



# AABC CONFERENCE & AGM

Tuesday 06 October 2026, Maison Dieu

## Community & Civic Pride

### Programme

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 09:45 | Arrival and registration - Tea & Coffee available on arrival                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 10:00 | AGM (All welcome not just members) - optional                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 10:20 | Welcome                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 10:30 | Introduction to Civic Pride at Maison Dieu - Roger Walton                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10:50 | Working with Historic Civic Buildings - Tom Gibb                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 11:15 | Community Engagement - Martin Crowther                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 11:40 | Conserving William Burges' Lost Decorative Vision - Tom Organ                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 12:05 | Technical Challenges at Maison Dieu - Rena Pitsilli-Graham                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 12:30 | Lunch                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 14:00 | Fire Safety Measures - Tom Gibb & Steve Emery                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 14:30 | Delegates will be divided into groups for their tours. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maison Dieu - Mayor's Parlour and Roof (PPE Required)</li><li>• Maison Dieu - Internal and External</li><li>• Dover Walking Tour</li></ul> |
| 16:00 | Any Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 16:30 | Close                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

# The Tours

## Maison Dieu - Mayor's Parlour and Roof Tour

The tour will include special access to the Mayor's Parlour, visitors will have the opportunity to see some of the building's most significant and characterful spaces while understanding the techniques and challenges involved in their conservation. You will also have access to the roof with an opportunity to see the building and the surrounding townscape from above.

## Maison Dieu - Walking Tour

Join us for a guided walk through Dover's rich history, from the medieval Maison Dieu and St Edmund's Chapel to the remarkable Roman Painted House. Discover how pilgrimage, religion, community and Dover's role as a gateway have shaped the town over the centuries, before returning to the Maison Dieu.

## Maison Dieu - Internal and External Tour

Explore the conservation of Maison Dieu's remarkable historic interiors, including the distinctive decoration work of architect William Burges. Discover the conservation techniques used to repair and protect this Grade I Listed Building, including approaches to the repair of masonry, roofing and historic fabric.



# Our Speakers

## **Roger Walton - Former Strategic Director Dover District Council**

Having trained as a chartered civil engineer and gained experience working with both contractors and consulting engineers, Roger joined Dover District Council in 1993 to lead its engineering team. Over time his role expanded into senior strategic leadership, with responsibility for Planning, Asset Management, Waste Services, Regeneration & Growth, Dover Museum and Tourism. Roger played a central role in the reawakening of Maison Dieu, leading the project from the initial studies in 2014 to its completion in 2025

## **Tom Gibb – Haverstock**

Tom Gibb is a Conservation Architect and Partner at Haverstock, with over 15 years' experience working on the conservation and adaptation of historic buildings. He has collaborated with organisations including Historic England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Heritage Memorial Fund. Tom led the award-winning restoration of the Maison Dieu, which received the Civic Trust AABC Conservation Award and was short listed for the Architects' Journal Retrofit and Reuse Award. He has worked closely with local stakeholders and project partners to deliver a conservation scheme that places the Maison Dieu at the heart of Dover's community.

## **Martin Crowther - Engagement Officer, Maison Dieu**

Martin Crowther has worked at the Maison Dieu for more than five years, developing and delivering a wide-ranging community engagement programme inspired by the building's history and heritage. He has over 30 years' experience in the heritage sector, including senior roles at Canterbury Museums, Canterbury Cathedral, the National Maritime Museum and the Imperial War Museum. A specialist in creative, hands-on learning, Martin is passionate about connecting people with historic buildings, collections and stories, helping communities engage with and take pride in their local heritage.

## **Tom Organ - Arte Conservation Ltd**

Tom Organ ACR is an ICON Accredited Conservator-Restorer and Director of Arte Conservation Ltd. He began his career at the Canterbury Cathedral Wall Paintings Workshop in 1981, later becoming its Director before establishing Arte Conservation. With more than four decades of experience, Tom specialises in the conservation of historic wall paintings and decorative schemes in churches, cathedrals, civic buildings and country houses in the UK and abroad. He has lectured widely on conservation and led numerous award-winning projects, including the restoration of the remarkable William Burges decorative scheme at the Maison Dieu.

## **Rena Pitsilli-Graham - Rena Pitsilli- Graham Architects**

Rena Pitsilli-Graham is a specialist conservation architect with over 30 years' experience working with listed, at-risk and historic buildings. After specialising in building conservation early in her career, she founded Rena Pitsilli-Graham Architects in 2012. Her work combines a deep understanding of historic structures with a practical and innovative approach to conservation. Rena first became involved with the Maison Dieu in 2014, leading extensive research that contributed to the building's Grade I listing upgrade. Working alongside Haverstock, she helped develop and oversee the building's ambitious programme of repair, conservation and reuse.

## **Steve Emery - Heritage Fire Consultancy**

Steve Emery has more than 40 years' experience in fire safety for historic buildings and chairs the Institution of Fire Engineers' Heritage Buildings Special Interest Group. He has contributed to national guidance and research on fire safety in historic properties. Recent projects include surveys of National Trust Wales treasure houses and castles and overseeing remedial works through to completion. His clients include the Palace of Westminster, the National Trust, Norwich Castle, and heritage organisations across the Channel Islands and Scotland.