

ARCLIB BULLETIN No.10

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ARCLIB Conference 2000 : Bridging the gaps in Newcastle



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All the time I was organising the ARCLIB Conference I kept thinking we should have hosted it in 2001. The new Millennium bridge would have been opened, and the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art nearly finished, but cities, like organic matter are evolving all the time so there is never an optimum moment to view a city. I was also thinking why, oh why did I foolishly volunteer to organise the 2000 conference? (actually I do know why - too many glasses of wine)!

Much of the organisation has now passed into a remembered blur of total anxiety, frantic phone calls, moments of thinking I had plenty of time, only to realise I hadn't, and the final realisation that it was not going to be cancelled, I was not going to break my leg or be able to escape in any way. We were also moving to our new office at the Old Post Office at same time as the conference, just to add to my stress levels. I can now look back and say I did enjoy the organisation of the conference and have a glow of satisfaction that it all went reasonably well.

Deciding on a theme for the conference was very difficult; regeneration came to mind, but the Committee advised the easiest way to organise the conference was to get the speakers and the visits organized, and then to devise a theme around them. 'Bridging the Gaps' was chosen as the title because of Newcastle's famous bridges and the fact that that the speakers would bridge various gaps in delegates' information and architectural knowledge. A long list of possible speakers and venues for visits was gradually whittled down to the final conference programme. Being a 'just in time' or even an 'oops it's a bit late' type of person does not bode well for conference organisation but everything finally fell into place and July 19th arrived only too quickly.

My adopted city of Newcastle has a wonderful mix of architecture with some hideous carbuncles from the regeneration era of T.Dan Smith. The city has improved over the

last fifteen years with the redevelopment of the Quayside and the city centre area known as Grainger Town, which takes its name from Richard Grainger, a speculative developer who built most of the city centre in the early 19th century. This area has one of Britain's finest and most extensive collections of neo-classical stone buildings, many of them listed. I wanted delegates to get a real flavour of the city, see as much of it as possible and show the full range of architecture from ancient to modern.

The Conference opened with a drinks reception and introduction to Newcastle at the International Centre for Life. The Centre was designed by Terry Farrell & Partners and opened in April 2000. This is the cornerstone in the redevelopment of Newcastle's neglected western fringe and the City Council hope this area will become a 'leisure quarter', with tree-lined boulevards stretching up to St James' Park, the football ground.

Cyril Winskell, Consultant Architect, gave a very entertaining and informative introduction to Newcastle. Cyril has lived and worked in and around Newcastle all his life and has been involved in the restoration of major residential and commercial developments in the centre of Newcastle. This was followed by a gentle stroll down to the Quayside for a very late supper at *Est Est Est!* The restaurant had overbooked but fortunately the weather was warm and sunny so we were able to enjoy an extra glass of wine or two and soak up the sun on the terrace.

The next day dawned warm and sunny again, as it was for the whole of the Conference, unusual for Newcastle not to have that brisk sea breeze whistling around the ankles. The proceedings began with a paper given by Andrew Wake of NBS Services, describing the huge changes in the construction industry that have happened over the last few years, from traditional construction methods to lean construction. This was followed by John McKechnie from the Newcastle School of Architecture, who outlined a method of document categorisation which would enable the classification of documents from an analysis of the occurrence of words and phrases within the document. Next came Dave Bloomfield from the BRE; he gave us an insight into how the BRE are adopting EU initiatives to develop Internet services to disseminate information. Linda Ashcroft from the Liverpool Business School followed with a paper on the benefits and problems of electronic journals. This topic certainly hit a nerve and generated much discussion.



A rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday' to Ann at Est Est Est!

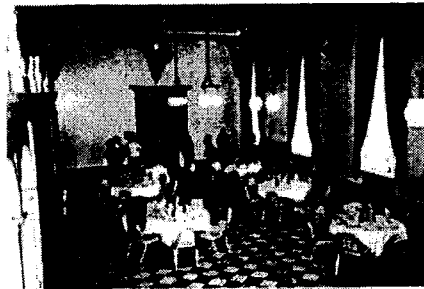
After lunch we had a linked presentation from Karla Youngs, TASI (Technical Advisory Service for Images), University of Bristol, and Phill Purdy, VADS (Visual Arts Data Service), Surrey Institute of Art and Design, around the issues of image digitisation. The role of TASI is to advise and support the academic community on the digital creation, storage and delivery of image-related information. VADS' goals are to build a searchable on-line archive of digital resources for use by visual arts institutions, especially higher education, for teaching, learning and research, and to establish and promote good practice in the creation, management and preservation of resources through advisory, training and publications programme. This was followed by a lively and informative question-and-answer session with a panel of experts! This ended the formal sessions for the day and delegates returned to halls (or home for the Newcastle contingent) to don party frocks for the evening's proceedings.



Delegates inspect the Guildhall Courtroom with its cage and manacles for prisoners.

The Conference dinner was held in the historic Guildhall on the Quayside. The Guildhall is a fine sandstone building dating from 1658 with both Renaissance and Gothic features. Dinner was held in the Courtroom, which still has the elaborate wooden seating for the court proceedings. The dinner opened with a drinks reception sponsored by RUDI who gave a presentation about their link-up with Planning Exchange, Glasgow.

After the excellent dinner, the die-hards set out to follow the ARCLIB tradition of finding a club to dance. This should not have been difficult given Newcastle's reputation as a party city but the chosen club turned us away as one of our members was inappropriately dressed, wearing trainers! I tried to explain very politely to the huge doorman that we were inoffensive librarians and would not cause any trouble, but he still refused to let us in. This misfortune led us to go to the 'Boat' -a nightclub moored in the Tyne. After a couple of hours of very energetic bopping we wended our weary way home.



Guildhall Courtroom, scene of the Conference dinner, with its 17th century chequerboard floor

Next morning came around only too quickly. The first session of the day was the AGM followed by Jonathan Berry, from the Welsh School of Architecture. Jonathan outlined the development and aims of the Centre for Education in the Built Environment. He also demonstrated the capabilities of the Centre's impressive portal. Colin Haylock, University of Newcastle, gave the final paper on Newcastle's regeneration experience. This complemented Cyril's introductory talk by bringing the developments of the city up to the present time.

After lunch we split into two parties for a tour of historical Newcastle led by Tom Falconer, University of Northumbria, and a tour of the Quayside led by Colin Haylock. They took in many of the historical buildings and recent developments that Cyril and Colin had talked about. Both tours were very informative, entertaining and the sun shone! I then returned to the office to pack up my desk and say a fond farewell to our Claremont office with the bottle of bubbly kindly given to us by ARCLIB.

Thanks to everyone at NBS for their help and forbearance and to everyone from ARCLIB for their help and advice. Never again!



The Conference finished with a walking tour of Newcastle.

Newcastle - the party city

According to the tourist literature, Newcastle has been voted the eighth best party city in the world by American travel experts and it is the only British city to make it on to the list! ARCLIB members did their best to conduct their own independent research to verify the accolade. The Newcastle guidebook urged us to "party on and enjoy". Especially recommended was "the unique club on board a ship moored below the Tyne Bridge ...a must for first-time visitors ...a spin on the revolving dance floor is a memory many treasure of a visit to Newcastle's club scene".



Newcastle Quayside by night



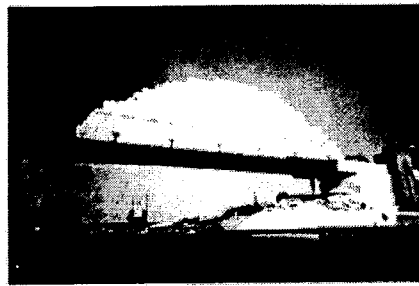
Introductory speaker Cyril Winskill with Arclibbers on Newcastle Quayside



2001 conference organiser Kathleen Godfrey with Julia Barrett at Est Est Est.



Food, glorious food!



The 'Boat' moored below the Tyne Bridge in wraps.

At the Coalface: experiences of a job-share

Sue Palmer shares her job with Angela Brady at Oxford Brookes University. She describes here the professional and personal benefits of job-sharing.

Even as recently as ten years ago the idea of job-sharing was regarded with overt scepticism; another well-intentioned but misguided and superfluous gimmick imported from more go-ahead (and therefore dubious) nations, such as Germany and the United States. Such radical notions might be a catalyst for social unrest and the fabric of society could be permanently undermined if there was such a challenge to the British work ethos. On the one hand there was absolutely no perceived need for this degree of flexibility in the work force; on the other, everyone might start demanding it once it caught on!

Fortunately, in this respect at least, we live in more enlightened times. More pragmatically, the predictions concerning demographic trends and the related issue of worker supply, which made headlines in the sixties and seventies, have turned into today's reality. Advertising certain posts as open to job-sharing is thus seen as one of several possible strategies for combating low application rates for middle-ranking positions in areas with high employment and high living costs, as well as being a response to changing employment needs and the demands of equal opportunities.

Two years ago theory was turned into practice in Oxford Brookes University Library and first Angie Brady, and then I, were taken on as a job-share at assistant subject librarian level. There had been job sharing at library assistant level before, but this was breaking new ground. Some of the practicalities had been thought out in advance; overlap time of half a day a week had thoughtfully been built into the arrangement from the beginning. Other aspects would evolve with time.

When it comes to job-sharing, as well as the obvious extra expenses for the employer in the form of additional contributions which have to be paid, there are undoubtedly 'hidden' extra costs involved in areas such as training. On the plus side for the employer, however, are the higher energy levels and high levels of commitment job-sharers bring to their work -you don't get that 'Friday feeling' if you only work three days a week! All job-sharers will tell you that they put in an untold number of unpaid extra hours, out of goodwill, in order to ensure that the job works out and is seen to work smoothly and seamlessly for those who might be affected. I feel we are no different in that respect.

As far as we can ascertain, our colleagues in the library view the experiment very positively and we respond to this by being as flexible and approachable as we can and communicating well between ourselves. We overlook minor confusions in the eyes of our colleagues over our precise subject responsibilities, and the initial problems over our identity in the School of Architecture (because of our similar colouring) have long since been ironed out, with much hilarity all round.

The personal benefits should not be overlooked either. The fact that we only work part-time during the week means that we have more time for family, friends and interests. We also have time for a second job! We both, it just so happens, work

during term-time as extended-hours librarians. Thus we have the optimum level of job flexibility; set hours in term-time and the choice in the vacation between more time at home or some extra paid hours on the enquiry desk, covering for holiday leave. The students who come in at the weekends also benefit from the subject and 'insider' knowledge we bring to this second job.

Not that we would want to change the world, or lead a revolution, you understand, but, who knows, in another ten years' time, just maybe we will be, as far as the workforce is concerned, in the majority and no longer the cutting edge.

The password problem

Maggie Black, University of the West of England, addresses the problem of the growing number of passwords and numbers in our lives.

Is it just my institution, or is anyone else having a problem with the number of passwords needed to use the electronic information resources, and for life in general?

Our students have an ID card with a number on it - this also serves as their library card, but they also need a PIN number to use the full range of library catalogue facilities. They have an e-mail username and password, which also acts as their log-in to any university networked computer. Another username and password allows them into the Faculty intranet, and yet another into the library's intranet to use networked CD-ROMs.

As for internet resources, the majority of them can be accessed within the university without passwords, but passwords are necessary for off-campus use (which is the main benefit of having internet resources) and gradually passwords are being demanded for use on campus as well.

Students are advised to set up personal ATHENS accounts - to cut down on some of the passwords - but this seems to be a totally mystifying process to most of them, and there are further passwords for using Avery on the internet, various collections of electronic journals, some individual journals, and so it goes on.

The rest of us have to remember key-pad numbers to get into the building, not to mention all the personal numbers (cash machines, burglar alarms, etc.).

A session on the Enquiry Desk consists - this term - of issuing passwords, sorting out passwords which don't work, coping with students who have lost or forgotten them, or are just so confused they don't know which one goes where -especially as so many of the systems have such meaningless names such as Iris, Unicorn, Web of Science (but they're not studying science), and what does ATHENS stand for anyway?

The students, especially the new ones, have so much to cope with anyway and we just seem to be making their lives even more complicated and difficult. Maybe some of you out there have cracked this problem. If so, please let me know how and I will pass the information on to our very harassed IT people.



No passwords needed for Maggie Black and colleagues to enjoy the sun and sights of Newcastle.

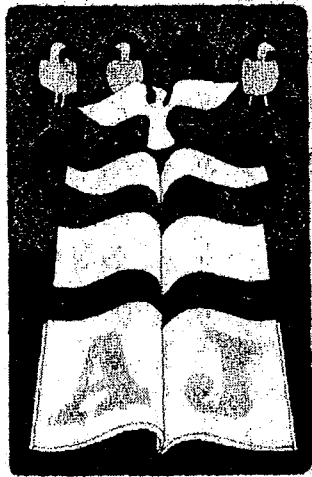
At the Coalface

An attachment to files and folders

Sylvia Harris, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff, is attached to her AJ files -the click of a mouse has not yet replaced the flick of a wrist.

It is a truth generally recognised that searching at length for information related to design is regarded as a time-consuming activity not wholly welcomed by architects. At the same time there is scant evidence indicating that this pursuit is regarded as unnecessary. It would be natural to think that any attempts toward making information both easy and quick to find would be gladly received. I would like to outline here the valiant attempts by the *Architects' Journal* over the years to organise information and to consider why so few in the architectural domain have adopted the suggested system or are willing to pay for it to be maintained even by someone else.

The first easy-to-file AJ was launched on the 19th April 1956. The 'Information Centre' was the brainchild of the visionary editor of the journal at the time, Colin Boyne. As he said himself in his editorial on that day, illustrating his innovation with this charming drawing by Gordon Cullen "...with a few quick flicks of a wrist or two you can conjure your pages into their pigeon-holes. And that we have been assured is what most of you want to do..."



The AJ technical files 'find' their places in the right pigeonholes. A drawing by Gordon Cullen from the Architects' Journal of 19 April, 1956.

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For the first time the weekly was arranged so that the final section, consisting of the technical articles, could be removed and filed without the intrusion of advertisements. These pages consisted of a building study including cost analysis, list of contractors, two information sheets and a working detail. It was now possible to build up a personal source of reference, which would in time become a library of files arranged chronologically by building type.

With the framework established and further developed in the 1960's the AJ went from strength to strength - notwithstanding that it became glue-bound, so that pages could be torn out and technical information filed according to SfB! This period of success is well documented in the *Architects' Journal Centenary Issue* of 9th March 1995. An additional feature of this time was the serialisation of articles, which were later collated into books, and published by the AJ. One most successful and seminal work, the *AJ Metric Handbook* - now called *The Metric Handbook: planning and design data*, began its life as a series of articles in March 1968.

In my recent conversation with Colin Boyne he described the editorial team then, as "pioneering and idealistic" whose policy it was to ensure the best expert advice for the benefit of professional standards as a whole. With this well-earned authority and

tear-out and fileable technical section, a format that lasted from its inception for the next thirty years, the journal grew in stature both in the UK and abroad. Even by the end of the 1960's circulation figures had reached 22,000.

Looking at the accumulation of issues from the beginning of this semester that require filing into the collection of AJ binders in the room adjacent and then at my flat screen at the Buildings Bank available from AJPlus (www.ajplus.co.uk) which went on-line on the 27th January 2000, I am aware of a watershed. Others I have briefly interviewed about the task of filleting and filing the AJ appear not to share this concern. The list includes former editors of the journal, authors of building studies, architects, academics, students and a practice librarian. I suspect this is because none actually engage in the arcane practice, although most agree it is a job worth doing.

Reservations

My 'survey' uncovered reservations, which I will summarise here.

- *It is seen as an additional task, which creates a backlog, just as soon as it is cleared, and that it really works best if there is no backlog at all.
- *It is regarded as expensive in terms of time, space and money.
- *The chronological order of the files can be easily disturbed by careless use. Worse still, articles can be effortlessly and noiselessly removed (the tearing having already been done for them!) by the unscrupulous and selfish, too mean to photocopy what they need from the bound collection. .
- *As it is not possible to treat all journals in this way, a files collection limited to only one title can lead to a narrowing of perspective if it is allowed to become the only source of reference.
- *The categorising of building studies into particular types, for example those about buildings of 'mixed'-usage that cut across the conventional boundaries, can limit their inspirational value.
- *The ability of the journal to deal with critical review has always presented editorial difficulties. One regular contributor to the AJ building studies expressed the view that impartiality could be compromised by editors who allow the architects of the building the final say in what is eventually published. His impression is that this trend is more apparent in recent times.
- *In the days of increasing electronic delivery this does appear a rather old-fashioned way to deal with information -a point I will return to later.

Advantages

- *Amongst the most frequently cited advantages were easy of access and quick reference. As Dor Pontin said, "most of my practices would love it but don't want to pay for my time to do it, although of course it saves them time when they are looking for a specific building type".
- *A study can act as a prompt, a quick visual impression, rather like an extended abstract, forming the basis for further research on-line in APId, Avery or ICONDA

for those who have access to these sources. Most queries are about something seen in the AJ in the last month, not really available in the major indexes till later (the exception being APIS Bulletin). A file collection, which is up-to-date, can best serve in this context.

- *One young architect mentioned the serendipitous discovery the files can facilitate: "You see an image you like, it may be a building which uses cladding in a particular way, this widens your filter. It may not be the building type with which you began your search".
- *A chronological collection can also be of historical interest, providing an impression of the evolution of a particular building type, charting the change in construction method and materials, legislation, and style over a period of time.
- *It can also be of diachronic value, sketching a picture of the popularity or dearth of a particular building type at a particular time, for example, the preponderance of visitor centres in the last decade, and the lack of studies on public housing in the same period.
- *The appeal of collections like this is that journal articles open a direct view into the time in which they were written and can thus speak to shifting sensibilities.
- *The teachers of architecture I have asked value the file collection particularly as useful precedents to which to direct students at the start of a project, as they often contain information more current than that in books. They can also be used to quickly build up a reserve collection for a particular project. It is possible that a file collection can act as encouragement to students to build up their own libraries by subscribing to the AJ.
- *Possibly of the most value is the view the building studies provide of "the culture of building" which Howard Davis defines as "the co-ordinated system of knowledge, rules and procedures that is shared by people who participate in the building activity".¹

The format of these studies as established by Colin Boyne clearly demonstrates that bringing a building to fruition involves the work of many hands. In my recent conversation with him he emphasised the importance of crediting the team and of providing cost information. This accords with Sir Colin Stansfield Smith's RIBA review of architecture education for the 21st century when he says:

"The profession and education share an important responsibility in ensuring that the full capacity of architecture is brought to bear on the built environment. Good design will be divorced from the built environment unless education and the profession together accomplish this task. For the profession this means full participation in 'building the team'. For the schools this means that the architects skills in collaborating with other professionals, in working with clients and understanding the operations of the building industry should be seen as fundamental not peripheral to an architect's education." Currently there is no British architectural journal that provides cost analysis in the detail provided by the AJ.

This information may become available electronically in the future via *AJPlus* but it is not available yet. The printed building study still holds sway to comprehensiveness.

Until the magic that a click of the mouse can conjure fully replaces the wizardry envisaged by Colin Boyne's few quick flicks of a wrist or two, I will continue my attachment to AJ files and folders and hang the backlogs!

(1) Davis, Howard. *The Culture of Building*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p.3.

Plane sailing!

Pam Masters describes the rough waters encountered in the transition from URICA to Voyager! This article was written in November 2000, and Pam has added a postscript to bring us up-to-date with the voyage.



Everyone loves a conundrum. What is worse - changing from a card catalogue to a computer-based system or - changing from one computer-based system to another? In institutions of higher education, the answer is academic!

This article aims to relate the various processes we went through at Edinburgh College of Art before we made our choice of a new system, and describes some of the highlights of a transfer from URICA, a system purchased from McDonnell-Douglas, better known for its aeroplane links, to the Endeavor Information Systems Voyager system with its nautical signature. I do not wish to make any assessment of either system although I will say that we are pleased with both. In a few weeks we will have switched over entirely from URICA, which for some of us will be like losing a friend. If Voyager serves us as well, I do not think we will have many complaints. At Edinburgh College of Art the impending new millennium presented us with the challenge of choosing a new computer system before we experienced a 'catalogue' of disasters. As the year 2000 dawned, we were left as the last but one British user of the system with limited specialist back-up.

As we are a relatively small specialist institution, it quickly became clear that the question of finance would have a deciding influence on our choice of system so that, although a fairly wide sweep of systems was carried out, a number eliminated themselves due to cost. Comparing those in our league proved quite challenging, as there is no 'perfect' system, so every system had its attractive side and its occasional

drawbacks. It was illuminating trying to define what we wanted when we only had the framework of our existing system as a point of reference.

To a certain extent we had tailored our everyday routines and our administrative structure round the current system. It was also illuminating trying to make a judgment on the information presented by the various representatives of the competing suppliers.

The level and clarity of the official presentation proved one of the deciding factors - an issue which suppliers might care to take on board. Further factors were the degree of innovative improvements made to new versions of systems already on the market and the amount of forward planning incorporated to take account of existing new developments such as the www/Internet and any unknown developments. It was hoped that a good system would be geared up to the unknown! The absence of tempting meals out and the noticeable omission of attractions such as T-shirts and baseball caps proved hard to live with!

Performance

Once the shortlist was compiled and visits from potential suppliers were over, we had to see some of the systems in operation at other libraries in Edinburgh. One advantage of being located in Edinburgh meant there were many diverse libraries, close at hand, with a wide range of computer library systems. There was also a serious attempt to involve the library staff at all levels and to explore what facilities attracted staff, especially those facilities on offer at the Issue Desk via a circulation module. Our shopping list cited a circulation module, an acquisitions module (including serials), a cataloguing module, and an OPAC module as essential.

Limitations

Apart from the financial aspects at the time, Edinburgh College of Art was involved in discussions regarding a closer association than that of 'Associated College' with Heriot-Watt University. Would the College spend money on an uncertain future and would the College take major decisions before the merger issue was clear? The millennium compliance issue loomed fairly large but we were fortunate to receive an enlightened response, not unexpected, from both the College and Heriot-Watt University.

It was fairly late in the day when the idea of joining the Scottish Voyager Board Consortium set-up by the National Library of Scotland and Edinburgh University Library - one a national library and one an eminent large university library with both a central main and associated satellite libraries - offered itself as a viable option. For us the advantages of having a local provider to take the weight of some of the delivery off our shoulders, to back us up with training and information and to give us the same catalogue for our students who consult both library catalogues quite extensively were quite telling.

Other libraries

It was interesting to see that other libraries already using the system ranged from the Library of Congress, the Harvard Business School, the Museum of Modern Art, and the National Library of Medicine in the United States through to the National Library of New Zealand; the United Nations (Geneva) and the Linnea Consortium of Finland, embracing all the libraries of institutions of higher education in Finland. More local libraries included the University of Hertfordshire, the Open University, the Universities of Wales and the Edinburgh-based library of the Faculty of Advocates. Just ahead of us in the queue in Edinburgh was the Library of the Royal Observatory. Would we soon be stars? We were informed that a number of European libraries were coming 'on board'. Astronomical and nautical allusions proliferated!

Advance preparations

Once the decision was made, it was necessary to draw up a specification. This was ably done by our Technical Services Librarian. Other considerations were upgrades in hardware such as OPAC, issue desk and library staff PCs plus attendant cabling, together with a timetable of publicity releases, training and consultation sessions at different levels. Above all, we had to decide on the right time for migration. Due consideration revealed that no time in the educational year was ever the right one, though the summer vacation was logical for the start of an academic year but the worst time to train library staff who would be taking annual leave.

Advance publicity

It was essential to spread awareness of the new development through the College, especially to the students. No-one likes change and, in all fairness, a degree of initial disruption had to be taken on board. Different notices, printed in various sizes and colours and via the OPAC, both still and winking, informed the college at large: 'Voyager' is coming. Would the star-ship Enterprise be able to cope?!

Library staff training

Our most valuable asset was our staff who moved earth, if not heaven, in order to be a regular presence at training sessions, many in the summer vacation. We had opted for a mix of external training from Endeavor and from the Scottish Voyager Board Consortium represented by Edinburgh University. Circulation training would have been interesting offered via the National Library - a reference-only library!

Internal training ranged from our own senior library staff passing on information, junior staff in key library roles related to modules, passing on expertise plus a number of excellent training sessions organised and delivered by our Technical Services Librarian.

Sometimes our two libraries' staff had training as one group, sometimes in the individual libraries. The key thing was to ensure everyone had attended enough sessions to feel confident once we went online. Staff participated in the training with

gusto and, I am sure, took great delight in clocking up huge fines and adding imaginative notes to the library accounts of senior library staff. Court cases are still pending!

Terminology

Interesting new words sprang up. The MFHD catalogue entries became muff-heads, catalogue entries were 'boated' to save them and, yes, - the nautical allusions started! Current opinion, magazines, pilot projects, coasting along, lines of catalogue entries, channels of communication, approaches, flagging up issues, bracing ourselves -for the inevitable!, making observations - both nautical and astronomical, the Scottish Main, a look-out, poor ratings and, to cap it all, instruction from the Edinburgh consortium by two librarians both with the surname of Stevenson. What would Robert Louis and his older relatives have said?

The future

It is now November and - yes, - migration took place in the summer vacation -at a good time - my own birthday. We never saw any cakes or ale and I think all of us, library staff and students, will need Christmas and New Year to recover. The computer system is either down or up and a new release is scheduled for - yes, you have guessed it - Christmas.

This week there is to be a small celebration at Edinburgh College of Art in the historic periodicals room of the Environmental Studies Library when the 'Memorandum of Agreement' with the consortium will be signed. Will the free Caribbean holidays be advertised then? Will grog and hard-tack be available? Will flags be raised, pirate versions be viewed, cut-throat competition take hold? Who knows?

Postscript

With no sign of a safe anchorage yet as Easter approaches, Janet has egged me on, or should I say roped me in, to bring the Voyager saga up-to-date.

Our multiple-handed voyage has been demanding though we have neither gone round the world nor hit an iceberg!! Two minor hitches have occurred. The projected release 2000, scheduled for September 2000 has been deferred twice to Summer 2001 and en route we have to face the challenge of upgrading to more powerful hardware necessary with nil funds.

Whilst we have learnt how to capture catalogue records from external sources, funds are more difficult, so we may yet have to take to the high seas either as pirates or to win a yacht-race. Thank goodness Edinburgh has a port!

Information Skills Training

Core skills start at the top

Tricia Noble, South Bank University, describes the 'uphill struggle' to impart core skills to academic staff as well as students, but has accepted the challenge.



Tricia Noble has no trouble finding an appreciative audience at the ARCLIB Newcastle 2000 Conference.

It would appear to be a universal problem these days, and not only amongst Schools of Architecture in the United Kingdom. One of our American visitors, at the ARC LIB Conference of 1999, reported a similar experience: architecture students are not using our libraries.

What is possibly more worrying is that neither do they attend our carefully arranged sessions to find out about the services we offer, to be taught about the dozens of databases we take (anyone of which might turn out to have details of that crucial article on designing a hospital or a nightclub, or that mystical connection between fashion and architecture, about which they have chosen to write their dissertation), not to mention the full-text journals and newspapers, the pages of web resources so painstakingly compiled by Information Advisers, or the easy access to the catalogues of so many other libraries.

As our American colleague remarked, it would be much less worrying if we thought that they were managing to find this information for themselves. Clearly, many of them are not. More than one third-year architecture student has asked me where they could find information for their dissertation. Have you tried APId? What's that? Explanation given to blank looks. What have you been using to find journal articles for the last three years? More blank looks. Result, a one-to-one crash course in databases, surfing the web, other London libraries.

It is also clear that, in spite of all our efforts, in many cases our lecturers are in a similar happy state of innocence about these same facilities and services. With this thought in mind, Learning & Information Services (LIS) and its Information Advisers at South Bank University decided to concentrate their attention on academics, in the hope that enthusiasm aroused amongst this section of our clientele would translate into a programme of student sessions organised with LIS across all subject areas.

At the Faculty of the Built Environment, academics were e-mailed with an offer of a visit from their Information Adviser to explain the use of LISA (LIS home page) as a first-stop information source. This session could take place either in the academic's own office or at the Information Adviser's desk. There was an additional offer of help with installing a plug-in to their own PC to give access to LIS databases on the CD-Rom network. This would include APId, Avery, Construction & Building Abstracts.

So far, I have successfully conducted six sessions. I have enjoyed all the sessions, all of which have felt very different, being tailored to the individual's interests and taken at their own pace, and the participants have also claimed to find them very useful.

I have yet to find anyone who knows more than I do, although I am certainly not expert on any of the databases nor on surfing the web. One lecturer had never used the web or seen a database, and was completely amazed by what was on offer - "This is marvellous! How many other people know about this?" - and I was invited to talk to his class of postgraduate students and arrange sessions at their convenience.

Another lecturer said that she did not approve of her students using the web to search for information as it encouraged them to think in 'sound bites'. I pointed out that students need to use computers if only to find books or to look up journal articles, and if they are going to use the web anyway, then they might as well learn to search effectively and evaluate what they find. This lecturer's session was based around a paper on which she was working relating to developments in architectural education.

The Dean of Faculty was another enthusiastic convert, and now wants his secretary to follow suit (presumably so that she can conduct his searches for him). Yet another academic found the session helped in his research for a book he was writing.

As a measure of the success of the project, in this new academic year more lecturers are booking in their students. Still, many students do not attend, those I have questioned usually claiming not have been informed that sessions are taking place, and I am convinced that the fragmentary 'atelier' system makes dissemination of information very difficult. It continues to be something of an uphill struggle.

The imminence of the QAA visitation is helping to concentrate minds on the Core Skills issue. My Annual Report to the Faculty has also brought the LIS contribution to students' learning, and the benefits of desk-top sessions for staff to the notice of the Faculty learning and Teaching Committee, whose members have suggested a target of all Committee members to have desk-top sessions before the end of this semester, and all Heads Of Division before the end of the academic year. I look forward to the challenge.

Information Skills Training
www.whatnext?

Jonathan Berry; Centre for Education in the Built Environment, Cardiff University. The purpose of this paper is to consider what we as built environment information specialists should be including information skills workshops which focus on the World Wide Web. The conclusions are borne from observations of students' web-based behaviour from information skills and induction workshops held at the beginning of the current academic year at Cardiff University.

Introduction

The impact of the World Wide Web, a constituent part of the Digital Revolution, has recently been heralded as the biggest event since the Industrial Revolution (Bawden 1999). The processing power of computers doubles roughly every year; the ability to communicate is estimated to double every three to four years. This is revolutionising the ways in which built environment professionals work as it is affecting methods of conducting business, communication, storage and the retrieval of information.

There is an obvious knock-on effect concerning how built environment information specialists working within the higher education system should prepare students during information skills workshops. It is important to question the general assumption that the Web is the greatest ever revolution in information dissemination and to assess the significance of this medium compared to existing methods.

Why the World Wide Web?

The convergence of traditional audio-visual media such as television, the dominant means of receiving information and entertainment, with the internet in the late twentieth century has resulted in an increasingly cheap and accessible means of communicating more effectively with a mass and diverse audience (Cohen 2000).

Built environment professionals have traditionally been at the forefront of using computer software to express concepts and relationships of physical space, particularly with CAD and GIS, but have had limited opportunities to disseminate their ideas widely; the web provides a medium with which built environment professionals can communicate complex design ideas with their increasingly vocal and engaged constituencies including peers, clients and local communities.

One of the reasons why the Web is so exciting is because good design, in its widest sense, is increasingly the result of effective communication. Part of the future role of the architect, for example, is to act as a facilitator, searching for, analysing and managing information and using the results to co-ordinate the efforts of project teams. It is therefore of fundamental importance to equip students with key skills to use the Web effectively and efficiently.

It is not my intention to criticise the World Wide Web; it is here to stay and there are some wonderful resources available, which have transformed our ability and that of our students, to retrieve, select and disseminate information. The Web is attractive for a variety of well documented reasons (Dawson 1997). Resources can easily be accessed and include a very wide range of subjects for a wide-ranging audience. Resources can be bookmarked for future use or cut and pasted straight into documents. Presentation is increasingly sophisticated and it can be a lot of fun to use.

The state of the art

There are, however, reasons to be increasingly concerned about the willingness of students to log straight onto the Web and search for information using this medium at the expense of other traditional methods. This is neither an intelligent nor an effective search strategy. Students often neglect the printed library resources that have been carefully selected and developed over a long period of time. It is important to assert that printed and electronic collections are complementary information resources.

Once on the Web, students are often easily overwhelmed by the apparent ease of navigation around the Web and in the joy of the journey, forget to evaluate both the resources and the search tools they use to find those resources. They also fail to question why they are using that specific method of information retrieval. It is still relatively commonplace to overhear remarks comparing the World Wide Web to an encyclopaedia, as if all the information is laid out in an organised and quality controlled manner.

Such attitudes need to be replaced with more realistic expectations. Even those who start an informed Web search for information in a controlled and structured manner can, when faced with failure, revert to a purely serendipitous approach. There is clearly much educating and training to do and as information specialists, our information skills workshops are the time and place to expose myths and instil sympathetic information-seeking behaviour.

This is a particular necessity for a number of reasons. The structure of Web sites and Web pages is non-linear: one can visit a page for a few seconds before launching off to another page on another site very quickly and easily by clicking on a hyper link. The ability to jump between different data sets so quickly is problematic as there is often little time given to evaluate the information presented.

This is compounded further by the Web's rich media (DiNucci 1998). Web pages are characterised by combinations of text, graphics, images, animation, sound and video. My experience suggests that when web pages are analysed by students, priority is often given to assessing the presentation (the whistles and bells!) rather than the actual information content (dull!).

If this seems unnecessarily cynical, it is because assumptions cannot be made; one cannot simply transfer methods learnt in the organised and controlled environment of the library to find information on the Web. It requires new techniques and approaches, and for information specialists to describe explicitly and explain for the benefit and education of our audience.

Bridges (1999) provides a useful critique of the World Wide Web as a reference tool and an explanation of why the Web should be used in a more cautious manner.

Search engines: friend or foe?

The use of search engines to find resources is a good example. Search engines are often the subject of information skills sessions focusing on the Web. However, search engines can be frustrating and rewarding in equal measure. The incorrect use of search engines can provide an illusion of choice; it is like using a hammer to break open a nut when there are more useful and sympathetic methods available.

Many colleagues will be aware of the 1999 study in *Nature* which highlighted that even the largest search engines fell short of indexing all pages available on the Web (see Sullivan 1999 for further details). Further, combined use of all the search engines was found to cover only 60% of the Web. There are also concerns that increasing numbers of indexed pages are out-of-date and that the Web is growing far faster than the ability of even the most powerful search engines to index it. My point is not that search engines are bad, but that they have to be used intelligently to gain satisfactory answers.

Sherman (2000), for example, has recently aired the concept of the Invisible Web, the large areas of the Web which are completely invisible to general-purpose search engines. These include Web pages which have no links pointing towards them or Web pages that include data elements which search engines do not index, for example below robot.txt files, graphics, CGI scripts, PDF files or, pages behind password protection or in databases.

The Invisible Web is growing at a faster pace than the Visible Web and includes many valuable resources that will be overlooked in a standard search engine search. Information specialists need to educate students to the increasing possibility that they could be lacking important information or wasting time when they could be using more effective tools to find information.

What we should be aiming for is the recommendation of quality reference resources, in the same manner that an information specialist knowing their printed collection can recommend recognised reference texts.¹ The aim is to inform students that while search engines are a necessary tool for accessing Web-based information, they are not the end of the story.²

A possible answer

There is a pressing need to instil evaluative skills into our students so that they know when to use the Web and what this medium can most appropriately be used for. As architects and other built environment professionals become more dependent on the Web, there is a greater need to train students to become more proficient at processing data, extracting salient points and disseminating knowledge in bespoke formats. This is particularly important when information overload can bring as many problems as information dearth. The concept of information overload is not a new one, but it has never been so true as with Web-based information. For many 'more is less' as the user does not know what to choose or how to evaluate it.

Skills required by the new built environment graduate transcend merely being familiar with CAD, GIS and email. The Web provides access to a bewildering amount of information in a distributed, global format and the skills needed to discriminate between necessary, desirable and peripheral sources are fundamental. Students need to be instilled with key skills to assess quality, accuracy and reliability of electronic information. These skills, i.e. interpreting results, are as important as conducting a good search, i.e. obtaining results.

In the absence of any Web-wide quality assurance tool, it is part of the role of the built environment information specialist to impart knowledge and experience concerning the provenancing of data and assessing the potential quality, value and accuracy of that data during student information skills workshops.

Information skills workshops should include information on what is available on the Web, how it works, how to search it, how to use the results and how to assess quality. It is also important that these 'hows' are supported by 'whys', so that students understand what they will or will not find; an absence of context means that students are working in ignorance without understanding what is going on.

While students are often taught the fundamentals of search syntax, information specialists need to go a step further to include information on which search engines to use when for a given situation and how they work. For example, meta search engines can be used to save time; general search engines are best used for finding obscure information; speciality, subject-based search engines can be used to gain a head start in a certain field. An appreciation of current concerns, for example the importance of including metatags, would also mean a brighter future for finding 'quality' Web resources, as the Web searchers of today will be the Web page authors of tomorrow.

Information skills workshops are a good opportunity to advocate a more locally-based method of information retrieval rather than jumping straight into a global Web-based search. In this case one uses locally developed resources, for example subject-related portals such as BUBL 5:15, ADAM or RUDI, to provide answers and pointers to quality, remote original data resources, instead of using search engines like *Google* and *Alta Vista* to search hundreds of thousands of sites. Information skills workshops focusing on Web resources should focus more on these bespoke

information portals, rather than solely on generic Web searching skills which although important, are only half of the answer.

Conclusions

With the increasing availability of high-speed networks, new services and applications, our role is fundamentally about educating students to direct themselves to the right information, in the right format at the right time! Students' electronic information and knowledge-handling skills need to be improved. Students need to be equipped with the knowledge of when to use the Web to find information and when to rely on other resources. They also need to learn when to use search engines and specifically which search engines to use for certain searches. We should seek to develop an information-seeking behaviour which emphasises critical awareness within our students so that they do not only question and evaluate the tools and resources that they use, but also develop reasonable expectations. Students will then have gained key transferable skills which will be of value for their coursework and for their future professional careers.



Jon Berry outlines the aims of the Centre for Education in the Built Environment at the Newcastle Conference.

Notes

- (1) See Sherman (2000) for some good starting points for the Invisible Web.
- (2) See SearchEngineWatch: <http://www.searchenginewatch.com/> for good articles about the strengths and weaknesses of search engines.

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Utopia 1) International co-operation between architecture libraries - a utopian project?

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1) The Italian context

Since an exhaustive analysis of architecture libraries in Italy -both in terms of quantity and quality - is not available at the the moment, it may be useful to consider the general features of Italian academic libraries, as they emerged from the Preliminary Report of the Osservatorio per la Volulazione de Sisema Universitario (Review Committee for the Evaluation of the University System) promoted by the Ministry of University and Scientific and Technological Research (MURST), in the research programme called 'Measurement and Evaluation of University libraries'.¹

In relation to the European programme LIBECON 2000, the Review Committee thoroughly investigated the academic libraries, collecting as much data as possible in order to understand the performance and quality of the entire system. The decision to adopt data survey procedures and methods similar to those employed in other EU countries allows comparison at the international level.

Taking into consideration the known statistical indicators, the Report underlines the organisational weakness caused by fragmentation into a great number of small libraries. Moreover, a lack of efficiency in services emerged, especially when considering the I number of students² as related to the number of libraries, professionals (Full Time Equivalent), and expenditure. According to the Report, in Italy in 1997 there were 2221 libraries linked up with 1639 administrative units, while in 1995/96, in the UK, 104 universities administered a total of 556 libraries, and in France, in 1994, there were 301 libraries.

Thanks to statistical data collected by SCONUL and ARL, it is also possible to attempt a more precise comparison with English and North American academic

institutions. Even in this case, although some relevant indicators are at the same level, it is clear that Italian libraries still have to do a great deal of work before they can offer - at the highest standard - the most requested services in a modern academic library, that is ILL, SDI, IT, networked electronic resources, reference services, and user training.

The Report also presents some solutions for the improvement of the general efficiency of the system, and these solutions were confirmed in the workshop 'Academic libraries of the Future: Ideas, Projects, Resources', organised by the Conference of Italian University Deans (CRUI), last May in Rome.³

Assuming international size and quality standards, MURST and CRUI outlined a set of guidelines to re-organise academic libraries. The main aims for the future will be: to merge libraries, to enhance services and co-operation, and to improve the professional qualifications of librarians. With respect to the autonomy of universities, both organisational and financial, it will be their duty to fulfil these guidelines. A main role in this difficult task will be played by Academic library Systems (SBA) which were constituted during the 90's in all universities with the specific role of co-ordinating libraries and their activities.

In the complex and varied world of Italian academic libraries, architecture libraries present the same features and problems (space, equipment, resources, staff) as similar organisations in other fields. Among more than thirty Italian libraries specialising in various aspects of architecture and urban studies, it is possible to find well-established institutions (for example, most faculty libraries) but also very small libraries connected to departments and institutes, or libraries with a long historical tradition as well as newly created ones.⁴

Since the mid-80's, CNBA (Coordinamento Nazionale delle Biblioteche di Architettura)⁵ has been active in introducing innovations to the tools available to architecture librarians, promoting the exchange of knowledge and professional experience, and collaboration and co-operation between libraries. In 1984, many libraries were involved in one of the first CNBA achievements, the "Catalogue of serials owned by Italian architecture libraries". Since then, many activities have been carried out, involving a growing number of libraries, especially in thematic working groups. During Bibliocom-Bibliotexpo 2000, held in Rome, 25-27 October 2000, CNBA presented its activities and projects in a session entitled "Themes of disciplinary cooperation".

Among these projects it is worth mentioning the realisation of MAIA,⁶ a MetaOpac that will allow users to search the catalogues of most of Italian architecture libraries simultaneously. Moreover, twelve libraries are involved in another CNBA project -the cataloguing and indexing of articles published before 1990 in main Italian architecture reviews. This huge effort will produce a database that will fill a lack in

Italian bibliographic tools. It should be clear, then, that the main focus for CNBA activities is co-operation, and this theme will be further investigated during the next meeting of the Association to be held in Rome in June 2001.

Utopia 2) From national to international co-operation

The need to better investigate the subject of co-operation, intended not as a simple slogan but as a series of concrete actions undertaken in order to improve the quality of library services, seems to be essential in Italy where this tool is still weak since it is new and lacks the appropriate instruments both from the point of view of law and organisation. During the recent meeting of the Italian Library Association,⁷ data available show that 70-80% of Italian libraries do not co-operate or they do so only in theory. The limited number of cases in which some sort of co-operation is realised, and where, however, some problems remain, are mainly co-operation in terms of cataloguing and management of the catalogue, while a greater attempt should be made in organising and providing library services.

In factual and functional terms, the discussion of co-operation implies the need to overcome many problems that the above-mentioned lack of uniformity in Italian libraries, and particularly in university libraries, causes. These problems concern insufficient staff and different levels of qualifications, little uniformity in management of services, difficulty in getting public institutions involved, cost management, and lack of adequate laws to facilitate co-operative projects. It is a challenge for Italian libraries and, notwithstanding the particular Italian situation which makes a comparison on many points difficult, some sort of collaboration with other European countries is extremely important, especially in universities where some common features can be identified. However, this is not always easy, since while the situation in England and the United States is well known, in other countries it is not.

Nevertheless, something is being done in academic libraries. Particularly in the area of architecture, there are many projects in progress, also at a European level. This suggests that co-operation in the field of architecture is not a utopia, but an effectively realisable project. The CD-Rom *Urbadisc* is an example; the CD-Rom includes the most important European architecture and urbanism databases. Italy participates in Archinet,⁸ an association for the production and dissemination of information on architecture, design, urbanism, planning and related fields. Some other projects are particularly interesting as they specialise in the construction of multilingual thesauri, like *Muleta*⁹ (realised within the European programme MUS) and, even though not strictly on a university base, the *Thesaurus de l'architecture* (realised with the contribution of the French government).¹⁰ The *Thesaurus de l'architecture* is based on the French database Mérimée and shaped on the Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) and on the Thesaurus of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England and will soon be translated into Italian by the

Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, so creating the basis for international communication.

The very need for widespread dissemination of information between European architecture libraries makes the creation of a forum for discussion and comparison desirable, especially if it can be considered a useful step towards wider international disciplinary co-operation:

First, through the creation of a federation of national associations of architecture librarians existing in different European areas, such as ARCLIB and CNBA, that can promote a network for the sharing of knowledge and experience, with the support of an international electronic mailing list, in the same way as IFLA already acts -an organisation that will be able to realise and co-ordinate a series of activities for architecture librarians; international exchanges perhaps within European programmes such as Socrates, a discussion forum and an annual meeting that promotes contact and comparison between different national circumstances; constant training and updating on projects and on specialised subjects in the field of architecture.

An activity that could be easily understood and visible through a website and bring in time the realisation of other important projects for architecture librarians: the creation of a directory of libraries and schools of architecture, a collection of selected and classified resources, as realised by RUDI and ADAM in the UK (and, in the American context, CYBURBIA) -a project that would be the basis for further collaboration in terms of sharing of digital resources and the creation of an international digital library of architecture.

Part 1 of this paper has been written by F. Di Giuseppe and Part 2 by R. Morrietto.

Notes

(1) In its web site <http://www.murst.it/>, MURST presents projects, on-line databases containing statistical data concerning students, courses, etc., and official documents. The Report is found at <http://www.murst.it/osservatorio/ricbibl.htm#Rapporto>

(2) The Review Committee for the Evaluation of the University System cites, referring to 1995/96, 1,018,938 students (FTE) in the UK, and 694,116 (estimated FTE) in Italy. Referring to 1997/98, ISTAT (Istituto per la Statistica), <http://www.istat.it/>, gives the data shown below for university students.

(3) The final document and related documents are available at the address <http://www.cruil.it/forum-bibl/index.html>

(4) In the last few years, according to European standards, the Italian university system has experienced a process of de-centralisation, while the so-called mega-universities' have reduced their size.

(5) CNBA has moved its web site to the new address <http://www.cnba.it/> contents and graphics are under construction.

(6) In collaboration with the Italian Library Association (AIB) and CILEA (Consorzio Interuniversitario Lombardo per l'Elaborazione Automatica), CNBA has produced a prototype of the Virtual Collective Catalogue of Architecture Libraries, which is available at the address <http://azalai.cilea.it/maia/>

(7) Some papers presented at the meeting are available on the Italian Library Association website: <http://www.aib.it/aib/commiss/cnbp/centr02.htm>

(8) The members of Archinet are: CNBA, IUAV (Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia), OIKOS and QUASCO. Further information is available on the website: <http://uavbc.iuav.it/archinet/archinet.html>

(9) Muleta -Multilingual and Multimedia Tool for Environment, Town and Country Planning, Building and Architecture: <http://uavbc.iuav.it/urbandata/muleta.htm>

(10) Thesaurus d'architecture:
<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/thesarch/pres.htm>

Note (2):

	Iscritti			Immatricolati al 1 anno			Diplomati e laureati (a)		
	Totale	Maschi	Femmine	Totale	Maschi	Femmine	Totale	Maschi	Femmine
Agrario	41557	23778	17779	8783	5139	3644	2636	1606	1030
Architettura	77656	40341	37315	8864	4335	4529	7234	3700	3534
Chimico-farmaceutico	55271	21290	33981	10936	4062	6874	4411	1704	2707
Economico-statistico	253904	135770	118134	46094	25216	20878	24306	12801	11505
Geo-biologico	71464	28322	43142	14970	6289	8681	5275	1982	3293
Giuridico	293833	123502	170331	50689	22185	28504	18632	8060	10572
Ingegneria	211230	179302	31928	37864	31673	6191	14806	12770	2036
Insegnamento	68575	6918	61657	18324	2047	16277	3838	379	3459
Letterario	168774	47295	121479	32951	10326	22625	12219	2830	9389
Linguistico	89231	11707	77524	18024	3008	15016	8106	679	7427
Medico	87128	35919	51209	15865	5453	10412	10685	4205	6480
Politico-sociale	144066	64064	80002	32285	14280	18005	10094	4212	5882
Psicologico	47035	9395	37640	10723	2217	8506	2678	482	2196
Scientifico	50047	31950	18097	9660	6470	3190	4836	2620	2216
Educazione fisica	17205	9087	8118	4028	2261	1767	2171	1007	1164
TOTALE	1676976	768640	908356	320060	144961	175099	131927	59037	72890

ARCLIB Out and About

RIBAnet and rare books

ARCLIB Chair Joan Drage, University of Luton, reports on a visit to the RIBA.



We were blessed with fine sunny weather for the ARCLIB visit to the Royal Institute of British Architects on 10 April, 2000, as we had been on the BRE visit the previous year. The group of ARCLIB members was augmented by other librarians whose work involves some knowledge of architectural information or a related field such as interior design. Some participants also took the opportunity to browse the shelves of the RIBA Bookshop which has been extended in recent years and now displays a very rich selection of publications on architecture, interior design, landscape and construction.

The visit lasted two hours and ran smoothly throughout. We were met by Jane Oldfield and taken first to see a demonstration of RIBAnet by Dylan Evans and John Edwards. This was new to us as RIBAnet can only be accessed by RIBA members. It was emphasised, however, that anyone can become a member of RIBA - you do not have to be an architect.

RIBAnet is a networked service which connects architects, architecture students and related professionals through their personal computers. Not only can they email each other but they can contribute ideas to up to 75 electronic conferences on topics such as conservation and disabled access. We were allowed a glimpse of some of these online discussions and it was obvious that the sharing of opinions, guidance and knowledge would be of great benefit to professionals and especially to those architects working in small practices.

After this introduction we were shown into the council chamber, where we received three very interesting talks by different members of staff. Paul Nash, Curator of Rare Books, talked about the richness of the Early Imprints Collection which consists of approximately 4000 books published between the 15th and mid-19th centuries. The icing on the cake was that he brought some examples with him and actually trusted us to handle them. One of these was the 1485 edition of Alberti's *De re Aedificatoria* and another was a very rare book small enough to be carried in the pocket and used as a working manual. This was written by Batty Langley in 1750 and entitled *The*

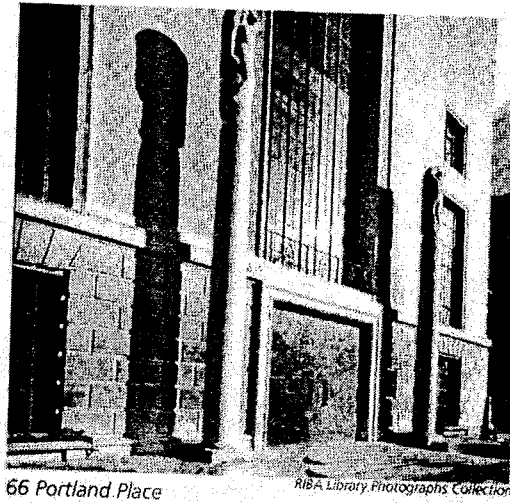
Workman's Golden Rule for Drawing and Working the Five Orders of Architecture.
For me this was probably the most exciting part of the visit - I love touching the exhibits!

The talk on the photographic collection by Robert Elwall was equally fascinating and included numerous examples of architectural prints. The collection consists of over 650,000 images of architecture in a variety of formats including prints, negatives and slides. As the collection is of photographic as well as architectural importance, it is in heavy and regular demand by architects, researchers and the media as well as the general public. It can only be consulted by prior appointment as it has to be fetched from a store.

The third talk, by Eleanor Gawne, covered the Drawings Collection which is temporarily unavailable as preparations are now underway to move it to its new home at the Victoria and Albert Museum. At around 500,000 items the drawings collection is the largest collection of British architectural drawings in the world and covers the Renaissance period to the present day. As with the other talks we were shown examples of some of this rich collection which made the talk even more interesting.

After the talks we divided into two groups and were given a tour which included the RIBA Library archives where we were shown items such as handwritten accounts from builders and the letters produced by architects such as Lutyens. We were also shown around the main reference collection of printed material and also the small stock of loanable items.

It was a worthwhile afternoon both for those librarians who had never visited the RIBA Library before but also for those of us who had seen behind the scenes on earlier occasions. Thanks to Jane Oldfield, the visit was well organised, and it was particularly impressive (and invaluable) that she was able to involve so many of her colleagues in the presentations and tours. Comments from the group after the event were very positive, particularly from non-ARCLIB members who would like the opportunity to join our visits in the future.



Two Margarets

Farewell to: *Margaret Gregory*

It is nearly a year now since Margaret Gregory took advantage of a voluntary severance offer and left John Moores University in search of her own millennium project. I know she's been missed by Arclibbers, colleagues and students alike - only the other week a former student turned up at my office looking for her, brandishing a bottle of champagne by way of a thank-you for help given in the past. I, of course, was not jealous, even though I can't recall ever being offered so much as a peppermint myself. I've obviously got a long way to go!

So what is she up to? Well, in February 2000 Margaret 1 returned to her roots (she's a qualified teacher) and took up an administrative position in a school in her home town of Wigan. Although I know she misses the challenge of travelling by Merseyrail everyday, she has had plenty to occupy her in her new post assisting the deputy heads with curriculum, assessment and data management.

A lot of her time is spent grappling with things like SATS, Examination Boards, timetabling and student information but I was heartened to hear that one of the first things she found herself doing was carrying out an emergency sewing repair on a pupil's trousers! It is definitely the kind of post which demands the flexibility and sense of humour Margaret always demonstrated here at JMU.

Although Margaret may have thought she was leaving the great and good world of architectural librarianship, she has not entirely escaped and has recently found herself assisting her nephew in his architectural studies!

On a personal level I am very grateful for all the support and encouragement I received from Margaret in the past and I know many of you would want to join me in expressing gratitude for her past commitment to ARCLIB and to wish her every success for the future.

Joan Shaw
Liverpool John Moores University

Thanks to: *Margaret Black*

It was as ARCLIB members tucked heartily into the delicious and generous Irish hospitality at the 1993 Belfast conference I first met and chatted with Maggie Black. She too must have enjoyed that conference, because I can't recall her having missed any subsequent ones. After visiting Edinburgh and Cardiff the conference venue moved to Liverpool, and it was here that Maggie became an ARCLIB speaker for the first time.

Talent scouts are always looking for in-house colleagues whose experiences might be worth describing to others, but even Maggie was surprised how quickly word spread that she had been involved in running a *Priority Search* package for evaluating customers at the Redland and St. Matthias campuses of the University of the West of England. She had been helping study user needs, with a view to planning where library resources could best be directed. (You can read her findings in the Proceedings of the Seventh Conference, p.3.)

One of the disadvantages for Maggie is that she works near a beautiful area of the country, and so it wasn't long before her ability to help organise a conference, and share the treasures of this locality with the ARCLIB membership, was put to the test. Those who attended the Burwalls Conference Centre, situated by the side of the great Clifton Suspension Bridge, will remember what an excellent event it was, with peaceful residences, warm weather, and especially memorable visits to the Architecture Centre on the harbourside, the inventive Eco-Home and the Create Centre, which we accessed from a bracing River Avon cruise, passing Brunel's SS *Great Britain* en route.

In order to facilitate the organisation and planning of such a conference, it was desirable to co-opt Maggie onto the Committee late in 1997. When the rest of the Committee viewed the potential facilities in Bristol early in 1998, it was Maggie and Helen Price who generously made their cars available and took us : around the city

sites, gave us a tour of the main UWE library, and took us back to Parkway Railway Station, for our homeward journeys.

Maggie was encouraged to remain on the Committee after this event, so that the benefit of her views and by now useful experience could be called upon. She does not push herself into the limelight easily, but has been a faithful help whenever needed, and we shall greatly miss this, and her occasional flashes of quiet humour.

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*A Newcastle landmark: the Northern Goldsmiths clock
described by Cyril Winskell in his introduction to
Newcastle-upon-Tyne at the ARCLIB 2000 Conference*

The ARCLIB Bulletin

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Jonathan Berry and Sylvia Harris will be editors of the ARCLIB Bulletin from issue no.11. Please send articles or letters for future issues to Jonathan at the address

below. Text should be sent in Word97 or below, or as an ASCII file. Images are welcome.

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