



SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSTRATION



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From the High Chair

Our recent meeting at Liverpool provided several good reasons why Allied members should attend. Following a superb presentation by the Liverpool based Company, UNIFORM, we were entertained by Jim Mann & Joe Robson who both demonstrated their computer skills to an awesome degree.

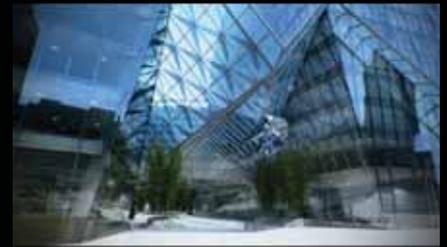
At the beginning of the meeting I was asked by individual Allied members as to why they had not been elected into the Society as full members. I firmly believe that the aforementioned demonstrations comprehensively answered their concerns.

Jim showed how many hundreds of hours of layer creation went into a seemingly simple task of providing virtual backgrounds for the otherwise cramped and stark interiors of TV News broadcast studios. He took us through the process of creating a vast, populated areas which can be seen on our TV screens for mere seconds at a time.

Joe gave a short, succinct presentation of some recent projects he has been involved with. He screened the Artwork that he created for the proposed refurbishment of the EUSTON ARCH and also a series to illustrate the SHARD which is to be the tallest building in Europe. All of Joe's images were a million miles from the standard "Out-of-the-box" offerings from CGI software and demonstrated the skills necessary to be elected a Member of our Society. See Joe's images at www.shardlondonbridge.com

I also urge you to visit the web site of UNIFORM at www.uniform.net. Click on the Crystal video presentation and be amazed. The above image is a still from the video.

Don Coe, Chairman SAI.



New Fellows & New Members



New Fellow Joe Robson is an architectural illustrator who trained originally as an architect and traditional illustrator before beginning a career in 3D visualisation at CASA, building the virtual model of Bath. Since then he has worked with some of the world's most respected architects, including Herzog & de Meuron, Renzo Piano, Richard Rogers, Fosters, and Grimshaw, and numerous notable Stirling Prize nominees. A number of his personal projects have been exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition over the last decade. An elected council member of the Society of Architectural Illustration, he also lectures at the London School of Economics and Bath University at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as internationally. Currently he runs his own practice, AVR London, specialising in architectural illustration, verification and research.



New Fellow Donna Scott I have been self-employed as a freelance architectural illustrator for 5 years. Previously having graduated with a first class honours degree in General Illustration from Swansea and then working as an illustrator for a kitchen and conservatory company. I work from home in King's Lynn, Norfolk and receive the majority of my business from small new build developments and barn conversions in my local area. I joined the SAI three years ago hoping to meet other people doing similar work and share skills, experiences and business advice. Since then my turnover has more than doubled and I have gained lots of new business from the 'Find An Illustrator' facility on the website as well as a wealth of knowledge and advice from other members. I particularly enjoy attending the meetings and even managed to earn one of my largest commissions to date directly from a presentation I did at Leeds last year! Thanks for all your help SAI.



New Member Mark Wearne I graduated from Trent Polytechnic (Nottingham) in 1979 with a Diploma with honours in Interior Design before the course was given Degree status. In 25 years as a freelance visual artist I have illustrated a wide range of architectural and interior projects including Saudi palaces, town centre masterplans, lingerie shops, aircraft interiors and Tring market. I started using watercolour then airbrush then pastels and markers and just recently I have started scanning my drawings into my Mac and rendering in Photoshop. Preventing work from looking too slick can be a problem but otherwise this must be the ultimate versatile and flexible medium.



New Member Neil Pearson is an illustrator specialising in watercolour, pencil & marker visuals. He proves that pre-constructional perspectives, whether for marketing purpose or to confirm that a project will fulfill expectations, can bring architectural plans or interior design concepts to life. Based in his studio overlooking the North York Moors, Neil is also well known for his wicked flair for caricature.

Members Profile

For each newsletter a member will be chosen at random to give a resume of their work and life with samples of work. Our second is from Nigel Gilbert you may be the next!

I'll come clean from the outset: Unlike David who so admirably started this series, I'm an old git. But stay, gentle SAI reader, this is no tale of faded smocks, dusty bow-ties and warped T squares. My illustrations began as a spin-off from being an architect. My design sketches were noticed and generous colleagues 'spread the word' when I struck out on my own nearly 30 years ago. A further string was added to my bow with a decade of design teaching at both Liverpool and Manchester University Schools of Architecture. Contact with such a wealth of talent provided the stimulus to write a series of self-illustrated articles that I was fortunate to have published in 'World Architecture' - courtesy of the then editor, the renowned writer and critic Martin Pawley.

My best commissioned work always begins with sketches made by hand directly on site. This is 'two eyes' rather than the single eye of a camera lens which does alter a scene whilst holding up its own accuracy for admiration. So I, in turn, hold up my hands and admit that I alter the computer generated set-ups that I am sometimes given to work from. (Mr President, I have a sudden intuition that profile 3 is just going to have to come from a 'cgi' member) All of this probably just reflects a personal judgement that my drawing skills are stronger than my self-taught watercolour technique. I like my washes to be very wet and this always, mirrors my state of mind during the process. Calm + relaxed = good but anxious+ stressed = !!!! Above all I think it is the design of the image that counts not just the design in the image.

There is precious little investment in development or infrastructure works here in N Wales and, to me, new enterprise always looks chronically undercapitalised in comparison to 'big city' precedents. How long the vital tourist trade can continue on bulk coach parties of the elderly and 'turkey and tinsel' Christmas breaks is an open question. The 'Queen' resort of this coast is in need of a radical rethink. I remain mystified that, in an area classed as among the poorest in Europe, site hoardings never announce funding contributions from the EC- you know, the ones we see everywhere on our continental travels. Still it is very beautiful here and I try to get out along one or other of the goat tracks close by every day.

With little arriving on my doorstep, I rely on a significant proportion of new work coming through my website and of course referrals via the Society site which I value highly. I am also a member of the American Society whose contact I enjoy- especially after I received an 'Award for Excellence' last year! I for one would support a hike in subscription to US levels to expand the scope of the SAI website -member's area with blog, direct updating of individual details/samples in a personal gallery, commission notice boards - and a drive to raise the profile of our Society: the Americans seem to enjoy a status and command a level of fees that we (!) do not.

Earlier this week I got a letter confirming that one of the biggest developer/builders in the region has been put into administration. So, it does look like rocky times ahead but so long as securing planning permissions remains so problematic and government investment to revive the construction industry stays on the Treasury books, our collective abilities to propose and advertise 'what could be' should remain in demand. Projects need to be moving now to have any effect during the next critical 2 years. (I'm just the Illustrators' Robert Peston really!) So, on to refining my budding Photoshop colour rendering skills and to uploading the results on to YouTube.

Wishing you all a rewarding and fruitful 2009

Nigel Gilbert

No 2 Nigel Gilbert in Llandudno



The Big Draw 2008

St Pancras Station - 11 October 2008

The Big Draw launch event at St Pancras London proved to be yet another successful occasion and the Society was well represented by yours truly; Keith Hornblower and David Birkett (making a surprise appearance!). The new SAI display stand was well received and positioned in the station for maximum publicity (thanks to David and Keith.)

Gilbert Scott's Gothic masterpiece has undergone a wonderful renovation and we were lucky enough to have the architect, Alastair Lansley, with us during the morning to give a talk on this. Alastair is a survivor of the old British Rail architect department, where he worked on the rebuilding in the 1980s of Liverpool Street station. There too a grimy, unloved, workaday building was stripped back to reveal a Victorian gem, with glass roofs and decorative cast-iron columns. At St Pancras Lansley and his team have been able to keep the main concourse free of clutter, tucking most of the retail space away downstairs in the "undercroft" below the platforms, along with all the Eurostar check-in facilities and departure lounge.

Now St Pancras is being promoted as a trendy destination in its own right. We are promised the longest champagne bar in Europe, a regular farmer's market and upmarket shopping. And, fittingly, just next to the champagne bar is a memorial to the man without whom St Pancras would long ago have vanished - a statue of John Betjeman, gazing up at that magnificent roof. There is no question that the new St Pancras is an impressive gateway to the Continent.

The day started with an introductory "pep talk" and briefing from Trevor Flynn of Drawing at Work, an organisation which promotes drawing to architects and engineers. This was followed by intense drawing activities inside and outside the station. Fortunately the weather was kind and this encouraged a good turnout from those who came specifically to draw as well as unwary commuters who were caught up in the Big Draw web! Children as young as 2 or 3 were joined by OAPs to experience the atmosphere of the location - at one stage I found myself drawing alongside an elderly gentleman who was born "just round the corner" and still lives there! He was full of anecdotes and before leaving asked me to take a photo of him drawing. When I enquired as to the reason for this he told me that it was to show his wife as she wouldn't believe that he had done such an accomplished drawing!

Throughout the day there were regular drawing tours of the station by student and young architects which were well attended. As a result of our involvement with the Big Draw Keith and I were invited by the Campaign for Drawing, the organisers, to attend a professional development day on Friday 7 November at the Royal Academy of Engineering in London. The day was sponsored by The Ove Arup Foundation and included delegates and speakers from architectural, landscape architecture and engineering backgrounds and proved a most rewarding day. The outcomes of workshops held during the afternoon will be used as the basis for a new publication dealing with the topic of Drawing: a tool for design. The society hope to distribute these to members once published - watch this space.

Pete Jarvis FSAI

www.thebigdraw.org.uk



The SAI Banner at The Big Draw in St Pancras Station

Made for the 2008 Big Draw the new banner is shown alongside Architect of the rejuvenated St Pancras Station during his address to a group of the Event's participants (Page 5). This is available for your free use if you need it at an Event that will give you more visibility.

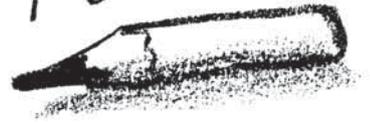
The Banner rolls up into a box with bag and is posted to your address or venue.

Please give about 4 week's notice
Return postage will be enclosed.

Call David Birkett **01491 825457** or
e-mail davidbirkett@btconnect.com

The Big Draw 2008

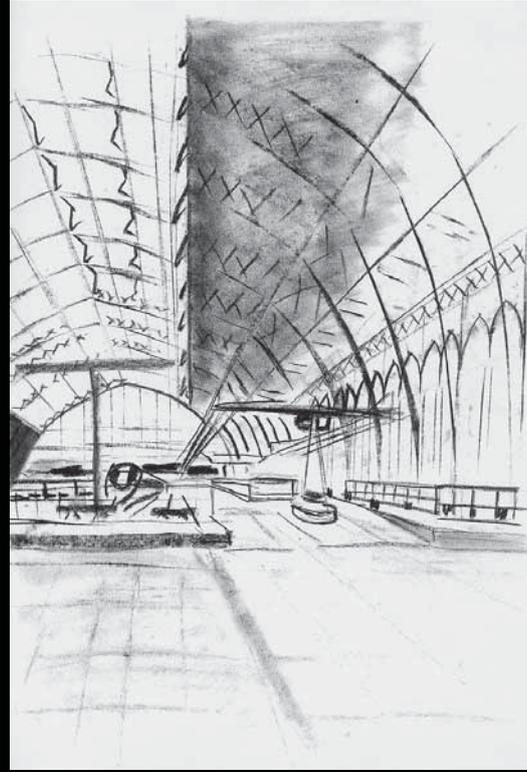
The Campaign
for Drawing



www.campaignfordrawing.org



Zofia Bogdan



An Irish Question?

As a result of more and more Japanese travelling abroad and returning with rich impressions to replant in Nippon a fascinating and diverse array of tiny family shops lightly peppers the length of Japan.

One such, which happens to be just outside the main entrance to Osaka Prefecture University where I teach on Fridays, is an easily missed tiny "English" tea shop called Sikkim with sundry nostalgic English emporium "antiques" hanging on its interior walls and perched precariously on its mini shelves. It's become a recent habit of mine to pop over at lunch time for a chat with, Anne, an English colleague at the university, over a flavourful cup of Jasmine tea.

Last Friday I found myself alone there. Anne was apparently off with a cold. Waiting for my hot beverage to arrive on the only empty table in the tiny room for 10-12 people huddled up close together I couldn't help but notice the three full-size table mats covering a fair portion of the rather small table surface. Each had an illustration of "Irish Pubs" by O'Shea. Armed only with my mobile phone to take pictures on Uni days these are the ones I managed of the mats, aided by a little un"distort" in Photoshop.

A Google search on the title of the table mat series "Irish Pubs" by OShea, just brought up a list of countless pubs owned by various O'Sheas... no illustrator or artist of same. I had thought I'd try to make contact and invite him to submit some work to join us.

Wonder if anyone a bit closer to the Emerald Isle might know anything of him or be able to locate him -- assuming he's still alive.

SAI member Chris. Lock FSAI, who lives and works in Osaka.



Summer time and the living is easy

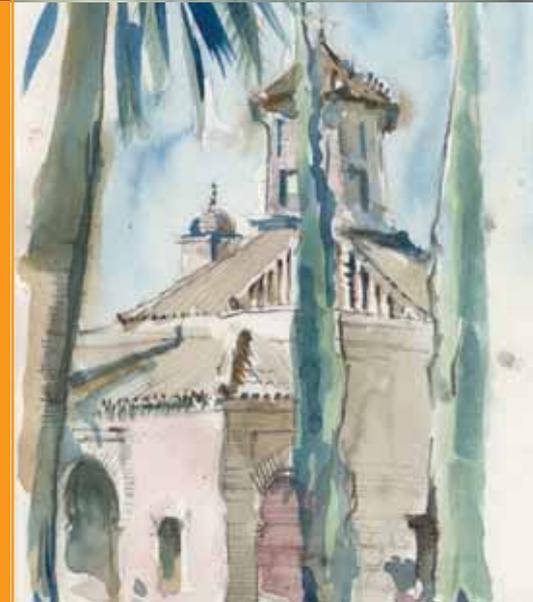
To cheer the cold of Winter a fellow member has sent a letter and some drawings of warm weather to us. Inspired with the warmth and the thoughts of the SAI, these arrived on Don's desk. Thank you, Robert Eyles. With the credit crunch these may be the answer to next Summer's holiday pinned to the side of your caravan in Skegness. Robert said:

Dear Heather,

I have attached some watercolour sketches that I did in Spain during the last summer holiday. The subjects are not particularly exciting but I was quite pleased with the results and if the society has space to fill in the future newsletter then perhaps 1 or more could be considered. On a separate issue and one for the committee, I haven't been able to attend a society meeting since Cheltenham, this is because the meetings tend to clash with school holidays. I appreciate holidays vary across the country, but would it be possible to consider moving them by a week or two?

Yours sincerely

Robert Eyle, MSAI Oxford



The Presidents Progress

If this size of newsletter is too long, big, overbearing or just an ego trip for the SAI still try and read it, enjoy it. This is a bumper issue I admit but it reflects what is going on. Three months on from the last one we have had a successful gathering at Liverpool and have dusted off the cobwebs of our communications with the new look for this bugle. As Don Coe has written elsewhere, this effort also needs your input too and make sure you are fully and properly connected to the Society's website so it can work for you. My recent forays into the website to check what members do, I have found, for example, an array of out of date e-mail addresses and websites that do not connect properly. If I cannot get through, what chance has your potential clients?

Slowly our advertising is spreading as seen with the advert as illustrated elsewhere that is going into the RIBA 2009 Directory of Chartered Practices due for publication early next year. The ACA (Association of Consultant Architects) have invited us to continue our column in their Newsletter.

My next port of call is the Institute of Historic Building Conservationists where I hope to recruit Architectural Illustrators who specialise in Historic Buildings, thus, maybe, creating a new category. I am aware we already have members who do this form of illustration but it will extend into measured drawing and building recording. Maybe we can develop a connection with the RIBA Drawings Collection through this arm.

A Spring offensive will be launched on the architectural photographers where our numbers have dwindled but seem to be seeing a renaissance. Alongside this I am hoping to work with a copywriter to display our wares in the Building Design, RIBA Journal and other relevant professional journals through articles about the Society.

The next Newsletter will be in the Spring but please earmark now the AGM to be held in London in late April, at the RIBA, Lutyens Room on Saturday April 25th starting at 10.00. More details of that and the pilot Summer School will also emerge. I have every wish to keep the Society fun to be part of, but also be seen as continuing and established credible source of skills for reference by the Building Professionals. This is, I believe, the ethos of the founder Eric Monk which needs to be kept alive. Please support our initiatives and keep in touch; remember you may be the next target for the "letter from" series - I can assure you the choice is at random - the element of surprise is great to hear.

Finally enjoy the approaching festive season and be inspired for the New Year.

David Birkett FSAI President

I'm Appealing... for all of you to log on to our web site at www.sai.org.uk and to check your contact details. Particularly those that appear on your folio page. We are still receiving complaints from your prospective clients that, on trying to contact you via the telephone number or email address which appears next to your name on the site, are being advised that, "the number you are dialling is unobtainable, please check the number and try again" or "This URL does not exist" As well as you missing out on a potential commission it reflects on the Society in a negative manner, so... PLEASE CHECK YOUR CONTACT DETAILS (Unless, of course you wish to remain invisible!)

Thank you.

Don Coe, chairman, SAI

The SAI & Rotary International

For the last two years, we have reported on our involvement with the Rotary Club of Bungay in Suffolk, sponsoring a prize for illustration work executed in connection with the end of year work at Bungay Sixth Form College.

This, as the reader may be aware, after the next and last year of awards is to be expanded into Young Illustrator of the Year, or some such competition. It transpires Rotary already have a programme for young designers and to set up our idea may exhaust our Society in the setup costs.

All is not lost, the offer of a prize, if appropriate is to be offered nationally through this Scheme. More news in the Spring edition.

Still on the hunt for a Treasurer's replacement.

Offers of help have been received but in case these all fail due to reasons beyond our control, please let us know if you are interested and request a job description from;

davidbirkett@btconnect.com

It may wet your palates. The current treasurer, a simple soul, claims that it takes no more than three hours a month, if that, plus attendance at the AGM.

David Birkett leaves the post at the AGM in April at the latest (our financial year ends in February 2009).

Liverpool Report

John Pumfrey reports on presentations in Liverpool at the Autumn Meeting.

The star performer at the Liverpool gathering was Andy Gilbert, senior designer from Uniform – a “cutting edge” visualisation team with their offices in the city. They are young and multi-disciplinary within the computer generated image field and, via expertise in digital design, graphics, film and video, take reality into the world of the surreal.

After showing a wide variety of projects ranging from conventional architectural perspectives to 3-D walk-through presentations their latest commission was projected. Their client had given them a free hand with style and content and “CRYSTAL” was the outcome. To quote their own summary: “The viewer is taken on a journey through reflection, refraction and light as the transient crystals imitate, investigate and discover the shapes and visual forms that create the fabric of the city and the Trinity buildings”.

If you want to watch some of this amazing animation visit Uniform.net and go via; **projects > film > crystal > videos > crystal**. You will then zoom over the Lloyds building, past the Gherkin, and glide through every form of glass architecture with the flying crystal... through atria, malls, plazas and offices.

Our second presentation was by Jim Mann who took us through a commission for providing background to News Readers on television. He explained that whilst the viewer sees Huw and Mary sitting at their desk in a busy news room humming with activity and many desks with glowing computer screens they are, in fact, sitting in front of a blank blue/green wall and everything else is a figment of Jim’s imagination and computer wizardry. Whilst I do not know how the busy scene is projected onto that wall (and this is probably a TV trick rather than Jim’s) thanks to his amazing presentation I now know that layer upon layer of digitally created images were generated to give the impression of a double-height office space with lifts rising through glazed shafts, reporters scurrying along open mezzanines and dozens of reporters typing at their workstations.

Finally Joe Robson brought us up to date with his visualisations. This was also by means of laptop and projector and this facility will be present at all future meetings.

It is not only a means of showing CGI’s, of course, since scanned (or photographed) images collected as PowerPoint show can be projected, too.

If any member wishes to prepare such a presentation for future meetings please rehearse and time it and let your Chairman know the details.



The Flying Crystal



News Readers Background



Joe Robson's Image of The Shard



The SAI gathering



David Birkett Addressing the SAI Meeting



Le Corbusier Exhibition

Le Corbusier
THE ART OF ARCHITECTURE
2.10.08 - 18.1.09 THE CRYPT, LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL

RIBA 

Ref: www.architecture.com/lecorbusier
RIBA Journal/ September 2008

Visited on Saturday 25th October by SAI Members.

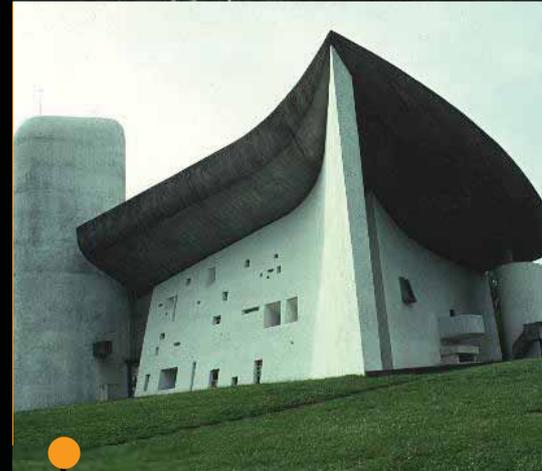
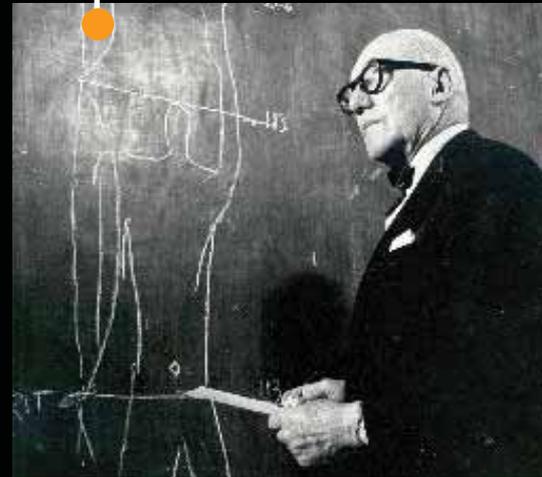
The exhibition is being held in the Edward Lutyens crypt of the Liverpool Metropolitan Catholic Cathedral and is running until 18th January, when it is moving to the Barbican Centre in London. The crypt windows have been sealed (without interfering with the original structure) to house the exhibition and yet retain the character of the building. This is an excellent exhibition giving a good overall view of his work.

There is a large display of models (mainly made with close grained timber and painted with white acrylic paint). One model showed how the Unite at Marseilles had scissor cross over flats to give occupants 2 storey living spaces and vision either side of the building.

Another was of Chandigarh, (the complete town designed by Corbusier) showing how he admired Lutyens New Delhi Viceroy's house and used the same proportions as the Lutyens classical design. A model of Ronchamp showed Corbusier's use of light, sculptural form and abstract punch aesthetic. There was also a model displayed of his only recently completed building of the Eglise Saint-Pierre Firminy in the Loire Valley, 53 years after its conception. It is now used as an art gallery to display Le Corbusier's work and that of his contemporaries. The conical roof has square and circular openings painted in primary colours and the outside has ledges to direct rainwater with future weathering patterns in mind. Also displayed were Corbusier's painting, films, sketches, furniture, sculpture and vintage prints.

There was a large colourful enamel painting taken from his office. The exhibition was admired by those who went and ended with a cunning route back to the car park, without getting too wet!

Tony Duckett, MSAI Henley on Thames.



Our Face With Advertising

This advert will appear in the RIBA Directory of Chartered Architects Practices 2009 due to be published early in 2009.

Please let Heather Coe know if you obtain any commission through its presence so that we can judge whether or not to continue it in the future. Next year I am hoping to get some free editorial too.

Can you use this advert to promote the SAI, hence yourself?
Please let us know.



Ref: www.architecture.com/lecorbusier
RIBA Journal/ September 2008

Panoramic Patron

There were three reasons for me suggesting Liverpool as the venue for this year's autumn meeting: firstly, it's the 2008 European Capital of Culture; secondly, the major Corbusier offering was in the crypt of the RC Cathedral; but thirdly – leading on from the first reason and, for us, more pertinent – the work of our Patron, Ben Johnson, was on display at the Walker Art Gallery; the first time his World Panorama Series has been exhibited in total, from the Chicago Rookery and the Paris Louvre to the huge panoramas of Hong Kong, Jerusalem and Zurich, culminating in the commissioned three year project by Ben and his team of seven, the enormous LIVERPOOL CITYSCAPE 2008.

Some of our members have experienced the trauma of demonstrating their expertise and techniques to fellow members. Ben, too, was kind enough to present an excellent talk at one of our meetings, principally about the Hong Kong project; but earlier this year – for six weeks from late January – he continued his work on the Liverpool Cityscape in front of a large, questioning audience, where his calm patience and genuine enthusiasm for this dialogue was quite illuminating. Herein, though, lies a dichotomy; for although Ben professes his prime concern to be for people, his work is peopled with buildings – humans, animals and traffic are all absent. Yet these are not the cold and threatening post-nuclear streets of New York in 'On The Beach' or, more recently, the London of '28 Days'; the spaces between and around these buildings invite onlookers mentally to inhabit the city – especially if they are Liverpoolians – for herein also lies Ben's skill; these pristine streets and clean-cut blocks of buildings (painted using stencils produced by night-working computers) welcome you in, just as an architectural model will, in my experience, immediately widen the eyes of any client. Surely this is the truth of Ben's Cityscapes: they are not just highly structured paintings, they are really models – two-dimensional models with all the tactile quality of three-dimensional constructions – encouraging interaction from their implied population of locals and visitors. (No wonder the RIBA made Ben an honorary Fellow for "his contribution to the public understanding of contemporary architecture".) Well, this visitor left the morning light of Ben's aerial city view and walked out into the afternoon sunshine of down-to-earth Liverpool with considerably widened eyes.

Ken Baker FSAI (© bd 2008)

Group of members in front of Ben Johnson's Liverpool Cityscape



Obituary Norman Westwood 1912-2008

The death of Norman Westwood was recorded in the September issue of the RIBA Journal.

Although he had no connection as far as is known with SAI his life is recorded here as he was an architectural photographer of great note.

He trained as an Architect and this aspect of his life happened as a result of the diversion of life caused by the Second World War.

During the war, after a brief spell in the army he was seconded to the RAF's model making V section that was responsible for producing topographical models of potential bombing sites interpreted from aerial photographs.

After the war when jobs for Architects were scarce he found that his skills as an architectural photographer stood him in good stead. He provided many photographs for both the Architects Journal and the Architect and Building News which led to his photographs being used to illustrate the text book, Trees for Town and Country and also Vita Sackville West's Country Notes.

In later years he was invited to illustrate some of the updated Pevsner guides.

However, most of his time he worked alongside his brother Bryan in their Architects practice before retiring to Devon where he continued to draw, paint and engrave.

Other News

Greetings from the ASAI

A letter received in response to the Presidents communication with our equivalent in the United States. Note also our man in Llandudno (see No 2 in the "Letter From" series) has been honoured by the ASAI in recent times. Also note the difficulties they have encountered with CG artists maybe we can help them?

If anyone is heading Stateside please let them know, especially if on business, it would be good to try and make a regular link.

Hi David,

Thank you for your e-mail and the effort to re-contact our group!

Your Society sounds invigorated and excited to make the next level of exposure, education and quality. I applaud your efforts to bring the CG practitioner into your midst and show there is a higher level of artistry that can be achieved than what many are approaching today. ASAI has been working on incorporate CG as a distinct sector of its annual competition for some time now, but we haven't been able to settle on what will work best for our group. We're eager to see your approach and wish you great success.

Tammy Horch-Prezioso is our executive director (copied on this e-mail) and handles much of our affiliations' communications and reciprocal exposure on our website and e-mails. Perhaps we can come to a mutual level of advertisement/exposure that would help both organizations' efforts.

Wishing you the best of times in your new role with SAI,

Ric Heldt, AIA, ASAI

Principal, ASAI President 2008

*A&E Architects, P.C. 608 North 29th Street, Billings, MT 59101
p.406.248.2633 f. 406.248.2427 www.aearchitects.com*

Line Up For The Next Issue

Regular features plus:

- Why I have migrated from Model Making to Photography?
by Tony Duckett of Henley on Thames
- More on the debate about services that could assist you
- Your letters (hopefully)
- An introduction to the new Treasurer (hopefully)
- Another intriguing anathema in the Not Quite Illustration series
- The AGM agenda on plus news of Guest Speaker and much more
- Your Valentine cards
- Updates on running issues and more

THE SAI AGM

The RIBA (Lutyens Room) London is the venue for our AGM on Saturday 25th April 2009. Starting at 10.00 Book this day now in your diary.

Agenda to include:

Reports from Officers

Election of Officers

Election of Council

Discussions. This may include:

- Is there a need for a Legal Help Line?
- Setting up a National archive as a unit within the RIBA Drawings Collection
- Do we raise our subscriptions?
And when?
- Can we run a Summer School in 2010?
- Members contributions
- And much more

Full details and booking details in the Spring Newsletter out early March 2009.

STOP PRESS!

Patron **Ben Johnson** is speaking at the AGM
Read more about the day in the Spring issue.

The year ahead...

February 14th: Deadline for Spring Newsletter. Deadline for Valentine Card Design submission

March 2009: The Spring Newsletter

April 2009: AGM at RIBA, London, Lutyens Room on Saturday April 25th starting at 10.00.

June 2009: Summer Newsletter

July 2009: Bungay School Design Awards

September 2009: Autumn Newsletter

October 2009: Autumn Meeting: Demonstration of Members Skills Presentation to winner of Christmas Card competition (Pilot Summer School!)

December 2009: Winter Newsletter

and finally...

NOT QUITE ILLUSTRATION

In 1901 sponge divers sheltering from a storm by the small Greek island of Antikythera, discovered an ancient Roman shipwreck – a victim of a much earlier storm. Amongst a large hoard of ancient Greek treasure (bronze & marble statues, jewellery, coins) a small wooden box was discovered. Inside the box was something that would change completely our views of ancient Greek technology.

Lying in a cupboard in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, almost unforgotten for half a century, these green corroded lumps of bronze were found using early X-ray imaging to contain at least thirty bronze hand-cut gearwheels. Thought to be an early astronomical calculating machine, the Antikythera Mechanism was examined again in 2005 using high-resolution CT (the technique used in a hospital body scanner, though using much more powerful X-rays). An international collaboration between British and Greek academics (archaeologists and astronomers), US-based Hewlett Packard and Tring-based X-ray company, X-Tek Systems Ltd not only confirmed the existence of the gear wheels, and counted their teeth, but also deciphered a large amount of ancient Greek text buried under 2000 years of corrosion. The style of writing dates the Mechanism to around 150B.C. The dialect of Greek suggests manufacture on Sicily, once the home of Archimedes.

The text contained instructions on how to use the Mechanism, as well as labelling two five-turn spiral dials, one marking the changing position of the Sun against the stars during the year, the other telling when eclipses both of the Moon and the Sun would occur – with an accuracy down to the nearest hour. It even predicted solar eclipses happening at night on the other side of the Earth (the Greeks knew the Earth was round and Eratosthanes had estimated its diameter to within 5%). The mechanism modelled the precessing elliptical motion of the Moon around the Earth, as well as using the first known differential gear to calculate the Moon's phase, shown by a half-black, half-silver rotating sphere on the Moon-position dial's pointer.

The teeth on the gearwheels, numbering up to 225 on the largest gear, were all cut by hand. Imagine a Greek philosopher, sitting night after night, watching the planets and stars (so much brighter in those days without the light pollution of today) and thinking, "It's all a bit mechanical really – I bet I could make a model of that!"

Not only thinking it, but spending months cutting out gear wheels by hand and inscribing the text on bronze plates. And all of this, 2000 years ago in the bronze age.

Andrew Ramsey, X-ray CT Specialist at X-Tek, based in Tring (now part of Metris).



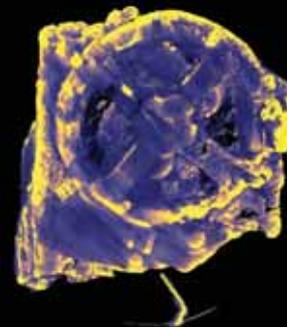
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This is a close up of a reconstruction of the eclipse prediction dial. The small dial tells you how many hours to add (0, 8 or 16) to the predicted time as the Saros cycle is 18 yrs, 11 days, 8 hours, so the eclipses only repeat exactly every three cycles.



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The largest fragment is about 130mm across, by 250mm high, and 90mm deep. Some of the inscribed letters are no more than 2mm high.



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Details inside a corroded gear wheel are revealed by high-resolution X-ray CT imaging.

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: Valentine's Day 2009

Design a Valentine's card.

Best half dozen will be published in the Spring edition.

All material to be submitted to:

davidbirkett@btconnect.com by 14th Feb 2009.