

Association of Archaeological Illustrators & Surveyors
NEWSLETTER

May 1997



Editorial

My apologies for the late appearance of this newsletter which is entirely due to the dearth of material I have received, hence its slimline proportions. Thanks must go to those who have taken the trouble to send in bits and pieces but I feel the general lack of more meaty articles, letters and information has put this issue near the limits of viability.

While I appreciate that most people lead busy lives and have to juggle their time carefully, can I please ask all members to consider sparing a little time to pen a few lines sharing some aspects of your working experience with other members of your profession? Do you attend conferences for example? If so how about sharing any aspect of it which is relevant with other members by writing a conference report. Or perhaps you are developing new ground-breaking techniques and methodologies in illustration and survey, a knowledge of which could be beneficial to other members or on which you would like feedback or comments. If so let's hear about it. Book reviews, if relevant to the association's field of interest, would also be welcome as would letters, comments and notes about equipment, materials, suppliers and forthcoming events.

I am sure this shortage of material is only temporary and I look forward to a bulging postbag for future editions.

Phil Newman, Editor

AGM & Conference 1997

Members may have been unaware of the situation but the Council has been desperately trying to arrange for a conference this year in the absence of a volunteer to organise the festivities. Although it is very late we now have a confirmed venue and a date for all your diaries. The Conference and AGM will take place on the 5th, 6th and 7th September 1997 at the Southampton Institute.

The Institute has recently been refurbished and the lecture rooms are of a very high standard with facilities for back projected slides, videos and computer imaging. The accommodation is a pleasant 10 minute walk away through parkland and has been built within the last two years. The accommodation is high quality single student rooms with en-suite facilities including a shower. Although there is no bar at the Institute, wine can be provided at mealtimes and for those of you who wish to partake of a sherry before retiring there are three pubs within 50 yards!

As this a relatively late start there are no confirmed speakers at the moment but Amanda Patton, Mike Pringle and myself are attempting to put together an interesting range of speakers and topics. I will bring you up to date with progress in the next newsletter and hope to see many of you there in September.

Rob Read, 1997 Conference
Co-ordinator

AAI&S and the Association of Illustrators

Members may recall the questionnaire last year concerning the possibility of dual membership with the Association of Illustrators. At the time of the questionnaire the proposal was that a reduced membership rate for the AOI could be provided for AAI&S members if we were prepared to accept a reduced 'selection' of the services the AOI provided for its own members. Further discussions have taken place and the AOI Council have come up with the following proposal.

The AOI are prepared to discount their full membership rate by the amount of the AAI&S full membership subscription. This would only be available to AAI&S full members but most importantly all the services the AOI provides to its members would be provided to AAI&S members at this reduced rate. At present rates this means that for the equivalent cost for a AOI full member - £85, AAI&S full members could have dual membership.

I hope to have AOI information leaflets available shortly for those of you who may wish to consider the benefits of dual membership and if at all possible a representative of the AOI to discuss its work and services at the Conference in September. Let me stress that the AAI&S is not about to be subsumed and remains an independent body and this arrangement is seen by Council as beneficial to its members.

I need to be able to judge the possible take up of this offer by AAI&S full members so could I ask those who are interested to contact me as soon as possible through the central mailing address. For those of you who wish to have further information about the AOI and its services please send a request and as soon as I receive the AOI leaflets I will send them on.

Rob Read, Council member

GETTING AWAY FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL ILLUSTRATION

Readers of *The Independent* for Saturday 8th March may have noted the happy tale entitled 'I want to be a ranger', in which after years of city drudge and grind, a 44-year-old countryside management student was striving to fulfil his dream of becoming a wildlife warden, abandoning '...a well-paid career for a working life in the country'.. But what was his former (well-paid) career from which he so desperately had to escape? No, not an accountant or a stockbroker, worse than that, he was an archaeological illustrator. It seems ironic that while so many people fight long and hard to get established in archaeological illustration that someone else is trying equally hard to get out. We wish him luck. Thanks to David Williams for spotting this piece.

Courses

The following courses are currently being advertised by Oxford University Dept of Continuing Education:

Introduction to Archaeological Publishing
8th - 9th December 1997

Health & Safety for Archaeologists
22nd - 23rd Jan 1998

GIS in Archaeology
23rd - 24th March 1998

Building Survey Week
1st - 5th June 1998
(In conjunction with RCHME)

Field Survey Week
22nd - 26th June 1998
(In conjunction with RCHME)

For further details contact:
The Archaeology Course Secretary, OUDCE, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JA.

Please note that courses are mentioned here only as an aid to members and that the AAI&S council is unable to recommend the content or standard of tuition for particular courses. Further, we would appreciate any comments, criticisms or praise from members or non-members on courses they have attended which purport to teach the disciplines of Archaeological illustration & survey whether advertised in this newsletter or otherwise.

Central mailing address:
AAI&S
C/o University of Exeter
Dept. Of History & Archaeology,
Queen's Building
Queen's Drive
Exeter EX4 4QH

WHO VALUES THE ILLUSTRATOR? A REPORT ON THE 1996 TAG CONFERENCE

In December '96, Liverpool hosted the 18th annual TAG conference. One of the final sessions was entitled "Image and interpretation: the use and evolution of the archaeological illustration". Considering there were only about fifteen people there, two of whom were student members of AAI&S, the debate that followed became quite 'interesting' with a variety of contrasting points being aired regarding the two main subjects under discussion. The two topics concerned were illustration as a discipline and the future of illustration.

It was agreed that illustration is a valuable tool. This was followed by a discussion on the role of illustrations and of the illustrator. The idea put forward by the session organiser, John Swogger (Liverpool Uni.) was that the discipline should not be isolated as a separate discipline to be carried out solely by professional illustrators, but that all archaeologists should be able to use the skill and create their own illustrations. This raised the point that archaeologists, both academic and field, do not have the time and perhaps the skill to carry this out whilst maintaining a high standard. It was suggested that increased 'education' of the archaeologist would aid the professional illustrator by means of maintaining a set of basic conventions. At the moment these are seemingly obsolete due to the 'work' undertaken by the illustrator often being subject to the specifications of the individual archaeologist. It was also accepted that illustration tends to take a back seat in many degree courses ... should we be encouraging 'new blood' by means of workshops to perhaps set standards and encourage those new to the discipline?

The discussion touched on the different forms of illustrations and for whom they are intended. This was quite interesting as some delegates clearly did not understand the use of different illustrations to aid different groups and individuals. This was especially noticeable within the art of reconstruction, some preferring the more artistic approach and others favoring the more interpretative format. This latter format being pushed by the increased use of computer technology. One of the delegates who was very anti the new technology, having accepted that its use was inevitable, was clearly not prepared to find out what the real advances and advantages are.

I have tried, in an impartial manner to convey concisely and, I hope, precisely the main points raised. I now challenge you to voice your response. Do we have any clear objectives concerning the future of the discipline, or its present day- to-day application within the whole sphere of archaeology ?

Louise D. Brown

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Having recently tried to replace our stocks of gridded drafting film, I have been informed that the only company that printed it has discontinued its production. Having used it for many years now, this news comes as a bit of a blow as there is no real alternative I know of which is as durable or weatherproof. An alternative I thought of was to use Letraset gridded line paper (line paper 5000) and laminated. This should, I thought, supply us with gridded material almost as hardy as the drafting film. Guess what? Yes, you guessed: Letraset have discontinued this line and I seem to now possess the entire stock for Worcestershire comprising three pads of A2, kindly sold to me by the nice man in PSW who was only too pleased to flog the stuff off cheap. Another alternative could be to arrange a print run especially for us. These would have to be in large quantities which would be overkill for our needs for the next few years. If there are other illustrators/dinosaurists out there who have come across this problem, have you found an alternative? If not would anyone be interested in joining forces to arrange a print run to supply us for a while? The printing would be on A1 sheets which should be large enough for the largest sites and the most enthusiastic site planners and should cover a reasonable area of a drawing board. Send your info to the central mailing or phone me on 01905 613877.

Laura Templeton

Does anyone know whether drawing/tracing linen is still produced and if so where can it be obtained? I received a roll of the stuff as a present, with a label showing it had been produced in the 1960's. Having tried it out using various pens, inks etc. I must admit to being impressed with its properties, being far more responsive to the pen than either film or CSI. Any information would be gratefully received.

Rob Read

Another member is seeking a supplier for a fine-pinned profile gauge. This is not your common DIY profile gauge as found at your local Do-it-all, but a precision instrument to be used for very fine work. The best ones apparently are manufactured in America. Information please via Central Mailing.

Whilst checking through members' banker's orders, the treasurer came across a mystery contributor named S.M. Smith. However, we have no-one with such a name on our data-base. Can anyone throw some light on who this benefactor might be? It may be that they are paying (£17, Associate rate) on behalf of someone else with a different surname. Can someone enlighten us please?

Richard Shepperd, Hon. Treasurer

The personal views expressed here by Association members and non-members may not be those of the AAI&S Council.
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Edited by Phil Newman