

Thursday Lecture Series at Eagle Hill

Lichens And Ancient Monuments with Mark Seaward

Thursday, May 26 - 7:30 pm

Dr. Mark Seaward, Honorary Research Professor of Environmental Biology, University of Bradford and Visiting Professor in Heritage Conservation, University of Lincoln will present a lecture about lichen colonization of ancient monuments, a topic which is interpreted variously by specialists in different disciplines, their attitudes inevitably colored by differing aesthetic and practical considerations. Ecologists, for example, regard the appearance of lichen mosaics as a natural aging process, finding the species diversity aesthetically pleasing. Conversely, those concerned with the conservation of cultural heritage view lichen encroachment very differently: inscriptions and fine detail may be obscured and, in some cases, damage may result from biodeterioration, its severity varying considerably according to the chemical properties of the stonework, micro-environmental conditions, and air pollution. Programs aimed at quantifying the actual role played by lichens must first determine which species are disfiguring but intrinsically harmless, and which cause actual physical damage; any treatment for their removal should be carefully selected, since although some methods may appear to be immediately effective, the effects are highly likely to be deleterious over a longer term. The speaker will consider the positive and negative aspects of lichen colonization as exemplified by his research based on worldwide studies.



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