



# LONDON BRANCH

## NEWSLETTER

Winter 2011



### Challenging Conservation: Heritage at the Crossroads – London Branch Day Conference 2011

After last year's hiatus, which in fairness was as a result of organising the Annual School, the London Branch arranged another successful Day Conference.

The overarching theme of the conference was the changing context in which conservation finds itself. This theme was explored by a range of excellent speakers who approached the topic from a diverse number of viewpoints and utilised excellent case studies.

I suppose the key question for a professional attending the conference would be: "is the future of conservation bright or bleak?"

I would suggest neither. It is what we, as a profession make of it. It is clear that change is afoot and already upon us in the form of the Government's pro-growth and de-regulation agenda, most readily apparent in the form of the recently enacted Localism Act and the draft NPPF. Whilst these documents present particular challenges they also present opportunities to engage with local communities who have valuable skills that may assist with the preparation of 'Local Lists' and Conservation Area Appraisals.

There is clearly an expectation that the heritage community will need to articulate precisely what is significant about a building, site or environment in order to justify its protection and management in an appropriate manner. The challenge will lie in integrating this within the wider planning agenda, which makes no qualms about the priority given to "sustainable growth". How successful will this be? Only time will tell...

The conference was a great success and a huge thank you goes out to the organising committee who put so much effort into ensuring the smooth running of the day.

We're currently giving some thought to the theme of next year's conference. If you have any ideas please do let our Chair, David McDonald, know.

**Marc Timlin**



# CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

It is with some irony that I reflect on the opening remarks in my Chairman's Note in the last newsletter. I commented on the declining numbers of conservation officers in London. I realised, when I retired from Kensington and Chelsea at the end of September, that I had become part of those alarming statistics. Unfortunately, I cannot report on any improvement on the employment situation, but thank you to all who sent me messages of goodwill for my retirement. Although my professional life is winding down, I shall be maintaining my IHBC responsibilities both at a local and national level.

You may have heard about the Government's Green Deal initiative, which is due to be introduced next year. It is a scheme in which property owners will have the energy efficiency of their buildings improved for them, the costs being met through increased heating bills from the utility companies. The idea is that over a short period of time, the measures will lead to sufficient energy savings to pay for themselves. The SPAB and IHBC amongst others have been concerned about the potential damage that such quick-fix measures, particularly wall insulation, may have on traditionally constructed buildings. In response to this the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has convened a working party at which I represent the IHBC. I'll keep members up-to-date with progress.

I am pleased to report that our IHBC London Conference, Challenging Conservation - Heritage at the Crossroads on 5th October was an outstanding success. It was heartening in these difficult times that we had well over one hundred delegates who enjoyed some inspiring presentations, including at the end, a spirited defence of the listing of the Abbey Road zebra crossing by Roger Bowdler of English Heritage. One of the most interesting presentations was by Julian Harrap who gave an account of his work along with David Chipperfield on the award-winning refurbishment of the Neues Museum in Berlin. Unfortunately, time did not allow Julian to get into detail of the conservation approach taken. However, he has kindly agreed to deliver an expanded lecture to the Branch early in 2012. Incidentally, Julian also provided one of the more memorable quotations of the day when he remarked that conservation was one of the highest forms of architecture. My thanks should go to the speakers, sponsor Montagu Evans, the delegates and of course the organising committee, led by Sheila Stones.

Finally, I'd like to remind members of the IHBC's Governance Review, which will be debated at December's Council Meeting. Whilst this may seem to be a rather arcane subject, it is important in shaping how the Institute will operate in the future and particularly how it affects you as an individual. If you would like to contribute, even to say that you are happy with the status quo, do not hesitate to get in touch with Sheila or me. Details of the consultation can be found on the IHBC website in the NewsBlog Archive.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our pre-Christmas Event at All Saints Church, Margaret Street on the 5<sup>th</sup> December.

**David McDonald**  
**London Branch Chairman**

## IHBC on Broadway

### London Branch Visit to London Underground's Headquarters

London Underground's headquarters at 55 Broadway were recently upgraded to Grade I from Grade II, reflecting the building's great significance. The September tour of the building proved to be the most popular among recent excursions for London IHBC branch members and required the tour to be split into two groups. Many thanks go to hosts, Mike Ashworth and Edmund Bird, who guided the groups through the Portland stone building, highlighting historic extant features and around the exterior with its remarkable sculpture by the day's famous artists.

Charles Holden's bold and modern cruciform design with stepped back upper floors made good use of the constraints of the building site and city building restrictions. 55 Broadway incorporated both London Underground offices and St James's Park tube station with the tube line located just 7.3 metres below the surface. The building was the tallest in London when it was completed in 1929. Originally, the travertine marble-clad lobby served as a route for pedestrians and commuters through the building's ground floor and across the station-booking hall. This public access was altered during a 1989 refurbishment.

Today, the London Underground lobby boasts six original train frequency indicators in their wall case but the Northern Line frequency indicator is the only one still functioning. Other original features remaining in the building include the drinking fountains, the lift lobbies, also clad in travertine marble, with their lift façades, and some remaining "Cutler" mail system chutes powered by vacuum suction, the seventh floor senior offices suites and the principal staircase. Striking geometric sunbursts, symbolizing speed and modernity, decorate the lift lobbies and a lightning bolt-like motif features in the main stairway balustrade. Signs from across London's transport system hang in the predominantly tile-clad stairway. Mr Ashworth provided a useful tip for dating the signs, count the number of arrow tails in the arrow and the fewer the number, the more recent the date.





Part of the tenth floor terraces, formed by the stepped back floors above, has been planted with a green roof and supports solar panels. The rest of the tenth floor terraces feature gardens fitted with outdoor seating, offering pleasant outdoor space in which to enjoy a fine day. The best part of the tour was saved for last, however, following a climb up increasingly narrow steps to the base of the flagpole at the top of the building. From that vantage point, a 360-degree view of London and beyond was laid bare. The glass windows of the city shimmered in a late afternoon sun and its stone and brick masses were silhouetted against a moody sky.

**Kate Jefferson**

## **An Update from the Brooking Collection**

Charles is now undergoing a major transitional process as is no longer linked to the University of Greenwich. We are currently in the throes of relocating the major part of the Brooking Collection, currently stored at two sites in London, to a new home in the South East region, as the University can no longer support it. The future is, however, very exciting and positive. The museum Trust will elect brand new Trustees, completely under our control - progress at last!

We've got together with excellent friends to form our own team, producing great results in a very short time. Our main aim is to relocate the museum artefacts safely to new secure accommodation over the next few weeks, and eventually to a permanent home - a daunting task not for the faint-hearted!

We envisage that The Brooking Collection, when settled into its new environment, will become a national centre of excellence for Conservation Officers, other conservation professionals, interior designers, apprentices, students and the general public. We are arranging to visit a suitable site at this moment as splendid offers keep coming in, so please bear with us...

When the move has been secured, Charles will be arranging to hold CPD workshops and lectures at our home in Cranleigh, SW Surrey, 8 miles South of Guildford on the history of the English door, window, staircase and fire grate. He also covers all period mouldings, joinery, shutters, early glass and ironmongery/door furniture but not plasterwork - however his colleague Neil is an expert in the latter, who could also provide CPDs by prior arrangement, perhaps in conjunction. Charles can also travel to give lectures or take a 'travelling exhibition' to a selected venue, but at the moment would prefer to operate from home.

As soon as things settle, we are going to produce a new, up-to-date leaflet detailing proposed CPD courses and their relevant fee structure, etc. Charles is also shortly setting up his own consultancy partnership.

In the meantime, should you wish to arrange a visit to see The Home Study Collection at Cranleigh during this transitional period, please email or ring Charles or myself on Tel: (01483) 274203 (with BT Callminder for messages). Our website 'The Brooking Collection.com' is currently undergoing reconstruction so please 'Google' the words 'Charles Brooking in Cranleigh' to read about him (but ignore references to Dartford and Greenwich on the other titles as they are extremely out-of-date).

We also intend to establish a supportive society called the 'Friends of The Brooking Collection' in the near future.

**Charles and Susan Brooking**

## The Mortuary that became a Museum

In St George's Gardens, Tower Hamlets, in the shadow of Hawksmoor's St George-in-the-East church, is a small ruined Victorian brick and tile mortuary (figure 1). Above the door survives a stone plaque that reads 'Metropolitan Borough of Stepney Nature Study Museum' (figure 2). In both roles, the building is important material evidence of the changing practices and attitudes towards death in Victorian London and of the lives of East End children in the early twentieth century.



*Figure 1: St George-in-the-East Mortuary, December 2010*

The mortuary was built c.1876 and is a comparatively rare surviving early example of such in London. Prior to the 1870s, while there were 'dead houses', usually attached to hospitals or workhouses, there were few suitable places for a body to be kept after death but prior to burial, particularly for unidentified bodies or for those requiring post-mortems. Despite a belief in 'miasma' – something in the air caused by decaying organic matter that caused sickness and death – the practice was to keep the body at home to ensure the person was actually dead, to allow people to pay their respects, and until the funeral could be arranged. For poor families usually living in single rooms, it also meant keeping the body until enough money had been collected for the burial.

Although Edwin Chadwick's 1843 report recommended the building of mortuaries and the 1866 Sanitary Act permitted local authorities to build them, by 1875 out of twenty-one London districts only nine had done so (British Medical Journal (BMJ) 1875, 802). By 1876, St George-in-the-East Vestry had built its 'commodious mortuary' (Fisher 2009, 5). However, other than a

newspaper report of 1888 that the body of Elizabeth Stride, one of the Jack the Ripper victims, was taken there (www.casebook.org 2011), there are no other records of the St George-in-the-East mortuary actually being used as such (Canon Ainsworth pers. comm.).

There was public resistance to the use of mortuaries: the fear of the body being snatched and the social practices involved with keeping the body at home meant that the working classes in particular were reluctant to use them (Fisher 2009, 12). A report of 1900 complained that the custom of keeping bodies at home for several days after their decease was still a regular practice (BMJ 1900, 657).

Despite a persistent shortage of mortuaries in London, particularly in cases where bodies had to await identification and coroner's inquests (BMJ 1890, 212), or perhaps because it had become out-dated – by 1900 the need to refrigerate bodies, and to carry out post-mortems in a separate building to avoid 'associations of a repulsive character' were being called for (BMJ 1900, 658) – by 1904 the mortuary had become a museum.



*Figure 2: 'Metropolitan Borough of Stepney Nature Study Museum', December 2010*

Following the setting up of the School Nature Study Union in 1902-3 to educate children and adults of crowded inner city areas who may never have had any experience of the natural world, the curator of Stepney Borough Museum, Miss Kate Marion Hall, and the curate of the parish, Claude Hinscliffe, with the help of an anonymous donation, transformed the mortuary into a Nature Study Museum. Aside from stuffed specimens and archaeological material, it was unique in London for having live exhibits, including a monkey. The museum was phenomenally popular, attracting up to 1000 visitors, mostly children, in the summer months (Stgite 2011). It survived the First World War but closed during the Second World War; its contents transferred to Whitechapel Museum. Since then it has fallen into dereliction. While there are hopes to conserve it, it is listed in English Heritage's Heritage at Risk and bizarrely was left out of a major restoration and conservation project of St George's Gardens in 2007-8 (Stgite 2011).

In addition to the desperate need for conservation, the building also deserves a great deal more research to both highlight the important cultural changes and social aspects it represents, and to answer some of the many questions regarding its use.

**Caroline Sands**

## References

BMJ 1875 Mortuaries for the Metropolis. *British Medical Journal* December 25 1875, 802-3

BMJ 1890. Morgues for London. *British Medical Journal* July 26 1890, 212-213.

BMJ 1900. Mortuaries in connection with cemeteries. *British Medical Journal* March 17 1900, 657-658.

English Heritage 2011

<http://risk.englishheritage.org.uk/2010.aspx?id=471&rt=0&pn=1&st=a&di=Tower+Hamlets&ctyp=any&crit=george+east+nature+study+mortuary>; accessed 17/01/11

Fisher, P. 2009. Houses for the dead: the provision of mortuaries in London 1843-1889. *The London Journal* 34 (1), 1-15.

[http://www.casebook.org/press\\_reports/daily\\_news/18881001.html](http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/daily_news/18881001.html) accessed 17/01/11

Stgite 2011. St George-in-the-East website: the nature study museum. <http://www.stgite.org.uk/naturesstudy.html>; last accessed 29/09/2011

---

## London Branch Christmas Event – 5<sup>th</sup> December



This year's Christmas tour is the Grade I listed All Saints Church, Margaret Street.

Colin Kerr of Molyneux Kerr, project architect for the three phases of restoration, has kindly agreed to lead a tour describing the works.

We will meet at 6.50 in the courtyard for 7.00 (prompt) tour of the Church. Please do not enter the church, as there will be service in progress.

Following the tour we will retire to Efes, a nearby Turkish restaurant, for our (non) traditional Christmas meal.

The tour of the church costs £5.00 for tour of Church and there are still places available.

It would be great to see as many of you as possible. If you want to come email Kate Ainslie-Williams on: [kate@kawdesign.co.uk](mailto:kate@kawdesign.co.uk)



## Post Offices Under Threat

Edmund Bird has recently completed a project assessing purpose-built post office buildings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in England, compiling an inventory of over 400 post offices designed by the Office (later Ministry) of Works between 1900 and 1980.

He has been working with the Victorian Society and Twentieth Century Society together with a dozen of the nation's architectural historians and authors with an interest in this period. These landmark public buildings were designed to a very high standard in the Edwardian and inter-war years – usually in a classical 20<sup>th</sup> Century Georgian style which prompted the architectural term 'Post Office Georgian' to describe the dignified, well crafted buildings that grace many of our high streets.



*Twickenham Post Office*

The post office is now an endangered species following the mass-closures and relocation of post office counters into shops leaving the purpose built buildings vacant, targets for demolition and redevelopment or creative new uses (particularly bars and restaurants).

Only 49 post offices in England from the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century are currently listed which is a woeful situation. Designation of London's splendid portfolio of historic post offices of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is particularly poor – only three are currently listed - the King Edward Street HQ in the City, West Kensington and Islington's Upper Street - but Edmund's report identifies 65 post office buildings of the last century in London and has selected 14 of particular note to form part of his nationwide shortlist of recommendations for designation. These range from the palatial Edwardian post offices in Twickenham, Borough (Southwark), Exhibition Road (South Kensington) and Uxbridge, to the elegant George V style post offices in Eltham and West Drayton, the 1930s moderne Beckenham and some post-war landmarks such as Lavender Hill in Wandsworth.



*Beckenham Post Office*

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Society have launched a campaign to improve the heritage protection of the best examples of post office architecture - if you have a favourite post office in London (or anywhere else in England for that matter) do log in to their website at [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk) and email in to them a photo and any historical information you may know (most post offices of the 1900 - 1960 era had their date of construction proudly embellishing their facades) - all contributions will be gratefully received.

**Edmund Bird**

# The National Heritage List for England & Online Application Form for Designation

On 4 April 2011 great changes took place in the world of designation with the launch of an online application form, a new designation casework database and the National Heritage List for England by English Heritage. Together the three components interact to enable designation casework to be approached in an increasingly holistic and unified manner, and will help us to keep the designation base up to date and accurate on behalf of the Tourism and Heritage Minister.

The online application form accepts applications for designation for buildings, monuments, parks, gardens, battlefields and wreck sites, as well as amendment and de-designation applications for these asset types. It is also for use by local planning authorities seeking listing following the issuing of a BPN, or by anyone applying for a Certificate of Immunity from Listing.

The online form incorporates a Geographical Information Systems element. This allows you to demarcate the exact asset or area you would like to have considered. Because the form is accessed via a Heritage Passport account, applications need not to be completed in one sitting - it is easy to log in and out and complete an application in stages if required. Feedback has so far been positive, and we are continuing to improve the form in order to make the designation application process as straightforward as possible.



*Chalk Farm Underground Station is one of 16 stations recently added to the National Heritage List for England*

Minor errors do not require the completion of the online application form. Simply send an email to ([minoramendmentstotheheritagelist@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:minoramendmentstotheheritagelist@english-heritage.org.uk)) and we can rectify the error on the National Heritage List for England.

Once an application form has been submitted it feeds directly into English Heritage's new casework database, the Unified Designation System (UDS). This database unifies our

processes, holds data for all asset types, and allows for electronic notifications and consultations. Saving time on these routine elements of designation casework will enable English Heritage to undertake more strategic programmes in line with the objectives set out in the National Heritage Protection Plan.

Whilst Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Designed Landscapes, Battlefields and Protected Wreck Sites all continue to be protected by different legislation, for the first time information on all nationally designated assets is now displayed in one place – the National Heritage List for England (the List) – where it can be searched and downloaded. This is an exciting step forward in the development of heritage protection reform, celebrating the significance of England’s heritage assets and making information available in a way that is open and accessible to all.



*The Philips Building at the School of Oriental and African Studies was listed at Grade II\* in May.*  
© James O. Davies, English Heritage

The List can be found on English Heritage’s website and is refreshed every night at midnight to ensure that the data on it is as current as possible - to date it contains just fewer than 400,000 entries. Therefore, to facilitate finding designation records the List comprises three types of search functionality - a quick search, a map search and an advanced search, the latter of which includes search areas such as designation date, monument type, date range and associated person. The numbering system on the List differs from that which was used previously on websites such as LB Online; however, it is still possible to find a designated asset on the List using a number from English Heritage’s legacy databases by using the advanced search. Certificates of Immunity and Building Preservation Notices sit on the List alongside designation records, and World Heritage Sites are also included even though they continue to be inscribed by UNESCO; their inclusion allows us to provide a comprehensive overview of all internationally and nationally designated heritage assets across England.

Please feel free to send us any feedback that you may have on the online application form or National Heritage List for England. Comments can be sent to [designation@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:designation@english-heritage.org.uk). A lot of work has gone into developing these new systems over the past few years and we hope that you find them a real improvement on the fragmented systems that they replace.

**Hannah Jones**  
**Designation Operations Team Manager, English Heritage**

## Art Deco Delight

On 16<sup>th</sup> November a small group of London Branch members (and a much larger group of 20<sup>th</sup> century society members) were lucky enough to be given a tour of the (nearly) completed development at the former Regent Palace Hotel, just off the southern end of Regent Street. Cordula Zeidler, of Donald Insall Associates Ltd. explained how they secured consent for the restoration of the restoration, and in some cases near complete scholarly replicas, of the Hotel's stunning 1930s interiors with the insertion.

The Regent Palace Hotel was part of a number of hotels built at the turn of the century for the increasing numbers of middle class travellers. The hotel's restaurant and bar areas are today considered to be among the best and most complete Art Deco interiors in the country. Under this scheme, sections of the facades and all the restaurants have been restored to the appearance they enjoyed in their 1930s heyday, including the reinstatement of a significant lost interior.



*The Atlantic Bar – in its heyday.*

The Regent Palace Hotel was built in 1912-1914 in a Beaux-Arts style for the Lyons Company and designed by WJ Ancell and Henry Tanner Junior. It was revamped internally in the 1930s when self-taught architect Oliver Percy Bernard, the UK's leading Art Deco designer, remodelled its restaurant and bar areas. Bernard created luscious and exciting spaces, lined in marble, and panelled in Rosewood veneer and Formica, with illuminated columns, glass sculptures, modern furniture and streamlined light fittings. Bernard was famous for his interior designs for the Lyons Company's Corner Houses; his glamorous entrance for the Strand Palace Hotel today forms part of the collection of the V&A. For the Regent Palace Hotel he designed restaurants and bars now better known by their later names of the Titanic restaurant, the Chez Cup cocktail bar, the Atlantic Bar and Grille, and Dick's Bar.

The interiors have survived many refurbishment projects, with much of the original decoration, including remnants of the original Edwardian fit out, still in place.

The Titanic and Dick's Bar have a particularly colourful history; the 1990s saw them host parties attended by scores of celebrities, including Madonna, David Beckham, George Best, Hugh Grant and U2.

Externally the lion head cartouches at the corners of the double mansard continued to pay homage to Lyons Corner House, and the Beaux-Art articulation and faience façade recall the Belle Époque of Paris.



*Former Titanic Restaurant*

A particularly interesting element of the proposals was the relocation of the Titanic restaurant from ground floor to basement level. This has been done very successfully and it's a testament to the quality of the design team and craftsmen that the new material is almost undistinguishable from the original fit out.

The retained parts of the building now return lost vistas, glamorous interiors and memories to London's urban landscape.

The tour finished in the contemporary insertion, designed by Dixon Jones, which provides a significant quantum of new floorspace in a considered manner whilst providing an appropriate interaction with the fabric and spaces of significance and integrating successfully into a sensitive area of Central London townscapae.

**Marc Timlin**

## **NEW BRANCH MEMBERS**

A warm welcome to :-

Richard Greenwood

Kelly Madigan

Dr Timur Tatlioglo

Nick Chapple

Richard Clayson

David Johnson

Timothy Murphy

Andrew Roberts

Henry Skinner

David Wylie

# **LONDON BRANCH COMMITTEE**

**Chairman** David McDonald  
davidmcdonald378@btinternet.com  
Tel. 020 8881 6724

**Treasurer** John Webb  
Jwebb@wandsworth.gov.uk  
Tel. 020 8871 6645

**Branch Secretary** Sheila Stones  
Sheila.Stones@english-heritage.org.uk  
Tel. 020 7973 3785

**Events** Kate Ainslie-Williams  
kate@kawdesign.co.uk  
Tel. 020 7735 6088

**Membership** Jacinta Fisher  
Jacinta.fisher@bromley.gov.uk  
020 8313 4664

**Application Mentor** Jon Finney  
j.finney2@ntlworld.com

**Newsletter Editor** Marc Timlin  
Marc.timlin@dpplp.com  
Tel. 0207 092 3623

**Publicity** Florence Salberter  
Florence.salberter@britishwaterways.co.uk  
Tel. 020 7985 7224

**Day Conference:** Position Vacant

---

Please e-mail any changes in your details to me as soon as you can.

Updated details should also be sent to -

IHBC  
Jubilee House  
High Street  
Tisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP3 6HA

Thanks

Jacinta Fisher

This newsletter is by IHBC members for the IHBC London branch.

The information in its articles are the views of the authors and not necessarily the view of the IHBC.

For the next edition please forward submissions to **marctimlin@hotmail.com** or **marc.timlin@dpplp.com**

Please send all text as Microsoft Word documents with images as jpegs.