

At our last meeting Annette Willoughby, who has recently completed studies in Heritage Management, spoke to us about the development of the Conservation Movement from the early days in the nineteenth century to to-days Planning Acts.

Enthusiasts William Morris and John Ruskin used their influence to save buildings at risk. In 1877 Morris founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the still existing SPAB. In 1958 John Betjeman and Nikolaus Pevsner created the Victorian Society, horrified at the apathy towards the destruction of Victorian Buildings. They had their successes, the saving of St.Pancras Station, and their losses, the removal of the Euston Arch.

With the passing of various Planning Acts, emphasis has changed from saving imposing buildings to keeping representative buildings. It was in this spirit that Southwell Workhouse was bought and saved by the National Trust in spite of initial criticism.

Today, in spite of a general lack of resources, interest in the past has never been greater. The criterion for preservation has changed with the change in public attitude. Now, not just one building but possibly a whole townscape.

The audience had many questions and plenty of opinions to offer our enthusiastic speaker who was warmly thanked.