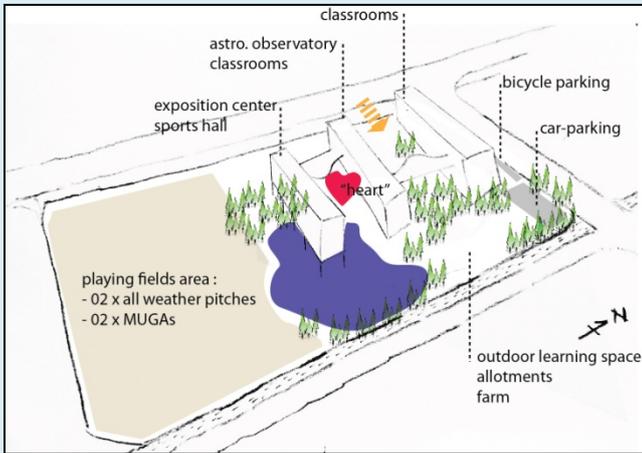


Sustainable development/sustainable construction?



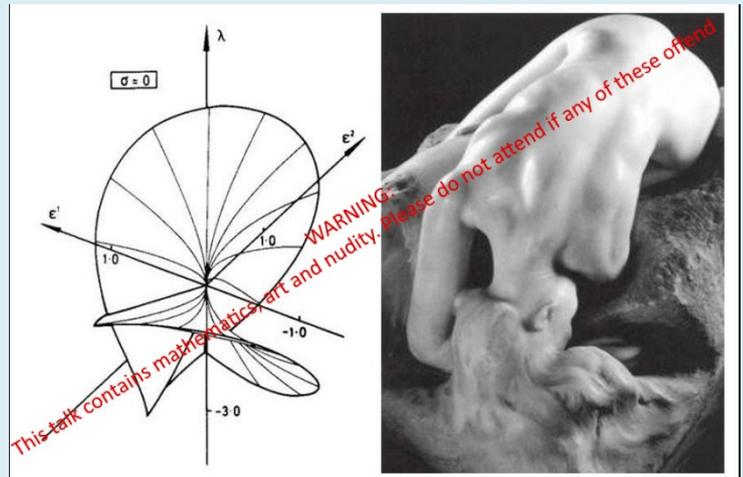
There were many highlights from this packed course week in March on 'Sustainable development/sustainable construction?'. The lectures, workshops and studio project explored what sustainability means to us as individuals and to others, the past and future of sustainability and policies for sustainable construction. The week was based around a studio project of a new school to be built on the outskirts of Cambridge, which has strong notions of 'sustainability'. School buildings in general have been highlighted, particularly by the previous Government, as the foremost building type to demonstrate 'sustainability'. But what does this mean, and what should we be doing, as individuals, as professionals, as the construction industry, as part of our

own country and society, as part of a global community? The studio project was a vehicle through which these questions could be explored more fully. At the end of the week, teams came up with a design solution for the school, explaining why their solution was 'sustainable' by their own definition and why it might fail to be classified as sustainable by others. How wide they set their boundaries was up to each team. The Leys Team solution is above.

Maths, geometry, nudity and art

In addition to the study theme lectures, each week also has Horizon lectures which introduce students to a wide range of contemporary issues. These lectures take place in the evenings after dinner. They don't usually come with a warning, but Allan McRobie's Horizon lecture *Maths, Geometry, Nudity and Art* did.

After looking at Rene Thom's Catastrophe Theory and its application across science and engineering, this lecture headed off in a different direction, for it is not widely known that the theory also applies to a great deal of art. Allan demonstrated that even a basic understanding of Thom's mathematics can change one's appreciation of a great deal of both traditional and modern art, with a particular emphasis on the nude.



Allan is a Reader in the Department of Engineering and is also on the IDBE management and academic committees. He is a structural engineer with specialist interests in dynamics and stability. It was during a life drawing class at the Department (classes that Allan had introduced to broaden the horizons of the Engineering students) that he first recognised the strong unifying resonances that exist between his lecture notes on stability theory and the shapes in front of his eyes. Allan's lecture was one of the absolute highlights of the week.

The British Antarctic Survey



Another highlight was our visit to the British Antarctic Survey, where glaciologist Dr Robert Mulvaney OBE gave an inspiring lecture on climate change, 'a great and approachable presentation to a huge topic'. He was a rather chilly host, though, taking us to -20C in the deep freeze to show us the ice cores. These have been drilled from the depths of the Earth's ice sheets, and contain bubbles of air trapped for many thousands of years; the bubbles reveal details of the past climate, and for our students 'really drove home the carbon issue and the effects on the planet'.

We were also given a tour around some of the unique Antarctic sealife in the BAS aquarium by Elaine Fitzcharles, and were shown the recently released film of the new Antarctic research station Halley VI (the subject of the IDBE studio project two years ago – see issue 14) by Paul Seagrove.



We would like to thank Robert, Elaine and Paul, and in particular Kim Quince for her support and help in making all the arrangements for our visit. The student feedback on the visit was completely glowing, and we hope it has re-invigorated them to work towards making a real difference in the sustainability of the built environment. In return our hosts at BAS reported that they found the IDBE students' enthusiasm and interest to be really rewarding!

Photos show 2000 year old Antarctic ice (with a story trapped in the air bubbles), Sam Watkins (cohort 19) listening for life and Dr Mulvaney holding a section of ice core. Above are sea spiders from the aquarium.

Where are they now?

Andy Nicholson, cohort 13 (2006-2008).



From Buro Happold's Fire Engineering team Andy moved to WSP Fire in 2010, then with the help of the great contacts he'd built up over the years was inspired to fly solo. In October 2011 The Fire Surgery Ltd (www.thefiresurgery.com) started trading; there were some raised eyebrows about opening a new consultancy in the middle of a double dip recession, but fortunately, the projects started to roll in. Andy was appointed to support Allies and Morrison Architects with the design of the Indoor Jacobean Theatre at Shakespeare's Globe. The theatre will be used for performances in the winter season and for education events and public tours during the summer months. The design (based on original plans from the 1640's) will be completed with untreated green oak. There is a strong desire to light the space with candles, including the performances. Some interesting challenges for the fire strategy ...

Andy says 'Being a part of the IDBE has been really influential in my career development. It has given me valuable tools and experience that I can call upon, a great network of friends and of course somewhere to stay in Cambridge!'

Marga Jann, cohort 10 (2003-2005) has accepted a Visiting Fellowship from July 2013 with Lucy Cavendish College.

And ending this newsletter is the latest photo of the research teams here in the Martin Centre at the Architecture Department – spot IDBE staff Becky and Alice, clearly hard at work while Sebastian is at a conference in Australia!



Application deadline!

**Please note that applications to
join IDBE for September 2013
must be made by 30th June!**



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Interdisciplinary Design for the Built Environment

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Course Director Sebastian Macmillan PhD RIBA **Course Administrator** Becky Stanley **Course**

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