



Amanda Patton The New AAI&S Chair

I graduated in 1982 with a degree in Textile Design (supporting study in Fine Art) at West Surrey College of Art and Design.

Whilst working on a thesis on an archaeologically related study I saw my first archaeological illustrations and these fell into two groups - the masterly watercolours produced a century ago and those being produced at the time. I was horrified at the standard of the work and determined that I should do something about it (oh, the arrogance of youth!). Immediately on graduating, I was lucky to be given a job as an archaeological illustrator at Mucking, where I learnt a lot in a short space of time and for this I shall always be grateful. I then moved to Birmingham and started working for BUFAU, where I spent a year excavating and then a couple of years leading the MSC Display Team. This was followed by positions at Worcester and Salisbury where I covered the full range of archaeological illustration. I turned freelance in 1988 and in 1992 when the amount of archaeological work available seemed to be in decline I began to supplement the work by taking on commissions in commercial publishing - currently this work accounts for about 75% of my time. Commissions include Reader's Digest, Miller's Antiques, etc and subject matter ranges from gardening, lifestyle, crafts and antiques.

I became a member of the AAI&S in 1983 and a Full Member two years later. I first joined the Council in 1983 and soon took over the role of Secretary. I've seen a lot of changes since that time (some instigated by me) which have made the AAI&S a more professional and effective body. After a break for children, I rejoined the Council last year and am delighted to have been given the honour of becoming Chairman.

I may be more realistic now than in 1982, but it remains my aim to improve standards, professionalism, professional standing and conditions for archaeological illustration and illustrators, and I am sure that a sound knowledge of commercial publishing coupled with 15 years experience in archaeology will prove to be of value in achieving this aim.

I am looking forward to working hard on behalf of our Association.

AAI&S CONFERENCE & AGM, 1997

Like many of our Great Modern Cities, Southampton's signposting is fine if you already know where you're going, and its street naming quite adequate if you already know where you are. For those like me who develop Headless Chicken Syndrome when faced with inner city traffic, actually finding the venue of the 1997 Conference was

not a pleasant experience; but that was the only jarring note in an otherwise enjoyable and valuable weekend.

The full and varied past of Southampton makes it a particularly appropriate venue for this kind of conference. Excavations have explored the Roman port of Clausentum, the large Saxon town

of Hamwic, and the Medieval town, all within the boundaries of the modern city. Matt Garner from the Southampton Museums Service gave us the first taste of this rich and complex picture with a guided tour of the city's remaining Medieval walls, from the massive northern Bargate to the fortified western waterfront.

Subversive sections of the company felt that the evening might have been enjoyably spent at the Moscow State Circus, which happened to be encamped in the park next to the accommodation. Fortunately duty prevailed, because the lecture "Ancestral Imagery" by Dr. Stephanie Moser (Southampton University) was lively as well as intriguing. Her theories on the origins, and continual recycling, of pictorial elements in reconstructions of Palaeolithic scenes are important to the understanding of this art, and will be contained in her book (to be published early 1998).

The next day - Saturday, 6th September - was of course the day of the Princess of Wales' funeral, and the Conference observed a minute's silence out of respect for this event before beginning a slightly disrupted day's business. Dr. Andy Russell of the Southampton City Archaeology Unit gave us a comprehensive picture of the enormous volume of work that the Unit has achieved since the 1950s on this extensive complex of urban sites. For myself - having worked with this unit during the 1980s - it was both saddening and worrying to see the drastic reduction in staffing during the last ten years. They have lost about 75% of their workforce, in a place where both archaeology and tourism are of vital importance. Sound familiar?

Michael Brammen of the Association of Illustrators was

unable to attend, so Rob Read spoke briefly about the AAI&S' new involvement with the AOI, and the various benefits that membership of this much larger organization can bring us.

The trip to Portsmouth Dockyard was the high spot of the weekend. Visiting the drawing office for the recording of X-thousand artefacts from the Mary Rose was an impressive experience, but visiting the hulk of the ship herself in its gloomy, mist-shrouded hall was even more so. I've seen so many pictures of it in film or print that the image has lost impact, but the real thing has a very strong presence.

Saturday's sessions were concluded by Dr. Roger Bland of the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, who was speaking about the implications of the new Treasure Act and the plans for the recording of all archaeological finds. The act is partly aimed at encouraging a more productive relationship with users of metal detectors. While the scheme is in its infancy at present, and it seems unclear whether "recording" would necessarily involve illustration, this is certainly a development to watch.

The final morning of the conference, appropriately enough, dealt with directions which many see

as the future of archaeological illustration: electronic imaging and survey. The excellent facilities of the Solent Conference Centre were ideal for this section, which involved the screening of both slide and computer-generated images in a very effective series of talks.

Mike Pringle started the morning with a clear exposition on virtual reality technology - an expression often met with but sometimes misapplied. Bernard Thomason (RCHME and Time Team) followed with a similarly lucid account of GPS surveying and its applications, and the morning's talks were concluded by Steve and Sue Francis' (Creative TV Facilities Ltd) account of the production of computer graphics for the "Time Team" programmes (what on earth did we watch before Time Team?!). These talks and the discussion that followed gave, I think, a much-needed airing to feelings that may be quite common to those of us still using conventional techniques: partly a distrust or dislike of computer-generated images; partly a fear of our own skills becoming obsolete. Probably both the dislike and the fear will eventually prove unfounded. This technology is now the norm for a great many artists and, even if we still choose not to use it, we certainly

need to be aware of its capacity and potential.

This was the first AGM and Conference that I've attended. I did so with some misgivings - like most of us, I have plenty of alternative uses for £120! - but at the end of the conference I was really glad that I'd come. I find that working in isolation is possible but very unstimulating; and it helps a great deal to be talking to people with similar problems, priorities and professional values. And for anyone who wants to take their profession seriously, it's an excellent way to keep up with what's happening.

Apart from all that it was a good time! In fact, Rob Read is to be congratulated for organizing a weekend which was remarkable value for money, from the accommodation at Kimber College to the excellent food at the Solent Conference Centre to the remarkable variety of draught beers on sale at that particularly pleasant pub. I'll come again.

PS. I drove out of Southampton with no trouble at all.

John Hodgson

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Subscriptions were due on the 1st of November and most members without banker's orders have yet to renew their membership for 1998. Please cooperate and send cheques made payable to AAI&S to our Central Mailing Address, with your name and (where known) your membership number on the reverse. Receipts and membership cards are available on request. Subscriptions can be paid in two installments if this helps. Send two cheques, each for half the sum, one with a current date, the other post-dated to 1st April 1998.

Full Members may still take up the generous offer from the Association of Illustrators for joint membership for the reduced total sum of £85, the equivalent of AOI membership alone. Paid-up members of the AAI&S need pay the AOI only £55, on proof that they already subscribe to us. As a further inducement, the AAI&S will now make a rebate of £7.50 to our members who take up joint membership. Those people who have already responded will be receiving this rebate in due course.

Richard Sheppard Hon. Treasurer

COUNCIL MATTERS

After three years in the hot seat, Laura Templeton retired as Association Chair at the recent AGM and I am sure all members will wish to join us in thanking her for all her hard work on behalf of the Association. The last year has been particularly arduous for Laura as we have had no secretary and much of the extra work fell upon her. Although Laura will not be continuing as a council member, she has agreed to oversee the editing of copy for the Association's new range of stationery and leaflets.

Seàn Goddard has also now retired from the council having served as Chair, Newsletter Editor and Journal Editor. Seàn will however be continuing in the role of Journal Editor as a non-council member.

Fortunately three willing volunteers leapt at the opportunity to serve on the council and we welcome Edward Lyons and John Hodgson, who are elected council members, and Liz James who will serve as a coopted member.

Dear Doctor,

I'm really worried I might be losing my mind. Can you please help me with this problem?

Whenever I provide good quality line-work as camera-ready copy (PMTs) to publishers, it gets transformed into irregular broken lines on the printed page. As a professional with my own high standards (the same high standards AAI&S and its members uphold), I feel powerless to change this situation.

Yours sincerely,

Bothered of Stoodleigh Bottom

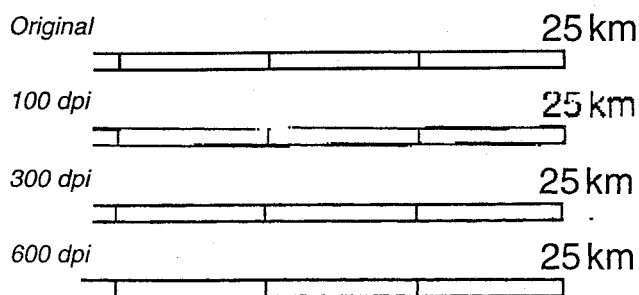
Dear Bothered of Stoodleigh Bottom,

I'm afraid you seem to have experienced a bad case of what we in the trade call the 'Jags'. A condition which is increasing with the casual use of flatbed scanners and one I seem to suffer from myself. Editors, (bless every one of them!) seem to have taken it upon themselves to integrate artwork electronically with the text instead of the paste-up job it would have been not so many years ago. Now, we cannot blame them for this move; it makes good sense to use the latest technology and to be able to provide complete, seamless pages for the printer, and it is clearly a cheaper option than having to pay someone to paste-up the copy. The problem comes with the scanning resolution and the amount of memory taken up with visuals. Let me give you an example. The copies of the part scale illustrated below have been scanned at resolutions of 100, 300 and 600 dpi (dots per inch [but you knew that already]) and you can see by the results how poor even the 300 dpi scan is. I should admit at this stage to having introduced a slight skew to the scan in order to show the jags better on straight linework, but this is often the case in published examples. Remember also that the lettering and line-work here is bold and should copy without any loss of detail.

The scanner I have access to, which only cost about £250, is capable of interpolated resolutions of 4800 dpi, but my laser printer only has a print resolution of 600 dpi (and this Newsletter will probably be photocopied) so there is no point me trying to show examples beyond that here.

The wonderful machines with which a bureau would output your final copy usually have a print resolution of

Sample scans



2400 dpi or greater, so it would be perfectly possible for even the finest artwork to be printed to perfection from scanned images. The reason artwork suffers from the Jags is because high resolution scans may be seen as using too much memory. As an example let's take the part scale illustrated here again. Taking the rather poor 100 dpi as a baseline, the increase in the memory needed from the 100 to the 300 dpi scan is in the order of nine times (x9); if we then go to 600 dpi it becomes x36, and at 1200 dpi it is in the order of 141 times, which means you would be unlikely to get even a simple line drawing onto a floppy disk (this page of text and simple graphic uses more than 3 Megabytes). Not that the transfer of large files is impossible; there are plenty of systems available to do this today.

Underlying the problem of wasted kilobytes is an industry-wide complacency to professionally supplied artwork: nobody else seems to give a *!#!* about the quality of reproduction.

Here is yet another example of electronic copying going wrong . . .

It has never been a good idea to use the likes of fine Letratone© tints on artwork as they often caused problems in the copying. Better instead to make an overlay for the tinted areas and get the printer to lay in perfect even tints onto the negs. But now even this proven technique of 'printerly' perfection has been highjacked by the scanners and their graphics software and you will find that the line-work, along with the tint area, is also getting screened: this time a case of the 'Dots'!

What can we do to prevent this abuse happening? This is a tricky one as editors (and dare I say 'designers', sigh) like to have 'control', but I think everyone should now include conditions for scanning when presenting artwork.

Already, illustrators should be making a declaration of copyright for their work and for its use in a specific publication. I am also thinking of solving the vexed problems of reproduction scales by limiting the acceptable variation to ±5% of the stated scale. And why not go on to include conditions for the scanning of artwork and demand resolutions of 1200 dpi or greater?

The conditions you specify will be clear from the beginning and editors and publishers, by using the material, should be bound by those conditions.

Who would have thought that at the close of the twentieth century print production would be taking backward steps?!

Yours sincerely

Dr Feeling-Prettysich Myself-Actually (alias SG)

PS If you want to see published examples of low resolution scans, take a look at recent editions of *Antiquity* (and probably every other journal come to that) and a book I've just seen, Alex Gibson and Ann Woods', *Prehistoric Pottery for the Archaeologist*, 2nd Edition 1997, Leicester University Press, a brilliant and otherwise useful book spoiled by the poorly scanned artwork.

PUBLICATIONS

Graphic Archaeology for 1997 was launched at the recent AGM. A well-produced and informative volume edited by Seàn Goddard. Seàn would like to remind members that contributions for the next (1998) edition are needed now, so please contact him at central mailing if you have some material. The latest AAI&S technical paper (No 13) is also now available entitled *Aspects of Illustration: Prehistoric Pottery* by Seàn Goddard, David Knight and Jane Goddard, Sue Hamilton and Sue Rouillard.

Book Review

***Picturing the Past - Through the Eyes of Reconstruction Artists*, Brian Davison 1997. 64pp c130 illus, £10.45**

Archaeological reconstruction is flavour of the month. Recently, in the pages of *Graphic Archaeology*, Seán Goddard has reviewed *The Cultural Life of Images*, an academic appraisal of how archaeological images are created, used and justified. Thames & Hudson have published *Virtual Archaeology*, an international extravaganza of sites brought to life through computer graphics. And, closer to home, English Heritage and Cadw have cooperated and produced a book entitled *Picturing the Past*. In this showcase of archaeological illustration, the presence of the soul-searching intellectual and the computer keyboard are noticeably absent. This, I suspect, is a book that will be of more immediate interest to members, and the public in general. It is also reasonably priced (at £10.45) and should eventually be easier to find in the bookshops.

This is an attractive and well designed book which features about 130 paintings, illustrations and vignettes in its 64 pages. Most will have been previously commissioned for use in guidebooks and for site display. Here the visuals take centre-stage as author Brian Davison and designer Martin Atcherley intersperse the illustrations liberally around a concise text that summarises the centuries between neolithic flint mining and the English Civil War. Davison accredits 27 different artists, although four versatile exponents of the genre are preferred and have produced over half the total. Such a choice allows for both variety and some consistency of style, enhanced by the wide range of topics covered and different approaches taken by the artists. Also, the colour reproduction is excellent, emphasising the advances made in printing since 1981 when Alan Sorrell's fine work was poorly reproduced in the book *Reconstructing the Past*.

In his introduction, Davison rightly points out that each reconstruction arises from a collaboration of differing experts and that ultimate success depends on the artist's understanding of the subject matter and the skill with which it is portrayed. In this respect, one recalls Barry Cunliffe's homage to Alan Sorrell, the doyen of the art form. Although Sorrell saw himself as something of an outsider (a still commonplace attitude), Cunliffe regarded him as an expert and scholar in his own right, with the power to communicate.

Whilst the book is aimed at a general audience and probably the educational establishment in particular, fellow illustrators will also gain much from its pages. It demonstrates some of the best of contemporary work, together with current trends in illustration. It is noticeable, for instance, how increasing confidence is shown in

portraying the people of former times; this is certainly demonstrated in Ivan Lapper's work. Although sometimes an eye-catching face can dominate a particular scene, the people are fluid and alive, and yet ambiguous enough to be believable in any age.

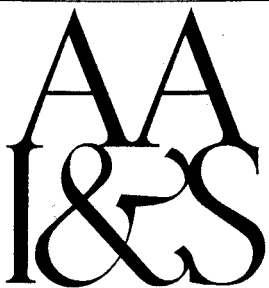
Nevertheless, a number of prehistoric hippies and rock stars are still in evidence. This shows how difficult it remains to escape the modern association between our prehistoric monuments and the New Age mind-set. Artists have the near-impossible task of truly distinguishing past from present, hampered as they are by the subliminal influences that abound. It is just as bad for the recipient. In my case, Paul Birkbeck's picture of Iron Age sling-shot throwers invoked memories of threatening characters in the film 'Clockwork Orange'.

My criticisms are few in number, which is only right coming from an unsuccessful dabbler at the art. Whilst this book emphasises the 'popular' artist, the ordinary archaeological illustrator, confined to the ink pen, hardly gets a look-in. This is perhaps unfortunate as the few views contributed by Karen Guffogg help to show how ink can still excel where the portrayal of fine detail is required. The subject-matter chosen also reflects English Heritage and Cadw's principal concern for archaeological monuments, ruins and historical events. By ending the volume in the mid10th century, topics such as vernacular architecture and industrial archaeology (where RCHM illustrators are so good) are not covered. Perhaps a companion volume covering the modern era will eventually appear.

This book is also very much a current viewpoint of history, an important factor that could have been better reinforced by the inclusion of several more pre-20th century images. A near contemporary view of the Battle of Hastings on the Bayeux Tapestry is included and, despite being heavily stylised and politically slanted, this remains a vibrant image. Generally, stylised images are not well represented here. Some imaginative views of Avebury by Judith Dobie are explained as somehow licensed by our ignorance of Avebury's original use and purpose.

This book deserves to be more widely publicised and available because, as yet, few people seem to have encountered it in the usual outlets (the reviewer had to order his copy through a book-dealer). When I get round to doing some more Adult Educational teaching this will be an ideal source book for taking slides, although several fine views (e.g. Philip Corbel's view of Bolingbroke Castle) have been spoilt by having to straddle two pages. As for a favourite illustration. That is a difficult choice but it has to be Peter Connolly's picture in which he cleverly expands the military contents of a wooden chest from Roman Corbridge. You will have to acquire a copy to see if you agree.

Richard Sheppard



**Copy
date
for
next
issue**

**31st
March**

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Edited by Phil Newman

**Central Mailing Address
Association of Archaeological
Illustrators & Surveyors
C/o University of Exeter
Dept of History & Archaeology
Queen's Building, Queen'
Drive
EXETER EX4 4QH**