Robert Willis

Science, Technology and Architecture in the Nineteenth Century

An International Symposium
Gonville and Caius College
Cambridge, 16th -17th September 2016
This two-day Symposium explores the extraordinary life and work of the Cambridge academic Robert Willis (1800-1875). Willis was a famous Cambridge polymath. A Fellow of Gonville and Caius, he was Jacksonian Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy and taught engineering in the early years of that subject. His research and teaching was spread over a wide range of interests. He was in particular a pioneer of the study of Medieval vaulting and did extensive research on Gothic Cathedrals and Medieval architectural nomenclature. In Cambridge, he is best known as the originator and author of The Architectural History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge which was put together from his papers and additional material by his nephew John Willis Clark.
Friday 16th September

08.15-9.30: Breakfast Harvey Court

15 minutes walk to Caius

9.30-10.00: Registration in the Bateman Room, Gonville and Caius College

FROM THE LOCAL TO THE GLOBAL

10.00-10.20: Jamex Campbell. *Willis and Cambridge*

10.20-10.40: Alex Buchanan. *Robert Willis’s networks of knowledge*

WILLIS AND SCIENCE (Part 1)

10.40-11.00: Jacques Heyman. *The teaching of engineering in Cambridge*

11.00-11.20: Ben Marsden. *A Protean system of apparatus: Robert Willis and the material invention of mechanism*

11.20-11.40: Coffee and Biscuits

WILLIS AND SCIENCE (Part 2)

11.40-12.00: Robin Maconie. *Willis, speech, sound and music*

WILLIS AND ARCHAEOLOGY (Part 1)

12.00-12.20: Chris Elliott. *Awful Grandeur and Deceptive Artifices. Robert Willis and Ancient Egyptian Architecture*

12.20-12.40: Martin Biddle. *Willis and the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem*

13.00-14.00: Buffet Lunch Main Dining Hall

WILLIS AND ARCHAEOLOGY (Part 2)

14.00-14.20: Toby Huitson. *Circular stairs, polychrome stonemasonry and gormandising monks: Willis’s work at Worcester*

14.20-14.40: Tim Tatton Brown. *Building on Robert Willis at Chichester Cathedral*

WILLIS, VAULTS AND DRAWING (Part 1)

14.50-15.10: Santiago Huerta. *Willis’s sources on gothic vault construction*

15.10-15.30: Antonio Becchi. *Drawing proofs: the kinematic gaze of Robert Willis*

15.30-15.45: Tea

WILLIS, VAULTS AND DRAWING (Part 2)

15.45-16.05: Javier Girón. *Willis’s “On Vaults of the Middle Ages”: some notes about his heuristic approach, his drawing and Viollet-le-Duc’s reception*

16.05-16.25: Nick Webb. *Digital re presentation of Willis’s work on medieval vaults*
WILLIS’S INFLUENCE

16.30-16.50: Martin Bressani and Aniel Guxholli. *Decorative versus Mechanical: A Comparative Study of Willis’s and Viollet-le-Duc’s Analysis of Gothic Construction*

16.50-17.10: Simona Talenti. *Willis’s reception in Italy and France (1835-1935)*

17.10-17.30: David Wendland. *Robert Willis and Germany: Gothic Revival and research on Mediaeval Architecture*

19.00 Drinks reception, Green Room, Old Court

19.30 Formal Dinner, Fellow’s Dining Room

**Saturday 17th September**

8.15-9.30 Breakfast Harvey Court

**Tour 1**

09.30 Meet Jesus College gate
09.30-10.30 Jesus College
10.30-11.00 Walk to Kings
11.00-11.45 Tour above Vaults of Kings College Chapel
11.45-12.30 Tour of Queens’ College
[Time to buy sandwiches]

**Tour 2**
[please buy sandwiches before tour]

10.30 Meet at Queens’ College, new Porters Lodge near Mathematical Bridge
10.30-11.30 Tour of Queens’
11.45-11.00 Tour above vaults of Kings College Chapel

**Both Tours**

13.15 Board bus to Ely behind Queens’ College
14.15 Tour of Ely Cathedral
17.00 leave Ely
17.45 Back on Cambridge.

*Please note lunch is not provided. Please bring your own pack lunch*