

Editorial

This volume of the *Journal* contains a surprisingly diverse mix of topics which consider in turn the environmental upgrade of traditional construction, architectural salvage, surface treatments to Venetian palazzo, aeronautical engineering heritage and, finally, vernacular early settler buildings in Australia.

The climate change agenda is having an impact on all facets of contemporary life and those who own, or are responsible for the management of, older properties cannot expect to be exempt from making changes to improve the environmental performance of the buildings in their care. However, a stumbling block to making improvements is a general lack of reliable information relevant to older traditional or vernacular constructions. Roger Curtis's paper describes the research being undertaken by Historic Scotland to remedy this deficiency. It offers the prospect of reliable guidance that can deliver environmental improvements, and do so without compromising either the essential vapour dynamic associated with traditional construction or the historic character of a building.

The practice of incorporating architectural elements salvaged from earlier buildings into later buildings is not a new one, and by the first quarter of the nineteenth century specialist brokers had emerged to meet the growing demand for 'period rooms' for installation into buildings either under construction or being remodelled. In the twentieth century Randolph Hearst, the newspaper magnate and model for Orson Welles' 1941 *Citizen Kane*, took this predilection to startling new levels at Hearst Castle, a new mansion he commissioned at San Simeon, California, to house some of the architectural salvages he had accumulated. So vast was Hearst's appetite for architectural salvages that much of what he had amassed remained in warehouses awaiting suitable projects in which to install them. One of the items originally intended for San Simeon, but never installed there, is a sixteenth-century Moorish-influence painted and gilded wood ceiling that was donated to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Recent renovation work at the museum necessitated the dismantling of the ceiling, and in their paper, Batyah Shtrum and her co-authors share what was learned by

a multidisciplinary team that took the opportunity to thoroughly research and investigate the ceiling prior to its reinstatement.

The search for suitable surface treatments to consolidate friable masonry or improve the weathering capabilities of ancient stone has been a long and frequently unrewarding one. Nonetheless, the traces left behind by earlier treatments may be analysed to reveal not only evidence of previous decay but also aspects of the history of the building itself. Manuela Sgobbi and her co-authors describe in their paper the studies they have made on the stratigraphy of the surfaces of a number of Venetian palaces. Apart from their findings adding to our knowledge of the history of the buildings, their research compels us to consider how what has been found can inform decisions about what layers should be protected during conservation campaigns.

Many of the military aircraft that played important roles in the defence of Britain during World War II and the Cold War period that followed were developed using the wind tunnels located at the former Royal Aircraft Establishment factory at Farnborough. These structures, now redundant, are important not only as part of our defence heritage, but also as industrial, archaeological artefacts epitomizing the cutting-edge aeronautical engineering technology of their time. These valuable heritage assets were deservedly given listed building status to protect them. Judy Allen's paper explores the challenges and issues that surrounded the development and implementation of a suitable conservation strategy to safeguard these structures when they passed from Ministry of Defence stewardship into private ownership.

In Australia very little physical evidence of the vernacular buildings erected by the pioneering European farming families who settled on the continent in the nineteenth century survives, so what remains merits careful conservation. Chris How, Marie Jackson and Catherine Woolfitt describe how local volcanic tuff was used in Victoria as a building stone to construct cottages and supply architectural elements for other building types. The inherent qualities of the material are discussed and advice is offered on how the fragile physical legacy of these early settler buildings might be conserved.

Professor Peter Swallow