Editorial

Journals such as this one can trace their roots back to the coming together of a small group of 'natural philosophers', including Christopher Wren and Robert Boyle, in 1660. Established as a '... Colledge for the Promoting of Physico-Mathematicall Experimentall Learning ...', the organization received the patronage of Charles II in the following year, and became known as the Royal Society. Among its leaders in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were (in addition to Wren and Boyle) Robert Hooke, Samuel Pepys, Isaac Newton and Hans Sloane.

These were the technology gurus of their day, and it is hardly an exaggeration to suggest that the Royal Society created the core principles of modern science, including careful and critical observation of phenomena, and a concern for the replicability of experiments. Most of all, the Society sponsored meetings at which its learned members could present the findings of their research, and discuss the merits of the broader ideas that grew from this multi-disciplinary research. In 1665, the first issue of *Philosophical Transactions* was published; today it is the world's oldest scientific journal in continuous publication. Widely read, even in its earlier years, the Society's journal established the concept of 'distance learning' long before electronic media gave us web-based seminars and video conferencing.

In this issue of our modest journal, we continue to offer both technical and theoretical studies that stir debate. Keith Garner, in the opening paper, documents the recent struggle to preserve the Battersea Power Station, focusing on its most iconic (and most problematic) features: the monumental chimneys. Built in several campaigns starting in 1929, the power station is among the most visible components of London's industrial heritage. When operations shut down 25 years ago, day-to-day maintenance ceased. As with many great cathedrals, Battersea's dilemma is a combination of the uncertainties of engineering studies with the more fundamental question of how future generations will be able to carry out periodic inspections and repairs on those four towering spires.

Elizabeth Hirst, Alison Aynesworth and Karen Morrissey present an amazing tale of the restoration of a mid-eighteenth-century chapel by James Paine at Cusworth Hall, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire. Like a

good mystery, this paper starts simply, with a programme of historic paint analysis. But archival research undertaken by the client soon directed the investigation toward the hunt for missing figural paintings, and the reconstruction of a complex decorative scheme that also included replication of a pigmented plaster floor, mechanical stabilization of the plaster ceiling, and the conservation of a gilded altar table.

Both Battersea and Cusworth are listed buildings. In their contribution, Gina Crevello and Paul Noyce discuss one aspect of the conservation of a Grade I listed building that isn't a building at all: it is the *Cutty Sark*, among the most famous historic ships in the world. Built in 1869, this remarkable clipper ship has been dry docked in Greenwich for more than half a century. These authors present the research and field testing of a technique to remove chlorides from the iron frame of the great ship. This is sophisticated work by a team of corrosion scientists, and in summarizing it these authors manage to teach us a little electrochemistry.

Chris Topp's article looks at ironwork from the opposite extreme, that is, from the viewpoint of the craftsman. He makes a very personal plea for the development of standards for the training of blacksmiths in traditional techniques. His goal is to incorporate these artisans into the larger framework of heritage conservation in the UK. Doing this successfully would simultaneously preserve craft skills that are quickly disappearing, and historic buildings that display ornamental ironwork of extraordinary beauty.

While Topp's paper emphasizes the talents of the individual, Dennis Rodwell considers the value of architecture on a grand scale, as he documents the ups and downs of the city of Liverpool. Once an economically powerful transatlantic port, the city began its decline in the 1970s, as more and more of its great buildings were mothballed or abandoned. But Rodwell's story has (as many of us know) a happy ending. Today's Liverpool, with over 2,500 listed buildings, boasts a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is Europe's Capital of Culture for 2008. Rodwell's paper provides us with all of the administrative and political details of this city's rough pathway to success.

Once again, our journal has shown its forte, in articulating just what architectural conservation is all about. It is the melding together of streams of knowledge, from management to building sciences to history and craftsmanship. We all learn much from our teachers and mentors, and from the mistakes that we have made as young practitioners, but those moments pass much too quickly. Journals, along with monographs and textbooks, are a way of preserving the expertise of our diverse disciplines. The five papers in this issue combine conservation theory with common sense, and esoteric technical knowledge with practical experience.

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