



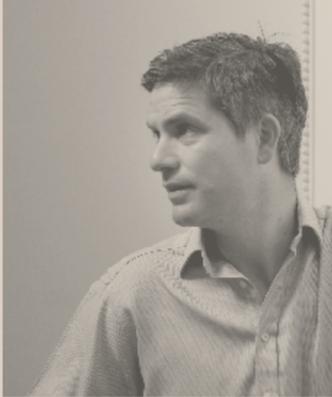
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Two worlds collide

What does Modernism mean to China?

- 3 St George's, Bloomsbury regains its full glory
- 6 The great Adam debate in Ireland
- 8 The true value of indigenous heritage
- plus the latest on our UK projects and a full events calendar

Report from the Chief Executive



It has been a busy winter. In September we launched an entirely new website www.wmf.org.uk with a catalogue of our achievements past and present, downloads of publications (mindful that you could well have worn them out by now), and all kinds of new-fangled features such as online donations, films of our projects, easy payments for events and e-alerts. The website has received thousands of visitors from countries as diverse as Puerto Rico, Australia and Iran. Enjoy using it, and please send us your feedback.

In the same month, the Strawberry Hill Trust finally received the lease to Horace Walpole's Gothick castle, effectively firing the starting gun on the physical interventions. This follows years of preparation and fundraising including £1.4 million from WMF. The detailed investigation of the fabric is revealing many surprises and discoveries that have lain hidden for years.

November saw the launch of the AmEx/WMF *Partners in Preservation* initiative on sustainable tourism at St Paul's Cathedral, which was presented with a US \$500,000, two-year grant. WMF Britain will help guide the project which involves the opening up of new areas in St Paul's to reduce visitor impact on the existing building. A new exploration centre in the crypt will explain 1500 years of history complemented with new access to the upper levels, is crowned with Christopher Wren's twenty foot-long wooden Great Model of the basilica that never came to pass.

We'd like to offer our members access to wonderful buildings, and in a new initiative have struck a deal with St Paul's Cathedral, Hampton Court Palace and the UK's nine independent Treasure Houses who will welcome you with 2 for 1 entry when your new WMF membership card is presented at their ticket offices. Other exceptional properties will join the list to offer you a range of affordable and culturally rich days out in Britain.

Well-attended lectures by Sara Wheeler and Jay Griffiths took us on a thrilling ride from Antarctica to South America. Jay writes for us in this issue. We're now branching out of London with fundraising talks across Britain to assist WMF project work. The first, in Gainsborough, saw 200 people generate almost £1000 toward the thousand-year old church of St Mary's Stow, where WMF is co-funding a crucial re-roofing project. 2008 will be a memorable year

for events. Tony Robinson, one of television's most prolific and engaging history presenters from *Blackadder* to *Time Team* to *The Worst Jobs in History*, offers WMF Britain an evening of entertainment on 6th June at St George's, Bloomsbury. It'll be sure to sell out, so please secure your tickets early, especially as we now have a record level of members.

As for project work this issue is focused on Ireland and Scotland. Projects Director David Gundry takes us to St Vincent Street church in Glasgow, which had its tower's masonry repaired through WMF Britain in 2000. He explains the next phase of work to make the building weatherproof and protect the interiors. Regarding Headfort House, we have in our possession the Kress-funded paint analysis of Robert Adam's only interiors in Ireland. These findings have already been presented in London and Dublin and we set out a lively debate on pages 6 and 7.

WMF Britain's £9.2 million restoration of St George's, Bloomsbury is approaching final completion as the eighteenth-century North Gallery is reinstated in oak and plaster, which restores both visual and acoustic harmony to Hawksmoor's masterpiece, and provides our page 3 glamour. This St George's day, 23rd April, sees a special evening service to mark the occasion, to which you are all welcome.

The summer of 2008 will be remembered for the Beijing Olympics, and as China's economic might accompanies its return as a cultural powerhouse, we are honorary sponsors of an exhibition of Modernism in China, from July to September at the RIBA, 66 Portland Place. The curator, Edward Denison, writes for us inside.

Please do register for e-alerts on the website so we can keep you up to date over this year: the contents of *Monumentum* alone should convince that we'll have lots to tell you about in the coming months.

A Greek revival in Glasgow

After years of neglect there is hope at last for one of Alexander 'Greek' Thomson's Glasgow masterpieces

Not many cities in the world have churches where you can discern the architectural influences of Egypt, Greece and the Hindu world all in one building. Glasgow once had several; all of them designed by the remarkable architect Alexander 'Greek' Thomson (1817–1875). Only one complete church by him survives today and that is the St Vincent Street Church completed in 1859. Rearing up from its monumental plinth it is a porticoed Greek temple that grows visibly from its Egyptian roots. At one side is the great tower that had Hindu temple origins, both incongruous and wild on the Glasgow skyline.

Poor old 'Greek' Thomson. For so long his weird and wonderful character was ignored and he was almost seen as an architectural embarrassment in a city that only wanted to worship one architect, and that was Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928).

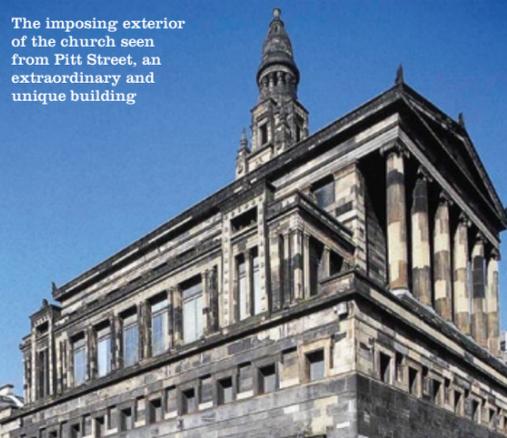
A result of inclusion on WMF's Watch List in 1998, funds were raised to conserve and stabilise the tower. It was expected that this initial phase of work would kick start a larger project to repair the entire building.

In 2006 WMF tried again and we offered the church two further small grants to investigate the interior of the building. Through the Samuel H. Kress Foundation European Preservation Programme a grant was awarded to investigate the interior of the sanctuary and to determine how much of the original decoration survives. Another grant, this time from The Paul Mellon Estate, was awarded to enable the church architect, Page Park, to propose a solution to the vast Main Hall, and undercroft. A balance between recovering from unsympathetic 1970s alterations while providing better facilities for The Open Door Trust, and other users, who are delivering essential services to the underprivileged of Glasgow.

Once the essential protective work is done the opportunity to restore the interior will re-establish a vision that Thomson felt should look like the interior of a great Greek temple.

In 2007 Glasgow's City Growth Fund provided £1 million of funding to undertake essential repairs to the roof and high level masonry with Historic Scotland also contributing a £375,000 grant to complement this. This essential work is planned to begin in March and will stop the water penetration that currently affects the interior fabric.

After many years of set-backs it seems that there is now a real future for St Vincent Street and one that WMF is helping to shape. We are still actively seeking funds for this project.



The imposing exterior of the church seen from Pitt Street, an extraordinary and unique building

St George's restored

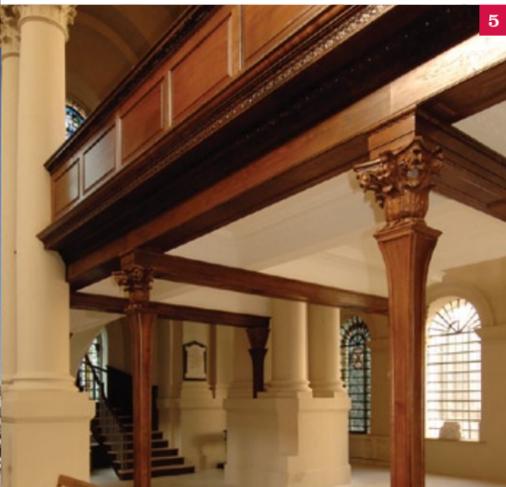
WMF's work on the galleries at St George's, Bloomsbury has reached a triumphant climax



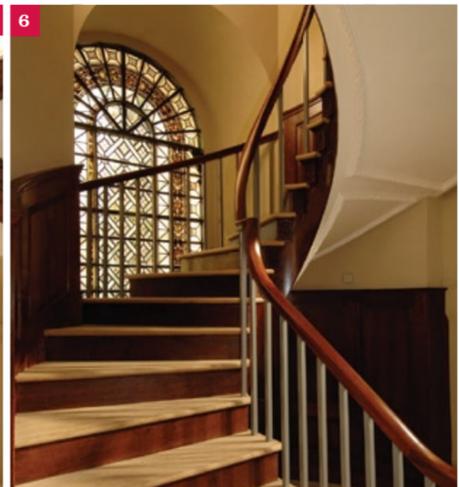
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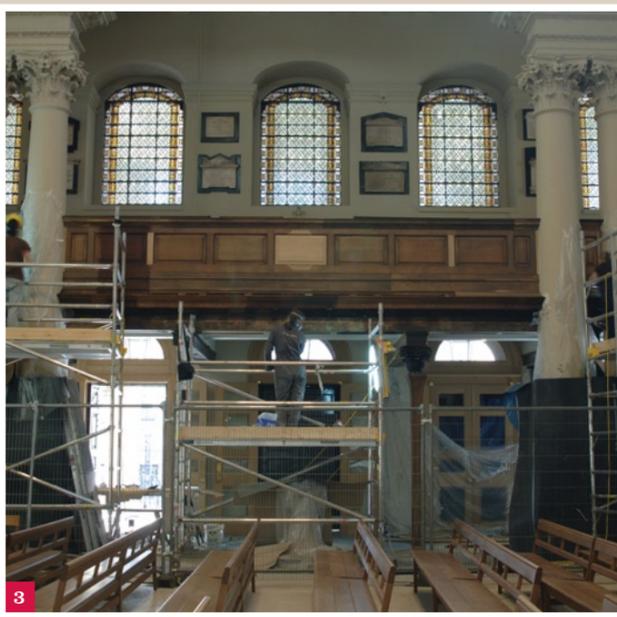
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- 1 North Gallery pre-restoration in 1999, showing the altar in the wrong position
- 2 North Gallery in 2008 following restoration of Hawksmoor's vision
- 3 This matches the existing South Gallery which WMF also repaired
- 4 North Gallery in progress
- 5, 6 Some exquisite detailing, January by Andrew Scaramanga for St Blaise Ltd



Modernism in China

A new RIBA show curated by Edward Denison considers China's vital contribution to the history of Modernism

With the Beijing Olympics drawing near it seems that China will not escape the glare of the media's spotlight. A prominent focus of this rising publicity is the iconic structures designed to demonstrate the country's growing stature. However, when the words 'China' and 'architecture' appear in the same sentence, they tend either to be in reference to the country's contemporary jaw-dropping, eye-popping iconic creations (Cover) or its equally inimitable but visually disparate ancient heritage (1). Rarely, if ever, is attention paid to the critical period of architectural and urban development during the early twentieth century that linked these two phases.

Although Modernist architecture and its influence is conspicuously absent from historical accounts of China, China is equally absent from

historical accounts of Modernism. Practically everything written about Modernism overlooks China; as if the twentieth century's most important design movement could simply bypass a country that boasts the longest continuous architectural tradition the world has witnessed.

The story of China's architectural modernisation is a truly fascinating tale of architectural espousal, fusion and innovation. It culminates with the extraordinary physical legacies of Russian and Japanese expansionism, a corpus of architecture ranging from the smallest villa to the immensity of utopian planned cities (2).

Chinese Modernism begins with the country's early contact with international designs through the endeavours of missionaries and merchants that led

to the eventual establishment of the infamous Treaty Ports in the mid-nineteenth century. This phase was mutually consequential as China encountered its first wholesale exchange of architectural styles since the eighteenth century when Europe's fascination for China blossomed into a love affair with chinoiserie. Famously embodied in Britain by William Chambers' pagoda at Kew of 1772 and contemporaneously in Russia by Catherine the Great's Chinese Palace at Oranienbaum, restored with WMF's help.

By the late nineteenth century, the introduction into China of modern engineering practises and the modernisation of the building industry laid the foundations for rapid architectural transformations in the early twentieth century. Their dilemma, like so many architects around the world, was how to



maintain the essence of their national architecture while embracing modern materials and techniques to meet the unprecedented demands of an increasingly industrialised society. Grave questions confronted China's young aspiring architects. Could a building constructed in reinforced concrete and glass still remain essentially Chinese or did modernity sound the death knell for the architectural spirit derived from habitual wooden frame and characteristic roof?

In the 1920s a wave of foreign architects flooded China to reap the rewards of a booming economy. Then the 'first generation' of formally trained Chinese architects returned from overseas universities and grappled with the paradoxes inherent in issues of national identity and modernity. By the depression years of the 1930s, a growing consensus emerged among China's disparate architectural community in the form of Modernism. While national characteristics in the form of stylistic appendages and the legacies of the Beaux-Arts education that many architects had received abounded, Modernism offered something refreshingly original for the most able architects. Throughout the 1930s and late 1940s, foreign and Chinese architects produced some of their best work. The outputs of firms such as Allied Architects, Kwan, Chu & Yang, Laszlo Hudec (3), Léonard, Veyssyere & Kruze, C.H.Gonda, Liang Si Cheng & Lin Hui Yin and Fan Wen Zhao demonstrate a remarkably broad interpretation of Modernism from an expansive range of influences. Among the Chinese, they also evidence an occasionally brilliant interpretation of Modernism in a Chinese context.

As the gathering clouds of the Second World War cast their leaden shadow over Asia, the destruction that would shortly ensue was preceded by unprecedented construction in one area of China, as the Japanese, controlling former Manchuria, set about building a quasi-colony from which they invaded the rest of China in 1937. The Russian and Japanese

influences in north-east China form another layer of the country's rich architectural heritage, infusing it with remarkable examples of Art Nouveau, fostering 'Chinese Baroque' produced by local craftsmen attempting to replicate Western styles, and, later, the distinctively plastic forms of Japanese Modernism.

Like so many Modernist legacies around the world, these seminal structures have received comparatively little attention since their construction because they represent a period that is not old enough to warrant heritage status, until recently. Furthermore, the augmentation of cultural identity is so often politically loaded. Although heritage assets are always open to historical interpretation and threatened by rampant development, China has firmly accepted the significance of the buildings from this era and an important step along this path is the successful nomination of Shanghai, the jewel in China's Modernist crown, onto WMF's Watch List of 100 Endangered Sites for 2008.

The initiative, *'Modernism in China'*, is both a publication (John Wiley & Sons, 2008) and an exhibition with a series of symposia (The Royal Institute of British Architects, July-September, 2008). Curated by Edward Denison, its aim is to explore China's early twentieth-century architecture and inform a broad international audience of China's unique role in the evolution of Modernism and its efforts to preserve its distinctively international heritage.

1 The complex structure of the traditional Chinese wooden frame and distinctive roof, here in the Imperial Palace (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Shenyang (1636)

2 The juxtaposition of old and new in the port of Dalian, showing the former Yokohama Specie Bank

(1909) which stands on the largest of a number of grand circuses that were a key feature of the Russian urban plan of the early 20th century.

3 The Grand Theatre, Shanghai, designed by Laszlo Hudec (1933)

4 Silk painting inside the Lodge of Retirement



Inside the Forbidden City

WMF is helping to restore one of ancient Beijing's subtler landmarks

In Beijing, urban redevelopment is sweeping through the city on an unprecedented scale in preparation for the summer 2008 Olympic Games. Yet, in the north-eastern quadrant of the Forbidden City, a major revitalization campaign of a different sort is well underway. There, WMF has partnered with the Palace Museum to restore the extraordinary eighteenth-century Qianlong Garden, built by Emperor Qianlong in anticipation of his retirement. WMF's ambitious project, which began in 2002, will reach an important milestone this coming autumn with the completion of the restoration of the Lodge of Retirement, the first of the 27 structures to be restored in the garden. The Forbidden City project, which will be completed in 2017 and cost approximately US \$18 million, draws on all areas of WMF's expertise, from materials conservation and the identification of artisans still skilled in delicate arts to issues of site interpretation, garden design, and visitor management.



Shades of Adam?

Is the recently discovered decorative scheme for the Eating Parlour at Headfort in Ireland a rare interior by Robert Adam, Britain's greatest eighteenth century architect? Or is it the work of an unknown local craftsman? Three Adam experts put the case for and against.

Robert Adam is a one of the seminal characters of British architecture whose genius for interior design revolutionised Georgian taste. WMF is working on Headfort House, County Meath, Ireland, which was built for the Earl of Bective who then commissioned Adam to design its grand rooms. This was Adam's only Irish commission. But the recent results of a paint analysis at Headfort jointly funded by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and WMF have revealed an extraordinary deep green decorative scheme. But is this really the colour and pattern Robert Adam intended?

YES

Dr Eileen Harris, FSA, author of *The Genius of Robert Adam: His Interiors, 2001* and *The Country Houses of Robert Adam, 2007* which includes a chapter on Headfort

The scheme of decoration discovered in Adam's Eating Parlour at Headfort does not look anything like the Adam we all know. The easy answer to this and one I've heard most often, is that it is not by Adam at all, but is the invention, or interpretation, by an eccentric Irish painter. That, in my opinion, is utterly inconceivable.

This one room had had a considerable sum of money spent on it before the first speck of paint was put on in 1780. To begin with, the two rooms on the south-east corner, on the lower right, were thrown together to create a grand, double-cube eating parlour rising up into the first floor. This alteration to the plan can be attributed to Adam and dated as early as 1765.

By 1771 the construction of the shell of the new room was finished and Adam then supplied a set of finished wall elevations in pen and grey wash. He also supplied a coloured outline drawing of the end wall with colour annotations, and a partly coloured ceiling design. For these drawings and a few others Bective must have paid at least thirty guineas. Had they been fully coloured they would have cost considerably more. Adam did not come cheap.

The ceiling was to be a segmental or flat arch, also known as a barrel vault, an antique Roman form which was a novelty in domestic apartments, first introduced by Adam in 1767 in the library at Kenwood. Unfortunately Bective's purse could not sustain his *folie de grandeur* and the expensive vault had to be waived.

In December 1775 Adam therefore made a new design for a coved ceiling, loosely modelled on the Saloon at Harewood, presented as part of the 1973 RIBA exhibition, and very similar to what is finally executed at Headfort.

Having invested in the new Adam designs, the execution of all the decorative stucco-work, and

for the two circular overmantle pictures and friezes painted by Zucchi in 1776, Bective was hardly likely to hand this important and costly room over to a local craftsman, or even to his Clerk of Works, to colour in as they wished.

Instructions must have come from one of the Adam brothers, Robert or James. Although we have no record of either brother visiting Ireland, a careful examination of the Bective correspondence might prove otherwise. Presumably the painters at Headfort were supplied by the Adam office with detailed drawings and written instructions from which to work. Such drawings were normally consumed by use and rarely survive.

Among the Headfort drawings at Yale there is one showing the manner of panelling the doors and shutters on which an intermediary, the Clerk of Works perhaps, has written a lengthy note referring to a plan sent by Lord Bective to Mr Adam and explaining exactly what Adam proposed to do and why. Painting instructions must have been transmitted in the same way.

Our ignorance has been painfully exposed by the discoveries at Headfort. Not only do we not know how Adam arrived at this unusual scheme of decoration or where it was leading him, but we don't even know how unusual it really is.

A few predominantly green ceilings were designed by Adam around this time; at Harewood in 1767, also at 20, St James's Square in 1773 and at Home House in 1775. The predominant colour of these designs *may* be significant but it is also the chiaroscuro (contrast of light and dark) effect that is of interest in relation to Headfort. I think a confined study of the friezes and mouldings of Home House might well prove fruitful and need not be too invasive or expensive.

My old friend, neighbour and paint guru, Patrick Baty, drew my attention to a superb illustration in my latest book on Adam of the Etruscan Dressing Room at Osterley, designed in 1775, the same year as the Headfort Eating Parlour. The carved mouldings that make up the chair rail are picked-in with white, Etruscan red, and black. Although they are three dimensional, they read as flat ornaments on a plane with the stylized bands of linked circles between

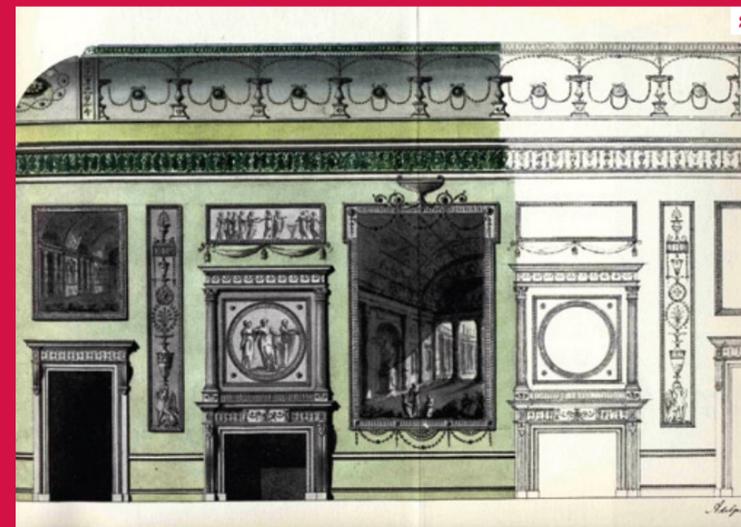


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bead mouldings that were painted on paper and fixed to the walls. Like the wall, the flat urn-shaped splat on the back of the chair is painted and picked-in to look three-dimensional.

However, it is not so easy to discover the source of the green chiaroscuro decorations at Headfort. We also need to look at the Eating Parlour as a whole and ask ourselves what the effect would have been had the three large ruinscapes been executed and placed in the complex green and white frames that have been discovered. It would clearly have quite busy and discordant in a carefully contrived way, 'a harmony of many contrasts', as Summerson put it. There were other Adam rooms like this, most famously the Red Drawing Room at Syon. I now wonder whether the Eating Parlour at Headfort also belongs to this category of designed discord, whether Adam hoped that such a thoroughly distinctive display of his versatility of invention would attract customers in Ireland and enable him to compete with Wyatt.

Who would have thought that Headfort, for years a forgotten Irish house, would raise so many thought provoking questions, thanks to WMF. We all need to continue to look further afield and look forward to seeing Adam's only surviving interiors in Ireland fully restored.



2

NO

Professor Alistair Rowan, who has published extensively on the history of Irish and Scottish country houses and the careers of the Adam brothers

In her discussion of the newly discovered green and white painting scheme which once decorated the Adam Eating Parlour at Headfort, Eileen Harris has called for debate and states categorically that the explanation that it is not by Adam is 'inconceivable'. I am not so sure. I make these comments hesitantly and as an immediate response to the startling analysis of the paint scheme which has just been put forward.

My basic premise must be that what we have been shown is, in intellectual terms, utterly illiterate. The picking-out of elements of the architecture in denial of their true function is not a practice which one would associate with a professional architect but is exactly the practice of an amateur. Let me explain: the reiterated small box forms, known as 'dentils', which are found in Ionic and Corinthian cornices have a form that is essentially sculptural and three-dimensional. The Adam brothers understood the elements of classical architecture very well and indeed both Robert and James delighted in devising subtle variations of standard types of cornice, capital and column, always strongly three-dimensional, to fit the proportions and 'feel' of their architectural schemes. Certainly they were neither pedantic nor academic designers: they believed in their own creativity. However to paint, as was done at Headfort, the flat surface of the face of a



3

row of dentils alternately green and white, while ignoring the underside and full form of the dentil as an architectural element is to misunderstand the basic tenets of classical architecture. Picking-in the vertical fluting of an urn in plasterwork with green paint, where the flutes taper away to nothing at the base, similarly denies the three-dimensional form implicit in the modelling and is really very ugly. Had Robert or James ever coloured drawings in this way to be sent to Headfort as has been suggested, it is my view that they would have rejected the banal effect immediately and turned to something more subtle and less clumsy.

Eileen Harris quotes a number of intriguing instances where the Adams picked-out parts of interior members in different shades of green or in other colours; she speaks of the 'harmony of many contrasts' which is a feature of the red drawing room at Syon but at Headfort seemingly we had nothing but a laurel leaf green and white. There is not a trace of gilding or any other tone which would have moderated the crude and jumpy effect that appears in the analysis of what we are told was the 'original' paint scheme. I do not think, as things stand at present, that the case for Robert or James Adam having devised the decorative painting scheme for the Eating Parlour is made.

Nor am I convinced by the suggestion that this room was thought of by Robert Adam as offering a particular opportunity to promote his originality, to challenge James Wyatt and bid for further patronage in Ireland. The known facts are all against such an

interpretation. The scheme proceeded in fits and starts while a distinct lack of energy seems to have characterised its patron. The Adam brothers seemingly did not consider Headfort sufficiently important to want to include it in their *Works in Architecture*, for which a number of parts were produced in the very years when the Eating Parlour was under consideration. So far as we know neither brother ever visited Ireland, (unless Robert went to Castle Upton, Co. Antrim in 1783 to survey the house) so that the Adams' Irish clients all came through contacts in London. When Robert Adam needed to increase his client base after the difficulties of the brothers' building schemes in London it was to Scotland that he would turn, where his family was well known and where the network of patronage favoured these able brothers. For the Adams Ireland was a *terra incognita*, with a different and separate parliament and a quite different pattern of patronage. Why would they pick Headfort, lost in the wilds of Co. Meath, as the field for an historic departure in their decorative style?

Yet this iconoclastic scheme was once a reality and as a cultural phenomenon demands to be taken seriously. How much can the paint analysis tell us? With a commission which dragged on over many years and was only partially completed could it be that the room was first painted out all in white, not an unusual procedure in Irish houses, and that a member of the household, perhaps not many years later, thought to enliven the room by picking out some of the fancy bits in dark green. The effect, whoever did it, as Eileen Harris agrees, must have been astonishing.

to be seen. My first impression was that this was a scheme of the early nineteenth century with the bold flattened appearance of the Empire style and its progeny. However history is frequently unpredictable and the jury remains out on this issue pending further documentation. The boldness and complexity of this remarkable scheme merits further investigation in order to throw light on the respective contributions of architect, patron and craftsman.

MAYBE

Dr Christine Casey is managing a research student at Headfort and is senior lecturer at the School of Art History & Cultural Policy, University College Dublin

Whether the astonishing decorative scheme unearthed by Richard Ireland and WMF at the Headfort Eating Parlour represents Robert Adam at his most abstract and uncanonical or an Irish painter-decorator of extraordinary ambition remains

What are your opinions on Headfort? We'll put the best letters in the next issue. Please write to wmf@wmf.org.uk

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Adam at Headfort?

Beyond the human mind

They may be 12,000 miles apart but, argues Jay Griffiths, ancient WMF sites in Ireland and Australia share a cultural resonance which cannot be underestimated

Heritage is the human mind

Jay Griffiths, author of *WILD: An Elemental Journey* has spent a great deal of time living with indigenous tribes. She describes the effects of losing this culture

A face. A human face, symbolic and intense, carved perhaps thirty thousand years ago. It's probably the oldest representation of the human face in world history, powerfully expressing its own vitality and meaning. It's just one of hundreds of thousands of petroglyphs in an area of Western Australia called the Burrup Peninsula, known as 'Murujuga' to Aboriginal people. This is understood to be the largest and oldest collection of rock art in the world and is arguably Australia's most significant cultural monument. The site covers more than 40 square kilometres and was also the scene of a massacre of Aboriginal people in 1868.

Having stood there for thirty thousand years or more, about a quarter of the rock art has been destroyed since 1963, and part of the site is now under direct threat from a gas project, while due to acidification from industrialization nearby, most of the rock art will suffer damage or disappear in the course of the 21st century.

The rock art includes geometric designs referring to the cosmos, and depictions of prehistoric animals such as the fat-tailed kangaroo and the

Tasmanian devil. For Aboriginal people, the works are a reminder of Law, and retain enormous spiritual power: the images have songs and mythology, cultural meaning for ceremony and initiation. More than a matter of artwork, it's a matter of integrity, meaning and the past; the site expresses the interplay of land and song, place and significance.

For Aboriginal people, the petroglyphs are the work of the ancestral creator beings in the 'Dreaming,' but Murujuga now represents a clash of dreamings. "We've dreamt of this area becoming the most important industrial region in the southern hemisphere," said a local non-indigenous MP. A clash of meanings too: there is significance to Aboriginal people which non-indigenous authorities, heedless of Aboriginal custodians, do not recognize and cannot see. Michael Anderson, leader of the Euahlayi Nation and spokesperson for the Gumilaroi Nation, describes the site as a 'prehistoric university'.

A heritage listing covers most of the area, but part is excluded, and carvings here have already been deliberately vandalized and defaced, while the area is also being bulldozed for a new gas plant: one which could have been renegotiated, say Aboriginal people, to land which is 'already destroyed.'

It's a clash of integrity, too. For Aboriginal people, the subtle relationships between land, people, songlines and carvings are intimate, intricate and entire: the integrity of a site means that you cannot remove any part of it. The company responsible, Woodside, says they have not destroyed some of the rock art, but 'removed' it. Robyne Churnside, Aboriginal traditional custodian of

Murujuga comments: "My people say that once a piece of rock art left by our ancestors is removed, our song line, our sacred site, is destroyed forever."

A clash of pasts, too. I spoke to an Aboriginal writer, Herb Wharton, about the past. What is it? Where is it? "The past," he replied, "is the land, it's under our feet." The past, for them, has authority too and must be respected, in all its forms: the elders, the Ancestors, the land. Within the land, to Aboriginal eyes, lies Story and Song, power and spiritual energy. Underground, to a cruder vision, lies energy of a cruder sort: liquefied natural gas. So it's a clash of underworlds too: the Ancestors for Aboriginal people are within or beneath the world we see. And the Ancestors are being challenged by one of the gods of the West: 'Pluto' (god of the underworld) is the appropriate name which Woodside has given to its project. Pluto is also the god of wealth, and money, I've heard Aboriginal people say, is "Whitefella dreaming."

The underworld, the subterranean, is also at risk in Ireland. The place considered as the heart of Ireland, its spiritual centre, for hundreds of years the coronation site of the High Kings, has been chosen as the site of a motorway. It was linked to the bardic tradition for 2,500 years, and thousands of harpers to 142 kings played here. But "the harp that once through Tara's halls" will be drowned out by the dirge of traffic and the greasy tills of the motorway's largest interchange, to be sited half a mile from Tara Hill.

The valley between Tara and Skryne, with a plethora of previously unearthed monuments and artefacts, is being completely destroyed. In July



2007, bulldozers were sent in the middle of the night to destroy the ancient burial ground at Baronstown in the Tara-Skryne valley, a site which archaeologists claimed was of national monument status. Lismullin, a wood henge and designated National Monument, including an amazing subterranean complex, an integral part of the ceremonial complex of Tara, was destroyed in December 2007.

Tara was the place Daniel O'Connell chose, when he addressed a million people seeking an Irish parliament. Tara was the most powerful pagan site of Ireland, which presumably was why St Patrick chose to launch his campaign against paganism from here. Tara was the entrance to the Other World, realm of ancient gods. "Tara is, because of its associations, probably the most consecrated spot in Ireland, and its destruction will leave many bitter memories behind it," wrote W.B. Yeats *et al*, in a letter of protest to *The Times* in 1902, when Tara was last threatened. It is a place designed for ceremonies of natural time, the 'Mound of the Hostages' on Tara, was constructed so that it is lit by the full moon of August, the ancient Lughnasa, and the opaque, allusive beauty of this contrasts starkly with the imperious permanence of a floodlit motorway interchange.

This place is older than the pyramids, older than Stonehenge, with stone engravings made by the Neolithic inhabitants. No matter: it will now be a monolith of modernity. The cultural significance of a road may need a little interpretation for future generations: the petroglyph of the banal, the aesthetic of brutalism, the monument of the present obliterating the past, the conquest of music by concrete, the overtaking of beauty by speed and a superb expression of the monoculture of the meaningless. It exemplifies a way of thinking, for in a world where only money talks, certain things can't be translated: resonance, metaphor, knowledge, language, message and meaning, enigma, significance, depth of spirit: in a word, *mind*. There is mind under matter, the subterranean of the human psyche.

1 The oldest art in the world resides in north-west Australia

2 An aerial view of Tara Hill, Ireland

3 Australia's more familiar monuments

4 Signs of protest at Tara



Learning from Australia

Dr Jonathan Foyle found himself inspired by Australia during a WMF lecture tour in 2007

During a conversation over lunch in a glass-walled canteen in Melbourne, a senior figure in the Australian heritage field told me he thought it counter-intuitive that an Englishman would seek to understand heritage in Australia. On the contrary, I said. Australia occupies a unique position in the conservation world, and can teach us a lot. There is a division in the concentration of significant sites: ancient, aboriginal sites are usually found in remote terrain and are often associated with natural phenomena such as Uluru (Ayer's Rock) or the application of incised or painted art on natural materials such as bark and rock, whilst the grander architectural monuments are concentrated on an urbanised strip of coast from Melbourne to Brisbane known as 'the terrace'. A key issue for Australia is that this vast country displays neither the dense concentration of sites, nor the range of ancient buildings that we take for granted in much of the rest of the world.

Does this sparseness of historic environment make Australia a poor cousin, or, conversely, does it promote in Australians an acute awareness of their sites and monuments as a fragile and limited resource? This gets my attention, because not taking things for granted, appreciation, is a beautiful mentality that encourages ongoing care. Now, appreciation also assumes an understanding of 'significance', a tricky term, for how do you settle a fixed value on what's often a personal and emotional attachment? Toward identifying significance in Australian heritage, an inclusive dialogue has emerged which is intent on breaking out of the idea that grand buildings and parks alone create

important cultural environment. Australia ICOMOS' Burra Charter is conservation as conversation. See <http://army.gov.au/environment/burracharter.pdf>

My own counter-intuition is that a country so enlightened on conservation should not allow one of the world's most important prehistoric sites to be threatened by the short-term gains of mineral exploitation. The Dampier Rock Art site on the Burrup peninsula in Western Australia is one of the oldest and largest concentrations of early art, testament to humankind's emergence into an imaginative and artistic engagement with the environment. The Pluto natural gas plant is about to be built on part of it, involving displacement and destruction contrary to a reassurance by the Australian government last year. The shouts of protest from Western Australia need amplification, and the site's inclusion on the WMF's 2008 Watch List allows us to highlight the urgency of the situation. <http://wmf.org.uk/projects/view/dampierrockart>

It was a delight to meet a variety of conservation professionals willing to share their experiences from Perth to Adelaide, Melbourne to Sydney. During a 24-hour economy rate night flight home in which my seat refused to recline, I had plenty of time to review the experience of lecturing and listening. I recalled the weird familiarity of cities that resembled Liverpool, Glasgow or Leeds under palm trees and jacarandas. The fearful baked red expanse of the outback is still unknown to me, the spiritual and ancestral home of people who will always receive our support to protect their cultural inheritance, in the Australian spirit of inclusion.

UK round up

The latest news on WMF's British projects



Spit and polish Westminster Abbey

In our last issue, we mentioned a project at the heart of Westminster Abbey, the medieval sedilia or priest's seat. After a preparation phase of surveying, using a technique called photogrammetry, the actual work to clean and consolidate the fragile and blistered painted surface began. Cleaning is done using a combination of deionised water and saliva, which is very effective. Consolidation of the surface is being achieved by applying a very low viscosity polymer to the surface which helps to adhere the loose and blistered paint flakes to the substructure. This process is helped by using hot spatulas to compress the blisters.

The scientific examination of the wooden structure of the sedilia will include a technique called dendrochronology which can trace the age and origin of the timber by analysing the growth rings visible in the material and comparing these to a database of known information. Amazingly all growing seasons produce a 'fingerprint' that is unique and traceable. It is not always possible to get a sufficient reading without damaging the material in question, obviously not an option in this case. Hopefully access to the higher levels of the sedilia will produce a sufficient reading.

The work is being undertaken by Marie Louise Sauerberg and Lucy Wrapson from the Hamilton Kerr Institute of Cambridge as well as being assisted by an intern, Kristin Kausland. The Abbey has produced some excellent reading material on view next to where the conservators are working so if you are in the Abbey over the next few weeks do look out for them.

Moving wallpaper Strawberry Hill

The process of physical investigation of the house began with the transfer of the lease from St Mary's College to The Strawberry Hill Trust late last year. Paint, wallpaper, stucco and papier mâché analysis and archaeological investigations in the garden are now in progress.

The contractors are now in the process of dismantling modern partitions, wall linings and

cornices and removing bathrooms which were installed in the 1930s. This work is being executed with great care so that the fabric of the original building is respected. Conservation specialists are stripping out the twentieth century wallpapers, often revealing fragments of Walpole's eighteenth-century decoration. When the investigative works are complete, a final plan for the restoration will be drawn up by the Architects and Trustees.

This stage of the project, which also includes the repair and restoration of the shutters will be



completed by the end of March 2008. In June we begin the enabling works, some garden clearance works and the construction of a ramp for access for wheelchairs and buggies. In September this year the house will be closed until the project is complete. The re-opening is scheduled for spring 2010 in time for a major Walpole exhibition at the V&A. The SHT and WMF have raised approximately £1.4m towards the cost of this project. See our website for information on visiting Strawberry Hill.

Bringing the roof down St Mary's, Stow

On an icy January afternoon, with the weak winter sunshine illuminating the vast interior, St Mary's had all the atmosphere of one of the oldest churches in the country. For the last year or so the south and north transepts of the building have been re-roofed. Providing better access onto the roofs for maintenance and installing spikes to deter pigeons from nesting in the belfry has also been completed. This work is being supported by a US \$100,000 Robert W. Wilson Challenge Fund to Conserve Our Heritage grant.

Steady progress was interrupted late last year when thieves stole some of the recently renewed lead from the roof and in the process caused more



damage to the building. Apparently there has been a corresponding increase in thefts of this type in Lincolnshire and elsewhere which does not help either.

We would very much like to contribute some additional funds to undertake more extensive repair of the stonework at a high level and so are leading an urgent appeal for a further £35,000. If you would like to assist us with this please contact us in the office or go to: www.wmf.org.uk/projects/appeals

Time for an upgrade Battersea Power Station

There was a breakthrough for Battersea on 4th October 2007 when Culture Minister, Margaret Hodge, accepted the advice of English Heritage, the Government's statutory advisor on historic buildings, to upgrade Battersea Power Stations listing from Grade II to Grade II*.

Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, said: "The upgrading of this internationally celebrated landmark is exceptionally good news. Battersea Power Station is one of London's most loved buildings and this much-deserved upgrading can only put extra emphasis on the importance of the regeneration process and help to speed it along... Battersea's outstanding exterior has a grandeur and scale more like the ruins of a Roman basilica. Sir Giles Gilbert Scott was a major figure in twentieth century architecture and successfully proved that massive, modern utilities could have an architectural distinction in their own right."

WMF Britain has fought a long campaign to secure the upgrading of Battersea Powers Station's Listing status to Grade II.* The magnificent building designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in the Art Deco style in the 1930s and added to in the same style in the 1950s has suffered a long period of neglect since it was decommissioned as a power station in 1983. The building was placed on WMF's Watch List of 100 Endangered Sites in 2004. Since then WMF Britain, SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Twentieth Century Society have worked together to prevent the removal of the four landmark chimneys by commissioning an engineer's report which showed that the chimneys could be repaired without the need for demolition.

Colin Amery on behalf of WMF Britain commented: "This long-awaited announcement guarantees that all its surviving architectural features will be protected. We also welcome the appointment of the distinguished architect Rafael Vinoly from New York who, with the current owners Real Estate Holdings (REO), will soon be producing new proposals for the entire riverside site. The qualities of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's design should now act as an inspiration for the whole development. There is no doubt that the campaign encouraged by Watch Listing helped to achieve this excellent result."

Programme of events summer 2008

Events

7pm, Wednesday 23rd April St George's day Evensong Service at St George's, Bloomsbury

We give thanks and celebrate the completion of the North Gallery with solemn Evensong followed by a wine reception. Everyone is welcome to attend with a drink to follow on the Portico steps. The Dean of St Paul's, Right Reverend Graeme Paul Knowles will give the sermon.

St George's, Bloomsbury, Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2HR. Two minutes walk from the British Museum Admission free and open to all Please register your attendance with the church through Kirsty Marsh on +44 (0)20 7242 1979 or kirsty@stgeorgesbloomsbury.org.uk

7pm, Friday 6th June '15 years of Time Team' by Tony Robinson WMF Britain's summer party and lecture at St George's, Bloomsbury

One of television's most famous actors, broadcasters and political campaigners, describes his time as presenter on one of the UK's most popular archaeology programmes. Robinson is also a member of the Labour Party and served on its National Executive Committee.

St George's, Bloomsbury, Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2HR. Two minutes walk from the British Museum Tickets £30/£25/£20 (WMF members, includes a drink) on +44 (0)20 7730 5344

Saturday 28th June 'The Emerald and Gold Ball' Merchant Taylors' Hall, City of London

The Irish Georgian Society, one of the contributors in the Headfort House project, is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year with a midsummer ball at the Merchant Taylors' Hall in the City of London. Proceeds will go towards the restoration of Headfort's Eating Parlour.

The evening promises to be a spectacular affair in a sumptuous setting, with dancing in the Great Hall until the small hours, preceded by dinner and entertainment overlooking the Hall's magical fountain court.

Full details can be obtained from Mrs T Bacon, Ramsden Farm, Stone-cum-Ebony, Nr. Tenterden, Kent TN30 7JB or emeraldandgoldball@googlemail.com

July-September 2008 'Modernism in China: conversations between East and West' Exhibition at the RIBA, Marylebone

A high-profile international public exhibition celebrating China's diverse architectural heritage and its often overlooked contribution to the modernist movement. The first exhibition will be hosted at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), London and will later travel to America and China.

Gallery One, RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD Opening Times: Monday-Friday 10am-6pm & Saturday 10am-5pm, admission free Co-sponsored by WMF Britain

Travel

Saturday 17th-Saturday 24th May International Council Trip to Scotland

A comprehensive and elegant tour of the finest private houses, castles and estates stretching from Dumfriesshire via Glasgow to Bute and South via Ayrshire, Edinburgh and Fife. The finest landmarks include Drumlanrig Castle, St Vincent Street Church in Glasgow, Mount Stuart on Bute, Dumfries House, Mavisbank House and Penicuik House.

Monday 26th-Thursaday 29th May Optional Extension to Caithness Journey North to the remote home of the Earl of Caithness and Castle Sinclair Girnigoe a ruin balancing on the clifftop and former WMF Watch Site. Also visit Castle May, former summer home of HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

Please note, space on this trip is extremely limited, so please ring WMF Britain on +44 (0)20 7730 5344 to check availability and eligibility.

Friday 20th-Monday 23rd June A Weekend in Verona and Mantova

Combine the opening weekend of Verona's annual Opera Festival with an exploration of the architectural wonders and cultural history of Verona and Mantova, Italy with Dr Jonathan Foyle, Chief Executive of WMF Britain.

For further information please contact Antonia Nightingale direct line +44 (0)20 7386 4659 antonia@theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk at The Ultimate Travel Company +44 (0)20 7386 4646 or WMF Britain on +44 (0)20 7730 5344

Saturday 27th September- Thursday 2nd October Dresden and Wörlitz

This six-day tour is based in Dresden, exploring its art and architecture, much of which has only recently resurfaced after years of restoration. Visit the art museums, the porcelain museum, the sculpture collection, the newly rebuilt Frauenkirche and much more. There is also a private visit to the recently reopened Grünes Gewölbe, one of Europe's most sumptuous treasure chambers. It is now divided into the Neues Grünes Gewölbe (New Green Vault), housing one of the finest princely collections of decorative art works, and the Historisches Grünes Gewölbe, the decorated rooms in which the collection used to be kept and displayed, works of art in their own right. A good half day is spent in Wörlitz, visiting the castle, the garden and the island with its famous artificial volcano. The tour has an emphasis on restoration work with talks from local experts, and is accompanied by an art historian throughout. The tour is organised by Martin Randall Travel, with a WMF Britain representative.

To receive an itinerary (to be published shortly) please contact Martin Randall Travel on +44 (0)20 8742 3355, or by email info@martinrandall.co.uk

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UK round up

Our new WMF membership package now includes 2 for 1 entry to St Pauls Cathedral, Hampton Court Palace and the Treasure Houses of England. For more information look at www.wmf.org.uk or phone +44 (0)207 7730 5334

For further information, memberships details and event bookings please contact:
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World Monuments Fund Britain:
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