

# **Design History Society Officers' Reports for AGM 2006**

## **Chair's Report** September 2006

This report focuses on the period from January 2006, when I took over as Chair, and there are a number of initiatives and activities to report.

### *Communications*

The website has undergone significant development during the last 12 months. The actions at the last AGM were implemented, although Juliette Kristensen, as Communication Officer, has taken over the management of the website, discussion list and the newsletter. As noted last year, an increasingly important task facing the Society is to enhance the membership so as to build on the international nature of its audience particularly in relation to web activity. One major challenge is to develop membership in the changing context of electronic publishing particularly with regard to the Society's Journal of Design History. The new context presented by electronic publishing has prompted further reflection on the Society's membership. With Juliette, Kristen Hardie (Regional Representative Co-ordinator) and Nichola Hebditch (Membership Secretary) are undertaking a review of the constituency of the Society, the role of the regions and the possible need to enhance international involvement, and the promotion of the Society. We envisage that this will take considerable time and effort over the forthcoming year.

### *Archival and Oral History Project*

As we approach the Society's 30th Anniversary, it seems particularly timely to take stock of its activities since 1977 by interviewing and recording key participants and archiving papers, which was reinforced at last year's AGM by Grace Lees Maffei's point about the importance of keeping an archive of the Society's website. To this end we are developing two projects. The first is an ongoing oral history project, headed by Linda Sandino, as part of the Voices in the Visual Arts project at Camberwell, to record the contribution of individuals to the formation, development and direction of Design History in the United Kingdom initially focusing on the role of the Design History Society, but casting the net wider, both in terms of scope and international focus, as the project develops. The second project is to bring together the Society's papers as an archive initially based at Northumbria University, but ultimately aiming at a more appropriate home (such as the National Archive of Art and Design at the V&A or another similar organisation). A PhD studentship based at Northumbria University will support this process by locating and identifying sources and papers. The Oral History Project is being funded by the Society and the PhD studentship jointly funded by the Society and Northumbria University.

Finally many thanks to Jo Lewis, who had to give up her role as Membership Secretary earlier this year due to injury, and to the Treasurer, Melanie Unwin.

*Dr Cheryl Buckley*

## **Treasurer's Report**

1. OUP have forwarded payment of £27,594.78, this is made up from:

- Profit share from the Journal of Design History: £25,141.78
- Membership dues: £2,453.00
- Less fee for translated paper: (£467.80)

2. Society accounts have now been approved and the accountants paid their annual fee of £381.88.

3. £1000 has now been paid to the University of Huddersfield for a DIY exhibition which had been approved as an award.

4. Just a reminder all Executive Members are entitled to the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses for DHS activities. These include subsistence and travel; receipts should be kept and forwarded to me with a brief explanation of how they were incurred

5. The Society's banking will shortly be conducted through Abbey. This change was circulated to you all some time ago, to which we received no objections, formal note of the change will be minuted at the Executive Meeting. Banking with Abbey is free, I have outlined interest rates below.

### HSBC

Product	Effective Date	Amount	Net %	Gross %	AER %
Business Money Manager					
Instant Access		Up to	1.60	2.00	2.02
Monthly Interest		£5,000	1.61	2.01	2.03
		£5,000+	1.61	2.01	2.03
	12.06.06	£25,000+	1.65	2.06	2.08
		£100,000+	1.65	2.06	2.08
		£250,000+	1.65	2.06	2.08
		£1,000,000+	1.69	2.11	2.13

### Abbey

Tier	Gross rate p.a. /AER*	Net rate p.a.	Monthly gross rate p.a.	Monthly net rate p.a.
£100,000 plus	3.10%	2.48%	3.06%	2.45%

Tier	Gross rate p.a. /AER*	Net rate p.a.	Monthly gross rate p.a.	Monthly net rate p.a.
£25,000 up to £99,999	2.40%	1.92%	2.37%	1.90%
£10,000 up to £24,999	1.49%	1.19%	1.48%	1.18%
£5,000 up to £9,999	0.90%	0.72%	0.90%	0.72%
£1 up to £4,999	0.50%	0.40%	0.50%	0.40%

6. I would like to propose a change in connection with the attendance of Trustees at the Society's conference. As it is the intention of the Committee to raise the profile of the DHS the annual conference is an opportune time to do this and thus Trustees should be encouraged to attend. To this end:

- Accommodation (as necessary), travel and subsistence will be paid, as 'reasonable out of pocket expenses' as deemed by the Charity Commission. Each expense must have a receipt and forwarded to me at the earliest opportunity, with a brief covering note as to how they were incurred.
- There will be no conference fee for Trustees and Executive Members.
- Catering expenses (dinner and lunch) incurred by the Conference Convenor on behalf of the DHS Executive will be met.

Attendance is for the benefit of the DHS, all Executive Members should wear clearly labelled name badges, a DHS stand should be manned etc.

This has been discussed with the Charity Commissioners, further information on Trustees obligations can be found at:

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc11.asp#12>

## **Journal Report**

The Journal's total circulation increased from 1,758 in 2004 to 2,217 in 2005. Of this total, approximately half are in Europe and North American, and half are in the Rest of the World. Circulation growth both for individuals and institutions has been greatest in North America and the Rest of the World. While these trends reflect increasing interest in the subject internationally, the promotion of the Journal by Oxford University Press in consortia agreements with institutions and its favourable access terms for developing countries has been highly significant.

Electronic access to the Journal content is continuing to increase rapidly, 1,600 institutions now offer online access – 1,400 of these offer online only, although only 13 discontinued print in 2005. While individual print subscriptions remain static at about 300, the number of individuals requesting email notification of

issue contents increased to 1,052 in 2005. Journal website hits increased fourfold to 123,886 and article downloads from the site rose from 4,822 to 18,591 in 2005.

The flexibility of the online access is having a greater than average impact on the Journal due to the international and interdisciplinary interest of its content as the diversity of user and of search terms used on the Journal's OUP site suggest. Further, when 600 articles from the digitised archive of the Journal content 1998-2000 became available in 2005, 97% were viewed and 76% downloaded to print the first year, notably higher than average percentages of use for related subjects. Growth in article searches goes hand-in-hand with growth in institutional online access: this primarily serves a US-based audience, an area where the number of institutions offering online access to the Journal increased by more than 60% in 2005. Free searchable access to the digitised archive of the Journal back issues is now being included in individual subscriptions and offered as an option to institutions.

Electronic access will offer further benefits to Journal readers. Individual subscribers or those with access via an institution can now comment on articles published via the Journal as part of the OUP website. Comments may take the form of letters or short papers on related themes. Selected responses will be included in the print version of the Journal, which will be increased in size for this purpose. Editors are also cultivating shorter papers for thematic discussion and debate under the title 'design re:focus,' which opens with the issue currently in print. The Journal is taking advantage of these opportunities to become a quick-response centre of exchanges in the subject.

Web-based communication is also offering benefits to authors and editors. Electronic publication of articles before print is now available, shortening the time between submission and publication. Online manuscript management will be introduced in early 2007. All aspects of an article's progress from submission to publication can be accessed by editors online, we will be able to flexibly accommodate ways of reviewing a greater range of content over more flexible timescales involving editors and advisors who don't always need to be physically present at the same time.

Oxford University Press considers that 'The Journal continues to perform well and brings in steady profits. New income streams are developing well.' Increasing profits in recent years enable the Society and OUP, as co-publishers of the Journal, to invest in its further development. Membership of the editorial and advisory boards is being adjusted to take advantage of these possibilities and ensure that the Journal contributes fully to the development of the subject internationally.

Tim Putnam

## **Membership Report**

## Introduction

Nichola Hebditch took over the post of Membership Officer from Jo Lewis at the beginning of the summer. Consequently, a more detailed report on DHS membership will be produced at the end of this year.

### 1 Membership Statistics (see Table 1)

Table 1: Membership categories – numbers and percentages

Membership Category	January – December 2002		January – December 2003		January – December 2004		January – December 2005		January – August 4 <sup>th</sup> 2006	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Institutional	17	9%	15	8%	18	8%	16	7%	18	9%
Personal	140	71%	149	78%	168	72%	170	78%	155	76%
Students	40	20%	27	14%	48	21%	33	15%	32	16%
Totals	197	100%	191	100%	234	101%	219	100%	205	101%

Sources:

Figures for 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 sent by OUP August 2006

Figures for 2002 Membership Report, September 2004

Total membership for 2005 stood at 219 comprising of:

- 16 Institutional Members
- 33 Student Members
- 170 Personal Individual Members.

Although Personal and Institutional membership remained fairly static, Student membership declined, with a loss of 15 student members on the previous year's figures.

Total membership for 2006 (to date) stands at 205 – a slight increase on the figure of 195 released this time last year.

To date membership for 2006 comprises of:

- 18 Institutional Members
- 32 Student Members
- 155 Personal Individual Members.

#### *Institutional membership*

In 2005, Institutional members accounted for approximately 7% (16 institutions). 2006 has seen a slight increase in this category with 18 institutions now represented. These institutions account for 9% of the total membership of the Society.

#### *Student membership*

In 2005, Student members accounted for 15% (33) of the total membership. Figures for 2006 show a similar number and percentage with 32 student members accounting for 16% of the total membership.

### *Personal Individual Members*

In 2005, Personal Individual members accounted for 78% (170) of the total membership. 2006 has so far seen a decline in actual numbers – 155 Personal Individual members accounting for 76% of the total membership.

Traditionally many people renew or join the Society in the weeks leading up to the annual conference, consequently it is anticipated that final figures for 2006 will show an increase in total membership.

### 2 Geographical location of members (see Table 2)

Information for 2006 shows that membership continues to be international and geographically diverse:

- 130 United Kingdom
- 29 Europe
- 46 Rest of the World

In addition to those countries within the United Kingdom, 18 countries are represented most notably the Republic of Ireland and Belgium (in Europe) and the United States and Canada (Rest of the world).

Table 2: Membership according to geographical location January – August 4<sup>th</sup> 2006

United Kingdom	130
Belgium	4
Finland	1
France	3
Germany	2
Greece	2
Netherlands	2
Norway	1
Republic of Ireland	10
Spain	3
Switzerland	1
Australia	4
Canada	7
Japan	3
New Zealand	1
Philippines	1
South Korea	1
Taiwan	1
United States	28
Total membership	205

Finally... Thanks go out to the following people who have provided assistance in the past year: Jo Lewis, Paula Thomson (Society Liaison Controller, Oxford Journals, Oxford University Press) and Clare Morton (Senior Editor, Humanities Journals, Oxford Journals, Oxford University Press).

Nichola Hebditch  
Membership Secretary  
[nichola.hebditch@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:nichola.hebditch@ntu.ac.uk)

August 30<sup>th</sup> 2006

## **Essay Prize Report**

Linda Sandino

This year the winners of the 2006 Design History Society Essay Prize were both awarded to essays on the history of graphic design by studio based students, which is an especially welcome development since it is evidence of the value of design history for practice and the engagement it engenders for studio practitioners. 2006 was a bumper year for entries. The standard was mixed rather than consistent in terms of quality. However, the outstanding winning submissions were rigorously researched with a clear and sophisticated grasp of the issues involved, written in a clear and elegant style. The BA prize went to John Patrick Hartnett, BA (Hons) Design for Interactive Media, from the Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin, Eire, for his essay 'Derrida by Default: Wolfgang Weingart and the (Accidental) Deconstruction of Swiss Typography'. The MA prize was awarded to Chris Campbell, currently on the MA Communication Design, Central St Martins, University of the Arts London, for his essay 'Authority, Obedience and the Naked Street: The British Road Signage System After World War II'.

John Patrick's was intrigued by how Wolfgang Weingart seemed to be 'pulling the threads of typography apart without ever resorting to the excesses of later postmodern graphic design' which led to an examination of Derrida's *Of Grammatology*. His essay synthesized complex theory with the work of an often overlooked designer. John Patrick is hoping to spend the next year working in a design studio for a time, after which he hopes to continue in higher education by undertaking an MA.

Chris, who initially studied film, has just completed the first year of his MA in Communication Design. He has worked in film production, and as a web designer in the USA. He is particularly drawn to 'the idea of functional design and the challenges of representing complex data in such a way for it to be quickly understood'. His essay explored the coding and visual language of UK road signage, the authoritative effect it has on road users and the consequences of this relationship on the traveler and traveled space.

The Society would like to thank Professor Jeremy Aynsley of the Royal College of Art, and Professor Teal Triggs of the London College of Communication for their contribution to assessing these essays

### **Event Award Annual Report for AGM**

The Design History Society offers financial assistance up to the sum of £500 for small-scale academic conferences and symposia or other academic events. The Event Award is aimed particularly at encouraging the development of new research interests within the field of design history and its related subject areas.

Applications should be submitted to one of the three annual rounds: 1 October, 1 January and 1 April. Applications must arrive in time to be considered in the round that falls at least six months in advance of the event in order that the event may be given free publicity in the DHS newsletter (worth around £100). The Event should take place within twelve months of the award being made.

Applications can be downloaded from the DHS website:  
<http://www.designhistorysociety.org/eventaward.htm>

Applications should be emailed to the Event Award Co-ordinator:  
claire.omahony@bristol.ac.uk  
Dr Claire O'Mahony, Director of Lifelong Learning,  
Department of History of Art, University of Bristol,  
43 Woodland Road, Bristol, BS8 1UU. 00.44.(0)117.331.1197

Event Awards have been awarded to cover a range of costs varying from speakers' travel costs to subsidising student places. We have most commonly supported conferences and symposia and which recently have included:

- September '04: *Emile Gallé: La Lorraine Artiste*, University of Bristol
- February '05: *National Identity in Italian Design*, MODA
- March '05: *History of international exhibitions*, doctoral students at the RCA
- March '05, *Domestic Encounters: 1400 to the Present* AHRB Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior
- September '05: *Show and Tell*, University of Hertfordshire
- Oct '05 *New Views: Repositioning Graphic Design History* School of Graphic Design, London College of Communication
- November '05: *Gender and Built Space*, Women's Committee of the Economic History Society Annual Workshop and Gender & Built Space Research Group, the University of Brighton.

January 2006 Award:

*Theorising Design and Design Issues in an Art Education Context: Leeds 2007*  
Leeds College of Art and Design, 16 March 2007  
Organiser: Kate Hatton

April 2006 Award:

*Finding the question to the answer: a graphic design research symposium*  
Nottingham Trent University, Wednesday 13 September 2006 1.30pm–5.00pm  
Organiser: Robert Harland

## **Communications Report**

Following last year's creation of the post of communications officer, the newsletter, website and electronic mailing list are all managed within one role. The following report outlines activities and developments of these three communication tools, as well as developments within the general field of the Society's communications.

### Newsletter

A new book notices section is being introduced, working in partnership with the Reviews editor of the *Journal of Design History*. The production of newsletter by a new printing company has resulted in a 60% saving.

### Website

The structure of the website has been rationalised and the entire site has been updated to reflect changes and developments within the Society itself. A new news page has been added which includes frequent updates, some crossing over from the electronic mailing list.

The website is receiving increasing numbers of visitors, which this year has averaged at 650 per month. Whilst a third of visitors are from the UK, 20% are from the USA, 20% from mainland Europe, 10% from Australasia, 10% from Asia with the remainder coming from rest of the world.

### Electronic Mailing List

As with the website, the electronic mailing list has received increasing numbers of subscribers, reflecting not only the increasing international nature of the Society's audience as well as the interest that there is in design history. However not only do subscriber numbers exceed membership numbers, but also only a quarter of members subscribe to the mailing list. Alongside increasing subscriber numbers, there has also been an increase in the number of postings to the list. Therefore postings will now be sent out weekly as a digest.

### General Communications

The consolidation of the communications for the Society has exposed its fragmented and often outdated nature. In order to update the Society's visual look and to produce new communication material, such as membership cards

and promotional posters, the executive has agreed to hire a graphics agency. The agency would be hired for the medium to long term, in order to be the 'brand guardians' of the Society and to provide continuity through changing executive committees.

Through a process of personal recommendations, seven agencies were invited to submit portfolios. The portfolios of six agencies were submitted and presented to the executive committee, from which a shortlist of two was drawn up. These two agencies were then sent a brief to cost up, details of which are attached to this document. Alongside this process, the committee is currently exploring, through personal contacts on the committee, the possibility of the design agency Pentagram taking on the Society's visual communications pro bono.

Two avenues are now open to the Society: to consolidate the current visual of the Society or to undertake a complete rebranding the Society. I look forward to receiving feedback from members about this particular development.

Juliette Kristensen  
September 2006

## **Regional Representatives Coordinator Annual Report**

### **1.0. Introduction**

This report aims to provide a brief summary of issues and developments relating to the Design History Society's Regional Representatives over the past 12 months.

The Regional Reps Coordinator, Kirsten Hardie (KH) took up the role in October 2005 and met with Andrea Peach, Duncan Flatman and Anna Moran at the 2005 DHS Annual Conference in London to discuss the handover of the co-ordinator role and to identify key ideas and issues for future development of the activities of the representatives.

KH has examined the Regional Reps (RR) files (compiled by the previous co-ordinators) to gain a better understanding of the RR network activities, issues and ideas to date - and has considered the comparable roles and activities of other societies to help inform how the DHS network can be developed further.

### **2.0. Regional Reps**

There are currently 8 Regional Representatives :-

Moira Vincentelli	Aberystwyth
Anna Moran	Dublin
Julie Barnham	Sheffield
Nicholas Oddy	Glasgow
Christine Arnold	NE. Scotland, Highland & Islands
Duncan Flatman	Birmingham
Anthea Winterburn	Swindon
Kirsten Hardie	South Coast of England



SW Regional Rep Harold Birks, Falmouth resigned in 2006 following retirement.

A call for new reps was made in the newsletter to encourage more members to be involved and the Executive Committee have encouraged that international reps are established.

## 2.0. DHS newsletter : Regional Reps Page

To ensure that members are aware of DHS reps and activities and resources across the regions, the RRC has worked closely with Communication Officer Juliette Kristensen to ensure that the traditional regional reps page in the newsletter is maintained. Articles have highlighted resource centres and museums across the UK and have informed members of the reps and proposed developments.

It was proposed that future RR contributions to the newsletter could include:

- current course provision nationally – what exists and where – a potential mapping exercise
- how design history exists within the curriculum – new initiatives
- how design history is taught – delivery, methods, projects, innovative approaches, themes, activities – as a distinct course or as an integrative part of a specialism.
- hot research topics related to distinct areas
- what resources exist to support Design History – showcase collections, archives, events
- how students engage with the discipline – cross level.

### 3.0. Events and activities

The important role that reps can play in promoting design history sources and events

is recognised. The aim to develop further key regional events has been proposed, - visits, workshops etc. Suggestions were invited and one proposal was made – visit to newly re-opened Modernist icon, the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill - however limited interest was received.

The organisation of a key event in 2007 that brings together DHS reps and reps from comparable organisations and societies – eg. The Twentieth Century Society, The Costume Society, The Ephemera Society, the University Museums Group etc is being pursued to develop cross/interdisciplinary networks and activities.

The RRC is currently working with colleagues regarding the development of proposed future events. It is hoped that Duncan Flatman will be able to help organise an event in Birmingham in the future.

### 4.0. Membership questionnaire

To gain a better understanding of the membership profile of the Design History Society, the RRC has worked with the Executive Committee to develop a questionnaire. It is hoped that the information received should help inform future regional activities.

### 5.0 Proposed Action

- to promote regional reps via newsletter
- to secure more regional reps - especially international reps
- to raise the profile and activity of RR
- to develop communication between reps
- to develop the advocacy role of reps – to promote the Society actively across their region
- to create opportunities for reps to meet

- to organise a series of events across the UK relating to various Design History themes
- to organise a cross society event – meeting of reps across related societies and organisations

## 6.0. Conclusion

The DHS network of Regional Representatives aims '*to support, encourage and vitalize local initiatives*'. It is recognised that the reps undertake this role voluntarily and that they are positioned nationally in such a way that makes the organisation of a core rep meeting difficult. The activities and contributions of the reps is important to the DHS. It is proposed that a more rigorous *push* to generate greater regional activity and/or communication of related DHS issues will be pursued. Notably, greater communication between reps will be encouraged and the *voice* of the reps will be more active in the DHS newsletter.

Kirsten Hardie  
August 2006