

# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER 2.0

Volume 2 No. 4

June 2019

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If you have not yet done so, please renew your membership in the Alumni Association now by going to our website at [vsaalumni.org](http://vsaalumni.org). The Alumni Association has an annual dues structure which is in addition to your membership in the VSA. **Membership in the Alumni Association is required for participation in Alumni Study Tours.** VSA membership does **not** include Alumni Association membership.

This issue of the **Newsletter** is focused on the recent Alumni Association Annual Meeting and Dinner held in connection with the 2019 VSA Study Tour of Philadelphia. Thanks to all those who were able to attend and participate in our Annual Meeting.

Please note that after June 24, there will be a new address for sending donations to the \$100,000 Buttrick Challenge. A revised flyer with the correct mailing address is included here. Thanks to all those who have donated so far to help us meet this challenge. Up to \$100,000 in total donations, large or small, will be matched dollar-for-dollar effectively doubling the impact of your donation. Your donation is needed to establish an endowment to ensure the Alumni Association's ability to continue to provide scholarships for the VSA Summer Schools in the years ahead. Please donate today.

Our thanks to **James Rusiello** for serving a Chair of our Social Media Committee, **Sibyl Groff** for serving as Chair of our Member Relations Committee, **Jim Buttrick** for serving as the Chair of our Finance and Fundraising Committee, **Travis Brock Kennedy** for serving as the Chair of the Nominating Committee, and **John Martine**, Director of the Alumni Study Tour Program. Their efforts help the Alumni Association to get and retain alumni members, to communicate with the alumni, and to establish a solid financial foundation to help support our organization's missions.

Also, please find attached the flyer for the 2020 VSA Summer Schools for your information and to share with any potential students you may know. Word of mouth is the best advertising for the Summer Schools!

Please submit information to share with other alumni to David Lamdin at [dalamdin@aol.com](mailto:dalamdin@aol.com)

Visit the Alumni Assoc's Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/vsaalumni1>

# Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools Draft Annual Meeting Notes May 24, 2019 Philadelphia, PA

(Notice of the AA Annual Mtg was sent to all members via the VSA Brochure and by an email and pmail notifications.)

Having established that a quorum existed with over 20 Alumni members present, the meeting opened at the home of **George Poulin and Keith Roeckle** with a presentation by **George Poulin** (London 2004) who talked about the history of their Civil War era home, its neighborhood, and the restoration.



George noted that their home was one in a series of four properties constructed in 1859 as part of a small speculative development in West Philadelphia. Prior to the Consolidation Act of 1854, West Philadelphia Borough (that portion of the City west of the Schuylkill River) was largely rural, with small villages such as Greenville and Hamilton Village interspersed with undeveloped farmland, stock yards, taverns, and country homes.

In 1858, the West Philadelphia Passenger Railroad opened along Market Street, connecting West Philadelphia with its downtown. Development quickly followed. Our neighborhood, now known as Powelton Village, was the earliest street car suburb to be laid out and developed. 3502 Hamilton was completed in 1860 and

would be a rented by a successful wool merchant for a few years before being sold to a wholesale dealer.



The 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia was underway just a mile up the road, bringing many visitors and prospective residents to the area. In 1882, the home was purchased by the Reverend Chauncey Giles, the Swedenborgian minister presiding over First New Jerusalem Church at 22nd and Chestnut (the church stills stands). By the time the Giles moved in, the neighborhood had become quite fashionable with many nearby homes being occupied by successful merchants, bankers, beer barons and even a railroad magnate.

George and Keith purchased the home in 2015 after living just a block away. The prior owners were well respected academics at the University of Pennsylvania, having owned the property since 1958. They had purchased the home from another Penn couple who had lived there since the 20's. Both families did little to modify the interior, other than bathroom upgrades and typical exterior maintenance.

Each of these families witnessed tremendous change in the neighborhood, including urban disinvestment, the rise of the counter culture movement, the expansion of nearby Drexel University and University of Pennsylvania, and the slow pace of gentrification over many decades.



*The Alumni Association meeting was held in the garden.*

3502 Hamilton is a lovely place to call home. It was constructed in the Italianate style clearly influenced by the writings of local architect Samuel Sloan (who designed some nearby homes, but likely not this house).



The house retains many of its original features, with the largest modifications occurring around 1900 through the addition of a 2nd story box bay window and some colonial revival features on the interior. Other architectural features include slate mantels, 10' high windows, an original rear staircase, and a lovely 2nd floor piazza reminiscent of homes in Charleston and Savannah.

The home is listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, and even though there is no intention to move, George and Keith feel as though they are just the temporary caretakers of this stately home. They have renovated one room at a time, living in the home throughout the whole process. While they are not finished (one never is with an old home!) all their renovations have been undertaken with respect of the past and the hope that the next occupants will appreciate their home as much as they have.

Many thanks to George and Keith for opening their beautiful home for our meeting and for the beautiful pictures.

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**Kevin Rose**, VSA President (Newport 2012) expressed his appreciation for the Alumni Association's consistent, significant, and long-standing support of the VSA and the Summer Schools. He noted that the VSA was still in the process of developing the new VSA website (<https://victoriansociety.org/>) and that plans were to work together with the Alumni Association to fully integrate the Alumni website with the VSA website.

The following Alumni Association Board members in attendance were introduced and thanked for their volunteer efforts to keep the Alumni Association's organization functioning: **Bob Chapman**, Vice-President (London 1999, Newport 2005, Chicago 2015); **Jeanne Solensky**, Correspondence Secretary (Newport 2007, London 2012); **Sara Durckas**, Membership Secretary (Newport 2016); **John Martine**, Director of the Alumni Study Tour Program (London 1979 and 2013, Newport 2007, Chicago 2016 and 2019); and **David Lamdin**, President (Newport 2015, London 2017, Chicago 2018). **Jim Buttrick** (Newport 1999 and London 2000) was also introduced and acknowledged for his very generous support of the Alumni Association by sponsoring the \$100,000 Buttrick Challenge grant.

Meeting Notes from the May 18, 2018 Alumni Association Annual Meeting were distributed. **Bob Chapman** made a motion to dispense with the reading of the Notes and accept the report. The motion was seconded by **Cindy Casey**. The motion was approved unanimously.

Membership Secretary **Sara Durkacs** reported as follows:

For the calendar year ending 12/31/2019, the Alumni Association raised the amount of its membership dues after nearly a decade. An “Early Bird Renewal” campaign appeal to current (2018) and lapsed (2000–2017) members was launched November 2018. Members were encouraged to renew by December 31 at the 2018 rate. The Early Bird deadline was then extended to January 15, 2019. Lapsed and current members received multiple direct mail and e-appeals.

<b>Level</b>	<b>2018 Dues</b>	<b>2019 Dues</b>
Young Professionals.....	\$25 .....	\$30 <i>35 years of age and younger</i>
Individual .....	\$45.....	\$55
Household .....	\$75 .....	\$100
Supporter* .....	\$100 .....	\$125 <i>* Members at this level and</i>
Sponsor* .....	\$250 .....	\$300 <i>above will be acknowledged</i>
Benefactor* .....	\$500 .....	\$600 <i>in our E-Newsletter &amp; Journal</i>

To date, there are 222 current member households of which 62% responded to the Early Bird Renewal Appeal (113 are at the Household level and above). The Association received 42 additional donations for specific scholarship funds from 34 donors as add-ons to the appeal. For the next renewal cycle, we will continue this best practice of appealing to our members before the year end.

**John Simonelli** made a motion to accept the Membership Secretary’s report. The motion was seconded by **Kevin Rose**; and the motion passed unanimously.

Social Media Committee Chair **James Russiello** submitted a written report as follows:

**Update on the "Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools 1" Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/vsaalumni>):**

The alumni Facebook page achieved very modest gains this year.

The alumni Facebook page posted relevant and interesting 19th century related news items. These posts averaged to just under 100 views, and the more popular posts (generally about RGW or UVA) had high engagement factors.

There were two paid posts (promotions) this past year (both \$20 privately paid).

One was a photo post honoring a longtime board member and had a high engagement rate (nearly 1,000), and the other linked to a Wall Street Journal

article and had a relatively low engagement rate. It is recommended that the VSA Summer School Administrator actively promote the alumni page as a venue to share and keep in contact with each summer school class and the alumni network at large.

Traditionally, the most significant period of gain in "likes" for the alumni page is the period between April and late May of each year, the period between acceptances and the program's start.

This year, there has been no noticeable uptick in "likes" possibly indicating that no additional notice was given, or that the smaller class sizes for all three schools may have migrated onto other social media platforms, like Instagram or Twitter. At present, the VSA Alumni shares an Instagram account with the national VSA (IG: VicSocAmerica); however, sharing this account with the national VSA is new this year and no new content has yet been posted.

Both Instagram and Facebook accounts would benefit from solicitations for current summer school class shareable photos and previous years' photos.

**Note: We have already acted on this report strongly urging the Summer Schools Directors to encourage students to post information about their Summer Schools experiences on the Alumni Facebook page.**

Acting Treasurer **David Lamdin** discussed the Alumni's Financial situation as of 12/31/2018 as described in the report which was previously distributed to all members with the Notice of the Meeting and which was previously published in our eNewsletter. In response to an inquiry from **John Simonelli**, it was noted that the 12/31/2018 balance of \$80,032.37 did not reflect the \$23,000 donation from the Alumni Association for 2019 Summer Schools scholarships.

**John Simonelli** made a motion to accept the Acting Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by **Bob Chapman**; and the motion passed unanimously.

President **David Lamdin** reported that:

1. The \$100,000 Buttrick Challenge Grant. The Alumni Board and the VSA Board approved the establishment of an AA Endowment Fund and that fundraising activities have included several electronic solicitations as well as postal mail letters.
2. The Alumni Board approved the concept of full integration of the Alumni

website with the VSA website and that the Alumni are in negotiations with the VSA to accomplish this.

3. In addition to the membership dues increase, The Alumni Board approved an increase in required donation fee for AA trips to \$400 after many, many years at the \$300 level.
4. The Alumni Board decided on a two-tiered approach to publications including publication of an annual *Journal* and periodic digital newsletters. Last fall's Alumni *Journal* was very, well received. However, the cost in terms of money and manpower was just overwhelming. At present, plans call for a suspension of the *Journal* this year. The digital newsletter has also been very well received. We will continue with periodic publication of this Newsletter this year.
5. The Alumni donated \$23,250 for 2019 VSA Summer Schools Scholarships. Scholarships are awarded in the names of Gavin Stamp, Gwen Kock, Paul Duchscherer, Sibyl Groff, John Martine, and Carole Chapman. In the future, we will have a Paul Duchscherer Scholarship endorsed by John Matrine and Sibyl Groff, and we will eliminate those two funds as separate funds. (NOTE: Subsequent to the meeting, it was decided that the Alumni Association would rename the Newport Fund as the Prof Richard Guy Wilson Scholarship for the Newport Summer School.) We are also working with the Summer School Committee on possible new ways to handle acknowledgements from scholarship recipients to donors to replace the traditional postcards which have been effectively used for many years.
6. **John Simonelli** noted that at the VSA 2019 Annual meeting, it was reported that 2019 Summer Schools enrollments were decreased from previous years and that an effort was being launched to restore enrollment levels. **Sallie Wadsworth** left a large bequest of \$58,000 to the VSA. There is a VSA Symposium on Kitchens and Dining in the Victorian Era this Veterans' Day weekend in Chicago. In May 2020, the VSA is planning a tour of Denver near the Memorial Day weekend and perhaps a Spring Tour to Cleveland in 2021.
7. A report on 2018 Alumni Activities was previously distributed to all members with the Notice of the Meeting and was previously published in our eNewsletter.

**David Vespa** made a motion to accept the President's report. The motion was seconded by **Jim Buttrick**; and the motion passed unanimously.

**John Martine** noted that he was working on an Alumni Tour of Lisbon, Portugal in the fall of 2020 with the possibility of another tour in 2021. Details to follow, but he noted that the Northern Ireland Alumni Tour of 2018 raised about \$13,000 for Summer Schools scholarships.

John then made a presentation on behalf of **Sibyl Groff**, Member Relations Committee Chair, who was not able to be present because of a recent eye surgery. John read from a very enthusiastic message from Sibyl concerning the \$100,000 Buttrick Challenge:

Dear Alumni,

To Red Nose day and giving. How appropriate that the Alumni are having their annual meeting today. Red Nose, a worldwide charity raises money to ameliorate homelessness by providing food and support to children.

This is timely as our caring alumnus, Jim Buttrick is giving the Alumni a challenge grant of \$100,000 so that there will be more available for scholarships, programs

The funds will establish an endowment fund from which a percentage will be available each year, where needed.

Most of you know Jim, who went to Newport 1999, London 2000 and many alumni study tours. Jim is involved with finance and is an architectural historian. His tours of Jamestown, Rhode Island are legendary.

**The Alumni must match his Challenge Grant!** Please advise how much you might pledge. The challenge continues to December 2020 so there is always time to think about and change your gift.

I, Sibyl, have been involved with the VSSS since 1978 and witnessed the recognition and development of our summer schools. As we know, many of our students and alumni have careers that are not that remunerative but challenging and educational. This fund is a testimony to the VSSS.

Kindly think about colleagues that you may have taken to one of the VSA lectures, tours or events. I have been pleasantly surprised to find that some of my non-Victorian friends contribute to the Alumni. Fellow students who are not members of the Alumni should be contacted.

Think about how much you have learned, the friends you have made, the private places you have seen and the joy this has brought to you. The Alumni of the VSSS is so important in my life. When I wrote my *Gothamtime* Book a few years ago everyone that helped me was from the VSA.

To the Victorious Victorians, Jim Buttrick and the Alumni!

Cheers,  
Sibyl 🍷

There being no new business to discuss, **John Simonelli** made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by **John McHugh**; the motion passed unanimously; and all adjourned to a delicious dinner.



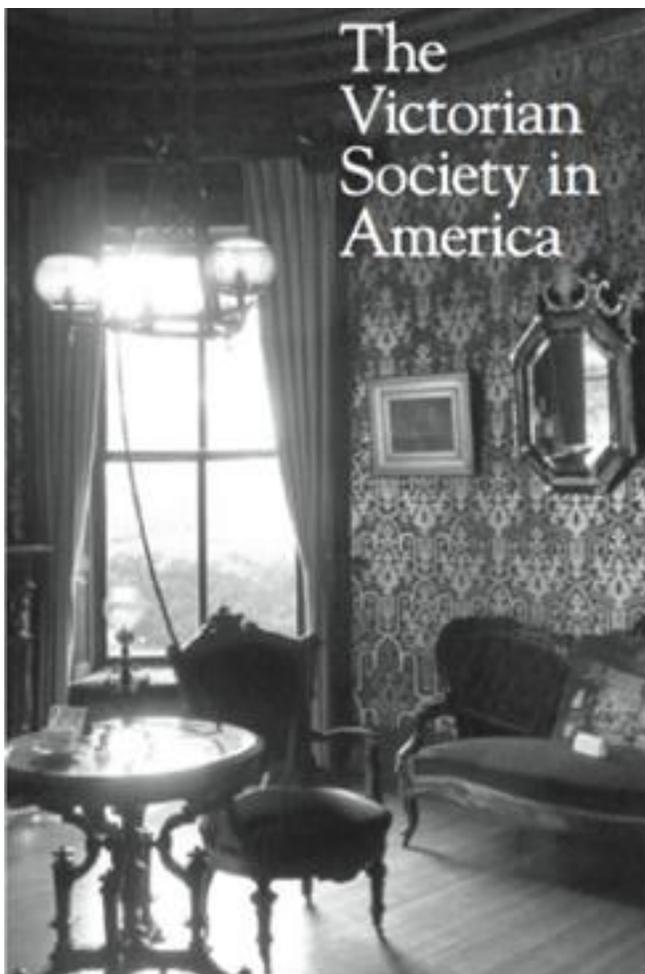
The 2019 VSA Philadelphia Study Tour group included many alumni.

# Call for Papers

The Fall 2019 issue of *Nineteenth Century*, published by the Victorian Society in America, will feature monuments, sculpture, and bas reliefs, along with their creators and commissioning agents. Co-editors **Warren Ashworth** (Newport 2009 and Chicago 2015) and **Laura A. Macaluso** (Newport 1999 and London 2017) are looking for essays addressing the contemporary context for American sculpture: including legacy, controversy, and recent scholarship.

If you, your colleagues and/or students have ideas for full-length essays (2,000-5,000 words with 6-12 illustrations) please be in touch by emailing the editors at [NineteenthCenturyMagazine@gmail.com](mailto:NineteenthCenturyMagazine@gmail.com). **Deadline for essays is July 15, 2019.**

## AN INVITATION TO JOIN



Since 1966, The **Victorian Society in America** has fostered an appreciation of this country's 19th century heritage through its preservation efforts, publications, and its Summer Schools in London, Newport, and Chicago. There are many outstanding benefits of a Victorian Society membership including supporting the Summer Schools, attending symposia, study weekends, and the annual meeting and tour in a location with a distinguished Victorian heritage, helping preserve historic structures, and receiving its scholarly publication *Nineteenth Century* and *The Victorian Quarterly* newsletter.

For more information or to join go to [www.victoriansociety.org](http://www.victoriansociety.org)

# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERS AND DONORS

The officers and board members of the Alumni Association give special thanks to those Alumni members at the Supporter level and above. Your generosity is appreciated!

## **BENEFACTOR** (\$500 and above)

Robert Chapman  
Hank Dunlop  
David Lamdin  
Jane & David Villa

## **SPONSORS** (\$250–\$300)

Louis Aubert  
William Ayres & Federico Suro  
Manya Fox  
Thammanoune Kannalikhram  
Darrell Lemke & Maryellen  
Trautman

## **SUPPORTERS** (\$100–\$125)

Laura Roscam Abbing  
Suzi Barbee  
Alexis Barr  
Ian & Margaret Berke  
Christopher Broadwell  
James Buttrick  
Sara Durkacs  
Steven Erisoty  
Robert Furhoff  
Sibyl Groff  
Stephen Haigh & Shelley Meagher  
Nancy Hays  
Mary Anne Hunting  
Sally Kinsey  
George & Jean Longest  
George McNeely  
James McPartlin & Elise Kelly  
Pauline Metcalf  
Shelley Miller & Joel Hoffman  
Edward Mohylowski  
Nancy Naeve  
Catherine Olasky  
Roger Reid  
Richard Reutlinger  
Donald & Elizabeth Roberts Jr.  
Max Sinsteden  
Kenneth Turino & Christopher  
Mathias  
Allan & Angela Vagner  
Frederic Vidal

Daniel Visnich & Linda Muir  
James & Marjorie White  
Marion Banks-Lawless  
David Blackburn  
Mark Brack  
Gray Brechin  
William & Patricia Eldredge  
Lamar Lentz  
Roger Scharmer  
Kenneth Snodgrass  
Kristina Wilson

## **PAUL DUCHSCHERER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Nancy & Fred Golden  
Sibyl Groff  
Adam Klafter  
Elizabeth Leckie  
Donald Merrill  
Richard Reutlinger  
Charles Robertson III  
Roger Scharmer  
Marilyn C. Scott  
Richard Tuck & Neale Grasham

## **SIBYL McCORMAC GROFF SCHOLARSHIP**

William & Patricia Eldredge  
Nancy & Fred Golden  
Elizabeth Leckie  
Donald Merrill  
Charles Robertson III  
Cynthia Sanford  
Roger Scharmer  
Joseph Svehlak

## **GWEN KOCH NEWPORT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Sibyl Groff  
Duane Myers  
Danae Peckler & Michael Spencer  
Marilyn C. Scott

## **JOHN MARTINE SCHOLARSHIP**

Charles & Sheila Donahue  
Nancy & Fred Golden  
Sibyl Groff  
Jan-Paul Malocsay  
John Martine AIA  
Donald Merrill  
Marilyn C. Scott

## **CHICAGO SCHOLARSHIP**

David Blackburn

## **LONDON SCHOLARSHIP**

Marion Banks-Lawless  
Laura Camerlengo  
David Lamdin  
Jeanne Solensky  
Jane & David Villa  
Susan Wagg  
Gertrude Wilmers

## **NEWPORT SCHOLARSHIP**

Mary Costabile  
Grant Quertermous  
Gretchen Redden  
Richard Guy Wilson

## **GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Jacob Albert  
Warren Ashworth  
Suzi Barbee  
Robert Chapman  
Hank Dunlop  
William & Patricia Eldredge  
Nancy & Fred Golden  
Shannon Grayson  
Elizabeth Leckie  
John McHugh & Janet Self  
Duane Myers  
Susan Robertson  
Kristine Steensma  
Sergei Troubetzkoy  
Jane & David Villa  
Samantha Wiley

*Contributor lists June 1, 2018 through June 13, 2019. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of our contributor lists, but errors may occur. Please contact Membership Secretary Sara Durkacs at (718) 499-8254 or at [membership@vsaalumni.org](mailto:membership@vsaalumni.org) with any errors or omissions.*

## Heritage Society

The Heritage Society of the Alumni Association was established to allow the Alumni Association to recognize those individuals who have made thoughtful provisions in their planned giving documents, wills, trust, and bequests. These provisions will help to ensure that the Alumni Association will continue to have the resources necessary to fulfill its missions in support of the VSA.

We are extremely grateful to the following members who so thoughtfully and generously included the Alumni Association in their wills or trusts. Their gifts will make a lasting difference to deserving scholars for years to come.

**The Bob and Carole Chapman Fund** very generously awarded a grant of \$10,000 to the Alumni Association Chapter in memory of **Carole Chapman**.

**Paul Duchscherer** very thoughtfully made provisions in his trust for a \$10,000 bequest to the Alumni Association as well as designating the Alumni Association as the beneficiary of all future royalties from his many books and other publications.

### **Darrell Lemke & Maryellen Trautman**

Including the Alumni Association in your estate plans is an effortless way to support the Schools. Please consider this sample language:

I give and devise to the Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools located in New Jersey, all (*or state percentage*) of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, to be used for its general support (*or for the support of a specific fund or program*).

If you are interested in and require further details about including the Alumni Association in your will or trust, please contact President David Lamdin at (703) 243-2350 or at [dalamdin@aol.com](mailto:dalamdin@aol.com).

## **\$100,000 Buttrick Challenge Grant**

The following individuals have generously made donations to help the Alumni Association meet the challenge grant from Jim Buttrick to create an Endowment Fund to support the VSA Summer Schools.

### **Donors**

Cindy Casey  
Robert Chapman and  
    Florence Sinofsky  
Hank Dunlop  
Nancy Golden  
Mary Anne Hunting  
David Lamdin  
Laura Macaluso  
John McHugh and  
    Janet Self  
Alessandra Merrill  
Phyllis Quinn  
Laura Parrish  
Robert Rettig  
Charles Robertson  
Richard Tuck  
Candace Volz  
Susan Wagg

### **Pledges**

Warren Ashworth  
Sara Durkacs  
Robert Esposito

## Victorian Society in America

The Alumni Association is extremely grateful to the following Victorian Society in America (VSA) donors, Victorian Society Chapters and others who so generously supported the Summer Schools through their very generous donations to The Victorian Society specifically for the Schools.

Robert G. Chapman

The VSA Washington DC  
Metro Chapter

John Simonelli  
Anne-Taylor Cahill  
David A. Lamdin  
Warren Ashworth

Felicia Fund  
Pauline C Metcalf

Nancy Golden  
Tina Strauss  
William Ayres  
William Eldredge

VSA Alumni Association

Judith Martorelli

VSA Metro NY Chapter

Sarah Lichtman

VSA Northern New  
Jersey Chapter

Decorative Arts Trust Exec. Dir Thurlow

VSA Ohio River Valley  
Chapter

*Contributor lists December 2018 through June 10, 2019. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of our contributor lists, but errors may occur. If you see an error, please report it to David Lamdin at [dalamdin@aol.com](mailto:dalamdin@aol.com)*

# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION of the VICTORIAN SOCIETY SUMMER SCHOOLS

## \$100,000 BUTTRICK CHALLENGE GRANT

The Alumni Association is very excited to announce the creation of an Endowment Fund to support the VSA Summer Schools. We received a very generous matching grant from Jim Buttrick (Newport 1999, London 2000). Jim will donate a total of up to \$100,000 to match dollar-for-dollar donations large or small to the Endowment Fund. These donations must be “new” money received before December 31, 2020. The Endowment Funds will be separately invested for the long term with a small percentage of the value of the fund used each year as needed for summer schools scholarships and operations.

As a supporter of the VSA, you understand the importance that the Schools have played in the lives of those fortunate enough to attend. Students consistently report on how the schools have enriched their lives with the connections made, the first-rate lecturers, and a broadened appreciation of the built environment. The Endowment Fund will provide an ongoing income stream to make the Summer Schools stronger and be our legacy for future Victorians. Please consider a generous contribution.

For additional information contact: David Lamdin 703-243-2350

[dalamdin@aol.com](mailto:dalamdin@aol.com)



*Prof. Richard Guy Wilson with students at the Newport Summer School*

Please complete and return the form below to help meet the Buttrick Challenge

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am including a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ payable to the “**Alumni Association**”. Memo: for the Buttrick Challenge Grant. **AND/OR**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Alumni Association for the Buttrick Challenge Grant to be paid before December 31, 2020.

Send to: **Alumni Association, VSA**  
**24 Wilkins Ave 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**  
**Haddonfield, NJ 08033**

*As a 501 c (3) organizations, donations to the Alumni Association are deductible as provided by law.*