

# maa news

The Newsletter of the Medical Artists' Association of Great Britain • Autumn 2003

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## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the Association of Archaeological Illustrators and Surveyors

5 – 7 September 2003 By Gillian Lee

**The conference was held at rather noisy and drab looking halls of residence namely Ramsey Hall, University College, London. But that was the only drab part of the Conference.**

Approximately 60 delegates gathered to hear the first speaker on Friday evening. Davis Neal gave me a great insight into the world of the Archaeological Illustrator. He traced his career with some interesting anecdotes and his gradual move to specialising in mosaics. His decision to retire early was a desire to complete a corpus of mosaics. This will be in four volumes, the first of which, *Britannia Monarch* has been published and was there for all to see. It was a beautifully produced volume with colour on every page. Although I am not 'au fait' with illustrations of reconstructed mosaic, the work was of the highest quality. These four volumes will provide the nation with a complete history of mosaics.

The AGM on Saturday morning was open to non-members to attend and it was good to hear Caroline Needham elected to Council. The problems discussed were very similar to our own, in fact had I closed my eyes and just listened I could have been present at our own AGM!

Peter Rowsome began the morning session with a paper about Archaeological Work in the City and specifically the Excavation of the Poultry site. Little do we realise the wealth of historical information buried beneath our capital city. The site is near Bank station where the old

Mappin and Webb building used to be and excavation took place at the same time as the superstructure was being built overhead. This allowed good cover for the archaeological illustrators to draw and index the finds on site, even if the underground trains were running only one metre away from the site edge! Peter showed us some reconstruction paintings of the city area as it could have looked around AD 60 with a population of ten thousand. From the results of the project, Peter is producing three Academic Monographs. These will include the indexing of 60,000 pieces of pottery and 6000 pieces of metalwork.

The next speaker was Sarah Lunnon from the English Heritage Metric Survey team. We heard how the famous Iron Bridge was measured to prove how it was built. There is very little reference that has been preserved and the project has taken three years to complete. New methods of measuring were explained some of which were successful – some not. One laser scan showed a beautiful image of the metal in detail but when used in the data lost all its detail. The casting, for example, of a particular span was expected to be identical to the next, but this was not the case either in the spans or any other components. The use of

AutoCAD helped us understand these different shapes and angles.

Lunch was taken 'on the hoof' as we rushed to our next meeting point at the Monument for a three-hour walk around the City visiting three sites of interest. A short walk down Lower Thames Street brought us outside a modern building belonging to the Corporation of London under which we were to visit the remains of the Billingsgate Roman Bathhouse. The remains have been preserved and it is hoped they will eventually be opened to the public. Peter Rowsome was on hand to explain the construction of the bathhouse aided by



*Remains of Billingsgate Roman Bathhouse*

reconstructions in pen and ink and a three dimensional model.



**Peter Rowesome explaining the construction of the Bathouse to Margaret and our President**

The next visit was to the ruins of St. Dunstons. The original church was built in Saxon times and then restored in 950AD by St Dunstan. Only the Tower remains after rebuilding by Sir Christopher Wren and again in 1817 in Gothic style by David Lang.

The ruin is now a public open space, enjoyed by many City workers. A long walk took us back through the City towards the Museum of London and on to the gate of St John, Clerkenwell. After viewing the gate we visited the Church of St. John, where Pamela Willis the curator was on hand. She explained the long history of the Church and the roman crypt.

Exhausted, we rushed back to Ramsey Hall for a quick wash and brush up before making our way to the Tate Modern for dinner.



**Dinner at the Tate Gallery with Jo Bacon, the AAI&S chairman and Caroline Needham our representative**



**The gate of St John's, Clerkenwell**



**The remains of St Dunstan's Church**



**The Millenium Bridge across the Thames**

I particularly enjoyed the two papers on Sunday morning. Peter Dunn from English Heritage showed us some of his superb paintings of reconstructions of excavated sites. Peter's use of perspective brought his paintings to life especially where battle scenes were included. Originals were on hand as well as his reference sketches.

Last but not least was Victor Ambrus from the Time Team series. Victor was a book illustrator until two years ago when the Producer saw his talent for figure drawing. He was plunged into the world of reconstructions and

sketching in all sorts of weather with sometimes only half an hour to produce the illustrations prior to filming.

The members' exhibition was varied with simple line illustrations of finds to full colour reconstructions from excavations. The majority of the work was rendered by hand and there were only a few members who were beginning to produce images on the computer.

Thank you to the AAI&S for allowing us to attend. I do hope next year many more will attend and I look forward to welcoming some of their members to our Conference.

Gillian Lee

Congratulations!

The stand Phil Ball designed for the Royal College of Pathologists which was exhibited at the Chelsea Flower show won a silver medal.

Congratulations!

Caroline Needham entered a BA Science week presentation competition and won the under thirties' prize with her MPhil presentation

### **MAA Anatomy Workshop**

Cambridge University  
was to be December 11-12 2003  
**Posponed until next summer**

## Paula Rhymes – Student profile

Returning to full-time education after a gap of about four years meant that I had to be certain about how I spent my time. In June 2003 I completed my Natural History and Illustration degree at The Blackpool and Fylde College. My time there was well spent and has proved vital to my technical skills. Starting the degree in the knowledge that I wanted to study Medical Art afterwards made a difference, my portfolio contained medical illustrations and nothing else! Medical art was for me and so there was little point studying flora and fauna.

In Blackpool making each brief relate to a medical topic in order to impart information became of utmost importance to me. I had, therefore, begun to visit The Unit of Art in Medicine at The University of Manchester for access to the Dissection Rooms and advice on my illustrations during my degree, starting in the second year. I would never have had the projects completed without this facility. It was rather stifling in the first and second years not to have onsite access to detailed medical information and dissection rooms. At times I had to produce the anatomy or pathological specimens myself using textbooks to create models. It was more typical for me to use clay, plaster and latex to build conceptual or anatomical structures before I put anything down on paper at all. After altering the lighting I was free to sketch

or photograph the subject. For me modelling gave an idea a three dimensional form so that light and shade, etc. could be easily conveyed into an illustration. For instance I used this to create basal cell carcinomas for a series of illustrations about breast cancer, but it was also away to work more sculpturally as something that I enjoyed but was unable to expand on at Blackpool.



My third year was spent studying the superficial muscles of the face. Working back from the face of a friend to the skeletal shape beneath the soft tissue I was able (under supervision) to plot the degree of muscular movement during facial expression. The project focused on six primal facial expressions: anger, happiness, surprise, fear, sadness and disgust. These illustrations were

## Talking Soap

**Hello, is Sarah there?**

This is Sarah, is that Jim?

**Yes, Jim Smith at your service...**

That'll be the day.

**...I was going to say I didn't recognise the croaky voice. Why are you in a bad mood now?**

Whadya mean *now*? What do you want anyway?

**Hey, hey, Sarah love calm down. What's up?**

I've got a sore throat because I've had to shout at all the idiots here. The University in its wisdom is

reorganising everything again. Supposedly for greater efficiency. So everything that used to work fine has been changed and now doesn't. Everything that used to be accessible now has three months of red tape.

**Its not that bad surely. These things often settle down and one then sees the improvements.**

Oh does one?!!! It's just chaos. It's caused so much extra admin they've taken on thousands of extra paper pushing staff in suits, but the people who actually do something useful are being cut back to pay for it all.

**It can't now take three months to organise something that used to be immediate, and I think thousands is**

**a slight exaggeration. It'll be OK, you'll see.**

Bah! What did you want anyway?

**Oh I just wanted to borrow that nice operative neurology book you've got in the department.**

Hah, well you can't. All my anatomy books have to live in the Med school library now. I have to go and borrow my own books! I told you it was chaos, and you won't get into the library let alone borrow a book!

**What? That's ridiculous! What a stupid thing for them to do. I need that book! Why aren't you making a fuss about it? Hello? Hello? Sarah? Hello?**

produced with careful measuring of cadavers to check muscle atrophy as well as facial anatomy. The finished illustrations were worked in watercolour, but I had a number in pencil and my favourite medium: dip pen and India ink.

This summer I had my first taste of commercial model making and manufacture from working at 'Limbs and Things' the medical model making company based in Bristol. During my two months with Limbs I worked in research and development, learning the stages that turn initial ideas into a prototype through to the finished manufactured product. Apart from the challenge of translating a sketch into three dimensions, there was a whole language of new materials, silicones, labs and stages of tooling to familiarise myself with, as well as the market for the products. As it is, these areas were sufficient to ground me in a basic knowledge of product design, but I also became all too aware of the gaps in my knowledge!

During my third year I was interviewed for the MPhil in Medical Art at the University of Manchester, and I am currently in my first year. My work here reflects my interest in sketching, painting and sculpture, and at present I am designing a model for patient care and education in speech therapy. The aim is to take the prototype to a stage where it can be commercially manufactured to achieve its purpose: to help with education of dysphagia patients. The project is collaborative,



so I am supported in areas outside of my expertise. The freelance illustration work began towards the end of my degree year. At times this has proved stressful with demands that feel hard to meet, mainly due to tight deadlines! However, as I enjoy illustrating I am glad of the chance simply to draw and paint. Sculpture and two-dimensional art work alongside each other to give me the balance that my way of working needs. So with regard to the future, I want to remain within research. Models and simulators are interactive answers within the field of medical research, this is of more interest to me than a fulltime commercial job.

Paula Rhymes

## Council

Council meet on 23<sup>rd</sup> September at Friends House, Euston Road, a new location which proved to be a promising venue.

The Hon. Secretary reported there had been no new membership enquiries but 3 student enquiries regarding the MPhil and MAET diploma.

The finances of the previous MAA conference in Manchester have not yet been audited, but there is an expected loss of only £100; a small cost for such a worthwhile event.

The Treasurer reported he had had a small surplus of the Members' Handbooks printed. The Secretary will hold these as reserve copies.

The Medical Artists Education Trust Director reported that the students have been introduced to progress files, designed to monitor progress to assist both tutors and students when planning future assessments and the forthcoming tutorials. Four prospective candidates were to attend for interview on the 24<sup>th</sup> September. One of these candidates if successful will be based in Manchester. One new student Louise Hurford has accepted her place and will start in October, based in London.

The MAET diploma was queried to be still relevant to the world in which the medical artist now lives. It was suggested a MAET presentation at the next conference to familiarise all members with the present diploma course would be useful.

### MAA News

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