



Rain was forming a pool on the lead roof of the Masonic Hall and a builder recommended that an inspection of the main cross beam (North to South) at the WM's end of the temple beam be exposed from inside for inspection. The beam (of Douglas Fir) was the original from when The Court House was built in 1859. These massive wooden beams were jointed by a cast iron insert (a flitch). It was found that the flitch had, over the year's egress of rain, rusted and cracked. The concrete slates that had been used before we bought the building in 1981 to cover the roof light (not seen from inside the temple as it had been covered with thin board and painted blue) and the cracked beam contributed to the roof dipping. Structural Engineers recommended that the beam be supported from the inside until a better inspection could be made and recommendations discussed with the Board of Directors, English Heritage and Rochford Council. Whilst this was going on most of the roof lead (Original) was stolen and rain caused more damage. Scaffolding was erected and a 'temporary' corrugated iron was put over the complete roof.

Structural Engineers have recommended, with English Heritage and Rochford Council approval, that the roof (and therefore the roof light) be removed, a Reinforced Steel Joist (RSJ) be used to replace it. An approved lead substitute will be used to cover the roof, when the work is completed. An ad hoc building committee comprising, Derek Childs, Bill Knapp and Alan Harvey was formed to liaise with the various people involved in the planning and reconstruction work. The roof light will be replaced by a different structure and fully reinforced and insulated. 3 estimates were sought for the work and the least costly was chosen. The work started early in July and will be completed by the start of the next Masonic 'season'. RMH will be borrowing some but not all funds from the Essex Provincial Building Fund. It is not anticipated that there will be any increase to Members.

It is hoped that pictures of the progress will be taken and put on this web page of the RMH site.

Currently :- 'Cracked' is a photo of the part of the flitch that was rusted and cracked, Being about 12 inches in depth there was only about 2 inches remaining.

D Childs and T Delf shows the Hall Secretary Derek Childs & approved builder Terry Delf standing on the temporary platform erected in the temple. They are standing in the former roof light area, which is now open to the sky but covered by the temporary corrugated iron roof. (Not seen in the photo)

Facing WM, shows the scaffolding erected in the Main Temple which is holding up the temporary platform seen earlier on which D Childs & T Delf are standing. Roof Light has gone, taken before the temporary platform and Temple scaffolding were erected

Rotted Beam. This shows the beam, which had to be cut into pieces to go into the shute from the roof. Although apparently looking good, the rotten part could be crumbled with fingers. Rotted roof planks are also seen.

[Temple from SE) is another view of the Temple Scaffolding

These pictures were taken by Terry Delf. Since then the 2 RSJ's have been inserted and now boarded and plastered