
With this issue of the *Alumni Newsletter 2.0*, we welcome over 50 graduates of the Summer School Classes of 2018 into the Alumni Association. I recently had the opportunity to attempt to explain to these new alumni some information about the VSA and the AA. I think it might be beneficial to go over that here.

The VSA was established in 1966. It is the only national non-profit organization committed to historic preservation, protection, understanding, education, and enjoyment of our nineteenth century heritage. The VSA has national members and several chapters located around the country. The Alumni Association of the Victorian Society in America Summer Schools is a membership organization exclusively for graduates of the Summer Schools in Newport Rhode Island; Chicago, Illinois; and London, England. The AA is a Chapter of the VSA that was founded in 1975 following the first VSA Summer School held in London, and established:

- to support and encourage the VSA as it fosters public appreciation and understanding of the artistic expression of the Victorian Era in the United States;
- to promote the programs of the VSA Summer Schools;
- to provide opportunities for professional, educational and social interaction of the Summer Schools alumni through study tours, seminars and other activities;
- to provide consistent scholarship funds for the VSA Summer Schools; and
- to encourage participation in and scholarship, through the VSA Summer Schools.

This year, the AA was able to provide \$24,250 to the VSA for summer schools scholarships for the 2018 class. The source of the AA funds, include a \$45 annual membership fee (which is a separate membership fee from the VSA), and largely from generous alumni who donate over and above the annual membership fees with honorary and memorial donations to support future VSA and AA leaders.

As a chapter of the VSA, the AA is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. You can find more information about the AA by visiting our web site at vsalumni.org, separate from the VSA web site (victoriansociety.org)

If you have not already done so, I would strongly urge you to become a friend of the AA on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/vsaalumni/>). There you will find information about upcoming events, and updates on news and information on your new friends and other AA members. Please share information about any of your publications, employment, promotions, etc.

There is a special \$25 a year membership available for those under 35 years of age. Annual AA membership benefits include: opportunities to participate in the Alumni Association's national and international Study Tour Programs that include exclusive access to historic sites, private homes, and private collections; invitations to special events nationwide; an invitation to attend the AA Annual Meeting & Dinner often held in a private home in connection with a VSA Study Tour; and publications keeping members informed of activities—only current Alumni Members may submit essays for possible publication. The next AA Study Tour is scheduled for October 2018 to Northern Ireland.



SUMMER SCHOOLS REFLECTIONS

LONDON Summer School

by Armon M. White (2017)

My experience with the London summer school overall, was an incredibly rich, in-depth and exceedingly enlightening perspective on the Victorian era in London and environs. The quality of instruction and the depth of knowledge demonstrated by the course director Jo Banham, could not have been better. Additionally, the excellence of the guest lecturers as well as the breadth and depth of information and experience they offered was truly impressive. Many of whom literally “wrote the book” on the subject’s they discussed.

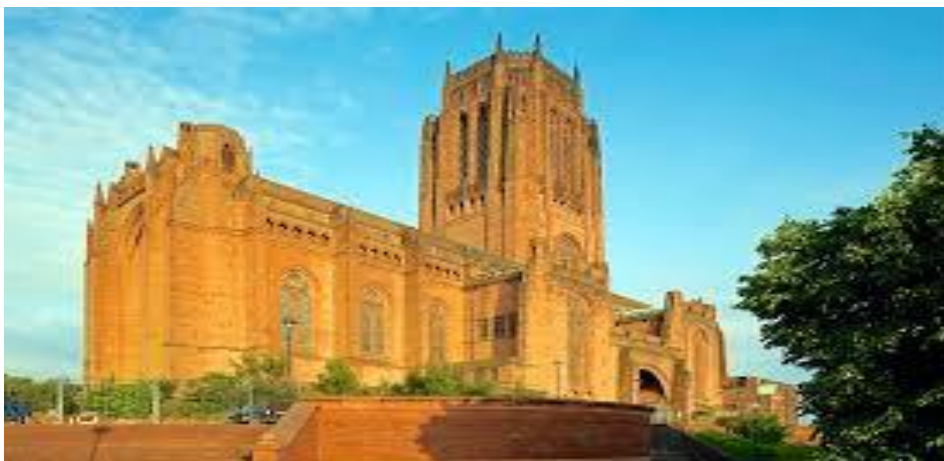
While the program was physically intense, it was well worth the effort required to gain exposure to so much exceptional information and experience in-situ. Also, having the opportunity to experience London was an invaluable bonus. The expert direction offered by Jo Banham, delivered in her soothing dulcet tones, offered an ideal learning opportunity. I could have listened to her describe a single piece of art for an eternity.

It should not go unsaid that exposure to the multitude of sites visited, was quite impressive and somewhat overwhelming. The initial visit to Standen house and gardens was an excellent beginning to discussing the arts and crafts movement in the period. This location represented an embodiment of the ideals of the movement. The fact that it was a real home of the period with its interiors intact, gave a glimpse into, not only the decorative traditions that informed the movement, but how people actually lived with them.



I have learned so much about the Victorian epoch, which I didn’t know, I didn’t know. There were so many amazing churches. Each one had incredible detail and individuality while maintaining similar massing. The exception was the extraordinary, in both scale and proportion, Anglican Cathedral

Church of Christ in Liverpool. I found myself truly in awe from the time it could be seen from the road. The effect was only amplified upon closer inspection. Of everything we saw during the trip, this was by far the most impressive for me. While I generally do appreciate churches, they are not my favorite type of architecture. However, this remarkable building has caused me to re-examine my position on churches generally.



While the trips to the northern locales were certainly valuable, if I had to make one

suggestion to improve the trip going forward, it might be that perhaps Birmingham could be omitted. Aside from its cultural offerings, the location felt less than safe in my opinion. Aside from my impressions, I subsequently learned that some of the young women in our group experienced being catcalled by several of the local men while there. I would

suggest the decision to include Birmingham be re-evaluated going forward. Of course, the ultimate decision will be one made by someone other than me.

One additional and salient aspect of the trip was the company of the absolutely lovely Liz Leckie and the erudite and charming Ian Dungavell. I cannot overstate how important and how much more enjoyable the trip was since Liz, Ian and Jo were simply a pleasure to be around. I also felt that ultimately the whole group created a feeling of cohesion, camaraderie and friendship.

I cannot thank Anne Mallek and the Victorian Society in America enough for the opportunity to experience both Newport and London, and to learn so much about the Victorian era. I could not have asked for a kinder, more generous, and thoughtful group of lecturers, staff and students.

I will take these experiences with me throughout my life as I continue to utilize the wealth of information learned and always treasure the friends I've made.

LONDON Summer School

Avigail Moss (2017)

When I applied for the Victorian Society of America's London Summer School, I was looking forward to learning about design and reform from A.W. N. Pugin to the Arts & Crafts movement. Indeed, our lectures provided windows onto these artists' and designers' oeuvres.

Rosemary Hill's presentations and tour of the Palace of Westminster provided a helpful overview of Pugin and Barry's work there.



Jo Banham's lectures on William Morris and on design reform (with

Cole and Owen) at the Victoria and Albert Museum were also useful introductions to the mid-Victorian design world. Kitt Wedd's and Christine Lalumia's lectures on the Victorian building industry and on nineteenth-century gardens (respectively) were also scholarly and generous. Likewise, Ian Dungavell's presentations and leadership also helped me to understand how to read and interpret English architecture.

Our onsite visits and tours allowed us to experience the texture of Victorian spaces: to see where nineteenth-century working life, commerce, and administration were carried out. Our most meaningful visits were to sites that were practically significant for large numbers of everyday nineteenth-century people. At Crossness Pumping Station—probably the most unusual and memorable site on the entire course—our guide, Petra Cox, explained how the Metropolitan Board of Works transformed London's infrastructure through the installation of modern sewers. Cox walked us through the building's

restoration process and pointed out how this eminently practical building also included a healthy dose of Victorian humor: the two beam engines that pumped London's sewage were named after Victoria and the Prince Consort, while the ornamental iron detailing in the Engine Room's entry hall included figs (known as digestive aids). At the Albert Dock in Liverpool, we saw how the shipping industry dictated the Dock's architectural forms: for example, all the buildings' edges—from granite steps to brick entryways—were rounded so as to forestall any damage to cargo being loaded and unloaded. The Albert Docks also featured aesthetic details a visitor might otherwise miss, as in the beautiful dock master huts designed by Jesse Hartley that featured "crazy paving," or carefully laid rubble stonework.



At the Model Village in Port Sunlight, we saw how William Morris' ideas affected practical designs of workers' housing.

One of the course's most effective visiting days addressed how different nineteenth-century religious practices were articulated through ecclesiastical architecture. We saw how G.E. Street's Gothic design for a parish church at All Saints Denstone (Staffordshire) was consonant with the congregation's Anglican beliefs, which were inclusive and non-hierarchical.



At Princes Road Synagogue (Liverpool) we learned how the Audsley brothers—two Presbyterian architects—came to give the synagogue its Moorish, Egyptian and Greek design: emphasizing that ecclesiastical architecture was often a matter of finding appropriate precedents. Concluding this day, Giles Gilbert Scott's Liverpool Cathedral presented an entirely different view of civic and religious ambition: its delicate and ornate Lady Chapel provided a respite from the Cathedral's otherwise grandiose design. But the real highlight for me was our visit to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, where we sat in red leather chairs once owned by the British East India Company in the India Office Council Chamber. Being in this room—a site where decisions about Britain's imperial dominions had been made—was profound, giving me an *emplaced* understanding of this seat of an Empire that had affected such massive and often negative transformations around the world.

The course also provided a window onto the management of heritage sites—indeed revealing the tension between heritage and the heritage *industry*. For example, although brief, our visit to Emery Walker's house beautifully showed how Victorian spaces continued to be used and reused after their principal periods of occupancy—with its many occupants, from Philip De Louthembourg to Dorothy Walker—challenging what a principal period of occupancy might mean.

By comparison, William Morris' Kelmscott Manor, with its twentieth century renovations, seemed evacuated, its floorboards too well swept, its selections of artifacts too carefully placed. Despite its lovely garden, and its proximity to the Thames (the scenes of which definitely matched the images conjured when reading *News From Nowhere*) Morris



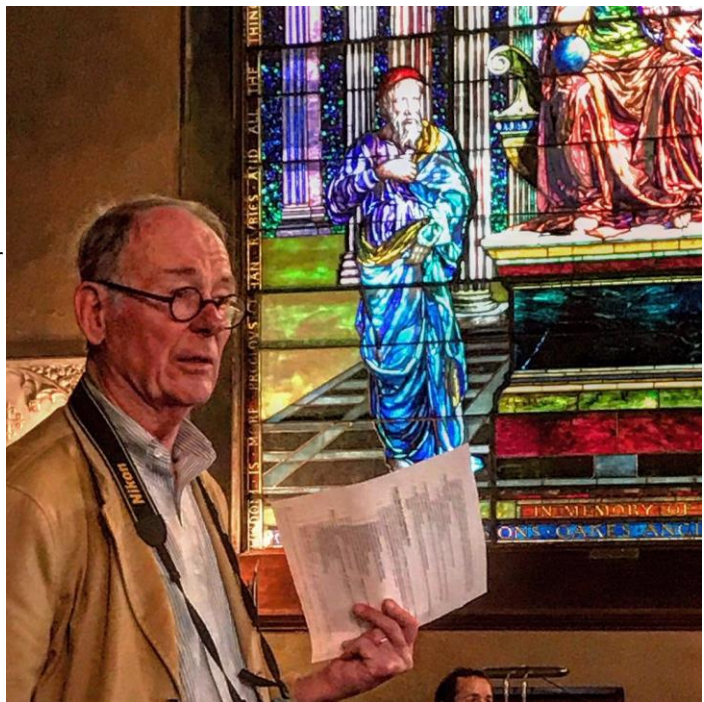
seemed almost lost in the crushing crowds and tea towels. The line between preservation and sanitization never seemed more apparent.

NEWPORT Summer School

by Willie Granston (2017)

The June 1, 1897 issue of *The New York Times* reported the recent arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt to Newport. "They arrived at 7 pm.," the newspaper article noted, "and were driven at once to the handsome villa on Narragansett Avenue of Mrs. Vanderbilt's parents..." ["Vanderbilts at Newport. Cornelius Jr., and His Wife to Enter Society This Summer," *The New York Times*, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.]

Exactly one hundred and twenty years later, on June 1, 2017, at just about seven o'clock in the evening, the first event of the Victorian Society in America's Newport Summer School was just getting started: the traditional pizza dinner at Ochre Lodge. Though it may not have attracted the attention of *The New York Times*, our dinner that night was, just like that of the Vanderbilts, the start of an incredible time in Newport.



Over the course of the following ten days we visited more than forty sites, ranging from Unity Church in North Easton, with its awe-inspiring stained-glass windows, to Ochre Lodge's next-door neighbor: The Breakers. Under the tutelage of Professor Richard Guy Wilson, we learned about a variety of topics, from Newport's architecture and British occupation, to the area's best coffee shops and fried fish restaurants. Despite often reminding us that he doesn't know "every damned building," Richard repeatedly proved himself wrong, and cheerfully answered our incessant questions with a twinkle in his eye. Over the course of the Newport Summer School we saw homes of all shapes, sizes, and styles, as well as churches, libraries, community buildings, gate lodges, and more. At these sites we experienced everything from the Egyptian Revival reception room at Clouds Hill, to the evocative garden follies surrounding Berkeley Villa. Over the course of the Summer School we traced the work of specific figures, like Stanford White, Charles McKim, and Richard Morris Hunt, observing through their buildings their growth and evolution as architects. But we did not limit ourselves to architects alone. We became acquainted with the work of John La Farge on our third day in Newport, and over the course of our studies his work appeared in a variety of places, not unlike that of Leon Marcotte and Ogden Codman, additional figures with whom we were very familiar by the end of the Summer School.

Lest you think we restricted ourselves to Newport alone, we traveled out of the city several times, encouraging us to think about architectural tastes far from the seaside summer resort. In Providence we visited the Art Club and the Fleur de Lys building, reminding ourselves of the important roles late nineteenth century civic institutions can still have in modern cities. We also visited the Governor Henry Lippitt House and Clouds Hill, two impressive structures that survive in stunning states of preservation. Visiting North Easton, we focused on the buildings Henry Hobson Richardson designed for members of the Ames family, followed by a stop in Fall River, where we explored the Reverend Arthur Knapp house. There we considered the fascinating juxtaposition between Ralph Adams Cram, the noted Gothic Revival architect, and his Japanese design for the local Unitarian minister.

We benefited immensely from the generosity of many individuals, and it would be impossible to recognize the role of each without an extensive list. Nevertheless, their kindness and interest in the program certainly added to the breadth of the discussions that took place both in and out of the classroom. Through the kindness of private homeowners, we were able to visit sites like the Quaker Tom Robinson House, with its spectacular 1870s alterations by the young Charles F. McKim, as well as Beacon Rock, the Hypotenuse, and many others.

Similarly, we were treated to fascinating guest lectures, covering a range of topics from Jules Allard's gilded interiors to Katherine Warren's efforts to preserve Newport's Colonial buildings. We also enjoyed several wonderful social events, like cocktails with Bill and Alison Vareika at their art gallery, coffee, tea, and sweets at the Knapp house, and a wonderful evening at Philmoney, hosted by Pauline Metcalf.

But as much as anything else, we learned from one another. Coming from diverse backgrounds, and with a variety of interests, our conversations were wide and varied. From politics and current events, to the intricate details of Gilded Age furniture design, we spent every spare moment learning from our classmates. Whether we were taking in the scenery along the Cliff Walk with new friends, eating breakfast at Ochre Lodge, or enjoying a glass of wine at the end of the day, we were learning, making wonderful new connections, and forging friendships in the process.

As I look back on the 2017 Newport Summer School, on the sites we visited, on the lectures we heard, and on all that we did, I am incredibly grateful that I got to do it with such an amazing group of people. We had a spectacular time and we learned *a lot*. And while we may not have made *The New York Times* society column, as the Vanderbilts did upon their arrival to Newport one hundred and twenty years before ours, I will always remember our first evening, on June 1, 2017, when a motley crew of individuals from all walks of life gathered for pizza at Ochre Lodge. Passionate about architecture, art, landscapes, nineteenth-century America, and more, we looked forward to the incredible opportunity ahead. And by the end of the Victorian Society in America's Newport Summer School, we were more enthusiastic and passionate than ever.

CHICAGO Summer School

A class favorite:



<http://www.crabtreefarm.org/virtual-tour>

One of the many highlights of the 2018 **Chicago Summer School** was the tour of 1886 Barnum and Root “Rookery” Building. The fantastic tour was led by the restoration architect, Gunny Harboe.



Here is an interesting article on Gunny and another one on the project. No doubt, Chicago Summer School students will recognize the picture of Gunny in the link below standing in Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's steel framed Illinois Institute of Technology, a key monument of 20th century International Style.

<https://americanbuildersquarterly.com/2015/10/01/harboe-architects/>

casestudies.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/98/2015/12/C025001.pdf



NEWPORT Summer School

Andrew Elders (2017)

I was privileged to attend the Victorian Society of America's Newport Summer School in June, 2017. As a full-time graduate student pursuing my Master of Science in Historic Preservation at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, I was looking forward to immersing myself in the architectural legacy of Newport and enjoying more in-depth field study of American Victorian residential architecture than I had previously experienced. The Newport session exceeded my expectations in every way.

More than anything, the instructors were top-notch. I had long known who Richard Guy Wilson was and admired his work for years, but to learn from him first-hand is an incredible experience. The knowledge he has at his command is immense, and he imparts it in an engaging and approachable manner. Far from being dry, pedantic lectures that drone on, Richard infuses his talks with humor, insight, and the occasional well-placed critique. He honestly brings his subjects to life, both in the classroom and in the field. He is extremely generous in answering questions and explaining the meaning behind the method of architecture and design. When you combine that with the huge network of property owners and subject matter experts he coalesces for the session, the experience becomes truly one-of-a-kind, a window into a world of design and living that most people never get to experience first-hand. Other speaker highlights for me included talks on interior decoration and decorators by Pauline Metcalf, French rooms in the Gilded Age by Paul Miller, and Servant Life by John Tschirch. They really rounded out the body of knowledge by explaining how people chose their surroundings, and how they inhabited them.



Another excellent learning opportunity I found was in the coterie of fellow attendees. As a self-described “buildings guy”, I gained interesting insights from the “decorative arts” professionals, the social historians, and preservation enthusiasts. The group was at ease together almost immediately, bonded by our common interests, and we carried our daily experiences on into the evenings in discussions and walks around Newport. That, and the diversity of locations of the participants kept discussions lively. It was fascinating to come to Newport to learn about high-style Gilded Age architecture and leave with additional knowledge of California Craftsman, Prairie Style, and Southern antebellum architecture. The enthusiasm shown by my fellow attendees was always evident and to learn in a group of like-minded people was certainly a lively experience.

Finally, the physical experience of the session was absolutely priceless. Rather than follow the form of tours filled with stale clichés and bland observations, the site visits kept a brisk pace and were packed with information. Even more unique was the opportunity to EXPERIENCE these spaces. Living in Ochre Lodge, while admittedly rather spartan, was just another element of immersion for me – to



inhabit the type of dwelling we were studying allowed me to contemplate what life was like in that age. I came to love that old house over the course of my stay. In the field, we were allowed to linger at elements we found intriguing, and the opportunity to photograph at will allowed me to bring my experience home with me. Furthermore, the collections we saw at houses such as Clouds Hill, the Harold Brown Villa, and Clover Patch were glimpses into a life many people don’t get to see, with collections of art and memorabilia being accumulated by a family over a century or more. They told the story of how the buildings were inhabited and gave the magnificence of the surroundings a humanity. And the characters who inhabited these places! All were unfailingly kind and welcoming, happy to answer questions and make sure that we were not only learning, but that we were comfortable while doing so. I left Newport feeling truly welcomed by the community through

these visits and the evening receptions so generously held by alumni and property owners alike. I never felt like a mere tourist, I felt like a guest and friend, and that truly made the Newport Summer School a transcendent experience for me. I consider the VSA Newport Summer School to be highlight in my education, and always will. I've never had such an opportunity to really direct my focus so completely and come away with such a broad base of knowledge. I am pleased to be part of the VSA alumni family and I look forward to participating enthusiastically with the group for years to come.