

Icon NEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • JULY 2014 • ISSUE 53



Botanical illustrations conserved

Also in this issue

Life as a CTQ student

A public paper chase

European Standards update

conservation register

Are you thinking of joining the Conservation Register?

The Conservation Register is the recognised source for finding professionally qualified conservator restorers in the UK & Ireland.

Practices that are included in the Conservation Register will benefit from:

- Referrals from organisations including the National Trust, the V&A museum, the Council for the Care of Churches;
- An individual entry providing full contact details and including automatic links to a website and email address; Inclusion in all UK and Ireland searches for your discipline;
- An opportunity to showcase examples of work to potential clients;
- Provision of information on the accreditation and skills of you and your staff;
- Login access for feedback on how often your own entry is viewed
- Practices in which the lead member is an accredited conservator-restorer (ACR) of Icon, or ARA, or BHI, accredited through PACR (Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers) are eligible for a 15% discount with Heath Lambert insurance brokers.

For further information and full details on the requirements for inclusion in the Conservation Register visit:

www.conservationregister.com

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THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

JULY 2014 Issue 53



From the Editor

From fish to flowers, via a church mosaic wall, the work experiences of CTQ candidates and a project which used the public to gather its data, there is plenty to get your teeth into over the summer in this issue of Icon News. Not to mention a bumper crop of events which Icon members have attended and report on, from Qatar to the Isle of Bute. And on the topic of attending courses and conferences, it is great to learn of the new source of funding, courtesy of Tru Vue, which is available to mid-career conservators to help with the costs of activities aimed at furthering their professional development.

One of the pleasures of my job as Editor is choosing the image for the cover of Icon News. Given the range of objects and places that conservators work with, there are usually some lovely, interesting or quirky candidates to pick from. Your object, too, could become a cover star. Just write a piece about it (short is good!) and send it to me. And don't forget that what may seem commonplace to you in your discipline may be fascinating and exotic to the rest of us.

Lynette Gill



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Cover photo:

A drawing from the collection of Nathaniel Wallich's botanical illustrations held at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, Middlesex. The image shows a Sterculia versicolor wall, a tree native to east asia and India. The drawing is suffering from lead white darkening. Image: ©Natasha Trenwith at RGB Kew

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professional update

From the Chief Executive

OUT OF THE ASHES



Photo: Matt Wreford

Alison Richmond ACR FIIC celebrates the heart-warming response to the tragic Glasgow School of Art fire and notes other developments in Scotland

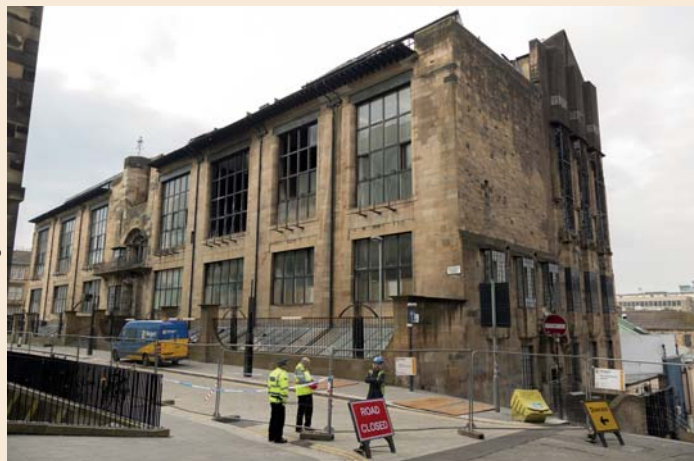
The devastating fire that sped through Charles Rennie Macintosh's iconic Glasgow School of Art completely destroyed the famous library and much of its art, artefacts and archives collections at the heart of the building. The Scottish Government immediately pledged £5M to the restoration fund and planning is underway to

restore the damaged building and conserve the remaining contents.

This injection of money is very welcome and is likely to attract more giving. However, in the midst of the disaster, Icon called upon another resource, one that couldn't be paid for. The response to our Twitter campaign calling for volunteers to help with the salvage of the contents of the building was dramatic. In the first three days, more than one hundred and fifty conservators offered their time and expertise for free. Icon's Scotland Group kept a log of all the offers of help and in the last counting we had conservators of all types, as well as joiners, architects, archivists. We had people who just want to help in any way they could. There were offers of equipment, transport, and buildings nearby, including equipment on standby in Dundee. This building meant so much to so many and people really wanted to help.

Although only a few of those who volunteered were called

Glasgow School of Art: wide angle view of the scene affected by the fire



Demotix/Press Association Images

upon to help in those initial days, there were other benefits that emerged from this campaign. The story of the campaign was picked up by the press and appeared in online editions of *The Art Newspaper* (TAN) and *Salon* magazine. It was very popular on TAN's website, showing how much people care about the school and Mackintosh's building. The Guardian was watching closely and its journalist Maev Kennedy tweeted the call. The Chief Executive of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) mentioned Icon's offer of help in evidence given to the Scottish Parliament. This evidence was recorded and available on line. Conservators and conservation were brought to the attention of a wider public. I am in dialogue with a number of people about the public benefit that can come out of a restoration project and how Icon might be part of that. We learned at first hand the power of social media to galvanise quickly. It was a really good example of an Icon Group and the Icon office working well together to achieve an outcome.

It is a very sad day when a building that so many know and love is damaged, but there is a silver lining. There probably hasn't been volunteering on such a scale since the Florence floods of 1966. One Twitter follower put it this way: *This unprecedented response to this crisis is historic. Proud to be a member of this professional community* [@charleslade02]. And so am I.

Icon has been active in more ways than one in Scotland. We were one of thirty-one organisations that responded to the call for evidence made by the Education and Culture Committee of the Scottish Government on the Historic Environment Scotland Bill. The purpose of the Bill is to establish a new lead body for Scotland's historic environment, to be known as Historic Environment Scotland. One of the things that we called for in the consultation was listed in the main outcomes of the consultation: the word heritage and historic environment mean different things to different people. There is a need for a shared understanding of what constitutes the Historic Environment.

We also joined the Built Heritage Forum Scotland and we are looking at how we will be able to contribute to the Strategic Historic Environment Forum. These are places where conservation is talked about but where a concerted voice for movable heritage is needed and Icon can provide that. We are also starting to think about what a 'yes' vote in Scotland might mean for Icon and our members This will be considered by the Board of Trustees at their next meeting.

ICON CONSERVATION AWARDS 2015

If you have been reading your Iconnects diligently, you will know that Icon has commissioned Erin Barnes and Gemma Clarke of ArtsMediaPeople to manage the Conservation Awards 2015 for Icon and on behalf of the stakeholders, Beko plc, The Pilgrim Trust, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) and The Plowden Trust.

Erin and Gemma have a track record of working with the media and cultural organisations, such as Tate and Historic Royal Palaces, developing outreach and liaising with

audiences. Since achieving a media profile is an important aim of the project, they have recommended that resources be focussed on one big launch to press and media, rather than the original plan of having a 'soft' launch in the Spring.

The launch, now scheduled for October, will announce that there is one year to go. Erin and Gemma will have time to develop the website and social media, and to gather stories from previous winners to attract press attention. So, past winners, if you have great stories please get in touch with me or Erin Barnes (erin@artsmediapeople.com)

Here is an outline of the **timetable** but please watch out for updates via Iconnect:

- This summer – drawing up the shortlisting and judging panels for each award
- November 2014 to April 2015 – open for expressions of interest
- Awards Submission deadline – 30th April 2015
- Shortlisting and judging – through May and June 2015
- Awards Ceremony – October 2015

The Awards are:

The Pilgrim Trust Award for Conservation (£10,000)

This Award recognises excellence in the conservation of the cultural heritage in the UK. It is presented for a completed project or project phase judged to be the best of those submitted.

The Beko Award for Conservation in the Community (£5000)

The Beko Award for Conservation in the Community will be given to a project of any size that has been undertaken by volunteers with the involvement of a conservator and which has led to learning new skills and knowledge. The legacy of the project will be the learning of the volunteers and the increased access to the cultural heritage by the community and by the public.

The Pilgrim Trust Student Conservator of the Year Award (£5,000)

This Award highlights the achievements of student conservators and the high standards of UK conservation training courses. It is presented for the conservation project judged to be the best of those completed during training.

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers Award for the Conservation of an Industrial Heritage Artefact (£2500)

The award recognises excellence in engineering conservation of an artefact or collection for a project that is professionally led. Applications are invited from individuals or organisations for conserving both operational and static examples of engineering.

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers Award for Volunteering in the Conservation of an Industrial Artefact (£2500)

The award recognises excellence in engineering conservation of an artefact or collection for a project that has significant volunteer engagement. Applications are invited from individuals, organisations or groups for conserving both operational and static examples of engineering.

The Anna Plowden Trust Award for Research & Innovation in Conservation (£2500)

This award of £2500 recognises the achievements of those involved in conservation research and development. It is presented for the best completed programme aimed at furthering the knowledge and practice of conservation, including research leading to better understanding of materials, their technology of production and their conservation and the development of materials, equipment, systems or techniques for improved conservation and collection care, examination, analysis, treatment or monitoring.

Alison Richmond, Chief Executive
arichmond@icon.org.uk

MORE HELP FOR MID-CAREER CPD

In a piece of excellent news for established conservators, Icon has announced a partnership with Tru Vue Inc to provide funding for mid-career conservators from across the globe to attend professional development events such as conferences and training courses.

Although there are a few, valued, sources of funding for this kind of training, the provision of extra resources for continuing professional development (cpd) is very welcome. Icon's labour market research has found that employers' training budgets have been drastically reduced in recent years and the need for this kind of help is increased accordingly.

Conservators from anywhere in the world are eligible to apply to Icon for funding, apart from members of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), who should apply to FAIC through a similar scheme.



TRU VUE

There will be a formal application process with three deadlines a year. Grants will range from £300 to £900 and there will be between ten and twenty grants per year. Applications opened on 1 July and full details of the programme can be found on Icon's website and in the special Iconnect.

Alison Richmond writes: 'We are very pleased to be involved in this initiative as it is a goal of our National Conservation Education and Skills Strategy to provide more opportunities for conservators to learn at every stage of their careers. Tru Vue has been very supportive of Icon, sponsoring our triennial conference and Conservation Register as well as being a loyal advertiser. We are delighted that our relationship with Tru



Standards under discussion: the CEN TC346 meeting in London

Vue continues to support the profession and the public by providing the means for conservators everywhere to develop their skills.'

'We are pleased to be partnering with Icon and FAIC to offer these scholarships to professionals who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend, and contribute towards their professional development goals,' said Patti Dumbaugh, Vice President for Tru Vue, Inc. 'Our goals for the program include encouraging international exchange and dissemination of training and conference information. We hope conservators with a thirst to learn from all over the world will take advantage of this program and the knowledge it can bring to their communities.'

For more information about this grant programme please contact training@icon.org.uk

EUROPEAN STANDARDS UPDATE

On 10 April 2014, for the first time in the ten years since the launch of the European conservation standards project, the UK played host to a meeting of CEN Technical Committee 346, the over-arching body responsible for the development of these standards. We were at University College London, accompanied by conservators and conservation scientists from across Europe, at a meeting hosted by Tim Yates, Chairman of the British Standards committee B/560.

It was significant that this should be happening at all in the UK, given our cautious, not to say sceptical approach to this grand European project right from its inception. Launched by architectural conservation scientists in Italy, this collaborative project has now resulted in no less than eighteen published British Standards covering a range of topics from the most general to the very particular, all under the broad heading of Conservation of the Cultural Heritage (google search for CEN TC346 Conservation Standards). These standards now take their place alongside thousands of others, most of which we take for granted in our private and professional lives, whether it's the window glass in our cars or the blades of our scalpels.

This annual plenary meeting was chaired by Dr Vasco Fassina,

CEN/TC346 Conservation of Cultural Heritage
Current Working Groups

WG 1	General methodologies and terminology
WG 2	Characterisation and analysis of porous inorganic materials
WG 3	Evaluation of methods and products for conservation works on porous inorganic materials
WG 4	Protection of collections
WG 5	Packing and transport
WG 6	Exhibition lighting of cultural heritage
WG 7	Specifying and measuring indoor/outdoor climate
WG 8	Energy efficiency of historic buildings
WG 9	Waterlogged wood
WG 10	Historic timber structures
WG 11	Conservation process

whose founding chairmanship was renewed for another three years. Much of the meeting was taken up by reports from the convenors of the eleven Working Groups listed here. Due to their efficiency (reports were circulated in advance), the accumulated experience of the somewhat arcane procedures, and the relative lack of controversy, the meeting was completed in one day, rather than the planned two.

Of the topics which gave rise to discussion, the following points are of note:

- WG1 is trying to complete its lexicon of alteration terms by compiling accompanying photographs.
- WG2 drew attention to a parallel project (not a standard), co-funded by the European Union, to develop 'a richly illustrated glossary' for the conservation of wall painting and architectonic surfaces (The EwaGlos Project).
- WG3 reported on potential new standards for cleaning, on which I drew attention for the need to incorporate wording which respects the special judgment and skills of professional conservators.
- The work of WG4 is threatened by the withdrawal of (Danish) funding for its secretariat. Meanwhile, its work continues on a standard for integrated pest management, another on risk management, and another called 'New sites and buildings', the only project under UK leadership, which has now been formally activated, the final draft due for approval next year. It is expected that this will eventually displace BSI's Published Document PD5454:2010 *Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials* and Publicly Available Specification PAS 198:2012: *Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections*.
- WG5's work on a transportation standard is close to completion; its Packing standard was published in 2011.
- WG6 had completed its work on exhibition lighting in collaboration with another (non-conservation) Lighting Technical Committee (TC169)
- A new work item was approved for work by WG 8 (Energy efficiency in historic buildings), namely 'Guidelines for improving energy performance of historically, architecturally or culturally valuable buildings'.
- WG11 continued to elaborate the main elements of what has been called the 'conservation process', which should offer a conceptual and practical framework for approaching all conservation projects.
- It was suggested that a new work item should be proposed for the next three-year work programme, namely a standard for the investigation of paint layers and other surfaces in the built heritage. There will however be wide consultation

on selecting this and other possible topics for the next work programme. Readers of Icon News are invited to propose topics.

Incidentally, also recently published is the purely British standard, BS 7913:2013 *Guide to the conservation of historic buildings*. This, together with all other British and European conservation standards, is available to purchase from www.shop.bsigroup.com. If you or your institution is a member you may qualify for half-price.

It will soon be time to start the revision of the earliest standards – a five year cycle – so your chance will soon come to comment on anything you think could be improved next time round.

David Leigh

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Book & Paper Group

As I write this, the next committee meeting of the Book & Paper Group will be coming up on 25 June. For the committee to exist, we need members... We are volunteers who try to make things happen, by discussing what we need as a profession right now. While we have recently gained some excellent new committee members, there may still be opportunities to join us. I would encourage you all to think seriously about volunteering your time as a committee member so that we can look after our profession in the best way possible

Although committee work does require commitment, there are great opportunities for camaraderie and a feel-good factor in knowing that we are doing our bit to pool resources and make things happen. So, if you are interested in making a contribution, please do get in touch:
isabelle.egan@ntlworld.com

Isabelle Egan

Book & Paper Group Chair

Ceramics and Glass Group

It's been an exciting couple of months for the Ceramics and Glass Group. In May we held our annual conference in York – look out for the review on page 26. It was an action packed couple of days and we've had some really great feedback from all those who attended.

I'm also very pleased to announce that the Nigel Williams Prize and Nigel Williams Student Prize were both awarded at the conference to two excellent projects. See page 8 for more information about these awards.

At the AGM there were several changes to the Ceramics and Glass Group committee. Our Group Chair Kathleen Swales stepped down after six years' service on the committee. She has been a real asset to the Group and we wish her well for the future. The committee is now as follows:

Chair – *Rachel Sharples*

Secretary – *Becky Sanderson*

Treasurer – *AC Orr*

Nigel Williams Prize Coordinator – *Ronald Pile*

Events Organisers – *Helen Warren & Sarah Delves*

Graduate Student Representative – *Tiago Oliveira*

Ordinary Member – *Sarah Cheng*

Planning has now begun for the next Icon Ceramics and Glass Group conference, if you would like to submit a paper, or have any suggestions for sessions, then please do get in touch with the Group Chair.

Rachel Sharples

CGG Chair

Paintings Group

The Paintings Group AGM was held on 27 February at the Freemasons' Hall in London. Chair Francis Downing addressed the attendees and reported on the past year's events and plans for the future. Treasurer Rebecca Gregg reported that the Group's finances remained in a healthy condition to date. Members Michael Correia and Jemma Edwards were proposed for and voted on to the Paintings Group Committee, where they will assist with the Group's activities.

The AGM was held immediately prior to Alexandra Gent's talk 'Reynolds, Replication and Restoration: Some results from the Wallace Collection Reynolds Research Project', which we are very pleased to report was a sell-out and attended by over one hundred people.

Our next upcoming talk is on the evening of Monday 29 September. Charlotte Bolland of the National Portrait Gallery, Project Curator of 'Making Art In Tudor Britain' will give a talk on the market in copies in Renaissance Britain. The talk will take place at 6:30pm (doors open at 6:00pm) in our usual venue, Freemason's Hall, 60 Great Queen St, London WC2B 5AZ. Please see the Paintings Group section of the Icon website for further information and details of how to book.

This year has also seen the introduction of a reduced rate of £5 for students attending our evening talks (even if they are not Icon members!), which we hope will encourage greater attendance and involvement of the upcoming members of our profession. Those wishing to obtain this student rate are requested to bring valid Student ID with them when paying on the door. The normal rates of £10 for members and £15 for non-members remain.

The Paintings Group Annual Conference will this year have the title 'Modern Conservation: What's New?' and will be held on Friday 10 October 2014 at the Wallace Collection in London. Ticket prices are £75 for members, £95 for non-members and £45 for students. At the time of going to press a final list of speakers is still to be confirmed; please check back on the Paintings Group section of the Icon website where further information and booking procedures will be published in due course.

We thank all of our members for their continuing support and ask you to email the Icon Paintings Group with any ideas, suggestions or feedback.

The Icon Paintings Group
icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com

Photographic Materials Group

Icon's Photographic Materials Group would like to thank all those who attended the Liverpool AGM and associated visits at the beginning of May. Particular thanks are due to Ann Stewart and her colleagues at the National Museums Liverpool Conservation Centre who made us feel very welcome and provided an informative presentation and tour at a time of such uncertainty: the recent announcement of the intended reduction of staffing at the National Museums Liverpool is expected to hit the centre hard. Having seen first-hand an example of just a small part of what conservation staff at the centre are able to achieve, the news of likely redundancies is a huge blow. The Photographic Materials Group would like to echo the support for the centre and its staff as expressed in Alison Richmond's letter to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport: <http://tinyurl.com/kzq6bfz>

A report of the event, which also included a behind the scenes tour of Liverpool Archives, has been written by a student on the MA Conservation of Historic Objects course at Lincoln, Emma Bonson. This can be found on page 28.

At the AGM section of the day, new committee members were elected into position as follows:

General Committee Members:

- **Anthea Henton**
- **Caroline Dempsey**
- **Elspeth Jordan**
- **Jacquie Moon**
- **Rosalind Bos**

Secretary: **Lorraine Finch**

They will join:

- **Louisa Coles**, who was elected as Chair
- **Dominic Wall**, who continues as Treasurer
- **Zoe Kennington**, who continues as Programme Coordinator

We also said farewell to two committee members:

- **Sarah Allen**, who has been Acting Chair since September of 2013, and a member of the committee for three years. Sarah will continue with the Group as a general committee member, but is taking a break from committee work while on maternity leave. Sarah has done a fantastic job since stepping in as Acting Chair in September, and in particular has put a huge amount of time into the organisation of the Liverpool event and AGM. We wish her well and look forward to welcoming her back early in 2015.
- We would also like to thank **Saya Miles** as she moves on. Saya has been a key member of the Icon Photographic Materials Group committee for three years, and has been instrumental in organising many of the Group's events in this time. Particular highlights were the talks delivered by Yoko Shiraiwa in London and Edinburgh on the subject of Rescuing Tsunami Damaged Photographs in Japan. This was a subject close to Saya's heart, and she put a great deal of time and effort into arranging these events and

spreading the word about the rescue effort in Japan. Saya will be a much missed member of the committee and we would like to wish her well for all she is involved in in the future. Saya has reassured us that while she is no longer a committee member, she will continue to be an active member of the Group. We look forward to seeing her again at Group events.

Keep an eye on our Icon webpages, facebook and twitter feed for further updates.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ICONPhMG>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ICONPhMG>

Textile Group

The committee has welcomed two new members. Kate French, from the National Museums of Scotland has become our new secretary and Stella Gardner from Textile Conservation Ltd. is now web editor. The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Sophie Downes who has ended her term as web editor. We thank her for all her hard work and dedication to the role.

There have been two very successful visits: one to Proportion London, Mannequin makers and the other to the Paul Smith exhibition at the Design Museum. Thank you to Debbie Phipps and Susana Farajdo respectively for organising these events. There are reviews about these visits elsewhere in this publication.

Look out for upcoming events on Iconnect, the website and our facebook page.

ICRI LAUNCH

The official launch of a new conservation body – The Institute of Conservator-Restorers in Ireland – took place on 27 May. ICRI is a single unified professional body formed from the membership of the Irish Professional Conservators and Restorers Association (IPCRA) and the Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in Ireland (ICHAWI).

The launch was held in the National Gallery of Ireland and was very well attended by representatives from the wider museums and galleries community, the Heritage Council and other bodies. ICRI was also pleased to announce its sole patron, the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.

More information can be found at www.conservationireland.org

The event was also the occasion for an inaugural Conservation Lifetime Award, which was presented to Anthony Cains and to Maighread McParland, in recognition of their commitment to the profession both in Ireland and abroad. Anthony Cains retired as Keeper of Conservation, Trinity College Dublin, having established the conservation laboratory, following his involvement in the Florence floods rescue operation. Maighread McParland, who also took part in the Florence rescue operation, established the Paper

Conservation Studio in the National Gallery of Ireland in 1970 from which she retired as Head in 1999. Both were honoured for their huge contribution to the professionalisation of conservation in Ireland.

ALUM TAWED SKIN – A FOLLOW UP

Icon News readers may be interested to know that conservators at Oxford Conservation Consortium and the Bodleian Libraries, along with Christopher Clarkson, met on 7 May with Tova Irving, Assistant Manager at William Cowley, Manufacturer and Supplier of Fine Parchment and Vellum. This was a follow up to our first meeting in November 2011. See Icon News issue 38, p.4.

Tova brought a good selection of skins that she had been working on, goat and calf, and again talked us through the processing of the skins and the effects that subtle changes in processing can have, such as the addition of more fat liquor to improve handling qualities. She reported that Cowley's are now using English goats which seem to result in a firmer skin with more body.

Tova was interested to hear that conservators are less concerned with skin pigmentation, saying that not having to worry about dark areas in the skin would make her life much easier! We impressed on her that we are interested in thicker skins, i.e. over 1mm in thickness, so that we can shape and pare the skin to suit the requirements of a binding. The skins looked very good and an initial order was placed on the spot, with a visit to select further skins planned for the near future.

Tova also brought two swatches of her experiments with dyeing alum tawed to produce a base colour that can then be toned to match a book undergoing treatment. These swatches looked very promising, and we are working with

Comparing dyed alum-tawed with natural swatches at OCC



Examining calf skins with Tova Irving (second on left)

Tova to develop a product that Cowley's can market, so will keep Icon News readers informed about progress.

We're very grateful to Tova for working so closely with us to maintain the production of high quality materials for conservation. If anyone is interested in joining this project, please contact OCC.

Jane Eagan ACR FIIC
Oxford Conservation Consortium

ICON AT THE M&H SHOW

In May, Icon took part in the Museums & Heritage Show at London Olympia for the first time. Icon staff and a volunteer group of members staffed a stall in the Ask The Expert area, promoting Icon and the Conservation Register and fielding questions from members of the public on a wide range of topics and objects.

This would not have been possible without the efforts of the nine experts who volunteered their time over the two days of the show and between them represented the conservation

Icon experts at the Museums & Heritage show



specialisms of paintings, books, paper, photographs and archives, textiles, leather and antiquities.

So three cheers for

Nicholas Burnett

Sarah Cove

Francis Downing

Lorraine Finch

Sharon Oldale

Melanie Leach

Eileen Powell

Theo Sturge

Heather Tetley

For Membership Manager Michael Nelles, this was his first outing with the team. 'I felt quite lucky to be starting my role just as the M&H Show came round,' he said. 'I'd only been in the role a week, and already I was hearing all about the fascinating projects our members were working on. It was a lovely induction!'

The show organisers seemed pleased with the popularity of the 'Ask The Expert' stands and have already invited Icon back for next year's show. Watch this space!

THE NIGEL WILLIAMS PRIZE 2014

'I can honestly say that I think this is the highest calibre of applications since the award began. We (the judges) would like to express our thanks to all the candidates for their applications and the thoroughness with which they addressed the judging criteria' (Sandra Smith, Head of Conservation at the V&A and chair of the Nigel Williams Prize Judging Panel).

Well done to all those applicants who supported the Nigel Williams Prize 2104! As well as the Main Prize, entries were also invited for a new Student Prize this year, and clearly both categories contained applications deemed to be strong contenders for the honours. The 2014 Award ceremony took place at the Icon Ceramics and Glass Group conference dinner in York this May, and many congratulations again to the winners:

The **Main Prize** was awarded to **Pete David** (private conservator) and **Judy Pinkham** (National Museum of Wales) for their intriguing project on the conservation of a contemporary artwork that was to be shown in the 2012 Artes Mundi (Arts of the World) exhibition in Cardiff. Described by the judges as a 'thoroughly professional approach to what must have initially seemed a rather daunting and dispiriting project'. Against considerable time pressure, the art-work - a series of floor tiles on which a friend of the artist had been murdered - required the treatment of severely damaged areas and remounting of the whole, all the while sensitive to the artist's desire to retain the existing surface blood and dirt.

The **Student Prize** was awarded (in absentia) to **Sara Amerio** for her conservation work on the restoration of a 19thc. stained glass angel window from the depository of Milan cathedral.



Pete David (3rd from right) with members of Nigel Williams's family

This project originally formed part of her MA dissertation at Turin University and, among other contemporary techniques, included some interesting experimentation with Photoshop. In their final assessment her application was described by the judges as 'an accomplished piece of work with professional presentation, excellent illustrations and plenty of evidence of a wide range of research and understanding of historical context'.

Abstracts for each of this year's applicants, together with information relating to current and former Prize winners, will shortly be posted on the Icon web-site (follow links to 'Nigel Williams'). Meanwhile the co-ordinator would like to draw attention to the fact that in each case, whether involving 'old' or 'new' techniques, or more usually a combination of the two, the judges commented favourably on the level of understanding of materials and general practical competency. It is good to be reminded that the element of craft that characterised Nigel Williams's own period at the British Museum is still mediated through contemporary conservation practice, re-interpreted in the light of the situation today. Nigel himself was quite 'open to having to make changes to fit with changing ethics etc.' (quote from Loretta Hogan, who worked with him at the British Museum). It is intended that the application criteria for the Prize reflect both the constraints and the opportunities open to conservators today, whether in the private or public sector.

While acknowledging the sometimes difficult and always creative role played by the panel of judges, the co-ordinator would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Williams family for their on-going enthusiasm and practical support for the Prize. It was a privilege and pleasure to have Nigel's partner, Myrtle Bruce-Mitford, together with other members of his family in attendance at the Award Ceremony, and we all look forward to the next event in two year's time (2016).

Ronald Pile

Nigel Williams Prize Co-ordinator

CORRECTION

A mistaken moth

The picture of a moth on page 6 of the last issue of Icon News was incorrectly labelled as a *Monopis fungus* moth. In fact, it is the Obvious moth, *Monopis obviella*, formerly known as the *Monopis ferruginella*. This is a potential new insect pest and has only been found on traps in recent years. It was given its common name at the 2011 Pest Conference in London when the suggestion Obvious moth won the popular vote.

Awards



Congratulations to Dr **Jim Tate** for winning the Royal Warrant Holder Association's 2014 Plowden Medal. The award recognises his significant contribution to the advancement of conservation and his unwavering passion for the application of science in promoting the understanding of artefacts.

Jim's background is in physics and his career eventually took him to Head of the Department of Conservation and Analytical Research at National Museums Scotland, a post he held from 1986 to his retirement in 2012. At heart a conservation scientist, Jim always combined his managerial role with applied research on the national collections, mainly into non-destructive methods of analysis and identification. He also maintained a wide ranging interest in all aspects of conservation and the museum world, including the chairing of Icon's Science Group and through his involvement in the initiation, development and establishment of the National Strategy for Science in Heritage, for which he has presented evidence to the House of Lords.

Of his award he said 'I am honoured to have had such a fascinating job with fantastic colleagues, and then to be awarded a medal – long live conservation and heritage science!'



The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust, ever generous to the conservation profession, has benefited two Icon members in its latest round of awards. With QEST's help, paper conservator **Samantha Cawson** will be able to undertake an internship at The Teylers Museum in the Netherlands under the supervision of Robien van Gulik, the Head of Conservation. She will take up the assignment upon completion of her MA Conservation from the Camberwell College of Arts this month.

Samantha has already gained valuable experience of conserving paper records, 19th century architectural drawings and photographic slides working with a number of organisations such as The Children's Society Archives, The Royal Collection Trust and the Horniman Museum and Gardens. This latest placement will provide her with essential experience of working with a variety of objects and on a major exhibition, as well as building crucial links with other institutions abroad within the heritage sector.



Also thanks to a QEST scholarship, **Susan Catcher** will be spending time in a conservation studio in Nanjing Museum alongside a practitioner instructing her in scroll mounting and the nuances of ink rubbing.

Susan is a Senior Paper Conservator at the Victoria and Albert Museum where one of her responsibilities is to conserve its collection of Chinese works of art on paper and silk. She is also passionate about Chinese ink rubbings and this award provides the perfect opportunity to learn how they are made and enhance her understanding of their conservation. The art of taking a rubbing is in danger of being lost in China, partially due to the introduction of photography, and is almost non-existent in the West.

Although competent in Mandarin, she will first spend an intensive fortnight in Shanghai learning the technical language required to exchange conservation information before arriving in Nanjing. As Chinese-specific techniques are not so readily available outside China, Susan will present a paper at the IIC Conference in Hong Kong to disseminate the knowledge that she will bring back to the V&A

Moves



In Conservation by Design's annual competition for the Nicholas Hadgraft Memorial Scholarship, **Liz Ralph** has won a prize that will enable her to attend the Montefiascone Book Conservation Summer School in Italy. Liz is a trainee book conservator and has just completed an Icon internship with PZ Conservation C.I.C. in Truro, Cornwall.

The CXD Scholarship nominally offers one winner the opportunity to attend the Montefiascone Summer School and this year the main prize went to a student at the Institut National du Patrimoine in Paris, France. However CXD's Managing Director Dirk Hendrickx said 'the entries were so impressive that, for the second year running, we have decided to award a runner-up prize too. Elizabeth Ralph demonstrated considerable skill and passion for her craft, so we are delighted to invite her to attend her preferred course at the summer school'.



Katy Smith has taken up the post of Textile Conservator at The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, thanks to a generous grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Katy completed her basic training at University College London on the Principles of Conservation (MA) and Conservation for Archaeology and Museums (MSc) courses. She specialised in textiles conservation with a three-year diploma in Textiles Conservation at the Victoria and Albert Museum, followed up by a short contract working on objects for the new Europe 1600–1800 galleries, V&A.

A far cry from Kensington, she now finds herself in a French-style chateau in the middle of the Teesdale countryside, and is preparing to take on two Icon/HLF interns a year, working towards the re-display of the Textiles & Dress Gallery.

The Nathaniel Wallich conservation project

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew's Collections conservator, Natasha Trenwith, describes the conservation of Nathaniel Wallich's botanical illustrations

THE PROJECT

In 2011, one hundred and fifty Wallich drawings were initially digitised and published on Kew's website, when it was thought that these were the only ones in Kew's collection. Shortly after this it became clear that other Wallich drawings existed but had been wrongly attributed to other collections from the 19th century. The illustrations required conservation to preserve them and get them ready for digitisation. I became the Wallich project conservator a year ago and the conservation side of the project has now come to completion. The project consists of 412 botanical illustrations, painted by anonymous Indian artists from Wallich's time spent in India working on the East India Company's Herbarium.

I began the work by surveying the collection; this was to give me an idea of the condition the illustrations were in and what

treatments and requirements they should need. The majority of the illustrations were adhered to a sugar paper backing with four blobs of animal glue in each corner. The sugar paper had become acidic and the cellulosic sugar had started to ferment, thus causing a detrimental threat to the artwork and needing to be removed. Other treatments included surface cleaning, tear repairs, lining, pigment consolidation and repair and bespoke archival quality storage.

LEAD WHITE TREATMENT

Whilst surveying the collection I noticed that a number of the illustrations had a black/silvery tint to several of the highlights and especially the white pigments. This is known as the darkening of lead white and this pigment deterioration usually occurs when lead white reacts with sulphur in the environment

An example of sugar paper fermentation



©Natasha Trenwith at RGB Kew

Botanical illustration: *Magnolia insignis* Wall



©Natasha Trenwith at RGB Kew

During lead white treatment



©Natasha Trenwith at RGB Kew



Before and after photographs showing the effect of treating lead white darkening

to form lead sulphide, a brown, black or silvery black product.

It was a difficult decision whether to carry out a conservation treatment to revert the pigment back to white using a hydrogen peroxide and diethyl ether mix, as the treatment does not change the pigment back to lead white but rather transforms it into a more stable lead sulphate. So a decision had to be made whether to proceed with the treatment or to keep the pigment as it is in its natural state. I finally came to the conclusion that as the illustrations are still a heavily used resource by the public, researchers and botanists, it was important to ensure that the illustrations represented the original colours of the specimen as closely as possible and therefore I treated the darkened lead white.

COPPER GREEN DETERIORATION

The survey also revealed further pigment deterioration on some of the illustrations containing green highlighting. This can be seen as an unusual rust coloured strike through onto the back of the illustration and, interestingly, is only present on wove paper. (There is a mixture of paper types within the collection.) Through research and pigment identification, this kind of deterioration showed signs identical to the damage produced by copper-containing pigments such as verdigris. Artworks suffering from this sort of damage have been known to become so weak that they can fall out of the page, leaving a hole. The deterioration evident in Wallich's illustrations is of a lesser extent and only a browning of the paper can be seen. An alkali wash using magnesium bicarbonate can inhibit the deterioration, together with storage with a low relative humidity reading.

The collection of botanical illustrations is now fully conserved

and the pigments are in a much more stable condition. Bespoke housing has been made for the collection that will provide sufficient protection to limit any further damage. The illustrations are awaiting digitisation so that they can be available on Kew's database as a resource for further research.

Information about Nathaniel Wallich's colourful life can be found on the Royal Botanic Gardens' website and his collection can also be searched in detail there:
www.kew.org/science-conservation/collections/nathaniel-wallich

Illustration of *Pterocarpus Indicus*: an example of copper green deterioration



Revealing a William Butterfield Mosaic

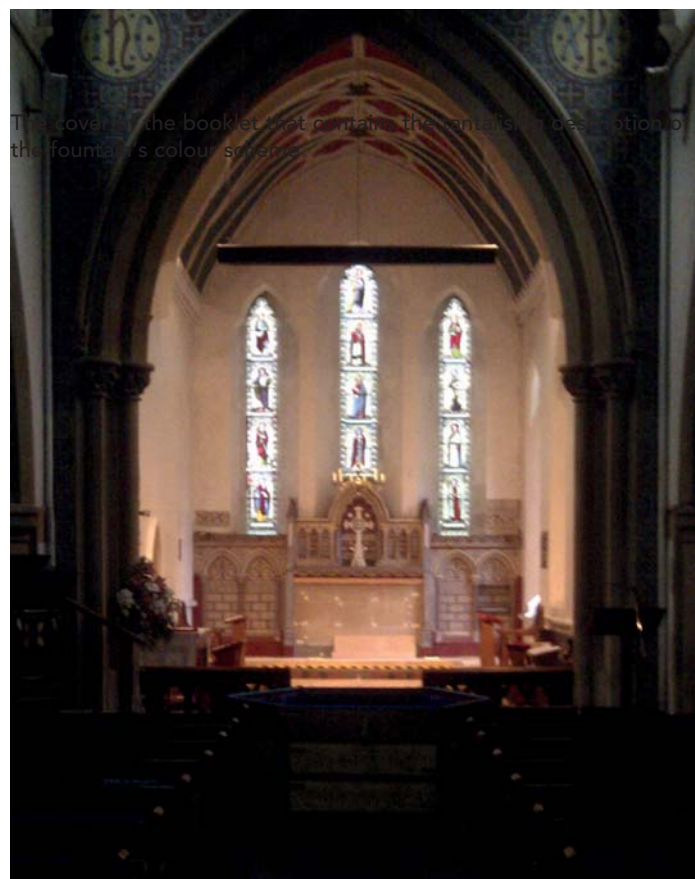
William Northover, Conservator and Restorer of Northstar Restoration, Pinner, describes the uncovering of a Victorian mosaic wall in All Saints Church, Harrow Weald in Middlesex

BACKGROUND

All Saints, Harrow Weald is a grade II listed building consecrated in 1849. The principal architect was the notable Victorian William Butterfield (1814–1852), a contemporary of Augustus Pugin. Both were Gothic revival architects. Butterfield was a supporter of an organisation in the Church of England called the Oxford Movement, as was the first vicar of All Saints, Edward Monro. As a result the church was designed and built in a Gothic revival style.

The Oxford movement was controversial in the context of the time; the Catholic Emancipation Act had recently been passed, and one of the criticisms levelled at the movement was that it led to 'popery'. This accusation has dogged All Saints over the years until more recent enlightened times. However in the 1950s the vicar of the time decided to take matters into his own hands and have the most decorative area

The gable wall of the church in June 2013 before the work starts. The curtain covering the lower third of the wall had been removed by this stage.



The cover of the booklet that contains the original reconstruction of the fountain's colour scheme

of the church – the mosaic covered East Wall of the chancel – painted over. He also had a curtain hung over the remainder of the mosaic decoration. The only clue to the design and extent of the mosaic was a black and white photograph which had been taken just prior to the wall being painted over

COMING UP WITH A SOLUTION

In 2009 Northstar Restoration was approached by the current vicar, the Reverend James Mercer, to come up with a proposal to remove the paint. At that stage it was not known whether more than fifty years of coverage with an unknown paint had caused any permanent damage to the mosaic tiles and mortar. After a period of research into various methods and stripping materials it was decided to use a chemical poultice method that was relatively easy to apply to walls, allowed the stripped material to be contained and easily removed and resulted in a neutral pH surface after washing down. Suitable test areas were identified and trials carried out with three different chemicals which resulted in a clear winner.

ESTABLISHING THE PROJECT

The first step was to work out an accurate cost for the project so that the necessary funding could be sought. A lot of the test work had allowed key data to be derived, particularly dwell time for the poultice to work effectively, as well as the influence of ambient temperature. Most of the cost elements could therefore be accurately scaled up from the tests.

The other constraint was inevitably time: like most churches

The last image of the mosaics on the gable wall before they were painted over, c.1955





First poultice in place with plastic covering at 3rd lift level

All Saints is busy throughout the year, however it was possible to negotiate a six-week window during the warmest part of the year – June and July. To complete the work in the time available was calculated to require four conservators to work in parallel or in pairs and at height. A lot of work went into the design of the scaffolding to allow safe working at two metre intervals all the way up the wall, as well as into the window recesses, where cantilevered sections were necessary.

A fund raising team from the church set to work to raise the necessary money and towards the end of 2012 it was estimated that the funds would be available to meet the target date by the middle of 2013.

IMPLEMENTATION

With our conservation team formed, in mid-June the scaffolding was erected with its three levels or 'lifts' at two metres' vertical separation. The overall height from the

The scaffolding in place on the gable wall, June 2013



Above: easing off the poultice and below: a much improved result from the second poultice application



ground to the point at the top of the gable wall is 9.4 metres. With all the necessary risk assessments and site safety signage in place the four members of the team paired up, with one pair starting on the top lift and the other pair on the second.

The method entailed covering a workable area with a combination of chemical poultice and plastic covering and leaving it overnight for the chemical to work. At the end of this dwell time the plastic covering is removed and the poultice is eased off with a plastic spatula to reveal the first signs of the mosaic. At this stage on the test areas the remainder of the poultice had been removed with a natural hair brush and water. This was time consuming and with the larger areas being cleaned a revised method was tried which involved a second application of the chemical poultice with a much reduced dwell time. This gave an improved result which reduced the final clean up time considerably.

The mosaic final clean was still accomplished with the use of a weak solution of neutral pH soap and warm water with a natural hair brush to get as much residue as possible out of the cement grout. The surface was given a final wash down with plain water. Towards the end of the project the surfaces only of the mosaic tiles were given a very light coating of microcrystalline wax and then buffed to brighten the colours and give some protection against dust and grime in the future.



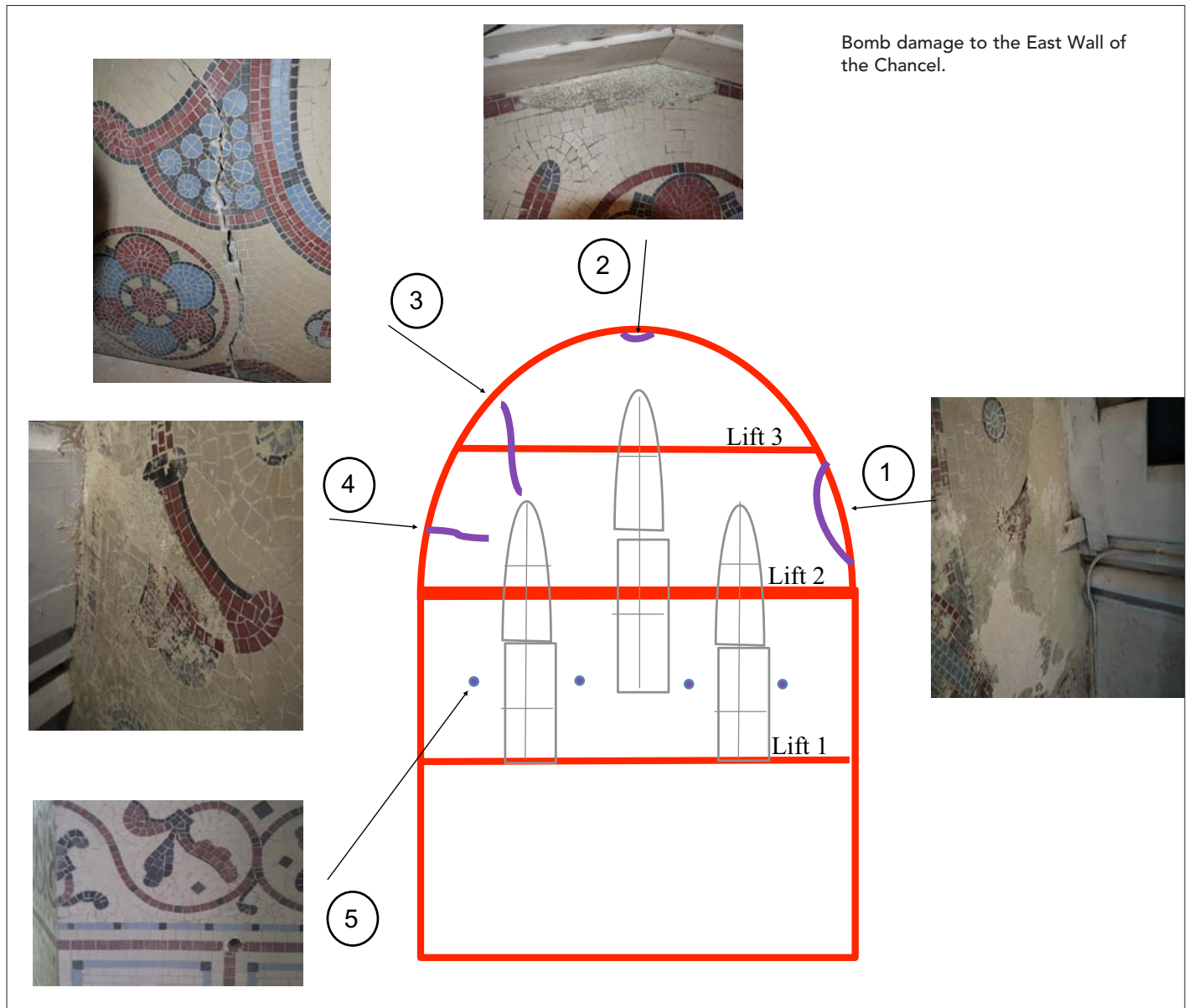
Cleaning the residue from cement grouting and around the stained glass windows on the 2nd lift

CONSERVATION OR RESTORATION?

During the course of implementing the project it became clear that another reason for painting the wall was to cover up damage and losses. During World War 2 a stick of bombs dropped nearby had caused a number of cracks to appear in the gable wall and hence the mosaic. Additional damage may have resulted from subsequent movement of the wall.

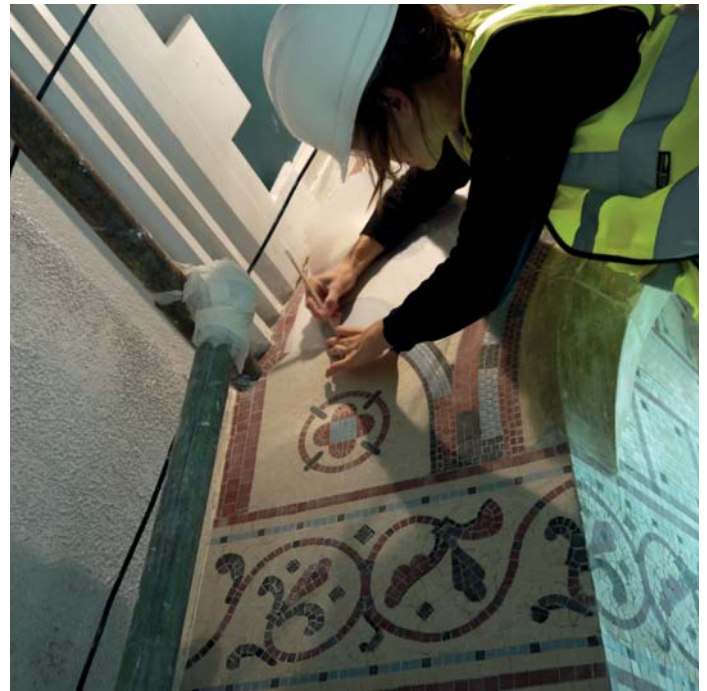
The extent of the damage is shown in the diagram. Image no.5 shows the holes drilled in the mosaics to support a curtain rail. No.1 was the largest area of damage and appeared to be associated with the installation of a steel strengthening tie which is visible in the photo.

The dilemma was whether to leave things as they were or try some sort of restoration. As there had been no allowance for this within the scope of the project, money and time were not on our side. The vicar, as the principal customer, was





1. The existing rendered surface has been checked for flatness against the surface of the mosaic and high areas identified. These are marked and chain drilled



4. Tracing the mosaic design from the North corner (second lift)



2. The surplus mortar is removed with chisel and mortar



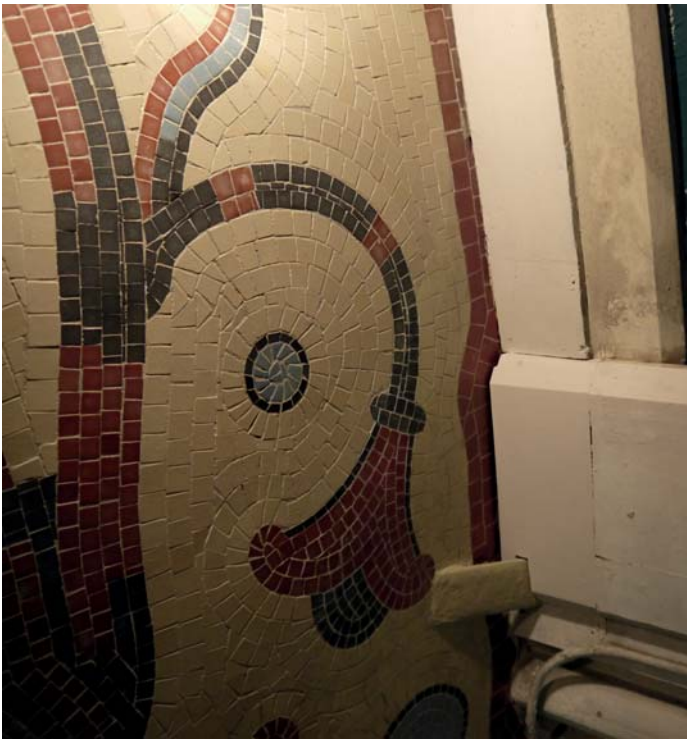
5. Tile design transferred from North corner and cut into plaster

3. New mortar is added and the plaster flushed off square and true to finish



6. Tile painting of the plaster in progress





7. The mosaic replication is complete. Castellation loss has been made good with new wood and the steel tie is colour matched to the background

consulted and it was clear that he favoured some intervention to correct the losses and bring the whole mosaic back to its former glory.

There was no chance of obtaining replica tiles: the Minton factory which had made the originals no longer exists and time was short. As a result of a team discussion a solution came forward which entailed replicating the missing mosaic tiles in plaster and then in-painting using colour matching techniques. Any gaps would first be filled with mortar for strength. The team estimated that the time saved by the revised method of paint removal made this achievable. The mosaic replication process is described in the illustrations aside and above (1–7). It relates to the area shown in image no.1 of the diagram on page 15.

CLEANING OTHER AREAS

With the additional time available, the team was also able to turn their attention to other areas of the gable wall either side and around the altar. It was discovered that the wall had been painted again in more recent times and the people concerned had been proud enough to leave their initials and date. They had also been none too careful, judging by the paint spillage which needless to say we cleaned up.

The mosaics either side of the altar had suffered over the years from candle smoke and were conservation cleaned together with the other decorative stonework. A garish red tile paint had been used around the border of the mosaic, overpainting the original Butterfield yellow and grey paints. This red paint was removed and the border repainted by colour matching with existing areas. Certain areas of decoration had originally been gilded to highlight detail but it was discovered that there were many losses. There was no time or money to re-gild so the losses were painted with a synthetic gold pigment using gum arabic as a medium, this being fully reversible. With the right tonality of colour it was possible to get a very close match and a pleasing result.



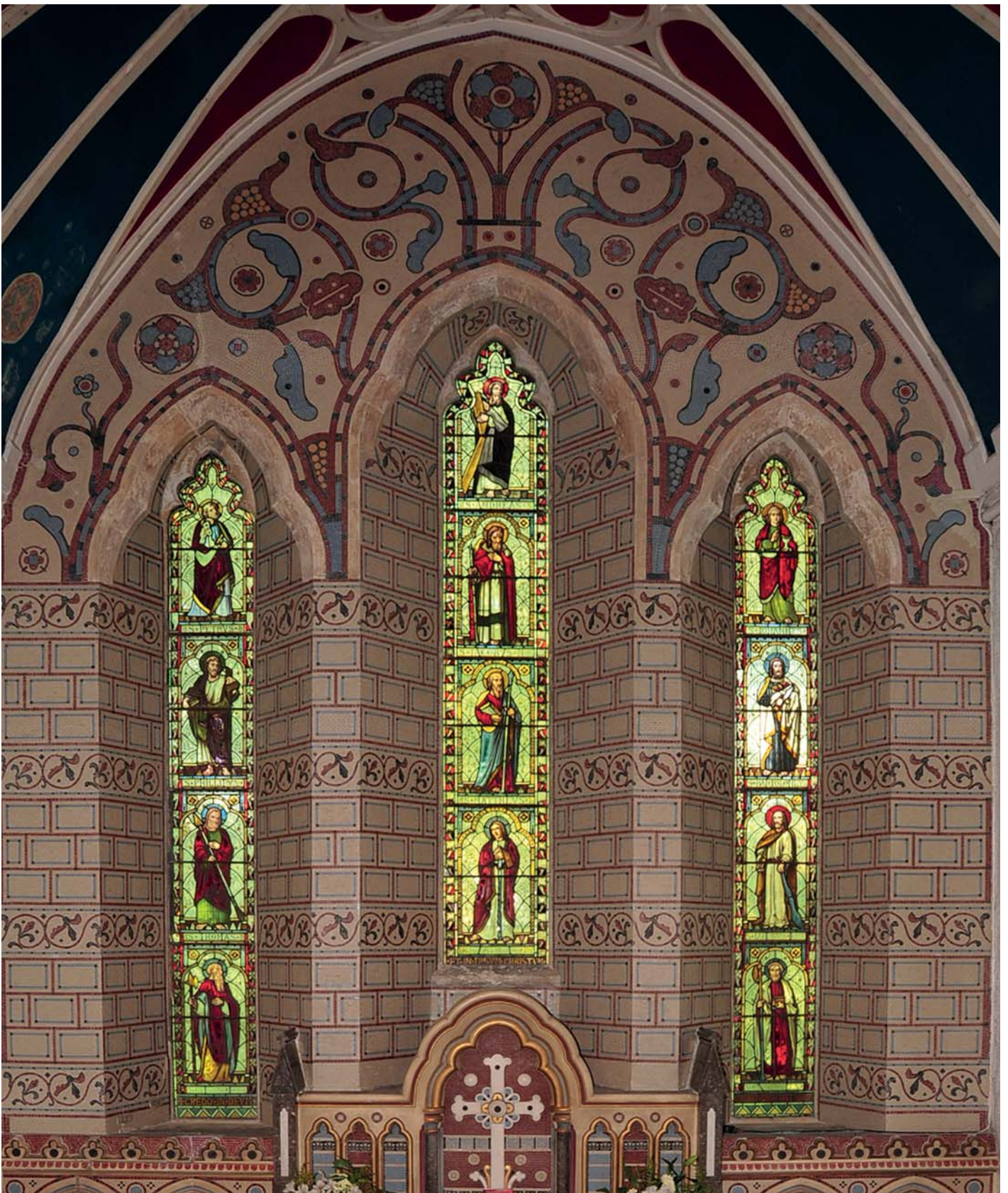
Earlier painters leave their mark and careless spillage on the floor beneath



Only the right-hand panel of these mosaics beside the altar has been cleaned

The final result of this area of work beside the altar





Revealed! The mosaic-clad East Wall previously painted over

IN CONCLUSION

It is a great satisfaction to restore and conserve a work of art for future generations to enjoy. There is much more to do in All Saints, including the uncovering of many more decorative features that have been over-painted. This project was a start and, happily, since this article was written, a generous donor, who was inspired by the mosaic project, has funded a further

paint removal project in the chancel which we have recently completed. Thus gradually the church is returning to its original state, after a remarkable act of vandalism and religious bigotry that has concealed its glories for over seventy years.

around and about

Making waves in the local community

Work recently carried out by Susannah Bartindale, a placement student from Durham University at Exeter's Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) has garnered a great deal of interest from local press and the radiography profession.

Susannah reports: a Sunfish (sp. *Mola mola*), originally caught in 1877 and its skin preserved by one of the first curators of the museum, had a large amount of damage to the back of the skin through which the sawdust stuffing was falling out. This was caused mostly by the wire previously used for hanging the specimen. Before treatment, confirmation was required that the wire was not attached to an internal structure. As the specimen was too large to fit in RAMM's X-ray machine, radiographers at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital kindly agreed to X-ray the specimen for us.

The excellent images that resulted confirmed that the wire was not integral to the support of the skin and could be removed. They also confirmed that only the fin and tail bones were used in the preservation, and that more of the skin had been preserved than suspected – the one-sided nature of the preservation and the thick, obscuring layer of paint had left us in doubt. Commonly, the skull would also be used in a taxidermy process as a structure to shape the mouth and head and fix the eyes to, but this was not the case for the sunfish. Dense areas on the x-ray show the mouldings for the mouth and the eye – probably clay or plaster.

Treatment consisted of removing the damaging wire, along

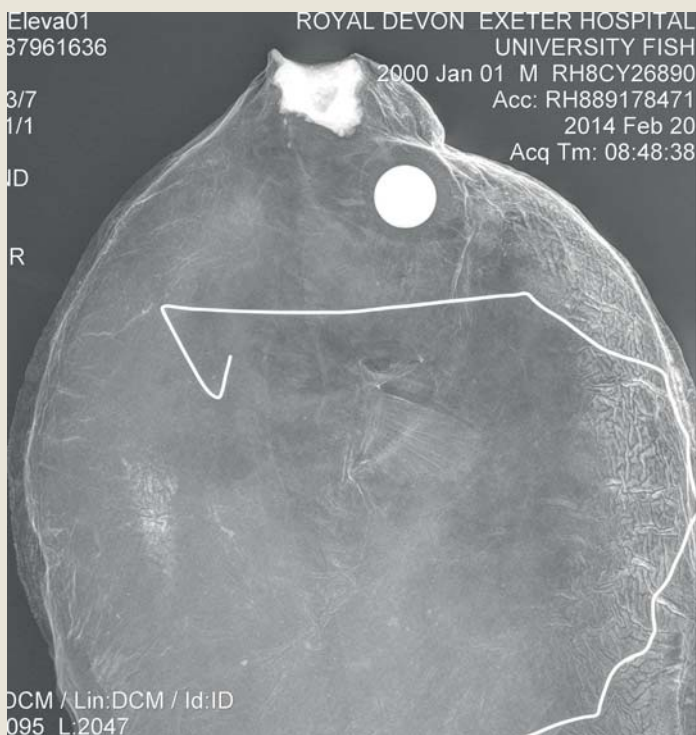


© Toby Adamson

The sunfish after treatment

with some old Velcro pads. The misshapen areas of skin were humidified locally to bring the shape of the skin closer to its original. It was decided not to close the crack completely – this would put too much tension on the skin, which had shrunk and embrittled (this is common with fish skins). Instead, missing stuffing was replaced using 'pillows' made of soft cotton lawn stuffed with polyester stuffing. These could be

A composite image of the x-rays showing the damaging wire



The back of the sunfish after treatment





Most of the work took place on the back of the specimen: above, work on the crack in the skin and, below, stuffing a 'pillow'.

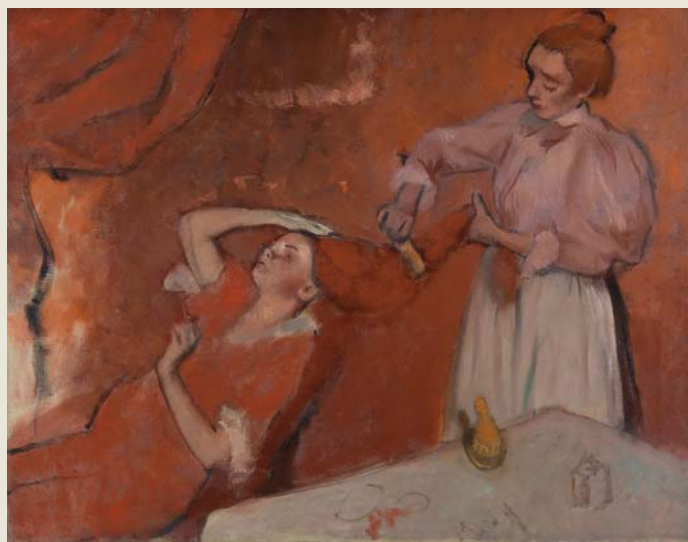


inserted, stuffed, sewn closed, and manoeuvred into position without damaging the brittle edges of the skin. Holes were closed and tears in the fins supported using Japanese tissue and methyl cellulose adhesive, which was colour-matched where it would be visible if displayed.

Although an ugly specimen, it is important within the museum collections, both because it was rare in the area at the time of capture, and now isn't – probably because of climate change – and as an example of amateur taxidermy that was common and popular at the time. In addition, despite being common, surprisingly little is known about the species, and museum specimens with detailed provenance, like RAMM's sunfish, are often useful for researchers.

Most of all, it has been an excellent example of how conservators can generate interest in museum objects from other professions and the local population – this project has already been featured in local news, in talks given by the Natural History Curator, and in *Synergy*, the news magazine of the radiography profession.

The sunfish at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital



Degas used three different reds for *Combing the Hair* ('*La Coiffure*') c.1896. Oil on canvas.

At the end of the rainbow

Running now at the National Gallery in London is a fascinating exhibition with a particular resonance for conservators. Co-curated by scientist Dr Ashok Roy, the gallery's Director of Collections, the exhibition traces the history of making colour in Western paintings over a seven hundred year period. The show is organised around the spectrum, with each room dedicated to a particular colour, and one at the end to gold and silver. Paintings are at its core but *Making colour* also draws on textiles, ceramics and glass.

The subject is explored from several angles: the origins and developments of the physical materials themselves, from natural and mineral products to man-made pigments; their supply, manufacture and application, as well as their permanence and colour effect. The exhibition brings together the worlds of art and science in a way that manages to be educational and down to earth – literally – about the physicality of the painting process without losing the magic of the creations that result. And who can fail to respond to the romance of words like cobalt, viridian, ultramarine and vermilion?

Making colour is on until 7 September.

Paul Cézanne's *Hillside in Provence*, c.1890–2. Oil on canvas



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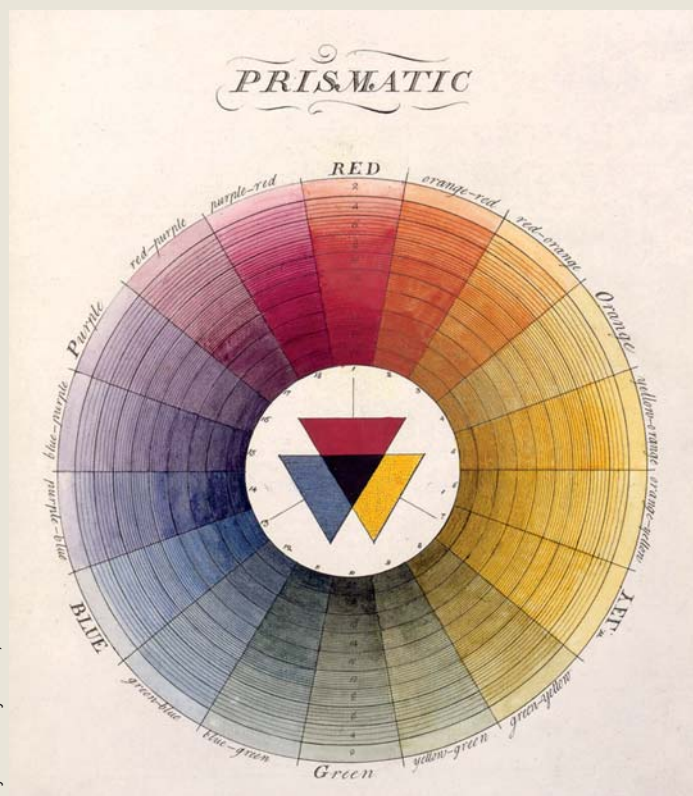
ART AND OBJECT HANDLING

John Bracken

24 - 27 November

For more information on all the courses in the programme
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Colour theory at the start of the National Gallery exhibition. A book by Moses Harris: *The Natural System of Colours Wherein is displayed the regular and beautiful Order and Arrangement, Arising from the Three Premittives [sic], Red, Blue and Yellow, The manner in which each colour is formed, and its Composition...* 1769/1776.



Royal Academy of Arts, London

Fountain news

If you are wondering where the latest instalment of the Paisley Fountain conservation epic has got to, rest assured the story will be continued hopefully in the September issue. Its author Jim Mitchell tells us that installation has been delayed due to site problems. He'll tell us more in due course. In the meantime here is a reminder of what is in store for the good people of Paisley.



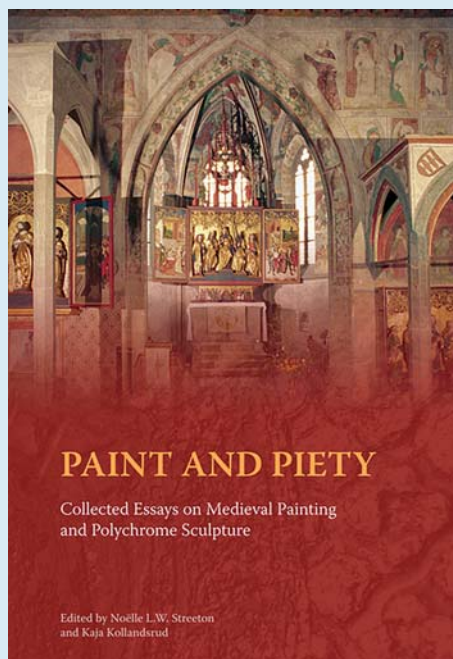
Boys from the Paisley Fountain with crocodiles, patiently waiting for their moment of glory

BOOKS

PAINT AND PIETY: Collected Essays on Medieval Painting and Polychrome Sculpture

Noëlle Streeton and Kaja Kollandsrud, eds.
Archetype Publications 2014
ISBN 978-1-909492-10-3 226pp

Norwegian medieval art of the 13th and 14th centuries has been extensively studied through the work of Unn Plahter, Martin Blindheim, Erla Hohler and Kaja Kollandsrud (among others), notably in the comprehensive triple volume *Painted Altar Frontals of Norway* (Archetype 2004). Attention has since turned to Norway's mid 14th- to 16th-century painted wooden polychromy with the project *After the Black Death: Painting and Polychrome Sculpture in Norway, 1350–1550* focusing on Norway's largely imported art of that date. The start of



that project in 2010 was marked by a conference in Oslo at the University Museum, where many key works of art are held, and whose collection is described in the opening essay of this volume. The other papers that comprise *Paint and piety* are the postprints of the 2010 interdisciplinary conference, which saw paintings conservators, art historians, conservation scientists, historians and religious historians brought together to discuss medieval painting and polychrome sculpture in northern Europe.

The book, which is an attractive volume with colour images throughout, covers a lot of ground, temporally, geographically and thematically. It is divided into four sections. Part I, *Locating the Sacred* deals with polychrome sculpture and painting in its

space, including the siting of relics within both defined geographical areas and within the structures of paintings and sculptures themselves. Tackled here also is the subject of the medieval perception of church art, and questions of style and dating are raised in an article examining the long duration of the Romanesque style of altar decorations.

The second part of the book, *Artistic production in the thirteenth century*, continues the rich vein of research into 13th century northern painting techniques already published, with detailed examination of English influence on Danish polychrome sculpture and a study of a *Sedes Sapientiae* Madonna and Child in the Brussels Royal Museum collection. Especially noteworthy is the proposed sequence of different colour schemes for the *Sedes* sculpture over time: a remarkable visual reminder of changing tastes and the reworking of objects at different dates in the long Middle Ages.

Part III: *Objects and the English church*, puts paid to the myth that all English polychromy was burnt, buried, hacked and scratched away in the Reformation and Civil War. The English paintings covered in the section range from an elite tomb canopy in Westminster Abbey to the earthen rood screen paintings of Devon and East Anglia.

The fourth part of the book, *Material histories for late medieval and early modern painting – conservation and history of art*, is made up of fascinating case studies, two concerning works of art from Norway and a third examines two paintings by Bernard van Orley. All show the benefit of the integration of technical study with art historical research.

All in all, *Paint and piety* demonstrates the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration, although, as with all conference proceedings, there are no widely-applicable conclusions of the type made in a single-themed book. Nonetheless, this volume allows access to English speaking audiences for material often tackled in German and French. It is also a welcome taster of the fruits of research set to come from the researchers of the *Painting and Polychrome Sculpture in Norway, 1350–1550* project in coming years.

Lucy Wrapson ACR
Hamilton Kerr Institute,
University of Cambridge

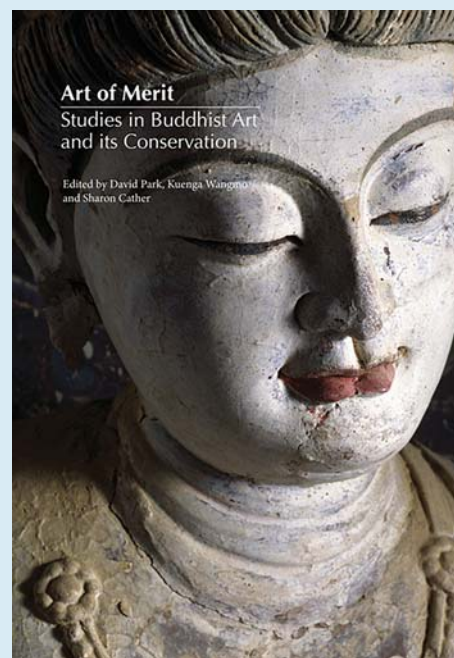
ART OF MERIT: Studies in Buddhist Art and its Conservation

Proceedings of the Buddhist Art Forum 2012

David Park, Kuenga Wangmo and Sharon Cather, eds

Archetype Publications 2013
ISBN: 9781904982920 416pp

This comprehensive and exceptional volume comprising twenty eight papers cannot fail, I feel, to appeal to all of an enquiring mind. It arose from a unique four day Forum held at



the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, in June 2012 which brought together art historians, conservators, curators and officials, a collector, a monk from Nepal and a contemporary artist. In this review I hope to convey a few of the many reasons why I find this such an interesting and rewarding volume.

David Park's introduction mentions the 'extraordinarily varied manifestations' of Buddhist Art; and these are well represented in this volume. Papers by Tadeuz Skorupski (*Buddha's stūpa and image: in search of the ultimate icon*) and Robert Sharf (*Art in the dark: the ritual context of Buddhist caves in western China*) were instantly rewarding. Skorupski explains that iconic or anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha were not made until almost four centuries after his 'human body and personality disappeared'; and that initially depictions of the Buddha were represented by 'empty spaces'. Thus there is an empty diamond seat (*vajrāsana*) under the bodhi tree in the depiction of the attainment of enlightenment. When depicted in sculpture, at around the beginning of the Common Era, there were two sources of inspiration; one had Hellenistic perceptions and the other took its form from literary sources. In both the image is idealised or superhuman; and radiating tranquillity.

Within Sharf's paper there is the fascinating suggestion that decorated mortuary shrines were not intended to be seen once completed and consecrated: what 'better example of 'art for art's sake' than art that was not intended to be seen at all'. It is something which differentiates such examples from those with a liturgical function; although he stresses the importance of not drawing a distinction between the shrine/mausoleum and temple/monastery.

Moving to the conservation of Buddhist Art, four papers especially come to mind. Susan Whitfield's argument focusses on 'our responsibilities today' for 'clear, comprehensive and archived documentation as essential for preservation'. Her paper (*Buddhist wall paintings in context: the foundation for future scholarship*) draws on

examples from the Eastern Silk Road where wall paintings are often in remote locations; in situations where it is difficult to protect sites from both theft and damage from nature (earthquakes, flash floods). Understanding the past, both the long term and shorter term, aids with current understanding and future planning.

Consecutive papers by Dorjee Tshering and a combined paper by Stephen Rickerby and Lisa Shekede give an illuminating insight into the situation in Bhutan. Dorjee Tshering (Director General, Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Thimphu, Bhutan) explains that Bhutan is seeking to conserve its rich historical past, and that conservation guidelines based on 'international standards of conservations but incorporating local Buddhist beliefs and skills, need to be developed urgently'. Bhutan has just over two thousand temples and a similar number of chortens (stupas/ reliquaries) across the country. The 'living' quality of these sacred works is shown by the fact that a ceremony called Pochoe is carried out before any conservation/restoration work is undertaken. If this is not carried out the belief is that these 'live' objects are subject to defilement and pollution.

Over a three year period some forty wall paintings schemes were studied in depth by Shekede and Rickerby; the main aim was to help with developing strategies for conserving Bhutan's wall paintings through understanding their physical nature and the deterioration processes they are subject to. In one seventeenth century example the quality of craftsmanship (technical virtuosity) is described as 'astounding' incorporating gilding and glazing over that gilding. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw new materials introduced (mass produced goods from British India) enabling wall painting to be executed on cloth supports rather than the traditional earthen plaster. With these changes the quality of work diminished, and continues to do so.

In the fourth example Yoko Taniguchi describes the important discovery of the earliest known example where a drying oil has been used as binding medium for painting. It is from the Bamiyan wall paintings in Afghanistan and dates from the seventh century; the technique corresponds to medieval European practice a few hundred years later.

Turning to the inner meaning of such sacred art, it was fitting to read Matthieu Ricard's explanation that 'the ultimate art is the art of enlightenment, and that the ultimate beauty is the inner beauty that emanates from the Buddha or great spiritual masters, who are embodiments of wisdom and compassion'.

In conclusion what makes this volume stand out is the fact that it enables one to see the role of conservation within the wider context of history, art, faith, artefact care and administration at all levels. Possibly because

Buddhism is not the predominant faith in the west, the Forum and this volume encompassed matters in a much wider context than might usually be the case. Is this then a marker post in the on-going development of conservation? I would like to think so.

Peter Martindale ACR

CONSERVATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Isabelle Brajer, ed.

Archetype Publications 2013

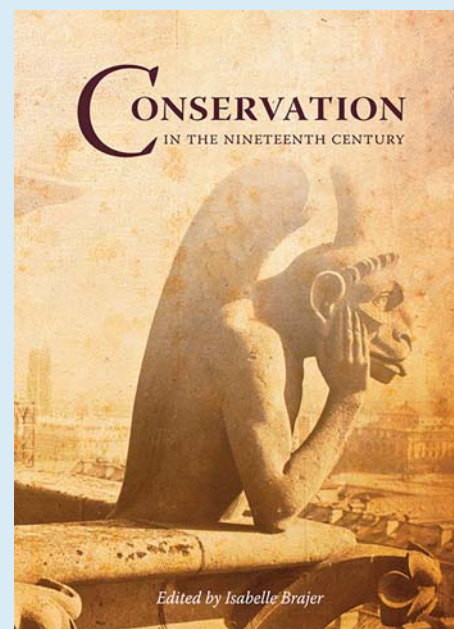
ISBN: 978-1-904982-91-3 231 pp

Congratulations to the publishers of this book. Conferences come, conferences go; occasionally there are pre-prints, but more frequently there are post-prints that, increasingly, are published on-line. Here however is an unashamedly handsome publication: hard-backed, generously illustrated and, would you know, typeset in Suffolk and printed and bound in Devon. A home-grown product if you're a UK-based reader. So what, you ask? Well, for this reader, and reviewer, it matters. It matters that beautiful specialist books (on acid-free paper) continue to be produced, and without any apparent corner-cutting.

The subject is conservation in the nineteenth century. Eighteen papers from ten countries (mostly European) cover nine or ten areas of activity, the product of a conference held in Copenhagen in May 2013. And Denmark must take equal credit for the quality of this publication, as the National Museum of Denmark and CATS (Centre for Art Technological Studies and Conservation) in Copenhagen, are associates of the publishers.

Isabelle Brajer edited the volume and is the author of the eloquent Introduction and she challenges us to reconsider certain shibboleths. For example, regarding the reversibility of treatments and the original function of certain artefacts, Brajer reminds us 'many nineteenth-century interventions that today might seem quite invasive were performed for technical reasons' ... 'restoration was not only guided by aesthetics, but also functionality'. And this seems as good a moment as any to advise readers to leave preconceptions behind when digesting these papers' authoritative insights into the philosophical, ethical and practical approaches of our predecessors.

Brajer's Introduction also gives the reader lively signposts to the contents of the eighteen papers: 'the insightful and talented administrator Richard Redgrave ... the extraordinarily sensitive Milanese artist-restorer, Giuseppe Molteni ... the spectacularly industrious Jacob Kornerup ... the tour de force of ancient vase conservation, Raffaele Gargiulo ... the curious and inventive Franz Fernbach ... the professionally engaging Charles Chapuis ...'.



The papers allow us, as Brajer emphasises in her Introduction, to interpret and understand the reasoning behind a number of practices typical of the nineteenth century. As Risser and Saunders conclude in their account of the restoration and conservation of the bronze Apollo Saettante from Pompeii, their approach in studying, conserving and displaying the Apollo was conditioned and determined by discerning the materials and techniques utilised by the nineteenth-century restorers and, more broadly, the practical and/or theoretical reasoning for their implementation.

And it's that emphasis on getting to grips with nineteenth century reasoning that makes dipping into this volume so rewarding, as every paper contains nugget after nugget. Take these two very different examples; the first is the visionary conclusion to an 1869 report of an investigation into the heating, lighting and ventilation of London's South Kensington Museum:

Pictures and works of art in a public museum have the great advantage of constant care and attention, but a certain amount of wear and tear is inseparable from their exhibition to millions of people. It is a question of how far works of art are to be open to public view. But assuming that they ought to be exhibited to the fullest extent, all that can be reasonably demanded is, that that wear and tear shall be reduced to a minimum.

And this concluding observation on the work of Jacob Kornerup (1825–1913), responsible for the restoration of medieval and post-Reformation wall paintings in more than seventy Danish churches:

It is important to keep this in mind: Kornerup's 'job description' was in many ways quite characteristic of the period before the conservation profession crystallised into an independent and rather specialised discipline, and was not far removed from the days of amateur antiquarianism. It covered an extensive range of professional tasks. In fact, measured by today's standards, Kornerup handled the work of at least three different disciplines: the conservator, the (art) historian and the archaeologist. His work should be evaluated within this framework ...

By most calculations, that crystallised specialised conservation – as practised widely today – is still a young profession, but one with many healthy indicators of maturity. For example, the breadth of recognised training courses across the globe, the wealth of technical literature, the achievements and status of so many national and international professional bodies and organisations and, in the UK, a tested professional accreditation process. And, add to these, the recording of our shared professional history. Whilst not the first in the genre, these scholarly papers are revelatory reference material for conservators at all stages of our working lives and contribute significantly to our understanding of our professional antecedents.

So let's reflect upon these prophetic words of Alfred Bonnardot (1808–1884), a Parisian writer, scholar and bibliophile, who saw where his own work might lead others and said of Essai, his 1858 manual on paper restoration:

Eventually, a good chemist will refine my work to such an extent that it will seem naïve in comparison, and thus I will be remembered solely for clearing the path with this book.

And long may we continue, too, to clear paths for our successors.

Clare Meredith, Consultant Conservator

CONFERENCES

PAST TO PRESENT: Art Conservation Conference

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar
28 November 2013

I was invited to speak at this event which was organised by the Orientalist Museum to bring together conservation experts from around the world and showcase their work across a range of art disciplines, with the aim of providing insight into the history of these diverse objects and shedding light on the techniques used to conserve them for the general public. Many world-renowned public institutions were represented, gathering a wide range of experts on sculptures, paintings, textiles and historical architecture.

Frances Hartog, Senior Textile Conservator at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, discussed the very delicate process of conservation and preparation for exhibition of a vintage Dior *Zemire* dress. The piece is believed to be the only surviving example from his 1954 autumn/winter collection and was featured in the V&A's autumn 2007 exhibition *The Golden Age of Couture*. **Michel van de Laar**, Senior Paintings Conservator at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, discussed the restoration of three Rembrandt paintings and the thorough research that preceded the practical treatments. The talk concentrated on the



Museum of Islamic Art

peculiar techniques and practices used by the master and the new contextual and technical insights revealed during the work.

Sonia Tortajada, Sculpture Conservator at the Museo Del Prado in Madrid, showed the audience the conservation of a majestic, 1904 plaster sculpture, *Nero and Seneca*, by Spanish sculptor Eduardo Barron. The piece needed extensive conservation and the presentation focused on the decision-making processes behind the treatment, including the challenging removal and replacement of the many additions made during previous restoration work. **Béatrice Sarrazin**, General Curator of Cultural Heritage at the Palace of Versailles, showcased the ongoing preservation work on the Palace ceilings, specifically with regard to the restoration of the ceiling of the Drawing Room of Plenty, a breathtaking decoration realised in 1683 by René-Antoine Houasse. The conservation team faced the complex demands of balancing the aesthetic needs of the work of art against other considerations such as the historical value of past restoration treatments and the technical and structural issues presented by the ceiling itself.

Stuart Ager, Frame Conservation Manager at the National Portrait Gallery in London, explained how the conservation of frames has evolved throughout the twenty-first century and how a close examination of a frame's features can be a vital addition to the history of a painting. **Jutta Hoeflinger**, Senior Paintings Conservator at the Vienna Museum of Fine Arts, talked about the restoration of an anonymous sixteenth-century Italian painting, *The Portrait of a Young Lady*. The talk showed the conservator's great attention to detail, knowledge of historical painting techniques, and manual dexterity while treating such a precious and beautiful item. **Kristin Gísladóttir**, Paintings Conservator at the Orientalist Museum in Doha, discussed the conservation of an oil painting by Jean-Baptiste Vanmour entitled *Sultan Ahmed Mosque*. When the museum acquired the painting, it was in poor condition and incorrectly attributed to another painter. The presentation focussed on the cleaning and restoration process that not only helped save the painting from further damage, but also uncovered a series of surprises in the work,

including a group of trees masked by heavy repainting during a previous restoration treatment.

I had the honour of concluding the day, presenting on the conservation of three manuscripts ranging from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries from the British Library's collections. My intent was to showcase the complex set of skills needed by book conservators to achieve the best results in the conservation of books and discuss the delicate art of preserving historical features. The audience was given a brief description of Islamic versus Western binding features, in order to contextualize the talk for an Arabic audience and highlight the difficulties conservators face in treating items belonging to different cultures that contain strange and often unknown elements.

The conference was a great success and the packed auditorium included the students from the UCL Qatar Cultural Heritage course, accompanied by their tutor Dr Stavroula Golfomitsoy, and many other conservators working for the museums and cultural institutions of Doha. Proof that the talks were well received lay in the very interesting questions and discussions that took place. The event was aimed at a lay audience but none of the talks were in any way superficial or uninteresting and the variety of conservation topics presented satisfied a vast range of interests and tastes. For me this was an amazing opportunity to share with other colleagues from different conservation fields a very enriching day and I am sure the same was felt by the rest of the audience.

Flavio Marzo ACR

Conservation Studio Manager
British Library/Qatar Foundation partnership

BRIGHT IDEAS: Light management for cultural collections

Icon Science and Care of Collections Groups
Museum of Liverpool 25 March 2014

It is always stimulating to attend conferences to learn more about research within conservation but this one in particular was especially suited to my interests. My internship at the Bodleian introduced me to the subject of colour fading on objects:

whether it could be accurately measured and what such values could mean within conservation and institutions. Understanding the implications of measuring colour change requires an understanding of how light is perceived by humans and how the colour of an object is dependent upon the light source. Research uses such principles to examine why fading occurs as well as to determine which materials might be more susceptible to prolonged exposure to light.

The conference introduced these topics through several case studies, each lecture building upon the previous to introduce more complex terms. English Heritage and National Trust were among those who offered case studies of certain rooms or galleries where a strategy for lighting proved challenging. Others, such as the National Museum of Australia, The National Gallery and National Galleries of Scotland discussed light exposure and conducted tests with microfading to ascertain whether specific objects should be displayed less or perhaps even more. A panel provided interaction between the audience and the lecturers, focussing on developing appropriate and sustainable guidelines. The lecturers did a wonderful job of providing access to ongoing scientific research while highlighting problems many museums face.

Workshops were held after lunch. I first attended 'LED lamps and demonstration of portable spectrometer'. One of the key points that carried across the conference and into this workshop was how the spectral power distribution (SPD) of a light source will change how an observer sees the colour of an object. Furthermore, the SPD of certain lights can be more harmful than others. We were given a demonstration where several LEDs of varying quality illuminated a piece of cloth. Each LED made the cloth colour appear different – warmer, colder or a balance between the two. Afterwards we tested the spectrometer to identify the SPD of each LED.

My second workshop concerned colour measurement with a spectrophotometer. A brief introduction about the human eye and its perception of colour emphasised that the eye is more sensitive to some colours than others. The spectrophotometer is able to measure all colours accurately by using the colour space (CIELAB) set up by the International Commission on Illumination. CIELAB gives numerical values to colour and a value of 1.00 represents a colour change that can be noticed by a trained eye. However, the downside is that it works best with flat objects and must be placed on the object to obtain a measurement. At the end of the session test measurements were run to demonstrate the software template. It was interesting to hear how museums have started using such technology to measure objects before and after display to establish whether the exhibition environment is suitable.

The workshops and lectures were



enlightening, although some of the technical terms and quick explanations might be difficult to understand in such a short period of time for those new to the subject. Additionally, Q&A sessions after both the lectures and workshops would have allowed the audience to ask questions and let the lecturers elaborate more on certain concepts. The number of participants was comfortable and encouraged networking. The conference did a wonderful job of examining lighting from a conservation perspective while discussing current research.

Tania Desloge MSc student, Conservation for Archaeology and Museums, UCL

Preventive conservation plays an increasingly important role in the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage. Faced with a growing concern about light, a primary threat to collections, this seminar and workshop brought together approximately sixty researchers in the field of conservation science and conservation from across the UK. Presentations were carried out on latest theories, techniques and practices on the light-ageing of cultural collections.

The morning seminar discussed the two aspects of light-ageing, namely objects and environment. First, to develop more effective strategies for the display of individual historical objects, significance assessment was introduced to decision making processes. This assessment is carried out by value, time period for display and colour stability. For colour stability, the innovative technique of microfading was developed by **Bruce Ford** from the Art and Archival Pty, Canberra, to detect the fading rate of various materials. By testing a micro spot, the technique is able to reveal the degree of light-stability of the material within a short period of time. This fast and intuitive technique has already shown its broad application prospects. Significance assessment which includes light-stability in the National Museum of Australia and National Galleries of Scotland has proved to be very effective in reducing changeover cost, protecting vulnerable objects, maximizing the public's visual experience as well as promoting collaboration.

Secondly, light control is another crucial aspect and different strategies for light management in historic houses, museums

and galleries were presented. On the one hand, **Paul Lankester** from English Heritage and **Nigel Blades** from the National Trust illustrated how they manage daylight in historic houses. By the measurement and simulation of light exposure, they are able to not only detect the light exposure of various locations but also recognise some influencing factors, including the change of season, the proportion of diffuse sky and sunlight and internal reflection, inspiring new insights into light control.

By contrast, controlling light in museums and galleries involves much consideration in selecting suitable light sources. On this aspect, **Joseph Padfield** from The National Gallery, London, introduced several important expressions for evaluating light sources from different aspects: lux value indicates the amount of light exposure whilst Spectral Power Distribution (SPD) curves highlight the wavelength distribution of light source. Correlated Colour Temperature (CCT) and Colour Rendering Index (CRI) reflect the colour characteristics of light and are concerned with visitors' aesthetic needs. Practical suggestions were provided on how to choose light sources.

With better knowledge of objects and light conditions, balanced against visitors' visual requirements, more effective strategies for the light management of cultural collections can be developed. Discussion took place around an initiative to establish a set of lighting guidelines and animated discussion on light management continued throughout the day.

In the afternoon, workshops on different light management techniques included microfading, colour measurement, light monitoring and light source measurement, with demonstrations and instruction on principles and devices. The tour of the Museum of Liverpool provided a precious opportunity for the field study of light management and the practical issues for museums. Protective practices such as the use of blinds, light monitors, light-check stripes and how to take advantage of showcase design and building structures for managing light were shown.

My own doctoral research on historical dyes involves the study of ageing of these dyes and how to preserve them. This seminar and workshop was of great help in providing me with insights on the light-ageing of different materials, the environment where historical dyes degrade and guidelines and measures for preservation. In short, the event shed light on more effective light management of cultural collections. Cutting-edge techniques, diverse theories and practices and heated discussions have enabled the participants to increase their knowledge and deepen their understanding of the subject.

Jing Han PhD student, Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History, University of Glasgow

The conference included a discussion about recommended light levels in museums to try to determine if the current guidelines/standards are still appropriate. The conclusions I captured were:

- There was general agreement that guidelines would be helpful.
- We need access to information on lamps including LEDs to understand the colour temperature etc.
- Accelerated ageing is useful but there needs to be an understanding of the maths behind it. It is a blunt instrument but perhaps one of the best we have.
- Do we need to think about the context of the object more? We perhaps need to better understand the perceptions of the visitor – sometimes faded is good.
- Historic houses have conglomerations of things, often on permanent display – do we need a graded set of guidelines to account for this?
- We need to better understand existing fades and how this will affect future fading.
- We need to push for a common logic not a common standard.

Jane Thompson Webb ACR
Conservator, Birmingham Museums Trust

TAPE AND SPILLAGE - Interventive Treatments in a Preventive Climate **Icon Ceramics and Glass Group** 16–17 May 2014 York

Never having attended a conference before, I was unsure of what to expect. But, as a student specialising in ceramic conservation, I thought it would be a great opportunity to see what is going on in the field, to keep up to date with new research and a chance to network and meet other conservators. Not only was it my first conference, it was also my first visit to York and, upon arrival, it was clear to see why it was chosen to host the event, the sun was shining on this beautiful city with its wealth of history.

On the first day, delegates were given the opportunity to visit two of three tours: the York Glaziers Trust Conservation Studio and their work in the Minster, the characteristically Georgian town house Fairfax House or York City Art Gallery stores, to see ceramics moved offsite during the redevelopment of the gallery. My favourite visit was the York Glaziers Trust Conservation Studio: it was a great insight into the practice, the work being carried out in the Minster and some more contemporary projects. We were particularly impressed by the new UV protective glazing being used in the Minster (discussed by speaker **Sarah Brown** on day two) and the effective use of age-old traditional techniques, coupled with new technology.

That evening all conference delegates were invited to attend the Nigel Williams Prize



CCG at York: Ceramics & Glass Group members in York

Giving Dinner. This wonderful evening was a chance to acknowledge those who had entered the Nigel Williams Prize and to celebrate the winners. [See page 8 for a detailed report.] The evening was also a great opportunity to network and share experience with experts in the field and other students in a relaxed environment.

Day Two was held at Kings Manor, a beautiful medieval building in the centre of York. It offered ten speakers and the topics ranged from stained glass conservation, 3D printing, the Nigel Williams Prize winning project and an onsite project at Osborne House, amongst others. One of the highlights for me was **Eleni Kotoula**, a PhD student from the University of Southampton, talking about the use of 3D modelling and reproduction techniques in the replacement of lost ceramic material. She spoke informatively about the processes involved, the benefits and the disadvantages of the process, and it was extremely interesting to look at modern advances in technology and the effect that it has on today's conservator.

Another highlight was the presentation given by West Dean students about the experience that they have had in practising the use of Paraloid films for glass fills, a technique created by Stephen P. Koob. They brought in samples of their tests for us to see the physical results and, although they did not get the end result they had hoped for, it was good to see their research, and to get an insight into conservation courses and the research they are undertaking. I look forward to seeing the results of further testing.

During the day there was an exhibition of student posters, displayed by myself and three other students from the University of Lincoln, UCL Institute of Archaeology and the Swiss National Museum Collection Care. It was a great chance for students to present their work, and for other delegates to ask questions and offer their advice and experience. The day was full of active questioning of speakers and the topics presented, and was an opportunity for everyone to reflect on old conservation techniques and to learn about and embrace new practices.

Despite being a newcomer to conferences, my experience with the Ceramic and Glass Group was extremely positive. It was not as formal as I was expecting it to be, I enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere in which I could meet others in the field and I found the tours very enjoyable. The speakers on the second day were informative and interesting, and there were plenty of chances to ask questions, gain new knowledge and challenge my existing practice. I would like to repeat the experience and attend again next year.

Bethan Tector
University of Lincoln Student
MA Conservation of Historic Objects

COURSES

UNDERSTANDING ASIAN PAPERS and their Applications in Paper Conservation 21–23 May 2014 British Library

This three day workshop was incredibly valuable as a theoretical look into Asian papermaking and identification as well as some well-run practical sessions in using Asian papers in conservation. The organisers were Yunsun Choi, Conservation Manager at Tate and Dr Cordelia Rogerson, Head of Conservation at the British Library. The tutor **Minah Song** is a paper conservator at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) in Philadelphia, USA. She holds an M.A. in East Asian Art History from the Academy of Korean Studies in Korea and an M.A. in Conservation from Camberwell College of Arts in London, UK.

We started with a lecture session on how different Asian papers are made. This included video footage and focused mainly on Japan, China, Korea and touching on Thai paper production. Minah had many samples to show us, to try and learn to distinguish papers from different countries and also from different plant fibres. The main objective was to make a more self-informed choice when ordering papers in the future for conservation purposes: first, to

be more aware of making sure of the quality of these papers (some of the Thai papers looked much like the expensive Japanese papers but were bleached and strong alkalis used in fermentation) and, secondly, to ensure that you are using the right type of paper for the right job. For instance for lining traditionally you would need a strong, medium-weight paper with good wet strength, whereas for repairing transparent paper you need a strong but light-weight tissue, not necessarily good wet strength.

Practical sessions included 'paper felting' a traditional Korean craft, to understand how the Asian paper fibres really knit together through manipulation. Following this, we tried friction-drying, whereby Japanese paper is used instead of Bondina to really grip the paper surface so that an object will dry really flat, rather than shrink back into its historic cockling and wrinkling. This technique was especially good for transparent papers.

We also learnt how to make a Karibari board out of readily available materials rather than the traditional. Once our Karibari was made we were able to line a newspaper using Japanese paper and tested out the new surface of the board. We also experimented with making a two-sided lining, without a board, which was made of simple materials and allowed to air-dry. We then moved to paper repair, making our own paper pulp, re-moistenable tissue and dyeing papers for toned repairs. These repair papers were then tested out on parchment and historic paper samples so that we had a good chance to experiment with the results.

As well as a full schedule and very organised sessions, Minah was a fount of knowledge on the use of Asian papers generally, with so many practical tips on how to carry out treatments not covered by the workshop, and was extremely up to date on conservation treatments outside of the subject matter as well. She was very generous in the materials provided and with sharing her work practices. All the demonstrations were very clear and well thought out, so that we came away with a simple format to complete complex linings using sustainable materials.

I would highly recommend the course as we use Asian papers so much in our work but I personally did not understand some of the traditional usage of papers I work with, therefore not using them for their best purpose. Hopefully Minah will run the workshop again soon, and is due to give a paper at the forthcoming Asian Papers Conference in London in Spring 2015.

Many thanks to the Penelope Plowden Trust and Clothworker's Foundation for funding my place on the workshop.

Sophie Sarkodie

Freelance Paper Conservator



The group on the wirework course

PRODUCING WIREWORK AND COMPOSITION ORNAMENTATION

Icon Gilding & Decorative Surfaces Group
11–12 March 2014 Lincoln

This course took place in studio space owned by Crick Smith, a company that specialises in the conservation of the decorative interior and operates as a commercial arm of the University of Lincoln. It was organised and lead by Dr **Campbell Norman-Smith**, experienced tutor and private conservation professional with years of experience as a course leader for the MA Furniture Conservation, Restoration and Decorative Arts at Buckinghamshire New University and joint Chair of Icon's Gilding & Decorative Surfaces Group.

The course tackled the task of dealing with decorative composition on wire and, through the experience gained, enabled a better understanding of the problems with composition ornamentation and its repair and replacement. To learn the skills and methods of applying composition to wirework, we went through the stages of creating a wirework candle sconce. These skills can then be applied to conservation work.

First we learned about soft soldering, which was practised at varying levels of difficulty

and was quite tricky but helped to understand the process and practise the technique.

Next, a piece of wire was provided to shape with various formers into any shape we liked; this was then sanded on one end to create a point for the candle to be placed on. For extra security and time saving it was MIG welded to a prepared back metal plate. The surface of the metal was then covered with a black cotton cloth that had first been covered in a prepared hide glue. The glue took twelve hours to dry overnight.

Next morning, we steamed pre-prepared composition to make it pliable again. It was then pressed into wooden moulds that we had chosen earlier to suit the shape of the wire and our proposed decoration. After cooling and firming, the composition was removed from the moulds and trimmed of any excess. Later this was applied to the sconce, if necessary steaming it again until soft enough to be bent into the correct shape, using full strength hide glue and backed up with a composition slurry as needed. The cup for the candle was made using a flower mould, then heated over a small cup to bend into the right shape. This was quite difficult as the thickness of the composition needed to be right or the petals would fall off.

The sconces made by the participants on the wirework course



For someone interested in the conservation of gilded and decorative surfaces, the course was an ideal opportunity to try something new and extend existing knowledge. It taught us new skills and valuable information about the production of composition; Dr. Campbell Norman-Smith's recipe and secrets for making high quality composition was, we agreed, the best we had worked with and did not crack in use. For this alone, the course was well worth it.

Aside from connecting the course to conservation skills, the idea of creating something beautiful, skilled and little more ambitious was exciting. The course transforms this ambition into a real project, where students with little or no experience, can create something of their own. Dr. Campbell Norman-Smith's experience, enthusiasm and very organized approach made the learning process easy to understand and enjoyable. Apart from the real hands-on experience, the students also benefit from support and advice during each step of the learning process. The tutor would bring examples of his past work where he used applied composition of wire, beautifully carved wooden moulds and most importantly each demonstration would be accompanied by personal advice and encouragement to further develop skills.

The social aspects of the workshop were also a highlight. The atmosphere was open and relaxed with plenty of opportunity for students to exchange their experiences and ideas. It was a great course which helped us develop new skills and also increased our confidence in handling composition, and we definitely feel that we have grown as conservators as a result of it.

Narissa Sykes & Kristina Sopkova
Students, University of Lincoln

VISITS

LET'S TALK ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY

Icon Photographic Materials Group
Liverpool 8 May 2014

The Group met for a behind the scenes tour of the National Museums Liverpool Conservation Centre and the Liverpool Archives. Starting at the paper conservation laboratory in the Conservation Centre we were welcomed by **Ann Stewart**, Head of Paintings, Paper and Frame Conservation at National Museums Liverpool. Ann introduced the Stewart Bale collection and explained the success of a volunteer project that had cleaned and re-housed the collection to ensure its safe keeping for the future. Following this informative description of the challenges associated with carrying out such a large scale cleaning and re-housing project, the group walked over to the separate storage facility and Ann was joined by her colleague **Anne Gleave**,



Sharon Oldale showing the group around the Liverpool Archives new conservation lab

Curator of Photographic Archives at Merseyside Maritime Museum.

Anne provided additional historical detail on the collection as we were given a chance to look around the storage space. Stewart Bale Ltd was a family run photographic company that specialised in commercial, architectural and industrial photography based in Liverpool from 1911 until the early 1980s. Photographs include many important images such as those that document bomb damage in Liverpool during the war. The collection consists of 195,445 negatives, approximately one third of which are large glass plate negatives. The collection held by National Museums Liverpool dates between 1924 and 1981: unfortunately any images before 1924 have been lost due to damage before they were given to the National Museums, which shows how essential the project is to save those that remain. Some have already been digitised but the hope is that it will be possible to view the whole collection in digital format in the future, safeguarding the original collection.

The second part of the backstage tour was at the Liverpool Archives, which is housed inside the impressive newly refurbished library building. This part of the visit was hosted by **Sharon Oldale** who showed us round the



Ann Stewart explaining the Stewart Bale project at the National Museums Liverpool Conservation Centre

Admiring the new Liverpool Archive storage facilities at the Liverpool Central Library.



new conservation lab and archive stores, including the cold store. This photographic archive holds a collection of national importance and includes the Chambré Hardman collection, co-owned by the National Trust, and detailing the work of renowned Liverpool photographer Edward Chambré Hardman. In awe of the equipment and the colour coded storage shelves, we had a fascinating glimpse into the running of the Liverpool Archive and it was heartening to see how the new building is fit for purpose; to protect its collections.

Other optional visits took place during the day. I attended the one to Hardman House, a National Trust property which provides a remarkable insight into a preserved photographic studio from the early 20th century. The tour took place in the house on Rodney Street where Edward Chambré Hardman and his wife both lived and ran their business. The staff described the story of the Hardmans and listening to sound bites throughout the visit from original staff members and customers of the studio gave a lovely sense of how a traditional photographic portrait studio was run and also how the owners lived.

During lunch the Photographic Materials Group held its AGM (see page 6). The day event was sponsored by Conservation by Design and thanks go to Chris French who attended and was on hand to talk about any of their products.

Emma Bonson Lincoln University
MA Conservation of Historic Objects

THE ISLE OF BUTE **Icon Scotland Emerging Professionals** **16 May 2014**

The newly formed Emerging Professionals sector of Icon Scotland saw its inaugural trip in May to the Isle of Bute to visit Bute Fabrics and Mount Stuart. Despite an early



Scotland's emerging professionals on their inaugural trip

ferry, we experienced a full complement of conservators sign up for the trip.

Catherine Murray, a designer at Bute Fabrics gave us an introduction to the company and its history. Bute Fabrics was founded in 1947 by the 5th Marquess of Bute in order to provide jobs to a post-war community struck with unemployment and the difficulties of living on an island. This mill continues to employ many islanders today. For those with an interest in textiles, and those unfamiliar with them, it was a fascinating insight into the production and continuing manufacture of high-quality fabrics and the process from design to production (and some seriously difficult storage issues: how do you keep over one thousand meters of fabric safely?). We were then given the chance to tour the whole mill, meet some weavers and see the incredible scale of a mill 'in action'.

In the afternoon we progressed to Mount Stuart, seat of the Stuarts of Bute. The amazing size and opulence of this building and grounds overwhelmed us and stunned most people into silence. However, we still managed to find our voices to engage in a lively discussion after the tour of what it means to be an emerging professional in conservation and some current issues in

conservation including the use of solvent gels on a range of objects.

Overall it was an extremely interesting and engaging day and I personally was really pleased to see such an interest in this new sub-group. Long may it last into the future!

For more pictures and information please visit the Icon Scotland Group facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/ICON-Scotland-Group/269883156518914>

Philippa Duffus, Emerging Professionals Support, Icon Scotland Group.

WILTON HOUSE **Icon Furniture & Wood Group** **Salisbury 31 March 2014**

Furniture professionals and students gathered together for an exciting day of learning at Wilton House, the Earl of Pembroke's ancestral home for 460 years. Architects involved in the design of this home include Inigo Jones and John Webb who rebuilt the house in the Palladian style after the 1647 fire whilst James Wyatt made further alterations after 1801.

The day started with brief introductory talks as well as an introduction to the history of Wilton House skilfully given by the assistant to the House Manager **Sarah King**. During the tour of the house Sarah would introduce the group to each of the rooms pointing out its important components, then Dr.

Campbell Norman-Smith of The Granary Conservation Studios in Lincolnshire discussed conservation efforts that he and his Bucks New University students had undertaken over the past four years. Of particular interest were the discussions of the safety aspects and the limitations of working on site in a lived in home. The temperature alone would limit the use of certain techniques, for example, the cold temperature would slow evaporation and drying times of some of the materials to such an extent that they were not useable. A wide variety of projects were discussed from picture frames to large Chippendale bookcases. The latter was particularly interesting as a problem was identified of disfigured floorboards that were not supporting the piece correctly. To correct

Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute



Photo: Philippa Duffus

Photo: Philippa Duffus

this situation the entire bookcase had to be moved and the floor repaired.

After lunch the group split into two. One group listened intently to **Yvette Fletcher**, Head of Conservation at the Leather Conservation Centre, discussing the conservation of a pair of leather sofas, including her analysis of prior efforts to restore them. The second group was in the next room taking a close look at a library table attributed to Thomas Chippendale. The overall structure was discussed as well as observations about the individual features, with these talks guided by Dr **Ernest Riall** of Lyon's Restoration in Bucks.

The day ended where it began in the Wilton House Restaurant where **Adrian Smith** of the Royal Households gave the closing remarks.

The day was considered by all concerned to be a success confirming the belief that there is a need for this type of event for conservators interested in furniture and wood. At this time, the committee is busy getting ready for several upcoming events. We hope to have a training course to offer furniture and wood conservators, a skill improvement course this summer and a second major event in the autumn. As always suggestions by the members are welcome. Please contact any of the committee members if you have any suggestions or if you have any questions. And finally, thanks to all of you who attended this event.

Ernest Riall Furniture Conservator, Lyon's Restoration Ltd

Participants gather under the Bard to listen to Dr. C Norman-Smith discuss the conservation of a large picture frame



Paul Smith with framed memorabilia from his personal collection

HELLO, MY NAME IS PAUL SMITH

Icon Textile Group

Design Museum, London 19 May 2014

The Paul Smith exhibition was more about Inspirational objects than strictly 'Fashion'. It follows the life story of Paul Smith and the myriad of objects that have inspired his creativity. It is a 'shop-front' of his imagination. It also pays homage to his muse, wife and life partner, Pauline Denyer. The concept for the exhibition developed during a meeting between Paul Smith and **Donna Loveday**, the Head of Curatorial at the Design Museum. Speaking to Paul, Donna very quickly realised that a Paul Smith exhibition could not be just about the clothes. As the title so aptly describes, the exhibition is about the man behind the clothes and the creative process.

Donna took us around the exhibition explaining her inspiration for each room starting with a reconstruction of his very

eclectic office, full of 'stuff' including plastic robots, a small train set in a case, rabbits and a myriad of objects collected from flea-markets. Paul Smith collects all sorts of things and these become part of his creative process. The theme followed on with a reconstruction of the design workroom, again with an eclectic feel with patterns hanging from the ceiling and vintage wallpaper pattern books sitting alongside computers.

As textile conservators it was rather a shock to see the last room where items from Paul Smith Collections were displayed on bust forms. There was no attempt to make some of the pieces fit the forms and with no arms or sleeve padding the printed silk pieces were left looking very sad. Being the finale of the exhibition this was a great pity, as several pieces really were not seen to their best advantage. However, taken in context of the exhibition they could also be seen as the collective expression of the eclectic genius of Paul Smith.

This exhibition is all about the personality, the humour and the genius of a man truly in his element. It was a fascinating, uplifting visit that showcased an innovative interpretation of a designer's creativity and also exhibition design.

Janet Wood, Textile Consultant, specialising in the conservation and display of historic dress

PROPORTION LONDON, Mannequin Makers

Icon Textile Group

1 April 2014

Proportion London is the UK's leading supplier of display mannequins and bust forms, manufacturing for high street and designer brands, as well as bespoke mannequins and bust forms for the heritage sector and museums. They manufacture two types, papier-mâché and fibreglass, and each mannequin and bust form are made by hand, employing many specialist and skilled people.



Museum bust form *Petite* co-created by Deborah Phipps

The visit was split into two halves, the morning session started at the Proportion factory, where we met **Ashley Backhouse**, Accounts Manager, and **Antonia D'Marco**, Sales Director. Antonia gave us a brief introduction to the company and the factory before we set off on our tour. The factory is a fascinating treasure trove of different mannequins and bust forms all in rows and boxes of body parts in multiple materials, which we could have spent all day exploring. We first visited the department that manufactures the moulds. These are taken from form sculptures made in clay by freelance sculptors, which was explained in more detail later when we visited Proportion's design studio.

We then visited the department that makes the papier-mâché mannequins and bust forms. Here, torn strips of recycled card are wetted in a water based glue and layered into the mould, between two to six layers at a time. The moulds are then joined and soaked in plaster and entered into the drying room. Once out of the moulds and dry, the forms are smoothed by hand, and heads, arms and legs are added. The forms then head to the covering room.

Standard papier-mâché forms can generally take four weeks to make and deliver, with bespoke forms taking up to twelve weeks, depending on alterations and changes being made. Interestingly the papier-mâché forms have been Oddy tested by the Museum of London and can be used for up to five years outwith display cases. The fibreglass mannequins are not conservation grade, however Antonia mentioned the possibility of using two-pack acrylic which has been Oddy tested.

In the covering room each form is covered individually in standard calico. The first stage is cutting the calico to the correct pattern, with large volumes of fabric cut at the same time using a tool similar to a hand held



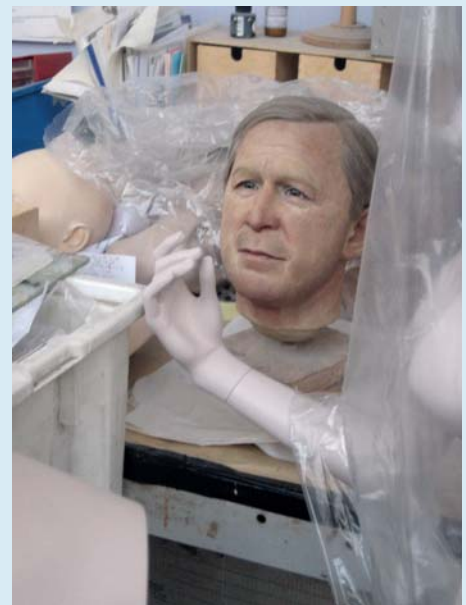
Proportion London factory visit

electric jigsaw. Once cut, the fabric is passed to a second employee who sews the pattern together. A third employee is adding cotton wadding to the forms and the fourth is covering the form with the calico. It is initially stapled to the form, whip stitched to secure in place, and then the staples are removed.

The tour then moved on to where the fibreglass forms are manufactured. This is a particularly noisy, pungent and messy area of the factory. Making a fibreglass form is similar to the papier-mâché process, where two halves of a mould are joined together and the moulds are layered and filled by hand. In this case resins, adhesives and fibreglass are heated and cooled to make the form. Once dry the forms are sanded off and given a coat of white paint that shows up any imperfections. A standard cellulose paint is used on the fibreglass forms, however bespoke colours, textures and patterns can be added.

We took a quick visit to Proportion's sister company Gems Studios, located in the factory. This is where wigs and makeup are applied to wax forms to make them appear realistic and have been used in a range of projects from the retail and fashion to the museum and heritage sectors. This is a complex and time consuming process where individual hairs are applied to head and body, correct skin colour and tone are achieved and makeup is applied where required.

The second half of the visit was at the Proportion London design studio and showroom, where their current products are showcased for fashion and retail purchase. We were shown some of the design boards that illustrate the starting point of any mannequin. A model is used to take measurements from and for the sculptor to sculpt a clay version that is then modified and adjusted to create the correct mannequin size. **Deborah Phipps** (Textile Group Chair) was involved in the creation of Proportions museum bust form collection. This female bust form is ideal for costume from the 17th century to the present and



An example of a wax head (George W Bush) created by Gems Studio

Deborah, present on the visit, kindly explained about the fascinating collaboration and design process for the museum form *Petite*. This second half of the day had less depth than the morning visit: I would have loved to have seen the designers and sculptors at work and looked at measurement and design sketches and drawings in detail.

Throughout the day it was clear that Proportion will try to meet any demands from a client, be it size, material, fabrics and finishes; they advocate collaboration with clients, conservators, curators and sculptors and are keen to try anything a client requests. The visit was fascinating and informative and I would highly recommend it. Seeing each process of manufacture was a real eye opener and highlighted that the possibilities are endless for bespoke mannequins and bust forms.

Danielle Connolly, Assistant Textile Conservator
National Museums Scotland

Fibreglass forms after sanding



VISITOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE SEARCH FOR TRANSPARENT PAPERS AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Dr Helen Wilson, The National Archives, Kew

The Transparent Paper Project

The National Archives' (UK) Collection Care Department has completed a one year research project on transparent papers. The Transparent Paper project was established in response to a need for better evidence to underpin the complex decisions necessary to preserve these materials. The aims were to develop practical guidance for conservators to use when deciding both when and how to treat and/or rehouse transparent papers. Involving The National Archives' daily visitors was identified as one way of gathering evidence to support this work and for the first time, these visitors helped to survey the collection.

Figure 1. A transparent paper overlaying a companion map from The National Archives (HO193/56/22SE)



Figure 2. A discoloured, torn, and fragmented transparent paper representation of a copyrighted ornamental design, c. 19th century. From The National Archives (BT43/57/105864)



Transparent papers, for this project, were defined as papers for which translucency was critical for copying, tracing, or overlaying of information. This definition includes papers such as tracing paper, vegetable parchment, and vellum made translucent using one of several methods, including overbeating pulp, sulphurisation, or impregnating with oils, resins, and/or waxes. Translucent or transparent materials such as film and thin copy papers were excluded from this project.

The translucency and smooth surface offered by transparent papers has been used since the Middle Ages to produce maps, architectural drawings, and artistic designs (Figure 1). These ephemeral papers are often in poor condition as a result of their method of manufacture, use, and storage which frequently result in tears, losses, discolouration, and brittleness (Figure 2). The fragile condition can limit access to these records.

Preservation of these chemically and often physically unstable records presents different challenges in comparison to non-transparent papers given their fragility, sensitivity to solvents, including water, and frequently, their very large size (Figure 3). The problem is exacerbated by the wide dispersal of the papers throughout the collection, which makes planning and treatment tricky. Consequently, more information on the condition, location and quantity of transparent papers within the collection was needed to formulate a preservation strategy.

The Readers' Survey

In 2011–12 visitors to our reading rooms ordered 574,351 original documents, far more than can be seen by the Collection Care Department in the same time. Visitors therefore offer a valuable means of gathering much needed information about transparent papers that would rarely be seen by our conservators.

The survey was designed and instigated in collaboration with colleagues from other departments. The questionnaire was designed to be simple and brief requiring no technical knowledge other than visual recognition of a transparent paper (Figure 4). It gathers information including the document reference, date of viewing, format on arrival, condition, and type of record. Additionally it asks the visitor whether a surrogate of the transparent paper document would have met their research needs since this is one method of limiting the handling of these fragile papers. Further information on the project, the papers, and the importance of the survey was provided on the reverse of each questionnaire.

In an effort to raise and sustain awareness of the survey, notices were distributed throughout the building (Figure 5), presentations about the project were given to regular users of the staff reading room and two blog posts were published on The National Archives website. Additionally, reading room staff were asked to encourage visitors to complete the questionnaire if transparent papers were identified amongst their records. Questionnaires were reviewed and replenished every two weeks and at the end of the twelve month survey period, the collected data was assessed.



Figure 3. Conservator Ilaria Coccia unfolds a large, painted transparent paper representation of an 1855 carpet design at The National Archives (BT43/117/99990)

Figure 5. A questionnaire collection point in one of the reading rooms at The National Archives

Figure 4. The transparent paper survey questionnaire used at The National Archives

Document reference:		How many transparent paper items?	
Date of document:		Date of viewing:	
Location of viewing	☐ A reading room ☐ Invigilation room ☐ Collection Care Department		
Record type	☐ Map ☐ Technical drawing (e.g. plans of buildings or structures) ☐ Other (please specify)		
Document format on arrival (Circle as many as apply)			
☐ Folded ☐ Rolled ☐ Flat ☐ In a plastic sleeve ☐ In a volume ☐ In a file			
Approximate size of record (unfolded)	☐ Smaller than A4 ☐ A4 (the size of this sheet) ☐ Larger than A4		
Is the record larger than the file/folder/volume it is stored in?	☐ Yes		☐ No
Is the record attached to something?	☐ Yes		☐ No
If Yes please say to what:			
Attachment method:			
☐ Tags ☐ Pins ☐ Sellotape ☐ Staples ☐ Adhesive			
Other (please specify):			
Condition: (Circle as many as apply)			
☐ Torn at edges ☐ Split along folds ☐ Creased ☐ Missing parts ☐ Discolouration			
Other (please specify):			
Would viewing a surrogate/copy of the original document have been sufficient for your needs?			☐ Yes ☐ No
Any comments?			

Results

A total of ninety questionnaires were completed; seventy seven of these related to papers that fitted with the definition of transparent papers used in this project. These seventy seven completed questionnaires reported some 3165 examples of transparent papers that were spread across sixty one different series and seventy one specific items. Between one and sixty transparent papers were found per item, comprised predominantly of maps and technical drawings. Examples were found to date from 1805 through to 1948 and varied in size, including one of A0 size and another roughly six feet long.

Whilst damaged transparent papers predominated (notably, one described as '...in pieces and too fragile to remove from the envelope.'), papers with no damage including one described as 'virtually pristine' were observed. The most common types of damage noted were: creases; tears; splits and discolouration. Less common damage included losses; staining; degraded and sticky Sellotape; and potential shrinkage of transparent paper so when laid over its companion map, details no longer align. The vast majority of visitors surveyed felt that surrogates would be suitable for their research needs; only a small number identified this as unsuitable.

These results have underlined how broadly transparent papers are dispersed throughout our collections. They also support the extensive variation in condition observed and reported by Collection Care staff. The survey data is now the foundation for a database of known transparent papers, which is another strand of work developed for this project. Data from other sources is being added to this database so that it builds a valuable overview of the transparent papers within

the collection and their condition. This information is invaluable knowledge for researchers and conservators who can now easily find examples of transparent papers of varying condition and type for demonstration and research purposes. Additionally, sorting of data can help prioritisation of records for conservation treatments or rehousing, thereby being a valuable tool for preservation planning.

Conclusions

Involving visitors has proved an effective method of gathering evidence for preservation decision-making when in-depth surveys by staff are not a viable option. Our visitors are continuously using the collection for their own research, so they are ideally placed to be able to help us with ours. It is not possible to control which documents they see, how frequently or how often, but this is mitigated by the sheer volume of material that would be accessed over the course of a year – far more than could reasonably be accessed by staff.

The success of this approach was dependent on staff support across multiple departments and the willingness of the participants; effective promotion was therefore essential. However, once the project was established, further involvement from Collection Care staff was minimal. Importantly we now have a solid framework for gathering data that improves our understanding of the collection and better informs our preservation strategies.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all the staff involved in this survey, particularly Amy Sampson and the many others in the Collection Care Department who shared their knowledge and experiences of transparent papers.

Further information about The Transparent Paper Project can be found at:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/transparent-papers.htm>

<http://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/transparent-papers-need-you/>

<http://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/transparent-papers-thank-keep-good-work/>

THE CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN QUALIFICATION: A STUDENT'S VIEW

Caleb Howgego and Hilary Tricker are Heritage Documentation Trainees, working at Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded *Skills for the Future* programme

We began our traineeships, which are primarily focused around museum documentation and collections management, in September 2013. The aim of the year is to give us a broad skill set for museum work, so we were also given the option of undertaking Icon's *Conservation Technician Qualification (CTQ)*.

What is the CTQ?

The CTQ is a workplace-based learning qualification. It covers a broad range of collections care, as well as more specific conservation practice, making it an ideal way to structure and formalise our learning during the traineeship, and to gain a recognised qualification to validate the skills we are developing.

The course comprises of six compulsory modules which establish good collections care skills, accurate records keeping and health and safety, as well as a commitment to continued professional development. Candidates then select two or more optional units that complement the work they carry out in their respective roles, e.g. units in preventative measures, treatments, exhibitions and displays, and even facsimile making. We are keeping a portfolio of all our work and activities as evidence to show that we have completed the various modules and units. This will be viewed by an internal and external assessor before any qualification is awarded.

Cleaning a seal In Ipswich Museum





Courier duty. Condition checking a painting on loan to SCVA (Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts)

Learning New Skills

During our traineeship, we have received guidance and training from our colleagues, including our museum's Conservation Officer, Robert Entwistle. The highly diverse nature of the collections in Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service – and the buildings themselves, including Ipswich Museum, Christchurch Mansion and Colchester Castle – support our learning for the qualification; we have been working on a wide variety of objects and projects which are both interesting and challenging. The objects we have worked on range from across continents, time periods, and sizes; from the very large (a polar sledge made for Captain Oates), to the very small (fragments of Anglo-Saxon metalwork).

'I have particularly enjoyed preparing objects to go out on loan and then accompanying them on couriating trips; getting to see behind the scenes in other museums is always interesting.' – Hilary Tricker

The Anglo-Saxon metalwork was a particularly interesting project to be involved in. The museum had acquired around 1,500 pieces of metalwork from an important archaeological site in Suffolk, all of which needed cleaning and conserving. Some of the items were earmarked for an exhibition at Sutton Hoo and needed to be ready to go out on loan within just a few weeks. This meant we had the opportunity to be involved throughout the whole process of cleaning, stabilisation, conservation and condition reporting. We then assisted with couriating the objects to the exhibition venue at Sutton Hoo, condition checking them and then assisting with their display – overall, a very interesting, rewarding, and valuable experience.

With guidance from colleagues, we reviewed the Integrated Pest Management system for the museum and mansion, updating blunder trap locations and then taking responsibility for monitoring them. The importance of a good IPM system



Courier Duty. Condition checking and packing Mendlesham Chairs on loan to SCVA (Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts)

was highlighted when an infestation of moths was discovered in some birds in our Natural History Gallery; we saw first hand the problems pest damage causes and it gave us an opportunity to learn how to deal with such a situation, including how to clean and treat taxidermy.

Elsewhere, our work towards the CTQ has seen us delivering a presentation on the development of Ipswich Museum to a room full of museum professionals, helping with the installation of exhibitions in the Ipswich Art School and Colchester Castle, learning to catalogue objects on a computer database and conducting day-to-day remedial conservation on objects in the laboratory.

Couriering

We have had the opportunity to accompany the Service's conservation staff while couriating objects to and from other institutions, gaining experience with condition checking and the paperwork involved. This has included trips to the National Horse Racing Museum at Newmarket to collect paintings, the Red House in Aldeburgh to deliver costume belonging to Benjamin Britten, and to the Sainsbury's Centre in Norwich to collect two paintings and three Mendlesham chairs.

A particularly special courier trip for us was accompanying a Valkyrie Pendant to the British Museum for the *Vikings: Life and Legend* exhibition; after a sneak peek at the exhibition prior to opening, we were able, through the personal contacts of our Conservation Officer, to visit many conservation departments at the British Museum.



Helping to conserve a mosaic in Colchester Castle

We were shown Iron Age cauldrons in the Metal Conservation lab; Cuneiform tablets and Roman glass dishes in Ceramics & Glass; Sand mummies from Sudan, the focus of a research project on medieval Nubians; preparations for upcoming exhibitions in Western Pictorial Art on Paper; the Hirayama Scroll Studio and their painstaking care to work in conditions faithful to those in which the scrolls were originally produced; and finally, the Facsimile Studio, where we met the man behind Ipswich Museum's Woolly Mammoth.

This was a really fascinating day, providing an interesting insight into the scale and specialisms of conservation within an institution such as the British Museum.

'The opportunity to work with so many interesting and varied objects in the laboratory has been excellent! I've gained valuable collections care skills to take forward with me in my career.' – Caleb Howgego

Professional Development

The nature of our posts as trainees, and undertaking the CTQ, has meant that we have been encouraged to seek out training opportunities on offer. As such, we have attended training on a range of relevant subjects, including the handling and packing of museum objects, labelling and marking, the conservation of photographic material, and caring for paintings.

Our Feelings about the Qualification

Overall, our experience of the CTQ qualification so far has been very positive. The wide range of topics covered by the compulsory units gives a good grounding in conservation techniques and practices, and the ability to pick from the optional units means that it can be tailored to fit our specific roles.

The emphasis on practical learning and the chance to apply this directly in our roles at the museum means that we feel more connected to our collections. We have been able to put things we have learnt for the CTQ into practice in a useful way, making us feel we are making a positive difference.

The CTQ will be relevant to any future museum job we apply for, as a demonstration of our collection care skills. The portfolio will be especially useful for this purpose, as a tool to showcase our work and experience to future employers.

From beetles to The Beatles



Entomology Products (Pages 71-75)



Phonograph Record Storage Sleeves (Page 27)

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