



IHBC SOUTHWEST BULLETIN SPRING 2023

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**Alex Marsh
Editor**

1. Heritage News

IHBC SW Draft Cob/Earth Day

This is still in development but the plan is for October probably 19th or 20th at the University of Plymouth.

It is likely to include speakers on Historic earth building, geology of earth building, clay building technology, cob repairs and Plymouth Universities Cobauge Project.

Centre for Building Conservation Studies – Building Conservation Summer School 2023 - 18 June - 22 June

A fully immersive and practical residential course, presented by over 20 conservation experts in a wide variety of fields. With ample opportunity for discussion and questions, as well as 'hands on' sessions, The Building Conservation Summer School is the most comprehensive course on offer for anyone seeking a career in the the repair of old buildings.

IHBC Market Place

IHBC's new virtual [Heritage MarketPlace:LIVE](#) - 21 June, flexible from 4.30pm - is **FREE & OPEN TO ALL**, so sign up and let your colleagues and friends know too.

Register [HERE](#) for your free IHBC's [MarketPlace:LIVE](#) heritage advice, guidance, services and more, online and live

**See the PROVISIONAL programme outline [HERE](#)
Time tight? Just pop in and out as suits from 4.30pm!
Stay on from 6.00pm if you want, for the online launch of [#IHBCSwansea 2023](#)**

IHBC's [MarketPlace:LIVE](#) Zoom Room breakouts let you meet, network, ask and learn on a huge range of heritage-linked topics, live and online:

- Historic England and Historic Environment Scotland on sustainability and retrofit in context, with advice, cases and more
- MFL Insurance on Professional indemnity
- Heritage change and the community: Civic Voice - [MarketPlace:LIVE](#) Media Network Partner
- Neighbourhood Planning and Climate Change
- Heritage practice in Canada
- Trees and the historic environment
- Sustainability Project: Case studies (RIBA Stage 2 & 3)
- Architects' own archives and drawings
- Equity, diversity and inclusion in heritage
- Career advice, support and training
- Conservation course case study & support
- Volunteering in heritage
- Advocacy in parliament
- IHBC-SAHGB Research Awards
- Permitted Development Rights

For more on the IHBC Annual School 2023, online and in Swansea, from 21-24 June 2023 – see [#IHBCSwansea 2023](#).

2. IHBC Consultations

Historic England Consultation - Historic Almshouses: A Guide to Managing Change

Any comments by 5th July please

<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/guidance/historic-almshouses-consultation-draft/>

This advice note suggests how the historic and architectural significance of almshouses can be conserved as proposals for upgrading are developed. As times change and the need for affordable accommodation is widely felt, provision of appropriate accessible and comfortable homes with contemporary standards of accommodation, allowing residents to remain independent in their homes for as long as possible, is essential. Almshouses derive a distinctive form from their use in providing communal housing often for the elderly, a use which has continued over centuries. This advice note suggests how this significance can be retained while supplying more comfortable and appropriate housing.

Draft Comment

This is a useful, measured and balanced document which refers owners and occupiers of these types of building to supportive information which is available to inform decision-making and to counsel against the introduction of changes without appropriate consideration of the significance of the structures and ensuring that a staged approach to development proposals is taken bearing in mind that significance. The advice heightens the need for engagement of specialist advice concerning these structures in terms of development proposals including energy efficiency measures so that the 'whole building approach' is taken, in the interests of minimising inappropriate works.

All of the considerations which are highlighted concerning the understanding of significance, sensitivity to the building fabric, carrying out a staged approach to development and a whole building approach concerning energy efficiency measures apply to any project involving listed buildings, buildings in conservation areas or buildings of local importance which are of traditional construction with solid walling.

3. Almshouses

Almshouses appear to be the topic of the moment in addition to the Historic England Consultation above a welcome recent article appeared on the 22nd May in the Guardian online that highlighted the benefits and relevance of almshouses as a potential solution to Care and Social Housing for our aging population.

The report identified how poor, older people living in almshouses enjoy longer lives than far wealthier people living elsewhere.

The research using data from almshouses going back 100 years has found that the solution devised in early medieval times to help poverty-stricken knights returning from the Crusades is still relevant today.

The report from the Bayes Business School says the longevity of those who move into one of the UK's 30,000 almshouses – the oldest form of social housing – is boosted by as much as two and a half years.

Given that residents typically move into almshouses in their early 70s, this is equivalent to an extra 15% of future life.

“Almshouses seem to wipe away the negative impacts on health and social wellbeing commonly experienced by older people in lower socioeconomic groups, particularly those living in isolation,” said Ben Rickayzen, a professor of actuarial science at Bayes and co-author of the Almshouse Longevity Study.

Almshouses are a charitable form of self-sufficient, low-cost community housing held in trust for local people in housing need. They are managed and run by almshouse charities made up of local volunteers.

Residents pay rent, usually called a maintenance contribution, which is often less than the average rent in local properties rented from a council, housing association or private landlord.

The study sponsored by the Dunhill Medical Trust and Justham Trust, was supported by the Almshouse Association. It provides good evidence that this ancient form of housing still addressed the evolving needs of older people living in modern-day society.

Almshouses usually encourage communal living where residents can take part in social activities and have responsibilities for fellow residents, increasing their sense of belonging, giving them a greater sense of purpose and reducing isolation.

Nick Phillips, the chief executive of the Almshouse Association, said the findings could be replicated across all sections of society currently experiencing housing crises.

The almshouse model is perfect he said. "It's the housing model of the past but perfectly adaptable to the housing crises of not just today but the future too. We just need philanthropists to set up more of them."

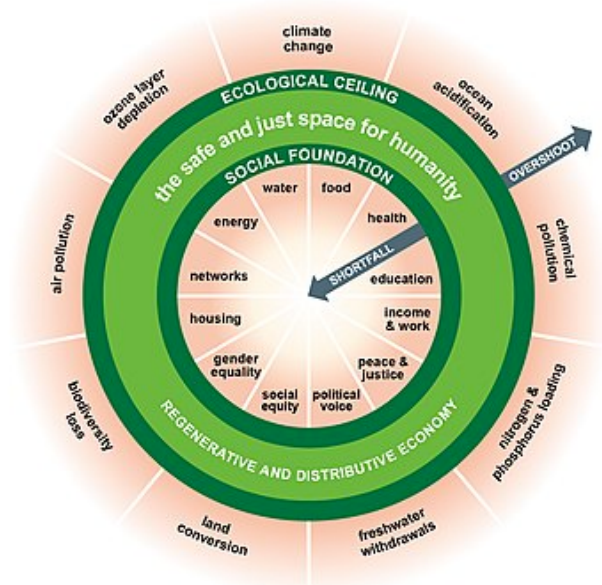
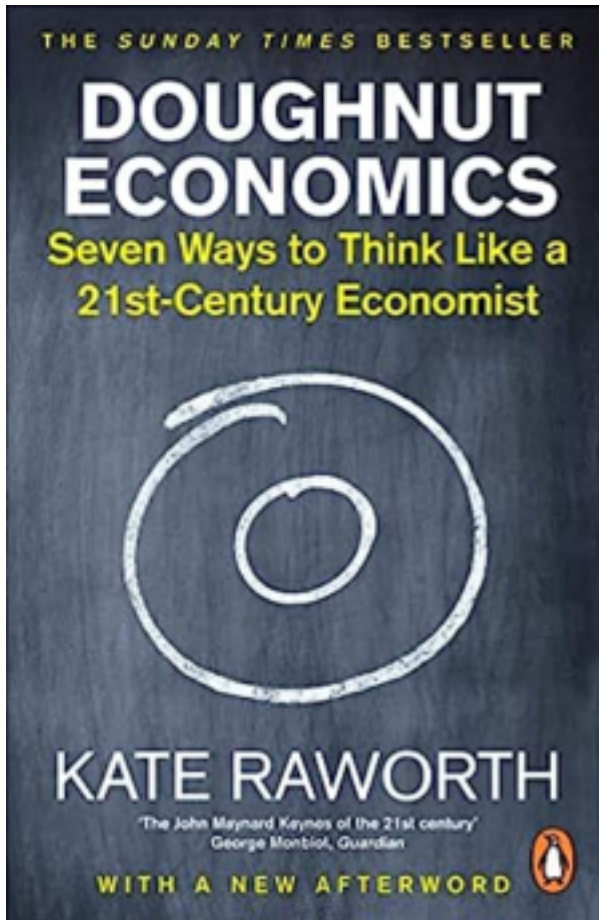
Almshouses are the oldest form of social housing in the world: the oldest foundation still in existence dates from about 990. Legally, historically and socially unique – exempt from right to buy legislation and so remaining as a permanent part of the community once gifted – there are 30,000 throughout the UK, providing affordable housing for more than 36,000 residents.

They are owned and managed by a network of more than 1,600 independent charities, and nearly all market towns in the UK have at least one almshouse. In some rural areas, they are the only provider of affordable, community housing.

In a time of a severe shortage of affordable rental accommodation, almshouse charities have long been trying to get attention from philanthropists and the government to make the case that their role is more vital than ever – that they should be put at the forefront of the community housing concept, providing an "exemplar housing model".

Paul Mullis, the chief executive of the Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association, the biggest almshouse charity in the UK, agreed. "Our residents know they can look forward to tomorrow because the things that make people's lives worth living haven't changed in the 1,000 years that almshouses were created to target: community, safe and secure housing, a sense of purpose."

4. Books



Financial crises. inequalities in wealth. Pressure on the environment.

Our economic system is broken. But can it be fixed?

In *Doughnut Economics*, Oxford academic Kate Raworth identifies the seven critical ways in which mainstream economics has misled us - from the theory of 'rational economic man' to 'growth at all costs' - This book offers instead an alternative route for humanity to find the 'Doughnut Ring' that meets the needs of all within the capacity of the planet. We should not still be considering these views radical and provocative, they should in my view be the mainstream, she offers a new economic model fit for the challenges of the 21st century.

I acknowledge being behind the curve on many new ideas and this one is the same but I have recently read Kate Raworth's 'Doughnut Economics' - Seven Ways To Think Like a 21st Century Economist and yes much of the book covers issues that have been around for a long time but sometime takes a new way of presenting them to catch the imagination. In this case a Ring Doughnut.

A phrase in the book used as one of the pillars of our transformation is Regenerative Design - being regenerative and distributive by design. She comments at page 267 '*Getting there calls for many sectorial transformations, including a strong contraction of industries such as mining, oil and gas, industrial livestock production, **demolition** and landfill, and speculative finance, offset by a rapid and lasting expansion of long term investment in renewable energy, public transport, commons based circular manufacturing, and **retrofit buildings**.*'

Much of what she discusses involves circular economy and a need to 'draw human ingenuity away from making stuff with fewer people **towards repairing and remaking more things with less stuff**, while employing more people too.'

The embodied energy of historic buildings also gets a mention throughout the book including p222....'if we start to look upon every object, be it an **eighteenth century building** or the latest smartphone, **as if it were a battery storing valuable materials and energy** then we begin to focus on retaining or reinventing that stored value.'

I think it beneficial to have these views presented as an essential part of the answer to a better balanced economic and environment approach and we should not lose sight of the importance of the heritage sector in making a contribution in philosophy and physical preservation, reuse and repair of old buildings and how we can learn from traditional buildings to inform and understand how buildings can be adaptive and importantly with global warming how many of the answers to issues like thermal performance, both warming and cooling, were built in with the experience of living with vernacular materials. You only need to look at materials like Thatch and cob and lime to see that circular thinking has ancient roots and the South West region is a strong advocate for understanding and reinventing these simple building materials.

Bulletin Editors Comment

This is the quarterly Bulletin for the IHBC SW Branch. It looks to highlight relevant news and best practice in the South West and things of interest from elsewhere.

I would welcome contributions from members in the South West as the best way to make this Bulletin relevant and worthwhile. I look forward to receive contributions on any topic, be it buildings, people or anything else members feel might be relevant and of interest. Please attach relevant photographs with contribution as these help make the Bulletin of visual interest and saves a lot of words!

Please note that Bulletin is made up from a variety of Contributor's and the Editor holds no responsibility for the viewpoints expressed or information provided.

