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C o n t e n t s

Editorial	5
<i>Peter Swallow</i>	
Conservation of Historical Observatories in the UK and Ireland	7
<i>Elliss Sharpe</i>	
The Monument to the Great Fire of London	27
An Investigation of the Verticality of the Monument and the Resecuring of the Flaming Orb	
<i>Judy Allen</i>	
Historic Fabric vs. Design Intent	41
Authenticity and Preservation of Modern Architecture at Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum	
<i>Angel Ayón</i>	
Diagnosing Defects in Lime-based Materials	59
<i>Jeremy Ingham</i>	
Bats and Historic Buildings	81
The Importance of Making Informed Decisions	
<i>Jonathan Howard</i>	
Book Reviews	101



Editorial

Astronomy impacts on our daily lives in ways that many of us fail to realize. To help the citizens of the world rediscover their place in the universe, the International Astronomical Union, together with UNESCO, designated 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy. A variety of events and initiatives have been held throughout the year to stimulate our sense of wonder and curiosity about the day- and night-time sky so it is apposite that this volume of the Journal should include two astronomy-related papers.

First, Elliss Sharpe provides a brief but fascinating introduction to the observatory as a building type in the British Isles by tracing its evolution from the seventeenth century. Case studies on a sample of observatories indicate that if these buildings have benign owners, or continuing amateur and educational interest, repair and conservation work is protecting their future. However, for the majority of observatories that are predominantly in private ownership, the picture is bleaker. Many have been demolished and those that remain face an uncertain future, chiefly because the passion for astronomy that brought about their creation is not shared by subsequent owners.

The subject of the second paper is the Monument, a curious structure which commemorates the 1666 Great Fire of London. The Monument was until recently attributed solely to Wren: however, it is almost certain that the design of the Monument owes more to Robert Hooke than Wren. Hooke was particularly interested in discovering evidence of the Earth's annual motion about the sun and hoped to use the Monument as an observatory. Alas, the Monument was insufficiently stable, and its role as an observatory was quickly abandoned. In her paper, Judy Allen describes the surveys to investigate the verticality of the structure and the remedial work carried out to stabilize the iron armature and masonry supporting the distinctive flaming orb which crowns the Monument. Following an 18-month programme of repairs, the Monument is once again accessible to the public who can see the fascinating interior and enjoy the splendid view of the City of London from this extraordinary building.

Our third paper deals with the conservation of Modern movement buildings. In contrast with many older historic buildings, conservators often have

the advantage of being able to inform their decision making by accessing substantial surviving archives. Such archival material may contain not only technical drawings and specifications relating to the building but also include correspondence, writings and other materials that make the architect's original design intentions quite explicit. This wealth of information may present the conservator with something of a dilemma. Should the original historic fabric be conserved as found, or should the opportunity be taken to restore the building to the design the architect originally intended? Angel Ayón explores this quandary by analysing the issues raised and the solutions reached at Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Over the years the Journal has published a number of papers on lime and its use in the construction and subsequent repair of historic buildings. In our fourth paper Jeremy Ingham takes stock of our current understanding of the defects and mechanisms of decay associated with this ubiquitous material, and gives guidance about the appropriate techniques to use when diagnosing problems in construction where this material has been used. It is hoped that this paper will provide a helpful introduction for readers less familiar with lime, and that it will also act as a stimulus to other readers to disseminate their practical experience and knowledge by submitting papers to the Journal.

As winter approaches in Britain the bat population is preparing for its annual hibernation and one hopes that all these amazing creatures will survive to delight us with their aerial acrobatics next year. Despite the pleasure that seeing bats in flight can give, and the fact that they have coexisted with people for centuries, for some they are still the subject of much superstition, myth and misunderstanding. In our final paper Jonathan Howard provides a useful summary of the legal protection enjoyed by bats together with advice about detecting their presence and how to proceed if they are found. While bat droppings and urine can cause problems to furnishings and fittings, in most cases satisfactory solutions can be found without having to relocate roosts or block any of their access route. In short, we should make decisions that could affect the well-being of bats with the same degree of rigour and sensitivity as we would for any other aspect of architectural conservation.

Professor Peter Swallow