

ARCLIB BULLETIN No.3: CONFERENCE EDITION SEPTEMBER 1994

NEWS

EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE LIBRARIANS CONVERGE ON EDINBURGH

This delayed third issue of the Bulletin is published to coincide with the 1994 (7th) ARCLIB conference in Edinburgh on 13-16 September. ARCLIB is this year hosting an international event, the 1994 conference assuming the grand title of 5th European Architecture Librarians' Conference. The conference has attracted wide interest, with colleagues expected from Denmark, Norway, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Sweden as well as the home countries.

As previously announced, the theme of the conference is networking: electronic networks and links of all kinds between professional colleagues both within and between countries. There will be an international forum in which representatives from the above countries outline the efforts being made towards co-operative services and data exchange. This will be followed on the final day by a session on the future of international links.

Electronic developments will be fully monitored, with sessions on the Internet and on the development of an architecture gopher at Oxford Brookes University, plus updates on the latest CD-ROM services - including Avery, API and the new version of URBADISC - as well as exhibitions of various electronic and printed services, as listed below.

If you are reading this as a delegate in Edinburgh, may I take this opportunity from the Editor's chair to welcome you to the conference and express the hope that you will find it rewarding and enjoyable. If you are not able to attend the conference, you will of course find a full account in the next issue of the Bulletin.

CONFERENCE SPONSORS

Thanks in no small part to the persuasive powers of outgoing ARCLIB Chair Catherine Tranmer, the conference has attracted support from a number of sponsors, some of whom will be exhibiting products and materials in Edinburgh. Likely sponsors include Swets, Barbour, Technical Indexes, BCQ, Oxford University Press, Bowker Saur, Butterworth Heinemann and Inch's Books of York.

CONFERENCE TO GET FIRST GLIMPSE OF API?

Many colleagues are perhaps wondering whether to subscribe now to the Avery Index on CD-ROM or to wait to see what the RIBA come up with in the electronic version of Architectural Periodicals Index (API). For delegates to the Edinburgh conference the wait, we hope, is almost over! A demonstration of the product is provisionally programmed for Thursday morning, in the practical session, which will also include demonstrations of Avery and URBADISC.

Whilst on the subject, apologies are due for our failure to include in this issue of the Bulletin the promised review of Avery. It is now hoped that reviews of both Avery and API will appear in the next issue. In the meantime it may be worth reporting that comments on Avery, which have reached the editorial office, range from unenthusiastic to extremely critical!

1995 CONFERENCE GOES TO WALES

The 1995 ARCLIB conference will be held in Cardiff. The conference will be held earlier in the year than of late; this arises partly from availability of committee members but also because it was felt that some members might be permanently disadvantaged if the conference was held at the same (inconvenient) time each year. The 1995 conference will be 4-6 July. Sylvia Harris of the Welsh School of Architecture will be the organiser of the conference which, to Sylvia's immense relief, will be a smaller scale affair than this year's international event.

COMMITTEE DEPARTURES

ARCLIB Chair Catherine Tranmer and secretary Karen Latimer will finally step down from the Committee at the AGM to be held during the Edinburgh Conference, having first indicated their intention to do so even before the previous 1993 conference. The existence of ARCLIB is due to Catherine's initial efforts to draw together a group of interested colleagues for the initial, informal meeting in Oxford. Both she and Karen are extremely capable and energetic and ARCLIB owes them a large debt of gratitude.

Fortunately, it appears that there are colleagues who are willing to fill the vacant places in Committee so with hard work the advances made during the past few years will be sustained, following the departure of these two founding Committee members. The Bulletin is glad to report that Catherine, at least, has hinted that she may consider returning to the Committee at a later date.

HAVANA GREAT TIME: ARCLIB MEMBER HITS CUBA

Just when most of the Cuban population were desperately trying to leave, ARCLIB Committee member Sylvia Harris flew into Havana to give a paper at the 60th IFLA

General Conference, the theme of which was 'Libraries and Society'. Sylvia's paper, which was given in the Arts section of the conference, was entitled 'Into the 21st century: the architecture librarian as mediator'. What lies behind this intriguing title will be revealed in the next issue of the Bulletin, which will carry the paper in full.

UNION SERIALS LIST NEARING COMPLETION

Entry of data into the ARCLIB serials database has now been completed (insofar as any task of this kind is ever completed, given the ever-changing state of periodicals subscription lists). Thanks are due to Colin Ball, formerly Architecture Librarian at Kent Institute of Art and design, who voluntarily took on the unenviable task of converting data from members' forms into the substantive database. A draft list will be distributed at the Edinburgh conference, following which copies will go to those members not attending the conference. In addition to the full list, members will receive a list of their own holdings as listed in the database, so that they can easily notify the editor of any necessary changes.

Final decisions concerning publications policy will be taken by the Committee, hopefully at their autumn meeting, and it is hoped that publication of the 'final' version will be some time early in the new year. It is expected that an electronic version of the data will be available, at least to ARCLIB members.

LOGO COMPETITION PRIZE GOES TO LA VILLETTE

The competition to design a logo for ARCLIB has been won by Alexandru Minoiu, a student from l'Ecole d'Architecture de la Villette. This somewhat surprising outcome arises from the fact that Alexandru was an Erasmus student at Oxford Brookes at the time the competition was held.

The competition in fact attracted a very poor response. To some this was rather surprising, given the £50 prize and the reported state of most student finances. However, there are many competitions available to architecture students and, as we all know, architecture courses are extremely intensive, allowing little time for extra curricular activities. Perhaps architecture students are better off than most; certainly one student in Portsmouth, having inspected our poster, was heard to say "Is that all?" with respect to the £50 prize!

Unfortunately technical limitations and lack of time prevent us from revealing the winning design in this issue of the Bulletin but Catherine Tranmer has been working hard on it in Oxford and the logo should make an appearance on the Conference documentation. The logo consists of a classical arch in which is incorporated the outline of an open book. It is hoped that by the time the Bulletin next appears the logo will have been incorporated into all ARCLIB stationery.

COMMITTEE NEWS

At its latest meeting, held in York in May, the dominant issue under discussion was, of course, arrangements for the Edinburgh conference. Other matters discussed included the venue for the 1995 conference, committee elections, the logo competition, Union serials list, dissertations database, ARCLIB directory and future arrangements for ARCLIB membership. Most of these are discussed elsewhere in this issue of the Bulletin. In the (unlikely?) event that anyone wishes to see full minutes of the Committee meetings, they are of course welcome to do so by contacting the Secretary, currently Karen Latimer of Queens University Belfast.

ARCLIB DIRECTORY

One of the projects being nursed by the Committee is a directory of members containing details about each Library, its staff, stock and services. Keith Parker has been working on a questionnaire to go to members with a view to gathering the necessary information. The second draft of this will be discussed by the Committee at its next meeting, and it is hoped that the questionnaire will go out to members in the near future.

SUBJECT LIBRARIANS NEVER ...

*How old is Catherine Tranmer? This was the question in the minds of Committee members when it was revealed that Catherine had this year celebrated (?) 25 years as a librarian in what is now Oxford Brookes University. Here Catherine looks back on her 25 _____ * years.*

(* A small prize is offered for the suggestor of the best word to fill this space)

25 years - ramblings of a library geriatric

On 1 January 1994 I celebrated 25 years of employment with this institution. Initially I was employed as assistant librarian, fresh from library school, by the Oxford College of Technology. My duties were to catalogue and classify all the 'pamphlets', and in addition to help the Librarian with the "Selected Index of Periodical articles", which he had started, in order to fill the gap in coverage of art, architecture, social science and urban planning literature. We indexed about 70 titles, and the resultant monthly publication had a circulation of about 60, including a subscriber in Australia. The Library staff numbered 6, there were 16,000 books in stock, and 1,600 students, many of whom were part-time, craft and evening class students. (Compare that with a current staff of 64, a stock of 260,000+ books and a student population of over 11,000 bodies).

It scarcely seems believable that I have been here so long. It has certainly been very rewarding, and in spite of momentary flutters when it seemed a good idea to move on, I can't say I regret having stayed here. There have been so many good, funny and interesting times, as well as the (predictably) miserable or difficult ones. Most of these

have been caused by students -like the time they brought a sheep into the library during Rag Week, or the time I caught a planning student in a study carrel with his girlfriend - he had his shirt off (because she was rubbing his bad back, he told me, and I of course believed him). After the SU bar opened in 1971 in a closet on the same floor as the Library entrance, they were always very good at fetching me half a lager and lime as I staffed the counter on my late night, alone till 9pm!

It was very exciting when we got the first Poly computer -a throwout from Loughborough University, and all of 64k of it, which took up the whole ground floor of the architecture block and required constant feeding with large piles of 80 column punched cards. Its operating system was called 'George IV' which always seemed friendly to me.

When we installed the security system we employed part-time married ladies to go through and 'protect' the stock. "We're the buggers", they announced proudly to anyone venturing into Interloans, whose premises they shared. The system required 'role-playing' as part of a training programme to show library assistants how to deal with potential thieves who alarmed the system. It was memorable since we all seized the opportunity to be really rude 'students' to the deputy librarian, who showed us how to be polite but firm!

That was all 'leading edge' stuff at the time - now we're on the kerb of the information superhighway, without a map of course, and getting ready to shoot off in any direction which looks interesting.

At Oxford Brookes we are given £170 after 25 years service, and also a party. When I asked how many people I could invite (I do know a few now), I was told that if Catering Services were organising it, I could invite 14 people, since the amount allocated was £119 (?). So in the end it was a DIY party, with help from my Exoset (the Excellent Organisation of Secretaries and Technicians) friends in the School of Architecture. What I should have really liked would have been a few days extra leave and a reserved car parking place, since I will clearly soon be too frail to stagger more than a few yards from the car each morning.

And that's it now - no more perks, jollies or goodies from OBU, however long I stay now. It's like they're saying "OK, 25 years, that's very good, but that's your lot." Interestingly, librarians in architecture do seem to stay a long time - look at the rest of the ARCLIB committee! I could stay another 17 years, but I only need to stay another 12 to match our recently retired colleague at the School in Barcelona, who ran her library for 37 years and finally retired, leaving it in the capable hands of her brother-in-law! What is the Catalan for 'nepotism'?

Or perhaps I'll try something completely different. According to my horoscope my life is in a period of great change (something to do with Pluto in my mid-heaven I think). A new career may be different, it would be hard to make it better than the one I've had, or more enjoyable anyway.

IMAGES OF GLASGOW: PHOTO CD-ROM

At last year's Belfast seminar, there was considerable interest in the emergence of Photo-CD as a medium for the storage and display of photographic images. This year's conference will see the launch of *Glasgow on Disc*, an easy-to-use architectural CD ROM which has been developed by Robert Anderson and David Buri of Glasgow School of Art Library, and which uses this new technology.

The CD comprises around 250 full-colour images of 150 of Glasgow's finest buildings from the medieval era to the present. An easy-to-use point and click interface enables retrieval by architect's name, building name, building type, street and date. On-screen textual information about each architect and building is provided. The images are copyright-free and can be viewed on screen, printed out, or downloaded to disk for incorporation into other documents.

The product will run on a suitably configured Apple Macintosh computer, and a PC version will also be developed. If you would like further information, please phone David on 041-353-4701 or Robert on 041-353-4700.

ARCLIB MEMBERSHIP: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

As ARCLIB becomes better known, more and more enquiries are being received from people who would like to join the group. Initially interest came mainly from colleagues working in related fields in higher education: building and engineering librarians, for instance. More recently, however, the interest has broadened, with, for example, enquiries from freelance information workers and library staff at NBS.

Up until now our policy has been fairly clear. ARCLIB was formed because there was a perception that similar groups such as CIIG or ARLIS failed to meet the particular needs of architecture librarians in higher education. In order to keep this particular quality we have limited membership to this small group, whilst indicating that others are welcome to attend our conference.

The situation has become further complicated by the publication of the Bulletin. Many friends of ARCLIB have up until now received this free, though nominally there is a charge of £5 per annum for non-members. The question must be asked however (and has been by the treasurer) whether it is worth the effort of collecting this small sum. It is possible that some form of associate membership, entitling the holder to receive the Bulletin, might be the answer. The problem here, however, is that full members only pay £10 per annum at present - so what do we charge associate members?

The resolution of these questions will be an important item for the AGM to be held in Edinburgh in September. Watch this space!

DISSERTATIONS PROJECT: COTAC PROPOSALS

The appeal for dissertation data which appeared in the last issue of the Bulletin has elicited a distinctly underwhelming response. Let's be honest, the response was nil. Why was this? Presumably either no-one has dissertation records in any electronic form - hard to believe - or colleagues simply haven't the time to organise and send a copy.

ARCLIB still aims to compile a dissertations database, however. A boost may be given to the project by an approach which has been received from COTAC, the organisation of trainers in building conservation. COTAC wishes to create a database of conservation dissertations, and asked ARCLIB for advice. As a result, a funding proposal has been put together which would involve a research assistant, based at the University of Portsmouth and trained in the use of Pro-Cite software by Ian Mayfield, visiting institutions in which conservation courses are offered to gather data on their dissertations.

Clearly COTAC's constituency is not the same as ARCLIB's but there are some areas of overlap and if the bid is successful, this would represent a useful start to the process of compiling a dissertations database. ARCLIB would seek ways to build on this beginning, perhaps by applying to RIBA or other relevant bodies for further funding to gather data in Schools of Architecture.

IRISH ARCHITECTURAL DATABASE PROJECT

The Architecture and Planning Library at The Queen's University of Belfast embarked recently on a project to set up a computer based bibliographic database on architectural, planning and environmental information in Ireland. Grant aid was originally obtained from a number of charitable foundations and more recently a British Library grant was received to enable the project to go forward.

The database will provide access to books, journal and newspaper articles, reports, theses, local plans, conservation area and environmental impact studies. The database will be used by staff and students of the University and researchers and practitioners in the wider community. The objectives of the project are:-

- a) to encourage collection and dissemination of local environmental information.
- b) to develop computer-based information retrieval and information management skills.
- c) to improve links between students and practitioners in the identification, collection and dissemination of data.

In the long term it is hoped to co-operate with University College Dublin in providing an all Ireland database.

The material to be included in the database contains information not available elsewhere and not systematically collected or recorded in national or European bibliographies and databases. Information on Irish architecture and planning is not easily accessible to researchers and practitioners because of a lack of good finding tools and because of the nature of the material. A lot of useful information is produced in small runs of what is essentially grey literature. It is hard to locate and quickly goes out of print. As well as recording and making available material already collected, it is hoped that the establishment and promotion of the database will facilitate the collection and donation of more of this sort of material, which is hard to trace.

Three postgraduate students are currently inputting data from the existing card catalogue. They are using Filemaker Pro which is the package also used by University College Dublin. There are limitations to this database package and an alternative may have to be considered at some stage.

Bibliographic references are provided and indexing terms assigned using the Getty "Art and Architecture Thesaurus" with local adaptations. Future plans include developing a full database and possibly optical imaging. It is hoped eventually to network the database. Anyone wanting more information on the project or with useful advice to offer, should contact Karen Latimer at the Science Library, Queen's - University of Belfast.

This edition of the ARCLIB Bulletin was edited by Ian Mayfield and published by him at the University of Portsmouth. Comments, complaints and copy for future issues to Ian, please, at the Frewen Library, University of Portsmouth, Cambridge Road. Portsmouth, Hants., PO1 2ST. Tel 0705 843239~ fax 0705 843233. Email cbs%uk.ac.portsmouth.csovax::mayfieldi
