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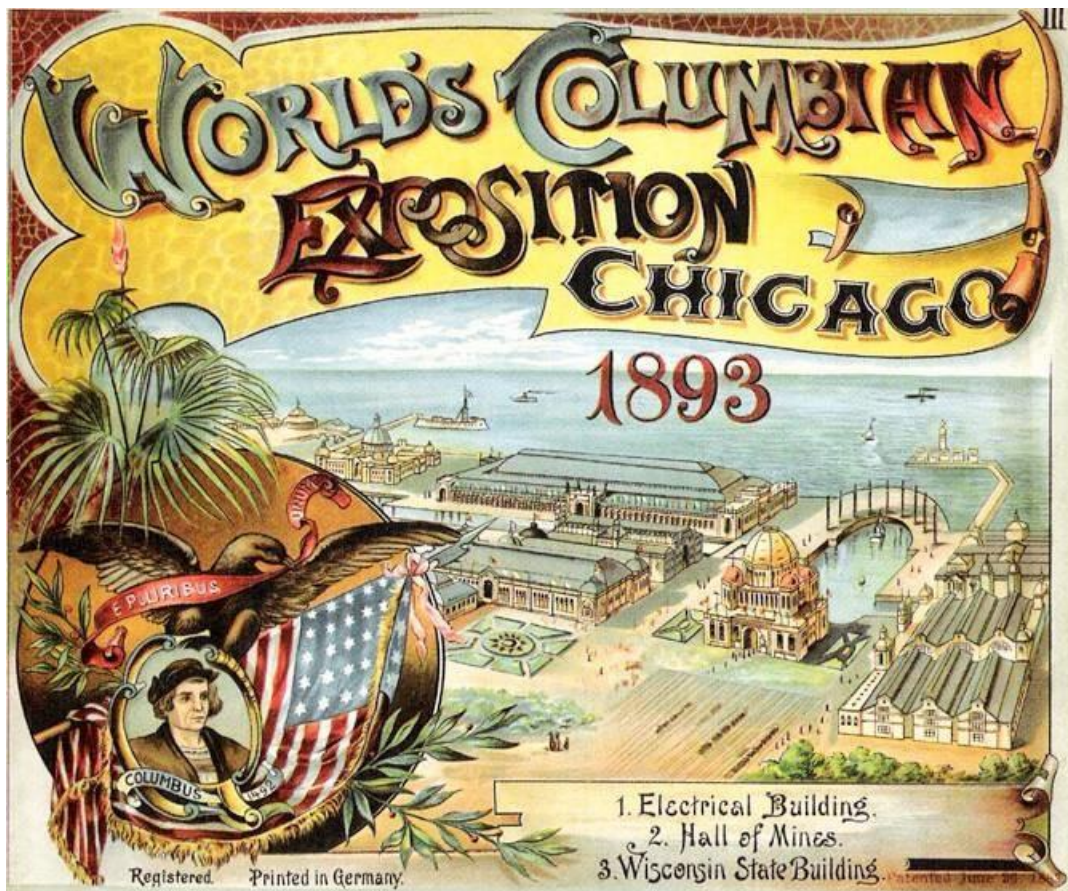
The Chicago Summer School

In honor of the 2020 Chicago Class of VSA Summer Schools, with this issue we are reprinting several articles which describe some of the highlights of past Chicago Schools.

This compilation of essays is intended to serve as an appetizer for those considering attending the Chicago Summer School as well as a book of memories for the alumni. These and many other essays can be found in the Publications section of the Alumni Association's website: vsaalumni.org and on the VSA website: victoriansociety.org

Please post your own memories on the Alumni Facebook page at:

[Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools 1](https://www.facebook.com/VSAalumni)



The Victorian Society in America Summer Schools

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL

In the December 2014 issue of the Alumni newsletter, **JENNIFER CARLQUIST** Summer Schools Administrator reported on:

New! The Chicago Summer School

Richard Guy Wilson often teaches that understanding the Victorian age is an essential background to twentieth-century architecture. Nowhere is that more evident than Chicago.

This sentiment might have been shared by **Nikolaus Pevsner**, the legendary architectural historian who helped found the Victorian Society in America Summer Schools in 1974. Pevsner repeatedly examined the pantheon of architects working in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chicago.

In his 1936 treatise, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, Pevsner hailed **Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright** as the first American architects “to admire the machine, and to understand its essential character and its consequences in the relation of architecture and design to ornamentation.” He compared Wright very favorably to the avantgarde of Europe, Adolf Loos, Otto Wagner, and Henry Van de Velde.



Louis Sullivan

He characterized Sullivan’s work as “the earliest manifestations of a new style,” and a uniquely American expression. “In his distant Chicago,” Pevsner continued, “where metropolitan architecture at that time meant New York and Boston, and farther afield, Paris, [Sullivan] worked out entirely on his own the theory. . . that ‘ornament is mentally a luxury, not a necessity.’”

As Pevsner and many historians have observed since, after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, progressive architects and clients

propelled the city to the forefront of technological and aesthetic experimentation.



Frank Lloyd Wright

Some New Yorkers may quibble about Chicago's title of Birthplace of the American Sky-scraper, but unquestionably Chicago stood at the forefront of American innovation in architecture, decorative arts and design, landscape and civic planning, retailing and consumerism, and industry, during the so-called Victorian age. No longer, however, should Chicago be considered so very "distant!"



Since joining the VSA board in 2006, **Tina Strauss** has sought ways to share her beloved city with fellow VSA members and strengthen the organization's Midwestern presence. Last year she proposed a new Summer School to focus on Chicago and the "Victorian" roots of American Modernism. Like the existing London and Newport Summer Schools (founded in 1975 and 1981, respectively), the Chicago program will survey mid-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architecture, art, design, history, and landscapes, and preservation through expert lectures and guided tours.

The idea of a Chicago Summer School received immediate support from **Richard Guy Wilson**. He has directed the Newport Summer School since 1979, when it migrated between cities, and remembered proposing a Chicago Summer School back in the 1980s. (One of Prof. Wilson's lesser-known areas of expertise is the Prairie School architecture, about which he has written, lectured, and curated exhibitions.) Strauss assembled an ad hoc committee of academics, curators, and architects who determined the program's feasibility and developed the itinerary.

Tina Strauss explains that "the core of the program will be based in the Loop, with the addition of Oak Park." Participants will visit public and private buildings, parks and other landscapes, with behind-the-scenes access to some of the city's most iconic spaces: the site of the 1883 Colombian Exposition masterminded by Daniel Burnham and Frederick Law Olmstead, H. H. Richardson's Glessner House (1886), Adler & Sullivan's Auditorium Building (1887–89), Burnham & Root's Rookery Building (1888), Frank Lloyd Wright's Home and Studio (1889 and later), Unity Temple (1906– 1908), and seminal Wright designs in the surrounding Oak Park neighborhood. Additional highlights include Tiffany interiors, Gilded Age mansions along the historic Gold Coast, and the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago and Driehaus Museum.



Tina Strauss, who has co-chaired the Summer Schools Committee since 2011, and spent more than 25 years studying and guiding tours of Chicago, has most enjoyed planning the site visits and guest lectures. “Everyone has been so willing to participate. It has been a lot of work but has also been so much fun.” For its first year, Tina Strauss has volunteered to co-direct the course with **John Waters**, a registered architect in Chicago and consultant on architectural history and historic preservation, as well as a two-time VSA alumni.

Guest lecturers will include Richard Guy Wilson, Warren Ashworth, Julia Bachrach, Diane Dillon, and Monica Obniski. Expert guides and other resources will be provided by the Chicago Architecture Foundation, much the way the Newport Summer School partners with the Preservation Society of Newport County. The last day of the course will feature an unforgettable tour by river cruise, followed by an informal dinner of Chicago-style pizza.



In the Fall 2015 issue of the Alumni Newsletter, **JOHN H. WATERS** Co-director of the Chicago Summer School reported on:

The VSA's New Chicago Summer School, an Auspicious Debut



The first annual Victorian Society in America Chicago Summer School got off to a rousing start on Thursday, June 11, as 19 participants joined co-director **Tina Strauss** and me for six days of exploration of this city's astonishing history, architecture, art and decorative arts.

The class was diversely talented and included designers, museum professionals, preservation advocates and history enthusiasts. It was a delight to show them "our" city, and for them to share their expertise with each other.

The Chicago Summer School's debut was the culmination of over a year's planning. With only six days to work with, and so much to see, we had to decide what to leave in and what to leave out. Right off, we knew there were a number of "must sees": Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler's tour-de-force Auditorium Building, the Art Institute of Chicago's jaw-dropping collection, H.H. Richardson's Glessner House Museum and the Richard H. Driehaus Museum.



Less well known were Pleasant Home in Oak Park, designed by Prairie School architect George Maher; the **Lily Pond in Lincoln Park, a masterpiece of Prairie School landscape architecture by designer Alfred Caldwell**; and Schmidt and Garden's Madlener House, now

home to the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. Visits to all these sites (and many others!) gave the Summer School participants a well-rounded view of 19th- and early 20th-century Chicago and its important role in the history of design in Victorian America.

We felt anyone interested in design could not visit Chicago without seeing **Frank Lloyd Wright's landmark Robie House** in the South Side Chicago neighborhood of Hyde Park, or, even more important, the Chicago suburb Oak Park, where Wright lived and worked. Our day in Oak Park included a tour of Wright's home and studio and a walking tour of the surrounding neighborhood, which is filled with his creations.



The day was capped by a tour of **Unity Temple**, a building Wright considered one of his most important.



As he later put it, "When I finished Unity Temple, I had it. I knew I had the beginning of a great thing, a great truth in architecture."

In building **Unity Temple** (1906–09), its Unitarian-Universalist congregation rejected the period's traditional church forms in favor of a design that it felt more accurately represented its progressive, egalitarian theology. Now

wrapped in scaffolding and tarp, Unity Temple is undergoing a massive restoration. Called “The Christo” locally, it is receiving a thorough going over, from a new geothermal heating and cooling system, to restoration of the exterior concrete and interior plaster, woodwork, and art glass. Though the building had been officially closed to tours only the week before, thanks to the graciousness of restoration architect **Gunny Harboe** and restoration contractors Berglund Construction, our group could experience the building before major work began. Despite the exterior’s veiled walls, which portended a dark interior, our group saw the Temple’s bright and open worship space as Wright intended it.

Our last day focused on decorative arts in Chicago and included visits to the Driehaus and Glessner House Museums. But the day’s unexpected pleasure turned out to be a visit to **Second Presbyterian Church** on South Michigan Avenue, a gem of Arts and Crafts design just a few blocks from Glessner House. Contrasting with Wright’s progressiveness, **Second Pres-**

byterian’s Gothic Revival exterior, completed in 1874, was designed by James Renwick, best known as architect of the Smithsonian’s original “Castle” on the Washington D.C., Mall, and St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City.



Members of the church’s elite congregation included residents of nearby

Prairie Avenue, among them George Pullman and George Armour. Robert Todd Lincoln was a trustee. But it was the church’s interior that was such a revelation for our group. In 1900 it was gutted by fire, setting the stage for its transformation into what is now one of the best-preserved Arts and Crafts church spaces in the country.

The rebuilding was done by Howard Van Doren Shaw, an architect particularly noted for his houses for the wealthy of Chicago’s North Shore. The interior is a coordinated environment of woodwork, ornamental plasterwork and murals by Frederic Clay Bartlett. And, as if that weren’t enough, the church contains nine spectacular stained-glass windows by Tiffany dating from 1892 to 1917.

Topping it all off are two exquisite small windows in the narthex designed by Edward Burne-Jones and fabricated by Morris & Co. Also, in contrast with Unity Temple and its world-class restoration work, today Second Presbyterian's small congregation struggles to preserve this National Historic Landmark. Areas of cleaned art glass and wall mural give a hint to the glories that future restoration will hopefully unveil.

Tina and I are now eagerly looking forward to 2016 and the opportunity to meet another enthusiastic group of participants. Already we have begun programming for the next class, which is scheduled for June 16–21, 2016. Valuable input from this year's class, as well as new opportunities that arise over the course of the year, will make 2016 a new and exciting experience for all of us.

*In the 2018 issue of the Alumni Newsletter, **Emily Banas** reported on:*

Crab Tree Farm

Before embarking on my curatorial career, and even before post-graduate study, my introduction to the world of decorative arts and design occurred by way of my studies in architectural history. Courses in American architecture focused largely on the city of Chicago; the advances in building technology, development of new, distinct American styles, and the architects who shaped the landscape of the rapidly growing city.

In many ways, the Chicago summer program with the Victorian Society in America brought me back to the start of my love for American architecture, decorative arts, and design history. Lectures on the history of Chicago, including the development of the city and its infrastructure, helped lay the groundwork for our week-long study. Touring a mixture of commercial, residential, and religious buildings provided a great overview of the breadth of work being produced at all levels in the city.

Visiting neighborhoods such as the Gold Coast, Oak Park, and Hyde Park was particularly interesting for me, as I enjoyed seeing styles of homes design by Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright in comparison to their commercial buildings. Exploring the architect-altered landscapes of Graceland Cemetery and Caldwell Lily Pond were equally fascinating, and Market Square in Lake Forest was excellent example of small-town commercial building design.

Although this may not always be the case, I thoroughly enjoyed sharing this experience with a small group of people who brought a diverse range of knowledge and expertise to the program. This greatly enhanced our group discussions, as each of us brought a unique perspective to each topic we covered. Having a small group also allowed us to move quickly and efficiently through the city, and miraculously afforded us extra time in some locations.

Of course, for me the undeniable highlight of the program was visiting the arts and crafts collections at **Crab Tree Farm**. It was truly special to be up close to these seldom seen collections of British and American decorative arts, in the context of period-appropriate interiors. It is a unique and interesting way to present a collection, and at the same time pay homage to the history of the buildings and the property.



The expertise of the property's curator/collections manager, Tom Gleason, cannot be overstated. I will, without a doubt, be able to utilize the knowledge I have gained during the Chicago summer school in my work. Gaining a better understanding of the history of the city has already aided in my interpretation of objects in our collection produced during the Victorian era in Chicago.

Lectures on the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago have also sparked my interest in learning more about the subject, particularly through the lens of the Gorham Manufacturing Company, one of the RISD Museum's most significant collections, who had a significant presence at the fair. I look forward to discovering additional Chicago connections within the scope of my work, and further delving into the vast and wonderful history of architecture, art, and design in the city of Chicago.

Thank you for supporting my attendance to this incredible program!

Chicago Summer School 2018 **By William Canup**

As an alumnus of both the Victorian Society's Newport and London summer schools, I had high expectations coming into the 2018 Chicago Program. I am pleased to say that the Chicago Program did not disappoint in the slightest! Our fearless leaders, Professor Richard Guy Wilson, Tina Strauss and John Waters lead us on a well-crafted and highly enjoyable odyssey covering the Windy City's most historic and influential works of architecture and design. Just like the Newport and London programs, the underlying academic rigor of the Chicago Summer School made the program as informative as it was entertaining.



I had not spent much time in Chicago before, so I was delighted when I found out that the program's housing accommodations were right downtown in **the Loop** just two blocks away from Grant Park. This proved an excellent home base not only for our tours of nearby historic landmarks but also for going out in the evenings and getting to know the current character of the city. We hit the ground running on the first day with a walking tour of the Loop and a visit to the Art Institute of Chicago.



Our introduction to the city was capped off with a welcome reception at the **Cliff Dwellers**, a private club founded in 1907 for artists, architects and other creative professionals. While sipping chardonnay on their rooftop terrace, I didn't know whether to be more impressed by the view of Lake Michigan or the names of notable members on the walls including Daniel Burnham and Louis Sullivan.

The rest of the program flowed in similar fashion with an agenda full of exceptional sites, several of which are not open to the general public. One of my personal favorites was our visit to the **Glasner Studio** with its intimate jewel box interior designed by Edgar Miller. Perhaps the twentieth century's most under-celebrated Renaissance man, Miller



embellished almost every surface of the studio with carved or applied detail in a variety of media with inspired originality.

I was also blown away by our trip out to Crab Tree Farm, a private estate designed by Chicago architect Solon Beman, where we had the privilege of touring an exceptional collection of Arts and Crafts ceramics and furniture.

The Chicago Summer School had a multidisciplinary approach to learning about each of the historic sites we visited, and the tours and lectures touched on everything from decorative arts to nineteenth century engineering to the history of retail.

Apart from the diversity of sites and subject matter, one of the program's strengths was the variety of participants it drew. Everyone on the trip had wide-ranging backgrounds and interests. It was wonderful to learn from the other attendees and gain new insights because of their unique perspectives.

As an alumna of both the London and Newport Summer Schools, I knew firsthand that the Victorian Society programs offer invaluable education opportunities for preservation professionals. So much of what I have learned during past summer schools has been directly applicable to my work. The theme of the 2018 Chicago Summer School, the American roots of Modernism, dovetailed perfectly with my professional interests. I work as a façade inspector for an architecture firm in New York City that specializes in restoring the exteriors of historic buildings. For this job, I often examine the sides of tall buildings from a suspended window washing scaffold. It was terrific to visit the birthplace of the skyscraper and learn about its development by seeing many early incarnations in person.

Studying the Chicago School of Architecture and touring works like the Rookery and the Monadnock Building by Burnham & Root has provided me a point of comparison for early skyscrapers in New York and enriched my understanding of the evolution of 19th century building technology.

Apart from professional development, one of the greatest takeaways I have from the trip is the inspiration gained from seeing such an array of extraordinary landmarks. Sitting down in front of the fireplace in Burnham & Root's studio or exploring the interior volumes of Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple are experiences that are difficult to adequately capture in words. The feelings of excitement and wonder I experienced while visiting these exceptional spaces are the some of the best memories that I have from the trip. The Chicago Program has certainly provided me memories to last a lifetime which is exactly how long I plan to continue studying architecture.



Professor Richard Guy Wilson and William Canup playing Burnham & Root in their studio in the Rookery Building.

Chicago, Chicago, that toddlin' town... By Raven Hudson

When I arrived in Chicago by way of the L train, I had Frank Sinatra blasting in my ears and the biggest smile on my face.

It was one of my bucket list cities, and I had dreamed of visiting for as long as I could remember. I grew up in rural Georgia and had never been to a city as grand and complex as Chicago, so I always wanted to find a group to visit with that would steer me in right direction and educate me on the history of the architecture. I was lucky to find the summer school with the Victorian Society of America through the Eloise Hunter Chapter in Norfolk, Virginia.

I knew I would never be able to afford the trip alone, and I was so fortunate to get a scholarship from VSA through my generous sponsor David Lamdin. The days that we had scheduled for us on this trip were filled to the max and expertly arranged by Tina Strauss and John Waters. I truly feel that there are no two greater individuals to explore and learn about Chicago with.

Our dorm room was located in the most perfect location in the Loop. I spent my early mornings reading Carl Sandburg at a great Chicagoan coffee roaster before heading off by foot or by bus with the group.

I believe we saw almost every great building and landmark that Chicago has to offer, but I will focus on the ones that I experienced only because I was with the Victorian Society.

The Rookery was at the top of my list to visit, and we got the most amazing tour by **Gunny Harboe**, the architect that oversaw its restoration. I myself and many others on the trip were astounded that we got to meet him and got a tour from him to learn the intimate details of how the building came back together. Sitting in the library with Gunny and Richard Guy Wilson looking out at the photo of Burnham and Root in the same room was a true highlight of the trip. I do not believe that any other tour in Chicago could offer such an amazing experience.



Visiting Crab Tree Farms was my most favorite adventure on this trip. It was so unexpected and different from everything else that we did. We felt like guests in the vacation home of Bryans, and the dedication of the staff encouraged me both personally and professionally. After meeting Tom Gleason and seeing his passion for maintaining the property and the Bryans' workshop for fresh and upcoming artisans, it inspired me to pursue a career in house museums and historical preservation.

As the youngest person on this trip by far, I was constantly asked by the other attendees what I was doing on the trip and in my professional life. Visiting Chicago with VSA was an important step in my journey to figuring out what I wanted to do with my history degree and what degrees to pursue beyond that. A few of my fellow attendees were so encouraging and motivating as well.

Another moment of this trip that made me realize where I wanted to focus my education was on the tour and reception at Glasner Studio by Edgar Miller. I loved the idea that there are individuals like Zac Bleicher and his family trying to preserve the legacy of lesser known artists. It made me feel like we have a whole lot of discovery left in this field and that perseverance and dedication to an ideal can make the difference in preserving something raw and beautiful like Miller's work. It also didn't hurt that we were able to walk around barefoot drinking wine together in this wonderful home. They truly made us feel at home, like so many other hosts did. I believe that they saw us as family because of our association with the Victorian Society of America.

I feel like a greater part of something, and the people that I attended with made lasting impacts on me. I have stayed in touch with several of them. Since returning back home to Norfolk, Virginia, I have taken a job as the Museum Experience Coordinator at the Hunter House Victorian Museum. Before going to Chicago, I didn't have the confidence or knowledge that I needed to take this position, but after spending a week with some of the most knowledgeable experts on Victorian art and architecture, I felt certain that I could follow the path that they laid before me to begin my own research and experience in this field.

I would be remiss to not mention two of the amazing women that gave lectures during the summer schools. I am so inspired by Sally Kalmbach and will aspire forever to reach her level of knowledge and passion on every project that I put effort into. Her tours and lecture at the Art Institute were so fascinating, and she was a brilliant addition to our collection of artsy intellectuals on this trip. Anne Sullivan was also an amazing individual to meet, and she presented one of my favorite lectures on Chicago that opened us all up to understanding the layout of Chicago and how the land impacted its growth and architecture.



My gratitude for this experience cannot be overstated. It was absolutely life changing. As each day passed on the trip, I thought for sure that we would run out of extraordinary adventures, but it just kept getting better.

I have never walked away from a trip so changed and inspired. I encourage people from all backgrounds to visit Chicago through the lens of VSA. There is no doubt in my mind that it is the best architectural tour available in Chicago at the best price.



Chicago Summer School

June 17 – 22, 2021

The Chicago Summer School focuses on the American roots of Modernism. After the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, progressive architects and patrons moved the city to the forefront of technological and aesthetic experimentation. Through expert lectures and tours, course directors Tina Strauss and John Waters lead a survey of 19th- and early 20th-century architecture, art, design, landscape, and preservation.

Participants will visit several private homes and public buildings, parks, and landscapes, with access to the era's most significant spaces: the site of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, H.H. Richardson's Glessner House, Adler & Sullivan's Auditorium Theatre Building, Burnham & Root's Rookery Building, and Graceland Cemetery. In Oak Park students will see Frank Lloyd Wright's Home and Studio, the newly restored Unity Temple and other seminal designs. Local experts and Principal Guest Lecturer **Richard Guy Wilson** will accompany the class at many of the sites.

Additional visits include Gilded Age mansions in the historic Gold Coast, such as the Samuel Nickerson mansion, as well as St. James Cathedral with its surprising St. Andrew's Chapel by Bertram Goodhue. The class will have the opportunity to take unique tours of the collections at the Art Institute. New this year will be an optional tour (not covered by tuition) focusing on 20th-century Modernism in the Chicago area and its connections to the Victorian era, and who the key figures are leading to Modernism in Chicago.

Lectures will be held in the classroom of the Historic Preservation Department of the School of the Art Institute

Course Director: Tina Strauss
Associate Director: John Waters
Principal Guest Lecturer: Richard Guy Wilson

Past lecturers include Virginia Stewart, Anne Sullivan, Gunny Harboe, Diane Dillon, Tom Gleason, Kathleen Cummings, and William Tyre.

Tuition is \$2,100 which includes expert instruction, lectures, course materials, tours, 7 nights shared dormitory-style accommodation in the downtown Loop, entrance fees, breakfasts, receptions, and some meals.

Full and partial scholarships are available for qualified US and non-US candidates.

*Chicago-area residents may request a reduced rate that does not include housing. Please contact the summer school administrator for details.

"Participating in the Victorian Society's Summer School in Chicago was a valuable opportunity to connect with others in our field and has become a treasured part of my professional development." **LESLIE KLINGNER**, CURATOR OF INTERPRETATION, BILTMORE ESTATE (CHICAGO, 2017)

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION of the VICTORIAN SOCIETY SUMMER SCHOOLS

\$100,000 BUTTRICK CHALLENGE GRANT

The Alumni Association is very excited to announce the creation of an Endowment Fund to support the VSA Summer Schools. We received a very generous matching grant from Jim Buttrick (Newport 1999, London 2000). Jim will donate a total of up to \$100,000 to match dollar-for-dollar donations large or small to the Endowment Fund. These donations must be “new” money received before December 31, 2020. The Endowment Funds will be separately invested for the long term with a small percentage of the value of the fund used each year as needed for summer schools scholarships and operations.

As a supporter of the VSA, you understand the importance that the Schools have played in the lives of those fortunate enough to attend. Students consistently report on how the schools have enriched their lives with the connections made, the first-rate lecturers, and a broadened appreciation of the built environment. The Endowment Fund will provide an ongoing income stream to make the Summer Schools stronger and be our legacy for future Victorians. Please consider a generous contribution.

For additional information contact: David Lamdin 703-243-2350

dalamdin@aol.com



Prof. Richard Guy Wilson with students at the Newport Summer School

Please complete and return the form below to help meet the Buttrick Challenge

I, _____, am including a check for \$_____ payable to the “**Alumni Association**”. Memo: for the Buttrick Challenge Grant. **AND/OR**

I, _____, pledge \$_____ to the Alumni Association for the Buttrick Challenge Grant to be paid before December 31, 2020.

Send to: **Alumni Association, VSA**
24 Wilkins Ave 1st Floor
Haddonfield, NJ 08033

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