

News

from The Victorian Society

SPRING 2008

Welcome to the Victorian Society friends' news update, designed to keep you up to date with what we're doing now. This year marks the golden anniversary of the Victorian Society. Looking back over fifty years of campaigning for the Victorian and Edwardian historic environment, it's clear that a great many of our best nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings would not still be standing without the efforts of our members and friends. Thank you for the part you have played in this.

We're always pleased to receive your comments, so if there is anything you would like to add to any of our campaigns, please do let us know.

Colin Cunningham
Chairman



The Euston Arch

Saving a Century

One of the highlights of our golden anniversary year has been the 'Saving a Century' exhibition at the Royal Institute of British Architects. Curated by Gavin Stamp, this photographic survey of some of our biggest and most controversial campaigns is a powerful testament to the vision and energy of the early Victorian Society members. The exhibition closed on 12 June, but will be touring venues around the country, so look out for news of 'Saving a Century' coming to a gallery near you. Souvenir exhibition booklets, containing all the photographs and information, are available from us for £5.



Lunch at the Albert Memorial

Extraordinary celebrations

A fashionable way to celebrate the completion of a building in the nineteenth century was to give a feast there. Intrepid Victorian enthusiasts ate dinner in the Rotherhithe Tunnel, took tea on the top of Nelson's column, and even banqueted in the belly of the Iguanodon at the newly-erected Crystal Palace. What better way, then, to celebrate the preservation of some of our best buildings and the anniversary of the charity set up to save them, than by organising celebration feasts at Victorian landmarks across the British isles?

To this end, we ran a competition for the most imaginative and lavish extraordinary feast to mark the Victorian Society's anniversary. Members and non-members alike rose to the challenge. There was a feast for 300 in Gorton Monastery, dinner for 70 in the Booking Hall of Douglas Railway Station on the Isle of Man, and in Eastbourne a nineteenth century boarding house threw open its doors to host a Victorian tea party. Competition was such that it was impossible to choose a single winner and in the end prizes were awarded to the five best and most imaginative celebrations. We're grateful to everyone who took part for helping us to mark our anniversary in style.

**THE VICTORIAN
SOCIETY**

1 Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT. Telephone 020 8747 5897
Email community@victoriansociety.org.uk Web www.victoriansociety.org.uk
Should you not wish to receive this publication, please contact us.



Hafodunos Hall, Conwy, Wales

Could Hafodunos rise from the ashes?

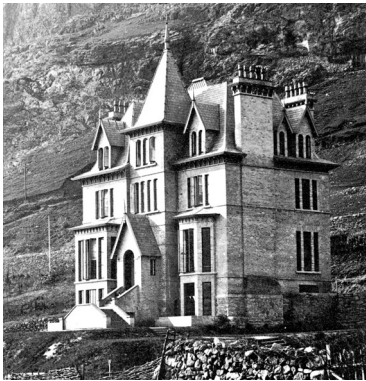
If you were a member of the Victorian Society four years ago, you will probably remember the sorry story of Hafodunos, GG Scott's Grade I-listed masterpiece in the heart of North Wales. The photograph of it burning after two youths set it on fire in October 2004 made a shocking cover picture for the issue of our magazine, *The Victorian*, which focused on the threat facing many derelict country houses in the region. Four years on and there could be hope on the horizon for the magnificent ruin, which is on the market with its 40 acre landscaped estate. It's a massive project, but we're convinced that in the right hands, Scott's masterpiece could be brought to life once more. We hope it gets that chance.



The Lanfyllin Union Workhouse, which was one of our Top Ten Endangered Buildings for 2007 and has since received a grant

Help us find the nation's top ten endangered buildings in 2008

Last year we asked for your help to find the best and most threatened Victorian or Edwardian buildings in England and Wales. We were amazed at the response: nominations flooded in from around the country and it was very difficult to narrow the short-list down to a final top ten. Since we published our list we have heard of positive developments for four of the buildings on it, including St Walburge's Preston, which has received an English Heritage grant, and Shadwell Park in Norfolk, where the owner is carrying out emergency repairs. This has made us all the more determined to find the best possible buildings for our 2008 list. So if you know of a listed structure that has been left to rot or a historic building up for demolition, please drop us a line at the address below.



Penforma, Llandudno, Wales

End of the road for Alice's holiday home

Sad news in Llandudno: Penforma, once the holiday home of Alice Liddell, the inspiration for Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, will be demolished later this year. Despite a vigorous local campaign backed by several politicians and celebrities, this charming 1862 house which once welcomed such illustrious visitors as William Gladstone and Matthew Arnold, will be flattened to make way for a block of luxury apartments. We remain in touch with local campaigners and will do our best to make sure that no more of Llandudno's heritage is squandered in the rush for holiday flats.



The Light, Shoreditch

Will a sixteenth century planning loophole save The Light?

At the Victorian Society, we're used to delving into history books now and then to find ammunition for the fight to save our best Victorian and Edwardian buildings. But it's rare that we go back as far as the 1500s. However, some sixteenth century documents unearthed by architectural historian Robin Stummer could prove crucial in the battle to save one 1893 building in East London. Built to generate electricity for Liverpool Street Station, the Light Bar, as it is now known, is a much-loved landmark on Shoreditch High Street. So much so, in fact, that 6000 local residents have written to Hackney Council to oppose the compulsory purchase and demolition of the building to make way for a mixed use development by Norman Foster. Yet the Council may not have the casting vote if documents showing that the land around The Light was kept under independent control after the Reformation are judged to hold good. If so, the decision technically rests with the Dean of St Paul's. We await the legal verdict with interest.