

# SAVE BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

## Newsletter – May 2006

70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ  
Tel: 020 7253 3500 Fax: 020 7253 3400  
[save@btinternet.com](mailto:save@btinternet.com)  
[www.savebritainsheritage.org](http://www.savebritainsheritage.org)

### Pathfinder

SAVE'S new report on the Housing Market Renewal Initiative, "*Pathfinder*" (£8 to Friends, £10 to all others - ISBN 0-905978-50 1) was launched on January 26" with a headline in the Telegraph of 'bullying' Mr Prescott accused of "hitting the poor", a good article in the Times, thorough coverage in the professional press and a superb piece on BBC TV's Culture Show. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, with all its might and resources, responded before a copy had even reached its desks, stating that the report was nonsense, and that SAVE was scare-mongering, lacking interest in the communities or even facts. This response, in the form of a document released to the Pathfinder bodies and local authority PR departments entitled "SAVE Report: Line to take" arrived anonymously over the fax at SAVE almost immediately. SAVE rapidly countered, disproving each of the points made by ODPM, in some cases using its own figures.

Along with the report, we launched our fighting fund for community groups in Pathfinder areas. Several generous donations were received including one of £1000 from a gentleman in Doncaster "to support the fund fighting the needless destruction of people's homes". He dedicated his donation to "the memory of those who die as a result of compulsory purchase"- one of the donor's friends had committed suicide after a compulsory purchase order was passed on his property. Thus far, the fund has assisted in the purchase of computer equipment and funding has been offered towards meeting the cost of professional fees for public inquiries into compulsory purchases.

### Dave visits the 'pool

Although Mr Prescott sat fiddling while his civil servants carry forward their policy of destruction (we don't yet know what Ruth Kelly is up to), at least his opposite numbers have taken an interest. Whether this is for political capital or out of genuine concern will only be told by time, but the visit by David Cameron, Lord Hestletine and a number of

members of the shadow cabinet to the clearance areas in Liverpool was none the less welcome, keeping the public eye on the Pathfinder shenanigans. SAVE and local campaigners showed them around parts of Toxteth and Newsham Park, areas where dereliction and blight could have been avoided through proper management of the area and the sale of vacant social landlord owned properties. In the interests of fairness, copies of the SAVE Pathfinder report were also sent to the Liberal Democrats, but nothing has been heard back. Liverpool is run by a Liberal Democrat council. Twenty-seven candidates stood in Liverpool in the local elections on a "stop the demolition" ticket, either helping unseat or seriously eroding the majority of the pro-demolition incumbents.

Enough of the politics and more on the action – the **Newsham Park** campaigners have finally won an important victory, in forcing the council to agree to sell off the houses that it owns in the areas that are currently vacant and falling into dereliction, on the understanding that they will be repaired. The area was mysteriously coloured in on maps showing it to be an area for redevelopment, including part of the Grade II listed park. Having fought back the lines on the map, they now hope to prove that the market, now that it has the chance, can pick up the vacant houses.

In the **Salford Pathfinder** area, the market has taken a very strong interest in Urban Splash's scheme for the conversion of terraces at Chimney Pot Park, with overnight queues forming of people wanting to buy the properties. Market failure, claimed the Pathfinder. Clearly not.

The Inspector at the inquiry into the **Edge Lane** clearance area in Liverpool (*SAVE Newsletter* Nov / Dec 2006) came to the shocking conclusion that the area could be compulsorily purchased for clearance. It appears, surprisingly, that many of the residents' arguments were overlooked by the Inspector. One weakness on the residents' part, and one from which other groups campaigning for the historic environment across the nation can learn, is that they were not formally constituted, leading to the Inspector giving less weight to their arguments. However, the residents have bitten back, launching a legal challenge to the Inspector's decision. Watch this space.



*Houses in the Welsh Streets, Liverpool, threatened with clearance.*

Your Secretary has been off **spreading the word** at a number of events about Pathfinder, including a mass rally held by Defend Council Housing in February. Expecting a couple of hundred people, your Secretary had more than cause to pause for thought on entering the hall, where at least a thousand people had gathered (the organisers say more) and Tony Benn. George Galloway and the Secretary General of Amicus were lined up to have their three minutes at the microphone before him. He reports that he just about managed to mumble something sensible.

A slightly less daunting experience was presenting the SAVE report at a conference on the Northern Way, the over-arching policy for the economic revitalisation of the North into which Pathfinder fits. Also on the side of the angels was Prof Anne Power of the London School of Economics, a key figure in Lord Rogers' Urban Task Force. Naturally we were given a hard time by the representatives of the Pathfinders and the local authorities within the Pathfinder areas, but there was almost no argument with the main thrust of the SAVE report – that mass demolition is not necessary and that it does not benefit those who are being forced from their historic houses, areas and communities.

A rather last-minute phone call from **Darwen** informed us that a public inquiry was due to start the next day - no-one had considered to tell us this or other heritage bodies, locally and nationally, earlier. A proof of evidence was put together in record time and presented to the Inspector at the inquiry, but Virgin Trains and Network Rail conspired against your Secretary being thoroughly cross-examined on the precise details of the Housing Acts. Our thanks to Kathy Fishwick for keeping us informed of the Inquiry's proceedings before our evidence session. We understand that the local authority has commenced demolition while the inquiry goes on.

There are a number of other public inquiries into compulsory purchases being lined up – at least three in Liverpool (**Anfield, Edge Hill and Picton**) that we know of, and possibly another twenty across the Pathfinder areas: we do not yet have a complete list. If anyone would like to volunteer their time to compile a list for us, please contact the office.

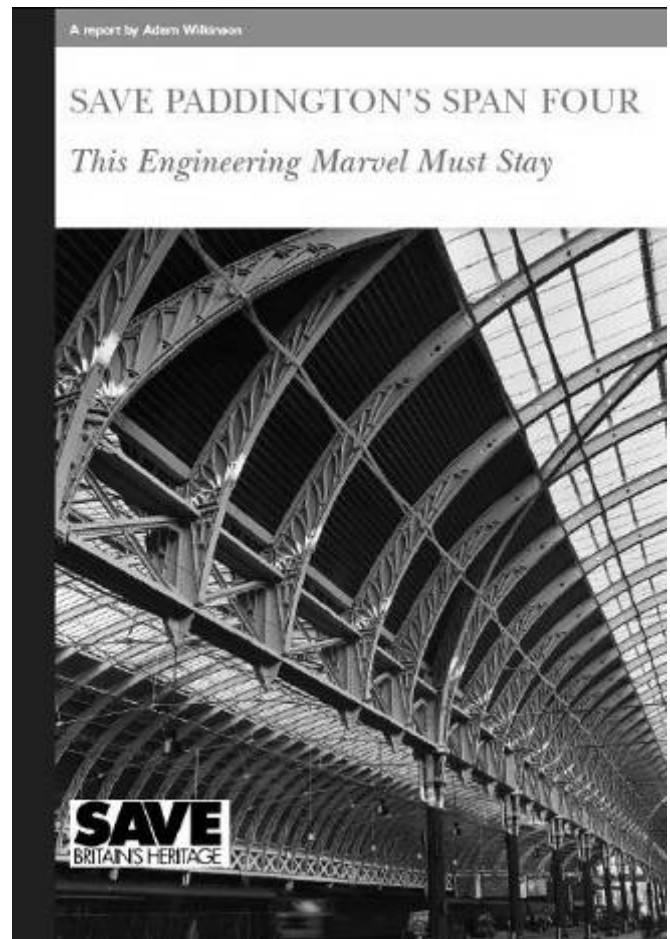
As if all this was not exciting enough the **Department Formerly Known As the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister** has produced a rather welcome document on how to measure the impact of Pathfinder. 'This is rather too little too late and is written in a remarkably impenetrable language, but at least it acknowledges that if you knock down a load of houses it will have side effects, such as the collapse of the customer base of local shops, or that if you build a load of new houses in one place you take demand from another place.

We are still waiting for Ministers to produce figures for the number of historic homes to be demolished over the course

of the demolition programme. The last set of figures from official documents giving the overall picture talked of 167,000 demolitions at current rates. Ministers have repeatedly denied this figure, which is odd as it can be found in Paragraph 9.19 of "Moving Forward: the Northern Way", a document launched by Mr Prescott. Instead they repeat the mantra that only 4,000 houses have been demolished to date and that they have restored more than they have demolished. What have they to be afraid of?

## Span Four at Paddington Station

Span Four of Paddington Station has been a concern of SAVE for the last few years. Our latest lightning report "*Save Span Four at Paddington: This Engineering Marvel Must Stay*" was published in February, and focuses on whether there is really any justification for demolition in terms of the railway, the architecture and the future of the station. The report is available from the SAVE office for £4 (ISBN 0 905978 49 8).



The report looks at the architecture of the train shed in relation to Brunel's work as well as in its own right, with research on WY Armstrong, the Great Western Railway's New Works' Engineer who was responsible for its design and construction. Also covered are the railway arguments, centring around the question of capacity and the impact of Crossrail, and the possible alternatives to demolition.

The irony of the demolition proposals is almost too much to bear - 2006 is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brunel's birth, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John Betjeman's birth (Span Four is the frontispiece to his book *London's Historic Railway Termini*; added to which the idea of the Great Western Railway as a World Heritage Site was the brainchild of Sir Neil Cossons, Chairman of English Heritage. As if this wasn't enough, while proponents of demolition argue that Armstrong's fourth span is pastiche, the original Brunel spans stand on Armstrong's riveted columns, with British Rail's tin roof over limbs that were heavily damaged in the Second World War.

Remarkably, the Victorian Society supports demolition, and English Heritage seems to be on the brink of approving the demolition of the train shed on the basis of a series of promised restorations and improvements to the Brunel Spans. SAVE holds that both are shortsighted and will not be thanked for their failure to see Span Four as an integral and essential part of one of the greatest railway stations in the world.

In the meantime, we **encourage Friends to write to:**

- Rt Hon Douglas Alexander, Secretary of State for Transport, Department for Transport, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DR
- Sir Neil Cossons, Chairman, English Heritage, 23 Savile Row, London W1S 2GT
- Rt Hon Tessa Jowell, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5DH
- John Armit, Chief Executive, Network Rail, 40 Melton Street, London NW 1 2EE

## Buildings at Risk Register

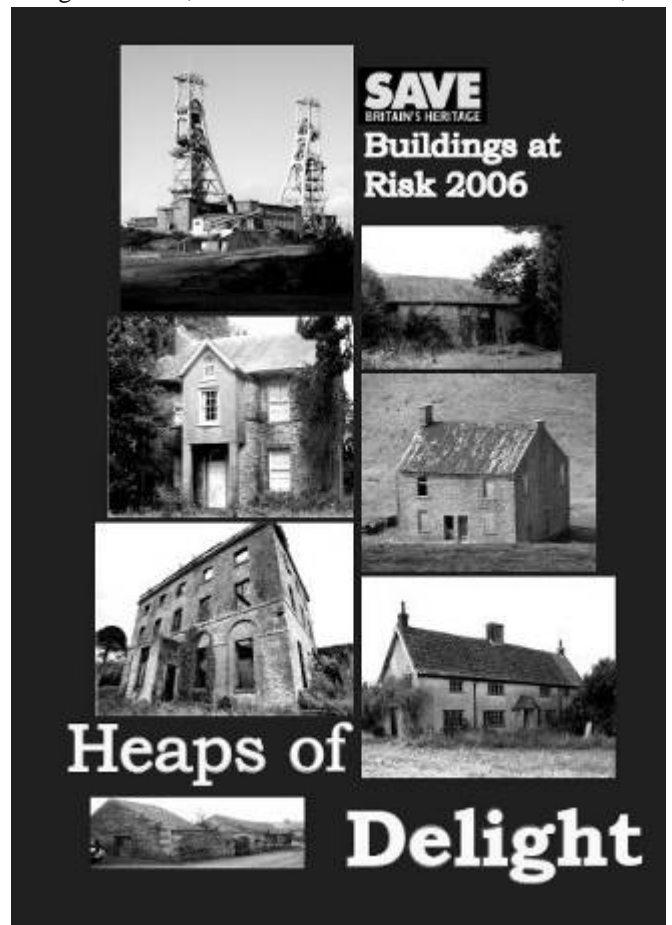
This is always an exciting time of year for the Buildings at Risk Register, and the publication of "*Heaps of Delight*" (£12, or £9.60 for Friends), our latest catalogue, has continued the trend. *Heaps*, as it is affectionately known in the office, contains over one hundred buildings at risk, as well as some amazing success stories. There's an article on a long slog to restore a beautiful II\* Merchant's House in Shepton Mallet, Somerset, which the owner, Jon Maine, is trying to keep 'carbon neutral' by use of boreholes and ground-source heat pumps among other 'green' features. Others include a Welsh farmhouse, where traditional cow dung and lime parging has been used to line the chimney, with the cow dung for this savoury task being collected fresh from his own herd by the owner, Gervase Webb, and a Lancashire church converted into a high tech recording studio.

In our opinion, *Heaps* contains some of the most desirable buildings we've seen on the register for several years. There is a plethora of gorgeous cottages, farmhouses and country

houses, as well as a variety of other buildings: a Lincolnshire tin tabernacle church, a half-timbered barn in Cheshire, and a former fire station in Liverpool. The press seem to agree; hopefully some Friends will have seen the article about the register in the Sunday Times 'Home' section, and there have been other pieces in the local press.

Unfortunately, we have already had some bad news about one of the buildings in the catalogue. The former Police Station in Tipton, West Midlands, was a fantastic Staffordshire blue brick building with some really interesting features, and unique to this part of Britain. Vacated by the police force quite recently, this building has already been demolished - in fact, the destruction started on the day the catalogue was released. Despite the efforts of one local campaigner, and the interest of a local journalist who felt very strongly about the building, the plans for demolition were rushed through and no local opposition developed. This is yet another loss of a significant local building not protected by listing and deemed 'surplus to requirements'.

Cases like this show just how important our register is, as it is often the only champion of small and relatively 'unimportant' Grade II listed or unlisted buildings under threat. These buildings are frequently overlooked and the threats are only noticed in the final stages of the planning process - often it is too late for the tide to be turned. We urge anyone who knows of a building of quality that is being left to rot, or is under direct threat of demolition, to



make others aware of the situation. Often the combined pressure of local people can make all the difference. The register is successful because the future of a building can be secured by an individual or a local group; we urge everyone to do what they can to protect our heritage, be it small vernacular buildings or unwanted civic buildings, and ensure that it is still there for future generations.

## St Agnes' Place, London

In January 1977 a large mobile crane swinging a ball and chain made its way down St Agnes' Place, Lambeth, smashing in the fronts of the houses one after another with the simple aim of damaging as many buildings as possible to the point that they were beyond repair. The owner of the buildings, Lambeth Council, knew an injunction was coming and moved the crane in at dawn, along with two hundred police officers. Eleven of the twenty-six houses were damaged before the injunction was granted.



Fast forward just under nineteen years. The remaining houses had been squatted for many years by a Rastafarian community, which had by and large settled and been left to its own devices by the local authority. And then it happens all over again. The bailiffs move in, attempt to kick out the residents (with the police officers in riot gear there to ensure a peaceful eviction), and the wreckers move in.



The buildings, perfectly decent Victorian terraced houses, typical of the area, were still owned by Lambeth. They

were not in a conservation area, nor were they listed. SAVE moved to take legal action against the demolition, only to find that the local authority had just about managed to paper over the gaps in its case as a result of an aborted action by one of the local residents. As ever, had we known a little earlier, more could have been done to stop this act of wanton vandalism by the local authority. With London's buoyant housing market the buildings could easily have been economically repaired and reused. It appears that councillors and certain officers had long regarded the area something of a running sore and were keen to tidy it up – through demolition. The local authority put forward no plan for the site post demolition, just some vague ideas about a community facility. Judge, jury and executioner: the sooner that demolition is regarded as a form of development, thereby requiring planning permission, the better.

## Derby Bus Station demolition

The prognosis for Derby Bus Station is looking grim, with demolition due to start this month. SAVE has long objected to the proposals to demolish the 1930s bus station, designed by the municipal architect, Charles Aslin (see SAVE Newsletter October 2001).



*Spot the strategically placed caravan...*

In October last year campaigners against the demolition of the bus station (and its replacement with offices and shops as a part of the massive Riverlights scheme) had been camping out on the roof of the bus station. They were shortly joined by a caravan, hoisted on to the roof by a mysterious group of well-wishers wearing black masks. The occupation lasted for four months, with the police refusing to facilitate the removal of said caravan. Then during this period the scheme's backers went bust.

The bus station action group managed to gather 16,000 signatures in a petition against demolition, and have drawn up plans showing how at least a part of the boomerang plan bus station could fit into the new development. The council is refusing to discuss the plans. Turnout at the local elections was about 60,000 (for a third of the local councillors) - in other words the petition represents an impressive proportion of the populace.

The case makes all Government's bluster about making heritage popular and accessible (what could be more accessible than a bus station?) seem rather pointless.

### **Goodbye Computer**

London changes and evolves at apace that can at times be dizzying. It is with some sadness that the staff of SAVE (if not necessarily its Trustees or committee members) of the large white building alongside Cannon Street Station, which bears more than a passing resemblance to the giant computer built to ponder the meaning of life in the film version of Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. While others may think it a carbuncle, we think it funky, robust and fun, unlike so many other more recent buildings along the Thames, including its flimsy replacement. It is more commonly known as Mondial House, by Hubbard Ford and Partners, dating from 1969-76, Mondial no doubt being a slightly cheesy play on the fact that it was built for the International Telephone Service. Close up it's a pretty aggressive building, but from the southern bank of the Thames it has a certain presence and is quite unlike any other building in the capital.



### **Abbotsford, Melrose, Scottish Borders**

Sir Walter Scott, the great Victorian writer, ended his days at Abbotsford, a house on which he started work in 1821 "bigging myself a bower after my own fashion" – there had previously been a small farm on the land, which Scott bought in 1811. The existing house was designed by William Atkinson.

Abbotsford is the national monument to Sir Walter Scott, having previously been his home. It was opened to the public shortly after his death, and it embodies many of the ideals promoted in his novels, from chivalry to romance to a fusion of ancient and modern. Essential to the vision of a house such as this is its setting, on the banks of the Tweed in undisturbed countryside.

This vision is, however, endangered by a set of proposals for a housing estate at Netherbarns, on the opposite bank of

the Tweed, which will be clearly visible from both the house and grounds at Abbotsford. Netherbarns is essentially a greenfield site, not a town centre location or even a suburban location, nor was it in the local plan. However, the local authority appears to be supporting the development as part of a wider attempt to increase the population in the area to a level whereby it might support a new rail link. Consequently, it is keen for the site to be included in its new local plan as an appropriate place for development.

Local preservationists and the National Trust for Scotland have objected vigorously, as has SAVE, but it remains to be seen if the site will make it into the local plan - it may well be down to the judgement of the local plan Inspector.

### **Nottinghamshire's Headstocks**

In spite of a gently resurgent coal industry, the heritage of the coal industry has been steadily disappearing since the closures that followed the miners' strike. The range of buildings associated with the collieries is large, from schools to clubs to bathhouses to headstocks - an area that ought to be investigated in greater detail.



*Annesley's distinctive headstock,, nearly all that remains of the conservation area*

In Nottinghamshire there are at present two sets of headstocks that are at risk, one set which is listed, the other which is in a conservation area. The conservation area



headstocks are at Annesley. The conservation area originally covered all of the colliery buildings, but the site's owners have cleared all apart from the headstocks and the rather well considered 1930s baths, in spite of howls of protests from the local community, many of whom live in the pit village (which remains intact). SAVE objected to the local authority to the proposed demolition, along with the County Council and English Heritage, and asked for the application to be called-in for consideration at a public inquiry, but our pleas were not heard. The headstocks are still standing but it is not clear for how much longer.

Meanwhile, a few miles away at Clipstone, a rather feeble and unimaginative attempt is being made to market the colliery site. This consists of a number of Victorian buildings, similar to railway workshops in style and size, and the magnificent brace of headstocks on either side of a very calm and well-considered winding house. Both the headstocks and the winding house date from the 1930s and are rightly listed at Grade II. The site is now in the hands of a company whose job it is to prepare it for marketing, under instruction from the English Coal Board. It is being offered on a thirty year lease. This makes it extremely unattractive, especially given the nature of the headstocks – they are huge. Left to rot, the experts reckon they'd probably survive another sixty years, so keeping them upright isn't a huge problem, although a thoroughgoing restoration would be prohibitively expensive on a thirty year lease.

The irony of it all is that with the value of the coal now shooting from the roof, if the pit had remained open just a few more years, it would now be a highly profitable outfit. As it stands, the pit has been filled and capped - it would be cheaper and easier to sink a new shaft. Any takers for this splendid site?

## Poplar High Street, London

The number of applications to which we are alerted involving the demolition of good buildings in conservation areas seems never-ending, as does the patience of the people who live in these areas and are willing to spend a great deal of time and energy fighting proposals that neither conserve nor enhance the character or appearance of their areas.

Sitting over the road from the massive towers of Canary Wharf, Poplar has not really benefited from the potent mass of wealth the Docklands' tall buildings represent. However, developers are finally starting to cotton on to the fact that an area less than ten minutes' ride by public transport from the heart of the City of London and ten minutes' walk from Docklands is rather well placed. Consequently there is a great deal of building happening in this area, and the pressure on its fascinating historic environment is ramping up.

Sitting on the corner of Poplar High Street and Woodstock Terrace is a typical early Victorian suburban terrace corner, a storey higher than the street behind but based on the same system of proportion, inherited from the previous generation. To either side of it are gaps in the townscape begging to be filled up with some new build that respects the existing. Unless, that is, you happen to be Telford Homes, in which case the whole site appears as one large clear site onto which you can squeeze a mass of flats. This is pure greed.

The entire terrace has signed a petition against the development. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is not famed for being either the most efficient or conservation-minded local authority in the UK, and somehow its conservation officer's strong remarks that the building was fundamental to the conservation area weakly morphed into an acceptance of the building's demolition. At least this was the case until councillors turned the application down, and another prompt 180-degree turn was performed.

The application is veering towards a public inquiry due to non-determination on the part of the local authority. SAVE will put in strong representations for the building to be retained - although the developer claims that the building is structurally unsound, no real evidence has been put forward to prove this.



## Spite Inn

Defence Estates, the Ministry of Defence's property arm, is one of the best examples of a Government department that looks after its property in an orderly and correct fashion, in general treating its proud listed building stock very carefully. However, the simple, decent and beautifully sited early nineteenth century Spite Inn faces demolition and replacement with an area of hard standing by Defence Estates for being located on the edge of an infantry training zone.

The Spite Inn lies on the Mynydd Epynt, an area of high land that stretches from the Brecon Beacons to Buith Wells,

requisitioned by the Army at the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 on the understanding that the Army would leave at the end of the war. The Army bought the building four years ago, and its excuse for not converting the building to residential use is that people would complain about the disturbance created by infantry exercises. This is akin to the Highways Agency proposing to knock down buildings by major roads on the basis that owners might complain - it really is the thinnest of grounds for demolishing. There must be hundreds of military personnel who would be more than happy with a house like Spite Inn.

The roof has already been taken off the building with the expectation that the Welsh weather will do the rest. This simply is not good enough -public money should not be spent on needless demolition, whether on this scale or that in the Pathfinder areas. It is worth noting that a nearby roofless barn recently sold for £200,000. The Georgian Group in Wales has picked up the cudgels and SAVE is supporting it as strongly as it can.

### Severalls, Colchester



After two years of wrangling over the Section 106 legal agreements, the planning permissions are in place for Severalls and this remarkable hospital site can finally be marketed. In the meantime, there has been a series of fires, as reported in the *SAVE Newsletter*. The most recent, however: was the most devastating, with the splendid hall completely lost. While this is a great shame, there is a

positive side to it - in spite of the alternative plans for the site having a use for the hall, its loss frees up a large space for development. Security at the site remains lax.

The site is to be marketed by English Partnerships. We have met with the head of the hospitals programme (which has taken on over a hundred sites from the botched NHS Estates attempt to sell them all to a joint venture between its commercial arm and the Royal Bank of Scotland) and his team. Their attitude is a breath of fresh air compared to the NHS Estate's tactic of leaving the buildings to rot while developing the land around them with nobby boxes – once in their ownership, sites are properly secured and sold as an entire site rather than picking off the choicest cuts and leaving the rest to rot.

The situation with Severalls is a little complex, with the site only partially in the ownership of English Partnerships, but it is responsible for marketing the whole site. SAVE sincerely hopes that the site is taken on by a responsible developer who would be willing to go further – much further – than the approved plan for the site, which would only see elements of the south facing ward blocks retained: the alternative scheme drawn up by Carey Jones Architects would see a great deal more retained and sensitive development within the parkland. Whoever takes the site on will find SAVE, the local campaigners, the local MP Bob Russell and the a representative of Essex County Council inviting them around for a cup of tea and a chat about how best to deal with the remarkable opportunities offered by Severalls.

### Bonkers preservation in America

Just as there are those who frequently and regularly bemoan the state we're in and how standards have dropped, there are those naysayers who continue to prate on that preservation has gone too far. SAVE would direct them to the following website, which is a slightly demented take on SAVE's *Lost Houses* series of books from the 1980s - rather it is a "lost fast food outlet". Only in America...

<http://www.notfoolin.ganvbody.com/schmindex.html>

### Out of Government: Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee

The Culture, Media and Sport Parliamentary Committee recently held a broad inquiry into heritage, which in effect became a chance to assess the state of the nation's (well, technically England's as the Scottish and Welsh Executives are responsible for the kingdom and principality) heritage. The response received was full, to say the least, with a wide range of individuals and organisations contributing evidence – two volumes of written evidence were produced even before the Committee had had the chance to take oral evidence. The submissions from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport seem to show it to have its head, if not firmly, then at least mostly, buried in the sand.

SAVE was called upon to give evidence to the Committee, along with representatives of the SPAB, the Ancient Monuments Society, Victorian Society and Twentieth Century Society. The Committee was receptive and interested, with only one moment of slightly robust discussion, between your Secretary and one of the members over the small matter of the Pathfinder proposals.

The Committee quite sensibly made its way out of London, visiting Liverpool, where locals affected by Pathfinder were able to put forward their case. We await the outcome of the Committees deliberations with some anticipation. However, the real test will be if Government bothers to listen.

## Principles of Conservation

English Heritage recently issued its first stage consultation of a document called *Principles of Conservation for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*. This of course begs the question as to how many more stages of consultation there will be, and to judge from the document, we hope not many, as it veers from the utterly impenetrable to the pointless.

English Heritage claims that the work is urgently needed as "existing guidance on ethical and other considerations involved with the conservation of the historic environment is now becoming outdated, is forgotten or misunderstood". One of the joys of conservation in the UK is that it is not the preserve of desk bound theorists, but is a balance between them and those with a more practical involvement in the process. What the work appears to do is to move conservation back into the realms of the theoretical, and this is reflected in the lack of plain English throughout the document. One has to ask "why this document", "who is it for?" as well as "why now?". Is it a response to a real need? If so, it appears to have passed us by.

Much inspiration seems to have been drawn from the Burra Charter, an Australian document focussed on a historic environment of a very different nature, and other international charters are taken into account. This however, lacks the simple clarity of the major international charters (both in terms of language and concept) that helps make them special. All that is bad about this document can be found in one paragraph on page 78, and it is worth quoting in full:

*"Where there is potential for conflict between conservation and other public policy objectives, we are firmly of the view that they are best reconciled or balanced through dialogue. Initially this should be focused on whether the other objectives could be achieved in a way that is less harmful to the heritage values of the place, or which would even eliminate the harm completely. Thereafter a balance must be struck, in which the greater the significance of place, the greater the weight that must be attached to sustaining that significance."*

This raises so many questions. Surely the lead body in the heritage sector should in the first instance be seeking to eliminate any harm. Does this represent a shift in policy? We are not told. What happens if dialogue? How does this relate to law and statutory guidance? Will this carry any weight? What counts for "sustaining significance"? A blue plaque?

One could spend an eternity picking holes in the document. Frankly, though, it's not worth it. The principles, no matter how penetrable or impenetrable, will only ever be dust in the wind, just another document marking a point in time. It is a values based document, and values change rapidly. It is not a practical or useful document to help practitioners when considering how to deal with a building in need of repair. When writing the SPAB manifesto in 1877, Morris was not motivated to justify it with a mass of sub clauses, questions and explanatory notes.

The commissioners of the document might have pondered whether the points they are trying to make might not be better illustrated with a series of examples - as there are useful ideas in the document which deserve an airing, but not in this sort of document. They might have also questioned whether Planning Policy Guidance 15 says all of this, and rather more usefully so, while giving English Heritage the option to say "no" to a bad set of proposals - a cynic might say that applied in retrospect, *Principles of Conservation* would justify some of English Heritage's worse decisions.

## Farm buildings

What is so depressing about the *Principles of Conservation* document is that English Heritage is perfectly capable of producing extremely helpful guidance, as evinced by its forthcoming guidance on how to deal with redundant farm buildings. It is written with both architects and their clients in mind, giving a clear idea of the architectural importance of our agricultural heritage and clear ideas about how farm buildings can be adapted to new uses while keeping their character and interest intact. This leads the document into being occasionally overly prescriptive - one feels that as a result inexperienced conservation officers might start questioning the appropriateness of kitchen fittings rather than addressing the bigger picture. However, this document must be seen as a welcome addition to the bookshelf, with clear guidance about what is and is not acceptable when dealing with this vulnerable building type.

## Peer Review of English Heritage

Just when you thought it was safe to start thinking of English Heritage as a body with a degree of stability after a rocky couple of years, along comes another review. This time it is a "peer" review, under the auspices of Dame Mavis McDonald, formerly the head civil servant at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Other members are Gill Taylor, Chief Executive, Academy of Sustainable Communities; Irene Lucas, Chief Executive, South



Teesside; Tom Wright, Chief Executive, Visit Britain; Jonathan Falkingham, Chief Executive and Co- Founder, Urban Splash; Professor Rosemary Cramp, Durham University and Linda Boort, Municipality Chief Executive and formerly Chief Executive of Dutch Heritage. As one might expect, they are in effect reviewing a review, and presumably their findings will demand a review.

The intention is to see whether English Heritage's "modernisation" process, which has seen the loss of experienced staff and more "upstreaming" potentially at the expense of valuable casework, has been effective. The "modernisation" process was forced on English Heritage by Government, ostensibly to make it save a few bob so that Government did not have to increase the level of funding it provides. The reality has been an attempt to bring a supposedly independent quango in line with Government's perception of how things should be done. SAVE will put forward a strong submission to the peer group calling for English Heritage's revitalisation, not its continued role as Government's whipping boy.

### **Friends : An Evening with Bill Bryson**

It was splendid to see so many Friends at the *SAVE Evening with Bill Bryson* at the Royal Geographical Society. Friends and other guests were greeted at the door to the lecture theatre by Mr Bryson, who then took us on a very entertaining world tour, from American slides to Norfolk's hedgerows, taking in parts of Africa, over head power cables and all matter of other topics.

After the talk, he embarked on a marathon book signing session, and then joined the staff and volunteers for a bite to eat. We owe Bill a huge thank you for his generosity in giving SAVE his time free and enabling a very successful fundraising evening.



We have seven signed copies of *"A Short History of Nearly Everything"* for sale available from the SAVE office for £10 including post and packaging. We also have one signed

copy of Dan Cruickshank's *"Around the World in 80 Treasures"* available for £20 - first come first served!

### **Marcus Binney CBE**

In recognition of his remarkable contribution to the preservation of the UK's heritage, SAVE's President, Marcus Binney, has been awarded a CBE in the New Year's Honours' List. This splendid news really is a seal of approval for Marcus's (and consequently SAVE's) work, no matter how anti-establishment SAVE may, from time to time, be.



### **Forthcoming events Bartholemew Fair, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2006, Smithfield, London**

As a part of London Architectural Biennale, SAVE has a stall at the Bartholemew Fair at Smithfield, London, on the 17<sup>th</sup> June, and we would love to meet any Friends who might come along. It should be great fun – around 15,000 visitors are expected.

### **The Conservation Book Fair**

The annual book fair will be held in the Gallery at 70 Cowcross Street, London ECI, on the 22nd June from 12.00pm through to 7pm. All the main conservation organisations will be represented, and as ever the emphasis is as much on catching up with colleagues and friends as it is on buying the entire SAVE back catalogue. The later part of the day will be helped along by some refreshments courtesy of our landlord, Alan Baxter Associates. *SAVE Britain's Heritage 1975 - 2005: 30 Years of Campaigning* by Marcus Binney is still selling well, and is available to Friends for £17 (£20 to all others). **The SAVE Britain's Heritage 1975 - 2005: 30 Years of Campaigning Exhibition** will be hanging in the Gallery on that day to make the book fair all the more special.

## SAVE Evening at The Lit and Phil, Newcastle upon Tyne

Your Secretary will be giving a talk on the work of SAVE at the wonderful early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literary and Philosophical Institute, 23 Westgate Road, Newcastle on the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm. The evening will involve a glass or two of wine in the historic Lit and Phil library, and a tour of the Gothic Wood Memorial Library of the Miners' Institute, connected to the Lit and Phil by a bridge. A great opportunity to see inside these two historic and important buildings.

Tickets £2 from [library@litandphil.org.uk](mailto:library@litandphil.org.uk) tel 0191 232 0192 [www.litandphil.org.uk](http://www.litandphil.org.uk)



Newcastle Lit and Phil, 1822-5 by John Green, later alterations internally by AR Gibson

### Giles Worsley 1961-2006

The following obituary for Giles, a long-standing member of the SAVE Committee, appeared in edited form in the Times.

Just two weeks before he died Giles Worsley was lecturing in Oxford on the architectural symbolism of Lord Burlington's designs for Chiswick House. His early death robs architectural history and criticism of one of its brightest and liveliest stars. Unquestionably he inherited a gene from his ancestor Thomas Worsley, an accomplished

gentleman architect who built the family seat at Hovingham on the edge of the North Yorkshire moors. The Worsleys are an old Yorkshire family of baronets; his mother's family, the Asshetons, of still more ancient lineage, came from the other side of the Pennines. Worsley's aunt is the Duchess of Kent.

The quip is often made of Hovingham that it is a modest country house attached to a princely stable and Giles Worsley's entrance into architectural history came with a dissertation at the Courtauld Institute on the British stable, which appeared as a handsome monograph published by Yale University Press in 2004. Worsley had gone to New College, Oxford to study history but, like others who took Sir Howard Colvin's special paper on 17th and 18th century British Architecture, his career changed direction.

Significantly one of Worsley's first observations about Hovingham was that it was inspired by the plan of a Roman villa. From this sprang his major contribution to his subject *Classical Architecture in Britain: the Heroic Age*, published in 1995 when he was just thirty four. This offered a fresh and stimulating alternative (though not a complete substitute) for Sir John Summerson's magisterial survey of British architecture from 1530 to 1830. With the self-assurance that was his metier Worsley challenged the long held art-historical thesis that the neo-classicism of the late 18th century formed a watershed as artists and architects returned to Antique rather than Renaissance sources for their inspiration. Worsley contended that 17th and early 18<sup>th</sup> century architects like Inigo Jones, Wren and Hawksmoor and Lord Burlington were equally keen students of the Antique and took insouciant pleasure in finding examples of the distinctive baseless Greek column in Palladio.

Worsley's book was also impressive for his extensive first hand knowledge of large number of houses and architects' drawings. His mastery of sources certainly owed much to the time he spent in the RIBA Drawings Collection while preparing an excellent volume on *Architectural Drawings of the Regency Period* (1991).

On leaving the Courtauld, Worsley secured the job of architectural writer at *Country Life* in 1985, rising (like Mark Girouard, John Cornforth, Marcus Binney and Clive Aslet before him) to become the magazine's Architectural Editor. At *Country Life*, as his father contently put it, he was a square peg in a square hole. His enormous energy and capacity for hard work made him restless and in 1994 he boldly took over as editor of the Prince of Wales's new magazine *Perspectives* which had suffered from being pulled in too many directions by the many forceful people involved in the Prince's Architecture School. Over four years Worsley fulfilled the Prince's mission of creating an architectural magazine for the general reader, giving it an edge and using colour to raise the profile of good design. While championing classical and contextual architecture he determinedly broadened the magazine to include contemporary new work. When *Perspectives* was closed, still needing time to build up circulation, Worsley quickly

found a new opportunity as Architecture Critic for the *Daily Telegraph*. After a few notable barbs aimed at Lords Foster and Rogers, Worsley progressively spread his writing across a wide spectrum, latterly becoming an ardent champion of Zaha Hadid.

The best known of Worsley's books is his *England's Lost Houses*, a handsome volume in the *Country Life* archive series, accompanied by an exhibition at the Soane Museum. He also carried out a brilliantly skilful editing job on Brian Wragg's *The Life and Works of John Carr*. Carr of York was the most accomplished 18th century country house architect in the north of England but the sheer volume of his output had defeated all previous historians who had set out to write a book on his work. Worsley, with his Yorkshire background, brought the task to a triumphant conclusion.

Though always a journalist Worsley has strong academic leanings and took pride in his position as Senior Resident Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research. As editor of the *Georgian Group Journal* he played a key role in shaping it as a forum for new research. He also had a lively penchant for stylistic attributions (disapproved of by the previous generation which had fought with brilliant success to put British architectural history on a solid foundation of documentary evidence).

Worsley's most recent salvo of this kind was an intriguing though not conclusively proven article in *Country Life*, suggesting that the Hawksmoor model of Easton Neston (acquired for a record price by the British Architectural Library) was actually by William Talman.

When he learnt of his illness Worsley redoubled the pace of his work, completing a book on Inigo Jones which will be published by Yale later this year, and had recently all but finished another volume on baroque architecture. Another key essay on Stiff ("but not dull" as Worsley quipped) Leadbetter, designer of a number of handsome Palladian country houses, had just been completed for the Ancient Monuments Society's *Transactions*.

Worsley served for five years on the Royal Fine Art Commission, where his historical knowledge and concern for context formed an important counterbalance and last year joined the Design Review Committee of CABE, the Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment. He was a longstanding member of the Georgian Group Committee and a Trustee of Somerset House. He was a frequent lecturer, excellent radio broadcaster and recently also a contributor to the *New Statesman*.

Worsley enjoyed boyish charm and good looks but had a steely, even sharp side to his character often found in second sons. He was forthright, incredibly hard working and possessed of an impressive self confidence, not only on his chosen subject, which enabled him to express his views cogently and fluently. In 1996 he married Joanna Pitman, who first rose to prominence as a Japanese correspondent

of *The Times* writing amusing and unusual reports which repeatedly ended up on the front page. He is survived by his wife and his three young daughters.

## Other Organisations

### Historic Chapels Trust Annual Conference in Todmorden Unitarian Church, June 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>

The HCT annual conference is strongly recommended to all committed to the religious heritage and engaged in church repair and regeneration, as well as those involved in urban and rural regeneration and lay people with a strong desire to know more. A great range of speakers is lined up for the two days, including three members of the SAVE Committee, Alan Beith MP, Crispin Truman from the Churches Conservation Trust and Shaman Kadish of Jewish Heritage UK. For more information contact the HCT on 020 7481 0533 or look up [www.hct.org.uk](http://www.hct.org.uk)

### The Regeneration Through Heritage Handbook

This rather nifty publication from the Prince's Regeneration Trust offers advice to community groups considering taking on a building and make a real difference in their area. It looks at a series of case studies where Regeneration Through Heritage, one of the two organisations within the Prince's Regeneration Trust, has helped enable local groups to broker deals with local authorities, owners and developers to solve the problems surrounding buildings at risk, with often spectacular results. The book guides you through from finding a building to the very last step, seventy pages on, of delivering the project.

Copies are available free to community groups working with the trust, otherwise it's available at all good bookshops for £12.50 (ISBN 1 86077 391 5)

### Markets – Common Ground's *Producing the Goods*

Common Ground is a remarkable organisation that encourages people to stand up for their places. The latest missive to arrive at SAVE from Common Ground is its "*Manifesto for Markets*", the second in its *Producing the Goods* series. The manifesto is eminently worth reproducing here - so much of it rings true for conservation in general rather than just markets, supporting and spurring on local regeneration, not ignoring a place's assets.

*Markets should be:*

- *True to their place, adding to local distinctiveness*
- *At the heart of a town's cultural and commercial life*
- *Maintained as flexible spaces useable for town gatherings*
- *The focus of town regeneration and tourism*
- *Providing an outlet for products and souvenirs of all kinds from the surrounding area, linking countryside with town*



- *Encourage direct selling*
- *Providing fresh, affordable, wholesome food with traceable provenance from as local as possible, reducing food miles, supporting local jobs*
- *Providing a means of selling for local farmers, market gardeners and small producers with a surplus*
- *Provoking market gardens/smallholdings in a town's hinterland through local authority market policy and provision.*
- *Making use of market halls - fine and successful buildings in function and design*
- *Conserved - the shapes, buildings and ghosts of a market and its artefacts (such as cattle troughs) are important cultural memories*
- *Celebrated for their urbanity and their continuing contribution to town and country life*
- *Dynamic - reflecting the comings and going of new communities and the things they buy*

Taken with permission from Common Ground's *Producing the Goods 2: Markets and Market Places* [May 2006] available free with a SAE [A5 x 37pl from Common Ground, Gold Hill House, 21 High Street, Shaftesbury. Dorset SP7 8JE or as pdf from [www.England-inparticular.info](http://www.England-inparticular.info)

We will take a close look at Common Ground's entirely wonderful *England in Particular* in the next *Newsletter*.

## Parting Shot

After two years of excellent work at SAVE, Ela Palmer is heading off to pastures green. Ela's contribution to SAVE over the last two years cannot be overstated - the feat of maintaining the Buildings at Risk Register alone is quite remarkable. We are very pleased to welcome to SAVE David Plaisant as the new Buildings at Risk Officer.

The following is Ela's parting shot - and a fine one it is too.

Apparently, the conservation of the built heritage is a conservative pastime - sometimes with a small 'c', sometimes with a large. Conservationists are living in the past, and have a terror of changes, of development, of the bright new world that can be provided by shiny new buildings. Some people take this further: conservationists are an out of touch elite, only interested in saving the past of the 'socially fortunate', and are able to throw money and time at a campaign or project because they have a surplus of both. As for those communities and individuals who would prefer not to have a seven-storey block of flats next door rather than a Victorian rectory – well, they are just selfish nimbys surely?

In recent years this has been the attitude taken in much of the media, and among those who don't know, or don't wish to know, why it is that people become passionate about the historic environment. We know that these observations are nothing more than hot air, the protestations of certain developers, architects and others who would prefer to see a building of their own – obviously a work of genius – or a

money-making scheme on the site of a historic building. At SAVE we have become increasingly able to knock each stereotype on the head through becoming involved in campaigns of every kind, and it is time for each of the ridiculous claims above to be disproved and forgotten forever, to enable us all to get on with what seems to be a never-ending job – finding new uses for redundant historic buildings, and making sure that the beauty of historic areas is not eaten away by ill-conceived 'improvements'.

First must be addressed the accusation that conservationists, be they local campaigners or professionals, are a reactionary crew who just don't like change. It is inherent in any effort to save anything, be it landscape, technology or buildings, that the battle would be lost immediately if obvious changes were accepted. Take the endless problem of plastic windows; if those wishing to protect the character of an area accepted this as normality, then there would be no point in fighting on, as the fundamental interest of the buildings would have been irreparably damaged. However, there are endless examples of cases in which changes are encouraged by conservationists: change of use, sympathetic or creative extensions, even in some cases moving buildings entirely.

A great example is the Museum of Scotland, as the people fighting to protect the integrity of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site and surrounding areas are constantly accused of blindness to the possibilities of development. Here, an 1861 Grade A listed building, one of the finest among many fine buildings on Chambers Street, was extended in 1999 by architects Benson and Forsyth. The result is white, concrete, and seriously beautiful; it echoes details of the surrounding Old Town and even the Castle, and is a daring but sympathetic response to a gap site in a historic area. However, it is not always the case that these sites are given the consideration they deserve - SAVE's ongoing struggle with the turgid office building proposed in the place of Smithfield General Market being one example.

Rather than being obstructive and conservative, conservationists are in fact bearing the standard for quality and sensitivity. The markets at Smithfield are buildings of quality, they add to the enjoyment of the area by a range of different people, and they could easily be reused. Why then is their retention a 'backward looking' reaction to the problem? It is those who think that London needs yet more acres of empty office space that are living in the past.

It is even less difficult to overturn the preconception held by many that conservationists are elitist and narrow-minded in their aims. The 2005 SAVE exhibition '30 Years of Campaigning' proved beyond doubt that this particular organisation takes on the widest possible range of cases, and recognised that the new construction of today may become the listed buildings of tomorrow. Yes, country houses were featured; SAVE was born out of a desire to stop the wholesale destruction of hundreds of this type of building. However, so were endless mills, terraced housing, the Norman Foster Renault Factory... the charge of elitism

could not be levelled at those campaigning against the northern Pathfinder Schemes, when essentially their quest is to keep communities together and ensure the survival of the places they live and love.

Campaigning, or any type of conservation work, is not about accent or money; most people struggle to keep their ideals and dreams afloat in what is a badly under-funded and poorly-paid industry. What holds it all together is passion, irrespective of class, colour, accent or creed. The pleasure of wandering around a new area and stumbling upon a building or street of beauty or pure quirkiness is not restricted to the 'elite', it is open to all, and it is and the responsibility of all to ensure that we will still be able to do this in the future.

The word 'nimby', or 'Not In My Back Yard' is a bit of a trendy favourite, levelled at those who are concerned about development of any type in the area around their homes. What the nimby-bashers seem to forget is that an intrusive block of flats is not likely to go up in any developer's back yard, it is certainly not going to go up in a councillor's back yard, and MPs are probably safe as well. It is very easy for these people to scoff at the fears of a village population who are losing their green spaces to new housing, and it is true that if there is a housing shortage the land should be made available to building these houses. However, there is a huge amount of brown-field land still to be used, and there is no excuse at all to build unsympathetic and cheap-looking housing in previously attractive areas, which is what the Barker Report seems to be recommending.

This need not be the case, and there are examples of brilliant schemes out there – the Peak District Park has been very strong in ensuring all new housing complements the old in terms of size and materials, without sacrificing creativity of design. However, so often housing is built in the cheapest way possible, and one particular example, in a different part of Derbyshire, has a huddle of red brick faced housing standing metres away from a handsome sandstone house. The problem here is not the housing itself, but the fact that overdevelopment in the name of excessive profit undermines any real consideration for the area and the people already living there. Why should this happen? And why should those who complain be lambasted for wanting to retain their quality of life?

It seems that despite the proven popularity of historic buildings and areas, conservation will always stand thus accused. As people who love old buildings, all we can do is continue to work for their preservation and try every step of the way to overturn each stereotype and remind our accusers, who make the decisions that affect the way we live, that the historic built environment matters to everyone. Strangely enough, one could almost call our accusers an elite...

*Ela Palmer, May 2006*