Graveyard Shift

Exploring Edinburgh’s historic burial sites
Bridgewater House was built to the sober designs of Sir Charles Barry from 1847-54, then richly decorated by Prince Albert’s favourite designer Jakob Götzenberger. Their collaboration created one of London’s most extraordinary residences. Tucked away next to Green Park, the vast atrium of its ‘Great Saloon’ is a riot of colour, marble and gilding with a faceted crystal glass vault: a basilica dedicated to the worship of Victorian cultural eclecticism.

It made a superb venue for our Summer Party, thanks to the generosity of its owner, Dr Yiannis Latsis. Around 200 guests converged for an evening to celebrate our achievements and partnerships over the last year, with engaging speeches by John Julius Norwich and Robert Wilson.
This issue of Monumentum heralds change. Most obviously, it looks different: it is four pages longer, and has been redesigned to be more elegant and navigable. We hope you enjoy it.

But the time is upon us to make a more fundamental shift to meet the demands and priorities of a more volatile world, of a less favourable climate for the essential charitable support we rely upon.

As we approach the conclusion of our £10 million target for Stowe, the last Robert Wilson Challenge funded project in the UK, Robert Wilson speaks in this issue about the imperative of philanthropy in preserving what we hold to be valuable.

We have much to do: the 2012 World Monuments Watch will be announced in early October, with a variety of new challenges that will bring a fresh direction to our work at sites around Britain, with potential partnerships being explored and developed as I write.

There is also change amongst our staff. Cathy Giangrande is opening a new chapter of her career, and we offer great thanks for her lead in our fundraising successes to date. David Gundry, WMF Britain’s Projects Director of six years is also moving on, having motivated and built partnerships with the custodians of sites in need. He has overseen the completion of an array of major projects, which he reviews in this issue. We wish David well in his advanced studies at the London School of Economics, and his ongoing engagements. New members of staff will join us in due course, in what is bound to develop and build on our work to date with a new complexion.

And, at the end of this year, we are also changing our offices, moving to Cowcross Street in Farringdon. It’s an exciting and creative area close to the City, with a facility for lectures and exhibitions, and we’ll encourage you to visit us. Supporters should experience our development as a positive direction, with three lectures this Autumn, whilst in Spring 2012 we’ll be introducing cinema evenings as well as study days and longer visits to inspiring new sites around the country that we will help to secure and revitalise, together.
To those aware of them, Edinburgh's inner-city graveyards are doorways into a richly evocative world, which still has the power to disturb and startle with the otherness of the past. Sadly, to many, their riches remain hidden. Over the last five months a small team assembled by WMF and Edinburgh World Heritage Trust has been investigating the five historic graveyards included in WMF's 2010 Watch List – the three kirkyards of St Cuthberts, Greyfriars and Canongate and the two burial grounds of Old and New Calton.

These graveyards are all found within the urban landscape of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site. The contrast between the medieval Old Town and Georgian New Town, linked by the Waverley Valley, is described by UNESCO as “unrivalled in Europe” and the five graveyards are an important aspect of this cityscape. Their layout and design, and the stones, monuments and other built features they contain, capture an unparalleled record of Edinburgh’s transition from a fifteenth century medieval burgh to a European Enlightenment city in the Georgian era.

Historic graveyards are especially rich cultural resources that can relate the story of a whole city. Moreover, the gravestones and monuments are in themselves significant architectural objects of great aesthetic and cultural merit. Their value extends across archaeology, sculpture, social and local history, theology and bio-diversity. These topics can be explored at various levels, from a single gravestone commemorating a person, family or community, right up to offering evidence of major national and international cultural changes – such as the Reformation and globalisation.
The view of Edinburgh Castle from St Cuthbert’s kirkyard.
The oldest document in the Scottish Records Office, dated 1127, is a charter granted by King David I which gives all land below Edinburgh Castle to St Cuthbert’s. It is believed that there has been a church dedicated to St. Cuthbert at this location since the eighth century, one of Scotland’s oldest sites of religious worship. That a long-standing and popular site for inhumations was so central led to problems. A St Cuthbert’s Kirk Session record of 1646 stipulates: “No burials should take place between six in the morning and seven at night because of the problems of the plague.”

Within the present graveyard there are 505 monuments, 14 tombs and 227 wall plaques: amongst these, the surviving collection of largely eighteenth century carved stones is of most interest, as they display the names and trades of the characters who forged the Georgian city. They are spread over a series of rectangular areas separated by stone walls that themselves bear memorial tablets, a pattern that may well lend itself to careful environmental management with the aim of encouraging greater bio-diversity within the city centre.

Close to the Palace of Holyrood, Canongate extends behind the Kirk in a sudden northwards decline from the Royal Mile and is terraced to obtain more level ground throughout the site. This exposure results in excellent views north to Calton Hill, an acropolis of many impressive nineteenth century neo-classical structures. These attributes contribute to a tranquil and open space, in sharp contrast to the cheek-by-jowl nature of much of the Old Town. But it wasn’t always peaceful. Two centuries ago, a night watch was established and mortsafes were ordered to protect newly buried bodies which were at risk of being sold to the medical school for dissection.

Overcrowding in the mid sixteenth century led to the establishment of Greyfriars Kirkyard on the site of a disbanded Franciscan monastery. It was also used as a gathering and social space and therefore played an important part in burgh life. Restrictions determined the placement and style of the monuments, ensuring that only the richest families could erect memorials during this period. This resulted in a very high standard of design and execution, creating a preponderance of grander funerary monuments unique to the site.

By the late eighteenth century, it was overflowing. “The graves are so crowded on one another that the sextons frequently cannot avoid in opening a ripe grave, encroaching on one not fit to be touched! The whole presents a scene equally nauseous and unwholesome,” (Hugo Arnot, describing Greyfriars in 1776). In the 1860s remaining concerns for public health resulted in recommendations for it to be closed to all but those families that owned private lairs within.

Old Calton burial ground was established during the early 1700 by the Incorporated Trades of Calton to support impoverished families of tradesmen through the collecting of ‘Freemen’s dues’, the renting of burial plots and burial charges. It is now recognised as highly significant within a wider landscape of monuments.
on Calton Hill, and because of the sites’ visual prominence from the Old Town and North Bridge. As well as famous monuments to the philosopher David Hume and to the Scottish-American soldiers of the American Civil War, much of interest can be found in the southern part of the burial ground, including some very primitive headstones that commemorate cobbler’s and their families.

As they are no longer used for burials and yet continue to be the responsibility of the Council’s Bereavement Services department, there are ever more limited financial resources available for adequately monitoring and maintaining these important urban spaces. For some, the graveyards are used for a relaxing lunch break or afternoon walk, but they remain generally underused and unappreciated. For a variety of reasons, this has led to concerns for public safety, and the graveyards have become notorious for illicit use after dark. Many memorials have been laid down and remain unrebuilt. Edinburgh Council, in nominating the graveyards to the Watch, recognised that the full potential for environmental improvements, community use and enjoyment was being lost. The idea of a ‘Graveyard Trust’ had been discussed for a number of years, and as a result of this project it is expected that this will soon provide a vehicle for the local community to become involved with the management and care of the graveyards.

Subsequent to the successful Watch nomination in 2010, a project team led by Dr. Susan Buckham will outline a strategy in preparation for greater community involvement and fundraising. This has brought together much of the existing knowledge about the graveyards, and led to the commissioning of new academic research into how they have been perceived and enjoyed over the 18th and 19th centuries. As well as helping to understand the significance of the graveyards this research will be used to produce information so that the many thousands of visitors to Greyfriars Kirkyard may be encouraged to experience the other sites. We are also considering how to make the spaces safer, more user-friendly and to encourage a greater range of wildlife habitats.

However, the primary focus of the project is to understand how other successful historic burial landscapes are managed, and to engage with the communities who live near and use these graveyards in an effort to establish how they might wish to become part of a Trust. Already over 30 organisations and community groups have been involved, and we have had some fantastic results from our work, which will shortly be published in a report to be presented to the City of Edinburgh Council. We will also be present at Edinburgh’s Doors Open Day (24th and 25th September) when we would welcome the opportunity to speak to visitors of St. Cuthbert’s and Old Calton.

This project was made possible, in part, by The Paul Mellon Estate and the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust.

Images within this article are generously provided by Robert Reinhardt.
INTERNATIONAL

EARTH, WIND AND SKY

Preserving America’s earliest solar observatory at the pre-Inca Chankillo, Peru

By Norma Barbacci
Images by Ivan Ghezzi
To enthusiasts of history, Peru is most readily associated with Cusco and Machu Picchu, two impressive sites built by the Inca, a formidable civilization that ruled over most of South America from the fifteenth century until the capture and execution of the last Inca emperor Atahualpa by the Conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1533. But who came before the Inca? The cultures that preceded them by hundreds if not thousands of years built scores of impressive monuments such as the Nazca Lines of c.450-650 A.D., a network of routes interspersed with characters – monkeys, fish, humming birds and many others – drawn by scraping away the red oxide of the desert to reveal whiter rocks beneath. The colourfully painted adobe brick pyramid of Huaca de la Luna near Trujillo is part of a complex serving as the capital of the Moche people, c. 100-900 A.D.; and there is Caral, the earliest city in America, dating back to 3,500 B.C., which was only discovered in 1948. But one of the most remarkable and spectacular of all is Chankillo, a ceremonial site that may be the earliest solar observatory built in America – 1700 years before the Inca began their expansion.

Chankillo is located in Casma, within the coastal area of Ancash, 400 km North of Lima, in a hilly region that was ignored by colonial chroniclers despite its rich archaeological treasures, and is little known today. It was first reported by travellers in the 19th century, and was partially excavated in the mid-20th century, but it was not until 2007, through the investigations of Ivan Ghezzi and his colleagues, that the site became internationally recognized as important for the study of archaeoastronomy. Ghezzi’s research proved that the concentric walls and elaborate gates of Chankillo were not part of a ‘fortress’ as previously believed, but provided the setting for ceremonial battles that took place around a fortified temple controlled by an elite between 400 B.C., until its systematic destruction around 100 B.C. The site spreads over 4 sq. km of desert and besides the circular walls and temple, it contains several other structures built of cut stone and mud mortar, including its most striking feature – thirteen towers built along a north-south ridge, presenting a toothed horizon that when seen from two opposite observation structures, marked with high accuracy the sunrise and sunset during the entire year. As Ghezzi points out, this monumental solar calendar was not
designed for mundane activities such as planting and harvesting, but to control more important ceremonial and religious events, and it was this special knowledge held by the rulers of Chankillo, that led to their rise and eventual destruction by competing forces.

Two thousand years of exposure to earthquakes and the environment have taken their toll on the stone walls of Chankillo, while the recent increase in the numbers of visitors who come to the site intrigued by the mysterious towers, have become a new source of concern. These threats, plus the opportunities for research and development offered by Chankillo, prompted its inclusion on the World Monuments Fund’s Watch List of Endangered Heritage in 2010, and the commitment to provide financial support for its documentation and conservation, and the elaboration of an integrated site management plan. The main goals are to preserve and present the site as well as to develop it as a sustainable source of economic opportunity for this under-developed region of Peru. In addition, due to its outstanding universal value, Peru’s Ministry of Culture has initiated the process for nominating Chankillo to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

A team of archaeologists, architects, conservators and surveyors have been assembled by WMF, under the supervision of the Instituto de Investigaciones Arqueológicas (IDAQ), led by Ivan Chezzi. Their first phase of work includes laser scanning the entire site, targeted archaeological excavations, and a condition survey to be completed in 2011. The following phases will include structural stabilization and conservation work, as well as the development of interpretive material designed to tell the fascinating story of Chankillo’s rise and fall. Lastly will come, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture of Peru, the establishment of a management structure intended to secure the preservation and development of the site for the benefit of present and future generations.

"Chankillo provided the setting for ceremonial battles around a fortified temple"

MORE ONLINE
To find out more go to www.wmf.org/project/chankillo

above
Sunrise visible from the observatory building, such as this one between Towers 12 and 13, indicated critical dates and allowed the organisation of a ceremonial calendar based on the passage of the sun.

left
Photo and video recording of one of the main gates, conducted before archaeological excavations as part of the 2011 condition survey.
On 6 June 2011 one of America’s major philanthropists spoke at WMF Britain’s Summer Party, thirteen years after launching the $100 million World Monuments Fund Robert W Wilson Challenge to Conserve Our Heritage.

In 1986, at age 60, Robert Wilson retired from a legendary career managing his own hedge fund, spent the next decade travelling around Europe listening to opera, and then decided to try to give away 70% of his net worth during his remaining lifetime. Not a fan of dormant funds such as endowments, or swollen college alumni campaigns, he has instead given huge sums, primarily to the direct action of environmental charities. To this end, he has to date divested from his personal fortune roughly $600 million.

Having witnessed the loss of Penn Station, a galvanizing moment for many Americans, Mr Wilson is very conscious of the fragility of our inherited built environment. In World Monuments Fund he found an efficient organization capable of delivering expert support. As he told Portfolio in 2007: “My primary interest has been conservation – the idea that but for my money, this building or piece of land would be gone. To that end, I have been a substantial donor to the World Monuments Fund, which preserves old buildings around the world.”

The WMF Wilson Challenge was structured as a matching award programme aiming to inspire others to contribute in turn, building a more global culture of philanthropy. It was therefore conditional upon equal contributions by non-US entities (private donors, charities, corporate gifts and government agencies, etc), raised through working in close collaboration with site custodians. The results are remarkable: 302 awards have been made to 178 sites in 48 countries, which brought $121 million in matching funds. The United Kingdom and Ireland was the single largest beneficiary, with $14.207 million spread across 16 sites. Half of that sum has contributed to our work at Stowe, the greatest investment of any WMF project, and the last Wilson Challenge project in the UK. The platform has enabled WMF and its British office to flourish. Now is the time to build on Mr Wilson’s example.

At the Summer Party his major message was: “If you have a lot of money, take on to yourself the duty of giving it away aggressively and intelligently. Don’t fob the job off on your family or some bureaucratic foundation.”

Robert Wilson

By Jonathan Foyle
Stowe’s Egyptian Hall was perhaps the earliest Egyptian Room in Britain. It was begun in 1803, just a year after Vivant Denon published the scenes encountered by Napoleon’s conquering army.

Stowe was a summer palace of vast rooms, whose gardens were dependent on the warm months when the family entertained and public visitors explored the extraordinary Arcadian landscape so the great irony of this important room is its purpose as a winter entrance, when the family appear not to have been in residence.

It offers access to the basement level of the house, via a cobbled porte cochere beneath the steps to the north front, for days of cold wind and rain. Upon entrance, through a glazed door no ancient Egyptian would have recognised, its sloping walls immediately hint at a deep history, no doubt helped by the low light on this side of the house. Straight ahead is the central door to ‘Plug Street’: the service corridor, illuminated not by a fanlight but a crystal disc as if the flaming eye of Ra. To the right, occupying an exedra with a columned screen was once a sarcophagus, as shown in Nattes’ drawing of 1805. This example never held a mumified body or threatened plague, as it was a novelty stove radiating heat to salve the windswept visitor. To the left were two sphinxes flanking the stairs (they always guard entrances). They were also shown by Nattes, and are also long-gone.

The opportunity for paint research revealed something else about the room: its paint was originally stone-coloured and laced with sand.

The room is so essentially complete as to be capable of restoration. Work begins soon so that it will regain its atmosphere and essential features, and offer visitors their first experience of a restored, and surprisingly intimate, fine room.
After six years, I’ve decided to leave WMF Britain for pastures new. I’m grateful for my time at WMFB which has been wonderful; there are few organisations in which you have the opportunity to work with so many talented and committed people on so many incredible projects - every one has been special.

The recession over the last few years has been challenging for all charities, including WMFB. But not only have we been able to remain effective throughout this period, we are within sight of completing our largest ever project, at Stowe House. Over the last six years we have invested about £12.9m of our donors’ money and this has made possible a huge range of projects in the UK and beyond. Heritage Counts estimates that this will generate £33.4m of benefits over a ten year period, which is a significant contribution to the whole country.

But more importantly, what has been achieved with this investment? The full list of over 20 projects is too long to include here but the short answer is – a huge amount! My overriding feeling is that we have been highly responsive in creating partnerships with site custodians and working with them to address a broad range of issues. Whether it is restoring a concert hall in Liverpool or exhibiting sculptures at Tate Britain, our work is never straightforward because heritage is a subject that people rightly feel very strongly about. We have taken on sites that many people had claimed were almost beyond help, and through skill and perseverance have helped turn them around. St. George’s Bloomsbury is probably one of the best examples, but there are many others. With WMF’s Watch, I’ve found that our non-financial support of organisations and communities has been greatly appreciated and equally effective.

The best way to demonstrate the value of our work is to see how it has benefited people’s lives. At the National Palace of Queluz in Portugal we established an on-site conservation studio that continues to be used today, we have supported the training of carpenters and stonemasons at Stowe and more recently Strawberry Hill has become a vibrant house museum and community resource with over 100 local volunteers participating in its day-to-day operation. It is a legacy I’m very happy to be part of.

Queluz Palace Gardens, Lisbon, Portugal

It had been many years in the making, but on Friday 24 June WMF Britain’s work at Queluz Palace near Lisbon was completed with the reinstatement of John Cheere’s lead statuary. WMF’s Chairman Christopher Ohrstrom, President Bonnie Burnham and WMF Britain’s Jonathan Foyle joined the celebration with representatives of WMF Portugal, Queluz palace, and the Portuguese First Lady, Maria Cavaco Silva.

Cheere’s figurative mythological groups had been on a long journey, from the commissioning of ninety groups at Hyde Park Corner in 1755-6 by an agent of the Infante Dom Pedro, to be delivered to his new palace gardens at Queluz. Some groups were to adorn fountains by Jean-Baptiste Robillion; others to preside over a long, tiled canal. Not all the sculptures survive in situ: several may have gone to Brazil at the French invasion of 1807, whilst those we have conserved arrived back in London two centuries later to be stitched, cleaned and refinished in Whitechapel under the expert eye of Rupert Harris. Two groups then went to Tate Britain for exhibition to be enjoyed by thousands, before their return to Queluz. The training of Portuguese conservators in the art of leadwork should encourage them to be admired in-situ for the foreseeable future.
LECTURES & TALKS
AUTUMN 2011

We host speakers from the worlds of photography, film and architectural heritage this Autumn. Each speaker will give their unique take on the built environment, drawing on experiences from their distinguished careers. Audience participation is very much encouraged.

Julian Fellowes
On Location in the Past
Thursday 29 September, 7 pm

As the acclaimed writer of Gosford Park and Downton Abbey, Oscar-winner Julian Fellowes ensured that his gripping historical narratives were filmed within ideal historic locations. But how were those sites chosen? What were the challenges of dressing buildings and gardens as scenography? And how did various historic settings ultimately contribute to his stories? Julian explains all in conversation with WMF Britain’s Chief Executive, Jonathan Foyle and the audience.

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Don McCullin & Barnaby Rogerson
Southern Roman Frontiers
Monday 12 September, 7pm

Don McCullin’s reputation as the greatest photographer of conflict has been replaced recently with his image as a great traveller. He is now as familiar with far-flung parts of the globe as he once was to life in the war zone. His recent book explores the fringes of the Roman Empire, with contributions from Barnaby Rogerson, a historian of North Africa. From the ruins of Baalbek in the Lebanon to Aleppo in Syria, the book sweeps through Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, and features many WMF Watch sites.

Britain’s Buildings, Lost and Saved
Wednesday 26 October, 7pm

The 2012 World Monuments Watch will be launched in October 2011. It will include a number of British sites at risk, highlighting some of the challenges we currently face in preserving our built environment. This evening features an account of the Watch with the UK sites, followed by presentations from prominent authors on vanished buildings: Philip Davies and Gavin Stamp, with an audience-led discussion on the best way forward.

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VENUE
Royal Geographical Society,
1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR
(doors open and a bar is available from 6.30pm).

TICKETS
WMFB Members £10,
Full price £15

HOW TO BOOK
Call 020 7730 5344 or book online at www.wmf.org.uk/activities

THE MAY FAIR
HOTEL
Often, the differences between a rare and valuable work and a more common example are very small. This is one of many areas where a professional appraisal can help. Our valuers routinely discover hidden treasures when visiting clients - perhaps we can do the same for you.

For a no-obligation discussion about how we can help, please contact Rachel Doerr on 0845 882 2794 or email rachel.doerr@lyonandturnbull.com
ABOUT WORLD MONUMENTS 
FUND BRITAIN

World Monuments Fund Britain is a leading charity which conserves vulnerable buildings in the UK and abroad. We build partnerships with people committed to protecting sites in their care and create long-term public value for the community, whilst preserving built heritage for future generations to enjoy.

We have worked in the UK since 1995 and raised in excess of £18m to safeguard threatened architecture. But our impact goes far beyond this thanks to the biennial World Monuments Watch. The Watch draws attention to important historic buildings across the world which are facing a variety of challenges and have an uncertain future.

Today, as industrialised development, more extreme weather, and a poor economy continue to threaten fragile historic sites, the work of World Monuments Fund Britain is more vital than ever. You can help us build on our past successes by joining us as a Supporter.

WHY SHOULD YOU 
BECOME A SUPPORTER?

Like us, you love old buildings but you’re concerned that some still don’t receive the help they need. World Monuments Fund Britain stands up for these important, and sometimes forgotten, buildings and gives them a better future. If we didn’t have support from people like you we’d be less able to help.

WE DO MORE THAN JUST RESTORE OLD BUILDINGS

We believe that our distinctive architecture is a national asset, so it’s important that communities are able to benefit from their restoration. When we get involved with new projects we make sure visitor centres, charitable partnerships and on-site training programmes are built into the plans right from the start. Every penny you give helps to secure the future of historic buildings for everyone’s enjoyment.

HOW WE THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING US

- Behind-the-scenes access
- Unique opportunities for learning
- Meet like-minded people

TO FIND OUT MORE GO TO WWW.WMF.ORG.UK/INVOLVED OR CALL US ON +44 (0)20 7730 5344