



Newsletter - April / May 2002

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Tyntesfield

'Tyntesfield in Somerset is surely the last of England's last great country houses to offer itself for rescue. Saving these majestic piles has been a genteel country sport for more than a century' *Simon Jenkins in the Times, 3 May 2002*



Tyntesfield is the biggest county house crisis in years. So far the response has been fantastic. Just two months ago, the house was virtually unknown and headed for break-up. Now thanks to determined campaigning it has risen to the top of the heritage agenda. The National Trust has taken an energetic and commendable lead, first in agreeing to take on the property and now launching a public appeal. As of now there is a remarkable amount of goodwill on all sides towards achieving a solution in the form of acquisition by the Trust - both from the executors and from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The most recent fillip is the Grade I listing of the house by Tessa Jowell, the most detailed listing description I have yet encountered as far as interiors go, even mentioning the heated billiard table.

The big problem is that time is short. The executors have to take a decision by mid-June as to whether to hold a big Christie's sale of the contents late in the summer. By that time the NT has to submit a large and complex lottery application and the HLF have to review it and make a decision.

You can support the campaign in a number of practical ways.

First you can buy a copy of our lightning leaflet 'The Tyntesfield Emergency';
Second, you can write to the five addresses given there - as an encouraging number of Friends and supporters of SAVE already have. These can also be found on SAVE's website;

Third you can make a modest donation to SAVE's campaign, or a larger one to the NT appeal - their dedicated phone line for donations 0870 458 4500, or alternatively, send a donation to:

The National Trust, Save Tyntesfield Campaign,
FREEPOST MB 2007, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3BR.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/tyntesfield

Marcus Binney

RAE Farnborough

The former Royal Aircraft Establishment site at Farnborough continues to be at the centre of our concerns, so much so that we produced a lightning report on the site at the end of December. Entitled '*Enough Has been bulldozed - Save Farnborough, the cradle of British Aviation*', the report seeks to show the significance of what remains at the site, by placing it in a world context. The report is available to Friends of SAVE for £4 (£5 to every one else). The report sets the site in its international context and puts forward the arguments for preservation. What sets Farnborough apart from the other sites where flight was developed is the range of research carried out there - not solely aerodynamics, but also research into materials (the results of which yielded carbon fibre), flight suits, head up displays and a great many other areas. As for the buildings that remain, we believe that they still represent the best preserved aviation research site in the world. The report has stirred considerable interest in the press, with articles in a range of national newspapers and magazines, as well as coverage on BBC TV's Breakfast News and local radio and TV

The buildings themselves form a superb group that impart a very special sense of place, and it is this that is most vulnerable. Slough Estates are still threatening to demolish many of the unlisted buildings that form the setting of the main listed buildings and which help provide this sense of place. The danger is still that this superb site will become just a token collection of buildings stranded in a sea of new build when in fact it could become a lively urban village at the heart of Slough Estates' new business park. We have written to the Secretary of State requesting the upgrading of the listing of the wind tunnels and the listing of other buildings on the site.

Farnborough must be saved for the nation - the historic core must be opened to the public, and we believe strongly that there should be an open day this summer.

One issue at the root of Farnborough's woes is that of listing - the original listing recommendations were all downgraded following representations from the

Ministry of Defence. This left many of the buildings without protection. With English Heritage's thematic review of aviation structures now nearing completion, there is a very real danger that all of the listing recommendations it makes will be downgraded by Ministers, or the criteria weakened. This must not happen.

Hospitals and Asylums

The Norwich and Norfolk Hospital, Norwich - or - when is a building a building?



At this time last year, this case was just coming to our attention. To briefly recap, the Norwich and Norfolk hospital, designed by Boardman and Wyatt, completed 1874, was facing the threat of partial demolition. This attractive Grade II listed building is presently being vacated by the health authority, and the entire site has been bought by Persimmon Homes, who are intent on squeezing over 500 houses onto it. In order to do this, they propose to demolish the ward wings of this H plan hospital, and erect in their place new wings linked to a massive new block (designed by Broadway Malyan) behind the original administration block, which will remain stranded within the new build.

The issue here, however is not so much to do with the new build (which we consider entirely inappropriate) but with the Council's approach to the entire application. They interpreted listed building law in a way which no one could quite fathom, namely that as only the administration block of the hospital is mentioned in the listing description, the rest of the building is unlisted. This we considered wrong, as by law the whole building should be covered by the listing, even if not mentioned in the listing description.

We therefore instituted legal proceedings against the Council on the grounds that the ward wings formed part of the listed building as defined by Section 1(5) of the Planning Act 1990 viz:

1. The ward wings were built at the same time as the main block;
2. The ward wings were 'ancillary' structures, fixed to the listed building ;
3. They were within the curtilage of the listed building.

At the end of June Persimmon applied for listed building consent to demolish the ward wings. The Council duly advertised the application and granted consent at its meeting on October 4. The Council therefore accepted that listed building consent was required and agreed to pay our legal costs.

While it is highly regrettable that the wings are to be demolished, an important point has been established and other handsome hospital buildings where wings and centre form a single composition should not be sacrificed in this way.

Severalls Asylum, Colchester

There are few intact echelon plan asylums left in the UK. Severalls is a superb late example (1910 - 1913), in good condition and in mature, undeveloped park land (which has recently been added to the Park and Gardens Register in recognition of its importance). Now unfortunately the NHS is seeking the most profitable rather than the most appropriate solution. Essex County Council's archaeologists recommended that the site be granted conservation area status and some of the buildings listed - a stance which we strongly support. Colchester's local authority has yet to act on this, as they see the site as an opportunity to fill their housing quota.

The present outline plans before them would involve the demolition of nearly all the hospital buildings and the destruction of a large part of the park land to make way for new build incorporating up to 1800 residential units, while a new, probably rather noisy, 6 lane trunk road would scythe through the asylum's cricket pitch and part of the park land. In the mean time, Essex County Constabulary is using the site as an occasional training ground for riot control. This cannot be in the buildings' best interests.

We are opposing the plans to clear much of the site and build over the park land, and we seek conservation area status for the asylum. We will attempt to find an appropriate developer for the site. The buildings (which are in a Georgian revival style) are two storeys high and would make very pleasant residential conversions. The present scale of new build proposed for the site is unsuitable - conservation area status would limit this and ensure that if any new build is erected on the site, it will be of an appropriate standard. In the mean time, it is essential that the NHS secures the site to prevent vandalism to the outlying villas - a cost which they feel unnecessary.



Horton Road, Gloucester

An old SAVE case. In our publication *'Mind over Matter'*, we identified the Grade II* Horton Road Asylum as one of the more important asylums in the country. A recent visit to this Georgian and Victorian asylum revealed that the views of the local NHS Trust do not concur with ours and the years (and successive owners) have not been kind. The building is in a state of serious disrepair - dry rot is rampant. Clearly, in the years up to the NHS Trust's disposal of the building, Government guidance was not followed - the building should have been secured, and routine maintenance carried out to ensure that the NHS Trust could get a sensible return in light of its listed status. In the meantime, the NHS Trust has either sold off or itself developed all of the land around the asylum, making it more awkward for potential developers to get an decent return on the site.

This tale of woe is not unique - there is a wretched pattern of neglect by many NHS trusts across the country that can only be described as scandalous - they and their agents are deliberately allowing an important part of the nation's social history to rot. The root of the problem is that despite Government guidance to departments on the disposal of historic buildings, most departments enjoy Crown immunity from the normal conservation controls. While in recent years some, such as the Ministry of Defence, have started to reacted positively to the historic buildings in their possession, others have not, and local authorities are powerless. The sooner the Government fulfils its promise to roll back Crown Immunity, the better - tax payer deserves it.

East Dulwich workhouse infirmary



There are not a great many late 19th Century pavilion hospitals that have survived intact: The shocking demolition of Hither Green hospital on the last day of its certificate of immunity from listing demonstrates attitudes towards these splendid buildings only too well. The East Dulwich workhouse infirmary, is however a super example with only minimal modern interventions, all of which it would appear could be easily reversed. Once again, however, the NHS Trust sees the land the hospital is built on as a potential money spinner, and is in the early stages of planning its disposal. The local community, however, believe that there is a strong need for some form of medical facility

on the site, and they also rather like the old infirmary. Quite right, too, as it has a real presence. Its four pavilion wards end in ogee roofed turrets, which along with a fine set of railing present themselves to the road. At the centre of the composition is a very handsome administration building, connected by a spine corridor, the upper level of which forms an Italianate covered walkway.

The most remarkable thing about the site is that the hospital is unlisted - something which SAVE will strongly press to correct. The buildings could easily be converted, and a medical facility provided on the site, if needs be.

Tall buildings

In the pipeline:

London

London Bridge Tower	306m
Millharbour (Docklands)	207m
Heron Tower	183m
Vauxhall Tower	182m
Churchill Place (Docklands)	165m
St. Botolph's House	160m
Bioclimate Tower	152m
168 Fenchurch St	144m
Lots Road Power Station	114m

Birmingham: City Tower	175m
Holloway Circus	154m

Liverpool: Beetham Tower 146m

Leeds: Bridgewater Place 115m

Newcastle: East Quayside Tower 88m

Source: DTLR

The Heron Bishopsgate inquiry

Five long weeks were spent at the Guildhall keeping an eye on the proceedings and adding to them where appropriate. Billed as a 'Clash of the Titans' by the property and architectural press (perhaps English Heritage's five yearly review had something to do with this), it was more a case of money and ambition against modesty and practical reality. The money were in the form of the Corporation of London and Heron Plc, the ambition in the form of the Mayor and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (ambitious but a spot tardy - their evidence turning up the day the Inquiry commenced). Modesty and practical reality were English Heritage, Westminster Council, SAVE, Tony Tugnutt, the City Heritage Society, and a whole range of other objectors.

It was either five weeks of scintillating argument, or five rather dry weeks lightened up only by the good humour of English Heritage's QC and the sound of Paul Finch, from CABE, snoring. Either way, debate focused on whether 40 storeys was really an appropriate height to build to, considering the proximity of the building to St. Paul's Cathedral in historically important views. Given that the tallest

office building in the City of London, Tower 42 is the same height as the planned tower, we argue not.

The immediate question is whether the outcome of this Inquiry will have any effect on plans to build other towers. Will it open the flood gates if the inspector gives the plans the nod, and if he gives it the thumbs down, will developers carry on regardless? Much of this depends on the stage of the economic cycle rather than good sense.

Other serious questions were raised by the Inquiry. Chief among these is the role of two bodies - the Mayor, and CABE. Both are highly ambitious, have pots of money and are remarkably unaccountable. What was the Mayor doing there? In law, he has the power to call in planning applications he considers to be of strategic importance, and if he believes that they are inappropriate, to turn them down. This does not, however, give the Mayor the right to support an application and calls into question his role. The Greater London Assembly cannot call him to account over his decisions - instead his decisions are informed by the coterie of advisers that surround him, and his advisor on urban issues is none other than Lord Rogers - an architect who is interested in designing, er, tall buildings.

So, what about CABE - which has recently had its budget doubled by Government, to over £3,000,000. It has no statutory role and has a rather narrow remit - that of ensuring the quality of new design. It is in danger of becoming a politician's plaything - Baroness Blackstone, Culture Minister, recently told the Secretaries of the national amenity societies at a meeting of the Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies that they had to do more with CABE. About what? For what purpose? Surely some of that £3 million would be better off funding the national amenity societies to continue and expand their tremendous work. What did CABE contribute to the debate over the Heron Tower other than a record of events? Not much. What will it do in the future?

House of Commons Urban Affairs sub committee

The overall debate on tall buildings was brought into sharp focus by the House of Commons committee investigation into tall buildings. SAVE submitted a lengthy memoranda on the subject. This was published along with all of the other submitted memoranda in a revealing little number, available through the Stationery Office (ISBN 0 215 00128 1). The wide range of views and opinions expressed in it vary from the sublime - Simon Jenkins' concise and well argued submission - to the ridiculous - the British Property Federation arguing that the London Telecom Tower successfully melds with its surrounding buildings (Georgian) and community - with plenty in between. A useful barometer of feeling.

The Vauxhall Tower

Vauxhall is not an obvious site for a cluster of tall buildings, which makes the current application for a 50 storey residential tower on the Effra site appear opportunistic. The tower would impact views from both Vauxhall park and Battersea park, and we believe that it would also interfere with views of the Westminster World Heritage Site from Whitehall. Moreover, its riverside location is really rather sensitive - the Thames is one of the few places in London in which there are unimpeded views. The architectural quality of the Broadway Malyan designed building has also been criticised, but this in our opinion is a secondary concern to the wider effects of its enormous height.

The basic point about tall buildings remains: **No one has produced any evidence for the economic case for tall buildings. Until they do so we must therefore assume that people want to build them purely for the sake of building tall, in which case we must judge them on their merits as tall buildings, asking what their wider effects are before looking at their architectural merit.**

And a quick giggle at the Corporation of London, who after their staunch defence of the need for towers at the Heron Inquiry are now opposing plans to build the tallest building in Europe in neighbouring Southwark, on the grounds that it intrudes on views of St. Paul's Cathedral. This, despite the fact that it is designed by that maestro of the modern skyscraper, Renzo Piano (the building has now been approved by Southwark's Planners).

Other Cases

Jack Straw's Castle



A building around twice the age of SAVE but one for which we have repeatedly fought. This charming pub in Hampstead is under threat once again. The building is a fine listed timber frame building, something of a rarity for the 1960s. The present plans will, if passed, see it turned into a stack of bijoux flats. This will involve a high degree of intervention in the structure of the building, using steel joists rather than timber. This is far from best practice. In the meantime, another application has gone in to board up the building. What seems so ludicrous to us is that if the owners wanted

the pub to succeed it easily could, given its location and delightful appearance.

Listing - Derby

A recent visit to Derby - ostensibly to investigate Aslin's 1930's bus station - revealed that not much has changed in the local authority's attitude to historic buildings since the much lamented demolition of the railway station, St Alkmund's church, the city's finest Georgian buildings including the Assembly Rooms etc. At the root of the problem are two factors - a local authority with a bad attitude to historic buildings, and an out of date and far from comprehensive listing survey of the town. Not only is much of Aslin's fine 1930's work under threat (or already demolished), but other buildings too. Parts of the courthouses have recently been demolished. The fine 19th Century marble factory is under threat from a road scheme, which would also run past the local authority owned Grade I St. Helen's House - a Palladian villa by Joseph Pickford. However, the local authority claims that building this road will allow better access to the site of the stunning former GNER Friargate Warehouse (which SAVE had a hand in spot listing many moons ago, and included plans for its reuse in the publication 'Bright Future') whose owner has a plan of action for the rescue of the building ready to go. It need not be the case that one building has to be sacrificed to save the other. The old chestnut of Allestree Hall awaits someone capable of taking it on, and the grade II* Rykneld Mill awaits conversion by Derby University. To cap it all, the new station is now deemed inadequate for the needs of the travelling public.

Below: The stunning Friargate warehouse



Papers out of Government

Just before Christmas, Secretary Adam Wilkinson was temporarily mislaid under a pile of papers that arrived from Government. He just about managed to extricate himself from this in time for the festive season. Perhaps the two most important documents to emerge were the planning Green Paper, and the Government's thoughts on heritage, entitled 'A force for our future' and widely interpreted as a response to the conservation world's 'Power of Place' document.

The Green Paper does not directly address conservation, but many of the measures it discusses

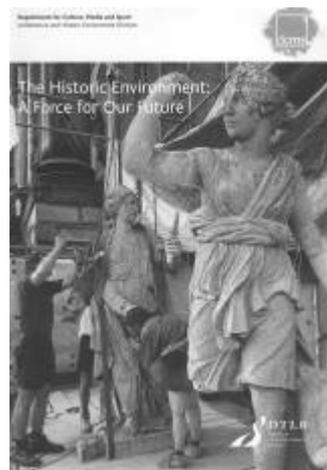
will, if enacted, have an as yet unquantified effect on the planning system, and therefore historic buildings. The question therefore is should conservation matters be bolted onto what is proposed, or should there be a wholesale rewrite of the paper to include conservation? So much for joined up Government.

There is are a couple of ominous points in the paper, which result from a desire to streamline the planning process - a democratic system that has been built up over time and hard fought battles and should not be dismantled. Firstly is the proposal to reduce the number of statutory consultees, which could be the death knell of the National Amenity Societies. Given the huge amount of expertise they contain and the mass of work they do at minimal cost to the Government, such a move would be very foolish.

Likewise, the proposals to include Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent applications on the same form as applications for Planning Permission are very worrying - the three are very different animals, each requiring consideration in their own right, as the material considerations for each are different. Putting all three onto one form will cause more misunderstanding and will probably be the cause of numerous bad decisions.

'A Force for our Future', or effoff as it is affectionately known amongst conservationists, was the Government's first attempt to make a mark on the conservation world. With it the Government hopes to take a lead role in the sector. However, the glaring mistake it makes is to ask the heritage sector what

it can do for Government, and not what Government can do for the sector. Many of the initiatives it discusses are already underway, set up and started by the voluntary sector, which the document's writers seem to have forgotten has long been the main driver in the sector.



One of the key points made by the document is about making the historic environment more accessible, largely through education, and directly through giving free access to English Heritage's properties for school parties. While this is of course welcome, one has to wonder what it will do for the revenues of privately owned great houses that are opened to the public. Furthermore, the discussion of education stops with schools - there is no mention of undergraduate courses, which are surely essential in training the next generation of heritage professionals.

If anything, the document illustrates the need for a united voice in conservation capable of responding to

and addressing Government's agenda in a co-ordinated manner

The Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies meets Baroness Blackstone, Culture Minister

SAVE sits as an observer on the JCNAS and we were very grateful to be given the opportunity to join the Secretaries and chairmen of the National Amenity Societies in a meeting with Baroness Blackstone. After preliminary introductions, the Minister gave a brief précis of her thoughts on the situation with conservation, pointing out that the amenity societies are often viewed as obstructive, and that there seemed to be an awful lot of them - surely the number could be slimmed down. She also expressed a desire to see us all working closely with CABE, but how exactly was not specified. Also pointed out was that space has to be made for new development, and that old buildings may have to go. Various other issues were raised, chief among them, but by no means dominant was the perennial issue of VAT. The Minister was sympathetic, but that, sadly, was as far as she was prepared to go. These are worrying times, but to repeat the assertion made in SAVE's first report '*conservation is not a fad or a trend*': at least Ministers come and go

The Sport of Swimming

The last time that lidos and swimming pools were all the rage was some time in the 1930s. However, a spate of recent cases involving swimming pools and Britain's resurgent strength in the sport resulted in the House of Commons select committee on Culture Media and Sport taking an interest in the buildings and their heritage. As ever, SAVE was somewhat ahead of the game, having first looked at the heritage of swimming in the 1982 exhibition and publication 'Taking the Plunge'. We submitted this to the committee as evidence as it is still as relevant then as today - there are cases of threatened historic swimming pools in Edinburgh and Ashton under Lyme, as well as numerous lidos such as South Bay pool, Scarborough and Hillsea, Portsmouth. Look out for English Heritage's pilot scheme timed to coincide with the Commonwealth Games, studying the sporting heritage.

EH / CABE - 'Building in Context'

A timely and potentially useful document, this seeks to illustrate through 15 case studies that carefully designed good quality new building can add to historic areas. It is also meant to be a practical document - a guide for the councillors who sit on planning committees, perhaps, giving guidance on how to assess new designs. The real test for the document, however will be the test of time: how will these case studies appear in 15 - 25 years time? The only danger in the document might possibly be unscrupulous developers seeing it as an excuse to do away with the old, replacing it with the new, a danger all too clear and present in **Richard Coleman's 'Revise PPG 15!'**, a dogmatic attack on façadism, which calls for the Government's guidance on conservation and the

historic environment, PPG15, to include strict criteria for high quality new design to replace mediocre buildings in conservation areas rather than retaining their facades, as often happens. The point here is that the public interest is often only in the facade of such buildings - in a dynamic street scene, the facade is a part of the group. Of course, façadism is indeed a halfway house and should be the exception rather than the rule, but in many of the case studies given by Coleman, there is no harm in it. There are other areas of concern in the conservation world which need highlighting more urgently than this non-threat.

Updates

Vauxhall Bridge Road, London

Shortly after the last newsletter we received word from the DCMS that numbers 181 - 201 Vauxhall Bridge road had been listed Grade II, almost 6 months after we requested their spot listing. Considering that these Georgian buildings were scheduled for demolition in December, this came just in the nick of time. Indeed, it was only then that the whole story became clear - the buildings had been compulsorily purchased by Westminster Council as part of a road widening scheme. When it turned out that the road widening scheme had become redundant, Westminster granted itself outline planning permission to redevelop the site. The profits from this, or the onward sale of the site had apparently been included in next year's budget. A slight apology, then, to Westminster Council Tax payers. The coast is, however, far from clear for these buildings - we wrote to Westminster saying that the Spitalfields Trust were willing to take on and restore the buildings, only to receive a somewhat curt reply. We have just found out that Westminster is applying to delist the buildings (using a consultant rather than their own conservation team), and demolition signs have gone up on neighbouring buildings. If they fail in delisting them, there is still the possibility that they will sell the site to a developer, who will then put in a listed building consent application to demolish and redevelop.

Queen Mary's school, Lytham St. Annes

...has been listed Grade II following representations from ourselves and the 20th Century Society, in recognition of its architectural merit and intact interior. Although the criteria for 20th Century listing seem to have been narrowed under the new regime at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, this particular building has been granted the recognition it rightly deserves.



The Ridge, The Park, Mansfield

Following the failure of the Secretary of State to call in the planning application for Norman Foster's Gherkin, there was a collective scratching of heads at SAVE, as we tried to think of examples of planning applications that had been called in without English Heritage involvement. Well, now the plucky Mrs Smith, leader of the campaign to save the Ridge, has managed (with a little assistance from SAVE) to get the decision by Nottinghamshire County Council to grant itself planning consent (without conservation area consent from the local authority) called in. Hurrah!

Kings Cross area redevelopment, London

What started out as a disaster scenario for the three blocks north of the Pentonville Road, to the east of Kings Cross looks set to become a successful conservation based regeneration scheme - something from which the government could surely learn. The scheme's first incarnation would have seen the clearance of a large number of buildings of historic interest, from artisans workshops through to double-decker stables. Fortunately, though, the initial fury of local residents and SAVE resulted in a steady hand being placed on the tiller, with RHWL as master-planners, and Richard Griffiths Architects advising on how to weave the historic urban fabric into the scheme.

That Government conservation area promise

Whatever happened following the Government's announcement about a year ago regarding development control in conservation areas? Nothing.

Seaside towns ii: Cromer

A year ago, Deborah Churchill investigated the problem of conservation in Hastings. Adam Wilkinson recently journeyed out to Cromer, Norfolk, to see where conservation stands on the local agenda. The town faces severe problems - an aging population, low employment rates and hawk-eyed property developers out to make a quick buck. Cromer has preserved much of what attracted hordes of Victorians and Edwardians there - a wonderful coastline and beaches, an attractive seaside promenade, and a winding mediaeval heart.

The town possess a whole range of building types and styles, from the brilliant knapped flint church of St. Peter and St. Paul (superbly restored by Blomfield in 1862 - his other work included the chapels of Exeter College, Oxford, and more topically, Tyntesfield) to late mediaeval fishermen's cottages, Georgian town houses, Victorian terraces and Victorian and Edwardian villas. The whole of the centre of the town is a conservation area, and the town contains over 100 listed buildings. However, conservation is not a priority for local councillors - economic development must, in their minds come first. They have failed, so far, to see that Cromer's two main assets - its location and its history - could be marketed to its advantage. Instead, the conservation areas are suffering from an

erosion of detail - whole bay windows (which are something of a feature of the town) are being ripped off, and replaced with feeble and inappropriate plastic versions.



Cromer: an unlikely battleground for the U-PVC debate, with timber on the left.



We have written to the local authority urging them to take a strong line on development in the conservation area. A new and vigorous preservation society has formed locally to force councillors to see the potentially huge asset that the historic environment is. They have our full support for their endeavours.

Northern Ireland - Responses

Either the Department of the Environment, the devolved body responsible for heritage in Ulster, has gone to ground, or it agrees with all the point in our report on the state of conservation in Northern Ireland (see Newsletter, October 2001). They have had eight months to respond - several more than we were expecting - and yet we have heard nothing from them. We have received responses from all manner of organisations nationally and locally, but the DoE has remained silent. All of the responses so far have been positive, welcoming the report. Will the DoE? Who knows. We will continue to press them for a response. There have been one or two encouraging signs, however - the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society has had its Buildings at Risk grant reinstated. Let us hope that this is the start of greater things rather than a token gesture to keep the locals happy.

The Baltic Exchange

After months of wrangling with the Treasury Solicitor, we finally beat down the costs awarded against us following our court action against the Secretary of State to a more reasonable level. We owe a hearty debt of thanks to all of the individual members of the Baltic Exchange who contributed towards these costs, as well as to the Baltic Exchange itself for its generous contribution.

Anyone who has been for a stroll down St. Mary Axe, London, recently, will have hardly failed to notice that the erection of the Gherkin is going ahead full steam. However, there are still a number of issues that need to be clarified, now that the dust from the developer's knocking ball has settled. No one has yet come up with

a solution for the interior of the bomb damaged Baltic Exchange, which is now stored in a warehouse in Reading. It has to be said that the developer has hardly advertised this far and wide. The situation is now that the interior can be broken up into individual elements, for use by museums etc.

Various aspects of the Section 106 agreement have not yet been met - no suitable way of displaying the stained glass from the war memorial has yet been settled on. The developer has a legal obligation to ensure that this is properly displayed: their original idea was rejected, and so now they are proposing to restore the glass and donate it to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich - with no reassurance that it will be a permanent display. This is no way to treat a war memorial.

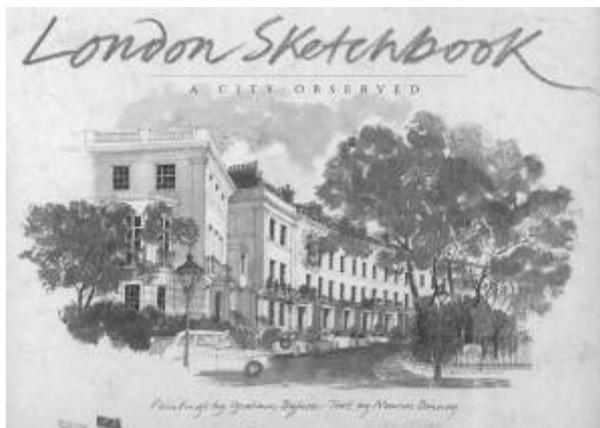
Aftermath - Falconer gets it right

If there has been one positive outcome of the whole Baltic Exchange scandal, it is that the Secretary of State must now give, if asked, clear reasons as to why a request to call in a planning application has been turned down. This piece of news was barely reported at the time - only the sharp eyes of one of the Evening Standard's correspondents picked up on this. Although we look forward to seeing the Secretary of State explain in clear and uncertain terms why applications have not been called in, this does raise the possibility of endless legal challenges to decisions.

Events:

London Sketchbook Exhibition: books and paintings still up for grabs

The exhibition of paintings from Graham Byfield and Marcus Binney's London Sketchbook was a great success, and we would like to thank all of the Friends who attended and bought books and paintings. Anyone interested in any of the paintings in the book should contact the SAVE office.



Book Fair

Two events in the space of a year - it must be a record. All Friends (and their friends) are warmly invited to a conservation book fair on Tuesday, 21st May 2002 at the Gallery, 70 Cowcross St. London (left out of

Farringdon tube, 50 yards up the road). A whole host of conservation bodies will be exhibiting and selling their wares - a chance for everyone to see quite how broad the conservation world really is. It kicks off at Midday and will end at 7pm. Refreshments will be available from 5.30 onwards. We look forward to seeing you there.

People

At the end of 2001, Alice Yates left SAVE and moved onto the World Monuments Fund. We are very grateful for all her hard work on the buildings at risk project. Her position has been filled by Regine Jaszinski, who has been incredibly busy gathering information for the 2002 Buildings at Risk catalogue, due out any moment now.

The SAVE office is currently a flurry of activity with a range of volunteers working on various projects and helping out with the everyday running of the office. A big get well soon to Rachael Heslop, who is currently recuperating from a hideously close scrape with the grim reaper following a bout of meningitis. She had been doing some tremendous work, sorting through SAVE's large photographic archive, and was about to go off trotting around the globe.

Of the other volunteers, Lydia Wilson is investigating the problem of local authority owned buildings at risk, Lucy Denton is hunting for country houses at risk, starting with North West England, Meriel O'Dowd is organising events (including the May book fair) and ensuring that our IT needs are met - she arranged a splendid donation of three new (old) computers to the office from Goldwaters solicitors for which we are immensely grateful. Theodosia Hashagen is having a crack at the photos and helping out with some of the admin, and Charlotte Beaupere is looking at some of the finer points of London's suburbs - a project that looks set to expand.

We could, however, still do with a volunteer with a good working knowledge of HTML for work which could be done from home. Anyone interested should contact Adam at the SAVE office on 020 7253 3500.

Giving to SAVE Britain's Heritage

There are a whole number of different ways in which you can give to support SAVE's work - payroll giving, charity card account, gift aid, shares, legacies. For more information, please contact the SAVE office.

Friend or Foe?

If you are reading this and are not a Friend of SAVE, then why not? For as little as £1.25 per month you can have peace of mind, knowing that you are helping to advance the cause of conservation, while also claiming a 20% discount on all SAVE publications. What more could one ask for?

The SAVE Trust: Castle House update

It has been something of a marathon, but at last it looks like the SAVE Trust will finally become the proud new owner of a crumbling ruin in Bridgwater. Many of you may well remember this building from previous newsletters - we had anticipated taking on the building about a year ago. However, the present owner has put up a determined fight to keep the building, in spite of the fact that he has shown no intention of repairing it. The local authority has issued two urgent works notices, and in order to stall the process, the owner has shifted ownership of the buildings around between various shell companies of which he is a director. Frustrating in the extreme, but what is shaping up to be a very exciting restoration project is finally about to happen....

New publications from SAVE

- The Tyntesfield Emergency. £4.50 (£3.60 for Friends)
- Your Own Place in History: The 2002 Buildings at Risk Register. £10 (£8 for Friends)
- Enough has been bulldozed! Save Farnborough, The cradle of British Aviation. 54 pages, fully illustrated in black and white. £5 (£4 for Friends)

Sponsor a newsletter!

If you would like details of how to sponsor a newsletter, please contact Adam at the SAVE office

Maintain our Heritage

Full steam ahead! The Bath and North East Somerset Pilot gets underway in April / May, offering a trial of the at-cost maintenance inspection service. This will be an excellent opportunity to sort out any short comings in the system, as well as for owners of listed buildings in the area to have a building health check. Anyone interested should have a look at the enclosed leaflet.

Although the principle of Maintain would appear to be blindingly obvious - that regular maintenance is better than sporadic repair - as yet no one has done the research to prove it. Maintain has recently succeeded in gaining sponsorship from the Department for Trade and Industry to fund a comprehensive study looking at the wider benefits of regular maintenance over sporadic repair. This is being generously supported by the Pilgrim Trust. The resulting body of work will be an invaluable weapon for not only Maintain, but for all conservation bodies engaged in the struggle to ensure the survival of our nation's historic buildings.

The value of the Maintain our Heritage movement has already been recognised by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which has commissioned a smaller study from Maintain. to help ensure that its massive investment in the nation's historic fabric is properly maintained.

SAVE Kenya's Heritage?: The Precious Stones project

"Campaigning for threatened historic buildings" is a familiar motto and challenge to Friends of SAVE Britain's Heritage. However, that challenge takes on entirely new perspectives when some of those historic British buildings are threatened at more than a continent away.

In January 2002, SAVE Secretary Adam Wilkinson met with Precious Stones Project Director, Ouma Erick Obanda. Their focus was upon what to draw from SAVE's knowledge and experience to increase the success of historic preservation in Kenya. As East Africa's only nationwide non-governmental historical preservation group, the Precious Stones Project of Kenya is a fledgling effort with much to do - and to learn.

Increasing his group's knowledge base, Mr. Obanda has been on sabbatical doing best practice research amongst the UK's most successful preservation and education-oriented organisations.

Long a priority and practice in the West, historic preservation programs for the built environment are in their infancy in most of sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya's unique array of historic architecture - including many outstanding examples by Sir Herbert Baker and others from the British colonial period - provide rich cultural counterpoint to the stunning beauty and diversity of Kenya's wildlife and geography - though all of this heritage is framed by a background of difficulties brought on by poverty, AIDS and government corruption.

Mr. Obanda believes the Precious Stones Project has been given a critical new insight and approach to significantly grow and strengthen his country's heritage conservation efforts through his research into UK preservation organisations. Says Mr. Obanda, "SAVE's well thought and very effective work clearly illustrates tourism-based economic value from historic preservation - critical to Kenya where tourism is a lynchpin of the nation's economy." Continues Obanda, "With so much of my country's historic built environment under threat, it would be easy for some to become overwhelmed. However, I will always be boosted by SAVE's energy and enthusiasm."

Mr. Obanda will return to Kenya in Spring 2002 to move full ahead with work to "SAVE Kenya's Heritage." Activities he'll perpetuate include innovative use of drama and participatory, educative theatre to create broader public knowledge of and advocacy for historic conservation nationwide. For more information about the Precious Stones Project or about historic preservation in Kenya, send email to nairobijuzi@aol.com or bikerengende@yahoo.com or write to the Precious Stones Project, P.O. Box 31991, Nairobi, Kenya

Article courtesy of Caroline Simmons, Assistant Director, Precious Stones Project