



### ***A Note from the Newsletter Co-ordinator:***

*My apologies all for the late appearance of this newsletter- it's been a hectic time since the last AGM. In particular I should note that I'm running a letter from Mike Wilkin here that he sent last August! His situation may be different now, however it's a very interesting letter, and is one that will, I know, resonate with everyone:*

## **Working & Walking in London**

Observations by Michael Wilkin

I don't know how many steps there are leading from the underground platform up to the surface at the Goodge Street tube station on The Tottenham Court Road near London's Soho district, but my legs and lungs told me there are quite a lot.

I had become impatient waiting for one of the three huge lifts to return to the lower level and pick up more of the endless stream of morning commuters to take them back to the surface. Goodge Street is one of the few London underground stations I've discovered so far, that doesn't have escalators. My impatience was due to the fact that I was a little late for an appointment to present my portfolio to a prospective new client and noticed a sign pointing to a steep spiral staircase next to the lifts being an alternative exit. I eventually reached the exit and continued my journey on wobbly legs and puffing as if I had just run a marathon. Having only recently arrived in London and being used to travelling by car to client meetings back home, I had not yet developed the level of fitness required to commute on foot around this enormous city.

Apart from strengthening one's leg muscles, one needs to be alert, nimble and have eyes in the back of your head in addition to cultivating a certain steely eyed blank gaze, essential for avoiding the dreaded spruiker, waiting to pounce on the unsuspecting wobbly legged traveller, going about his business trying to procure some architectural rendering work.

I came to London to further develop a small international client base I had started in Australia, the idea was to spend some time here, introduce my work and myself to as many firms as possible get some projects to work on here and try to convince them that working remotely with an illustrator in OZ is also a great idea! Having

switched to producing my commercial work digitally, the equipment I brought with me consists of a Macintosh PowerBook G4, Wacom Tablet and a portable Canon A4 scanner. My thinking was that this gear would afford me the maximum amount of transportability and thus avoid having to rent or lease equipment here, given that I did not know how long I would be staying. I have been here for six months and I'm finding that the London architectural illustration marketplace is probably no different from any other except perhaps the sheer number of firms given the enormous size of the place.

My initial problem of course was actually managing to see architects to show them my work, but I pursued it with the tenacity of a British Bulldog which has delivered some success, although it is a never ending quest trying to get past snooty receptionists etc and speak to the right people. One receptionist actually told me in no uncertain terms that there was no point in seeing any of my work because some members of their staff were not only very talented architects, but also very good at sketching as well. Ho Hum, if you can't even get past the receptionist.....I say forget it!

I have been concentrating on trying to get concept development work requiring images for presentations in the very early stages of a projects development. This is an area that together with my Dublin based partner Serge Zaleski in Delineation Graphix I have pursued vigorously here in London. I have included an example of a project that I think illustrates this type of work quite well for your perusal.

Well after a predictably slow start in a new market place and environment there are signs of improvement and I would be happy to send further instalments, should there be interest within the membership. It is of course quite difficult to encapsulate a more in depth record of all my experiences and impressions of London so far in a few paragraphs, suffice to say that every day is interesting and I have only just begun to get a closer look at this incredible city.

Warm Regards from London  
Michael Wilkin



The doodle above, a few words, and a site plan formed the total brief for Mike's marvelous sketch below.





**Following from AAAi Conference, Sydney, Oct 04 :**

Dear AAAi Members

In the shadow of another enjoyable AAAi Conference and AGM, I am gratified to be re-elected as AAAi President. The new term 2004-2005 is an opportunity to continue and expand the efforts established in the previous year, with the prominent focus to now gain awareness and recognition of the Association. We aim to achieve this through targeted efforts and a lot of determination.

During the Conference I noted that a couple of sessions evoked various topical opinions and active discussion. Discussion is vital to the development of the Association and I encourage everyone to participate in the issues which are current and future to the development of the Association. All contributions are important. I felt that watching the member interaction during the conference – the discussions both formal and social - were the best part of the Conference.

The most productive way for the Association to service its members is to listen to what members have to say. Feedback is important. We encourage your ideas, your input and your inspiration. Please feel free to contact us.

On a similar vein, interacting with other members outside of the Conference is also a great way to support and assist each other. Informal coffee meetings, visiting each other at the work place or mutual company to a function or event – these are all good opportunities to keep open the lines of communication with members. How often do you hear the lingering after-conference words "...so great to catch up ... so inspiring..." The opportunity is actually open all the time.

Maintaining or renewing inspiration is a key factor in enjoying the business practice and the process. Michael Keniger spoke at the Conference that AAAi is a unique Association about how we interact with one another in the spirit of drawing. Let us prove the adage true that there is strength and unity in numbers. The down time will be far outweighed by the mutual benefit and inspiration.

Glenys Foster  
AAAi President 2004-2005



Ian Stantiall, top, explodes above, from left, Chrissy Hill Helen McNab, Irene and Neil Coleman, at Kings Cross.



Above, surrounded by the 'Spirit of Drawing' exhibition illustrators hear Alec Tzannes discuss the part that drawing plays in his work.



Jane Grealy making a canny aquisition at the silent auction.



## 'The Spirit of Drawing' Exhibition & AAI Annual Conference

Every year we travel from near and far to meet with like minds for a weekend of group artistic interaction. In October 2004 the AAI held its annual conference and AGM at Tusculum, the headquarters of the NSW chapter of RAIA. The heritage location was also a perfect backdrop to host 'The Spirit of Drawing' a inaugural exhibition where the work of practicing illustrators was displayed side by side with selected archival illustrations from the Mitchell Library and the National Capital Development Authority – a compelling snapshot of techniques and viewpoints from decades of experience.

"The exhibition is a clear and concise representation of how design in architecture is depicted and explored in drawing."

The exhibition was a brave evolution from the usual program and drew outside interest to our gathering, including architects, developers and businesses associated with architectural illustration. Of course, there was plenty of discussion and sharing of ideas, which is what the exhibition and conference is all about.

The conference keynote speaker, Professor Michael Keniger, addressed an eager audience about how illustrators contribute to the world through the act of drawing. As an Association, we welcome the ideas from a range of practitioners in our quest to be enlightened and to understand, and the day's guest speakers represented a range of disciplines (architect, digital master, artist and figurative painter) yet they all emanate from the same grass root foundation of the spirit of drawing.

The NSW conference organising committee of David Duloy, John Haycraft, Irene Still and David Wardman executed a mammoth task of negotiating the location, selecting archival and submitted works for the exhibition and organising the guest speakers and social activities. Congratulations for providing an inspirational and enjoyable weekend.

The annual conference is the main event in the AAI year and it was gratifying to have increased participation also welcoming more members from New Zealand. It is important to support the AAI and its members by attending the organised activities and the



conferences, so the hint of a future conference being hosted in New Zealand was considered with excitement.

Michael Keniger spoke that drawing is like a "curious dance of the way ideas are developed and expressed". Indeed, the 2004 gathering represented an overture in the dramatic musical 'The Spirit of Drawing'.

### Following from the AAI AGM Sydney, Oct 04:

The minutes of the AGM 04 will in due course be distributed to members once ratified at the upcoming executive meeting, scheduled at this stage, for 30 or 31 March, by tele-conference. Members are urged to take a good look at these, since they contain details of the development of the AAI website, and a suggestion that the next conference could be hosted by our dynamic New Zealand members in New Zealand. Also, useful strategies for creating more state level activity were canvassed.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2004-2005

Three members of the 2003-2004 have stepped down:  
Michael Wilkin, Eddie Gonzalez and Phil Beggs.  
The current executive are:

President: Glenys Foster  
Vice President: Vacant  
Secretary: Helen McNab  
Treasurer: Nigel Gough  
Website Co-ordinator: Jane Grealy  
Newsletter Co-ordinator: David Duloy  
Executive Members:  
David Wardman  
Neil Coleman



### The Art of Viewpoint Selection

Let's face it. As architectural illustrators, delineators, perspectivists, renderers - whatever we like to call ourselves, we are part of the process of selling. Selling a design, a building, an apartment, a planning scheme, whatever, our job is to help our client 'SELL'. As venal and lowbrow as this might appear, after 35 years in the business I am yet to be convinced that our task is anything but the production of 'sales aids'. An understanding of this is, I believe, essential in the process of doing our work well.

Two years ago, at the Melbourne annual conference, I was fortunate enough to listen to David Wardman's erudite and thoughtful presentation on keeping the 'art' in our work. As David so rightly pointed out we need to maintain our artistic role, even defend it sometimes, to keep our soul in our work. Not only are the pictures better, our own personal enjoyment of our daily work is enhanced. Now this argument and the one I propose in my opening paragraph, are not as mutually incompatible as they may at first appear. We must listen to our client's directions and ask him what he wants to say and to whom and how. His is the job of doing the face to face selling whether it is to a council planning officer, a developer, a land and environment court judge or via the medium of a glossy brochure aimed at prospective buyers. Ours is the job of saying it pictorially and effectively.

You may say all this is stating the obvious. Where the waters get murky is the role we have in bringing an artistic judgement to the message our client wants to give. We have all had experience of working on a perspective that feels like, and will end up looking like a dead dog because the view is wrong.

Leave aside the rendering technique at this stage. We are all different and clients approach us because of our unique and idiosyncratic approach to illustration. Where we have common ground is the set-up. The viewpoint. The standpoint. The camera position. The angle of view. There are many names for the same thing and the CAD world has introduced a few new ones to confuse the issue. Some of us do our own set-ups and many now, including the Haycraft Duloy studio, accept 3D wire-frames or computer generated models from architects with the viewpoint locked in. How many times have you struggled to make a grossly distorted model work as a picture? You do not need to have that experience too

often to realise you are on a hiding to nothing trying to wrangle a bad set-up into a good illustration.

We are in a unique position to advise on the best position to view a subject from, yet too often we are blocked from that process. An effective, well thought out perspective set-up literally sets the firm foundation for a good working picture that sells. So why don't we get involved and argue for a say in the viewpoint selection? It takes time. Our skill and experience is discounted when it comes hard-nose decisions about getting 'bangs for bucks'. Artistic literacy is not a skill liberally sprinkled through our client base (with the exception of architects who seem to be playing a lesser and lesser part in our briefing these days). Many of our commissions are coming from project managers, developers, et al and most have limited artistic literacy, sadly. We have not, historically, argued our case for input into the early part of planning perspective presentations.

We remain out of this process to our peril. Let's listen to the salesmans' requirements. He or she should know the market place. But we serve our clients better if we speak up on viewpoints when we know there is a better way to tell the story, when we believe they are asking for too many pictures when fewer more thoughtful views would do the job, when an aerial will explain a project better than low level, or vice versa, when a dramatic angle is wrong for the subject, when a third (vertical) vanishing point creates tension when repose is called for, when a 'whole room' illustration produces distortion because the client wants to see too much, when a marketing drawing is not suitable for council DA submission. You all know the scene.

Younger practitioners may need courage to take on a client over this issue. Use thumbnails to prove your point. Point out other examples either from your own portfolio or others work, or use photos from magazines. Usually professional photographers have an 'eye' for a good look and they can be your ally. Hoary, experienced practitioners will have learned from experience the pitfalls of taking on bad viewpoints and can effectively argue for a different approach. We don't always win but maintaining the principle of keeping the 'art' in our work keeps us striving. And we know we will be able to achieve it in the next job.

John Haycraft

