



# NATIONAL SOCIETY OF MASTER THATCHERS LIMITED

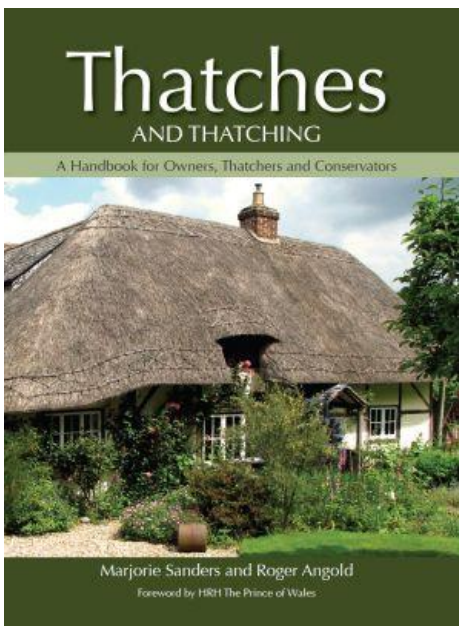
## THATCHES AND THATCHING:

### A handbook for owners, thatchers and conservators

By Marjorie Sanders and Roger Angold.

Foreword by HRH The Prince of Wales

After three years in the writing THATCHES AND THATCHING is finally published. It is available from bookshops, Amazon and the publishers.



The current generation of thatch owners has high expectations for the longevity and appearance of thatch and these are not always realistic. It is essential to understand thatch, and to manage expectations in providing an explanation of how this organic material behaves without giving the impression that thatch owners face a string of problems. A renaissance in thatch popularity has led to an increase in the number of thatched buildings on new developments. Attention to good design provides an opportunity for modern craftsmen to put their own mark along the thatching time-line and to manage the risks associated with fire.

The book takes account of the heritage encapsulated in the United Kingdom's thatched roofs and is concerned to maintain it in a sensitive and sustainable way. Its focus is on both the pleasures and the responsibilities of living with and maintaining a thatched roof. The intention is to showcase the industry's response and achievements in bringing the craft into the twenty first century. Growers of straw and water reed are introducing innovations for

efficient harvesting and preparing raw materials for thatching. This is a necessary strategy to keep production economics competitive against a background of increasing pressures on land use for food production, bio-fuels and other specialist crops. Changing climatic conditions are affecting both the growing of thatching materials and their performance on the roof.

Preventing thatch fires is the biggest single challenge facing the survival of thatch. Even though the causes of fires in thatched properties are well researched and publicised the number of devastating fires in thatched homes, most of them listed, continues to increase. There are two modern practices, which, if stopped would significantly reduce the number of thatch fires. The combination of the regular use of wood burning stoves coupled with the addition of a new thatch layers creating a very deep thatch is a major cause of thatch fires in straw thatch.

For the past twenty-five years the authors have been active in both academic and practical research into the determinants of the life of thatch, which include fire. They provide independent advice to owners, architects, surveyors, conservation officers and local fire and rescue services in addition to providing consultation services to the National Society of Master Thatchers Limited on technical issues associated with thatch.

This is a clear, well-written handbook providing practical guidance for owners, thatchers and conservators of thatch.

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