



Conserving the burial of an Anglo-Saxon prince

Also in this issue

A blitz on moths • A week in Belfast • Two days in London



Architectural detail in Belfast City centre: See article on page 19. Image: Peter Martindale

AUGUST 2019 Issue 83



From the Editor

The Icon News production schedule did not coincide with the timing of the #Icon19 conference, so our main coverage of the event will be in the next issue. But we bring you a couple of tasters here. Icon Trustee Peter Martindale has sent us his impressions of his week in Belfast and we learn about the

pre-conference London experiences of the delegates whose attendance at #Icon 19 was made possible by generous support from the Getty Foundation.

Our feature on the Prittlewell burial, a project begun before Icon was even born, relates how painstaking collaboration, analysis and conservation have released the stories about Anglo-Saxon life and death from the often minimal traces of evidence within this princely chamber grave.

So great was the moth problem at Newhailes House that a four-month, large-scale project was mounted by the National Trust for Scotland both to tackle the problem and to use it as an opportunity for delivering pest management training and conservation advocacy. Our Emerging Conservator story has the details.

And finally, our Chair of the Board of Trustees reflects on her time in office as she prepares to stand down, whilst our Chief Executive has a very big question for us: how do we capture and share the purpose of Icon? Read her column to see why we need a really good answer.

Lynette Gill



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

Institute of Conservation
Radisson Court Unit 2
219 Long Lane
London SE1 4PR
T +44(0)20 3142 6799

admin@icon.org.uk
membership@icon.org.uk
www.icon.org.uk

Chief Executive
Sara Crofts
sara.crofts@icon.org.uk

Conservation Register
conservationregister@icon.org.uk
www.conservationregister.com

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Icon News

Editor
Lynette Gill
news@icon.org.uk

Production designer
Lee Holland
leerh1974@gmail.com

Printers
Calderstone Design & Print Limited
www.calderstone.com

Advertising
Display and Recruitment
020 3142 6789
Advertising@icon.org.uk



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Cover photo
From the Prittlewell princely burial: a copper alloy bowl made in Britain and discovered still in position hanging on the chamber wall
© MOLA

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For the December 2019 issue
Tuesday 1 October

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professional update

From The Chief Executive



Sara Crofts on the importance of articulating Icon's purpose

'Why is it so hard to explain what we do?' sighed a heritage sector colleague when a group of us met to exchange news over a pizza recently. Those present nodded sympathetically as she continued with her story. She went on to outline her recent experience of taking part in the Clore Leadership Programme. She had been the sole heritage representative in

a cohort of twenty-five culture sector professionals; most of the others worked in the arts sector. During various workshops and discussions she had tried to describe her role – championing built heritage conservation as the leader of one of the national amenity societies. She talked about heritage being all around us in our townscapes and cities, noting that it forms the backdrop to our everyday lives – but to no avail. Despite being an intelligent and articulate advocate for heritage, she was dismayed to discover that she simply couldn't find the right words to convey her passion in a way that piqued the interest of her fellow Clore learners. She was deeply frustrated that she had been unable to elicit the same kind of positive response as the other participants did when they talked about their roles as writers, artists, and musicians.

Her predicament chimed with my experiences over the last few months. I've spent quite a lot of my time meeting new people and remaking connections with colleagues across the heritage sector. Even though Icon has clear charitable objectives and a strong vision I also struggle when it comes to finding a couple of meaningful and memorable phrases that adequately describe who we are and what we do. And I know that this is not a new challenge: staff, trustees and members have all wrestled with this problem before, but we still have not found the ideal answer.

Icon's vision is for cultural heritage to be valued and accessible and for its future to be enhanced and safeguarded by excellence in conservation.

So why does this matter? It matters because we are competing for attention in a world where there is an overwhelming volume of communication across a vast spectrum of media outlets. There are many good causes and organisations vying for attention and, more importantly, for public support. To stand a chance of being heard, every charity needs to have an easily recognisable brand and a clear and simple message; if you want to make a connection then your audience needs to know instantly who you are and what you are trying to achieve. In the modern world of business this is

often now described as communicating your purpose.

According to Chelsea King of Kin&Co, a culture and behaviour change consultancy, *'the arguments for being (or becoming) a purpose-driven organisation are compelling. Companies led by purpose are now outperforming their competitors by over 200%, and Unilever's purpose-driven brands continue to grow nearly 50% faster than the rest of their business.'*¹ So, if we want Icon to grow and prosper perhaps we ought to revisit our vision and redefine our purpose. We need to be able to communicate the 'why' of what we do more effectively, so that we can grab our audiences' attention and then inspire them to join our cause.

And how do we start to articulate Icon's purpose? This might mean returning to first principles. Instead of simply describing *what we are* – a registered charity and the professional body for those who care for and conserve our cultural heritage – we need to find words that connect what we do with the people and the world beyond our labs and studios. Defining an authentic purpose doesn't start from what we have to sell (membership and accreditation) but from a genuine understanding of our role in the world, the unique skills and competencies that we nurture, the broad value of the work that our members do, and the societal needs that conserving and championing cultural heritage can serve. We need to state clearly and confidently *why* Icon exists.

So how might we go about this? Taking inspiration from colleagues elsewhere in the charity sector I would suggest that harvesting ideas from all directions is the most effective way of creating a shared sense of purpose. This means approaching the task:

- top-down (seeking strategic direction from our Board of Trustees)
- bottom-up (gathering input from as many members as possible)
- outside-in (engaging with other people and organisations who share our aims and values)

I strongly believe that articulating our purpose is something that everyone can get involved with. That's why my welcome address to #Icon19 conference delegates ended with a plea for members to tell me what matters most to them. And now I'm extending the invitation to join the conversation to all of you. Drop me a line and share your thoughts – I'm keen to hear your ideas.

Once we've found the right words to express Icon's purpose afresh the next step will be to tell people about it. So, we will also have to think about how we communicate more effectively with a broad range of external audiences – stakeholders, funders, policymakers, media professionals, education-providers, those who own or care for cultural heritage and more.

We need to find new and better ways to tell our story and to share our passion for conservation, so that new members will join our ranks. We urgently need more people to support our ambition for cultural heritage to be valued and accessible and for its future to be enhanced and safeguarded by excellence in conservation. Articulating our purpose in an effective and engaging way will be crucial to achieving this aim.

¹ www.kinandco.com/why-purpose-must-be-at-the-heart-of-business-strategy/

OUR CHAIR STANDS DOWN

When I was selected as Chair of Icon, nearly four years ago, I was delighted to take up the opportunity to lead the organization and progress some of the areas of work that I had previously been part of as a member of the Board. My time as Chair has been a rewarding and personally fulfilling one and it is with some sadness that I recently confirmed my intention to stand down at the next AGM. I have been grateful for the extension of my tenure into its second term of office which has not only allowed me to see the Icon conference in Belfast, but also to provide continuity for the change of Chief Executive within the organization. The latter was a strong motivation in remaining on as Chair for an additional year and I hope that this will make my successor's transition to being Chair as smooth and unproblematic as possible.

It hardly feels like three AGMs have passed since I took up office, until I look back at all that has happened in that time. The organization is stronger than ever and my aspiration to develop Icon with a more outward-facing role seems increasingly part of the fabric of the organization. At the time I took up post, the challenges were to respond to the membership survey and the clear message from the members that advocacy was a major motivation for Icon membership. This has helped to inform the direction of the organization and while Icon has punched above its weight for some time, we are increasingly recognized as a go-to authority with major strategic stakeholders.

The extra year as Chair has been tremendously helpful in allowing me to see to fruition a number of initiatives that were either aspirations or in the early stages of development when I took up the role. The development of the Icon Strategy was chief among the considerations in my first year as Chair. The three themes of Advocacy, Excellence and Engagement have helped to focus activities internally while also making the organization more coherent and understandable to our funders, supporters and the general public. The Strategy has, very much, been a driver for all Icon activities and hopefully will continue to provide a firm foundation for the next couple of years.

A chief consideration in reinvigorating the organization's vision and purpose was to engage members and stakeholders alike in shaping our future direction. The genuine involvement of so many enthusiastic and deeply committed people - not only in the development but also in the delivery of the Icon Strategy - is one of the truly rewarding pleasures of heading up Icon. I am grateful to the Board, the specialist Groups, the people who have contributed to the many committees, and Task & Finish Groups who have delivered for Icon, as well as the many external partners who have worked with us.

In recommending the role of Chair I would say that, while there is never a dull moment and the enormity of the role and the workload can sometimes feel daunting, you are always surrounded by people who are dedicated and who share a passion for cultural heritage. That, in itself, is an affirming and encouraging incentive. There are also the rewards of



achievement, both personally and for the organization, and of learning a good deal from a wide range of great people. I am particularly indebted to all of the Icon staff, past and present, who have worked with me. It is reassuring to know that Icon is in such great hands.

It has been an honour and a privilege to be Chair of my professional body. I hope I have done some justice to

the role of Chair, however there is always more that can be achieved, and I will leave a new set of challenges for my successor. As Icon embarks on the recruitment process I can thoroughly recommend the role to anyone who is interested. It can be hard work but also incredibly satisfying, and it is a fantastic opportunity that I am grateful to have been able to take advantage of.

Siobhan Stevenson ACR

CAMBERWELL UPDATE

The latest news of the Camberwell College of Arts MA Conservation course

David Crow, Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Head of Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon, contacted Icon in February to inform us that University of the Arts London (UAL) had taken the decision to close the MA Conservation course currently being delivered at Camberwell College of Arts.

This announcement was unexpected and is a matter of great concern to Icon and to its members.

Icon's Board of Trustees discussed UAL's decision at its March meeting and agreed that Icon should write to UAL to express our sadness at the loss of a long-standing and greatly valued course, and to share our concerns about the potential negative impacts of the decision.

In order to ensure that Icon's formal response fully reflected the views of Trustees and the wider membership we engaged with Camberwell staff and alumni, and the Book and Paper Group. This process culminated in a roundtable meeting in late April where members with an interest in the closure of the MA in Conservation came together to share their views. The meeting was very productive, and we were able to gather a great deal of well-considered reflections on the potential impact of the MA course closure on conservation training and on the profession. We also identified a range of issues that UAL ought to consider as it works through the academic closure process. Those who were not able to attend the meeting were able to submit comments via email.

The information gathered through our internal discussion

process was used to shape a letter that was sent to Nigel Carrington, Vice Chancellor of UAL (and is available on the Icon website). Professor Crow responded a short time afterwards. While he acknowledged that Icon members are concerned about the closure of the MA course he argued that the partnership UAL has developed with City & Guilds of London Art School (CGLAS) has been carefully planned 'to ensure your members continue to have a source of trained graduates for the future'. The Executive Board of UAL takes the view that CGLAS is 'well equipped and resourced to deliver their paper-based pathway within a financially sustainable model'. He also stated that UAL has 'committed to helping CGLAS in any way they can to make their new Book and Paper Conservation offer a success. This includes encouraging a more diverse student cohort by providing support for non-traditional entrants through a number of bursaries over the next three years'.

While it is, of course, encouraging to know that it will still be possible to undertake a degree (and potentially an MA in due course) in book and paper conservation in London this does not fully compensate for the loss of the much-praised MA at Camberwell College of Art. It also serves to highlight the ongoing threats to university-based teaching of conservation subjects and the fragility of the relationship between education providers and employers.

Prompted by this example Icon is now taking positive action and will convene a workshop to address this issue with a range of partners in September. We aim to gain a better understanding of the current challenges and to actively investigate ways to strengthen the resilience of our educational pathways. Our hope is that we might facilitate better connections between academia and the profession and therefore ensure the continuance of high-quality conservation training. In addition to this strategic activity we are pleased to share the news that a task group, led by Ylva Dahnsjo ACR, has been convened to carry out an options appraisal in an effort to find another academic host for the Camberwell MA course.

Sara Crofts
Chief Executive

ADVOCACY AND POLICY BRIEF

In Development: Labour Market Intelligence Toolkit

In the previous issue, I introduced an exciting project that will keep the policy and professional development teams busy for much of the summer. Icon is partnering with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in a new Historic England-funded workforce research project that seeks to develop a sustainable toolkit for collecting, analysing and presenting labour market intelligence on the cultural heritage workforce. We will create a toolkit that is accessible, comprehensive and user-friendly to encourage systematic and regular research across the sector. The aim is to facilitate the delivery of insight on key issues like skills, employment and salaries to inform effective messaging and decision making.

The project is now well under way. Following a competitive

tendering process, we appointed market research and communications consultancy Loud Marketing as our consultant for the project. Loud Marketing will provide the expertise required to create a toolkit that is genuinely easy to use and accessible but that also delivers robust research. Over recent weeks, we have been working busily with Loud Marketing and Historic England to establish research objectives, questions and standards. The overall framework of the toolkit is now in development. We are looking forward to the next stage of the project, which will involve putting the pilot toolkit through a thorough testing and user consultation process to ensure it will be fit for purpose.



Visitors from China

In May, we welcomed a high-level delegation of heritage professionals from Shaanxi Province, China, to London to discuss shared priorities in conservation. Chief Executive Sara Crofts, Head of Professional Development Susan Bradshaw, and I met with the delegation led by Director General Luo of the Shaanxi Provincial Museum Association and Director Hou of the Terracotta Army Museum. The purpose was to

build on the Memorandum of Understanding between Icon and Shaanxi Provincial Museum Association and to enhance communication and collaboration in cultural heritage conservation between the UK and Shaanxi Province.

During the meeting, I introduced Icon's advocacy and policy priorities, drawing attention to the impact and successes of the Policy Advisory Panel. The Chinese delegates expressed admiration for the UK heritage sector's mechanisms for influencing policy by drawing on the expertise of its volunteers. Susan delivered a presentation on training, professional development and standards within the UK conservation sector, which the delegates later described as 'inspiring' and 'helpful'. We learned how the absence of professional standards in China presented a challenge to evaluating and benchmarking conservators' work.

The following weekend, Sara accompanied the delegation to Knole to see conservation in action. The group was treated to a private view of the newly re-opened Showrooms, led by two expert National Trust volunteer guides who pointed out Knole's many treasures, including the intricate plaster ceilings, elaborately carved wooden screens, magnificent fireplaces and rich textiles. Gerry Alabone, Senior Conservator (Furniture and Frames), provided an introduction to the Conservation Studio, which was recently opened in 2017. The group was privileged to receive behind the scenes access to some of the Studio's state-of-the-art equipment. The day concluded with the Shaanxi delegates expressing their delight with the visit, outlining the many valuable lessons learned from Knole that they planned to share with their colleagues at home.

Icon's exchanges with China continue to generate interest amongst stakeholders and decision-makers, demonstrating the benefit of international engagement to enhancing Icon's visibility both at home and abroad.

Anni Mantyniemi

Policy Advisor

NHSF NEWS

A new Chair for NHSF

The trustees of the National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) recently announced the appointment of Professor Nigel Llewellyn as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He takes over the role from Alastair McCapra, who was Chair from 2015 - 2019 (and, of course, a former Chief Executive of Icon). Icon is one of the seventeen members of the Forum.

An art historian by training and profession, Professor Llewellyn has worked for most of his career in the academic sector, including as Dean and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex. In 2007, he moved to Tate where he established the research department and developed a research strategy for the museum across all sites. He brings extensive understanding of national cultural and research strategy, and of the partnership working that is vital to support the development of cultural policy. He was Programme Director of the AHRC Research Centres Scheme (2003-5) and has been involved in many other research council roles, including the AHRC/EPSRC Science and Heritage programme.

A new strategic framework

The new Chair takes up his role following the launch of a new strategic framework for heritage science in the UK. Developed over the course of 2018 by the NHSF, the new framework was proposed by its trustees as a tool to support the heritage sector to:

- Define research priorities
- Secure investment in heritage science
- Strengthen links across the heritage sector and with other partners
- Create a supportive policy environment
- Build the capacity of the sector
- Articulate the value of heritage science to society and the economy.

The process of development built on achievements since the publication of the 2010 National Heritage Science Strategy and sought to respond to changes to the policy and operating environment since 2010, including: the publication of the Industrial Strategy, the Mendoza review, the creation of UKRI and changes to the research councils, and the Brexit vote.



The new Framework identifies three themes through which its vision '*that the UK's extraordinarily rich and varied tangible and intangible heritage will be enhanced by better use of science and technology for the benefit of society*' will be delivered.

These themes are:

- Excellent research
- A skilled and diverse heritage science community
- Demonstrable social and economic impact

The Forum is now calling on the individuals and organisations to contribute their work to the Framework so that the sector can demonstrate, as a whole, how it is delivering against the goals, where there are gaps to be filled, and who is well-placed to lead new initiatives.

We have created three padlets, (online noticeboards) that can be used to share with us the work that contributes to the three strategic themes. You can find these on the NHSF website (www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk) or you can contribute by emailing Caroline Peach, administrator@heritagescienceforum.org.uk.

NHSF is now in the process of developing the delivery plans to support each theme. It has set up three working groups through which its members will deliver the priorities that have been identified for NHSF. To find out more, please see www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/what-we-do/strategic-framework.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS & NETWORKS

Archaeology Group

The Archaeology Group is looking forward to hosting a number of dynamic events this year. Our 2019 AGM will be held on Thursday 8 August at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and will include a talk on the new exhibition *Last Supper in Pompeii*. There will also be the opportunity to visit the exhibition and the museum's conservation facilities. Further information and tickets will be released shortly.

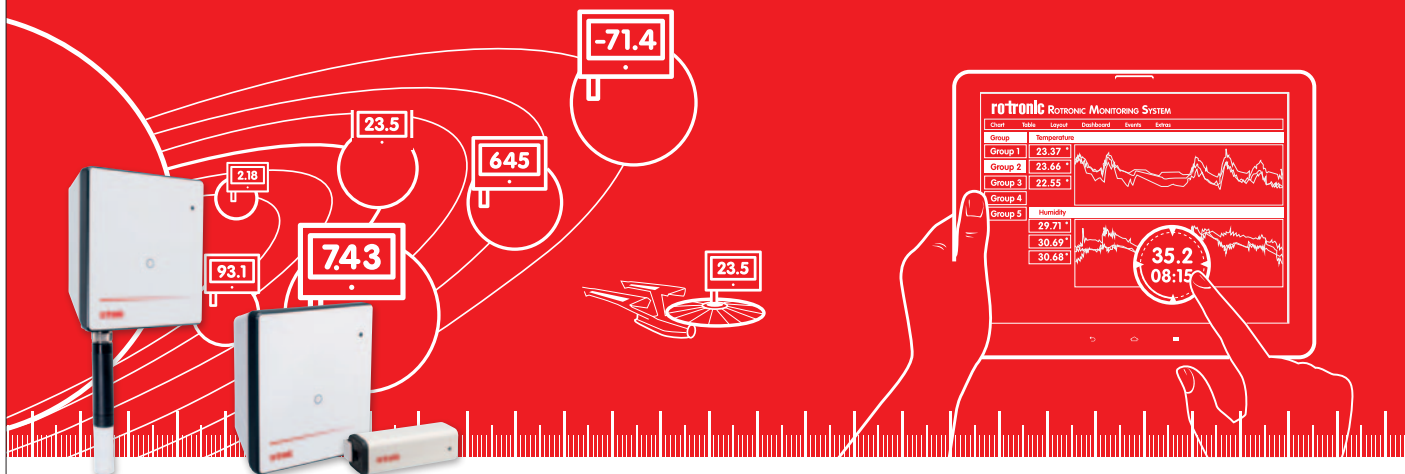
We will be hosting a one day conference on X-radiography at the Museum of London in November. Look out for further details and a Call for Papers. We are also looking forward to organising a joint workshop with the Portable Antiquities Scheme, looking into the conservation of metal detected finds. Suggestions for future events and workshops are always welcome. Please watch Iconnect, Twitter and the website for further announcements.

We'd also like to let our members know that we've got a Twitter account you can follow (@ICONArchaeology). We would love to hear about your current archaeological conservation projects big or small, please tag us and #findsfriday in your posts and follow us on to see what everyone else is up to.

Charlotte Wilkinson

Icon AG Communications Rep

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Book & Paper Group

As I am writing this (in early June), the committee is gearing up for the next Icon Conference! By the time this is in print, the Events and Training Sub-committee will have hosted its first two fully online events, a lecture from Emma Nichols on her experience as an emerging conservator dealing with short term contracts, and her reflections on some of the challenges and benefits.

We will also have held the first in our webinar series in collaboration with Ashleigh Brown, private practice conservator and former Head of Conservation at John Jones before it was closed. The first talk is an introductory one looking at business management in the growing industry of private practice conservators. We are planning a whole series of these bringing in industry experts covering many aspects around running a private practice, so keep an eye out for that! We are hoping to run more fully online events to help improve access for all our members.

For those of you looking out for the Indo-Islamic Papermaking Workshop: because of some travel issues we have had to postpone this until the autumn. So keep an eye on your inbox for an Iconnect announcing the new dates.

As ever, we are keen to hear from you about training or workshops you would like to see. Please email iconbpg@gmail.com with your thoughts.

Holly Smith ACR

Chair, Icon Book and Paper Group Events and Training Subcommittee

Ceramics and Glass Group

Recent Advances in Glass & Ceramics Conservation 5-7 September 2019

The Glass and Ceramics Working Group of ICOM-CC, Icon UK's Ceramics and Glass Group and the British Museum are pleased to announce the joint meeting between these parties. There is still time to book your place at this specialist conference on ceramics and glass conservation. Sales will end on 22 August. Booking for the main event and tours on 4 September can be accessed on the Icon CGG webpage via Eventbrite.

Recent Advances 2019 has been made possible by generous sponsorship from the British Museum who are hosting the conference. The British Museum was founded in 1753, the first national public museum in the world. From the beginning, it granted free admission to all 'studious and curious persons'. Visitor numbers have grown from around five thousand a year in the eighteenth century to nearly six million today. The collection is one of the world's largest and most comprehensive, and originates from all continents, illustrating and documenting the story of human culture from its beginnings to the present.

With twenty eight speakers and forty poster presenters, this international conference promises to be one of the most important events for professionals working with ceramics and glass in recent years. Some of the highlights from the programme include: a technical study on the Terracotta Army by conservators from the Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum in China; mould making to cast transparent fills for a 16th-century Austrian façon de Venise glass vessel by conservators from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; and the use of lasers to remove biological growth from Cypriot terracotta figurines by conservators at the British Museum.

The papers and poster presentations have been peer reviewed by our scientific committee to produce formal pre-printed conference proceedings, an important publication and resource for practitioners.

We look forward to welcoming you to this exciting event!

Documentation Network

Registration open: modelling conservation data

The Linked Conservation Data Consortium is organising a free workshop in London hosted by the University of the Arts London (UK) to discuss modelling conservation data. Conservation domain expertise and sample data are needed.

Date: 12-13 September 2019

Location: University of the Arts ,London

Deadline for registrations 16 August 2019.

Registration is now open at:

<https://forms.gle/eh96yn5ogxQ6VNdf8>

Capacity is limited.

Confirmation will be sent to all participants.

The workshop takes place over two days. On the morning of Thursday 12 September, participants will attend a series of lectures introducing the principles of data modelling, the CIDOC-CRM and its relationship to Linked Data, as well as typical examples of data modelling in conservation. In the afternoon, sample conservation data will be examined and modelled.

On the morning of Friday 13 September, a wider range of modelling examples will be presented, while in the afternoon participants will work towards proposing ways for modelling

The Linked Conservation Data project logo



The group at the first Linked Conservation Data workshop

complex cases of conservation records from databases and documentation systems as well as image and document metadata. The capacity of the CIDOC-CRM to comprehensively describe conservation data will be assessed during these sessions. This workshop will bring together technical expertise around Linked Data but it will depend on conservation expertise around the interpretation of database records.

If you are able to contribute sample data which we can use during the workshop please contact us as soon as possible. www.ligatus.org.uk/lcd/meeting/modelling

Emerging Professionals Network

Meet-Up events

When establishing the Emerging Professional's Network one of our main aims was to create discussion between members and the wider conservation community relating to the experience of the emerging conservation professional and to facilitate resources that can benefit career development. With this in mind the network has set up EPN Meet-ups, a range of informal events to help early career conservators meet one another and gain advice on soft skills and professional development.

The first of these events were held on 8 May at University College London (UCL) Institute of Archaeology and at Coffee by the Arch in Lincoln. The events aimed to tackle the daunting task of constructing a portfolio. Both sessions started with a general critique of some examples and were followed by a group discussion, which provided some constructive advice and touched on many aspects of creating a body of work. Specific areas that were covered included how to focus your portfolio and present an organised structure that reflect your skill sets as well as including more practical aspects such as size and formatting. Other areas of discussion were the inclusion of 'soft skills' branding, attention to detail, going digital as well as the importance of great photography and how to effectively use your portfolio in an interview.

Lending a professional eye to the discussion was Renata Peters from UCL, Duygu Camurcuoglu from the British Museum and Pip McDonnell from Lincoln Conservation. With their combined conservation experience, it was a fantastic chance for participants to gain advice from those established in the field.

We would like to thank everyone who took part and for those who were unable to attend we have summarised some of the key points from both evenings on our facebook page. We also want to keep the discussion going so if you have any additional advice or ideas for future meet-ups please add them to the comments.

Future Events

We were very pleased with the success of the first EPN Meet-ups event and there will many more to come. Our team will be putting together the next event, focused on interviews, very soon. Details will be notified on the Emerging Professionals group webpage, Iconnect and our facebook page.

Contact:-

Email: IconEPN@gmail.com

Facebook: Search 'Icon Emerging Professionals Network'

Sofie Chandler-Heal & Rebecca Plumbe

Ethnography Group

At our AGM and film screening event in London in April 2019, the Group's chair, Charlotte Ridley, event organisers, Sophie Louise Rowe and Alex Cantrill, bowed out of the Group committee. We would like to thank them all wholeheartedly for their wonderful work and their dedication to the Group's activities.

The current committee members are as follows: Misa Tamura (chair), Kay Saunders (secretary), Cheryl Lynn (treasurer), Verena Kotonski, Lydia Messerschmidt, Keira Miller (event organisers).

Thank you very much for those who presented and attended the Ethnography panel at the Icon Belfast conference. It was a fantastic opportunity to hear about recent developments in

ethnographic/world cultures conservation, as well as to meet both new and familiar faces.

We have a few events in the pipeline at the moment for the rest of 2019.

Meanwhile, we would love to hear from you if you have any ideas for an event or an activity you would like the Group to host or organise. Please feel free to get in touch with us via misa.tamura@sciencemuseum.ac.uk.

Icon Scotland Group

Training and events

Our most recent event was a theoretical and practical course on the salvage of library, archive and museum collections, hosted by the University of St Andrews Library. The course, led by Helena Rodwell and Sophie Rowe, involved a series of presentations followed by a practical salvage session in which course participants moved and documented damaged items, before undertaking basic first aid treatments. It was very popular and we hope to repeat it again in the future.

Looking forward, we are supporting the stone conservation conference, *Monuments in Monuments*, which is being run by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) at their Engine Shed building from 2-4 September. HES have managed to attract some fantastic speakers from across the world, including Icon's own Sara Crofts! Following the conference two leading building conservation suppliers from Germany will give a seminar on 5 September for Icon Scotland, providing stone enthusiasts with the opportunity to learn about the practical applications of nanolime and the use of METIGO software for 3D surface and decay mapping. Tickets can be obtained through Eventbrite.

At the Emerging Professionals' meeting in Lincoln



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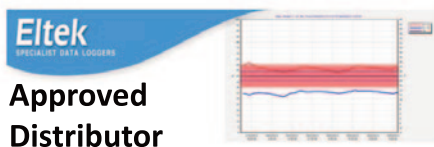
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We then have two further events in September: a five-day practical course on gilding, led by Tim Ritson, which is running from 9-13 September at Kelvin Hall in Glasgow; and a course on Reflectance Transformation Imaging, run by Marta Pilarska from Historic Environment Scotland, which is being held in Edinburgh on 27 September. At the time of writing, tickets for both these events were still available.

We are also thrilled to announce this year's Plenderleith lecture. Our speaker is Liz Davidson and her talk is entitled *After the dust has settled; rediscovering the spirit of Mackintosh*. The lecture will be held on 28 November at the Lighthouse in Glasgow, and further details will be released shortly.

Other happenings

Events aside, our committee members were delighted to have a slot in May on the 'Conservation Diaries' twitter feed, and we are grateful to our Digital Content Officer, Emily Hick, for organising this. We were also very pleased to welcome Sara Crofts on her first visit to Scotland in her official capacity. Sara met with conservators from a number of organisations before attending an Icon Scotland committee meeting, and we enjoyed the opportunity to get to know her a bit better, not least because of her Scottish roots!

Contact and keep in touch

We obviously welcome primary and secondary members, but remember that all you need to do in order to receive the emailed Scotland Group Iconnects is to tick the Group on your Icon membership form. You can also see our latest updates on social media: our blog is at <https://iconscotland.wordpress.com>, our Facebook page is <https://en-gb.facebook.com/iconscotlandgroup> and our

Twitter feed is @icon_scotland. Comments and suggestions for events can be emailed to scotland@icon.org.uk.

Paintings Group

Postprints from our conference *Interactions between Water and Paintings* (eds. Helen Dowding, Rhiannon Clarricoates and Adele Wright), which was held in Edinburgh in November 2018, are now available through Archetype Publications (<https://archetype.co.uk/our-titles/interactions-of-water-with-paintings/?id=282>).

Our second talk of the year in May 2019 was given by Tom Flynn and Angelina Giovani, who talked on *Art Provenance Research Issues and Challenges* and on 4 July Jilleen Nadolny gave our third talk on *Goncharova and Larionov: Painting the Future*. If you are interested in reviewing this or any other future talks for Icon News please contact us using the Group email. Future talks will be advertised on the events page of the Icon website.

The Committee is organising a Modular Cleaning Programme workshop, led by Chris Stavroudis from 16-20 September 2019. For more information contact committee member Clare Finn (finnclare@aol.com).

As always, we are keen to hear from Icon Paintings Group members about what events you would like us to organise. We are always looking for speakers for our talks so please let us know if you have any suggestions for speakers or topics you would like addressed.

The Paintings Group Committee

Email: Icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com

Twitter: @IconPaintings

Photographic Materials Group

At the beginning of July the PhMG committee held the workshop 'Protecting Daguerreotypes: a new Structural Housing System' at the National Library of Scotland, taught by conservator Clara M. Prieto. Look out for a review of this event in a future issue of Icon News. Our next Group event will be this year's round table discussion, taking place towards the end of the year.

Please get in touch and share your conservation stories (phmg@icon.org.uk). We are always looking for updates for our blog (<https://iconphmgblog.wordpress.com/>), Facebook (ICON Photographic Materials Group) and Twitter (@ICONPhMG) pages; a wide range of photo-related content is welcome!

Stained Glass Group

Please save the date in your diaries for our one-day conference event on Friday 4 October 2019 at Gloucester Cathedral. Registration is now open and details can be found about how to apply on the Icon Stained Glass Group webpage.

The theme of the conference is 'Accommodating the Past' and we will be exploring how production techniques and previous restorations of stained glass windows have influenced conservation approaches and recommendations for future care. The Conference will take place in the Chapterhouse at Gloucester Cathedral, with tours to view the renowned collection of stained glass at this venue. The SGG Committee will also hold our Group AGM during the course of the day.

We are still accepting posters for the conference. For more information about the theme please refer to the Call for Papers on our webpage. If you would like to present a poster please contact the SGG committee as soon as possible at iconstainedglass@gmail.com

Information about the conference can also be found on our social media pages on Facebook and Twitter.

The SGG would be delighted to welcome new members to our Group. If you are interested in stained glass please remember to tick the stained glass box on your membership form or email head office and request to receive updates from the Group. Even if you are not a direct Group member you would be welcomed at our events and we hope to see you at Gloucester.

Textile Group

Events

The events team are busy finalising workshops for later in the year, including toile-making and Fosshape workshops.

Textile Committee AGM

Following a call for applications to the Textile Group committee, three people put themselves forward. Each of the roles was uncontested, and so automatically accepted. This was confirmed with a show of hands at the Icon Textile Group AGM, which took place at the British Library on 30 April. Full biographies for new committee members can be seen on the

Textile Group Committee web page online.

The new committee members are as follows:

Elizabeth-Anne Haldane – Events

Emily Austin - Secretary

Aimee Grice-Venour – Icon News

Thank you to Katy Smith & Nadine Wilson for their hard work during their time on the committee!

Colour Symposium

The Textile Group's one-day symposium based around the theme of colour is to be held on Friday 8 November at the People's History Museum, Manchester. While the call for papers closed on 31 May with a good response, late abstract submissions will still be considered.

The committee are currently working on putting the programme together. Additional information and booking details to follow.

Upcoming Events

Dress and Textile Specialists (DATS) Conference: Redressing Diversity: Making Hidden Histories Visible. Unfortunately this conference, programmed for May 2019, has been rescheduled. It is now expected to be held in the autumn. Provisional dates are now Thursday 28 and Friday 29 November 2019 at Norwich Castle Museum.

Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material:(AICCM) National Conference 2019. Save the Date: 13 - 15 November 2019 in Melbourne, Australia.

In this Issue

Rachel Langley ACR has written an interesting article on her four week sabbatical at the Rijksmuseum Textile Conservation Department. Ann French has reviewed *Understanding Tapestry*, a two day tapestry weaving workshop which she attended in April.

Keeping in touch

Due to publication deadlines, it is not always possible to mention all events so please check the Icon website, Facebook page, Twitter feed and Iconnect for details. If you have anything that you would like mentioned in our communications please contact the Textile Group's News Editor aimee.grice-venour@nationaltrust.org.uk



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Conservation will be held on Thursday 5th December 2019 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 31st March 2019.

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, Student and Emeritus 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. Proxies may be appointed via the web portal or to the registered office so long as they are received before 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 3rd December 2019. Those received later will not be counted.

If you are eligible to vote you will be sent an email by our election support provider mi-voice inviting you to access the Proxy Notice enabling you to register your instructions on-line. If you do not have an email address, please phone the mi-voice office at 0845 241 4148.

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

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

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

Simon Green, Company Secretary

12th June 2019

people

The latest Trustees



Fiona McLees ACR lives in Oxford and works as a paper conservator for the Bodleian Libraries, where her interests include research and treatment of Persian and Indian illuminated manuscripts and conservation of Chinese books. She also enjoys working with an enormous variety of other materials at the library, and has wide-ranging experience of 20th and 21st century art and archives having worked at the National Archives, Imperial War Museum, and Tate.

After graduation and some dallying, she went on to gain an MA in Conservation from Camberwell College of Arts in 2010 and then accreditation from Icon in 2017. Her formative training also included experience as an intern at the British Museum's Western Art on Paper conservation studio and a one-year internship at the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

Since 2013 she has been active on the Icon Book & Paper Group committee, culminating in chairing the organisation committee for 2018's B&PG conference in Oxford. Being elected as a Trustee is a chance to hopefully form a conduit between the members she has met during Icon events and the Board of Trustees, and to ensure that the views of colleagues and peers are represented at strategic level within Icon.



Sophie Rowe ACR specialises in organic artefacts conservation and collections care. She has worked in all kinds of contexts, from national museums in the UK and Denmark, private practice and university museums, right through to historic huts in Antarctica. She is particularly interested in mounting systems for fragile artefacts (it's amazing what you can do with LEGO!) and in conservation of plastics in collections.

She currently co-ordinates conservation and collections care activities across the consortium of eight University of Cambridge museums, with a strong focus on emergency planning. She is also an Arts Council Accreditation mentor for two volunteer-run museums.

She is enthusiastic about developing local support networks to raise standards, and is already enjoying working on the Professional Standards and Development committee at Icon.

Welcome to these new members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all those who joined us in April and May 2019. We hope to see you at an Icon event soon!

Anaka Asokan
Student

Amber Bailey
Associate

Maria Fernanda Bastidas-Spence
Royal Museums Greenwich
Associate

Lucy Blumenthal
Associate

Riva Boutylkova
Student

Kathy Bradshaw
Student

Laura Bryer
Associate

Loreley Cairns
University of Pretoria
Student

Carlotta Cammelli
Student

Francisca Campos
Associate

Valerio Caputi
Associate

Joy Carlsen
Student

Yannick Chastang
Yannick Chastang Ltd
Associate

Tuhin Chisti
Student

Ronnie Clifford
Ornate Interiors Ltd
Associate

Chris Collins
Associate

Kusi Colonna-Pret
Terra Conservacio i Patrimoni
SLU
Associate

Rosa Costantini
University of Glasgow
Student

Andra Danila
University of Amsterdam
Student

Gemma Dewar
Hocking Heritage Studio
Associate

Kelly Evans
Associate

Fatima February
Associate

Anupama Gaur
ARC Resources & Services
Associate

Nicole Giacomantonio
University of Glasgow
Student

Madalina Goga
Associate

Katherine Graf
Student

Jan Graham
Associate

Josep Grau-Bove
Associate

Deborah Greenfield
Student

James Hamilton
Hatfields Restoration
Associate

Rebecca Hawkrigde
Max Communications
Associate

Ina Hergert
Associate

Wendy Jackson
Supporter

Jane Lau
Supporter

Rachel Lawson
Associate

Joanne Lowe
Associate

Ali Mahfouz
Associate

Eszter Matyas
Hungarian National Museum
Associate

Antanas Melinis
Student

Anuja Mukherjee
Associate

Maria Lourdes Po
Associate

Kirsty Redmonds
Student

Jeremy Richardson
Student

Caitlin Richeson
Student

Kristen Robinson
Student

Ellen Marianne Ropke Ferrando
Instituto Moreira Salles
Associate

Rebecca Sawyer
Northumbria University
Student

Sarah Shepherd
Student

Hesaan Sheridan
Heritage Testing Ltd
Associate

Lucinda Smith
Associate

Anthi Soulioto
Associate

Alexandra Taylor
Student

Sylvia Thom
Associate

Reuben Thompson
Student

Ifthy Wangsa
Hatfields Restoration
Associate

Grace Welsh
Associate

In memory



Mette de Hamel

15 May 1945 – 6 June 2019

Mette gained her BA Hons Degree in the History of Modern Art and Design at Newcastle and went on to study the Conservation of Works of Art on Paper at a postgraduate level. Once she had graduated, Mette established her own practice in Darlington, working from a beautifully equipped and well-lit studio on the top floor of her elegant Edwardian House.

She soon gained a reputation as an excellent conservator, working for both the public and private sectors; local and national museums and galleries, art dealers, auction houses and private clients.

Mette brought an enormous amount of energy, commitment and enthusiasm to her work which made her an excellent choice as first year tutor in the Conservation of Works of Art at Gateshead Technical College. As part of the team, she was focused, well organised and had a wonderful sense of the ridiculous which made her a joy to work with, whilst her charm, elegance and social skills did much to enhance the international standing of the course.

After her experience at Gateshead, Mette's next challenge was as Director of the Hampton Court Textile

In memory



William Lack ACR sadly passed away on 30 May 2019, aged 74.

William was born on 13 April 1945. He took a degree in mathematics and pursued a career as a geologist. He eventually met H.K.Cameron, the renowned monumental brass conservator, via his wife Jenny who was a member of the Monumental Brass Society and who had arranged a brass rubbing exhibition in Shrewsbury to raise funds for the Cambridge workshop. Keith Cameron, in his 70s at the time, was looking for the right person to become his apprentice and William soon transpired to be that person.

Before long monumental brass conservation had taken over as the day job, and remained William's career for the rest of his life. This was, of course, tempered with other interests, as William was a real family man – juggling work with bringing up his two daughters whilst Jenny was working as a teacher. He also had an enduring love of old cars and motorsport.

William Lack succeeded Les Smith as Hon. Bulletin Editor for the Monumental Brass Society with Bulletin 113 (January 2010) the first to appear under his editorship. He has been responsible for a total of twenty-nine issues

during which period many significant advances and improvements had been implemented at his instigation. He has also prepared thirty-two reports on conservation for the Society's *Transactions*.

William has been responsible for conserving more than a thousand monumental brasses to the highest of standards. It is of great credit to him that he sought out an apprentice of his own as he saw his retirement looming – although he actually never stopped working! From 2014 he started working closely with Simon Nadin, a conservator at Skillington Workshop Ltd in Grantham, and with Simon formed a new company, Skillington Lack, under the Skillington Workshop umbrella. This company now thrives with Simon continuing where William left off, in a new studio set up with William's guidance.

An enduring contribution of William's study of monumental brasses is his co-authorship of the *County Series* that commenced in 1992 with seventeen volumes published to date. This, for the counties covered, forms the definitive catalogue of known brasses including those which have been lost or survive only as indents.

William passed away after a relatively short illness, leaving Jenny, his daughters Jo and Lucy, and his four grandchildren.

Conservation Course and from there she went on to establish the new Conservation Department at Sothebys. This was a bold new idea and one fraught with both politics and contradictions but Mette, who was passionate about the ethics of conservation, was determined to bring her own high professional standards to the role. At Sotheby's, Mette acted as conservation advisor to the departments, created an 'in house' conservation facility and surrounded herself with an effective multi-disciplinary team of experienced and talented conservators.

Mette was also one of the founding members of the Icon Historic Interiors Group; a group formed to address the needs of conservators and paint analysts who specialised in the conservation of historic interiors. She served as the events coordinator and it was through her broad network of conservators, architects and curators that she helped to develop a wide variety of one day seminars and events culminating in the highly informative and popular annual Cambridge conference. The Group had decided to focus on an architectural period each year and Mette's suggestion that we consider Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, proved to be the ideal conference venue.

The conferences developed a devoted following of conservators, paint analysts, curators, architects and art historians who enjoyed the multi-disciplinary approach to historic interiors as well as Mette's well organized and informative lunchtime architectural tours of Cambridge and the evening's punt on the Cam followed by dinner. It was her natural flair for creating events that made Cambridge so special.

As a committee member, Mette was always generous

with her time, gracious and hospitable in offering her home for our meetings and tireless in her efforts to ensure that each annual Cambridge conference would be memorable. Throughout her professional career she was kindly and generous in her support of colleagues and fought hard to further the cause of ethical conservation worldwide. We have lost both a respected friend and inspirational advocate.

Christine Sitwell & Allyson McDermott

CONSERVING A RARE PRINCELY BURIAL

Liz Barham, Senior Conservator at Museum of London Archaeology, on uncovering the secrets of an Anglo-Saxon burial



© MOLA

One of two rare blue glass decorated beakers. The two were almost certainly made as a matching pair and discovered intact within the burial chamber

INTRODUCTION

The discovery of a princely Anglo-Saxon chamber grave in Prittlewell, Essex by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) in October 2003 was an astounding and unexpected find. Discovered beneath an ordinary strip of grass verge during an archaeological evaluation prior to a road-widening scheme, it was nationally and internationally significant, as well as very special for local people.

The widely collaborative analysis project that followed gathered together around forty specialists, including some fifteen scientists, and in the course of events it took in documentary and press coverage, temporary displays in Southend, London, Sutton Hoo and Paderborn, Germany, academic seminars and numerous lectures and talks by the core project team. It is now complete with an academic volume (MOLA 2019), a book aimed at a non-specialist audience, the objects returned to Southend and a selection on permanent display.

The burial consisted originally of a large wooden chamber beneath a mound and within it, a man placed in a coffin, surrounded on the walls and floor by buckets, cauldrons, bowls and drinking vessels, a lyre, a sword, a folding stool, a scythe, and lighting equipment. There were gold foil crosses, probably placed over his eyes, and gold coins, possibly placed in his hands, and buckles on his clothing. This was a rare opportunity to use modern archaeological and scientific techniques to examine, record and analyse such a burial. These were particularly valuable as the organic remains were generally poorly preserved except as mineral preserved fragments around heavily corroded metal fittings and

surfaces, some of them surviving only as stains in the ground. The body itself was no longer present, except for tiny fragments of tooth enamel.

The circumstances of the discovery and conservation experiences during and just after the fieldwork stage of the project were reported soon after that work began (see Conservation News issue 93, November 2004). Here we report on some of the challenges and surprise results of the work at the analysis stage and note the value of archaeological conservation for its intimate perspective on the finds, from early work on-site, throughout the forensic investigative process and in drawing together scientific analyses to inform the rest of the project.

THE EARLY STAGES

The project was undertaken according to the staged approach defined in *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (MAP2: English Heritage 1991) and its successor *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE: English Heritage 2009). Following on-site recording, most of the objects from the chamber grave were lifted in soil blocks for recording and micro-excavation in the laboratory. The initial investigation of these blocks was undertaken soon after lifting to ensure that they were examined before deterioration of any ephemeral remains, to

View of the burial chamber being excavated with emerging array of grave goods



© MOLA



The updated illustration of the reconstructed burial using precise results from the analysis project

stabilise more fragile elements and to clarify surfaces through X-ray and investigative cleaning. It was also to facilitate the assessment of potential that the project team would be required to undertake prior to the analysis phase of the project, comprising in-depth investigative conservation and scientific analysis to support finds specialist reports, illustration and photography for the site publication.

A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM

In fact, analysis work was delayed by political decisions about the road scheme which had a knock-on effect for assessment and funding, so further work could not get underway until 2012. It was fortuitous that the conservators who had lifted and worked on the finds at fieldwork remained in post throughout all phases of the project, providing a valuable continuity of knowledge of the finds and their contexts on site.

MOLA appointed team leaders to bring together the specialist work and as such the lead conservator was central to the coordination of the conservation work at MOLA and the scientific analyses undertaken by external institutions. This was beneficial so that sampling and analysis took place in conjunction with the investigative conservation programme, within an intensive schedule requiring completion within approximately fifteen months.

The most integrated group of specialists were those examining mineral preserved organics: animal derived remains, wood and plant-fibre, and textile. When there were composite objects these specialists sometimes came in to work together, contributing to annotation of the same diagrams, which assisted the interpretation of degraded

surfaces and their relationships.

For example, the work on the sword from the chamber floor was very much a joint enterprise between specialisms: within the corrosion of the blade lay traces of an ash wood scabbard lined with sheep wool, possibly covered by skin or leather with a tape-and-cord binding at the scabbard mouth, a horn hilt and textiles probably laid over the upper surface. X-ray had already shown that the sword was pattern-welded with a displaced iron angle bracket from the coffin corroded to it; this was covered in textile from the surface of the coffin.

Where possible, external specialists came to examine objects in the conservation laboratory rather than objects going out to individuals. This was partly due to the large size and fragility of some objects and for time efficiency, but it also enabled them to make observations and discuss them as the conservation work progressed.

CONSERVATION APPROACH AND FINDINGS

From the start, the conservation work on this burial was not just about preserving objects but studying them in detail and collaboratively with other specialists. This was essentially a continuation of the work on-site, in which subtle details such as wood stains from the chamber structure had been skilfully planned in by the archaeological team. Together we investigated their surfaces in soil and corrosion, their layering and constituent parts, looking for fine details such as evidence of decayed elements, wear and repair and examining their orientations and the remains of materials attached to them from their burial context.

It was possible, for example, to see wear from usage under the microscope on the rim-clips of some of the drinking vessel rims, perhaps through rubbing against a storage-box lid or even through resting upside down, maybe to dry them after use.

Wear on the delicate ridges of gilded lyre fittings on the flat front and back suggested that they had been slightly abraded over time, perhaps in drawing it in and out of a bag. Animal hairs (too degraded for full identification even under electron microscope) were found on the underside of some of the fragments, suggesting, along with the fact that the lyre lay face down, that it was originally placed in an animal-skin bag.

There were also traces of plant-fibres in these areas, helping to establish that there were random strewn grasses and possibly other plant stems on the chamber floor, as well as remains of what appeared to be woven (possibly rush) matting.

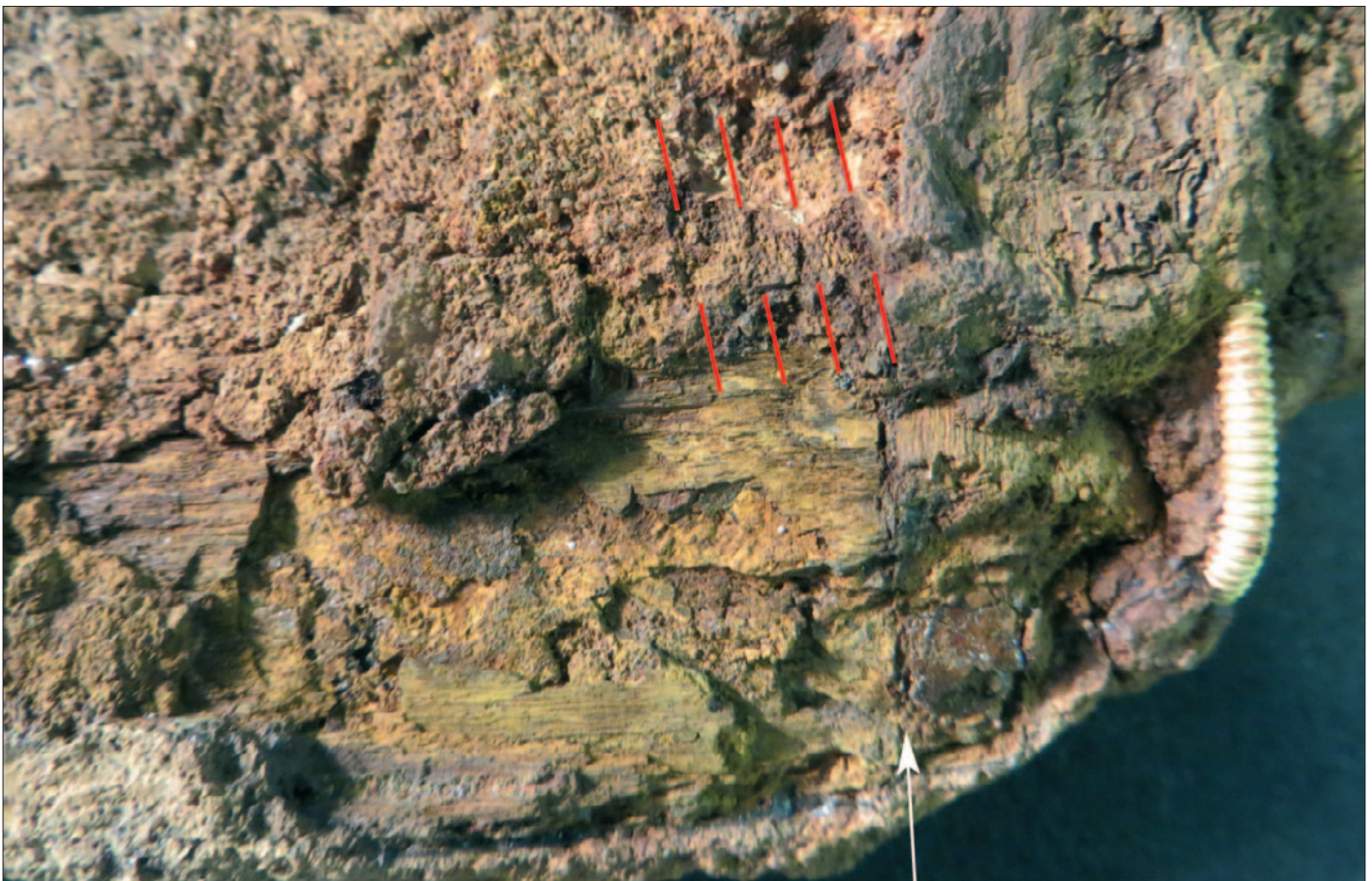
Sometimes it was important not to clean away soil but to leave it as the last evidence of an object or structure; the only surviving evidence of a tongue-and-groove joint from the chamber wall was a woody stain preserved in a lump of soil attached to one of the wall-hooks. Soil was also left in situ where it added to the completeness of some objects; a pair of buckets were no more than a series of iron bands

supported in situ by the soil separating them. One of these buckets was consolidated as such and can now be displayed as found. It was agreed by the project team that the scythe embedded in the soil base of the largest bucket would not be removed for more detailed measurement to avoid destruction of the bucket as a fascinating whole object.

The full significance of some observations made while the objects were fresh from the ground was not always apparent at the time, but through X-ray or CT scanning, through images, drawings and notes made during the process, sometimes with an archaeological illustrator's assistance, we could look back at these at later stages when new questions arose about objects, about the structure of the chamber and the taphonomy (fossilization process) of the burial.

Recording the relationship of the drinking vessels, some of which were lying on top of each other in soil blocks, through X-ray and photography, and relating that to their site orientation, provided key evidence about how the array of vessels had been placed originally and moved as a group over time, and therefore about the structure on or against which they were sitting and the potential length of the horns' tips no longer present. The recording of approximately 20mm

Trace of rows of tape-and-cord binding at the top of the sword scabbard



edge of scabbard mouth



Front face of the lyre on underside of soil block revealed after turning and investigative cleaning

of soil between the lyre and a conglomerate of corroded iron spearheads that had fallen onto it from the wall as indicated by the wall-hook corroded to them, contributed to the evidence that the chamber was not originally filled in and had remained a void for some time after it was closed up and the mound built above it.

TREATMENT ISSUES AND FINDINGS

The conservation treatment of some objects was challenging. Four drinking bottles had decorative collars and mounts in gilded copper alloy and silver, attached to the remains of a maple-wood neck and upper part of the bottle. The wood was decayed and the mounts encrusted with bulky copper alloy and silver corrosion, pushing off flakes of the gilding. Immersion of the wood in polyethylene glycol (PEG) might have caused many of the corroded and flaking mounts to float away. A wax cradle was made with a separating tissue layer in order to invert the object and pipette on PEG solution over five months. Following that, these objects were frozen and effectively freeze-dried very slowly in the freezer to avoid stressing the fittings by placing the objects under vacuum in a freeze-drying chamber. After drying, the wax support could be removed, some of the more bulky metal corrosion pared down and the gilding reattached with a stable consolidant, sometimes with additional Japanese tissue supports.

Painstaking cleaning under the microscope revealed some breath-taking surprises: a painted design in red, white and yellow was discovered on the underside of a fragment of wood

Conservator Liz Goodman and Specialist Esther Cameron discuss conservation of one of the buckets





© MOLA

Drinking bottle after drying in its wax support

Drinking bottle with conservation complete (Rim diam 59mm)



© MOLA

thinly encrusted with a dark layer of plant-fibre and fungal remains. The collection of tiny samples of corrosion and corroded solder from the hanging bowl, under one of the decorative ribs removed for investigative cleaning, produced six tiny fragments of spiral-spun gold thread, so small as to hardly be visible to the naked eye: under SEM it was found to be approximately 0.2mm wide and 0.004mm thick. These fragments appear to have been caught on the decorative rib of the bowl, perhaps from the sleeve of the last person to handle it.

The scientific analyses added immeasurably to the finer understanding of the finds. Most notably perhaps, given the poor preservation of some of the bone, it was possible, using tiny samples through Zooarchaeology by Mass Spectrometry, to identify the species of the bone of the gaming pieces (probably from the rib or ribs of a sperm whale). And a bone placed with two of the drinking bottles next to the coffin appears to have been a joint of beef – the deceased's share of the feast.

Even more importantly for the burial overall, it proved possible to date it to earlier than originally thought. This was done with the help of high precision radiocarbon dating using Accelerated Mass Spectrometry on very small, selected samples from a drinking horn and wood from a drinking cup, in combination with statistical modelling (taking into account data from the new national dating framework for Anglo-Saxon graves). The resulting date range for the burial was *cal AD 575-605 (95% probability)* with the starting date narrowed by evidence from the coins to 580 AD at the earliest. This makes it the earliest of the dated Anglo-Saxon princely burials and

provides us with a new window on early Christian belief among the elite families of the East Saxon Kingdoms.

It was a great privilege to work on the remains of this burial, and those involved felt a great responsibility, because the discovery of an intact chamber grave of this nature is extremely rare and demonstrated its potential in the course of the work to offer some completely new insights into the elite Anglo-Saxon life and burial practice. This was reflected in the number of scientific specialists and institutions who, working with MOLA, generously gave their time and expertise to investigation and analysis of the finds. We anticipate that the results of the work will stimulate and contribute to academic research and popular debate in Anglo-Saxon archaeology for many years to come.

Acknowledgements

The Prittlewell analysis project was funded by Southend Borough Council and Historic England. We are grateful to many individuals who contributed to the project and who are acknowledged in more detail in the Prittlewell monograph (see below). Principal contributors in the conservation and scientific analysis work were: Liz Barham, Liz Goodman (conservation), Janet Ambers (Raman spectroscopy), Alex Bayliss, Christopher Bronk-Ramsey, Gordon Cook (radio carbon dating), Esther Cameron with Zoe Knapp (animal derived remains), Matthew Collins, Keri Rowsell (ZooMS analysis), Ian Freestone (glass analysis), Paul Garside, Angela Middleton (FTIR analysis), Sue Harrington (textile), Duncan Hook with Marei Hacke, Aude Mongiatti (gold and silver analysis), David Starley (ferrous metallurgy), Karen Stewart, Jacqui Watson (wood and other plant material), Harriet White (non-ferrous metallurgy).

The results of the research into the burial are published in a MOLA monograph: *The Prittlewell princely burial: Excavations at Priory Crescent, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, 2003* by Blackmore L, Blair I, Hirst S and Scull C, 2019 available online at mola.org.uk/prittlewell-princely-burial.

One of two drinking horns: their fittings provided vital organic material for successful radio carbon dating. They gave date ranges for the death of the animal whose horns were used



© MOLA

BELFAST 2019

Icon Trustee Peter Martindale gives us a personal reflection on his time in Northern Ireland both at #Icon19 and in the days around the Conference



Fatima Wednesday

Morning rain was drumming hard on the skylight above the bed when I awoke. The previous evening saw the concluding event of the conference, the 'Steam and Jazz' night. #Icon19 was over and I was tanked up on conversation, possibly punch drunk. By the end of that new day I would be punch drunk, but not on conversation.

At 10.30 that morning I joined a 'History of Terror' walk through the centre of Belfast.¹ Paul Donnelly, who has worked as a mediator, was our guide. In his youth he had been a punk with a twelve-inch Mohican. We visited a handful of locations where bombs had exploded during the troubles. At one I lowered my head as tears welled in my eyes as Paul explained what it is like to be very frightened and to not know how to get to safety.

In the late 1970s I recall 'The Troubles' being reported on the television; and in 1979 I bought an album by Stiff Little Fingers (*Inflammable Material*). On it there is a song titled *Alternative Belfast*. Now after forty years I began to understand what punk

meant to the Irish youth and what it was like to live in those times.

In the afternoon, with some guidance from Paul, I walked across to the Falls and Shankill Roads to see the paintings on the walls. During the morning walk Paul had explained that the society in Northern Ireland remains divided, and that there is much work to do with reconciliation and healing. Now I saw his words. Whilst viewing and photographing some of the paintings I felt ill at ease; because what I saw was raw, chillingly real, and now.

The following day, my last before returning home, I visited the Ulster Museum, site of the opening reception to the conference. The sun was shining as I walked at ease, with people sitting at street side cafes. In the museum there is an excellent section devoted to 'The Troubles', and to their context. In the late C19 Belfast was Britain's biggest port and the biggest city in Ireland. It

Siobhan Stevenson





In the Ulster Museum: *Games of Thrones* has entered Northern Ireland's heritage

drew in people who settled in neighbourhoods reflecting their beliefs. So the checkerboard of Catholic and Protestant areas evolved. There was great wealth in the city; but with it great poverty, overcrowding and ill health. How things have changed.

Recent change is also evident in the Museum where there is a ninety metre long tapestry illustrating the 'Game of Thrones'. Three dragons, woven from willow, hang suspended from the ceiling in the entrance hall. 'Game of Thrones' is, from what I read, now part of Northern Ireland's Heritage.

Moving back to the day before the conference I saw another type of change when I visited the well-known UNESCO World Heritage Site the Giant's Causeway on the beautiful Antrim coast. The earliest rocks there today began life 470 million years ago on the other side of the hemisphere, and lie below the famous hexagonal basalt columns. There has been, and continues to be, change.

Climate change was the topic for the closing keynote address by Dr Meredith Wiggins (Historic England) at the conference. We and the items we conserve will all be affected by climate change. Meredith noted that we are the caretakers of human knowledge, and asked us to consider what the role of cultural heritage is in a changing climate. Change was a theme I encountered both within and outside the conference.

Another word or theme common to both the conference and the days I spent exploring before and after the conference was 'people'. During the opening plenary session of the conference Paul Mullan, who is currently undertaking PhD research on the role of heritage in a divided society, sketched the historical backdrop to Northern Ireland today. He explained that objects only have meaning when connected with people; and that we need to understand ourselves and our role in society today.

Jane Thompson Webb ACR, in her summing up at the end of the final plenary session, noted that conservation is about people. Earlier in the afternoon three speakers; Jane Henderson ACR, Dr Janet Berry ACR and Debra Hess Norris ² (Chair and Professor of Photograph Conservation, University of Delaware) had all expressed the importance of people in the conservation. Jane noted that we need to ask of ourselves, who are we looking after items for? She believes that we need to be open and welcoming, as opposed to being gatekeepers.

Belfast and Northern Ireland has much to offer; stunning landscape, rich history and a future which I sense is brighter by the day. Throughout my visit I found the people of Northern Ireland to be both welcoming and engaging. From the



conference I have gained an understanding of how conservators and conservation can benefit society. Northern Ireland, Belfast and #Icon19 are etched in my memory for they have given me much food for thought.

I would like to conclude on a personal 'people' note by mentioning two of the many who spoke to me from the heart. Firstly Fatima Wednesday, an objects conservator from South Africa who explained how much of a support Icon is for her. She was one of a small number from 'emerging countries' who were able to attend as a result of grants from the Getty Foundation. At the 'Steam and Jazz' night Fatima boogied energetically, and we all bathed in that glow. Secondly Siobhan Stevenson, Chair of the Board of Trustees, whose home city is Belfast. At the reception for overseas delegates Siobhan delivered a heartfelt welcome on the SS Nomadic as she did on the first morning of the conference.

1. Dead Centre Tours - <https://deadcentretours.com/>
2. You may like to see Debra's TED talk - www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSw0PCwe1oE

A mural from Belfast's Peace Walls



A CONFERENCE PREQUEL

Susan Bradshaw, Icon's Head of Professional Development, describes the Continuing Professional Development programme organised for Getty funded delegates ahead of #Icon19

BACKGROUND

The Getty Foundation awarded a grant of £57,000 to the Institute of Conservation to support participants from countries with emerging economies to attend the 2019 Triennial Conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland. In addition, grant recipients had an opportunity to see conservation in action with a two-day programme in London prior to #Icon19. Overall, the aim of the programme was to answer the

question: how do conservators identify low-cost sustainable solutions?

PRIVATE STUDIO VISITS

The London visit provided exclusive access for the Getty-funded delegates to visit two private conservation studios with Julia Nagle ACR, paintings conservator¹, and Janie Lightfoot ACR, textile conservator² where recent projects were on show and could be discussed with the studio teams.

Julia Nagle Conservation provides specialist knowledge of twentieth century and contemporary art, conserving and restoring paintings from Bacon to Banksy. They bring museum-style conservation services to private collectors, insurers, commercial galleries and public institutions worldwide, and are the official conservators for Frieze Masters and Frieze London Art Fairs.

Janie Lightfoot has been running her textile conservation and restoration studio for over thirty-five years. Janie has worked extensively in the public and private sectors, both nationally and internationally, including recent projects in Albania and India. Janie also acts as a consultant for several major institutions; she is an associate lecturer at University of the Arts London and a frequent speaker at conservation and textile conferences. Her passion for textiles and collecting is what has driven the studio to where it is today.

BRITISH MUSEUM VISIT

Further behind-the-scenes access to two world-renowned organisations - The British Museum and The National Archives - provided another dimension to the programme.

At The British Museum, Monique Pullen, Head of Organic Materials Conservation, welcomed the group and introduced several tours to match the learning needs of the delegate group. These tours encompassed the western pictorial art conservation studio (including specialist prints and drawings mounters), the organic materials conservation studio (including textiles) and the ceramics, glass and metals materials conservation studio.

Presentations followed and addressed how the British Museum conservation team works in support of the development of exhibitions; what the challenges are of balancing light levels with access and the preservation of collection; and the moving of a major collection. It also looked at conservation decisions and ethics and community liaison. The speakers were Duygu Camurcuoglu ACR, Inorganic Object Conservator, Hannah Clare ACR, Head of Preventive Conservation, Rachel Howie, Project Conservator, Collections move and Sophie Rowe ACR, Organic Objects Conservator.



Image: Susan Bradshaw

Delegates came from all over the world



Image: Susan Bradshaw



At the British Museum

AND FINALLY

Throughout the two days the delegates were able to talk to the conservation teams at all the places we visited. Thanks go to all the hosts and their teams for contributing their professional input and dedicated time to this programme. And, of course, thanks go to the Getty Foundation for providing the funds to make this possible.

Key learning objectives for the full CPD programme were:

- learning about current thinking in conservation practice
- sharing of practical solutions to address current working requirements
- networking of professionals – to learn from each other
- understanding of how research plays a part in practical treatments

Look out for full coverage and blogs provided by these delegates on the Icon website.

1 <https://www.julianagle.com/>

2 <https://www.janielightfoot.co.uk>

AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Welcome and introductions at The National Archives were led by Juergen Vervoort ACR, Head of Collection Care. Again focusing on the learning needs of the delegates, a series of presentations were given, the first by Sonja Schwoll ACR, Head of Conservation Treatment and Development, who spoke about value assessment at the National Archives. Then Dr Lora Angelova ACR, Head of Conservation Research and Audience Development, addressed the subject of practical science. Three other members of the team, Sarah Noble, Senior Conservation Manager, Sarah Vansnick ACR Senior Conservation Manager, Technology and Preservation and Nathalie Brown, Conservator Research and Development, then took over, looking at maps, large-scale paper objects and their digitisation, accessing collections in balance with preservation requirements and changing approaches to access, when mould is a hazard.

Delegates and Icon staff at Janie Lightfoot's



CONFERENCES

SUSTAINABLE & EFFICIENT: challenges of best practice

West Dean College of Arts & Conservation
Chichester 10 May 2019

Following on from the success of last year's inaugural event, West Dean College once again opened its doors to external students and conservators for its Student and Emerging Professionals Conference series; planned, lead and organised by a team of current students.

This year's themes were sustainability and efficiency, and how to approach best practice with those goals in mind. **Francine Norris**, West Dean Director of Education, started proceedings with a brief opening address which touched on the intricacy of sustainability in conservation, but also the challenges faced by the preservation of traditional skills and methods - intangible heritage that may involve inherently unsustainable practices.

The keynote speaker for the day, **Ylva Dahnsjo**, then joined the conference from Scotland via a skype link. Ylva's lecture touched on a wide range of sustainability and efficiency issues, sharing advice gained from her many years of experience in the profession. She also urged the delegates, and the profession as a whole, to write and publish more to communicate our work to outside audiences, to be a force for change

by spreading skills that help others build self-sufficiency and resilience, to cause people to adjust their attitudes, and to challenge the inherent unsustainability of consumerism and modern industry as a whole.

After the keynote, the day was formatted into half-hour presentations on a variety of subjects broadly falling under the sustainability/efficiency umbrella. **Sally Kilby**, a West Dean MA student, related her experience of quick, repetitive repairs whilst on work placement at the Bodleian earlier this year, highlighting the value of being economic with both materials and time. Sally argued that to see real change we do not need a handful of people being perfectly sustainable but millions of people at least trying, and doing it imperfectly, and that as conservators we can contribute by building small actions into our practice to make a difference. **Rachel Davis**, archives conservator at the BBC, presented a major rehousing project as a case study for the necessity of efficiency and outside-the-box thinking when the budget is not there to carry out large projects according to a standard method. She demonstrated how, by making an investment in their own machinery and then buying raw materials instead of pre-made enclosures, the Archives were able to save £44k on the project - once again highlighting the value of self-sufficiency.

The following two presentations, given by

Hollie Drinkwater and **Erica D'Alessandro**, of PZ Conservation, and **Ania Golebiowski**, of Zenzie Tinker Conservation, focussed on the challenges of limitations of time and resources. They both showed how networking with other local businesses is not only valuable professionally, but is also a more environmentally sustainable and increasingly efficient way of working - an observation that goes hand-in-hand with contemporary theories on the benefits of decentralisation towards sustainable development.

Jürgen Huber, of the Wallace Collection, gave a whirlwind tour of sustainability issues in both conservation and wider industry, and presented new and (in some cases) experimental treatments, including dry-ice cleaning of gilt metal mounts using captured CO2 from other industries. The value of digitisation in preventing wear, and therefore the need for future treatment, of certain objects was also discussed. Perhaps most pertinently, the validity and effectiveness of environmental control parameters that result in huge carbon footprints was questioned, and we were forced to consider what benefit there was to preserving objects whilst simultaneously contributing to the destruction of our environment.

Daniela Molinari, representing *Sustainability in Conservation*, continued the push to reconsider industry standard practice, this time focussing on the unsustainability of isinglass due to the endangered status of wild sturgeon and the environmental destruction caused by farming. Some potential alternatives were presented as being possibly more sustainable, but all still had their own associated environmental challenges, highlighting the difficulties faced for true sustainability in a modern society dominated by industry and intensive farming.

The day was rounded off by **Peter Brown**, returning the focus to efficiency whilst talking about a large-scale move project at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, wrapping up the day with the conclusion that best practice does not mean sticking to an unreasonably high standard, but using available resources as best you can to improve the condition of your objects.

Overall, the conference was equal parts challenging and inspiring, pushing the next generation of conservators to create a professionalism that is less insular and considers itself within the wider context of our world.

Dale Sardeson MA Conservation Studies
West Dean College of Arts & Conservation

The team of students responsible for the planning, organisation and running of the conference. (From left to right): Leah Humenuck, Dale Sardeson, Amy Walsh, Emily Cummins, Nayla Maaruf, Kate Galatian, Sarah Stanley, Shane Wiechnik, Maria Borg



Image: West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

47TH AIC ANNUAL MEETING

New England USA May 2019

The American Institute of Conservation held its annual conference from May 13-17 in Uncasville, Connecticut. The conference was hosted at the Mohegan Sun, in the territory of the Mohegan Tribe. The theme - *New Tools, Techniques, and Tactics in Conservation and Collections Care* – encouraged all attendants to consider how we are innovators, collaborators and problem solvers. Between nine concurrent sessions and sixty poster presentations, each delegate will have taken away something different, but hopefully this is a taster.

Two days of pre-session experiences were offered and I first headed off for a tour of several Newport Mansions with The Preservation Society of Newport and followed this up with a workshop on the identification of dyestuffs, both natural and synthetic. On Wednesday, after a general session with all delegates, the specialty groups split off. A variety of topics were covered in the textile session, including light-bleaching of textiles (**Caitlyn Picard**), orchid mucilage as an adhesive (**Hector Lozano**) and Japanese tissue to treat embroidered bed hangings (**Yoko Hanegreefs**). **Staphany Cheng** and **Tanya Uyeda** spoke on gel-related topics and the day was concluded with five minute 'tips' on mannequin creation (separately from **Laura Mina** and **Tae Smith**) and creating a low-cost wash table for private practice (**Jennifer Cruise**).

Having time to attend a mix of these sessions was fantastic (even if some power walking between rooms was required).

Matthew Cushman 'Lessons from the felt: Thoughts of Risk, Community and Lifelong Learning from a Poker Player Turned Conservator' encouraged conservators to value how our unrelated but transferable talents give us unique skillsets for our role. I was particularly taken with his charge to find your 'pod' – a group of peers/colleagues/mentors with whom to have an on-going dialogue regarding niche interests, thus ensuring the longevity of specialist knowledge.

Another paper I took a lot away from was **Laura Challie's** discussion on the place of smartphone technology within conservation. She presented several successful, but short-lived, projects where smartphones were used but ultimately abandoned as technology changed quicker than the project evolved. Challie also gave examples of recent projects where specific apps on phones, such as scanning and documentation tools, had been used to aid short-term, high volume, cataloguing projects.



UK conservation graduates at the AIC meeting

Another highlight was the Mistakes lunch – what happens when you ask fifteen people to share their potentially most awkward professional moment? Well, from the title of this session we find that 'A mistake shared is not a mistake'. This session, and several other presentations over the week, highlighted the significance of reflecting and sharing experiences, both good and bad, and the importance of thinking outside the box to solve problems. The value of cross-specialty collaboration was also reiterated in many projects.

The evenings were filled with networking opportunities including receptions held at Mystic Seaport and The Mashantucket Pequot Museum. As a 'Brit Abroad' it was great to see a few familiar faces also making their way across the pond. A reunion was held for all who graduated from UK conservation programmes, with Cardiff

University, UCL and University of Glasgow alumni all making an appearance. I thoroughly enjoyed my week at AIC, but a weekend to recover was also much appreciated!

Hannah Sutherland, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Textile Conservation at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

OLD & NEW APPROACHES TO FURNITURE CONSERVATION

Stichting Ebenist

The 14th International Symposium on Wood and Furniture Conservation

Rijksmuseum, Netherlands November 2018

I was fortunate to be awarded an Individual Grant by the Furniture History Society which enabled me to attend Stichting Ebenist 2018,.

Since my first experience of an international conference in 2014 - when I found myself so

Icon Furniture & Wooden Object Group members tour the Amsterdam Historical Museum Conservation Studio





Jiří Bém demonstrates the *Steno-Injection*

awestruck that I barely managed to speak with anyone - I have recognised the value of such events in bringing together conservators from far flung places. For professionals who often find themselves working away in their own atelier or even in the isolating rhythm of their own institution's demands, the opportunity to share and to connect with peers at various stages in their careers is invaluable.

Having wanted to make the absolute most of the experience, I had signed up to attend the Icon Furniture & Wooden Object Group's tours of the Amsterdam Historical Museum and the Mayor's House. At the AHM, delegates were given a presentation regarding the rigorous research approach and techniques used in the conservation of a terracotta sculpture. We were also shown a digital montage of images captured via CT scan comparing the surface density of two nearly identical casts. It was a very positive presentation – these were the results of collaboration between colleagues of different specialisms, from different museums, who were granted access to the expensive analytical resources belonging to a large corporation, equipment prohibitively expensive to be owned by most museums.

The theme of the visit to the Mayor's House, although not explicitly stated, was arguably that of the fluid exchange of skills, materials and craftspeople from across Europe, brought together in this now iconic Dutch edifice. The 18th century interiors were created by a follower of Robert Adam and much information remains in documentary and other physical evidence of the people who created them and from where their designs and precious materials originated.

The following morning after a welcome to delegates from the organising committee, the presentations got off to a sobering start. **Jonathan Ashley-Smith** spoke sincerely about the state of conservation

training programmes in the UK and how this has evolved – arguably for the worst – over the past three decades. We were all reminded of our collective 'unique selling point' - that is the 'ability to make a practical difference' (with our hands). The preceding speakers related the points raised by Ashley-Smith – the culture of immediacy and ephemerality – to phenomena experienced in their respective countries or institutions. By the end of the session however, the enduring message was one encouraging a cross-specialism, multi-institutional and international exchange of expertise, resources and mentoring.

The following session transported delegates into a world of cutting edge technologies but in so doing, demonstrated how modernisation can be harnessed to further the public consciousness with regard to cultural heritage appreciation and preservation. In this instance, 3D imaging of 18th century furniture was discussed. Furthermore, modern technologies in some cases can permit the conservator to accomplish tasks that would either be impossible or totally infeasible without; and we heard of various applications of infrared lasers for cleaning, and of fledgling vacuum clamping techniques.

Flying in the face of the stereotype of the impatient, under-skilled millennial that was presented earlier, **Jiří Bém** rounded off the day's presentations by introducing his latest invention. Delegates huddled onto the stage for a demonstration of a machine designed to inject hot animal glue under a

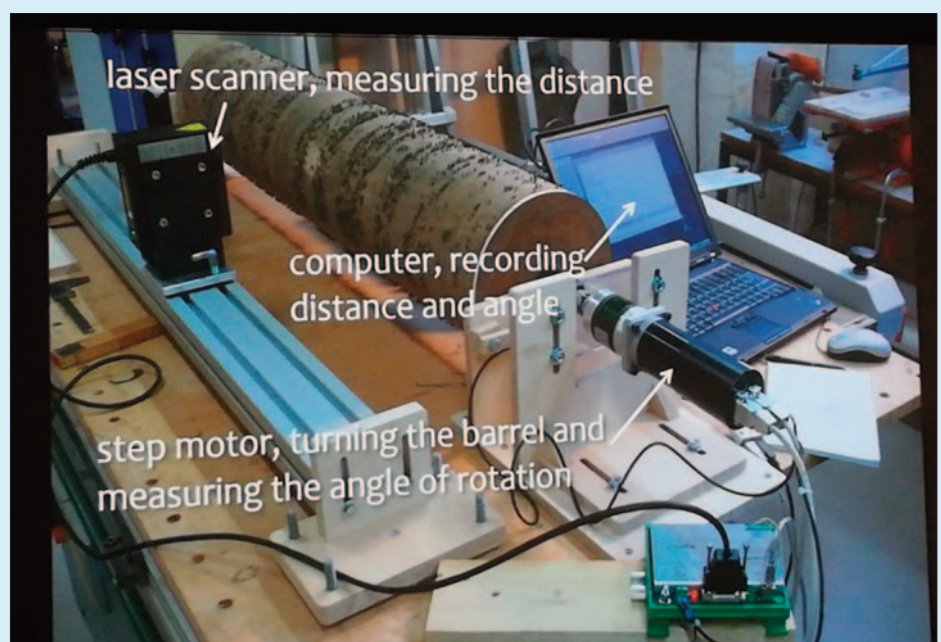
much greater pressure than is achievable by the conventional syringe method. To the credit of the organisers, the day had felt somewhat of a journey, having begun with a cautionary tale and emerging on the other side with a renewed confidence that emerging talent in the field will ensure the relevance of the conservator into the future.

The following morning, old versus new approaches to loss compensation were compared through an array of projects: Bouille marquetry, a copy of an Oeben bureau, an English bureau and even in the conservation of a musical cabinet. Techniques employed varied from laser cutting, writing computer algorithms based on wood grain to manipulating live recordings of musicians in order to replicate the sound of music that may otherwise be lost forever.

That afternoon we heard from **Jan Dariusz Cutajar**, who had recently concluded a project in the UK before relocating to Holland. Having trained in archaeological object conservation, Jan applied his intellectual rigour and practical skills to conserve the only example of a *kussenkast* in England, belonging to the National Trust at Knole House. The process of reconstructing the *kussenkast* from many long separated and seemingly nondescript pieces, was beautifully captured by time-lapse film and did demonstrate the enormous collegiate effort demanded by the project.

The closing presentation was a thoroughly absorbing film regarding the practice and

A slide from *Reconstructing the music in an 18th-century cabinet coded on pin barrels: The use of 3D-scanning technology, digital photography and software to reconstruct the music of the Lehmann cabinet*



Bodil Stauning, furniture conservator, the Royal Danish Collection, Copenhagen, Denmark



A still from the film HANDWERK

philosophy of **Caspar Labarre**, a traditional chair-maker working in Amsterdam. The audience watched in admiration as the creation of one of Caspar's chairs was captured, from his felling the tree to preparing the timber and crafting every piece by hand using historic tools and techniques. I would strongly encourage anyone to watch the film (www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNrgcP5HtPA).

As the title 'Old and New Approaches to Furniture Conservation' suggests, delegates were promised a symposium full of contrasts and the organising committee did perfectly deliver just that. The broader topic, as well as individual presentations, posed many interesting questions and prompted wider debate. Personally, I was encouraged by hearing from seasoned experts as well as by learning of specialists from other disciplines using their transferable skills to approach new materials, objects and challenges.

I take this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank the Furniture History Society's Grants Committee, for kindly putting their faith in me and my sincere ambition to make the most of attending Stichting Ebenist 2018.

Ffion Howells

Frame Conservator National Portrait Gallery

PAPER CONSERVATORS IN SCOTLAND:

News and Ideas Exchange

Edinburgh 15 May 2019

The fifth 'five-minute presentations' event, organised by **Helen Creasy** from The Scottish Conservation Studio, was held at the National Library of Scotland (NLS). This free, annual event is an opportunity for Scottish conservators to get together to exchange news and ideas in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Colleagues can share their projects with each other and offer help in return, which strengthens the conservation community.

The talks were organised into three sections, each of which was chaired in turn

by **Erica Kotze**, **Tizzy Hepher** then **Kirsten Dunne**, with time-keeping by **Anna Trist** and technical support from **Mary Garner**.

After each section, there was time for questions and, of course, tea, home-made baking brought by the participants, and networking.

After an introduction from **Julie Bon**, the newly appointed Head of Collections Care at the NLS, **Charlotte Park** from the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) started the talks with an update on the NGS print rooms conversion, including photographs of the bright new space which is now open for business. Next to speak was **Carrie Farnell** from the Highland Archive Centre (HAC) in Inverness, who shared her journey from trainee to conservator through project work rebinding various books, and the skills she developed along the way.

Caroline Scharfenberg from the Book and Archive Conservation Services spoke about historic sewing techniques and how she went about amending an original technique to provide better support for a book when repairing and reconstructing it. **Fay Humphreys** from the Cumbria Archive Service detailed her research into book boxes with integrated cradles, outlining some of the pros and cons; her prototypes were keenly examined by the book conservators present.

Ann Evans from Glasgow Museums presented the impressive treatment of a large, poor quality and badly damaged Toulouse Lautrec poster of Jane Avril. Ann put her Eastern paper conservation training skills to use when painstakingly repairing it for exhibition. **Nicole Devereux** from the University of Edinburgh Library's Centre for Research Collections (CRC) brought to the group a tricky treatment regarding photographs stuck to glass, sharing the methods of removal she has attempted so far while asking for help regarding other possible methods of safely removing the photographs from the glass.

Kirsten Dunne from the NGS gave two separate talks. The first was about her collaboration with Napier University regarding nanocellulose, a sustainable product made from seaweed, and its potential use as a repair material for transparent papers and films. Kirsten's second talk was on her experience with microfader equipment, a useful risk management tool that can non-destructively test the relative light sensitivity of objects, the results of which can be used to facilitate conversations about light and display management.

Richard Aitken from HAC spoke about the conservation of an early nineteenth-century Tibetan scroll, upon which is an astrological calendar with Chinese zodiac characters. It is now on display at Dundee's Art Gallery

and Museum. **Vicki Hanley** and **Lisa Cumming** from the National Museum of Scotland (NMS) gave complementary presentations about items in their collection that they had recently prepared for exhibition in a new gallery. Vicki's talk titled 'A is for Ancestral Scroll' was about repairing a scroll on a silk and paper lining with structural damage, and the successful process of humidifying and tension-drying it before displaying it in the Museum. Lisa's talk titled 'B is for Buddha' was about repairing a circular seventeenth-century Buddhist temple painting on silk, mounted on wood, by consolidating the flaking paint and using toned infills. Lisa also mentioned a group of Japanese woodblock prints on display and their neat idea of using magnetic pegs to allow for their easy rotation.

Emily Hick from the CRC presented her ethical dilemma with the seventy-two metre long Mahabharata scroll, on which is a Sanskrit poem with seventy eight miniatures on Islamic paper, housed in a Victorian wooden case with four rollers, asking the question: should it be kept within this non-contemporary case even though it's causing damage? **Rosie Shepley**, a second-year paper conservation student from University of Northumbria, spoke about her dissertation topic on the correlation between paper type and the presence of foxing, comparing prints from the Edington Collection and the manifestation of foxing. Icon Intern **Claire Hutchison** talked us through her project surveying, conserving and rehousing fragile Scottish newspapers at the NLS and how she has used a 'less is more' approach considering the number of newspapers in the collection requiring conservation.

Eric Verkade, a student on the Technical Art History course at the University of Glasgow undertaking an internship at the NGS, discussed his project finding and identifying watermarks in drawings and sketches on paper by Allan Ramsay and mentioned how it appears that Ramsay actively sought out papers with watermarks for these works.

Kate Eden, Herbarium Technician at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, prepares plant specimens and discussed the process of pressing and mounting new specimens as well as how repairs are made to older specimens.

Tizzy Hepher from Historic Environment Scotland discussed her rehousing project of a fascinating and varied collection of drawings by William and Henry Haworth from the Carron Company ironworks, including designs and sketches of building details and cannons that eventually got turned into ironworks. **Ilaria Camerini** joined the group from the University of Manchester Library, giving a talk on the conservation and rehousing of the Alan



Presenters of five minute talks for paper conservators in Scotland

Tabor Collection, which included repairing mother of pearl details on a parchment document using isinglass.

Arielle Juler, Icon intern for the National Trust for Scotland, talked about the moth management project at Newhailes House, detailing how they disrupted the moth life cycle with a deep clean of the house and through freezing and cleaning furniture and other objects before reinstating them. They carried out wide public engagement and staff training. The final talk of the event was from **Helen Creasy** on Tynecastle tapestry. This richly textured and decorated material, imitating gilded leather, was treated in two recent projects. It had been used as a covering on doors at the Gardner Memorial Church in Brechin and on the library walls at Barnbogle Castle, and in both cases was cleaned, consolidated and retouched.

Thanks to all the speakers, attendees, organisers, and chairs and to the NLS for providing an excellent venue – here's to the next one!

Anna O'Regan

Freelance paper conservator, Edinburgh

TALKS

BOOKBINDING HISTORY AND SACRED COWS: reflections on received wisdom

Bibliographical Society
London, 21 May 2019

'I will have no friends left in the binding fraternity', prophesied **Dr David Pearson** at the start of his Homee and Phiroze Randeria Lecture where he challenged a number of book history and bookbinding beliefs and ideas, including:

- quality bookbinding content in training and reference books

- research focus into non-fine bindings
- early modern binding formats at point of sale
- binding workshops and tool usage/sharing
- use of terminology like trade and retail bindings
- outside-in versus inside-out binding analysis
- documentation methods including rubbings and digital humanities
- methods of accruing expertise
- change as evidence of use
- increasing regard of the book as a material object

Dr Pearson structured his lecture by leading us through a series of questions he posed, including what we know, what we can know and what we will never know, and by answering these questions against the topics listed above.

From a book conservation perspective, a number of the topics are particularly relevant to my training and professional development, such as the acknowledgement that the advice for learning about historical bookbindings, which can be summarised as 'go away, look at approximately 10,000 books and then come back to discuss', is neither inclusive nor achievable for many. He went on to offer pragmatic suggestions on how to address this, such as supplementing catalogues with binding feature images and improving bookbinding training for librarians, archivists and curators. He also acknowledged that it is now predominantly conservators who may be the only people to have access to bookbindings and hidden elements like sewing, therefore case studies are coming from the conservation community. There may be an issue with case study analysis and linking the research to

the broader bookbinding history, balancing the idea of uniqueness against the broader timeline of binding evolution.

Another sacred cow Dr Pearson confronted is that of analysis and documentation best practice. He comprises between the heavy history of fine binding decoration and the newer approach championed by Professor Nicholas Pickwoad of looking from the inside out, and advocates including bindings outside of the fine binding category, those considered 'plain and simple'. He went on to propose that neither approach should be taken individually; a melding of the two would be the most useful way forward.

The third challenge I felt most relevant to a book conservator was the need to anchor bookbindings more firmly into the art historical world and increase the regard for the book as a material object. He articulated his expectations that the quality of binding descriptions should be in line with the level afforded to transcribing marginalia. This linked with his earlier suggestion for increased training attention but he also spoke about training book caretakers to look at binding changes as evidence of use, reader interest and fashion.

The talk concluded with a number of comments and questions and with Professor Miriam Foot expressly reassuring Dr Pearson that he will leave the lecture room without having lost any friends.

Meagen Smith

Parliamentary Archives, London

David Pearson slaughtering sacred cows





Image: Mary Garner

A demonstration at the Board Re-attachment workshop

WORKSHOPS

A BOARD REATTACHMENT METHOD Icon Scotland Group St Andrews University, Fife 19 March 2019

As a part of Icon Scotland's 2019 programme of events, I, along with nine others had the pleasure of attending a workshop at St Andrew's University run by **Emma Fraser** ACR, of the Book and Paper Studio in Dundee.

I, like many others, first encountered Emma's self-developed board reattachment technique during the Paper Conservators in Scotland News and Ideas Exchange, last year at Edinburgh University. Looking around the room I was clearly not the only one who was intrigued by the method and was keen to learn its workings.

The method aims to tackle an issue



Image: Mary Garner

Emma Fraser in mid-demonstration

commonly faced by conservators working with bound objects. Board detachment will inhibit handling for digitisation and display, as well as aesthetically, therefore an approach should be found to rectify this. Mechanical problems arise when the leather is pasted directly on to the spine in a tight back style inhibiting access for repair. Joint repairs with Japanese tissue alone, although straightforward to apply, can lack strength and longevity. Fraser's method works around this problem not only creating a strong repair when re-hinging the board but also a repair so visually subtle it is virtually invisible upon initial inspection of the hinge.

While the premise may be easily explained, a great deal of skill and practice goes into perfecting the technique. Emma left us with the skills, and tools, to continue to utilise her method in our own practice. Thank you to Erica Kotze and St. Andrew's University Special Collections for hosting the event, Mary Garner at Icon Scotland for organizing the event and Emma for sharing her knowledge with us; it was a very enjoyable day.

Gemma Mathieson

Book and Paper Conservator,
Downie Allison Downie Ltd, Glasgow



Image: Mary Garner

Threads secured to boards and ready for final tightening

CONDITION ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP

Care of Collections Group National Museum Wales, 4 April 2019

This Care of Collections Group workshop was held at the National Museum Wales in Cardiff where seven speakers delivered thought-provoking and instructional presentations on the theory and practicality of conducting condition surveys and assessments across varied collections. The afternoon sessions saw delegates participating in four practical workshops.

The first Keynote speaker was **Helen Lindsay** examining the importance of understanding the surveys that we undertake. She initiated a group discussion on why we carry out surveys and assessments and discussed different types of assessment and survey methodology before highlighting the importance of understanding and analysing your data. Next, **Dr. Athanasios Velios** from University of the Arts/Ligatus introduced us to how data integration could work in the heritage sector using CIDOC-CRM. By linking and interrogating different databases, sample sizes can be increased and new conclusions drawn. He highlighted that data integration does not affect existing systems, but is built on top of them. The next step in the process is that existing databases require mapping to start building these crucial links.

Alex Walker, Preventive Conservator from the Bodleian Libraries was the first speaker in the 'ten slides in ten minutes' presentations. She spoke about a new training programme at the Bodleian called Book Mindfulness, aimed at developing collections care protocols and tackling collection issues mainly caused by time pressures. The training focused on the principles of taking care, awareness of the present moment, focusing on one task and not getting overwhelmed. Feedback showed it was easy to relate to, encouraged happy working and developing relationships.

The next speaker was **Rowena Doughty** from Gwynedd Archive Service sharing how they

Sewing threads anchored through text block



Image: Mary Garner



Participants at the Care of Collections Group workshop on condition assessment

have developed a survey method to identify risks and prioritise treatments with limited resources. She highlighted the importance of training, making sure that participants were able to understand what they were doing, why they were doing it and what to look out for. Their survey method included a fixed condition rating scale which was updated once treatment had happened, creating a fluid system that allowed for priorities to be identified.

Penny Hill from St Fagans Museum was the final speaker in these short presentations. She discussed the challenges and solutions when caring for publicly accessible objects on an open air site. Using simple condition assessments and assessing in bulk provided the most workable results. She also found that it was the best way for communicating actions points to volunteers and staff.

Valeria Duplat from the Tate spoke about documenting contemporary art, showing that it is often not just the object that needs to be conserved but the supporting documents as well. She demonstrated how artist instructions, installation guides and reproduction guides, all contributed to the artwork as a whole, emphasizing the importance that the complementary documents be preserved and documented themselves.

Deborah Walton, from the University of Cambridge Museums, finished off the morning presentations discussing successful condition reporting for volunteers with minimal training. She emphasized good and clear communication, defining what success looks like and accepting hard truths. Expecting volunteers to be able to succeed, working with their individual skills and being nice are the keys to success.

The afternoon saw the attendees participating in two of four workshops. The Paintings Workshop offered a variety of examples on display to be examined and discussed. Conversation focused on condition assessments for loans with the group agreeing that simple and clear reports with annotated images were the most effective. The Assessment of Fluid Specimens workshop invited participants to assess a variety of fluid specimens that were set out. It

showcased the importance of understanding the collection that you are assessing and clearly defining what information you seek. The Data Mapping Workshop put the theory presented in the morning into practice as participants were provided with actual data sets to map using the CIDOC-CRM model. The Care of Collections Workshop provided two collections care scenarios to be discussed as a group. The first was a museum move, the second was a condition assessment of two objects. Both scenarios brought about lively debate and discussion with many anecdotes being shared. A huge thank you to all the presenters, organizers and to the staff at the National Museum Wales for hosting and sharing your collections with us. A fabulous and instructive day was had by all.

Aimee Sims ACR & **Sara Spillett**, Eton College

KNIFE SHARPENING WORKSHOP

OCC & Bodleian Libraries
Oxford 8-10 May 2019

In May the Oxford Conservation Consortium and Bodleian Libraries invited designer-craftsman **Bernard Allen** to run a workshop for six book conservators in knife making and blade sharpening.

Bernard is a short course tutor in furniture-making at West Dean College of Arts and Conservation and has taught knife sharpening to book conservation students there (and elsewhere) since 1995. Bernard worked closely for many years with Christopher Clarkson, teaching at Spoleto and West Dean. He supplies and prepares quarter-sawn oak book boards for many book conservators including the Bodleian and the Oxford Conservation Consortium, and has also started supplying knife blanks for conservators, recognising the difficulty we have in sourcing high quality edge tools and in ensuring that supplies will continue. The aim of this three-day course was to give us a reintroduction in how to look after and sharpen the various types of knives and tools we already have, as well as to teach us how to make our own paring knife and lifting knives from scratch.

On the first day Bernard introduced us to the materials we would be using and the sharpening equipment required. He assessed the range of equipment we already had between the two studios, and introduced us all to the Tormek machines which none of us had used before.

The knife sharpening workshop set up at the Oxford Conservation Consortium





Bernard Allen demonstrating sharpening a curved blade on a Japanese whetstone

Beginning with the roughly shaped blades of Niolox steel that Bernard supplied, we set to work with Japanese whetstones to lap the backs of our knives perfectly flat before moving on to shaping the bevels on the Tormeks.

By the second day of the workshop many of us had progressed to using the Tormeks, before returning to work on the whetstones to get our blades sharp. Bernard also showed us how to adapt hacksaw blades into lifting knives in a variety of angles and shapes. For this we used a grinder brought from his workshop to create the desired shape for the blade and then used the whetstones we were now familiar with to sharpen them.

We were able to use the last day of the workshop to continue to practise our sharpening technique, as well as discuss the sharpening of other tools we frequently use and how to make and use strops effectively. Bernard examined and discussed the wide variety of knives we already owned, and gave us tips and practical demonstrations for sharpening curved blades, double bevels, spoke shave blades and scissors, which was invaluable.

This intensive three-day course proved to be a test of our patience and stamina, and left us all feeling a huge sense of achievement with our new knives, and a greater understanding and confidence in the process of sharpening many different types of tools. Like our knives, which Bernard kept reminding us would require work hardening, we were work-hardened by the end of the course, and ready to keep practising everything we had learnt with Bernard to keep our tools in the best condition.

We are grateful to the Association for Manuscripts and Archives in Research Collections for supporting this course. Individual course participants were also

supported by the Anna Plowden Trust, and received Icon Book and Paper Group bursaries.

Alice Evans Assistant Book Conservator
Bodleian Libraries

UNDERSTANDING TAPESTRY

Atelier Weftfaced
Sussex 13-14 April 2019

This two day workshop was held at Atelier Weftfaced near Arundel, and was taught by **Caron Penney**. Seven of us warped up

frame looms and then were introduced to warp settings, preparing yarn, diagonals, plain weaving, creating shapes, use of slits, how to change yarn colours and the various interlocking methods to use. We all came away with our own woven sample (mine is a mere 10cm square!), and many were inspired to buy their own frames and yarn at the end of the weekend. Caron and her partner **Kathleen Swailes** also gave us a tour of their current work, which put all of our efforts into perspective.

I chose to participate in this workshop as the Whitworth is installing a tapestry exhibition later in the year, and as someone who has never been a natural at tapestry conservation, I was looking for insights and perspectives to contribute to the exhibition preparations. The two days more than delivered this for me, and I think all of us truly appreciated the learning through doing – small numbers, few distractions, total concentration and the guidance of an excellent teacher. I came away with fresh insights as to how to examine and document a tapestry – historic or modern – and a question which I will be exploring as I prepare tapestries for display: namely ‘do our supports and linings obscure construction techniques that we should or could be documenting?’

<https://www.weftfaced.com>

Ann French

The Whitworth, University of Manchester

A sample end result of the Understanding Tapestry workshop





Image: Rachel Langley

Rachel's experiments in progress

A NEW LOOK FOR OLD RESTORATIONS

Earlier this year Rachel Langley ACR, Senior Textile Conservator at the National Trust Textile Conservation Studio, learned some new techniques during a sabbatical at the Rijksmuseum Textile Conservation Department

After having worked for the National Trust in the Textile Conservation Studio for over twenty-six years I was able to take advantage of the opportunity to take a sabbatical. In February 2019 I undertook a four-week work placement in the Textile Conservation Department of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. This was a fantastic opportunity for me to contrast working in a national museum with working for the National Trust, where in general we are conserving textiles for open display within furnished rooms.

As the Trust owns around six hundred and fifty tapestries a good percentage of my career has been spent in tapestry conservation. When I attended the Tapestry Symposium in Edinburgh in 2012 one of the papers that I found particularly interesting was the one given by Mieke Albers from the Rijksmuseum entitled *Colouring the past for the future: retouching of old restorations in a tapestry*. In it she outlined the use of the Lascaux Sirius® primary watercolour system, to re-touch the faded re-woven areas in a 17th century Gobelins tapestry depicting scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Throughout my career I have continually faced the challenge of how best to in-fill missing areas and blend in existing repairs and patches. Mieke had recently made a trip over to the UK to advise the team of conservators working on a large Axminster carpet, designed by Adam, at Saltram, a National

Rachel undertaking paint trials



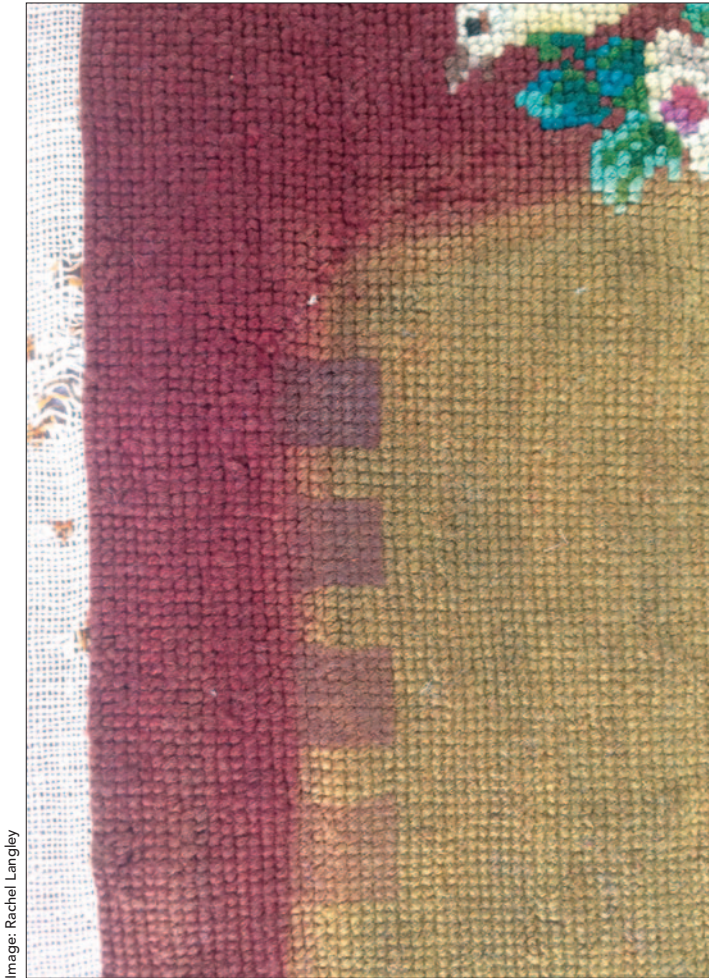


Image: Rachel Langley

This image shows a sacrificial piece of textile on which Rachel experimented with building up layers of colour using the Lascaux watercolours. The colour match was in fact rather better to the naked eye than comes across in the photograph. It should be stressed that the Rijksmuseum only advocates the use of this re-touching technique on a faded re-woven area of a textile and not on a faded original piece of textile

Trust property. The carpet had extensive areas of faded, but sound, re-weaving in the dark brown wool. The re-touching technique using the Lascaux paints was successfully used on the carpet. There were a couple of upcoming tapestry projects at the Studio where there were distinct areas of faded re-weaving, so I wanted to spend some time exploring the use of this technique.

During my time at the Rijksmuseum I was able to spend time experimenting with various techniques for applying the watercolour paints, blending colours and building up the depth of shade. It was really beneficial to be given the time to step outside of my day job and explore the uses and limitations of a new technique. I was also able to spend time applying paint-on silk dyes, called Deka Silk, to silk crepeline, a technique which was new to me. I was particularly pleased with the results I achieved when using a dilute solution of the Deka Silk and also when painting an outline design onto a pre-dyed piece of silk crepeline.

Among the other projects that I was able to see in the studio was a Tournai tapestry (dated 1500 – 1525) composed of over three hundred fragments. This tapestry is currently in storage; conservation treatment was started twenty years ago but then put on hold. The plan is to map all the fragments to determine what is original and which patches are from other tapestries.

I found the experience of working at the Rijksmuseum extremely valuable, and a wonderful contrast to my day job. Working in central Amsterdam in conservation studios covering the disciplines of metals, ceramics, furniture and paintings, together with the state of the art analytical laboratories that make up the Netherlands Institute for Conservation, Art and Science, was a complete contrast to the National Trust's beautifully converted barn in the middle of the Norfolk countryside.

I would like to thank all the staff of the Rijksmuseum Textile Conservation Studio, with special thanks to Suzan Meijer, Carola Holz and Mieke Albers for sharing their time and knowledge with me, making my time there very informative and productive, as well as enjoyable.

The Rijksmuseum's Textile Conservation team at lunch



Image: Rachel Langley

MOTHS AT NEWHAILES HOUSE

Icon Intern **Arielle Juler** describes her work on a major problem with moths at a Palladian mansion in Musselburgh

BACKGROUND

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) data indicated a sharp increase in the number of webbing clothes moth (*Tineola bisselliella*) at Newhailes House and Gardens in 2016. The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) implemented targeted localised treatment and deep cleaning in the most affected areas of the house, however, webbing clothes moth numbers remained high. So in 2018, NTS decided that a more in-depth treatment project was required and the moth management project was approved, enabling those involved to tackle the ongoing problem and reduce moth numbers down to manageable levels.

I started my Icon internship in Preventive Conservation just as the moth project was beginning to be organised on-site and have been able to be part of this large scale IPM project from its initial planning phase through to implementation and delivery.

The various strands of work involved have offered me excellent opportunities to increase my skills and experiences as an emerging conservator. The project also focused on delivering training and public engagement for NTS staff, conservation students, and the general public. As expected for an undertaking on this scale, a number of challenges and logistical puzzles have come up along the way, providing me with an excellent opportunity for problem solving and applying conservation principles to challenging circumstances.

ON-SITE AND ORGANISED

The project was designed to reduce moth numbers through three activity strands – temporarily decanting collections from the affected rooms, low temperature treatment of affected collection items, and a thorough deep clean and selective application of pesticides to the affected spaces.

The IPM data gathered at the property provided us with evidence of which locations in the house were most affected by webbing clothes moth. This information provided us with a guide to where we would start the project and how we would work through the house beginning at the largest heavily affected room, the Library, and working systemically across the rooms on both floors. By starting in the Library we moved the biggest and most fragile items first and emptied one of the largest rooms to work within.

The scale of the programme necessitated the recruitment of volunteers and the secondment of property staff to ensure delivery of the core objectives. The project team received 'train the trainer' instruction to enable everyone to take an active part in training the wider team of volunteers and staff. This was a new approach for NTS and the moth management team was used as a pilot project.

The teams began on-site at the end of January with a training



© Arielle Juler

Packing items for temporary collection decant

day for the volunteers and staff in the principles of integrated pest management, collection movement, wrapping and packing, and surface cleaning. The delivery of this training provided me with a great opportunity to share my conservation knowledge and work with people from diverse backgrounds and with varied experience levels in collection care. The training provided the project team with an overview of the activity strands in two half-day sessions with more hands-on training provided once teams started on-site.

DISRUPTING THE MOTH CYCLE

Collection moves

The work started in January with packing and wrapping objects for removal from the first room. Each room is full of a variety of materials and items on open display and so they can be challenging spaces to work in. Before we could begin preparing objects for freezer treatment, we needed to remove collection objects that were not part of the treatment process in



© NTS

Moving a large rug from the house to the freezer for treatment

order to gain access to the rooms. As we packed and moved items from the Library to other storage areas in the house we made sure that the catalogue number of every item was recorded so that their movements could be accurately logged, first on paper, then on the collection management database.

Once we had space to work within the Library we could begin preparing our first objects for freezer treatment. I worked with the team to ensure that everyone was familiar with the principles of protecting exposed materials from the changes in relative humidity whilst in the freezer and the use of acid free tissue paper as an environmental buffer against condensation. Once we started wrapping we soon found a 'house style' that suited most of our objects and that the teams found most effective to apply.

One of the biggest challenges we faced was the lack of available storage space within the house. The majority of the rooms are on public display across the two main floors with the remaining rooms already occupied with collection storage and staff offices. In order to remove collection items from the rooms during the project we had to revisit current storage spaces and consider additional storage solutions.

The project team worked to condense storage areas within the house to free up space and also used external storage units for larger items that would not be included in freezer or pesticide treatments. As we worked across the rooms in the house, object storage needed to be revisited continually to make sure that we were moving and documenting our collection appropriately and to ensure that we had adequate work spaces for the project activities.

TREATMENTS

In order to treat fully the objects and the house, a combination of deep cleaning, low temperature and pesticide treatments was used to provide as much coverage and deterrent as possible against re-infestation.

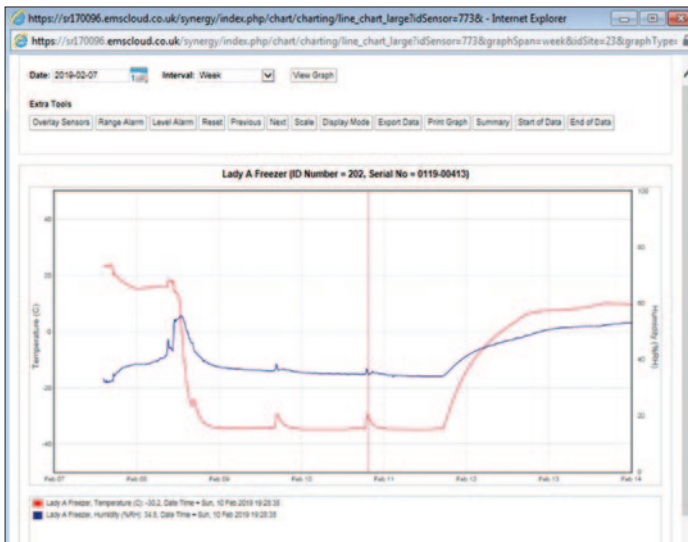
After emptying a room of collection items, the team then began the deep cleaning phase. In the Library, this required the installation of two 6.5 metre scaffolds in order to remove the

curtains for freezer treatment and to deep clean all of the high book shelves. With the furniture removed, we were able to access all of the low level cupboards for deep cleaning that were previously behind large and heavy objects. Going through the cupboards provided us with a bonus of condition checking items, surface cleaning materials where required, and repacking in appropriate materials for long term storage. The empty cupboards were then cleaned and transluthrin packs were

Checking inventory records of collection items in the freezers



© Arielle Juler



© NTS

Environmental monitoring data inside one of the freezers during treatment cycle

installed to act as a moth deterrent.

To prevent a future increase in webbing clothes moth numbers at Newhailes, the project team decided to treat as many gaps and voids in the rooms as possible for potential infestations. In consultation with the NTS National Preventive Conservator, it was decided to apply a silicone desiccant to the exposed floor boards, focusing on gaps between boards to reach areas that have previously been difficult to treat.

The sharp particles of the desiccant will abrade against the exterior of the moth eggs, larvae and adults allowing the silicone to then enter and eliminate the pests. The powder is very fine and needs to be directed into gaps in floor boards and skirting boards to enable it to sink below the surface layer. The dust will be left in place as a long term deterrent and therefore needed to be carefully applied and the treated areas cleaned afterwards so that no sharp particles were left on floor boards that might affect floor coverings, underlays and historic carpets when reinstated. I worked with two team members to methodically apply the dust to rooms on both principal floors.

After the objects were packed, wrapped, sealed, and labelled, they were moved into one of the two on-site walk-in freezers

Collection items stored in the house prior to freezer treatment



© NTS

for low temperature treatment. The freezers steadily reduce their temperature to -35°C where the objects are kept for seventy two hours, after which the freezers are turned off and the temperature gradually increases to ambient levels when the objects can then be removed. The two freezers were located at the front entrance to the house for ease of controls and object movements. One freezer was fitted with shelves to increase the storage capacity for smaller items, including cushions, rugs, blankets and other small textiles, while the other freezer was kept clear to hold larger objects such as rolled rugs, sofas, and the bear skin. After the items had been through a freezer treatment they needed to be condition checked and surface cleaned ahead of reinstatement into their display locations throughout Newhailes house.

A number of objects affected by, and vulnerable to, moth infestation were not able to be treated in the freezers. These objects had elements made of materials unsuitable for freezing, such as mother-of-pearl or other inlay, or were unable to be moved into the freezers because of the materials used in their construction, such as a built-in wardrobe lined with silk. Increased monitoring will be carried out to carefully watch for signs of moth activity in these areas.

The decision to use permethrin on collection items was discussed in detail with the National Preventive Conservator. We needed to be very specific and careful about what materials we did treat and which were unsuitable. It was decided to only use permethrin on a small number of carpets that are used as support items. A permethrin solution of Constrain was applied to the backing of fitted carpets prior to re-laying them in cleaned rooms. The items and areas will need to be monitored for any sign of pest activity as the Constrain treatment will only remain effective for around three months and may need reapplication.

TRAINING AND ADVOCACY

Training and conservation advocacy were an integral part of the project. The Newhailes learning and engagement team offered public tours during the project to give visitors an insight into how a moth infestation is managed within an historic house.

I worked with the National Preventive Conservator to lead the NTS annual IPM training sessions for staff held at Newhailes House. The day training included a session on the principles of IPM and the pests most commonly found at NTS properties and a practical session working with the project team to prepare collection items for freezer treatment.

We also hosted the University of Glasgow Centre for Textile Conservation MA students as part of their IPM course module. The National Preventive Conservator provided them with a detailed presentation on IPM, identification and treatment options. We then asked the students to work in teams on two of our most challenging objects in the Library – an oversized fragile sofa and a bear skin rug. I worked with the students to discuss options on how we could best protect the bear skin for freezer treatment.

I have also hosted a number of conservation interns from



© NTS

Application of silica dust powder to floorboards

different courses and institutions at Newhailes during the project, to share my IPM knowledge and work with them to gain hands-on experience in a large scale IPM project.

CONCLUSION

The project ran from the end of January through to the end of May and delivered core objectives to treat an ongoing

webbing clothes moth population. The project has been able to treat 420 objects for webbing clothes moth and has cleaned and treated fourteen rooms across the principal floors at Newhailes House. The project also raised awareness of specific areas within rooms where moths had been active, which will now be included in plans for deep cleaning and monitoring. Additionally, new pest traps have been laid and pest numbers will be closely monitored for activity to measure the effectiveness of treatments and the application of moth deterrents throughout the principal floors.

I have gained a wealth of experience through working as a team leader on the project and have been able to increase my skills and confidence as an emerging conservator. As well as gaining practical conservation experience in integrated pest management, I have also been able to gain skills in leadership, working with volunteers, delivering training, and conservation advocacy.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the National Trust for Scotland for hosting the internship with generous support from the Bute Memorial Fund. Also, I would like to thank Julie Bon (Conservator, Edinburgh and East), Mel Houston (NTS National Preventive Conservator) and Sarah Gerrish (Private Conservator) for their support throughout the internship. I would also like to thank the Moth Project team at Newhailes House and Gardens for all the hard work, dedication, and humour they brought to this large scale project.

University of Glasgow conservation students discuss IPM in the Library



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Contemporary thinking and practice in conservation, and changing standards in the sector leaves the conservator with the challenge of balancing the needs of the object, cost and concerns for the environment.

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Installation view of
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