



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

SW Bulletin No. 29 - July 2015

Regional Training News

Your *Bulletin* is much later than scheduled for a variety of reasons which I won't bore you with! The good news is that we have run two successful training events so far this year and have others in the pipeline.

Despite the showers and wind, 19 May saw over 40 delegates attending the *Conservation of Traditional Thatch* day at South Petherton, Somerset. This was a joint event organised by the IHBC and Historic England, with specialist speakers from the thatching industry and practical demonstrations of the various materials. An illustrated write-up of the day will appear in *Bulletin 30*. Many thanks to Greg Venn for organising the event and negotiating highly competitive rates!

Highcliffe Castle in Dorset was the setting for a June tour of this fascinating Grade I listed 'Picturesque' building which is currently undergoing major restoration works. James Webb laid on a packed schedule which allowed delegates to 'go behind the scenes' and comment on the conservation methodology for the Victorian kitchen and historic panelling.

Surface treatments provide an essential ingredient of the historic environment which is all too often overlooked. The SPAB and Historic England are partnering on a research project that will investigate the survival, care and repair of cobbled pathways in Devon; in order to define best-practice guidance for their ongoing care, as well as tackling associated access and safety issues. The project findings will be presented at a conference to be held in Exeter on 27 November 2015. Bookings can be made through the SPAB:

<https://www.spab.org.uk/spab-events-awards/events>

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Looking Forward: A better deal for all of our heritage?

Well, the General Election has come and gone and the various manifestos made passing references to the built environment without anything specific about heritage. So nothing new there although the period of 'stability' which we are now entering gives a key opportunity to lobby Government for more essential funding for urgent repairs and buildings at risk, better protection, improved interpretation and so forth. The heritage of this country, its overall setting and sheer diversity are the envy of the world and explain why so many visitors flock to see it. Visitor numbers to the UK in 2014 are estimated to be in excess of 34 million, spending over £21 bn. The heritage 'boost' to these figures cannot be insignificant and surely warrants a proportionate return from Government in helping ensure that our heritage continues to 'attract' and be maintained into the bargain. The New Statesman goes one step further and calls for the restoration of the Ministry for Tourism and Heritage. I'll vote for that!

Malcolm James

Anyone for Tea?

A recent addition to the statutory list is the former tea room at Priding Farm overlooking the lower reaches of the River Severn near Arlingham in Gloucestershire.

Dating from circa 1910, the modest single-storey timber-framed structure standing on a brick plinth features a series of painted panels of named topographical, marine, genre and botanical subjects in oil, with a wax top varnish. Structures of this type built exclusively for leisure and recreational purposes are comparatively rare; more so when the delicate nature and originality of the interior decoration scheme are factored in.

The Grade II listed farmhouse and ancillary buildings had been the subject of a photographic survey by English Heritage in 1997, some time after the tea room structure fell into disrepair. Subsequent inspection in 2014 revealed the structure much better maintained,

and the paintings had been lightly cleaned to remove surface dirt.



One of the painted panels depicting a topographical scene; possibly St Mary's at nearby Fretherne with Saul (as enlarged 1857-59 by Francis Niblett) © Historic England

The former tea room is listed Grade II and has list entry no. 1422531:

<http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1422531>

NB. Access to the site is restricted but the structure can be seen from the Severn Way footpath.

Malcolm James

**Planning Appeal: Regents Circus,
Swindon, Wilts. SN1 3DQ
(APP/U3925/A/13/2204424)**

A number of Prior Approval applications for some telephone kiosks were applied for under Part 24 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 to enable Swindon Borough Council to consider their siting and appearance.

The main considerations included the effect of siting and appearance on the safety and convenience of public highway users, and in the case of one kiosk, whether it would preserve the setting of a Grade II listed building? The building in question was the 19th century Swindon Town Hall, built in red brick 1890-91 and originally known as the 'New Swindon Local Board Offices'; today it is a library and community arts centre.



Swindon Town Hall; the proposed telephone kiosk would have been to the left of the tree

The local authority refused the subsequent Planning application (ref. S/TC/13/0781) and so the applicant went to appeal. In assessing the impact of the proposals, the Inspector had regard to the openness of the area around the Town Hall (partly the result of a recent landscaping scheme) and noted that it provided "a fitting setting for the listed building"; thus making "an important contribution to the designated heritage asset". The Inspector reasoned that the

prominence and siting of the proposed kiosk would detract from the openness of the area and thereby negatively affect the setting.

The appeal was dismissed on the grounds that the proposed development would be "harmful to the character and appearance of the area and would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building" as stated under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Liz Smith-Gibbons

**Planning Appeal: Land at Little
Chalfield, nr. South Wraxall,
Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire
(APP/Y3940/A/14/2228679)**

An appeal by Solar Planning Ltd. against the decision of Wiltshire Council to refuse Planning consent for 36,000 solar panels spread over a 25 hectare site has been dismissed (ref. 14/05253/FUL).

The inspector highlighted the fact that the proposed scheme would "introduce a development of industrial appearance into an otherwise agricultural landscape for what would be at least a generation"; although the topography of the site would go some way to limiting the impact on the landscape character. Also noted were the significant number of heritage assets within 1.5 km of the site, including Grade I and Grade II listed buildings, two conservation areas and a Grade II Registered Park and Garden.

The inspector weighed many diverse factors in reaching a decision, including the planning balance, conflicts with the Wiltshire Core Strategy policies and the three dimensions of sustainable development (i.e., projected economic benefits, social role and environmental role). Despite the renewable energy contribution that the proposed scheme would undoubtedly make towards achieving Government's climate change policy objectives, the projected benefits in this case were not deemed to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the setting of the listed buildings.

Malcolm James

**Planning Appeal: Land at
Longleat, Swindon Village,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
(APP/F1610/A/13/2203411)**

The Swindon Village Conservation Area forms an outlying part of Cheltenham Borough which is largely urban, and on land that forms part of the setting of Swindon Hall; a Grade II listed building and historically part of its grounds.

The appeal was lodged following refusal of the appellant's proposals to erect a timber clad, single storey dwelling with glazed link corridor and part 'green'/ part zinc roof which would bridge across a small lake on to a central island. Cheltenham Borough Council cited the potential harm to the designated conservation area and the adverse impact on the setting of Swindon Hall.

The inspector agreed with the local authority's Conservation Officer concerns that the form and materials of the proposed dwelling would contrast markedly with the simple form and appearance of other buildings in the immediate vicinity, namely several chalet-style, detached stone-faced bungalows. Furthermore, that it would be an intrusive and incongruous building visually noticeable and uncharacteristic of the conservation area as a whole. It was further stated by the inspector that the proposed dwelling, despite being a subservient 'counter-balance' to Swindon Hall in terms of scale and appearance, would sit within the open setting and reduce the positive contribution that the 'verdant character' of the appeal site makes to the listed building's setting.

The inspector rejected the appellant's case that the local authority was unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply, stating that the development would not satisfy the environmental role as a result of the harm to the conservation area and the setting of the listed building. Although the harm was considered to be less than substantial, it was not outweighed by any apparent public benefits or by a clear and justification for that harm.

Wendy Tomlinson Cheltenham Borough Council

Officers from Gloucester City Council and Gloucester Cathedral recently hosted the 'Gloucester Heritage Project Forum' at Gloucester Cathedral to inform fellow colleagues developing other HLF-funded projects in the city.

Although the projects varied in terms of nature of heritage asset, scale and delivery timescale, it was felt that such a collective might benefit each project in terms of information sharing, interaction/ leverage and avoidance of repetition. Attendees at the forum included representatives from the following projects:

- Project Pilgrim: Gloucester Cathedral.
- Remembering the Soldiers of Gloucester: Soldiers of Gloucester Museum
- Southgate Street THI
- St Nicholas' Church
- Llanthony Secunda Priory
- Discover De Crypt
- From Birmingham to the Sea: Gloucester Waterways Museum
- Know Your Place Archive
- Robinswood Hill Country Park
- Gloucester Museum

There were also representatives from the HLF, Gloucester City Council's heritage team, Stroudwater Textile Trust, John Moore Museum and Gloucestershire County Cricket Club.

Following presentations on the individual projects, a discussion session took place to establish common ground and assess resourcing issues. All parties identified with the challenges of ongoing loss of heritage and the need to "get the message out to the wider community".

As a follow up to the event, feedback highlighted a number of opportunities and ideas for partnership work that could be explored at future events, including marketing, consultation, fundraising, education, training and activities. Rachel Court, project manager of Discover De Crypt commented "It was useful to hear from the other heritage projects, to appreciate more fully where our own project fits into the wider picture, and to

realise the enormous potential that exists for collaborative partnership working in Gloucester". Phillippa Davies from HLF added "The event was a really useful opportunity for the sharing of information, joining up of contacts and partnership work in Gloucester; which could really contribute to the heritage of Gloucester and the surrounding area".

Features on some of the highlighted projects will appear in *Bulletin* over the forthcoming issues. Feedback, comments and ideas are, as always, most welcome!

Charlotte Bowles-Lewis

St Nicholas' Church, Gloucester: The Churches Conservation Trust

The Churches Conservation Trust are currently working with the charity Art Shape to turn one of Gloucester's finest medieval buildings into a new and accessible heritage and arts centre for the city.

St Nicholas' Church dates from 1180 and is the oldest medieval parish church in Gloucester. It incorporates significant survivals of rebuilding schemes throughout the medieval period and beyond. Of particular note are the Norman features and subsequent 13th century adaptations, the plethora of high quality monuments and a 15th century tower with outstanding Perpendicular spire which forms a prominent local landmark.

Established in 1993, Art Shape strive to aid community cohesion, bringing diverse groups together to work on projects and get involved in community events. Their countrywide programme of arts courses and projects with a specific focus on disability issues and social inclusion.

The project is estimated to cost £3 million and initial concept designs with activity plans are currently underway for a Stage 1 HLF bid. Once the project capital work is complete (and this will include extensive conservation of the building fabric), the Trust envision that St Nicholas' will be both a historic and contemporary space for craft, creativity, enterprise and the arts. Project objectives and deliverables include:



St Nicholas' Church on Westgate Street; the oddly truncated spire is the result of lowering/capping following damage sustained during the English Civil War siege of the city in 1643

- Providing a new home for artist and craft workers - a number of whom have disabilities - allowing visitors to experience first-hand their craft, trade and products.
- Telling the story of the church through imaginative art, performance and interpretation work, allowing visitors to discover new aspects of St Nicholas' and Gloucester's history.
- Hosting a diverse cultural programme for the whole city and wider Gloucestershire to enjoy.

Further informative about the project and Art Shape is available at:

<http://www.visitchurches.org.uk>

<http://www.artshape.couk>



Rachel Barrett
Regeneration Officer

Project Pilgrim: Gloucester Cathedral

Project Pilgrim is a once in a lifetime opportunity to restore and improve specific parts of Gloucester Cathedral. This will help ensure that it continues to fulfil its role as a place of dynamic spiritual, civic and heritage activity. Key elements of the project will include conserving the 15th century Lady Chapel (identified as the most 'at risk' part of the building), installing an 'invisible' solar PV array to the south aisle roof (with the potential to contribute up to 20% of the building's energy needs) and removing the car park to create an 'iconic public space' to the south frontage.



Chloe Gilbert
Project Assistant

Agricultural structures of the post-1945 period are a common sight across much of the country. With the availability of pre-cast concrete sections, modular roofing systems and cost-effectiveness, market demand ensured that they rapidly became synonymous with 'modern' farming methods and an almost ubiquitous feature of the rural landscape.

Moving forward 70 years and many of these structures are now approaching end-of-life. The combined effects of materials failures (e.g. exposure and corrosion of steel reinforcement rods), impact damage and poor maintenance mean that many will need to be replaced if they are to remain in a viable agricultural use.

The key issue of course is what happens when a change of use and/ or redevelopment to introduce a completely different building is proposed? Two case studies from different areas of the region provide contrasting views with interesting outcomes. Further discussion welcome!

Malcolm James

**Dutch Barn, Marsh Farm, Yeovil
Marsh, Yeovil, Somerset:
(APP/Y3940/A/14/2228679)**

The development proposed in this case was for Prior Approval of Change of Use of Agricultural Building to Dwellinghouse (Use C3) and for Associated Operational Development. The key issue at stake was whether the proposal satisfied the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 with particular regard to its effect upon the setting of Marsh Farmhouse; a Grade II listed building dating from the mid-18th century.

South Somerset District Council refused to grant prior approval for the proposed change of use because they felt that it would significantly affect the setting of the farmhouse. The applicant lodged an appeal and an inspector visited the site in December 2014. Andrew Tucker takes up the story:

"When we heard of the Government's latest plan to allow any agricultural building to be converted to dwellings

without the need for Planning permission, we were filled with dread! A Prior Notification was still required, but it seemed initially as though we were only able to consider a few small matters".

"We have received lots of these Prior Notifications. Many have been accepted but we didn't feel so comfortable about a proposal to convert a Dutch Barn in close proximity to a Grade II listed building. You will see from the picture below that the barn is situated across the road and behind a hedge away from the historic farmstead; so initially the proposal doesn't appear to be too problematic".



Marsh Farm looking west with the farmhouse and historic farmstead on the right; the Dutch Barn stands in the distance on the left

However, images and angles can often be misleading as this second picture reveals!



Marsh Farm as seen from the public footpath which runs uphill across the fields to the south; the Dutch Barn actually stands in the foreground of the Grade II listed farmhouse

Andrew continues: *"We took the view that this proposal was 'undesirable' because of the harm caused to the setting of the listed building (a consideration that is 'relevant to the subject matter of the approval). This refusal was upheld by the inspector at appeal, recognising that the existing barn, although only of 'functional agricultural merit' is a typical rural building to be expected in such a location".* In dismissing

the appeal, the inspector concluded that the proposed building would have a new domestic character, causing harm to the setting of the listed building, and with no public benefits to justify the scheme.

Andrew Tucker (with thanks to Greg Venn)
South Somerset District Council

**Land at Watershard, Driffield,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire:
(CDC ref. 14/05648/FUL)**

The site in this instance was adjacent to a Grade II* listed parish church on the periphery of a small village in the south-east Cotswolds. It was not a historic farmstead as such and none of the agricultural buildings were listed. The barn was of concrete/ asbestos construction from the mid-1960s and whilst in a serviceable condition, it had effectively become redundant due to changes in farm management. The proposal was for demolition and the erection of a dwelling.



St Mary's church Driffield; view looking north-east from the lych gate with the aisled barn on the falling ground in the mid-distance

The scale of the proposed dwelling was modest in comparison to the barn's footprint (i.e. 50% less) and the mostly single-storey form utilising traditional materials empathised with other nearby domestic buildings.

Cotswold District Council referred the application to Historic England who took the view that the proposals would create a 'facsimile' farmstead building harmful to the setting of St Mary's church. Also, the proposals were not in accordance with national planning policy. The Council's Planning sub-committee recently voted in favour of the development on the grounds of its sustainability benefits to the small community of 169 residents and Driffield's proximity to other settlements/ services.

Malcolm James

Born in Wolborough, Newton Abbot, the son of a brewery clerk, Frank Matcham was brought up in Torquay where he went to Babbacombe school. In 1868 he became apprenticed to George Bridgman who was a local builder and architect. By the mid-1870s Matcham had moved to London to join the architectural practice of Jethro Robinson who was then consulting theatre architect to the Lord Chamberlain.

Following his marriage to Robinson's daughter in 1877, Matcham suddenly found himself running the practice when his father-in-law died suddenly the following year. He was 24 years old at the time and his first major project was to complete the Elephant and Castle Theatre which Robinson had started. Matcham rose to the challenge and over the next 30 years he became unrivalled as the most prolific theatre architect of all time. His work can be seen nationwide but perhaps the most famous commissions are those with which the public are most familiar; Blackpool Tower ballroom and circus (1899) and the London Palladium which opened in 1910.



An impression of Frank Matcham published by Vanity Fair to accompany an interview in 1911

Despite his success 'Matchless Matcham' did not hold any formal qualifications as an architect and was snubbed by many in

the profession as a result. Matcham's prolific output in no way compromised his designs and project management capabilities; in 1888 for example he was directly involved with the construction of five theatres concurrently. Each theatre was unique and a magnificent building in its own right.

Allied to an intuitive ability to complete projects on time and within budget, Matcham quickly earned the respect of theatre owners and managers alike. He developed close relationships with several owners, most notably Sir Oswald Stoll for whom he designed his masterpiece, the London Coliseum (1902-04) as the flagship venue for Stoll's chain of theatres and music halls. Happily this Grade II* listed theatre survives largely intact as the home of the English National Opera and was magnificently restored for its centenary in 2004.

It is impossible to be precise as to Matcham's total output, but it is thought that he designed at least 80 theatres from scratch and refitted or worked on at least as many again. He was without doubt the key figure in the most important age of theatre building in this country. Sadly, only 24 or so of his theatres survive with a further dozen drastically altered as bingo halls, nightclubs, cinemas, etc.

Matcham's last major theatre was the Bristol Hippodrome; a music hall with a huge tank under the stage for aquatic performances. The earliest surviving work by him is the Cheltenham Everyman where the rather quiet and unprepossessing street frontage belies the typically striking Matcham interior.



The Bristol Hippodrome on St Augustine's Parade which Frank Matcham designed in 1912 with the assistance of Bertie Crewe



Interior of the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham; fully restored during the summer of 2011

Matcham is buried in London's Highgate Cemetery and a blue plaque commemorates the site of his London home. Works in the south-west include:

- 1873 Paignton, Oldway House Theatre (as assistant to G. S. Bridgman)
- 1889 Bristol, Prince's (reconstruction)
- 1891 Cheltenham, Everyman Theatre/Opera House
- 1895 Bristol, Prince's (alterations)
- 1902 Bristol, Prince's (remodelling)
- 1912 Bristol, Hippodrome (with Bertie Crewe)

Further information is available from:

<http://www.frankmatchamsociety.org.uk>

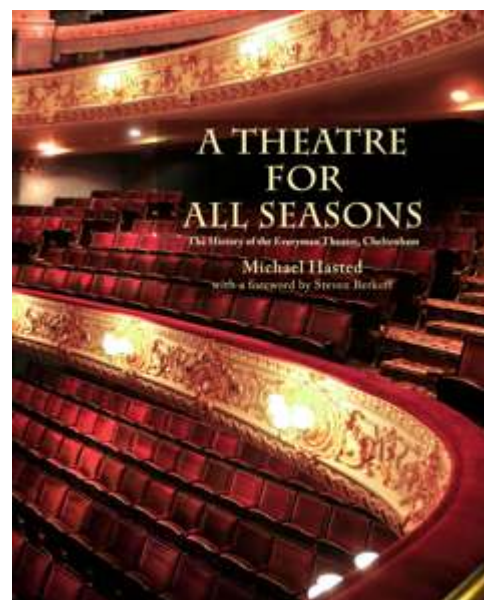
<http://www.arthurlloyd.couk/Matcham.htm>

Editor's note:

The Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham, its history and recent restoration, is the subject of a new book by Michael Hasted:

<http://jeremymillspublishing.co.uk>

<http://www.everymantheatre.org.uk>



Bristol's Underfall Yard: Regenerating the city harbourside

Underfall Yard in Bristol is just about to disappear under scaffolding for a one-year programme of refurbishment works totalling £2.6 million. The project (which includes a further £1 million of engagement and interpretation thanks to the provision of a new visitor centre) has been funded by the HLF and others including Bristol City Council, Garfield Weston, AIM Biffa, the Pilgrim Trust, Getty and the Wolfson Foundation.



The Underfall Yard is the historic centre of the Bristol Docks operation; at one stage the buildings on this small site at the far end of the Floating Harbour serviced not only the city docks but also the new ports out towards Avonmouth. Hydraulic pumps and the sluice room necessary to maintain the artificial high tide in central Bristol were housed in the Underfall Yard, providing the key engineering machinery which enabled the Bristol to continue to develop as a major port through to the mid-20th century. With the advent of containerisation and the demands of larger vessels docking at Avonmouth and Portishead, the city docks slowly became redundant and some of the buildings became vulnerable through disuse.

Most of the Underfall Yard site is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument with several individual buildings listed in their own right, e.g. Grade II* listed hydraulic pump house and the Grade II listed shipwright's shed.

In 2014 the whole site was transferred from Bristol City Council's ownership to the Underfall Yard Trust, an independent charity who now manage the site and will be overseeing the project. The Council lease back those parts it still requires for its vital work in maintaining the floating harbour, while the Trust will be letting more space to small maritime-based businesses so as to maintain its 'feel and purpose' as a working boatyard.

Throughout the project, hard-hat guided tours of the site can be organised and audiences will continue to be engaged via events, outreach work, newsletters, an information hut and social media. For details please contact Nicola Dyer:

nicola@underfallboatyard.co.uk

Tel. 0117 929 3250/ 07769 695991

<http://www.underfallboatyard.co.uk>

[Facebook.com/underfallyard](https://www.facebook.com/underfallyard)

Nicola Dyer
Project Director

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