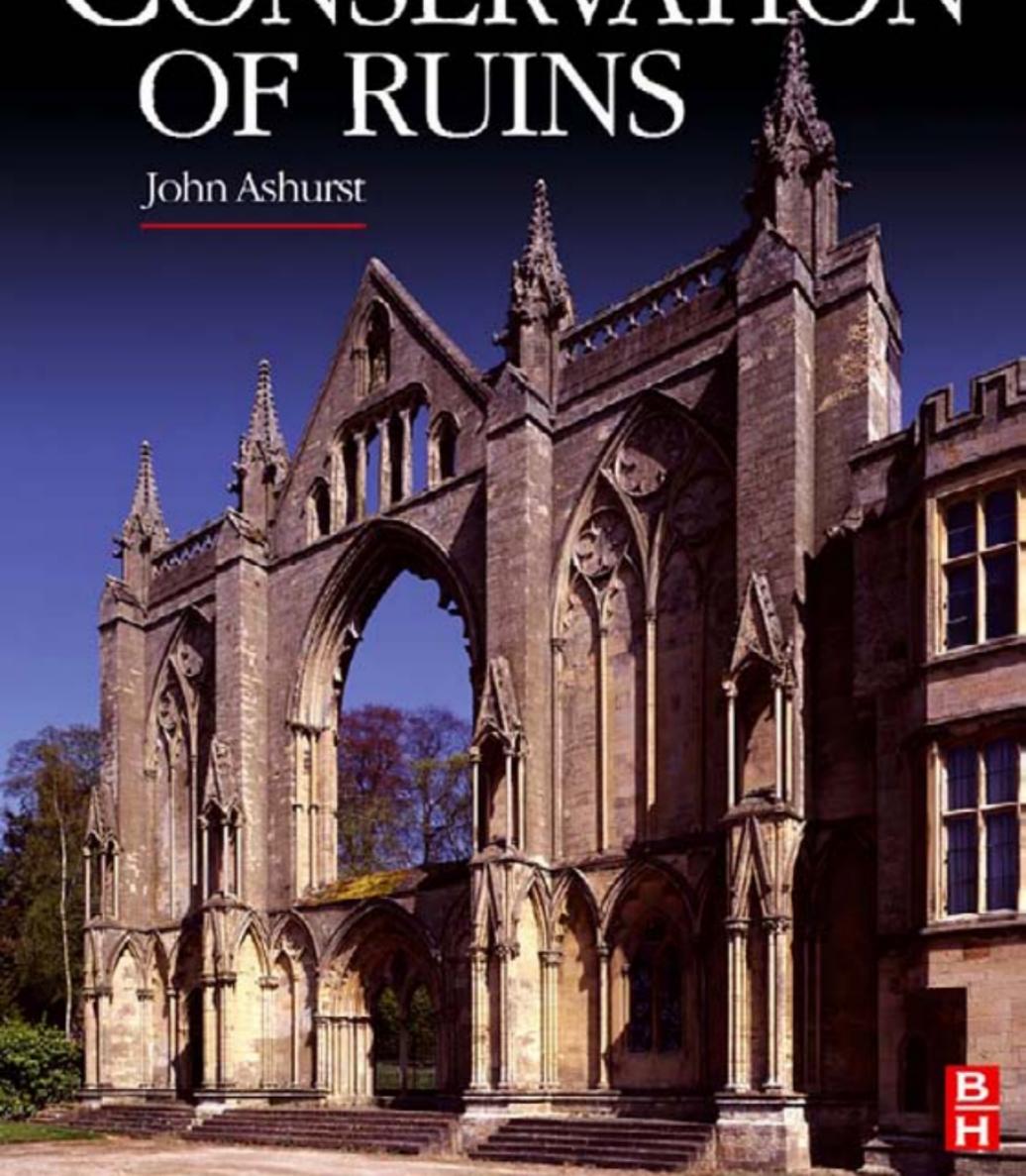


CONSERVATION OF RUINS

John Ashurst



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CONSERVATION OF RUINS

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Knowlton Church and Rings are a good example of a Scheduled Ancient Monument in England. Located in the ancient landscape of Cranborne Chase and surrounded by barrow cemeteries and earthworks, the church is eleventh century but much altered in the fourteenth century. Remarkably, it stands within a well-preserved ceremonial Neolithic Henge monument of c. 2500 BC. Consolidation of flint core work, tamping and pointing, the use of rendered brick structural supports and bronze corbel bars are classic interventions of the Ancient Monuments Division of the Ministry of Public Building and Works (c. 1950). Scale by Sam the retriever.

CONSERVATION OF RUINS

Edited by John Ashurst



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*I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. And near them on the sand
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive stamped on those lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works ye mighty and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

(Percy Bysshe Shelley,
Ozymandias of Egypt, 1817)

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I count it a true privilege to know each one of them.

Graham Abrey • Jason Bolton • Colin Burns • Sara Ferraby • Chris How • Jukka Jokilehto • David Odgers • Gionata Rizzi • Asi Shalom • Margo Teasdale • Amanda White • Catherine Woolfitt

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My second acknowledgement is to all those who have contributed to my love and knowledge of historic buildings and especially those buildings with 'special needs' which have so much to teach us, the building ruins and their sites.

The list which follows is a dangerous one, because there will be omissions which I will later remember and regret. But I list them as well as I can without their titles but with my enduring thanks and appreciation.

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The archaeologists and historians

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Chris Wood • Elizabeth Vause

The engineers

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Lesley Arnold • John Beavis • Leo Biek • Mike Bowley • Brian L. Clarke • Tony Coote • Francis G. Dimes • Peter Ellis • Sophie Godfraind • Yosef Hatzor • David B. Honeyborne • Elaine Leary • Frank Matero • John Musty • Sara Pavia • John Pickering • Clifford A. Price • Barry Richardson • Brian Rideout • John Savory • Giorgio Torraca

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List of contributors

Professor John Ashurst is a chartered architect who has spent most of his professional life working on historic buildings. In the early part of his career he joined the Ancient Monuments Division of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works and remained with the organisation through its several changes, culminating in privatisation as the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, better known as English Heritage. For the greater part of this period he was architect in charge of the Research and Technical Advisory Service and took particular interest in the conservation of ruins in the care of the state. For many years he has been actively involved in teaching and site training, and is author of numerous technical notes and books including, with Francis G. Dimes, *The Conservation of Building and Decorative Stone*, published by Butterworth-Heinemann. Since 1991 he has worked in private practice as a consultant on historic buildings and their sites and has had a particular interest and involvement in the historic sites of Israel. His other interests are eighteenth century history, theatre, film and the graphic arts.



Colin Burns is a master stonemason and served his apprenticeship on the Isle of Portland in Dorset, England. He has spent the last 35 years in the field of masonry conservation. The greater part of that time has been with the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, later English Heritage, where he worked with John Ashurst in the Research and Technical Advisory Service. He is a well-known and respected teacher of practical masonry conservation, particularly for his speciality in site training on the conservation of ruins. He has contributed to the conservation of ruins training programmes in Ireland, Albania and Israel. His varied interests include the practice and history of quarrying.

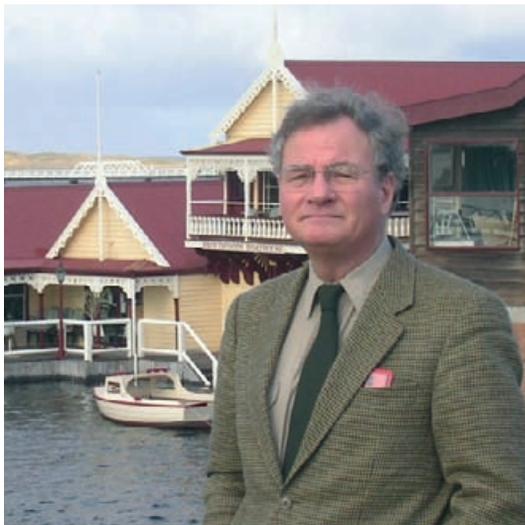
Graham Abrey is a chartered building surveyor accredited in conservation by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. He gained considerable practical experience in the repair of historic buildings as a supervisor and project manager for a UK stone masonry company. He obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in building conservation and subsequently worked as an independent consultant in the repair and conservation of masonry buildings before co-founding Ingram Consultancy Ltd in 1999. Graham uniquely combines an extensive knowledge of traditional building materials and repair techniques with essential professional project management and documentation skills. He has travelled widely in the Himalayan region and has a passionate interest in its cultures.





Jason Bolton has a background in architectural conservation science, heritage risk management, commercial diving and archaeology. He has recently completed doctoral research on the deterioration of coastal stone monuments, and has authored a wide range of books, technical studies, papers and articles since he began in private practice as an Architectural Conservation Consultant in 1997. Research interests include the weathering, decay, cleaning, repair and conservation of stone, brick and mortar masonry structures, the interaction of island and coastal environments and historic buildings and materials, medieval mortar technology, quarrying and sources of building materials, and the technology and design of Irish stone monuments.

Sara Ferraby is a chartered building surveyor with a background of project management in Historic Royal Palaces in England. She has considerable experience in conservation contract procedures and documentation, and of using these coupled with proper supervision and good communication to ensure the maintenance of high standards on site. This translation of conservation requirements into practice on site has given her a particular interest in the development of accredited practical conservation training. She is committed to the protection of the countryside and its wildlife, is interested in all equestrian pursuits and regularly competes at affiliated dressage with her Hanoverian horse Leonardo.



Chris How studied Civil Engineering with a Structural Engineering bias at West Ham College of London University. He carried out a variety of investigation and design works, which included bridge design in Cornwall, before migrating to Australia in 1970. Since 1973 he has lived and worked in the pioneer region of South-West Victoria, most of this time as a Consulting Engineer in his own practice. Chris is now semi-retired and is busy indulging a fascination for historic buildings and their problems, which stems from 3700 site tests around the area, and a large number of structural investigations on pioneer structures. He is a team player who enjoys the interaction with heritage architects, builders, conservationists and historians. He is a member of Australia ICOMOS, a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and the Institution of Engineers, Australia.

Dr Jukka Jokilehto was born in Finland, where he first worked as architect and city planner. In 1971, he attended the International Architectural Conservation Course at ICCROM in Rome, and was later made responsible for the Architectural Conservation Programme, reaching the position of Assistant to the Director General. Many of the world's conservation practitioners came to know him in this role and benefited from his guidance and enormous experience of international conservation. Retired in 1998, he has been Advisor to ICOMOS on the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Internationally known as a lecturer, he has written on conservation theory and practice, including *A History of Architectural Conservation* (Butterworth, 1999), and is an accomplished violinist.



David Odgers graduated with a degree in chemistry, then spent several years working on the fringes of industry before becoming an apprentice conservator at Wells Cathedral under Professor Robert Baker, where he learned the value of the conservator becoming as knowledgeable about the object to be treated as any doctor should be about their patient. He later built on this experience to become one of the founder members of Nimbus Conservation in 1984 and from 1991 until 2005 Managing Director of the company, employing over 40 craftsmen and conservators. He was responsible for conservation works to many important historic buildings and monuments, including archaeological sites. He is now an independent consultant, an Accredited Conservator, well-known trainer in conservation subjects, and a keen cricketer.



Gionata Rizzi graduated in architecture from the Polytechnic of Milan before specialising in building conservation at ICCROM and at the University of York, where he obtained an M.A. with a thesis on masonry ruins. Assistant to Sir Bernard Feilden in Rajasthan, he has been involved in many projects of architectural conservation in Italy, France, Spain and the Middle East. As a consultant to UNESCO, ICCROM and WMF he worked on various World Heritage Sites, including the *Templete Mudéjar* in Guadalupe (Spain), a project that won a Europa Nostra Prize. For the Getty Conservation Institute he developed a proposal for a shelter on a hieroglyphic stairway of a Maya pyramid. He is now working in Italy on Herculaneum, on the façade of Parma's Cathedral, and on the archaeological site of Piazza Armerina in Sicily. He has taught Architectural Conservation in Milan and Geneva, and is a guest lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania.





Asi Shalom is an archaeologist and site conservator. Asi was one of the founders of the Conservation Department in the Israel Antiquities Authority in 1989. He is a graduate in Conservation Studies of the School of Archaeology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and has also trained in Italy. He founded and has managed the Archaeology Conservation Center since 1995, and has participated in and led over 60 conservation projects throughout the country, such as Masada, Qumeran, the Spice Road Caravansaries, Mosaics of Memphis, City of David – Jerusalem and various Classical and Biblical sites. Asi's many interests include early technologies, especially the culture and work of the Nabateans. He has developed and manages a successful olive farm in the

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Catherine Woolfitt is an archaeologist and architectural conservator, and co-founder and director of Ingram Consultancy Ltd, a practice dedicated to the conservation of historic buildings and ancient monuments. Since completion of her training at Queen's University in Canada in the fields of Classical Archaeology and Art Conservation, she has pursued her interest in history and specialised in the conservation of historic building fabric – survey, recording, analysis, repair and surface treatment. She has had a long-term involvement and maintains an ongoing interest in the history and archaeology of the Mediterranean region and of her ancestral home in North Wales. Catherine is a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and of the UK Institute of Conservation. Spare time is devoted to the conservation of her sixteenth century Somerset farmhouse and garden.



Rachel Sabino-Gunaratna is Assistant Conservator of Objects and Sculpture at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Rachel has carried out internships at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, J. Paul Getty Museum and Corning Museum of Glass and successfully managed a private practice in London. Her interests include gardening, bookbinding and equine pursuits.

Gillian Reading runs her own administrative support company out of offices shared with Ingram Consultancy on the Fonthill Estate in Wiltshire. She has worked as personal assistant to John Ashurst, Catherine Woolfitt and Graham Abrey of Ingram Consultancy for the last three years and has a client base of 10–15 small to medium size businesses in the area. Gillian spends time away from her computer running or walking with her Jack Russell dog, Finch.



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Foreword

The conservation literature contains many books on earthen architecture, stone and historic buildings. Few of them, if any, deal specifically with ruins, and this volume fills the gap admirably. Similarly, the conservation profession has many gifted people but there are few, if any, who are better qualified than John Ashurst to bring such a book into being.

One of my first encounters with John was at Tintern Abbey. Its immaculately maintained appearance contrasted markedly with photographs from the previous century, when it was covered with ivy, the archetypal romantic ruin. We were applying a range of biocides to control algae and lichen, seeing which worked best and lasted longest. I doubt whether it occurred to either of us to question what we were doing, or to set the evident need for maintenance into the wider context of conservation ethics and principles. Conservation then was largely a matter of finding the right material for the job.

This book reflects the changes that have taken place in the intervening years. It contains much

practical advice, but it also maps out some of the wider context in which conservators now operate.

John's first book *Stone Preservation Experiments*, co-authored with Brian Clarke and published by the Building Research Establishment in 1972, marked a turning point in approaches to stone preservation. It was meticulously researched and recorded, but few people who read the preface went any further. The preface ended with the memorable words 'None of the treatments has had any overall beneficial effect in retarding decay on any of the sites'. Why read on? This volume, by contrast, will be quarried repeatedly by students and experienced practitioners alike. It provides, in the words of Gionata Rizzi's preface, a 'close encounter with ruins': an encounter that will inform and invigorate on every occasion.

Clifford Price

Professor of Archaeological Conservation
Institute of Archaeology, University College London

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Knowlton Church and Rings are a good example of a Scheduled Ancient Monument in England. Located in the ancient landscape of Cranborne Chase and surrounded by barrow cemeteries and earthworks, the church is eleventh century but much altered in the fourteenth century. Remarkably, it stands within a well-preserved ceremonial Neolithic Henge monument of c. 2500 BC. Consolidation of flint core work, tamping and pointing, the use of rendered brick structural supports and bronze corbel bars are classic interventions of the Ancient Monuments Division of the Ministry of Public Building and Works (c. 1950). Scale by Sam the retriever.

Preface

Gionata Rizzi

*Rocks impregnable are not so stout, nor
Gates of steel so strong, but time decays.*

(Shakespeare, Sonnet 65)

Ruins: buried cities brought to light by archaeologists in every part of the world; sacred temples dedicated to divinities that we have ceased to worship; towers, forts, strongholds, military defences made useless by the unremitting development of new weapons; industrial plants and factories no longer compatible with modern techniques of production and abandoned like the carcasses of huge old-fashioned cars; buildings that have been gnawed, mutilated and reduced to a state that bears no relation to their original purpose; buildings that have sometimes deteriorated to a point where their original form can hardly be recognised; buildings that only survive in the form of isolated fragments.

Ruins are everywhere. They form a considerable part of our architectural heritage and, actually, even of the World Heritage List: they are preserved as ruins, maintained as ruins and visited by a growing number of people who, in ruins, see values, significance and meaning – in spite of their condition.

In spite of their condition or *because* of their condition? Henry James¹ puts it clearly: *'It has often seemed to me ... that the purest enjoyment of architecture was to be had among the ruins of great buildings'*. True, although the *enjoyment* he describes is probably not only architectural: the interest in archaeological ruins and the taste for architectural fragments go far beyond the historical and artistic importance the remains of a given building may have; as the ephemeral traces of the human activity on earth, ruins are actually among the most evocative icons of times past.

Indeed, the 'enjoyment of ruins' seems to thrive in contemporary sensitivity nourished, as it is, by

many aspects of our mentality: the aesthetic pleasure in the patina of time, the romantic sensitivity for the work of man reconquered by nature, the positivist interest in architecture denuded of ornament and observable in its bare 'anatomy', the taste for the part wrenched from its context, for the unity turned into pieces, for the isolated fragment.

As a matter of fact, this fascination of contemporary culture for ruins appears to have its roots in at least two centuries of history of ideas. A crucial moment for the development of such sensitivity is perhaps to be seen in the great excitement that seized Europe when Winckelmann, before being murdered in 1769, began to reveal to Northern Europe the extraordinary discoveries of Pompeii and Herculaneum. It is difficult to imagine a historical moment when European culture could have reacted with greater interest to the discovery of a buried city: eighteenth century sensibility was by then ready to become excited at the romantic notion of the ruin, while neoclassical antiquarian taste was anxious to find in archaeological remains new material for its aesthetic. From the end of the eighteenth century, and for a period that was to last many years, an avalanche of writers, thinkers and artists descended upon Pompeii and Herculaneum: Goethe visited the excavations in 1787, Stendhal in 1817 (*'The strangest thing I have seen on my journey ...; one feels transported into antiquity ...'*); and subsequently Chateaubriand, Taine and Gautier. Thus, in a few decades, the aesthetics of the *bella ruina*, the literary sensibility for the 'pleasing decay', the poetry of ruins, received a strong impulse that would have a profound effect on the history of taste.

Ruins, however, do not only attract for romantic reasons. Actually, at the very same time as the romantic