



ARCHITECTURE GROUP

NEWSLETTER: April 2020

Greetings.

Welcome to Newsletter No.2. Thank you for your positive feedback. Unfortunately, we will not be visiting Vienna this month. I do though have a provisional slot for April next year for Mike Grundy to visit us to deliver his much-anticipated talk.

In the meantime, I hope the following will be informative, entertaining and a brief distraction from what is going on around us just now.

SPECTACULAR VENACULAR

Based on David Long's book bearing the same name, a few examples of some London curiosities.

YE OLDE CHESHIRE CHEESE PUB, Fleet Street, EC4



Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese is a Grade II listed public house at 145 Fleet Street, on Wine Office Court, City of London. Rebuilt shortly after the Great Fire of 1666, the pub is known for its literary associations, with its regular patrons having included Charles Dickens, G.K. Chesterton and Mark Twain.

The Central London chapel of the National Union of Journalists was formed here in 1907, and until relatively recently this warren of a place was still a favourite of writers and journalists. They and other regulars would have known it as "The House", the tavern's given name being a bit of a red herring. The



Cheshire in question was one Thomas Cheshire who records show as keeping the bar here in 1543.

Nearly four centuries later, one of his successors had a parrot that achieved a measure of celebrity status. In 1918, it fainted after mimicking 400 times the popping

of a champagne cork to celebrate the Armistice. The bird was also renowned for a vocabulary so blue, that when it died in 1926 aged 40, it got a mention on the BBC News.

VANBRUGH'S CASTLE. Maze Hill, SE3



The castle was designed and built after Vanbrugh had been the architect of the baroque houses at Castle Howard and Blenheim Palace, and shortly after he succeeded his architectural mentor Christopher Wren as



Surveyor to the Royal Naval Hospital in 1716. Vanbrugh took a lease on a 12-acre triangular site of the Westcombe estate from Sir Michael Biddulph, 2nd Baronet in 1718, now known as Vanbrugh Fields.

Vanbrugh named it "La Bastille". Complete with a defensive ring of walls, bastions and a gatehouse, the

castle itself originally comprised just a fairly compact four-square keep, with two circular towers on the southern façade and another one in the centre. It was later extended in a picturesque manner to accommodate "two Boys Strong in the Nursery". Alas, one of the adored children was to die around his first birthday. Vanbrugh himself soon after of quinsy in 1726. The house later became a school and now is converted into flats.

POLICE STATION LANTERN, Trafalgar Square, SW1



Located rather surreptitiously at the south-east corner of Trafalgar Square is a rather peculiar and often overlooked world record holder; Britain's Smallest Police Station. Apparently, this tiny box can accommodate up to two prisoners at a time, although its main purpose was to hold a single police officer...think of it as a 1920's CCTV camera!

Built in 1926 so that the Metropolitan Police could keep an eye on the more troublesome demonstrators, the story behind its construction is also a rather secretive. At the end of World War I, a temporary police box just outside of the Trafalgar Square tube station was due to be renovated and made more permanent. However, due to public objections this was scrapped and instead it was decided to build a less "objectionable" police box. The venue? Inside an ornamental light fitting.



Once the light fitting was hollowed out, it was then installed with a set of narrow windows in order to provide a vista across the main square. Also installed was a direct phone line back to Scotland Yard in case reinforcements were needed in times of trouble.

In fact, whenever the police phone was picked up, the ornamental light fitting at the top of the box started to flash, alerting any nearby officers on duty that trouble was near. Today the box is no longer used by the Police and is instead used as a broom cupboard for Westminster Council cleaners!

Whilst in Trafalgar Square, it is also worth noting that Nelson's Column itself, at 145ft (plus a further 17ft for the Admiral himself) is still the tallest Corinthian column in the world.

THE ROTUNDA (Museum of Artillery), Repository Road, SE18



Illustration c. 1844 with Nash's Rotunda in the background. Credit: By Kleon3 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=56173998>

for the many events hosted there by the Prince Regent in celebration of the allied victory over Napoleon.



The first event held in the wooden rotunda was a magnificent celebration in honour of the Duke of Wellington, in July 1814. The Regent ordered the removal of the rotunda from the grounds at Carlton House, in 1818. John Nash had hoped it would be converted into a church. However, the Regent directed that it be re-erected on Woolwich Common for

use as a museum by the Royal Artillery. When the building was re-erected in Woolwich, in 1820, its original architect, John Nash, turned it into a permanent structure with a lead roof and central supporting pillar. In 1973 the Rotunda was designated as a Grade II* listed building.

Since most of its exhibits were transferred to the Firepower museum at the Royal Arsenal in 2001, the Rotunda has ceased to be open to the public, except by special arrangement. The building is now used as a boxing ring by the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery, housed in the nearby Napier Lines Barracks.

BURTON'S TENT, St Mary Magdalene, Mortlake



This curiosity lies in the churchyard of St Mary Magdalen Church. It is in fact the tomb of Victorian explorer and linguist, Sir Richard Burton (1821-1890). It is a truly amazing sight, one that transcends curios and enters the realm of the truly eccentric!

Sir Richard Burton (and be careful not to make the usual mistake of confusing him with the actor of the same name), you see, is buried in a stone replica of a Bedouin tent that stands 12 feet square by 18 feet high and is adorned with frieze of Islamic crescents and stars.

His tomb is a proud remembrance of his many achievements that included travelling in disguise to Mecca, an unexpurgated English translation of *One*



Thousand and One Nights (better known as *The Arabian Nights*), bringing the *Kama Sutra* to publication in English, and, together with John Hanning Speke, acquiring the distinction of being the first Europeans to visit the Great Lakes of Africa in search of the source of the Nile.

Startling as this incongruous monument is, yet another surprise awaits. If you make your way to the rear of the tomb and climb an iron ladder that has been conveniently placed against the rear wall of the tomb, you can even peer through the glass plate at the tomb's interior.

As your eyes adjust to the gloom within, you find yourself looking down upon the coffins of Burton and his wife, Isabel Arundell, surrounded by dusty artefacts such as lamps and helmets.

- **CAPTION COMPETITION**

Come on you lot.
Haven't you heard
of social distancing.



Do you have a suggestion to offer? Let me know your ideas for a comical caption.

Updated photo courtesy of Val Atkinson

- **ARCHITECTURAL STYLES**

- **GOTHIC**



Strasbourg Cathedral, France

The Gothic style encompasses many forms of art including sculpture and furniture, but no discipline was more visually masterful than that of Gothic architecture. The

Gothic architectural movement originated in the Middle Ages around the mid-C12th in France, and though enthusiasm began to wane in central Italy towards the C16th, other parts of northern Europe continued to embrace the style, allowing aspects to flourish to this day.

Evolving from a Romanesque (Norman) style of architecture characterised by semi-circular arches, Gothic architecture showcases great height, light, and volume. Its signature elements—the ribbed vault, flying buttresses, and pointed arch—are evident in some of the most spectacular buildings around Europe like that of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France*.

*If you have access to BBC iplayer, you might be interested in the BBC Four programme “Rebuilding Notre Dame: Inside the Great Cathedral Rescue” aired on 15th April. This looks at the work undertaken since the devastating fire which broke out roughly a year ago.

A Brief History of Gothic Architecture

Gothic architecture was originally referred to as *Opus Francigenum*, or “French Work,” until the C16th century when it became known as “Gothic.” The rich history of Gothic architecture is divided into three distinct phases: Early, High, and Late. Each is characterised by different design elements, styles, and engineering advancements.

Early Gothic

Early Gothic architecture represents the style between the years 1120 and 1200. The first Gothic architectural structures were built in Île-de-France, a region near Paris. The Early Gothic period in northern France was rife with growth and prosperity, and citizens had the resources to build in the grandiose style that the movement promoted.



Suger’s reconstruction of the Abbey of Saint-Denis (left) served as a model for this new style. Not long after, by 1160, the construction of Notre Dame in Paris had begun. Buildings and cathedrals built during this period typically had four

distinct levels: a ground-level, tribune gallery level, triforium gallery level, and an upper, windowed level called a clerestory, which were supported by patterns of columns and arches. Windows were lined with decorative dividers and a diverse range of stained glass.

The Early Gothic style swiftly spread across Europe, appearing in Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and England. England's early, vast adoption of Gothic architecture is evident in the construction of the Canterbury Cathedral, rebuilt in this style in 1174.

High Gothic

Much of the High Gothic or "Rayonnant Gothic" in France, is a style which appeared in the C13th. Rayonnant, which translates to "radiant," marks a more expressive period that exaggerated key features of decorative styles. Instead of structural improvements, architects focused on new ways of approaching geometric designs, elaborate adornments, and stylistic enhancements. Some of the advances that emerged during this time include:

- Pinnacles: upright structures that topped piers and gave weight to buttresses
- Mouldings: elements that contour or outline edges and surfaces on a projection
- Window tracery: stonework elements that support the glass in a window
- Mullions: vertical or horizontal bars used in a decorative fashion



Another notable development during this period was that of a large, circular rose window that adorned west facades of many churches. One of the most iconic examples is the two rose windows on the north and south of the transept of the Notre Dame Cathedral. These delicate roses occupied the entire space between the pillars, contrary to those constructed in earlier periods that were framed by stone and only occupied a portion of the wall.

During this period, the triforium gallery and clerestory were combined into one large, glazed area. The earliest manifestation of this was seen in the Amiens Cathedral which was constructed from 1220 to 1270.

Late Gothic


Late Gothic architecture is known as "Flamboyant Gothic" architecture in France, getting its name from the widespread use of a flamelike, s-shaped curve within the stone window tracery. Flamboyant Gothic Architecture was even more decorative than that of Rayonnant. Other new features included



the *arc en accolade*, a window decorated with an arch, stone pinnacles, and floral sculptures. One of the most notable examples of Flamboyant Gothic architecture is that of the Rouen Cathedral in France, whose construction lasted over three centuries and allowed various towers to draw upon Flamboyant, decorative characteristics.

Beginning in 1337, the series of conflicts between England and France during the Hundred Years' War led to a reduction in religious architecture and increase in military and civil buildings, leading to more Flamboyant designs appearing in many town halls and even domestic residences.

Rouen Cathedral

Article based on  In Good Taste piece: see <https://www.invaluable.com/blog/gothic-architecture/>

AT RISK BUT NOT FROM CORONA VIRUS!



Want a Devon pad and save our heritage? How about giving Blackborough House near Exeter a go? It's on the edge of the Blackdown Hills. Built for a naval man, the last Earl Egremont (yes, it's the Petworth family), its history is eccentric!



It was designed by James Thomas Knowles (Senior) who specialised in Italianate architecture and designed 15 Kensington Palace Gardens, the residence of the Finnish Ambassador. But there were money problems and it was turned into a semi-detached for the Earl and his cousin. It's been a school



and an internment camp, and is not in the best state of repair!! – oh, and is currently occupied by a scrap yard. What a challenge but great chimneys!

Article kindly supplied by Tim Cox.

NOW TIME TO PICK YOUR WITS!!

Architectural Terms Crossword

Across

- 5. a sculpted female figure used as a support in place of a column
- 6. a low wall for protection at the edge of a balcony
- 7. a semicircular wall area above a door or window
- 9. a supporting structure for a column or statue
- 11. a round window
- 12. a horizontal band with paintings or sculpture that runs along the upper portion of a wall

Down

- 1. a vaulted space beneath the pavement of a church, often housing relics or tombs
- 2. a triangular element of a building
- 3. the principal exterior face of a building, usually the front
- 4. an arched ceiling
- 8. a concave recess in a wall, often used to house statues
- 10. a tall pointed termination of a tower

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ANSWERS ON LAST PAGE

Being creative with columns



How about these columns!! Aren't they exotic; but many of you will have seen the building they form part of? It's within 40 miles of Farnham

Do you know the answer?
Do have a guess if you don't know.

Answer will be revealed in the next newsletter.

Article kindly supplied by Tim Cox.

OPPORTUNITIES

Stuck for entertainment? I pass on the following information kindly sent to me by the Front of House Manager at Farnham Maltings. Happy viewing.

Marquee TV

<https://www.marquee.tv/>

Strong selection of Opera, Theatre, Contemporary Dance, Ballet and Documentaries - and they've extended their trial period to 30 days, so a whole month of watching without paying any money. Just need to ensure you cancel your subscription before it's due for renewal (or if you like it, keep it going).

Pride and Prejudice - the Musical

<https://m.facebook.com/whatsonstage>

Link to various musicals and things theatrical.

Fleabag - stage show

<https://on-demand.sohotheatre.com>

Phoebe Waller-Bridge's smash hit stage show is now available online, for a minimum cost of £4 for a 48-hour rental. As the money is going to charities (National Emergency Trust, NHS Charities Together, Acting for Others), you can opt to pay more. But it's a great way to help in these tricky times, whilst also having a good laugh. They also have a small selection of comedy shows, each priced £4 as well.

Chichester Festival Theatre

<https://www.cft.org.uk/flowers-for-mrs-harris-broadcast>

Chichester Festival Theatre have announced that they'll be making archive recordings of some of their performances available for free via their website, starting with 'Flowers for Mrs Harris', a production which won three UK

Theatre Awards, including Best Musical. It's available until the 8th of May. There may be plans to show more, but no news on what they might be yet!

The Shows Must Go On - Andrew Lloyd Webber

<https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCdmPjhKMaXNNeCr1FjuMvag>

Andrew Lloyd Webber is making recordings of his musicals available over each weekend on YouTube - they premiere at 7pm on the Friday and stay available until 7pm on the Sunday. Shows to date have included 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' and 'Jesus Christ Superstar'.

National Theatre At Home

<https://m.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre>

The National Theatre are making recordings of productions available each week for free. Shows to date have included 'One Man, Two Guvnors', 'Jane Eyre' and 'Treasure Island'. I think the next one is 'Twelfth Night'.

Shakespeare's Globe - Hamlet (2018)

<https://m.youtube.com/user/ShakespearesGlobe/featured>

The Globe are offering some limited productions for free on YouTube. You can also find a number of productions available to buy or rent via their GlobePlayer at <https://globeplayer.tv/>

If you find other sources which you think will be of interest, please do let me know and I will pass on.

AND FINALLY...

Thanks for your interest. Hopefully we will be able to resume our normal meetings in September ... but who knows.

Would welcome any feedback. Have I got the balance right? Special thanks to all contributors. Any potential articles/snippets for inclusion in next edition always welcome.

Stay safe, keep healthy and positive. Looking forward catching up again soon.

John Townsend
(Leader – Architecture Group)

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD

<p>Down. 1. Crypt, 2. Gable, 3. Facade, 4. Vault, 8. Niche, 10. Spire 12. Frieze.</p> <p>Across. 5. Caryatid, 6. Parapet, 7. Lunette, 9. Pedestal, 11. Oculus,</p>
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