

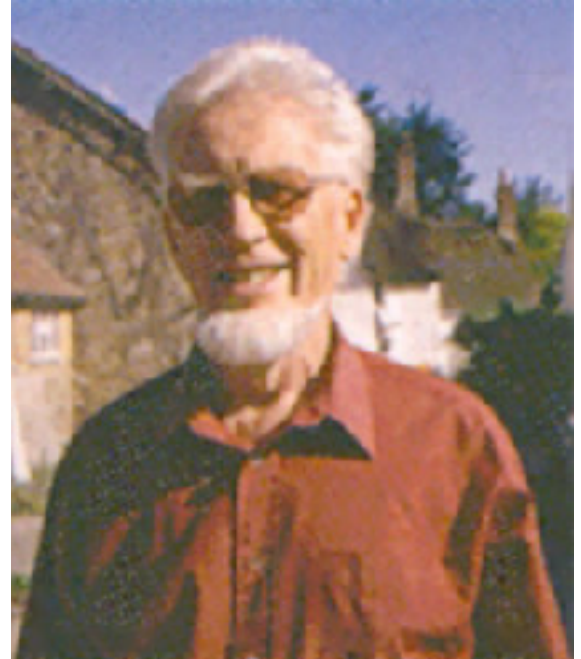
John McCann BA.

Consultant on Historic Buildings and much valued member of SVBRG.

John was born in Warwickshire, lived in Essex for over thirty years and then semi-retired to Sidbury in Devon where he died unexpectedly on May 8th 2018 aged 91. During these later years both he and his wife, Pamela, were active and inspiring members of SVBRG in spite of living 'out of county'.

For twenty-five years John McCann had photographed modern architecture for architects and architectural journals. His skill 'behind the camera' was to stand him in very good stead with his subsequent interests in vernacular buildings, particularly dovecotes and his various publications about these.

As a 'mature student' he read for an honours degree in history at King's College, London University.



Interest in our 'vernacular building heritage', country wide, was growing and SVBRG was embryonic. In 1975 John immersed himself in the study of the traditional buildings of the English countryside and their historic origins:-

He examined and listed some two thousand historic buildings for Essex County Council and English Heritage.

He lectured and wrote extensively about vernacular architecture and tutored numerous courses for Cambridge University and the Workers' Educational Association.

His own publications, often assisted by Pamela, went hand-in-hand with this -

1990 *'The Dovecotes of Suffolk.'*

2003, assisted by SVBRG, *'The Dovecotes of Historical Somerset.'*

2004 *'Clay & Cob Buildings.'*

2011 *'The Dovecotes & Pigeon Lofts of Wiltshire.'*

Additionally, his 'papers' appeared in many 'periodicals':

In **Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society:**

Vol 44, *'Dovecotes and Pigeons in English Law.'*

Vol 50, *'The Dovecotes of Rutland.'*

1987 Vol 31 *"Brick Nogging in the C15th & C16th.'* (infill of brick into timber frames from C15th)

1991 Vol 35, *'A Historical Enquiry into the Design & use of Dovecotes.'*

2011 Vol 54, *'Keeping Pigeons in Parish Churches.'*

2014 Vol 58, *'Buildings of the Deer Hunt.'* Part 1

2015 Vol 58, *'Buildings of the Deer Hunt.'* Part 2

In **Post-Medieval Archaeology :**

Vol 14, *'An Essex Lobby-entrance House Reconsidered.'*

In **Period Home:**

1981 *'Reading the Timber'* (5 issues)

"Antique Ironwork: Wrought Iron Windows – Part 1"

1982 *"The Development of Glass & Wrought Iron Windows – Part 2"*

‘Antique Ironwork: Cast Iron Windows & Fanlights’

1983 Vol 4, ‘*Discovering Old Water Pumps.*’

1985 Vol 6, ‘*The Bread Oven*’ (C19th brick bread ovens)

In **Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History:**

1982 Vol 35, ‘*A Smoke-Curing Chamber at Brockley*’ In the roof of a C17th farmhouse!

In **Country Life:**

1982 ‘*Warm in Winter, Cool in Summer*’ (earthen buildings in Buckinghamshire).

2001 ‘*Origins of the Dovecote.*’

In **Historic Buildings in Essex:**

1984 ‘*No 2 Church Path, Wendens Ambo*’ (Conversion of a village Guildhall, 1549)

1985 ‘*The introduction of the Lamb’s Tongue Stop*’ (Scroll Stop, post 1564)

1988 No 4 ‘*Dissatisfactio In with Builders in the C16th.*’

1993 No 7, ‘*Brentwood Marking in Cornwall.*’

2003 No 11, ‘*Editing Cecil Hewett re English Cathedral & Monastic Carpentry.*’

In **Vernacular Architecture:**

1987 Vol 18, ‘*Is Clay Lump a Traditional Building Material?*’ (Adobe – not in use until C19th)

1997 Vol 28, ‘*The Origin of Clay Lump in England.*’

2007 Vol 38, ‘*Clay-walled Houses in Norfolk: some comments.*’

2010 Vol 41, ‘*A Vernacular Window of 1618.*’

2011 Vol 42, ‘*Engravings as evidence of Dovecotes.*’ (Early C18th)

In **Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society:**

1987 Vol 76, ‘*The First Cottage of Clay Bats?*’ (Clay Lump – 1791)

In **Essex Archaeology & History:**

1987 Vol 18, ‘*Tollesbury Hall, a C13th Manor House*’. (Timber framed, aisled Hall)

1994 Vol 25, ‘*The Dovecote of Berechurch Hall.*’

1997 Vol 28, ‘*The Dovecote at Hedingham Castle.*’

2005 Vol 35, ‘*A Tower at Fingringhoe.*’ (Ice house, pavilion & pigeon-loft combination.)

2008 Vol 102, ‘*A Swedish observer in Essex in 1747.*’

In **Records of Buckinghamshire :**

1994 Vol 36, ‘*An C18th Dovecote at Stewkley.*’

In **Journal of Architectural Conservation:**

1995 Vol 1, ‘*The Conservation of Historic Dovecotes.*’

In **Farming & Conservation:**

1995 Vol 2, ‘*Dovecote Design down the Ages.*’

In **Journal of the Historic Farm Buildings Group:**

1996 Vol 10, ‘*The Influence of Rodents on the Design & construction of Farm buildings in Britain to mid C19th.*’

2001 Vol 14, ‘*The Abandoned Dovecotes & Pigeon-lofts of Almeria.*’

In **Encyclopedia of the Vernacular Architecture of the World:**

1997 Contributions re carpenters marks, granaries, clay lump etc.

In **Timber Framing:**

1999 No. 52, ‘*A Timber Framed Dovecote in Suffolk.*’

In **Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History:**

2001 Vol 40, ‘*The Dovecote Turret Of Hadleigh Deanery*’

2004 Vol 40, ‘*Two More Dovecotes in Suffolk.*’

In **Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeology and Natural History:**

2001 Vol 143, '*The Columbarium at Compton Martin Church.*'

2005 Vol 149, '*The Introduction of the Brown Rat.*'

2009 Vol 152, '*Wrought Iron Windows in Somerset.*'

In **Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club:**

2008 Vol 54, '*An early C18th Dovecote at Burghill.*'

In **Wiltshire Archaeology & Natural History Magazine :**

2009 Vol 102, '*A Columbarium at Collongbourne Ducis.*'

In **Eavesdropper**, the Newsletter of Suffolk Historic Building Group:

2010 Vol 42, '*The First Glazed Windows in Vernacular Houses.*' (C16th).

2012 No 46, '*Brick Nogging.*'

In **Transactions of Worcestershire Archaeological Society:**

2011 Vol 22, '*A Columbarium at Overbury Church.*'

I first met John & Pamela on a SVBRG visit to Cleve Abbey, around 18 years ago, and was instantly struck by both their star-quality glamour and their friendliness, it was only later that I appreciated their depth of vernacular building knowledge!

John was especially keen to share the latter with the Group and spoke to us on a variety of topics over the years until Pamela's dementia and his advancing age meant that he could no longer leave her or undertake the night time journey up from Devon, but he was always happy to be reached by phone or to respond to an e-mail.



On holiday in Cornwall some 3 years ago Mike & I stayed on a farm where the owner made timber-framed dolls houses, dog kennels etc. and our 'vernacular buildings' conversation soon turned to John McCann whom the owner had known previously in Essex!

It's a "small world", as we all know, and will be a less enriched one without John's continued knowledge and wisdom to benefit us all; SVBRG will miss him.

Our condolences go to Pamela, whose future is uncertain, at this sad time. Denny Robbins.

Fergus Dowding writes: "He was earnest and professional, and I always found him generous with his time and knowledge in any subjects he shared an interest in.

His useful knowledge for our group had always been that of early timber scarf joints, and he joined many surveys in the Penoyre/Dallimore days. Few of us more recent members knew him well, and his living a way away and needing Pam to chauffeur him meant we saw relatively little of him of late.

I think he was a professional photographer of buildings. When he moved onto older buildings, he told me he felt he ought to learn what they were, he did a course somewhere learned and then became interested in clay, windows, doves etc. The great thing about him was that he would not say something he was not certain was true."

After conversation with his 'executor' SVBRG will take possession of all remaining copies of 'The Dovecotes of Historical Somerset' and all his papers relating to Somerset. These latter will be assessed and then suitably archived by us and/or the SWHC. Denny 28.5.2018