



· INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

NORTH BRANCH

NORTHERN NOTES

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IHBC delegates visiting Carlisle Castle during the Annual School. Photo by Stephen Rickards

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2013.

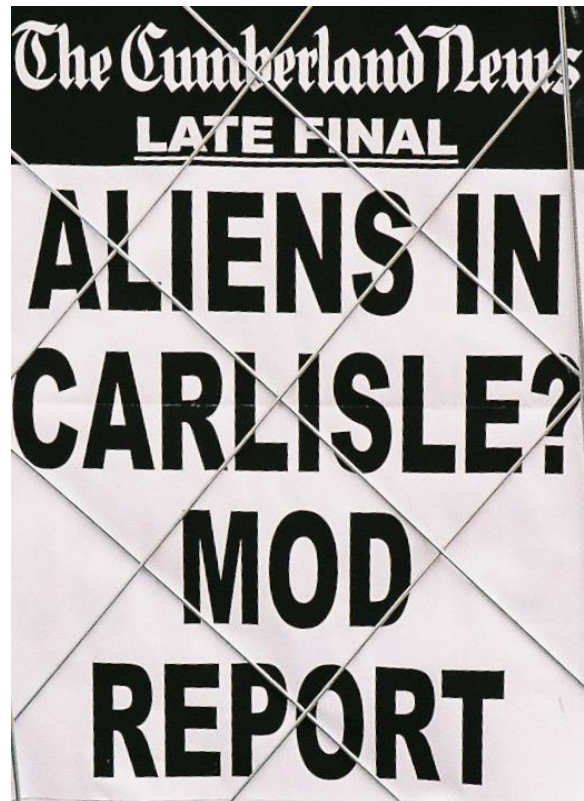
Following the North Branch successfully hosting the IHBC Annual School at Carlisle in June, 'Context', the IHBC magazine did a full report in the September 2013 issue. It also did an excellent vox pop feature on Richard Majewicz, who was the lead organizer for the event, so if you want to know why he has an unpronounceable second name you can find out where his family came from as well as getting an insight into what makes him tick!

Well done to everyone involved in organizing and taking part in the event that has proved to the rest of Britain that we have a very rich heritage in the north and through highlighting the importance of retaining and developing specialist skills the future will be very bright as well. This newsletter will not reproduce the same articles in Context but will look at the event through the eyes of individual members who attended to give their own personal perspective on the three day School.

We have introduced a new feature for this newsletter involving a 'Mystery Building'. Readers are asked to guess what the building in the photograph is and we will let you know next time. If anyone else has a 'mystery building' picture to use in a future newsletter please send it on to us.

Thanks to our contributors for their excellent articles and as always we welcome any contributions from those interested in the conservation of historic buildings. Any comments on the format or content of the newsletter will also be welcome.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in reading the newsletter please do forward a copy to them.



The arrival of IHBC in Carlisle did not go unnoticed...photo by John Preston

Contents

- 1 What's on**
- 2 Committee meeting dates 2013**
- 3 Skills at the IHBC's Annual School June 2013**
Jules Brown, Kathryn Banfield, Stewart Ramsdale
- 4 IHBC Annual School – a very personal take**
Bridget Turnbull
- 5 Carlisle IHBC Annual School Impressions**
Marta Zurakowska
- 6 Day School**
Gaby Rose
- 7 Caption Corner**
- 8 Mystery Building**
- 9 Edinburgh IHBC Annual School 2014**
Jane Jackson
- 10 Branch Contact Details**

This newsletter is prepared by the North Branch of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) however the views and opinions expressed within it are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute or of the Branch Committee

1 What's on

Heritage Skills events continue throughout the year both in the North East and Cumbria. For details of this years programme contact Andie Harris, Heritage Skill Coordinator for details at admin@nect.org.uk. Tel. 0191 232 9279

Conservation Forums hosted by English Heritage. Further details can be obtained from Claire Botham at English Heritage at claire.botham@english-heritage.org.uk tel. 0191 269 1234

If you want to keep up to date with all that is happening in the heritage world log on to the **IHBC NEWS BLOG** on the IHBC national website: www.ihbc.org.uk Up-to-date information is given including links to other sites to get all the information in full. You can even read all the back issues of Northern Notes on the North Region part of the website. IHBC members can get regular updates as they are published by signing up to the BLOG on their e-mail: newsletter@ihbc.org.uk

2 Committee meeting dates 2013:

IHBC North Branch AGM & Training Event (Free)
Friday 25 October 2013 at Durham Cathedral
11.00- 17.00 (Branch AGM at 1.25 pm)

Next Branch Committee Meeting:
4.15pm on Thursday 12th December 2013 at Blackfriars, Newcastle

All IHBC members are welcome to attend any meeting.

3 Skills at the IHBC's Annual School June 2013

Skills was a word very much at the centre of the Annual School of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) hosted by the institute's North Branch in the historic city of Carlisle in June 2013.

Setting out to examine the critical challenges for built and historic environment conservation specialists and placemakers in the 21st century, the school focussed on the breadth of the skills training needs of conservation professionals required to ensure that our heritage is viable, sustainable and in good heart.

Nearly 150 delegates from all relevant specialist backgrounds and disciplines were presented with a huge range of opportunities to scrutinise the latest thinking on skills resources, priorities and opportunities, ranging across practice, policy, funding, community education, low-carbon priorities and traditional skills as well as the tools of the mainstream construction sector such as contracts and design review.

With professionals and contractors from across the spectrum, there is a need for each of us to understand what others in our sector are doing and how we fit together to conserve the historic environment.

Being 'up' on our own field is one thing – and that's hard enough – but there must be a need for us to get to grips with the skills of others that we work with, strengthening the sector and broadening its base. Several of the School's sessions highlighted this. Are we all sufficiently

up on digital recording to know when it should be specified? Do we have the community engagement skills we need to persuade others of our cause? Can we all get that mortar mix right when we need to?

As we know, the loss of skilled craftspeople equipped to work with heritage buildings, engineering and crafts is a huge issue. The equivalent loss of knowledge in the public sector, as conservation officer numbers continue to drop, is equally worrying. The loss of private sector jobs, notably amongst small practice archaeologists, is a third example. Bolstering the sector with cross-fertilisation of knowledge and skills is important as fewer people are left to deliver more.



Stonemasonry at the Heritage Skills Fair photo by Vilhena de Moraes

This is why the success of our mini Skills Fair in the Market Place on the Saturday of the School was particularly pleasing. Delivered through North of England Civic Trust's Heritage Skills Initiative (HSI), over 50 School delegates got stuck into blacksmithing, wood turning, lime mortar pointing, lead work and more. Looking on by the dozen were the great Carlisle public, gripped by how that spindle would turn out or what the gizmo under the hammer would look like when it was done. For the contractors who led the training, spreading this kind of word amongst professionals and potential new clients is vital to keeping our sector bright for the future.

But it was the need for connections between different skills which the School highlighted best demonstrating the importance of developing an approach which integrates training of all types into live projects, writing training into tender documentation across the board, and making it an integral part of all commissioned and contracted work on our heritage-at-risk projects. There is a clear need for us to know what others in our sector are doing and, for that we need to share our skills beyond our colleagues. Whether it's an hour's talk by the architect or a 12 month bursary by the joiner, it's got to be all joined up.

*Jules Brown & Kathryn Banfield,
North of England Civic Trust – Heritage Skills Initiative
Stewart Ramsdale, Tees Heritage Trust.*

4 IHBC Annual School – a very personal take

It seemed strange finally attending the IHBC Annual School in Carlisle. Strange because 2 years ago I worked in Cumbria and had been party to some of the early discussions about the then embryonic event. Here it was at last, having been tenderly nurtured by Richard Majewicz and the Northern branch. In that time I had moved 300 miles north; going from the English to the Scottish way of doing things and from the idyllic backwater of Eden to the huge development pressures of Aberdeen. In short I was a changed professional going back to a part of the world I knew well.

Also it was my first full summer school, having only once attended a day school in Matlock quite some years ago. So I was doubly curious about the event. One of the wonderful aspects of working in the historic environment sector is the generous enthusiasm and knowledge that other professionals have and their willingness to share it. The networking aspects of the school were great and I learnt about what's happening in Australia, Ireland, and the academic and building preservation sectors. It was also good to meet professionals from other heritage related disciplines. It's very difficult to reap these benefits from just attending the day school.



Brougham Castle photo by Richard Majewicz

With a degree of trepidation I co-lead a visit to Brougham Castle, a Building at Risk just south of Penrith. In my past life in Eden DC I'd worked with the owner, Christopher Terry, and English Heritage on various aspects of the castle's restoration. The IHBC group's responses to the work were diverse -from admonishment that such conjectural restoration could ever have been allowed to a recognition that it had enabled a BAR to be put back in practical and economic use as a heritage training skills centre and visitor attraction. Brougham Castle is the result of one man's vision and drive over the last thirty years, much of it achieved without grant aid. This contrasted with the restoration works at nearby Lowther Castle, a major HLF funded scheme that includes substantial landscape recreation.

It was with some sadness that I went back to my old stamping ground. I love the simple vernacular architecture of the rural Eden area and find it heartbreaking that there is no dedicated local authority conservation resource anymore to care for them. Would I go back? No, as I love the cut and thrust of dealing with major schemes on a routine basis. As things stand at the moment conservation in Scotland seems to be in far better shape than the North of England and possibly the south too for that matter. Come to next year's Annual School in Edinburgh and find out for yourself.

Bridget Turnbull, Senior Planner, Conservation, Aberdeen City Council
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5 Carlisle IHBC Annual School Impressions

Introduction

Marta Zurakowska studied at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan and then worked for four years at the Poznan University of Technology as an academic teacher in engineering geology and also began to start her research into earthen buildings. As her university department also provided broad consultancy services, so Marta became involved in various geotechnical engineering projects in Poznan in addition to her teaching role.

When she started her PhD project at the University of the West of Scotland, her biggest surprise was that attending university and undertaking research was separated from industry and consultancy, at least at doctoral research level. She also noted that studying in Scotland differs from abroad as in most European countries, PhD research is considered as valuable work experience!

Her PhD research project studied the effects of stone cleaning and its impact on the stone decay process but she found it difficult to communicate with stone cleaning companies and councils in order to obtain technical specifications and information on how and when buildings were cleaned. Maybe this is understandable as stone cleaning in the UK has been the subject of emotive debates in past decades.

By contrast, whilst studying for her PhD in Scotland, she was involved in a project with her Polish colleagues studying the effect of stone cleaning on the Castle in Poznan where her team received valuable assistance from local conservation officers.

Here is Marta's report

I am very new IHBC member that was lucky to get a chance to attend IHBC Annual School in Carlisle 2013 and to be welcomed as part of IHBC Clan or Family (subject to Scottish-English borders).

I came to Scotland from Poland, where I graduated with Master's degree in geology and spent 4 years as an academic teacher at one of Poznan's universities. I am now studying for PhD at University of the West of Scotland, in stone deterioration and cleaning of sandstone buildings. I am also passionate about earth buildings and decided to attend IHBC Annual School in Carlisle to recognise what career path will be suitable for me after completing my PhD. With more than 10 years research and consultancy within a university environment I am looking forward to hopefully starting work within natural buildings materials consultancy.

I was thrilled to be at opening of IHBC Annual School with inaugural talks from IHBC President Trefor Thorpe, Councillor Ray Bloxham, Mayor of Carlisle and Ray Robertson NHTG Chair. An

exceptional presentation by John Grundy started the overflow of extraordinary (did I say extraordinary?) humour supplementary to three days of technical presentations, study tours and opportunities to take part in heritage skills.

IHBC Annual School in Carlisle allowed me to realise two major themes that I was unaware: policy in conservation and heritage skills. So far, as a buildings materials scientist at university, I was looking at building conservation aspects from narrow academic perspective without appreciation of heritage skills that are extraordinarily important to effective buildings repair and maintenance. School Organisers let me get hands on experience. I was very interested in presentation about Legislation and Policy, or keen to grasp 3D object scanning used to capture conference gallery presented by Historic Scotland and many more topics. Presentations covered different aspects of skills, training and exhibition stands provided additional opportunities for networking and discussion that continued over conference dinner.



Lamonby Farm, Burgh-by-Sands photo Stewart Ramsale

For myself - a person passionate about vernacular and earth buildings - I enjoyed the tour to see clay dabbins in Cumbria. Earth buildings heritage in Carlisle areas is extraordinary (sic!) value and lesson from the past about building low carbon buildings from local materials. Technique used for clay dabbins is similar to cob used in different areas of Europe. Unfortunately without promotion of earthen construction and financial and technical support for owners of these houses might disappear soon from Cumbria map.

Overall IHBC Annual School with study tours and heritage skills was very well organised and provided great environment for ideas exchange beyond boundaries in charming Carlisle. I attended numerous conferences in this country, in Poland, Germany but IHBC Annual School had an extraordinary welcoming atmosphere and I had great opportunity not only to meet but also to speak to Great People. I am looking forward to next IHBC Annual School in Edinburgh.

Marta Zurakowska



Leigh Cottage, a clay dabbin at Burgh by Sands photo by Stewart Ramsdale

6 Day School

As this was my first attendance of an IHBC day school, I was asked to write a review of my experience at this year's day school on Friday 21 June at the Crown & Mitre Hotel in the centre of Carlisle, Cumbria. The people behind the scenes had done an amazing job of organising this annual school and running it very smoothly. I run an annual Homeowner's Event myself and I know how much hard work goes into organising a comparatively very small day school.

The venue was well located as the hotel was only a short walk from the train station as well as in close proximity to some of Carlisle's well-known historic sites, like the cathedral and the abbey. The conference room was ideal for showing presentations because its generous width enabled longer but fewer rows of seating, meaning that none of the audience was too far back.

A buffet lunch was provided in a downstairs space. It could have been improved by including seating opportunities as it was difficult to eat and drink while holding plate and glass in your hands! Also, a seated arrangement could have enabled better communication between attendants. In the same space consultants, like Historic Scotland, had set up stands with leaflets or displays. It is always great to provide additional sources of information during events, yet the room was not quite large enough for having both the stands and lunch at the same time. Having said that, it is quite a challenge to accommodate such a volume of people and their needs or interests.

For me, the day school started with helping out at the registration desk which was a great opportunity to meet people, and to see who is coming. Every attendant received an IHBC-branded fabric bag which contained useful information about the whole annual school and the city of Carlisle.

The day school was held between 10:00 and 17:20 with two breaks, for lunch and afternoon tea. This year's theme was 'skills' and a wide variety of views and approaches was offered, which was useful as attendants came from different backgrounds, with different interests. The delegates included architects, local government officers, planning consultants, suppliers of heritage materials or products, and historic buildings contractors, to name but a few.

The sessions that stood out to me were during the afternoon but, like I said, this is due to personal interest, as all presentations were very informative and shed a different light onto 'skills'. My background lies in design and survey works so naturally *'Practical Approaches to Design in Historic Environments'* and *'Digital Technology: Skills in a Changing World'* sparked my interest.

However, there was one outstanding presentation regardless of any personal subject preference. I was very impressed by Alan Gardner's animated performance of *'Outreach, Education and Training during Construction Projects'* and, judging from the applause Alan received, I was not the only one. Although Alan talked about 'skills' he actually gave a great demonstration of his own skills, i.e. to be passionate about what he is doing, to be able to inspire others with his enthusiasm, and to go the extra mile to achieve the best outcome possible. And I agree with that; to work in the heritage sector should not only be about carrying out a job but actually caring about it as well and trying to make a (positive) difference, where you can, even if it means putting in extra effort.

I am looking forward to next year's IHBC Annual School, *The Art of Conservation*, which will be held in Edinburgh in June 2014.

Gaby Rose, Building Conservation Officer, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

7 Caption Corner

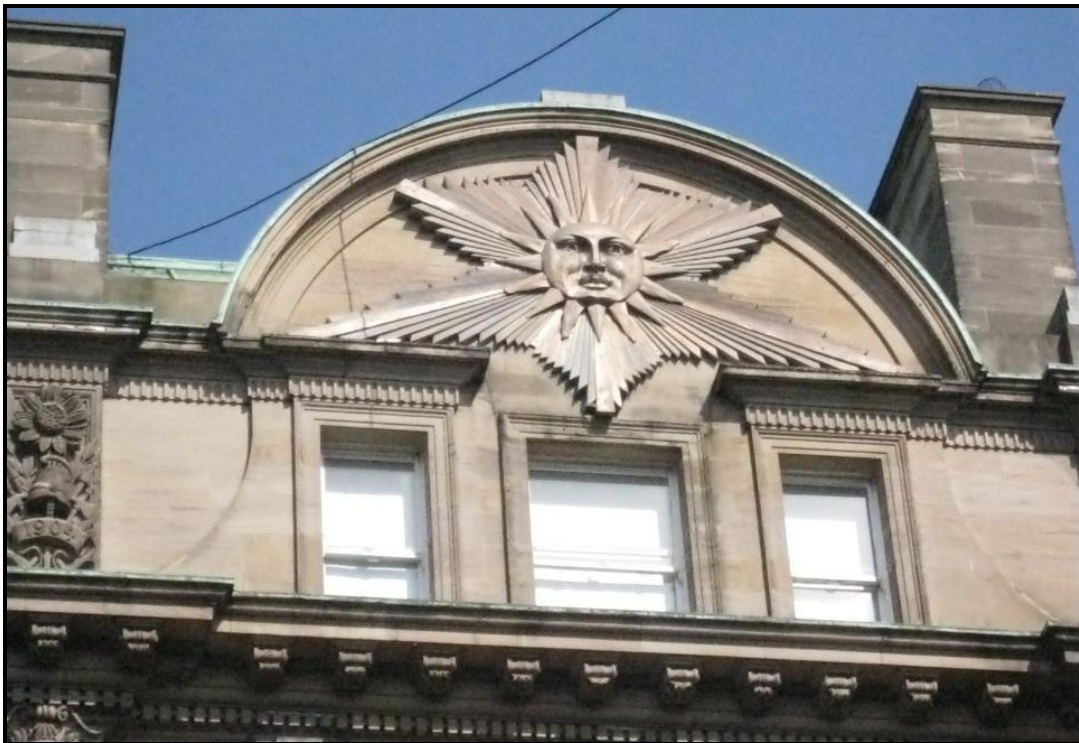


Photo by Ken Hutchinson

Have a go at thinking up suggestions for this photograph of an interesting building in Newcastle.

E.g. 'The architect came up with this bright idea!'

Or 'This is the highlight in the building's design'

Or 'I only asked for the window to face the sun, I think the architect misheard me!'

8 Mystery Building

Richard Majewicz has sent in this picture. Can you guess what the building is? We will give the answer in the next newsletter. If you have a similar photo of a mystery building just send it to us and we will include it in a future newsletter.

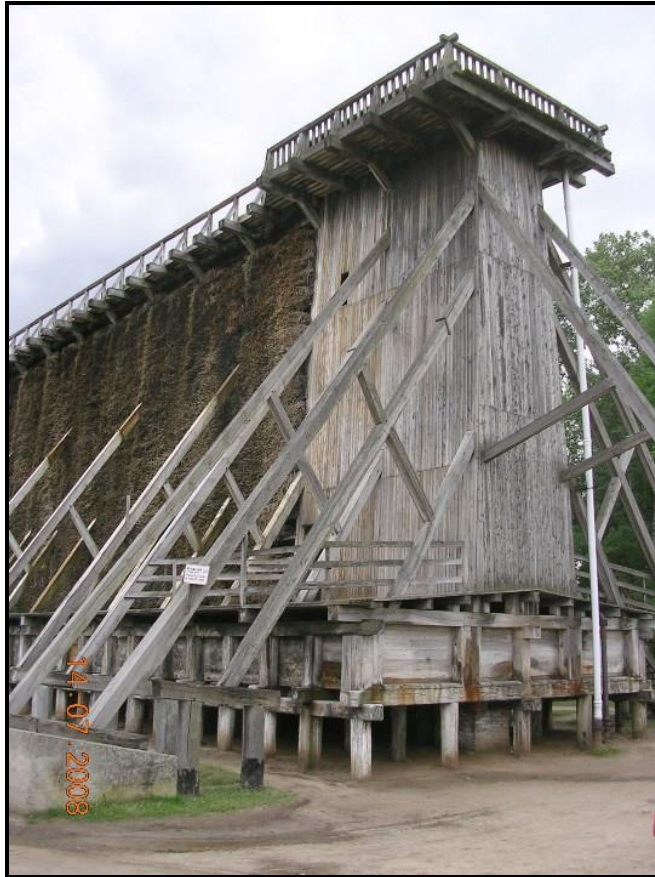


Photo by Richard Majewicz

9 Edinburgh IHBC Annual School 2014 – The Art of Conservation

The dates for Edinburgh are 5th – 7th June 2014 (chosen so it doesn't clash with the anniversary of Bannockburn, not so much a matter of cultural sensitivity but because Historic Scotland doesn't want to divert its attention from its planned events).

The title is 'The Art of Conservation'. It is to be based at University of Edinburgh complex around Pollock Halls (next to the Commonwealth Pool) and will feature other venues around the city for receptions and visits.

There will be links to other Scottish World Heritage Sites (including the opportunity to walk on and up the Forth Rail Bridge which is the nomination for new WHS in 2014 – book early!), designed landscapes linked to architects and artists work such as Jupiter Artland. The venue for the annual dinner and associated evening events will be Summerhall – the former college and fringe festival venue.

Enter this key 2014 CPD event in your diary **NOW!**

Jane Jackson

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