

IHBC South West Region covering: Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Scilly Isles, Somerset & Wiltshire

SW Bulletin No. 28 - January 2015 (supersedes December 2014 edition)

Making History in Plymouth

Already steeped in maritime history over many centuries, Plymouth is celebrating again after the award of a £12.8 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help create a major new historic and cultural attraction in the city centre.

Half of the grant award is being allocated to the development of a 'History Centre' which will focus on interpretation of the city's rich history, including key figures such as Darwin, Drake and Scott of the Antarctic. Construction of the new building on Tavistock Place is scheduled to start during 2016.



Artist's impression of how the new Plymouth History Centre may look on Tavistock Place, just off North Hill © Plymouth City Council

Plymouth City Council are engaging with a broad range of community groups and residents across the city to bring together personal stories of historical significance which will help enliven the exhibitions. Plans are still in the formative stages and anyone with an interest in getting involved is invited to contact the council for further information.

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/creativityandculture/loveourpast/lovemypasttsandcs.htm

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Change of Use for Heritage Assets: For Better or Worse?

As heritage professionals, we most likely associate 'change of use' with a building which has fallen into disuse and/ or stood empty for a period of time. Former industrial and agricultural buildings which have been given new leases of life serve as classic examples. During recent years economic factors have contributed to the gradual demise and closure of many thousands of public houses across the country; the fortunate ones becoming private houses or convenience stores. But what about a building where its use appears secure but the owner decides to seek a change of use regardless? This scenario is currently being enacted at a well known Grade I listed country hotel not far from where I live. No longer the nucleus of village life and standing rather forlorn, its future looks uncertain to say the least. When the inevitable 'change of use' application appears, how do we ensure that all economic arguments are rigorously assessed and every effort applied to help reach an acceptable status-quo? Comments please!

Now is the Season of ... Rain (and overdue maintenance)!

Many years ago I was given some invaluable practical advice by the senior partner in a local surveying practice: "don't forget to check the drains and remember your hat and boots". By the latter he wasn't referring to my attire but the building's roof and wall bases/foundations (in the generic sense)! Being investigative types, we surveyors like lifting up manhole covers and checking that the rainwater systems do in fact drain away properly when it rains but what happens when they don't?

Gutters and downpipes are essential components and invariably in the case of historic buildings, they tend to be of castiron construction. The material is eminently durable and its elegant profiles add significantly to the building's character and appearance. Too many systems, however, get neglected due to cost/height access implications and that's usually where the problems start. Problems that typically manifest themselves as irritating drips from joint leaks and/ or fractures, leaves or other debris accumulation or poorly designed (and in some cases completely missing)

sections; ultimately lead to damp walls and costly fabric repairs.

Now arguably isn't the best time of year to be addressing the roof or guttering problems but carrying out routine maintenance is an on-going, all year round task; one which many custodians of our heritage don't always recognise as such. So 'be vigilant' and if you see something which looks like it could become a problem, highlight it to those concerned. It's our heritage too!



Refurbished 1960s 'Coalbrookdale' cast-iron guttering on a stone cottage in the Cotswolds; several wrought-iron stays had sagged under the imposed load due to the inappropriate use of timber wedges in the masonry joints, resulting in end fractures and joint leakage

Regional Training Update

The Sandford Orleigh Carvings, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 2HP

The third in a series of occasional talks and events organised by the IHBC SW Regional Committee took place on 17th October 2014 in Newton Abbot and attracted a wide audience from diverse backgrounds.

In partnership with Newton Abbot Town and the Great Western Railway (GWR) Museum, the event focused on timber conservation, using a particular case study; the Sandford Orleigh carvings (as featured in Maureen Pearce's article in Bulletin 25 earlier this year. The carvings constitute a composite of high quality and important Renaissance and later carvings, which in the 19th century were incorporated into a massive overmantle.

Felicity Cole, the museum's curator, introduced the carvings and explained their history from the mid-19th century to the present day, including their recently completed conservation and installation into the museum. Felicity developed the 'Heart of Oak Project' with aims to conserve the fabric of the carvings, improve their understanding through further research and to make them more widely known to the local community and wider public. The funding, including that from the Heritage Lottery Fund, was explained in detail. Wide-ranging community involvement in the project was intended from the outset and an ambitious target to engage every age group within Newton Abbot town was set. This was achieved in a range of ways, including some 60 free art workshops.

Hugh Harrison (the internationally renowned conservation specialist) then explained the physical conservation work undertaken; from a rather sorry pile of dirty and dismantled pieces (with several key elements missing), to the installation of the conserved overmantle into the museum just weeks before. Hugh also provided an update on other current timber conservation projects in the southwest, including the conservation of fire and water damaged historic timber work.

Dr Nicholas Riall then outlined the research undertaken into the age, style and possible pre-19th century history of

the carvings. The overmantle consists of a composite of sixteen very finely carved Renaissance panels and other later pieces of carved timber. The quality of the Renaissance panels is very high and they of represent some the earliest Renaissance work in the country. Clearly they were commissioned by a patron who was both wealthy and forward thinking in their artistic appreciation. Interestingly, there are at least two other stylistically within the similar pieces close neighbourhood; the doors to St Mary's Church, Totnes and a screen at the National Trust property, Bradley Manor, Newton Abbot. These are now recognised as a distinct early group, separate from other Renaissance carving in Devon.



Delegates inspecting elements of the conserved overmantle following Hugh Harrison's work

The event finished by the delegates viewing the towering overmantle in its dedicated gallery with all three speakers on hand to answer questions and debate the presentations. Special thanks must go to Felicity Cole and Newton Abbot Museum for partnering with IHBC SW and for hosting this event. By way of thanks a part of the modest profits from the event was donated to the Museum.

Val Harrison

Montacute House Somerset TA15 6XP

Over 50 delegates converged on the National Trust's masterpiece of Elizabethan architecture in deepest Somerset for a joint IHBC/ NT event held on the afternoon of 21st October 2014.

Structural engineer Patrick Stowe gave a very informative presentation about his ongoing 'conservation engineering' investigations into floor loadings and proposed changes to the spatial layout/ visitor routing at the property since 2005. Several key issues were highlighted during the subsequent tour of the various rooms

and staircases; most notably the high ratio of glazing to wall masonry on the principal elevations, poorly routed services and the possible compromising of structural integrity to certain floor beams subjected to multiple service penetrations, e.g. pipe work, wiring and cable runs, etc.



Part of the south front at Montacute showing the relatively large ratio of glazing to load bearing masonry; most notably to the top floor (housing part of the National Portrait Gallery)

Patrick's succinct and holistic appraisal of the building fabric was most informative and gave much food for thought in helping to shape the conservation management plan for the property. As Patrick noted, not all cracks are serious but it invariably pays to ask the right questions and to investigate each one regardless!

Will Cookson of landscape architects Cookson Tickner presented a detailed overview of the development of the historic landscape at Montacute over the past 400 years and how the house, garden and parkland interrelate. Will pointed out some of the park's more salient features during the walking tour of the the grounds to the east aspect, in particular the mature tree avenues, garden (or 'pudding') pavilions remaining from the former (principal) entrance courtyard and an ice house.

Malcolm James

Thanks to Val Harrison and Greg Venn for organising these two events. IHBC gave modest donations to the Museum and NT respectively.

Planning Appeal: Hartland View Farm, Shirwell, Devon EX31 4LA (APP/X1118/A/13/2204240)

Plans to erect a single triple-bladed 35 metre high turbine at Hartland View Farm have been turned down by the Planning Inspector. The appeal was made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission by North Devon District Council.

With an extended blade height of almost 61 metres above ground, the proposed turbine was deemed to pose 'substantial harm' to the setting of Grade I listed Youlston Park, a notable manor house with origins dating back to the 13th century and set within a landscaped park which includes a pair of Grade II* listed entrance lodges. The setting of West Okewill Farmhouse (17th century and Grade listed) and located approximately 650 metres distant from the proposed development would also potentially be compromised, with 'a limited degree of harm to the overall significance of the listed building'. The impact on other nearby heritage assets at Arlington Court (Grade II* listed) and Upcott Farmhouse (Grade II listed) was felt to be minimal given their relatively secluded settings within wooded valleys and other natural depressions.

In summarising the hearing, the Planning Inspector acknowledged the weight that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) affords to farm diversification and the development of the rural economy. The potential energy saving and resilience benefits of the proposed development in respect of appellant's dairy farm livelihood were implicitly recognised. These economic factors were, however, ultimately outweighed by the harm posed to identified heritage assets and the desirability of preserving buildings or their setting(s) as stated under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Judicial Review: Wind turbine at Winslade Farm, Frogmore, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 2PA (APP/43/2567/13/F)

Given the sensitivity of this particular case and the ongoing review process, we have decided to retract the previous summary issued in Bulletin 28 (December 2014). Many thanks to Richard Gage of South Hams District Council for bringing to our attention certain factual inaccuracies in the recent media coverage. We hope to be able to publish a comprehensive account of the final judgement in due course.

Malcolm James

Planning Appeal: The Barn, Ham Court, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham (APP/B1605/F/12/2185153)

Bulletin 25 (January 2014) highlighted this case involving the unauthorised installation of 16 solar panels to the roof pitches of two curtilage-listed 17th century barns.

The appeal was dismissed because the appellant had failed to show that other renewable energy sources and/ or achieving energy savings were non-viable for the site. They then failed to remove the panels within the four month period prescribed by Cheltenham Borough Council and have subsequently been fined a total of £4,400. The severity of the fine reflects the fact that the owners committed a criminal offence.

Malcolm James

Protection of Bowling Greens

Ministers from the Department for Communities and Local Government have written to all English councils highlighting measures that can be taken to protect green spaces including bowling greens, following a debate in Parliament. The measures referred to include: the powers to list land or buildings as Assets of Community Value; the NPPF statement that existing open spaces, sports and recreation buildings should not be built upon unless an assessment demonstrates that there is no alternative; and the provisions for Local Green Space designation.

Green light for wind turbine:
Pugh v Secretary of State for
Communities & Local Government
(Case no. CO/3712/2014)

A High Court judge has rejected an attempt to overturn an inspector's approval for a 75-metre wind turbine in the Cornish countryside, despite claims that the scheme would damage the setting of ancient monuments and listed buildings.

Farmer Nick Maiklem triumphed in June 2014 when a planning inspector opened the way for him to build the turbine near Lanreath. That was despite Cornwall Council's view that it would harm the historic landscape, which includes the Iron Age fort at Bury Down Camp, and the Giant's Hedge, both scheduled ancient monuments. Maiklem said the turbine would offset electricity costs on his 354-acre farm; allowing him to diversify and secure the future of his rural business.

But neighbour, Richard Hackett Pugh, who runs a holiday cottage business from nearby Trecan Farm, objected and took his case to London's High Court. Pugh's legal team argued that the inspector had, among other things, misinterpreted planning policies and ignored the potential impact of the turbine on listed buildings at Trevawden and Pelyne Farm.

In dismissing Pugh's challenge, Mr Justice Gilbart said the inspector had carefully balanced the benefits of the turbine against its impact on the sensitive The landscape. inspector had acknowledged that the turbine would be "prominent" on high ground and, measured to the tips of its blades, would stand taller than Bury Down Camp. However, he described the impact on the setting of the heritage assets as "less than substantial". The judge said the inspector had examined the issues "with care" and had been entitled to place considerable weight on the benefits of the turbine.

Pugh was ordered to pay more than £8,000 in legal costs.

Maureen Pearce

Cirencester Weavers Hall is a two storey late-medieval Almshouse which forms part of a terrace of period stone buildings along the north side of Thomas Street in Cirencester. Founded under the will of Sir William Nottingham, Attorney-General to Edward IV in 1483, recent dendrochronology core testing of the roof structure and other timber elements indicates that it was built during the building period 1475-76. The understood to have been in continuous occupation ever since and currently provides residential accommodation for two elderly tenants. It justifiably lays claim to being the town's oldest secular dwelling house and is listed Grade II* on account of its age and 'particularly important' historic fabric.



Cirencester Weavers Hall as seen looking east along Thomas Street; note that projecting stone figure above the entrance doorway which was recorded and conserved by Rory Young in 2010

Character Conservation Limited were approached by The Trustees Cirencester Weavers Company (the social landlord) to carry out a survey of the building and to offer advice on repairs, maintenance and services upgrading in accordance with landlord's obligations under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHRS) introduced in 2006. A full elemental condition survey of the building and its grounds was carried out in July 2014 and a schedule of planned maintenance works will shortly be submitted for costing purposes.

The building conforms to a compressed U-plan of single-depth proportions and has four structural 'bays' with a central cross passage. It originally provided accommodation for 'four poor weavers' but was reconfigured during the 19th century into its present two dwelling layout, i.e. No. 4 Thomas Street (right-hand side of

passage) and No. 6 Thomas Street (left-hand side of passage and adjoining No. 8.

Wall construction utilises coursed limestone rubble to the principal (i.e. street) elevation, with a chamfered stone plinth, corner quoins and dressed stone lintels to the doorways and window apertures. The rear elevation is built using random limestone rubble and smooth cementitious render for a circa 1962 flat roofed bathroom extension to No. 4 (now the rear kitchen).

Roof coverings are of natural stone slate to the front and rear pitches, with bituminous felt for the flat-roof structure above the rear kitchen extension. Two masonry chimney stacks project above the roof ridge line at each gable end and stepped stone copings extend from the eaves up to the stack base in both cases.

Windows comprise a mixture of traditional side-hinged metal and timber casements with some fixed lights and modern 'storm proofed' windows to the rear elevation. The four-light stone mullion and transom window to the ground floor of No. 4 includes some fixed lights with square quarries, leaded cames and internal ferramenta support. Both entrance doors are of solid timber oak/elm plank construction and incorporate traditional wrought-iron stud work with strap hinges.

Notable architectural and historic features include the carved stone Tudor arched heads to the entrance doorways, the internal elm plank and muntin screens to the cross passage and a projecting stone figure set into the principal elevation above the entrance doorway. The internal roof structure includes closely spaced elm rafters, purlins and arch bracing to the eaves, with evidence of historic limewash and smoke blackening in places.

Investigations carried out by Rory Young and others during the course of stone conservation repairs in 2010 revealed that the hitherto hidden parts of the projecting stone figure above the street entrance include a draped cloak, shield and part of a serpent-like creature. These are all richly decorated with polychromatic colouring including terracotta, crimson, gold and green. Scholarly opinion suggests that the figure depicts St Michael overcoming Satan and that it was quickly inserted



Interior view showing the cross-passage which runs the full depth of the building between the two dwellings; the floor is formed of rectangular blue setts of 19th century origin and accessed by two stone steps up from the street level



Roof structure and central dividing screen visible within the roof space above No. 6 Thomas Street; note curved wind brace between purlins (lower purlin obscured by (raised) ceiling structure

above the doorway sometime during the 16th century (possibly just after the dissolution of Cirencester Abbey in 1540).

Proposals for internal redecoration and possible spatial reconfiguration to open up the 1st floor level (removing late 20th century additions) are currently under discussion. A specialist assessment of two concealed early 17th and 18th century wall paintings in the upper rooms has been completed and any changes to the accommodation layout will aim to improve both their preservation and interpretation.

Please note that the Weavers Hall is not open to the public, although it may be possible to view the cross passage on specified days during future Heritage Open Days in early September. For further information on Cirencester's medieval history, visit the Corinium Museum in Park Street or see:

http://coriniummuseum.org/collections/ten-treasures/medieval-gallery-text/

© Malcolm James Character Conservation Limited (courtesy of Cirencester Weavers Company)

Round and About the Region

Somerset Buildings Saved

Bruton in Somerset is well worth a look if you enjoy exploring old market towns and 'discovering' hidden buildings. Greg Venn informs me of an impressive conservation project recently completed by Hauser & Wirth Somerset whose premises are located just outside the town. The organisation runs a pioneering world-class gallery and multi-purpose arts centre from a restored former agricultural complex.

The nearby mid-18th century Grade II listed Durslade Farmhouse was on the English Heritage At Risk Register for many years before Hauser & Wirth acquired the property and commenced conservation repairs in 2012. The restored farmhouse incorporates innovative design twists by architects Laplace & Co. and benjamin + beauchamp. It now provides residential accommodation for artists and guests.

http://www.hauserwirthsomerset.com

Rope and twine manufacture was an important rural industry in West Coker from the 1830s through to the mid-20th century. Two ropewalks at the former premises of Job Gould (West of England Twine Works) off Laurel Close survive and are listed Grade II. The former Millbrook Works of John Dawes also survives and is listed Grade II* on account of its almost complete inventory of original equipment. South Somerset District compulsory purchased the site in 2005 to promote its restoration for the future under the auspices of the Coker Rope and Sail Trust. Part of the west ropewalk was extensively rebuilt in 2013 and restored machinery is now being recommissioned.

http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/somerset/west+coker

http://www.westcoker.net/home-page/ropewalk/

Malcolm James

Pevsner's Progress or Where I Am in Dorset by Michael Hill

In the summer of 2001, at the launch of the third volume of *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire*, my wife (Kim Jarvis, the stained glass artist) suggested that my next step should be to write a book on Dorset country houses. Ten years later, as preparation for publication of this (in two

volumes by Spire Books Ltd of Reading) was in progress, I moved on to start on revising the Dorset *Buildings of England* volume, the first edition of which hailed from 1972. This leap followed the notice in the Society of Architectural Historians newsletter written in the style of *'Your Country Needs You!'* where the series editors listed those counties for which a reviser had not yet come forward, one of which was Dorset. It seemed the logical next step and so I signed up, making an initial visit to the county in May 2011.

But I'm leaping forward a little. Having met with the other 'Pevsner' authors in London, I realized that much time could be wasted unless there was a clear plan of action. Starting at a parish named 'Aardvark', for example, and continuing until 'Zoopla' would make no geographical sense, so I resorted to the local authority boundaries, working broadly from east to west. The first was East Dorset and the first parish (coincidentally starting with an 'A') was Alderholt. Interest came within minutes as I found the small church of 1849 was built for the 2nd Marguess of Salisbury who was, to a degree, an amateur architect. The crow-stepped gabled roofs (unexpected in Dorset) were most likely a foible of his.



St James Alderholt with its distinctive flechestyle bellcote which houses a single bell

From Alderholt, the more conventionally medieval Cranborne church was more the kind of thing I expected. Here, though, I was confronted by a wide variety of Victorian and later stained glass, all seemingly unsigned and none apparently having received a faculty!

One of the great advantages of *The Buildings of England* series is that it is sufficiently respected to be capable of calling on the help of a variety of specialists. My first point of call with the glass was fellow *'Pevsner'* reviser Alan

Brooks (working on Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and now Oxfordshire). So at Cranborne I 'met' for the first time Percy Bacon Bros., Mayer & Co. (of London and Munich) and Alexander Gibbs.





The Parish Church of St Mary and St Bartholomew, Cranborne was largely rebuilt in the 13th century but retains an impressive Norman doorway of circa 1120; the stained glass features impressive work by Percy Bacon

And so the project continues with East Dorset, Poole and North Dorset all largely complete and Weymouth & Portland my next port-of-call.

Michael Hill

Editor's note:

Details of Michael's two new books on Dorset Country Houses can be found on the publisher's website:

http://www.spirebooks.co.uk/dorsetH

For the earlier landmark series on the Country Houses of Gloucestershire (in collaboration with Nicholas Kingsley), see:

http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/

Taking Stock: Gloucestershire Churches

English Heritage has undertaken a strategic designation project in the deaneries of Cheltenham and Gloucester following on from a review of churches entitled: 'An Historical, Architectural and Archaeological Assessment of Church Buildings'; a partnership project between English Heritage and the Diocese of Gloucester in 2010-11. The project assessed a number of unlisted churches identified as potentially being of special architectural or historic interest as part of the work to inform the report. It also reassessed some 'under-graded' churches, and amended statutory list entries where omissions or inaccuracies were identified. Working closely with the Diocese, English Heritage's Designation team short-listed the churches and assessments were undertaken in consultation with the relevant parishes. As a result, the list entries for 14 places of worship were updated to better reflect their special interest and to provide documentation which will be more useful in their future management. At the same time, a number of war memorials in churchyards were listed, as part of English Heritage's current strategic designation project to mark the centenary of World War I.

Holy Trinity church in Longlevens, Gloucester, was listed at Grade II. Designed by Harold Stratton Davis and completed in 1934, it forms a pleasing composition in a stripped-back Perpendicular Gothic style reminiscent of the 15th century. In addition to its architectural interest, use of local materials and virtually 'asbuilt' condition, it retains a remarkably complete suite of high-quality contemporary fittings.



Looking down the nave inside Holy Trinity Longlevens

Although newly listing a building can be perceived as making it more complex to look after, the addition of Holy Trinity Longlevens has been welcomed by both the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the Diocese of Gloucester. Listing now gives the PCC eligibility to apply to the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme; with grant potential to cover the VAT levied on most repairs or development work. This was particularly well timed since the parish had committed to a low-impact and low energy lighting project which is intended to improve the user experience of the building and make the most of its distinctive architecture.

Natalie Fenner Churches Officer, Diocese of Gloucester Amanda Hooper Senior Designation Officer West, English Heritage

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