

UK Report 2001

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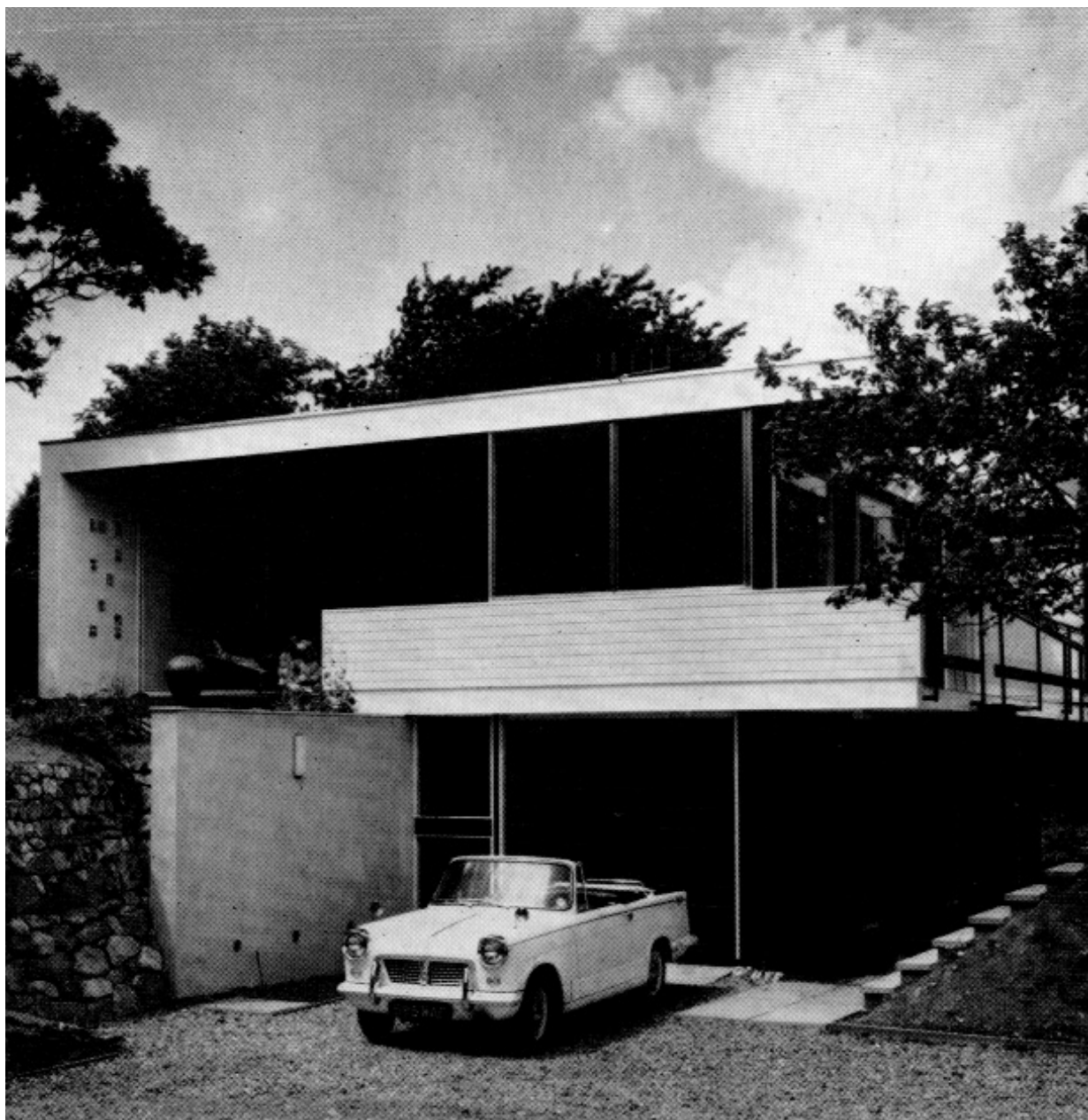
Editorial

European Visits

10 Years of DOCCOMOMO UK

Evening Seminars

Campaigns



Lanteglos, Calenick, Truro, Cornwall 1964 Giles Blomfield
Rediscovered during Post-War Register research

The Eindhoven Statement

DoCoMoMo exists to:

1
Bring the significance of the Modern Movement to the attention of the public, the authorities, the professions and the educational community concerned with the built environment.

2
Identify and promote the recording of the works of the modern Movement, which will include a register, drawings, photographs and other documents.

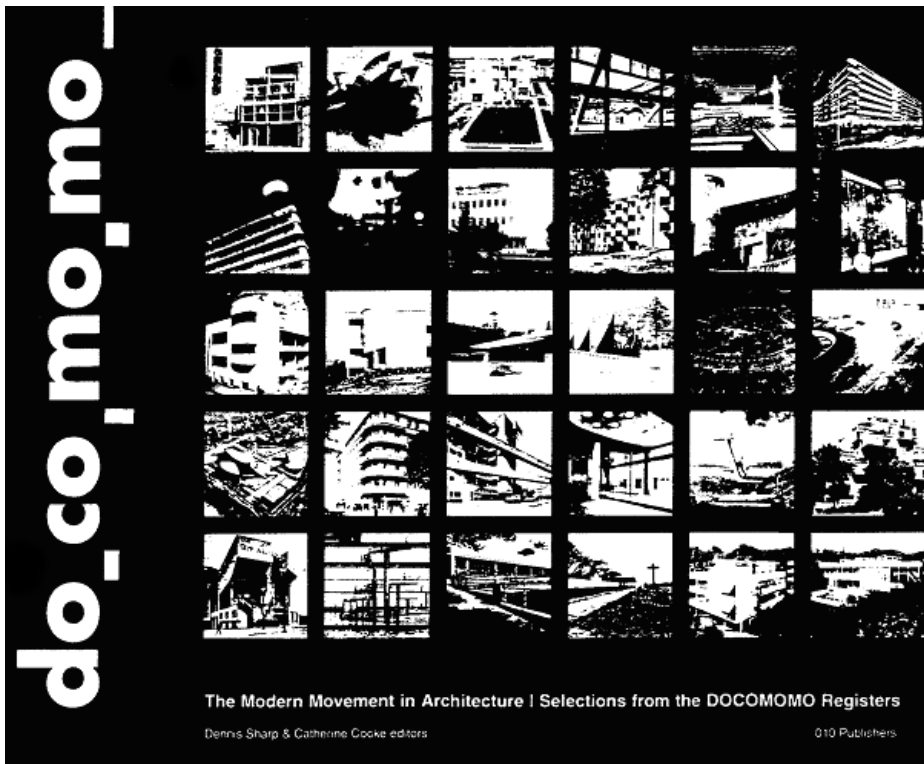
3
Foster the development of appropriate techniques and methods of conservation, and disseminate knowledge of these throughout the profession.

4
Oppose destruction and disfigurement of significant works.

5
Identify and attract funding for documentation and conservation.

6
Explore and develop knowledge of the Modern Movement.

do.co.mo



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Hubert-Jan Henket:
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 Maristella Casciato: **Documenting Modern Architecture**
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Register sections of the national & regional working parties:

Argentina • Australia • Belgium • Brazil • British Columbia • Bulgaria • Czech Republic • Denmark • Estonia • Finland • France • Germany • Greece • Hungary • Iberia • Iceland • Israel • Italy • Japan • Latvia • Netherlands • New Zealand • Norway • Quebec • Russia-West • Russia-East • Scotland • Slovakia • Sweden • Switzerland • United Kingdom • USA

Catherine Cooke: **Literature of the Modern Movement in architecture: an international bibliography of books & periodicals**

The Modern Movement in Architecture

Selections from the DOCOMOMO Registers

Dennis Sharp & Catherine Cooke editors

010 Publishers

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Report 2002

From the Editor

It remains a source of amazement how much can be achieved by a small but dedicated group of people with no outside financial backing. The active members of DOCOMOMO-UK are backed up instead with the invaluable and tangible support and collective goodwill of those members who subscribe, attend meetings when they are able, and are always ready to put us straight, send letters of support, and get involved where appropriate. We are always particularly delighted when a long-term member rallies to a cause they feel strongly about, reminding us that, above all, we are an organisation of professionals and specialists in a wide variety of fields whose expertise is waiting to be tapped.

DOCOMOMO continues a programme of vibrant monthly meetings on historic or topical conservation issues. Taking place in either the Volume Gallery attached to Dennis Sharp's tempting Book Art shop in Bloomsbury, or in Alan Baxter Associates' larger space in Cowcross Street, Farringdon, if you have never attended before there is always a warm welcome for you and any prospective new members.

There is no need to book. Entry, wine and nibbles are free and help the flow of lively discussion and debate that follow every presentation (see pages 10-11 inside). Our independence is highly valued and encourages free and passionate exchange of views, which to date is always good-natured, has never come to blows, and usually continues after the talk in a nearby restaurant.

Our international study tours have proved very popular. Led by a DOCOMOMO specialist and with everything charged at cost (and the option to make your own travel and accommodation arrangements to suit your preferences), they are inexpensive, tremendously enjoyable and offer a chance to wallow in Modern Movement buildings



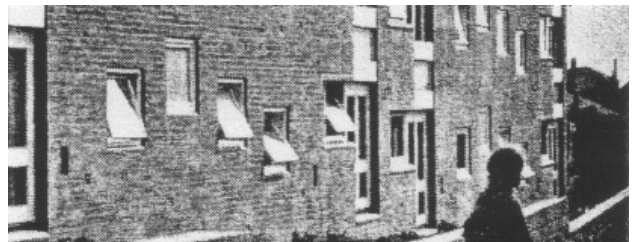
Place de la Gare, Grenoble: Calder *stabile* and the Alps

and ideas with like-minded people for an intensive brain detox and history course in one (pages 4-7).

Campaigns for buildings under threat do not always have such happy outcomes. Many wearied campaigners are still devastated, after the time, effort and arm-twisting involved, at demolition of the Brynmawr Rubber Factory - a Welsh version of the Firestone story with accompanying political and commercial sub-texts which would make Machiavelli blush (page 12). The only good outcomes were the strengthening of commitment by DOCOMOMO members in Wales that led to the creation of a dedicated Welsh sub-group, and the unprecedented local and national media coverage which has raised the profile of modern architecture there.

As laid down in the stone tablets of DOCOMOMO International, DOCOMOMO-UK has committed to further research on Modern Movement buildings. Following the earlier exercise by Alan Powers on the pre-war period, I am delighted to be personally involved in cataloguing post-war buildings, and would like to thank Matthew Wickens and all those who have been willing to give their time to spend a day in the RIBA Library helping with this painstaking but essential task. Through this research, for which we continue to seek funding, we hope to amass a comprehensive reference catalogue, and eventually a database, which could be accessed by anyone researching the period, and which would inform ourselves and the larger public what 'Modern Movement' has actually meant in UK architecture.

Emma Dent Coad



Stirling & Gowen, Re-housing, Preston, 1962

Rotterdam Modern

Emma Dent Coad on our first foreign study tour

We came from far and wide, by road, rail and air, and settled into the kitsch damasked cosiness of the Hotel Breitner for our first joint meal. Architects, historians, enthusiasts, young and young at heart, were bonded by an irresistible compulsion to wander the streets and suburbs of Rotterdam admiring modernist buildings. Our guides, sometimes in spirit, sometimes in person, were Aimee de Back, Camiel Berns and Lucas van Zuijlen, a dynamic group of young Dutch architects who now form the core of DOCOMOMO-Netherlands and are currently involved in various restoration and reuse projects. It was a late April weekend with a typical mixture of sunshine and showers.

Our first visits were downtown, to the Netherlands Architecture Institute by Jo Coenen, 1988-93, (impressive, left us feeling wistful) and the stunningly restored Sonneveld House of 1928-32 by J A Brinkman and L C van der Vlugt, which is next door and had just been opened as a permanent part of the Institute. Having surrendered bags, coats, dripping umbrellas and shoes in the hallowed Sonneveld hallway, we shuffled around respectfully quiet, listening to the tour guide on headphones. It is a lovely house with some beautiful spaces, articulations and details, surprisingly colourful, if a little unhomely and overly 'hygienic'. Lots of original or reproduction furniture and fittings, tiled bathrooms and fitted cupboards; not a millimetre was unused or out of place.

Strolling past the restored De Unie cafe (sadly closed) we visited the Lijnbahn shopping area. Breuer's de Bijenkorf department store of 1955-7 and Gabo's great 'construction' were looking good now in the sun of a bustling Saturday morning. The Lijnbahn flats of 1956 by H Maaskant, one of which was lovingly restored and furnished, were a favourite of many of our group. The generosity of



Breuer's Bijenkorf & Gabo's 1956 'Construction' (CC)

space, with its wide sunny balcony, living room spanning the width of the flat (which could be subdivided to provide an additional bedroom), full length glass screen wall onto a hall area large enough to eat in, fair sized bedroom, and original fitted kitchen with stainless steel sink and counter, all decorated in glorious 1950s technicolor, endeared us all.



Period furnishing in the restored Lijnbahn flats (CC)

We were benefiting unexpectedly from an enlightened project of 'open apartments' funded by various developers as part of Rotterdam's year as a Cultural City of Europe. Across the city, 24 dwellings, most of them historic and restored but some new and advertising the joys of city life, were accessible by common ticket and an excellent guidebook for a six-month programme called 'Thuis in Rotterdam': 'At home in Rotterdam'. This was Open House on a big scale, and worthy of far more time than we could give it.

The historical diversity of standards this displayed was quite revealing. Those of us who bravely ventured into the 1996 so-called 'trendy living in the air' penthouse by Pi de Bruijn, were paradoxically brought down to earth by the thoroughly mean ceiling heights, cheap detailing, vast lengths of wasted corridor space and stingy window sizes - all in all a space, though large in floor area, which felt cramped and claustrophobic. All this was squeezed into a high-rise tower, which, for reasons I still cannot grasp, was clad up to the lower-lying clouds in red brick.

Saturday night was spent feasting and relaxing in the little Restaurant Soit - So Be It - run by friends of our Dutch DOCOMOMO hosts, which managed to accommodate and feed a group of twenty visitors and our local DOCOMOMO friends around

one huge and hospitable table.

On Sunday morning we were collected by a cortege of cars and a minibus for a more structured day of visits. We strolled along the river, past the Cafe Rotterdam, housed in the former departure building of the Holland-America shipping line, 1937-8 by Brinkman and van der Broek, and into the Hotel New York, built at the turn of the last century as part of the departure facilities for Holland-America's transatlantic passengers. It was currently lost in a sea of flattened dockland but, on a holiday Sunday, heaving with brunching families and architecture students from around the globe.

Our first scheduled stop was to the Kiefhoek low-cost housing estate by J J P Oud of 1925-9, where a compact (I should say tiny) four-roomed house (bathroom in yard, inside loo) for a family with eight children, lovingly restored with original colours and furniture, opened our eyes to the social problems of the time.



We crowd into Oud's worker's house at Kiefhoek (CC)

Michiel Brinkman's Spangen deck-access housing of 1921, very much deteriorated and in some cases with original brickwork over-painted from a 1983 restoration, appeared vandalised, squatted and crime-ridden. This was a very depressing sight compared with the optimistic ideology of rosy-cheeked babes playing in the traffic-free streets in the sky, the perfect neighbourhood community Brinkman had in mind when he conceived it. A new information centre and site office in one of the ground-floor flats promised in the foreseeable future a total restoration of structural and moral values - if only they could keep the vandals out.

Another sadly derelict site due for restoration was the nearby Experimental concrete housing project of 1922-9 by J M van Hardeveld, A Halsenbosch, and W Greve and W van Tijn. This consisted of low-rise housing blocks set around a private garden area. This was so degraded it was hard to imagine as a vibrant neighbourhood of the

future, and we await a positive outcome for this with some trepidation.

The longed-for high point of our visit was the van Nelle factory of 1929 by J A Brinkman and L C van der Vlugt. This massive site with its world famous cascading glass facades on all sides and glass freight conveyor bridges had been the subject of debate for some years. The happy conclusion to this has been a plan to restore the building's original structure and detailing as far as possible while converting it to re-use as lettable spaces of varying sizes for architects and other 'creatives.' The architectural practice of DOCOMOMO International's Secretary, Wessel de Jonge, is responsible for the current work and is taking over a sizeable volume of the awesome multi-cathedral like interior for its own new premises.



We float in the vastness of Van Nelle (MW)

Wessel's assistant Leo was our guide into parts of the project which would normally have been hard-hat zones. By effectively 'doubling up' the skin with metre-wide bands of circulation (to the north) and thermal control (to the south) the aesthetic is being maintained whilst usable space to current standards is created. Original fittings in the bathrooms reached by separate criss-crossing stairways for men and women workers are being restored, as are the well documented Kees van der Leeuw offices and the tea room in the cylindrical tower. It was a particular privilege to have a guided tour with a member of the practice team responsible for the work, whose enthusiasm seemed undaunted by the massive scale and complexity of such a major restoration.

The first DOCOMOMO-UK foreign study tour was judged a tremendous success. Everyone was grateful for the detailed itinerary and study notes which gave useful background information. Special thanks go to Dennis Sharp who initiated the idea of a Rotterdam visit and particularly for his negotiations with Wessel de Jonge which enabled us to have special access to van Nelle whilst the work was still in progress.

L'Esprit Nouveau at Grenoble

Graham Hopewell on our second foreign study tour

At the end of November 2001, eleven members of DOCOMOMO enjoyed a trip to Grenoble timed to coincide with the L'Esprit Nouveau exhibition which had transferred from Los Angeles. The show featured a part-reproduction of Corbusier's 1925 Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau complete with fitted and loose furniture. Around it were over 70 paintings and 20 drawings representative of the 'Purisme' school of which Amedee Ozenfant, Fernand Leger and Le Corbusier himself were the principal exponents, together with documents setting the background and development of the movement. We spent much of a day there, and the big eye-opener for me, as for several of the group, was the number and diversity of paintings by Corb.

Judi Loach, Convenor for Wales, was our excellent tour leader. Having studied at nearby Lyon and taught in the Grenoble School of Architecture, she had written a mini history of the town for us and a very full programme of buildings, many of which we left unseen through lack of time. Grenoble's wonderful location in the steep foothills of the Alps has ensured a concentration of engineers here and a willingness to explore the latest technology. Portland cement was invented in Grenoble and the local production of high quality cement meant that concrete was used here widely since the 1840s, initially as a cheap substitute for stone.

The exhibition was in the Musee de Grenoble, one of Mitterrand's provincial Grands Projets. Built in 1994 (by Olivier & Antoine Felix-Faure and Philippe Macary) in a modern if undistinguished style, it nonetheless has good gallery spaces and houses the finest collection of 20th century art in France outside Paris.



Original paintings and authentic furniture in the reconstructed Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau, Grenoble

Among the most interesting buildings we saw was Auguste Perret's Observation Tower, the only building left from the Exhibition of Hydroelectric Power and Tourism of 1925 and thus an exact contemporary of the L'Esprit Nouveau. It is now alas in a bad state due to crumbling concrete exposing the reinforcement and thus cannot be climbed. At the opening of an exhibition of architectural students' work which accompanied the main show at the Musee, we met people who had enjoyed running up and down it as children! We were also able to catch the ear of the Deputy Mayor and urge upon him the importance of its preservation.

Other buildings we saw included the Hotel de Ville (by Maurice Novarina, 1965-8), which has curtain walling by Jean Prouve; the Sports Stadium built for the 1968 Olympic Games; the Olympic speed-skating track with kinetic modular murals by Vasarely, and the Ecole d'Architecture where we were welcomed by the ex-director who gave us a tour. This included the basement workshops where the students have practical experience in constructing buildings which are subsequently dismantled to make way for the efforts of the succeeding year's students! Nearby we saw L'Arlequin, a large multi-storey mixed council and private housing estate set among communal green spaces. Visiting the area again after a lunch in the Architecture School's canteen (very palatable!) I was shown a sequence of piloti-walls on a pedestrian deck which had been given to extremely accomplished young spray-gun artists to create graffiti murals with stunning results.

Especially interesting was an extraordinary one-off building type: a 7-storey helicoidal garage built in 1928-9 by Fumet & Noiret on a tight inner-city site. On the street front is an apartment building with Art Deco facade behind which, entered through a porte cochere, rises a broad spiral ramp with 225 lock-up garages around its periphery and a salon for owners to await their chauffeurs.

A walk to 'the other side of the tracks' took us to examples of the 19th century use of concrete as a 'false stone' and for mass-produced decoration including a group of workers' houses, a neo-Gothic church and a disused glove factory - glove-making having been one of Grenoble's major industries.

Like many French cities, Grenoble has preserved its charming old town with twisting streets, alleys and market places - now refurbished and gentrified as the immigrant and working-class population have been decanted to the new banlieues. In the

19th century its expansion was handled with impressive boulevards and latterly has continued with pleasant housing estates in landscaped parks. It really cannot be said, however, that any of the modern architecture we saw 'vallait le detour.' (Andre Wogensky's Maison de la Culture was closed for refurbishment.) The town is undeniably handsome: if only we in Britain could learn the lessons in urban design which the Continent could teach. As a French architect friend says to me, we build buildings in Britain but we do not build towns. Despite that there is little or no evidence of cutting-edge modern design at street level. (This is in marked contrast to the 1860s which bequeathed the city streets a remarkable sequence of pre-cast concrete *vespasiennes*, or single-occupancy pissoirs, which were a highlight of our architectural monument-spotting.) Today one rather has the feeling that, with the exception of the artworks, time has stopped still visually some 20 or 30 years ago.

Of specialist interest to me was the amount of public art - more than in any other French provincial city. Every winter I go to help teach art to Venezuelan children in a creative programme initiated by my son, and this year my slides of the street art in Grenoble generated a lively discussion



Nursery school with 'added' murals in the Arlequin (GH)

among them. Most of the works date from the late 1960s and early 70s and are the product of the then socialist town council's policy of devoting 1% of the budget of all public projects to artworks in a programme entitled 'Le Musee sans Murs.' This is best translated as 'The Open Air Museum' since 'without walls' it would have been impossible to paint the murals which abound, as do sculptures. These crop up all over the town and many a blank gable wall is thus embellished. A nursery school in the Arlequin, whose black exterior walls were not appreciated by the children or their teachers, however pure they may have appeared in the architectural conception, have received a particularly lively and colourful abstract mural which breaks with, rather than respects, the orthogonal form of the building. It would be interesting to know the architect's reaction to this presumably unsolicited addition to his work. One also wonders if it has resulted



Mural (GH)

in better attendance as the young crawl less unwillingly to school. The murals range from abstraction to social commentary and criticism. I was told how one particular abstract mural on the facade of the Maison du Tourisme, expressing 'The imbalance of our present world, its violence and aggression', was vandalised (!) and had to be repainted with another, less provocative theme.

Among the artists are refugee Latin American muralist co-operatives who were invited by the Council. Their work seems not to get painted over following the change of political regime, as it does in Latin America itself. The Musee de Grenoble has its own sculpture park with works by Calder, Caro, Marta Pan, Zadkine. Not all artworks are outside however. Visits to the Police Station are enlivened with colourful and dynamic abstract murals in the entrance hall. Those who wed in the Salle des Mariages behind Prouve's facade in the Hotel de Ville do so beneath an abstract tapestry by Manessier. The gendarme who showed me in expressed his strong distaste for modern art and enthused at length over Gobelins and Louis XV.

Despite my comments about a certain lack of contemporary visual stimuli, it would be wrong to end without mentioning Grenoble's superb modern tramway system with its computerised ticketing system and 'station' stops ramped and raised to the exact level for wheelchair access. The articulated trams whisk you quietly from one end of town to the other - another example of Grenoble staying in the forefront of technical advance.



Inside the helicoidal garage of 1928 (MW)

The first decade in the UK

James Dunnett

As members will know, DOCOMOMO's international headquarters moves in Autumn 2002 from Delft to Paris. To mark this handover our Dutch colleagues decided to devote the last number of the International Journal which they will publish, no. 27, to reports from each national group about their activities over this first period. Each group was asked to fill a double spread 'as they thought fit.' We gave this task to James Dunnett, as one of the very few members who have been continuously involved in DOCOMOMO-UK's affairs since the very beginning. Since most UK members are not also 'international' members and do not see this journal, we decided to reproduce his account here.

DOCOMOMO-UK, in keeping with the style of its progenitor Christopher Dean, was inaugurated in the grandest meeting room in the grand headquarters of the Royal Institute of British Architects in London, on 1 March 1990. Dean, formerly a partner in the successful proto-hi-tech architectural practice Castle Park Dean Hook was a friend of DOCOMOMO's founder, Hubert-Jan Henket, who had worked with him in that office. Charming and well informed, but volatile and maddening for some, Dean had secured personal financial backing for DOCOMOMO-UK from no less a figure than Lord Palumbo, Chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, property magnate, collector of Modern Movement houses and a friend of the Thatcher government. So the best room was made available at the RIBA, with coffee and drinks to match.

The meeting was attended by the author Brian Brace Taylor, UK arts administrator *extraordinaire* Rory Coonan, John Allan of Avanti Architects (fresh from his refurbishment of Tecton's Penguin Pool, largely funded by Palumbo and the iconic project for DOCOMOMO-UK); by Dennis Sharp who had pioneered recognition of UK modernism in official circles here in the days of Nikolaus Pevsner, and myself, invited because of my agitation for the work of Erno Goldfinger. John Allan became first Chairman, I was first Secretary and Christopher Dean was first Co-ordinator, paid by Palumbo funds. Our first tasks were to write a constitution, obtain charitable status and prepare for the inaugural international meeting to be held at Eindhoven in September 1990.

Our first casework meeting was almost equally grand. Christopher booked a room in his club, the highly ornate nineteenth century Reform Club in Pall Mall. In this incongruous setting we met Laura Cohn to discuss restoration of the austere Isokon Flats designed in 1933 by her father Wells Coates (finally today the subject of a restoration project by Avanti). She had been referred to DOCOMOMO-UK by the Thirties Society (now the Twentieth Century Society), founded some years earlier to defend good pre-war architecture of all styles, which enjoyed official recognition. Its broad remit distinguished it decisively from the exclusively Modern Movement concerns of DOCOMOMO but precise definition of the respective roles of the two societies was to remain a problem.

The first International Conference at Eindhoven was an inspiration to us all and back in the UK activity was almost feverish. With enormous energy, Christopher cre-

ated the exhibition *Modern Architecture Restored*, which was later shown at the Bauhaus during the second International Conference and travelled widely. A regular Newsletter was started. With an RIBA research grant Alan Powers embarked on a Register of pre-war Modern Movement architecture in the UK. Jean-Louis Cohen was invited over from Paris to give the first Annual Lecture at the RIBA. He declared that the fact we were able to pay all his expenses showed modern architectural conservation was on a better footing in the UK than in France. Henri Ciriani lectured the following year and Herman Hertzberger in the next, both helping to identify us as international in perspective.

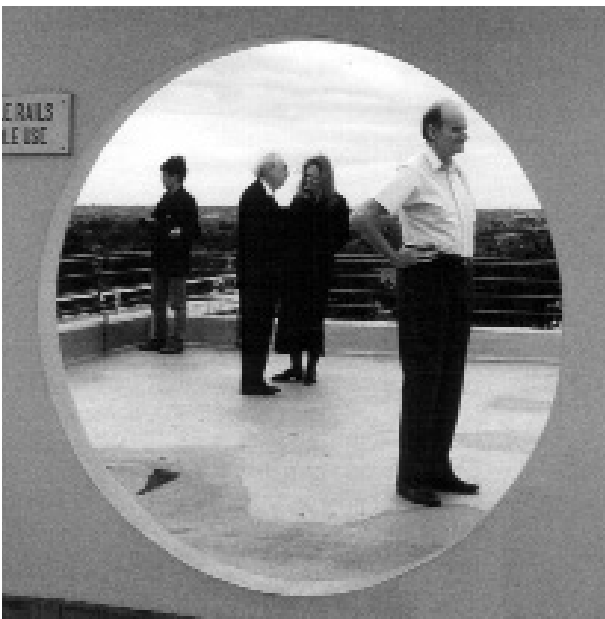
By this time the end of Lord Palumbo's initial three-year funding for DOCOMOMO was in sight. Christopher Dean was searching for new sponsorship and approached Norman Foster. But this coincided with the development of Foster's proposals for extending and altering Mendelsohn and Chermayeff's 1934 Cohen House in Chelsea Old Church Street, London, one of the most important Modern Movement houses in Britain. The proposals (subsequently in major part carried out) were controversial and DOCOMOMO-UK saw no alternative to opposing them. But from then on it had to survive without any established source of funding beyond its own members' contributions. Life became a battle for survival combined - sadly - in Christopher's personal case with a battle for life as his health failed.

Through the good offices of Derek Sugden of Arups, space was made available to us free at the Building Centre in London, where he was Chairman of their charitable Trust. This remained our base - appropriately surrounded by samples of building materials - until the move to our present address in 1998.

In 1993 Dennis Sharp succeeded John Allan as Chairman, Susan MacDonald from Australia replaced me as Secretary and I succeeded Catherine Cooke as Editor of the Newsletter. We fought various battles, including a famous one for Basil Spence's Hutchesontown flats in Glasgow. We lost it, but my father, a poet with Modern roots, wrote a poem on the eve of their explosive demolition, which we published in the Newsletter. With a paid Co-ordinator in those days we also organised an annual symposium, and the 1993 one on 'Education for Conservation of Modern Architecture', held at the Architectural Association, was influential in bringing attention to the practical and philosophical aspects of training people in our field.

In 1994 DOCOMOMO brought to the Building Centre an Italian exhibition of furniture by Alison and Peter Smithson with whom Christopher had once worked. This too then travelled widely in the UK. A boost for DOCOMOMO's interests in Britain came with the acquisition by the National Trust of the house Erno Goldfinger designed and built for himself at 2 Willow Road, Hampstead, in 1938, together with most of its original contents of art works, library and furniture. This became the first (and is still the only) Modern Movement house in the UK to be open to the public. But with Goldfinger's post-war Player House and Alexander Fleming House we were not successful: they were respectively demolished and transformed. We were successful, however, in putting forward for listing Owen Williams' stupendous 8-acre BOAC hq building of 1950-55 at Heathrow, following a DOCOMOMO visit in 1994.

We started fighting at this time for the heroic Brynmawr Rubber Factory in South Wales by the Architects' Co-Partnership (1949), where demolition was finally carried out in 2001 after a battle led by our group in Wales and by Alan Powers, son of one of the original architects. Demolition of Keeling House 'cluster block' in east London by Sir Denys Lasdun was averted and this block of supposedly 'failed' social housing was transformed into desirable private apartments. Despite Christopher's efforts, however, Lasdun's elegant Peter Robinson department store on London's Strand was lost.



Two visits of 1996: *above*, Christopher Dean, Catherine Croft and John Winter on the roof of Pulman Court (Gibberd, 1935) and *below*, Dennis Sharp at Boots Head Office (SOM & YRM, 1968). (JD)

In 1996, Dennis Sharp was succeeded as Chairman by Sherban Cantacuzino, former editor of *The Architectural Review*, and that summer DOCOMOMO held a weekend conference at Nottingham University. This centred on the impressive Boots factories by Owen Williams (1929-32) and SOM with Yorke Rosenberg and Mardall (1968) which were then being restored. Impressive tours of Modern Movement buildings in north and south London were organised by an ailing Christopher Dean. A great success of that year was DOCOMOMO's battle, led by Dennis Sharp, to prevent demolition of 'Torilla', FRS Yorke's pioneering thin-walled concrete house at Hatfield of 1935, which was listed, de-listed, then re-listed - and finally expertly restored by John Winter, who is now one of our Trustees.

There were UK representatives at all the International Conferences and at the third conference in Barcelona we made a bid to stage the fourth. The location would have been the Arne Jacobsen-designed St Catherine's College in Oxford, with the theme of 'The City and the Modern Movement.' The UK bid was narrowly out-voted by the Slovakian, but the idea of a DOCOMOMO conference on this theme eventually re-emerged as a purely UK event at East London University, where *The Modern City Revisited*, organised by Thomas Deckker, was staged in 1998 and the proceedings were published as a book by Spon. It heralded the International Conference in Brasilia that year.

The Newsletter continued to appear twice yearly. Alongside articles about threatened buildings were reminiscences by leading UK Modernists like our President, Sir Philip Powell. Obituaries included one by Trevor Dannatt, another Trustee, of Le Corbusier's collaborator Jane Drew. There were articles by or about artists whose work was related to Modern Movement ideas such as Natalie Dower and Gillian Wise. In autumn 1997 the latter opened our campaign to save the Apollo Pavilion at Peterlee by the artist Victor Pasmore, of 1967. As I write the campaign for restoring this unique abstract concrete bridge seems to be succeeding.

The next year, 1998, sadly saw the final defeat of Christopher Dean in his battle for life. Allen Cunningham stepped in as Coordinator for a period. Clinton Greyn became Secretary and organised our move to the remarkable little 'cultural colony' that the engineer Alan Baxter has created alongside his office. Sherban Cantacuzino was succeeded as Chair by Catherine Cooke, well known for her work on Soviet Modernism, who introduced an entirely new format.

In the current terminology, we became a 'flatter' organisation, with lively monthly meetings at which members talked of their own work and researches, lubricated by wine and generally ending up in Italian restaurants. We already have a tradition of biannual study tours to see MoMo works and conservation abroad. So far these have taken us to Rotterdam, Grenoble and Barcelona. At home we are working on our post-1945 Register. In public and official circles this is now the most threatened and least understood period, which brings us frequent calls for support. Even such major British Modernists as Sir Basil Spence remain critically unregarded here and key works such as his Swiss Cottage Pool have recently been lost. But we keep fighting and thus, we hope, educating.

Our monthly meetings

Philip Boyle

The last Report ended in February 2001, so our 'year' for these purposes starts eccentricly in March.

That first meeting saw our Chair Catherine Cooke giving a fascinating talk on the Modern Movement in the Urals, a part of the former Soviet Union now struggling to find a new identity. Her tireless research into this hitherto 'closed' territory was undertaken with the must-have accessories of her trusty folding bike, plus a knowledge of the Russian language and the workings of the still top-heavy bureaucracy. The diversity and formal boldness of the 'new socialist building types' was remarkable. Like the low-rise housing these are mostly now in a dire and depressing state of repair but the vigorous attitude to mass housing in the past had many lessons for us to absorb today.

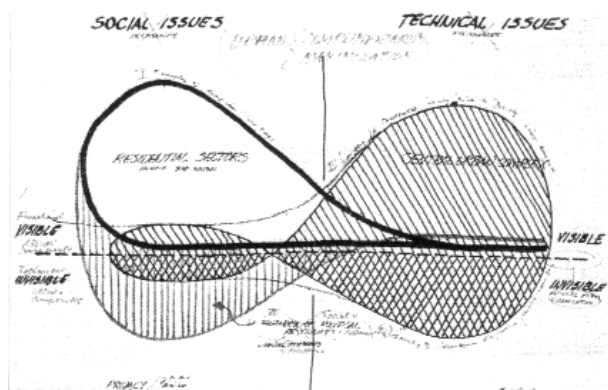


Workers' law centre, Ekaterinburg, 1929, present state

Judi Loach, our Convenor for the newly formed DOCOMOMO Wales sub-group, gave a timely talk in April. Amidst much uproar and calling-to-arms for the protection of the Brynmawr Rubber Factory, her account of the sparse but important stock of existing Modernist buildings in the Principality focused attention on the special problems there. These emanate as much from a lack of scholarly documentation as from a local emphasis on the ancient and rural building forms which support essential tourism in a largely post-industrial Wales.

Alan Powers' talk on Serge Chermayeff in May pulled the largest crowd of the year, coinciding as it did with his exhibition and monograph on Chermayeff's career. The basement room that temporarily served as ABA's gallery was packed. Alan's talk gave us a tour of Chermayeff's long and varied life, from immigrant school days at Harrow, through

Tango dancer, pre-war practice in London to inspirational teacher in the USA. The emphasis on Bentley Wood, arguably the finest pre-war modern house (and the most 'English', by an immigrant Russian), and on the post-war theoretical books in collaboration with others at Yale, was certainly correct. These two achievements rise above others (and above the 'little matter' of the unpaid bill for that iconic Henry Moore on the terrace of 'my beloved Bentley').



Chermayeff, teaching diagram, Yale 1960s

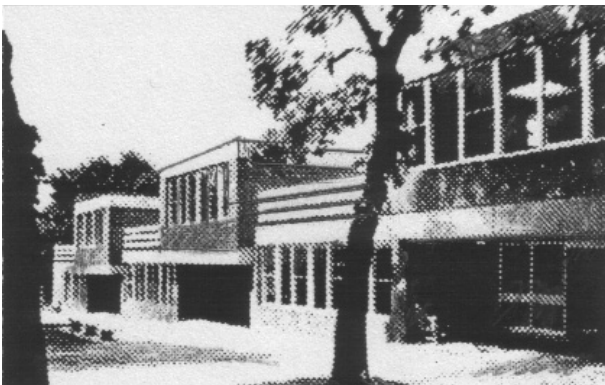
AA student Tina Gregoric discussed the problems of saving the Modernist legacy in her native Slovenia at our June meeting. One of a group in Ljubljana who have been documenting remaining post-war Modernist buildings, she explained the difficulties, with the country's shaky economy, of getting official recognition and funding for restoration and reuse. We were very delighted that the Slovenian Ambassador honoured us with his presence for the evening, and even more delighted to find he was a modern architecture enthusiast who genuinely appreciated the gift of our DOCOMOMO International Registers book. Dennis Sharp had hastily fetched a copy from his bookshop upstairs when we realised who our guest was.

In July, the more obviously appealing prospect of research wearing sunglasses was presented by Emma Dent Coad in her talk on Spanish Rationalism (so called to differentiate Modern Movement in Spain from *Modernisme*, which is Gaudi era). Giving a historical and political background to the trials of Rationalism in the 1920s and 1930s, the talk was a taster for the Barcelona study tour in June 2002.

After the summer break, Emma and Catherine Cooke gave a presentation of the major research project begun during an intensive period of joint

work during the holidays. This will result in a catalogue of post-war architecture, 1945-75, and eventually a database. They showed a selection of hidden gems (notably some little known private houses) as well as discoveries in technical innovation (housing and industrial buildings). Complementing this with the work of one single office, John Baker ended the evening with a talk on the UK work of James Cubitt's practice in this period.

Following up the September meeting, October's session concentrated on the post-war work of the LCC/GLC Architects' Department with talks by three of its former members. Eric Classey presented some of his research into the schools programme. John Bancroft presented to us a pre-fabricated 'talk-pack with slides' that the GLC itself had produced and sold in 1973 to accompany its ICA exhibition *Home Sweet Home* and 'explain' some considerable turn-arounds in its housing policy. Jake Brown spoke about more general issues of the Department with Louis Hellman egging him on from the audience to recall some of their bolder acts of protest. On the schools front particularly, there was stimulating discussion, as Derek Sugden for example illuminated some of the structural innovations (like Kidbrooke School's vast assembly hall roof), but also prompting wistful comments when comparisons with current school buildings are made.



Oak Lodge School for Deaf Children, LCC 1968

After the November AGM, Matthew Wickens gave a presentation based on the Rotterdam study tour. Matthew's talk triumphed over the arrival of his appreciative boss Rick Mather at the back of the audience: his presence was too much for some members bursting to bring their heartfelt views on the long-vexed South Bank Arts complex to the attention of the incumbent master planner. Matthew, however, held sway and introduced members to the range of effects possible with Powerpoint, not least the use of multiple images within the projector frame to convey spatial and sequential events. This was particularly rewarding on the recently restored Sonneveld House. During the trip we spent more than two hours in

this small house, which had been intelligently and meticulously restored and had held us all enraptured. Matthew's keen eye for the right image brought it all back.



Sonneveld House, 1929-33, restored interior furnishing

James Dunnett on Richard Seifert in December was in quixotic mode, from one attuned to advancing unfashionable causes. Backed by verbatim quotes from interviews he himself had conducted with The Colonel in his panelled office, he regaled the audience with images of splendid pilotti, snatched from illegal parking on motorways, or before a security guard descended to evict him from a directors' car park. There were views from Croydon, the Bull Ring, Euston, Oxford Street and Kingsway, to make the point that Seifert (or someone in his office) was better at copying Corb, Breuer and Nervi than many of the card-carrying copiers who practiced in the 1950s and 1960s, and were seriously applauded at the time. The argument was forcefully made and prompted a vigorous discussion on such things as forms and motives, consistent planning, and whether any of this mattered if the results were so visually striking. Kester Rattenbury's full-spread report in *Building Design* was typically astute and entertaining.

Our February meeting was prompted by the study tour to Grenoble and specifically to Auguste Perret's Tower for the 1925 Exhibition of Hydro-electric Power and Tourism. James Dunnett and Alan Powers, both long students of Perret's work, discussed the oeuvre of the Perret Freres from an English perspective. This was consciously aimed at getting behind the 'career overview' which has been covered in two recent books. James showed slides of selected buildings, in particular a lesser known country house by Auguste Perret showing a more relaxed but nevertheless rigorous style, together with Erno Goldfinger's first house, now altered, but bearing the imprint of similar rigour. Alan, without slides, advanced a more detached case for the British pre-war establishment's indifference to Perret, up to the awarding of the RIBA Gold Medal at the instigation of Goldfinger after the war.

Back Page

Emma Dent Coad

Campaigns in Wales

Despite a massive campaign to save and reuse the magnificent Listed Grade II* Brynmawr Rubber Factory by Architects' Co-Partnership, 1946/52, this unique example of shell dome construction was razed to the ground in June 2001. Unprecedented media coverage on radio, tv and the press, backed up by local pressure groups, DOCOMOMO and the Twentieth Century Society, were not enough to save it. Instead £6m of taxpayers' money has been used to destroy a unique building, and the expectation of commercial interest to create jobs is yet unrealised.

Meanwhile, the state of Sully Hospital by WA Pite, Son and Fairweather, 1931-6, is still in the balance. Saved by campaigning from being turned into an 'illegal immigrant camp' – when the security measures alone would have destroyed its integrity – it is back on the market for social/health reuse.

Barbican

An attempt to list the Barbican complex at Grade II was supported by DOCOMOMO with certain provisos. In a letter to DCMS our chair Catherine Cooke expressed the view that the building was of 'very variable quality'. Specifically this related to our agreement that the Girls' School has little 'of genuine architectural significance'; similarly the Arts Centre, 'beyond a certain boldness of the structure whose visibility, eg in the concert hall, is worth maintaining'. Updating and redesign were recommended.

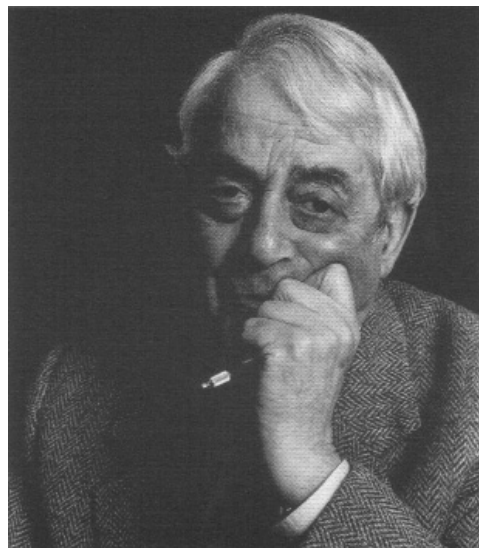
However, it was emphasised that the painted relief by Gillian Wise, on the staircase leading to Cinema 1, should be specifically included in the list entry as 'a major work by a British artist of international stature and recognition who was then at the height of her powers'. An update on the Barbican listing will be in the forthcoming issue of the DOCOMOMO Report in early 2003.

Pasmore Pavilion, Peterlee

An ongoing battle regarding major alterations to Victor Pasmore's Pavilion at Peterlee raged throughout the year, the main intent being to protect it from being the focus of vandalism. Suggestions from a joint meeting between the Twentieth Century, DOCOMOMO, members of Easington District Council, English Heritage and other interest groups agreed a set of proposals. These included enlarging the lake to make casual access impossible, improving lighting and landscaping, but at the same time making access possible for organised visits. This was accompanied by a proposal from James Dunnett to acquire and restore one of the surrounding houses to create a museum of Pasmore's contribution to the design of Peterlee.

Denys Lasdun

In a fitting tribute to Lasdun's life, his once-maligned Keeling House cluster block in East London has been saved from demolition, to be given a new lease of life as a highly prized private housing enterprise.



**Denys Lasdun
1914-2001**

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