

HERITAGE REVIEW

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Editorial

During its short life the Northern Ireland Assembly discussed and enacted quite a variety of legislation, exercising its members in passionate debate about matters other than 'politics'. Of most importance to the Society was the long awaited Planning Amendment (NI) Order, finally brought into being by Direct Rule Minister Angela Smith in the wake of the high profile demolition of Tillie & Henderson's factory in Londonderry; it has provided some real teeth for historic building protection.

The paltry fine of £5000 for demolition of a listed building has been a laughing stock for many years – particularly when it was interpreted as in the case of Ogle Street in Armagh some years ago as a maximum £5000 fine for demolition of an entire terrace within a conservation area. The fine has now been raised to £30,000 and a possible jail sentence, but, more significantly, the matter can be taken to the High Court where the fine can be commensurate with the profit a developer might have expected to accrue from his actions.

The Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) is given definite power to 'spot list' properties (through the application of Building Preservation Notices) pending the formal consultation procedures involved in listing, during which buildings have been legally demolished in the past. (There had been some debate whether the DoE already had spot listing powers, but there is now no doubt.) The process of enforcement is also simplified and the Department is given easier access to injunctions to ensure court backing to its rulings. The Society welcomed all these moves, and has been watching how they would be put into effect. With mixed success, it has to be said, to date: the first Repairs and Urgent Works notices in the province have now been served, but spot listing seems to have been forgotten about. And the Society had joined many residents' groups in calling for Third Party Appeals, which were debated at length in the Assembly but dropped from the final legislation.

The National Trust has convened an inquiry into the planning system, considering the possibility of refining our planning to become more plan-led. Its final conclusion is awaited with interest, but the Society takes the view that on the whole our system is reasonably good: unfortunately it is not applied with the rigour that prevails

in other parts of the United Kingdom. Less obsession with high level planning and more attention to what happens on the ground in every town and village of the province might bring about a more satisfactory environment.

Angela Smith has followed her devolved predecessors in making fighting speeches about protection of the historic environment, but a year after its very high profile demolition we still do not know whether the clearance of Tillie & Henderson's factory was legal or illegal – it seems that the legal brains advising the Department of the Environment have not yet reached a conclusion on the matter.

Maintaining Momentum

Following the passing of the Planning Amendment (NI) Order, the DoE wasted no time in serving the province's first repairs notices in July. At the stable block in Sion Mills, which has been derelict for over twenty years and the subject of many threatened notices in the past, compulsory acquisition proceedings are now under way. The owner has had plenty of opportunity to repair the building over the years, and even been offered high levels of grant to assist him – now he is likely to lose the building altogether, and be compensated for the value of the land taken less some of the cost of putting the listed structure back into repair. This was an obvious candidate for the procedure, and we hope the acquisition will be relatively speedy and lead to a satisfactory conclusion ere long.

The Department also has the option to require an owner simply to carry out repairs to a building which is being neglected, and that is what has been applied to Cairndhu near Larne. It may be coincidental that the owner of this vandalised property is also the owner of the site of Tillie & Henderson's factory.

We warmly applaud the DoE for putting the repairs legislation described above into practice, and trust that similar measures will be used to save many other buildings suffering from severe long-term neglect, such as the *cottage orné* at Burrenwood near Castlewellan, and the enchanting group of courthouse and cottages at Armagh Manor, Co. Fermanagh.

Demoralising, Demeaning, Delisting

The Society continues to be concerned about the delisting of architecturally and historically significant buildings across the north, and has raised questions over what has been delisted to date. Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) statistics at the end of 2003 showed that out of a total of 526 wards, survey work had been completed in 98, with decisions on listing and delisting having been processed for 62 wards. 177 buildings had been removed and 105 added.

However, this does not tally with the information coming from local press reports every month as councils are consulted about, and nearly always trying to oppose, proposed delistings in their areas. In the small conservation village of Glenarm alone twenty buildings were proposed for delisting in November, following a similar number delisted in the neighbouring village of Carnlough last year (see *Heritage Review* No.6) – representing some 20% of the listed building stock in each case. It is hard to reconcile this knowledge with the official statistics, and we can only assume that the published figures represent the tip of the iceberg, that is, the buildings which were proposed for delisting three years ago and have now worked their way through the lengthy – and expensive – process of formal delisting and been officially signed off.

While the Society has been among the most consistent opponents of delisting, it is noteworthy that much dismay has been registered in the press from local people who are indignant at the belittling of what are often the few remaining buildings of distinction in their locale. Northern Ireland started listing twenty years after England, and its building stock has taken a severe battering from the Troubles. We simply cannot afford to cull an already reduced stock of historic buildings.

The Society is keen to see that the Statutory List regains the respect it used to have, and continues to try to persuade EHS to stop wholesale delisting, which makes the List appear to be a matter of taste or fashion. The Second Survey should not start as if there had never been a First Survey, and should consider enforcement in any cases where buildings have been altered to the point where they are considered 'no longer listable'. The Society also feels it is important

that EHS sees the merits of group listing and the value of the setting and context of buildings. Groups of buildings gain their merit from external details, and should not have to be justified by having retained interiors.

The delisted Limavady Town Hall (featured in *Heritage Review* No.1), which still awaits its fate, is a case in point. If the building had retained its listed status, debate in the Borough Council over its future would have been clear-cut. Now that its calibre has been called into question by delisting, demolition of one of Limavady's key landmark buildings has become a distinct possibility. Delisting could represent the death knell in this case, but the Society hopes that local representatives will realise the building's potential and come to its rescue.

A more bizarre case is St Joseph's Church, Claudy, which was the recipient of a recent restoration grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The EHS surveyor recorded it as a good example well restored, yet inexplicably it has been delisted!

Conservation Areas and Officers

Still on the theme of delisting, many of the buildings being delisted are located in conservation areas and EHS has argued that this gives sufficient protection from demolition. However, while consent is required for outright demolition of buildings in conservation areas, no permission is necessary to remove critical details such as windows and doors which do so much to define the character of such areas. The Historic Buildings Council (HBC) agreed to a number of delistings in conservation areas, with the proviso that Article 4 Directions would be put in place. These remove permitted development rights for the alteration of character-defining details, thus requiring planning permission. This has not yet been implemented, and the Society has met with staff at EHS and Planning Service to query the lack of progress.

The Society believes it is imperative that Article 4 Directions are adopted in conservation areas where HLF money has been made available through the Townscape Heritage Initiative. These grants have been used to reinstate historically accurate details. Without

Article 4 Directions in place, these details could be subsequently removed without permission, thereby squandering public investment. There is a strong moral case for their use – indeed this is an HLF condition of grant aid, accepted and adopted throughout the UK. Planning Service has refused to impose the Directions here to date. What makes Northern Ireland so special? Or indeed not special enough?

The lack of adoption of Article 4 Directions is also key to the demoralising situation in Market Square, Dromore. Planning Service approved demolition of a prominent group of buildings within the Dromore Conservation Area in October 2003. When the Society viewed the planning files, it appeared that key conservation policies had been ignored. £90,000 is ring-fenced to restore the buildings as part of an HLF Townscape Heritage Initiative (this was the only major project highlighted within the scheme), and will be lost to the town if the buildings are demolished. The Society felt so strongly about the case that it decided to seek judicial review of the DoE's decision, and that process is currently in hand.

It has also come to the Society's attention that other buildings in the conservation area have been approved for demolition without the necessary demolition consent. The lack of a dedicated conservation officer in this planning division, which covers seven conservation



Market Square, Dromore

areas, must also have some bearing on this failure to understand basic conservation principles.

The shortage of qualified staff in the Planning Service employed to look after conservation areas is alarming. The Society has discovered that, while there are a number of private consultants appointed to comment on proposals in an ad hoc fashion, there are only two full-time dedicated conservation officers in Northern Ireland. They have to manage 58 conservation areas between them, and more will be designated through the area plan process. This is unacceptable. Surely, at least one qualified in-house conservation officer, who can respond to queries from owners, local residents and developers, advising them on legislation, policy and best practice, is required per planning division?

Society Wins Judicial Review

The Society sought its first ever judicial review at the end of 2002, and the decision on it was announced early in 2003.

The DoE had approved demolition and rebuilding of 1-7 Malone Place in Belfast, a listed terrace at the bottom of the Lisburn Road (reported in *Heritage Review* No.5). The HBC had not been consulted and relevant planning policy had not been taken sufficiently into account. In particular, the DoE had ignored the fact that a potential purchaser had expressed an interest in repairing the buildings, so that demolition was not the only option on the table.



Malone Place as it could be once restored

The DoE decided not to contest the action in court, and the decision was duly quashed. The fate of the 19th century red brick terrace is, however, still to be decided.

We had discussed the possibility of taking such a review on previous occasions but it is potentially a very expensive process, and not to be undertaken lightly. We are very grateful to our legal advisors for their cautious but supportive advice throughout the process, and hope that by winning our point in a court of law we may ensure that the procedures around listed buildings will be respected properly in future.

Stretching Our Legs

Visitors to the Society's offices in a single room at the top of 66 Donegall Pass often wondered how our staff managed to fit into it, let alone to carry out the excellent work they did. We have been looking, along with Hearth, for a suitable building to acquire and restore but while new office blocks are ten a penny, historic buildings are not so easy to find – and often not at all affordable.

Fortuitously, our colleagues in the NI Museums Council, who had been occupying the ground floor of no.66, decided to move on to larger offices in the autumn. After doing some careful sums, and deciding on a few calculated risks, we decided to take over their old offices and moved down there in October. Visitors to the new offices were amazed to find just how much had been fitted into the previous room, as the three rooms now look just as crowded as the one did before.

The move should make for greater efficiency, and we look forward to seeing members in the new offices. Our address and phone number remain the same, but there is more space to browse through the publications and consult the Society's books.

We would like to acknowledge the generous donation by Finlay Reid of a collection of large-scale Ordnance Survey maps. As many of you will know, these are expensive to buy, and very often outdated maps will provide information missing from the current ones. These will be a useful addition to our library.

Cathedral Way, Belfast

It seems that difficult lessons regarding sensitive development in city-centre conservation areas are not being heeded at Cathedral Way, one of three big planning applications for Belfast city centre that have been put forward in recent years. The Victoria Square application, which has since been approved and which will lead to the loss of the historic Kitchen Bar, was well documented in *Heritage Review* No.6.

The Society had a useful meeting with the developers in May, when it saw revised drawings for the area between Royal Avenue and Donegall Street that were a considerable improvement over earlier plans, retaining significant buildings in Lower Garfield Street, North Street and the entire North Street Arcade. However there was still a bridge proposed across Donegall Street, and some 750 car parking spaces which sits at odds with policy that strongly encourages pedestrian activity and the use of public transport. Moreover, a development of this kind should include living spaces, and the



Derelict listed buildings in North Street due to be restored in the development.

proposal for a paltry eighteen apartments will ensure that the development draws shoppers rather than residents into the area.

There is no doubt that this part of the city merits regeneration, but it must be of the right kind. Laganside's gentle restoration of buildings along Donegall Street provides

a useful template, and Ewart's holding in the area contains numerous buildings that would lend themselves to mixed use and the incorporation of more living space.

The Society has worked closely with Belfast Exposed, the Community Arts Forum, Todd Architects and architect Mark Hackett to make the process more transparent and to promote a high quality

environment. Together we arranged for drawings of the scheme to be displayed in Belfast Exposed's gallery space on Donegall Street and organised a walk around the area. Public involvement is critical in considering a scheme of this scale, and the Society was pleased to be able to participate in a public debate held in the Linen Hall Library.

In December, the Society met with staff at Planning Service headquarters to persuade them to provide an urban design framework for the area against which the scheme can be assessed. We also urged them to consult their private conservation architect in the absence of dedicated in-house staff. This is a major scheme and every effort must be taken to ensure that its impact on the city is beneficial.

Informing Council Opinion

Society staff and members continued their journey around local councils in 2003, addressing them on issues and individual case studies directly affecting their areas, as well as providing general information on the Society. A number of councils have joined as corporate members and we have been happy to provide advice to them throughout the year. Robert White of the NI Building Control Group organised an excellent seminar at the Roe Valley Country Park in November, entitled *Conserving Our Built Heritage*, at which Rita Harkin gave a presentation. All twenty-six councils were represented and the economic value of the built heritage formed the focus of the two-day session.

Developing the Society's input into advising local authorities, in late 2003 the Society began carrying out work on behalf of Belfast City Council's Culture and Arts Unit, work which will continue into 2004. The projects include assessing the listing process and criteria for local lists, developing interpretation panels for the Cathedral Conservation Area, and investigating the possibility of introducing the HLF Townscape Heritage Initiative in Belfast City Centre. The Society is delighted to be involved in this interesting and worthwhile collaboration.

Architecture is a gallery from whose frames a masterpiece is ripped each day. (Simon Jenkins writing in *The Times*, quoted in *Building Conservation Journal*, Spring 2003).

Disabled Access Seminar

The Society has previously highlighted sensitive questions surrounding providing appropriate access to historic buildings (See Order in the Courts and Building Regulations, in *Heritage Review* No.6). While clearly improved and well thought out access to all buildings is to be strongly encouraged, the Society has concerns about the potentially damaging nature of some interventions. Often there is a lack of discussion about the range of possible access solutions and the changing nature of technology which might be utilized to facilitate disabled access to public buildings.

The Society organised an intensive half-day workshop at the QUB Lanyon Building in May to kick-start this discussion. It started with a short presentation by Gary Jebb of QUB Estates Office on particular challenges relating to their historic building stock. Disability Action, the Equality Commission, the EHS, Duchas and Consarc also set the scene for a very lively debate, especially when case studies were put forward. A key example was the proposed adaptation of the University Square terrace, where most buildings apparently need separate ramped access to meet the requirements. The University will be spending some £8m over three years carrying out such alterations, and even with considerable thought going into the impact of the work there will inevitably be some very unsightly adaptations.

While no one wanted to restrict access, there was lengthy discussion about whether adaptations should be permanent or reversible, and whether developing technology might render many of the adaptations redundant in a decade or so. It was also pointed out that in cases like Georgian squares with basements and railings conventional access was virtually impossible without very damaging alterations.

This was a very helpful and open exchange and the majority of those attending were keen to feed into the forthcoming draft EHS Technical Note. For published guidance in the interim, readers can see www.historic-scotland.gov.uk *Technical Note 7*, www.cadw.wales.gov.uk *Overcoming the Barriers*, and www.english-heritage.org.uk *Easy Access to Historic Properties*. Duchas guidance is currently in draft form.

Progress on VAT Reform

Over the past number of years, the European Heritage Tax Forum has been pressing the European Commission and the European Parliament to acknowledge that building works relating to historic buildings have a social and cultural function and therefore should also be allowed a lower rate of VAT.

On December 4, 2003 the European Parliament voted to recommend to the European Commission that member states should be allowed to charge lower rates of VAT to buildings designated as heritage assets. This development follows a letter-writing campaign to all MEPs earlier this year, organized by the European Heritage Tax Forum, which is co-ordinated by Europa Nostra. The Society also wrote to local MEPs and the Treasury pressing for reform.

Gocean Lodge

Gocean Lodge, a listed building within Killyleagh Conservation Area, was formerly surrounded by mature woodland, much of which has been removed in recent years. Planning Service has stated that it is minded to refuse permission for a scheme for more than 300 dwellings and a marina in the grounds of the house, which would effectively double the footprint of the village. They cited twenty six



Gocean Lodge, shortly before the trees were cleared.

reasons for refusal, but the developer continues to mount pressure to have the scheme approved. The National Trust has led the opposition to the controversial proposal, joined by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the Society. This collaboration between built and natural heritage groups makes good sense and demonstrates an exemplary holistic approach to caring for the environment.

Last Orders

Despite last minute publicity and lobbying (and a vociferous demonstration with some very witty placards) the DoE has confirmed that it will allow the Kitchen Bar to be demolished as part of the Victoria Square redevelopment. In the past the Department could have appeared to be ‘a seamless garment’, but the open files now enable journalists to explore the reasoning behind decisions and in this case to uncover the extent of dissent within the Department itself, with many officials arguing that the Bar should be kept for tourism and historic reasons.

The new site [for Edinburgh’s Royal Infirmary, hitherto in a listed building in the city centre] is handy for nothing except ringroad cars but, as the hospital would generate traffic to gridlock this infrastructure, parking is banned over a wide radius. And so, to replace the existing city transport infrastructure which made the old site easy for all, the people of Edinburgh now access their hospital services (including A&E) via a hellish, interminable, multi-bus trek out of town (don’t bleed on the seats please)...To this failure is added one of provision (the new hospital has many fewer beds than those it replaces), procurement (a process designed and owned by the banks) and finally, architecture... The new building must have had a brief delivered by truck. And yet it’s built down in a dank hollow, around mean courtyards that will never see the sun, with wee, zipped-up windows and lots of mechanical ventilation... My pal Henry, a transplant surgeon... liked his walk to work across the park and felt his quality of life would plummet at the new site. So, he has emigrated to Australia... (*Malcolm Fraser, article in Building Design, 9 May 2003*)

A historic site has been lost every day since World War II. This is a constant and creeping degradation of the quality of the historic environment. (*Neil Cossons, launching “The State of the Historic Environment” report*).

Buildings at Risk in Northern Ireland

In recent years there has been a noticeable upturn in public concern for the built heritage of Northern Ireland. Several high profile cases of neglect and television programmes such as *Restoration* have brought the vexed issue of buildings at risk to wider prominence. Informed local knowledge has stimulated much of this wider public interest and the work of the Society has played a central role. With the launch (scheduled to take place as we go to press) of the first online Register of Buildings at Risk in Northern Ireland (BARNI) the means by which this important issue is made public will change markedly. The BARNI Register provides an up-to-date and comprehensive picture of listed building neglect in Northern Ireland and will act as a catalyst for their restoration and reuse.

We are grateful as ever for the financial support of EHS that enables us to employ Andrew McClelland as our BARNI officer. He has identified over 400 buildings to date, of which almost two-thirds were not previously recorded as being at risk. Urban houses and terraced properties account for some 27% of the total, while gate lodges and other estate related structures are the second largest category of building, at 14%. Almost half of all buildings identified are Grade B1, while the top two grades of listing, Grades A and B+, comprise 9% of the total. Geographically, the highest number of listed buildings at risk is found in the Belfast City Council area while almost a quarter of all buildings are located within the Craigavon Planning Division.

A significant number of properties (27) which featured in the first published *BAR Catalogue* remain at risk, including Gosford Castle (see *Heritage Review* No.6) and Hilltown Lodge. While many are already familiar landmarks, a number of less well known building types are increasingly represented, with a collection of lockhouses, market yards and even tin buildings having been added to the Register. In contrast, the many neglected vernacular buildings are hugely under-represented (8% of the total) as they do not often have statutory protection. The expanding number of institutional buildings on the market, particularly former Belfast banks, is also noteworthy, as is the conundrum of exactly what to do with vacant and redundant churches of all denominations. Although Andrew has

recorded many interesting unlisted buildings at risk, few of these will appear on the EHS list.

Another important aspect of the Society's work has been establishing contact with building owners, community groups and other concerned parties. In a number of instances this active engagement has led to restoration projects being taken forward, reinforcing the point that work done on the ground to encourage and inform owners is often repaid. Active involvement to bolster the work of community groups and building preservation trusts continues to throw up some of the most rewarding cases.

An example is Craigowen Lodge, a mid-19th century gate lodge near Holywood designed by Thomas Turner. Compulsorily purchased by Roads Service in the 1990s, it has been extensively vandalised and local people have become concerned for its fate. Contact was established over a period of months with the owners and a number of organisations including Hearth and EHS, and its future is looking more promising with Roads Service having agreed to put the building on the market after drawing up restoration plans which would be a condition of sale. Another example of interaction is the Rosetta cottages at the top of Belfast's Ormeau Road, which Roads Service has not yet released from demolition plans although these seem



Craigowen Lodge

increasingly unlikely to proceed. The cottages they have vested were being vandalised and this was having a detrimental effect on the rest of the terrace, chasing tenants out. After intervention by the Society, Roads Service secured their cottages and considerably improved their appearance. We hope they will also be released to the market during 2004.

The HLF has been a constant source of grant aid for rescuing buildings at risk and the Townscape Heritage Initiative has made an enormous impact on conservation areas. However, outside of these designations it remains extremely difficult for private owners to access funding. In particular, owners of Grade B2 listed buildings do not presently qualify for any grant aid from EHS, although this policy is understood to be under review. Meanwhile, powerful disincentives to reuse rather than replace loom ever larger, such as the imposition of VAT on maintenance and repair and the Housing Executive's Replacement Dwelling Scheme.

The BARNI Register will be a significant resource for highlighting and encapsulating the extent of historic building neglect in Northern Ireland. However, its value will only truly be determined by how effectively it is used – as a tool to channel scarce funding resources where they are most needed; as a means of engaging with, and informing, owners of the opportunities that exist; and, if worst comes to worst, as a weapon for enforcement action when all else has failed.

The Building at Risk agreement with the DoE also embraces the publishing of new editions of the *Directory of Traditional Building Skills* and *Directory of Funds for Historic Buildings in Northern Ireland*, both of which are expected in 2004.

More than a quarter of all [600,000 dwellings in Northern Ireland] were constructed post 1980... Indeed, nearly 15% of the total stock has been built since 1990... A quarter of all dwellings were built between 1965 and 1980, one-fifth between 1945 and 1964, and a little over 10% in the period 1919-44... Approximately 18% of all dwellings were built prior to 1919, compared to 20% in 1996, reflecting in particular the ongoing demolition of older stock, mainly in areas of Belfast subject to regeneration. (*Statistics proudly printed in The Northern Ireland Housing Market 2003-2006, NI Housing Executive 2003*)

Education Project

The Society's three year education programme, grant-aided mainly by the HLF, has focused on engaging children from 8 to 10 years of age, and forms a very positive element of the Society's current work. Our new Key Stage 2 folder, *Looking Back, Moving Forward*, was launched by the North Eastern Education and Library Board Environment Advisor during European Heritage Open Days in Gracehill in September 2003. The pack includes teachers' and pupils' worksheets and looks at homes through time. Our intention is to provide information on other building types following feedback on this resource.

After the Gracehill launch, hundreds of children and their parents enjoyed taking part in an architectural treasure hunt of Northern Ireland's first conservation area. Gracehill Village Committee and the local primary school provided valuable assistance in the organisation of this event, which generated much local interest and press coverage. Subsequently a random selection of 63 schools in the NEELB area received packs and evaluation sheets.

Our Education Officer, Angela Fitzpatrick, continues to target specific officers in ELBs in order to spread awareness of this resource – useful fora include INSET groups (in-service training) and new student teachers. Selected schools in areas where project work has previously been undertaken have been issued with folders but requests for copies can also be made to the Society's offices. Preliminary feedback from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment has been extremely encouraging and has led to the possibility of collaboration on CCEAs *Timescapes* project, a web-based resource supporting the History curriculum.

The Society continues to devote a proportion of its resources to responding to individual requests for assistance from schools, which tend to be generated by teachers with a natural enthusiasm for the subject and may therefore be particularly productive.

The Society continues to be a member of the Northern Ireland Environment Link Education Forum, and during 2003 delivered practical workshops to students of both Queen's University and St Mary's University College. We also facilitated cross-community

schools exhibitions of the buildings of Castlewellan and of Caledon. The latter was displayed at the launch of the new conservation area booklet for the village. The Society's resources also proved to be very popular at an environmental fair in Derrygonnelly at the end of year.

Another architectural treasure hunt for children has been organised in Armagh City on Thursday 3 June 2004.

2003 Events

Roger North, who wrote *Of Building* in 1698, said that an interest in architecture is

a sober entertainment and doth not impeach but defend health. Other pleasures which are less despised, as wine, women, gambling, etc., have a sting which this has not. And it is also an exercise of the mind as well as the body... He that hath no relish for the grandeur and joy of building is a stupid ox and wants that vivacity of sense and spirit that seasons humane life and makes it less insipid.

There are many reasons why members attend lectures or outings and I think that this year we can truly say we provided exercise for the mind as well as the body!

During 2003 there was lots of fun and laughter mixed with education and learning, not least at the Gracehill architectural treasure hunt described in the Education report above. *An Adventurous Scramble along the Gobbins Path*, carefully supervised by Dawson Stelfox and some of his mountaineering colleagues, brought out members with nerves of steel and a head for heights!

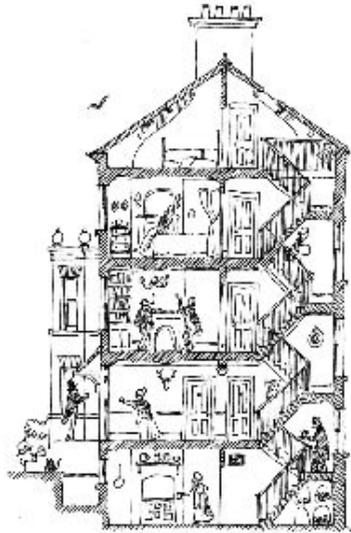
The participative model extended to lectures as well as outings and when John Redmill spoke about the life of Lord Charlemont under the enigmatic title *While Your Lordship already has the Venus...* he asked his audience for information. James Caulfield, 1728-99, was the leader of taste in Ireland during the second half of the eighteenth century amassing one of Ireland's greatest collections of paintings, furniture and objets d'art. Tragically it was all dispersed in the late nineteenth century and the whereabouts of most of this important collection is unknown. Several members who attended the lecture

were able to enlighten him. Dixie Dean, author of one of the Society's most popular publications, *The Gate Lodges of Ulster – A Gazetteer*, gave a well illustrated lecture in March. This was later followed by a seminar for planners, architects and others to discuss best practice on the reuse of these important and interesting little buildings.

In the final lecture of the year Hugh Dixon gave us a behind-the-scenes glimpse of what it was like to be a Pevsner slave! Hugh came to Ireland as a research assistant on the first of the Penguin series *North West Ulster* by Alistair Rowan, which was published in 1979. Alistair in the foreword pays tribute to Hugh saying 'His knowledge of Irish Victorian architects has saved me many blunders, and his enthusiasm for even the dullest of rural buildings was very sustaining on poor days.' Hugh shared the platform that November evening with Simon Bradley, an author and editor working for Yale University Press, who related the history of the Pevsner series as a whole. Simon is involved nationally in co-ordinating the Buildings of Ireland series under the aegis of Yale publications. The Society is indebted to the Ulster Museum and its staff for hosting our illustrated lecture series.

Our outings took us from Donegal in the west to Down in the east. In the Mourne under the guidance of Harriet Devlin, the Society's former Buildings At Risk Officer, we visited a magnificent inhabited lime kiln near Kilkeel before learning how to slake and apply lime in Narrow Water Castle yard. Harriet also took us to see several of the projects under way as part of the Mourne Homesteads scheme, to restore rural vernacular buildings for local use. By way of a complete contrast the outing entitled *One Hundred Years of Justice* took Society members first to the new Courthouse on Belfast's waterfront and then to Crumlin Road Gaol and courthouse.

During the year the Society received funding from HLF to undertake a series



The image used for the Historic Buildings Owners Days

of information days for the owners of historic buildings. These are held in historic properties which demonstrate sensitive use or reuse and good conservation practice. In 2003 events were held in the Verbal Arts Centre, Londonderry, and Clotworthy House, Antrim. They proved popular and helped establish contacts between the Society and individual owners, many of whom struggle to maintain their historic properties. In April the Society held a lecture in the restored former Christ Church, College Square North, Belfast, which has found an exciting new use as a centre of excellence for information technology, a library and facility for heritage-based activities. The guest lecturer on this occasion was James Simpson, from Simpson & Brown, Edinburgh, who spoke on *Ways of Skinning Cats!* He described two very different conservation projects in Scotland – the repair and restoration of Auchinleck House, Ayrshire, and the repair and conversion of Stirling Tolbooth.

The Society's furthest foray south was to County Westmeath. Sinead O'Hara, a former committee member of the Society, is the county's conservation officer and she led members around some of the delights of this part of the Irish Midlands. We visited Beau Parc house and Slane Castle as well Locke's Distillery, Tyrell's Pass and Middleton Park House. We dined in the Belfry, the former Ballingall Church of Ireland, which is a fine example of sensitive new use. The visit to Belvedere, designed by Richard Castle in 1740, with its fascinating follies – the Jealous Wall, gazebo and rustic arch – was a particular pleasure. We were warmly welcomed wherever we went but particularly so at Belvedere, now owned by Westmeath County Council.

Curiosity is an attribute common to us all though sometimes we are ashamed to admit it! During the thirty-six years of the Society's existence members have travelled the highways and byways of Ulster and beyond satisfying their curiosity and learning about our fascinating architectural heritage. Our thanks are due to those who organise and lead these outings as well as to those who attend. Long may they continue to amuse and delight!

Particular thanks go to Primrose Wilson who has just retired as Chairman of our Events Committee, and a warm welcome to Keith Gilmour who has volunteered to take over the hot seat.

Hearth

Hearth has been progressing two major schemes in Belfast and Portrush which it is hoped will start on site early next year. It has also had a number of small projects on site during 2003.

The most significant has been the restoration of the Edward Blore gate lodge to Castle Upton in Templepatrick, built about 1835 as part of the demesne wall for the 17th century Castle Upton. Built in what was described as the 'Saxon' style of architecture, with granite quoins and beautifully crisp basalt ashlar work, the tower is a machicolated gateway with turrets. The original lodge was one of those ones with living quarters on one side and the bedroom accessed by walking across to the other side of the gateway in your nightgown, an arrangement that suited the symmetrical ambitions of the landowner rather than the convenience of his servants.

Hearth's plan was to extend both sides of the lodge parallel with the demesne wall that hides the lodge to form two separate lodges, using matching basalt walls and restoring the cast iron lattice windows that would probably have been in the window opes. In order to avoid cold spots in what was going to be a highly insulated house, secondary glazing was provided. Work started early in 2003, with JS Dunlop as the main contractor. The sitting tenants were housed temporarily in a mobile home nearby.

Externally, a culvert running underneath one of the lodges had to be investigated, and structural engineer Brian Campbell had to set aside his calculator to deal with an unquantifiable problem in the leaning turrets of the tower. It was concluded that the effect of sulphuric acid in rain (initially from chimneys in the tower, latterly from traffic) was reacting with the lime mortar and the resulting compound was expanding the turrets and the top of the tower itself, all of which were leaning outwards, encouraging a flourishing growth of trees and ferns in the open joints. The turrets were rebuilt and the roof reslated and leaded. The interior of the houses was very simple, but the run cornice in the main rooms was repaired, and a fragment of unusual fretted architrave was restored in the living room.

Hearth received funding for this scheme from both the Housing Associations Branch of the DSD and the HLF. The reason for dual

funding on a comparatively modest scheme is that along with the two houses being created by extending the lodge there was substantial work required to the linking tower which could not be funded by housing grant.

Work has also started on three other gatelodges, one in the People's Park at Ballymena and two in the Wallace Park in Lisburn, which will be reported on in next year's newsletter.

OBITUARY

The Society argued that with the new legislation in place a Building Preservation Notice (BPN) should have been served in the case of Claremont Lodge on Derry's Northland Road. An EHS survey of the building had begun and historical information was provided by the Foyle Civic Trust, indicating that it would be a worthy addition to the statutory list. Loss of trees within its grounds signalled plans by its owner to redevelop the site, and when EHS asked for access to examine the interior the owner's heightened awareness of possible statutory protection provided the impetus to proceed with demolition. The use of a BPN during the survey process would have prevented this. As it is, another cherished local landmark has disappeared and the tool designed to give such buildings a stay of execution sadly remained unused in this case.

The Society was hugely disappointed when the South and East Health & Social Services Trust went ahead with the demolition of Red Hall in the Circular Road Area of Townscape Character in East Belfast. This was where C.S. Lewis wrote *The Pilgrim's Regress*, opposite his family home, Little Lea. Included in the Historic Trail



Red Hall being demolished

of East Belfast, Red Hall was a sound building which could easily have been adapted to new uses, and again demonstrates Northern Ireland's ingrained bulldozer mentality. An intensive redevelopment of the site is now proposed, with little regard for the character of the area.

Despite its size and respectable Victorian heritage, Bangor has very few listed buildings, so that many good ones are unprotected. The bottom of the town's High Street formed an attractive group with curved corner buildings and some excellent Victorian stucco work. Sadly, nos.10-12 were demolished early in 2003, leaving a gap in the group. The architect for the replacement building consulted the Society to seek support for his designs. Contrary to general opinion, the UAHS is not opposed to all new design, and the request led to some lively debate in committee and subsequent correspondence with the architect. While each case must be judged on its merits, the Committee decided in this instance to oppose the proposed modern design, and felt that the correct approach would have been to keep the Victorian structure and once it had gone to seek to replace it with something of equivalent townscape character.

Further bulldozer destruction took place in Portstewart when two listed 18th century terrace cottages in the Main Square were demolished by a developer. The Environment Minister's quick response was to issue action against the developer and state in the media that such 'flagrant breaches of planning laws would not be tolerated'. However despite the initial stop notice it appears that this developer will be allowed to proceed with new development on the site, albeit taking the form of a more accurate reproduction of the facades.

It is – if only a little – gratifying to note that the Society's views were sought in reporting these cases, and are represented increasingly in the media. Unfortunately too often we appear to be wringing our hands after the loss of buildings. It is never so easy to attract publicity when we are warning of what is about to happen than once a building has been lost.

Book Reviews

Terence Reeves-Smyth and Richard Oram (editors), *Avenues to the Past, Essays presented to Sir Charles Brett on his 75th Year* (Belfast: UAHS, 2003). ISBN 0 900457 60 0. £16.00.

This book is a wonderful big birthday cake for Sir Charles Brett. There are twenty eight bright candles that illuminate it. Let none of those candles think of itself as perfect because Sir Charles has a way, with one quick breath, of extinguishing the very brightest. This cake is multi-layered, light in texture, full of different flavours. The very best thing about such a confection is that Sir Charles, who is not fond of cake or other sweet things, will share it with you, so that you can have his cake and eat it.

If you do consider this a book, then how best do you review it? Although it is an erudite publication one can start anywhere and find pleasure. The various authors have chosen a diversity of subjects and explored them for us. This book is a treasure chest of flavours. Let us start with houses. There is an essay on sod cabins; not quite architecture for they have vanished without trace. There is hardly even a photograph.

We move on to more sophisticated houses, with three authors untangling the stories behind projects. Relations between client and architect were not always harmonious. Early designs by Richard Castle for Castle Coole were not proceeded with but we eventually got Wyatt's masterpiece. Then to Nash and his work at Rockingham, Co. Roscommon. What a project even for this architect. The first site work comprised a pier on Lough Key, a light railway and ferry boats; all to get materials on to the site. The great house was built, burnt, restored, parts sealed off, again burnt in 1957, and sold to the Department of Lands who razed the ruin in 1970. The last story is a happier one. It concerns the work of the architect Edward Blore and his work for Colonel Creighton at Crom Castle in Co. Fermanagh. Blore had a very good reputation for keeping his costs below estimate, indeed some clients called him 'a cheap architect'. As work proceeded at Crom Castle cost problems did arise, as they tend to when the client wants an Elizabethan Revival House with all 'mod cons'.

Allow for one last story of a house. It concerns the first bungalow

built in Ireland, which is to be found at Ballycarry, Co. Antrim, built by a builder who returned from California in 1907. He built the house in 1908 and it still exists, virtually unchanged, a transplant from the west coast of America.

This is obviously a book of delights, it covers so many subjects, there is excitement to be found on all the pages. When a writer really knows his or her subject, then the pen races and enthusiasm simply springs from the page. Here you will find essays on carving executed in plaster and wood, images in many forms of the First Duke of Wellington, stained and decorative glass researched and the exploration of a famous campanile. These are just some of the contents. Allow me to return to houses from two different angles.

One essay that will delight any reader is on the subject of Florence Court and the opportunity that arose for the National Trust to have many family treasures returned to the house. Starting with a letter from the Dowager Countess of Enniskillen, moving on via executors, the Inland Revenue, solicitors, Christie's and an auctioneer in Glasgow (where police had to restore order) through a maze of negotiation, so that finally the great bulk of furniture, pictures, books and personal items are back on display. A true tale of perseverance and dedication, with a happy ending.

Another essay sets out the work of Hearth and the endeavours to preserve groups of houses that are falling into decay. Here again is a story told straight from the heart. There is no point in offering a précis, for to read the whole essay gets across the whole flavour of 'life at the coal face'. This is a story full of humour even when dealing with difficult areas and difficult owners. A great many difficulties overcome.

Have you an appetite for churches? One architect who was responsible for a great number was Joseph Welland. In the latter part of the 19th century he carried out work all over Ireland when working for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of the Church of Ireland. He was responsible for designing over a hundred churches, many of them in his own variation of Pugin's aesthetic principles.

The second essay is devoted to one church: Knockbreda Parish Church, near Forestside in the suburbs of Belfast. A small building

with a tower and stumpy spire, which was built in 1737 and designed by Richard Castle (remember early designs for Castle Coole). This place of worship was modified by Thomas Drew in 1883 and has some more recent extensions. It is an excellent building which does not seem to have had the recognition it deserves.

You must acquire this book, for there are so many other parts to savour. A far-seeing essay on Irish town planning, on conservation and attitudes to it down the centuries, a beloved area of the Mourne explored, a fascinating account of the search for Heritage Gardens and many others. In this review not every subject is mentioned; it is to be hoped that your appetite is whetted, and you will rush out immediately to buy the book. The volume is something to be proud of. It is beautifully printed and bound, full of photographs, drawings and maps. Great value at £12.00 to UAHS members, £16.00 to others.

In this review the names of the authors, who so kindly contributed essays, are not given. Be assured you will find all credits in the book. Nor indeed is the name of the reviewer now given.

Anon

Lyn Gallagher, *The Albert Memorial Clock* (Belfast: UAHS, 2003). ISBN 0 900 45759 7. £8.00.

This new publication by the Society chronicles the history and restoration of Belfast's very own leaning-tower-of-Pisa, highlighting how the work required to restore it to Barre's original vision needed to be nothing short of radical. Not only was stabilisation of the lean a concern, but the stonework was shabby (at best) or shot (at worst), most of the original ornamentation had gone, and the clock faces were decidedly dull - the structure needed a full overhaul.

What a restoration it got. I had long taken the Albert Clock for granted. I sort of appreciated its presence but had never really stopped to look at it in any great detail (for any detail that was left before the restoration, that is). But I gasped when I saw it revealed from its protective coverings last year, not just because the stone looked so good and the clock seemed to glow, but also because of all the lively ornamentation: the pinnacles, gargoyles, angels and

canopy over the statue of the Prince Consort himself. Primrose Wilson is quoted in the book as rightly saying, “This icon now looks benignly on its city and people, refreshed and reinvigorated with its lean arrested and its embellishments restored. After years of being ignored, the Albert Clock now seems to be taking quiet pleasure in the admiring glances of those who pass by!”

The book both celebrates and documents the structure and its restoration. Well illustrated, with a good collection of colour photographs of the refurbishment process and the final outcome, along with archival illustrations and black-and-white photographs which set the historical context, it traces the reason for the erection of the clock in the first place; the personality of its architect and the debacle between Barre and Lanyon & Lynn over the competition; its life and times – or, as that chapter is neatly labelled, “Its Life and Lean” – and, of course, the massive restoration. Cross references, details and anecdotes enliven the story, such as the information that the Portland stone statue of Albert was sculpted by Samuel Ferris Lynn, brother of W.H. Lynn – a little ironic considering the heated competition process. One nice little trick that the book’s designers should be congratulated on is the graphic treatment of the title: the structure is, I think, correctly called the Albert Memorial, but most people know it as The Albert Clock (or, as Gallagher sometimes refers to it, The Albert); the neat italicization of the word Memorial satisfies both the prole and the purist.

The last section of the book details the enormous work carried out by everyone involved in the massive restoration, from Consarc Conservation to Doran Consulting Engineers (who repiled the foundations and stabilised the tilt), to the stonework contractors (S McConnell & Sons) using the latest technology, to the sculptor Gabriel Gilmore and to the gilder, Ruth Bothwell, who appears to have nobly survived the elements while applying precious gold leaf to the clock face *in situ*. In short, this was obviously a labour of love for the entire team; and one of which they can be proud.

This is an attractive, accessible and readable publication, with most of the facts and figures you could want. Full credit to Belfast City Council and the HLF for funding it.

PH

Thomas McErlean, Rosemary McConkey and Wes Forsythe, *Strangford Lough - An Archaeological Survey of the Maritime Cultural Landscape* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press and Environment and Heritage Service, 2003). ISBN 0 856 407232. £25.00.

This impressive volume is the product of a partnership between EHS and the Centre for Maritime Archaeology at the University of Ulster. At its core lies a survey of the inter-tidal archaeological features of Strangford Lough but it is more a cultural and economic history of the area from a maritime perspective.

Much of the book’s emphasis is on the ‘living’ aspects of that landscape, that is the development of the towns and villages, and the buildings of the quays and harbours that are still in use. The result is a highly readable work of local history. It provides a context which allows us to understand how the built environment of the area developed. The work reverses the usual approach of surveys by making the surveyed material secondary to the overall analysis of the cultural landscape and economic history of the region.

A section dealing with the development of the towns and villages is especially interesting. Excellent use is made of contemporary newspaper records and the results show that this generally overlooked source is an indispensable tool in any study of this type. For instance, without such data it could not be shown that the building of a new quay on the Quoile and the extension of the quay at Killyleagh to its present form was occasioned by the setting up of the passenger route between Strangford Lough and Liverpool during the 1830s.

The proliferation of documentary sources during the post-medieval periods also gives us our first comprehensive indications of trade connections and the range of material transported in and out of the lough. Much of the material imported comprised building supplies, especially from the early 18th century onwards when native oak became less available. In other cases it would seem that a lack of knowledge of local material sources might have occasioned the unnecessary importation of materials. It is strange that Hugh Montgomery found it necessary to import fir deal from Norway when he restored Newtownards Priory as his residence during the early years of the 17th century. He must also have been unaware of the

fine sources of slate close to Newtownards when he imported slate from Scotland for the same building. It implies that slated buildings were unknown in the area at this time.

One of the principal features discovered during the intertidal survey were a very large number of slipways, jetties and piers. The majority of the landing places were small affairs servicing a farm or group of farms and were used for the movement of coal and agricultural produce and the transportation of material to and from the islands on the lough. Some of the most elegant piers in Strangford Lough were developed by the Bangor estate at Castleward and it is likely that some date to the early 18th century. Unlike many of the urban quays that have been altered in more recent times these beautiful structures remain in their original form. Most of the stone used in the quays and slipways are made of locally sourced stone. Occasionally, however, imported stone was used as in the case of the extension to a quay and slipway in Portaferry which used stone from the Isle of Man.

The book is beautifully produced and generously illustrated. The text is well written throughout and disguises the fact that it is a multi-authored work. What is most striking, however, is the sheer breadth and depth of the research undertaken. The quality of the this scholarship can be easily appreciated by looking at the book's exhaustive bibliography and one cannot be but impressed with the obscurity of many of the sources consulted. The book moves archaeological survey to a new level and hopefully will prove a template for future work, maritime or otherwise. At £25 it is also a bargain.

F McC

APW Malcomson, *Primate Robinson 1709-94*. (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003). ISBN 1-903688-33-7. £9.99.

Anyone who has been taught anything about the city of Armagh is familiar with the name of Archbishop Robinson, Primate of Armagh for thirty years at the end of the 18th century, who was responsible for many of that city's finest architectural monuments. Most of

them still stand today, and like Sir Christopher Wren, Robinson could be given the epitaph "Circumspicere" – the Bishop's Palace with its elegant little chapel, the Royal School, the Observatory, the magnificent Public Library – Armagh would be a much poorer place without these buildings, and Robinson's name is quoted with due reverence on their account.

Anthony Malcomson, however, has chosen to follow the modern biographer's trend of assiduously (if most elegantly) seeking out the clay feet of his subject. Even the book's sub-title ('a very tough incumbent, in fine preservation') suggests that its hero will not be treated with much reverence

We soon learn that Robinson's building works were restricted to the first decade or so of his primacy, and that they perhaps owe more to the building boom of the time and to the considerable wealth of the see than to any refinement or vision on Robinson's part. Even his sermons, while apparently excellent in style and doctrine, were not written down, and when delivered were inaudible due to his 'indistinctly heard' voice!

Perhaps this revisionist view came about because Dr Malcomson came at Robinson circuitously from more extensive labours on his contemporary Archbishop Agar. Nevertheless, we learn that Robinson was a colossal man 'with a penetrating eye', who seems to have been unusually conscientious in making ecclesiastical appointments, and those of us with a weak religious gene will sympathise with his having donated 'Snetzler's finest Irish organ' to the Cathedral and giving a fellow clergyman the advice that

If you wish to get these people back [to the church] again, sing them in. They won't come to your preaching: argument will do nothing with them; but they have itching ears and will listen to a hymn.

Few people have as comprehensive knowledge of Irish ecclesiastical history of the 18th century as Anthony Malcomson, and this is a short book tightly packed with information about Trollopian intrigues and full of pithy quotations. Sadly the architectural content is less than we might have expected, but it does place the buildings of our finest Georgian city in a fresh and vigorous context.

MP

Winning on Restoration

The Society was delighted to assist the television company Endemol in selecting buildings and issues to be discussed in the Northern Ireland edition of its 'Restoration' programme. Society members will probably be familiar with the outcome of the series, in that Lissan House near Cookstown won the Northern Ireland heat and went on to take second place overall. Since the programme, one of the other Northern Irish entries, the Crescent Arts Centre in Belfast, has been awarded a substantial grant (£1.2million) towards its capital refurbishment project from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's National Lottery funds.

They said...

Regardless of the quality of the A-list architecture being produced today, it's the quality of the B-list, the everyday commercial and vernacular architecture, that we should be worried about. The truth of this statement can be ascertained by walking around any of our major cities [where] practices, all fully professionally and technically competent, and fully paid up members of the RIBA and ARB, have just won planning permission for some hideous dog of an office / retail / residential development, which is about to disfigure some unsuspecting street... Why are these people not struck off? Rather than being responsible for the odd repairable leak, these people are collaborating in the disfigurement of whole cities! Is that not professional incompetence? (*Sean Griffiths, article in Building Design, 19 September 2003*)

The impact on the environment of demolition and rebuilding is huge. Socially, it takes a generation to rebuild wiped out communities; economically even the highest renovation costs rarely reach the full costs of demolition and rebuilding. Between £20-40,000 per property will restore currently 'obsolete' housing. But demolition alone costs £20-30,000 per home whilst new infrastructure and services, environmental costs, congestion, time lag and rehousing costs add up to at least double this. The cost to the public purse of each new home, before building it, is around £65,000. (*Prof Anne Power of London School of Economics, report for Chartered Institute of Housing, February 2003*)

Do they listen? Yes. Do they hear? No. (*Letter about planners to Co Down Spectator, December 2003*)

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LISTS AND GAZETTEERS

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Joy Street area of Belfast	£4.00	Central Belfast	£9.50
St Helier, Jersey	£4.00	Bangor (new edition)	£9.00

Orders for all the foregoing publications, and standing orders for future publications, may be sent to the Society at 66 Donegall Pass, Belfast BT7 1BU, and will be fulfilled subject to availability, and at the charges for postage and packing ruling at the date of order.

Many of the Society's early Lists are now out-of-print, and while we hope to bring out new editions of some them, the Secretary is happy to assist enquirers by making photocopies on request at cost from the copies held in the Society's office. The following items are now out of print:

Lisburn	Mourne
Portaferry and Strangford	North Derry
Antrim and Ballymena	Carrickfergus
Downpatrick	Town of Cavan
City of Derry	An Introduction to Ulster Architecture
Dungannon and Cookstown	Palm House and Botanic Gardens, Belfast
Glens of Antrim	Court Houses and Market Houses
North Antrim	The Diamond as Big as a Square
Coleraine and Portstewart	Clandeboye
Enniskillen	Buildings at Risk catalogues 1-6
Towns and Villages of East Down	Directory of Traditional Building Skills
Island of Rathlin	

The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society exists to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of good architecture of all periods - from the prehistoric to the contemporary - in the nine counties of Ulster, to encourage the preservation and restoration of buildings of merit or importance; and to increase public awareness of the beauty, history and character of local neighbourhoods.

This newsletter outlines some of the major activities of the Society during 2003.

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Heritage Projects Officer: Andrew McClelland

The Society is always looking for members interested in taking an active part in its activities. In particular, monitoring of planning applications in different areas, preparation of new lists, and assistance in organising outings are always appreciated. If you would like to help in any of these ways, please contact the Secretary, Miss Joan Kinch, at Belfast 028-9055 0213. Our e-mail number is info@uahs.co.uk, and our website is www.uahs.co.uk

Our **front cover** shows Claremont Lodge, Londonderry, shortly before its demolition in the summer of 2003. The **back cover** shows the gate lodge at Castle Upton, recently restored by Hearth.

Contributors to this issue: **Anon**, Angela Fitzpatrick, Rita Harkin, Paul Harron, Karen Latimer, Andrew McClelland, Finbar McCormick, Marcus Patton and Primrose Wilson.



