



# *The not so* **MERRY** **WIVES** *of* **BATH**

*With his warring 'wifelets' once again in the news, Nesta Wyn Ellis wonders whether the Marquess of Bath encourages these catfights as proof of their devotion*

**T**HE RECENT VIOLENCE that erupted at Longleat House between two of the 'wifelets' of the Marquess of Bath was not the first. Police had previously been called to his summer villa in St Tropez. When I was a guest there in 2000 to interview the Marquess for my biography of him, I witnessed extraordinary scenes and was also harassed by a wifelet who accused me of trying to steal her boyfriend.

She came slamming into my bedroom before breakfast to tell me that it was her room and that if I touched any of her things, she would have me hounded out of

France by her 'high-up political contacts'.

Her violence at that stage was verbal rather than physical but, as I knew that she was volatile, I was apprehensive. The first night I was there, she and the other woman went clubbing. They returned at about 1am screeching and clattering their high heels on the tiled floors. I heard the wifelet come crashing along the passage towards my room. She tried to open my door but I had locked it. I heard her shouting to the other woman. 'She's in there, I'll kill her. I'll kill her.' I was so alarmed that I jammed a chair under the door knob.

During the morning as I interviewed Lord Bath on the terrace, this same wifelet

constantly interrupted, directing abuse at me and saying Bath should not trust me. I cut my visit short without concluding my interviews. He was, of course rather upset, but clearly terrorised by said wifelet.

Another female friend of Alexander's who was staying at the villa had arrived before me and was in a state of misery owing to the verbal attacks she had experienced after arriving. She was told by the guardian of a neighbouring villa, that police were sometimes called to his house because of catfights. The previous year, a blonde had been taken away with long, deep scratches on her arm. Every summer when Bath and his female guests were in