

# #SPAB ANNUAL REVIEW 2017

Our vision is that old buildings are understood, cared for and appreciated today, and protected for future generations.

## From the director

In 2017, the SPAB's 140th anniversary allowed opportunity to reflect on the past, but the year's focus was firmly on our current strategy. The Society's tried and tested ideas were re-presented in the *SPAB Approach*. Coupled with the *Approach* was our *New Design for Old Buildings*. This book, alongside our well-established Philip Webb Award for young designers, explains our view that additions should be sympathetic to old buildings while contributing to their history and interest. These principles were applied at Clandon Park, Surrey where we supported the National Trust's reconstruction plans following fire damage. How to deal with catastrophes such as fire or flood was also explored in a 2017 SPAB Briefing on disaster recovery.

The Society's highly successful, three year Maintenance Cooperatives Project ended in 2017 with cooperatives established across England. Our principal supporter, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) declared

it was 'mission accomplished'. HLF also supported the Society's Working Party at Lumsdale in Derbyshire, which involved practical work, volunteer training and schools education. In Derry/Londonderry, a further working party proved a terrific first venture for newly-formed SPAB Ireland.

The Society's influence exceeds its modest size as the result of a dedicated staff and an expert and enthusiastic membership. In 2017, our efforts were further boosted by several generous legacies, including one of particular note from the late Enid Lamb linked to mill conservation. This legacy will assist much-needed millwright training. The Society's financial position in 2017 remained strong, with generous donations, grants and legacies increased by positive investment returns. A surplus for the year of around £280 000 will help new projects and the expansion of existing work in 2018.

*Matthew Slocombe, SPAB director*

**The SPAB's mission:**

**The SPAB Approach is adopted by all people caring for old buildings.**

**To supply expertise that keeps old buildings useful, beautiful and part of people's lives.**

**To connect with all people who appreciate old buildings or care for them.**



# Hands-on learning

## Working Parties

The SPAB Working Parties allow us to put our expertise into practice by joining forces with building enthusiasts, specialists and professionals, and a local community to repair a building in need.

In July '17 we embarked on the slightly more unusual project of repairing a ruined mill complex in Lumsdale, Matlock, Derbyshire. The site, a Scheduled Ancient Monument provided a range of activities for our enthusiastic but expertly divided heritage volunteers. Repointing and consolidating stone walls, timber repairs, applying a grassy 'soft cap' to the ruins and slate roofing were some of the techniques volunteers could try, all under the guidance of conservation specialists.

During the week the SPAB held an open day that began at nearby Cromford Mill, an evening celebration for SPAB members and local residents, a learning day for a local school and a well-attended Faith in Maintenance event at St Mary's, Cromford. Throughout the week over 60 volunteers came to Lumsdale from all over the country, with some people travelling from Europe.

One volunteer said the most valuable thing they took away from the experience was: "the opportunity to meet a range of hugely interesting and knowledgeable conservation professionals, and making many new friends".

## Derry/Londonderry

The newly-formed SPAB Ireland's first major event was the Derry/Londonderry Working Party on 24–27 August. After securing funding from the Heritage Council the event ran as part of Heritage Week.

The focus of the work for the four days was the repair of a rubble stone garden wall running alongside an end-of-terrace house on De Burgh Terrace. The goal was to teach the 25 volunteers to prepare and work with hot-mixed lime mortars. Small groups were led by SPAB Fellow Eoin Madigan, a sixth generation stonemason, and SPAB Scholar and Guardian Conor Meehan. The event was made possible by a warm and welcoming community.

# Scholars and Fellows

The Scholarship and Fellowship programmes embrace a hands-on approach. These unique schemes sees craftspeople and building professionals visiting workshops, sites and historic houses across the country, and learning from the very best in building conservation.

2017 marked the 30th anniversary of the William Morris Craft Fellowship, an initiative to foster a new generation of highly skilled craftspeople.

This year, Fellows were Gregor Alcorn, a stonemason working in Shetland for Historic Environment Scotland; Jack Clare, a stained glass conservator and director at Holy Well Glass Limited; Dale Perrin, a self-employed carpenter from Chelmsford, Essex; and Paul Walters, a plasterer from Carmarthenshire who runs Just Lime Limited in south Wales.

Gregor Alcorn on his Fellowship experience: "It has been a privilege and a pleasure. A unique opportunity to meet a large variety of craftspeople and professionals engaged on conservation projects throughout the UK giving wide and varying knowledge and understanding. Achieving the number of visits in six months is only possible on the Fellowship."

The Scholarship programme, a scheme for architects, engineers and surveyors working in building conservation, runs alongside the Fellowship and takes a similar hands-on educational approach. This year's Scholars were Kristian Foster (architect), Lilian Tuohy Main (architect) and Aoife Murphy (structural engineer).

Lilian Tuohy Main on her Scholarship experience: "Passion, dedication and willingness to share knowledge have been the common

traits amongst everyone we've been lucky enough to meet on the Scholarship".

The Scholarship supporters were: Alan Baxter Foundation, Wheeler Foundation, The Dance Scholarship Trust, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, The John Vickers Charitable Trust, The Drake Trust, Patrick Plunket Memorial Trust, Cathedral Architects Association. The Fellowship supporters were: Carpenters Company, Carrington 1953 Ltd, Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, Stuart Heath Charitable Settlement, Hazel Guile, The Building Limes Forum, The Churches Conservation Trust, The Drake Trust, The William Morris Society, William Morris Craft Fellowship Trust, Fellowship presentation donors: Fullers Builders Ltd, PAYE, Houghtons of York, Lodge & Sons, Dr Peter T J Rumley FSA.



ABOVE  
Hands-on conservation with SPAB Ireland: teaching volunteers to prepare and work with hot-mixed lime mortars.  
CREDIT: JOHN MCDAID



RIGHT ABOVE →  
Applying a soft capping to the ruins at Lumsdale, Derbyshire.  
CREDIT: RALPH HODGSON



RIGHT BELOW →  
Repointing at the Lumsdale Working Party  
CREDIT: RALPH HODGSON

RIGHT →  
'Passion, dedication and willingness to share knowledge': Scholars and Fellows at Hampton Court Palace  
CREDIT: SPAB



# Campaigning

## Casework

2017 saw an increase in the SPAB's active campaigning and awareness-raising work.

In December the SPAB won a landmark court case involving a harmful proposal to install underfloor heating in the Grade I listed Holy Trinity Church, Poynings, Sussex. An active case since 2015, the SPAB objected to proposals for underfloor heating in the Chantry Chapel on the grounds that the scheme would have buried the medieval monuments of the church's founders under a modern floor and likely exacerbated an existing damp problem in the church. Given that under floor heating was unlikely to provide the results the parish were seeking whilst causing harm to a

medieval church, we felt we must oppose the scheme at Consistory Court when our advice was not taken. Challenging these works and winning at Consistory Court level ensured that the SPAB's practical and conservative approach to repairing old buildings was added to church case law. We are proud to have had a tangible impact on the direction of future church casework.

In March the SPAB wrote to the Secretary of State to request the call-in of an application for the demolition of the Grade II listed Robin Hood Hotel, Newark and its replacement with a new Travelodge after the local council recommended it for approval. The case was called in on heritage grounds and thanks to our involvement and collaboration

with Historic England, the applicant has since withdrawn the applications in the face of a public inquiry.

The SPAB, along with the other National Amenity Societies, produced a cross-organisational database and joint notification system for all casework. This collaborative endeavour allows all National Amenity Societies to streamline their case administration and focus their efforts on saving our built heritage.

With two caseworkers dedicated to Welsh matters, the SPAB continues to strengthen its campaigning voice in Wales. Thanks to the SPAB's ongoing efforts to rescue Eglwys Brewis Church in South Glamorgan, in 2017 the Local Assembly Member, Jane Hutt, set up a working group to establish a new use for the building.

Elsewhere our involvement secured better outcomes for buildings: at St Cadoc's, Pontypool our involvement ensured the survival of historic joinery and at Porth Mawr, Caernafon we advised on a successful scheme to give better public access to the castle.

With the launch of the new website in 2017 came the online and freely-available *Campaign Toolkit* aimed to clarify the planning system and empower communities interested in saving their local heritage.

Historic England generously supports our casework. Casework in Wales is given funding assistance by Cadw.

## EPC Working Group

Well maintained, older buildings can be the very essence of sustainability. They frequently have low embodied energy, comprise durable materials and tolerate sympathetic alterations. Getting maintenance and retrofit right should, therefore, be a priority for a Government facing the twin challenges of climate change and housing shortage. The SPAB and other leading heritage organisations, however, have expressed concern to ministers that current energy conservation policy and practice are flawed in their application to traditional buildings. This not only damages the historic environment but jeopardises human health.

A major problem is that that present policy is over-simplistic and

designed from the perspective of modern construction. In particular, it overlooks the need for old buildings to 'breathe'. Consequently, this risks creating warm, damp buildings with mould, decay and more incidences of diseases such as asthma while saving little, if any, energy. We are also concerned about confusion surrounding the new Private Rented Sector (PRS) Regulations and the need for privately rented buildings to achieve an EPC rating of E or better. Official guidance since 2013 has stated that listed buildings are EPC-exempt when sold or let but the PRS regulations offer no such clear exemption.



LEFT AND ABOVE

Landmark cases:

Holy Trinity Church,  
Poynings, Sussex.

Robin Hood Hotel,  
Newark.

CREDIT: SPAB

RIGHT →

View of Porth Mawr,  
Caernarfon

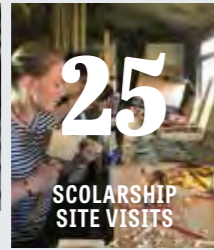
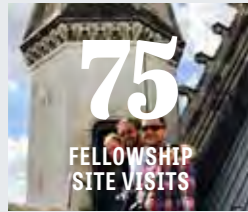
CREDIT: DONALD INSALL  
ASSOCIATES



..... SCHOLARS & FELLOWS .....

**6,000**  
MILES  
TRAVELLED  
BY THE  
FELLOWS

**10,000**  
MILES  
TRAVELLED  
BY THE  
SCHOLARS

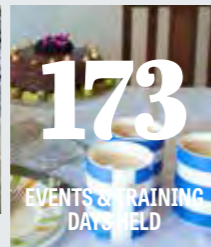
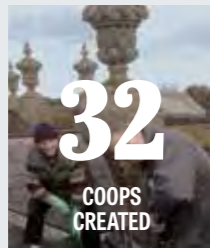


..... MEMBERSHIP  
NUMBERS .....

**5,747**  
MAIN  
SOCIETY

**776**  
MILLS  
SECTION

..... MAINTENANCE  
COOPERATIVES .....



..... SOCIAL MEDIA  
FOLLOWERS .....

**14,977**  
TWITTER

**6,045**  
FACEBOOK

**789**  
INSTAGRAM

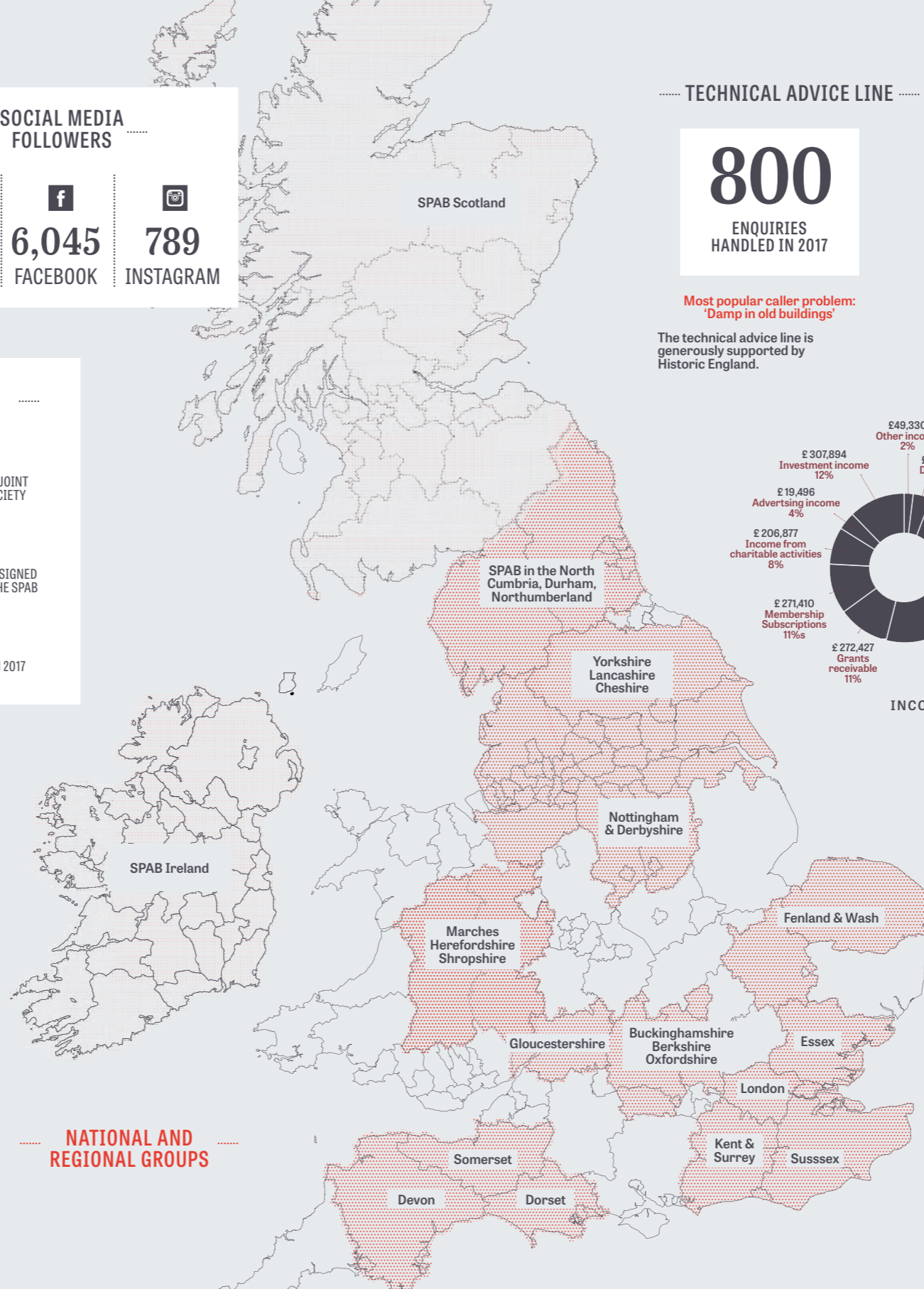
..... CASEWORK  
NUMBERS .....

**6,914**  
APPLICATIONS SENT TO JOINT  
NATIONAL AMENITY SOCIETY  
CASEWORK HUB

**2,258**  
OF THOSE CASES WERE ASSIGNED  
TO AND CONSIDERED BY THE SPAB

**543**  
OF THOSE CASES  
WERE RESPONDED TO IN 2017

..... NATIONAL AND  
REGIONAL GROUPS .....



..... TECHNICAL ADVICE LINE .....

**800**  
ENQUIRIES  
HANDLED IN 2017

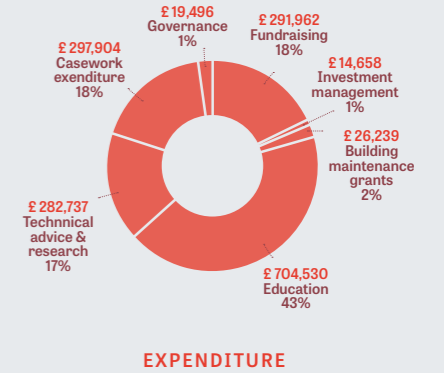
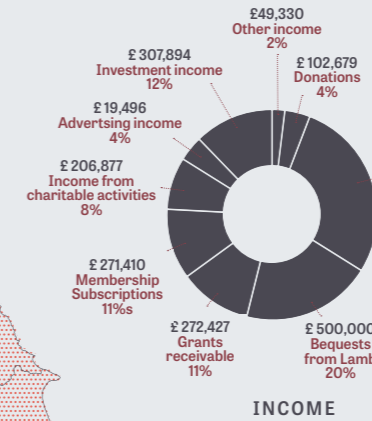
Most popular caller problem:  
'Damp in old buildings'

The technical advice line is  
generously supported by  
Historic England.

..... LEARNING .....



..... FINANCE .....



The SPAB's legal annual report  
and full audited accounts can  
be obtained on request.

**Major donations**

We would like to thank the  
following for their generous donations;  
Richard Broyd, Dr Henry G Bosanquet,  
John Sell, John Mason Wills Trust,  
David Thompson, Prof Martin Rudunek,  
Fabian Ruffers.

**Legacies**

We were very fortunate to receive  
generous bequests from the estates  
of Barry Sharrocks, Thomas Perriman,  
Jean Wilding Walsh, Averill Kelly, Geoffrey  
Chandler, Nigel Power, Eva Brown, Margaret  
Mary Miller, Peter Fowler, Bridget Mary, David  
Hickling and Enid Lamb.

**Grants awarded**

Misses Newcombe Bequest  
for almshouse repair:  
Sackville College, East Grinstead, West Sussex  
Saffron Walden Almshouses, Essex

Baber Fund for emergency work:  
Tyntyla, Rhondda, Wales  
Nash Farm, Fownhope, Herefordshire

Thomas Hardy Fund:  
Chapel, Manor Farm, Stourton Caudle, Dorset

# Our expertise

## Publications

The SPAB Briefing *Disasters and Recovery*, explains how to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to protect old buildings from potential disasters. Available in print format or as a download.

In the autumn we released *The SPAB Approach to the Conservation and Care of Old Buildings*, written by Matthew Slocombe. The beautifully presented booklet combines well-proven principles with practical repair techniques and is available in print format or as a download on the SPAB website.

We gave out 10,000 free, handy, pocket-sized maintenance calendars during National Maintenance Week (17–24 November) to help anyone who cares for a building to schedule simple maintenance tasks throughout the year.

Author Roger Hunt and SPAB Chairman Iain Boyd published *New Design for Old Buildings* with RIBA Publishing in November. The book champions the SPAB's philosophy that good new design should complement and enhance our historic buildings.

## Energy efficiency research

The SPAB Building Performance Survey was established to provide detailed insight into changes in moisture behaviour in traditional solid walls when insulated for better energy efficiency and also assesses the implications for building fabric and human health. This research is providing convincing evidence to support our long-held contention that the use of 'breathable' insulation materials minimises the risk of elevated moisture levels and their detrimental effects.

In addition to material characteristics (including vapour permeability), our research shows how the performance of solid walls after insulation is affected, too, by the external and internal climate, quantity of insulation, building location, orientation and condition. It suggests that excessive insulation thicknesses and non-breathable materials should be avoided. It shows as well, though, that uninsulated solid walls tend to lose less heat than previously thought and that thinner installations of less high performing, more breathable insulation – where insulating is justified – can achieve successful upgrades.

For the detailed results of our research so far, go to the advice section of the SPAB website.

This research was generously supported by Historic England and Historic Environment Scotland.

## New website

We introduced our new-look website featuring a knowledge base filled with technical information, including new guidance on planning and legislation. Another addition is our campaign toolkit, a vital resource for those campaigning for buildings in their local area.

## Maintenance Co-operatives Project 2013–2017

The Maintenance Co-operatives Project (MCP), a £1.2 million endeavour that saw a team of eight work across the country to empower volunteers to maintain their places of worship, drew to a close in 2017.

Over three and a half years the team founded 32 co-operatives in Lincolnshire, Cumbria, the North East, South West and Herefordshire and Worcestershire, formed of inspiring and dedicated volunteers

with a genuine passion for their local heritage. Many groups continue their good work and have inspired other communities to set up their own co-operatives.

There is more to come from the MCP. The remaining funds have been put towards creating a series of training modules bookable through the SPAB education and training team, which is due to be trialled in 2018.

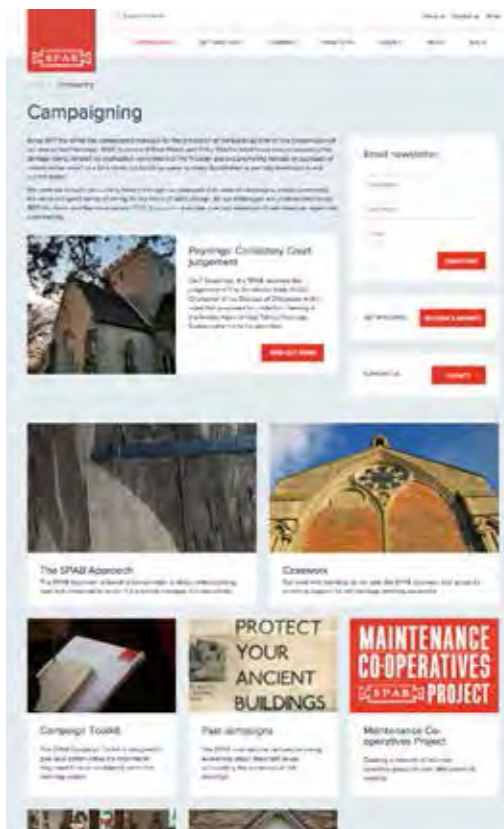
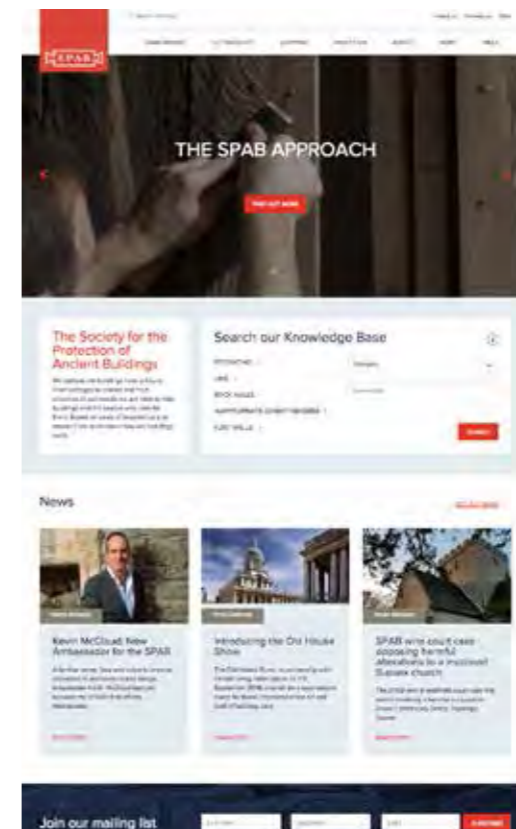
We are greatly indebted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Lottery Players for their support of the project as well as to Drake Trust, Historic England, J Paul Getty Jr Charitable Trust, Leche Trust, Radcliffe Trust, Stephan Clarke 1957 Charitable Trust, The Garfield Weston Foundation, and York Consortium for Conservation and Craftsmen.

## Extending the knowledge base

The SPAB presented two major day-seminars on technical subjects, intended both to explore current issues in key areas of conservation and to offer a forum for discussion and exchange amongst delegates from a variety of backgrounds. Our topical *Fire in Old Buildings* day examined prevention and protection, post-fire recovery and approaches to reconstruction. *Conservation Mortars for the Twenty First Century* extended the debate about the range and selection of building limes and their use, but also highlighted the role of earth mortars, and available techniques for repairing modern buildings constructed in concrete and cement.



LEFT TO RIGHT  
Publications in 2017: SPAB Briefing, The Approach, New Design for Old Buildings, and pages from the SPAB website.



## Awards and events

### Awards

2017 saw lively competition for SPAB awards. The John Betjeman Award for repairs to places of worship attracted an impressive 29 entries from across England and Wales. Terracotta conservation at St Pancras New Church, Euston Road emerged as the winner from a strong shortlist. Equally impressive were the 17 entries submitted for the Philip Webb Award design competition by young architects from 11 UK schools of architecture. Marta Ascenso of Glasgow School of Art took first prize with her scheme to revitalise the ruined Italian hill town of Craco in Basilicata.

Stafford Holmes, an architect specialising in the use of traditional building materials, received the Esher Award for his outstanding contribution to conservation.

To mark the 30th anniversary

of its William Morris Craft Fellowship, the SPAB instituted the Gwyn Watkins Award, named in honour of an early stonemason Fellow who was a superb craftsman and an inspirational mentor to the Fellows who came after him. The first awards were presented to stone conservator Dr David Carrington and bricklayer Emma Simpson for their contribution to sustaining traditional buildings skills and their long-term support of the Fellowship.

The close of 2017 also saw the launch of the Gloria e Marco Award, in memory of young architects Gloria Trevisan and Marco Gottardi who tragically lost their lives in the fire at Grenfell Tower. An initiative of Gloria's employer, Peregrine Bryant Architects, the award will provide an annual bursary and structured study visit to the UK for a young Italian architect interested in conservation.

The SPAB will administer the fund and – with others – contribute to the programme.

### Events

**Open House.** In September we welcomed over 500 visitors to our headquarters for Open House London. As well as exploring our Georgian headquarters, visitors also had a chance to try traditional peg-making with carpenter, John Russell. **Members' Weekend:** the ancient city of York was the site for the annual members' weekend and meeting in June, with over 100 members attending (pictured below). **National Garden Scheme:** we were delighted to open our shaded courtyard for a second time for the ever-popular National Garden Scheme event, partnering with other gardens in Spitalfields.



LEFT & BELOW

Philip Webb Award winner and the winning scheme to breathe new life into Basilicata, a town in Italy abandoned in the 1970s after a landslide.

CREDIT: GRAHAM PRICE



LEFT

SPAB members at York Minster

CREDIT: ANDY MARSHALL



CREDIT: MARTA ASCENSO

## SPAB sections

### SPAB Scotland

SPAB Scotland focused its events on historic decorative plasterwork, beginning in March with a guided tour of the workshop of the plastering firm Grandison & Son, a business of historic importance. The visit was part of the AGM at Peebles's Eastgate Theatre & Arts Centre, which also included a tour of nearby Traquair House, a 15th-century stately home. During the second Crafts Symposium in Falkland, Fife, SPAB Scotland was involved in demonstrations of historic construction skills, which included plastering, masonry work and thatching. In September there was a tour of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh, to see the spectacular plasterwork and plastering demonstrations, as part of SPAB Scotland's contribution to the Edinburgh Doors Open Days.

### SPAB Ireland

In 2017 a group of Irish SPAB Scholars and Fellows joined together to form SPAB Ireland. The newest branch of the SPAB is an active and friendly community that aims to protect and promote the wonderful national built heritage on the island of Ireland. It has its own Committee, which focuses on organising hands-on activities and social events. In May it held a lime day at Russborough House, Co. Wicklow in collaboration with the Building Lime Forums Ireland and a Working Party in Derry/Londonderry in August, along with social events including a fundraising quiz. The first Irish Maintenance Week rounded off a successful inaugural year.

### SPAB Mills Section

2017 saw two very successful day meetings, *Wheels of change: natural*

*power in the Industrial Revolution* and *From quern to computer*, at the Mills Archive, telling the flour milling story. The mills at Charlecote, Swaffham Prior and Bromley-by-Bow hosted three of our annual courses entitled *Maintenance Matters*, and *Practical Flour Milling* (twice). Our new website greatly improves our advice and guidance areas. The Mill Repair Fund offered grants to five watermills<sup>1</sup> and three windmills<sup>2</sup>. The substantial *Lamb Bequest* left to the Section will be used for windmill repair and some will be invested in developing training for millwrights. The Lynn Owen bequest was awarded to Great Chishill Windmill, Cambridgeshire.

<sup>1</sup> Watermills: Sutton Mandeville, Wiltshire; Winchester City, Hampshire; Eskdale, Cumbria; Beeleigh, Essex; Wath, North Yorkshire

<sup>2</sup> Windmills: Burwell, Cambridgeshire; Wymondham, Leicestershire, Wheatley, Oxfordshire.



LEFT

Wheatley Mill, Oxfordshire is the recipient of a mill repair fund grant for new sails.

CREDIT: SPAB

RIGHT →

Plastering demonstrations for doors open day in Edinburgh.

SPAB Ireland day workshop: Learning about lime at Russborough House.

CREDIT: SPAB



## Our committees

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PART OF THE YEAR  
Ian Harper  
PART OF THE YEAR

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Simon Hudson  
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CHARITY NO. 111 3753  
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COMPANY NO 5743962

Support the SPAB! Become a member.

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