

Newsletter

No 68 Summer 2012



AIA UK

A Chapter of
The American
Institute of Architects

AIA UK 2012 Annual Summer Gala

Etain Fitzpatrick, AIA

The AIA UK chapter held its annual Summer Gala on the 5th of July at the historic Fishmongers' Hall at London Bridge, launching the celebration of the chapter's 20th year Anniversary. We were proud to enjoy this signature event with so many of our members, sponsors and guests. The evening began tranquilly as guests arrived and were guided to the Halls' Court room terrace, overlooking the Thames and offering fabulous views of Tower Bridge, the Shard, Southwark Cathedral and the Tate Modern.

Fishmongers' Hall is the home to the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers which is one of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of the City Guilds. It has been in existence for more than 700 years. The present Hall was designed and built from 1832-1835. In 1832, the architect, Henry Roberts, was awarded the project in competition. The young George Gilbert Scott, the future Victorian architect, spent two years in Robert's office preparing working drawings for the Hall. The building is noted as one of the rare examples of an English Greek Revival town building and for its early structural use of iron and hollow bricks, afforded by the mills of the industrial revolution.

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Summer Gala, Fishmongers' Hall

AIA UK 2012 Cambridge Excursion

Lester Korzilius, AIA RIBA

Our annual tour will be to Cambridge from Friday evening, 7th September through Sunday, 9th September. It will include architectural guided walking tours of Cambridge, including entrance to Kings, St John's, and Queen's colleges; building tours led by the architects involved in the design – Allies & Morrison, Leslie Martin & Colin St John Wilson, Dixon Jones, MacCormac Jamieson Prichard, van Heyningen and Haward, and others. There will also be a gala dinner on the Saturday night and punting on the River Cam!

The registration cost for AIA members plus one guest is £149. This includes all tours, transport, lunches, the gala dinner, and entry fees to the various colleges. Further information and booking forms are on the AIA UK website at www.aiauk.org.

This event is possible in part due to the sponsorship of Grohe.

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AIA UK 2012 Annual Summer Gala, cont.

Etain Fitzpatrick, AIA

Throughout the evening curated tours of the Hall were given by Claire Crawford. As Curator at Fishmongers' Hall for the last 12 years, Claire is involved in the research, commissioning and restoration of items in the Company's collection, which includes over 1700 items of silver, artwork, furniture and ceramics. We were fortunate to have Clare share her extensive knowledge of the Hall's history and works of art as this year's regularly scheduled tours are completely booked out.

Herman Miller, the evenings' Platinum and long-term chapter sponsor, generously donated their Setu lounge chair and ottoman to be raffled later in the evening. Everyone had the opportunity to try a sample of the chair displayed in the Hall's entrance, set off beautifully by a backdrop of intricate mosaic tiles. The winner of the chair was Lester Korzilius, AIA, AIA UK Board member and organizer of this year's Weekend Excursion to Cambridge. Congratulations Lester!

Our event was strategically scheduled to coincide with the official inauguration of the Shard, designed by the Renzo Piano Building Workshop, recently completed and Western Europe's tallest tower at 310m. The Gala extended to enjoy the celebratory laser and light show that emanated from the Shard at 10:15. The Hall's terrace afforded front row seats to the spectacular and we calmly looked on as hundreds of people poured onto London Bridge to get a view. It was a fantastic finale to a beautiful clear evening during one of the UK's wettest summers!

Thank you to everyone who attended and made it such a unique and fun party. A special thanks to our long-term sponsor, Herman Miller, for making the gala possible and also for their generous chair donation. I would also like to give particular thanks to our Board Members and Officers, Chapter Executive Fiona McKay and Treasurer Justin Cratty, AIA for their help and to our IDP/ARE Coordinator Brianne Page, AIA, Events Coordinator, Maria Solovieva, AIA, and Vice-President Robert Rhodes, AIA, who greeted our guests at the door. We hope to see you all next year. Happy 20th Anniversary AIA UK, the first International Chapter of the American Institute of Architects!



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AIA UK President Etain Fitzpatrick (left) with AIA National Officers

2012 AIA National Convention

Michael Lischer, FAIA

Fifteen thousand architects and delegates descended upon Washington DC in May for the AIA's National Convention and Design Exposition! Among them were AIA UK members Mike Hardiman, our President, Etain Fitzpatrick, and board member Michael Lischer.

This year the Convention offered nearly 200 educational sessions and over 100 tours around the DC area! Thirty of the educational sessions were broadcast live over the internet for those unable to attend. The tapes of these sessions are still available from the AIA for those needing extra continuing education Learning Units.

Among the highlights for overseas members was the International Chapters meeting, where Etain gave a captivating speech about the AIA UK's many activities over the past twelve months. Of particular interest for our Chapter, was the passing of a bylaws amendment authorizing the National Board of Directors to establish a new International Region. This will include all of us who are members of the AIA UK. A task group has been established to work out the details, but this is an important change that raises the profile within the AIA of those practicing overseas. More information will follow in future additions of the AIA UK Newsletter.

Key purposes of the Convention are the election of National officers and hosting the AIA business meeting. Helene Combs Dreiling, FAIA, was elected 2013 First Vice President / 2014 President. Steven Holl, FAIA, was honoured with AIA Gold Medal and Minnesota firm, VJAA, won the prestigious Firm Award.

The Convention festivities concluded with the Fellows Banquet. This annual event welcomed 105 new members into the College of Fellows. Next year's convention takes place in Denver, June 20-22. This is a great opportunity to earn a year's worth of Learning Units at one event! Registration is now open!





Tulum View from Temple Watchtower



Palenque

2011 Noel Hill Scholarship Winner Visits Central America

Robin Flindell, 2011 Student Award Winner

My proposal was to compare two ancient cities in order to seek evidence for the existence (or otherwise) of a Universal Geometry underlying all current built expressions of thought. My research question became: "Does an intrinsic reaction to our natural environment provoke an inevitable cross-cultural similarity in our conceptions of the Universe? And can this then explain similarities found in cross-cultural mythology and construction in cities?" This was the question for my Masters written thesis at Sheffield School of Architecture entitled - "Man, Myth and A Universal Geometry." The basic idea for the study came from my passion for ancient myths and legends combined with a historical analysis of ancient cities from an architectural and urban perspective.

For my thesis I wanted to explore similarities in geometry of the pre-modern city from unconnected sites across the globe. My choices were the now ruinous Teotihuacan near Mexico City and the Forbidden City in Beijing. My critical standpoint was that the notion of a Universal Geometry, of an unwritten code pervasive in all our built expressions of thought, quite predictable and unlikely to be as significant in the overall design, if the cultural and historical contexts in which each city existed were properly taken into account. By limiting this broad subject area by using only two case studies and specific and measured examination criteria, I would still be able to produce an informed and enlightening discussion. When Sixteenth century Conquistadors conquered central America, they destroyed most of the indigenous records, making any subsequent desk based study extremely difficult or impossible. In contrast, the Forbidden City has been well documented by countless academics over the centuries leaving a wealth of material available.

My travels included as many Mayan, Toltec, and Zapotec sites as possible while travelling in Central America and the Mexican Yucatan peninsula. In order to fully understand the cultural context in which Teotihuacan was based, it was necessary to visit various sites built in different eras. Ultimately this field research allowed me to accurately formulate my discussions and conclude that both case studies have shown that the cities were indeed constructed and planned according to beliefs in the meaning of the universe, reflected in their geometric layouts. However, although there were some initial similarities, it is probable that these were not due to a shared conception between the two and that they displayed quite unique cultural evolution despite fundamentally sharing the environment of the earth.

Finally I would like to thank the AIA UK for awarding me the 2011 Noel Hill travel scholarship which allowed me to visit the sites about which I had only been able to read. My first-hand experience gave me invaluable insight and understanding of the topic area and resulted in a level of accuracy in my thesis I would otherwise not have achieved. Thank you!

For details on how to enter the student competition for the 2013 Design Awards, please visit the AIA UK website later this year.



Panoramic View of Teotihuacan



Teotihuacan Moon Pyramid taken atop Sun Pyramid

UPCOMING EVENTS

CAMBRIDGE EXCURSION

September 7-9

Cambridge, England

Registration - www.aiauk.org

'CROSS THE POND' - AIA UK & AIA NY

Design Award Winners Exhibition

as part of the British Council's International Architecture and Design Showcase

September 2012 - see website for details


STUDENT DESIGN CHARETTE

October - Details TBC



Summer Gala 2012

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AIA UK Building Tours

Wade Scaramucci, AIA, RIBA

AIA Building Tours have continued into the summer. These tours provide opportunities to visit unique buildings, practical knowledge concerning London specific issues, as well as units of CES / CPD accreditation.

In May 2012, the group toured the award winning Bear Lane residential project by Panter Hudspith Architects. Architect Simon Hudspith led the tour and focused on the design of high density living in a contextually creative manner. The building's mass is comprised of a series of stacked brick boxes, set around an internal courtyard which steps down to meet an existing public house. This is a contemporary building whose grain and texture reflect the areas industrial urban past, while providing the catalyst for a new community.

During June, the London AIA toured Canada Water Library by CZWG Architects. The Canada Water Library celebrates its unique location on a new public square overlooking Canada Water. An inverted pyramid form springs from a restricted plot size, whilst the expanding shape above enables the containment of the main library and ancillary spaces. Anodized aluminium cladding with sequined perforations wraps the building, giving it sculptural appeal and a striking visual effect. This project brings not only a new civic amenity to the community, but a fresh, urban identity as well.

In July, the group toured City of Westminster College by Schmidt / Hammer / Lassen Architects. This project is an exemplar modern British educational building and provides identity, flexibility and an inspirational educational environment. The building design responds to the constrained nature of this urban site and the requirement for highly adaptable spaces to provide for future flexibility. Architect Jim Dorsett explained how the project incorporates a range of sustainable principles including optimising natural light and thermal mass. The result of this thoughtfulness is a series of diverse spaces supporting a range of teaching and research methods.



AIA UK Exhibition Tour Nicholas Hawksmoor: Architect of the Imagination

Alex Miller, Assoc. AIA

The Royal Academy hosted a guided tour of their exhibition “Nicholas Hawksmoor: Architect of the Imagination”, led by the exhibit curator Owen Hopkins. While the RA's ground floor architecture gallery on first impression offers up a challenging and small space with a sloped floor, the exhibit filled the walls with a range of carefully selected drawings, photos, images, and videos that reflect both Hawksmoor's own built and un-built works.

Another key element of the exhibit was the work through time that Hawksmoor has influenced. Hopkins gave a thorough explanation behind each of his selections and a deep insight into the chosen work from Hogarth on to images of the post-modern One Poultry. Images from the 70's challenge the current perception of Christ Church Spitalfields and the evolution of that space over time.

We were also guided through an evolution of Hawksmoor's work on church and tower spires. The entire assembled group was grateful to Owen Hopkins for taking time out of his Friday evening to guide us through the exhibit and share his thoughts directly on Hawksmoor, which truly enhanced the experience of the exhibit.

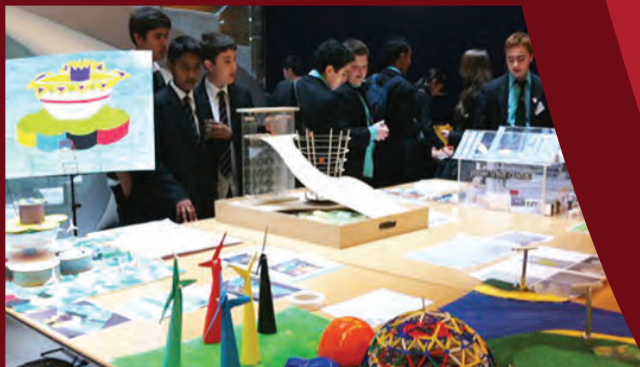
2012 Create Sport Challenge

Shannon Piatek, AIA Assoc.

The AIA UK recently had the wonderful opportunity to participate on the jury for the 2012 Create Sport Challenge, a London-wide design competition for Year 8 students in which participating teams have to complete a conceptual design and build a model of a Community Sports Venue. The annual event, which had over 130 students representing 17 schools participating, was sponsored by Serious About Youth (SAY), the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), Sport 4 All, and Arup.

With the Summer Olympics 2012 in full swing this summer the event offered a unique opportunity to engage students in this fun, exciting & educational initiative that developed their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) curriculum skills. Students worked with industry professionals over the course of several weeks to research existing sporting venues and develop their own scheme. The students investigated various structural solutions to create open plans without visual obstructions to spectators, sustainable design features, and also how their project would be used after the Olympic events to help the community.

The AIA UK Chapter would like to congratulate all the participants for their hard work and recognise all the winning schools for a job well done.



AIA UK Exhibition Tour Bauhaus: Art as Life

Robert Rhodes, AIA

On July 12th 2012, the AIA UK held its second event in a new series of guided Exhibition and Gallery tours. Following the success of the first event at the Hawksmoor Exhibition at the Royal Academy, a group of 16 AIA members and guests were treated to a insightful and inspiring private tour of the Barbican Art Gallery's “Bauhaus: Art as Life” exhibition, led by curator, Catherine Ince.

With more than 400 works marking the Bauhaus' turbulent 14 year history, Catherine had the daunting task of condensing what is the largest UK exhibition on the subject in over 40 years into a brief evening event. With expertise and charm she painted a thorough, entertaining and quite personal portrait of the personalities and politics that were central to forming the Bauhaus' utopian vision for a modern society, although the unparalleled artistic output made it arguably the most influential art and design school of the early 20th century.

The exhibition follows the development of the Bauhaus school from its founding by Walter Gropius in Weimar in 1919, through its Arts & Crafts beginnings, to its move in 1925 to Gropius' iconic campus in Dessau – where the students and faculty tested their new ideas for modern living. The exhibition traces the final years under Hannes Meyer from 1928 to 1930, and then Ludwig Mies van der Rohe who led the school through it's move to Berlin and closure in 1933.

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