and the names of many famous and distinguished guests feature, including Charles Dickens. However, the one we want to focus on appears on the first page of this volume. The Princess Victoria, later to become

Queen Victoria, visited the Regent Hotel on 3rd August 1830 and stayed overnight before continuing her travels to Malvern¹.

May is the anniversary of her birth.

Victoria is listed here with other members of the party: Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent (Victoria's mother), Lady Catherine Jenkinson, Baroness L. Lehzen (Victoria's Governess) and Sir John Conroy (Comptroller of the Household of the Duchess of Kent). These are the first entries on the first page of this volume. It is the earliest Visitors Book from the Regent Hotel that we hold in our collections.



First page of the Regent Hotel Arrivals Book, showing the Royal Party as the first entries, CR4017/1.

¹ Queen Victoria Visits Warwickshire, Our Warwickshire, <https://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/article/queen-victoria-visits-birmingham> (accessed 07/04/2020).

There is an index of the names recorded in the Regent Hotel Visitors Books in our library (reference B.Lea.CRO(p)).

Queen Victoria

Queen Victoria was born on the 24th May 1819, at Kensington Palace. She was the only daughter of the fourth son of King George III. Her three uncles (George VI, Frederick Duke of York, and William VI) had no surviving legitimate children and her father died shortly after her birth, leaving Victoria the heir to the throne. When William VI died in 1837, she became Queen at the age of 18².

She married her cousin, Prince Albert (Prince Franz August Karl Albert Emanuel), on the 10th February 1840 at the Chapel Royal, St James' Palace. They had nine children. Albert died in 1861 at the age of 41 and Victoria remained in a state of mourning for the rest of her life. She ruled the British Empire until her death in 1901, when she was succeeded by her eldest son, Edward VII.

Eight years after her visit to the Regent Hotel, Queen Victoria granted the town its 'Royal' prefix, making it Royal Leamington Spa³.

Regent Hotel

The hotel's foundation stone was laid by Miss Greatheed and it officially opened to visitors on the 19th August 1819. The hotel has not always been known as the Regent, however. It was originally called the Williams Hotel but three weeks after opening became known as the Regent, by permission of the then Prince Regent, later to become George VI. At the time of building, the Regent was the largest hotel in Europe. It has had a colourful history with many noted guests over the years, including the Duke of Wellington and Charles Dickens, as well as Queen Victoria.

² Information gathered from *Victoria (r. 1837-1901)*, The Royal Household, <http://www.royal.uk/queen-victoria> (accessed 07/04/2020).

³ *Queen Victoria Visits Warwickshire*, Our Warwickshire, <https://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/article/queen-victoria-visits-birmingham> (accessed 07/04/2020).

It was owned by the Cridlan family from 1904 until its eventual closure in 1998. It was refurbished and re-opened in 2005⁴ and is now owned by the Travelodge chain of hotels. The hotel was given Grade II listed status on 19th November 1953.

⁴ Information gathered from *Regent Hotel*, Historic England, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1381422> (accessed 08/04/2020).