



EDITORIAL

What? I hear you say, another newsletter only two months after the last, and after he moaned about not having enough material!

Well, with the conference and AGM just around the corner it was necessary to disseminate the details and inform members about one or two issues before then, so you get the treat of an extra mailing.

The conference, which is to be held on the 5th - 7th September, moves to Southampton this year. There will be a stimulating panel of speakers and a field trip to see the Mary Rose. Full details are enclosed with this Newsletter.

We seem unable to avoid the word 'reconstruction' these days. The demand for archaeological illustrators to produce arresting images which Joe/Jo Public and his/her family can relate to seems greater than ever (led I suspect by the Time Team's very effective use of reconstruction for the visual demands of the telly) and this is as it should be. English Heritage have just produced a book consisting entirely of reconstructions (*Picturing the Past*, text by Brian Davison) and we hope to have a review of this in the next issue. In the meantime, in this issue, AAI&S member John Hodgson introduces us to his postgraduate work in researching the entire field of reconstruction.

Phil Newman

COUNCIL MATTERS

At the forthcoming AGM (see enclosed flyer) Laura Templeton (current Chair) and Seán Goddard (former Chair) will be retiring from the council and will not be seeking re-election. Both have been extremely hard-working members of the council in

recent years and their enormous input will be sorely missed by those of us who remain. Their departure leaves something of a vacuum in the council when coupled with the fact that we still do not have a secretary since Mike Fossick's retirement last year. This is going to make the running and efficiency of the organisation increasingly more difficult if new blood does not come forward to replace them. If you think you could contribute to the running of the association by becoming a council member, please consider it *very* hard. Membership of the council is open to all Licentiate and Full members. We meet approximately three times per year at the British Museum for which travel expenses are paid. In particular we are in dire need of a secretary, the main duties for whom would be organising council meetings, taking minutes at meetings etc. If you would like to be nominated for the council at the AGM in September, or you would like to nominate someone, then please write to Central Mailing as soon as possible. Please do not nominate anyone unless they have already agreed to stand.

Over the past couple of months the Council has been taking further steps towards the streamlining of its work. Effort is currently being concentrated on a package of printed material aimed at conveying information on a variety of the Association's activities. This will include an upgrading of the AAI&S logo and stationary, and producing a suite of leaflets designed in such a way as to convey a more unified (I hesitate to use the word corporate) and professional image. We very much hope to be able to display some of the first design ideas for this material at the AGM but in the

meantime we do need some graphic material to include in the new layouts as exemplars and to give embellishment to the leaflets. Offers of new material from members would be most welcome. This project is explained in a little more detail by Mike Pringle on page four.

THE MYSTERY OBJECT

How often have you drawn objects dug from the earth without having a clue as to what they might be or what they were used for and nobody, however learned, can explain what it is either? I am sure most archaeological finds illustrators must have been in this situation. It has been suggested by a member that we have a Mystery Object Spot in the newsletter, where members may send in drawings of such artefacts (known to most of us as Wotsits or Wossits, though this term is surprisingly omitted from the official *Thesaurus of Archaeological Terms*) in the hope that others may be able to offer some illuminating (or amusing) explanation. Brenda Craddock kicks off overleaf with our first mystery object and we hope other members will wish to contribute by sending in further items.

THE ASSOCIATION OF ILLUSTRATORS

I have now received information and application forms from the AOI and we have agreed a procedure to process applications for dual membership. If you are a full member of the AAI&S and you are considering applying, or if you require further information, please contact me through the central mailing address.

Robert Read

That damned illusive past

I work as a self-employed designer and illustrator from a studio in Somerset. I have been drawing reconstructions of archaeological sites since 1984, along with a great deal of other display and illustration work. I expect few artists make a living from reconstructions alone, but they remain, to me, one of the most fascinating areas of archaeological artwork.

Reconstructions are of great importance to archaeology in that they are comprehensible, exciting and immediate, and can form a major interface between the science and the public. They are also a fascinating area of study because of the multiplicity of factors involved. A hundred interpretations are possible from one set of data and any or all of them may be 'right'. There are problems of data availability, interpretation of data, the mindset of the archaeologist, of the artist, of their culture - the list is as long as the possibilities of interpretation. Studying the questions in any depth is enough to make you wonder if the exercise has any validity at all.

Trying to make sense of these questions was my initial motivation for starting research for a PhD at Bournemouth University. It seemed best to study within the framework of a postgraduate programme, partly because I knew I would need the advice and facilities, but mostly because I cannot (or at any rate, do not) work well in a vacuum - it goes better if someone is expecting the paper on their desk by the end of the week. I chose Bournemouth partly for geographic semi-convenience, partly because of their work in archaeology and heritage conservation, and mostly

because of the encouragement and support of Mark Brisbane in the School of Conservation Sciences. Getting anyone to fund me seemed to be a non-starter so I am paying my own fees as a part-time student, spreading the work over five years so that I can continue to earn an erratic living.

It has taken most of the first year just to get my research programme formulated and passed by the University Committee, never mind starting the research! The problem has been that there are no existing formats which could be directly applied to the question as they stand, and I have had to borrow techniques from market research, art history and the physical sciences to come up with a programme that is academically respectable. However, the exercise was very valuable for clarifying the question of what I was actually trying to do.

The aim of the study is to examine the reasons for making reconstructions, the processes by which they are made, and the extent to which they fulfill their roles. The data necessary will be obtained by:

- Creating a database of artists who have worked in this field
- Compiling a history of the art
- Making structured critiques of individual works
- Processing information from the critiques to find conditioning factors

At this stage a picture could be drawn of the anatomy of archaeological reconstructions as it has operated in the past. To examine and evaluate the art's present performance there will be:

- Interviews with reconstruction artists, to understand different approaches
- 'Model' reconstructions: comparing various versions from identical data
- Audience reactions: how far the stated aims are being fulfilled

Final analysis of the findings may produce a picture of the art's characteristics, practices and trends up to the present time, with the possibility of extrapolating guidelines on roles, potential, content etc.

Eventually I shall be hoping very much for the help of AAI&S members in participating in the interviews and reconstruction experiments. For the moment I am dealing with the history of the subject, and in particular with the databases. This is a continuing project which is, to some extent, independent of the thesis: to produce databases of artists, and of representative works, who have been or are involved in archaeological reconstruction. These would contain the usual biographical information, sources etc, and would I hope be a valuable resource for people working in this field.

I am collecting this information wherever I can, but if anyone out there knows of an artist who really should be included, please let me know! I am dealing with popular illustrators as well as 'straight' archaeological illustrators; also with artists who specialised in historical scenes. Please do not be put off by thinking I will already know of them - I have already been amazed how many artists I did not know about and I thought I was reasonably well informed!

John Hodgson

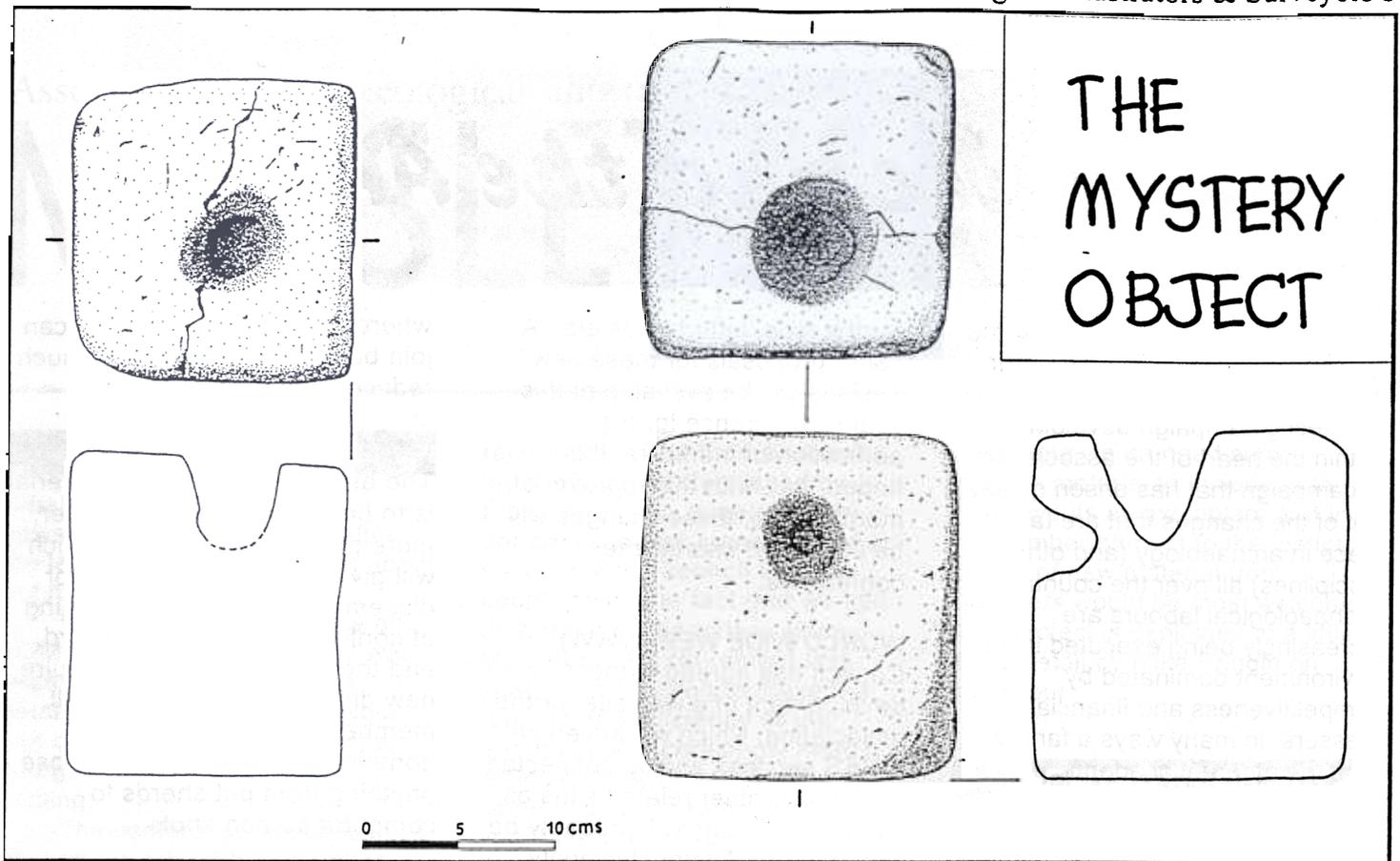
On leaving archaeology for better things

or topical tip of the week in honour of the 50th anniversary of Gardeners' Question Time)

In reply to the piece in the last newsletter concerning an ex-archaeological illustrator who left a secure well-paid city life-style, let me tell you another story. It concerns a good friend of mine, who, having reached her milestone years decided to leave the world of excavation and find what the real world had to offer. She had worked for a long time on many excavations, seeing what the dirt had to offer in the heat, the rain, the wind and the snow. She realised it was time to go and get herself a 'proper' job. Interestingly, her proper job is seeing what the dirt has to offer in the heat, the rain, the wind and the snow. She works on a National Trust property as a historic gardener. It seems that those who shun archaeology just can't resist scrabbling around in the dirt - for whatever reason!

Although this is already a story with a happy ending, as my friend is perfectly content in what she is doing, one does wonder whether ex-archaeologists ever hang up their trowels and leave them to rot away, forgotten and unloved in the back of the garden shed. Perhaps they rattle about in the boot of the car, occasionally dropping out and reminding the owner of the days when a good trowel was worth its weight in gold.

My friend's trowel, however, is now enjoying a happy retirement, having been put out to grass on the lawns of the National Trust. So, if you see a well used four inch pointing trowel sitting quietly in the shade of a rhododendron, don't immediately assume that there is an excavation in the area. It may just be that my friend has been enjoying a quiet day, cutting dandelions out of the lawn. Apparently there's nothing better than a good four inch trowel to dispose of those pesky weeds! *William N Benn*



THE MYSTERY OBJECT

Two chaff tempered clay blocks from the tin smelting and habitation site of Göltepe, Southern Anatolia, Turkey. Early Bronze Age. They do not seem to come from any specific metallurgical context. They have one hole, two holes, or, just occasionally, no holes. They were probably originally sun dried, though some became partly fired when the houses at the site burnt down. The holes show no signs of wear and the maker's finger marks can still be seen.

Brenda Craddock

LETTER

Dear Sirs.

I would like to thank you for the recent newsletter, as I was interested in Louise Brown's piece about the TAG conference. In light of your request for peoples' views I have a couple of comments to make.

I cannot understand why more archaeological degree courses do not involve illustration. My experience at university involved one three-hour workshop in the second year. Fortunately the department was

equipped with a very good drawing lab and due to my interest and the eagerness of the departmental illustrator I made use of the lab to improve my skills in my spare time, as did a few others. However, it is felt by many that the drawing lab was not used to its full potential. Discussions with the department about bringing illustration into modules such as flint analysis and archaeozoology (believing that it actually aids the observation and identification skills) were met with enthusiasm, but dampened by the politics of time and money.

Despite the above, the university does provide an excellent module in archaeological illustration as part of the Post Excavation Skills MA. After searching for suitable MA courses for myself I found that this was the only one of its kind. I was surprised to discover this, as post excavation is such an important part of interpretation in which illustration plays a large part. I cannot understand why there are so few courses of this nature when so many universities teach archaeology.

Miss Jodie Humphrey

Portable Antiquities

The Dept of Culture, Media and Sport (formerly the Dept of National Heritage) has awarded grants to fund pilot schemes in five areas of England for the voluntary recording of archaeological finds.

The pilots will run for two years from September 1997, managed by: Kent County Council; Norfolk Museums Service; National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside; the Yorkshire Museum and the York Archaeological Trust; and North Lincolnshire District Museum. The organisations were selected by DNH in consultation with the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) from a field of over 50 applicants.

The grants will support the bulk of the cost of four full-time posts and one part-time post (in the case of North Lincolnshire) to carry out the work of recording finds. The pilot programme will be co-ordinated by DNH, with funding channelled through the MGC. A total of £55,000 is being made available in the current financial year.

Image and the AAI&S

It may come as a surprise to some, but as we sleep peacefully in our beds, there is a rapidly growing marketing campaign developing within the heart of the association. A campaign that has arisen quietly out of the changes that are taking place in archaeology (and other disciplines) all over the country. Archaeological labours are increasingly being executed in an environment dominated by competitiveness and financial pressure; in many ways a far cry from the ethereal academic pursuit, of the study of material culture.

However, just because archaeology is being pushed into a situation that it may not like, it does not necessarily mean that archaeology has to fall.

THE AAI&S IS PUSHING BACK!

In response to the need for increased professional viability several developments are currently taking place in the association that, it is hoped, will secure its place in a competitive businesslike environment. The core of these developments is a marketing strategy that will place the association firmly on the map through increased publicity and greater numbers of members. The following is a list of the varying approaches currently being instigated to this end.

IDENTITY

The corporate identity of the association is currently under review with a firm of graphic design consultants having been approached to provide a new look

for the logo, letterheads etc. A set of proposals for these new designs will be available at this year's conference for the edification of members. It is hoped that, with the approval of membership, these changes will be instigated shortly after conference.

WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW)

Council has agreed to the development of a web site for the association, which will advertise AAI&S services and be connected to as many other related sites as possible. The site will probably be based on the Exeter University server and maintained by central office.

EDUCATION

A list is being compiled, of all archaeological illustration and surveying courses in the country. These include any training or educational facilities concerned with the production of any archaeological images; from finds drawing to temporal-spatial geographic information systems. The list will be available on the WWW and will potentially be accessible on the web sites of every university in the country which has an archaeological department. If you know of any appropriate courses please let us know.

PARTNERSHIPS

In order to increase the services the association can offer, a deal has been struck with the association of illustrators (AOI)

whereby members of AAI&S can join both associations for a much reduced subscription rate.

DISPLAY

The association's display material is to be added to with a smaller, more portable display unit which will give greater opportunity for disseminating AAI&S advertising at conferences etc.. This board, and the current one, both require new display material: would all members please consider donating artwork for this purpose - anything from pot sherds to computer screen shots.....

LEAFLETS

Once the new corporate identity has been approved, a series of information leaflets will be produced, each one providing details of the various activities of AAI&S. These, alongside a glossy promotional brochure, will make up a comprehensive information pack available for anyone enquiring after the association.

So, as you can see, things are happening, and the beauty of it all, is that in order to maintain the momentum of these developments, only one thing is required: the support of the association's members. So if you have any suggestions or criticisms, or feel that you would like to be involved in any of the above mentioned activities, please let us know. Unless of course, you would rather throw yourself off a tall building....

Mike Pringle



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date for
next
issue

31st Oct
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The personal views expressed here by Association members and non-members may not be those of the AAI&S Council.
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