



· INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·  
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

SOUTH EAST BRANCH

# NEWSLETTER

AUGUST2024

## Contents

### Future events

**Watts Gallery & Chapel:** Summer 2024 (exact date tbc), CPD on materials techniques

**East Sussex College Training Hub, Eastbourne** - 1st November 2024 - Retrofit

**2025AGM in Reigate** – March/April 2025 - Engineering theme, underground theme, etc.

**Sydney Little in St Leonards/Hastings and Marine Court:** Summer 2025 - Conservation of concrete

### Recent events

**Compton Place, Eastbourne BN21 IEH, Putting Fabric First:** How temporary works can be used to facilitate essential structural repairs whilst retaining historic assets, 6th February, 9am - 12 midday

**SE Day School, Canterbury Christ Church University:** Augustine House & Hall, Canterbury CT1 2YA, 26th April, 9.30am - 4pm

**IHBC Annual School:** Place & Building Care, 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June

**Lewes Quaker House talk** 'Retrofitting and refurbishment'

**Launch of the Guidance Booklet** by Sarah Mayfield on the Repair of Traditional Plaster Ceilings, 18<sup>th</sup> June

**Living & understanding Bungaroush** talk by Neil England

### Dont miss

**Introducing New IHBC Member, Sarah Perez Storey** and her story encountering usage of AI - page 7

## Word from our chair



I wanted to start this year by saying a big thank you to all members of the South-East branch committee, as without you all I wouldn't enjoy this role so much, or see so much achieved by us all. Our branch is a good mix of local authority and private practice all united by our championing of the historic environment. This is followed by another vote of thanks to the members who come to our events and make them worthwhile. We have had a great year for in-person events, joining up with SPAB and local amenity societies to spread our network wings. We don't always agree, but debating at such a high level is part of being an IHBC members. We must never stop fighting and caring for our wonderful buildings and landscapes.

It's more important than ever with so many cuts in funding to Historic England and our local authorities that we remain united and constant. I for one wish we could do more to enforce against breaches in the protection of buildings and landscapes combined, sadly enforcement is increasingly rare as LPAs can't afford to go to court, or having to determine a breach is not in the public interest to action. One former conservation officer told me they felt like a toothless tiger in their role which is very sad to hear.

### Events

We kicked off with our last AGM in March at the Weald and Downland Museum on the subject of versatility and resilience in vernacular buildings. We were treated to presentations by some giants in the conservation world, and where I personally picked up an incredibly useful architectural time line - a history of buildings in the UK from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

Other events comprised talks on the planning conversion of Britain's only purpose-built seminary on Wonersh and an absolutely fascinating presentation and site visit to see repairs to the intricate decorative plasterwork ceilings at grade 1 listed Compton place in Eastbourne which involved incredibly an complicated and ingenious external support scaffold.

This newsletter features two articles from Southeast IHBC members. Please do get in contact via my email at SEBranch-chair@ihbc.org.uk, to share any personal stories you may have and would like to be featured in future newsletters.

### Compton Place, Eastbourne: Putting Fabric First

This CPD event ‘Putting fabric first: How temporary works can be used to facilitate essential structural repairs while retaining historic assets’ was an intriguing look at a highly skilled engineering solution.

Many thanks to Debbie Gardner for setting up this amazing CPD opportunity. We were lucky enough to be treated to a stunning



Fine plaster ceiling

example of engineering design on this Grade I listed property by the renowned Palladian architect Coleen Campbell. Compton Place is the only Grade 1 building in Eastbourne, which is mainly Victorian, laid out by architect Henry Curry in the late 1890’s for the Duke of Devonshire. Compton Place was the Duke’s summer residence, and has recently been leased to a Language School.

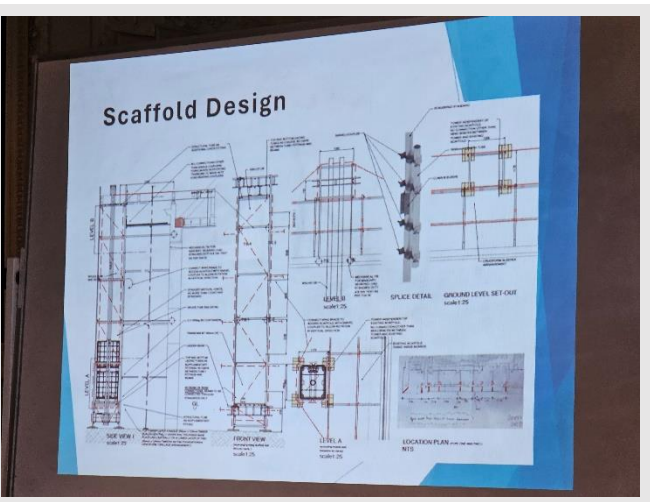


As the building was under review for maintenance it transpired that water had historically been leaking into the building rotting out the building’s main truss ends, which were sitting on stone walls by as much as 600mm in places. Matters were complicated by the ornate internal plasterwork’s ceilings which meant one could not support the building from inside.



We had a great introductory talk by various professionals involved, including the Duke of Devonshire’s Estate manager before going up on the scaffolding to view the repairs in person.

Steve Wilson Partnership designed counterweights on temporary steel beams to support the trusses with repairs undertaken in resin below.



Photos by Jo Saady: Compton Place



## AGM Day School, Canterbury Christ Church University

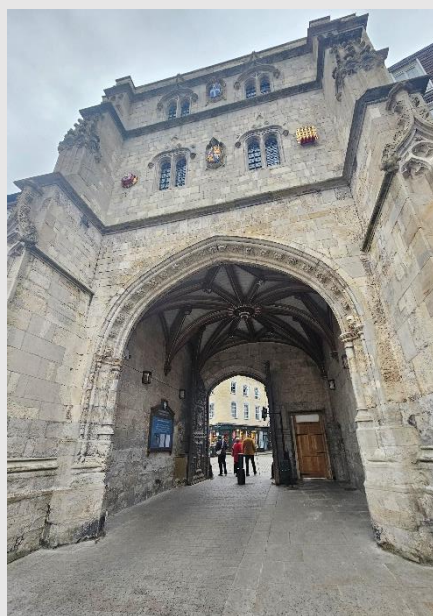
Levelling up our World Heritage.

This year's AGM was held in April, at the Augustus House, in Canterbury. Canterbury is a World Heritage Site and we were lucky enough to secure some really informative speakers, and it was nice to catch up on some old faces that one hadn't seen for a year. We are always so pleased when people support our events.

The first talk was by our very own Events Secretary Christopher Reynolds who stepped in at the last minute to cover the subject 'Levelling up and World Heritage Sites' update which was followed by Lizzie Johnson from Canterbury City Council talking about Canterbury City's levelling up bid. Bennett, director of Pantry Archaeology Trust, gave a brief history of the poor priest hospital which formed part of the bid as well. The story of Canterbury's heritage was covered by Dr Jane Lovell from Canterbury Christchurch University and then Neil Collam spoke on the management of Canterbury's World Heritage from English Heritage and chair of the Canterbury World Heritage Site Management Committee.

Finally, before our brief AGM, we had an amazing talk on numerous repair and maintenance works being undertaken at the Canterbury Cathedral by Leanne Harter, Senior Project Leader at the Purcell Canterbury office. We actually, ran out of time sadly but it was generally agreed that we would love to hear more from Leanne at another opportunity, there was so much more that she had to say! Absolutely fascinating.

As our secretary, Heather Hall, was away our newest committee recruit, Serena Perez-Storey was acting secretary for a day. Many thanks to Serena and everyone involved in organising and making the day a huge success!



Photos by Jo Saady: Canterbury

## Treasurer's Report

The branch started the financial year (2022-2023) with £3,511.61 and had £3,288.61 in the account excluding expenditure and income relating to this year's AGM and annual School. The 2023 branch Annual School at the Weald and Downland Living Museum generated a profit of £317.90

The budget for Committee expenses for 2022-2023 was slightly underspent. In establishing a budget for the forthcoming year, a slight increase has been made to cover future training events to reflect recent expenditures. A budget forecast of £3,700 for the period October 2023 to September 2024, with a 10% contingency figure resulting in a total of £4,070 for the year. The branch currently has sufficient funds and does not anticipate needing central funds

### Budget overview (20223-2024)

- Training and events: £2,800
- Committee expenses: £300
- Annual School Bursary: £600
- Contingency: 10%

### IHBC Annual School: Place & Building Care

This year's IHBC annual summer school was held in Reading where a chance was given to learn about heritage and conservation challenges, and allowed individuals to look more into conservation issues and opportunities and learn from the experts themselves. Daniel Baty, a Heritage Consultant, attended and he has so kindly shared his experience in a couple of words for us.

'I would like to say thank you to the IHBC South-East Branch who offered me the bursary to attend the annual summer school at Reading. I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend which offered me the opportunity to meet other professionals within the field of conservation and learn more about the rich history of the town. This was my first annual school event which I consider to have been very informative and educational, enabling me to continue to develop my professional and networking skills. I look forward to attending more events in the future.'



## Lewes Quaker House talk 'Retrofitting and refurbishment'

The talk on the retrofit and refurbishment and extension of Lewes Quaker Meeting House was given as a joint event with AECB and IHBC members which led to a fine lively debate coming from two different angles and perspectives.

The building work has been lucky enough to be highly commended by the Sussex Heritage Trust Award in the Community and Public Building Category. This scheme links the existing Georgian meeting room via an internal ramp. Connecting the building in a way that it hadn't collected before. The event was invaluable as we were able to discuss the limitations of energy models like EPC's. The Residents flat had only achieved a D after a huge amount of retrofit work in natural materials.

After lunch some of the group took a stroll through the town, looking at the amazing old architecture, before calling in at an event running in parallel at the town hall called Eco Home Extravaganza! This showcased lots of alternative products and services, many conservation centred, and proved a really good introduction to how green and conservation are two sides of the same coin when executed properly.



Photos by Jo Saady: Quaker House



### Launch of the guidance booklet by Sarah Mayfield

Produced by FIS Heritage Plaster Group and written by building conservator, sculptor and ornamental plasterer, Sarah Mayfield. This booklet can help fellow architects, building owners, surveyors, plaster contractors or conservation officers, guiding them through the specification of traditional ceilings, and advantages and disadvantages of each repair technique by its historic value. Through this booklet, Sarah is raising the standard of repairs to keep authenticity and significance within historic ceilings.

The guide is split into sections and covers everything from the principles of building conservation to understanding the history of the ceiling and its materials, offering a series of points like the appropriate materials and

techniques to use or what suspension methods work best.



Photo from Sarah Mayfield LinkedIn

### Living and Understanding Bungaroush talk by Neil England

Neil England, a fellow Heritage building advisor, recently had a talk to enlighten us on what 'bungaroush' is and how it was once used. A bit of a funny word if you've never heard it before but it was an important part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to it being easily accessible because of its low price and cheekily ability to avoid the brick tax.

Being cheap as it was it was still a strong and durable material similar to brick. Commonly used for garden walls in areas like Brighton and Hove, bungaroush was susceptible to erosion due to water from the sea. In Neil's talk, he informed us how we can repair bungaroush to preserve it.

He taught us that you can halt the erosion by spraying it with limewater, then a grit composed of sand and hydraulic lime render or stucco should be worked wet onto the face of the wall, then after a couple of days of the wall drying out brush face of well with a coco brush. This sounds simple but can be a meticulous procedure as Neil also tells us this isn't a job for amateurs because of the usage of the hot lime which can cause burns to the skin if in contact. So, in simple terms, as Neil advised, stay back a bit.



Photos from website: Heritage Building Advisors

## Introducing our new member Serena Perez Storey: her story encountering usage of AI

Happy to introduce Serena Perez Storey, PDP Historic Buildings Officer in Surrey County Council, a new member who has joined the IHBC team recently, and in addition she has shared an “amusing” story, as she likes to put it. She had recently noticed the usage of AI in a heritage statement in one of the cases she worked on, where the previous application on the site was a simple copy-and-paste description, more than once! When looking at a side-by-side comparison of the building appraisal in the heritage statement AI essentially has just written each point into full sentences and padded them out with waffle with no new information. Talk about all quantity and no quality! Many thanks to Serena for sharing!

### Listing description (original points)

Shop, now office. Mid to later C19; altered. Roughcast render painted white, slate roof. **Double-depth plan with long rear extension. Two low storeys and 2+1 bays (the 3rd bay, which has a roof of lower pitch, apparently of a different build).** The principal feature of interest is the ground floor shop front under a prominent canopy: this has a tripartite shop window and a doorway to the right, with fluted Tuscan semi-columns on panelled plinths, framing a wide centre and narrower side windows, **all these windows under semi-elliptical fanlights with radiating leaded glazing and the doorway with a rectangular panel above;** attached to the entablature of each column is a very prominent ornamental cast-iron bracket supporting the canopy, which has ornamental cresting over a modern fascia board. The 1st floor has 4-pane sashed windows furnished with blind-boxes. **Chimney stack on slope of roof at left end. Interior altered.**

### Heritage statement (Usage of AI)

facade showcases a blend of roughcast render painted in white hue, complemented by a slate roof, presenting a distinctive architectural style characteristic of the era. **The building follows a double-depth plan layout, supplemented by a lengthy rear extension, enhancing its spatial dimensions.**

**The structure stands at a modest two storeys in height, with a configuration of 2+1 bays, with the additional bay featuring a roof of a lower pitch, suggestive of potential alterations or subsequent additions.**

A notable feature adorning the ground floor is the prominent shop front, crowned by a striking canopy that draws attention to the entrance. The shop frontage comprises a tripartite arrangement, encompassing a central wide window flanked by narrower side windows, accompanied by a doorway positioned to the right. Accentuating this architectural element are fluted Tuscan semi-columns mounted on panelled plinths, lending a sense of grandeur and symmetry to the composition. **The windows, including the doorway, are adorned with semi-elliptical fanlights, exhibiting intricate**

**radiating leaded glazing, while a rectangular panel sits above the doorway, adding a touch of embellishment to the ensemble.**

A distinctive aspect of the canopy design is the inclusion of ornamental cast-iron brackets, affixed to the entablature of each column, providing robust support and visual interest. These brackets extend outward, holding aloft the canopy, which is embellished with ornamental cresting, contributing to the overall aesthetic appeal. Modern enhancements include a fascia board mounted atop the canopy, serving as a contemporary addition to the traditional architecture. Ascending to the first floor, one encounters 4-pane sashed windows, complete with blind-boxes, imparting a sense of continuity with the design language observed on the ground level.

**A solitary chimney stack graces the slope of the roof at the leftmost end, indicative of the building's original heating system.** While the exterior retains much of its historical charm, the interior has undergone alterations over the years, reflecting evolving functional requirements and design