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
The website has received thousands of visitors from countries as diverse as Puerto Rico, Australia and Iran. The website has received thousands of visitors from countries as diverse as Puerto Rico, Australia and Iran.

Griffiths took us on a thrilling ride from Antarctica to South America. Jay writes for us in this issue. We’re already been presented in London and Dublin and we will have lots to tell you about in the coming months. 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 Medimam in China, from July to September at the RBA, 66 Portland Place. The curator, Edward Denison, writes for us inside. Please do register for e-alerts on the website so you can keep up to date over this year’s contents of Monuments alone should convince that we’ll have lots to tell you about in the coming months.

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 1855. 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 wand 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 improve 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 small organisations to deliver essential services to the underprivileged of Glasgow.

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

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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 spotlight. A prominent focus of this rising publicity is the iconic structures designed to demonstrate China’s architectural modernisation and its equally inimitable but distinctive roof forms. A prominent focus of this rising publicity is the iconic structures designed to demonstrate China’s architectural modernisation and its equally inimitable but distinctive roof forms.

Although Modernist architecture and its endeavours of missionaries and merchants that led to the eventual establishment of the infamous Treaty Ports in the mid-nineteenth century. This phase was militarily consequential as China encountered its first wholesale exchange of architectural styles since the sixteenth century when Europe’s fascination for China mesmerized into a love affair with chinoiserie. Famously embedded 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.

Although Modernist architecture and its influence is conspicuously absent from historical accounts of China, China is equally absent from accounts of China, China is equally absent from 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 experimentation, a corpus of architecture ranging from the smallest villas 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 militarily consequential as China encountered its first wholesale exchange of architectural styles since the sixteenth century when Europe’s fascination for China mesmerized into a love affair with chinoiserie. Famously embedded 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.

The juxtaposition of old and new in the port of Shanghai...
Robert Adam is one of the seminal characters of British architecture whose genius for interior design is considered unsurpassed by any other British architect. His designs are characterized by their classical elegance and the synthesis of form and function. Adam's work was deeply influenced by the principles of the Grand Manner, which emphasized balance, symmetry, and grandeur. His designs were often commissioned by wealthy patrons, who sought to express their status and taste through their interiors.

In the recently discovered decorative scheme for the Eating Parlour at Headfort in Ireland, it is rare for us to have the benefit of seeing an original decorative scheme as part of an Adam interior. The Eating Parlour at Headfort is a rare example of an interior design by Robert Adam, Britain's greatest eighteenth century architect. The discovery of this scheme has been a significant event in the history of Irish architecture, as it provides a rare glimpse into the work of Robert Adam in Ireland.

The scheme of decoration discovered in Adam's Eating Parlour at Headfort does not look anything like the Bective Room at Headfort. It is as if Robert Adam had never had a chance to visit Ireland, which I have heard most often, is that it is not by Adam at all, but is the invention, or interpretation, by an eccentric Irish painter-decorator, in my opinion.

This one room had a considerable sum of money spent on it before the first speck of paint was put on in 1783. To begin with, the two rooms on the south-east corner, on the lower right, were thrown together and the ceiling was raised to a higher level by the addition of mouldings at the corners that make up the chair rail are picked-in with white, and the main cornices have a form that is essentially sculptural and strongly three-dimensional. The Adam brothers understood the elements of classical architecture very well and indeed both Robert and James delighted in developing subtle variations of standard types of cornices, capital and column, always strongly three-dimensional, to fit the proportions and feel of their particular decorative schemes. Certainly they were neither pedestrian nor academic; designers: they believed in their own creativity. However to paint, as was done at Headfort, the flat surface of the face of the row of dentsils alternately green and white, while ignoring the undertone and full form of the dentsil, as an architectural element is to misunderstand the basic tenets of classical architecture. Picking in the vertical fluting of an urn is a statement of green paint, where the flutes taper away to nothing at the base, similarly denies the three-dimensional form implicit in the modelling and it is really very ugly. Had Robert or James ever coloured drawings in this way to be sent to Headfort we have been assured it would have been immediately recognised and turned to something much 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 colours’ which is a feature of the red drawing room at Siryn but at Headfort seemingly we had nothing but a sultrul leaf green and white. This is not a lack of skill or any other reason which would have moderated the crude and jumpy effect that appears in the analysis of what we are told was the ‘original’ paint scheme. In this case, 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.

Yet this iconoclastic scheme was once a reality and as a cultural phenomenon demands to be satirised. 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, at an unusual procedure in Irish houses, and that a member of the household, perhaps not many years later, having decided that the scheme was not to his taste, honestly tried a few tricks in dark green, the effect, whatever it was, Eileen Harris agrees, must have been astonishing.

The scheme proceeded in fits and starts while a distinct lack of energy seems to have characterized the Adam brothers’ working style. It is not surprising that they did not consider Headfort sufficiently important to warrant much attention. Although 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 Headfort, and Robert went to Castle Upton, Co. Antrim in 1783 to survey the house to find the Adam Irish designs came through the window. 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 those who lived for the Adams Ireland was a bonanza, with a different and separate parliament and a different pattern of patronage. Why would they pick Headfort, lost in the wilds of Co. Meath, as the field of their activities and cultural schemes? A very peculiar and as a cultural phenomenon demands to be satirised. 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, at an unusual procedure in Irish houses, and that a member of the household, perhaps not many years later, having decided that the scheme was not to his taste, honestly tried a few tricks in dark green, the effect, whatever it was, Eileen Harris agrees, must have been astonishing.
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 called the Burrup Peninsula, known as ‘Murujuga’ of petroglyphs in an area of Western Australia oldest representation of the human face in world. It is a place designed for ceremonies of natural time, the ‘Mound of the Hostages’ on Tara, was constructed so that it is by the full moon of August, the ancient Lugnasda, and the opaque, allusive beauty of this contrasts starkly with the imperious permanence of a football stadium interchange.

This place is older than the pyramids, older than Stonehenge, with stones embedded into the Nzolithic inhabitants. No matter: it will now be destroyed in December 2007.

For Aboriginal people, the petroglyphs are the work of the ancestral creator beings in the Dreaming, but Murujuga now represents a clash of dreams. ‘We dream 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’. 'Whitefella dreaming.' "It is the appropriate name which Woodside has given to the site, 'Whitefella dreaming.'"

There is mind under matter, the mind in a word, not 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 swansong of historical significance make Australia a poor cousin, or, conversely, does it promote in Australians an acute awareness of their cultural inheritance, in the Australian spirit of inclusion.

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. This Dampier Rock Art site on the Burrup Peninsula in Western Australia is one of the oldest and largest concentrations of early, artefactual human remains, a superb expression of the prehistoric and the ancient Lughnasda, and the opaque, allusive beauty of this contrasts starkly with the imperious permanence of a football stadium interchange.

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Learning from Australia
Dr Jonathan Foyle found himself inspired by Australia, during a WMF visit in 2007.

During a conversation over lunch in a glass-walled canteen in Melbourne, a senior figure in the Australian government last year. The shouts of protest from Western Australia need amplification, rather than 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 swansong of historical significance make Australia a poor cousin, or, conversely, does it promote in Australians an acute awareness of their cultural inheritance, in the Australian spirit of inclusion.

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**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, the conservators are working so if you are in the Abbey time for a major Walpole exhibition at the V&A. The

**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 Station listing from Grade II to Grade II*.

Giles Gilbert Scott was a major figure in twentieth century decoration. When the investigative works led to 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.

William Morris & Company have fought a long campaign to conserve the building, which is very effective. Consolidation of the surface structure of the sedilia will include a technique which is very effective. 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 renovation process and help to speed it up. 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 modern, useless buildings could have an architectural distinction in their own right.

Our new WMP 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.wmp.org.uk or phone +44 (0)207 7730 5341.