

CORNISH BUILDINGS GROUP



The main stairs once again to be seen in their former glory, as part of the extensive restoration of Beconnoc, which has been underway for many years. The work has been acknowledged by a Commendation in this year's Awards. See page 7

THE CHAIRMAN

In December 2012 Cornwall Council published its Historic Environment White Paper. The document is a mixed bag. Alongside gloomy reminders of austerity cuts, heritage at risk and the potential of losing traditional skills are more positive solutions of how Cornwall Council can form effective working partnerships in order to safeguard our built environment. Heritage led regeneration schemes part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Princes Regeneration Trust have proved fruitful over the past few years, as have Townscape Heritage Initiatives (THI) such as those at Camborne and St Austell. However, these

partnerships, along with the delivery of aims set out in the White Paper, will only materialise with the full support and co-operation of local authority specialists. It is beyond comprehension, therefore, that Cornwall Council is to cut-back even further on the provision of historic environment specialists. It is clear from our casework that Cornwall Council is already struggling to cope and that communication between departments is, at times, dysfunctional. We are incredibly concerned that this loss of expertise will compromise how our local authority can deliver their statutory conservation duty both in the short- and long-term. If austerity cuts restrict the ability of our local

authority to discharge their responsibilities then it is to groups like ours where that responsibility falls. We too have to consider partnerships in order to remain an effective heritage champion and a critical voice in planning. Over the winter months we have worked alongside Cornwall Council and other local amenity groups on a project looking specifically at buildings at risk. Funded in part by the Heritage Lottery Fund, this project has focused on the assessment of Grade 2 listed buildings in the eastern part of the county. Our members have played a key part in data gathering which, once analysed, will be used to make informed decisions on conservation and funding. I would like to thank all of our members who have volunteered their time to help with this important work.

Another partnership we have formed is with the Council for British Archaeology. By forging a closer connection with a statutory consultee our priorities regarding casework can be managed more effectively, particularly in areas where a listed building is due to be demolished either in its entirety or in part. With reductions in Cornwall Council services threatening the management of heritage assets our aspiration is to raise our voice and profile and have a more prominent say in the due legal process.

We work hard to make our voice heard - however, events do not always go our way. For example, our fight to save the Foster Complex near Bodmin, a complete hospital built in the Edwardian Baroque style, was a battle lost. Despite driving the debate to the House of Lords and getting prominent national and local media coverage, English Heritage and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport would not reassess listing the buildings nor would Cornwall Council consider extending the conservation area. Despite support from the Ancient Monuments Society and SAVE and extensive dialogue with the owners and other interested groups no options to reuse the extensive complex materialised and the buildings are now lost forever.

Perhaps, a more serious case of Cornwall Council's apathy to historic buildings relates to the Bishop's Palace, a Grade 2* listed rectory in the Gothic Revival style by the renowned architect William White. Despite constant pressure from ourselves and the Victorian Society, nothing has been done for some 4 years to stem the water penetration from a hole in the roof and remove

the extensive plant growth now endangering the roof structure itself. To be fair to Cornwall Council they did put a lock on the front door to secure the building, but that took over a year to achieve. Because we took the lead on the fight to save this historic asset I was invited to a meet Mr John Pollard, Leader of Cornwall Council, and Mr Chris Cooper-Young, Principal Development Officer (Enforcement), both of whom promised to push through enforced repairs on the buildings despite knowing that a budget to actually carry out the work may remain problematical. We still await positive progress. A similar situation remains in Penzance with a Listed Georgian house in Chapel Street, formerly the Ganges Restaurant.

Of course, these are only two cases that we have taken on in the past year and more can be found on our website <https://sites.google.com/site/cornishbuildingsgroup/>

The Awards scheme once again turned out some impressive entries, particularly in the refurbishment of historic buildings with Porthmear Studio in St Ives, Boconnoc and Duchy Palace, Lostwithiel, the Carpeners Workshop at Heartlands and Trevu Road development at Camborne taking awards. New buildings were not overlooked with two houses by Simon Conder Associates near Porthtowan, a new house in Fowey and Georgian style water pavilion at Kilmarth also receiving accolades. We were also pleased to be able to present our first ever personal achievement Special Commendation to Simon Thorpe, ex-Chairman of the Cornwall Buildings Preservation Trust. Over many years Simon has made an outstanding contribution to the welfare and protection of Cornwall's built environment. He has recently secured a new position as project manager at Lytham Hall in Lancashire, so we wish him every success in his new role. It is my aim to take this scheme forward and adapt it for modern times; thereby ensuring its position as Cornwall's premier architectural award scheme.

Your Council have been very active in supporting Peter Beacham with the forthcoming Pevsner guide of Cornwall. Since its first publication in 1950 this architectural guide has become an indispensable research tool that connects buildings with the architects, artisans and craftsmen who made them. We are hoping that in the future we can work with Peter Beacham to gather some support and sponsorship to organise a quality conference,

in part, to celebrate Pevsner but also to discuss the future of Cornish architecture. We offer Peter our warmest congratulations on such a magnificent achievement in the long overdue revision of the county guide and also thank him for his praise of our Awards scheme in the introduction to his book, when he writes 'The Cornish Buildings Group has a proud record of encouraging good design as well as opposing the destruction of the historic environment, no easy task in a county that was slow to appreciate its architectural and buildings heritage'.

Peter's complementary words recognise our work as champions of good design in the county. In my role as Chairman I recently formed part of a panel discussion focussing on various perceptions of good architecture in areas of outstanding natural beauty. Organised by the Friends of Pendower, the debate focussed directly on the Roseland Peninsula but, in actuality, could have applied to any part of Cornwall. To prepare I read several design guides published for specific AONBs in other counties. What I found was advice that was on the whole very prescriptive - yes, buildings should be sensitive, built of local materials, perhaps reflect the local vernacular and be part of a consultative process - however, when it came to the physicality of design the same phrases were constantly repeated, 'low profile', 'tucked into corners of landscape' and 'not visible'.

My argument questioned whether architecture should be invisible? It seems curious that some of Cornwall's most recognisable buildings (albeit on a grand scale) are in AONB and have become iconic because they are explicit in the landscape. Examples may include St Michael's Mount at Marazion and Headland Hotel in Newquay both of which are far from 'low profile'; Caerhays castle near Gorran Haven and Chapel Point overlooking Mevagissey Bay are not 'tucked into corners' while Porth-an-Als at Prussia Cove and Bar Lodge on the Penrose estate near Porthleven are anything but invisible. Perhaps the one thing they all have had in common is that none would have got planning permission if it was needed at the time! With that in mind we should consider ourselves very lucky that radical contemporary buildings, such as Creek Vean in Feock (Team 4 architects), Pillwood (John Miller of Colquhoun & Miller) and Barley Splatt on Bodmin Moor (Martin Johnson and Graham Ovenden), passed the planners. My conclusions

were first, the notion that buildings complement landscape, not compromise its beauty. How many I wonder have stood at the top of the tower at the National Maritime Museum and looked through the telescopes? I'll wager most are looking at the houses on the riverbank opposite rather than the surrounding landscape. And second, if architecture and landscape are integral then it goes without saying that an AONB becomes more iconic with well-designed buildings. Architecture, therefore, should respond to location not surrender to it.

A similar theme followed in a more high profile event, The Heritage Centenary Debate, which was streamed across the internet. Amongst the panel comprising of, amongst others, the National Trust, English Heritage and Central Government, was the design historian Stephen Bayley who raised the very pertinent question of what will constitute our future heritage. This really made me think about the legalities of our built environment and how effective our planning system is at crushing good, perhaps even radical, design. A final thought is that architects and planners should embrace good design not yield to the negativity of the few in opposition. Our Awards scheme recognises the brave, the daring and the bold - Malinidi and Providence (2012; Simon Conder), Sea Road, Carlyon Bay (2011; Alan Leather Associates), Roundwood at Kea (2010; Kerrison Stock Ltd) and Salthouse, Carbis Bay (2009; Lilly Lewarne Practice) are all examples of where domestic architecture and location work together.

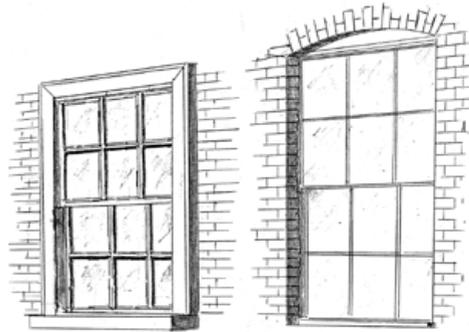
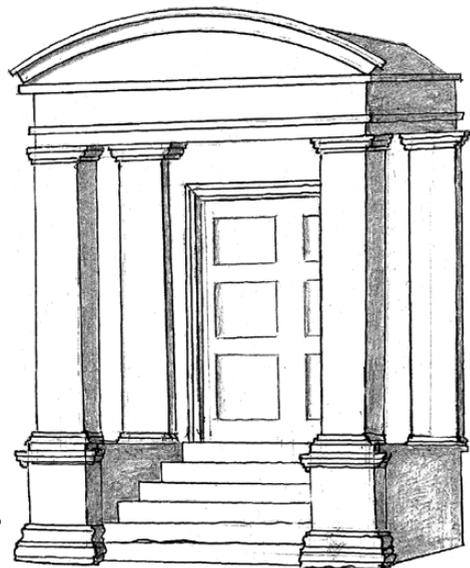
The philosopher and critic Alain de Botton wrote '...a good building can change your life (and a bad one ruin it)'. Architecture is subjective and personal, when it is done well it is art, when it is done bad it can blight the landscape. We can all think of examples in both camps but, just as an example, consider Lostwithiel and the fine restoration works carried out at the Duchy Palace, the old farm buildings at Restormel Manor and Brunel Quays - all listed buildings. The work at Perran Foundry near Truro also fits into this category and hopefully so will, the currently derelict, Loggan's Mill. As for the future it is vital that new design philosophies and practices are embraced and championed, if not I fear that the next revision of Pevsner, some 50 years on, will be very

THE BLACK ACTS

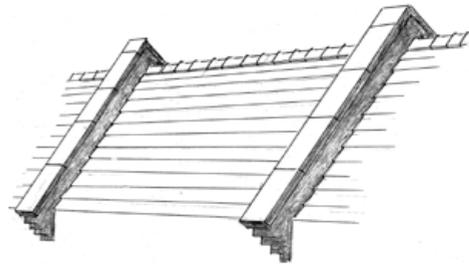
Those of us who are bedevilled by the torrent of building regulations that seem to flow inexorably from government departments with seemingly little better to do, may take comfort that this is no new phenomenon.

The first recorded example of building regulation dates back to 1189, when Henry Fitz-Alwyn, first Lord Mayor of London, ordained certain rules regarding the thickness of party walls and width to which jettied upper floors were allowed to project into the street. These and many of the regulations which followed were aimed at preventing the spread of fire in built up areas. At that time it was virtually impossible to enforce these acts, builders apparently paying little attention to the rules.

It was not until 1605, when James I decreed that all new houses within the City of London should be built of stone or brick, that the appearance of the townscape began to change. However, by September 1666, the vast majority of London buildings were still timber frame with thatched roofs. The Great Fire of that year destroyed over 13,000 houses, making it imperative to rebuild much of London in a less combustible form. To this end the 1667 Act was passed - the first comprehensive act to be rigorously enforced. These followed the acts of 1707, 1708 and 1709,



(known collectively as the 'black acts'), all designed to further reduce the danger of fire spreading to adjacent buildings. The last of these acts was instrumental in radically changing the look of all new buildings. Before 1709, elaborate timber door cases, often miracles of the carpenter's art,



projected well forward of the façade, similarly, the sash window cases were built flush with the outside walls, and overhanging eaves were the accepted style. Henceforth no timber was allowed within four inches of the façade. Elaborate projecting doors disappeared, sash windows retreated back by the depth of a brick, and roofs became hidden behind brick or stone parapets. The 1709 Act is the best guide to dating a house built either side of that date.

Governments have always delighted in enacting building legislation, and doubtless always will.

HUGO WHITE

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

The Membership Secretary would like to remind our members that for several years, the subscription has been just £10 single and £12 for a couple. A very few members are still paying various (lower) subscriptions . . .

It would also be useful if we could be kept up to date should you move house, or change your email address!

SECRETARY'S REPORT 2013

Our 2013 AGM was held at the far east of the county, at Poundstock where a large party gathered to enjoy lunch in the recently restored Grade 1 listed Gildhouse. The building had received a commendation (2010) from our group followed by a Europa Nostra Grand Prix award (2012) presented in Lisbon. I hope everyone who attended agreed that the wonderful setting, the impressive roof structure and splendid royal arms added some gravitas to the event. It was fascinating to hear all about the project from Sandy and Tim Dingle, who had been much involved, and who showed us around the Gildhouse and Church in the afternoon.

Our former Chairman, Peter Michell, kindly arranged our May visit to a place most of us had never seen before as it is completely hidden from the road – the vast Penlee Quarry. We were given a very informative talk by Professor Geoffrey Walton, Director of the Company, which included details of plans for a possible marina development. We ended the day at St Hilary Church, famous for its unique array of paintings created by artists of the Newlyn school. Following a talk in the church by Dr Joanna Mattingly and others, tea was enjoyed in the recently converted Old School Heritage Centre.

On a beautiful, albeit chilly, evening in July our Chairman gave us a tour of the exterior of Lanhydrock House which helped enormously with understanding the building and its development over some 600 years.

It was a good summer and another glorious day in early September found a party of CBG members on the Lizard visiting CBG Award winner (2011) Kestle Barton. The architect Alison Bunning, gave us a very interesting tour of the ancient farmstead and explained how the barns were converted into an art gallery and holiday lets. Many of us were able to enjoy picnics in the sun in the wonderful gardens. In the afternoon the architect Matt Robinson showed us around Roskruge Barton, an enchanting 15th-century Grade 2 listed farmhouse where we had the joy of seeing work in progress on the restoration of barns to remain as barns! Before departing Matt showed us drawings and told us about possible plans for 'Dor Kemmy'n' an interfaith Centre for Cornwall.

A few weeks later a party of 40 members were welcomed at Perran Foundry, near Truro, making amends for the visit which was previously cancelled. Much has been achieved and the development is easy on the eye although many of us were rather puzzled by the interior planning.

As we started the year in the east of the region, we thought it a good idea to finish in the far west! On an October morning in a thick fog we headed for Pendeen Manor. When the mist lifted we could see the sea, the lighthouse and, more importantly, the intriguing 15th-century granite farm – birth place of Dr William Borlase. The buildings were also used during the filming of the TV series 'Poldark'. Terry and Janet Davey welcomed an alarmingly large group – as did Canon Alan Rowell at Pendeen Vicarage, where many of us enjoyed picnic lunches and tours of his Vicarage. The church was built in 1851 entirely with local stone and labour at a cost of £2,000. It has the same proportions as the Early English Cathedral/Abbey of Iona and is surrounded by a high castellated granite wall and entrance gate. We have concluded that distance does not seem to deter the keen CBG member – our first and last outings being particularly well attended. We are extremely grateful to all our hosts for being so generous and welcoming and hope they all enjoyed the days as much as we did. We also appreciate your support in attending these visits. We always welcome feedback on the visits or suggestions for future visits.

Our Annual Party was held at the Pandora Inn, beautifully restored after a serious fire, by CBG members John Milan and Steve Bellman.

Again, thanks for everyone's support.

JENNY GASON



Pendeen Manor - between rain that wet October morning!

BUILDINGS AT RISK

'GROUND BREAKING COUNCIL PROJECT TO SURVEY 500 LISTED BUILDINGS IN NORTH AND SOUTH EAST CORNWALL IS AWARDED A HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND GRANT'

05 November 2013

A ground breaking project which will see Cornwall Council working with local groups and volunteers to survey the condition of 500 Grade II Listed buildings in north and south east Cornwall has been awarded a grant of £18,600 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The Cornwall Listed Buildings at Risk project is being led by the Council's Historic Environment Service who planned to train 25+ volunteers from existing groups and societies to carry out the survey. In fact it proved so popular that XX have been working on the project.

As well as the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, five local societies – the Cornish Buildings Group, Cornwall Archaeological Society, Cornwall Buildings Preservation Trust, Cornwall Heritage Trust and Caradon Archaeology – are making financial contributions and / or directly supporting the project.

The survey, begun in October, is on schedule for completion at the end of March 2014.

The main aims of the project include building on the wealth of public interest and support for Cornwall's heritage; giving volunteers new practical skills, and enabling volunteers, building owners and the public to learn more about the quality and diversity of historic buildings and the risks that some of them face; and raising the profile of several voluntary groups. It will also create a legacy of greater volunteer engagement in managing Cornwall's heritage, and increase the capacity of groups to do more surveys.

"There are more than 12,820 Listed Buildings in Cornwall" said Nick Cahill, Cornwall Council's Historic Environment Information and Policy Team Leader. "These include milestones and bridges, churches and funerary monuments, industrial structures, domestic houses and commercial premises. Over 11,874 of these are Grade II Listed structures which have never had their condition monitored".

6 The project will be focusing on north and south east Cornwall as there has been significantly less investment in heritage projects and regeneration

in this area than in other parts of Cornwall. The 500 buildings are sited across a variety of locations, including one principal town and a number of smaller towns and settlements.

"Following the completion of the survey we will be able to identify possible solutions to those at risk and measure the resources needed to address this."

Welcoming the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund Edwina Hannaford, the Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Heritage and Planning, said "This is very good news for Cornwall. We are rightly very proud of our culture and heritage and this project will enable us to carry out a detailed assessment of the condition of some of our most historic buildings. This information can then be used to promote heritage led regeneration projects.

"As well as helping to raise awareness of the diversity and quality of these historic buildings, and the potential threats facing some of them, the project will encourage local groups and volunteers to work together to increase their skills and help protect our heritage for the future."

Commenting on the importance of the award, Nerys Watts, Heritage Lottery Fund's Head of South West said "Cornwall's rich and varied built heritage is a key part of the character and beauty of the county. By engaging local people in surveying and learning about some of the most threatened structures, this fascinating project will ensure that they continue to be cared for and valued into the future".

2013 AWARD DISPLAY

The 2013 Awards Display is being arranged as usual, to travel around the County, spending one month in each of 11 different County Libraries.

Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances these venues have yet to be finalised and we apologise for any inconvenience.

THE AWARDS EXHIBITION DATES AND VENUES WILL BE GIVEN ON

<http://sites.google.com/site/cornishbuildingsgroup/>
PLEASE CHECK DATES WITH THE LIBRARIES BEFORE MAKING A LONG JOURNEY, IN CASE YOU ARE GOING NEAR THE CHANGE OVER DATE

ANNUAL AWARDS SCHEME 2013

2013 AWARDS

AWARD 'Malindi' and 'Providence', Porthtowan.	<i>Simon Conder Associates, Architects</i>
AWARD Porthmeor Fishermen's Cellars and Studios, St Ives.	<i>Long and Kentish, Architects</i>
COMMENDATION Boconnoc, nr Lostwithiel.	<i>Stephen Tyrrell, designer and historical advisor</i>
COMMENDATION Carpenter's Workshop, Heartlands, Pool.	<i>Stride Treglown, Architects</i>
COMMENDATION Duchy Palace, Lostwithiel.	<i>Princes Regeneration Trust / C B P Trust</i>
COMMENDATION Water Pavilion, Kilmarth, near Par.	<i>Craig Hamilton, Architect</i>
COMMENDATION 23 St Fimbarrus Road, Fowey.	<i>Alan Leather Associates, Architects</i>
COMMENDATION Trevu Road development, Camborne.	<i>Lilly Lewarne Practice, Architects</i>

Our annual awards programme is one of the highlights of our year as it gives us the opportunity to celebrate the outstanding achievements of architects, craftspeople, designers and patrons. Our awards regularly attract over 40 entries, all of which are carefully considered in order to establish a short list of between 8 and 10 projects.

The judging panel, made up of architecture and heritage professionals, historians and enthusiasts, visit each project and allocate awards accordingly. Over the years, entries have ranged from cob-built bus shelters and skilled craftsmanship projects to restorations of Grade I listed buildings and exciting new housing estates.

CBG Chairman, Paul Holden, firmly believes that the award scheme '... recognises and rewards excellence in architectural design and conservation/restoration practice. We carefully take into account the appropriateness of design in rela-

tion to setting, the environmental impact of the building and its suitability of purpose. Our award scheme has long been a barometer for standards in Cornwall with many of our winners going on to win RIBA, and other national award schemes'

JOINT AWARD WINNER

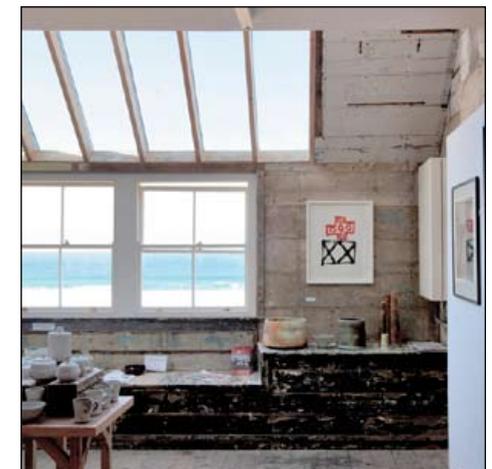
Malindi & Providence, Porthtowan.

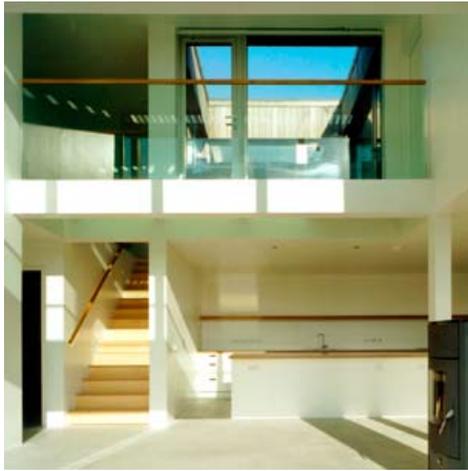
SIMON CONDER ASSOCIATES

Notwithstanding their dramatic views across Porthtowan beach these two new contemporary structures are both inventive in design, sensitive to the locality and environmentally sustainable. Designed by an internationally acclaimed architectural practice the buildings deploy external hardwood cladding which has been left unfinished to weather to a silvery grey and extensive glazing along the south elevations which benefits passive solar gain.

Borlase Smart Room, previously Studio 10 used by the St. Ives School of Painting, now for public uses such as seminars, lectures and exhibition.

© Graham Gaunt Photowork





PORTHTOWAN HOUSES: Looking to the Garages and entrances leading to the upper floor of the two-storey houses. Looking from the living area, stairs down from the entrance floor and the courtyard lighting the centre of the deep plan house. From the upper floor looking down into the living area, Porthtowan valley below.

JOINT AWARD WINNER

Porthmeor Studios and fish cellars, St Ives.

LONG AND KENTISH ARCHITECTS

This project proved to be both an exercise in forensic investigation and a finely crafted approach to restoration. Blending in subtly with the old, yet using intelligent and sensitive new design, there can never be any doubt that this is a modern, contemporary, entirely appropriate restoration that reflects the tradition and innovation that is the soul of this historic building.

COMMENDATIONS

Boconnoc, nr Lostwithiel.

STEPHEN TYRRELL, DESIGNER & HISTORICAL ADVISOR

8 By the 1970s this Grade 2* listed house was in such a perilous condition that it was relegated to one of the foremost heritage at risk properties in

the country. Renovation has taken 15 years and has included re-roofing, major structural repairs, replacement of huge floor timbers, repairs to fine plasterwork and a complete re-servicing. The consequence is that the house has been re-established as the centre of one of the most important historic estates in Cornwall. Consequently, Boconnoc has justly been recognised by two other awards schemes, the Historic Houses Association/ Sotheby's Restoration Award 2012 and the Georgian Group Architectural Awards.

Carpenter's Workshop, Heartlands, Pool.

STRIDE TREGLOWN, ARCHITECTS

Part of a 35 million pound project, the Old Carpenter's workshop at Robinson's Shaft, part of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, has been sensitively and imaginatively restored. By cladding the outside



PORTHMEOR STUDIO above: Porthmeor Beach elevation after refurbishment. right: New Reception Studio for public uses, previously Studio 12 and corridor below: New Roy Ray Studio, used by the St. Ives School of Painting

PORTHMEOR PHOTOS: © Graham Gaunt Photowork



of the building with fire retardant materials, the integrity of the exterior has been maintained, as has the interior with its beam ceiling, wooden walls, machinery in situ, and even a smell of sawdust.

Duchy Palace, Lostwithiel.

PRINCES REGENERATION TRUST AND CORNWALL BUILDINGS PRESERVATION TRUST

The Grade I listed Convocation Hall is regarded as the oldest non-ecclesiastical building in the county and, until recently, has appeared on the Buildings at Risk Register. This major repair and regeneration project has now been completed to an extremely high standard using traditional materials and craft skills. Surprisingly, for a building of this age, the aspiration is to achieve an energy efficient BREEAM 'Very Good Rating'. This impressive regeneration has a beneficial long term use thereby supporting the local community and its economy.

Kilmarth Water Pavilion, Fowey.

CRAIG HAMILTON ARCHITECTS

Over the past twenty years Kilmarth's chatelaine has established a beautiful formal garden set around a listed 18th-century house overlooking St Austell Bay. This two-storey water pavilion is beautifully crafted in slate stone with granite dressings below reclaimed Delabole scantle-slate which has been traditionally laid to diminishing courses on both the upper walls and on the ogival roof. Such a quality building ahead of an ornamental garden pond successfully creates a theatrical focal point to three gardens and is entirely in keeping with the spirit of Kilmarth.

Trevu Road development, Camborne.

LILLY LEWARNE PRACTICE

This work has enhanced and transformed the once thriving Holman's No. 3 Works industrial site and the former Trevail-designed Assembly Rooms, which had become sadly neglected in more recent 9



above: interior of the Carpenter's Workshop, adapted to modern standards as the café at Heartland's, and top, the exterior times. Key elements in this complex and complicated project were to encompass rebuilding, incorporate well designed new housing and use informed restoration techniques all underpinned by an innovative energy-saving historic building retrofitting and monitoring programme administered by the Camborne team.

23, St Fimbarrus Road, Fowey.

ALAN LEATHER ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS

This new build property has been extremely well thought through. Situated within a Victorian neighbourhood, an AONB and conservation area, this contemporary styled property (replacing a

below: a new modern house at Fowey, overlooking Polruan and the open sea; similarities with last year's winner at Carlyon Bay are clear, especially in the exterior view, on the right. For many decades such buildings were never allowed by our planners and councillors!



above: Main entrance to Boconnoc, a fine approach to the newly restored House

1960s house with no architectural merit) is an innovative and sensitive addition to the locality. The judges appreciated the striking verticality of the structure, its self-effacing articulation, the flat roof construction which remains sympathetic to its neighbours and the modest front elevation which is in no way detrimental to the streetscape.

SHORTLISTED ENTRY

Ebenezer Chapel, Marazion.

LAP ARCHITECTURE AND CONSERVATION

Successful chapel conversions are notoriously hard to achieve. Even harder when a chapel is divided into two two-storey houses and small rooms replace large open spaces. There is little sense of a chapel now, but Eco features like an air source heat pump and whole house ventilation for allergy control are to be commended.



above: the Duchy Palace at Loswithiel, exterior and right, below street level, the Undercroft - in appropriately simple finishes



right: the Water Pavilion at Kilmarth, provides a wide view of St Austell Bay; all the judges agreed on the superb standard of workmanship throughout, shown in the detail above.



right: The SE view from Camborne Cross, where 3-4 storey flats replace the nondescripted utility factory, built c1939, for the war

JEAN WINGFIELD (1920-2013)

As a founder member of the Cornish Buildings Group whilst Penhale was being completely renovated and restored, her love of interesting buildings was fostered. Well known to many

members, Jean hosted our Christmas parties and many Award Presentation evenings with aplomb, but she will want to be remembered not only as a keen gardener but as a prodigious reader with a fine intellect.

THE BIRDCAGE, PORT ISAAC

'For the little houses (the oldest are sixteenth-century), though so huddled together and so steeply hung onto cliffs, are like all fishermen's houses, wonderfully clean and polished'.

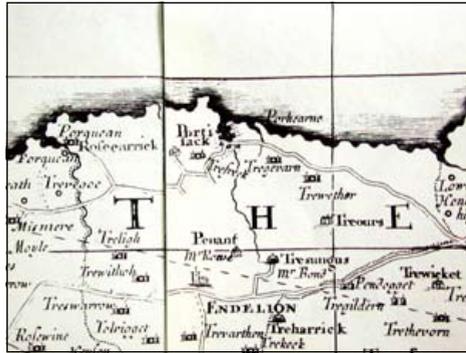
John Betjeman's fond memories of a 'clean and tidy' Port Isaac are instantly recognisable today yet, historically the village was once quite the contrary being considered by many as a dirty and dangerous place to be. First mentioned as small fishing village in 1338, John Leland confirmed its early sixteenth-century position as a 'pretty fisher village [with] a pier and some shelter for fisher boats'. John Norden, writing in 1584, remarked that Port Isaac had 'wonderfully increased in buildings' which was clearly to the disadvantage of 'the little cove and haven [of Port Gaverne]' that had 'all decayed since the growing up of Port Isaac'. Unlike its neighbour Port Isaac capitalised on the rapidly escalating pilchard processing industry, building fish cellars which along with a new inn concentrated homes and business around the harbour area known as the Platt. The 1699 Joel Gascoyne map of Cornwall (above) shows the main centres of habitation being around the Fore Street and Church Hill areas

As trade developed, so did the village. During the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries more inns were built, a chapel (1750) followed, then a market house on the Platt (c.1780), a school (1804), a Quaker meeting house (1806) and more substantial housing for well-to-do merchants. In the opinion of some contemporaries village expansion eventually facilitated its ruin. The village physician John Watts Trevan described Port Isaac in the 1830s as

... the most thickly inhabited place in this parish it contains about one hundred and forty dwelling houses inhabited mainly by seafaring people being as mean dirty and tumultuous place as can well be conceived ... the street narrow and filthy as almost to render them inhospitable in the time of wet weather.

Such were the conditions in Port Isaac when the property today known as the Birdcage was built.

12 Its builder was a local shoemaker Valentine Powell Richards (1819-1881). In the 1841 census he was



recorded as living with his mother Joan, sister Jane and two boarders – a tailor and seaman. In 1843 he married Rebecca, daughter of Captain John Tanner of the Port Isaac coastguard service. Born in Waterford, Ireland, Rebecca must have been quite a local curiosity as the census returns show few village residents being from outside Port Isaac let alone outside of the country. Whether Valentine had other business interests or whether he made his money solely through his trade as a cobbler we cannot be sure yet, soon after 1842, he built a new house on the partially developed Rose Hill area to the east of the village. Nestled within the small dangerous alleys (ideal for smugglers and robbers) known as 'drangs' the towering three-storyed, three roomed, property later known as the Birdcage was built using the traditional methods and materials as rubble slatestone, some timber framing, cob and slate hangings. Its height suggests that it was squeezed into a small area – perhaps a small garden plot of an existing house. As such the building can be seen from most places in the village. Perhaps, this worked to Valentine Richards advantage as being away from the main thoroughfares some visibility for his cobbler's workshop would have been beneficial. The 1851 census suggests that Valentine was living above his cobblers shop with his wife and two children, May and John.

By 1861 the cramped domestic space and the death of his first two children prompted a move to a house called Richards Cottage. Two more children are listed in the 1861 census; Clara aged 5 and the 2 month old Rebecca – both tragically died in infancy. In 1868 Valentine and his wife had moved again, this time into newly built cottage at the top of Fore Street on the very edge of the

village. Carrying an inscribed datestone 'V.P.R. 1868' on its south gable end Cliff Cottage (as it is now called) has equally spectacular views onto the harbour and out to sea. Its position and the progressive nature of its construction (picturesque Gothic) suggest that Valentine was quite a well-to-do person. This area of Fore Street was being developed despite the decline in the fortunes of the fishing industry – a Methodist Chapel was built in 1868; a lifeboat station soon followed in 1869 and new school (1877) designed by the renowned Cornish architect Silvanus Trevail. Rebecca died in 1876 while Valentine's death was recorded in Bodmin in 1881. The headstone at St Endellion church records a 4 month-old baby Charlie Richards (d. 1880) seemingly, Valentine

was all too briefly a father once more at the age of 61.

What happened to the Birdcage after Valentine's death remains unclear however, by 1910 the Burton family were the recorded owners. Soon after it regained its position as the village cobbler's workshop, this time run by Jim Lark. After the Second World War it was sold to Alexander Gorton who employed the architect W. H. Scott to refurbish the property. As a rare example of Cornish vernacular architecture the Birdcage was given grade II listed status by English Heritage. It was given to the National Trust by the representatives of the late Irene May Gorton in the spring of 1980.

PAUL HOLDEN FSA

OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT: WHAT NEXT?

So, now we have some really useful work in the SW of the county with volunteers assessing the state of around 500 Listed buildings, after training by staff from the Historic Environment Service at County Hall (see page 6). This has provided a number of very enthusiastic trained people - while a further 12,000 Listed building, are just awaiting a similar assessment, but this is now unlikely to be promoted with the Council's much depleted heritage staff. Many of those slowly deteriorating buildings could have been identified and benefit from just a little more attention and encourage some much needed careful repair. This could have included the former mining towns in the west, with the more significant parts of the World Heritage Site and our obligations to UNESCO.

Cornwall has declining natural resources, with little more than fishing and farming. The environment - natural and built - have made it a pleasure for us and an attraction to visitors. These are now under threat with the disappearance of any meaningful planning controls, so the best open landscape will be interrupted by random incongruous houses, while village envelopes are increasingly ignored allowing the deterioration of our choicest coastal villages and market towns, up to the City itself, whose eastern approach is to be dominated by the 'Waitrose Temple'; just what our visitors drive down the M5 to see! The lack of planning resources will ultimately add tourism to our other long lost or nearly lost industries - tin, copper, maybe china clay, granite, slate, next

EDITOR

below: our heritage - 500m of a local town street, last week





AT LAST: PROGRESS AT GREAT WHEEL BUSY

Having first visited Great Wheel Busy at Chacewater more than 50 years ago, it has been a sad story of neglect for most of that period.

The mine had a long and important place in mining history, from the erection of Newcomen's steam engine in 1726, to James Watt, actually supervising the installation of his first engine in Cornwall, in 1777.

The importance of the site 50 years ago was its completeness, as apart from a good engine house with *in situ* boiler house, long used by a local coal-merchant, was a row of mining cottages. To the south a Brunton arsenic calciner, with flues and chimney were looking almost in working order – with remaining arsenic crystals on the 'lambryth' walls.

However, the most impressive building was the Workshop, outstanding amongst the architectural gems of the county and Mining World Heritage Site. This building - 31m long - ranks as the only such Workshop on a mining site to have survived; normally ancillary buildings were small and almost temporary, with timber frames, clad in corrugated iron or boarded which have long disappeared. Examples of such an ciliary buildings at Geevor, King Edward or Tolgus, are on a far more modest scale that they can hardly be compared.



left: An outstanding relic of the importance of mining: the unique workshop building at Great Wheel Busy, housing the mine smithy and carpenter's shop. Photographed by the Editor in 1961, and still little changed but for 50+ years of wear and tear – and the weather!

above: One of the cast-iron lintels from the Perran Iron Works, similar to the contemporary arches at the Perranarworthal Foundry itself

Apart for its size, the building incorporated two splendid examples of cast-iron lintels (see top of page) very similar to the design used at Perran Foundry where they are still visible from the A38 road. Possibly this was to persuade shareholders of a sound investment, the design then forming the basis for their own new foundry doors, although why did they not use the same patterns is a mystery, as apart from the lettering the patterns are different.

But at last now, thanks to the co-operation of the landowner the Tregothnan Estate acting in partnership with Natural England, work is shortly to go ahead with the conservation of the engine house, boiler house, and the engine's chimney. Ainsley Cocks, of the World Heritage Site team within Cornwall Council's Economic Development & Culture directorate, has been working alongside Council Senior Archaeologist Ann Reynolds to apply Natural England Higher Level Stewardship funding to the site. Both are now delighted that, at long last, work is about to start, as many had almost given up hope that these buildings would survive. A detailed digital survey of all Great Wheel Busy has taken place and now in parallel with work on site, an archaeological study of the mine will be progressed along with surveys of the site's unusual



Looking north-east from the Workshop; the end of the row of cottages, the rusted roof of the boiler house with the 1856 engine house and its chimney behind.

ecology, partly arising from air-bourne deposits from a century of working the arsenic. Particles of roasted arsenic drifted from the Calciner stack on the prevailing SW wind stunting normal plant growth to the NE of the site.

The next stage should be to finish the job – the complex task of saving the unique Workshop. This will depend on securing additional funding from



Inside the Workshop building, showing the massive king-post roof trusses with struts, spanning a 42' (13m) a clear space only interrupted by a cross wall which incorporates the smithy chimney. The most obvious source for such timber would have been old pump rods from the mine, probably cut down, when presumably when the clear carpenters marks were added..

other sources, and the continuing support of the Tregothnan Estate will be essential in achieving this. It is to be hoped that the first phase of the project now underway will provide the encouragement needed to complete this worthy project.

JOHN STENDELHOFEN

ANOTHER PROBLEM IN THE WEST? — ST ERTH STATION

A long drawn out planning fiasco or just a legacy of the old Penwith District Council? Or can it survive as 'a rare example of a complete (late 19th century) station', as Peter Beacham says in the forthcoming volume of Pevsner's Cornwall⁽¹⁾.

While British International Helicopters could sell Penzance Heliport for a much-needed supermarket, PDC could deliver a new site for BIH at their 'transport interchange' for the area up the road. This would complement the Household Waste Recovery Centre, and ensure an area safe from residential development around the Station.

The present park-an-ride area at Lelant Saltings would be moved as well to the Station - and potentially release much more valuable land for building, close to the waterfront.

Then National Rail said a definite **NO** to a heliport adjoining a railway line, so the prime aim of the the scheme was gone, - as was the Scillonians' helicopter link to the mainland!

The roof over the heavily framed timber screen that separates the main line (left) from the St Ives branch line. The roof slopes down towards the lower platform (right) with purpose-made cast-iron brackets. The outer line has slightly rusted track indicating only occasional use by maintenance trains.

Another problem with the scheme was that the 700 car park-and-ride was on the wrong side of the track. There was no level access to the down platform or up from the car park. The underbridge follows a sharp bend but could it be widened? The proposed solution was simple and had the great benefit of getting rid of the old (Listed) GWR bridge - so very expensive to maintain. Remove the trees, and build a wheel-chair ramp each side⁽²⁾, connecting across a new pastiche 'Listed' bridge. Obviously much cheaper than painting the old one?





The integrity of the most complete, Listed, C19 station in the county was to be seriously compromised - to provide a car-park!

There had been much local opposition and particularly hostile comments from St Erth Parish Council while English Heritage strongly objected to the application.

Planning applications were made for quite extensive, but sensitive improvements to the station and were, rightly, granted permission. With the separate application for a 'new' bridge and ramps Cornwall Council duly rejected the application. So this is where the situation remains at present: St Erth is still 'retaining all its period charm'.

The station is essentially as it was in the 1890s, with no 20thC intrusions; the GWR did't go in for 'moderne' and maybe the post-Beaching decline in traffic saved it from later 'improvements'. It is suggested this is one of the very last rural junction stations remaining, giving it a national significance^(3.). The little flight of steps down to the lower branch line platforms are most unusual, dating from the 1890s rebuilt, as the St Ives line was proving a great success with increasing holiday traffic.

The bridge was the GWR 'standard' design of the period and the most prominent feature of the Listed group of buildings. It is apparent Network

Under the footbridge east to the whole group, with 'all its period charm', and matching ornate valances on roofs and bridge.

Rail is attempting to rid itself of any others in the county, Listed or not; how long is it before the maintenance costs equal the cost of the 'new' replacement?

What alternative proposals will they come up with next? Is it really beyond our leading engineers to work out how to install a lift down to a tunnel under the track; it could even be hidden by that little coppice?

As the upgrading of the station generally appears to respect the Listed status, it will be welcomed by the Group. With the bridge though, it should be accepted that this was an unsuitable site for a park-and-ride scheme - just as it was not a suitable site for a Heliport. Unless a feasible engineering solution, avoiding ramps and in keeping with the surroundings, there is only one resolution: accept that irrevocable errors were made in selecting this site.

JOHN STENGELOHOFEN

(1.) see Peter Beacham & Nikolaus Pevsner's *Architectural Guides: Cornwall*, Yale University Press, 2014

(2.) The total length up and down the 29 ramps, landings and the bridge would be about 240m (260yds) long, each of the ramps being 5m (16ft) long **at 1 in 12 = ♪**

(3.) see Gordon Biddle: *Britain's Historic Railway Buildings*, O.U.P., 2003

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