



## THIS MONTH : BACK TO THE FUTURE

There was a fad in California in the 1970s for pet rocks. It didn't last particularly long but apparently made the advertising executive who hatched the idea a millionaire. The standard quip was that they were easy to look after but not much fun if you wanted to take them for a walk.

It will come as no surprise to you, I'm sure, to hear that rocks have been held in high esteem in Yorkshire for centuries. What's more, Yorkshiremen traditionally liked their rocks to move. To be honest it was far better to let them do so. But like so many traditional skills, that of allowing your rocks to move was gradually lost, with unhappy consequences.

The majority of pet rocks in Britain are kept in buildings. The incidence in parts of Yorkshire is very high. Buildings, as those of us in construction know, move. Indeed making provision for that movement is one of our key skills. But the trend away from the use of lime mortars towards greater use of cement mortars that occurred in the first half of the 20th century led to some sad mistreatment of many stone walls. Very often, cement based mortars that are too hard or strong have been used to repoint stone walls originally built with traditional lime mortars, with unfortunate consequences.

One 17 partner Stuart Beaumont specialises in conservation work and spends a lot of time dealing with those unfortunate consequences. Stuart is a great enthusiast for lime mortars. So much so that during March he arranged for Mark Womersley from Heckmondwike to give our office a lecture and practical demonstration on the

specification and use of lime mortars. Mark is a genuine expert on the subject and runs a specialist company supplying materials for historic building refurbishment and eco-friendly construction. I have heard Mark talk on lime mortars on several occasions and never fail to feel the superficiality of my own knowledge of the subject. Besides knowing his subject inside out, Mark is such an enthusiast you find yourself being entertained by what might, on paper, appear a rather dry subject.

The twin plagues of economic crisis and environmental degradation currently visiting us both point to and remind us of the logic of conserving our existing assets and helping them perform better. It may even make our built environment a nicer place to inhabit. Achieving that requires a combination of knowledge and enthusiasm if it is to succeed. Lime mortars are a good starting point.



On a related but ostensibly very different subject, when meeting someone for the first time the other day, I handed them one of my business cards. "That's nice" they said and remarked on the typography and layout. "Excellent, and it says what you do. It's amazing how many business cards I have where the individual's and his or her company name appear but with nothing to give me a clue what they do to help me remember later in what context I met them." I was proud to tell my new friend that my card had been designed by One 17 GC, our branding and graphics consultancy. The same goes for all our literature and our website.

When times are hard, a business, be it a one man band or a company with a multi-million pound turnover, cannot afford to get its marketing wrong. Every detail counts in ensuring you are distinguishable from your competition and that you communicate what you are about clearly and quickly.

It may start with a business card, move on to the brochure you leave with your contact and, if you are not careful, may end with your website that will inevitably be scrutinised if you are a serious possible business contact.

All of these, and all your other media, must communicate what you have to offer and the values you uphold, clearly and consistently. But what if you don't have any of these? One 17 GC has worked with numerous companies developing programmes for them. If you would like to see more of what it can do, log on to:

[www.one17design.com](http://www.one17design.com)