

fully realised. This is not to do with any reticence, but is more a consequence of the fact that ARLIS members mainly come from the middle ranks of their organisations. It is therefore essential that the senior information professionals within the national arts institutions are active within the Society. Their institutional roles invest them with the opportunity and authority to be the leaders and change agents in the national and international arena. I endorse Debby Shorley's proposition in her keynote address at the 2009 Conference that ARLIS should be more outward-looking and should strengthen its relationships with other organisations. ARLIS must also reach out to sister societies globally. It needs to do more to influence developments relevant to the arts information profession but, by virtue of what ARLIS is, it cannot wield significant power when acting alone.

The promotion of co-operation and co-ordination in order to enhance arts information resources and services has always been a core value held by ARLIS. Consequently it was a key factor underpinning the Visual Arts Library and Information Plan (VALIP) that was launched in 1993 to promote collaboration and co-operation within the visual arts library community. VALIP itself proved to be still-born but discipline-based collaborations and shared services across institutions and sectors are currently being advocated by various national bodies, including the UK's Joint Information Systems Committee and HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England). Participating in these initiatives could be the best way to protect and enhance our specialist resources and services, physical and digital/text and image, in

times of financial constraint and institutional fragility. Although ARLIS as an organisation may not be able to gain direct access to the funds which support such initiatives, its membership does, in effect, provide a solid foundation for these collaborations.

In conclusion, the current ARLIS/UK & Ireland mission is 'to provide leadership to the arts information profession within the UK and Ireland' and 'to promote excellence in the provision of visual arts library and information services, collections and resources'. Without doubt, ARLIS is delivering its mission, which is cause for celebration. However there is no room for complacency. The future of ARLIS is dependent on its positioning as a confident, authoritative and agile leader within the arts information world. It also needs to nurture new generations of enthusiastic members and to strengthen its strategic alliances with other organisations. By doing these things ARLIS will be able to live out its vision and values within this ever-changing environment and to flourish as a membership Society for arts information professionals for another 40 years.

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Editor's note

The articles in this issue of the *Art libraries journal* are almost all revised versions of papers presented at the ARLIS/UK & Ireland conference held in July 2009 at Clare College Cambridge. The conference celebrated the Society's 40th anniversary and took as its theme *Tradition and transformation: roles in a changing world*.

The only additional article is the one by Patricia

Bickers, recounting the history of the journal *Art monthly*. It is a revised version of the special lecture she gave to the members of ARLIS at their Annual General Meeting at Tate Britain in April 2009, which also marked the Society's 40th anniversary.

Gillian Varley
Editor, *Art libraries journal*