SENT TO COVENTRY

Mending the cracks at St Michael’s Cathedral
We were delighted to see so many of you at our Study Days in the Spring. This season we welcomed more than 100 guests to events where we showcased our work. We use Study Days to give our supporters unique behind-the-scenes access to historic sites, and recently we are hosting a further day at Coventry to explore the medieval heart of the city and we return to St Paul’s for talks on Wolsey, Henry VIII, and Nelson, followed by a boat trip along the Thames. For more details turn to page 12.

1 The ruins of St Michael’s, Coventry, still inspire wonder. 2 A morning conference on stained glass, Strawberry Hill, April 2012. 3 After a morning conference on stained glass, Strawberry Hill, April 2012. 4 The latest at Shobdon Church, Stowe House and our new project at The 50-room Wine House.

THE RUINS OF ST MICHAEL’S, COVENTRY, STILL INSPIRE WONDER.
In the summer of 2011, the ruins of St Michael’s, Coventry, a parish church elevated to cathedral status in 1918, developed sudden and alarming cracks. For a place that was bombed in 1940, cracks may seem to be par for the course. But St Michael’s is no ordinary building. It retains the tallest spire of any medieval parish church, a masterpiece of design and the city’s beacon. And tragically, it is also important as Britain’s only cathedral to be destroyed by war. This open, Gothic amphitheatre has become a globally important icon that warns us of our industrialised capacity to destroy.

In 1951, the competition to design a new cathedral for Coventry was won by Sir Basil Spence. His vision was not to further raze and replace the ruins, but to preserve and develop St Michael’s by linking it-as a physical testimony-to a new cathedral, optimistic and distinctive for a new age. He described his first encounter: ‘The bombed cathedral still had its fine, graceful tower and spire intact…As soon as I set foot on the ruined nave I felt the impact of delicate enclosure. It was still a cathedral. Instead of the beautiful wooden roof it had the skies as a vault. This was a Holy Place, and although the [competition] conditions specified that we need keep only the tower, spire and the two crypt chapels, I felt I could not destroy this beautiful place, and whatever I did I would preserve as much of the old cathedral as I could.’

Half a century on, after its 2012 World Monuments Watch listing, we have combined the site’s urgent needs into a major project. First, we are helping to mend those cracks; protecting the crafted red sandstone with capping, and sealing the fine, but leaking, crypts. We have also funded and commissioned a Conservation Management Plan to enhance the available spaces around the city’s ‘Cathedrals Quarter’ and link them so that they become more useful and coherent, reinforcing the character and story of the city. We then need to realise the contemporary value of its ancient assets.

Amongst our native arts, few are as compelling as stained glass. And the material has a special relationship with Coventry. Six hundred years ago, stained and painted glass was ubiquitous, but the best work was reserved for great churches like St Michael’s, Coventry. When it was built, at the turn of the fifteenth century, the city was home to the nation’s most important glazier, John Thornton. He introduced a lighter, more elegant style of glass art which would inform the practice of glass making in the next century. Thornton went on to create the largest of all our surviving medieval windows- the superb east window of York Minster for which the contract of 1405 survives.

Today, this salvage represents Britain’s largest collection of loose medieval glass. It is stored beneath the modern cathedral, but needs more stable and secure conditions. Each piece is covered in centuries of dirt. And all the faces, creatures, scripts, angels and flowers—a medieval encyclopedia—deserve to be seen and enjoyed by visitors who could help put Coventry on the cultural map. From August until October, Crick-Smith Conservation of the University of Lincoln will be conserving the glass in public view in the Herbert Art Gallery, while the leading authority on John Thornton, Dr Heather Gilderdale Scott identifies and catalogues it. With tremendous support by American Express the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation, and other generous sponsors, we are providing a sensitive and imaginative response to history in an overlooked city, where creativity and craft can engender an enhancement of the past, a reinvestment in the spirit of the place.
Ian Crick-Smith  
**Project Lead Conservator**

“The logistic challenge was to source so much for this ‘pop-up’ lab from scratch, as well as optimising public access. There aren’t many collections of objects on this scale. It’s a complex process and a really high volume of data capture.”

Gemma Smart  
**Conservator**

“I’m excited about it, being from nearby Lichfield. It reminds me of the work I did on the Staffordshire Hoard. The quantity of the glass had been mentioned, but the first day we saw the collection, it took my breath away.”

Jean Lambe  
**Student Conservator**

“I’m from Tipperary, and had just finished a placement with the National Museum in Dublin when I saw the job advertised. The images are so strong- they have such charm!”

Fran Scargill  
**Conservator**

“I trained at the University of York, and know John Thornton’s glass. You can recognise his hand in some of the pieces- especially the way he painted hair, which is really beautiful. We’ll never be able to put it back, so I hope the public sees it. As long as it’s accessible, people will appreciate what they’ve got here.”

Josh Blieve  
**Student Conservator**

“The dirt was unbelievable. We’re removing the evidence of industrial Coventry- for a good reason. It traps water, which harms the glass.”

Kelly Orange  
**Conservator**

“I took this on because I’ll learn a lot and enjoy the immersion - I usually travel to see this sort of thing at historic sites and only get a day with it. But this is a constant revelation.”

Laura Fox  
**Student Volunteer**

“I enjoy the medieval period, and this is one of the largest resources of medieval art we can still handle and be involved with- I’m making a scaled and referenced photograph of each piece. I’d love to see it displayed in a modern context, lit properly and enjoyed.”

Crick-Smith University of Lincoln conservators will be at the Herbert Art Gallery in Coventry until the end of October, cleaning, repairing and cataloguing the glass with the assistance of Art-Historian Dr Heather Gilderdale Scott. Please pop in; it’s free of charge and they would welcome your interest in our work.

**Stage 1**

After a light brushing a dilute solvent is used to wet clean the fragments where required. Some of the larger particles of dirt may be removed using tools.

**Stage 2**

Once the fragments have been cleaned, they are photographed and given a unique reference number. The details are then entered into a database, which also records the condition and location of the fragment.

**Stage 3**

Where fragments have broken with clear breaks they are carefully bonded back together.

The team is conserving the glass using a combination of techniques. The initial stage of the project is to clean and stabilise the fragments to prevent future deterioration. Dust on the surface of the glass can harm the delicate painted surfaces.
Historic sites are related by many disparate threads: history, personalities, style, geography, materials and politics amongst them. But a major unifying theme today is tourism. Large-scale preservation work brings with it advocacy-news of a transformative project or a well-honed story can attract widespread attention. Consequently, travellers for business or pleasure often want to see sites at first-hand, and bring spending money, which can encourage local enterprise.

WMF Britain often considers sustainability with paying visitors in mind: St Paul’s Cathedral, St George’s Hall Liverpool, Strawbery Hill, Stowe and Coventry all rely on tourism for their upkeep. But getting the balance right is a tricky act. As the London Olympics found, there are only so many visitors to go around: one site’s gain can be another’s loss. And too many visitors in one place can cause more harm than good, as this WMF field despatch from Angkor explains, written in March 2012:

For many of the world’s most popular destinations, tourism is both a blessing and a curse. As the number of travellers to sites of historic importance grows, so too does the importance of responsible travel.

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EXHIBITION PREVIEW

SIR JOHN SOANE’S MUSEUM is the result of both serendipity and careful planning. As a venue to showcase World Monuments Fund Britain’s projects, it could not be more apt.

Soane bought 13 Lincoln’s Inn Fields in 1834 for £1,000. He added the adjacent numbers 13 and 14, and brilliantly sculpted his house and studio around a collection of objects that he opportunistically acquired. This unique resource of architecture and imagination was left to the nation in 1837, and it continues to inspire. The nation’s unique resource of architecture and wealth slipped from their grasp. No two weeks are the same; with a diverse portfolio of projects and activities, our Curator Jo Tinworth has contributed, they will forever present their

The new Exhibition Gallery at Sir John Soane’s Museum

“...were added to the WMF 2012 Watch and as such we continue to take a keen interest in...”

“...the celebrated stained glass artist of Coventry’s first medieval glass studio...”

One of the most elaborate of the 275 jewels Soane purchased from the Duke of Buckingham in 1834 for £1,000.

Stowe House remains an important priority for WMFB and I am at Stowe attending meetings at least once a fortnight. Despite many visits, the mansion still takes my breath away and I’m always excited to hear about the new discoveries unearthed by the careful conservation. Recent work in the Music Room has revealed that painted decoration had once extended across the ceiling. The regular Finance Meeting, involving our Finance Director, Ewa Manias, and Stowe House Preservation Trust ensures a close eye is kept on the project costs and the interests of our donors. My work also extends to meeting with Stowe’s new Project Development Officer, Jenna Spellane to discuss the new interpretation centre – we are currently thinking creatively about the content of the centre and looking to other comparable sites across the UK to gather ideas.

No two weeks are the same; with a diverse portfolio of projects and activities. As so much of my time is spent on site, when back in the London office it’s important that I catch up with my colleagues and deal with emails and correspondence, sharing enquiries from potential sites for the next Watch List. Budgets also need to be reviewed, the most recent project costs and to record up to date project costs. Quarterly papers need to be written for WMFB Board Members, as well as project reports for major funders. We share office space with a number of organisations within the built environment and I frequently meet with our neighbours the Twentieth Century Society to obtain updates on the British Brutalism sites which featured on the 2012 Watch. With increasing requests for WMFB support, our workload and funding requirements are steadily increasing. It is only through your support that my work is possible, and I’m always excited to hear about the new discoveries unearthed by the careful conservation.
The Church of St. John the Evangelist, Shobdon, Herefordshire

The grand re-opening of Shobdon Church, Herefordshire was recently held following a successful winter works schedule. The completion of the Church was celebrated at the village’s annual Food and Flower Festival in June 2012 and henceforth has returned to its rightful place on the ‘must see’ list of British parish churches.

The Watch Listing came at a crucial time as, despite as stalwart effort by the Shobdon Church Preservation Trust, their 10 year, £1m campaign was running out of steam. Swiftly the listing’s structure and timber framing in the hanging pendant arches to the Transepts and Chancel was repaired. This would not have been possible without kind support from many individuals, trusts and foundations. Particular thanks goes to Linda K Bennett, The J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, The Paul Mellon Estate and an anonymous benefactor.

The Parish are now focusing on fundraising for the redecoration of the matching Gothick furniture and the repair of the church’s boundary wall. In spite of a few ups and downs along the way, including dealing with the contractor going into liquidation in 2011, this special little church was unveiled at the celebrations performed at the celebrations on St James the Apostle’s Day (25 July), which he personally supervised in 1810, a decade prior to his death. It involved ten young dancing girls from the families of fishermen, to be dressed in white; two widows in black, and a fiddler to play the Furry Dance, each of whom received alms from Knill’s endowment. Remarkably, this still happens, making the monument the centrepiece of a unique living tradition.

The Knill Monument

A new project to repair and conserve the Knill Monument in the Cornish coastal town of St Ives is WMF Britain’s first in this picturesque extremity of the British Isles. The soft high granite pyramid stands on Worvas Hill in the Steele Woodland area and was the last work of John Wood the Younger of Bath, easton, designer of the Royal Crescent in Bath.

The monument needs a condition survey of the granite structure, and was built in 1786 as a mausoleum for John Knill. Knill (1735-1812) was born in Callington, Cornwall, and became customs collector and later the mayor of St Ives in 1767.

What makes this monument especially important is that Knill prescribed an elaborate quinquennial ceremony on St James the Apostle’s Day (25 July), which he personally supervised in 1810, a decade prior to his death. It involved ten young dancing girls from the families of fishermen, to be dressed in white; two widows in black, and a fiddler to play the Furry Dance, each of whom received alms from Knill’s endowment. Remarkably, this still happens, making the monument the centrepiece of a unique living tradition.

The monument needs some repairs - weeds are growing from the joints, the sarcophagus is flooded, and previous repairs have been carried out with inappropriate materials. We are working with a local architect who is undertaking a condition survey of the monument and preparing a specification for repairs.

Conservation and repair work began on the Music Room at Stowe on 23rd April 2012. The project involves the conservation of the Vincenzo Valdè painted panels and ceiling, plaster and joinery repairs, repairs to the timber floorboards and the redecoration of the room.

Decorative plaster ceiling and wall repairs are well underway, and joinery repairs to the doors are ongoing. Conservation contractors, Fairhurst Ward Abbotts and Paine & Stewart, have been working from a tower scaffold on the ceiling cleaning the gilding and painted panels, and decorators are painting in the pale dull green scheme for the main bed colour of the room, as prepared by the specialist historic paint consultant, Patrick Barty.

There have also been some interesting discoveries in the Music Room revealing past decorative schemes. In May, contractors revealed an original decorative paint scheme of a flower motif to the roundels and flat panels, and gilding to the moulded elements on the shutters either side of the west sash window. More recently careful work on the shutters have revealed an illustration of a deity in the upper central panel.

We are still seeking to raise a further £100,000 for Stowe to complete important conservation work. If you would like to support the project, you can donate at www.wmf.org.uk or contact Jules Stowe at jules@wmf.org.uk or email jules@wmf.org.uk A conservator works on the intricate decorative scheme that adorns the Music Room doors.

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EVENTS

AUTUMN 2012 & WINTER 2013

We are delighted to present our events programme for Autumn 2012/Winter 2013. Each event is unique, designed to entertain and intrigue an intelligent audience. We look forward to welcoming you.

LECTURES

Suzannah Lipscomb & Hallie Rubenhold
Behind Closed Doors: The Hidden Histories of Great Buildings
Wednesday 12 September 2012

Conservation work often touches the surface of a deep history. World Monuments Fund Britain has worked on familiar landmarks including Henry VIII’s Hampton Court and Hawksmoor’s St George’s Bloomsbury. This evening, authors Suzannah Lipscomb and Hallie Rubenhold present an entertaining historical context that compares inspiring, intriguing and occasionally scandalous lives from Tudor to Victorian England. Audience participation welcomed. Watch sites feature.

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

TICKETS
WMFB/1805 Club Members £10
Non-members £15

HOW TO BOOK
Call +44 (0)20 7251 8142 or book online at www.wmf.org.uk/activities

STUDY DAY
St Paul’s Cathedral and Thames Cruise
Thursday 27 September 2012
10am – 4.45pm

St Paul’s Cathedral presides over The Thames to tell myriad stories of London’s past. The Oculus at St Paul’s was sponsored by World Monuments Fund/American Express to help tell those stories. Immediately by its entrance sits an extraordinary monument: the tomb of Admiral Nelson, which reused the sculpted sarcophagus made for Cardinal Wolsey, adopted in turn by Henry VIII. This unique day, held in partnership with The 1805 Club, includes talks on Wolsey, Henry VIII, and Nelson, followed by a private cruise along The Thames where we enjoy lunch whilst learning about the Diamond Jubilee flotilla and the capital’s riverside architecture.

WMFB/1805 Club Members £35
Non-members £45

HOW TO BOOK
Call +44 (0)20 7251 8142 or book online at www.wmf.org.uk/activities

Antony Beevor
The Second World War
Thursday 8 November 2012

Bestselling author Antony Beevor presents his latest work ‘The Second World War – an absorbing, unpartly lucid work of military history... exceptionally powerful’, (The Spectator) offering new perspectives on the conflict with particular focus on the fate of the individual. Beevor, known for Stalingrad and Berlin – ‘The Downfall’, joins WMFB as we embark on a major project at Coventry Cathedral to protect and enhance the bombed Cathedral of St Michael’s, now an international icon of reconciliation from war. A book signing will follow the lecture.

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Bettany Hughes
The World That Borned Socrates and its Enduring Impact
Thursday 28 February 2013

Bettany Hughes is one of our best-known broadcasters, and a specialist in ancient Mediterranean history. This talk is based on her book ‘The Hemlock Cup’, a New York Times Bestseller. Its Athenian subject, Socrates, contributed to a city that nurtured key ingredients of contemporary civilisation – democracy, liberty, science, drama, rational thought – yet, as he wrote nothing in his lifetime, he himself is an enigmatic figure. Bettany followed in the footsteps of Socrates across Greece and Asia Minor to shed new light on his world.

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SAVE THE DATE

Sir John Soane’s Museum
Tuesday 27 November 2012
Pre-Advent fundraiser by candlelight & private view of World Monuments Fund Britain’s Exhibition

Sir John Soane’s Museum, 13 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London WC2A 3BP. Tickets will be limited. To express interest and gain priority booking please email sarah@wmf.org.uk.

The Soane Hours’ manuscript c.1600 showing ‘The Construction of the Tower of Babel’

MONUMENTUM AUTUMN 2012
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 7251 8142