Summer 2025 Newsletter

A Note from the Chair

In November 2024 we commenced a series of tea break sessions (see Our Meetings, below) on the theme of significance. We had over 80 attending a discussion on non-designated heritage and equally well-attended sessions followed on the themes of significance which will soon resume after an accident floored the Chair! There is clearly a heavy demand and we would be most grateful to hear from any members who wish to contribute to or suggest topics for future sessions.

Buildings archaeology continually throws up surprises and queries and so this newsletter will focus on questions arising from recent survey work. We are thinking about how to present BAG news in a different format, but for now we hope that you can read, enjoy and if possible provide feedback on the studies presented here.

We wish in future editions to report on the results of projects that have provided new insights into buildings archaeology. Please send us any details of projects that you have been involved in and would like to see reported in this newsletter.

CIfA Buildings Archaeology Group

The group aims to promote the analysis of the built environment and to raise awareness of approaches and methodologies to address the wider role of buildings archaeology with other professionals in built heritage sector by:

- advising CIfA council on issues relating to standing buildings and being consulted during the drafting of new recording guidelines and heritage legislation
- producing regular newsletters (two per year)
- articles in the CIfA magazine 'The Archaeologist'
- training events (seminars, guidance and conference sessions)
- developing links with associated heritage professionals
- to provide a forum for addressing the wider role of buildings and archaeology within the built heritage sector

Membership is **free to CIfA members**, and £15 annually for non-members. **Email** groups@archaeologists.net

DO YOU HAVE NEWS OR AN INTERESTING PROJECT TO SHARE?

We would be grateful for any articles or news for our next newsletter and topics for our proposed on-line sessions. Please contact: jeremy.lake44@gmail.com

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QUERIES FOR MEMBERS

A DISTILLING HOUSE?

Diane Charlesworth, Gloucestershire Building Recording Group dianec88@gmail.com

Gloucestershire Building Recording Group (GBRG) was invited by Charles Martell, distiller and cheese maker, to record the timber-framed distillery at his farm and to research its history, with the aim of ascertaining if it had operated as a distilling house in the 17th and 18th centuries and had been built as one.

This area in north-west Gloucestershire was well known from the medieval period for its orcharding and cider making., one in the village, recorded in 1696, which has been identified and which GBRG hopes to record in the near future. Another maltster and distiller was in Ryton, and the third one at Brooms Green (very likely Huntes, it then being occupied by Benjamin Hunt) in the late 18th century. Excise officers were also present in Dymock in the late 18th century.

There is no doubt that Huntes, first recorded in the early 15th century, had operated as a distilling house in the early 19th century and most likely in the later 18th century. Our research has shown that in the 17th and 18th centuries it was one of three distilleries in the parish of Dymock reflecting the rapid expansion of the distilling industry in the mid to late 17th century – in tandem with the rapid growth of the cider industry – and that spirits were made from many sources including orchard fruits and grapes. Later In the 19th century its use was changed to a cider house with a stone cider apple mill installed in a rather makeshift manner by the use of additional timbers and nails.

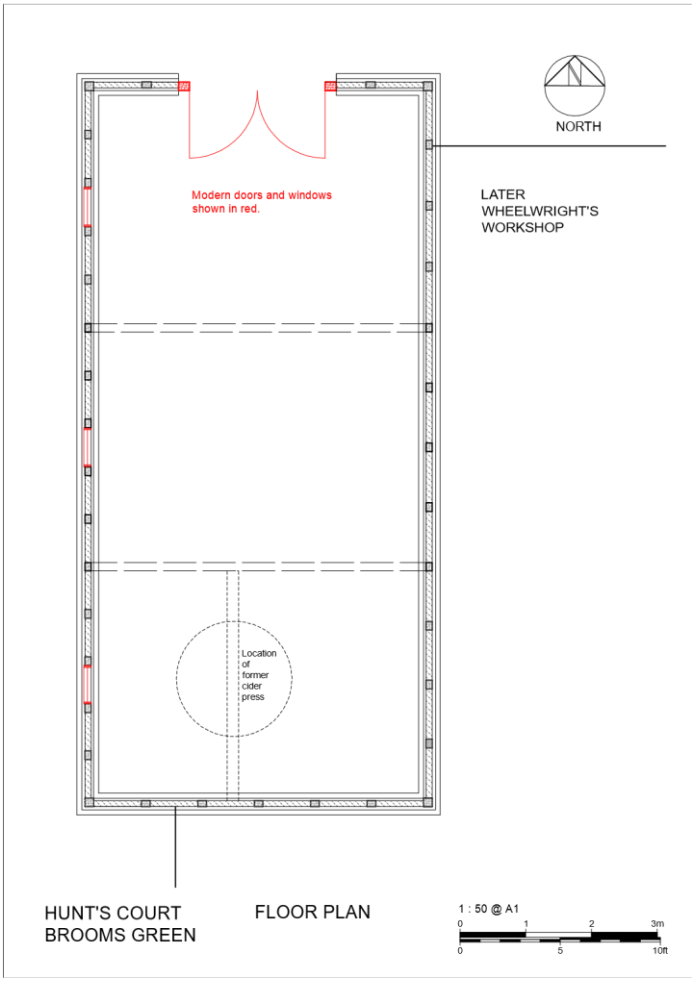
Interpretation is made difficult by the fact that the building has had some major renovation carried out which could have obliterated evidence, particularly the roof and floor. The timber frame clearly dates to the 17th-18th century, most of the timbers having been converted (by pit saw and adzing) from young trees. Small-panelled framing of this type is found in the early 17th century, the weather-face (facing broadly south-west) having had its original wattle and daub replaced in brick before being restored back to its original appearance. However, the wall posts all have gunstock heads and straight bracing more commonly found later in this period. The plan form – simply a long room with a wide gable entry – does not match commonly-encountered farm buildings (notably threshing barns and animal housing) of the period and the absence of fixings for wattle and daub inside the V struts on the two gable ends suggests that these were open and that its builders intended the interior to be well-ventilated. William I-Worth's *The Complete Distiller* (1705), has a cut-out drawing enabling the reader to see how the distilling equipment was arranged and also how the

fumes would need to be vented away. The west side of the building was also ventilated by diamond-mullioned windows that have been renewed, any evidence on the east side having been obscured by a 19th century wheelwright's shop. The owner informed us that there was a cobbled floor down the centre of the building that was slightly cambered with a flat earth floor on either side. A photograph of the north gable end before renovation showed a narrower and lower very plain flat-lintelled doorway of approximately 3ft 6in (1.006m) wide, wide enough to admit barrels. In this latter respect there is a superficial resemblance to apple stores and barrel stores of the type encountered in farmhouses or farm buildings, but the length of the building and the provision of ample ventilation is unusual: a mezzanine would have been expected for the storage of apples and there is no evidence of one. Everything points to the need to dispel fumes in combination with a cambered rolling way.

If it was not originally built as a distilling house, what would it have been? So far we have been unable to locate and visit any comparable building. What would be most welcome is information, photos and plans of another building that has been used as a working historic apple/pear cider distilling house in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries in England or Normandy that would provide a comparison.

I would be most grateful for any information members could provide.

Diane Charlesworth Recording Visits Coordinator, Gloucestershire Building Recording Group. Email: dianec88@gmail.com



West elevation before (above) and after renovation.

Interior of a distillery from William I-Worth's *The Complete Distiller* (1705).

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EARLY USE OF FLAT IRON AT SARSDEN GLEBE

The Oxfordshire Buildings Record has surveyed some farm buildings which display a remarkably early use of structural iron at The Iron Buildings (so named by the OS in 1880) at Sarsden Glebe Farm to the east of Churchill in Oxfordshire. They were probably built in 1824 by John Langston (1797? - 1863), who inherited from his father John (d.1812) on coming of age and invested heavily in both the house and the estate.

The Iron Buildings were constructed using rolled flat bar iron to assemble light iron frames fixed by rivets and bolts: the intention was clearly to prevent the roof from twisting or collapsing under weight. The roofs originally held slate tiles tied on with copper wire. Each roof is constructed principally of rolled wrought iron bar using either flat or round section secured using hot-forged rivets and square-headed bolts/nuts. No angle sections (as developed in France between 1810 and1819) or cast-iron structural members are present, the use of cast iron being limited to batten cleats. Rods connecting the rafter frames to the king post trusses were intended to stiffen the overall frame and mitigate lateral torsional buckling, a major challenge with flat iron in contrast to angle iron or 'I-section' beams. These were secured using long threads on the tension bars, probably to facilitate tensioning of the bar during assembly. The rafter trusses used in the threshing barn are connected by a tensioning rod between their apexes adding significantly more stability to the frame during assembly and with a pair of struts, much greater resistance to torsional buckling. Each roof truss in the shelter shed, which is a slightly later build, comprises kingpost, principal rafters, tie beam and raking queen struts all made from vertically oriented flat iron bar joined by iron rivets with approximately 3cm diameter heads.

We would welcome any information from members on the early (pre-1840s) use of structural iron to better assess these roofs in their national and international context. All the buildings have similar roofs using similar materials, but each are of subtly different design. Their extensive and exclusive use of flat section wrought iron bar, and the structural forms suggest both the material and designs were innovative for the time reflecting the wealth and wider connections of the Sarsden estate. The subtle changes in the structural designs, while using identical materials, suggest the roof designs were developing as the buildings were sequentially erected. By the 1840s it was recognised that certain structural members in iron trusses had to withstand bending and compressive loads to which flat wrought iron was unsuited. This is demonstrated by the French railway engineer Camille Polonceau's patent of 1837 for a truss in which cast iron was used for compression elements and wrought iron for bars in tension. In 1839 Robert Stevenson used iron trusses for the terminal train sheds of the London to Birmingham railway in Euston and London: these used round sections for bars in tension and T-sections for the bars in compression.

Paul Clark, *The Iron Buildings, Sarsden Glebe, Churchill, Oxon.* (Oxford: Report OBR.521, Oxfordshire Buildings Record)

The Oxfordshire Buildings Record would be most grateful for any information members could provide.

Email Paul Clark: paulclark@pgcmail.net

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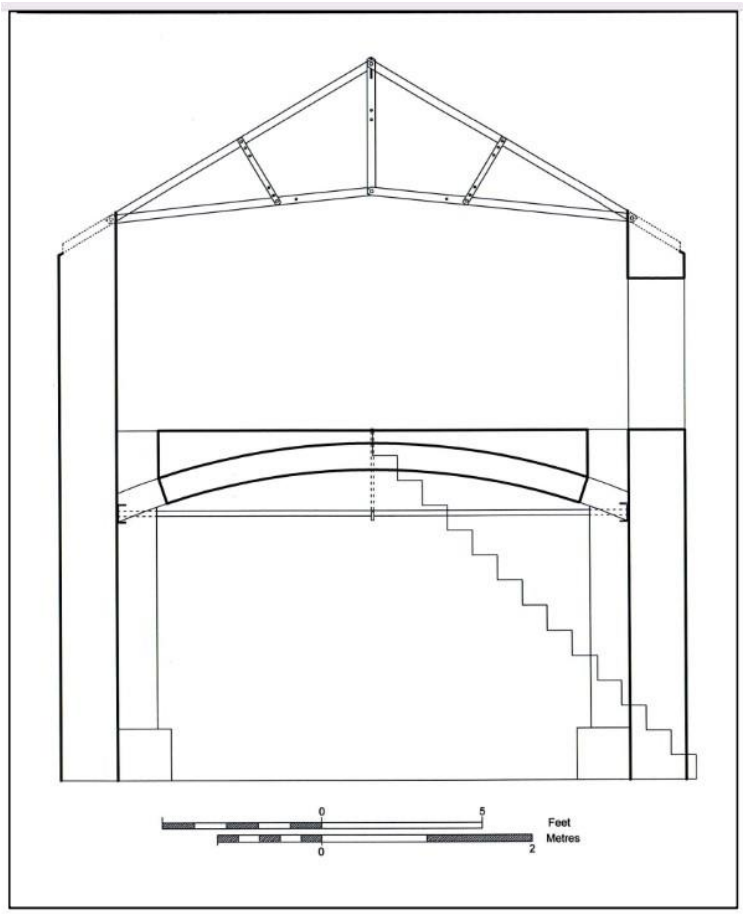
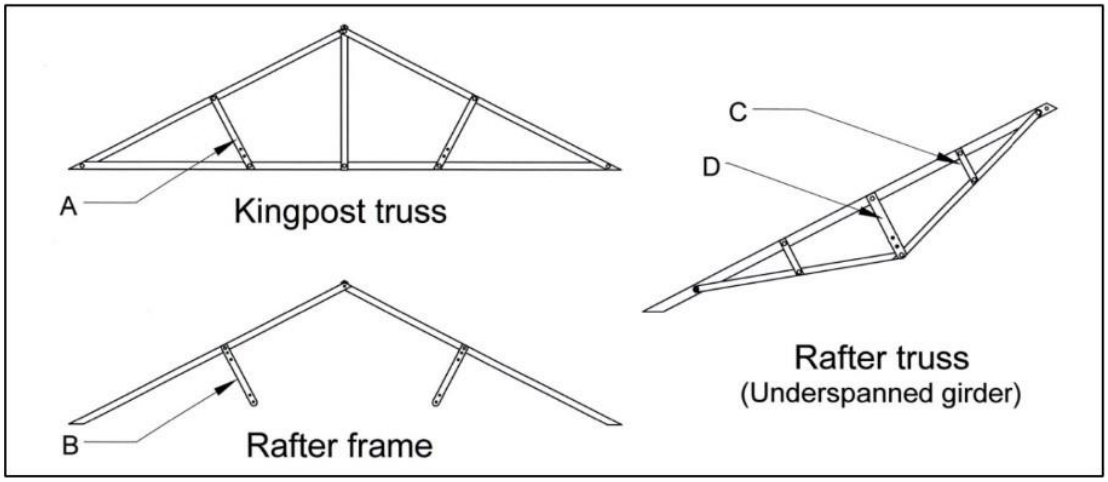
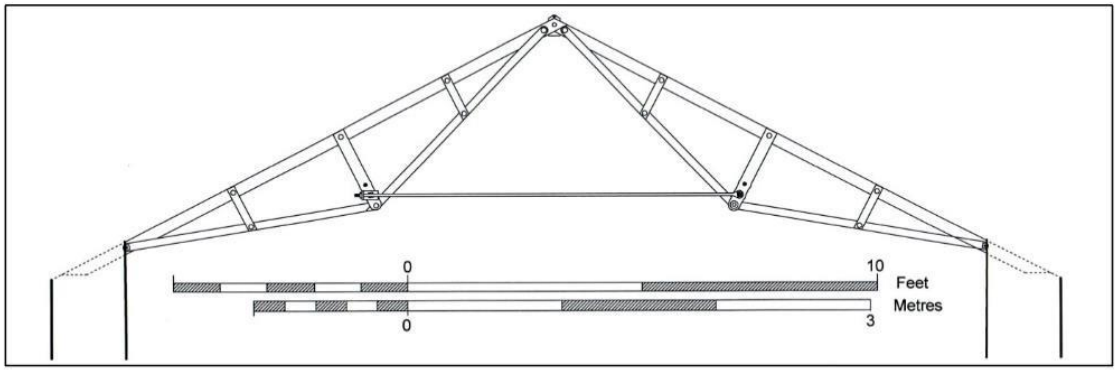


A section through the vault of the granary and stable, showing the outline of the stair for its relationship. The vault supports a first floor made of compressed pebble in a lime mortar matrix. *Drawing: P. Clark*



The three principal frame types used on the buildings. *Drawing: P. Clark*



The trusses used in the threshing barn are similar in profile to the Polonceau-style trusses as patented in 1837, the principal difference being these do not use cast-iron members designed to withstand compression loads. *Drawing: P. Clark.*

Rafter frame with rafter post attached to adjacent trusses by connecting rods. *Building B. Photo D Hill*

Batten cleats. Illustrated inverted – legs face down in operation. LEFT: small style with broken leg, RIGHT: large style unbroken, LOWER: wedge used to secure cleat to rafter.

AN UNUSUAL FIND WITHIN A MEDIEVAL WALL

Bill Wyeth william.wyeth@english-heritage.org.uk

I hope BAG members will be willing to share their thoughts regarding an object with a curious context. Members familiar with strictly medieval comparable cases, as well as feedback on the ideas proposed here, are warmly invited to get in touch via the contact information below.

In autumn of 1936 while raking out the pointing mortar of a ruined building at Richmond Castle, North Yorkshire (England) a mason named Wilson found an object. That object is a small bone pin lodged within the mortar. It is tiny: 31mm long and 7mm wide at its broadest and narrower in the shaft and hipped, tapered point. The craftwork is of a very high standard. The decoration of the head comprises overlapping bands of interlace design with lightly scored linear decoration, the whole being perforated 13 times.

Figure 1. The pin from Richmond Castle. © Historic England Archive

Pins of this kind are rare in general, but relatively common in towns and castles from 11th-12th-century contexts. They are considered sartorial accessories being used to pin back clothing or hair. The presence of hollows in the pin head through which thread or wire may be threaded is like other pins of this type, though examples without such threading holes (if that is what they are) also exist.

The wall from which the pin was recovered is the east wall of the great hall at the castle named Scolland's Hall. A recent analysis of Scolland's Hall places its construction in the 1070s-80s, making it not only an early example of a building of this type but also potentially coeval with the dating of the pin. It is by no means certain that the mortar of the wall in which the pin was lodged was also late 11th-century in date, but it is a feasible working assumption given that the wall has always been internal and the hall and adjacent chamber have not been significantly remodelled around this segment.

Figure 2. Scolland's Hall, looking east. The put-log holes on the left wall mark the level of the first floor, the photograph being taken in what was, in the late 11th century, a ground-floor undercroft. © Historic England Archive

These points raise several questions, the foremost of which is 'how did the pin make its way into the mortar?' The possible scenarios are numerous. For example the pin may have fallen off an item of clothing when the castle was under construction in its primary phase (or indeed a secondary phase) then might have been brushed or swept into a mortar mixing pit and made its way onto a mortar board. Or perhaps more straightforwardly – and the scenario with a small number of analogies – the pin was found somewhere in the castle at the time Scolland's Hall was being finished in the 1080s, and a playful stonemason pressed it into fresh pointing mortar, perhaps plugging the pin into is mortar tomb to conceal the evidence of their act. Variations upon these and others are eminently feasible.
Two points are fairly certain. Firstly, the wall (excluding here its mortar) is in origin a late 11th-century construction. Secondly, the pin is understood through analogies from elsewhere to date to between the 11th-12th centuries. It is a small leap, but one beyond the evidence to state without ambiguity that the pin is a primary deposit, but it is the simplest explanation.

The number of publications which deal with the pin and its context are small. These have tended towards the view that the pin in the wall represents evidence of an act of subversive intervention whose physical presence in the wall can be paired with a metaphysical significance which is lost. Foundation deposits are quite well-known from prehistoric and Roman buildings, while hidden shoes and shoe-soles, witches' bottles and dead cats are familiar to early modern standing buildings. Less well-attested in Britain but perhaps drawing on similar themes are the deposits of coins recorded in medieval Italian foundation ceremonies of civic monuments and churches; a further reference to a statue for deposit in foundations from the 15th-century Low Countries suggests a wider, undocumented tradition. Records of the boom in Victorian civic buildings similarly make references to foundation stones and stone vases filled with coins, medals and copies of the day's newspapers, among others. The evidence from medieval Britain is more limited. Certainly, there are parallels in the physical evidence, but it may not necessarily be deduced that the metaphysical significance was similar.

Two challenges present themselves in the context of the Richmond pin. Firstly, it's necessary to reconcile these examples, to historicise vastly different traditions, cultural contexts and subtly distinguished varieties of practice. Secondly, it's important to recognise the unusual context of the Richmond pin. Probably by the very nature of the

evidence very few comparable examples of deliberate deposits within either the pointing mortar or wall matrix of medieval buildings are recognised. I have located nine further examples with differing degrees of confidence, strength of record and similarity to the Richmond evidence.

I would be interested to hear the thoughts of readers. Please email me at william.wyeth@english-heritage.org.uk.

Updates - Built heritage in the news

Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework

As we all know the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) arrived to much delight in December 2024, including lots of change, and none specifically for heritage, or at least not directly. The devil is, however, in the detail.

The revisions include for the adoption of 'Grey Belt' land, or: *land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.*

Footnote 7 of the NPPF explicitly includes designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest which are of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments). So, where harm to a designated heritage is identified, which would require great weight or special regard, this *could* be interpreted as precluding the identification of grey belt land (as could any finding of archaeological remains of national importance which might create a strong presumption in favour of refusal). The great weight that would need to be afforded to that harm may present a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

Thus, we find the definition of grey belt land riding, in certain circumstances, on an understanding of the extent of the setting of designated heritage assets and the extent to which that setting contributes to significance.

It is particularly important to note that the grey belt exclusion relating to Footnote 7 is based solely **on the nature of a scheme's impact**. It is not based on the nature of a site itself and is not related to whether or not a site contributes to the significance of a heritage asset or indeed *is* designated in its own right.

Other changes may materially affect our workload (such as the continued focus on brownfield land – industrial archaeology anyone?). In addition, the provision for significant weight to be afforded to certain types of development (brownfield, energy etc) may be material to how we advise clients or colleagues going forward, noting that 'significant' and 'great' weight should be treated synonymously.

Seth Price, MCIfA AssocIHBC, BAG Committee

OUR MEETINGS

We have had three well-attended lunch break sessions on 25 November 2024 (on Non-designated heritage) on 11 February 2025 (on Historic Interest) and on 8 April 2025 (on Archaeological Interest). Two are now available on You Tube for members to access:

- BAG tea break talk recording - 8 April 2025
- BAG tea break talk recording - 11 February 2025

We shall notify members of future sessions. There is strong demand for these talks so we are proposing to also have evening specialist lectures that can focus on specific topics and themes.

- Topics such as farmsteads, non-conformist chapels, pubs, military sites, 20th century domestic and nondomestic architecture

- Issues such as assessing significance, recording methods, dendrochronology, new perspectives, climate change adaptation and moving beyond minimum intervention
- Practice elsewhere: Italy, other parts of Europe and other parts of the world: how values are perceived and how this translates into action

Let us know if you wish to contribute to these and if you have any specific topics or themes that you would like to see in our programme.

LINKS TO RELEVANT GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

The **Heritage Alliance** - https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk - is England's largest coalition of independent heritage interests, bringing together over 200 organisations, which contain over 7 million members, volunteers, trustees, and staff. The *Heritage Manifesto 2024*, calls on all political parties to respond to five key policy priorities for supporting the UK heritage sector and maximising its benefits for communities and the environment.

Historic England has a series of upcoming webinars, including case studies of historic buildings listed under its Technical Tuesdays web page.

Historic England has also just put out a Call for Proposals for Supporting the delivery of Heritage Carbon Literacy Training to the sector.

Historic England Advice Note (HEAN) on *Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptation* has now been published.

Historic Buildings & Places – the former Ancient Monuments Society continues to provide an invaluable round up of current casework. Some are online but if you are a member its triannual *Heritage Now* provides a full list of current cases and issues.

The **Vernacular Architecture Group** Amongst its excellent range of online databases and other resources is a new Vernacular Building Glossary which identifies terms used for vernacular buildings, in particular the components of timber-framed structures. They can be identified by name or from drawings. It is based on the Practical Handbook *Recording Timber-Framed Buildings: an Illustrated Glossary* by Nat Alcock, Maurice Barley, Philip Dixon and Bob Meeson, published by the Council for British Archaeology.

The Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain is running some excellent online talks. For details follow the *What's On* link on their website**.**

The Victorian Society and **The Georgian Group** continues with their exciting programme of regional events and online talks. Both have links to useful bibliographies and resources.

The Twentieth Century Society has a similarly exciting programme with links to some excellent YouTube lectures.

The Association for Industrial Archaeology has published lectures on its YouTube channel and has a variety of online resources.

The Construction History Society (CHS) has published two editions of its peer reviewed journal *Construction History* and one of its intermittent popular magazines *The Construction Historian.* As the CHS is an international learned society with nearly half its members resident outside the UK, the content of both is wide-ranging, geographically and topically. The Construction Historian magazine seeks short, popular, illustrated articles about Buildings Archaeology projects, specifically those that pose more questions than answers. If you've found something you can't identify or understand, send it in and we will circulate your enquiry to an international membership of c. 400 construction professionals, academics and curators. Our remit is broad, encompassing everything to do with buildings and construction from drains to roof coverings, superstructures to decorative fabric, lives of individual builders and company histories, materials and contract practices. Send your thoughts, in the first instance, to Mike Heaton - *membership@constructionhistory.co.uk*

The CHS has also launched the **On-Line Construction History Bibliography**. This is a searchable 'wiki' source that is being compiled by CHS members. Anyone can search the database but only members of the CHS and affiliated

organisations can add or edit entries. It therefore reflects the interests of active members so in addition to the contents of the CHS journal since 1984 (almost complete) it contains references to a lot of material by European academics and engineers. Amongst that you will find much about, for instance, how Gothic cathedrals were built (not just what they look like) or the economics of the 17th century brick industry. Eventually it will hold references to several thousand books and articles about construction history, a subject that includes Buildings Archaeology.

The Lime Finishes Group headed by Dr Timothy Meek runs monthly online zoom discussions looking specifically at lime finishes and understanding their significance as part of the historic development of a building - an area often misunderstood or overlooked. Talks are varied and include outlooks from all areas of the buildings sector. Anyone is welcome to drop in. For more information on how to get involved please find Dr Timothy Meek on LinkedIn or email tim_meek@icloud.com

OUR COMMITTEE

Acting Chair
Jeremy Lake

Secretary
John Mabbitt

Treasurer
Patrizia Pierazzo

Committee Members
Amelia Allen
Amir Bassir
Cathy Coutts
Alison Dickens
Lorna Goring
Seth Price
Franki Webb

Advisors
Catherine Bell, CBA

Jeremy Lake – after a long and varied career with English Heritage and Historic England - is a historic buildings and landscapes consultant, with a wide variety of projects including recent conservation plans for Jersey Heritage and for the island's Archaeological Research Framework, on Virginia Woolf's Sussex home and John Constable in Dedham Vale. He is a Visiting Professor with the Countryside and Community Research Institute at the University of Gloucestershire and amongst other voluntary roles serves on the National Trust's Historic Environment Group.

John Mabbitt's passion for historic buildings developed from his involvement with his father's woodcarving shop, working in the cathedrals and churches of East Anglia. He has a doctorate in historic archaeology from the University of Newcastle and has worked on a wide variety of historic buildings. He is now a historic environment consultant with Wood.

Patrizia Pierazzo studied medieval archaeology and historic building recording in Italy before coming to the UK to work as an Historic Buildings Archaeologist for Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA), with the Alan Baxter engineering consultancy and at the environmental consulting company WSP, working on a range of recording projects including management of HS2 Community Engagement projects. She returned to MOLA as a team leader and project manager in 2021 and is now Deputy Director at HMS Victory at The National Museum of the Royal Navy. As part of her

volunteering work, she trained volunteers in historic building recording for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and lectured on behalf of Venice in Peril (a charity supporting conservation projects in Venice) and is also an adviser to the San Cassiano Theatre project in Venice which is aiming to reconstruct the first public opera theatre in the world.

Amelia Allen is an early-career buildings archaeologist working with a small archaeological company operating in south-west England, undertaking consultancy work and historic building surveys. She is passionate about the sustainable reuse of older buildings and the application of traditional materials and methods. From this, she has a particular and growing interest for historic lime finishes and understanding historic methods for protecting masonry and surfaces across the country, understanding how finishes can be used as part of modern sustainable conservation works to buildings. Projects so far have given her some varied experiences, and she is particularly keen on understanding the smaller features which appear to provide insight into vernacular trends and patterns.

Amir Bassir is a Principal Historic Environment Consultant at The Environment Partnership Ltd, undertaking consultation and project management as well as providing built heritage advice and historic building surveys. He has worked on a wide range of historic buildings of different periods with particularly memorable examples including the Teesside Iron and Steelworks, Tredegar House, the Rugby Radio Station complex, Greyfriars Bus Station, and a survey of historic bridges throughout Northamptonshire – an all-time favourite being a highly-detailed assessment of Canons Ashby House.

Cathy Coutts started in archaeology by volunteering on excavations on Hadrian's Wall in the 1970s, and after studying Prehistory and Archaeology at Sheffield University completed a PhD on Middle Saxon imported pottery completed while working as the Archaeology team Field Officer at The British School at Rome for five years, roaming around various parts of Italy running archaeological projects. Cathy has since had a varied career based in Warwickshire, working initially with churches, but increasingly with historic farm buildings, timber-framed buildings and cob buildings. More unusual buildings recorded have included the former Warwick gasworks, a secret nuclear weapons bunker (subsequently used for storage of film by the British Film Institute) and Stanton Ironworks. Her job title has recently changed to Principal Historic Buildings Officer.

Alison Dickens is Director of Granta Heritage, a small independent company specialising in buildings, churches and research. Until mid 2019 Alison was a senior Project Manager at CAU (University of Cambridge) where she ran very large projects from urban redevelopment to a 10,000-house new town. Alison is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCIfA) and an Affiliate of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

Lorna Goring started her career in the Development Management Team at Wrexham Council, moving into the role of Conservation Officer from 2010 to 2018 before moving to Wardell Armstrong to work as a heritage consultant within their heritage and archaeology team. She now works as a heritage consultant with Walsingham Planning.

Seth Price has worked in commercial heritage and archaeology since 2012, with experience across the UK. He advises clients with regards to the significance of the historic built environment, including assessments of setting, and the likely impact of proposed development to that significance. He specialises in assessing change to the historic environment, providing pragmatic and informed reports and advice to steer development and conserve significance. He works with a wide range of clients within the private and public sector, including acting as an expert witness for planning and listed building consent appeals. Seth is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCIfA) and an Associate of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (AssocIHBC), accredited in conservation practice that evaluates change in the built and historic environment.

Franki Webb is a Principal Historic Environment Consultant at The Environment Partnership, Franki has undertaken projects across a wide spectrum of heritage work, her main focus being on sustainable development and the effects of climate change on the historic environment. She works within all aspects of Historic Environment including built heritage and archaeology. She also has an avid interest in projects which focus on habitat creation and biodiversity. At

Lichfields, she established an archaeological service before leaving for TEP. During her time at Atkins, Franki worked on a number of flood defence schemes and natural habitat creation schemes with the Environment Agency. Prior to working in heritage, Franki was a journalist in Tokyo and then London. She also runs the online website https://archaeoblog.com

Catherine Bell is a caseworker for the Council for British Archaeology, assessing Listed Building Consent applications across England and Wales. She is passionate about the role of old buildings to a local sense of place and the importance of recognising their embodied carbon as part of sustainability in the built environment. She has a particular interest in the phased development of buildings and how the significance of listed and unlisted buildings can be celebrated and incorporated within adaptive reuse schemes with creativity and imagination.