

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • SEPTEMBER 2015 • ISSUE 60



A collaborative doll storage project

Also in this issue

China celebrates conservation

Pennies present a problem

A Clore course commended



Get ready – Icon's 2016 Conference is coming up!

Turn and Face the Change: Conservation in the 21st Century

Looking towards future trends in conservation and discussing current challenges faced by the sector.

Call for Papers out now!

October

Deadline for Abstracts

November

Booking Opens

May

Booking Closes

Icon 2016
June 15–17 2016
Conference Aston,
Birmingham

With events at
Thinktank
Birmingham Museum
& Art Gallery



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

SEPTEMBER 2015 Issue 60



From the Editor

If, like me, you tend to throw away those leaflets and enclosures that drop out of magazines without even looking at them, then please go directly to your recycling box and retrieve the enclosure with this issue of Icon News. For it is our new

Membership leaflet. We haven't had one for quite a while and we thought you would like to have a copy. Obviously, you are already a member in one shape or form but you might know someone who could be a supporter or who ought to be an associate and hasn't got round to it. So do pass it on and if you need more copies, then contact the office.

With enough support we might one day get to the state of national rejoicing in conservation described by Jane Henderson from her trip to China....(we can dream). And there are plenty of other stories to enjoy in this issue, including a problem penny and delightful dolls; not to mention reports on a host of events: conservators are indefatigable in their CPD endeavours. And on this topic, congratulations to the latest batch of ACRs!

Lynette Gill



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ISSN 1749-8988

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Cover photo:
After repacking: a project to
improve the storage of the doll
collection at The Bowes Museum
has just been completed ©The
Bowes Museum. Article on page 18

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Deadlines:
For the November 2015 issue
Editorial: 3 October
Adverts: 20 October

Icon is registered as a Charity in
England and Wales (Number
1108380) and in Scotland (Number
SC039336) and is a Company
Limited by Guarantee, (Number
5201058)

professional update

From the Chief Executive



Photo: Matt Wreford

EVALUATING OUR INTERNSHIP SCHEME

Alison Richmond ACR FIIC
on the outcome of a recent evaluation exercise

The external evaluation of Icon's Training Bursary Scheme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders, has given Icon a great deal of very positive feedback on the quality of the scheme and the impact it has made on people's lives. (Find it at icon.org.uk/what-is-conservation/internships)

The scheme met nearly all of its stated aims, but one remains elusive. To tackle it will require a concerted effort on the part of the whole cultural heritage sector.

Since 2006, the Scheme has provided one hundred and forty six internships across the UK in public, private and civil-society organisations, covering a wide range of conservation disciplines where training was either scarce or non-existent. The stated aims were to:

- Improve the quality of skills available to the heritage sector by providing new entrants or existing staff with work-based training opportunities
- Develop innovative, exemplar training schemes which promote diversity in the workforce
- Enable heritage organisations to work in partnership with other agencies; and
- Disseminate good practice.

The framework for interns to monitor their progress against the professional standards with the support of ACR advisors, the longer length of the internship (one year), and the 'living wage' bursary enabled interns to develop into work-ready conservators and conservation scientists. The support provided by Icon to recruit, induct, and monitor progress throughout and, at the end, to evaluate the internship was rated highly.

The majority of interns felt that the internship was a key factor in developing skills and in getting a job. But there were other outcomes, too: increased confidence, the development of professional networks and further opportunities to learn were cited by over 90%.

With a high retention rate of 98% across the scheme as a whole, we now have a generation of conservators, embedded in the profession, who have experienced this high quality of work-based learning, are heading towards accreditation themselves and are taking on their own interns. We still have

a long list of employers wishing to take on an intern in the future and Icon is set up and ready to help them to find the funding to do so.

Diversity

I said that our scheme had achieved nearly all of its aims, but one still eludes us: can internships help to increase the diversity of our sector to be more representative of the demographics of our society as a whole? Our scheme was notable for allocating half of internships to new entrants with transferrable skills and it was anticipated that this would help us reach more people who would not normally consider an academic training route to conservation. In the end, 41% of interns did not hold an academic qualification in conservation before starting their placement, but only a few applications came from people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or with a declared disability.

Reflecting on this with our funder, we were reassured to learn that we are not alone in finding this a big challenge; it is an issue across the cultural heritage sector but for conservation it could be even harder. Our Conservation Labour Market Intelligence Research 2012–13 (see icon.org.uk/what-is-conservation/ncess) tells us that, with black and minority ethnicities forming only 3% of the conservation workforce, our profession is far less diverse than the UK workforce as a whole (13%) and less diverse even than the wider cultural heritage workforce (7%). Disabled people were similarly under-represented in conservation, forming 2% of the workforce compared with 15% in the UK working age population.

Success has been achieved in cultural heritage. Notable examples are:

- National Museums Liverpool's Diversity Strategy and Action Plan (www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/about/corporate/policies/equality-diversity-policy-NML.pdf)
- Museums Association's Diversify Programme (www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=955792)
- Cultural Corporation's Strengthening Our Common Life by nurturing heritage skills (www.culturalcooperation.org/pages/socl)

What they all have in common is positive action. We need to learn lessons from these models for our sector.

Currently, there are a number of volunteering in conservation projects underway that engage people previously excluded from education and employment opportunities, to work with professional conservators, gain confidence and learn new skills - many of them transferrable - that lead to real jobs and job satisfaction. The Level 3 Conservation Technician Qualification is another entry route into conservation for people already in employment and this can be offered as part of the non-graduate internship package. Right now Icon is taking part with other professions in developing the Apprenticeship Trailblazer for an Historic Environment Practitioner. There are quite a few entry-level opportunities in conservation, what we need more of are opportunities for

learning and employment that allow for people to develop and move all the way to the top.

Icon will need to decide whether to embrace the challenge of increasing diversity or let conservation's poor record on diversity stand. If the answer is 'yes' to the first, we will not be able to do this alone, but will need to work with bigger partners to make a difference.

ICON CHAIR APPOINTMENT

Icon has a new Chair!

Icon had just completed a successful recruitment process led by Iain Boyd, Chair of the Nominations Committee. Finding



the right person to take over the Chair was never going to be easy, but Icon Trustees rose to the challenge of eliciting applications from inside and outside the profession and many conversations were held with potential candidates. In July, four excellent applications were submitted and all the candidates were interviewed by the Nominations Committee with Alison Richmond observing. The preferred candidate was recommended to and unanimously accepted by the

Board of Trustees

Our new Chair is **Siobhan Stevenson** ACR. Siobhan has been Head of Collections Care National Museums Northern Ireland since 2008. Members will know Siobhan as a Trustee of Icon for five years until she stepped down from the role last December. She has also chaired the Professional Standards and Development Committee for two years (2013–2014) and was the Trustee-lead on the Positive Futures Conference 2013.

Siobhan is an energetic leader, a powerful advocate for conservation and for Icon. We are very fortunate that this role comes at an ideal time in her professional career. As Siobhan has recently served as a Trustee, she will not be taking up her Chair role until the December AGM. In the meantime, Caroline Peach and Nigel Dacre will work closely with her to ensure a smooth transition.

Siobhan told Icon News: 'I feel privileged to be selected as the new Icon Chair. Icon is in great shape to take on some of the challenges that will be facing the profession across the next few years. I look forward to working with the Board, our members and stakeholders to build Icon and to strengthen the provision and awareness of conservation.'



The designers of our new website from Kolab: Emma Logan, Marta Kuśnierz and Nick Bain

ICON'S NEW WEBSITE

A successful launch!

After five months' intensive work involving most of Icon's staff, some trustees and many of our volunteers, the new site went live on 4 August. This is the first significant change in www.icon.org.uk since it was first introduced ten years ago. If you have not visited it yet, please do so and you will see a huge change to an image-rich, easy to navigate site with a great deal more capability.

The site is now divided into two main areas. The home page is intended to reach out to the general public and all those who may have some interest in conservation in a way that the old site did not. Here can be found all the news about conservation, our events (nearly all open to non-members too), our useful Caring for your Collection leaflets (which are at <http://icon.org.uk/what-is-conservation/caring-your-collection>) and general information about Professional Development.

Members have been sent new passwords to access the Members' area which is focused on their needs, on-line access to the latest issues of our Journal and Icon News, easy ways of changing their contact information, renewing subscriptions and so on. The architecture of the new site makes it easy for our Digital Content Officer Katie Allen to manage it and also for us to add new features over the coming years.

The website has been designed and managed by <http://kolabdigital.com/> who are based in Poole, Dorset and constructed by their team in Opole in Poland. We have been delighted with their approach and the results they have achieved.

Goodbye and thank you

Icon would also like to thank Brian Holden of Noovo Creative, who designed and built Icon's first website about ten years ago and has managed it ever since. Over the years he has dealt with many issues, apparently including sustained attacks from hackers in Kazakhstan in the last year. A decade is a long time in the digital world and we would like to thank Brian for all his support.

YOU COULD BECOME AN ICON TRUSTEE

We will soon be inviting you to put your name forward to become a trustee of Icon. The Trustees have overall responsibility for the charity, set its strategy and detailed policy, approve the budget each year, report to the members annually and supervise the management of the charity through the Chief Executive.



Simon Green, Icon's Business Manager

This may sound a bit dry but I can assure you that Trustees' meetings are full of lively and sometimes passionate discussion. Trustees care about the profession but do not always agree on how best to take it forward so each vote on the board counts although it is not often necessary to vote formally. Trustees also sit on the various committees and task groups set up for specific purposes and, when they have particular skills or interests, they can advise managers.

There are four formal Board Meetings a year, plus a planning day and the Annual General Meeting. Meetings are usually held in London as it has been found that it is difficult to achieve a good turnout elsewhere. Trustees are not paid fees but may claim expenses for travelling to meetings from anywhere in the UK. Trustees and staff communicate extensively by email and some issues are decided by that means, so you will need to have an email account and computer access.

For the first time this year we are now using a new internet based system for running our elections as well as issuing and counting proxy forms for AGM voting. This is authorised by our new Articles of Association, approved by members last December. The system is run by Mi-Voice who run elections for very large organisations and have done for some years. The reasons why we are switching to this new system are:

- By making voting easy we hope that many more members will vote. Typically, less than 10% of our members vote in elections and we hope to double that. In addition for the first year our Articles of Association allow Student Members to be nominated as trustees and to vote. Being internet based, you can submit nomination papers and vote at home, at work, on the train or on the beach - anywhere in the world that has a connection. No paying for a stamp and going to a letterbox.
- Whilst we were always very careful about the integrity of our elections, you can now have confidence in a respected independent organisation organising and counting your votes.
- Though we pay a fee for the service, there is a considerable saving because we do not have any printing or postage costs.
- A large amount of staff time will be saved and put to other uses.

Paid up members will very soon get an email Request for Nominations from Mi-Voice. Please do consider helping your professional body in this way or perhaps you can suggest another member that you respect. The on-line nominations

form will be easy to use and you will just need the support of two other members at this stage. Note that because Trustees communicate by email, nominations can only be dealt with electronically.

In early November, all Accredited, Associate, Graduate and Student Members will get another email inviting them to vote. Don't get left out! If you don't have an email address, write to Mi-Voice, Democracy Technology Limited, Gamma House, Enterprise Road, Chilworth Park, Southampton, SO16 7NS, asking them to register you as an Icon member who has no email address and they will send you voting papers by post.

Supporters; you don't have to be left out either! Why not upgrade to Associate Membership and you will then be able to stand for and/or vote in an election. It's easy to do; just call or email the membership team at 0203 142 6799 - membership@icon.org.uk.

Simon Green
Business Manager

CONSERVATION AWARDS UPDATE

When you read this it will be less than a month away until the winners of the 2015 Icon Conservation Awards are announced.

At the time of writing the judging for all of the awards has just been completed. Both the quantity and quality of the fifty nine applications were encouraging and when the screening panels set to work they found the job of selecting the shortlists (a maximum of four projects) very challenging indeed. The judges had their work cut out for them to choose a winner from amongst these high calibre shortlists.

We are grateful to all of the screening panels and judges who participated, giving their time and expertise to ensure that the Awards showcase the very best of conservation and scientific practice. Our thanks also go to all of applicants.

Good luck to the shortlisted projects! The winners will be announced at the Awards ceremony in London on 22 October.

You will find the shortlisted projects for all six awards on the Awards website (www.conservationawards.org.uk).

Watch out, too, for stories from the shortlisted projects featured on the Icon website (www.icon.org.uk).

THE 2016 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Icon's forthcoming triennial conference continues to gather force and the conference committee is hard at work behind the scenes. *Turn and Face the Change: Conservation in the 21st Century* will discuss challenges facing the sector and explore the ways conservators are adapting to current and future trends.

Birmingham is the setting for this next conference, and naturally the Conference Committee has very strong local representation on the ground – thanks in no small part to the support of the Birmingham Museums Trust. Taking the Chair is **Deborah Cane** ACR, Collections Care Manager at the Trust. 'I've been involved with Icon through the Ethnography

Group and subsequently the Metals Group, and have attended numerous Icon conferences,' she says. 'I'm looking forward to facilitating debate and dissemination of the great work our profession undertakes'.

The Birmingham team is rounded out by **Jane Thompson Webb** ACR, Birmingham's Conservation Team Leader and also Chair of Icon's Care of Collections Group; and **Pieta Greaves** ACR, Conservation Co-Ordinator for the Staffordshire Hoard. As Deborah explains, 'The conservation team in Birmingham didn't want to miss the opportunity to host the conference and we are delighted to be involved.'

Sharon Robinson, Collection Care Manager at the Museum of London, is chairing the submission panel. 'I've been an active member of the Metals Group committee for the last twenty-five years,' she explains. 'It's so exciting to be chairing the submissions panel. I can't wait to see how our members respond to the conference themes – it's set to be a very dynamic and engaging event.' Also on the submissions panel is **Louise Lawson**, Conservation Manager for Sculpture and Time-Based Media at Tate Britain.

The conference team is supported by **Julia Jablonska**, Icon's new Administration Officer. Julia has only been with the team a short while but has been enthusiastic to get stuck in – with her sights firmly set on the Fine Art Conservation course she intends to start in September 2016, thanks to her unconditional offer from Northumbria University. 'Although I only recently took up my post at Icon it has already proven to be incredibly educational, broadening my appreciation of how many individuals with different skill sets contribute to the field. I'm very excited about meeting more conservation professionals from different backgrounds, institutions and specialisms.'

If you have yet to submit your abstract for consideration, there's still time – but not much! Deadline for abstracts is coming up soon in October, while booking will open the following month.

Michael Nelles
Membership Manager

THE JUNE BAKER TRUST AWARDS

The June Baker Trust is pleased to announce the awards that it has been able to give out this year as part of its 'Awards for Conservators in Scotland' grants:

- **Carrie Farnell** £200 towards the cost of attending the ARA conference in Dublin
- **Elzbieta Gorska-Wiklo** £300 towards the cost of attending a three day course at West Dean on Photograph Conservation.
- **Emmanuelle Largeteau** £200 towards the cost of attending the ARA conference in Dublin
- **Simone Parker** £300 towards the cost of a student summer placement at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia
- **Christy Reeve** £100 towards the cost of attending a course on 19th century stitch straw hat making, in Fife

The Nigel Williams Prize 2016

Have you recently (or within the last three years) completed a piece of conservation/restoration work in ceramics, glass, or some related material that might also be of interest to others in the profession?

Did it present some interesting challenges, technically and/or ethically, requiring perhaps some lateral thinking?

Would the project fit the Applications Criteria on the Icon web-site?

If the answers to the above are generally **YES**, then why not apply for the **2016 Nigel Williams Prize!**



The bi-annual Prize, now divided into 3 categories, is the result of the collaboration between Nigel Williams' family and the Icon Glass and Ceramics Group. It was created to serve both as a memorial to Nigel's work and to encourage continuing high standards at all levels within the profession.

The Main Prize: The Winner receives **£1000**, together with a "virtual" presentation of a gilded ceramic copy of the **Portland Vase** (kindly donated by Wedgwood and kept at the Museum).

The Secondary Prize: entirely at the judges' discretion, a **Secondary Prize of £400** may be awarded to any applicant considered to be a close runner-up.

The Student Prize: Applications in this section must have been completed while the applicant was still in full-time or further education. The winner receives £250.

Application Criteria: See under: **Groups/ Ceramics and Glass/Nigel Williams Prize:** www.icon.org.uk

Application Deadline 31 March 2016

- **Geraldine Sim Guanyu** £300 towards the cost of a trip to Shetland Museum and Archives as part of an MPhil study of archaeological textiles in their collection
- **Sophie Woehrling** £350 towards the cost of attending a three day gilding course in West Lothian

The June Baker Trust was set up in 1990 to help individuals working or training in the conservation of historic and artistic artefacts in Scotland. The Trust offers two different annual awards. The 'Awards for Conservators in Scotland' are to help with CPD activities, equipment purchase or other suitable projects for conservators with a strong Scottish connection. These awards are made annually in June.

The Trust currently also offers 'Grants for emerging conservators in Scotland', for conservators who have graduated from a conservation training course within the past three years. The next deadline for this grant is **31 January 2016**.

NMCT GRANT DEADLINE

The next deadline for applying for grants from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust is **1 October 2015**. The deadline thereafter is 1 April 2016. Grant applications must be made on the NMCT form, which can be downloaded from the website (nmct.co.uk), where lots of helpful information can be found, including FAQs and past grants and case studies

The Trust, which was founded in 1990, helps to preserve important manuscript and archive collections by awarding grants for their conservation. Between 2010 and the end of 2014 grant were awarded totalling £700,000 to a diverse range of conservation projects from cinema plans to the papers of the first Duke of Wellington, the archive of an ironworks, a 12thC Bible and rare Cornish language manuscripts.

Thanks to their successful fundraising efforts, the Trustees would like to increase the number and range of applications received, and are also particularly interested to have proposals from record offices, libraries, archives and museums that have not received their support in the past. So if you think you have an excellent conservation project, the NMCT is keen to hear from you!

THE LANGUAGE OF BINDINGS THESAURUS

Ligatus is proud to announce the launch of the Language of Bindings online thesaurus of bookbinding terms, which was celebrated with a one-day event in the Chelsea College of Arts (University of the Arts London) in collaboration with CERL

(the Consortium of European Research Libraries) on 23 June, 2015.

Ligatus is a research centre of the University of the Arts London with projects in libraries and archives and with a particular interest in historic bookbinding. The Language of Bindings thesaurus is the



Prof. Nicholas Pickwoad discussing features of binding structures during the launch of the Language of Bindings Thesaurus

result of our long experience with historic bookbindings, but has been greatly assisted by contributions from an international group of bookbinding experts and book conservators. This work was made possible by a Networking Grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK.

The thesaurus is constructed around *concepts* (such as different bookbinding components, features, materials or techniques) that can be expressed by a number of language terms (*labels*). The thesaurus allows one concept to have more than one label, which allows the same concept to be searched for by the different terms that may have been used historically to describe it. It will also allow the concepts to be expressed in different languages.

The Language of Bindings thesaurus can be used as a reference online resource that can be searched by keyword or alphabetically. The concepts contained in the thesaurus are, however, also arranged hierarchically, based on a class/sub-class relationship, which allows concepts to be retrieved by navigating down the hierarchies even if their label (the term) is not known.

It is hoped that the thesaurus will enable all those who work with books in early bindings to arrive at more consistent descriptions of those bindings. By being based primarily on single concepts, it has tried to avoid the more familiar but sometimes frustratingly imprecise language that has often been used in the past. This means that some of these familiar terms will not be found as labels, though they may be referred to in the scope notes that define and describe the concepts (and can therefore be found by a simple keyword search).

At the moment, the thesaurus contains labels primarily in English but work on its translation has already started, and plans for the addition of illustrations are also underway. The thesaurus can, in addition, be used as a look-up service for software applications that need to populate schema fields from thesauri.

An accompanying volume, *Coming to Terms: guidelines for the description of historical bindings*, which is based on the terms in the thesaurus, is to be published in the autumn.

The success of the thesaurus will to a large extent depend on contributions made to it by its users, either to add more concepts, refine existing scope notes or correct mistakes. Such contributions to the thesaurus will be welcomed, and can be made online following a registration process.

The thesaurus can be accessed at:
<http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob>

YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'VE BEEN CLORED!

A conservator's experience of the Clore Leadership short course by Lorraine Finch ACR

Introduction

From June 1 to 12 this year I was fortunate to be one of twenty five participants on a Clore Leadership short course, held at Linden Hall in Northumberland. Offered as part of a programme of courses by the Clore Leadership Programme, it's a two-week residential course providing intensive training in the essential knowledge and skills required by the cultural leaders of today.

The Clore Duffield Foundation was established in 2000 by Dame Vivien Duffield. It was her inspirational idea which led to the creation of the Clore Leadership Programme in 2004, with the aim being to help develop a generation of exceptional cultural leaders. The Programme is the UK's first cross-disciplinary leadership programme for the cultural and creative sector.

Participants

The participants on the course were very well chosen. Our skills and backgrounds complemented one another's very well. The participants spanned the cultural and creative sector. They included people from museums; libraries; archives; dance; theatre; music; television; film; visual arts and digital arts. They came from charities; national institutions; private sector; freelance; not for profit; for profit and local councils.

Content

The course covered Leadership Styles; How We Learn; Counter-Strategies in Creativity; Authentic Leadership; Governance; Enabling Personal, Team and Organisational Change; Coaching Skills; Media Training and Leadersmithing.

These subjects all seem a little dry. They also all seem to be about management, and could be found in most management textbooks. You would be forgiven after reading them, if you thought that the course was about developing management skills. Far from it! The course is not about how to lead but how you lead. It's about your personal development. It is the part of your journey as a leader. It enables you to examine your leadership style, how that style impacts on those around you, how you communicate and what skills you already have. It certainly helps you to gain insight into your relationships at work, and why some of those may be easy and others very difficult.

My motivation

For those of you thinking that a leadership course is of no relevance to you because you don't lead a team or because you work on your own, neither do I. I went on the course because I wanted to develop my leadership skills in order to become a better advocate for conservation and the conservation profession, especially in spreading the message of conservation to excluded audiences. The Clore Leadership short course will help you to develop your leadership skills to become a leader within the profession, within your institution or within your specialism.



© Lorraine Finch

Linden Hall, where the course was held

School's out! Relaxing just after the course finished



© Lorraine Finch

The difference it has made

It is very difficult to explain how deeply and fundamentally the course affected me. At times it was surprisingly emotional. It has changed me for the long-term, in both obvious and subtle ways. It has increased my confidence and self-belief. It has helped me realise that I have the abilities and skills to lead, and that during my twenty two years in conservation I have learnt quite a lot. It has also made me think about how I interact with others and the effects that my actions, speech and behaviour have on them. It has allowed me to make time for myself and to make sure that I take care of myself. Many of the effects of the Clore short course will take time to permeate through me. It is a slow process of change and growth.

A very immediate benefit of the course is the networking. I have met professionals from areas outside my specialism, as course participants and as course lecturers. Those contacts will last a lifetime. I am also now a member of the Clore alumni. My relationship with the Clore Leadership Programme and the support and knowledge that they provide will continue to sustain me and nourish my development.

Conclusion

Participating in the Clore Leadership short course was an amazing experience. It was truly transformational. It has changed my practice as a professional. It has inspired me to pursue my aims. It has caused a profound personal change. I encourage you to apply for a course.

For further information see: <http://www.cloreleadership.org>

If you would like to speak to me about the course, please feel free to contact me:

Lorraine Finch

Email: paper@lifeconservation.co.uk

Web: www.lfcp.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/LFCandP

Twitter: [@conservel_fcp](https://twitter.com/conservel_fcp)

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Archaeology Group

Following our AGM in June, the Archaeology Group would like to extend a warm welcome to newly elected committee members Mark Watson and Luciana Carvalho, and to Helen Ganiaris, Helen Butler and Hazel Gardiner, due to be co-opted at our next committee meeting. We are delighted to have elected a new chair from within the committee, Evelyne Godfrey, and wish her all the best in the role.

We would also like to thank our outgoing Secretary Mags Felter and outgoing Vice-Chair Claire Woodhead. Mags and Claire will both be remaining on the committee to represent the AG at Rescue and ClfA meetings.

The Archaeology Group current committee is as follows:

Chair: Evelyne Godfrey

Treasurer: Sarah Morton ACR

Secretary: vacant

Events: Mark Watson, Ellie Rowley-Conwy, Bronwen Roberts ACR

Advocacy: Luciana Carvalho

Professional development: Karla Graham ACR

Student Liaison: Alaina Schmisser

Communications: vacant

Publications: Angela Middleton

Ordinary members: Claire Woodhead ACR (Rescue), Mags Felter ACR (ClfA), Kathy Tubb ACR

If you would like to become involved with the Archaeology Group committee, please contact us on iconarchaeologygroup@gmail.com

Book and Paper Group

Hotfoot from a Book and Paper Group Committee meeting, I can assure you things are moving apace with CTR, with many exciting courses over the next few months. If anyone hasn't attended one of the Photography workshops over at Lux Darkrooms, then do think about it. It is a great experience for those - like me! - who struggle with understanding the processes and great for recognising and identifying those processes. The price is very reasonable and a worthy addition to your panoply of skills.

As I announced recently at our AGM, my two years as Chair come to an end this December. If anyone wishes to consider standing as Chair of the Book and Paper Group Committee, now is the time to make your presence known. The application form will be available online shortly, and the balloting process will be advertised by Iconnect. The deadline for applications is 31 October, so you have a while to ponder 'shall I, shan't I?'

The final profits of the Adapt and Evolve Conference are still being calculated, but we are hopeful that some of the profits can be redirected to benefit members. On this note, the committee is working on subsidising our CTR courses in order to provide learning opportunities for conservators at a lower price. We have recently capped course prices and will bring you more news on this soon.

Liz Ralph, a Special Projects Officer has accepted the independent conservators portfolio as her speciality within the Book & Paper Group Committee. It was felt that the interests of independents were not fully represented within the committee. Liz, who is an independent conservator herself, will give voice to independent conservators and their particular requirements.

We are always on the lookout for CTR volunteers to help on the CTR sub-committee, so please volunteer - spare hands are always welcome! You can join for a short time if you wish, and should contact the CTR chair Françoise Richard for a chat if you are interested at fr.conservation@gmail.com.

I will attend the next Group Chairs meeting on 23 September 2015. This is where the chairs of each of the Groups meet and discuss all manner of subjects, from what constitutes an Icon Group to looking into whether guidelines for volunteers should be issued. Should anyone wish to raise any point to bring to the notice of Icon via the Group Chairs group, or indeed any other matter, please get in touch with me on isabelle.egan@ntlworld.com.

I hope you have all had a great summer, and come back refreshed for a new round of conservation!

Isabelle Egan (Independent Conservator)
Group Chair

Book and Paper Group CTR news

The CTR is preparing a rich and varied program of workshops and talks, and you can already save the following dates in October and November 2015.

After two successful sessions on cyanotype photographic process held earlier this year, Fiona McLees is organising a new event in collaboration with Lux Darkroom on salt printing. This one-day workshop is scheduled for **October 12**.

Sylvia Sumira, ACR will be sharing her exceptional expertise with a lecture on the conservation of globes. Sylvia has carried out work on globes belonging to universities, museums, libraries and private owners in the UK and abroad. Paper, plaster, metal, and varnish are likely to be on the menu of her evening lecture on **October 23**.

British Library conservators Gayle Whitby and Zoe Miller will lead a workshop on iron gall ink, with a program covering chemistry, history of treatments and case studies, as well as practical demonstrations, including the implementation of the calcium phytate treatment. The workshop will take place at the British Library on **November 10 and 11**. The British Library will also host an evening event for a larger audience with presentations from Dr Paul Garside, Conservation Scientist, Dr Christina Duffy, Imaging Scientist and Gayle Whitby, Conservator.

Further details regarding each event will be published in due course through Iconnect.

Françoise Richard, ACR (Chair, Book & Paper CTR)
fr.conservation@gmail.com

BOOK AND PAPER GROUP

New Chair needed from 2016

Application deadline 31 October

The Chair position of the Icon Book & Paper Group Committee will be available as of January 2016 when our present Chair Isabelle Egan will step down after her two years' tenure.

This is a unique occasion to make a difference. You will be a strategic thinker, a charismatic and pragmatic leader, with the know-how to steer the committee to achieve real outcomes. This is a demanding position, which will require time and energy in exchange for rewarding results.

The Chair is the cornerstone of the committee. As such, candidates should have at least five years' experience in book and paper conservation and preferably be accredited. You should have knowledge of the committee structure and guidelines.

The committee meets approximately four times per year for a minimum of four hours. In addition work from home is required, with the amount depending on the time of year and projects in progress. The Chair is also required to attend the regular Icon Group Chairs' meetings. Travel expenses for committee meetings are refundable.

We would like to encourage members from **all geographical areas** to join us. If you are interested in applying for this role please fill out the online application form (<http://tinyurl.com/pkc8y3c>). If you would like to discuss or find out more about the position, please contact Isabelle Egan (isabelle.egan@ntlworld.com).

Ceramics and Glass Group

At the time of writing, we still have a few places remaining on our Colour Fills workshop, being held at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre on 14 November 2015. The workshop has proved to be very popular, so we hope to be able to hold it again in 2016.

I am also pleased to announce that the Ceramics and Glass Group will be hosting a session entitled 'Tales from the Workbench' at the Icon Conference and the Call for papers has just been released. If you have been involved in an interesting ceramics or glass project over the past year, please do consider sending us your abstract.

Finally, planning is also underway for the 2016 AGM, which will be held in Brighton. This will also include the presentation of the 2016 Nigel Williams Prize, which there is still time to enter for!

For all details of forthcoming events, and how to apply for the Nigel Williams Prize, please see the Ceramics and Glass Group pages on the Icon website.

Rachel Sharples

Ceramics and Glass Group Chair

Gilding & Decorative Surfaces Group

Celebrating our first twenty years

On 25 June, a hugely enjoyable 'Free Festival' celebrated two decades of our Group. Back in 1995, a fledgling UKIC Gilding Section held its first conference at the Museum of London. The section's name and scope expanded into Decorative Surfaces in 2003. Successful conferences and the stream of events have continued since becoming an Icon Group in 2005. Our famous AGM has always been characterised by its party, an important part of business along with interesting talks. It may be a few years since we enjoyed gilded canapés, however our Group has always had fun while working hard for our members' various specialisms.

Festivalgoers gathered under Tom Proctor's painted banner to picnic in Lincoln's Inn Fields after a morning of tremendous free visits. Huge thanks are extended to the generosity of all those who so kindly hosted visits during the morning and afternoon: the Palace of Westminster, National Gallery, St. Paul's Cathedral, Sir John Soane's Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Guildhall Art Gallery, Hunterian Gallery, V&A, Wallace Collection, Natural History Museum, Courtauld Institute, Imperial War Museum, Foundling Museum and John Jones Ltd.

Fiona Hay, our Group Events Coordinator, worked extremely hard to ensure that members enjoyed the day – words such as 'free, festival, drink & live band' had all manner of unconnected folk signing up on Eventbrite! It was particularly good to see former Chairs and committee members throughout the day, and at the evening's superb party, generously hosted by the City & Guilds of London Art School with its impressive conservation, historic carving and fine art degree shows. Thank you to everyone who attended the visits and events to make the Festival such a successful celebration.

At this year's forthcoming AGM and party, Campbell Norman-Smith, Tom Proctor, Martin Body and I will stand down from the committee, having served two terms. An election on the night will choose our new Chair, Secretary and two Ordinary

The sun shines on the righteous at the Free Festival party in the sculpture yard at City & Guilds of London Art School.



members. Recent members on the committee have been carrying on a fabulous job, creating enjoyable events serving the wide interests of the group. Similarly, our committee meetings have always aimed to be enjoyable. Please consider standing for the new committee and share in its rewarding work – or just keep coming to our events – I know I will.

We all hope to see you at our AGM – a November weekday in London, to be announced – for another great evening, and to take part in the elections leading our G&DS group into its next two decades.

Gerry Alabone

Metals Group

The Metals Group is pleased to announce that our autumn conference and AGM will be held in Cardiff this year:-

Metal in Motion:

Conservation and Care of Kinetic Metal Objects

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Cardiff
Monday 16 November 2015

Presentations will explore ethical and practical challenges related to the operation and maintenance of moving metal objects. We envision that the subject will cover a vast range of objects including industrial machinery, sculptures, decorative arts objects, scientific instruments and clocks.

Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

- Ethical issues involved in running and maintaining dynamic objects
- Challenges related to treatment and display
- Logistics of operating the objects
- Decision-making and institutional policies regarding moving objects
- Conservation case studies

More information is to come, so please check the Icon website or the Metals Group Facebook page. We hope to see you there!

Paintings Group

The Paintings Group conference '**Appearance and Reality: Examining Colour Change in Paintings**' will be held at Tate Britain in London on Friday 9 October. Further details including booking information and a list of speakers and papers can be found on the Icon website:

<http://icon.org.uk/events/appearance-and-reality>

The ticket price includes lunch, tea/coffee and an evening drinks reception from 5:30–7:00pm in the Clore Gallery at Tate. Two free drinks vouchers (wine or soft drinks) will be included in the delegate packs. Tickets prices are: Icon members £75; non-members £95; student members £45, student non-members £65.

We look forward to seeing you there!

If you have any further queries please contact us at:
icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com

Stone and Wall Paintings Group

The Stone and Wall Painting Group Conference: **FIRE D EARTH –The Conservation of Architectural Terracotta** will be held on Thursday 8 October 9:30–17:00 at Oxford Town Hall, Saint Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1BX.

The programme will include: a history, structural issues, cleaning, replacement, Coade Stone, and case studies.

Please refer to the Icon events website for further details and the eventbrite link to register. **Please note that the registration deadline is September 30.** Cost: Icon Members: £55.00, Non-members: £75.00, Icon Student members: £25.00, Students (non-members): £35.00

Textile Group

Icon's third triennial conference will be held in 2016. **Turn and Face the Change: Conservation in the 21st Century** will take place from 15-17 June at Aston University Conference Centre in Birmingham. The Textile Group sessions will be held on the afternoon of 16 June and the morning of 17 June. The call for papers is out and members are encouraged to consider submitting a paper. Further details can be found on the Icon website.

The committee has been considering ideas for a celebration of the Group's 25th anniversary, to take place in March 2016. The UKIC Textile Section was formally established at a meeting at the Museums and Galleries Commission in London on 11 February 1991. Any ideas you may have are welcome. Look out for further details of the event later in the year.

The Textile Group is planning events throughout the year. Look out for details on the website, Iconnects and on facebook.

Finally, a big thank you to Susana Fajardo for arranging the Group's very successful, special visits to the *Savage Beauty* exhibition at the V&A.

ADDENDUM

In the Around and About section of the last issue of Icon News (No. 59, pp 24/25) we published an article about the conservation of Rochester Cathedral's Vinegar Bible. We are happy to draw attention to the fact that the work was carried out by Lara Meredith under contract to The Leather Conservation Centre and with generous financial help from The Worshipful Company of Leathersellers

Awards



As we noted in the last Icon News, this year for the very first time the annual Plowden Medal was awarded to two recipients. Nancy Bell received hers in June (see p 9 of July's issue) and at the end of August it was the turn of **Sarah Staniforth**.

A leader in the conservation profession, Sarah is the former Museums and Collections Director for the National Trust and is currently President of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC). She was the architect of last year's new internationally agreed environmental guidelines for collections, which emphasise an holistic and achievable approach to standards of care for exhibitions and storage, encouraging sustainability and the use of energy efficient solutions.

With her CBE earlier this year and now this recognition, this is definitely something of an annus mirabilis for Sarah!

New Icon staff



Julia Jablonska joins Icon as our new Administration Officer. She writes:

I am an art history graduate aspiring to become an easel painting conservator. I will be working full time from Icon's London office until the end of August 2016, and I hope then to embark on a masters course in fine art conservation.

I will be helping the committee organise the 2016 Icon conference, as well as supporting the rest of the team in and out of London by carrying out administrative and financial tasks. I have been following the work of Icon for a while now and I am thrilled to have been given an opportunity to become a part of the organisation at this exciting time. I am particularly keen on learning more about Icon and the field of heritage conservation, as well as meeting likeminded people who share my interests and values. I look forward to hearing from Icon members and I hope to meet you soon at future events.

Julia can be contacted on jjablonska@icon.org.uk



Patrick Whife joins Icon as the new Training and Development Manager. He writes:

I am really delighted to be joining Icon as the new Training and Development Manager.

Graduating from the University of Manchester I began my career working in urban regeneration and the evaluation of education & training programmes across the UK and Europe. I subsequently moved to Kensington & Chelsea College where I led the growth and development of the Apprenticeship delivery at the College. This saw me working to secure high quality apprenticeship positions for young people looking to kick start their careers in the Cultural Heritage Sector and the Creative Industries

I am delighted to be continuing to work in the Heritage sector and am looking forward to getting my teeth into the exciting Professional Development work at Icon.

Contact Patrick on pwhife@icon.org.uk

Departures



© Rob Scott Photography

Janet Berry has been the Editor of the *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* since 2009.

She has recently been appointed to the position of Head of Conservation of the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division, Archbishop's Council, Church of England, where she will be promoting standards, developing funding streams and training programmes for the care of churches and cathedrals.

We are absolutely delighted for Janet and at the same time very sad to see her go. We are indebted to her for her excellent management of the Journal, making it the prestigious publication that it is today. She has worked very closely with the team at Icon and has put in an enormous amount of extra work over and above her strictly editorial role, firstly on the Board Journal Task & Finish Group and most recently on developing the tender and recruiting for a new publisher. We wish her well in her new role and anticipate that we will be working again together soon.



Kat Cresser, our Membership Officer, is leaving Icon after five years to train to become a special-effects makeup artist. Kat joined Icon as a temporary part-time Administration Assistant in 2010 and supported successive membership managers in the huge amount of administration work associated with the annual membership renewal cycle. In recent years she has been responsible for running the Conservation Register, supporting the registered practices and helping members of the public to find what they are looking for. Throughout, she has been a friendly voice on the phone for members and public alike. With a degree in graphic design, Kat was always looking for ways to develop her creative side, and this new move is just the ticket. We wish her all the best with her new career!

New ACRS

The Accreditation Committee approved the accreditation of the following conservator-restorers at their July meeting.

Congratulations to all the following new ACRs!

Catt Baum Conservation management, The National Archives

Christine Braybrook Conservation of easel paintings, Hamilton Kerr Institute

Jonathan Bridal Preventive conservation, Historic Royal Palaces

Simona Cenci Books and paper/parchment based material, National Library of Scotland

Isabelle Egan Works of art on paper, Independent Conservator

Nancy Georgi Stained glass conservation, The York Glaziers Trust

Richard Horton Conservation of industrial collections, Science Museum Group, London

Helen Mayor Paper and archive conservation, The National Archives.

Patricia Smithen Conservation management, Tate.

Keisuke Sugiyama Conservation and mounting of East Asian paintings on paper and silk, Tohoku University of Art & Design.

Jasmina Vuckovic Ceramics, Sarah Peek Limited.

Timothy Warrender Archives, London Metropolitan Archives.

Welcome to these new members

We'd like to extend a very warm welcome to all those who joined us this past June and July. We hope to see you at an event soon!

Michael Adams Supporter

Annika Amundson University of Glasgow Student

Laura Ananos Student

Catherine Atkinson Student

Joanne Berzins Student

Hannah Biggs Supporter

Rosie Bolton West Dean College Student

Katie Brew Associate

Camilla Brivio Associate

Lauren Buttle Student

Giulia Campagnari Student

Chiara Chille Student

Stewart Colquhoun National Trust Scotland Associate

Marta Cotelli Student

Samantha Cribb Student

Rebecca Davison Student

Karen Donaldson Supporter

Tiffany Eng Student

Nicola Evans Student

Mostyn Gale Student

Irene Genova Supporter

Caterina Goodhart Associate

Daniel Hanrahan Associate

Gyrl Grimsaeth Horn Student

Andrea Hutton Associate

Julia Jablonska Icon Staff

Satcey Mei Kelly Student

Florian Kirchert London Stone Conservation Associate

Mari Kitamura Student

Maria Ledinskaya University of Lincoln Student

Coralie Lluca-How-Choong Associate

Karen Mailley-Watt Associate

Manuela Martino University of Palermo Student

Christina Mastora National Museum of Wales Associate

Reiner Meindl Associate

Lydia Messerschmidt Associate

Clara Molina Sanchez Nicolas Boyes Stone Conservation Associate

Dana Mossman Tepper Arizona State University Art Museum Associate

Sofia Pascual Student

In memory

John Peacock

Student

Emily Perdue

Student

Chiara Puglisi

Supporter

Rachael Purse

Associate

Kari Rayner

Student

Maria Luisa Reginella

Supporter

Rebecca Rosen

Associate

Ellie Rowley-Conwy

Royal Armouries

Associate

Tabea Rude

Student

Emma Russell

Associate

Vittoria Sajeve

Associate

Sarah Sanders

Phoenix China Registration

Studio

Associate

Mark Searle

City & Guilds of London Art

School

Student

Stefan Strittmatter

Halcyon Conservation Ltd

Associate

James Taylor

Student

Kirsten Walsh

Associate

Marta Wasko

Associate

Oliver White

Plowden & Smith Ltd

Associate

Janine Windler

Erasmus Boekhandel BV

Kris Zykubek

Associate



Holly Philipa Marston

6 June 1988 – 25 July 2015

It is with profound sadness that, on behalf of her family, the Yorkshire Regional Conservation Network and Rotherham Heritage Services, we announce the sudden and unexpected loss of Holly Marston. Holly was the newly appointed Conservator for Rotherham Heritage Services based at Clifton Park Museum.

Before being appointed at Rotherham, Holly worked with many museum services including her dream placement at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds. She also worked with Leeds Museums and Galleries, where she was the first conservation trainee on the Leeds Museums and Galleries ACE (Arts Council England) programme in partnership with Royal Armouries. It was due to the success and feedback from Holly that another conservation traineeship between both organisations could be offered this year with additional elements.

Holly also worked with York Archaeological Trust. One of the projects she worked on

whilst with YAT was the Brigg 'Raft', a late Bronze Age ferry. Holly was very proud of her involvement in this project.

Holly's favourite museum was Beamish Museum in Durham where her family treasures memories of visiting with her.

Holly was a bright, talented, hardworking professional, passionate about her work as a museum conservator in a regional museum. In the short period of time that Holly was at Rotherham she made substantial progress on the development of the Clifton Conservation Traded Service as well as helping the museum move forward with their preventive conservation.

Holly was a valued and inspirational member of the small conservation team. As a manager she was kind, encouraging and thoughtful. Thanks to Holly's openness towards sharing of knowledge and expertise the team can continue her good practice ensuring that the collections at the museum receive the best care.

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The profile of conservation in China

Jane Henderson of Cardiff University was thrilled by the celebration of conservation which she encountered in China earlier this year

Icon's conservation awards are underway and I am sure the winners will remind us once again of the immense value of conservation work to many and varied individuals and organisations.

On a recent visit to China I got a chance to witness and participate in a celebration of conservation of the cultural heritage that, honestly, blew my socks off.

Every year China has a national cultural heritage day and that day is celebrated across the country. One site is chosen to host and launch the day, in 2015 the honour fell to Dazu in Chongqing province. Dazu is home to an amazing series of Buddhist rock carvings some dating back to the 7th century AD which are being restored by a huge team of Chinese conservators. Alongside the restoration, analytical and imaging programmes, a museum has been developed which displays smaller and more portable elements of the rock carvings and makes links between these carvings and other cave art along the silk route.

As well as the conservation one of the most impressive aspects of the project was the way that conservators on the ground and agencies like the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage (CACH) have managed to place the conservation work front and centre of the developments.

The first sign I had of the importance of not only the carvings but also of their conservation was the bill boards that I noticed lining the road as we drove into Dazu (Fig. 1). I was there to speak about conservation training at a conference on the conservation of stone cultural heritage, which was the academic heart of the event, but I have never see a town throw a welcome like that. The conference was part of a significant group of events coordinated to lunch the cultural heritage day.

On the first day all the conference delegates were swept up the road in a motorcade to the site of the rock carvings where the results of the conservation were to be launched. The

1. Billboards line the roads



3. The banner-lined route



2. T shirts proclaim conservation messages





6. Point cloud data inspires the museum lighting scheme

opening of the restored 1000-hand Buddha was shown to a crowd of observers on a massive screen with a countdown and film crews filming the countdown. When we got to see the results they were dazzling. Following extensive recording and research the conservation team had decided that the only option was to restore lost elements and re-gild using traditional techniques and materials. Repairs were modelled based on the manipulation of 3-D scans of surviving hands.

As I tried to take it all in, I was interviewed by one of the TV crews there to capture the event.

We were then driven a short distance to the official launch of the national cultural heritage day. As we walked in a troop behind our guide and flag we were passed by hordes of school children all wearing the event T- shirt, each one with the slogan 'conservation results shared by all' written on their back (Fig. 2). Once this celebration was completed we walked along a banner-lined route to the new museum (Fig. 3). Although the translation might be a little awkward, the key point is that each flag had a different message about the

4. Shumeng Dai holds one of the banners

5. The banners spread the word about conservation



大足石刻之痛

Pains of Dazu Rock Carvings

千百年来，大足石刻作为室外文化遗存，长期遭受着渗水、风化、岩体失稳、生物侵蚀等病害的威胁。一尊尊雕像，就如一位位历史老人，长期饱受着病魔的摧残。

Like elder people suffering from constant illness, the Dazu Rock Carvings, as cultural heritage located outdoors, have been suffering from water seepage, weathering, rock instabilities, biological erosion and other threats for thousands of years.



The author addresses the conference

7. A panel describes the causes of damage to the carvings

importance to society of the conservation of cultural heritage (Figs. 4 & 5).

Once the museum was opened in a shower of ticker tape we went inside. The very first gallery was inspired by the digital imaging that had been conducted to record the site (3 D modelling) and to assist in the restoration. The lighting, inspired by point cloud data, looked beautiful in the entrance hall and was accompanied by a commentary that put the conservation of the site into context (Fig. 6). Amidst the galleries was an entire set of displays linked to the conservation using a medical analogy to explain conservation. Many of the panels were bilingual Chinese English and even some of those that were not would be fairly readable to most trained conservators (Figs. 7 & 8).

I was inspired by this visit. The conservators I met had many of the same concerns that we share: 'why don't they let me be in charge of the art handlers?', 'how to get salt out of this object?' or 'which do you think is the best tissue for this

repair?'. Yet the profile and recognition of the value of cultural heritage, properly conserved, was off the scale compared to anything I have ever seen in my conservation travels. As ever, with cultural exchanges, there is a lot we can learn from each other but I wanted to share this tale and these images because wherever we are working this surely inspires us to look up, think big and ask for recognition. What we do matters.

Thanks to Cardiff University for supporting my trip to China and to CACH for the invitation and welcome to both the conference and their headquarters in Beijing and for their support during my travels in China.

8. This panel in Chinese will be familiar to all conservators



around and about

Caring for dolls

Taking care of stored collections is one of the most important tasks for conservation staff in a regional museum like The Bowes Museum, County Durham. The Museum's doll collection was identified as a priority for re-storage. This created the perfect opportunity to collaborate with conservation students from Durham University and organise a

short term volunteer project, which has been invaluable experience for our professional development during our current Icon/HLF Textile Conservation internships.

The Museum's doll collection is fairly sizable and includes dolls dating back to the 18th century.

There are currently one hundred and sixty four dolls in storage which range in size from 2cm to 90cm in length. They



Dolls in their box before the repacking exercise started

The boxed dolls after repacking



The repacking project in full swing

The condition survey in progress





The doll store before and after the repacking project



© The Bowes Museum

are made from a range of materials, including wax, bisque, porcelain, plastic, rubber, paper, wood and composition. Some are in very poor condition and needed more appropriate storage, so they can be preserved for as long as possible. The plastic and rubber objects also needed to be isolated and allowed to off-gas, as some are actively degrading.

Prior to re-packing, the storage was poor, using non-archival card and chipboard boxes. The packing materials were yellowed and no longer acid-free. Many of the dolls had been stored face-down, tightly packed and layered. The boxes were not clearly labelled and the object number labels were unclear and aged.

The project took place over three days in July 2015 and

involved ten first year Artefact Conservation students from Durham University. We were able to manage the project in its entirety, initially through correspondence with one of the course tutors, Vicky Garlick, and then by overseeing the practical work.

During the three day project each doll was assessed, photographed, re-labelled, and re-packed in a labelled acid free box and arranged by material type. The re-packing was kept simple to be able to complete the project in the allotted time, using Plastazote® bases and tissue puffs as cushioning. Smaller dolls were stored in custom made Plastazote® trays with Tyvek lined recesses.

Information from the condition survey was entered directly onto an Excel spreadsheet which can now be used to get a

Discussing surface cleaning and insect debris.
Emily Austin is on the left



© The Bowes Museum

The working area for the doll project



© The Bowes Museum

better understanding of the overall condition of the collection as well as identifying vulnerable objects, and those that required custom-made packing.

The project ran smoothly, with work stations set up for the different tasks. The students organised themselves and rotated as necessary. One box was found to have live moth activity but was dealt with quickly, by freezing the dolls' clothing and quarantining the mixed media dolls.

The collaborative project was a success, with the doll collection now surveyed, stored appropriately, and accessible for curators and researchers. The students have had experience completing a team project within a museum environment and also learnt more about textiles as a conservation specialism.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the museum for entrusting us with such an interesting project and also a huge thank you to the Durham students for all their hard work.

Emily Austin & Maria Pardos Mansilla
Icon/HLF Textile Conservation Interns
The Bowes Museum, County Durham.

A shortlisted Angel

Congratulations to Sally Strachey Historic Conservation Ltd for making the shortlist in the 2015 Historic England Angels awards in the Best Craftsmanship category. By the time you get your copy of Icon News the winners will have been announced, but congratulations are due to the team in any event for the recognition of their work. The project in question – to repair the Shell Grotto at St Giles House in Wimborne St Giles, Dorset – was very challenging both technically and aesthetically due to its delicacy and ruinous state.

The grotto was built 1746–1753 with two principal and two side chambers. The entrance chamber is encrusted with



The entrance chamber with the internal supports being installed before the conservation programme can begin

minerals and crystals and the entire inner chamber is covered with shells and shell-covered branches. How to conserve the grotto had been a concern for several generations and the grotto was in an extremely fragile condition by 2011. The structure was engulfed in vegetation, smothered in ivy and with trees growing from the walls; the roof structure was collapsing, the floors were covered in a thick layer of fallen shells and other decoration and water penetration was threatening the whole structure.

Holding repairs to reduce further deterioration began in 2011 and in 2013 Sally Strachey Historic Conservation were appointed to undertake the rescue work: major work to the grotto's external fabric together with conservation of surviving shell and mineral decoration. Complicated and innovative

The grotto after clearance around it before the conservation work begins





The inner chamber after conservation of the shell decoration

techniques were needed to stabilise and repair the roofs and walls without precipitating the collapse of the structure and without disturbing the decoration.

With the structure saved the shells of the inner chamber could be consolidated or carefully reinstated using historic photographs for accuracy.

Whatever the outcome of the competition the outcome of the work is clearly fantastic!

Work in progress to consolidate and reinstate the shell decoration and decorative branches

Work on reinstating the roofs nears completion





Oliver Cromwell by Robert Walker,
oil on canvas, circa 1649 NPG 536

Unfriending Cromwell?

There is just time to catch a display at the National Portrait Gallery before it closes on 19 October of a mystery surrounding a portrait of civil war campaigner and staunch republican Sir Arthur Hesilrige. Recent investigation of the portrait of Sir Arthur, using the latest infra-red technology, revealed what appears to be a hidden portrait of the Parliamentary commander Oliver Cromwell underneath.



Sir Arthur Hesilrige by Unknown artist,
oil on canvas, circa 1650 NPG 6440

The reasons for this change are obscure. Hesilrige appears to have been a pretty fiery character, holding radical religious and political views. So perhaps Hesilrige had Cromwell's portrait repainted as one of himself when the two fell out over Cromwell's assumption of the role of Protector. Or perhaps the artist was just re-using an old canvas that he had been unable to sell. The display puts the Gallery's portrait of Cromwell alongside that of Hesilrige and, for the first time, shows the infra-red image of the hidden portrait.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 11th Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Conservation will be held on Monday 30 November 2015 at 5.00 p.m. at the St. Bride Foundation, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 8EQ, to consider the following business:

Ordinary Resolution 1: To receive the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2015.

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

A member of the Institute of Conservation who is entitled to attend and vote at the meeting (being a paid up Accredited, Associate, Graduate or Student Member) is entitled to appoint a proxy, who need not be a member of the Institute of Conservation, to attend and vote instead of them. Proxy forms may be

appointed via the web portal or to the registered office so long as they are received before 5.00 p.m. on Thursday 26 November 2015. Those received later will not be counted.

Proxy voting forms will become available later via our electronic voting system.

We will advise you of any changes or additions to the Agenda as soon as they become available.

Registration begins at 4.00p.m. and 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

Simon Green, Company Secretary
1st September 2015

VISITS

THE CONSERVATION OF PACIFIC COLLECTIONS

Icon Ethnography Group

The British Museum, 27 June 2015

This half-day tour was organized and led by three conservators of the British Museum: **Verena Kotonski** (Specialist Conservator, Icon Ethnography Group Committee), **Misa Tamura** (Specialist Conservator, Icon Ethnography Group Committee), and **Monique Pullan** (Senior Textile Conservator). All three had worked on conservation projects in preparation for two complementing exhibitions at the museum: *Shifting pattern: Pacific barkcloth clothing* (at the British Museum until 6 December), and *Indigenous Australia: enduring civilisation*.

The first session was a gallery talk by Monique at the *Shifting pattern* exhibition. Prior to the talk, the fifteen participants introduced themselves as a mixture of conservators of paper, textile, or objects. This range of conservation fields reflected the unique characteristics and challenges of barkcloth clothing in a museum collection. Barkcloth and paper are both made from plant materials but the manufacturing processes differ. Barkcloth clothing in the Pacific regions is traditionally made and used in the form of sheets, rather than cut in patterns and sewn together to make a shirt, skirt or robe. Nonetheless, barkcloth is indeed worn as a garment, wrapped or draped around the wearer's body. Monique drew attention to the fact that the barkcloths on display are accompanied with photographs so that their use can be understood without compromising their fragile condition. The talk highlighted that barkcloth conservation was a collaboration between conservators and curators as well as the source communities.

Monique pointed out how the condition of the barkcloths, in addition to obvious dust, dirt, and soiling, has deteriorated over time. First, the degradation of some pigments has accelerated the deterioration of the barkcloth. The barkcloths were often decorated, using paint and/or dye, with the source communities' ancestral symbols. Second, some barkcloths were cut for sampling and the pieces were not always in the same physical condition, making it difficult to reconnect them. Third, some barkcloths had deep creases because they had been folded or rolled for storage due to their large size. Monique described the careful planning and execution of the treatments that were required to improve the stability of these vulnerable cloths, which also included the development of new treatment options such as filling areas of loss using Kozo fibre pulp. Acknowledging these challenges, the participants enthusiastically asked questions about future storage plans



Monique Pullan, Senior Textile Conservator, giving a talk in the 'Shifting patterns: Pacific barkcloth clothing' exhibition

after the exhibition, and about the creative way to display barkcloths using magnets covered with tinted Japanese tissue paper.

The second session started with insightful information about selected artefacts displayed in the *Indigenous Australia* exhibition. Verena, Misa, and Monique each selected a couple of examples to illustrate their decision-making processes. They described how they considered both the object's physical condition as well as the source community's wishes while choosing conservation treatments. Their presentations provided the participants with incisive ideas about how conservators address the issue of an object's cultural heritage in an exhibition, which stimulated many questions from the participants as they explored the exhibition at their own pace.

The two sessions complemented each other and demonstrated the challenges and privileges in conservation of ethnographic objects. As a conservation student, the visit was a great opportunity to see firsthand how conservation has contributed to the exhibitions as well as to safeguard material cultures.

Eri Ohara Anderson MSc student
Conservation for Archaeology and Museums,
UCL

ALEXANDER MCQUEEN: Savage Beauty

Icon Textile Group

V&A June 2015

At 8:30am on 9 June, Textile Group members were invited to a privileged private viewing of *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Early entry meant we had the exhibition to ourselves, (which can be truly appreciated upon returning during opening hours), and were privy to museum staff carrying out the maintenance work required for the textiles on open display in such a popular show.

The visit began with an introduction to the exhibition by **Sarah Glenn**, Senior Textile Conservator at the V&A, who discussed the challenges involved with the mounting of

two hundred and forty four costumes and accessories on the different mannequin types selected for each room setting.

An example of one such challenge was that a majority of the Bonaveri mannequins favoured by the McQueen team were too big for many of the garments included in the exhibition. Sarah described how, in order for the costumes to fit, the chosen mannequins had to be cut away until often only the original head, hands, and legs remained. Senior Costume Mounter, Lara Flecker, then had the task of finding an appropriate material to fill in the gaps and thus stabilise and strengthen the mannequins for display. Materials tested included buckram, fossshape, and formetal before a solution was found in combining varaform mesh with resin-impregnated medical bandages.

This insight into Textile Conservation's involvement with the exhibition continued as we were accompanied on a long-awaited look around the exhibition by Sarah Glenn and fellow V&A Textile Conservator **Susana Fajardo**.

The first two rooms of the exhibition, which are designed to look like the studios at Central St Martins where McQueen trained, are new additions to when the show first debuted at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2011. They chart the beginnings of McQueen's career as a fashion designer through a multisensory display: Mannequins exhibiting McQueen's early designs are staged in front of a screening of runway footage while audio delivers snippets of interviews with McQueen speaking of his inspiration working in London.

'The mannequins in these rooms', explained Sarah, 'are off-the-peg stockmans mannequins from Proportion London, which have a special cover that had to be distressed. These were mounted in the studio, marked up, undressed, and sent back to Proportion for distressing before returning to the conservation studio for final dressing'.

This sounded fairly standard practice in comparison with the installation of the



Textile Group members at the Alexander McQueen exhibition

oversized silver figures in the very last room, which display examples from McQueen's final runway presentation; the vivid 'Plato's Atlantis'. This high-octane set, which concludes the show, has a similar layout to the first room with mannequins staged in front of a large screen. This time, however, the figures were made bespoke by a sculpture company rather than a mannequin maker. The elongated and alien like proportions of the mannequins as well as their fragile silver surface made transportation and installation challenging.

As you navigate the exhibition other complex installations become apparent and one marvels at the achievement of all those involved in setting up this definitive retrospective. Not only are there different mannequin types used throughout the exhibition but they are often mounted on moving plinths and display costume composed of every unconventional material imaginable.

A notable example of how the V&A's excellence in costume mounting and exhibition display does justice to McQueen's innovative designs can be seen in the Cabinet of Curiosities installation; a floor to ceiling space with more than one hundred and twenty two seminal pieces on display.

With the rave reviews which the exhibition had received, it was hard not to have high expectations when entering it for the first time. All expectations were surpassed, however, by the sheer ambition and scale of the show.

Thank you to Sarah Glenn and Susana Fajardo for organising such an inspiring and informative visit.

Rosie Chamberlin Textile Conservator
Plowden and Smith Ltd

COURSES

NEW METHODS OF CLEANING PAINTED SURFACES

International Academic Projects
London 13-17 July 2015

Attending one of Richard Wolbers' 'New Methods of Cleaning Painted Surfaces' courses is something I have long wanted to do, and I was very grateful to receive

funding from the Icon Tru Vue Professional Development Fund to enable me to do this.

Organised by International Academic Projects, the five-day course is a very intense but informative and practical approach to the topic, covering everything from the chemistry of cleaning, right through to suitable preservatives for natural gels and where to purchase materials and tools for making specific preparations. My main concern, and that of several fellow participants I spoke to, was that my level of understanding of chemistry might not be adequate to fully follow the course.

However, Richard is one of a rare breed: an inspirational practitioner and excellent teacher, with time and patience for every level of question. The course goes far beyond Wolbers' 'solvent gels', in fact centering on six basic aqueous recipes, generally free of both solvent and surfactant (but with the addition of a chelating agent in most cases, and triethanolamine in some), that can be utilised and adapted for a very wide range of aqueous and minimally-aqueous ('dry-cleaning') applications.

By changing the gelling agent, pH, conductivity and concentration, Richard showed us how a few simple ingredients could serve multiple purposes within a gel system to provide considered, safe and controlled cleaning methodologies for a variety of materials, including aged oil films, under-bound matte paints and acrylics. The addition of solvents, surfactants and enzymes within these systems under specific circumstances, and the production of 'macro' and 'micro' emulsions, was also practically explored, and the benefits/downsides of these approaches discussed.

With the main principles firmly embedded in our notes, if not yet fully in our heads, Richard went on to discuss in some detail his more recent research on acrylic paint films, and how aqueous gel systems might be utilised even on this highly sensitive, problematic surface. The importance of corrosion inhibitors was also briefly touched upon, in the context of aqueous cleaning (and undertaking other treatments such as consolidation) on metal substrates.

There was a good balance of lecture-based teaching and hands-on practice, my only criticism being the slightly chaotic practical afternoons where twenty keen participants simultaneously rushed to use the limited equipment in a small laboratory. By the end of the week I felt positive and more informed, albeit somewhat saturated with information, and have since had time to reflect on the lessons learnt. Whilst gels are certainly not the answer to every cleaning problem (and Richard would be the first to suggest there are more efficient ways to remove a modern resin coating, for

Learning new cleaning techniques from Richard Wolbers



example), the course has provided me with some extremely useful tools to assist with specific situations, also introducing me to new materials and techniques, and clarifying a bit of 'Wolbers folklore' that I have incorrectly assimilated over the years.

Specifically, the course reiterated the centrality of pH and conductivity to any responsible aqueous cleaning methodology, and introduced me to the wonderful world of xanthan gum, velvessil plus and 'D4'. Xanthan gum is a unique gelling agent that can work within a wide range of conditions. Whilst a polar gel, it is simultaneously able to hold a limited amount of non-polar material, i.e. a solvent, within 'pockets' in its structure. Velvessil Plus, a cross polymer silicone gel, is what might be described as its opposite, being a non-polar gel able to hold up to 20% water, thus enabling water-sensitive materials to also benefit from aqueous cleaning in a limited, controlled way. Perhaps the real star of the show, however, was cyclomethicone, or D4, a silicone solvent able to clear Velvessil Plus gel residue from a surface but also, due to its extreme low polarity and ability to repel water, used as a barrier on and within a surface to prevent ingress of the gel systems without mobilising dirt or leaving tide lines (and, equally impressively, behaving in an opposite way on an acrylic film to reach embedded dirt particles).

I would highly recommend this course to any conservator who would like to significantly develop their knowledge-base, and add to their current tool-kit for approaching potentially complex cleaning problems. You might even walk away with a free IAP mug!

Alison Foster Westminster Abbey
Liaison Conservator for the Queen's Jubilee
Diamond Galleries project.

WORKSHOPS

BACK TO BASICS: Plastics

Icon Textile Group

V&A, Tate and Museum of London
14–15 May 2015

Day One of this two-day workshop was hosted by the V&A at the Clothworkers' Centre, Blythe House. Four conservators gave five talks over the course of the day discussing the history, treatment and research of this ubiquitous modern material.

Dr **Brenda Keneghan**, V&A Scientist, gave an excellent overview of the type of plastics that can be found in museum collections and the history of plastics across the 19th and 20th century. The two talks also highlighted the effect additives such as plasticisers, heat and light stabilisers have on the degradation of plastics as well as how to spot the signs of plastic breakdown both visually and through smell. The issue of additional filler materials added to plastic and their effect on spot test

results was also noted. Brenda's advice that plastic identification should generally be undertaken using FTIR for specific results was a relief to conservators who have spent hours trying to get positive identifications using spot tests and had failed.

Dr **Cordelia Rogerson**, Head of Conservation at the British Library, discussed the assessment and conservation of contemporary jewellery collections made from plastic. This informative presentation discussed working with living artists and the issues surrounding the assessment of chemical and mechanical deterioration, particularly in relation to surface damage and the effect it can have on the artist's intent. Cordelia also brought her own contemporary jewellery collection in for participants to handle and observe. This presentation, as well as raising questions as to how conservators assess plastic objects, was a brilliant introduction to contemporary jewellery artists such as Adam Paxton and Wendy-Sarah Pace. It also opened my eyes to the versatility of plastic as a medium for making beautiful jewellery.

Although the primary focus for the workshop was on plastics in textile collections, **Clare Ward**, Conservator at the British Museum, highlighted the issue of plastic deterioration in ethnographic collections. Specific focus was on slowing down the rate of decay of cellulose nitrate and cellulose acetate objects by using low oxygen environments and cold storage recommendations. Clare also discussed the treatment of deteriorating polyurethane ether (PUR) foam flowers on a Bulgarian kukeri mask. A mixture of Tinuvin B75 (an antioxidant) and Impranil DLV/1 (a consolidant) dispersed in Isopropanol and water can be applied with a nebulizer to PUR foam; this solution successfully acts as a physical consolidant and as a chemical stabilizer. Degraded polyurethane has always appeared relatively untreatable to me, so it was great to see that early intervention with this consolidant can prolong its notoriously finite life!

Finally, **Mark Kearney** talked about his research undertaken as an Icon HLF intern of modern materials at the V&A. His research follows on from work undertaken on the EU funded POPART project (Preservation of Plastic ARTeifacts in Museum Collections), focusing on the repeatability of the tests created on this project and whether they can be replicated in the lab. His findings included creating a more realistic dust for cleaning tests and fine-tuning the analytical technique for measuring scratches and loss of gloss on the surfaces of plastic. Another project undertaken by Mark was a time-lapse recording of decaying cellulose acetate bags using a raspberry pi computer and camera module – these videos are available for viewing on the V&A's conservation blog.

Overall, the workshop was an incredibly informative and enjoyable refresher on

plastics and prepared us well for the behind the scenes tours and further talks the following day.

Charlotte Ridley Conservation Officer
Horniman Museum and Gardens

The second day of the workshop moved us out and about to see the care of plastics in action. A morning visit to the stores of Tate revealed the extent of plastics in their collections and the way in which their preservation is managed. Plastics are mostly present in the sculpture collection and Tate's Conservation Manager **Louise Law** revealed the approach to their conservation. This includes a full condition assessment at the point of acquisition, the formulation and use of a vulnerable items list, and the monitoring of the condition and deterioration of plastics. Tate is taking part in Nanorestart, a three year NMP21-European funded project exploring the conservation of contemporary art, and is also actively researching the long term preservation of plastic materials in its collections.

Challenges to the ongoing preservation of plastics in the collection include the size, scale and varied nature of the objects and their components. Storage can be a challenge as there is a requirement that the sculptures are 'loan ready' in crates, so the lids are not placed on top to allow plastic elements to off-gas. The issue of when an item is no longer viable to be displayed and kept in the collection because of its state of degradation was discussed as was object replication which often involves dialogue with the artists who created the original work of art.

At the afternoon session at the Museum of London, **Abby Moore** described the research she has undertaken into the museum's handbag and purse collection. Many of the bags contain plastic in their construction and the signs of their deterioration are often very evident, so a condition survey was undertaken, which included recording the number of different plastics present in each object, their condition, and the type and frequency of the deterioration.

One of the major aspects of the work was to correctly identify the types of plastic present. Working with UCL-Centre for Sustainable Heritage, the museum has trialled the use of Solid Phase Microextraction-Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (SPME-GC/MS) as a non invasive method to identify the volatile organic compound of the plastics. They have found it to be a reliable and more conclusive way of identifying plastic type than FTIR and the information that has been discovered provides comprehensive knowledge about each object which has impacted the way in which this collection is being preserved.

Both visits offered wonderful insights into the way in which plastics in collections are

monitored, researched and stored. We were grateful to the Tate and the Museum of London for sharing their experiences and being open about the challenges that they encounter. The two visits excellently complemented the talks that we had heard the day before through the information that they provided and the discussions that took place, and they gave an opportunity to see a variety of objects and plastics in their storage environments.

Sarah Howard

Freelance conservation manager and consultant

PHOTOGRAPHIC CONSERVATION WORKSHOPS

Icon Scotland Group et al

June/July 2015 at various venues

From 24 June to 2 July, a series of workshops on the conservation of photographs were hosted at Fort William, Brora, Aberdeen and St Andrews. The workshops were generously funded by Museum Galleries Scotland in partnership with Icon Scotland, University of St Andrews and the Scottish Society for the History of Photography. The events were aimed at people working with small to medium sized photograph collections.

The workshops proved to be very popular, with approximately fifty participants attending in total, representing thirty seven heritage institutions in Scotland. The sessions began with a brief introduction to the birth of photography by **Rachel Nordstrom**, Photographic Preservation Officer at St Andrews University. Rachel began by describing the first photographic processes (daguerreotype and calotype) and highlighted the Scottish connection to the development of photography. Interestingly, a patent was applied to the calotype in England, but not Scotland. So early use of the calotype flourished in Scotland leading to fantastic collections that documented life in Scotland at that time.

Next, Rachel discussed the care of photographic collections. She described the agents of deterioration that are applicable to all collections, such as temperature, relative humidity and light, and emphasised the need for good housekeeping. The benefits of cool versus frozen storage was also discussed. When handling photographs, nitrile gloves should always be worn. It can be uncomfortable wearing these gloves for a long period of time, so Rachel suggested cutting off the fingers of the gloves and just wearing the finger parts. These nitrile fingertips will keep your hands cool and your photographs protected!

Edward Martin then gave a talk on the digitisation of photographic collections. He began by describing the methods of digitisation such as flatbed scanning, film



Identifying 19thc photographs at one of the Scottish workshops

scanning and photographic copying and then discussed how to decide which option to use. For example, Daguerreotypes and Ambrotypes are highly reflective, so flatbed scanning is the best option. However, if the item is cased and can't be fully opened, photographic copying may be more suitable. Edward then discussed what resolution to use when capturing your image. Rather than going for the highest possible resolution, he suggests that you should base your resolution on what the end usage is. Edward also emphasised the need to calibrate your monitors and regularly back-up your files. Another top tip was to test the back-up files regularly to ensure these had not been corrupted.

After lunch, we began the identification of 19th century photographs. With approximately 1,500 known photographic processes, it would be impossible to describe them all, so Rachel focused on the twenty two most common types. She first explained the methodology when starting to identify photographs and provided a handy flowchart which shows the identification steps. We then broke off into small groups to put this into practice. Certain photographs were fairly easy to identify such as the daguerreotype, with its distinctive polished and shiny surface. Others were much more difficult, such as the Gelatin Printing Out Paper Print and the Collodian

Printing Out Paper Print, which are virtually indistinguishable.

Overall, the day was highly successful and proved to be of interest to conservators and non-conservators alike. Due to the location of the workshops, heritage professionals from smaller institutions were able to attend and gain valuable insight into the conservation and preservation of photographs. Based on the success of this event, the Icon Scotland Group plan to host a similar workshop series next year on a different topic.

Emily Hick Project Conservator
Centre for Research Collections, Edinburgh University

INTRODUCTION TO USING A PORTABLE XRF SPECTROMETER

Icon Book & Paper Cooperative Training Register

London May 2015

On Tuesday 19 May book conservator **Abigail Bainbridge** presented an 'Introduction to using a portable x-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometer' at the V&A. There were ten participants in both a morning and afternoon session. Participants included V&A conservators from various disciplines, including paper and furniture, as well as a number of conservators from other institutions and in private practice.



Dana Melchar & Tristram Bainbridge of the V&A analyzing a pair of 18th century French tables

During the course of several hours, Ms Bainbridge explained how to use a hand-held Bruker Tracer Turbo XRF spectrometer, the basics of how this non-destructive surface analysis technique works, and safety features of the portable unit. The unit that was used for the demonstration was generously loaned by West Dean College. She began with an orientation of the instrument while explaining how the spectrometer detects elements at least as heavy as sodium by emitting an x-ray beam. The beam excites electrons from the inner orbital shells of the atoms in the sample being analysed, causing them to leave the atom, while the detector measures the energy lost from the sample as electrons move to fill vacant shells around the nucleus. Each element has a unique energy 'signature' during this process that is identified by the associated software.

Ms Bainbridge then demonstrated how this works. She began by analysing pigment on a paper sample. While the spectrometer was pointed at the object, a computer attached to the machine generated a spectrum on the screen. After about twenty seconds, the

peaks on the spectrum became static and the x-ray was turned off. At this stage, with the help of identifying software, the peaks could be identified, thus providing a better understanding of the inorganic elements present in the sample and aiding in material identification.

After the demonstration, Ms Bainbridge helped the participants to conduct the analysis themselves on samples they had brought to the session, allowing them to become familiar both with the instrument and the associated software. Highlights in the afternoon session included investigations of an old school book, analysing coloured paper, and looking at metals and pigmented resins on furniture.

During the course of the session Ms Bainbridge made the technique, instrument and software all very accessible. The course provided participants with a basic understanding of the technique and the ability to use the equipment and generate useable spectra. The training also enabled participants to interpret and understand the XRF data presented in articles and conference papers with more confidence.

Dana Melchar Senior Furniture Conservator, V&A

Abigail Bainbridge demonstrating pigment ID



materials in conjunction with the treatment of 'The Virgin and Child', a painting by Gerino da Pistoia. Their successful identification of a suitable filling material (Balsite®, a two-component epoxy-based putty) for their project, is encouraging news for conservators working on woodworm-damaged panel paintings.

Alex Owen then shared his findings on the effect of alcohol on the strength of animal glues. His research stemmed from treatment he was conducting on detached shell inlay, when he realised that there was often a void behind the shell where the deer collagen glue had once existed. Alex's well-considered preliminary research shows that alcohol lowers the strength of collagen glues, and that its effect is related to the molecular weight of glues.

Following Alex, **Hugh Harrison** embarked on an interesting and detailed account of discoveries made regarding the construction of early 16th century choir stalls and screen at St. Cross Church in Winchester over the course of their treatment. These choir stalls and screen have now been recognised as a stellar example of early Renaissance woodwork in the country.

Amy Anderson took to the podium after a brief interlude for refreshments, recounting the treatment procedure of a 17th century carved oak figure from the collection of Norfolk Museums. In a very enjoyable presentation, Amy highlighted the pricing challenges, ethical issues and technical complexities that occurred over the course of treatment, providing useful insight particularly for conservation students and those new to the field.

Next, **Zoe Allen** and **Phil James** provided an absorbing review of non-intrusive upholstery techniques that were used for 18th century French seat furniture at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The techniques incorporated traditional upholstery methods with modern conservation practices, such as the addition of poplar wood frames and sewing pockets, to re-create the authentic appearance of the furniture while preserving the integrity of the chairs' original and fragile construction.

Finally, musical instruments conservator **Jonathan Santa Maria Bouquet** brought the programme to a close with a fascinating look into the inherent problems found in 19th century guitars. Jonathan introduced the cause of splits occurring in the wooden fronts and backs of these stringed instruments, and related the challenges faced and the materials employed during conservation treatment.

It was heartening to see that the event, held at a charming venue in the heart of Covent Garden, was attended by conservation and heritage professionals from various specialisations in addition to furniture. The cross-disciplinary tone of the occasion

CONFERENCES

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM Icon Furniture and Wood Group London 15 May 2015

The inaugural Furniture and Wood Group Symposium promised an afternoon of interesting presentations on a diverse range of topics, kicking off with a warm welcome speech by the principal organiser, **Tristram Bainbridge**.

The first presentation, by **Chloe Head** and **Christina Young**, set the tone for the next few hours with a thoroughly informative talk on their rigorous experimentation with filling



An attentive audience at the Furniture and Wood Group's symposium

emphasised the benefits of communication and co-operation between the various specialisations in conservation. The Group then rounded off the event by adjourning to a local pub, to reflect on and further discuss the day's topics.

Many thanks to the organisers for a rewarding afternoon, and looking forward to many more successful editions of the symposium in years to come.

Yuqi Chock Student MA Conservation Studies (Furniture & Related Objects), West Dean College

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVE STORAGE: problems, potentials and solutions **Icon Archaeology Group** Fishbourne Roman Palace, West Sussex 6 June 2015

This Icon Archaeology Group event reviewed the current status of archaeological archives in the UK and presented case studies demonstrating how these might be managed, made accessible and their value realised, through effective storage, documentation and public engagement. A summary of the key points follows.

An archaeological archive comprises artefacts to ecofacts, waste materials to scientific samples and includes all documentation, analogue and digital. Local authorities and museums sometimes do not have the resources to manage this material and it may be in danger of neglect and, in extreme cases, of disposal.

Duncan Brown (Historic England), in *Introduction to the crisis in archaeological archive storage*, set the scene. Many museums and local authorities contend with a vast legacy of material from past archaeological projects. New projects generate more material, so demand on storage increases. In 2012 the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA) and the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME) identified more than nine thousand archives in the UK that lacked full documentation and which therefore remained inaccessible. Advances have been made in recent years toward developing

guidelines and protocols for archaeological projects, notably *A Standard and Guide to Best Practice for Archaeological Archiving in Europe* (2014). Establishing consistent standards at a national level, raising the profile of collections, introducing archive selection strategies and ensuring that provision is made for future deposits are the key tasks ahead.

Gail Boyle (Society for Museum Archaeology) in *Running out of space, running out of time* reiterated the need for a unified approach to storage, care and access. The SMA 2012 report confirmed that few museums are now collecting archaeological material and that a significant number of local authorities do not have the space or resources to store and care for archaeological archives. Often there is no direct source of funding, or requirement, to support them. More positively, the wide use of archaeological collections and their appeal to a broad range of audiences may

prove valuable in finding funds to support curation, conservation care and access. New relationships to support archaeological archives must also be developed, for example involving academic and wider archaeological sector partners.

The following papers concentrated on solutions. **Nancy Grace** (National Trust) in 'A box here and a box there' – a view from the National Trust outlined the Trust's approach to managing its archives. Significantly, archaeological archive materials are now to be included on the National Trust collections database, which will greatly improve their accessibility. The National Trust aims to hold archaeological archives at the sites where they originated if possible; these materials are viewed as research resources and their use supported. A recent change in name of the depository from *Stores* to *Resource Centres*, reinforces the idea that the archives are seen as living and accessible collections.

The next two papers focused on the planning and management of large-scale storage move projects. **Amber Xavier Rowe** and **Charlie Newham** (Historic England) discussed the *Wrest Park Archaeological Archive Store* project that they initiated. A key development was barcode identification for objects, which streamlined documentation and later access. A full presentation about the storage move project, including the pragmatic and effective approach to establishing suitable environmental conditions, is available online. In this two-year project 160,000 objects stored in rented warehouses were relocated to a single store. This has reduced costs, improved storage conditions and enhanced access.

Museum of London's archaeological archive store.



© Museum of London

Sally Croft (Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Record) and **Deborah Walton** (University of Cambridge Museums) in *Cambridgeshire archaeological archives* – a solution urgently needed to provide a service with increased capacity and improved access. The solutions found were imaginative. A converted bunker now houses sensitive and fragile finds. Other materials are now held at the DeepStore facility in Cheshire (a disused salt mine). As above, a barcode system was used for identification. Thorough documentation resulted in a richly populated database enabling effective searching and better access. Cambridgeshire County Council have now published guidelines to assist those making deposits of archaeological material found in the county.

The success of these projects greatly depended on the project leaders developing a cost-effective and precise plan, underpinned by conservation best practice.

Archaeological Archives – Beyond Storage, given by **Adam Corsini** and introduced by **Helen Ganiaris** (Museum of London), concluded the event with an exemplar of the use of archaeological archives by the Museum of London. Volunteers help improve documentation, packaging and storage, and the museum promotes access to its archaeological archive through regular events in the stores and in the wider community, including outer London shopping centres where shoppers have helped pack finds from local excavations. Public engagement with the collections, and learning, are achieved not just through direct contact with objects but also through the museum's blog and other social media.

A summary of the group discussions following the papers and links to resources mentioned above may be found on the Icon website on the Archaeology Group pages.

Hazel Gardiner British Museum

CONSERVATION MATTERS IN WALES: 'DAMAGE – WHO CARES?'

Aberystwyth, Wales 11 June 2015

This one-day conservation conference held at the National Library of Wales was organised by Cardiff University, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, the Federation of Art Galleries and Museums in Wales and the National Library of Wales.

The first speaker was Professor **Moria Vincentelli**, Curator of Ceramics and lecturer at Aberystwyth University. She outlined the 'Hot Pot Project' and described a display of the recently acquired Ann Carr collection of pottery, curated by a group of students, appearing at Aberystwyth Art Centre. She emphasised how the damage and accretions in the pots were valued as integral to their history. These were pots that were used on a daily basis and were made not as art works but as functional pottery.

She highlighted the use of broken pots and

fragments in contemporary studio practice and also mentioned a recent art work of dissolving an unfired clay construction in water. She introduced a number of themes which would run throughout the conference, thought provoking and stimulating concepts on how the broken or damaged nature of some ceramics might gain them new value and renewed artistic appreciation, which led us seamlessly to the next speaker.

Gas Kimishima, ceramic conservator and ceramicist from Japan, explained his methods of restoration, together with an overview of the contrast between Japanese and Western values regarding the restoration and treatment of antique ceramics. He described his Kintsugi restoration as giving the pot 'new life.'

Sally McInnes, head of Unique Collections and Collection Care at the National Library of Wales, discussed a series of projects that the NLW want to develop, such as the state-of-the-art Conservation and Digital Service for Wales's Documentary Heritage, together with new public areas within the NLW. These proposals aim to improve public engagement with conservation and

preservation activities, as well as improving visitor experiences.

The final speaker for the morning was **Sue Renault**, Chief Conservator of History and Archaeology at the National Museum of Wales. She described the recording and evaluative process that is carried out at St. Fagan's, in relation to its large and varied collection of artefacts. She highlighted their use of the 'Levels of accessioning matrix' chart, which categorises artefacts by damage levels and value, in order to organize which artefacts are of particular importance and require further attention, or those which require less attention or can be discarded.

Following questions from the floor and then the lunch break, **Mark Allen**, Conservator at Flintshire Record Office, talked about the range of damage that occurs in archived paper works and the differences in treatment and care for stored and exhibited artefacts. He reminded us of some of the basic but important questions which we need to ask ourselves when starting out on conservation projects. Is it worth it?

Stuart Evans, Designer at the Ceredigion Museum, discussed how damaged objects in

Gas Kimishima lecturing about the Kintsugi technique

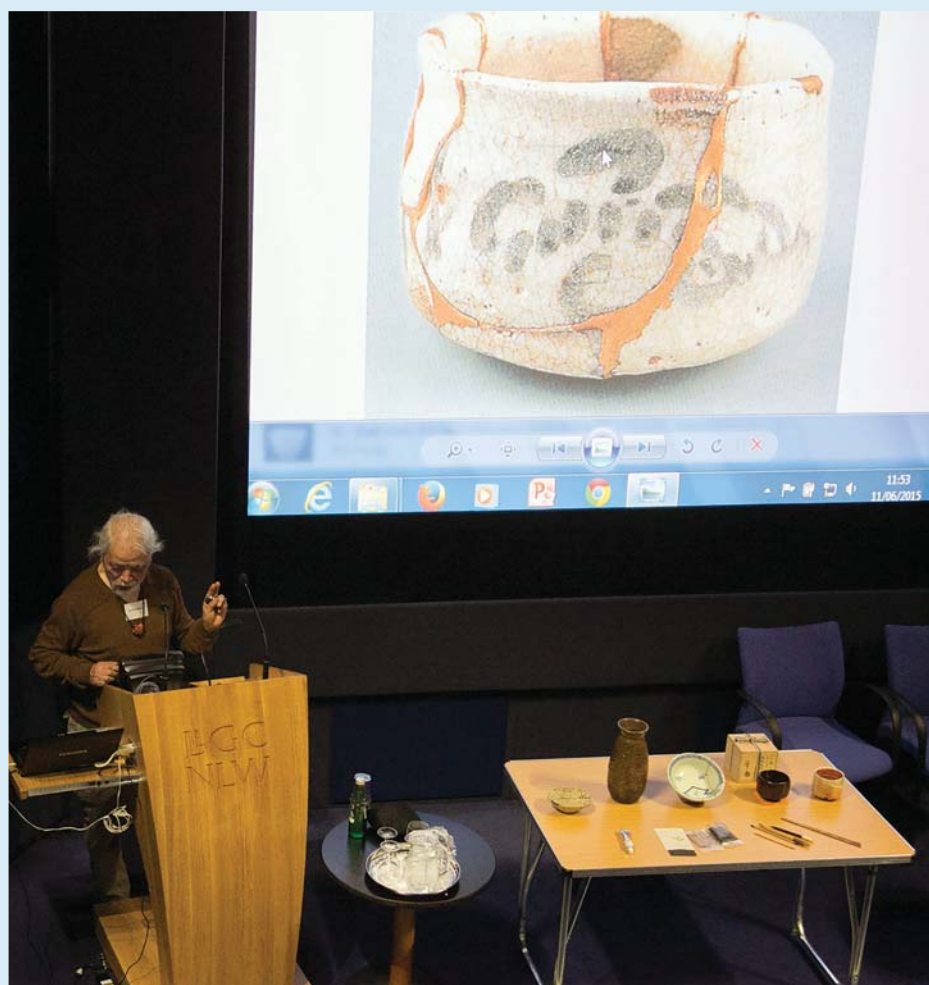


Photo: Mike Jones
© National Library of Wales



Imari dish – repaired with kintsugi technique

collections can still be valued and exhibited. The Museum was asked to work with the 'Hot Pot' project and a new education programme was devised and tested with a group of eight year olds. Using fragments of pottery as a handling collection, children were introduced to the ceramic making process. In particular, he highlighted the activities they design to get younger generations interested in the preservation and study of artefacts and museology as a whole.

The last speaker of the day was **Sarah Paul**, Conservation Advisor, MALD. She discussed how museums have to balance the emotional needs and values of the public towards an artefact. Furthermore, she expressed that it was imperative for each object to be considered carefully, so that they can ensure any future preservation and care is viable and fundable.

Overall, the conference enabled a variety of professional conservators, staff, as well as academics and students, to raise topics and share opinions about issues which concern us all. Members from various backgrounds of professional conservation care, including those simply with an interest in conservation attended. The talks were informative and well executed. Thanks to all those who took part.

Olga Ventura, student, Aberystwyth University

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTMAKERS FORUM: UK Kick-start Event

London April 2015

Earlier this year the International Mountmakers Forum Kick-Start Event was held at the Natural History Museum in London. Over one hundred mountmakers and display specialists gathered together to network with fellow professionals and to hear a number of presentations. The International Mountmakers Forum (IMF) is a biennial conference that has previously taken place at various host institutions across the USA. The event was held in London to gauge interest and build a community among specialists ahead of the 8th conference, which will take place in London in 2018. It is hoped that by holding the conference in the UK it will be more accessible for delegates across Europe to attend.

The presentations given at the event were broadly grouped into two sections: those explaining the origins of the IMF and plans for the future, and those recalling practical

advice and past projects. Firstly, **Helen Walker** (event organiser) explained her involvement in previous IMF conferences and laid out the purpose of this gathering in London. This was followed by talks from **Mackenzie Lowry** and **BJ Farrar** who laid out the history, intent and development of the IMF, having both been involved from the outset through their work at the Getty Institute. These talks were invaluable in informing all delegates of the origins of the IMF and the plans for the future. **Shelly Uhler** from the Smithsonian Institute gave a fascinating presentation which detailed how the IMF had expanded after subsequent conferences, and her role on the Directional Committee.

The second group of presentations were given by **Roger Murray** (Victoria and Albert Museum), **Christian Kingham** (Wellcome Collection) and **Kevin Smith** (Plowden and Smith). These talks focused on specific projects, practical advice and project management of object displays. By including these presentations in the Kick-start Event, delegates were able to get a sense of how knowledge, ideas and particular techniques can be shared at conferences in the future.

One of the great strengths of the event was the use of technology to record and share the occasion. The IMF have always used a Google group to circulate ideas and documents, which continues today. Additionally, presentations and Q&A sessions from this particular event were filmed and are available for all to view on YouTube.

Mountmaking and conservation are intrinsically linked, as appropriate support of objects acts as a preventive conservation measure. Technicians, mountmakers, display specialists and conservators are all involved in this specialism to produce the stunning displays we see in museums and art galleries. A key topic raised in the Q&A sessions was that of recognition for the skills of mountmakers and display specialists. The IMF also provided an excellent opportunity for people involved in the profession to meet face to face and to socialise. Many thanks go to Helen Walker and Sam Gatley who organised the event.

Zoë Lanceley Textile Conservator

ADAPT AND EVOLVE 2015 POST-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

LOCAL REPAIRS ON IRON GALL INK

Museum of London, 11 April 2015

After two days at the Book and Paper Group Conference, a practical workshop was eagerly anticipated. **Eliza Jacobi** had presented a paper earlier in the week called 'Moisture and Mending: An Evolving Relationship' and this popular



Using the Dutch Fe-Migration Test for applying repairs

complementary workshop, co-hosted with her colleague **Claire Phan Tan Luu** from Practice-in-Conservation, did not disappoint.

The perils of iron gall ink are a familiar concern to every book and paper conservator and we were looking to learn more about current techniques in treating this complex material. The opening presentation provided an extremely useful revision of iron gall ink, its properties, characteristics of decay and the corrosive impact of humidity and handling on the ink.

Many of us have come across bathophenanthroline paper as an indicator for iron (II) ions. Eliza and Claire have taken this further and, in cooperation with colleagues from the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and the University of Amsterdam, they have developed the Dutch Fe-Migration Test. This test uses filter paper, impregnated with a bathophenanthroline solution and stamped with iron gall ink to make visible the migration of FE (II) ions caused by the introduction of moisture. This in turn can indicate to conservators how the application of our repairs can affect this sensitive media.

We looked at how this indicator paper responded to different adhesives and types of repair. Through research using this test paper Eliza and Claire have found that gelatin remoistenable tissue provided the most ideal iron gall ink repair technique.

The practical sessions allowed us to test this theory. During the first session we made two types of gelatin remoistenable tissue so that we could experiment with different paper weights and with methods for applying the gelatin adhesive layer. Interestingly, we used a rubber squeegee to draw drops of the warm gelatin through a piece of fine silk or a rigid mesh – this was a new application technique for us and we found that it provided a thin and even film.

In the second practical session Eliza and Claire thoughtfully provided us each with our own name stamped onto newsprint in iron gall ink, which we then tore to imitate the



A How to... package for participants to take home

corrosive damage caused by unstable iron gall ink. This was so that we could try out and compare our own repair techniques and the ones we had just learnt, in conjunction with the indicator paper. By applying the repair technique initially to the sensitive indicator paper you can see to what extent the magenta appears and therefore how the moisture from the application of your repair could affect your object. The whole process provides a lot more control for the conservator. By reactivating the adhesive using a sponge/ blotter moisture reservoir containing a finite amount of moisture it ensures that subsequent repairs must be safe too.

Overall for a half day workshop we squeezed in a lot!! We were also shown a film of Gangolf Ulbricht's workshop making the famous 2.5gsm Berlin tissue. The skill required to make an even sheet is impressive and seeing the film reminded us how special this material is. The presentations were full and disseminated the information very clearly with great photographs. While this worked well a longer session would be even better. Fortunately Claire and Eliza provided us with, 'How to' packs to peruse at leisure as well as providing us with the link to their power-points. This gave us all the equipment and knowledge needed to apply this technique in our own workshop in the future. Thanks go to the Museum of London for hosting us and to the Clare Hampson Fund for sponsoring the event.

Deborah Farndell, Senior Conservator & **Rebecca Goldie**, Conservator, Cambridge University Library

KARIBARI MAKING WORKSHOP

Wellcome Library London 12–14 April 2015

I was very happy to be one of eight delegates of the Book and Paper Group Adapt and Evolve Conference to attend the post-conference workshop on making a Karibari board, hosted by the Conservation Department of the Wellcome Library and generously sponsored by the Clare

Hampson Fund. It was a hugely enjoyable, informative and productive three days and I am sure my fellow delegates join me in thanking **Namiko Tagawa** who led the course, and **Gillian Boal** and her colleagues at the Wellcome for their friendly and generous hospitality. We are also very grateful to **Sayaka Fukuda** ACR who assisted with the smooth running of the workshop, stepped in as translator when required, and organised marvellous lunches - crucial to any successful Karibari board making venture!

As the workshop progressed, I came to fully appreciate the time and thought that Namiko had clearly spent in planning the program and organising the tools and materials we would need. The days were very well timetabled to allow sufficient time for the various steps in the process. All the materials had been supplied from Japan and everything was very well prepared, including the seemingly vast quantities of paste that the group would use.

Traditionally Karibari consist of eight different layers, with each one left to dry overnight. The time constraints of the workshop meant that our boards had five layers with a reduced drying time. The workshop timetable allowed plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion, for the preparation of paste and paper, and for the demonstration by Namiko of the application of the next layer.

Inevitably, much of the discussion centred on the characteristics of the papers we were using. It was a great opportunity not only to learn more about Japanese papers but to practise pasting and pitching large sheets. Namiko gave us tips on squaring sheets and when it is appropriate to water cut as opposed to knife cut the edges. We also discussed the care and correct use of Japanese brushes and had plenty of opportunity to fine tune our nadebake welding technique.

The papers used for our boards were all Hosokawa-shi from the maker Owaga Washi.

These sheets are made from 100% Japanese kozo fibre, cooked with soda ash. They are un-bleached and dried on a stainless steel board. The formation aid is tororo-aoi. Namiko had prepared beautiful sample books for each of us, illustrating the various weights of paper available from this maker. In the traditional Japanese system of paper weight, 1 monme (or momme) is approximately equal to 3.75gsm. It was interesting to learn that the direction of the paper when applied to the board is not critical and that the most economical use of the sheet generally dictates the orientation. For large frames, sheets should be pre-joined and allowed to dry before being applied.

The cedar wood frames are constructed using bamboo nails which are dry cooked to increase their strength. Small apertures at the sides reduce the risk of warping, as does the first paper layer *Honeshibari*, which translates as 'tighten the frame'. When supplied, the frames have small extensions (Tsuno) at the corners; these are generally removed after the application of the fourth layer, *Minoshibari*. This allows two or more boards to be joined together with wooden battens if required for the drying of large objects.

During the workshop, the group were very fortunate to have a visit from Professor **Katsuhiko Masuda** who explained the purpose of the each paper layer and gave us tips while we prepared our boards. He mentioned, for instance, that clay-containing papers were generally used for the second *Dobari* layer; this reduces light penetration when Karibari are used for sliding doors or folding screens. He also noted that the third *Minokake* layer acts as a cushion, preventing rips, dents and tears. It is named after an old style raincoat, made of layered reeds which over-lap like roof-tiles, and was often traditionally comprised of re-cycled documents like pages from ledgers.

Having taught Karibari-making to generations of students, it transpired that Professor Masuda had taught Namiko's teacher. Undaunted by such an eminent guest, Namiko handled the added pressure with impressive ease. The workshop concluded with demonstrations of applying objects to a Karibari and further discussion of their use, including adaptations that may sometimes be necessary when drying western objects.

The course was full of fascinating information as well as very useful, practical tips. Namiko is an extremely knowledgeable and patient teacher, demonstrating enthusiasm and unflinching good humour throughout. I think we were all very proud of our completed Karibari as we stepped out into the sunshine of the Euston Road, determined not to dent them on the way home.

Harry Metcalf ACR



Kyoko Kusunoki showing the way to stir paste

STARCH PASTE AND JAPANESE ADHESIVES FOR CONSERVATION Museum of London 11 April 2015

This day-long workshop at the Learning Centre in the Museum of London was led by Dr **Noriko Hayakawa** and assisted by **Kyoko Kusunoki** from the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties in Tokyo.

Wheat starch paste is of major importance as a conservation material in Japan, especially for paper and – above all – scroll paintings. The aim of this workshop was to introduce us to the Japanese method of preparing wheat starch paste and the chemical properties of the material. *Funori* was also discussed.

The day started with a lecture looking in detail at traditional adhesives such as fresh wheat starch paste (known as *shin-nori*), aged wheat starch paste (*furu-nori*) and seaweed paste (*funori*). Based on their properties, they are used for facing and thickening (*funori*) and linings (*shinori*, *furunori*). Wheat granules not only contain starch but also protein (gluten) which can be separated from the starch through a simple process of kneading and washing. In Japan gluten-free starch is used for conservation. Dr Hayakawa also explained the starch's chemical behaviour by looking at the amylose and amylopectin content. Wheat starch, for example contains 3:7 amylose to amylopectin, while rice starch contains 2:8 and sticky rice 0:10. Dr Hayakawa also explained the changes to wheat starch granules during cooking: how they absorb water, swell up, and burst to start the process of gelatinisation, until they are finally cooked.

The hands-on-work began with the preparation of wheat starch paste. We prepared an 18% concentration by mixing 90 grams of gluten-free wheat starch powder in 410 ml of distilled water. For paste making we were advised to use only distilled water, not tap water, since tap water contains ions that influence the condition of the paste in terms of tackiness, adhesive force and viscosity. The mixture was cooked at a medium to high heat. During cooking, we used a large wooden stick to stir the paste continuously. The stirring was a challenging



Noriko Hayakawa lecturing, with Kyoko Kusunoki in the background

technique in itself and Kyoko demonstrated by rotating the middle part of the stick with one hand while keeping the top part steady with the other. When cooking, the mixture started to thicken but looked white; as we carried on, it started to look slightly transparent; and after ten more minutes the paste looked ready to us, but it wasn't ready for the instructors! As we added a further ten minutes of cooking and stirring we could feel the paste thicken again and at that point it was ready (about thirty minutes altogether).

Once the mixture was cooked it was left to cool down before straining. This is done through a Japanese mesh made from horse hair called the *Norikoshi* sieve, using a wooden spatula and a bowl called a *Noribon*. Sieving also follows strict guidelines. The stiff paste is passed through the sieve a couple of times and is then diluted gradually in the *Noribon* to the consistency of skimmed milk. To test that the paste was effective, we put a little of it between the palms of our hands, pressed them together and felt the tackiness straight away. We were instructed to keep the unstrained paste under a wet cloth at room temperature – but not to cover it with water or put it in the fridge. When the paste starts to deteriorate, it starts losing water and tackiness.

The second part of the workshop involved a lecture on *Funori* (seaweed paste). Extracted

from a particular type of seaweed, it has many uses. In conservation it is used for facings and as a thickener for other adhesives. Although many Western conservators use *funori* as a consolidant, Dr Hayakawa told us that in Japan it is never used as a consolidant as it is not strong enough. Two variations were discussed: cold and cooked. Cooked *funori* requires 3 grams *funori* in 100 ml of distilled water – it is cooked at a high temperature stirring constantly, though the *funori* must be left soaking in water for at least one hour before it is heated. The cold variety requires 10 grams *funori* in 200 ml distilled water, and should be kept overnight at room temperature. Cold *funori* is only used for facing. In both cases, the *funori* is strained through thin gauze leaving you with a thin gel. The instructors recommended keeping it for just one day at room temperature.

Kyoko suggested that cold and cooked *funori* may be used for particular purposes depending on the situation. Both types have almost the same adhesive force but cold *funori* dissolves in cold water much more easily than the cooked. So papers pasted with cold *funori* can be peeled off very easily – hence its use for facing.

Although gluten-free wheat starch can be purchased from most UK conservation suppliers, unfortunately *funori* can only be purchased from Japan.

This was a fantastic workshop, taught by experts in the field, giving a little more insight into the traditional Eastern uses of some of the adhesives that are now more commonly used here in the West. Thanks go to **Clare Reynolds** for hosting the workshop at the Museum of London, **Megumi Mizumura** and **Carol Weiss** for assisting the instructors during the workshop, and to the Clare Hampson Fund for sponsoring it.

Amelia Rampton ACR Independent Conservator

Straining funori



LOOK AFTER THE PENNIES.....

Dr Mark Lewis draws attention to conservation problems of the future being stored up by modern coinage practice

The National Roman Legion Museum in Caerleon acts as a reporting site for the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS Cymru) and has dealt with a number of notable finds, not least the Langstone Hoard of first-century A.D. vessels which included a waterlogged yew drinking tankard subsequently conserved at the National Museum Wales Archaeological Conservation Laboratory, Cardiff.¹

Often, the metal detector finds reported at Caerleon are notable not for their archaeological significance but for their preservation or corrosion characteristics.

A regular visitor to the Museum, Mr Mike Bierne, recently reported a batch of metal detecting finds which included the coin flan shown here next to a modern British penny. Close inspection of the find revealed that it too is the remnant of a copper-plated steel decimal British penny!

According to The Royal Mint, the originally bronze (97% copper, 2.5% zinc, 0.5% tin) decimal penny coins were superseded by copper-plated mild steel coins from September 1992. *"The reason for this change was the increase in the price of metals on the world markets. The coins have a mild steel core and are electroplated with copper - consequently they are magnetic. The 1p coin is legal tender for amounts up to 20p."*²

The corrosion of the penny shown here is extensive. The mass of the uncorroded coin (bottom) is given by The Royal Mint as 3.56g. The corroded flan (top) now weighs just 1.79g (half its original mass), and was not cleaned by Mr Bierne other than a rinse under the tap. He reports that the coin was 'just lying there' and, when found, looked just as it does now. Only small patches of copper plate still adhere to the surfaces of the flan. As with many coins reported at the Museum, one face is notably more extensively corroded than the other. In this example, the reverse (shown) is far more extensively corroded than the obverse.

Deep corrosion pits developed at some raised sections of the design and are especially evident where some of the raised bars of the portcullis motif intersected. It is notable that some of the raised sections have corroded preferentially to the gaps (the field) between these elements of the design where the steel was more deeply impressed. It is probable that initiation of anodic corrosion pits at these points is due to thinning of the copper plate in these areas due to wear. The possibility of locally accelerated corrosion through the action of chloride ions concentrated within the pits is significant given that the coin was recovered from the bed of the river Usk near to Newport Transporter Bridge where the river is tidal and brackish.³ Orange corrosion product can be seen within some of the corrosion pits and, whilst this has not been analysed, it is likely to be the chloride-bearing mineral akaganéite ($\beta\text{-Fe}^{3+}\text{O}(\text{OH}, \text{Cl})$).

Nevertheless, the extent of corrosion that has a *terminus post quem* of A.D. 1992 (twenty two years) is remarkable and does



Photograph: M. Lewis, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.

Two copper-plated steel decimal pennies (reverses)

not bode well for plated steel archaeological numismatic finds of the future. We are reminded of a well-known seventeenth-century translation of a first-century A.D. text 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt...' – sound advice, it would appear.

Mr Bierne has very kindly donated the coin to the National Roman Legion Museum for teaching purposes.

Dr Mark Lewis is an Icon associate member and Senior Curator (Roman), National Roman Legion Museum, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.

Notes

1. <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/244817> and http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/rhagor/article/langstone_tankard/
2. <http://www.royalmint.com/discover/uk-coins/coin-design-and-specifications/one-penny-coin>
3. Turgoose, S., 'The nature of surviving iron objects', in *Conservation of Iron, Symposium at the National Maritime Museum London, 4 July 1980*, ed. R. Clarke, and S. Bradshaw, National Maritime Museum Monographs and Reports 53, National Maritime Museum, London. (1982) 1–7. See also Watkinson, D. and Lewis, M., *Desiccated Storage of Chloride-Contaminated Archaeological Iron Objects. Studies in Conservation* 50 (2005), 1–12.

SEPARATING ALBUMEN PRINTS

A compilation of her experiences by **Marta Garcia Celma**, Icon Intern in Photograph, Paper and Preventive conservation at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland in Edinburgh, 2014–2015.

Background

The albumen prints on which this study is based are part of Photographs of Medieval Sculptures, a large photographic collection dating from 1885 found at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS). The whole collection comprises a variety of photographic materials such as glass plate negatives, acetate negatives, silver developed out prints and albumen prints. The silver developed out prints and the albumen prints are the positive copies of the collection's negatives.

The collection was originally housed in nine cardboard boxes which showed water marks, suggesting their exposure to a water incident prior to arrival at RCAHMS. The conservation challenge was that, due to the moisture, some of the images inside the boxes had stuck together. (No mould was found under UV examination.)

Some photographs had been mounted, while others were unmounted. The mounted images appeared well adhered on an acidic board layer covered by a thin layer of high quality black paper (Fig.1). The edges were gold coloured and a Photographic Studio stamp was found printed on the back (Fig.2). The unmounted photographs were of thin paper and had a strong tendency to curl with the emulsion side towards the centre.

Seven groups of two, three and four 'self adhered' albumen photographs were extracted from the boxes. The albumen had acted as the adhesive, bonding with the black layer of the mount boards. Albumen coated paper swells in water. Vitale and Messier, (1994) found that it has an increase of nearly 2% in the machine direction and 4% in the cross machine direction. It is possible that it was during this process that the albumen became adhered to the board.

In these cases the top photograph of each group was visible leaving the lower ones totally inaccessible. On examination, it was found that on average 35% of each photograph showed discoloration, cockling, adhesion to the adjacent prints and areas of strong tension. (Fig.3).

Fig.1: Adhered mounted albumen prints. Detail of gold toned edge

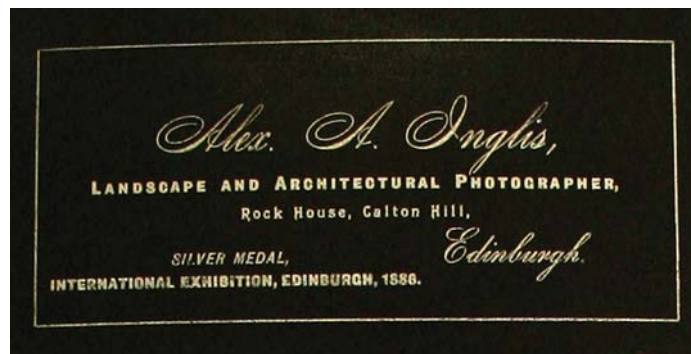


Fig.2: Example of the stamp found on the verso of each mounted photograph

Conservation Objectives

The aim of the treatment was to separate the photographs and to make them accessible. The original glass plate negatives from which the prints had been printed had already been conserved, rehoused, catalogued and digitised at RCAHMS prior to the attempt to separate the photographs. Thus it was accepted that a range of experimental approaches could be tried.

Taking into consideration these relevant factors, the curators and conservators decided, first, to digitise at high resolution the accessible images and, secondly, to bring the prints back to the conservation studio where different treatments would be carried out in order to access the prints by separating them. Without treatment the photographs would remain completely inaccessible in their original adhered state.

The approach to separation

Albumen prints can suffer serious consequences from aqueous treatments. Messier and Vitale (1994) found that the crack width in albumen photographs increased the same amount from surface cleaning with deionised water on a cotton swab as by immersion and that consequent treatments further increase the crack width. In addition, their research showed that albumen gloss changes are closely linked with the increase in crack population.

In the light of this, it was my responsibility as a conservator to assess the benefits and risks of introducing aqueous treatments for separation and to judge the potential merits of conserving the images. I researched historical and contemporary techniques used for the separation of albumen prints and other sympathetic materials, considering their benefits and disadvantages. Some of the techniques proposed

Fig.3: Unmounted albumen print stuck to the board of a mounted photograph



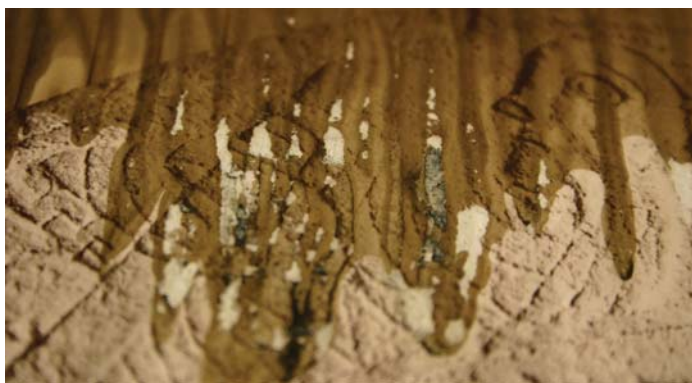


Fig.4: Lost areas of albumen image which got stuck to the board of the mounted print

for the separation of photographs were taken from Hinge, Tape and Adhesive Removal (AIC) and others were unconventional 'home made techniques' found in online platforms. Finally, nine different techniques were proposed for treatment.

The different methods used

This article is by no means intended to provide a guide for treatment. Rather, it is a compilation of the results observed in these particular photographs.

- Application of localised heat with a small hair dryer. *Unsuccessful*
The combination of heat and air made the albumen print shrink. In consequence the differences in tension between the two adhered objects increased, causing the print to rip itself from the board. (Fig.4)
- Application of IMS (Ethanol liquid). *Unsuccessful*
- Application of IMS: H₂O, 1:1 (Ethanol and water, liquid). *Unsuccessful*
- Application of water (liquid). *Unsuccessful*
- Application of enzymes (liquid). *Unsuccessful*
- Application of acetone (liquid). *Unsuccessful*
The liquids were applied using a small brush, while a thin round spatula was used to try to lift and separate the prints. The response of the prints in all those cases was similar. The unmounted albumen photograph lost its strength while wet and ripped off from the mount board when the spatula or brush touched it. The black paint of the mount board dissolved in the solvents, staining the brush and travelling in the moisture to the surrounding areas of the print, so creating small tide lines.
- Humidification chamber. *Unsuccessful*
After placing the print (image side up) in a humidification chamber for two hours the image adhered areas showed no changes. In addition, the unmounted albumens tended to curl and due to limited options for movement, new areas of tension and cockling appeared.
- Splitting, thinning and reducing. *Successful*
With the help of a scalpel (blade No.22) the back board was split from its most external layer of paper and paint (Fig.5). This operation was repeated in each area where the albumen and the board were stuck together. And as a result the unmounted albumen was separated from the board without tearing. However, the thickness of the back board of the mounted image was reduced. The decision to accept this reduction was made after having identified other mounted prints in which the photographer stamp was intact and thus could be kept as historical examples. The ethical decision to sacrifice part of the back board was

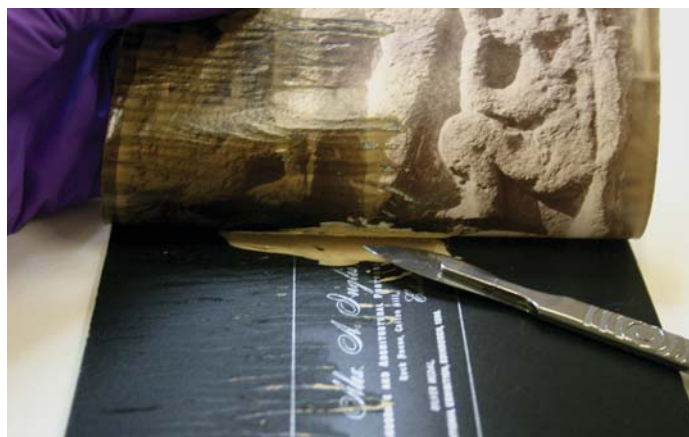


Fig.5: Splitting unmounted and mounted photographs with the help of a scalpel blade n°22

taken after careful consideration and discussion with the curator. This method allowed access to the previously hidden image.

At that point the image side of the unmounted albumen had large layers of board adhered to its surface and their safe removal was the priority (Fig.6). With the help of a scalpel (blades No.10 and No.22) the paper board was slowly thinned, reducing it to the minimum possible (Fig.7). All the paper was carefully removed, but the black paint from the most external layer of the board remained strongly attached to the image of the albumen. The closer to the original the more carefully the process had to be undertaken as it was extremely easy to chip the albumen layer of the image.

Once the accretions were reduced to a layer of black paint,

Fig.6: Mounted and unmounted prints are finally separated leaving large paper accretions on the image of the adhered photograph





Fig.7: Paper accretions are thinned down with the help of a scalpel

their removal presented complications and once again different techniques had to be tested.

- Local humidification was *unsuccessful*. The black particles did not soften and instead the surrounding paper absorbed the moisture making it more vulnerable to mechanical action.
- A second attempt was made by rubbing a scalpel (blade No.15) back and forth with rotary motion, controlling pressure and friction until the accretion started to break down into small black particles (Fig.8). That operation was successful. It is important to note that during this process the use of sharp blades was essential. In addition, due to the fragility of the photographs it was also important to 'listen to the object'; to feel the orientation in which the bonds were weaker by rotating the scalpel around it as necessary.

- Sliding dental floss back and forth between prints.

Unsuccessful

The idea of this treatment was taken from online forums which refer to the book *Extraordinary uses for ordinary things* (2007) which suggests 'Try working a length of dental floss between the pictures to gently pry them apart'. As soon as the piece of dental floss was tensed between the prints, it acted as a sharp blade cutting through the prints.

Rehousing

After treatment, the individual items were rehousing according to the order in which they were found. The unmounted photographs were placed over 1650microns unbuffered 100% cotton museum board in order to provide additional support, and then placed into archival-safe polyester based pocket pages. The mounted photographs were placed directly into the polyester archival pockets. That system limited the

Fig.9: Rehoused mounted and unmounted prints in archival safe pockets



Fig.8: Adhered layer of black paint (part of the mount board) is broken down into dust

movement of the images and consequently reduced further damage by handling. The pocket sheets were stored in archival ring binders providing more protection and easier storage within the archive as well as easier and protected access for those wishing to consult the material (Fig.9).

Conclusions

Initially, different treatment proposals were presented based on researched literature and personal experience. As the project evolved, the different methods proposed had to be evaluated and reshaped according to the nature and behaviour of the photographs, balancing risk against benefits.

Splitting, thinning and reducing was the technique that in this case released the groups of adhered mounted and unmounted albumen photographs into individual items while preserving the image side of the albumens. In addition, the successful treatment was aqueous-free, reducing the chances of causing more cracks.

The final treatment required good manual dexterity, important ethical decisions and the collaboration of different departments in the archive with curatorial, conservation and digitisation teams working towards the same goal.

However, none of this tells us what would have happened if the adhered photographs had been found unmounted. Photographic materials should be studied individually, as any variation in their nature, processing, history and use could influence the ethical decision which will determine their final treatment.

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Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the supervisors at RCAHMS: Elizabeth Hephher ACR (Paper Conservator) and Emma Buchholz ACR (Preventive Conservator) for their support and advice during this project and to Icon and HLF for their Internship Programme which supports emerging conservators at the beginning of their professional career in this field.

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