

Editorial

The contributions to this edition of the *Journal* take us on both local and international journeys, each of which highlights the complexities and demands of conservation projects that are ever present, however exotic the location.

Jonathan Howard provides a highly enjoyable paper in which he describes Snowhill Manor in the Cotswolds and its eccentric owner Charles Paget Wade who, between 1919 and 1951, put together an eclectic collection of artefacts in a very specific arrangement. The house and its collection were handed over, as a complete unit, to the National Trust in 1951. The principal theme of the paper concerns the realities of managing an atypical historic building and its content, highlighting the Trust's initial struggle to preserve the 'spirit of the place' while at the same time making it commercially, physically and intellectually accessible to visitors.

The early use of concrete, and the inherent technical challenges that this material presents for conservation, is explored by Alan Wright and Peter Kendall in 'The Listening Mirrors'. The mirrors in question are large concave profiled concrete surfaces, designed between the World Wars to reflect sound waves and allow early warning of an aerial attack. The invention, not altogether successful, was soon superseded by radar. However, three of these huge, unusual objects remain in Greatstone, Kent and are listed as part of our cultural heritage. Wright and Kendall describe the intricate process of their structural stabilization and conservation, highlighting the advice of a master mason and concrete repair contractor for the repair of twentieth-century concrete, a material which is still a comparatively new addition to the buildings conservation portfolio.

British conservation architect Francis Maude recounts his involvement with the repair of the early twentieth-century Founder's building which forms part of the Queen's Royal College in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Maude's paper details the logistics of supervising a complex building conservation project, often from a distance of several thousand miles, whilst simultaneously dealing with unfamiliar local materials and standards of workmanship. The driving motivation behind the venture was the transferral of traditional building conservation skills to local tradesmen to

enable the repair of this and other historic buildings on the island. Fulfilling this ambition was not without its difficulties, although Maude cautiously concludes that the project has gone some way towards improving buildings conservation practice in the Caribbean.

Moving to the slightly less familiar region of Burana in Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia, to a structure built almost a thousand years ago and steeped in a remarkable history, Enrico Fodde describes the conservation of an eleventh-century fired brick mausoleum located on the northern part of the ancient Silk Road. He discusses the efforts of a team of conservation and archaeological professionals to preserve the structure of the mausoleum, in a project which included experimental laboratory analysis of both historic and repair materials. Conservation skills were again transferred to local workmen, and it is envisaged that the recommendations and practical methods adapted for the project will be utilized by conservators working in similar structures in the Middle East and Asia.

The papers in this issue of the *Journal* represent many very different aspects of building conservation and heritage care. These include the ethical complexities involved in the presentation of an eclectic collection of artefacts housed in a National Trust home in the UK, as well as the need to transfer conservation knowledge for the preservation of buildings in Kyrgyzstan and the Caribbean. Slowing down the effects of decay, together with the availability of funding, inevitably affects the levels of intervention. Each project presents its own unique problems and triumphs: solutions are sought and then progress; new levels of understanding can be reached that enable decisions to be made and appropriate conservation treatments to be undertaken.

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