



Welcome to **April's** email bulletin. This month our topic is **roofs**. You can also view an illustrated version of this bulletin [online](#). If you have a subject that you would like us to cover in a future bulletin let us know by emailing the team at info@spabfim.org.uk.

Things to think about...

April is a good time to think about your roofs, as neglect of a faulty roof will quickly lead to damage in other building elements. By the time that telltale clues such as drips or patches of staining become visible on the inside, considerable harm may already have occurred. Also, the location of internal damp patches will not always provide a useful indication of where the roof failure is located, as water can travel a considerable distance from the point of ingress before it is seen.

Things to do...

Clay tiles, natural slate and stone: Check your roofs for frost, snow and wind damage. Not all colour changes, minor cracks or delamination (flaking) mean that the roof is in poor repair, but debris on the ground from broken slates and tiles might indicate a problem. Have dislodged or missing slates and tiles reinstated before damage occurs to roof timbers or ceilings. This is a straightforward task but will require a contractor who has the appropriate equipment to allow safe access to the roof slope.

Ridges and hips: Ridge and hip tiles provide protection to the vulnerable areas where different roof slopes meet. They can be dislodged by high winds so you should check for missing sections, which should be replaced without delay. Ridge and hip tiles are often pointed with mortar to provide further weather protection. This mortar will eventually fail and drop out due to the exposed location. Look out for areas of missing pointing and seek guidance on their repair, as water will quickly penetrate any gaps.

Sheet metal roofing: Flat roofs and roof gutters should have a slight fall to allow water to drain away. Check for splits and cracks in areas of flat or sloping sheet roofing as these will let in water even if the defect is only small. Splits and pinholes in lead can usually be repaired by 'burning in' a new piece of lead but this type of work requires an experienced contractor, who will take the necessary fire precautions. Mastic or repair tapes can be used as an emergency measure to prevent water seeping through cracks and splits but these are only appropriate as a short-term solution.

Flashings: Some of the most vulnerable parts of the building can be found where one element of the building meets another i.e. where a vent pipe penetrates through a roof or where the roof meets the wall. These junctions will often have lead or zinc 'flashings' to protect the joint from the weather. Inspect these flashings to check that they are in good condition, without holes or

splits. You should also make sure that they are securely fixed. Alternatively, the junction may be protected with a mortar 'fillet' combined with lead 'soakers' underneath the slates or tiles. These should be checked for signs of decay; if the mortar is loose or missing it will need to be repaired.

Lastly, remember to clear any early spring blossom fall, leaves and other debris from gutters and rainwater pipes regularly. Even a small quantity of leaf matter can be enough to cause a blockage and allow water to become trapped.

Further information

- [SPAB Technical Q&A 15 : Roof Maintenance](#)
- [SPAB Technical Q&A 6 : True Slate Roofing](#)
- [SPAB Technical Q&A 9 : Clay Pantiles](#)
- [SPAB Technical Q&A 24 : Clay Plain Tiles](#)

Have you seen the Little Red Book?

Last summer, English Heritage launched its [Caring for Places of Worship](#) campaign. With the help of *Ecclesiastical Insurance*, it sent copies of a free booklet to more than 30,000 places of worship all over England. The booklets, which are A5 size, bright red and contain a DVD, were mostly sent to the people who deal with insuring their local church, chapel or other place of worship. These people were asked to share the booklet with their PCC or congregation. So, if you haven't seen a copy please contact *English Heritage Customer Services* to be sent another. It could make all the difference to how you look after and use your own building - 28% of those who've read the booklet said they'd already made or planned new initiatives because of the ideas they read about and others are working towards making bigger changes.

- Tel: 0870 3331181
- Email: customers@english-heritage.org.uk
- Download: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/caring-for-places-of-worship/>

Need more help?

If you have any questions about maintenance or repair issues contact our [Technical Helpline](#) for advice and guidance. This service is normally available on **Fridays** between **9.30am and 3.30pm** on **0207 456 0916**. Alternatively you can mail your questions to advice@spabfm.org.uk. Copies of the SPAB's range of Technical Pamphlets and Information Sheets are available to purchase from our [online bookshop](#).

Sara Crofts Faith in Maintenance Project Director

Stave off decay by daily care ~ William Morris 1877

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