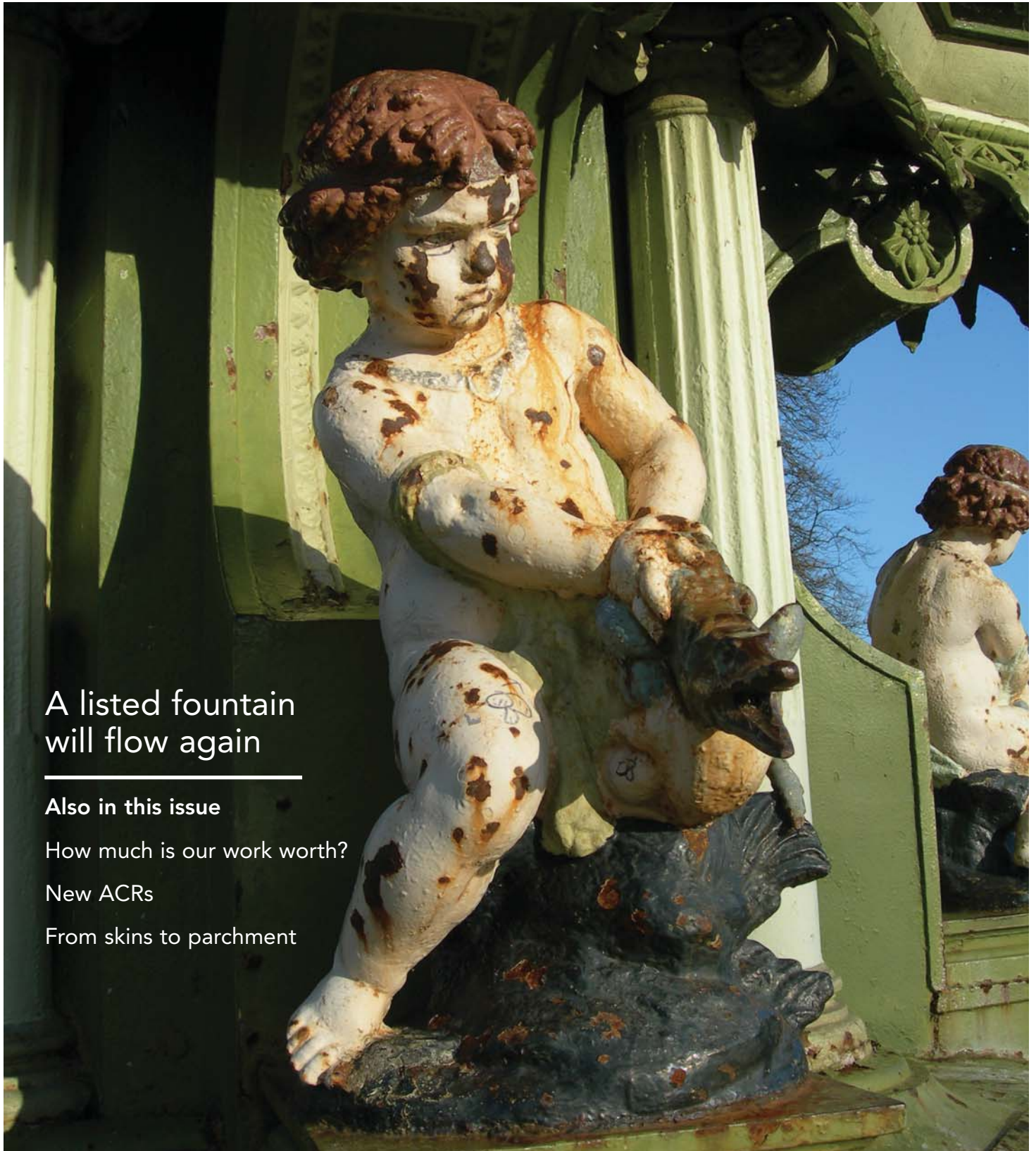


Icon NEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • SEPTEMBER 2013 • ISSUE 48



A listed fountain will flow again

Also in this issue

How much is our work worth?

New ACRs

From skins to parchment

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

SEPTEMBER 2013

Issue 48



From the Editor

Have you ever wondered what the financial value of conservation is? In this issue, our Skills Strategy Manager, Kenneth Aitchison, reveals his heroic calculations - not an easy task but an interesting outcome.

The end pages of the magazine offer another serious read in the In Training section, where conservation science intern Michael Cox has come up with a clever way of reliably identifying repairs in the future. Although the pilot project is a piece of furniture, don't think it can't interest you: its potential application goes way beyond that one discipline. And speaking of applications, one of our number is bringing an App to market to help with the process of condition reporting. For all our supposed nerdiness, ingenuity seems to be a feature of the conservator and should certainly be celebrated. Do get in touch with other examples of your creativity and entrepreneurial spirit.

Jim Mitchell got in touch last time in response to my call for some of the less well represented disciplines to share their work with us; starting in this issue we will be following his treatment of a great ironwork fountain featuring some irresistible, two-tonne, spouting walruses.

Lynette Gill



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Cover photo:
Detail of an ornate ironwork fountain in Paisley's oldest public park. The eight-metre high, derelict structure is undergoing restoration to bring it back to full working order.
Photo: James Mitchell

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professional update

From the Chief Executive

VALUING CONSERVATION

Alison Richmond ACR FIIC on the economic case for conservation



Photo: Matt Wreford

One of the questions that emerged at a recent meeting of the National Conservation Education & Skills Stakeholders Group and one that we agreed needed further investigation was: 'What is the value of the conservation sector?'

It's all about economics

To have an answer to this question is important – arguably it is more important than ever before. This is because the Westminster Parliament, in trying to deal with the fallout from the

crash of 2008, has instituted successive austerity budgets that aim to cut public spending severely. Arguments for funding to be allocated to this or that must therefore appeal to the Treasury where decisions will be made about how public funding will be distributed.

Economic arguments are what matter today. Maria Miller, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, in her speech at The British Museum in April 2013*, called on the sector to give her the evidence to make the economic argument for culture in the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. In answer to a question from the floor, she said that the softer, social impacts of culture were very well known and what we needed to focus on now was the economic argument.

A partial valuation

English Heritage's *Heritage Counts 2012*** is the latest in a series of EH publications that presents the statistical evidence for the value of heritage. But this only gives part of the picture: it is restricted to England, and does not take into account heritage outside of EH's remit as the statutory adviser to Westminster on the historic environment in England. Nevertheless, it is a good source and model for showcasing the contribution that heritage makes to society and to the economy.

Pinning conservation down

For our conservation sector, there is no such compendium of statistics, nor can these be easily sourced. In part, this is because conservation activity and workforce stretches across a number of domains (built heritage, archaeology, museums, archives and libraries, landscape, and so on); employers are publicly funded, civil society and private sector, and, of course, are spread across the whole of the UK. Moreover, conservation is carried out by many different kinds of workers (architects, surveyors, archaeologists, craft makers, artists, conservators) some of whom are in defined roles (technician, volunteers).

Therefore statistics about conservation are mixed up with other data sets and it is difficult to isolate them. When we

look at one particular population, for example, conservation professionals, this is a small data set within a much bigger conservation population. This makes it difficult to answer questions like 'What contribution does conservation activity and workforce as a percentage of all other heritage activity and workforce make to the economy?'. The question prompts another question: 'What conservation activity and workforce are you talking about?'

The way ahead

As readers of this column will know, Icon has already carried out its own labour market intelligence research that defines the conservation workforce as set out in the National Conservation Education & Skills Strategy and, in the article that follows, Dr Kenneth Aitchison suggests a way of estimating the value of our sector using that research. However, as you will read below, measurements of this kind may result in numbers that may be small in relation to the bigger numbers for heritage as a whole.

So we need to do three things to make sure that policy-makers and the public understand the value of conservation and the cost of maintaining the profession: (1) not rely solely on economic arguments but use them to support the softer, social impacts such as wellbeing and social cohesion; (2) join with others in the heritage sector and advocate in partnership and (3) identify the specific contribution that conservation professionals make within the larger whole. These three actions will help us to answer the question in a powerful way.

*www.gov.uk/government/speeches/testing-times-fighting-cultures-corner-in-an-age-of-austerity

** <http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/content/pub/2012/hc-2012-england.pdf>

VALUING CONSERVATION – and the cost of conserving Schrödinger's Cat

Kenneth Aitchison, Icon's Skills Strategy Manager, looks at the financial case for conservation



Photo: Matt Wreford

Using the data published in *Conservation Labour Market Intelligence 2012–13*¹, it is possible to estimate the monetary value of UK professional conservation.

*Mapping Heritage Craft*², an earlier report prepared by TBR for Creative and Cultural Skills which was published in 2012, estimated that the heritage craft sector (which in that study included some people who did occasional restoration work, but did not aim to cover the work of all professional conservators)

employed nearly 210,000 people and had a turnover of £10.8 billion, generating £4.4 billion of gross value added to the UK

economy in 2012. Specifically in terms of the heritage craft elements of businesses in that sector, total turnover was £5.5 billion with an average turnover per business of £65,000 *per annum*. The total *gross value added* by the heritage craft aspects of these businesses was £2.2 billion.

What the economist said

A quick word on definitions – *turnover* is essentially the total income a business receives in a year, and *gross value added* is very similar to net profit – it is what is left after all expenditure is subtracted, including salaries and materials. The Office of National Statistics defines *approximate gross value added* (aGVA) as ‘a measure of the income generated by businesses within their industries and sectors, less the cost of goods and services used up to create the income’³.

Turning over and grossing out

Conservation Labour Market Intelligence 2012–13 used a different methodology to *Mapping Heritage Craft*, which calculated the turnover figures by using reliable figures on how much income heritage craft practices had received in the previous year, and then extrapolating from that. *Conservation Labour Market Intelligence 2012–13* did not get robust figures on financial turnover, but it did get figures for the total number of people working in conservation and the average salaries they earned. From these figures, and breaking down the totals by the numbers of individuals working full-time and part-time and the average salaries for those two categories, the total wage bill for professional conservation in 2012–13 can be calculated as having been £85million.

Salaries are typically the largest component of expenditure in conservation; materials and workspace costs vary depending on the speciality of a practice, but (in this author’s opinion and looking at broadly comparable other cultural heritage sectors) 60% might represent a reasonable, rough, estimate of what percentage of income a conservation practice spends on salaries. If that was the case, then UK conservation’s total value – defined as the total amount of money coming in – in 2012–13 can be estimated as having been £142 million.

£142 million is 1.3% of the total estimated turnover for heritage crafts of £10.8 billion (1/75th), but that is not unreasonable given that the estimated number of people earning money from heritage crafts was 210,000 and the estimated number of 3,175 conservators working in the UK presented in *Conservation Labour Market Intelligence 2012–13* equals 1.5% of that number (1/66th).

The calculation of *gross value added* from *turnover* is a complicated matter; *Mapping Heritage Craft* relied on the ‘best fits’ that could be made between the different areas of heritage craft and *SIC 2007*, the Standard Industrial Classification codes used by the UK government to classify industrial activities⁴, pages 134–138).

That calculated *approximate GVA* for heritage crafts as a whole as 39.6% of the sector’s total value; this combined inputs from many areas, some of which have very high *approximate GVA*; for example, over the four years from 2008–2011, category 90.03 Artistic Creation (which includes

‘restoring of works of art such as paintings etc’) had an average aGVA of 62.5%. By contrast, 91.01 Library and Archive Activities had a four-year average aGVA of 8.2%. It is worth noting that category 91.02 Museum Activities’ four-year average was –23.2% therefore that sector was losing value rather than adding to the economy⁵.

Too small for a best fit

Conservation is too small and insufficiently well-defined to have its own *SIC 2007* code; to carry out an exercise like that undertaken for *Mapping Heritage Craft* and to assign ‘best fit’ figures to all of the extremely small subsectors of conservation would not be a worthwhile exercise.

What can be done is to present a range of figures that might represent the *gross value added* of professional conservation. Taking as a potential maximum, the figure calculated for heritage crafts (39.6%) would provide an estimate of £33.8m *gross value added* by conservation to the UK economy.

However, because of the high proportion of newly created artwork included in the heritage craft figures, which has an extremely high *approximate gross value added*, that may be too high for realistic comparison with conservation; using the aGVA percentage for Library and Archive Activities (8.2%) provides a figure of £7.0m, while the figure for the broader Libraries, Archives, Museums and other Cultural Activities (*SIC 2007* code 91) averaged over four years to 2011 was 5.3%. Multiplying this figure by the estimated total turnover for conservation gives an estimate for conservation’s *gross value added* of £4.5m.

For what we’re worth

In financial terms, the total *turnover* generated by the conservation profession in 2012–13 was £142 million and the *approximate gross value added* to the UK economy was between £4.5 and £7 million.

These actuaristic, economic, financial estimates use the word ‘value’ in a very different way from the sense of value as being used to describe something that is valued, that is cherished, that is protected – cultural or social value. It is very difficult to equate the two different senses of value. For example, people have tried to make calculations using *contingent valuation*, a method that has been applied to find out how much people value environmental resources by asking questions along the lines of ‘how much would you pay to protect the Peak District’. *Revealed preferences* are a better way to put value on economic resources than *stated preferences* (as happens in contingent valuation) – because the average prices of how much people pay to buy houses inside the Peak District National Park can be objectively compared with average house prices in villages immediately outside the Park – so giving a real measure of how much people are genuinely prepared to pay for the environmental advantages of living in the Peak District.

Letting the cat out of the box

However, methodologies like these are extremely difficult to apply to conservation – beyond comparing market prices for unconserved materials and those for objects that have been conserved – and these data are just not available for many of

the areas of conservation work. This means that we cannot calculate (in financial terms) the social or cultural value of conservation – which then means that we cannot present realistic financial figures for not carrying out conservation – which is where Schrödinger's paradoxical Cat enters the equation. His cat is inside a box and is either alive, dead, or possibly both simultaneously – and we cannot know which until its box is opened. We do not know what the cost of not opening the box will be. It's an unknown, but it is a known unknown – it's something we know that we don't know. At some point, the material will irretrievably deteriorate and the cat will meet its end whether we open the box or not. That will be a social and cultural loss. We do not know what that means in financial terms and we cannot calculate it.

Hearts and minds

So this means advocacy has to pull at the heart-strings as well as to appeal to the financial mind. For conservation to be promoted as a socially valuable profession a confident case needs to be made that shows why people feel that it should be undertaken. A good argument was made in the Demos

report *It's a Material World: caring for the public realm in 2008*⁶, but that work now looks very much of its time – New Labour government and pre-global economic collapse. It promoted the forward-looking social value of conservation, but now, five years later in a different economic and political climate, the thoughts that underpinned the philosophy of *It's a Material World* need to be urgently recast, supported and underpinned by the economic data that we now have.

However, the figures show that we are a very small cog in the much bigger heritage machine, and so we need to advocate by association with partners in other related sectors or, like Schrödinger's Cat, our voices won't be heard outside of our box and one day it will be too late.

1 www.icon.org.uk/images/stories/downloads/clmi%20report.pdf

2 <http://creative-blueprint.co.uk/library/item/mapping-heritage-craft>

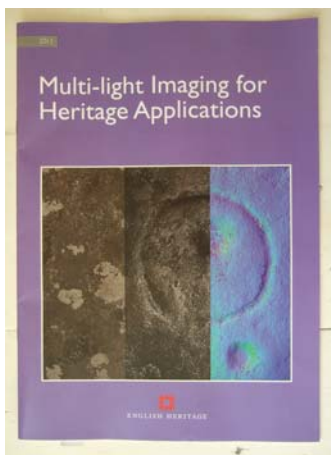
3 www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_266774.pdf

4 <http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/content/pub/2012/hc-2012-england.pdf>

5 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/abs/annual-business-survey/2011-provisional-results/abs-2011p---section-r--arts--entertainment-and-recreation--nov-2012-.xls>

6 www.demos.co.uk/publications/materialworld

MORE LIGHT ON OLD THINGS



In the last issue (page 6) Dinah Eastop wrote about the image capture and processing technique known as polynomial texture mapping. PTM is one application of Reflectance Transformation Imaging and since Dinah wrote her piece a new publication about RTI has come to our attention.

Published by English Heritage*, *'Multi-light Imaging for Heritage Applications'* covers the practical application

of RTI to heritage data capture. It aims to provide user-friendly guidelines and advice for using the technology and the post-processing of the images. It also includes several case studies to demonstrate how the technology can help to better understand the cultural heritage we record. There is a useful glossary and list of references, web links and downloads.

*Duffy, S. M. 2013. *Multi-light Imaging for Heritage Applications*. London: English Heritage. 24pp. Product Code 51802; Customer Services: customers@english-heritage.org.uk (a copy is held at the Chantry Library).

MANUSCRIPTS CONSERVATION GRANTS

The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust offers grants for the conservation and preservation of manuscripts and archives. The next deadline for the submission of applications is **1 October 2013** with results being announced in early December. If you want to plan ahead, the deadline after that is **1 April 2014**.

The NMCT welcomes grant applications from Record Offices, Museums, University's Archives or Special Collections sections, Cathedral Archives and Libraries, as well as owners of manuscripts that are exempt from capital taxation or owned by a charitable trust. Grants can cover conservation, binding and other preservation measures, including digitisation (providing it is part of a wider conservation project).

The application form can be downloaded from www.nmct.co.uk. If, having consulted the website, you have any queries about whether your project is eligible etc please contact Mrs Nell Hoare, who manages the Trust. You can contact her either through the NMCT website or at info@nmct.co.uk (*please note that this is a new email address) or on 01491 580883

FNL ACQUISITION GRANTS

Grants are available for the acquisition of manuscripts, books and archives from the Friends of the National Libraries. The FNL accepts applications throughout the year – allowing it to respond speedily to applications for grants to purchase items at auction. The name FNL implies that only national collections can apply but this is far from the case. National, regional and local record offices, archives, museums etc can apply. Details of how to apply can be found on the website: www.friendsofnationallibraries.org.uk.

JOURNAL NEWS

Five years on

With the publication of the March 2013 issue of the *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*, we are celebrating its tenth issue. After five years of publication in its current format, the Task and Finish Group are undertaking a very timely review of how the Journal is performing and how it can move forward into the future. During these five years the publication

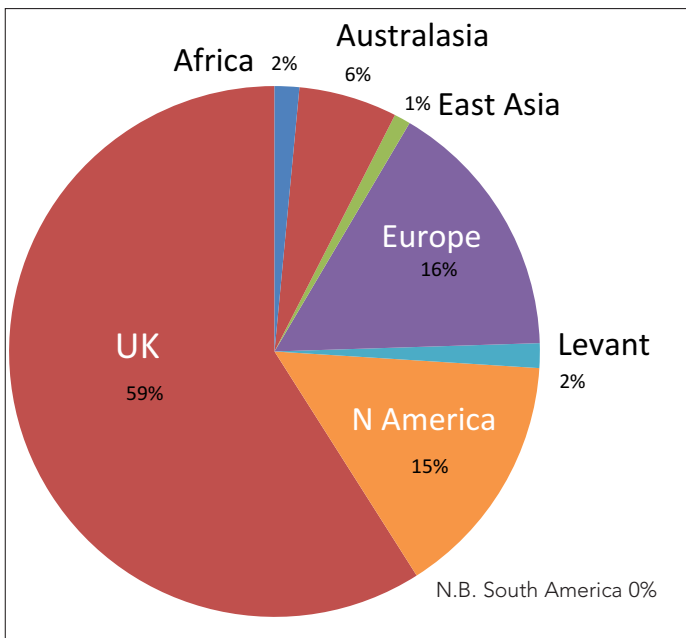


Fig 1 The geographical origin of Journal articles.

landscape has changed considerably, with the advance of online publication and moves towards open access for research publications funded through public/ government research bodies. The Journal has taken advantage of both of these initiatives. It is now available online¹ and has open access routes available for authors through our publishers, Taylor and Francis.²



Janet Berry

Progress

Online publication has enabled the Journal to publish articles faster, with Accepted Manuscripts (AM) now being available online soon after an article has been accepted for publication, and the fully typeset version (VoR) also being available online before the printed copy is made available.³ Articles online have the added benefit of all images being in full colour. These are all areas of progress with the production and presentation of the Journal.

Challenges

However, there have been problems with the timeliness of the Journal. It has rarely been arriving on your doormat on time, with severe delays to the most recent issues, including the Parchment and Vellum special issue. This affects your ability to read the most current information, the way the Journal is perceived in the conservation community, and its ability to be taken as a serious journal for publishing work. The reasons for these delays are complex, and the Task and Finish Group is looking into how this situation can be improved.

Getting it right

Of equal importance is whether the content of the Journal is still attractive to readers. Is the Journal meeting the expectations of the Institute of Conservation's (Icon) membership? Are readers happy with the frequency, content and balance of articles, shorter notices and book reviews? How do authors and potential authors view publishing in the Journal? How can the Journal improve to remain relevant in the future? These questions are being considered by the Task

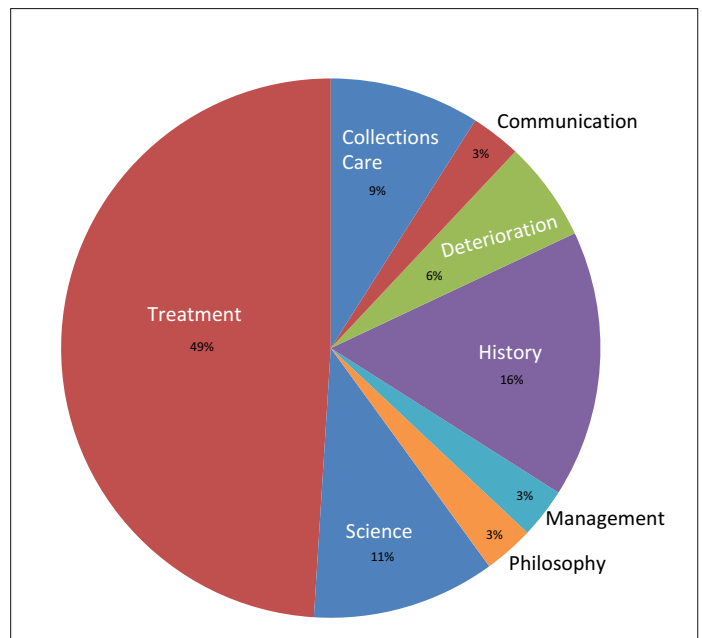


Fig 2 The types of subjects covered by Journal articles.

and Finish Group to ensure that the Journal continues to be a publication that delivers high quality, relevant, useful information to the conservation profession.

Where our authors come from

To help the Task and Finish Group with its work, I have been analysing the past issues of the Journal to see who is publishing in it, what we are publishing, and what areas are missing. The statistics paint a picture of a vibrant and diverse international community conversing through the Journal. Although Icon is an organisation for the conservation of cultural heritage in the UK, there is a wonderfully international outlook to the Journal, with 40% of articles originating from authors outside the UK, including mainland Europe, North America, Australasia, Africa, East Asia and the Levant (Fig.1).

What our authors write about

Half of the articles published are about the direct interventive treatment of an object or collection (Fig.2). Of the remaining half, 16% discuss the history of an object or conservation treatment, to provide context that aids both preventive and interventive treatment. 12% of articles report on scientific studies relating to the conservation of objects. 9% of articles deal with collections care issues including risk assessment and packing objects for transport. 6% discuss the deterioration mechanisms of an object or collection, with a view to understanding the past to help make more informed decisions for the future. Conservation management, philosophy and communication are also represented in journal articles.

Who our authors are

Two thirds of authors publishing in the Journal are conservation practitioners, with the remaining third from higher education institutions (both students and staff), which is a figure to be celebrated. The Journal is one of the few conservation publications in which practitioners publish, providing readers with practical, pragmatic information. Publishing the results of work undertaken is an excellent way to enhance continuing professional development. However, only a handful (nine) authors were in private practice when their article was written. The most recent information on the conservation workforce in the UK estimates that 38% of conservators are in private practice.⁴ Why are conservators in

private practice not contributing to the Journal and what can be done to overcome these barriers?

Current coverage and gaps

There is a current focus on cross- and inter-disciplinary research in the heritage sector. A number of articles present work that has arisen from university and institutional collaborations. There are very few inter-institutional articles, although there are some articles authored by institutional and private practice conservators working together. Does this lack of articles authored by multiple institutions reflect a true lack of collaboration between institutions, or is the Journal not attracting submissions from those involved in multi-institutional collaborations?

Look out for a survey

These are many of the questions that the Task and Finish Group will be examining. To help us we will also be asking you about the Journal. Later this month, we will be sending out an online survey about the Journal. Please help us by answering the survey, so that we have your views. Our ultimate aim is to provide a journal that represents the talent and skills of the modern conservation professional.

Janet Berry

Editor, Journal of the Institute of Conservation

1 www.tandfonline.com/toc/rcon20/current

2 www.tandfonline.com/page/openaccess

3 <http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/publication/articleversions.asp>

4 Kenneth Aitchison, *Conservation Labour Market Intelligence 2012–13* (London: Institute of Conservation, 2013), 7.

ABOUT THE CWF

The Cathedrals Workshop Fellowship (CWF) was established by its eight participating Cathedrals, (Canterbury, Durham, Gloucester, Lincoln, Salisbury, Winchester, Worcester and York), to promote the sharing of information amongst practitioners employed by their respective Works Departments, and to provide a training path beyond

The CWF course students at Canterbury with their measured carvings. See review on page 23



Photo: Peter Arts

apprenticeships.

They have collectively written and now offer, in partnership with the University of Gloucestershire, a practical work-based development course for stonemason-conservators, taking students from NVQ level 3 to Levels 4 and 5 in Higher Education – a Foundation degree.

The course runs for two years with the students meeting as a body on study blocks hosted by one of the participating Cathedrals, with training delivered by in-house staff and other expert lecturers. The key elements of the course are Banker Masonry, Setting Out, Fixing, Conservation, Architectural History and Archaeology, Geometry, Geology and Professional Development. Each study block is used to explore in depth one of these subject areas and to assess assignments that were given to the students during previous study blocks. A review of the study block which took place at Canterbury Cathedral last May can be found on page 23.

The course has now been running for four years, the first cohort of students having graduated last November. The intake is on a biannual basis and the next group of students is due to start Level 4 this month. All the students on the level 5 course have passed and will be graduating in November.

'STUFF MATTERS'

'Stuff matters': The crucial work of the *American Institute for Conservation – Collections Emergency Response Team* is an excellent recent interview with Eric Pourchot, Institutional Advancement Director at the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation. It can be found at <http://c-u-d-i.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/stuff-matters-crucial-work-of-american.html>

The interview is in a question and answer format and covers such issues as 'why was the AIC Collections Emergency Response Team established?', 'what plan of action is put in place by the team when major disasters such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti strike?' and crucially 'why in times of crisis is it important to rescue our cultural heritage?'

NEW SUPPLIERS OF AERO-LINEN & AERO-COTTON

Samuel Lamont Ltd in Northern Ireland have ceased to produce the wonderful linen and cotton that many conservators have grown to depend on as a support material, particularly in library and archive conservation, as well as textiles. The new supplier, of what is believed to be the same material, is the large textile manufacturing company, Arville Textiles Ltd in West Yorkshire, UK: www.arville.com. You will notice a higher charge than you were used to paying per metre and they will not offer less than ten metre rolls. However after some strong negotiations (thank you Arville!) they have agreed to supply conservators (please state you are using it to protect our heritage) ten metre rolls, or more, at the following costs (excluding VAT and delivery):

Aero-Linen (ARVEX Linen) L9F1 (137cm wide) 10 metres @£25.20 per metre.

Aero-Cotton (ARVEX Cotton) C7F8 (122cm wide)10 metres @£22.50 per metre.

Please contact Arville Textiles, Ltd, Sanbeck, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, S22 7DQ. Tel: +44 (0)1937 582735.

Email: sales@arville.com

Remember to ask for a sample before you buy!

Lara Artemis, Collection Care Manager, Parliamentary Archives, Houses of Parliament

WEST DEAN NEWS

Some interesting short courses are coming up this autumn at West Dean under their Professional Conservators in Practice heading:

- From 7–10 October Conservation of arms and armour
- From 28 October–1 November Moulding and casting within conservation
- From 11–14 November Conservation of carpets
- From 2–5 December Managing change: Moveable heritage in context

All Icon members receive a 10% discount on the course fee.

For more information on all the courses please contact the Conservation Short Courses Organiser on 01243 818219 or cpd@westdean.org.uk Website: www.westdean.org.uk/College

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Archaeology Group

We are pleased to announce that our next event on Monday 21 October will be a combined trip to the newly re-opened Mary Rose Museum and the English Heritage facilities at Fort Cumberland. This is an excellent opportunity to visit two great facilities in Portsmouth and to gain insight into two very important conservation and visitor experiences. There will be talks from both teams as well as a chance to explore the new Mary Rose Galleries and have a tour of the EH labs.

The deadline for receiving booking forms for this event is October 11, so do book quickly if you are interested as the number of participants is restricted to thirty five people due to meeting room capacity.

Lunch is included with the full day rate of £25, there is also an option to attend for half a day at £15 without lunch. The student rate is £20. Please use the bookings form on the Archaeology Group webpages at www.icon.org.uk and send to Claire Woodhead: claire.woodhead@hants.gov.uk. For further information on this event please contact Bronwen Roberts: broberts@horniman.ac.uk.

We would also like to take this opportunity to give advance warning that this year's Christmas Party will be held the afternoon of Friday 13 December at Birmingham Museum, followed by decamping to the pub (apparently the Christmas German market will also be on the doorstep and well worth a look!) The suggested theme this year is 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' of Conservation and we would like to

encourage people to come along and share their most weird and wonderful object stories as part of the informal talks held before the party gets underway. If you would like to contribute, please get in touch with Deborah Magnoler: Deborah.Magnoler@birminghammuseums.org.uk

Booking forms and further details will be available nearer the time.

Book & Paper Group

As usual there is great activity going on in our Group. To keep fully up to date, please subscribe to The Gathering to automatically receive updates on new articles (www.thebookandpapergathering.org). We are very keen to use The Gathering to publish articles about practical work which you would like to share: an unusual treatment, an unexpected result, work carried out in collaboration with people you do not usually work with or creative solutions to unusual problems. Write-ups do not have to be lengthy or formal and they can even be anonymous. If you are interested in submitting an article, remember that you should seek approval from your manager first if you work in an institution.

We are still working on the idea of putting together a 'recipe book' with old and new recipes on such things as how to make adhesives, re-sizing and deacidification solutions, bleaching, parchment repairs and fixatives. It is important for re-treatment purposes to know what was used during conservation and restoration projects in the past, even from the recent past – the sixties to the nineties - and the new generation of conservators need that knowledge, as well as today's best practice. We would be grateful if you could share your knowledge and help us compile this online recipe book, which will be posted on The Gathering.

Committee news

Some of you may know that Victoria Stevens, our Deputy Chair, handed over the CTR workload to Amelia Rampton, who is chairing the CTR subcommittee for a year. She reports below on recent and forthcoming events. We thank our new and much larger subcommittee group, for their great enthusiasm and hard work in conceiving and planning all the events of the group and making them so relevant and successful.

We are pleased to welcome recent committee members Anna Johnson as Secretary, covering Anna Brookes' maternity leave for a year, and Joanna Blackburn, the new Student Liaison Officer. They have already shown great initiative and commitment. Catt Baum and Mark Furness are now working on 'Special Projects', and their main task initially will be helping the CTR committee with the organisation of the Book and Paper Conference which is taking place in the spring of 2015. Amelia Rampton and Amy Junker will coordinate this event and its working title is 'Eastern Papers and Conservation Techniques Used in the West'. Amelia Rampton will keep us up to date as the conference outline develops, but we hope to have a very exciting line-up of speakers.

Committee departures

Isabelle Egan, our sub-editor, is leaving the committee at the end of the year to concentrate on The Gathering. We would

like additional sub-committee members to take on the role of editing material both for Icon News and The Gathering. Applicants should have an excellent grasp of English grammar.

I will be leaving my post as Chair of the Group at the end of December and elections will be announced shortly. Interested applicants should fill out the online application form (which goes out via Iconnect this month). The job description is available on The Gathering. If you are interested in the position but would like to know more, please feel free to contact me for an informal discussion: s.signorello@wellcome.ac.uk. You may also wish to contact me if you have any problems with the online application form.

Election procedures

The deadline for applications is 10:00pm, 6 October 2013. Applicants should submit a manifesto of c.200/300 words. Members will be notified via Iconnect of the names of all candidates within three business days after the closing date. Voting will take place via online survey (or by postal ballot only for those members, if any, who have notified me by email by 15 October that they have problems with the online form). Complete instructions will be provided when the candidates are announced. Voting will be open for one month from 15 October to 15 November. Results of the election will be announced by 29 November 2013.

Stefania Signorello Group Chair

The Cooperative Training Register Group

I'm very grateful indeed for the support I received taking on the role of interim CTR Chair. Victoria Stevens has done a remarkable job building the CTR in only two years and it has become a post with important responsibilities that clearly require a good deal of time and effort. The CTR needs a strong committee and our dynamic membership now consists of Francesca Whymark, who is joined by the newly elected Amy Junker, Fiona McLees, Françoise Richard, Melissa Lewis and Sayaka Fukuda. We are also very excited by the generosity of the Clare Hampson Scholarship Trust, which will be providing £3000 a year to sponsor workshops and lectures over the next three years.

Recent events

Our programme for the year kicked off in June with an evening lecture led by Richard Wolbers on 'The Use of Gels in Paper Conservation'. Richard is an Associate Professor at Delaware/Wintertur University with twenty five years' experience working on the use of gels for cleaning decorative surfaces. He lectures all over the world and when he was in London running a workshop for International Academic Projects, he agreed to fit in a talk for Icon. This was a great success and very well attended. The talk is reviewed in this issue on page 27. We filmed the lecture and question session and the link will be posted in the Book & Paper Group site 'The Gathering'.

In fact, filming is a new initiative for our group and this was a pilot to explore the feasibility in terms of cost, audience reach and dissemination. This could also be very useful for other Icon groups, so I'll be drafting a review of this exercise with

Heather Ravenberg (our IT coordinator) and discussing it at our next Book & Paper committee meeting.

The second event of the year, coordinated by Melissa Lewis, was a two-day workshop led by Alan Buchanan on 'The Use of Vacuum in Paper Conservation', held at Camberwell College of Arts Conservation Studios in July. Designed for nine participants, the course places were very quickly filled with international and local delegates. There will be a review in November's Icon News.

Autumn courses

We've organised a three-day workshop on 'Innovation in Conservation Mounting of Works on Paper', to be led by Hugh Pibbs from the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. The workshop will run from 21 to 23 October 2013 at the National Maritime Museum and there will be eighteen places. Bookings open on 23 September 2013 and there will be an online booking form. Hugh will also give an evening lecture open both to Icon and non-Icon members, details of which will be published in Iconnect and on the Group webpages.

We are also planning to repeat 'Information Skills for Conservators', an excellent course providing guidance on the use of on-line search tools for research, led by Chantry Librarian Ros Buck. Annika Erikson, an independent paper conservator, will introduce us to 'Articheck' (see the article on page 18). There will also be a day course on 'The Use of Cyclododecane in Paper Conservation' led by Elisabeth Carr from the National Maritime Museum. Details will follow on the usual sites.

2014

Our next AGM will feature the Clare Hampson Memorial Lecture. The aim is to showcase significant science research projects in conservation, and for 2014 our guest speaker will be Dr Matija Strlič, Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Sustainable Heritage at University College London. Other major events being organised by the CTR team are: a workshop on 'Removal of Pressure Sensitive Tapes and Tape Stain', led by Linda Stiber Morenus and Elissa O'Loughlin; 'The Medieval Palette', led by Cheryl Porter; and 'Adhesives and Consolidants' led by Andrea Pataki.

In addition, as Stefania Signorello has written above, the CTR team is organising a major conference for the spring 2015. We will keep you up to date on the progress of this event over the next months.

Finally...if you would like us to organise an event, anywhere in Britain, on a topic that you are interested in, we'll be more than happy to discuss it with you. Your request can only help to make the CTR stronger and more useful to its members. Please also do remember that you can either request training or offer to deliver training by going online to our Book & Paper Group site, under Training (CTR). If you'd like to discuss these possibilities, feel free to get in contact with me at ameliarampton@aol.com

Amelia Rampton ACR, MSc
Interim CTR Chair

Ceramics and Glass Group

Call for papers

'Tape and Pillage: Interventive Treatments in a Preventive Climate'

We are delighted to announce that the next CGG conference will be held in York, one of England's most beautiful and historically rich cities, on 16 & 17 May 2014. We now invite the submission of abstracts for presentations and posters for this event.

The conference aims to discuss and evaluate the variety of interventive treatments available to us and ethical decision making, regardless of whether we work alone in private practice or in larger institutions. The conference will be set in York (Jorvik to the Vikings) and will include tours of various historically significant buildings and collections on Friday 16 May with a full day of talks and posters arranged for Saturday 17 May.

Abstract submissions should include the following: the title of the presentation; the names of all contributors; mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail of the contact person. They should be approximately 300 words and will be included in the delegate pack. The deadline for abstracts is 17 January 2014.

Contact: Rebecca Sanderson (becci_louise@yahoo.co.uk) for presentations and AC Orr (ac-orr@hotmail.co.uk) for posters

Nigel Williams Prize

During the York conference the Nigel Williams Prize will be awarded. Further information regarding submissions will be released shortly, however I am pleased to reveal that a new student's prize will be added to the line-up. The 2014 prize will be awarded at its own evening reception on the Friday night.

Any queries please contact Ronald Pile
ronaldpile37@btinternet.com.

Other Events

This year's AGM was held at the De Morgan Foundation on 8 June – thank you to all who attended. A review of the event can be found at page 25.

As this issue goes to press we are holding our second practical 'Silicone Mould Making Workshop' by Dana Norris and Ken Watts on Saturday 7 September at the Ashmolean Museum. A review will be available in the next issue of Icon News.

To finish I would once again like to encourage all Icon members to browse our forum:

<http://iconcgg.proboards.com>

Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ICONCGG>

And blog <http://iconcgg.blogspot.co.uk/>

And you can now follow us on twitter @ICONCGG

Kathleen Swales

CGG Chair

Furniture and Wood Group

The Furniture and Wood Group is currently working toward making our group an active part of the careers of restorers and conservators throughout England, Scotland and Wales.

As a first step in this process, we conducted a survey in order to find out what events and learning experiences were wanted by the membership. Sixty six responded with their thoughts. We are currently in the process of analyzing the findings and the exercise has stimulated a lot of ideas to take forward.

The executive committee would like to thank the membership for participating in the survey. Your input has proven to be invaluable. As promised, we have selected at random a respondent to win a copy of Adam Bowett's magnificent new book on historic woods (Woods in British furniture-making 1400–1900). The winner is Malcolm Brown, a wood and boat restorer in the Milford Haven area of England. We hope his prize proves both interesting and helpful.

To help us succeed in making the Furniture and Wood Group into what we all want, we would like to ask members to join in and help. Please feel free to join us at any of the committee meetings. If you are interested in getting involved please feel free to contact any committee member. Their names and email addresses are provided on the Furniture and Wood Group page of the Icon website. Thank you in advance for your help.

Metals Group

There have been a number of changes to the Metals Group committee this year. We would like to thank outgoing committee members Ian Clark and Stathis Tsohis and welcome Cymbeline Storey as our new web editor. Several roles have changed hands as well. The current committee members are:

Frances Keating (Chair)

Sharon Robinson (Secretary)

Seoyoung Kim (Treasurer)

Jacqui Ready (Events Coordinator)

Deborah Cane

Nicola Emmerson

George Monger

Richard Rogers

Cymbeline Storey

Our autumn conference and AGM, taking place on Friday 8 November 2013 at the Wallace Collection, London, will focus on all aspects of surface finishes for metals. The programme will include the use and discussion of:

- Waxes (hot & cold applications)
- Lacquers
- Varnishes
- Primers and paints
- Maintenance plans vs surface coatings

Tickets are £35 for students, £45 for Icon members and £55 for non-members. Further information and booking details are on the Metals Group web page. **The deadline for bookings is Friday 25 October 2013.** We hope to see you there!

The Metals Group is now on Twitter @ICONmetals. Follow us for the latest Metals Group information and links to metals conservation projects and stories in the news that have come to our attention. You can also find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/IconMetals.

The 4th edition of the Metals Group Handbook is now available. The cost is £5 for an electronic copy on CD-ROM. To purchase a copy please fill out the order form on the Group's web page.

The Group wants to hear about what you've been working on. If you have been working on an interesting project, no matter how small or large, then tell us about it. We are seeking articles that can be submitted to Icon News. For more details or to send an article, please email the group chair, Frances Keating (f.keating@mosi.org.uk).

Finally, we are currently in the process of organising study visits to several institutions in the near future. These will be announced on our web page as well as Iconnect, Facebook and Twitter as soon as venues and dates are confirmed, so keep an eye out for further details.

Photographic Materials Group

A Message from the Chair

I wanted personally to share my news with the members of Icon Photographic Materials Group. As some of you are aware, I been involved with our Group since its inaugural meeting as the Photographic Materials Conservation Group following the conference 'The Imperfect Image' in 1992. It has given me great pleasure to chair the Group in recent years, particularly with our current committee who have done much to bring about our successful and well-attended meetings.

From this September, I will be on a sabbatical from my role as the National Trust Photographic Materials Adviser to take up a place at Reading University in order to develop my teaching experience formally. As I resign the chairmanship of the Photographic Materials Group I am very pleased that our Deputy Chair, Sarah Allen, has agreed to take over as Acting Chair, until a new Chair is elected.

Anita Bools ACR 12 August 2013

And thanks from the group...

Anita has invested a huge amount of time and effort into the work of the Group and she will be much missed. We would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her hard work and wish her all the best for her future plans

Recruitment of committee members

The Group is looking for new committee members. We are not only seeking a new chair, but looking for members who would be interested in taking up other roles too. We will be electing members into position at our AGM later this year.

The committee is open to applications from conservators at any stage of their careers. It is a great way of gaining new experience, making contacts, and developing your knowledge in your chosen specialism. It is also an opportunity to influence the agenda and activities of the Group.

If you would be interested in becoming a committee member, please get in touch. If there is a particular area or role you are interested in taking on, then outline this in your correspondence, however, at this stage it is not necessary to state a preference.

If you would like to contact us informally for a chat before

making a commitment, then please contact Zoe Kennington:
Email: Zoe.kennington@lancashire.gov.uk
Tel: 01772 533037

Textile Group

The Textile Group held its AGM at Hampton Court, after the visit to the State Bed exhibition, on 21 June.

Three committee members stood down; Rosamund Weatherall, Louise Squire and Lynn McClean. Many thanks for their hard work and commitment.

New committee members were welcomed. Natalia Zagorska-Thomas (freelance textile conservator) and Alice Brown (Icon intern, Textile Restoration Studio) will work on events. Jane Smith (National Trust Textile Conservation Studio) takes over as Icon News sub-editor.

Leanne Tonkin, the organiser of the Back to Basics workshop held at the British Museum, has reported back on its success. It has been noted that the demand for this course has established the need for more appliance of science-led workshops with more practical applicability. This is something the Group intend to build on in the future. Thank you to all delegates who provided feedback, it is greatly appreciated. Rachael Lee has written a review of the workshop which can be found on page 24.

The group invites abstracts for papers for the Forum 'Joined up Thinking: Textiles and the Historic Interior' which will be held in London, April 2014. The forum will explore the issues involved in the treatment, care and display of all types of textiles within a historic interior. We welcome papers from conservators of all disciplines involved in historic interiors whether in historic houses, museums or other locations. We also welcome papers from curators and scientists involved in the same. Papers can be on either current or past projects. The deadline for papers has been extended to 24 September. Please email abstracts of 200 to 300 words to Zoe Lanceley at zoelanceley@hotmail.com

A visit to the Leather Conservation centre, Northampton University will take place on Friday October 11. This will include a tour and a short handling and identification session. If you are interested you can find full details on the Textile Group web pages, along with other related textile events and information.

CHANTRY LIBRARY NEWS

Photocopies

Don't forget that we supply photocopies of journal articles, chapters from books, and conference papers, which are held in the Chantry Library collection. Icon members may claim ten free articles each year, provided either as scanned pages or in hard copy. Email Ros Buck, Librarian at chantrylibrary@icon.org.uk, with your requests, quoting your membership number, or complete and send the copyright form available on the Chantry Library webpages www.chantrylibrary.org.uk (Library Services).



Ros Buck

Recently received publications

La description des reliures orientales: conservation, aspects juridiques et prise de vue edited by Raphaelle Mouren, Archetype Publications Ltd., London, 2013, 60pp.
ISBN: 9781909492028
Further details and contents pages: www.archetype.co.uk/publication-details.php?id=188

Recently received journals

The Book and Paper Group Book

Annual (AIC), Vol.31, 2012

Papers Presented at the Book and Paper Session, AIC's 40th Annual Meeting, May 8–11, 2012, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Art Business Today, August 2013

BAPH Quarterly (The Journal of the British Association of Paper Historians), No.87, July 2013

The Ephemerist, No.161, Summer 2013

The Ephemerist Item of the Month:
www.ephemera-society.org.uk/items/2013/iotm.html

The New Bookbinder (Journal of Designer Bookbinders), Vol.23, 2013

Studies in Conservation, Vol.58, No.3, July 2013

Contents pages, abstracts, some selected content online free of charge:
www.ingentaconnect.com/content/maney/sic;jsessionid=1vdbbpg0esb3.alice

Interesting websites

IFLA's work on preserving cultural heritage

www.ifla.org/cultural-heritage
IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) is pleased to launch a new set of resources relating to libraries and cultural heritage. The new webpages look at the work and support given by libraries to areas experiencing conflict, war, or natural disasters. They highlight the importance of cultural heritage in the continuity of rebuilding and re-establishing a community after disaster strikes. Furthermore they share the work of other organisations working in the field, highlight what IFLA is doing to secure cultural heritage whenever possible, and give you a chance to get involved.

Preserving History

<http://archivehistory.jeksite.org/index.htm>
This site provides practical, technical guidelines for creating archival digital files for historical photographs, documents and audio recordings. It describes methods and workflow for preparing the master files for presentation and covers the use of inexpensive consumer technology as well as more expensive professional technology, addressing the cost benefits of the different levels products. The website is aimed at historical organizations, families, and individuals and should be particularly useful for anyone working with budget limitations.

Rock Art Studies Bibliographic Database

<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/rockart.html>
This database is a compilation in progress which was begun in March 1993. Currently it contains over 27,000 citations to the world's rock art literature, with an emphasis on English language and North American citations.

The Getty Trust – Open Content Program

The Getty has created an open content program to make their images openly accessible for all uses. Find out more here: www.getty.edu/about/opencontent.html.

Find out more

There are several ways of keeping up to date via the Chantry Library:

- Check out the library blog 'Library News' <http://chantrylibrary.wordpress.com/> for further details of new resources and a full listing of all journal articles received over the past few month.
- Or you can have the news come to you by subscribing to the RSS feed and track new books and journals at the Library in real time. More details on how to do this are also at <http://chantrylibrary.wordpress.com/feed/>
- Details about new library resources can also be found in the quarterly Chantry Library Resources Updates, on the website here:
www.icon.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1827&Itemid=175

Conservation Librarians Group Update

The latest meeting of the CLG group was held at West Dean College, West Sussex in June. Discussions included volunteer involvement in libraries, the dissemination and listing of MA theses/dissertations, further development of the CLG online presence, researching e-books and e-resources relating to conservation issues and the sharing of resources. The minutes are available via the Chantry Library webpages: www.chantrylibrary.org.uk

The group explored the idea of creating a 'Library of the Month' for the webpages This would be a chance to showcase one of the CLG's libraries and also highlight a current project, success or new resources. The first may be Camberwell College of Arts – with news of their digitization of dissertations success, a direct result from being a part of the CLG network, and the international interest this has created.

Membership is gradually expanding; we now have over twenty five members and we are currently compiling a membership directory. The next meeting is planned for early December 2013 at The Courtauld Institute of Art in London.

Are you a librarian or archivist responsible for a collection of materials about heritage conservation that serves practitioners, students, or the general public? Perhaps you would be interested in joining the Conservation Librarians Group. To find out more, please contact Ros Buck, Chantry Librarian chantrylibrary@icon.org.uk

Icon Trustee Frankie Halahan writes about your Icon from her perspective



Frankie Halahan

I have now been a board member for just over a year. I put myself forward because I have always been involved with Icon and its predecessors one way or another, but felt that it was time to contribute a bit more to Icon.

When I was elected I was hoping that much younger people than me would be voted to be trustees: not because I did not want to be involved, but purely because I feel strongly that governing groups should be made up of a good range of the members,

including emerging professionals with aims and ambitions. I was, though, very pleased to have been successful and to be part of the team.

Throughout my career I have always worked within conservation. I now work as a consultant, helping people to look after and use their collections. Our work ranges widely around the preservation needs of collections. We work with all sorts of people from volunteers running small museums to large organisations and private owners. Before becoming a consultant I was employed in a large museum and abroad, worked in private workshops, ran conservation courses and finally developed into a consultant. I have worked overseas as well as in the UK.

This variety of work has enabled me to meet with many gifted, able and dedicated people working with collections and it has helped me understand what drives our non-conservation colleagues. This itinerant work has also helped me understand how people, both the public and colleagues, see conservators.

In my daily routine I do not attend a great number of meetings and, when I do, they usually have a specific purpose, so it is really interesting now to be involved in the board meetings that are concerned with current governance, long term planning and assessments of the shape and needs of Icon and the conservation profession in years to come.

My main current involvements as a trustee are to work with Kate Frame's small team to consider and develop Icon's communication methods which she described in Icon News earlier this year. I also join a meeting of the group chairs so that I, on behalf of the Icon Board, can listen to the issues and activities currently concerning the group members, and I participate in meetings concerning the Conservation Register.

These three aspects of the Board's work interest me greatly. Communicating to and from both the members and the public successfully is crucial to the future of Icon and essential for the conservation profession. We need to represent the members and their activities and skills as well as let them know what the Board is doing on their behalf and to listen to the members' views.

I have always been involved with various Icon Groups, and before that the UKIC sections, and I consider that their activities are a core part of Icon's work, which all members can benefit from and contribute to. I am therefore very keen to develop an understanding of the groups' plans and needs.

Similarly, the Conservation Register is an important Icon asset as it enables the public and heritage professionals to find accredited conservators and helps independent conservators reach their clients. However, we must ensure that it is managed well and provides the service that the members want.

Icon is in a robust position at the moment with a strong, enthusiastic and skilled team united and lead by a talented and dedicated chief executive but, as with most organisations, finding funding to facilitate all the activities it wishes to support is a continuous battle. One of the trustees' responsibilities is to understand and question where necessary the management of the finances. We underwent training at the beginning of our term to help with this but I still find it one of the more demanding and challenging aspects of a trustee's role. But I am determined to continue to learn, understand and contribute to this aspect of Icon's life

Icon's membership is small and the fees cannot fund all the activities we request as members and I admire the Icon team's success in obtaining funding from elsewhere, but it is a continuous, uphill battle that is not eased in these times of austerity. One of the great successes is securing the funding from HLF and other funders for the Icon internships which are a tremendous asset to the profession.

I should add that we are fortunate to have an Icon intern, Philippa Crofts, working with us on a project in Stoke-on-Trent. We feel privileged to have been invited to host an intern, as Philippa brings a great deal to our project and we are kept on our toes ensuring that she benefits as much as possible from the experience.

Employing the next generation of professionals

Jane Henderson, Senior Lecturer Cardiff University and Icon Trustee, takes employers to task for their cavalier treatment of job applicants



Jane Henderson

'Ten reasons why I won't hire you' or 'What's wrong with your CV?'. As another generation of students enter the ever narrowing job pool the media are quick to blame them for their own inability to find work. I agree that spelling the museum's name incorrectly or including a detailed description of babysitting does not make a good application. But blaming graduates for the job market is borderline victim blaming. When I graduated, toned down the purple hair and took off the DMs, I got hired, even

with my anti poll tax badges. Now I appreciate and share advice with students about how to interview better, but for once, just once, let's turn the tables and ask: *Would-be employers, what can YOU do better?*

My first dislike is people hiding behind Human Resource departments and saying their hands are tied. We are a profession. Recent graduates are part of the profession; we once got our first job and we will all meet again as we try to build our profession together. I know we are told that there are limitations to what we can tell unsuccessful interviewees but we can do better than:

'The job was given to someone with more relevant experience'. Well, duh. What experience did the interviewee not have? You had seen their CV so what was it that you wanted to hear about? Was it objects, safety, management? Please tell. The lack of experience is a vicious circle: candidates need your advice on the point they need to break.

'You are too experienced'. Seriously? If the candidate is prepared to do the job it is their choice. If you mean 'we don't think you will stay' say so, then they can address this. If

The author (r) with (fellow Icon Trustee) Siobhan Stevenson



you mean 'you are smarter and better than me and it would be embarrassing' then perhaps best stick to 'too experienced'.

'Just come for an informal meeting or tour'. Nothing is ever informal so don't say it is.

'You did very well and you came second'. It is nice to hear you did well but can you offer feedback? Interviewees torture themselves un-picking their performance. 'Your portfolio was stunning'; 'we thought you answered the H&S question well'; or even, 'your appearance and attitude suggested you would fit in here' would at least point up what helped them get to second so they can figure out what stopped them from getting the job.

'You have never worked in or with this type of museum/ location / collection / project'. Are you saying that you made them come for interview, prepare a presentation and worry themselves silly when a glance at their CV would have told you all you needed to know?

'If you have not heard in five weeks then you can assume we don't want you'. How rude. New conservators spend hours writing these forms; surely an acknowledgement is not much to ask?

'Come for an interview, tomorrow (or the day after)'. Yes, things get lost in 'the system' but this is not fair. Job seekers need one working day to get a travel warrant and yet I have heard more than once this year of notice that was less than that and of interviews at 10 am in London even though candidates are hours away. Could you match the travel time to the interview schedule?

'Attend in person, we don't do Skype interviews'. Although it is hard to perform on Skype if a would-be employee is on an excavation in the Middle East why not let them try out virtually? If you are not paying travel expenses why are you insisting on travel?

'We will get back to you'. I have watched one graduate wait a whole month after interview to hear if they had the job. Graduates sometimes hear on Facebook from the successful candidate before the employers let the others know.

'Sorry we don't offer feedback.' I think this should be against the Icon code of ethics. Recently I have heard from several graduates who had paid their own money to travel to interview and after all the work they were refused feedback or advice on improvement. Whatever the excuse this is NOT acceptable.

So I beg you, communicate. *'We got your application thanks, you have / have not been selected for interview.'* Then *'Thanks for coming to interview we have decided not to offer you the post but here are three things that we felt went really well and three areas where you could have made a stronger case.'* We claim to be a profession so let's act like one, starting with paying basic professional respect to the people who will be growing that profession behind us.

With extreme gratitude and indebtedness to all participants in the Cardiff graduates' Facebook discussion on the topic.

Moves



Dr. Helen Wilson has been appointed to the role of Conservator – Research and Development at The National Archives, Kew. Starting in October 2013 her appointment follows a year as a Conservation Research Fellow at The National Archives (2012–2013). A major part of her new role will be practice-led research on a ‘business-as-usual’ and project basis, aimed at delivering practical outcomes for preserving and maintaining the accessibility of The National Archives’ extensive records. Helen’s knowledge and skills in conservation research were gained during a Science and Heritage Programme PhD at The University of Manchester and the British Museum (2008–2012), an Icon HLF internship at The Pigmentum Project (now Art Access & Research) (2007–2008), and her MA Chemistry at the University of Oxford (2003–2007).



Graeme Scott has just moved to Glasgow from the Netherlands to take up the post of Conservation Manager for Glasgow Museums. Graeme studied architecture at Edinburgh University before embarking on a career in conservation in 1978 in Dundee Museums. After moving to Inverness Museum and later back to Dundee again, he went to work at the Australian Museum in Sydney in 1989, developing an interest in preventive conservation and taking a Masters degree by research at the University of Canberra. In 1996 he moved as Head of Conservation to the Dutch National Museum of Ethnology (Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde), taking over as head of the division of Collections Management in 1998. During his time in the Netherlands he was involved in setting up and managing collections care for two comprehensive building renovation projects, numerous exhibitions and international loans, as well as creating a so-called ‘mass conservation’ programme – in ten years about 45,000 objects were surveyed and 13,000 objects treated.

Fifty years in conservation!



In February of this year, **Sheila Landi** celebrated fifty years in conservation with a party at her home in Lincolnshire for friends, former staff and current staff of the Landi Company Ltd.

Sheila entered the profession in 1963, when she joined the Victoria and Albert Museum. When she retired from there in 1989 she began work in private practice and eventually set up her own company based in a stable block at Burghley House, Stamford.

Her working life so far has been notable for the introduction of innovative techniques (her work on the Erddig Bed was ground breaking); her tireless fight to turn textile conservation into a modern profession firmly anchored on scientific ground; her refusal to be daunted by the scale of any textile object and the publication of classic texts.

She continues to work with drive, enthusiasm, engagement and persistence. In the last two years she has set up a website for conservators to contribute to a library of technical and visual information on the textiles under their care, something she has wanted to do for a very long time (vtarchive.com).

New ACRs

The Accreditation Committee approved the accreditation of nine new conservator-restorers at its meeting in July.

Congratulations to everyone!

Karen Ayres, textile conservator, Historic Royal Palaces, Conservation and Collection Care

Thilo Bürgel, engineering conservator, National Museums Scotland

Margrethe Felter, archaeological conservator, York Archaeological Trust for Excavation and Research Ltd

Eleanor Hasler, paper conservator, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Peter Meehan, conservation manager and consultant, Historic Metalwork Conservation Consultancy Ltd

Kate Orfeur, textiles conservator, Historic Royal Palaces

Nicole Rode, textile conservator, The British Museum

Polly Saltmarsh, private easel paintings conservator

Samantha Taylor, preventive conservator, National Trust

In appreciation

Ian Constantinides 1955–2013

Ian Constantinides was one of the most innovative figures in UK building conservation history. Through his company St Blaise, he brought together the worlds of building and conservation at a time when architectural conservation was seen as something marginal and impractical. He raised the bar, ensuring that a broad range of skills and high standards of repair were applied to the nation's buildings. He did it all with extraordinary enthusiasm, a sense of adventure and discovery and along the way he trained a large number of builders in techniques of conservation; they have gone on to play a central role in conservation today. He was also a dynamic and informative teacher – his lectures on everything from lime plaster, to 'sex and conservation' were famed and well attended.

Ian was born in Amritsar, India in 1955. At the age of eight he was sent to boarding school in Britain, from which he was eventually expelled after weekly dashes for freedom. There followed a period as a miner, an apprenticeship in precision engineering and a more serious spell with the Atomic Energy Authority. Finally he settled on the building trade after, as he put it, 'trashing his first country cottage', to which he made penitent pilgrimages for the rest of his life.

In 1982 when Ian set up St Blaise, there was a wide gulf between conservators and builders. Ian invited people from all the trades on to the building site and

encouraged them to learn from each other. Although he always thought of himself as a 'builder' and not as a conservator, he played an important part in making conservators feel that they could hold their own with fellow professionals and encouraging architects and surveyors to include conservators in any team.

Ian understood the value of a building's relationship with the landscape, and how closely this was connected to building materials: St Blaise was fearless in resuscitating old building techniques – from working with lime to reopening a quarry to get the right material to repair Wardour Castle. Ian was a great believer that the human eye was the best tool of all, 'better than the tape measure, the set square and the water level' and that it is better not to repair at all than to repair badly.

Passing Windsor Castle in 1992, he called a colleague to say he 'could see flames.' He was on the site while it was still smouldering. He noticed that the coving in the Grand reception room was modelled free hand. Despite the fact that his estimate was higher than the others, he won the contract to restore it because he was direct and frank in interview. Windsor Castle was not the only building the company built up from the ashes. They rebuilt St Ethelburga's Church in London destroyed by IRA bombing in 1993 and they replaced all the joinery in Uppark House, Sussex following the 1989 fire.

Under Ian's directorship, St Blaise was involved in the repair of hundreds of



historic buildings. The company worked at the highest academic end of building conservation, for English Heritage, CADW, Historic Scotland, The National Trust, The Landmark Trust, as well as major sites such as the British Museum. When he died, he was working on a project in the chapel in King's College, Cambridge.

In recent years, Ian turned once again to the open road. As the heritage industry became more established he lost interest even though this was to a large extent due to his constructive input. Whilst delighting in the increasingly widespread care for old buildings in Britain, he despaired of the increased bureaucracy that came with it. When he began, interest in the workings of lime mortars was at the cutting edge of conservation – but in recent years he felt that the industry was becoming increasingly complacent.

Ian was a unique character; through his zest for life, his friendships and his passion for old buildings, he made a significant contribution to the conservation profession and life will certainly seem slightly duller without him.

Clementine Cecil

This is an abridged version of an obituary of Ian. The full text can be found on the Stone and Wall Paintings Group page of www.icon.org.uk

Tanya Pollard 1973–2013

Tanya was diagnosed with pelvic cancer in February this year and died peacefully at home on Friday 2 August.

Tanya began her career in IT having gained a BA in Business Studies from Brighton University and worked for both IBM and Eurostar developing and streamlining their IT processes. She retrained in Conservation and achieved a BSc in Conservation and Restoration from London Metropolitan University in 2006. She worked as a conservator at the Natural History Museum and joined the Museum of London in 2009.

Tanya was passionate about her work and loved the people that she worked with. In her role as ACE Collection Care Development Officer for London she had a regional remit to provide strategic collection care advice and support to museums London wide. It was an environment in which she thrived, combining her love of collections and expertise in caring for them, with her warmth for people and the satisfaction that she was helping them to make a difference.

Tanya was based in the Conservation and Collection Care Department at the Museum of London and worked on a number of high profile projects. Her IT and software expertise were especially valuable during the production of RAPT, the Risk Awareness Profiling Tool, with Birmingham Museums Trust. Tanya's IT skills and knowledge of software development were fundamental to RAPT's success. She also went on to

develop a number of collection care e-learning tools which are designed to communicate collection care principles to diverse audiences.

One of her final projects was to establish the Volunteer Development Programme, a pilot scheme to teach museum volunteers how to care for and surface clean their collections. Her energy and enthusiasm were infectious and her natural teaching ability engaging. It is because of this that one of Tanya's legacies is a highly trained core of conservation and collection care volunteers at the Museum of London.

Tanya was a brilliant and talented professional; funny, creative and a friend. She leaves behind her partner Richard, her parents Ian and Jill and her cats Toby and Twiglet. She will be much missed by us all.

When Tanya became ill she elected to support Jo's Trust, a charity which raises awareness of and supports women with cervical cancer. We established a fundraising campaign in the last few months of Tanya's life and this will continue in her memory. You can contribute by visiting www.justgiving.com/racefortanya

Sharon Robinson

Collection Care Manager, Museum of London

Paisley's Grand Fountain

Over the next few issues of Icon News we will be following the progress of a challenging ironwork project. The work is scheduled to last for forty weeks and began in late July. Jim Mitchell ACR, of Industrial Heritage Consulting Ltd, sets the scene

The Glasgow iron foundries turned out a massive volume of ornamental and structural cast ironwork from the mid-19th and well into the 20th Century. Structures ranged from prestige buildings in India, bridges over the Thames, Sao Paulo's main railway terminus to the facade of Selfridges on Oxford Street.

Public bandstands, drinking and ornamental fountains were erected in most UK towns' and cities' parks as Victorian philanthropy created green spaces in industrial areas. Three of the most prolific foundries were George Smith's Sun, Walter MacFarlane's Saracen and McDowell Steven's Milton Ironworks. Public fountains were very much celebrating the triumph of clean water, as it became more widely available in industrial towns.

The Coats family of Paisley made their fortune from cotton thread manufacture and sponsored many public projects in the town. One of these was Fountain Park, laid out in 1867. George Smith's Sun Foundry supplied five fountains, one of which was the central Grand Fountain. Four full-sized walruses in cast iron were featured, each weighing around two tonnes and spouting water from their nostrils. This could have been connected with Coats' predilection for hunting the animals in the Arctic; although he did redeem himself by sponsoring the highly successful but little known Scottish Antarctic Expedition of 1902.

Coats was very much caught up in the vibrant Glasgow arts scene which produced fine architects, artists and interior designers. One of the latter group was Daniel Cottier, a key proponent of Aestheticism who was to become an internationally renowned colourist and stained glass artist. Cottier was commissioned to decorate the fountain in variegated bronzes and translucent glazes.

Historic Scotland carried out a detailed paint analysis in 2007 and traces of his finishes were revealed under much darkened layers of varnish and subsequent 'municipal' paint schemes. They also carried out 3D digital scanning, an invaluable tool in mapping such a large object. After detailed development work, Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund have provided £0.5m to Renfrewshire Council to save the fountain and to finish it in a way that recognises Cottier's complex scheme.

The fountain will operate again, with a new underground treatment plant recirculating and purifying the water. Lost Art and Industrial Heritage Consulting have been commissioned to do the work.

The fountain survives, relatively complete but in a derelict and dangerous state. It is a Category A listed building; one of

three large iron fountains so designated in Scotland. It is, of course, a complex assembly of parts with its wrought iron fastenings almost completely failed through interactive corrosion. Dismantling and recording poses the first major challenge with over one hundred and fifty overlapping cast iron floor plates – which leaked from soon after the fountain was commissioned. We have little idea what we will find beneath them.

'Fountain No 1' from the Sun catalogue. They never built another on this scale, but there were a number of smaller variants



A 21st century approach to condition reporting

Annika Erikson describes the development and design of an App to streamline condition reporting

The problem

We have all felt the pain of condition reporting: ticking boxes, scribbling notes, trying to read other people's handwriting - sometimes in a foreign language - figuring out the correct order of the sheets which may be in disarray; taking hundreds of photos which may not be filed anywhere anyone will see them again, typing notes, or scanning or photocopying.

Whatever method is employed is almost invariably time consuming and fairly inefficient - an archaic manual process or a Frankenstein's creature of manual and digital processes, sewn awkwardly together and lumbering along.

The Eureka moment

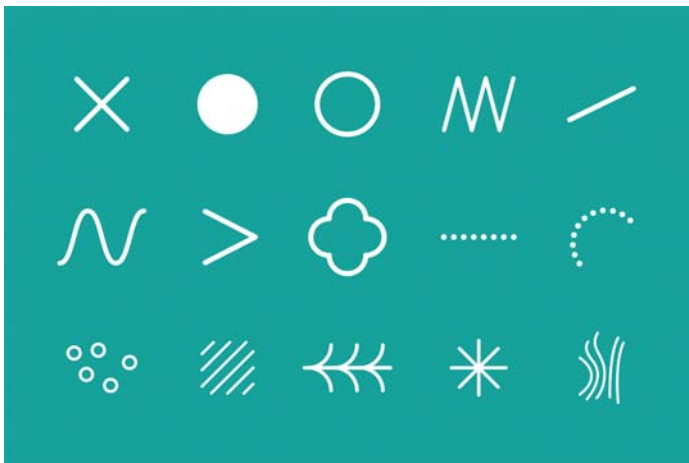
Two and a half years ago, at a Documentation Day dedicated to finding more efficient ways of working, conservators at Tate spoke excitedly of the new iPad, and a future where condition checking would be done on tablets. This new iPad did not have a camera and the galleries did not yet have wifi, so the conservators felt that the technology was close but not quite there.

As a paper conservator working for Tate at the time, I felt strongly that this was the way forward and hoped that this new era of streamlined paperwork might give conservators more much-needed bench time. With this in mind, I assembled a team and started working on the project in my spare time, working towards a vision of creating a new international standard for the process of condition reporting, the symbols and terminology used. I am now assembling an Advisory Board to further this end.

Ready to roll

Now, with a basic version already available on the App Store and a new, more complex version hitting the App Store next

Symbols representing different issues or types of damage



month, the future is here! Articheck brings together the elements needed to compose a professional condition report - detailed notes, images and diagrams, organized in a clear and meaningful way. The new version will have templates for Works of Art on Paper, Paintings, Sculpture, Objects, and a template builder for other media types.

Facilitating focus

Several years ago, an article in the AIC Journal on condition reporting highlighted the need to keep one's attention on the object. Switching attention from object to document back and forth can reduce effective detailed observation, and it recommended two conservators for the job, one to observe and one to record. This is a luxury not often afforded, however, other than in surveys. But we have combined the technology of mobile devices, that allow input of data and images directly in front of the object, with a form designed by a conservator to maximize direct observation of the object while capturing the required information. The voice recording function, for example, will allow the conservator to make notes while keeping their eyes on the object. These notes can be exported to text, or kept as a voice recording so that the next conservator can enjoy the same benefit of keeping their eyes on the object.

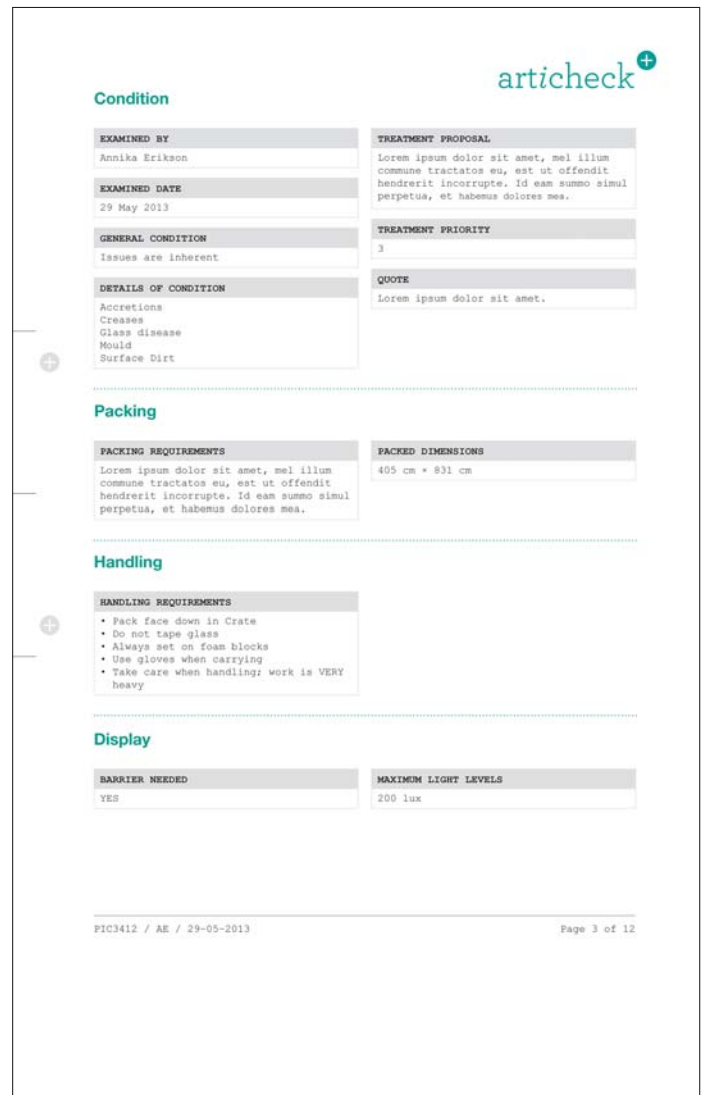
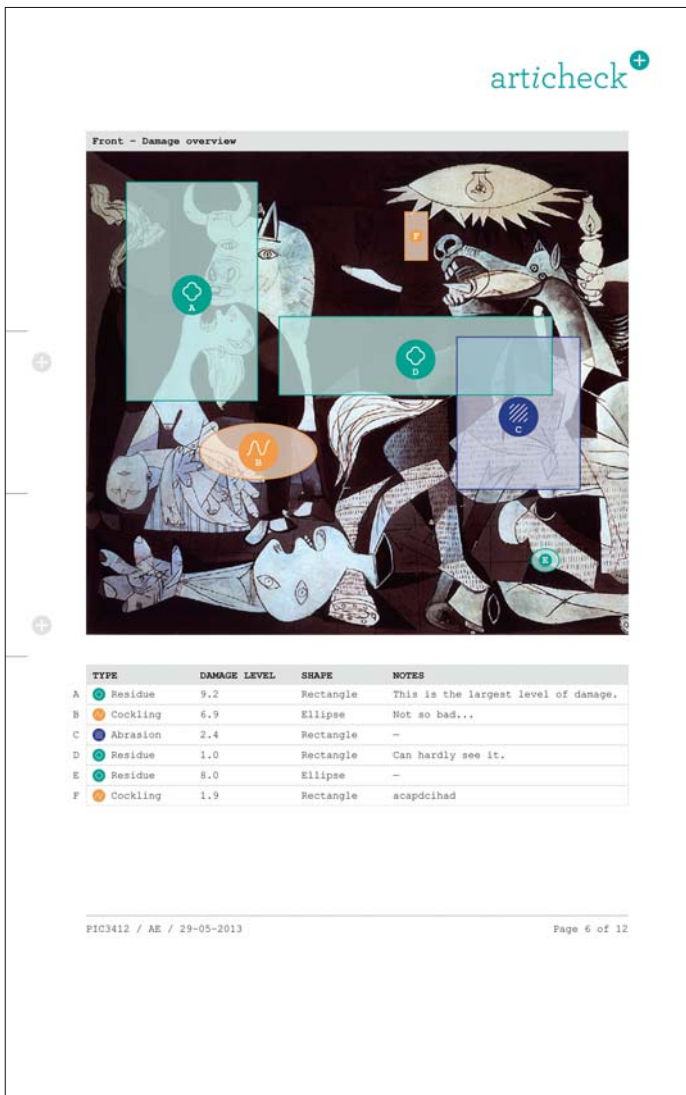
Saving time

There are great time saving functions too: with auto populating fields, one need never fill out a field fifty times in a row again! If you have a group of twelve charcoal drawings by Gauguin of the same size, from the same lender, for the same exhibition, in the same type of frame, you can enter all those details once, and copy to the next report each time.

In a recent timed test at a well-known contemporary art gallery, condition checking an object took forty minutes using their own process and ten minutes using Articheck.

How it Works

- Download Articheck from the App Store and try it out for free. (You get ten free reports). You need internet access via wifi or 3G to login, but then you can work off-line, until you want to share the reports.
- Stand in front of the object, enter details about the artwork such as the title and artist. Take a picture of the artwork. Bring up the tool bar, choose the symbol correlating to the issue or damage you see. Choose a box or ellipse to indicate the area of damage. To each area of damage, you can add notes, voice recordings, detailed images and scale the level of damage. You can even annotate the detailed images with more symbols, notes and images, allowing you to zoom in as closely as you like. You will be able to upload your logo and signature into the template, so that this is included in every report.



Sample pages from a condition report

- When you are finished, the system for sharing reports is easy, and you can share PDFs that cannot be edited, or if working on a loan or exhibition, you can share via the app for other conservators to add to.

Looking ahead

You will soon be able to create or belong to a group, which might be for an exhibition, or a particular collection, on the Artichek Secure Web Portal, and your reports will be filed in that group. Your colleagues with access to that group can access the files for themselves, open them on their iPad or iPhone, and add to them if they have permissions. In this way, museums and galleries can add to reports for incoming and outgoing checks, and then pass the reports on to the next museum for a touring exhibition.

It will soon be possible to integrate with Collection Management Systems and Spreadsheets. Artichek will be able to import and export data to and from CMS using CSV files (a simple common file that all spreadsheets share), or you

can go one step further and integrate more fully using APIs.

An Android version is coming soon and translation is also in the pipeline, so that conservators don't have to re-do or labour over condition reports they receive in another language.

I think that Artichek is an exciting new product that will help reduce time spent on administration and increase bench time. Please help by trialling the app and sending feedback to Annika@artichek.com. If you like it, further details on pricing can be found on the website, at www.artichek.com. Larger institutions should get in touch with me.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 9th Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Conservation will be held on Monday 2nd December 2013 at 17.00 in London, Chancellor's Hall, First Floor, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU, to consider the following business:

Ordinary Resolution 1: To receive the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2013.

Ordinary Resolution 2: To authorise the Trustees to appoint the auditors to serve until the end of the next Annual General Meeting.

Ordinary Resolution 3: To authorise the Trustees to decide the remuneration to be paid to the auditors.

We will advise you of any changes/additions to the Agenda as soon as it becomes available.

Members are invited to stay on after closure of business for a glass of wine.

So that we can estimate numbers for catering please let us know if you are planning to attend by sending an email to membership@icon.org.uk

Alison Richmond, Chief Executive

19 August 2013

Notice of Board Elections

Call for Nominations

Do you have strategic vision or experience of strategic decision-making? Do you have an understanding of charity finance? Are you able to communicate effectively? Are you willing to take responsibility for corporate decision-making? If the answer to these questions is 'yes', then Icon needs you!

What is involved in being a Trustee?

Job descriptions for elected Board members are available from the Icon website. The term of office of an elected Trustee is three years. There will be approximately five meetings of the Board in 2014:

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Away Day | 29th January 2014 |
| Board Meeting | 26th March 2014 |
| Board Meeting | 25th June 2014 |
| Board Meeting | 24th September 2014 |
| Away Day | 29th October 2014 |
| Board meeting & AGM | 1st December 2014 |

Travel expenses are paid up to a maximum of £150 per board meeting. You can see biographies of current Trustees on Icon's website: <http://tinyurl.com/o67ay5j>

How does the election work?

This year there are four seats open for election, including the reserved seats for Scotland and for Northern Ireland and two unreserved seats. Nominations for the reserved seats for Scotland will only be accepted from Full and Accredited members who have a preferred address in Scotland. Nominations for the reserved seats for Northern Ireland will only be accepted from Full and Accredited members who have a preferred address in Northern Ireland. Two seats are open to nominations from all Full and Accredited members. Candidates seeking election to reserved seats may also seek election to unrestricted seats.

To put yourself forward as a nominee, please complete and return the nomination form available on the Icon website to arrive at the Icon Office by 17.00 on 25 October 2013.

Ballot papers will be sent out to members eligible to vote on 12 November 2013. Ballot papers must be received by the Icon Office by 17.00 on 27 November 2013. The results will be announced to members at Icon's AGM on 2 December 2013.

Icon Needs You!

Please consider standing for the Board and contact Alison Richmond if you would like to discuss running for election. arichmond@icon.org.uk

Alison Richmond, Chief Executive

12 August 2013

Historic
Royal Palaces

Conservation 100 autumn evening talks

Our conservators' talks are:

- **Face to face with the emperors (terracotta)**
- **Royal wedding dresses at Kensington Palace**
- **State Beds: Uncover the story behind the story**
- **Caring for the tapestries at Hampton Court**
- **Rubens's ceiling: a rare survival at the Banqueting House, Whitehall**
- **From our palace to your palace (preventive conservation)**
- **Science: it's in everything that we do**

All talks begin at 18.30.
Ticket prices: £12 (£10 members)
Includes drinks reception

For dates and booking details:
hrp.org.uk/conservation100talks
or call **0844 482 7799**

Visit our blog: conservation100.hrp.org.uk





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- 19th and 20th century wall clocks for Somerset House Trust
- The Dairy at Waddesdon Manor
- the altar table at Wycombe Abbey School
- faux marble 'Gower House' table top for The Courtauld Art Gallery.

For more information contact:

Julie Catlow
julie.catlow@bucks.ac.uk
01494 722 490
bucks.ac.uk/bucksconservation



COURSES

UNDERSTANDING PARCHMENT

Oxford, 24–28 June 2013

Entering the gloom of a disused warehouse, tucked away in the back corner of an Oxford industrial estate, to find hunched figures engaged in stirring plastic vats of skins immersed in a solution with a rather sinister smell of dead flesh, put one in mind of the set for a certain type of American gang-land film. This was, however sinister it may have appeared to passers-by and health and safety officials, the start of a group attempt to produce parchment under the expert guidance of **Jiří Vnouček**, ably assisted by his son **Jonathan**.

Arranged jointly by conservators at the Oxford Conservation Consortium and the Bodleian Libraries and, with generous financial support from The Association for Manuscripts and Archives in Research Collections (AMARC), Conservation By Design, The Leathersellers' Company and the Wellcome Trust, this course was designed for mid-career conservators working with medieval parchment manuscripts to learn about the most durable of writing supports through practical participation in the parchment-making process from the lime-bath stage to finished product, supplemented with lectures on, and hands-on examination of, medieval techniques and products.

It is a pleasure to be struggling for terms of praise which do justice to this intensive, revelatory week. Seldom have I enjoyed all the elements of a course so much: long will its lessons remain with me and enhance my conservation work!

Questionnaires for participants circulated in advance of the course allowed the tutor to assess expectations and areas of interest, and from there to tailor the week to the needs of this particular group. Although I debated whether to answer 'Rather squeamish' to the initial question asking for any impediments to full engagement in the practical elements of the course, I need not have worried. Despite being extremely smelly, rather gruesome to view, and slightly nauseating to the touch at first, the concentration and physical exertion required in cleaning the lime-soaked pelts of calf, sheep, goat and deer, combined with Jiří's running commentary on his craft, left little room for such anxiety.

This end of the process is not for the faint-hearted (and wellies are essential), but all participants were soon deeply engaged in the work of de-hairing and removing extraneous material from the flesh side of the skins. After rinsing the cleaned skins overnight, we spent the next day assembling hearses on which to tension and dry them and learning how to attach the tensioning cords with pippins of dampened paper or small pebbles, or lengths of dowel. Initially



Jiří demonstrates cleaning of the flesh side of the pelt

nervous about damaging the skins, I was amazed by their strength and resistance to tools from this stage onwards. Participants split into smaller groups to tension the skins and scrape the flesh side with various knives before rubbing in a sloppy mixture of chalk paste and finally setting the skins to dry in some welcome sunshine.

Jiří's lecture style is unconventional but wonderfully engaging: his enthusiasm and experience win over his students and wider public audiences alike. I have long believed in the importance of educating the eye alongside academic education and Jiří's analysis of parchment, relying as it does on

low-tech but highly detailed visual examination of membranes renewed my enthusiasm for this approach. The great lesson to take from this is the huge amount of information which detailed study using the simplest of resources – close inspection enhanced with a magnifying lens and back-lighting provided by a near-by window – can draw out of every leaf of a medieval book.

Chris Clarkson and **Martin Kauffman**, curator of medieval manuscripts at the Bodleian Libraries, joined us for a session devoted to examination and discussion of a selection of the library's manuscripts in the Conservation Department which served as a

Completed calf, goat and sheepskin parchments





Attaching the cleaned skins to the hearse ready to be tensioned and dried



Scraping the taut skin before leaving it to dry

spring-board for wider parchment-centred conversation that had to close all too soon. It is to be hoped that such conversations will be taken back to the various institutions represented on the course and that, eventually, we can develop and agree upon an accurate vocabulary to describe our observations of the physical features of parchment manuscripts.

Returning to the warehouse, we concentrated on the parchment-maker's true work, the finishing of the skins. Scraping and pumicing the drum-like membranes filled the air with the ring of the semi-lunar knives and clouds of fine parchment dust. The process has an addictive quality as the dried chalk is scraped away and continued work produces a fine velvety knap to the surface. I had assumed that five days' work by novices would produce 'interesting approximations' to true parchment; yet here were skins which one could use, membranes each with their individual interest and beauty!

This was the icing on the cake of a week of truly enlightening work which I heartily recommend to anyone working with parchment, conservators and artists alike. I think I speak for all the participants in expressing warm thanks to Jiří and Jonathan, colleagues in Oxford who put in many hours of preparatory work to make the week the success it was, and to the sponsors whose generous support enabled the course to take place. The efforts and enthusiasm of all are deeply appreciated and have, I am sure, given everyone exciting and insightful lessons in the study and appreciation of such a satisfying material and the skill of its makers.

Edward Cheese, ACR
Conservation Manager
Cambridge Colleges' Conservation Consortium

CATHEDRALS' WORKSHOP FELLOWSHIP CWF Stonemason conservation study block Canterbury Cathedral 20–25 May 2013

Seven stonemasons from four of England's greatest Cathedrals were welcomed by Canterbury Cathedral to study and share knowledge of conservation techniques and philosophy.

Catherine James and Peter Arts from York Minster, Pourang Tajally from Winchester, Alex Clarke from Gloucester and Michael Graves from Lincoln all joined Canterbury stonemasons **Jen Jordan** and **Sam Matthews** for a week's intensive study block.

The week's activities included a variety of presentations, demonstrations and seminars as well as on-site experience with the in-house masonry and conservation team. Many of the sessions were made available to other members of the Cathedral's staff and to Purcell Architects, who have an office in the Cathedral Precincts and of which John Burton, the Surveyor to the Fabric, is a Partner.

Jamie Fairchild of Restorative Techniques started the week's proceedings with a presentation on decay mechanisms in stone, followed by a demonstration on site of the Jos wet-head air-abrasive stone cleaning system and the opportunity for the students to try their hands at this and at steam cleaning.

In the evening a group was led by **John Burton** on a tour of the Cathedral's interior, climbing to the top of Bell Harry Tower and then descending, via many of the roof spaces, to the Crypt. The students were fascinated by stories of the history and architecture of the Cathedral brought to life and made entertaining by the Surveyor.

On Tuesday conservator **Ned Scharer** took the group to look at the beautiful pavement in the Trinity Chapel, where he described the history of this particular pavement and of mosaic in general. He went on to outline the pioneering work undertaken to conserve and repair the cosmati pavement at Westminster Abbey, in which he played a lead role, and how those same techniques have informed his approach to the investigation of the Canterbury pavement.

Later the same morning Ned was joined by **Nigel Gervis** of Ty Mawr Lime and **Myles Yallop** of Limecrete who each gave a practitioner's insight into the properties and uses of lime as a building material, both historically and for the future. It is useful for the students to know that the lime-based methods they are being taught in the context of the magnificent, historic buildings on which they work also have applications for modern construction and that they are being refined and promoted as a cost-saving, efficient and eco-friendly means of building low-cost housing.

Concluding the lime theme for that day, **Liz**

Hirst of Hirst Conservation gave a presentation on Nano limes and some of the projects on which she has been using them to consolidate stone, plasters and mortars.

Wednesday morning was given over to conservator **Tobit Curteis** of T C Associates, who gave a lucid and informative overview of the mechanisms of decay in stone and plaster, followed by a fascinating tour of the Cathedral where he explained the environmental monitoring system which he and his colleague Eike Friedrich have installed. He also described projects that have been informed and shaped by the data gained from the monitoring system, including the work by the Hamilton Kerr Institute on the Royal Tomb Testers and more recently the projects to conserve the glass and ferramenta of the south oculus in the SE Transept and the glass and masonry of the Great South Window in the SW Transept.

All day Thursday was spent on site putting into practice some of the theories on cleaning techniques, mortar repair and shelter-coating learned on Monday and during previous study blocks. The practical sessions were led with great enthusiasm and expertise by **Neil Bywater** from Lincoln Cathedral, ably assisted by members of the Canterbury stonemasonry and conservation team.

On Thursday evening Architects **Jonathan Deeming** and **Jodie Hill**, both of Purcell Architects, put the case for the conservation of late 19th and 20th century structures, giving examples of previous projects in Oxford and current work at Battersea Power Station. This was an intelligent, amusing and well-led discussion, looking at material, concrete in particular, that is sometimes regarded with indifference, (or worse), by many buildings' conservators, but that will nevertheless pose a considerable challenge to them in generations to come.

Friday morning was spent in information-gathering, when the students were invited to first look at the Great South Window, currently shrouded in scaffolding both inside and out, and then convene in the masons' drawing office to share what they had found. They were asked to offer explanations for any problems they had encountered, and finally make suggestions for remedial repair and conservation. After this the in-house team revealed what intensive research into the failure of the window over the past five years has made known and in describing the conservation plan for both the stone and the glass, what this means for the window in the future.

The study block finished at midday on Friday.

Heather Newton, ACR
Head of Stone Masonry and Conservation,
Canterbury Cathedral

BACK TO BASICS WORKSHOP: Wet cleaning

Icon Textile Group

British Museum London 27 June 2013

This one day workshop held at the British Museum's Organics studio was led by **Dr Anita Quye**, formerly a chemist and materials analyst and now a lecturer at the University of Glasgow. The workshop was aimed at understanding the scientific principles that underpin wet cleaning. This was a valuable opportunity to re-evaluate the irreversible implications of wet cleaning and particularly useful for textile conservators who find they do not wet clean regularly.

The day started by reviewing cleaning agents and plotting Teas' charts to work out the solubility of different organic solvent types. This was a useful reminder of how these charts can be a practical tool in matching soiling types to the most effective solvent. The importance of water quality was also discussed at length.

In the afternoon necessary health and safety issues were revised as well as the accurate use of measuring equipment. A practical session covered pH testing and how to measure out buffers by molecular weight as opposed to grams and percentages.

The choice of detergents was also discussed and comparisons between anionic and non-ionic were debated. During deliberations between the two it became apparent that many conservators are looking for an alternative to the non-ionic detergent *Dehypon LS45*, due to its low cloud point of 20°C. The practicalities of sustaining the temperature of the wash bath at 18°C (just below its cloud point) throughout washing and rinsing has proved to be problematic, particularly with large tapestries and during

Back to basics on the wet cleaning course



Photograph: Leanne Tonkin

Icon/HLF interns at the Textile Restoration Studio, Cheshire, with owner Jacqui Hyman

the warmer months of the year.

Since the discontinuation of the non-ionic detergent *Synperonic N*, which had a higher cloud point of 36°C, *Dehypon LS45* was thought to be the most suitable alternative and has proved to be highly efficient at soil removal; however its low cloud point inhibits its usability.

It was agreed that more time was needed to discuss detergents further and the idea of an informal follow up meeting to share experiences and look at alternative non-ionic detergents was suggested.

Since this workshop, conservators at the V&A have been looking into an alternative non-ionic, *Dehypon LS 54*, which has a cloud point of 30°C. Further experimentation is needed but it is hoped that the results of this will be shared in the near future.

With special thanks to Anita Quye, Leanne Tonkin and Monique Pullan for organizing the workshop.

Rachael Lee

Assistant Conservator V&A Museum

VISITS

CONSERVATION STUDIO VISITS FOR ICON INTERNS

4 & 14 June

Studio visits were arranged to four conservation studios currently hosting Icon/HLF interns, in textiles and painting conservation. The visits in London and Manchester were both well attended with interns specialising in sculpture conservation, preventive conservation, collections care, archaeological conservation, painting conservation and textile conservation all attending.

The days were organised by the interns as a chance to experience the diversity of institutions and private practices involved in the scheme and a great opportunity to see behind the scenes in the conservation departments and talk to conservation staff. It provided a chance for the hosting interns to talk about the work they are completing, a skill we all need to develop for future employment. Importantly, the days acted as a way to create and strengthen links

between interns across the conservation disciplines, as I hope we will have the opportunity to work together in the future.

Tuesday 4 June

A morning visit to the Textile Conservation Studio at Hampton Court Palace gave textile conservation intern **Charlotte Gamper** the chance to discuss her involvement in the display of the exhibition 'Secrets of the Royal Bedchamber' as well as giving a quick tour of the three specialist textile conservation studios (tapestry, furnishings and general textiles and costume).

Jemma Edwards, conservation of paintings intern based at Rangers House, Greenwich, described the conservation treatment of a painting removed from the wall at Kenwood House. She was able to show us the new lining she had applied the day before and discuss the proposal to infill any losses.

Rebecca Chisholm, preventive conservation intern, gave a tour of Rangers House discussing the monitoring of the display cases she has been working on as part of the conservation team at Rangers House.

Friday 14 June

We met at the People's History Museum, Manchester and textile conservation intern **Danielle Connolly** showed us the Textile Conservation Studio where she was working on a Co-operative Society banner. A tour of the museum galleries gave her the further opportunity to discuss banners she has worked on that are now out on open display.

To complete the visits, textile conservation intern, **Alice Brown** took the group to The Textile Restoration Studio, a private conservation studio in Cheshire. Due to the nature of the private practice, completed items are quickly returned to clients and so could not be shown. As a result of this, treatment proposals for items that were in the future conservation schedule were discussed and completed items were viewed in a portfolio format.

This concluded two very busy and exciting days fuelled by mountains of tea and cake. A big thank you to all those involved in four very successful visits.

Alice Brown, Icon Intern
The Textile Restoration Studio.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF CONSERVATION

Icon Textile Group

Hampton Court Palace, London June 2013

The morning visit celebrating one hundred years of conservation at Hampton Court Palace combined a tour of the new state bed exhibition 'Secrets of the Royal Bedchamber' and the Textile Conservation Studio.

This well attended day commenced with a welcome and introduction by **Kate Orfeur**, before being guided to Mary II's apartments and the start of the exhibition.

At the heart of this temporary exhibition are six royal beds which are said to make up the world's largest and rarest collection of early State beds. Exploring the spectacle of the bedchamber through these beds, personal and treasured possessions, portraits and room settings, the exhibition presents a dramatic display telling the story of how and why the bedchamber became the most public and sought after room in the palace. During the heyday of the State Bed Chamber in England (1660–1760) state beds were a place where heirs were born, marriages consummated, monarchs died, and important affairs of state conducted. This was all before an audience of courtiers, politicians and family members.

Throughout the exhibition, textile conservators were positioned to share further information about specific objects, their origins and the conservation work undertaken. The first of these four talks by **Zoe Roberts** introduced a gilded bedrail used to distance visitors away from the King

Queen Anne's State Bed



and the State Bed. First thought to be from the period of Charles II, dendrochronology proved that the rail was in fact much earlier, dating to 1640–1650 within the reign of Charles I. With very little original archive material, the original intended location of use and configuration can only be speculation.

Gabriella Barbieri gave an insight into the conservation on Queen Anne's Bed. This state bed, of genoa velvet in golds and reds, provided conservators with many considerations for treatment. The original velvet panels within the tester roof had been lost and replaced in the 1970s with mustard coloured velvet. During conservation these were removed. Eyemats of Chatham, Kent were used to print high resolution panels of the pattern onto brushed polyester, after experimenting with other types of fabric, as a replacement in the tester.

Another splendid bed featured was the infamous 'Warming Pan Bed', the state bed of James II's Queen, Mary of Modena. It was the scene of the royal birth that sparked the quiet revolution that led to the end of the Stuart line. This talk by **Karen Ayers** focused on the logistics of moving the bed from the 'enchanted exhibition' at Kensington Palace to Hampton Court with minimal disruption for both.

The final talk, given by **Charlotte Gamper**, concentrated on the conservation of the George II early 18th century travelling bed. This rare, miniature, state bed, standing at 8ft 8" high consists of fifty four pieces, twenty seven of which are individual pieces of textile. An adhesive treatment undertaken on the silk components within the 1960–80s had deteriorated during open display, so between 2003 and 2005 the adhesive treatment was reversed and damage supported with the addition of conservation stitching.

The second half of the morning was a tour around the textile studios looking at the current projects and research within each department: science, tapestry and furnishings. These included the conservation of foot curtains from Queen Anne's bed and the use of digital printing technology to reproduce the pattern of the silk velvet onto conservation net to enhance the visual appearance.

This visit provided an opportunity to put into context the historic custom of attending court and the use of state beds. It also gave an insight into the use of Eyemat printing for conservation material as opposed to its more usual use of protecting carpets.

Aimee Grice-Venour, Assistant Textile Conservator,
National Trust Textile Conservation Studio



Visiting the de Morgan Foundation

THE DE MORGAN FOUNDATION

Icon Ceramics and Glass Group

Wandsworth London June 2013

Most ceramics conservators are probably familiar with the work of William de Morgan and will have seen examples of his work in a variety of museums. However, fewer might be aware of the paintings of William's wife, Evelyn de Morgan. In early June, a group of Ceramics and Glass conservators were fortunate to be able to visit the de Morgan Foundation in Wandsworth. This wonderful collection of ceramics and paintings created by both William and Evelyn de Morgan was formed by Evelyn's sister, Mrs Wilhelmina Stirling, and bequeathed in Trust for the public to enjoy today.

The group was treated to a fascinating talk by the collection's curator about the life and work of William and Evelyn. William de Morgan was heavily influenced by Islamic Iznik pottery, and many examples of his brightly coloured blue and green ceramics can be seen on display. One of his greatest contributions to ceramics was, however, his work into lustreware. The bright coppery reds and golds on his tiles and pots are particularly impressive. We are all familiar with the classic 'Bedford Park Daisy' and other designs but his work was far more wide reaching than this, as evidenced by the opulent two foot by five foot Galleon tile panel, one of a series of twelve commissioned for P&O liners.

I was quite surprised to learn that despite the popularity of his work today, William de Morgan was actually more successful as a novelist than as a ceramicist. He only started writing at the age of sixty five but his books managed to make the couple financially stable. Whilst they are no longer in print, they are well worth tracking down.

As if a stunning display of ceramics was not enough, the walls of the museum are hung with many of Evelyn's paintings, all-in-all making this collection a wonderful testament to the remarkable skills of this couple.

A good time was had by all – we'd like to thank the staff at the de Morgan Foundation for their warm reception. If you have some time, do go to the museum and take a look: www.demorgan.org.uk/

We hope that more people will feel inspired to join the group at the next Ceramics and Glass event later in the year!

Rachel Sharples
CGG Secretary

CONFERENCES

CONSERVATION MATTERS IN WALES: SHARING CONSERVATION DECISIONS 2013

National Library of Wales, 13 & 14 June 2013

The conference was funded by the National Library of Wales, CyMAL and the School of Art, Aberystwyth University

Day 1

The Sharing Conservation Decisions Conference at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth was an ideal forum to discuss the issues surrounding our actions and develop ideas on what we actually do regarding conservation of our collections. Being a consultant with some independent museums I was looking at the talks thinking how the issues raised would affect these institutions.

The talks on the first morning, chaired by **Sarah Paul** of CyMAL, raised vital issues for such museums. Both **Dean Sully's** talk on the

conservation of Hinemihi Maori meeting house at Clandon Park and **Dinah Eastop's** on ethics and decision sharing raised the issue of conservation as a social issue. This also was a theme in **Helen Hughes'** talk on the debate on presenting the Great Hall of Kelmars Hall.

Although looking at very different projects, the three morning talks raised questions that all conservators and most curators face: what does authenticity mean, and how does it differ with various 'stakeholder' groups? The importance of conservation as a social interaction with values based and people based approaches is a day-to-day issue facing independent, volunteer run museums, especially when they do not have, or cannot afford specialist conservators at hand.

The afternoon talks, chaired by Helen Hughes with **Sally McInnes** speaking on the sharing of conservation skills throughout Wales, and **Scott Waby** on digitisation were valuable contributions for those of us with large archives of documents that require specialist care and the creation of surrogates.

Adam Webster's talk on painting conservation and **Hannah Woodward's** on Tudor funerary portraits were excellent technical introductions to the issues of art conservation, which were enjoyable, even to the non-specialist. They were also great appetisers for the evening lecture by **Bob Meyrick** on the 'Isleworth Mona Lisa' and the private viewing of 'From the Shadows: The Prints of Sydney Lee RA RE RWS (1866-

1949)' and 'Gwilym Prichard: A Lifetime's Gazing', both at the School of Art, Aberystwyth University.

Peter Alexander, Museum and Heritage Consultant, Rhyl, Denbighshire

Day 2

The second morning, chaired by **Jenny Williamson**, started with **Susan Bradshaw**, Icon's Professional Development Manager. She presented an overview of Icon's work in supporting and developing careers in the field of conservation, especially PACR: Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers. Icon-supported internships and the diversity of career paths in conservation discussed in the session were of particular interest to the students present.

Tim Padfield then followed with a frank debate about conservation standards, questioning the accepted environmental parameters for conservation. His work should be introduced to all students studying heritage preservation and conservation so that the next generation of artefact guardians question the efficacy of standards and the motivation of those anonymous experts who write them. PD5454 will never be read the same way again.

The next three presenters addressed administrative decisions in conservation.

Jane Henderson, Cardiff University School of History, Archaeology and Religion, discussed the conservation process; who is involved in that process and how are decisions made. **Cordelia Rogerson**, Head of The British Library Conservation Department, described how her department has adopted a 'Fit for Purpose' policy as a response to the rapid changes in available resources and the effect of digitisation. The results of adopting a different approach to conservation decisions mean that her department is more efficient and responsive to the needs of the Library. **Joel Taylor**, Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage NIKU discussed the merits of material versus value conservation.

The afternoon session, chaired by Jane Henderson, featured the decision-making process of four hands-on conservators describing current or recently completed projects. **Gemma Aboe** described researching the significance of a 19th century Ethiopian shield and how that influenced her decision making as the conservator of that artefact. **Mark Allen**, Flintshire Record Office, discussed conservation decision making with limited resources in the public sector. **Dilwyn Williams**, National Library of Wales presented the procedures involved in conserving 'The Boston Manuscript' and how facsimile copies are produced within a national institution. The session finished with **Moirá Buick** outlining the same process of conserving and producing facsimiles within the private sector. Comparing the resources available to Dilwyn and Moira highlighted how similar tasks are approached within

Dilwyn Williams, Conservation Officer at the National Library of Wales



different parameters.

Delegates left the conference with plenty of information to mull over and a lasting impression of the warm welcome provided by the excellent hospitality of the National Library of Wales.

Jan Marshall, Student, School of Art, Aberystwyth University

CONSERVATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

May 13–15 2013

ICOM-CC THEORY & HISTORY OF CONSERVATION Working Group

May 15–17 2013

National Museum of Denmark

Sometimes looking back and reflecting on the shifting contexts of and for conservation acts as a valuable reminder of why conservation happens – historically, currently and in the future. The back-to-back conferences held in Copenhagen in May this year provided such an opportunity. Over the course of a week thirty-four speakers – mostly European or North American – provided a fascinating variety of papers covering historic and contemporary conservation approaches and projects. Both conferences were opened by complementary papers by **Salvador Munos Vinas** setting the scene for the different, yet related, emphasis of each conference.

The papers for *Conservation in the Nineteenth Century* took an historical perspective charting the emergence of the profession and, while many papers did cover techniques, many speakers covered or included the changing value systems and cultural shifts that emerged in the 19th century and that prompted the rise of

preservation for preservation's sake and not for repair or re-use. Striking was the use of historical and financial archives and object labels used to inform research, as much as technical examination of work carried out on objects. Several papers covered described early manuals – essential reading for those specialist disciplines – despite the confusion created by changing terminologies fully acknowledged by the speakers.

Conservation's relationship with and dependence on artists, art historians and archaeologists and the values they placed on objects and heritage – with their creative visions of past times, nationalist ideologies, artists' shifting reputations, politics, inequalities, gender and cultural contexts – was very clear. What is preserved has always reflected human relationships with objects and it was good to be reminded of how subjective our work is and how infrequently this was and is documented.

The papers at *ICOM-CC Theory and History of Conservation Working Group* continued these themes, yet brought them up to date by considering current contexts, and the final paper (by **Joel Taylor**) suggested a future approach – that of intergenerational justice. There was a slight feeling of unease and uncertainty, perhaps the result of a global recession forcing cultural change upon the profession? Despite this, it was refreshing to be discussing why conservation happens, (and not how), and hopefully the papers presented and published will inspire further such work on the history and theory of conservation.

Both conferences were superbly organized and hosted by **Isabel Brajer** and the conservation team of the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, with support from the National Museum of Denmark and the Danish Agency for Culture. The preprints of *Conservation in the Nineteenth Century* are published by and available from Archetype Books:

Conservation in the Nineteenth Century, Isabelle Brajer (ed.) ISBN: 9781904982913 www.archetype.co.uk/publication-details.php?id=182

The papers from the second event will feature in a forthcoming edition of the online journal *CeroArt*:

<http://ceroart.revues.org/84#tocto1n2>

I would like to thank the Clothworkers' Foundation for a CPD Grant to attend both conferences.

Ann French Collections Care Manager/Conservator (Textiles) Whitworth Art Gallery University of Manchester

LECTURE

THE USE OF GELS IN AQUEOUS CONSERVATION OF PAPER

Icon Book and Paper Group CTR Course Wellcome Institute, London June 2013

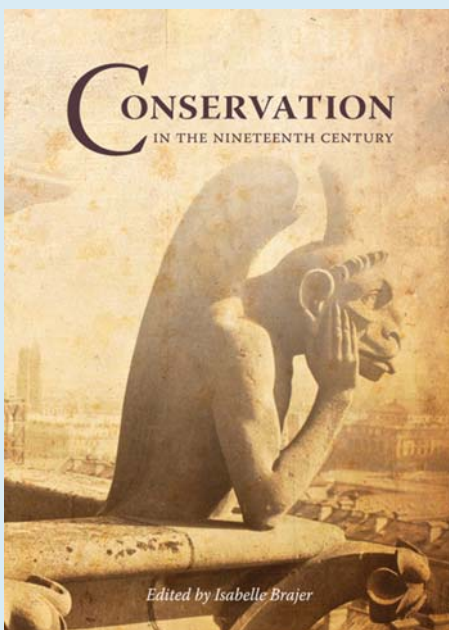
Since the mid-1980s, especially in the field of cleaning of easel paintings, the name Wolbers and gels have been closely linked. Initially, **Richard Wolber's** research focussed on the use of solvent-carrying gels based on the polymer Carbopol® and resin soaps. They have since extended to the use of new methods involving aqueous gels, culminating in the publication of his book, *Cleaning Painted Surfaces: Aqueous Methods* (2000).

Richard has been teaching workshops on the use of gels in conservation throughout this period all around the world. He was in London running his *New Methods of Cleaning Painted Surfaces* course for International Academic Projects when he was invited to speak by the Book & Paper Group on aspects of another of his workshops developed for paper conservation.

Although obviously an accomplished chemist, Richard's background is in easel painting conservation. He began by expressing his dislike of exposure to solvents, preferring water-based systems of emulsions and gels. Few, especially in paper conservation, where water is the prime solvent, would disagree with this. Most of the chemicals he went on to mention were selected due to their lower toxicity or biodegradable properties. Although his workshops cover a wider range of materials, his lecture focussed on three non-toxic polysaccharides: xanthan gum, gellan gum and agarose.

Paper conservators are used to applying cellulose ether gels as swelling agents or as a carrier for enzymes. Some other gels have been used, such as Laponite® and Cellogel®. By comparison, the recipes for gels for cleaning painted surfaces can appear complex. As well as solvents, gels can carry enzymes, buffers, chelates, surfactants, salts and thickeners; the point being that they are tailored to act in a specific way upon the substrate. However, the gels that Richard discussed could be prepared relatively simply and, if desired, used solely for their capillary action to draw out discolouration.

Each of the three gelling agents had differing properties that could be exploited. Xanthan gum, used in the food industry as a stabiliser for ice cream, remained as a gel at a range of pH levels from 1 to 14 and regardless of salt concentration. Should the substrate being treated be acidic, xanthan gum would not, like some polymers, form precipitates. Whilst xanthan gum's negative ionic charge means it is not appropriate as an enzyme carrier it can hold a wide range of salts including chelates. It is also compatible with acids, water-miscible solvents and forms





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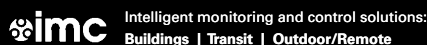
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stable emulsions with water-immiscible solvents up to 20% w/w without the need for a surfactant. In fact, it can act like a surfactant and pull dirt away from the substrate and into the gel. They are, though, incompatible with oxidising agents such as hydrogen peroxide.

At this stage, Richard went on to mention a number of solvents, such as iso-propyl palmitate as an alternative to white spirit and dibasic ester-type solvents with similar solubility parameters to xylene and toluene. He also touched on silicone solvents classed as dimethylsiloxanes and cyclomethicones which can be used as a masking material in aqueous treatments in a similar manner to cyclododecane and will evaporate in a relatively short space of time.

Several articles have been presented recently on the use of rigid gellan gums and some in the audience were already familiar with its potential applications. Although similar to the cellulose-like, branched polymer of xanthan gum, both deriving from bio-fermentation of a sugar source, a 2% solution of gellan gum forms a rigid, water-containing sheet which can be cut and handled.

It cannot be used with many other additives; chelates would remove the vital calcium ion within the molecular structure, but small amounts of ethanol or isopropanol could be added. Its potential use in paper conservation was as a swelling agent or poultice and a means of drawing out soluble discolouration. The product used, Gelzan[®], was relatively cheap and gellan gum is non-toxic and biodegradable.

Finally, Richard dealt with agarose, a rigid gel forming material derived from a seaweed source. Unlike xanthan gum, it has no ionic charge, and, unlike gellan gum, it does not bind calcium ions so it can be used as a carrier for enzymes, buffers and chelates. One of Richard's former students has described its use as a carrier for trypsin, a protease enzyme but it can also be used with families of enzymes. The gel can be formed in petri dishes, cut and lifted into place for local enzyme treatments. Potentially it is also an effective carrier for EDTA, with or without the addition of a reducing agent like sodium dithionite, as a chelator for iron(III) oxide.

Richard described another useful application. Small agarose gel discs placed in temporary contact with paper can be removed and tested with a pH probe to give an indication of surface pH of the paper, without risking the tidelines sometimes formed when probes are placed in direct contact with paper. He suggested that when agarose gel was used for cleaning paper or textiles, the capillary forces involved can be greater than those from a vacuum suction disc.

I have personal experience of using agarose gels with enzymes successfully although one issue with them is that water is rapidly drawn from the gel block into the paper, potentially leaving tidelines. Richard had explained that with 1-3% w/v gels this can be a problem but with gels of 5-6% the water is released much more slowly and the capillary forces tend to draw material from the substrate into the gel. Unfortunately, for enzymes to move

from the gel to the substrate successfully a low percentage of 1.5%, with the added risk of tide-lining, was necessary.

Another question on chelates in agarose gel led Richard to suggest the potential of HBED chelates and Tiron[®] as alternatives to EDTA / dithionite that could be explored. The use of barrier layers was also raised and, although residues of all three gels should be removable with water rinsing, Bondina and barrier papers could be used to aid handling and removal.

Richard's years of teaching on this subject make him an eloquent and authoritative advocate for seeking out more efficient, less toxic and greener alternatives to orthodox conservation treatments and we were very grateful to him for taking the time, after a full day teaching, to come and talk to us. The Getty Conservation Institute carried out the Gel Cleaning Project (1998-2003) to investigate further the properties and actions of the solvent gels proposed in the 1980s. Although much data is already available from the food industry, something similar would be welcomed to investigate further the use of aqueous gels in a conservation context and explore the potential of Richard Wolbers' innovative approach to problem solving.

Thanks go to Amelia Rampton and those involved with the Co-operative Training Register (CTR) who organised this event. The lecture and question session was filmed and the link will be available on the Book & Paper Group site 'The Gathering'.

Richard Hawkes ACR

From beetles to The Beatles



Entomology Products (Pages 71-75)



Phonograph Record Storage Sleeves (Page 27)

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CONSERVATION IN FOCUS: true colours revealed

by Jürgen Huber ACR, Senior Furniture Conservator at the Wallace Collection

INTRODUCTION

This article explains the work undertaken on an 18th century French commode to stabilize the lifting wood-veneer decoration, clean and conserve the overall structure and the gilt-metal mounts. During this treatment some of the original colours of the veneers were revealed and the image shown below is a digital reconstruction of the original colour-scheme, based on the colours found on the underside of some of the loose veneers. The medallion section was not lifting, so is a more hypothetical digital reconstruction based on archival sources.

HISTORY

On 9 December 1780 a fabulous chest of drawers or 'commode' (inventory no. F247) was delivered to the palace of Versailles by the royal cabinet-maker, Jean-Henri Riesener (1734-1806) for use in the cabinet interior of Marie Antoinette. It was subsequently bought in the 19th century by the 4th Marquess of Hertford and is now part of the Wallace Collection where you can see it in the Study.

Described as a 'new model' in the palace records, the commode marks a step towards the refined simplicity of Riesener's later works. He used the lattice-work marquetry and tripartite form for which he was renowned, but embellished the piece with jewel-like gilt bronze mounts that are more delicate and naturalistic than those on his earlier works. These depictions of real flowers – including roses, pinks, narcissi, poppies, lilies-of-the-valley and dahlias – reflect the love of nature which was such an important element in French court fashion at this time and which was a defining characteristic of Marie-Antoinette's personal taste. In the centre of the frieze at

The Riesener Commode, partially digitally reconstructed using the original colours found during treatment



© by kind permission of the Trustees of the Wallace Collection



Detail of the commode before treatment

© by kind permission of the Trustees of the Wallace Collection

the front, garlanded by flowers, are the Queen's initials framing the key-hole. The workmanship is of the very highest quality.

In 2011 the commode was identified as being in need of conservation treatment and was subsequently taken off display and assessed. The main cause of concern was the lifting marquetry/parquetry decoration and a vertical split in the panels on either side of the commode. Various options for treatment were discussed and the treatment commenced shortly after.

TREATMENT

In order to treat the lifting marquetry all the metal mounts were removed. It then became immediately clear how much the colours of the wood veneers had faded over time. Underneath the mounts, protected from light, the colours were much richer. Furthermore, the flowers in the marquetry show evidence of sand shading, a technique by which the edges of the veneers are scorched in hot sand to create shading, (illustrated on page 31).

The marquetry

In all the veneered parts of the commode, fine hairline cracks had developed from the underside of the different veneers, right through the shellac polish to the surface. These veneers also started to lift or delaminate at the points where different types of wood veneer abutted, or different wood-grains met. Advantage was taken of the latter as it helped a great deal to re-adhere lifting veneers and marquetry decoration. Moisture followed by diluted protein glue was driven underneath the veneer using these hairline cracks, re-hydrating the original glue slowly, with the aid of heat (approximately 50°C) and a little pressure. For areas that were difficult to clamp, a frame was made and glue blocks ('sandwiches' of silicone rubber, Perspex and rubber like PVC sheet) were pushed down using flexible wooden dowels.

During the time-consuming process of rehydrating the old glue layer, only an area of the size of each lozenge was

Digital reconstruction by Marine Robidel



Removing mounts reveals the original colours of the veneer. Parts of the insignia can also be seen

treated at any one time. Too much moisture absorption by the wood veneers would risk not only changing their visual appearance but also their size. Excess moisture might also reactivate the naturally occurring or artificial dyes in the wood veneer, causing the marquetry to lose definition and become cloudy in appearance.

The polish

The shellac polish, applied in 1943, was already very dark originally, and had darkened further during the past seventy years and the decision was taken to remove it. Such decisions are not taken easily and many factors have to be taken into consideration. However, on this occasion the advantage of increasing the definition and contrast of the marquetry was considered more desirable than keeping a film-forming material applied in the 1940s. The polish was removed using a paper poultice dampened with IMS. In order to protect the veneer decoration of the commode a few coats of pure shellac blonde, a much lighter polish, was applied with a 'rubber', followed by a coat of microcrystalline wax.

The mounts

The mounts were gently dusted before being exposed to IMS vapour. The softened shellac varnish was then removed with liquid IMS. On a few mounts some of the gilded areas were gently cleaned with warm de-ionised water and a soft bristle brush. Stubborn corrosion products and accumulations of dirt and old varnish were removed by using a bamboo stick which

The back of the plinth with later alterations indicated by arrows



Detail showing the original sand shading

was sharpened frequently to avoid any embedded corrosion products scratching the gilding. All mounts treated with water were rinsed with de-ionised water, left to dry and finally rinsed with an acetone/IMS mix.

All mounts were waxed using a synthetic microcrystalline wax, applied with a brush and a hot air gun to ensure better penetration and coverage. Any corrosion or discolouration which could not be removed using this method was toned-in using mica powder in white spirit, applied with a brush after the mounts had been waxed.

Alterations

During the treatment it became clear that some alterations had been carried out since the commode was first made. The basic carcass was completely original, but the plinth had been altered in the past. The most obvious signs of alterations are the lion-mask mount on the apron, and the semi-circular gilt-metal moulding on the lower edge of the plinth, both of which differ from the rest of the mounts in style, quality and the method of their fixing. Also, the plinth does not follow the concave corners of the carcass, which would indicate that either it is not original or it has been altered.

Once the lion-mask mount was removed, the differences in the veneers were even more apparent. The veneers used on the plinth clearly differed from those used on the carcass. The

The bottom of the carcass showing two holes next to each other.



colour of the former appears very artificial, probably because a dye had been used to imitate amaranth wood.

As it was dismantled, the true extent to which the plinth had been changed in the past became visible. Its upper part matches the rest of the commode perfectly in terms of craftsmanship and choice of timber. The joinery on carcass, drawer, and upper part of the plinth is simply magnificent, exhibiting all the hallmarks of an 18th-century cabinet maker of the first order. The original part of the plinth is jointed with mortice and tenon joints, the back joints being slightly dovetailed. The sides are veneered with amaranth, then over-veneered with oak and, finally, the oak itself has been veneered over with the present later veneer, clearly applied over the original and the new parts of the plinth to disguise the alterations. The result is a now physically much higher plinth.

There are two holes next to each other in the upper part (the original section) of the plinth for the threaded screw bar fastening the feet onto the plinth, indicating that at some stage the location of the feet must have been changed.

A pair of holes can be seen for each foot on the top of the plinth but not on the underside of the new section; that part of the plinth's wooden structure must therefore have been applied when these alterations were carried out. Also, the quality of the woodwork of the new part of the plinth differs from the upper part, and various joints indicate that off-cuts were used to increase the overall height but not strengthen the construction. The joints generally are also extremely tight and precise, indicating that machines were most likely used to make them, probably in the 19th century

When the mount of the central frieze drawer was removed, three beads on either side of the M in the Marie-Antoinette monogram remained attached to the drawer. These three beads on either side must have been purposely removed rather than broken off accidentally because the bead chain is quite strong, is protected from damage, and the 'break' on both sides is in precisely the same place.

Furthermore, close visual examination using our stereo microscope and XRF scanner, on both front and back, confirmed that the three beads were part of the original mount. The size of the beads corresponds perfectly to the decreasing/increasing size of the whole string, matching the first and last bead of the chain. The surface on the back of the mounts shows identical gold splashes occurring during the process of mercury gilding, and the colour of the copper alloy is identical to that of the rest of the mount.

XRF analysis confirmed the same metallic composition, including the presence of mercury, gold, copper, zinc and trace elements such as iron and silver. The breaks or cuts do not match perfectly but this could be for many reasons; the beads could have been slightly reworked to fit onto the drawer and during this process edges may have been rounded off. Also, the beads may not have been cut off the mount using a saw but with pliers, or snapped/broken off. One of the loose beads has a hole drilled through it in order

to take a pin, while others have been drilled into in order to take a threaded screw. This leads to the conclusion that the insignia was purposely altered to disguise the commode's provenance and at some stage the insignia was completed again.

Redisplayed

The commode is displayed in the newly refurbished Study at the Wallace Collection. In addition there is a small display in the Ritblat Conservation Gallery which lasts until 1 January 2014 and features the digitally reconstructed commode and the treatment outlined in this article.

Over the course of the past few months there have been several talks on the treatment and subsequent discoveries made and I will be giving a further talk on 19 November at 1pm.

A video about the conservation work can be seen on: www.youtube.com/watch?v=j98fZOUoVbY

Please see the Wallace Collection website for further information: www.wallacecollection.org/whatson

in training

CASTING A RELIABLE LIGHT ON REPAIRS

A simple but ingenious technique designed and developed by Michael Cox, BSc graduate intern at The Wallace Collection Conservation Department, uses ultraviolet light reactive fluorescent compounds in conservation to identify repairs and alterations reliably

An award winning innovation is currently being piloted at the conservation department of The Wallace Collection. This innovation has been developed in order to support identification and re-treatability in conservation. The pilot marks the culmination of a project which explores the controlled introduction of a range of fluorescent compounds (fluorophores) as ultraviolet light responsive materials in the conservation and restoration of objects. The subject of this pilot is a magnificent eighteenth century French commode (inventory no. F406) veneered with walnut and ebony and decorated with contre-partie bouille marquetry of turtle shell green-stained horn, mother-of-pearl and brass.

Conservators are familiar with the use of ultraviolet light as a visual aid to identify repairs and restoration, as these additions will often fluoresce with different characteristics to the original materials when exposed to an ultraviolet light. Ultraviolet light is also commonly used for cross-sectional and paint surface analysis: again the different materials within the surface layers of an object may fluoresce to different degrees and so aid differentiation between the layers of materials



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The French commode used for the pilot project

used. Fluorescence spectroscopy is also a widely-applied technique for protein analysis and identification.

Current practices rely on a degree of chance in that the degree to which a particular material within or on the object will fluoresce is often unpredictable. Indeed, when like-for-like materials have been used the fluorescence differentials can often be too small to be useful.

Developing the controlled use of UV Light

Two years ago a research project was initiated to develop a technique that would utilise ultraviolet light reactive materials to firmly and reliably identify repairs and additions made to objects. If this technique could be successfully developed it would allow repairs and additions to be clearly identified at a later date thus supporting re-treatability.

The project's aim was to introduce these materials into the restoration process in a controlled manner through their addition to fillers and coatings. There are many hundreds of compounds with ultraviolet responsive properties; the number of commercially available compounds though, which are identified specifically for their ultraviolet reactive properties, is much smaller. These compounds have the ability to absorb invisible ultraviolet energy, usually in the 340–370 nm region of the electromagnetic spectrum, and re-emit a portion of this energy as visible light in the blue wavelength region of the spectrum (typically 420–470 nm) when excited by ultraviolet light: they fluoresce with an intensity that allows them to be readily identified from other materials. And so, these compounds are primarily used for whitening within the textiles, cosmetics, and paper and plastics industries and can also be used as security products. These compounds are

produced in a number of forms; however, the focus of this project has been on their use as a dye or as a dyed thermoplastic pigment.

The project was developed around a series of trials, during which the technique was adapted and monitoring systems were established.

Trial 1. Sample Boards: Figs 1 & 2

This initial trial explored the compatibility of a range of fillers with a range of both solvent based and water soluble fluorescent dyes. It also considered the optimum filler-to-fluorescent dye ratio. Many permutations were applied to the sample boards. At this stage water soluble dyes proved to be the most successful and were compatible with both traditional and commercial fillers.

This trial also explored the use of ultraviolet responsive materials in water based paints for use in colour matching during the restoration process. It became clear that some water based paint colours quenched the fluorescence when combined with ultraviolet light reactive dyes. The next step in the trial then was to identify a fluorescent pigment that contained ultraviolet light reactive properties. The trial concluded that, in powdered form, pigment successfully fluoresces when combined with fillers and also when combined with many of the paint colours.

As the first in a series of trials, initiated in 2011, the sample boards have provided a marker from which to monitor the photostability of the different materials once combined with a filler and applied.



Fig. 1

Trial 2. Frame Section: Figs 3 & 4

This trial was intended to develop the combination of ultraviolet light reactive materials with composition and gesso in a mock-restoration scenario to assess viability and to identify any issues that may interfere with the normal restoration process.

Having previously established the suitability of a powdered pigment (top sample) and identified the optimum ratio of fluorescent materials to gesso / composition, the process was carried out successfully: the addition of pigment did not compromise the repair process while the pigment successfully retained the required fluorescent properties. Application of the gesso with water soluble dye also gave comparable results (bottom sample) but was felt more likely to migrate or leach.

Trial 3. Object Restoration of Japanese Anatomical Manikin: Figs 5 & 6

Issues were raised in the first trial around the quenching of colours when adding ultraviolet reactive agents to water-based paints resulting in some paint colours not effectively fluorescing. Therefore, this trial explored how successfully ultraviolet reactive pigment could be used as a surface coating on areas of repair at the end of the restoration process to act as a further marker to the repairs. After trials, a pigment was successfully combined with a variety of possible surface coatings that could be utilised for different types of projects.

This object is composed of paper pulp surrounding a wire/wooden armature. The figure is hollow in parts; layers of paper are applied to the pulp to create a substrate onto

Fig. 3

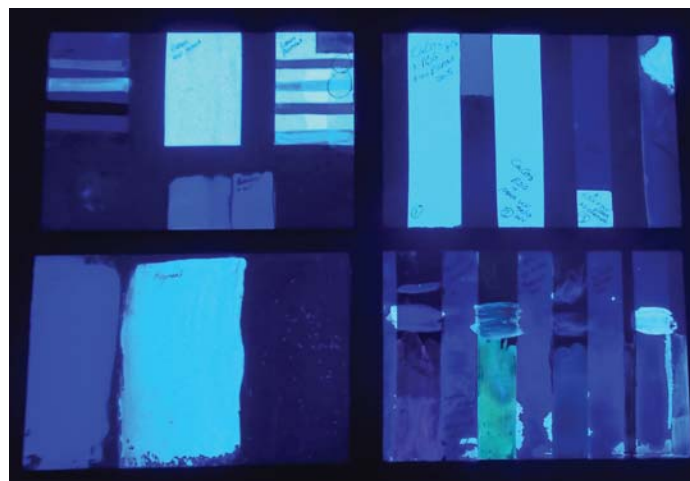


Fig. 2

which a gesso ground is applied. Trials for a suitable barrier which could eliminate the possibility of materials migrating determined that methyl cellulose created a good barrier between the paper substrate and gesso filler and additionally allowed for the fills to be easily removed. After infilling of losses with gesso and ultraviolet responsive materials and further inpainting with water based paints, an application of rabbit skin glue with 5% w/v of fluorescent pigment was used to further tag the repairs. The object had a natural matt reflective surface finish. To match this, funori was applied to reduce the surface sheen to a matt finish. This coating was applied on top of the combined fluorescent pigment and rabbit skin glue. The funori did not inhibit the UV light reactive pigment from fluorescing.

The trial concluded that the ultraviolet reactive pigment selected was appropriate as an additive to both the filler and coatings. The material was selected also because of its strong fluorescence, its high fluorescence quantum yield and its photostability.

The Wallace Collection Pilot Project: Eighteenth Century French Commode: Figs 7-12

A pilot project was launched in April 2013, in collaboration with the conservation department of The Wallace Collection, to utilise the process in the restoration of an eighteenth century French commode.

A full conservation treatment programme had been proposed for the commode in January 2013. Pre-treatment explorations had concluded that as a result of the fragmented nature of losses on the object and the high possibility of causing further losses if attempts were made to replace with like-for-like

Fig. 4



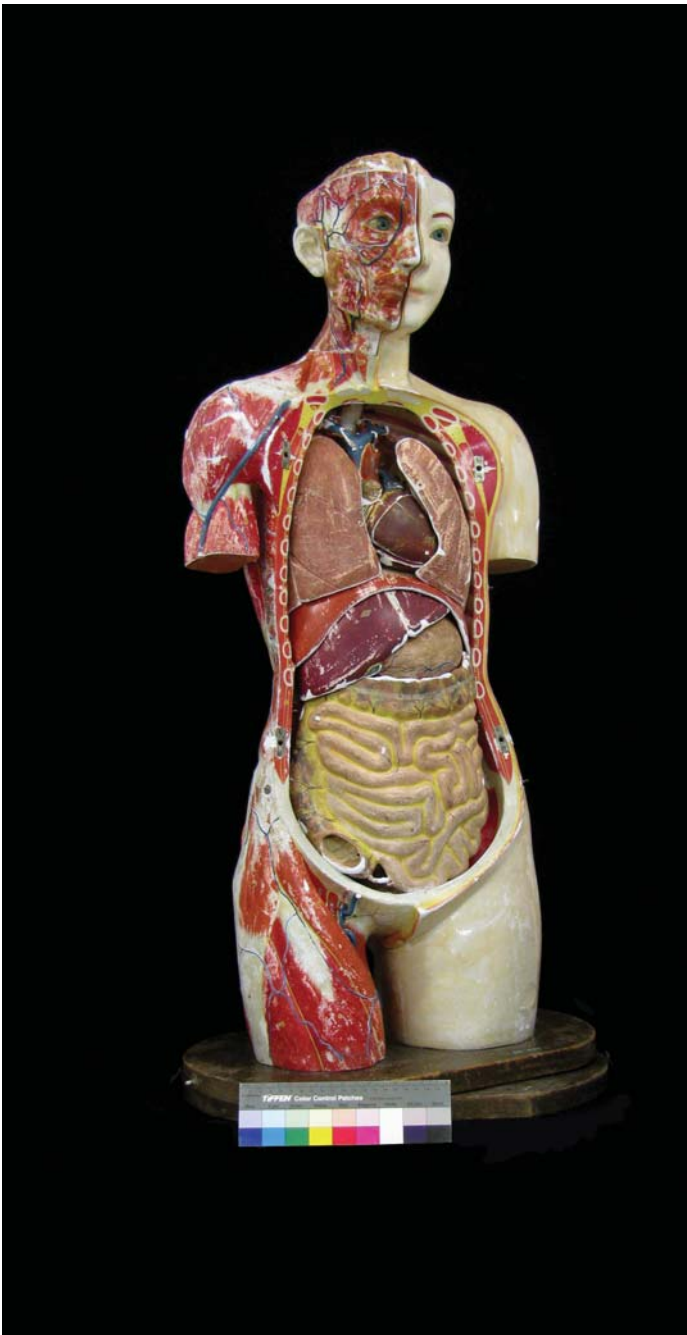


Fig. 5

materials, a gesso fill would be used for the restorations.

The identification of repairs and ease of re-treatability were considered to be of paramount importance to the success of the treatment and therefore, as well as a comprehensive treatment record and full photographic documentation, the innovative use of ultraviolet responsive materials was considered to be perfectly suited to this project. After consideration, the conservation and curatorial teams at The Wallace Collection approved its use. By July 2013 this part of the conservation treatment programme was complete.

This project is particularly significant as a follow-on from the trial phase as it is only within the museum environment that careful long term monitoring of a restored object can be undertaken to examine the long term photostability of the fluorescent materials, monitoring in an environment with significantly reduced ultraviolet light and low lux levels. The museum environment, by its nature, protects objects from photo-degradation caused by light exposure and will

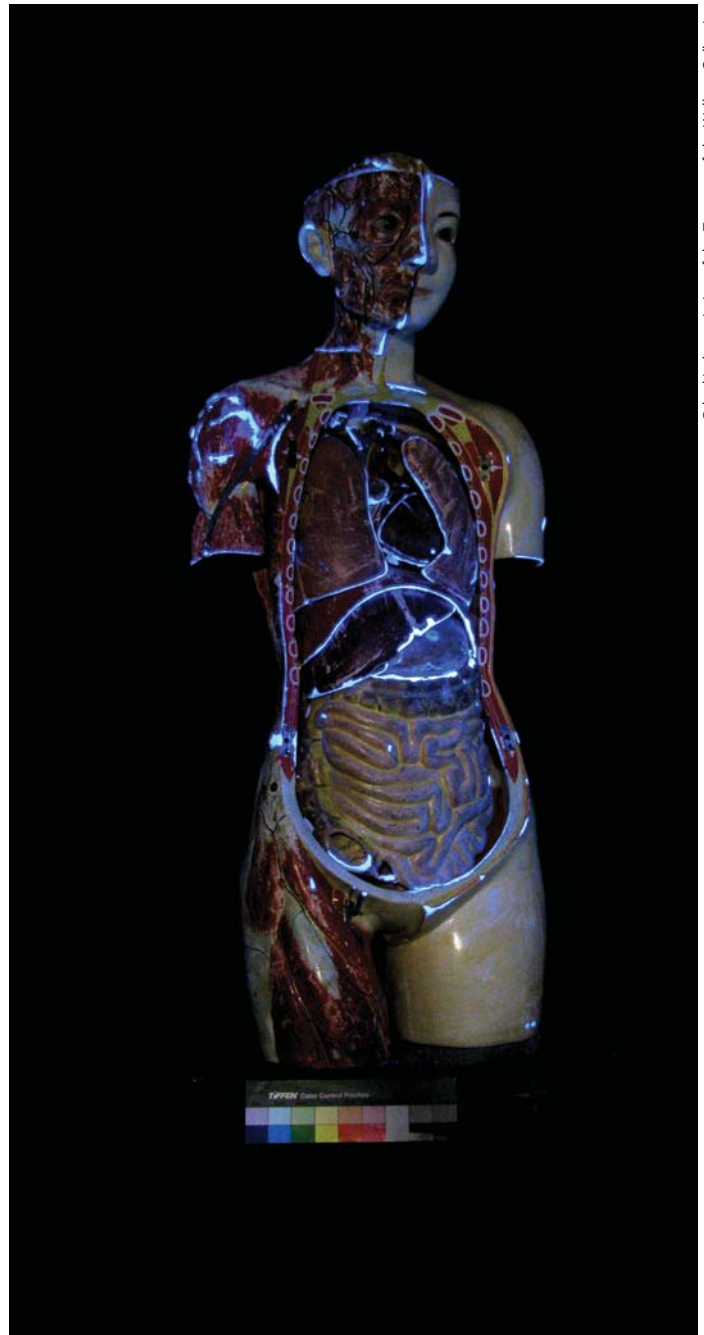


Fig. 6

significantly extend the photostability of the ultraviolet light reactive materials.

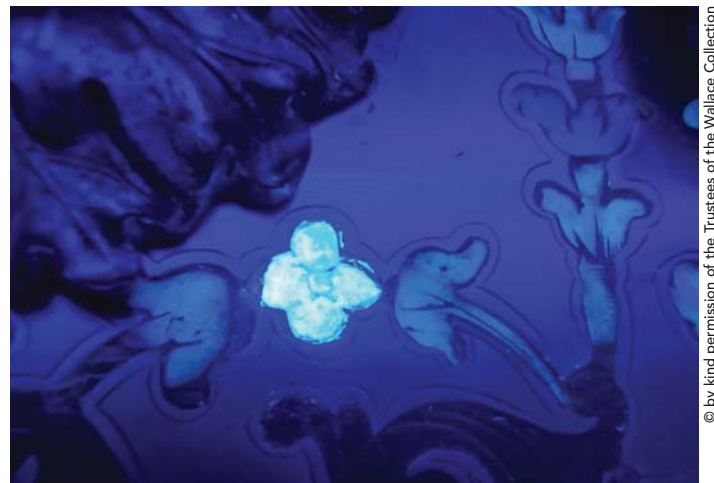
This close monitoring of the pilot project on the commode will be conducted over a ten year period.

Implications and Future Developments

This process may be of significant benefit in the restoration or conservation of objects in the future because it provides a reliable and economical method of identifying repairs without compromising the integrity of the object.

Further research and development will involve the ongoing collaboration with conservators and chemists to investigate the capabilities of other materials, including inorganic materials, which could offer a number of possible advantages including extended photostability and the use of ultraviolet light inhibitors, again, to further extend photostability.

Future projects will explore the compatibility of ultraviolet light reactive agents with other materials currently used in



Figs 7-12 Illustrate the process of infilling, overpainting and excitation under ultraviolet light (wavelength 365nm).

conservation such as acrylic resins, shellacs, oils and fillers. Whilst exploring the range of compatible materials, future projects will also aim to widen the application of the process to a broad range of object types (for instance marble sculptures, glass and metal objects) in order to further advance the field of conservation.

Thanks and Acknowledgments

Thanks to Alex Schouvaloff who has been a great support throughout the development of the process from its initial trial. The curatorial and conservation teams at The Wallace Collection have keenly supported the pilot project and have also committed their future support for an on-going

monitoring programme. Particular thanks are due to Jürgen Huber, Senior Furniture Conservator, and David Edge, Head of Conservation, for their enthusiastic support and encouragement to share the findings of this work with the wider conservation community.



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