

ARCLIB BULLETIN 5

JANUARY 1996

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFERENCE 1996 GOES TO LIVERPOOL IN JULY

The 1996 ARCLIB conference will be held in Liverpool, at Liverpool John Moores University on 10-12 July. The theme for the conference is '**Finding and meeting users needs**'; this gives us the chance to look back at user education, which was a theme of the very first ARCLIB conference in 1988. Much has changed in the Library world since then and it will be useful to look, for example, at the demands placed on the user education effort by the growth of CD-ROM and other electronic services. It should also be interesting to see approaches to meeting users needs in the new Learning Resources Centre at John Moores. Apart from user education, topics to be covered include user surveys and the related issue of performance indicators; marketing the library; and making a case for more resources. Details and booking forms will be sent out shortly.

FRENCH CONFERENCE ALSO JULY

In the latter half of 1995 reports reached us that the 1996 seminar of the French architecture school librarians would be, in part at least, an international event (see Catherine Tranmer's report on Clermont Ferrand 1995 on page 5). This caused some excitement in ARCLIB circles, especially since the seminar will this year be held in Paris. The bad news, however, is that this too will be in July, which creates logistic and financial problems for most of us. Exact dates for Paris are not yet known - what price July 10-12??

COMMITTEE NEWS

At last year's AGM in Cardiff Sylvia Harris relinquished her place on the ARCLIB Committee. Ian Mayfield, who was due to stand down at the same time, agreed to serve for one more year. Volunteers to replace Sylvia (admittedly a hard task) were conspicuous by their absence: at the AGM John Thomas of South Bank University allowed himself to be pressed into service but subsequently a willing volunteer has emerged, enabling John to exercise his opt-out clause! The new member, whom we are pleased to welcome, is Chris Hagar of Newcastle University. Chris is a relatively new

member and we look forward to getting to know her better.

Sylvia's departure was appropriately timed, coming as it did during the excellent conference which she arranged at Cardiff last July. A resumé of the conference appears on page 4; it is hoped that full proceedings will appear in due course.

We are pleased to say that Sylvia's talents are not lost to ARCLIB: see the next two items!

ARCLIB REPRESENTED ON RIBA PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE COMMITTEE

During the discussion which followed Stanley Cox's thought-provoking paper at last year's conference (see p. 4) it was suggested that ARCLIB should be represented on the RIBA's Professional Literature Committee. To his great credit, Stanley took up this suggestion with the Committee, who gave their approval. Since Sylvia Harris has worked with Stanley Cox at the Welsh School of Architecture for a number of years, it seemed appropriate to ask Sylvia to represent the Group on this Committee, a proposal to which she agreed.

To have a voice 'on the inside' represents a major achievement for the group and should provide valuable opportunities to make our views known. Sylvia reports that the Committee proposes in future to circulate its book list to ARCLIB members rather than (or perhaps as well as) to Heads of schools, in order to enhance the prospect of its

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giving due consideration. Having achieved presentation on the Committee, it's important that ARCLIB shows its mettle by means of a vigorous response from the membership - so, when you get your copy of the list, please try to ensure that Sylvia gets plenty of feedback. Let her know your views both about the items included and others which you feel might usefully be added.

Sylvia may be contacted on 01222 874000, extension 5975; email harris@cardiff.ac.uk.

SYLVIA HERE, SYLVIA THERE.....

Another ARCLIB responsibility taken on recently by Sylvia Harris (good job she's left the Committee!) is that of representing ARCLIB at ARLIS Committee meetings. More on this in a future issue.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

ARCLIB membership continues to grow. There are now only five UK and Irish Schools of Architecture which are not current members. The latest recruit is the Prince of Wales School, whose Librarian is Alan Powers. We hope to meet Alan at future conferences. Associate membership has also expanded, extending to our first overseas member, Sidsel Moum of Oslo. Latest associate member is Felicity Gilmour of the National Monuments Record Centre in Swindon.

A full list of all full and associate members is given in the membership list which you should receive with this Bulletin. On the subject of the list, the Committee has discussed the possibility of selling the list, following a number of enquiries from prospective purchasers (publishers). After considering practice elsewhere (e.g. ARLIS), the Committee agreed that a price of £20 for a straight listing or £40 for labels would be appropriate to start with. We should, however, be glad to hear members' views on whether the list should be sold at all and, if so, whether this price is about right. Views to Ian Mayfield on 01705 843239 (email mayfield@libr.port.ac.uk).

COMINGS AND GOINGS.....

Well, mostly goings actually, with a coming in prospect. We were sorry to hear that Mary Nixon has left the RIBA to join the British Society. Mary has been a regular at ARCLIB conferences, which she says she has much enjoyed. Her successor is not known at time of writing.

At the University of North London, Linda Gray is on maternity leave. In her absence the job is being done by Kate Jones (email kjones@unl.ac.uk). Our good wishes go to Linda for the big event.

ARCLIB-L ELECTRONIC MAIL FACILITY

Long-standing ARCLIB members (or at least those who were active electronically) will remember that at an early stage we attempted to set up an electronic mail facility for members, based on the Vax machine at the University of Portsmouth. This never really worked well, for reasons which never became clear.

However, there is now an electronic mail facility available which appears to be robust and reliable. Based in Venice, it is an international facility which has a wide readership. This has some disadvantages: a call for nominations to ARCLIB Committee members posted by Julia Barrett elicited at least one response from overseas!. However, provided that messages intended only for U.K. readers are clearly labelled as such, this facility is a useful means of contacting many ARCLIB colleagues at once - and, of course, it gives us the wider contacts too.

Many ARCLIB members (19, according to Catherine Tranmer) use the list already. For those who don't but would wish to do so, instructions for joining and sending messages are as follows:

To subscribe (i.e. to receive a copy of any message sent to the list), send an email to:

listserv@icineca.cineca.it

with the following text:

subscribe ARCLIB-L <your name and surname>

If you are not familiar with listserv, you should read the file which you will receive after your subscription.

To send a message to all the people currently subscribed to the list, just send your message to:

ARCLIB-L@ICINECA.CINECA.IT.

PRODUCT REVIEW: ARCHITECTURAL PUBLICATIONS ON DISC (APId):

There has been considerable discussion about the relative merits of the two bibliographic databases in architecture, i.e. Avery Index and APId. Colleagues are understandably anxious to reach an informed decision about which of the two to buy (since few can afford to buy both). Considerations extend not only to content and price but also to networkability. We had intended some time ago to publish a review of Avery (the first of the two to appear); however, our reviewer has not delivered as promised. However, some comments on Avery appear in a review of APId which

Catherine Tranmer has written for the AJ. This is expected to appear on 15 February, but the Bulletin is happy to bring you, with the permission of the AJ's Editor, this exclusive preview of Catherine's review.

APId (Architectural Publications Index on Disc) RIBA Publications, quarterly updated, 1995. COVERS ARTICLES 1978-1995 Price £700 per annum (RIBA members/educational institutions £560)

CD-ROMs are now almost commonplace, offering previously undreamed-of facilities to researchers. The technology has been successfully used in libraries to automate paper indexes of periodical article references, and the resulting databases have been greeted enthusiastically by librarians and library users alike, since not only do they save the searcher the burden of ploughing through annual volumes of paper indexes, but, at a relatively low cost, they offer different ways of accessing bibliographical references which paper cannot offer. The cost and connection difficulties associated with older online searching of remote databases often meant that academic libraries in particular were unable to take much advantage of computerised databases although recently the development of the Internet has made online searching easier.

In paper format the Architectural Periodicals Index (API) has always been very popular with both librarians and library users, having assisted the quest for knowledge, precedents and material for student projects for over 30 years. Although its US equivalent, the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals, is bigger and indexes more periodicals, many of them are not easy to find in the UK. Avery uses different terminology (gas stations etc.) and spelling (theaters) to our practice and takes up more room on library shelves (more than five times the space API consumes). API, on the other hand, is indexed from the stock of the British Architectural Library at the RIBA, so we know that all items in it are accessible. It is constructed in our own language, to a highly professional indexing standard, has useful 'people and places' indexes at the back of the annual volumes and, more recently, includes books added to the BAL's stock.

Both these indexes have recently become available on CD-ROM, and inevitably the comparisons are interesting. It has to be said that neither employs particularly good software, and one wonders whether the producers of either seriously examined any other similar products before deciding to write their own software (Avery) or utilise a commercial text retrieval package not tailor-made for this type of product (APId). Much current CD-ROM database software is fast, user-friendly and effective, and those of us who have been using other databases in the area of the built environment, especially ICONDA (International Construction Database) and Urbadisc, now find that

the two architecture ones we have been waiting for do not compare favourably with these for different reasons. Avery is very quick, but is often ineffective because in free text

searching it cannot search strings - this means that a concept like 'urban design' is difficult to search for because the software will retrieve 'urban' AND 'design' resulting in large numbers of irrelevant references. It is also irritating to retrieve references from obscure magazines, but for simple searches it is quick and easy. Some academic libraries have networked it, and report that students are using it happily with a minimum of guidance. It is easy to print out (3 refs per A4 page), and to download references for use later, but in common with the printed version, updates are quite slow to appear. At an initial cost of £765 + subsequently lower annual charge of £385 it works out cheaper than APId within 2 or 3 years. *

APId is much more sophisticated, and offers many facilities which would take too long for many users to get to grips with. The *Idealist* software employed by APId has apparently won prizes, but it is overcomplicated for this purpose, and as a result distracts the searcher from finding the information required. It operates in Windows (the other products mentioned operate in DOS), so it looks good, being well-designed with appropriate use of colour and fonts, and the references are easy to decipher. Additionally there is a valuable synonym control which allows the user to retrieve both synonyms and alternate forms/spellings of keywords. What it is not is quick and easy - in fact it seems slow, taking over 30 seconds to load (when 6-12 seconds is the norm on other CDs). Default searching also seems sluggish - a search on 'Scarpa and Venice' took less than 1 second to process on both Avery and ICONDA, but 13 seconds in expert search mode on APId; 'solar heating' took 5 seconds on ICONDA (806 references), less than 1 second on Avery (139 references), but APId (600 references) had to be interrupted after 4 minutes when it still had not finished processing. Unaccountably, retrieved records are listed in chronological order starting with the oldest, but this can be reversed with a bit of fiddling around.

There are alternative options or faster searching but all the bells and whistles mean getting side-tracked into learning how to use the software instead of tracing information sources. Use the 'Print' button and each of your references will be printed on a separate A4 sheet, which seems wasteful; download them, and the results are visually confusing and require editing in your word processing package to become intelligible. (There are other options for downloading, but these are time-consuming to create.) Furthermore, unless users have special needs, good basic default formats should be the norm in a package like this. Trying to teach customers to use this package is not easy, even for our university,

CARDIFF CONFERENCE: RESUME

which uses the same software in a more simple form for its own databases. The 60 page user manual is very detailed, but the reality is that users don't really want to read about it, but to do it, reflecting the necessity for good on screen instructions. On the brighter side, there will be four updates per year of APId, to make it much more current than Avery, and it can be networked at no extra charge (provided you have a 32 bit network which many of us do not!).

So those of us in higher education who have long awaited the release of this package feel a bit disappointed that a better job has not been done with API. The frustrating thing is that the information behind the software is so important, and is keenly sought by users in the academic world, but they don't want to jump through hoops to get it. Perhaps RIBA Publications will be prepared to take our comments into account and amend and simplify future versions.

Catherine Tranmer
Architecture & Planning Librarian
Oxford Brookes University

*Avery on Disc (COVERS ARTICLES FROM 1979-1995) available from Thompson Henry, tel: 01322 24615

[Postscript: Since writing this in December, I have discovered that some customizing of APId is possible. For example, it is possible to remove the one record per page print option, and keep only the 'print out all marked records without page breaks' and 'print out all records without pagebreaks' print options. It is also possible to remove buttons which are not required. If anyone would be interested, I am prepared to write up the alterations we have made here, in order to simplify APId application.]

Ian Mayfield adds: At Portsmouth we plumped for APId because, being an RIBA product, it gives a closer match to the journals we have or can get easily; and because I wasn't impressed with a brief view of Avery - not least the fact that there appeared to be no specific means of searching for a named architect (but it was a brief look and maybe I missed it). At Portsmouth we have a central library with a site library in the School of Architecture. For this reason we network APId so that it can be accessed from the Architecture Library. Networking presented no real problems except that it is very, very slow.

We should be glad to hear from any reader who has Avery and would be willing to write a full review for the next Bulletin. Finally, colleagues may be interested to know that it is possible to search Avery in a rather crude fashion via the Internet: the URL is http://www.ahip.getty.edu/ahip/Text_multidb-form.html

The 1995 seminar, on the theme of the role of publishing in architecture, was held in Cardiff on 4-6 July and organised by Sylvia Harris of the Welsh School of Architecture. Sylvia ensured we were extremely well looked after, wined and dined and entertained, and she arranged for exhibitions and displays to be available for us to view between listening to a wide range of speakers who approached the theme from many different angles.

Stanley Cox described the work of the RIBA Professional Literature Committee, of which he is chairman, and he went on to list his concerns about professional literature which include reading lists which fail to be short, up to date and co-ordinated with examinations. He questioned if architects buy or read books and asked how they obtain information, especially when, in times of recession, the practice library is often the first thing to go. He wondered if RIBA should be meeting these needs.

Maggie Toy was an architect before entering publishing and becoming managing editor of the Academy Group. She argued that although a photograph of a building cannot take the place of a visit, it can spark off the interest to make that visit. Books are important for pictures, text, critical analysis and the transmission of a range of ideas. She described various architectural series published by Academy - one based on RIBA drawings including lesser known architects, and one from the TV series 'Building Sites'. She believes it is not the task of the publisher to educate architects but to make material available.

Dr Catherine Cooke, an expert on Russian architecture who moved to the Open University from Cambridge with the ambition of teaching everyone about architecture, believes there is a need for architectural understanding for all students of the built environment and architectural publishing should be aimed at a wider audience than just students of architecture. She suggested that books on architecture should be available in DIY stores and supermarkets to spread the 'value added' message. The problem of communication was mentioned, how architects often find drawings easier to understand than text, and how publishers must use the most accessible form in order to be read.

An ex-student from Brighton, Sacha Cole, talked about the journal 'Archetype' which he founded in October 1993 as a result of frustration with the lack of communication between schools of architecture; the fact that many articles were not written for students, but over their heads; and because he found college too restrictive with no room for debate. So far Archetype has been published irregularly, with the

in of twice a term. It is free to students, financed by sponsorship and advertising and is shortly to appear on the internet as well as in its printed form to be a forum of debate for 9000 students of architecture, and to show them alternative options for their skills.

Paul Finch, editor of Architects' Journal, spoke of present and future prospects of architectural publishing. In a brief history of AJ, he explained how in the last 20 years, as an increasing number of journals have been competing in the same field, AJ has become a hybrid journal with 60% of its readers not being architects. He talked of partnering between publishers and professional bodies and of the impact of technology. He believes that AJ has an aesthetic quality of its own, more effective than a screen image, and that journals are reflectors and sponges rather than influences.

'Retrospective on diffusion and insularity' was the daunting title of Christopher Powell's talk. A lecturer at the Welsh School of Architecture, he claimed that academic journals have more keen contributors than readers and the aim is often to get published rather than read. He talked of diffusion of ideas through journals and insularity in the readership. He said the function of publishing was to help designers by providing inspiration, ideas and technical information. He concluded by explaining with the aid of charts how diffusion of ideas in earlier centuries was much slower than today.

'Giving it all away - publishing on the internet' by Jonathan Moberley from Ellipsis London Ltd., caused great interest. The two speakers have a background in publishing including guides to contemporary architecture, and are planning to publish 'The history of architecture' on CD-ROM as, being cheaper to produce than a paper version, more funding can go into the content and structure of the information.

They demonstrated a CD-ROM showing panoramic views of cities and another of an interior view of the inside of a model of a new concert hall, both made up of lots of photographs joined together, and both views not possible on the printed page. Ellipsis now has a home page on the internet - <http://www.gold.net/ellipsis/>. The advantages include no distribution costs and lots of feedback, it enables experimentation and allows the structure to grow and take shape according to need, also bits can be sliced off for CD-ROMs, books, etc. They listed 7 ways of making money from the internet: sponsorship, advertising, exhibition work, paper view (pay per page), closed access subscriptions, open access subscriptions (paid for by institutions) and research grants.

Richard Hayward and Sue McGlynn from Oxford Brookes University and Keith Silver from Spon Chapman Hall were there to speak about 'Urban

Design International - a new journal with electronic dimensions'. The work of the Joint Centre for Urban Design at Oxford was described, and as a result of the need for more networking which was discovered after researching into the profiles of ex-students, something electronic was considered to network good practice. The journal is intended to be interactive with people contributing ideas. It is the first electronic journal for Chapman Hall/Spon and they generously agreed for ARCLIB members to be able to subscribe at student rate for the first year. The advantages of electronic publishing are desk access, being easy to search and rapid to publish.

A member of ARCLIB, Dr John Thomas, faculty librarian for architecture and civil engineering at South Bank University in his paper titled 'The librarian publishes' gave a personal account of his experiences in publishing. John has written a number of books and articles on the subject of church architecture.

The final afternoon consisted of a guided tour of Cardiff Bay, including a visit to Paul Koralek's new Quest Centre.

My third ARCLIB seminar was certainly as enjoyable, interesting and informative as those in Belfast and Edinburgh, where Karen Latimer and Pamela Masters set such high standards. The fact that everything ran so smoothly and everyone enjoyed it all so much showed how much work and preparation Sylvia must have put into organising the event, and all of us who attended appreciated it very much.

Margaret Black, Subject Librarian for the Faculty of the Built Environment University of the West of England, Bristol.

CLERMONT FERRAND IN THE SPRING...

Report on the seminaire of the French documentalists, 29-31 March 1995

The seminar was attended by Ian Mayfield and Catherine Tranmer and was held in the interesting town of Clermont-Ferrand, which combines the towns of Clermont and Montferrand. The former is the larger industrial town known for its Michelin tyre factories, the latter a mediaeval town with many interesting buildings. Local architectural features include the construction of many building in the black volcanic stone of the area (where Volvic water comes from), and a particularly interesting local version of romanesque church architecture. The seminar was well-organised by Pompeya Bellot and her staff at the Clermont-Ferrand school, and we foreigners were made particularly welcome.

a welcome by the Head of School, Jaques Faye, a repeat of her Edinburgh paper about the need for a European association of architecture librarians Mariagrazia Ghelardi (Florence), the programme devoted the first day to the rights of authors, the first paper being a two and a quarter hour marathon by Mme de Faultrier-Travers, a lawyer, who spoke continuously and without notes in French which was too rapid for us! She explained the new French copyright law, the European directives concerned with document loans and the regulations pertaining to electronic databases. She was followed in the afternoon by Mme Palluel, who spoke about authors' rights regarding audiovisual materials. It would appear that we share the same problems of control over library users' copying recorded and photographic material. The following speaker, M. Rollin, of SCAM (Societe Civile des Auteurs Multimedia), advocated, amongst other things, that librarians should stand next to photocopying machines and record what students copy! Needless to say, this caused something of a storm amongst the audience.

The second day was a day of visits. In the morning there was a choice of a guided tour of the old town of Montferrand, or one to the cathedral and the old market. An Auvergnat lunch at a traditional mountain inn preceded a spectacular drive through the volcanic landscape and visits to three of the special romanesque churches mentioned above. The first was set on a man-made platform in the small town of Orcival which is built from the black volcanic stone. Conferees were bemused by M. Trilloux, a writer on the symbolism of religious places, who acted as guide, and who introduced us to the church, built on an ancient Druid site, by using his dowsing rods to demonstrate the location of energy lines and centres. Following our return to town, the School of Architecture offered us supper and a chance to see contenders from the local festival of celebrated short films.

The final day's round of papers included updates on the cooperative projects which the French documentalists are engaged in. We learnt that their database, ARCHIRES, is included on the 1995 Urbadisc CD-ROM, but needs a special password to allow access. Since at present the schools, on the whole, do not have Internet access, participants were interested to hear about the cooperative server in Grenoble, set up by the University and Science park to which the Grenoble school has access. The new database software, Isaplus, issued by the Ministere de l'Equipeement for use in the schools' documentation centres was discussed, and we heard how the completion of the Grande Bibliotheque de France will allow the creation of a Grande Bibliotheque d'Art (and architecture) in the old building once its contents have been moved to the new.

The final discussion session finished with the proposition that the French should host an international conference in 1996, possibly in June or July. Watch this space, and keep your dictionaries handy.

Catherine Tranmer/Ian Mayfield

INTO THE 21st CENTURY NOW:
THE ARCHITECTURE LIBRARIAN AS
MEDIATOR

The following is the text of a paper presented to the IFLA Section of Art Libraries at the IFLA Conference at Havana, August 1994, by Sylvia Harris. It is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of Art Libraries Journal, in which it was previously published.

Architects are often unable or unwilling to explore the information which is available to them, and their failure to do so limits the social value of their work. At the Welsh School of Architecture, architects of tomorrow are given training in information research, and practising architects have been given similar training through Continuing Professional Development courses. Architecture libraries have a vital role to play in encouraging and enabling architects to undertake adequate research, utilising the potential of information technology to provide ready access to a widening range of networked information.

My working life of the past 13 years has been spent in Wales, where I have been Architecture Librarian at the Welsh School of Architecture, University College of Wales, Cardiff. The Library, a collection of approximately 20,000 volumes of books, periodicals, reference, technical and trade literature and a growing resource of audio-visual material, is located in the School, at the centre of the campus and Cardiff and is thus well placed as a resource for both students, the academic community of the university and architects in local practice.

Thomas Markus in the introduction to his newest book, *Buildings and Power*, states 'I take the stand that buildings are not primarily art, technical or investment objects but social objects', whether they are good to use or not 'depends on owners, designers, institutions of all kinds and occupants so this must be a question about society'.

The essential social role of architecture is of primary concern to a recession-afflicted architectural profession in Great Britain. In a recent television broadcast Frank Duffy, President of the RIBA said 'what architecture is, is the assembling of physical resources in order to achieve the future'. He asked 'Do we want to imagine what kind of country we

to be in 2010 or no?². He claimed equivocally that the future of the whole of society not be achieved without architects.

The tasks ahead for the RIBA as it sets about to 'redesign our collective future'³ embrace changes in professional orientation and concerns in particular the relationship between architects and the public, architectural education and attitudes to information. These have been detailed in a number of strategic studies published in the last two years.

To take the first, the subject with which I am directly involved, Duffy would like to reverse the findings of the last decade which demonstrate the difficulties architects encounter assessing the knowledge-base available to them. Both Margaret Mackinder and Heather Marvin who researched the role of information, experience and other influences during the design process found as Mackinder says 'a general unwillingness on the part of architects to consult written sources of information partly due to the pressure of time'⁴. My own research in 1989 when I interviewed local architects about the use of information in office design showed 'the use of a narrow band of favourite sources'⁵. The currency of the 'fast-track' method of building which characterised the late 1980's mitigated even further against architects willingness to use the broad spectrum of information available in the design process and it is this trend which is rightly seen as limiting the potential that architecture can offer society.

It is apposite therefore that attention is focused currently on architectural education and the need to equip students with the skills necessary to face a rapidly changing and increasingly pressured world. The information explosion from which architects are known to take flight, like yeast in bread will grow. The vital and indeed transferable skill of learning how to find out is one that can be taught using the library as laboratory, to compliment techniques learnt in the studio and which at best in the words of Julianne Hanson promote 'development of judgement, understanding and self-knowledge, the combination of a personal philosophy, political awareness and ethical viewpoint, which together add up to the beginnings of wisdom'. It is her view that 'the long-term social good of the architectural profession can only be served by a knowledge-base approach to design'⁶. I believe that the librarian who facilitates the preservation, documentation and access to this knowledge has a unique role in fulfilling these educative aims and in the Welsh School of Architecture I have been encouraged to participate in the process. For the last two years I have run a First Year Project providing early lessons in techniques of literature searching and evaluation. Students are required to write an essay on a twentieth century architect of their choice, demonstrating the major

contribution and philosophy of the architect as illustrated in one significant building. Using sources of information in the library, this allows an engagement with architectural precedent and with ideas expressed in the past which perhaps can be given new relevance. The essay carries a mark which contributes to the students final assessments and also forms part of the History and Philosophy examination at this level.

For most First Year students architectural study begins after secondary education and unlike the study of physics or history; there is no coherent programme of relevant study towards the formation of an architect before those developed in institutions of higher education. This would suggest the need for schools of architecture to extend their educative influence beyond the first five-years of architectural.

In Cardiff the Welsh School of Architecture maintains close links with local practices many of whom employ its graduates. It found it natural therefore to expand its responsibility for education into the working lives of its students when approached by a consortium of six Cardiff practices last year to provide Continuing Professional Development or CPD courses. I was invited to speak and chair a discussion group on a session devoted to techniques for making efficient use of technical information. My talk focused attention on useful resources in books and periodical literature and valued the information that the architect carried in his or her head. The course provided the opportunity to demonstrate in the library new electronic information on CD-ROM both bibliographic (ICONDA) and full-text (CIS) and techniques for searching these systems with which practising architects might not yet be familiar.

It is paradoxical that despite recession the tide of information has not stemmed nor the proliferation of research relevant to architecture. However it has meant that few architects can now afford the services of a full-time librarian to document and up-date this information.

Architects recognise that they have to develop strategies to cope themselves. As Frank Duffy urges 'Architects' knowledge needs to be brought up to date, energised, set on fire through anticipating and serving the emerging needs of this decaying society of ours'⁷.

It is exemplary that engaging with and cultivating the knowledge-base of architecture has been given centre stage. This I hope will allay what is tantamount to the guilt architects feel that time spent reading is not time spent designing.

The urgency to harness new developments in information technology to design multi-media information systems which will provide the architect

what he or she requires with speed and efficiency is even greater. There is also a growing recognition of the need to share resources. One possibility debated by the Cardiff Practice Training Group was the deployment via IT of a hierarchy of library provision advancing from personal library to practice library to group library to the WSA library and to the British Architectural library. It is hoped that residing here is the germ of what Ken Allison has described as architecture's 'unique possibility to link and resolve'⁸ which even more optimistically, could facilitate the exploitation of knowledge born of research in related fields to truly fructify the multi-disciplinary character of architecture that it touches all our lives.

Reviewing the progress of the first nine years of the journal *Architecture and Behaviour*, the editor Kaj Noschis in 1989 noted the difficulty of reaching architects as their interest in behaviour had 'atrophied' in his words 'they are unprepared to receive what to the lay person would immediately appear important'⁹. Today Frank Duffy sees the interest of users of buildings as of paramount concern to architects. In his clarion call to the profession he has said 'the architect's role as the defender of clients, users, society's interest in a supply side-dominated construction industry is vital for everyone's future. Defending clients' interests depends on knowledge as well as energy and inspiration, hence the importance of architectural research'¹⁰. Architecture libraries with historical collections and which offer the possibility of multi-disciplinary networking are able to present a diachronic view of research, providing the threads of investigation begun in one decade and abandoned in the next, to be reutilised in another. They are also most likely to hold and reflect the pre-occupations of current research for example those concerning green issues which offer a key opportunity to address the increasing problems of global environmental resources and pollution. A recent survey by Christopher Powell and David Leighton both lecturers in the Welsh School of Architecture conducted because, in their reckoning, green building design 'enjoys much good will among UK architects, as well as consumers and the media', shows that better quality information and easier access to information would provide greater incentives to environmentally conscious design. The survey also highlights the need that architects have to work with clients who have parallel concerns. Let us hope that all the means of information gathering and dissemination, which include libraries and the media, will educate society in the broadest aspect, cutting across national boundaries of their global responsibility.

There is currently a confluence of concern and a convergence of urgency both by the architectural profession and by librarians to harness the opportunities afforded by developments in

information technology which will dominate how the architect and the librarian will work in the future. Both the Joint Funding Council's Libraries Review Group Report and the Report of the Steering Group on Architectural Education note the sea-change in the need for information and IT and both recommend further investment by funding bodies if the full potential in IT is to be realised.

A well-stocked library with the latest electronic resources will not itself answer the problems of society but it can provide a vital locus where the architect might find the patterns of solution.

Only time will demonstrate our measure of success but for now as we approach the millenium at least we must address the challenge of trying.

The philosophers goal as defined by Sir Isaiah Berlin can be ours too when he says 'If there is to be any hope of a rational order on earth, or if a just appreciation of the many various interests that divide diverse groups of human beings - knowledge that is indispensable to any attempt to assess their effect and the patterns of their interplay and its consequences, in order to find viable compromises through which men and women may continue to live and satisfy their desires without thereby crushing the equally central desires and needs of others - it lies in the bringing to light of these models, social, moral, political'¹² (and, may I add, environmental).

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