Stephen Parnell

A Semi-Social Magazine: Love, Life, and *Architectural Design*

Architectural Design magazine, Monica Pidgeon, AD, Personal/professional entanglement

/Abstract

This paper analyses the magazine *Architectural Design (AD)* under the post-war editorship of Monica Pidgeon. Through extensive archival research, content analysis, oral histories, and interviews, I adopt a biographical approach to understand the people behind the magazine and their networks and argue that Pidgeon had a very different idea of criticism to how we might today interpret it in retrospect. Pidgeon was neither an architect nor an ideologue and did not run her magazine on the basis of a campaign for how she believed the world should be reconstructed. Instead, her commitment was primarily to people – the architects whom she accepted into her network – rather than their buildings. I argue that Pidgeon's personal and professional life became so entangled that she developed this network as a type of social 'club' to the extent that *AD* turned into her life and her life into *AD*. The paper is split into two halves: the first explores Pidgeon's background in order to develop an understanding of her approach to editing an architectural magazine; the second describes the contents of the magazine and the networks of its contributors during the tenure of the first three technical editors, Theo Crosby, Kenneth Frampton, and Robin Middleton. In contrast to conventional understandings of architectural criticism and history, the paper emphasises the messy personal, human, back-stories as a fundamental driver of the decisions that are made about what is 'given ink' and, as a consequence, what is ultimately nominated to the canon of architectural history.

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Les Trente Glorieuses of architectural criticism

After the Second World War, a 'golden age' of architectural criticism emerged in tandem with the general consensus that modern architecture was the way to re-build a new, progressive world. The quarter century following the end of the war witnessed a remarkable period of economic development and political stability in Europe and the USA which was reflected in the growth and stability of the professional architectural press. Several architectural magazines in these countries maintained a long-term editor and proprietor who developed their magazine along an editorial line that promoted a certain view of what architecture should be.

In Italy, examples include Ernesto Nathan Rogers' period at *Casabella-Continuità* (1953-64), where he attempted to link modernity with history; Gio Ponti's directorship of *Domus* (1928-41 & 1948-79), where he promoted modern taste to the burgeoning middle classes; and *L'architettura: cronache e storia*, which Bruno Zevi started in 1955 and edited until his death in 2000, promoting organic architecture and attempting to define modern architecture as a language of asymmetry and dissonance.

In the USA, Douglas Haskell edited *Architectural Forum* from 1949 until he retired in 1964 when Peter Blake, who had worked at the magazine since 1950, became editor-in-chief until the magazine folded in 1972. Both Haskell and Blake were critics of modern architecture. Haskell in particular believed in the role of the architectural critic to connect the profession with the public and spoke up for popular taste. On the West Coast, John Entenza edited *Arts & Architecture* from 1938 until 1962. In January 1945 he announced the Case Study House Program, in which the magazine commissioned American architects to design inexpensive, replicable prototype houses to demonstrate how good modern design, manufacturing methods, and materials could help improve the anticipated deficiencies in post-war housing.

And in the UK, Hubert de Cronin Hastings was appointed proprietor of both the *Architectural Review* (*AR*) and the *Architects' Journal* in 1927 and oversaw both publications until his retirement in 1973. In December 1949, Hastings and his editors at the *AR* launched the Townscape campaign to advocate the use of Picturesque principles applied to town planning and architecture. This pervasive campaign dominated the magazine for the next quarter century and had more influence over British post-war architectural design than Hastings cared to admit.

In contrast to these examples, however, Monica Pidgeon edited *AR*'s main monthly rival in the UK, *Architectural Design* (*AD*), from September 1941 until November 1975 without campaigning. In this paper, I will describe how *AD* became one of the most influential architectural magazines in the world during this long-term tenure despite Pidgeon never promoting a specific vision of how architecture should be beyond the overarching optimistic belief in progress and its manifestation in modern architecture. I will explain how

Pidgeon's magazine became more of a club than a cause, and more a network of architects than a platform to promote a vision for how the world should be reconstructed. While the campaigns of its peers and competitors got tired and aged, this approach enabled *AD* to stay young, vital, and relevant to a changing profession.

This idea of a 'club' takes magazines' engagement with their readers to a level beyond the kinds of network or community that they usually encourage, described by Carolyn Kitch as 'ready-made social groups, collections of people united by shared interests and worldviews.'[1] An important characteristic of architecture magazines in this respect is that the readers also often become the writers, as well as the subjects of the articles – an engagement far beyond letters pages. Yet Monica took this idea of community further still in nurturing a network of people interested in architecture who were not only contributors and subjects of articles, but also her personal friends. This is not unusual in architecture, but it is not usually discussed in relation to how its history is constructed. So this paper describes how the personal and professional lives of architects, contributors, and editors are unavoidably entangled and argues, therefore, that architectural criticism – and ultimately its history – can be a product of such human entanglement and the personalities involved, rather than straightforward objective judgement. The bigger argument is that the production of architecture ultimately relies on these life stories, an aspect usually ignored or overlooked as insignificant or incidental to architectural history.

Part 1: Monica's approach[2]

The paper is split into two quite distinct halves. The first half will focus as much on Monica's life as it does on *AD* itself, as it is impossible to understand one without the other. On the basis that the magazine and her life are completely entangled, I will explore her life story, beliefs, and introduction to architecture in order to establish how she approached architectural journalism.

The second half will then outline the consequences of this approach in terms of how she chose and worked with her technical editors initials and networks to cultivate a magazine that proved to be most successful when it was least critical.

Monica was a woman working at the epicentre of the very male-dominated world of architecture in post-war Britain, yet she made nothing of this and always insisted that she was absolutely not a feminist.[3] Throughout her career, she had

1 Carolyn Kitch, 'Theory and Methods of Analysis', in *The Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research: The Future of the Magazine Form*, ed. David Abrahamson and Marcia R. Prior-Miller (New York & London: Routledge, 2015), 12.

2 From here on in the paper, I will refer to Monica Pidgeon as simply 'Monica' for two reasons. Primarily, this is to acknowledge how she consciously constructed her life: 'Monica' was not the name her parents gave her, but one she became known as in her childhood and which she chose to continue using throughout her life. She was always simply known as 'Monica', even by her children. A less significant reason is to reduce the ambiguity and confusion with her first husband Raymond Pidgeon who was an architect and appears briefly in the story.

3 Barbara Goldstein, interview with the author 15 July 2020.

little patience with anyone who asked her about it. In an interview with Charlotte Benton in 1999, for example, she responded to the question of being a woman in a man's world by saying that 'people are always trying to find out the difference between women's interests and men's interests. Or women architects - there's a women's architects' group at the RIBA. I always say an architect's an architect, irrespective of gender […] you're trying to get out of me there's a difference by being female […] the only problem I ever had about being a female was these directors.'[4] And ten years later, just a few months before she died, when I asked her a similar question, she responded, 'I've always had this attitude that a job's a job and if you can do the job, so what? Never mind what sex you are.'[5] Monica did not see any disadvantage in being a woman – in fact, Barbara Goldstein, who worked with her at *AD* from 1973 to 1975 and then together at the *RIBA Journal* until 1978, explained how she used it to her advantage: 'How she made it as a woman in a man's world, I think, is that she was charming. People found … men found her attractive. She was able to talk with them in such a way that they would let their guard down.'[6] This way of operating was also inflected by her childhood and privileged upbringing in South America and her introduction to British architecture, which I will outline first, before going on to describe her influence on international architectural culture through *AD*.

Scrapbooks

There are 25 half-hour recordings of Benton's interview with Monica in the British Library Architects' Lives series and the last seven narrate a scrapbook that Monica started collating in the 1950s. Monica revealed to Benton,

> I used to get on very badly with my father. They lived in Chile, my parents, we were here [in London]. In 1950-something they said they were going to come and visit us, and I thought I've got to figure out who I am. So, I started this collection of photographs of my life. I don't like writing, it takes too long. So it's for me: my photographic record of my life.[7]

I paid no attention to this part of the interview when I first listened to it in the British Library, before it was put online, as time was short and Monica and Benton were talking about old family photographs that I couldn't see. But several years later, I visited Monica's daughter, Annabel Donat, and I finally had the opportunity to see the scrapbook myself. It is huge and remarkable in the number of press cuttings and photographs from Monica's personal and professional life throughout the twentieth century. It is notable that there is no attempt

4 Monica Pidgeon, National Life Story Collection: Architects' Lives. Monica Pidgeon (7 of 25), interview by Charlotte Benton, 9 July 1999, C467/39, British Library Sound Archive, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-0700V0. The directors she was referring to were the directors of the Standard Catalogue Company, the owners of *AD*.

5 Monica Pidgeon, interview with the author, 25 February 2009.

6 Goldstein, interview with the author

7 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives. Monica Pidgeon (17 of 25), 1 June 2000, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-1700V0.

to separate the personal and professional – the two are completely collaged together. Jessica Kelly also noted this personal/professional entanglement in her study of Jim Richards, editor of the *AR*, explaining that,

> the specific details of his personal life were integral to understanding his career and the meaning and cultural significance of his work. Richards was part of a complex network of people and places at a particular time. His role was contingent on this entanglement and could not be separated from it.[8]

This entanglement is normal for editors and architects, as the field operates more through knowing people. Just like Monica, Richards 'knew absolutely *everybody*'[9] and Kelly goes on to argue that 'the people and places that constituted Richards' personal life […] were instrumental to architectural history.'[10]

Early on in Benton's interview, Monica explained that she used to enjoy making scrapbooks as a child and that it gave her a feel for making magazines. Monica found her life in *AD* and her biographical scrapbook is Monica making her life into a magazine. In conjunction with Benton's interview, it assembles a detailed picture of Monica's background in both spoken word and image and allows us a glimpse of her and her personal/professional network throughout her life.

Monica was actually born Grisel Helen Ida Lehmann in a small rural village called El Ñilhue **[Fig. 1]** in the valley of Catemu, Chile, on 29 September 1913, to a Scottish musician mother and French-German mines manager father. She enjoyed a privileged, strict, Edwardian expatriate upbringing with an English governess and maids and servants for everything, with whom she spoke Spanish. Monica recalled a very happy childhood and school life with lots of friends, many of which are included in the scrapbook **[Fig. 2]**. Her ambitions were limited to simply being a señorita in Chile: 'dancing', 'tennis', and 'flirting'.[11] On reading a draft of this article, Annabel requested that I also add that 'she had desperately wanted to learn ballet but her father forbade it, much to her great sorrow and resentment.'[12]

Her father had promised her mother that they would return to England for their children to finish their education, so the Lehmanns came to London briefly in 1926 for her elder sister Olga to enter the Slade School of Fine Art. Three years later, Monica came to England for good. In her scrapbook, she scribbled, 'What to do with an unambitious daughter who likes art and algebra? "Architecture" said Pop.' And so Monica enrolled on a degree in architecture at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.[13] After the first year, she was advised to switch to interior

8 Jessica Kelly, 'Discourse, Ephemeral Sources, and Architectural History', in *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural Research*, ed. Janina Gosseye, Naomi Stead, and Deborah Van der Plaat (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2019), 83.

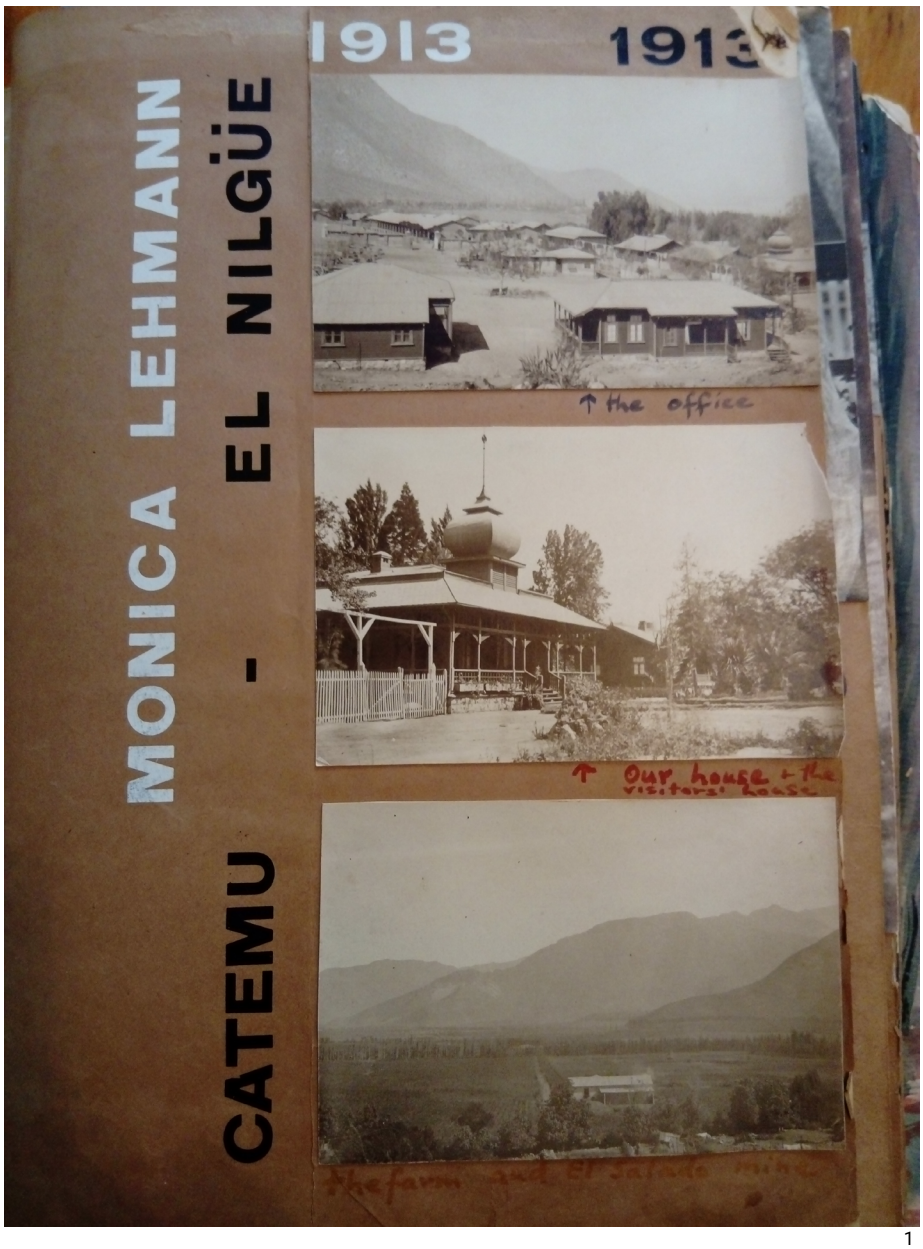
9 Reyner Banham, 'Sir Jim', *London Review of Books* 22, 1980, 30.

10 Kelly, 'Discourse, Ephemeral Sources, and Architectural History', 91.

11 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives. Monica Pidgeon (1 of 25), 29 April 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-0100V0.

12 Annabel Donat, email to author, 22 September 2020

13 Monica Pidgeon, 'CV' (CV, n.d.), British Library, C467/39/01-13.



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decoration as architecture was 'no good for women'.[14] In 1934 she completed her 'College Certificate in Decoration – or 'useless diploma' as she referred to it in her scrapbook – with a 'Commendation',[15] and started working for the Leo Scott-Cooper Furniture company in Bedford.[16] She met the architect Raymond Pidgeon[17] at Christmas in 1935 and they married a year later.[18] Wanting to live in London with her new husband working at T.P. Bennet, Monica was responsible for opening Leo Scott-Cooper's new London showroom in March 1937, for which she commissioned her sister Olga to paint murals. However, it closed

14 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (1 of 25).

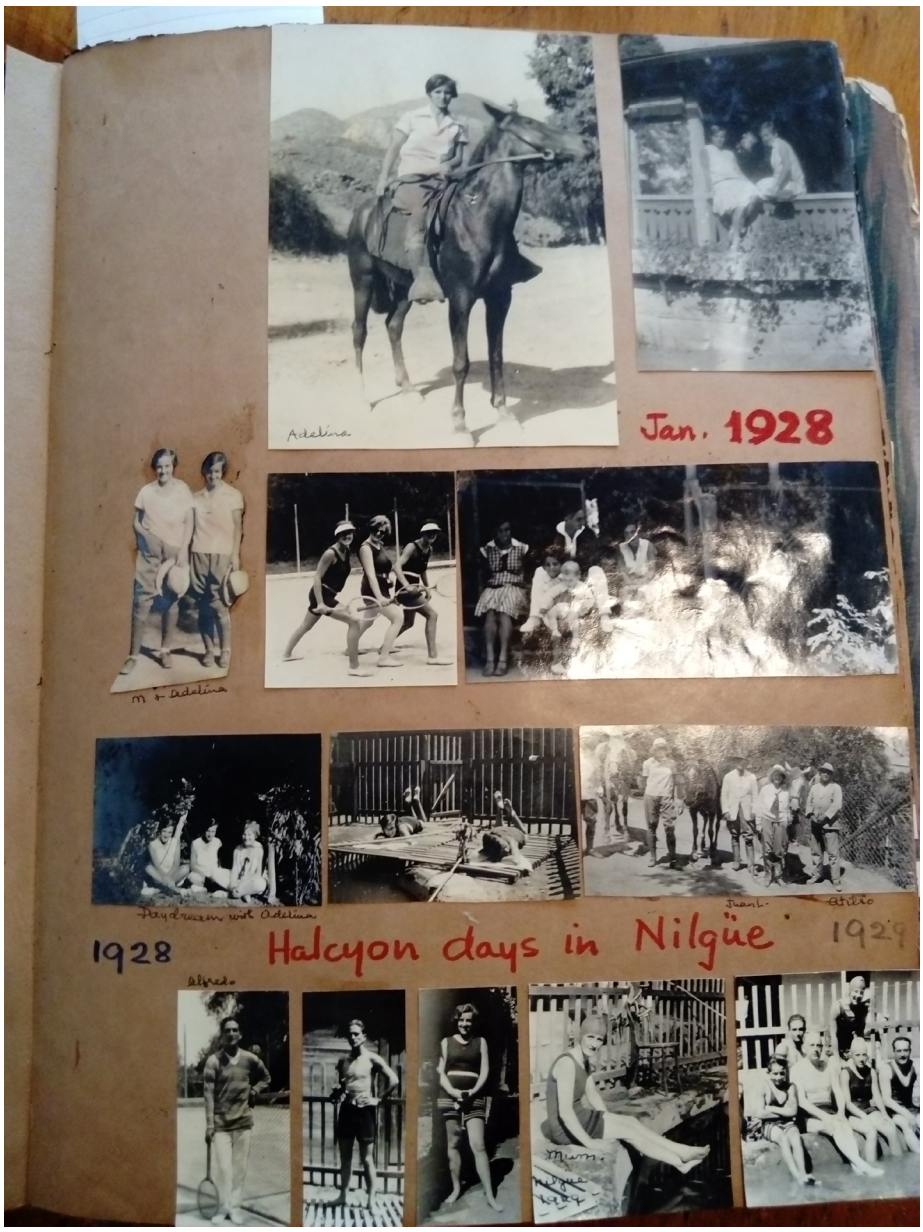
15 'LEHMANN, Grisel Helen Ida', 1934, University of London graduate records.

16 She started work on 21 September 1934. Leo Scott Cooper's real name was Michael Dawn, who was published in *AD&C* a couple of times in the Thirties: review of *An Architect's Study*, by Michael Dawn, *Architectural Design & Construction* 5, no. 8 (June 1935), 256. Review of *Space Saving Flat*, by Michael Dawn, *Architectural Design & Construction* 7, no. 6 (April 1937), 213.

17 Raymond Vincent Pidgeon (12 May 1910 – October 2006).

18 They married on 19 December 1936 at St. Martin-in-the-Fields and moved into a flat at 191 Gloucester Place.

Fig. 1
Photographs of El Ñilhue in Monica's scrapbook (permission courtesy of Annabel Donat).



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after only six months and Monica left the company to have her son, Carl. For 1938, Monica wrote in her scrapbook how she was a '"kept" wife during the whole year – plus a nannie/housekeeper' and 'on the whole AIMLESS.' Monica was not at all domesticated and did not take to being a housewife and mother – she admitted that she didn't have any maternal instincts and she always put the magazine before her family to the extent that the magazine effectively became her family.[19] Peter Murray, who joined *AD* as art director from 1970 and was then technical editor from 1972 to 1974, recalled her advice on interviewing candidates for secretary positions: 'Never employ anyone with children because the children will always be seen to be more important than the magazine.'[20] On the 1940 page of the scrapbook, there is a photograph of Pinewood, Crowborough,

Fig. 2

Photographs from Monica's scrapbook showing her 'halcyon days' in Chile (permission courtesy of Annabel Donat).

19 Annabel Donat, interview with the author, 4 April 2019.

20 Peter Murray in Ema Bonifacic, 'Letters for Monica Pidgeon', Architectural Association Independent Radio, accessed 22 November 2010, http://radio.aaschool.ac.uk/2009/11/21/letters-for-monica-pidgeon/.

DESIGN FOR LIVING IN 280 SQUARE FEET by Monica Lehmann and Raymond Pidgeon

The flat illustrated here is self-contained on the ground floor of a converted building in Gloucester Place, W.1. It was designed for a married couple, an architect and an interior decorator, who are out during the day, and away on most week-ends, and therefore merely require a functional unit as a headquarters.

As will be seen in the accompanying plan, the lounge and adjacent bedroom are divided by a curtained archway.

The bedroom furniture is made up of fitted units: two wardrobes; two chests of drawers, with hinged lifting tops over boxed compartments which serve as dressing-tables; a cupboard unit between, with a built-in electric heating panel; and a long bed-head unit with a door at one end, in which are stored T-squares, drawing-boards, portfolios, and other such untidy accumulations. A large mirror over the dressing units, doubles the apparent size of the room.

In the lounge, the focal point of interest is a shelf-and-cupboard fitment, forming a recess for a large settee, with concealed lighting in the soffit behind a frosted glass panel. Cupboards are fitted wherever possible to take drinks, glasses, cigarettes and cigars, coffee-cups, tea-cups, and so on, and the top of the projecting fitment on the right of the settee has a hinged top with a boxed compartment underneath for small drawing instruments. Built into the window recess is a collapsible table, at which four people can sit comfortably to eat a meal, and further recesses on either side of the chimney-breast and gas fire are fitted with a low cupboard and a writing-desk. Two Parker-Knoll easy-chairs, four small chairs, and an occasional table make up the rest of the furniture. Lighting is by means of architectural tube-lamp over the mirror in the bedroom, ceiling fittings in both rooms, and small movable lamps, as well as the panel which has already been mentioned.

There is only one picture in the flat—a portrait which hangs under this panel but there are two large mural paintings, by Olga Lehmann, one on the lounge chimney-breast and the other over the divan in the bedroom, called respectively "Architectural Dream Fantasy" and "Musical Concord". They are executed unobtrusively in pastel shades of pink, white, and brown.

The colour scheme is the same for both rooms:

The walls and woodwork are cream distemper and paint; the ceiling is pinkish cream distemper; the floor is close-covered with a warm nigger-brown carpet, and the fitted furniture is cream cellulose to match the walls. Plate glass protects all available ledges. Other furniture is of cellulosed Finnish birch.

The upholstery of the settee, easy chairs, and divan cover is cream tapestry with self-coloured pattern. The small divans are in a carmine red sponge fabric. The window curtains are off-white satin with a slight design in red, black, and fawn. The curtain dividing the two rooms is of a cream woven fabric to match the walls, and the cushions and pillow-covers are of red or nigger-brown or gold satin.

The use of built-in furniture painted to match the walls, ceilings and upholstery tends to make the rooms look much bigger than they would normally, especially as the colour is a light one; the touch of red is all that is needed to make a cheerful, bright, and warm ensemble.

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labelled 'May: Carl's new home'. Pinewood was a boarding school run by 'Strix'[21] and modelled on the philosophy of A.S. Neil's Summerhill in Suffolk, where children could be free from adult authority. Carl was sent there at the tender age of 2½, just before the school moved to Cornwall away from the danger of the Nazi bombing. Immediately after the War, the school moved to Ware in Hertfordshire and Monica sent her daughter, Annabel, to join Carl there at the same age.

Trying to find a direction in life, Monica made friends with Roger Smithells who edited the magazine *Decoration*. Smithells published the Pidgeons' tiny Gloucester Place flat (including a couple of murals by Olga)[22] **[Fig. 3]** and Monica reviewed books for him, which she said gave her a feeling for liking magazines. She also attempted to start an Association of Interior Decorators, modelled on the Architectural Association (AA): a news clip in *Decoration* mentions her as secretary of this association though it never actually got going.[23] It does, however, show how much she needed to do things with other people, and how she was always a driver of activity through getting people together.

Monica met Frederic Towndrow, then the editor of *Architectural Design & Construction* (*AD&C*) magazine, when Olga – by then an emerging illustrator and artist who had done a mural in Highpoint 2 – brought him round for dinner,

21 'Strix' was Elizabeth Strachan, the aunt of Su Brumwell who went on to marry Richard Rogers.

22 Raymond Pidgeon and Monica Lehmann, 'Design for Living in 280 Square Feet', *Decoration* 25 (October-December 1937), 54–55.

23 Roger Smithells, 'Notes and News', *Decoration* 29 (July-September 1938), 60.

Fig. 3
Monica and Raymond's flat published in *Decoration* magazine, October-December 1937.

around 1938.[24] Towndrow and his wife Ena became family friends. In June of that year, Olga illustrated an article in *AD&C* and Raymond also started contributing by taking over the 'Materials & Equipment' column in November 1938.[25]

On taking up a post as Senior Architect at the Ministry of Works and Buildings, Towndrow wound down his practice and had to reduce his commitment to *AD&C*. On hearing that Monica had resigned her job at the Ministry of Supply in June 1941, Towndrow asked her to ghost for him. She joined the magazine three months later, effectively co-editing the magazine with Towndrow's secretary, Barbara Randell. Towndrow continued as a consultant, but Monica and Randell became the de facto editors, each month taking the proofs to the Ministry of Works for Towndrow's approval.[26] From what appeared to be an unpromising starting position, deep in the middle of the war with few buildings being constructed and paper rationing, Monica and Randell embarked on the magazine's 'golden era'.

The second half of the war, and the immediate post-war period was a real struggle for survival for *AD&C*. Advertising and editorial were minimal, circulation averaged only around 2,300 and each issue consisted of only around 20 pages.[27] But survive it did and December 1946 marked a turning point for both Monica and her magazine. As she and Raymond divorced, she optimistically noted in her scrapbook, 'In my beginning was my end – in my end, my beginning. THE NEW FREEDOM'. And the magazine's editorial for that month was equally buoyant, ending 'we shall appear in a new cover with a slight change in our title. For the sake of brevity we shall be known in future as ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN.'[28]

Architectural Design

Magazines are focal points around which people with a common interest congregate. Magazine scholar David Abrahamson has used the term 'magazine exceptionalism' to describe how magazines are different from other media such as newspapers, explaining that 'in most cases, the editors and writers of magazines share a direct community of interest with their readers. They are often, indeed literally, the same people'.[29] Magazines are therefore material manifestations of the networks of these people: editors publish the work of the people they know about and more often than not, for expediency, commission the

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24 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (3 of 25), 29 April 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-0300V0; interview with the author, 25 February 2009.

25 Raymond Pidgeon, 'Materials & Equipment', *Architectural Design & Construction* 9, no. 11 (November 1939), 441.

26 They were not acknowledged as co-editors on the masthead until January 1946.

27 By way of some context, there were 15,045 registered architects in the UK in 1946. Circulation figures are taken from the Audit Bureau of Circulation.

28 Barbara Randall and Monica Pidgeon, 'About Ourselves', *Architectural Design & Construction* 16, no. 12 (December 1946), 322.

29 David Abrahamson, 'Magazine Exceptionalism', *Journalism Studies* 8, no. 4 (1 August 2007): 670, https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700701412225.

people they know and trust to write the pieces. Before the internet, this 'inner circle' of contacts was even more important. These networks are vital for an editor to understand what is happening in the field, but they also create a critical sphere, or what is known as the 'discourse' in architecture. While architecture magazines often printed letters to the editor and acted as something of a forum for debate, the main features would mostly be written either by or about architects involved in these networks attached to the magazine and its editors. It was the editors' job to be acquainted with the right people – something Monica excelled at. Not only was she charming and found people interesting, but she had a terrific nose for talent.[30]

From the nineteenth century, Victorian Gentlemen's Clubs such as the Athenaeum and Freemason's lodges offered ready-made networks for gentlemen of a certain social standing – those who had usually attended public school and elite universities. These were places where the personal and professional were entirely intertwined and where members could dine, debate, and meet other gentlemen of a similar status.[31] These clubs, however, were simply not accessible to women, even after the Second World War. So, while Jim Richards could be a member of the Athenaeum,[32] the sociable, gregarious Monica had to create her own and became an avid joiner of groups and organising committees.

One such club was The Architecture Club which was established in 1922 with the purpose 'to enlarge public appreciation of good architecture and the allied arts, and especially of the best work of today.'[33] Members were originally either '(a) architects, or (b) writers, or (c) persons interested in furthering good building'.[34] The Club's activities consisted of two committee meetings a year, a summer party, and a winter black-tie supper debate, attended by approximately half of the 200 members. Despite editors of the press being present, the Club itself was never reported upon and 'made public'.[35] It was therefore more than just a means of enlarging the public appreciation of good architecture, but as much about defining a distinct group of mostly London-based people who could network in the name of architecture. In July 1951, *AD*'s long-time contributor and consultant Mark Hartland Thomas proposed for membership Barbara Randell, along with Gontran Goulden, another *AD* consultant who knew Monica from their student days at UCL. Randell joined the Club and at the December meeting, Monica was then nominated and had joined by the next meeting in April 1952. At

30 Goldstein, interview with the author.

31 Ian Horton, 'The Foreign Architectural Book Society and Architectural Elitism' (unpublished PhD Dissertation, Open University, 2000), 51–66.

32 James Richards, *Memoirs of an Unjust Fella* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1980), 228–29.

33 Murray, Peter and MJF, 'A Short History of the Architecture Club', March 1979, 1, AC/1/1, Architecture Club Archives, RIBA Archives.

34 'The Architecture Club List of Members', December 1922, n.p., AC/2/3, Architecture Club Archives, RIBA Archives.

35 It was mentioned at a committee meeting in 1966 that 'it was agreed that the traditional right of the Club not to have its meetings reported must be insisted upon' after an article appeared in the *AJ* the previous week. 'The Architecture Club: Minutes of the 55th Meeting of the Executive Committee', 20 April 1966, AC/2/3, Architecture Club Archives, RIBA Archives.

258

CIAM • 6 BRIDGWATER, 1947 *(See page 269)*

Group photograph taken during the visit of CIAM to the Bristol Aeroplane Company's factory producing aluminium housing.

TOP–ROW 1. (Left to right).
1. Milton (England).
2. Browne (England).
3. Rogers (Italy).
4. Cedercreutz (Finland).
5. Grannasztoi (Hungary).
6. Hruska (Czechoslovakia).
7. Neumann (Czechoslovakia).
8. Marshall (England).
9. Kadleigh (England).
10. van Bodegraven (Holland).
11. Entwistle (England).
12. Richards (England).
13. Elte (Holland).
14. Samuel (England).
15. Roth (Switzerland).
16. Emery (Algeria).
17. Bijhouwer (Holland).
18. de Vries (Holland).
19. van den Broek.
20. Kloos (Holland).
21. Kleykamp (Holland).
22. Michel (Belgium).

ROW 2.
23. Cadbury-Brown (England).
24. Shepheard (England).
25. De Syllas (England).
26. Cox (England).
27. Moffett (Ireland).
28. Batista (Cuba).
29. Arroyo (Cuba).
30. Fuchs (Czechoslovakia).
31. Honnegger (Switzerland).
32. Fischer (Hungary).
33. Steiger (Switzerland).
34. Mrs. Stam Beese (Holland)
35. Katona (England).
36. Pritchard (England).
37. Bakema (Holland).
38. Hogan (England).
39. Singer (Czechoslovakia).

ROW 3.
40. Papadaki (U.S.A.).
41. Morton Shand (England).
42. Rosenberg (England).
43. Martin (England).
44. Goldfinger (England).
45. Jensen (England).
46. Ling (England).
47. Ferrari Hardoy (Argentine).
48. Mrs. Wiener (U.S.A.).
49. Wiener (U.S.A.).
50. Maxwell Fry (England).
51. Wells Coates (England).
52. Townsend (England).
53. Krejcar (Czechoslovakia).
54. Oberlander (Canada).
55. Schütte (Austria).
56. Merkelbach (Holland).

ROW 4. (Front row).
57. Le Corbusier (France).
58. Vivanco (Argentine).
59. Sadie Speight (England).
60. Susan Cox (England).
61. Malnai (Hungary).
62. Mrs. Malnai (Hungary).
63. Barbara Randell (England).
64. Monica Pidgeon (England).
65. Sert (U.S.A.).
66. Giedion (Switzerland).
67. Jane Drew (England).
68. van Eesteren (Holland).
69. M. de Silva (India).
70. Gropius (U.S.A.).
71. Mrs. Fischer (Hungary).
72. Blanche Lemco (Canada).
73. Kalivoda (Czechoslovakia).
74. Mrs. Sert (U.S.A.).
75. Mrs. Schütte (Austria).
76. van Tijen (Holland).

that time, the Club was meeting just up the road from the Architectural Press's offices on Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster and Jim Richards was a member of the Executive Committee. The Architecture Club still exists and Peter Murray has been the Honorary Secretary since 1977.

Monica also joined MARS (the Modern Architecture Research Group) in 1947, when she attended the 6th CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) congress in Bridgwater. In the famous photograph of the group on a visit she organised to the Bristol Aeroplane Factory (designed by her friend, *AD* consultant David Aberdeen), Monica is featured sitting in the middle on the front row, to the right of Josep Lluís Sert, President of CIAM. To Monica's right is Barbara Randell and to Sert's left is Sigfried Giedion, Secretary of CIAM **[Fig. 4]**. In comparison, Jim Richards, convener of the congress, is located in the middle of the back row, a position that Reyner Banham interpreted as being at the centre of the introduction of modern architecture, but in the background. Banham argued that Richards knew everybody but kept them at arm's length.[36] Following this interpretation, Monica is at the centre of things and very much at the forefront. Despite the fact that her magazine was then still relatively young and unknown (with a circulation of less than 3,000) compared with the much more established and popular *AR*, this ability to be at the front and centre is a good example of Monica's networking ability and modus operandi.[37]

Fig. 4
CIAM 6 group photograph as published in *Architectural Design*, October 1947, p.258.

36 Banham, 'Sir Jim', 30.

37 Circulation figures from Audit Bureau of Circulation.

Architects I've Known and Loved

Catherine Hakim has extended the three types of capital that Pierre Bourdieu identified (social, cultural, and economic) with another, erotic capital, which Hakim described as having 'enhanced value in situations where public and private life can become closely intertwined – such as politics and jobs in the media and entertainment industries.'[38] Monica enjoyed a cornucopia of this type of capital. Goldstein said that if she wrote a biography of Monica, it would be called *Architects I've Known and Loved*.[39] Monica herself openly admitted to Benton several times that she had a propensity to easily fall in love:[40] 'I was falling in love right through my life with boys and older men'[41] and 'I like men very much' and 'find men very exciting.'[42] For an independent woman who had been brought up well in good society, the male-dominated field of post-war British architecture with its still predominantly upper-class charismatic and egotistic practitioners was a comfortable and exciting field for Monica to work in.

As Monica's scrapbook and interviews clearly demonstrate, her personal and professional lives were completely and inseparably entangled – a very recognisable phenomenon in the arts and media industries where personality and networking have always been crucial to success. But this went deeper for Monica who was actually more interested in people – the architects themselves – than their buildings or architecture per se. She conflated the person with their architecture to the extent that when she published something, she was primarily affirming the person rather than their work. At her memorial at the AA, Michael Manser recounted how he would ask Monica if they should publish a building and she would not commit herself until she knew who the architect was.[43] She had a terrific intuition and appreciation for good design, but this came from knowing, understanding, and trusting the designer. And once she trusted a person, she was completely loyal and continued to publish them regardless of the work itself, as we shall see below with the Smithsons.

This clearly had an impact on how criticism appeared in *AD*. Monica believed that the best form of criticism was simply not to publish something, or 'give them ink'. In her interview with Benton, she disclosed her beliefs in this regard:

> A principle which I hold to this day is never to put in print something that you think is bad, so we never had and never do and never will. Because people go through a magazine from the back […] and they see a picture of something – something you think is horrible – if you've put it in. They see

38 Catherine Hakim, 'Erotic Capital', *European Sociological Review* 26, no. 5 (2010): 503.

39 Barbara Goldstein (Monica Pidgeon Memorial, Architectural Association, 23 November 2009). Video, 52:50. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oJ0lsfBuzE [accessed 14 September 2020].

40 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (6 of 25), 29 April 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-0600V0.

41 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (12 of 25), 9 July 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-1200V0.

42 Monica Pidgeon, National Life Story Collection: Architects' Lives. Monica Pidgeon (13 of 25), 9 July 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-1300V0.

43 Michael Manser (Monica Pidgeon Memorial, Architectural Association, 23 November 2009). Video, 25:00. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oJ0lsfBuzE [accessed 14 September 2020].

it, they don't read anything about it, and they go on through and then they remember that and they say, "well, it must be good if it's in *AD*!"[44]

Peter Murray agreed that she used to say, 'if it's not worth writing about, don't put it in the magazine' and that she 'did not like writing knocking copy.'[45] According to Goldstein, Monica 'didn't believe in critiquing architecture'; she preferred to let the architects speak 'in their own voices and she didn't want to critique what they had to say.'[46]

If, then, we apply the idea of a 'committed criticism' to Monica's editorship of *AD*, it would not be based on ideology or policy, whether personal or dictated from above. She was given complete freedom to include what she wanted in the magazine as long as it continued to be profitable for the owners, the Standard Catalogue Company (SCC). Monica's 'commitment' was to the architects themselves, as people and as friends. This is not to say that ideas or opinions did not matter, but they did not come first. And her idea of 'criticism' was implicated in being part of her 'club'.

'I always thought we were called "technical editors" because we were technically the editors!'[47]

On her 39th birthday, Monica moved into a beautiful new house in Highgate designed by her close friend Walter Segal, where she was to stay for the rest of her life. St. Anne's Close was a kind of early housing association where many architects, including Segal himself, lived. The following year, her personal and professional life changed considerably. Her scrapbook mentions that after the 1953 CIAM conference in Aix, she toured around France 'with Jim and Goldfingers, ending in Paris'. Monica's daughter Annabel thinks that 'Jim' was Jim Richards, whom Monica was then seeing. She remembered that Monica asked her ten-year old daughter whether she should marry Richards, or Cyril Clarke, the artistic director for Argo records. Clarke was a charismatic man who had an aura about him – a personality trait that always impressed Monica. Annabel chose the friendly, gentle Jim. Monica instead opted for the exhilarating, wild Cyril. He turned out to be an alcoholic[48] and the tumultuous marriage lasted only three years: 'END OF CYRIL' appears in big red capital letters in the 1957 page of her scrapbook.

The second considerable life change in 1953 was in Monica's professional life: her co-editor Barbara Randell left *AD* to start a family. Neither editor was an architect, so the directors wanted to replace her with someone who could offer more technical knowledge about architecture. Dargan Bullivant,

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44 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (3 of 25).

45 Peter Murray in Bonifacic, 'Letters for Monica Pidgeon'.

46 Goldstein, interview with the author.

47 Peter Murray in Bonifacic, 'Letters for Monica Pidgeon'.

48 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (15 of 25), 9 July 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-1500V0.

a student at the AA who had lived in the same mansion block as Monica, had been fulfilling this role on an ad-hoc basis up until that point, but a permanent appointment was required. This role turned into the technical editor, a crucial role that was fulfilled successively by Theo Crosby (October 1953 – May 1962), Ken Frampton (June 1962 – December 1964), Robin Middleton (December 1964 – July 1972), and Peter Murray (August 1972 – January 1974). The technical editor was trained as an architect which satisfied the SCC's requirement that there was sufficient technical material going into the magazine to appease their advertisers. Monica explained that the title was just 'to keep those people upstairs happy that he, as the technical person, knew about technology. I didn't – this little woman didn't!'[49] In other words, a reassurance for advertisers that there was a man in charge of the technical material.

Coming from a financially comfortable background, money was not a concern for Monica: she was never either driven by, nor worried about it. She lived a relatively modest life in St. Anne's Close, driving around London in her white Mini, being much more involved in culture and interested in people and their conversations and ideas than material wealth. Following Bourdieu, she was rich in cultural and social capital (and if we believe Hakim, also in erotic capital), but not economic. She was never paid very well working at *AD*,[50] but it gave her the freedom, independence, and opportunity to mix within a social and cultural milieu that was perfect for the life that she desired. So, while *AD* at least paid for itself through its adverts, Monica was entrusted with the freedom to develop the cultural and social aspect of the magazine rather than the financial, without interference from the directors. Peter Murray's quote at the head of this section shows how crucial the technical editor became to *AD*: it was pivotal to the magazine's success, which took on a new life from the introduction of the role.

Part 2: Working with the technical editors

AD blossomed with the introduction of the technical editor role. Monica could leave the layout, design, and much of the actual editing to the technical editor while she oversaw its management, dealt with the 'men upstairs' at the SCC and nurtured her networks for material. She had been editing the magazine for over a decade by this point and her charm with people and 'scrapbook' mentality had become an effective way to achieve continuous publication through an incredibly testing time. So, the second half of this paper will focus more on the individual technical editors and how they inflected Monica's overarching approach of nurturing a 'club'. In contrast to Monica, each of these technical editors had trained and practised as an architect and had different ideas about what

49 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (9 of 25), 9 July 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-0900V0.

50 When she finally left to edit the RIBA Journal in 1975, her salary immediately doubled: Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (5 of 25), 29 April 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-0500V0.

architecture should be, each of which in itself might be considered a different cause which was manifested in distinct ways in the magazine.

Theo Crosby and Brutalism

Randell's replacement was the South African Theo Crosby who started at *AD* in October 1953.[51] His appointment revolutionised the magazine, turning it into the young architect's magazine. As Banham later wrote, 'the student generation were without much means of public expression (until Theo Crosby joined *Architectural Design* in October 1953) and little of the polemic is visible in print.'[52] Not only did Crosby have a real aesthetic sensibility (Monica admitted she was never a particularly good designer or writer herself), but he brought architectural experience and knowledge to the role. He was also an ardent modernist who opened Monica's eyes and mind to modern design.

In my own and others' interviews, Monica frequently recalled how she loved to work with Crosby and how he changed the face and fortune of the magazine. 'There's nobody been like Theo', she told Stephen Escritt.[53] Similarly, to Benton: 'Theo was wonderful, I had eight wonderful years with Theo because he's such an all-round person and such a nice guy. I really enjoyed that. Eight wonderful years. He did lovely covers and he somehow changed the direction of the magazine. It was lovely working with him.'[54] It is perhaps not surprising that during those early years the South African's and South American's own personal and professional lives became entangled.

Crosby contributed far more than his knowledge and skills, however: his real passion was art and on arriving in London in 1947, he immediately absorbed himself in the art world of the post-war neo-avant-garde. His life revolved around the Central School of Arts where he took night classes in sculpting and where Eduardo Paolozzi and Peter Smithson taught,[55] as well as the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) where he was a member of the nascent Independent Group consisting of artists and architects such as Eduardo Paolozzi, Lawrence Alloway, Richard Hamilton, Reyner Banham (by then an assistant editor at the *AR*) and Crosby's best friends, Alison and Peter Smithson, with whom he lived until 1953.[56] The Smithsons were the new up-and-coming architects of the time - 'the bell-wethers [sic] of the young throughout the middle fifties' according to Banham,[57] having won the competition for Hunstanton School, which was then

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51 Initially as co-editor, as Randell had been, but in November 1954, he was listed as 'Technical Editor'. Monica Pidgeon, 'Editorial Staff Changes', *Architectural Design* 23, no. 10 (October 1953), 298.

52 Reyner Banham, 'Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural Polemics, 1945-1965', in *Concerning Architecture: Essays on Architectural Writers and Writing Presented to Nikolaus Pevsner*, ed. John Summerson (London: Allen Lane, 1968), 266.

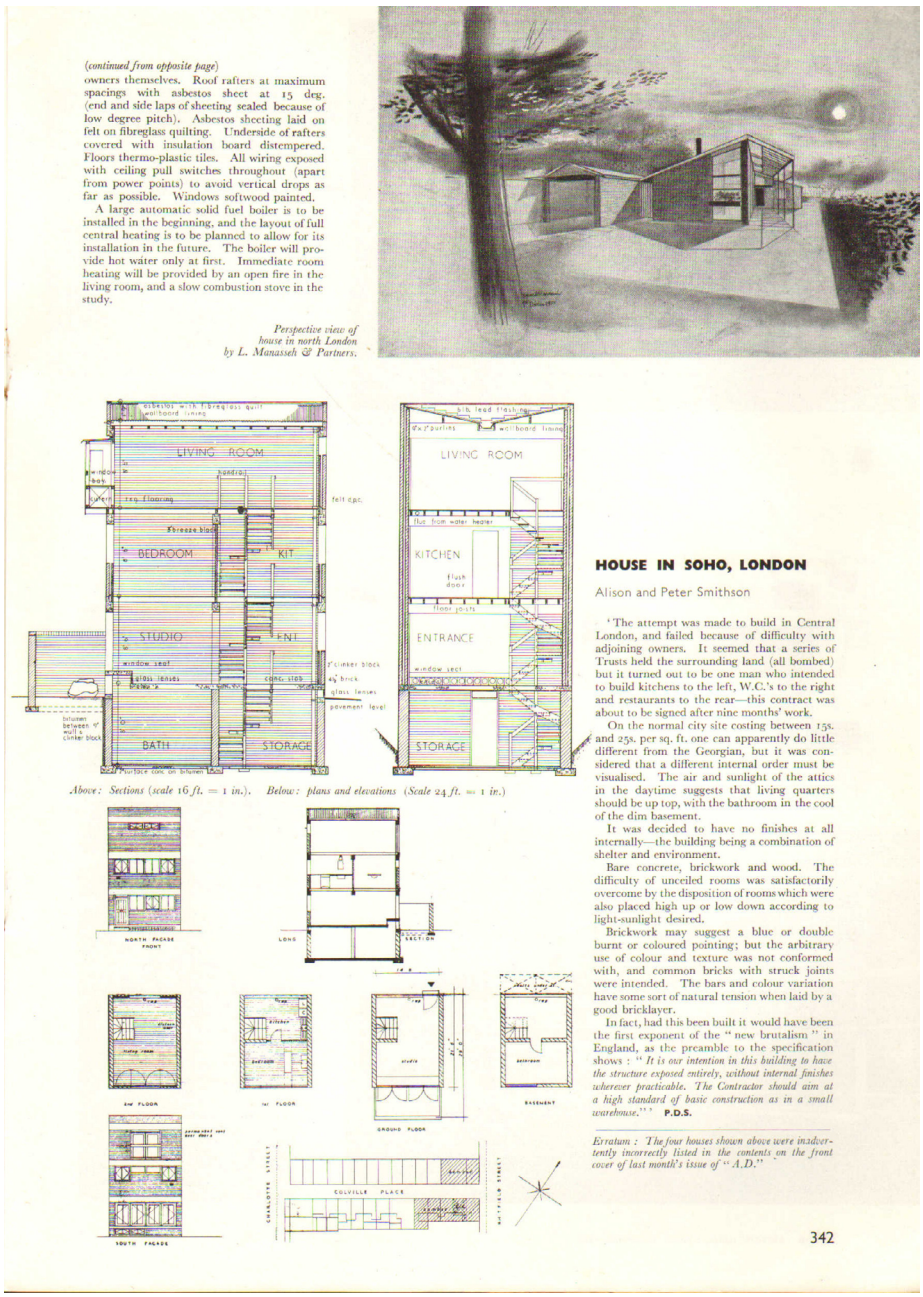
53 Monica Pidgeon, interview by Stephen Escritt, 18 July 1995.

54 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (3 of 25).

55 David Robbins, ed., *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 57.

56 See Parnell, 2019.

57 Reyner Banham, "Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural Polemics, 1945-1965," 270.



(*continued from opposite page*)
owners themselves. Roof rafters at maximum spacings with asbestos sheet at 15 deg. (end and side laps of sheeting sealed because of low degree pitch). Asbestos sheeting laid on felt on fibreglass quilting. Underside of rafters covered with insulation board distempered. Floors thermo-plastic tiles. All wiring exposed with ceiling pull switches throughout (apart from power points) to avoid vertical drops as far as possible. Windows softwood painted.

A large automatic solid fuel boiler is to be installed in the beginning, and the layout of full central heating is to be planned to allow for its installation in the future. The boiler will provide hot water only at first. Immediate room heating will be provided by an open fire in the living room, and a slow combustion stove in the study.

Perspective view of house in north London by L. Manasseh & Partners.

LIVING ROOM
BEDROOM
KIT
STUDIO
ENT
BATH
STORAGE
KITCHEN
ENTRANCE
STORAGE
COLVILLE PLACE

Above: Sections (scale 16 ft. = 1 in.). Below: plans and elevations (Scale 24 ft. = 1 in.)

HOUSE IN SOHO, LONDON

Alison and Peter Smithson

'The attempt was made to build in Central London, and failed because of difficulty with adjoining owners. It seemed that a series of Trusts held the surrounding land (all bombed) but it turned out to be one man who intended to build kitchens to the left, W.C.'s to the right and restaurants to the rear—this contract was about to be signed after nine months' work.

On the normal city site costing between 15s. and 25s. per sq. ft. one can apparently do little different from the Georgian, but it was considered that a different internal order must be visualised. The air and sunlight of the attics in the daytime suggests that living quarters should be up top, with the bathroom in the cool of the dim basement.

It was decided to have no finishes at all internally—the building being a combination of shelter and environment.

Bare concrete, brickwork and wood. The difficulty of unceiled rooms was satisfactorily overcome by the disposition of rooms which were also placed high up or low down according to light-sunlight desired.

Brickwork may suggest a blue or double burnt or coloured pointing; but the arbitrary use of colour and texture was not conformed with, and common bricks with struck joints were intended. The bars and colour variation have some sort of natural tension when laid by a good bricklayer.

In fact, had this been built it would have been the first exponent of the "new brutalism" in England, as the preamble to the specification shows: "*It is our intention in this building to have the structure exposed entirely, without internal finishes wherever practicable. The Contractor should aim at a high standard of basic construction as in a small warehouse.*" P.D.S.

Erratum: The four houses shown above were inadvertently incorrectly listed in the contents on the front cover of last month's issue of "A.D."

342

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nearing completion and reviewed in *AD* by Bullivant in September 1953.[58]

Crosby's first piece for *AD* was actually a short review of the Independent Group's 1953 exhibition, *Parallel of Life and Art* at the ICA.[59] As this exhibition only opened on 11 September, he must have been invited to write it as soon as he was offered the job. He had an immediate impact, inviting the Smithsons to contribute a piece on a design for their house in Soho, which he published in his first issue of December that year, the magazine being put together three months in advance.[60] This small article has since become famous as the place where the term 'The New Brutalism' was first mentioned in print **[Fig. 5]**.

58 Dargan Bullivant, 'Hunstanton Secondary Modern School', *Architectural Design* 23, no. 9 (September 1953), 238-48.

59 Theo Crosby, 'Parallel of Life and Art', *Architectural Design* 23, no. 10 (October 1953), 297.

60 Alison Smithson and Peter Smithson, 'House in Soho, London', *Architectural Design* 23, no. 12 (December 1953), 342.

Fig. 5
First mention of 'The New Brutalism' in print, *Architectural Design*, December 1953, p.342.

AD cheered on the New Brutalism as it gained momentum as an identifiable movement. Crosby asked the Smithsons, as the 'prophets of the movement to supply a definition or statement' for the first editorial of 1955.[61] While architectural historians have tended to overlook this rambling, incoherent statement in favour of Banham's much longer, more considered and articulate 'New Brutalism' article that appeared in the *AR* of December that year,[62] the movement was first published and nurtured in *AD*. Not only did *AD* promote the Smithsons, but under Crosby, it also provided a platform for the whole Independent Group.

The Group appeared very little in *AD* until it ceased meeting in 1956, when its members started to become regular contributors and subjects for content. From January 1956 until December 1961 (72 issues), there were at least 30 articles by or about a one-time member of the group, quite apart from the writings by the Smithsons and Crosby. Bloomfield's bibliography demonstrates that *AD* was the organ of choice for the Smithsons' rhetorical pieces.[63] Peter Smithson later acknowledged the importance of Crosby's position: 'That meant that when we started, we had a channel. Monica was […] very loyal. Where you have an editor who doesn't understand what you're writing but trusts you, it's an interesting phenomenon.'[64] In the 276 issues between December 1953 (when Crosby became effective) and November 1975 (when Monica left), 168 pieces by the Smithsons, or a group connected to them (the Independent Group or Team 10) appeared in *AD*, an average of appearing in almost two-thirds of the period's issues.

Monica also published other Brutalists such as Jim Stirling and Denys Lasdun, the latter whom she claimed was 'a terrific guru' for her.[65] In December 1956, Lasdun appeared on *AD*'s masthead as a consultant and a new series called 'Thoughts in Progress' started. Although printed anonymously, these opinion pieces were conversations between Crosby, Lasdun, and an architectural historian friend of Lasdun called John Davies on various topics from the 'Curtain Wall' to 'The New Brutalism'. In response to the latter article, the Smithsons were 'given ink'[66] to bemoan that 'Up to now Brutalism has been discussed stylistically whereas its essence is ethical.'[67]

But the relationship benefited both parties: *AD* needed the neo-avant-garde as much as they needed the platform to disseminate their ideas and *AD*'s popularity increased throughout Crosby's time. Figures for the last half of 1953 show a

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61 Alison Smithson, Peter Smithson, and Theo Crosby, 'The New Brutalism', *Architectural Design* 25, no. 1 (January 1955), 1.

62 Reyner Banham, 'The New Brutalism', *The Architectural Review* 118, no. 64708 (December 1955), 354–61.

63 Julia Bloomfield, 'A Bibliography of Alison and Peter Smithson', in *Oppositions*, vol. 2 (New York: The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, 1974), 104–23.

64 Peter Smithson, National Life Story Collection: Architects' Lives. Peter Smithson (7 of 19), interview by Louise Brodie, 4 September 1997, C467/24, British Library Sound Archive, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0024XX-0100V0.

65 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (16 of 25), 9 July 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-1600V0.

66 Goldstein used this lovely term in the author's interview with her.

67 John Davies and Denys Lasdun, 'Thoughts in Progress: The New Brutalism', *Architectural Design* 27, no. 4 (April 1957), 113.

circulation of 6,067, a third of the 18,158 registered architects in the UK.[68] By the time Crosby left in May 1962, *AD*'s circulation had increased to 9,613, compared to the *AR*'s 10,947.[69] While *AD* itself didn't ostensibly have a cause based on any architectural ideology beyond the simple declared policy 'To show good architecture, and to attempt to stimulate thought about the art of architecture and the direction it must take to complement the rapid development of science,'[70] it had become a champion of the neo-avant-garde centred on the Smithsons. Through Crosby's 'commitment' to his best friends, *AD* effectively became a 'channel' to promote their Brutalist ideas.

Ken Frampton and criticism

Crosby left *AD* to work for Taylor Woodrow in May 1962 and recommended Kenneth Frampton as his replacement. Frampton's first contribution was jointly with Crosby in the 'Art' column of the following month and he was listed as the technical editor from July, with Crosby joining the growing list of consultants.[71]

Frampton attended the AA between 1950 and 1956[72] where he was taught by luminaries such as Walter Segal, Leonard Mannaseh, Arthur Korn, Ove Arup, Anthony and Oliver Cox and, during his thesis year, Peter Smithson. While at the AA, Frampton was part of a close circle of friends centred around Thomas (Sam) Stevens. Included in this group that met at Stevens's flat in Marylebone High Street in the early 1950s were James Stirling, John Miller, Alan Colquhoun, Neave Brown, Joseph Rykwert, Patrick Hodgkinson, Bob Maxwell, Douglas Stephen, and Reyner Banham.[73] In 1961 Frampton joined Douglas Stephen and Partners, a practice that was a crucible of young talent for architects such as Elias Zenghelis and Panos Koulermos. As the *AD* 'team' (Monica and her technical editor) worked from 2pm until 7pm, Frampton could supervise the construction of an eight-storey block of flats in Bayswater in the mornings before going to Bloomsbury to work at *AD* in the afternoons.[74]

Monica teased Frampton for being the 'arch-worrier', and didn't have the same excitement as with Theo, but recalled that he 'brought a *very* serious approach to the magazine, much more architectural than Theo.'[75] *AD*'s tone completely changed during Frampton's 2½ years. The most obvious changes were his introduction of a more critical approach and more in-depth coverage of buildings, 'meticulous in all the details and working drawings and

68 Figures for the *AR* are unfortunately not available before 1959.

69 46% and 53% of the 20,693 registered architects in the UK respectively.

70 Monica Pidgeon, 'Affirmation', *Architectural Design* 26, no. 1 (January 1956), 1.

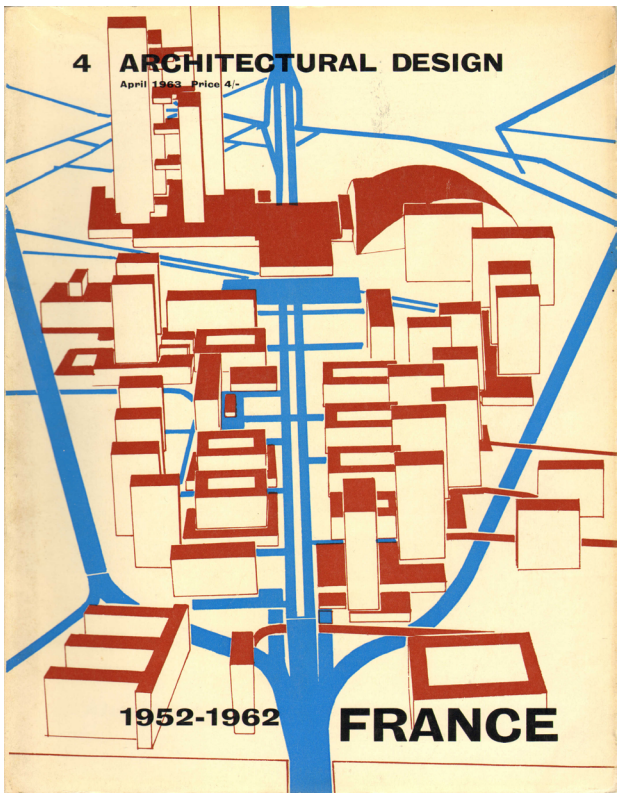
71 Peter Smithson had also been appointed as consultant in February 1962. Alison was never listed as an official consultant.

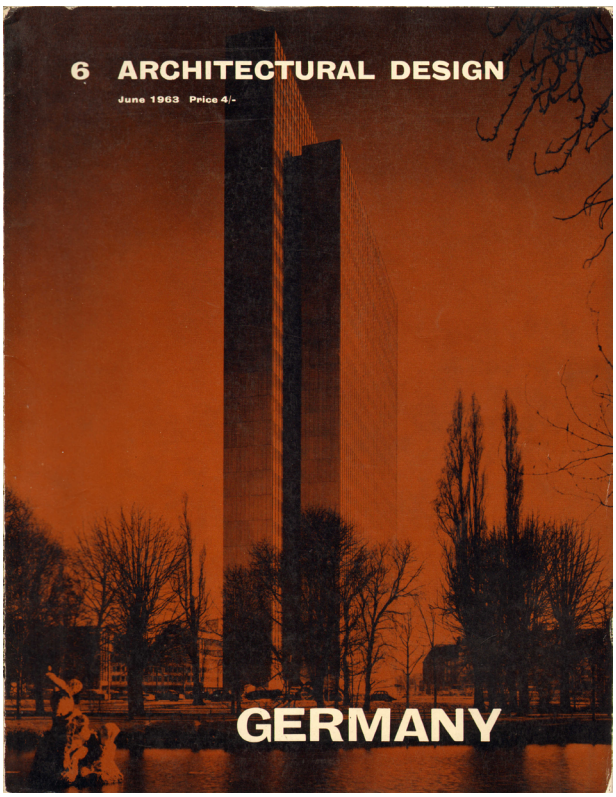
72 Kenneth Frampton, 'The English Crucible' (CIAM Team 10, the English Context, Faculty of Architecture TU Delft, 2001), 115, http://www.team10online.org/research/papers/delft1/frampton.pdf.

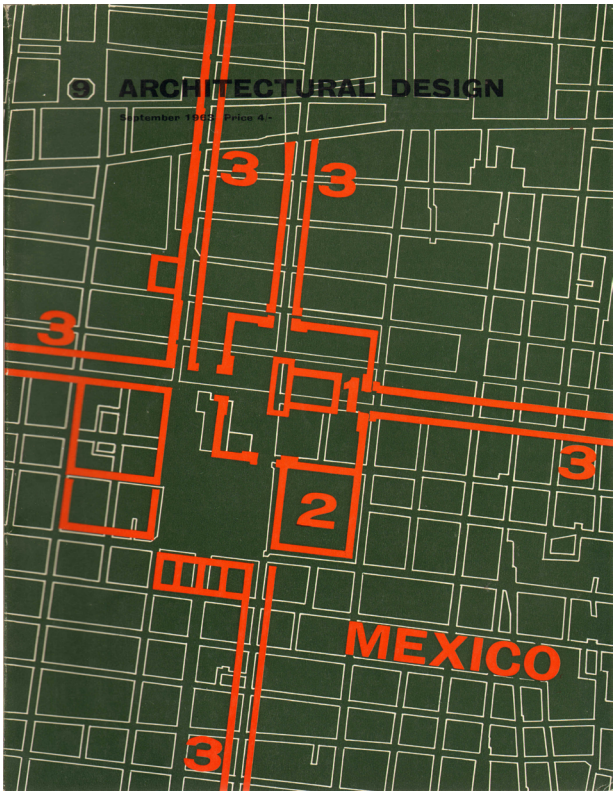
73 Mark Girouard, *Big Jim: The Life and Work of James Stirling*, (London: Pimlico, 2000), 60, 74.

74 Ken Frampton. Presentation at Monica Pidgeon Memorial (Architectural Association, 23 November 2009). Video, 11:40. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oJ0lsfBuzE [accessed 14 September 2020].

75 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (9 of 25).







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everything – marvellous photos.'[76] Architects no longer spoke in their own words. Instead, Frampton recalled that he 'advance[d] the critical stance of the magazine with a line of authors who had not hitherto been published in that journal, including Joseph Rykwert, Alan Colquhoun, Neave Brown, and Gunter Nitschke.'[77] He also introduced special issues with themes focused on countries (such as France, Germany, and Mexico in April, June, and September 1963 respectively [Fig. 6]), or architects: Lingeri & Terragni with an introductory overview of Italian Rationalism by Italian correspondent Koulermos;[78] a year later came the work of Mangiarotti & Morassutti in Milan and of Gino & Nani Valle in Udine, Italy with an introduction by Rykwert.[79]

Frampton acknowledged that the seeds of his ideas on critical regionalism were sown during his time at *AD*, while touring Continental Europe with Monica,[80] and the magazine started focusing more on Europe's 'city states', 'their "princes" of architecture. Ungers

76 Ibid.

77 Frampton, presentation, 18:09.

78 March 1963.

79 March 1964.

80 Kenneth Frampton, interview with the author, 23 November 2009.

Fig. 6
Covers of *Architectural Design* special issues focusing on France,Germany and Mexico (April, June and September 1963).

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in Cologne, Gisel in Zurich, Valle in Udine and […] Ceccarelli Epaminoda [sic] in Ravenna.'[81] The previous favourites of Crosby featured much less during Frampton's time. Monica was 'fed up' with the Smithsons for breaking up CIAM, which she had been involved with herself **[Fig. 7]**, and thought that Team 10 was 'a lot of blah blah.'[82] Yet she remained loyal and allowed them to guest-edit two issues, the 'Team 10 Primer' (December 1962) and on 'The Work of Team 10' (August 1964).

The apartment block that Frampton had been overseeing was published in September 1964 **[Fig. 8]**[83] and this seems to coincide with his desire to move on: Robin Middleton took over from him at the end of that year and Frampton's final issue of February 1965 focused on the Smithsons' Economist cluster. Monica

81 Kenneth Frampton, 'The Work of Epaminoda', *Architectural Design* 35, no. 1 (January 1965), 3.

82 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (5 of 25).

83 Frampton, "Maisonettes in Bayswater, London", *Architectural Design* 34, no. 9 (September 1964), 442-48.

Fig. 7
Photographs from 1951 in Monica's scrapbook (permission courtesy of Annabel Donat).

8 |

and Frampton didn't fall out but clearly had different styles, especially concerning the place of criticism in the magazine, and Middleton remembered that they 'were both control freaks.'[84] While Monica wanted to open up *AD* to her network and let architects speak for themselves, Frampton wanted to control the discourse. One example of this is that 68 letters appeared in Crosby's pages during his 103 issues while only a single letter appeared in the 31 that Frampton oversaw. It is also worth noting that during these 2½ years, *AD*'s circulation remained static whereas *AR*'s continued to grow slowly, as it would continue to do until around 1970,[85] suggesting that Frampton's 'commitment' to criticism was not shared by Monica.

84 Beatriz Colomina and Craig Buckley, eds., *Clip, Stamp, Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines*, 196X - 197X (New York: Actar, 2010), 443.

85 From 9,682 (48% of UK registered architects) in the second half of 1962 to 10,102 (48% of UK registered architects) in the second half of 1964. This compares with 10,879 and 11,862 respectively for the *AR*.

Fig. 8

Photograph of the block of flats that Frampton worked on while at AD, published in September 1964.

Robin Middleton and Cosmorama

After completing a PhD under Nikolaus Pevsner at Cambridge University, Robin Middleton – another South African – went to work for Crosby at Taylor Woodrow on the recommendation of their mutual friends, the Smithsons. Crosby had remained close to Monica and when Frampton left *AD*, he suggested that Middleton help her out. After Frampton's seriousness, Monica was about to have fun again: Middleton, who had 'ceased believing in most of the architecture going around because it was so bad and so horrible'[86] gradually turned *AD* from a vehicle for promoting products, buildings, and their architects into one of iconoclastic and experimental ideas.

Crosby's team at Taylor Woodrow ended up including future *AD* contributors such as Alex Pike and Brian Richards as well as all the members of Archigram. Middleton recalled that 'Cook was the first of the group to arrive, in 1962; Chalk and Herron followed at the end of the year, to be joined by Crompton, Webb and Greene in 1963, when the architects' office was established on the Euston site.'[87] Archigram started in 1961 as a small student newsletter reacting 'against the crap going up in London',[88] but numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6 were designed and produced in the Taylor Woodrow office and in the home of Peter Cook. Cook is generally acknowledged as the engine of the group and came to London to be part of 'the scene' and to replicate the success of the Independent Group's exhibitions.[89] However, as David Greene recalled, 'the real lucky break for Archigram was [when] Robin Middleton became assistant editor of Architectural Design.'[90] So in terms of facilitation, Middleton was for Archigram what Crosby was for the Smithsons and Middleton's 'first real intrusion, editorially, was the 15-page survey of the works of Archigram'.[91] Archigram matured while the group worked at Taylor Woodrow but Middleton introduced them to the wider world of architecture in this survey that appeared in November 1965 **[Fig. 9]**. For young architects in the mid-1960s, the post-war reconstruction boom had simply become tedious and the space-age comic architecture of Archigram became a favourite for *AD*.

By this time, the *AD* 'club' had become centred on the AA, where Middleton taught General Studies and where Cook, Chalk, and Webb taught design alongside other *AD* contributors such as Cedric Price. After a hiatus under Frampton, the Smithsons were invited into the *AD* club again with their Team 10 reports, but the magazine increasingly focused on future thinking through a section that Middleton introduced called Cosmorama. This started as a news column in July

86 Robin Middleton, interview with the author, 4 March 2010.

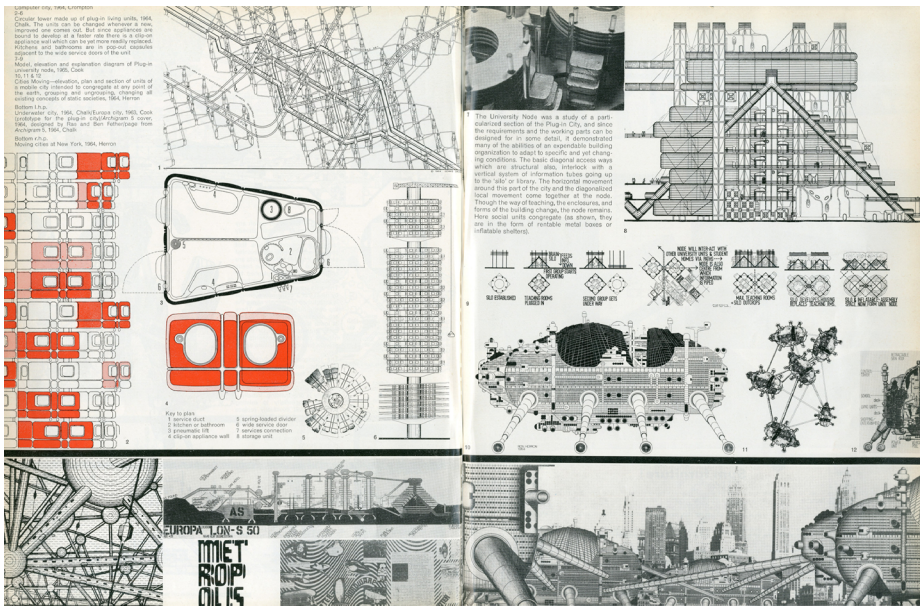
87 Robin Middleton, 'Haunts of Coot and Hern', in L.A.W.U.N. Project #19 (London: AA Publications, 2008), B22.

88 Peter Cook, 'Amazing Archigram', supplement, *Perspecta*, no. 11 (1967): 133.

89 Mary Banham, interview with the author, 2 July 2008.

90 David Greene, Jon Goodbun, and David Cunningham, 'Architecture and the Rain', *Journal of Architectural Education* 6 (Summer 2001): 197.

91 Robin Middleton, 'Working for Monica', *AA Files*, no. 60 (Spring 2010): 26.



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1965 but expanded to the extent that it practically consumed *AD* by the time Middleton left.

Neither Monica nor Middleton were motivated by any proactive policy or agenda, but rather an ad-hoc exploratory process from month to month based on what came into the office. They were both interested in the future and the content turned towards experimental ideas and transferable technologies: 'There was certainly a tremendous belief at the time in the possibilities of technology,' Middleton explained, 'You could solve problems in the world not by building things but solving the problems of life.'[92] 'There were editorial "interests" – let's put it that way,' he explained to me, 'Monica and I could never produce a concerted policy together, we wouldn't have done […] we couldn't have.'[93] Furthermore, they simply 'didn't have enough money to determine exactly what went on.'[94] Looking more towards Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog* than the *Architects' Standard Catalogue*, Cosmorama became Middleton's own scrapbook to speculate about the future: 'that was where you could try out things and have a fling,' he later explained, 'Monica would allow almost anything, she wouldn't vet it.'[95]

Middleton came to believe that 'Cosmorama was the reason people were buying and reading the magazine. It was the main part of the magazine. We were all saving our energy to put into Cosmorama, picking up any sort of information on new lifestyles that we could find. Nobody was interested in pictures of new buildings. Cosmorama kept the magazine going'.[96] But it was also the reason that advertisers were leaving, as coverage of buildings became rare and the readership more international. Monica had always been able to run the editorial

92 Colomina and Buckley, *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 32.

93 Middleton, interview with the author.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Colomina and Buckley, eds., 'Interview with Robin Middleton', in *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, n.p.

Fig. 9

A double page spread from the Chronological Survey of Archigram's work published in *Architectural Design*, November 1965.

side of *AD* independently from the marketing side because it managed to pay for itself through advertising – at its height, *AD* made £60,000-£70,000 a year from advertising.[97] In terms of number of adverts, this was around 1962, coinciding with the peak of the post-war building boom. However, as advertising declined, loss of revenue was countered by an increase in circulation which rose at a steady rate of about 1,000 per year and even gained on that of their closest competitor, the *AR*, until eventually, for 1968 only, *AD*'s figures were slightly higher.[98]

It would not be accurate to attribute this circulation curve to Cosmorama alone, but it would be fair to claim that Middleton's content curation attracted more readers than it lost during the first half of his tenure, while the reverse was true in the second. By turning away from reviewing buildings and advertising products, and focusing instead on theoretical ideas, paper architecture, and political criticism, Middleton started losing professional readers but gaining a large international student following: 'we didn't want to be a professional magazine,' he admitted, 'we wanted to deal with the culture of architecture.'[99]

It was pure coincidence that the student riots in Paris happened as *AD*'s first art editor, Dave Chaston, started. Chaston changed the magazine's name to '*AD*' for the May 1968 issue guest-edited by Cedric Price. From that point on, Price, who taught at the AA and contributed to most Archigram zines, became a regular contributor and his iconoclastic attitude exemplified the more ideas-led direction of *AD*. This split from its traditional customer base, both in terms of readers and advertisers, forced *AD* to become a 'little magazine' from October 1970, covering its costs through subscriptions alone rather than advertising and allowing complete independence from the practicalities of product manufacturers. With Archigram ceasing publication in 1970, *AD* effectively took over as the magazine of architectural ideas for students and in its 'little' phase in the early 1970s, it became more of an alternative magazine of the counter-culture than a professional publication, influenced heavily by ideas circulating around the AA and Price but connecting a network of like-minded young architects between the USA, Italy, Austria, Japan, and beyond.

Middleton had completely transformed *AD* by the time he left in July 1972.[100] He was an astute critic and historian in his own right, whose criticism, along with that of AA colleagues he published such as Cedric Price and Peter Cook, resisted the hegemony of modernist dogma. It was an iconoclastic, anti-establishment, and 'politicised' critique of the values of architecture and society, which resonated with a young, vibrant, consumerist, and swinging 1960s London.

97 David Dottridge in email to the author, 15 September 2011. Adjusting for inflation, £70,000 is equal to around £1.5m in 2020.

98 Audit Bureau of Circulation figures show that *AD*'s mean circulation for 1968 was 13,434 and *AR*'s was 13,278.

99 Middleton, interview with the author.

100 Middleton, 'Working for Monica', 26.

A semi-social magazine

In her interview with Benton, Monica recalled why *AD* commenced publication in the first place, in November 1930, explaining that the directors of the SCC 'thought it would be nice to have a give-away, *semi-social* magazine with their Standard Catalogues.'[101] This has gone down on record, being repeated elsewhere.[102] But it is entirely her interpretation and is not corroborated by any archival or analytical evidence: 'semi-social' is simply how she thought of the magazine. Habermas argued that the very idea of public opinion and the public sphere were created by the publication: rather than thinking of an audience waiting to receive the publication, the publication appeared first and organised a group of private people (subjects) into a public.[103] In the context of twentieth-century architecture, we can read this as architectural publications forming a critical architectural sphere or architectural discourse in which architects participate. The architects who are the subjects of architectural periodicals like *AD* and *AR* are also their major contributors, or have networks connected to the contributors. Magazines create networks.

AD was different to many post-war architecture magazines. Monica was neither an architect, nor an ideologue and while she was interested in modern design and futuristic ideas, she was more interested in people. Editorial policy was always vague and related more to building an architectural culture than a way to build society;[104] Monica's overriding policy was simply not to publish people who had not been accepted into her club. Instead, she used *AD* as a platform to create such a club and constantly renewed it with new members who kept it young, vital, and relevant while its competitors' campaigns became tired and dogmatic. Within this context, the technical editors mentioned in the second half of the paper were free to publish their own causes. For Crosby, this was giving the Smithsons a channel to effectively run their own campaign for Brutalism; for Frampton, it involved exploring a critical discourse about architects related to their region; and Middleton transformed the entire magazine into a radical and counter-cultural organ of experimental speculation.

In his *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing*, Michael Bhaskar explains that

> Their [people's] actions reflect assemblages of motivations and expectations, conscious and unconscious, internally or externally conditioned, affecting their behaviour. Content is no exception. It therefore makes no sense to discuss content without some reference to how these motivational factors work, as the factors involved will have powerfully helped

101 Pidgeon, Architects' Lives: Monica Pidgeon (4 of 25), 26 April 1999, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-0400V0. My italics.

102 Parnell, 2012; Monica Pidgeon, 'AD Remembered: 1941-75', *Architectural Design* 71, no. 2 (April 2001).

103 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: Polity, 1989), 25-26.

104 See Randall and Pidgeon, 'About Ourselves', 322; Pidgeon, 'Affirmation', 1.

constitute the work in question.[105]

This applies to any form of content creation, from magazine publishing to architectural design – there is always a context, a back-story, with people behind the scenes making decisions based on motivational factors small and large, personal and professional. While the personal is often included in narratives of artists' works, it has traditionally been excluded from architectural history, ignored as the hidden private lives of the protagonists. However, this paper has tried to explain how the private and professional lives of these actors are always entangled and a fuller understanding of architectural history might be achieved by taking this into account.

Monica's criteria for publication in *AD* were not primarily motivated by an ideology, but by a commitment to and love of people. Becoming part of her club depended more on the personality of the architect in question: how well Monica got on with them and, frankly, how attractive she found them. In writing architectural histories, it is tempting to focus on divining some 'objective truth' that ideally represents a committed or politicised critical position of a magazine or editor, overlooking the fact that the people running them are flesh and blood with inconvenient real-life problems and confusing contradictory emotions that have real, printed consequences and long-lasting historiographical implications.

Igea Troiani has written about using gossip and rumour as evidence in architectural history, 'sources often dismissed because they are deemed subjective, sensationalist, and unverifiable'.[106] Troiani uses these versions of oral history as hints to look elsewhere to provide other stories based on more traditional, objective documentation. I have similarly used 'gossip' and 'whispers' to direct my interviews and highlight other evidence that would normally remain hidden. The point is not to write a biography, but to adopt a biographical approach to architectural history, acknowledging that the entanglements of the personal and professional lives have a very real influence on what gets published, built, wins awards, and written into the canon. Had I not adopted this approach, with its implied commitment to people itself, I would have assumed that Monica and *AD* held a specific policy and critical position and attempted to divine what beliefs underpinned Monica's long, uninterrupted editorship as I characterised the other magazines at the beginning of the paper. But what I found instead was that the content was driven by a commitment to people rather than their products.

105 Michael Bhaskar, *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network* (London; New York: Anthem Press, 2013), 96.

106 Iggea Troiani, 'Spoken-Not-Spoken, Written-Not-Written: From Gossip and Rumour to Architectural History between Margin and Center', in Gosseye, *Stead, and Van der Plaat eds., Speaking of Buildings, 235*

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