

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE YEAR 1975

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ABSTRACT This chapter opens by sketching the background to the principal concerns of the *European Architectural Heritage Year 1975* (EAHY 1975) in the context of the United Kingdom. First, historic cities and towns, including the often confrontational tensions between planners and developers on the one hand, and informed local people and others – who valued historic places for their messages from the past and their civilised ‘liveability’ – on the other. Second, country houses, fuelled by the timely exhibition, *The Destruction of the Country House 1875–1975*. Third, churches, often pushed beyond the edge of redundancy by planning policies which destroyed the urban communities they were built to serve and by depopulation in the countryside, compounded by a decline in regular church-growing. Fourth, the voluntary sector, particularly strong in the United Kingdom, and radiating both from individuals (Sir John Betjeman, Poet Laureate, was a particularly prominent figure at the time) and from a significant number of membership organisations, registered as charities, which included the *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings*, *The National Trust*, *The National Trust for Scotland*, and the *Civic Trust movement*, with offices and committees in all four of the home countries (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), specifically charged by the Government with organising and promoting the British contribution to EAHY 1975. These and related concerns came together in the campaign itself, which was given an added cutting edge by the foundation early in 1975 of *SAVE Britain’s Heritage* by the ‘young Turks of conservation’, who observed that in spite of fulsome congratulations at official levels there were still vast swathes of our cities and towns, and countless individual buildings, very much at risk of demolition. This chapter concludes with a reflection on the impact of EAHY 1975 in the United Kingdom.

1. The United Kingdom Context

Historic Cities

From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, established and emerging cities across the United Kingdom were increasingly affected by the burgeoning Industrial Revolution including the effects of coal-fuelled atmospheric pollution and insanitary housing conditions. Vividly depicted in the novels of Charles Dickens (1812–1870), these impacts inspired Sir Ebenezer Howard (1850–1928) and the Garden City movement, were replicated in the 1925 *Plan Voisin* by Le Corbusier (1887–1965) for the reconstruction of Paris, and conditioned the 1933 *Charter of Athens* – the manifesto of the Modern Movement. In Britain, a strong anti-urban sentiment developed from the early nineteenth century onwards; the development of suburban railway systems facilitated the exodus of populations from the centres of London and regional cities; and, with limited exceptions, urban dwelling was no longer a location of choice (Rodwell 2007).

The precepts of Modernism were taken forward at the practical level by Sir Patrick Abercrombie (1879–1957), the most influential town planner of the immediate post-war period, whose commissions for the re-planning of major historic cities included the port city of Plymouth (severely damaged during the war; plan implemented), and the historic cities of Bath and Edinburgh (eventually not implemented). The am-

bivalent 1963 report *Traffic in Towns*, authored by Sir Colin Buchanan (1907–2001), was interpreted by some as proposing constraint of the motor car, championed in the preface to the popular paperback edition as encapsulating how “to replan, reshape, and rebuild our cities,” and concluded: “What the Victorians built, we can surely rebuild” (Buchanan 1964). The same assumption that historic cities were a liability not an asset was summed up in the 1965 *Liverpool City Centre Plan*: “The essence of Liverpool’s problems today stem from the fact that the essential fabric of the City dates from a hundred years ago” (City Centre Planning Group 1965, 55). Further, the remit for the seminal four historic town reports (or Studies in Conservation) commissioned by government and published in 1968 for the English cities of Bath, Chester, Chichester and York, was baldly stated: “To discover how to reconcile our old towns with the twentieth century without actually knocking them down” (Insall 1968, ix; Rodwell 2011, 36–44).

In the decade prior to 1975, Edinburgh and Bath were among the most important historic cities where attention was focused on the threats posed to the overarching townscapes and the diversity of the architectural heritage by Modernist town-planning theories. In Edinburgh, the path was smoothed by Sir Robert Matthew (1906–1975), himself a leading architect of post-war Modernism, who inspired and led the 1970 conference *The Conservation of Georgian Edinburgh* (Matthew 1972). This presented a street-by-street and building-by-building architectural and condition survey – undertaken on a voluntary basis by local professionals – of one of Europe’s largest areas of neo-classical town planning (Fig. 1); it also drew on available international experience in urban conservation, including the Marais quarter of Paris (Matthew 1972, 84–96).

Fig. 1: Edinburgh New Town: a pioneering example of large-scale urban conservation inspired by the 1970 conference *The Conservation of Georgian Edinburgh*, in which the voluntary contribution of local professionals and community participation played a major part. Published in *A Future for our Past* (Council of Europe 1975a, 71)



For Bath, the post-war story was polarised and confrontational. The 1968 *Study in Conservation* characterised the architectural importance of the city primarily in terms of its top-grade Georgian (1714–1830) façades and the urban and landscape spaces they enclosed. The City Council was already embarked on a full-scale programme of demolition of whole quarters of urban vernacular that did not conform to this selection, and parking for city centre commercial uses was prioritised over housing (Buchanan 1968). Unsurprisingly, the author of this study was the same as for *Traffic in Towns*. The long media and political battle to highlight the plight of Bath reached a climax with the publication in 1973 of *The Sack of Bath* (Fergusson 1973) and a special edition of *The Architectural Review* (Cantacuzino 1973).

Country Houses

The United Kingdom is renowned for the diversity and architectural exceptionalism of its castles, palaces, and country houses, which constitute one of its most important contributions to European heritage. England saw an expansive period of country house building in the first Elizabethan Age (1558–1603); across the British Isles, continuous waves of construction from the seventeenth century onwards; and the country house lifestyle, supported by small armies of indoor and outdoor servants, reached its apogee from the third quarter of the nineteenth century through until the First World War. Thereafter, a combination of circumstances spelt the end of countless landed estates and left many houses and their contents devoid of function and the means to maintain them. These included: the social, political and economic impacts of reform of the House of Lords in 1911 coupled with the dismantling of the British Empire; the loss in two wars of heirs and manpower; increasing levels of income and inheritance taxes including death duties; and the absence (until 1968) of effective protective legislation.

In the inter-war years and following the Second World War, over sixteen hundred country houses were demolished, largely irrespective of their architectural quality. Representing between a fifth (Scotland) and a sixth (England) of their total, the numerous major losses included the neo-classical Hamilton Palace (architects: James Smith, William Adam, and David Hamilton), seat of the Dukes of Hamilton, demolished in 1921; Clumber Park (architect: Charles Barry junior), seat of the Dukes of Newcastle, demolished in 1938; and the Gothic revival Eaton Hall (architect: Alfred Waterhouse), seat of the Dukes of Westminster, demolished in 1961. By 1955, one house was being demolished every five days (Worsley 2002, 7).

Churches

In addition to the established Church of England, Church of Scotland and Church in Wales, there are also Roman Catholic, Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist, Quaker, Unitarian and other smaller Christian groups in the United Kingdom, and so generalisation about their church buildings is far from easy. But a useful statistic is that there are around 16,000 listed churches, of which around 12,000 are pre-1600, belonging to the Church of England alone. In short, churches form a very important aspect of the nation's architectural heritage, along with their associated burial grounds and art treasures in the form of textiles, stained glass, painted decoration, sculpture, furniture, organs and bells. However, although in 2015 it is said that there are some five million active Christians in the United Kingdom, church attendance has continued to decline from the 1940s onwards. There are additional pressures on church buildings: in towns and cities they were often the victims of comprehensive development during the 1950s to 1970s; and in the countryside there has been a significant drain of people working on the land and many rural churches struggle to attract a congregation sufficient to pay for insurance, regular maintenance and repairs. Redundancy of church buildings has therefore been a serious problem.

In the years leading up to EAHY 1975 the Church of England took a particularly enterprising initiative. The Pastoral Measure 1968, which came into operation on 1 April 1969, provided for three possible solutions for a redundant church: demolition (but only very rarely has this happened in the case of a listed church); alternative use, either for a community or cultural purpose or (especially in the countryside) conversion into a house; or vesting for permanent preservation "in the interests of the Church and of the Nation" in the *Churches Conservation Trust* (originally called the *Redundant Churches Fund*). The *Churches Conservation Trust*, which is a United Kingdom charity, now looks after almost 350 churches which have been declared redundant, which places it amongst the half-dozen or so most significant heritage bodies in the country. There is also a *Chapels Trust* for outstanding redundant non-conformist chapels. Such initiatives were in their infancy at the time of the EAHY 1975, but the *Church of England's Council for the Care of Churches* and the *Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England* played an enthusiastic part in the year and in the planning for it. The Dean of Peterborough Cathedral,

Dick Wingfield Digby, represented both bodies at the Amsterdam Congress at the end of EAHY 1975 and made a powerful speech supporting the long-term preservation of ecclesiastical buildings in the United Kingdom.

The *Friends of Friendless Churches* had been founded in 1957 by Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, who was also present at the Amsterdam Congress. This modest but significant charity is responsible for over forty redundant churches in both Wales and England.

The Voluntary Sector

The voluntary, non-profit sector has a long and distinguished history in the United Kingdom, including the public amenity and heritage fields.

One of the oldest amenity societies in the world is *The Cockburn Association* (latterly also known as the Edinburgh Civic Trust), founded in 1875 and named after Lord Henry Cockburn (1779–1854), a Scottish lawyer and literary figure who campaigned to protect and enhance the beauty of Edinburgh (Bruce 1975). The *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings* was founded by the poet, designer and social activist William Morris (1834–1896), the noted Arts and Crafts architect Philip Webb (1831–1915) and others to campaign against the destructive restoration of churches and other monuments. Its 1877 Manifesto is often cited as the first doctrinal document of the conservation movement (Morris 1877). Other campaigning groups founded before EAHY 1975 include *The Georgian Group* (1937), which focuses on the period of the four Kings George and William IV (1714–1837), and *The Victorian Society* (1958), which focuses on the Victorian and Edwardian periods (1837–1911). Major campaigns by the latter in the 1960s included the neo-classical Euston Arch (demolished following a public outcry in 1962), and the Gothic revival St Pancras Station (threatened with destruction; since fully restored; and now the London terminus of Eurostar).

Founded in 1895, *The National Trust* (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) is, at over four million, one of the largest membership organisations in the world and largest landowners in the United Kingdom. With its portfolio of protected historic houses, parks and gardens, nature reserves and coastline, it counts an estimated 67 million visitors a year to these properties. Its annual reports for 1973, 1974 and 1975 all contain references to its contributions towards the values and initiatives of EAHY 1975. The 1973 report refers to the Trust's offer to consider covenants (a form of legal protection) over "buildings and areas of architectural or historic interest" and to "eliminate unnecessary overhead wires, as it has already done at Lacock in Wiltshire" (in this case the Trust owns not only the country house called Lacock Abbey but almost the entire historic village). The report concludes that "The aims of European Architectural Heritage Year are implicit in the work of the Trust and are part of its continuing purpose." The 1974 report summarises progress which had been made and suggests that "By far the most important of these projects is the intention to re-establish the seventeenth-century garden at Ham House" (see below). In 1975 the Trust was able to report that it had been awarded a "special Heritage Year award to honour its contribution to the preservation of the architectural and landscape heritage in Britain over three-quarters of a century." The medallion had been the gift of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths to EAHY 1975 and was presented to the Trust's Chairman by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh.

Its independent sister organisation, *The National Trust for Scotland*, founded in 1931, is additionally remarkable for its early focus on saving and conserving vernacular buildings, collectively known as *Little Houses*, notably in historic fishing villages along the Fife coastline (Watters and Glendinning 2006). A presentation about the *Little Houses Improvement Scheme* was made at the Amsterdam Congress and gave wider currency to the mechanism which has become known as the 'revolving fund': a building, usually a house, is conserved and given appropriate new services and then sold on to a private owner-occupier; the funds thereby generated are ploughed into the next project; and so on (potentially) *ad infinitum*.

2. EAHY 1975 IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Campaign: 1972–75

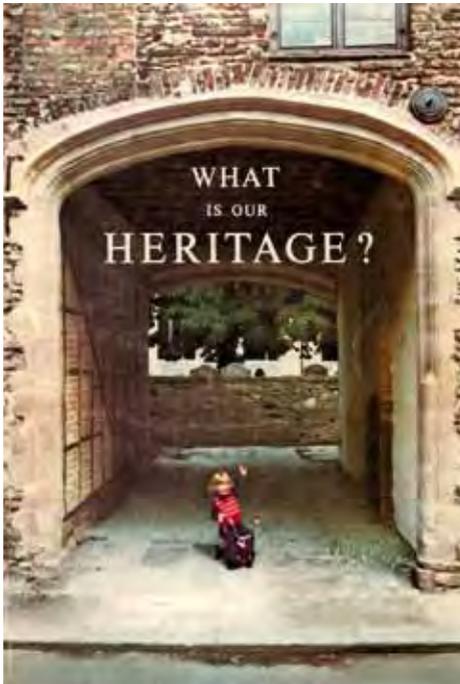
The United Kingdom campaign was consolidated in 1972 with the establishment of an executive committee under the dynamic chairmanship of the Countess of Dartmouth (b.1929; daughter of the novelist, Barbara Cartland; subsequently, as Countess Spencer, step-mother to Diana, Princess of Wales). The members of the committee included Michael Middleton CBE (1918–2009), director of the Civic Trust (then the umbrella organisation for United Kingdom amenity societies), and Lord Duncan Sandys (1908–1987; ex-officio chairman of the *Council of Europe Organising Committee for EAHY 1975*; founder in 1957 of the Civic Trust; promoter of the 1967 Civic Amenities Act which introduced the concept of locally designated conservation areas; and former son-in-law of Sir Winston Churchill). The campaign reflected the diversity of the United Kingdom's heritage resources beyond a strict limitation to architectural heritage as well as the long-standing complementarity of the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The campaign embraced three main objectives: practical projects, of which 1,300 were completed or underway towards the end of 1975; the establishment of a national revolving fund, the Architectural Heritage Fund, which initially raised £400,000 from private sources and was matched pound for pound by government; and a broad programme of environmental education to which almost every local education authority pledged support (Leicestershire County Council 1975; Wood 1975). For the architectural heritage, equal recognition was accorded to properties as distinct from one another as palaces, castles, and churches; neo-classical terraces and thatched country cottages; wind and watermills. Special emphasis was placed on Britain's unique industrial heritage including mills, factories and water works, railway stations, canals and engineering structures. Extending beyond the confines of architecture, EAHY 1975 in the United Kingdom additionally celebrated the nation's contribution in the fields of horticulture, arboriculture, gardens and landscaped parks, and stressed the importance of training and securing continuity of demand for the multiplicity of craft skills.

In his introduction to *What Is Our Heritage?* His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, president of the United Kingdom Council for EAHY 1975, wrote: "The great achievement of European Architectural Heritage Year has been to draw attention to the short-comings of our generation as curators of the European architectural collection" (Dartmouth 1975, v–vi).

A major emphasis in the campaign, within a decade of the *Liverpool City Centre Plan* cited above, was on countering perceptions that the architectural heritage was a liability by opening eyes to its manifold opportunities. *What Is Our Heritage?* (Figs. 2a–d) records diverse examples of historic buildings, small and large, successfully converted to new uses. These include: the neo-classical Crescent at Buxton, converted to a public library and offices; a medieval street in the Warwickshire village of Alcester converted to old people's housing; early nineteenth-century warehouses at St Katherine's Dock, London, together with a Georgian prison and police barracks in Bath, converted to flats; Lisburn railway station, Northern Ireland, restored and cleaned; the station at Monkwearmouth, Sunderland, converted to a museum; and a 1386 common latrine converted for lectures and parties at New College, Oxford. Notable was the example set by architects in the conversion of disused or derelict buildings as homes and offices for their own use, thereby show-casing what could be achieved.

Another focus was on the potential for reviving historic town centres as places of traditional social exchange and conviviality though pedestrianisation – streets for people – with examples including Old Harlow, Lincoln, and Commercial Street in the city centre of Leeds. Teams of volunteers played a vital role in the United Kingdom campaign in dredging canals; clearing country lanes; tidying churchyards; restoring recreational areas; and planting trees, flowers, and shrubs. Projects in the latter category included the restoration by the National Trust of the gardens of Ham House (a former royal residence) to the original 1672 design, tree planting along the Thames footpath by the Strand-on-the-Green As-



Figs. 2a–d: Illustrations from the 1975 publication *What is Our Heritage?*: Cover; Buxton, Derbyshire, the neo-classical Crescent before and after rescue from dereliction and conversion into a public library and offices; Alcester, Warwickshire: images before and after the restoration and conversion of a medieval street to old people's housing; Collage of various posters during the 1975 Campaign (Dartmouth 1975, cover, 13, 18, 87)

sociation, and daffodil planting at Thorplands, Northampton. Public utilities (electricity and telephone) contributed substantially to the improvement of village greens and townscapes through the removal and under-grounding of overhead cables, including at Houston in Renfrewshire. And public authorities followed exemplary projects on the European Continent in the cleaning and floodlighting of historic buildings, streetscapes and riverside walks; also, extending beyond the strict limits of architectural heritage, to include floodlighting the Second World War cruiser HMS Belfast, converted to a naval museum and moored on the Thames by London Bridge.

EAHY 1975 was additionally celebrated across the country in a widespread campaign of special publications – guides, calendars and trails; events – exhibitions, concerts and lectures; award schemes; and by the Royal Mail's issue on 23 April (St George's Day) of a special set of commemorative stamps, thereby reaching out not only to recipients of mail within the United Kingdom but world-wide (Fig. 3).

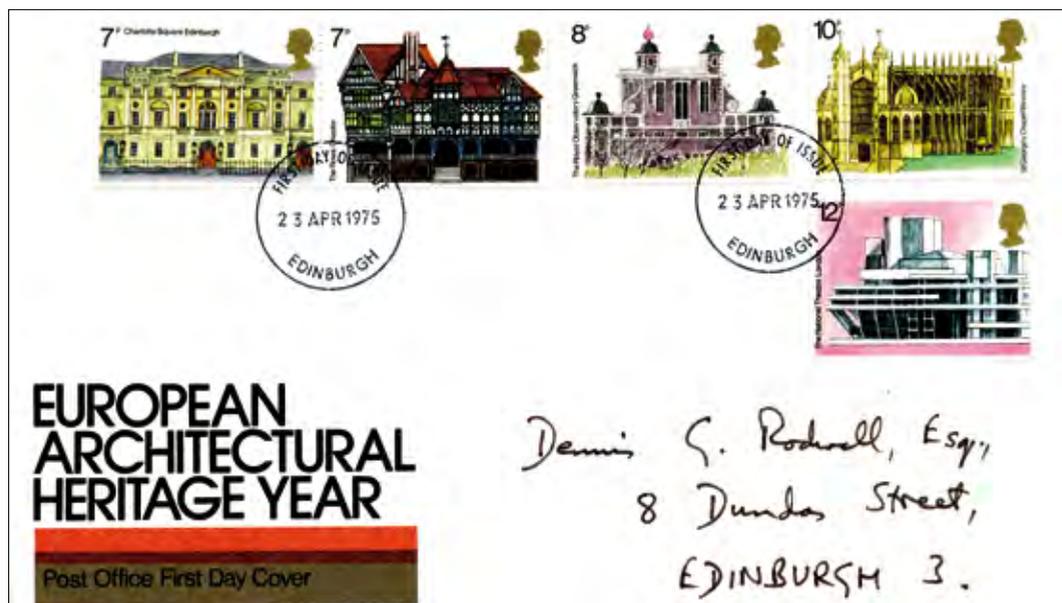


Fig. 3: First Day Cover of the Royal Mail's EAHY commemorative stamps issued on 23 April 1975. The stamps featured (left to right) Charlotte Square, Edinburgh; The Rows, Chester; Flamsteed House, Greenwich (The Royal Observatory); St George's Chapel, Windsor; and the National Theatre, London. (© Dennis Rodwell)

Special priority was attached to the fundamental role of young people. *What Is Our Heritage?* quotes the final line of Benjamin Disraeli's 1845 novel *Sybil*, "The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity" (Dartmouth 1975, 92). Dartmouth proceeds: "Therefore it is particularly important that [young people] should be taught in schools, polytechnics, and universities to appreciate their environment, to question any destruction or degradation of their own area, and to learn something of the broad spectrum of artistic achievement;" and illustrates a selection of the numerous youth projects of EAHY 1975. Berating "the inferior quality of new building in countless towns and cities," *What Is Our Heritage?* signals that "Architecturally we live in the Age of Ugliness," calls for new buildings to blend in with what already exists, and concludes with the hope that "the young [...] will learn from our mistakes and make a springboard of our successes" (Dartmouth 1975, 92).

Inevitably the planning for EAHY 1975 was the occasion for a good deal of heart-searching and debate about what the nation's 'heritage' consisted of. One of the most memorable utterances was that of Sir

John Summerson, doyen of English architectural historians and Curator of the Sir John Soane Museum, London, in an article in *The Times* on 12 July 1974 (Summerson 1974):

“After the sixties it could be said that preservation had been stood on its head. Where in 1947 the heritage appeared to be a pyramid with a golden summit and a base of expendable dross, by 1970 it was seen that the dross was only dross because it had never been sensibly evaluated. The dross was, in fact, to a significant extent “the environment”. The gold at the top was still pure gold, but perhaps the heritage was not a pyramid after all [...]

Conservation, in the broadest possible sense, seems to be the pervading theme of the council which is now promoting, in this country, the operation of EAHY 1975. The secretariat’s recent report lists projects of every conceivable kind: publications, exhibitions, films, conferences, lecture courses, buildings restored and cleaned, flood-lighting, traffic management, pedestrianisation, and a whole range of area improvements.

Many of these projects are already in hand and do not necessarily represent the efforts of authorities, groups and individuals to produce a glamorous showpiece in 1975. Many are enterprises of some years’ growth, not a few undertaken with grants from the Historic Buildings Council and Local Authorities.

This must be clearly understood. The preservation of historic buildings is not (as, say, tree-planting is) something which can be activated as a gesture of celebration in a designated year. But the essence both of conservation and of preservation is in long-term policy, watchfulness, technical research and, above all, the intelligent analysis of problems, whether structural or financial, before they actually arrive on the doorstep ... our own heritage is overcast with such problems.”

Sir John Summerson then listed some of the problems, as follows:

- *The future of the country house is now more gravely threatened than at any time since it was saved by the Historic Buildings & Ancient Monuments Act of 1953*
- *The Value Added Tax (VAT) on repair bills, but not on new construction*
- *The proposed wealth tax*

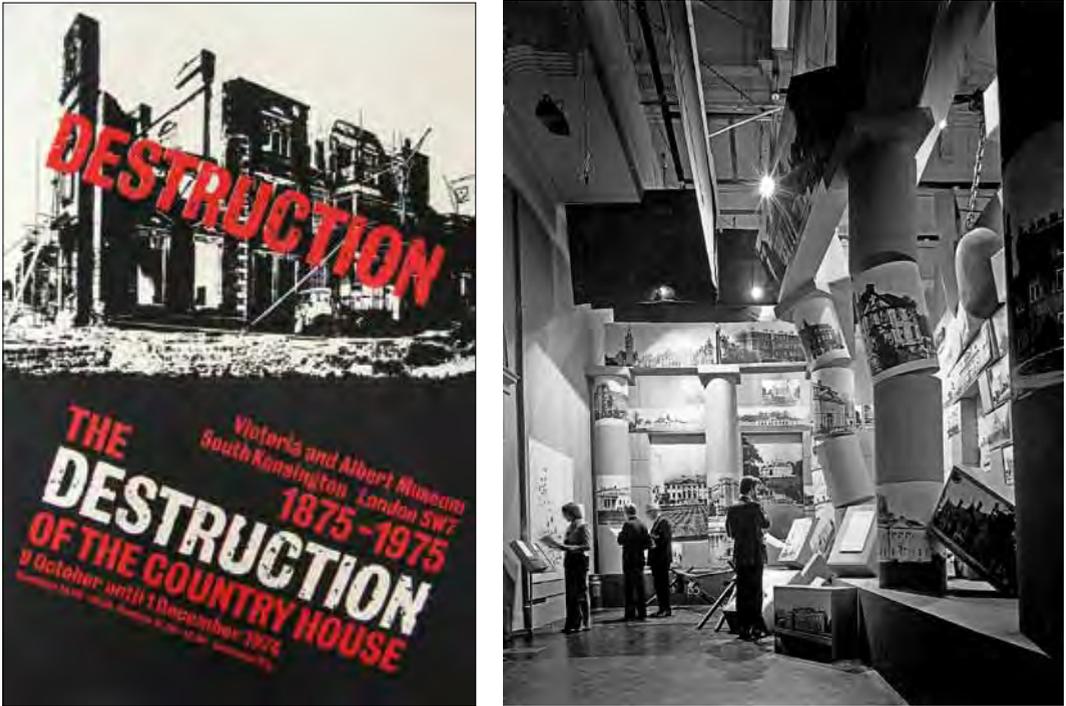
Then there are the cathedrals and churches. How far into the future will public generosity carry the cathedrals, with all their patrimony of art and music? More immediately, how are the churches to fare, especially those far from a congregation, already perhaps deserted, locked and declared redundant? What sort of custody, what measures of security and access will be needed within, say, the next half-century?”

3. IMPACT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The 1973 publication of *The Sack of Bath*, cited above, coincided with the United Kingdom campaign for EAHY 1975 and signalled a dramatic change of fortunes for that city; also, for the primacy of urban conservation generally. In 1974, Roy Worskett (1932–2014), formerly with the Civic Trust and the Department of the Environment; author of *Worskett 1969*) was appointed city architect and chief planning officer for the city of Bath, where he oversaw the policy transformation from *sack* to *saving* the city (Worskett 1978).

The immediate lead-in to EAHY 1975 also included the highly influential exhibition *The Destruction of the Country House: 1875 to 1975* at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, held from 10 October to 1 December 1974 (Strong, Binney and Harris 1974) (Fig. 4a). The ‘Hall of Destruction’ in this exhibition was a fantasy of tumbling columns, illustrating a selection of over 1,000 historic country houses that had been demolished over the preceding century (Fig. 4b). In 1955 (as referred to above), the *annus horribilis* of the British country house, one country house had been demolished every five days (Worsley 2002, 7). With hindsight, the exhibition signalled a turning point in the fortunes of country houses nation-wide, but not without the energetic intervention of *SAVE Britain’s Heritage* (see below). “Such was the concern generated by the exhibition that from 1975 onwards demolition of historic country houses has come to a virtual halt” (Binney 2005, 11). The dramatic fall in the number of losses as well

as innovative solutions to restoration and new uses was celebrated in a 40th anniversary exhibition at the same museum (Binney and Harris 2014).



Figs. 4 a, b: The exhibition *The Destruction of the Country House: 1875 to 1975*, held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Left: Poster; right: The ‘Hall of Destruction’ in the exhibition (© SAVE Britain’s Heritage)

The 1976 report *The Work of the Scottish Civic Trust in 1974 and 1975* set out the preparations made by that organisation for EAHY 1975 (Scottish Civic Trust 1976). There were a ‘widely representative’ Scottish Committee and a Scottish Executive Committee under the chairmanship of (Sir) James Dunbar-Nasmith, distinguished Edinburgh-based architect and one of the two founding partners of the Law and Dunbar-Nasmith Partnership (now LDN). There was an Architectural Adviser in Scotland, James Stevens Curl, who toured every one of the 33 former counties of Scotland during 1974, stimulating new conservation projects and bringing existing ones into the general focus of the EAHY 1975. Moreover, the Scottish Civic Trust organised the first of three Heritage Year Seminars for the Council of Europe. Financed by the United Kingdom Government for whom the Trust acted as agents, the three-language seminar on *The Social and Economic Implications of Conservation* was held in Edinburgh in January 1974 and attended by over 100 delegates from many parts of Europe (Council of Europe 1974). Its professional success was augmented by the hospitality extended to guests from other European countries through private dinner parties in Edinburgh New Town houses and by a ‘Burns Supper’.

EAHY 1975 also signalled a wider recognition of the constituent range of the United Kingdom’s architectural heritage. Just as the eighteenth century period only attracted widespread recognition following the founding of *The Georgian Group* in 1937 and the subsequent nineteenth century period following that of *The Victorian Society* in 1958, chronological expansion only took root in 1979 with the founding of *The Thirties Society*, renamed *The Twentieth Century Society* in 1992. The campaign was actively pro-

moted by many organisations, including the *British Tourist Authority* and the *Youth Hostels Association*, and monitored by the *Civic Trust* (British Tourist Authority 1975a; British Tourist Authority 1975b; British Tourist Authority 1975c; Youth Hostels Association 1975; Bailey 1976).

The most important event in the campaigning arm of the voluntary sector, however, occurred in EAHY 1975 itself, with the founding of *SAVE Britain's Heritage*. The original committee (Marcus Binney, David Pearce, Timothy Cantell, Peter Burman, Colin Amery, Simon Jenkins, Margaret Richardson and Dan Cruikshank) issued a Manifesto in the spring of 1975 which begins:

"The destruction of fine buildings continues despite official conservation policies of recent years. The steady flow of applications to demolish historic buildings shows that pressures for redevelopment remain alarmingly powerful. In a period of economic stringency the waste involved in town centre demolitions, for example, is almost criminal. Homes are lost, small businesses destroyed, areas blighted, resources squandered, and the civilising influence of the past dissipated.

SAVE Britain's Heritage has been formed in response to the European Architectural Heritage Year 1975 to give greater publicity to proposals to demolish historic buildings. Particular emphasis is put on the publication of photographs of threatened buildings and their settings. Whenever possible, the public is alerted while there is still time for objection to be made; indeed the efforts of SAVE complement those of national and local amenity societies. SAVE welcomes 'correspondents' from every part of Great Britain to send in details of threats to our architectural heritage. Help from local photographers is particularly valuable."

The committee consisted of young professionals – who all by chance knew one another – working in the historic environment or in architectural journalism, who were appalled at the fact that in the first eleven weeks of EAHY 1975 local authorities had received applications to demolish 344 listed buildings, as well as 163 located in conservation areas. (Sir) Simon Jenkins, who wielded a powerful pen for the *Evening Standard*, provided the winning formula: good 'punchy' copy; facts and statistics, well researched; a 'juicy quote' (often provided by Marcus Binney); and good photographs. To the initial amazement of the committee, local and national newspapers were often content (even glad) to publish the press releases virtually without alterations. The impact was enormous, gave local campaigners fresh heart, and often signalled a turning point in the fortunes of a particular campaign. The committee also pioneered another form of effective communication: the 'SAVE lunches'. Every Friday lunch-time tasty sandwiches and a glass of wine were offered to whoever cared to turn up – word of mouth was very effective – and often those who came were themselves influential, and keen to support SAVE in its work.

In the early days of SAVE every member of the committee was invited to take an initiative reflecting their own particular interests and knowledge. Peter Burman, for example, organised a debate on *The Future of Historic Inner City Churches*, which was held one summer evening in 1975 in Nicholas Hawksmoor's spectacular early eighteenth century church, Christ Church Spitalfields, on the edge of the City of London. At that time the church was empty and unused – except for the crypt, which was used as a residential care centre for alcoholic vagrants, exhibiting admirable social responsibility. As one result of that meeting Hugh Keyte, Early Music Producer of the BBC at that time, organised a concert to prove that the church had outstanding acoustics for the performance of Baroque music, and so began the Spitalfields Music Festival which continues until today. Peter Burman became the founding chairman of the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields, yet another United Kingdom charity (or not-for-profit organisation), and during the first five years the Friends raised £1.1m to begin the most urgent repair works to the building; many years later the Heritage Lottery Fund give a final grant of £8m to complete the work. The church is now a beacon on the edge of the City of London and the key building in Spitalfields, whose important early eighteenth century houses were only just beginning to be rescued at the time of EAHY 1975 (these include 37 Spital Square, restored following 1975 as the headquarters of the *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings*).

The summer of 1977 saw a second Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition, *Change & Decay: The Future of our Churches*, organised by Marcus Binney and Peter Burman (Binney and Burman 1977):

“To coincide with this SAVE published Churches at Risk. The exhibition contained copious evidence of the threats to churches, namely to major town churches and remote country churches. Remarkably, within a month of the opening, the Government announced the first grants for historic churches, breaking a long-standing deadlock between Church and State. This owed much to the fact that the Church of England was exempt from listed building controls – as were all other denominations (except where total demolition was involved). Government policy was ‘no control, no grants’. Now, suddenly, the way was open for many millions to flow to both churches and later cathedrals – and for controls to be improved” (Binney 2005, 17).

Here, in a real sense, was part of the answer to Sir John Summerson’s final question of July 1974:

“SAVE organised a large travelling version of Change & Decay, which toured museums around the country. The exhibition, and accompanying books, highlighted the extraordinary (and until then largely overlooked) quality of dissenting chapels and meeting houses – Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist, Quaker and Unitarian – and also the range of denominations and fine buildings in Scotland and Wales” (Binney 2005, 18).

SAVE’s Mission Statement declares unequivocally that from its launch in 1975 it has taken the offensive: publicly fighting applications to demolish historic buildings; demanding that local planners serve repair orders on listed properties left to rot; attacking government departments that fail to carry out basic maintenance on fine architecture in their care; and taking legal action against Ministers who decline to use the powers that Parliament has given them to protect our heritage.

SAVE regularly works with engineers and architects to show how crumbling buildings can be made safe, restored and adapted to lively new ones. *In extremis* SAVE has stepped in to acquire key landmarks on death row, repairing them and finding new owners to look after them. These ‘last resort’ cases include the eighteenth century Barlaston Hall, Staffordshire; the church of All Souls, Haley Hill, Halifax, by Sir George Gilbert Scott (who described it as “On the whole, the finest thing I ever did”) and a house at 6 Palace Street, Carnarvon, North Wales, none of which would have survived if it had not been for SAVE’s vigorous and risk-taking interventions. Consistently, SAVE has contended that old buildings do not have to be pensioners on the public purse. They can become attractive places to live in and good investments.

There have been so many achievements in the past forty years, but special mention should be made of the role of the architect-developer Kit Martin, who has collaborated with SAVE on a number of occasions, and who has devised a way of designing and carrying out the vertical conversion of large country houses which entails minimum loss of historic and architectural character and fine detail. These houses, for which SAVE has successfully campaigned, have included Hazells (Binney 2005, 78–79), Cullen House, Banffshire (Binney 2005, 156) and Burley-on-the-Hill (Binney 2005, 166–167).

However, despite the vigorous endeavours of the newly founded SAVE Britain’s Heritage throughout 1975 and subsequently, 1977 saw the sale and dispersal of the internationally important Baron Meyer Amschel de Rothschild collection of furniture and paintings from Mentmore Towers (architects: Joseph Paxton and G. H. Stokes, 1852–1854), reputed as one of the finest ever to be assembled in private hands, since when the house itself has suffered numerous changes of ownership that have threatened both its future and setting. SAVE had launched a vigorous campaign to enable the house and collections to survive intact (by now it would have become a major visitor attraction, but then there was still much caution about protecting and saving nineteenth century buildings), demanding that the government should finance purchase from the £13m in the *National Land Fund* set up in 1946. Despite mounting public outcry, ministers refused to act. In the end, they spent as much on individual treasures for museums as it would originally have cost to buy the house and contents together. The *Parliamentary Environment Committee* intervened and adopted SAVE’s proposal that the Land Fund should be an independent body, leading to the formation of the *National Heritage Memorial Fund* in 1980 (Binney 2005, 62–63).

That single step, plus later the founding of the associated *Heritage Lottery Fund* under the premiership of Sir John Major, has transformed the funding of heritage projects in the United Kingdom in ways that

we simply could not have imagined at the time. Much later on, in 2002, when the ‘Tyntesfield Emergency’ arose in connexion with another major nineteenth century country house, the *National Heritage Memorial Fund* provided a grant of £17.4 m to enable the National Trust to acquire the house complete with all its furnishings and treasures intact (Binney 2005, 136–139). The *National Trust*, in a way that was then wholly innovative, made the conservation process part of the ‘visitor experience’. Arising out of tentative steps in EAHY 1975, the interpretation and educational value of heritage has developed in numerous imaginative ways. Above all, SAVE has sought to open eyes to forgotten and unknown places, whether they be dockland warehouses, grand classical barracks or imposing mental hospitals. SAVE has championed the great legacy of the railways, the textile mills of the Pennines, ornate Victorian pubs, awesome power stations and the simple dignity of the terrace house. This is a story of triumph and tragedies; a battle as urgent now as it was 30 years ago (Binney 2005, 8).

Sir John Summerson was correct. The policy impact of EAHY 1975 disclosed a number of shortcomings in the United Kingdom. The Council of Europe’s *European Charter* introduced the concept of *integrated conservation*, recognising that the future of the architectural heritage depended on its appreciation by citizens and the weight attached to it within the framework of urban and regional planning (→ *European Charter of the Architectural Heritage* (Council of Europe 1975b, see appendix)). This charter’s endeavour to inculcate a broader appreciation of the role of the architectural heritage in society, echoing as it did the 1972 UNESCO *Recommendation Concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage* (UNESCO 1972), was not fully supported – as disclosed in the passage in one of the most important celebratory publications of EAHY 1975 which reads “The starting point in a historic town must be its historic quality and visual character – not secondary social, economic or even ecological arguments” (Cantacuzino 1975, 4). Forty years later, this attitude still largely prevails, thereby providing us with a further and continuing challenge.

CONCLUSION

There can be no doubt that EAHY 1975 was an immense force for good in the United Kingdom. It succeeded in engaging people of all ages and at all levels of society. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh were very active and visible in supporting the efforts of the year. The Youth Hostels Association was one of many organisations that realised, through EAHY 1975, that they too had a contribution to make to the protection and use of heritage buildings. There were special programmes for schoolchildren and for professionals involved in the built heritage. Such professionals were no longer only members of the architectural profession and town planners, but also architectural and art historians, archaeologists and conservators. The ‘seeing eye’ of the artist and writer was also seen as important – the painter, John Piper, and the poet, John Betjeman, were among the leading protagonists of protecting historic buildings, designed landscapes, parks and gardens. The well-being of citizens and the ‘cherished local scene’ began to be more appreciated. Industrial archaeology was the subject of a special conference – one of a good many EAHY 1975 conferences which provided opportunities for both learning and debate – entitled *Industrial Archaeology in the Midlands* which was held at Matlock, Derbyshire, 13–19 July, so as to be within easy reach of Cromford, where the world’s first successful water-powered cotton spinning mill was established by Sir Richard Arkwright in 1771. Among other strands to emerge or to become re-focused through EAHY 1975 were the realisation that there was limitless scope for imaginative conversion of unused or underused historic buildings, and that such new uses frequently engaged local communities and brought visitors or tourists in increased numbers and so contributed to economic prosperity. It also became clearer than ever that there was a skills shortage and, ever since, initiatives have been taken to remedy this shortage and to provide craftsmen and conservators with satisfying and worthwhile employment. Above all, it became clear that there was no reason for complacency, and that there needed to be a stronger understanding of why our architectural heritage was

important including the highest levels of Ministerial decision-taking. EAHY 1975 generated immense goodwill in the United Kingdom, and many good things have continued to flow from it. One wonders whether it would soon be timely to have another one.

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