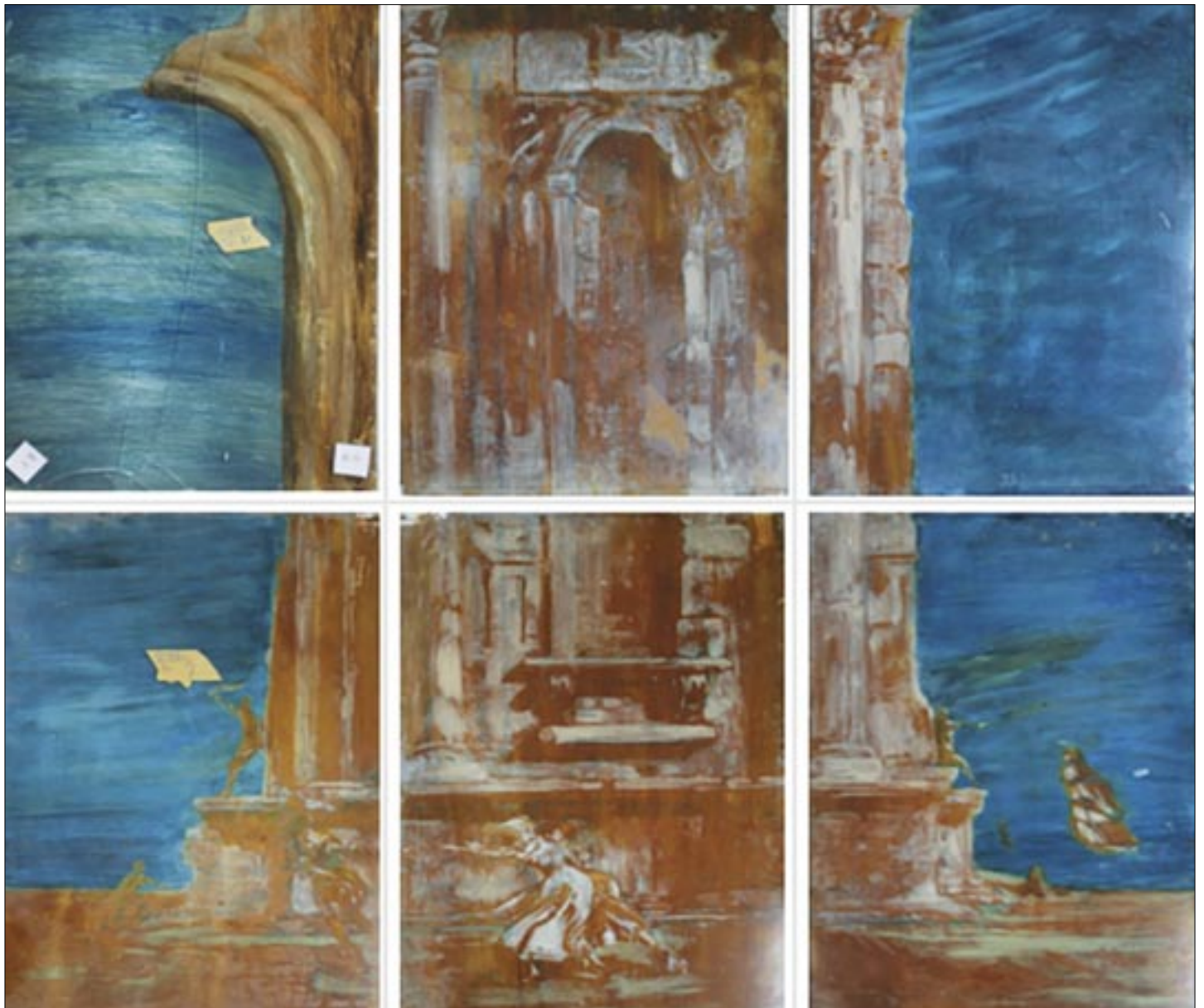


THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • DECEMBER 2018 • ISSUE 79



Winning the Denise Lyall Prize with William Nicholson

Also in this issue

A magnetic solution • A Tate placement • Digitisation step by step • The year in policy

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DECEMBER 2018 Issue 79



From the Editor

'We are not NASA here - trying to get a man back from the moon!' Thus spoke our departing Chief Executive to me on one occasion when I was panicking about a deadline. It is a mantra that I have clung on to on several occasions since. Calming and

sensible, those words seem to me to encapsulate Alison Richmond's wisdom and kindness to me and everyone connected with Icon. Our Chair of the Board of Trustees has more to say about her achievements over nearly a decade. We wish her a happy retirement and look forward to welcoming our new Chief Executive.

If you are planning to embark on a digitisation project, the article from the National Library of Scotland has plenty of useful knowledge to impart on the topic. We also have an enthusiastic description of a shared, trans-Atlantic internship at Tate; a prize-winning approach to determining the future of a stored artefact and an account of setting out on one course with a treatment and changing tack in the light of challenges. Detail, passion and flexibility – that's conservation for you!

Lynette Gill



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Image of *Architectural Fragment* by William Nicholson, a set of reverse-painted glass panels. © National Trust Photo: Sophie Croft

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Deadlines for adverts and editorial

For the February 2019 issue
Friday 30 November

For the April 2019 issue
Friday 1 February 2019

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professional update

From the Chair of the Board of Trustees

THANK YOU ALISON!



Siobhan Stevenson pays tribute to Alison Richmond

This is normally the spot in which Alison Richmond, as Icon's Chief Executive, updates members on aspects of Icon's work and reflects on key issues or gives us some insight into activities that may be of interest to members. Alison's lively columns help to give the members a real flavour of the enormous breadth and diversity of the role she has occupied over the last eight years.

Many of you will have read with some sadness the press release that Alison is leaving Icon. She has been such an inspiration to the organisation and has very much been the driving force behind the high standing Icon enjoys within the heritage sector.

Alison has left Icon in a much better place than it was when she took up post. She moved from a role as Trustee to take on the post of interim Chief Executive and then we were fortunate enough to cement her into the role on a permanent basis. Her openness, genuine commitment and encouraging and supportive approach has helped to create and sustain an excellent team at Icon. It is clear that the operational improvements that Alison has delivered have enabled the smooth running of business which in turn has allowed more sustained and focused prioritisation of strategic activities.

It is easy to take for granted the quiet and unassuming way in which Alison has lead the organisation. Her period as CEO has seen the consolidation of activities such as the delivery of a strong suite of publications, the continued advancement of Professional Accreditation of Conservator Restorers (PACR), as well as the delivery of skill development and learning opportunities. But it has also seen a major transformation and several landmark achievements. Icon has taken on the central role in coordinating and delivering triennial conferences which are now recognised internationally, the successful running of the Conservation Awards and delivery of the National Conservation Education and Skills Strategy (NCESS) - all these impacted widely on the perception and status of Icon. In addition, the Icon website has been comprehensively revamped, re-orientating Icon as a more outward- and forward-looking organisation.

Neither did Alison shy away from the more daunting and challenging aspects of the role, steering the Chantry Library to a more long term and sustainable home, strengthening Icon's professional credibility through development of Icon's own Code of Conduct and revised disciplinary processes, as well as moving professional accreditation towards an Icon-only accreditation standard.

Alison's accomplishments are not just confined to Icon itself; she has been a major influence on our partner organisations both as a supportive colleague and by playing a key role in policy and advocacy across the sector, including being instrumental in the development of the National Heritage Science Forum. She has built and sustained positive relationships with funders and Icon has benefited enormously from the confidence placed in her by organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Clothworkers' Foundation, both of whom have been so supportive of Icon's development and activities.

The leadership Alison has provided will also be much missed among the many committees and specialist groups of Icon. There is a dizzying array of meetings in which she regularly provided guidance, information and imparted her knowledge so generously. As an accredited conservator she provided a strong sense of professionalism and an authoritative voice on conservation issues. At the same time her personal qualities encouraged commitment and loyalty. Never forgetting a name or failing to acknowledge other people's contribution was always a hallmark of her contribution.

I have every admiration for Alison and all that she has achieved. I am also deeply indebted both personally and professionally for the support she has given me. She has been an inspiration to me in my role as Trustee and as Chair. I have been grateful for her steady, conscientious and patient dedication, which continues to play a key role in our transition to a new Chief Executive.

Alison is moving on in her life to a new phase that will allow her to focus on herself and family and to relocate to the wonderful Devonshire countryside. While we wish her every success and enjoyment in her new life, we will also miss her enormously and I am sure all Icon members will wish me to take this opportunity to congratulate Alison for her achievements and pass on our sincere thanks for the significant contribution she has made to Icon.

Alison at the launch of the NCESS in 2012



© Matt Wreford

NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR ICON



Sara Crofts

The new chief executive of Icon from January next year will be **Sara Crofts**. Sara comes from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), but originally trained as an architect and holds an MSc in Architectural Conservation and wrote her thesis on Interpreting Cultural Significance. She has held senior positions with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, SPAB, including as Deputy Director and as project director for major conservation initiatives.

For the last three years she has

been Head of Historic Environment at the HLF, providing advice and strategic direction to the Board and Executive on grant-giving and policy issues and building strategic relationships with historic environment organisations across the UK.

The recruitment panel was led by trustee Iain Boyd with Chair Siobhan Stevenson, Vice-Chairs Caroline Peach and Jenny Williamson. External support was provided by Peter Hinton of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA), Ben Cowell of the Heritage Alliance and charity recruitment specialists OxfordHR. The panel was greatly impressed by Sara's broad level of skills and connections in the conservation and heritage worlds and her track record in advocacy, fund raising, project and people management. Sara was the panel's unanimous first choice and the members were delighted when she accepted the position.

In her application Sara said: 'I am extremely proud to have

played a part in the life of the UK's oldest conservation charity and to have worked for a major public funder, but I now feel that I would like to return to a smaller organisation where I can make full use of the skills and knowledge that I have acquired. As an architect I greatly respect fellow conservation professionals and have been impressed by the many conservators and restorers that I have met. I would therefore warmly welcome the opportunity to lead this important organisation and promote the profession within and beyond the heritage sector. Icon has achieved a huge amount over the last few years, but there is always more that can be done to build capacity in the sector and to train, enthuse and support the next generation of professionals. I see this role as an opportunity to make sure that Icon continues to be a well-respected organisation and continues to develop whilst delivering tangible and lasting benefits for its membership and heritage more broadly'.

Alison Richmond told Icon News: 'I couldn't be more delighted to be handing Icon over to Sara Crofts. Icon is very fortunate to be reaping the benefits of Sara's distinguished career at SPAB and HLF. Her experience and expertise are exactly what Icon needs to move to the next level. I hope you will join with me in giving Sara a very warm welcome.'

Sara will start in January 2019, allowing time for her current strategic review work at HLF to be finished. In the meantime office visits and a handover from Alison will be organised to make the transition as smooth as possible.

CONFERENCE UPDATE

It's hard to believe – but registration for Icon19 is now open!

Taking place in Belfast, the conference provides a platform to engage with the latest cross-specialist developments in conservation of cultural heritage; to exchange knowledge and find networking opportunities to support and promote professional standards of conservation all over the world. There

Belfast City



Image: Visit Belfast

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are encouraged to bring guests to our Formal Triennial Dinner and during the next day's conference sessions, friends and family will be kept busy and amused with a full programme of local tours before the steam train whistle blows for us all!

Financial help available

Support for members to attend has also been a critical objective pursued by the organising team. Icon has been delighted to announce that The Clothworkers' Foundation have provided a generous grant of £25,000 to cover conference registration for Icon members who would otherwise not be able to afford to attend the event. Check the website for details and make sure you apply by the deadline of 7 February. Alongside this, other sources of grant support include Icon Tru Vue CPD grants for mid-career conservators – the result of a fruitful partnership between Icon and Tru Vue currently in its fifth year. The deadline for the next round is 12 December. Also, the Anna Plowden Trust will be considering applications to support #Icon19 attendance in their springtime round (deadline 25 March).

A number of local hotels have offered competitive discounts to #Icon19 delegates, and alongside this our friends at VisitBelfast have provided cards that will give #Icon19 a wide range of discounts across the local area. Check the Icon website for full details!

We can't wait to welcome everyone to Belfast to experience all the excitement and get into that #Icon19 spirit. The Early Bird rate runs only until 28th February - so make your plans today!

CHAMPION SPONSOR FOR ICON19

Icon is thrilled to have Conservation by Design (CXD) headlining the conference, supporting us in making #Icon19 the best Triennial Conference yet! Not only have CXD been long-term and ardent supporters of Icon's work but their products and services are of direct benefit to our audience. They provide a comprehensive range of high-quality conservation storage and display products including furniture, showcases, acid-free boxes, museum boards and specialist papers to museums, galleries, libraries and archives worldwide.

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Delegates of #Icon19 will come to know our Champion Sponsors



was an overwhelming response to the Call for Papers, and now the Programme Committee is hard at work putting the final programme together – watch this space.

This next conference takes on board membership feedback from previous conferences – calling for a lower speaker's rate, a day rate for those unable to attend the full works, and indeed greater scope in networking opportunities.

Tours and events

Our conference tours are set to take us around the historic city centre to all the points of interest you could imagine, while coaches will also be ferrying #Icon19 delegates to locations nearby such as the National Trust's recently-restored Mount Stewart (which graced the cover of Icon News issue no.74). After the tours, delegates will experience the full wealth of Ulster Museum collections as we visit it for our opening reception; while the Formal Triennial Dinner will give delegates the chance to ascend the grand red-carpeted stairs at Belfast City Hall and stroll into the sumptuous décor of a beautifully conserved formal banqueting hall usually off-limits to ordinary mortals.

Following this, delegates have the chance to unwind in style after all the papers have been presented, at Icon's first-ever Steam Jazz Night. A historic steam train will chug along the track to Whitehead Railway Museum with a jazz band and a cash bar and there will be plenty of opportunities to get out and dance along the way!

Family and friends

An important feature of the programme has been to facilitate the involvement of the friends and family of #Icon19 delegates who may also want to take the opportunity to see Belfast. Delegates

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well. CXD will be speaking at the #Icon19 Opening Ceremony, will be exhibitors at the Trade Fair as well as running their own session as part of the conference programme. Their presence will also be felt throughout our conference venues, materials and literature.

Find out what's on at #Icon19: icon.org.uk/events/icon-conference-2019/programme/whats-on-at-icon19

GOODBYE ELLA! HELLO AGAIN FFION!

After three years as Icon's Membership Officer, Ella Swindells has moved on to take up a full-time post at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where she began her new role as Loans Assistant in mid-October.

'I am very sad to be moving on as it has been such a pleasure getting to know so many of you', she wrote in an update to Icon members. 'It has been a wonderful opportunity and I have greatly enjoyed learning so much about the conservation profession.'



Ella Swindells

Ella worked closely with members to promote Icon Group events, administer the Conservation Register and, of course, to complete the annual membership renewal cycle. With her tenacious approach and attention to detail, under Ella's watch Icon's membership retention rate hit successive record levels in each

year of her tenure.

A Classics graduate from Exeter University, before joining Icon Ella worked with the Royal Collection Trust at Windsor Castle and also volunteered at Wycombe Museum. We wish her all the best in her new role at the V&A and look forward to keeping in touch!

Our new Membership Officer will be announced in the next issue. In the meantime, Icon member Ffion Howells has temporarily stepped back into the office to provide interim cover for membership administration as Membership Assistant, working Tuesdays and Wednesday afternoons until the end of November. You may recall Ffion last helped out after the departure of Kat Cresser back in 2015 – so she is stepping into a familiar pair of shoes! As you can imagine, it has been a great relief to have such a safe pair of hands to help keep things ticking over in our busy Membership Department until our new recruit joins us. We are delighted to have you back, Ffion!

CHANTRY LIBRARY NEWS

Congratulations to Icon's Book and Paper Group, and particularly Conference Chair Fiona McLees, on the resounding success of their Oxford conference 'Unexpected Fame: Conservation Approaches to the Preparatory Object'. The Chantry Library was present at the conference with a stall manned by Oxford Conservation Consortium conservators, with on-the-spot catalogue searching, the 2nd edition of Banik and Bruckle's *Paper and Water* for browsing, an extremely popular sale of duplicate publications, and a nifty 'donations' wheat-starch container courtesy of Bodleian Conservation and Collection Care! **Sincere thanks to all our supporters, your donations will go toward new book purchases for the Library!** Chantry is open for business and we are in the process of finding a new



The Chantry Library stall at 'Unexpected Fame'. Back views of Jess Hyslop and Nikki Tomkins (left) staffing it!

librarian, so please contact us, make a visit, and see if we can help with your research. chantrylibrary@gmail.com.
<https://chantrylibrary.org>

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Book & Paper Group

Chair's Update

As I write this I have just returned from Oxford, after spending a fabulous three days at the 2nd B&PG conference - *Unexpected Fame*. I am sure that all those of you who attended will agree with me that it was a stimulating and very enjoyable few days. A massive thank-you should be given to Fiona McLees, the conference committee chair, and her team, without whom the conference would not have run so smoothly. We are pleased to announce that we will be publishing digital postprints from the conference, edited by Tom Bower and Abby Bainbridge, aiming to have these available for free to members and conference attendees by October 2019.

Thanks also to our sponsors mentioned by Holly Smith below, our speakers for such enlightening talks, and session chairs for keeping discussions on track. I am extremely proud that the Book and Paper Group are able to provide such a professional and interesting selection of lecture and tours, especially since this time the conference was run entirely by volunteers. We made a point of delivering this conference at an affordable rate, sensitive to the fact that not everyone has institutional funding to attend. We kept the offering relatively simple, with a printed programme and plenty of coffee breaks but without extras like conference bags or extravagant catering, to keep costs as low as possible. We hope to see you at our sessions at #Icon19 in June, and if everything goes smoothly, again in three years!

You will all soon know who have been the lucky recipients of the Autumn 2018 round of £200 bursaries; please check our new blog to read up on what past winners have spend their winnings on:

<https://iconbpg.wordpress.com/>

Also on our blog is Jasdip Singh Dhillon's entry for his research on paper used for Sikh manuscripts; the Dhan Su Kagad Project. Jasdip will be presenting his research, funded by the Fred Bearman Research Grant, at the inaugural lecture evening in the next few weeks. An Iconnect will have already gone out informing you of all the details. The new round will be announced on the first of December with applications closing on 8 February. The bursary amount will be the same amount as last year, with £1000 going to any Icon member working on a research project with a Book/Paper conservation theme.

Remember to follow us for deadline updates and news through our social media accounts. We're always on the lookout for photos and content, so please contact Nicole our Social Media Officer with any juicy photos of your current projects.

- Facebook: @ICONBookPaper.
- Twitter: @ICONBook_Paper
- Instagram: @iconbookandpaper
- Email: iconbpg@gmail.com

Liz Ralph

(Chair, Book & Paper Group)

Events and Training Sub-committee

I am writing this just after the end of the second Icon Book and Paper Group Conference *Unexpected Fame*. So I would like to start this update by thanking all the speakers and delegates for their contribution. I would also like to thank the Clare Hampson Fund and TruVue for their generous sponsorship of the conference. And last but by no means least, I would like to thank all the conference committee members who volunteered their time both before and during the conference, without whom this conference would never have been possible.

We have said goodbye to Fiona McLees who has chaired both the Conference and Events and Training Committees and made such a huge contribution to the committee over the last few years. We will miss her and wish her all the best.

Finally, our team are always looking for interesting venues with conservation equipment to use for workshops as well as lecture theatres for evening events. This can be a great opportunity to promote your space and the work that you do. If you feel you have a space that would work, then please do get in touch via iconbpg@gmail.com.

We have an exciting programme lined up for 2019 so keep your eyes peeled for upcoming announcements!

Holly Smith Sub-committee Chair

Heritage Science Group

On 1 October, HSG Chair Eleanor Schofield hosted the HSG's latest committee meeting at The Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth. As well as hearing reports from our committee members, we:

- advanced our plans on developing guidelines for use in the field of heritage science;
- discussed further ways to engage student researchers with the Group, and;
- identified ways of highlighting students' research to the wider heritage sector.

MUSEUM WORKSHOP



object mounts

Museum Workshop worked closely with conservators to guarantee that all showcase object mounts were designed, manufactured and displayed on time in advance of a Royal opening at Brooklands Museum, regarded as The Birthplace of British Motorsport & Aviation – Home of Concorde.

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The next committee meeting will be hosted by Helen Wilson at the National Archives on 14 January 2019.

Icon Heritage Science blog

Want to showcase your research? Have you recently published a piece of heritage science research or are involved in a heritage science project that you'd like to shout about? If so, how about contributing to the Icon Heritage Science Blog! It's quick to do via the online submission forms and Natalie Brown is on hand to respond to any queries you may have. For more details including the online submission forms and previous blog posts, please see <https://icon.org.uk/groups/heritage-science/blog>.

Events

On 9 October, The National Trust hosted the HSG's event 'Excel training for effective data management'. Look out for a review in the next Icon News!

We also have several events in the making that will address needs that were identified by Icon members in the HSG Membership Survey (2017).

Keeping in touch

Finally, keep an eye out for our notices in Iconnect, on our webpages, and on Twitter (@ICONSci) and get in touch via our Group email address (hsg@icon.org.uk) if you would like to become more involved in the Group's activities.

Helen Wilson ACR, HSG Communications Officer

Historic Interiors Group

The Interiors committee got together recently to discuss forthcoming events including our AGM and annual conference. Both are looking very exciting with our annual conference returning in the spring for our 10th Cambridge Conference, this

time looking at Pre-Raphaelites and Arts & Crafts. The dates and details are to be announced soon on our webpage.

We have also booked our AGM at the rather fabulous Leighton House Museum in February 2019. Tickets are available on Eventbrite and include talks on The History of Leighton House by Senior Curator Daniel Robins (Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea) and the Historic Interiors Conservation and Refurbishment by Project Architect Dante Vanoli (Purcell). Please come and join us!

Photographic Materials Group

At the end of November we held a repeat of our round table discussion event and AGM. This gives speakers the opportunity to talk for five minutes on topics within photographic conservation and to discuss their presentations with the group. Look out for a review of this event and updates from the AGM in a future issue of Icon News and on the Group blog (<https://iconphmgblog.wordpress.com/>). For further updates from the PhMG you can visit our Facebook

(<https://www.facebook.com/ICONPhMG>) and Twitter pages (<https://twitter.com/ICONPhMG>).

In October, the University of St. Andrews Library Special Collections Division hosted a conference on stereo photography, coinciding with the St Andrews Photography Festival 2018: (Stereo) Views of Scotland. You can visit the festival website for more information about this worthwhile event (<https://www.standrewsphotographyfestival.com/>).

Remember to get your tickets for the Icon Conference 2019 in Belfast! The PhMG hope to represent the field of photographic conservation at the conference and hear a good number of papers on related topics.



ICON BOOK AND PAPER GROUP
IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE

FREDERICK BEARMAN RESEARCH GRANT

Awarding up to £1000 to Icon members to carry out research relating to the conservation of books, paper and archival materials.

For further information and application details visit: icon.org.uk/groups/book-paper

**Applications open
1st December 2018**

**Applications close
8th February 2019**

Icon Scotland Group

Training and events

On 28 September we ran 'The Secret of Surfaces', a training course on Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) led by Marta Pilarska from Historic Environment Scotland. Marta showed the attendees how to take RTI-compatible photographs and process them on their own computers to create a 3D effect of the virtual surface structure, and they were very impressed with the simplicity of the technique.

Our two-day course on parchment conservation took place on 22-23 November at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. It sold out very quickly, so if you were disappointed please contact the course organiser (i.griffin@nls.uk) to note your interest should the course be repeated.

As always, we are all looking forward greatly to the Harold Plenderleith memorial lecture and the opportunities for socialising that go along with it. This year's speaker is Dr David Saunders, presenting 'A clearer view: new thinking on lighting in museums and galleries'. Dr Saunders was recently Keeper of Conservation, Science and Documentation at the British Museum and previously Principle Scientist in the Scientific Department of the National Gallery, London, and this lecture will be a sneak preview of his major work on lighting in museums and galleries. It is being held at Discovery Point in Dundee on 29 November at 6 pm, with our AGM beforehand and some tours of the new V&A Dundee beforehand.

Committee

The AGM will be a chance for you to meet our committee and participate in the election of new members, so please do come along to Discovery Point, Dundee on 29 November at 5pm.

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 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.

Stone and Wall Paintings Group

Conference Announcement & Call for Abstracts

A conference hosted by Historic Environment Scotland *Monuments in Monuments 2019* is taking place at the Building Conservation Centre, the Engine Shed in Stirling from 2 – 4 September 2019.

The conservation of immobile stone monuments, structures or objects within traditional buildings present specific conservation challenges as a result of conditions faced by both the internal and external structure. *Monuments in Monuments 2019* will examine the interaction and conflicts raised when conserving stone structures in this context and examines whether a holistic conservation approach is possible.

The conference will bring together international conservation practitioners to discuss innovative and traditional approaches that address the challenges of stone conservation within traditional buildings. The event will blend speaker lectures, posters and industry partner stalls with field trips to some of the most iconic heritage sites in Scotland to view these issues in situ.

Key themes will be

- Investigation & survey: role of imaging, heritage science,

NIGEL WILLIAMS PRIZE 2019

Call for applications
deadline 4 February 2019



For more info
please visit Icon's Ceramics&Glass group pages
or email nwp@icon.org.uk

material characterisation and analysis;

- Creating a protective building envelope: materials and design approaches to the external structure that support the conservation of internal structures;
- Conservation challenges: preventive and remedial conservation of sculptural elements inside historic spaces through:-
 - o Environmental control
 - o Salt reduction
 - o Controlling moisture ingress
 - o Consolidation
 - o Cleaning
 - o Repair
- Conservation in context: use and adaptation of traditional buildings and their impact on internal monuments;
- Stakeholder engagement: roles and responsibilities of communities, owners, visitors and other stakeholders to achieve sustainable conservation of a 'living space'.

More information is available on:

www.historicenvironment.scot/call-for-papers-monuments-in-monuments-conference-2019/ and www.engineshed.scot/whats-on/event/?eventId=5ac52968-26c3-4d11-a78c-a96000fc7ba5

Textile Group

Icon Textile Group Events

The events team of the committee have finalised several workshops. Details of these can be found on the Icon Textile Group webpage and the Iconnects for the most up-to-date information.

In this Issue

Emma Hartikka has written a review of *Late & Medieval Renaissance Textiles* by Rosamund Garrett & Matthew Reeves.

Upcoming Events

The Icon triennial conference, *New Perspectives: Contemporary Conservation Thinking and Practice*, Belfast, 12-14 June 2019, will feature multiple parallel sessions across the specialisms. It is expected that the Textile Group will join with another of the Icon Groups to co-host a session. Booking opened in early November, with early bird and day rates available.

<https://icon.org.uk/icon-conference-2019>

The 12th North American Textile Conservation Conference, *Lessons Learned- Textile Conservation- Then and Now*, is being held in Ottawa, Canada, from 23-29 September 2019: www.natccconference.com

Writing for Icon News

Did you recently attend the Icon pattern-cutting workshop, the BM Mellon Symposium *Textiles from the Silk Road in Museum Collections: Scientific Investigations and Challenges* or any other workshops and conferences that you think would be of interest to members of the Textile Group? Would you like to write about them for Icon News? Details of how to write for Icon can be found here: <https://icon.org.uk/what-is-conservation/writing-icon> or by contacting Nadine Wilson.

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 Iconnects for details. If you have anything that you would like mentioned in our communications please contact nadine.wilson@nationaltrust.org.uk.

The Textile Committee would like wish our Group members a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

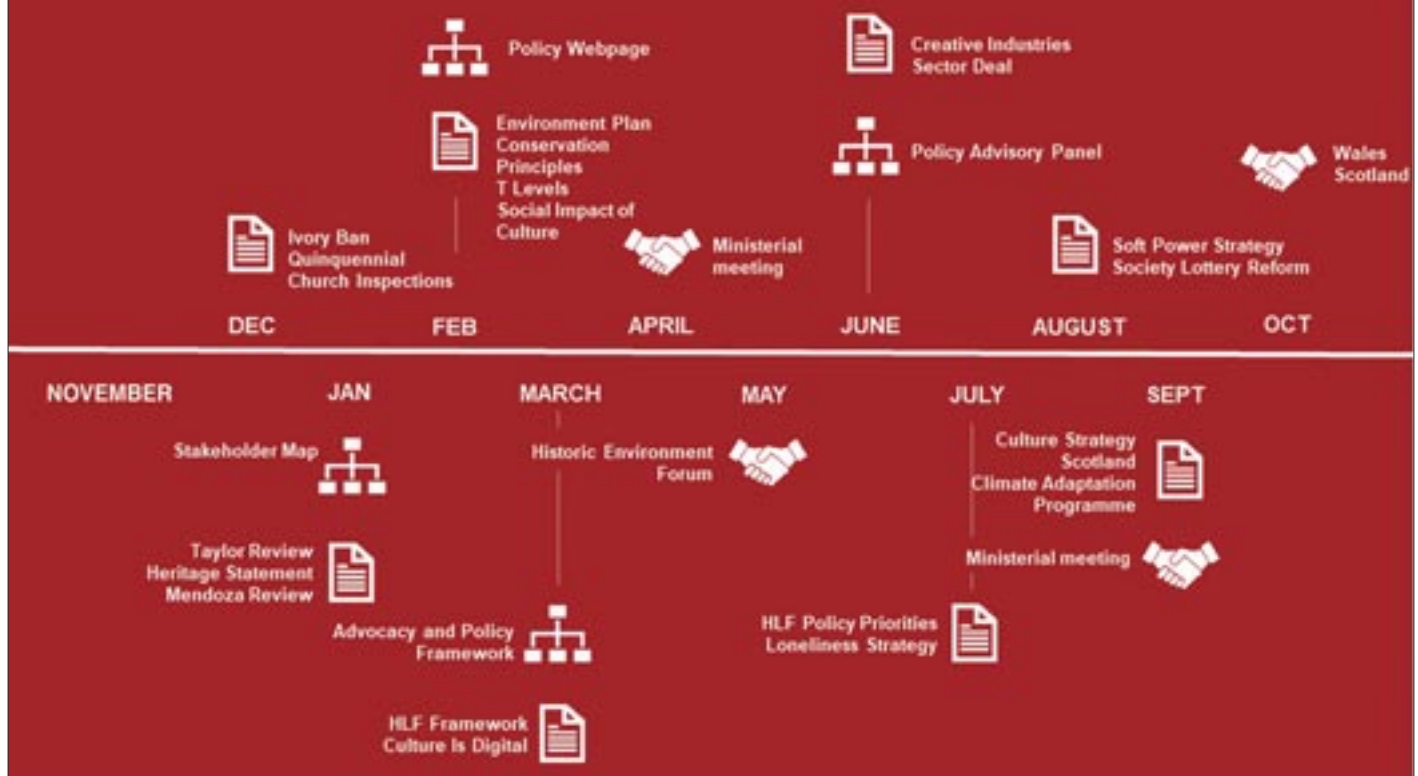
POLICY BRIEF

Midterms

November was all about the midterms. A time to evaluate achievements to date, influence policy plans and define the future direction of a term. No, you have not picked up the wrong magazine, as no – I am not talking about the midterm elections in the United States. Concurrent to the perhaps slightly more high-profile milestone abroad, this November also marked the 'midterm' or halfway point of the Clothworkers' Foundation funded Policy Advisor post at Icon. It seemed an appropriate moment to reflect on the impact the role has had twelve months since its establishment.

The purpose of the Policy Advisor role is to enhance Icon's capacity to be outward facing and influential, so that Icon can more effectively promote the value of conservation and the profession to all sector policy makers. Since I proudly took on the role last year, I have focused on influencing the policies of governments, non-government and other voluntary and professional bodies in the UK. If I had to visualise the past twelve months, it would look like the diagram overleaf: a busy year of writing papers, engaging stakeholders and building a strategic framework for policy at Icon.

2017-2018 a year of policy at Icon



A substantial part of the year has involved drafting responses, position statements, reports and letters to decisionmakers in consultation with Icon members. The publication of these papers is one of the central ways in which we have aimed to influence and it has been an incredibly productive year in terms of the written content we have produced. Icon has taken a position on issues ranging from the Scotland Culture Strategy to HLF's Strategic Funding Framework. I thank all Icon members who have contributed to these papers as your input has significantly increased the robustness of our messages.

I have been busy building on Icon's relationships with existing partners and reaching out to new contacts. Amongst the highlights are two meetings with DCMS Heritage Minister Michael Ellis. The Minister appeared genuinely interested in Icon's work at our meeting with him in April, which was the first contact Icon has had with a government minister. Needless to say, we were delighted when Mr Ellis suggested setting up a closer working relationship between his department and Icon at our second meeting in September.

This progress has been supported by a new foundation for policy that we have been laying throughout the year. This includes a stakeholder map, which tracks Icon's outreach strategies and an outward facing policy webpage that promotes our outputs. It also includes the Advocacy and Policy Framework, which identifies objectives and procedures and – most excitingly – the Policy Advisory Panel through which members have been providing unique insight on current issues since June. I consider this foundation the most significant achievement of the year, with the potential to have lasting impact through its structured approach to policy.

Longer term

However, a consultation response or a meeting is not an outcome. The outputs I've described have been working toward three intended outcomes: to make government, decisionmakers and key stakeholders recognise Icon as a leader regarding policy on conservation, an arbiter of high-quality professional standards,

and an authoritative source of information on conservation policy and the profession.

I am proud to say that we have made headway toward each of the aims. We have seen an increase in the way that Icon is consulted, having been invited to represent the conservation sector at conferences, events and new forums. We have also witnessed progress in the way that Icon's work is cited, even securing our first reference on the government's website in relation to our engagement with China.

The consultations and citations suggest that our policy papers, stakeholder engagement and new strategic approach to policy are paying off. However, an essential objective of my role has been to ensure that Icon members are satisfied with and engaged in Icon's policy activity. After all, the case for increasing Icon's policy profile was supported by the 2015 Membership Survey, which revealed a need for Icon to do more to advocate for the profession and to promote its advocacy activity.

While you will of course be invited to express your views in the next membership survey, I welcome any direct feedback on the past year in policy. If you have thoughts on what could have been done differently or how we can make Icon an even more

effective advocacy body, please do email me at amantyniemi@icon.org.uk. This is your chance to shape the next twelve months of Icon's policy work!

Anni Mantyniemi

Icon's Policy Advisor



Appointments



Congratulations to **Lorraine Finch ACR** who has been appointed as a Committee Member for the British Standards Institute (BSI), where she will be contributing to the work of BS/560 which oversees the conservation standards. Lorraine is an archives conservator with specialist skills and knowledge in the conservation and preservation of film, sound and photography, running her own business LF Conservation and Preservation. Lorraine is a Trustee of the Institute of Conservation, a committee member of Icon Professional Standards and Development Steering Committee and Chair of Icon's Ethics Task and Finish Group.

Welcome to these new members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all those who joined us in August and September 2018. We hope to see you at an Icon event soon!

Lydia Aikenhead
Institute of Fine Arts
Student

Lorraine Bigrigg
TKM Associates Inc.
Associate

Emma Carr
Associate

Laura Chaillie
Student

Kenton Clarke-Williams
Student

Suzan Daana
Birzeit University
Supporter

Amy Farmer
Supporter

Peter Goodwin
Ancestry.com UK Ltd
Supporter

Jemma Grace
Student

Betsy Johnson
Associate

Sophie Kean
Northumbria University
Student

Martha Kelsey
Supporter

Richard Kenyon
Richard Kenyon Master
Thatcher
Associate

Saki Kunikata
Student

Laura Maddaloni
Associate

Joe Martin
The University of Lincoln
Student

Sabrina Angelica Matsumoto
Honourable Senate of the
Argentine Nation
Student

Valentina Nasca
Student

Tom O'Keeffe
Associate

Charlotte Paxman
Essex County Council –
Jaywick Martello Tower
Supporter

Calum Richardson
Bowes Museum
Icon Intern

Pascual Ruiz Segura
National Records of Scotland
Associate

Charlotte Smith
Student

Alice Watkins
University of Amsterdam
Student

Emily Williams
Durham University
Associate

Tim Yates
University of Lincoln
Student

In memory



It is with great sadness to pass on the news of the sudden death of French Upholsterer, **Xavier Bonnet** who died in his sleep aged just 48 on 14 October.

Recently, Xavier worked with conservation, curatorial and technical services colleagues at the Victoria and Albert Museum on the re-upholstery of several French 18th century chairs for the museum's Europe 1600 – 1815 Galleries.

Xavier's extraordinary knowledge and experience in this area was truly unique. He specialised in the history of upholsterers in 18th century Europe and France. His expertise was sought internationally and he contributed to many major projects including the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Châteaux of Versailles and Fontainebleau, France and the White House in Washington. His premature departure leaves a great void in this field.

Xavier was endlessly generous with his knowledge and his passion and enthusiasm was infectious. He was a man of great humour, warmth and wit and will be sorely missed.

Zoe Allen

Furniture Conservation,
Victoria and Albert Museum.

SO ATTRACTIVE!

Riza Hussaini, Collection Care Assistant, and Cécilia Duminuco, Book and Paper Conservator, on mounting and re-housing a parchment charter using magnets

INTRODUCTION

The John Rylands Library holds various records of the *Henshaws Society for Blind People*, created in Old Trafford in Manchester in 1837. First known as the *Henshaw's Blind Asylum*, the society aims to support and help blind people or those affected by sight loss.

The collection involves various objects, from photographic prints to objects such as a typewriter and a school bell. Earlier this year, the charter for the *Henshaws Society for Blind People* was flagged up as needing re-housing.

The charter was produced at the College of Arms in London in 1997. It was temporarily housed in the incoming collection room when the society's archives were donated to the John Rylands Library, without an appropriate mounting system or enclosure. Our goal was to provide it with safe storage that could also potentially be used for display, while being as efficient with our time as possible, and cost effective.

The parchment is illuminated and includes three red-wax seals enclosed in gold-coloured metallic cassettes, attached to the document with blue ribbon.



© The University of Manchester

Close-up of the Charter's red-wax seals in their gold metallic cassettes with blue ribbon

DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL

Our first step was to measure and do a preliminary condition assessment of the charter, before conducting some research. We collected as much information as possible about parchment charter storage. These examples gave us ideas which we then discussed with our team in Collection Care using expandable Melinex hinges, Mount board or Plastazote, and boxing options.

We agreed on several points:

- The charter was to be mounted with an adhesive free system, our preference being folded paper hinges, also used for mounting photographic materials.
- We wished to reduce the weight of the final mount. However, we needed the base to be stiff. Therefore, we selected Correx to be used as our base, as it would bring us lightness with relative rigidity.
- Our mount window had to follow the shape of the seals.

Window and base ready for assembly but it was clear that together they were too thick for a hinged approach



© The University of Manchester

- The seals and their enclosures are 25 mm thick, so our mount window had to be raised to the appropriate thickness. We decided to cut two windows in mount board, and use Correx strips between them to create a 'sandwich' of around 30 mm depth.
- Plastazote rectangular blocks would be used to maintain the seals in place on the mount.
- Finally, a phase-box would be cut on our (lovely) box-making machine, to accommodate the mounted charter.

Our proposal was approved by our team leaders and curators, so the work could start.

However, practice proved that we would face a few challenges, making us deviate from our initial route.

IN PRACTICE

The initial plan was for a hinged, windowed portfolio to house the charter. However, after assembling the base and top separately, it became clear that, combined, the final depth would be too thick for a hinge, as it would create an excess of bunched material. We also had to consider the continued

strain on the hinge during use.

A solution arose when a colleague suggested magnets as an alternative method for closure. It was immediately agreed, as using magnets would satisfy our plan for a discreet yet practical mounting solution, given that the final structure will be thick due to layers of Correx, Plastazote and mount board. Neodymium magnets were used as they are corrosion resistant and small but with a relatively large pull. It was really helpful as the poles on the magnets were on each side rather than on the opposite ends of the bar. We wrapped the magnets with Japanese paper and annotated the poles on the wrapped magnet. It was important to ensure that the magnets were matched with their corresponding counterpart.

We tested the pull of the magnets for suitability. It needed to be not so strong that the layers snapped sharply back into place yet still strong enough to provide the pressure needed to secure the charter. We decided to use four pairs of magnets, located on the corners of the mount. Combined with the paper hinges, we found there was sufficient traction with magnets at each corner. Little trenches were cut in the Correx to house the magnets and in order to avoid dislodging them, we lined the bottom of the Correx with Manilla paper.

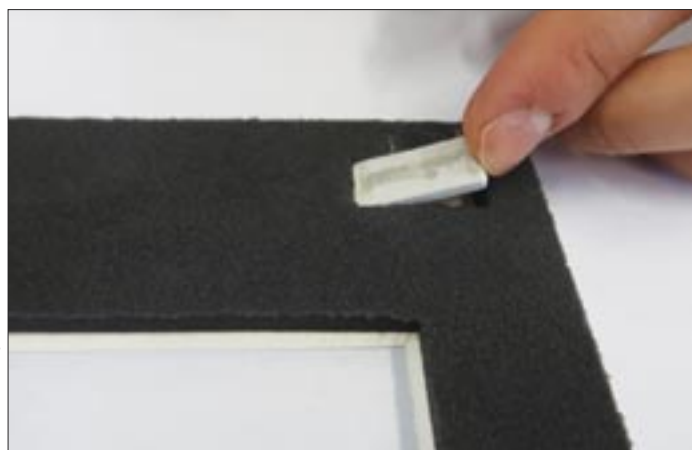
Our proposed idea of layering Correx had to be reconsidered for the windowed mount. Cutting Correx left sharp edges and

Cutting little trenches in the Correx



© The University of Manchester

Embedding the wrapped magnets in the Plastazote recesses



© The University of Manchester

Designing the bean-shaped stays



© The University of Manchester



Preparing the bean-shaped stays for the seals

cutting curves were almost impossible. It also added considerable weight. The way around the problem was to use Plastazote instead. We are fortunate to have a mount cutter and box making machine, so cutting out bespoke designs on Plastazote and board is made easier. At this point, our top layer magnets were embedded in small recesses cut in the Plastazote.

To get a balance of aesthetics and security, we made custom stays for the seals out of layers of Plastazote and topped it with mount board. That way the overall view would be of a single colour, thus allowing the main focus to be on the charter.

We experimented with several designs from single strips on either side to L-shaped corners, but decided on one that frames and 'hugs' the seal. Akin to the shape of a bean, the stays were made slightly higher than the seal.

RESULTS

Our final step was mounting the charter in its new custom-made mount. The folded paper hinges were adhered with wheat starch paste. We used two pieces for the top corners, and six pieces to hold the sides of the charter. The bottom part of the charter is held by the mount itself. To create the hinges, we used some heavy weight conservation grade Western paper.

The folded hinges, in combination with the gentle pressure of the magnets, hold the charter securely in place, while allowing it to move with fluctuations of its environment.

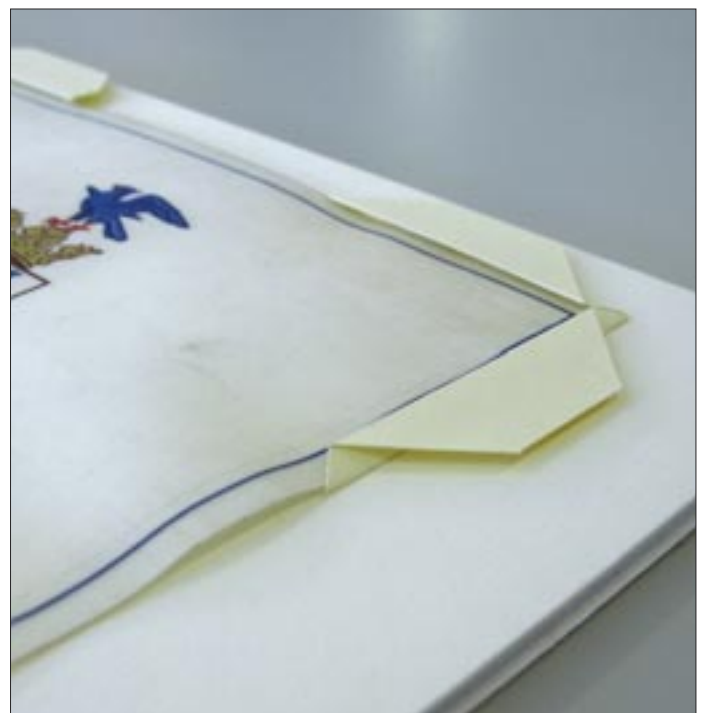
To complete the project, a bespoke phase box was cut on the box-making machine, using 1000µm archival-quality board. The design was slightly modified to facilitate access to the charter, with one of its short edges dropping-down. A guidance note

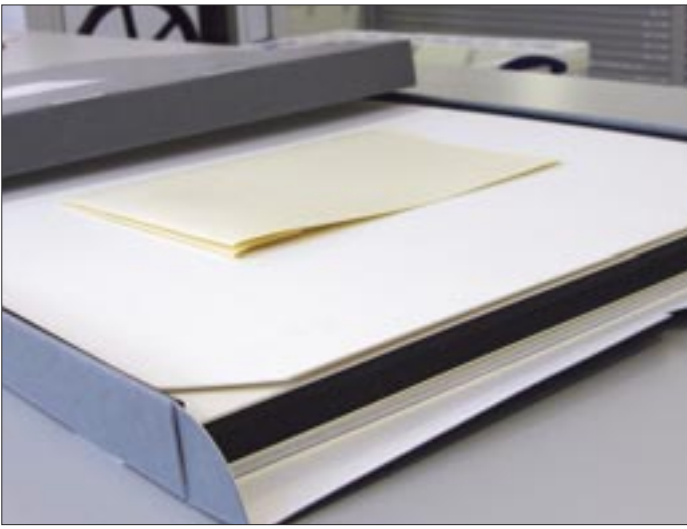
was added, to ensure safe handling of the object.

CONCLUSION

This project has been rewarding in many ways. Firstly as a fruitful collaboration, involving all the Collection Care team members and discussions with curators. Secondly, it presented various challenges, which pushed us to find

Detail of the folded paper hinges at the corner





The bespoke phase box with its drop-down edge



The charter re-housed

creative solutions along the way.

Our main goal was for our intervention to be as minimal as possible and for it to serve as a possible display resource.

The rehousing design is respectful of the object, entirely reversible and could be applied to other charters presenting similar features. This will save a considerable amount of time and resources in the future.

Thanks

We wish to thank our team in Collection Care from The University of Manchester for their ideas, support and for matching our enthusiasm throughout this project.-

Lifting the magnetised window mount



VALUE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

Sophie Croft outlines her investigation into William Nicholson's reverse-painted glass panels through value-based conservation decision-making. The work won her the 2018 Denise Lyall prize

INTRODUCTION

After specialising in the Conservation of Ceramics and Related Materials at West Dean College, in 2017 I embarked on my Masters' research project in Conservation Studies. The project began with a visit by the Ceramics department to Petworth House in West Sussex to observe and discuss the large number of reverse-painted glass panels stored within the National Trust property.

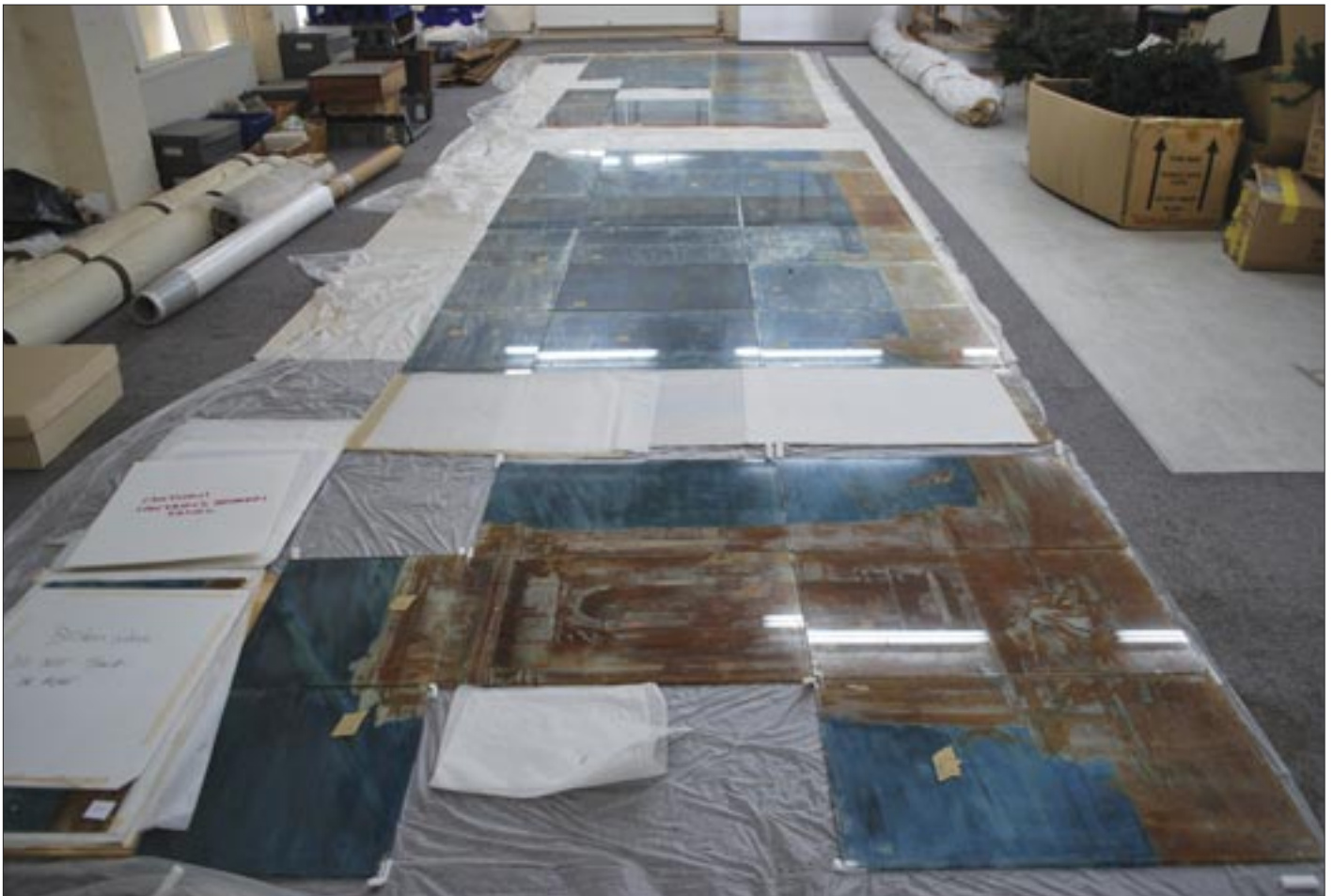
Here I first encountered the three sets of reverse glass paintings by William Nicholson - the largest commission on glass by the artist - which inspired my research. It is a great honour for this research to be acknowledged through the

Denise Lyall Prize and it was an informative and rewarding experience to collaborate with the National Trust on this project.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The National Trust had previously conducted historical and material research on the panels, aided by conservators and curators. I hoped to augment this by examining current condition and approaching a broad range of stakeholders to canvas opinion on conservation issues and options. My first task was to consider the art historical significance of the panels to inform my research.

The Nicholson panels in store at Petworth House, 2017





The condition survey of the Nicholson panels at Petworth House, West Sussex.

Produced in 1913, the extensive artworks were originally commissioned by the American playwright, Edward Knoblock, to decorate the dining room of his Parisian apartment. Knoblock and Nicholson first met in Rottingdean, East Sussex, where they shared a passion for the expansive coastline and the thriving theatre scene. The monumental architecture, theatrical figures and seascapes depicted in the panels appear inspired by these shared interests.

In Paris, Nicholson painted across multiple glass panels, culminating in a striking design of four paintings, consisting of sixty-three individual panels set within a window-frame structure and painted curtains flanked the composition. Nicholson formed an illusion of viewing the sea through four windows, encapsulating the artist's fascination with theatrical landscapes, reflective surfaces and experimentation with artistic mediums.

During the First World War, Knoblock returned to England and the Nicholson panels were re-installed in 1919 at Beach House, Worthing, overlooking the sea. After the sale of Knoblock's Worthing property in 1923, three paintings, *Architectural Fragment*, *Beach Scene* and *Loggia with Figures*, were separated from the fourth painting, *Enchanted Journey*, now in private ownership. The three paintings were stored by Worthing Museum between 1933 and 1937, prior to their purchase from Worthing Council in 1953 by Knoblock's friend, 3rd Viscount Lord Mersey, for display at Bignor Park, West Sussex, and later gifted to the National Trust in 1958.

CONDITION ISSUES

Two main issues had affected storage and access to the panels: their significantly large scale and their material condition. In 2003, the paintings conservator, Morwenna Blewett, had investigated the material composition and technique of Nicholson's reverse glass paintings, concluding

that environmental and storage conditions had previously impacted the painted surface.

In 2008, Jessica David established a successful method for

Image of an *Architectural Fragment* compiled to form a digitised condition database for individual panels.

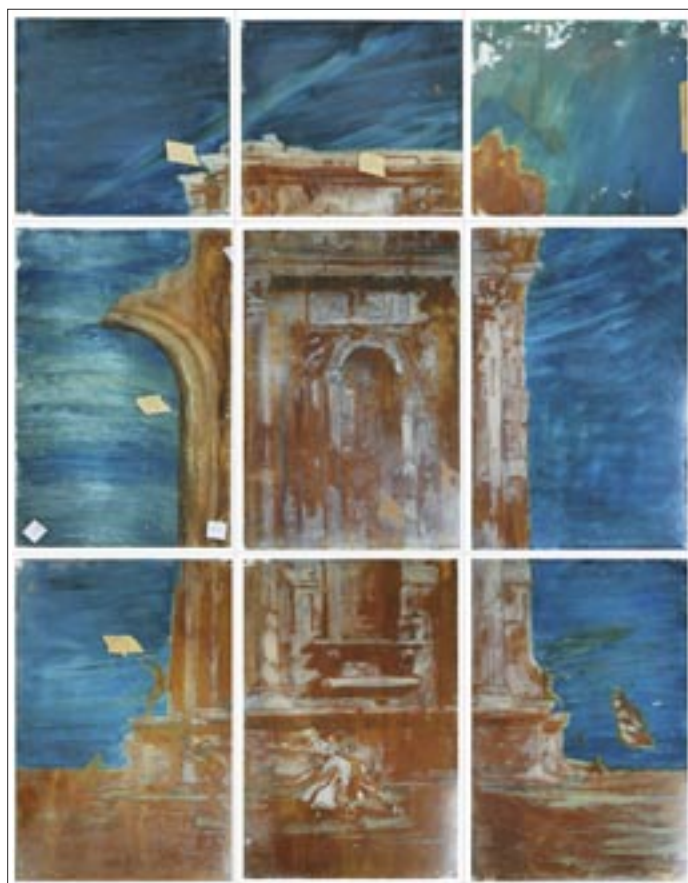




Image of a *Beach Scene* compiled to form a digitised condition database for individual panels.

preventing mould growth and consolidating the flaking and powdering paint by brush and ultrasonic mister with 10% Regalrez 1094 in Shellsol D40. Twelve panels from *Architectural Fragment* and *Loggia with Figures* were treated at the Hamilton Kerr Institute by Jessica David and Andrea Sartorius, along with the portrait of Knoblock and the self-portrait of Nicholson, with the intention of display.

APPROACH

In 2017, the Nicholson panels embodied the many challenges conservators face when dealing with large-scale, multimedia objects, requiring substantial resources to sustain them and improve access. Through revisiting the National Trust's previous research on the panels, I proposed the investigation of an alternative decision-making framework for their improved storage, whilst simultaneously addressing longer-term, conceptual ideas of public awareness and future display.

It was important to consider their current condition, the environmental conditions in the store room, and to discuss how the panels could be more fully accessed. A collaborative, value-based approach was employed through conducting

interviews, a stakeholder survey and circulating a questionnaire. Conservators, curatorial students, Nicholson's family members and the general public were consulted, providing varied and interesting results. This collaborative method follows a trend for engaging expansive and inclusive communities and potential audiences with conservation options.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey revealed that stakeholders would like to access the Nicholson panels. A full 71.3% of participants wished to learn more about the panels and would welcome access to them via digitisation and temporary exhibitions. The majority of respondents saw benefit in stabilisation of the painted surface and exhibited a trend away from in-painting the areas of loss. This reviewed and renewed public interest in the panels is conducive to the National Trust's support for their improved accessibility, including public outreach and education through their conservation.

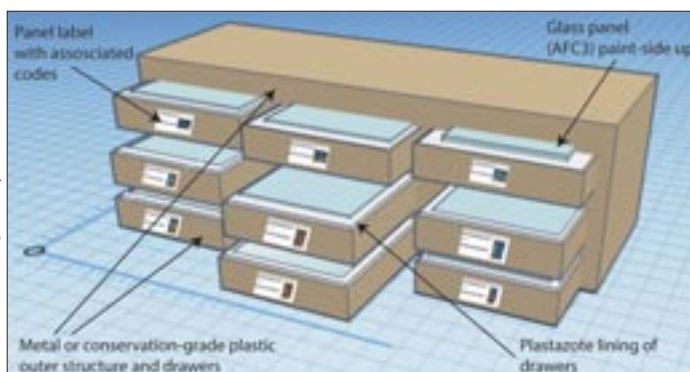
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

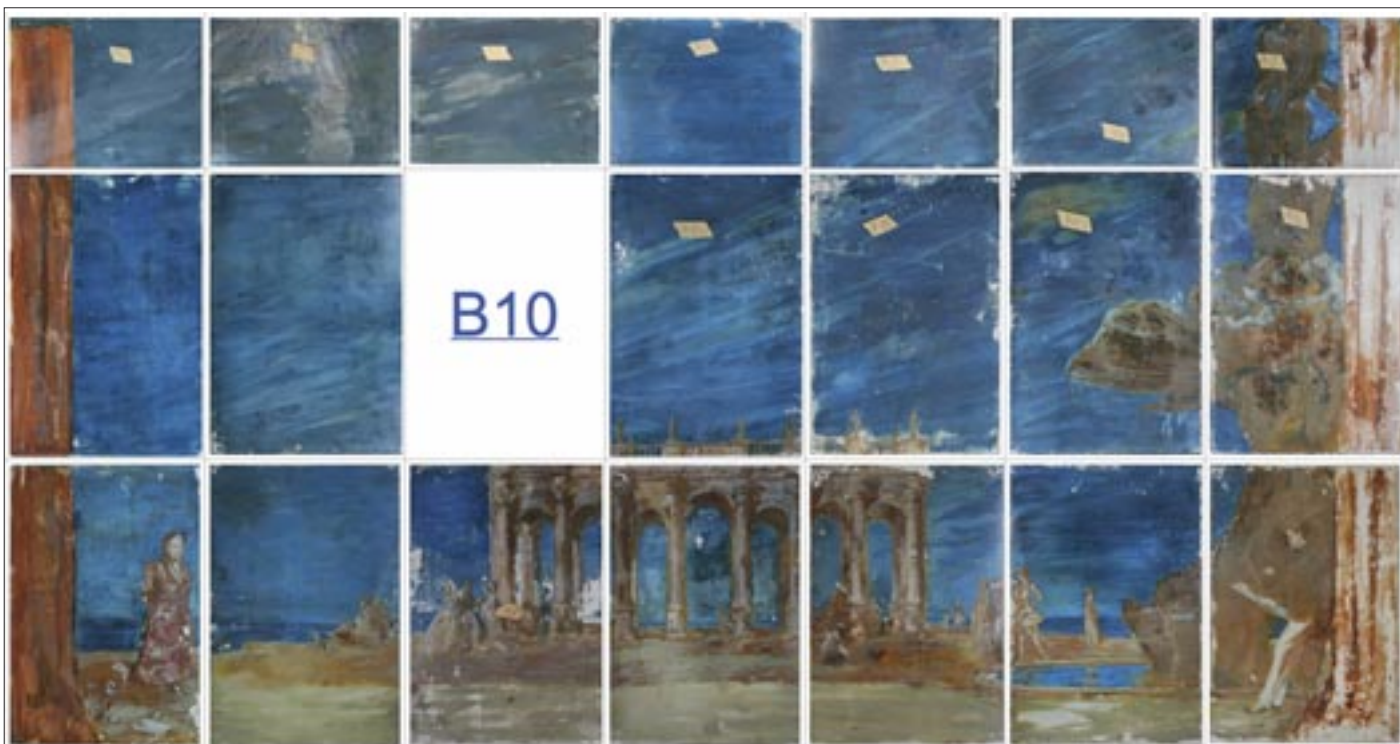
With this information gathered, a number of established conservation decision-making models were assessed and a bespoke decision-making model was proposed to include access, values, condition, treatment, the collected stakeholder opinion and an updated Statement of Significance.

I collaborated with the paintings conservation graduate, Marine Andrieux, in the complete condition assessment of the fifty panels in storage at Petworth House. An environmental monitoring programme over nine months revealed issues relating to humidity, temperature and light within the store. The condition and environmental data were synthesised into a digitised condition database for each panel, including the informed treatment and storage options.

A collaborative approach to conservation decision-making

A proposed bespoke storage unit for the Nicholson panels





© National Trust Photo: Sophie Croft

Image of a *Loggia with Figures* compiled to form a digitised condition database for individual panels.

identified and broadened stakeholder input. It is hoped that the conservation options reached through this value-based decision-making process could contribute towards the National Trust's future planning for the panels. By highlighting past and current interest in the tangible and intangible

significance of the panels and formulating practical outcomes, the panels can be on a pathway towards improved storage and access.

MOVING ON

Since the completion of my Masters' research project, I have undertaken a nine-month internship in the Decorative Arts Conservation Workshops at Royal Collection Trust. I have completed conservation treatments upon Delftware, Meissen Schneeballen vases and Japanese porcelain from the Royal Collection. I have gained new confidence in the replication of large missing components, fine-modelling work and high-finishes for display. The opportunity to work alongside the conservation team of this unique collection has been an exceptional experience.

The valuable skills I have gained through my internship and Masters' studies will greatly assist in the next steps of my conservation career.

About the Denise Lyall prize

Denise Lyall graduated from West Dean College in 1987 and started her own commercial ceramic restoration business. She later became the part-time assistant tutor on the ceramic restoration course at West Dean. Denise died on 23 December 1990 in a tragic sky-diving accident in Florida, USA. The Prize, inaugurated in her memory, was awarded annually from 1993 to 2009 to the student on the Conservation and Restoration of Ceramics and Related Materials Programme at West Dean College who had produced the best conservation research project.

The Ceramics and Glass Group committee has been able to reinstate the prize for at least two years with awards being made in 2018 and 2019, the first of which is Sophie Croft's project. The committee hopes to be able to donate to the prize on a regular basis so it can continue to be awarded.

The author working at the Royal Collection Trust



Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2018

around and about

Photographic Materials Group editor and photographer Boyce Keay brings together reflections and feedback from a landmark event in July, when Debra Hess Norris ran a three-day workshop on the preservation of photographic collections. Debra is Professor of Photograph Conservation at the University of Delaware and an internationally renowned author and teacher.

'July's event was a wonderful opportunity to meet and work with Debra. I was overwhelmed by how positive everyone was about the experience, not only during the workshop and lecture but also in the feedback they gave us afterwards; and enormously grateful for the hard work and commitment of our committee members in organising the event and ensuring that it ran smoothly.

'I think events like these are key to showing the impact of the work that conservators do. As a profession we need to get better at explaining how we put our research into practice, and how that practice can change people's lives. It was hugely inspiring to hear Debra talk about her work with those affected by disaster and misfortune, and how photo conservation has helped them cope and recover; but these are just the most dramatic of countless examples.

'More events and workshops will build the reputation of our profession in the UK and beyond. They will bring in artists, curators and enthusiasts, promote careers in conservation to young people, and help our colleagues feel supported in a meaningful, creative and innovative field; one deserving of recognition and acclaim.'

Jacqueline Moon, Icon PhMG chair

Jacque and our committee colleagues were not alone in finding Debra's teaching an inspiration. Eleni Katsiani, lecturer in conservation at Camberwell College of Arts, London, said that 'it was very inspiring to spend three days with Debra and be immersed in her ethos and approach'. She aspires 'to be able to pass on some of Debra's enthusiasm.' Laura Covarsi Zafrilla, photograph conservator at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, said that she 'learned a lot from the way Debra taught us', and that she 'will definitely use her methodology' in her own teaching.

The opportunity to network with other specialists was also important to many. Nadine Reding, an independent photograph restorer from Bern, said that 'networking has meant a lot to me' and that 'it is very important that the professionals exchange ideas.' Emma Lowe, a conservator of photographic materials in the UK, highlighted the impact of the workshop's practical exercises, and said that though 'we can all be informed by reading, the hands-on stuff is so vital'.

Several of our visitors reflected on how the workshop will benefit specific ongoing projects. Catrin Norén, a conservator at the Royal Danish Library in Copenhagen, told us that she 'will look at some seventy photographs, taken by a Danish artist in the 1890s, that are to be part of a small research project, and try to identify their techniques'. Our friend Emilie Cloos, a loans and exhibitions conservator at The National Archives in London, enjoyed the opportunity to share



Photo: Boyce Keay

Three days in London with Professor Debra Hess Norris

knowledge with other professionals, and told us that she 'learned as much from participants as from the course leader; it is the group itself and the variety of attendees and organisers that I appreciated the most'.

Lastly, we had an overwhelming number of comments about how welcoming and supportive the workshop had been. Jenny Harvey, archives conservator at Historic England in Swindon, summed up many of these in saying that 'it was great to feel a part of something collectively. We all need support, encouragement and advice from time to time'. Maartje Schalkx and Roo Foley, contemporary art conservators based in London, 'really enjoyed the course, not least making new connections and spending time with familiar faces'. Nicole Devereux, project conservator at the University of Edinburgh, enjoyed 'a full and fun-packed course' and 'a great opportunity to meet so many people passionate about photographic conservation'. Iben Bak Christensen, conservation manager at the Royal Danish Library in Copenhagen, reflected that the event had been 'a pleasure to attend', and that 'it was very well organised, everyone was very friendly and respectful'. Lastly Thomas Bower, a collection care assistant at the Parliamentary Archives in London, said that 'the workshop was very well organised and had a friendly and supportive atmosphere', and that he 'looked forward to more events from the Photographic Materials Group in future!'

A noble conservation award

Icon News was delighted to see the recognition given to conservation in September when the 2018 Ig Nobel prizes were announced.

For those of you who do not know about the Ig Nobel Prize, it is an award inspired, of course, by the Nobel Prize but with a more eccentric edge to it. The award ceremony takes place every year in the autumn at Harvard University with the prizes handed out by genuine Nobel Laureates. The aim is to honour 'achievements that make people laugh and then think'. Celebrating the unusual and the imaginative, they nevertheless have the serious underlying intention of piquing people's interest in science and technology.

This year the Chemistry Prize went to Portugal for an article in *Studies in Conservation* published by IIC (International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works). The recognition might be described as belated since the article, on measuring the degree to which human saliva is a good cleaning agent for dirty surfaces, came out in 1990. Nevertheless, publicity for conservation is welcome especially when it is not of the adverse sort!

The article in question is *Human Saliva as a Cleaning Agent for Dirty Surfaces* by Paula M. S. Romão, Adília M. Alarcão and [the late] César A.N. Viana, *Studies in Conservation*, vol. 35, 1990, pp. 153-155. You can find it on the IIC website.

The winners did not attend the ceremony but delivered their acceptance speech via recorded video. The awards are broadcast live on-line; catch this year's at www.improbable.com/ig/winners/

Saving Minerva

Broomfield House in the borough of Enfield, north London, is a Grade II* listed building whose history stretches back to the 16th century. It was bought for the public in 1903 but subsequently suffered a number of fires, so that now it is held up by scaffolding whilst efforts to fundraise for its restoration continue.

One of the most notable of the house's features were the staircase murals painted in 1725 by the Flemish baroque artist Gerard Lanscroon, a leading mural painter of his day, who also worked at Hampton Court Palace and Windsor Castle. After a fire in 1984, the murals were cut off in sections and stored with the aim of eventual restoration. Now one section featuring the goddess Minerva has been conserved by Arte Conservation under the aegis of Icon member Tom Organ ACR.

Minerva is now on show for the first time in thirty four years as the centrepiece of the joint Museum of Enfield and Broomfield House Trust exhibition at the Dugdale Centre 'Hidden Treasure: Revealing Broomfield House and Park', which is open until 6 January 2019.

A short film shows the amazing result achieved by Arte Conservation and how they did it. You can catch it on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=URzSz3OK1X0&t=6s

The work was funded by voluntary contributions and a grant from The Enfield Society. Sadly, with the house as a whole under threat because the considerable sum needed for its rebuilding and restoration is proving elusive, all that may live on of its rich history is this restored panel.

The conserved panel of Minerva mounted for display



BOOKS

PESTS IN HOUSES GREAT AND SMALL: Identification, Prevention and Eradication

David Pinniger & Dee Lauder
English Heritage 2018
ISBN 978 1 910907 24 5

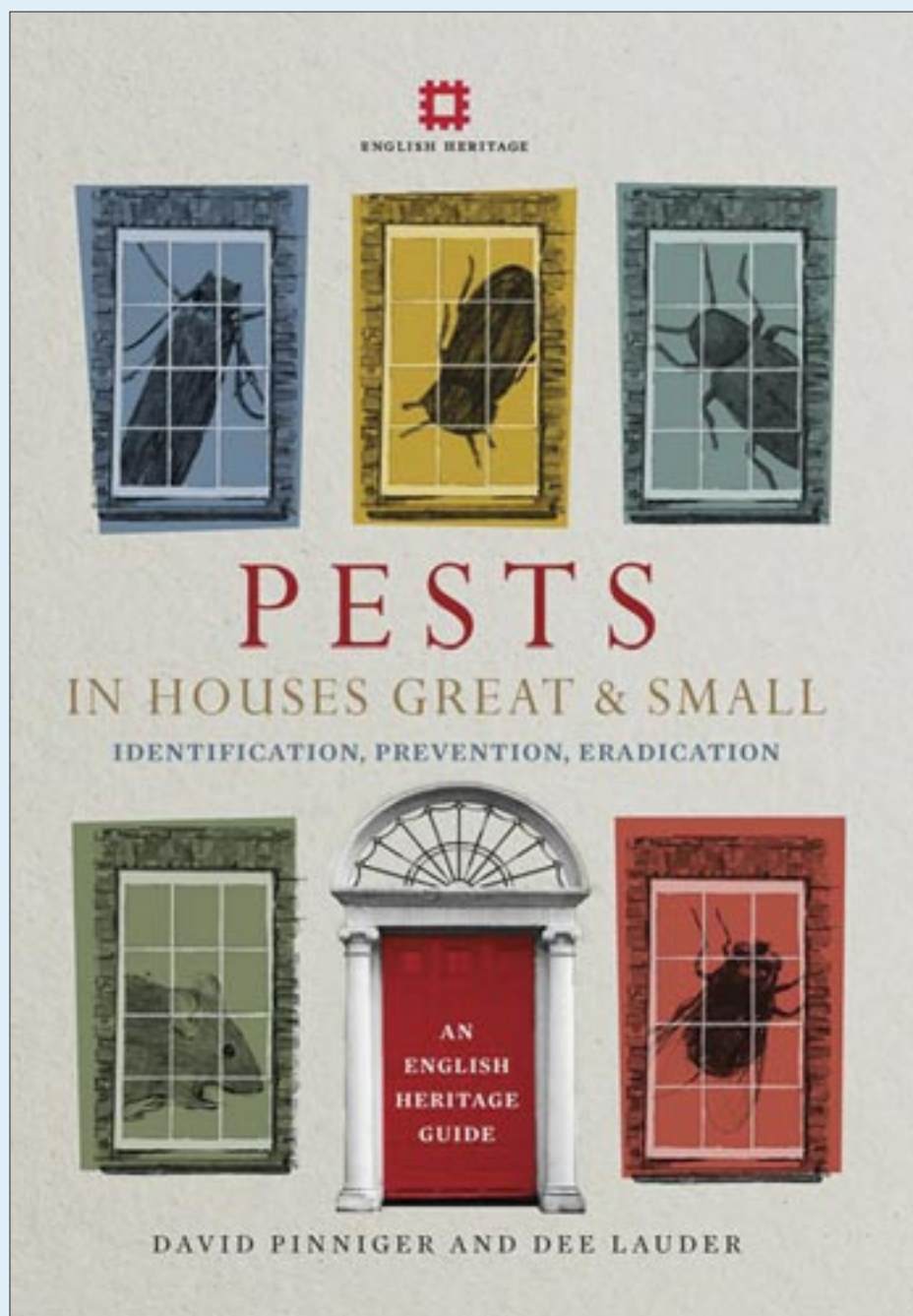
I am very excited as there's a new Integrated Pest Management (IPM) book on the block! More fabulous bug pictures, including a really amazing image of an ancient Egyptian biscuit beetle preserved in a loaf. What's not to like? Buy it now!

This book is a little different though. It has a huge amount of useful information for the heritage professional wanting to identify insect pests or deter rodents just as one might expect. The section on solving problems focusses on practical techniques, from monitoring to proofing to the use of deterrents. There is a fascinating introduction giving a brief history of IPM – some of the techniques are familiar, others would struggle to find a place in modern IPM practice. I cannot imagine that many of my colleagues would be in favour of carbonising the outside of wooden items to prevent wood borers.

Sections on coloured paper pull out the key points of dealing with each group of pests and also explain some concepts in more detail. The inside cover has a wonderful drawing of a cut-away house, which is a beautiful quick reference tool that shows possible access points for pests and likely sources of infestation. Those of us lucky enough to go to the launch of this book are proud possessors of an A3 version of this drawing and it is already proving to be an extremely useful reference tool in itself.

The great strength of this book is its link with English Heritage. Scattered throughout the text are case studies from English Heritage properties. These show IPM in action and show how most infestations can be resolved in simple and straightforward ways. It is perhaps a brave move for one of the UK's foremost heritage conservation charities to lay themselves bare and admit problems with insects, but I found this to be encouraging – if EH have problems with insects then it is ok if I do too. Maps showing the distribution of the primary insect pests give one an insight into the scale of the problem across the UK (it is big, they are pretty much everywhere).

The main difference between this book and other IPM books is the intended audience. There is a huge amount that is useful for the heritage professional, not least a good image of the Grey silverfish, the new invader, and I am delighted to have this book on my shelf. The book is, however, aimed squarely



at the non-professional, (whisper it) the public. I feel it reaches both audiences exceptionally well. It is easy to read and entertaining, production values are high and the A5 size and full colour make it seem very approachable. Add to that the accuracy and usefulness of the information and the fact that it is about insects and I think that it comes pretty close to perfection. Dave and Dee are to be applauded for this wonderful book as is English Heritage in their willingness to nurture and publish the project.

Buy it for yourself as a holiday read and buy it for all your chums as an early Christmas present. For once, they really will thank you for it.

Jane Thompson Webb, CCG Chair
Conservation Team Leader
Birmingham Museums Trust

LATE MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE TEXTILES

Sam Fogg Ltd London 2018
ISBN 9781911300 489

This handsome book is a product of Sam Fogg Ltd., a London gallery specialised in dealing in medieval art. There was an exhibition of Late Medieval and Renaissance textiles at the gallery from 14 June until 13 July. It featured an amazing array of both sacred and secular textiles, many in surprisingly good state of preservation. The book in hand is a catalogue made to accompany the exhibition. However, right from the beautiful front cover it is clear that it is not like any other old gallery catalogue.

The catalogue starts with a short introduction to the book and its purpose, continuing with acknowledgements but then it goes straight to the objects without further ado. The book introduces thirty six textiles from the late Middle-Ages to the

Renaissance period. The origins of the textiles span from England all the way to Turkey. The variety of the textiles is also interesting – there are textiles from extravagantly embroidered church vestments to colourful tapestries of European courts and Mediterranean velvets. In the catalogue, these textiles are grouped first by country of origin and then, inside these groups, by materials.

Clearly, care has been taken to investigate and record the origin, provenance and dating of each object. These bits of information are easily found under the object number alongside a detailed description of the textiles including size, materials, techniques and condition. On top of that, every textile has a lengthier but still nicely concise section discussing its cultural and historical background.

There are also photographs of paintings contemporary to the textiles featuring textiles in use or the same subject matter as

in a certain piece of textile. Alongside the written information, these paintings create an understandable context for the textiles. Also, good literary references for every object and an extensive bibliography at the end of the catalogue are great assets and useful additions for further reading and research.

For me, the most prominent and memorable feature of the catalogue is definitely the photographs. There is usually at least one complete photograph of each object as well as one or more detailed photos showing, for example, the surface of the textiles, some pictorial details or other features of interest. Therefore, besides the informational value, the catalogue is very pleasing to the eye. The beautiful photographs show the vivid colours and the skilfully made details of the exhibited textiles. One can even see the individual stitches or weave structure of the textiles from the good quality photographs. The visual richness of the book offers

enjoyment to anyone interested in textiles and medieval times. But, in addition, the detailed photographs paired with the written information, descriptions, dating, and provenance – the catalogue should prove to be a great resource and reference for further research and learning for students as well as scholars.

It was great to see the wonderful textiles in real life when visiting the exhibition but the book is more than a decent substitute for all those who couldn't make it – and for all of us who want to enjoy the beauty, skill and intriguing details of those textiles over and over again.

Emma Hartikka

Textile Conservation Student, Helsinki

WORKSHOPS

CONSERVATION PAMPHLET BINDINGS

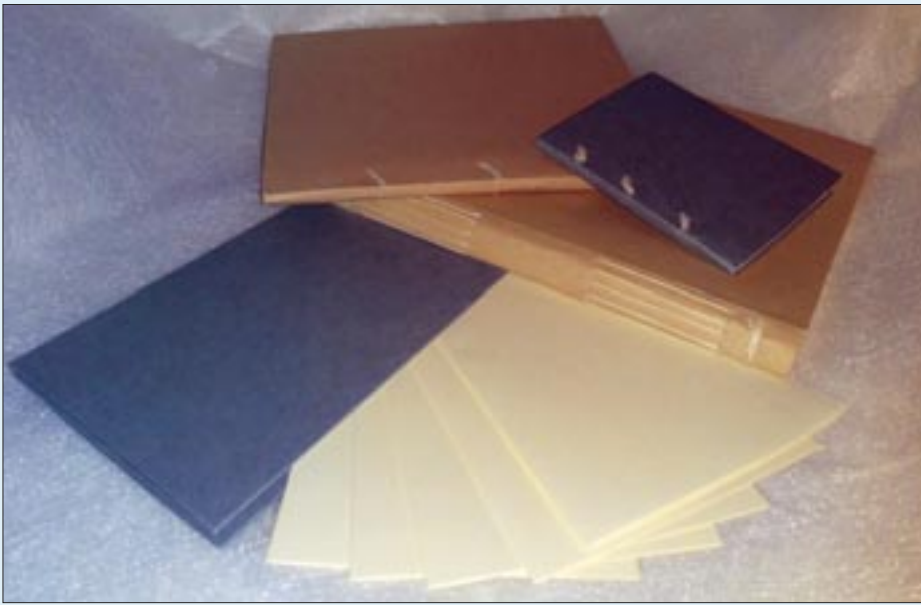
London 18 September 2018

This workshop was hosted by **Dr Sian Prosser** of the Association of Pall Mall Libraries in the beautiful library space of the Royal Astronomical Society, Burlington House in London. Organized for ten people, the workshop was structured into three parts led by **Meagen Smith**, Archive Conservator and Collection Care Studio Manager for the Parliamentary Archives. The first part included an introduction to binding materials and tools appropriate for use with pamphlets. The second and longest part was the practical sewing session and the third section included a consultation on collection pamphlets.

Archivists from organisations like the Royal Academy of Art, The King's Fund and the Royal Institution of Great Britain started with kits including a measured cover card, multiple bifolio sections of chain laid archival paper, lengths of unbleached linen thread along with a set of tools that Meagen used to review the basics of preservation materials. We inspected archival manila and the usefulness of various weights of covering card, described the appropriate weight of linen thread and when it is necessary to use sewing tape. We also talked about tools like effective staple lifters as well as where to buy archival material. A number of pamphlet binding examples such as a multiple-section laced paper case and a long-stitched wrap around paper case were passed around with questions and answers about the benefits and risks of each style.

The making session started with measuring and creasing the sequence of folds required for a wrap-around style cover. With the covers measured, marked and creased, workshop attendees sewed two single-section pamphlets with a three-hole format. When comfortable with the single-sections and the figure of eight sewing pattern,





Conservation Pamphlet Bindings kit and example bindings

attendees progressed onto sewing a long-stitch multiple-section pamphlet. Attendees practised controlling the tension of their sewing thread and learnt tricks like crushing the first part of a square knot to hold the thread in place.

A number of attendees brought with them examples of pamphlets to discuss possible treatments. We took the opportunity to pause between sewing the single and multiple section pamphlets to discuss the various examples. We discussed conservation and preservation options for a set of pamphlets from the interwar years with the inherent vulnerabilities from poorly manufactured material, including methods of keeping the pamphlet together in a binding without applying paper repairs to the detached cover sheets. We also discussed minimal intervention preservation activities such as replacing staples with linen stitches

on a set of contemporary pamphlets with heavily calendared covers.

Questions were discussed throughout the afternoon including consistency of cover size for the long term protection of a pamphlet collection, the use of wax on sewing thread, safe removal of rusty staples and appropriate activities for volunteers related to pamphlet preservation.

Everyone agreed the two hours passed very quickly and found the session useful and relevant. Jane Harrison, Documentation Manager at the Royal Institution, came to the workshop with bookbinding experience and said 'I felt it was very useful as it made me start to think of things in terms of conservation rather than just construction.'

Meagen Smith

Archive Conservator and Studio Manager
Parliamentary Archives

THE MAGIC OF MAGNETS! A magnetic box-making course

Icon Book & Paper Group
Dundee 7 June 2018

In June this year a group of conservators, conservation technicians and printmakers met at Dundee Contemporary Arts for a two-day course to learn how to make from scratch an A4 size, four flap, wrap-around, cloth-covered box. But no ordinary box – this one was made with hidden magnets which allowed the box to be secured in a completely invisible, elegant way. Lead by book conservator **Sayaka Fukuda** ACR, each participant proudly left the course with a beautiful hand-made box which fastened with a satisfying 'snap.'

After recognising fellow course mates all wandering the streets of Dundee with green cutting mats and rulers sticking out of backpacks and bags, we collectively made our way to the printmaking studio of Dundee Contemporary Arts.

Our course leader Sayaka began by describing the appearance of the boxes and illustrating their potential uses. She then described how to measure accurately and spoke about the importance of grain direction for the boards. She also described how you need to get to know your board chopper, as some can be a bit quirky. Is the blade bendy? Are the gauges accurate? Sayaka said the success of box-making is dependent on your board cutting skill! Once you have cut the boards and are happy you can start sticking the cloth to them. Sayaka's

Attendees sewed two single section pamphlets and a multiple section pamphlet





Participants proudly display their efforts on the magnetic box-making course

top tip was to use a small roller with a tray. This is much easier and faster to use than a brush and you can pop the roller into a padded envelope in between uses.

Sayaka demonstrated each stage, gave us time to do the practical part and then repeated the process. This way, step by step we were all soon at the point to cut channels in our boards to embed the magnets. I found this the trickiest part – how to cut nearly all the way though the board with a scalpel – but not completely. Also remembering to get the magnets the right way around was vital. After a final squeeze in the nipping press, the box was complete. We were all very impressed by the professional finish of our lovely new boxes, and the patience and guidance of our course leader.

Thank you to Sayaka for all her hard work, bringing all the materials so meticulously prepared and for Erica Kotze for organising this great workshop.

Elizabeth Hefher ACR

Historic Environment Scotland

this two-day conference. This is a brief account of my experience attending the conference and I discuss a few of the highlights for me below.

The conference started with **Chris Fletcher** who discussed several objects whose intention or purpose involved physical or chemical modification or even destruction. He gave the examples of a photograph designed by the artist to fade, a confession book containing little confessions on small pieces of paper made to be detached and handed to the priest, as well as a text block that can only be opened and read by breaking the paper seal binding it. Of course, these examples are challenging for the conservator and many questions arise from them. For instance, is it the role of the conservator to break the seal and wouldn't it be the best thing to do if this was the only

copy left? The ethics of the conservator were already questioned during the first hour of the conference.

Sue Hourigan, private conservator, was honest and transparent about a project involving a large cartoon, showing that every conservator can have doubts when undertaking a conservation treatment.

Professor Margaret Holben Ellis discussed the original function of preparatory objects and questioned the context in which we tend to put them on display. Indeed, is a golden frame ideal to characterize the true nature of a study drawing and shouldn't we try to capture the inherent humility of the drawing instead?

As for **Shona Hunter**, she worked on an impressive object: a giant pop-up book from the National Library of Scotland. Not only was the handling and treatment of this

Dr Chris Fletcher, Keeper of Special Collections at the Bodleian, giving the opening paper on conservation and curatorial challenges of collecting items which in their design, involve elements of destruction

CONFERENCE

UNEXPECTED FAME: Conservation approaches to the preparatory object
Icon Book & Paper Group
Oxford 1 - 3 October 2018

The Icon conference organised by the Book and Paper Group in Oxford this October was a great success and it is difficult to believe that the event was organised through the efforts of volunteers alone, drawing speakers from across the globe. The length of the talks at thirty minutes per speaker allowed the specialists to deepen their subject and provided a range of topics to consider over



Image: pauldrowlandphotography.com



Alison Richmond, Icon's CEO, addresses the attendees at the Evening Reception in the Pitt Rivers Museum.

imposing object a great challenge, but the digitisation process was also rather epic. The last speaker, **Anna Johnson**, described issues caused by pins gathering different types of documents on Darwin's papers held by the Cambridge University Library. Darwin himself made these additions and the way they were assembled is important to understand Darwin's thinking and logic. Anna explained her research and how she used digitisation to preserve these important parts of our history.

This is of course only a very small sample of the high quality papers delivered over our three days in Oxford. Conferences are not only an invaluable source of information but also a great way to network and learn from others in the field. The reception was held in an almost magical context at The Pitt Rivers

Museum with its exposed shrunken heads and sealskin coats. Taking a glimpse at Oxford's library and heritage institutions was a great way to top off the conference, and a behind-the-scenes tour is always very exciting for a conservator.

Many thanks to everyone who made this event possible, the speakers and Icon. Count me in next time!

Erica D'Alessandro

Book and paper conservator
Churchill College, Cambridge.

COURSES

WAX MODELS, PORTRAITS & SCULPTURE: Conservation and restoration techniques

Egham, Surrey 11 – 12 September 2018

The course was organised by **Tessa Jackson ACR** of Jackson Sculpture Conservation Ltd and took place at her studio. The course leader was **Valerie Kaufmann ACR**.

We instinctively regard wax as impermanent because of its susceptibility to heat and pressure but in fact many wax artefacts, some hundreds of years old, such as Renaissance maquettes and 18th century portrait miniatures, are preserved in the collections of institutions and individuals. The material's qualities, including ease of casting and the ability to mimic flesh, which made it popular for portraits and anatomical models, appeal just as much today to contemporary artists.

The range of items made from wax and the type of collections across which they are spread was illustrated in Valerie's introductory presentation while her second one comprehensively demonstrated the sorts of problems and defects she has encountered during her many years specializing in the conservation of wax. In between these we heard about the different

Wax sample pieces prepared by Val and the 'wax pallet' of colours for tinting wax fills.





Image: Valerie Kaufmann

Course organizer Tessa Jackson and the other course attendees.

types of waxes, their origins (animal, vegetable, mineral), chemical composition, properties and the way they have been combined and adulterated at different times and for making specific artefacts.

The practical part of the course began with Valerie demonstrating cleaning techniques on wax sample pieces. She had prepared a set of these for all of us, with dirt and 'bloom' (the thin whitish crystalline layer commonly found on beeswax items which studies have shown is caused by components of the wax itself rather than additives). Many wax surfaces are relatively soft so it is extremely important to avoid applying pressure and Valerie showed us how to apply a small range of solvents and mixtures using a soft brush then quickly blotting it dry to 'suck up' the cleaning solution.

We spent some time cleaning our samples and deciding which solutions worked best in which cases. Then Valerie demonstrated dowelling and bonding techniques including using Japanese tissue for reinforcement and reversible 'first aid' At the end of this packed first day she showed us techniques for melting wax to make mixtures of different waxes (for example beeswax with harder carnauba wax) and fixing pigments in beeswax to create a 'palette' of different colours and varying pigment density. We then made up our own wax mixtures and coloured wax palettes to be used the next day for filling losses.

Day 2 focussed on consolidation, filling

and retouching. Most damage results in areas of 'shelling', for instance along the edge of breaks where the top surface of wax has detached and appears white. Methods of consolidation vary depending on the type of wax and sometimes can only be achieved by 'welding' with a 'finger hot' spatula which requires great skill so as not to damage the wax surface. Fills in wax must be tinted as a clear fill would show as a shadow and Val likened it to filling glass. For retouching on a wax surface, watercolour can be used so long as a tension breaker such as oxgall is added. At every stage, as Val demonstrated the processes, she explained and discussed them, including in which circumstances (type of object, subsequent use, private or museum collection) she would take a different approach. We returned to our work benches and our arrays of spatulas, small spoons, spirit lamps etc. to try them out for ourselves. The joy of a practical course is instantly becoming aware of your own limitations but having Val there meant this was a masterclass, where mistakes provided more opportunity to learn.

The course set-up (fully equipped workstations, clear views of presentations and demonstrations) was excellent and we were well provided for with lunch, morning and afternoon breaks, plentiful biscuits (and home-made cake!) in a friendly and supportive environment. We all went home with a digital folder of articles and other information. The organizers are considering running a longer course next time to allow

more time to hone technique, but I feel equipped to start practising on my own and will now approach this unique material with informed respect and caution rather than trepidation.

Melanie Rolfe

Conservator (Sculpture and Installations)
Tate

DIGITISATION AT NLS

Mary Garner, Digitisation Conservator, and Isobel Griffin ACR, Head of Collections Care, describe the process of preparing collections for digitisation at the National Library of Scotland

INTRODUCTION

Digitisation is the process of converting physical or analogue items into duplicated digital surrogates that can be saved, stored, shared and viewed electronically, through capture with modern cameras or scanners. For library and archive collections it provides a way of capturing the content of a book, pamphlet, newspaper, journal, photograph, manuscript or map and making it accessible to people around the world.

Like many other major libraries, the National Library of Scotland ('the Library') began collaborating with publishing companies in the 1980s to capture its collections on microfilm and then started digitising in the late 1990s, initially focusing on the most iconic items in the collections. We now carry out a variety of digitisation work including large scale 'mass' digitisation projects, smaller 'boutique' projects, digitisation for preservation and digitisation to support exhibition and loans. The capture work is usually done by Library staff, but some projects involve external contractors working on Library premises, and occasionally we also send collections for capture off-site.

In 2015 a target was set for one third of our collections to be in digital format by 2025, and this has dramatically increased the pace of our digitisation programme, and impacted upon every department.

STAGES IN THE PROCESS

The most obvious stage is capture, the process of photographing or scanning the collection item. But in fact capture is only the tip of the iceberg in a process that can take weeks or even months from start to finish. First, the items for digitisation must be selected, based on pre-defined criteria such as significance, availability of the digital version

Mary Garner, the digitisation conservator, undertaking the condition assessment 'at the shelf'



© NLS

Mass Digitisation

Room NLS CB
Project number a. Project 000

Scanned by:
Work Station:

Scanning start date:
Scanning completed date:

Number of images:

QA start date/s:
QA finish date/s:
QA by:

PASSED/TO FIX

Fixed date/s by

Number of images after fix:

PASSED/TO FIX

Returned to stacks:

Conservation information

Date non-conservator assessment	---
Date conservator assessment	Aug 2018
Reject for digitisation	Yes No
Is treatment needed?*	Yes Possibly No
Date treatment completed	20 Sept 2018
Advice for camera operators	Fold outs
Conservation assessment required after digitisation?	Yes No

*If a non-conservator records that treatment is possibly required, a conservator check should follow

The current conservation tracking slips

elsewhere and physical condition. For some collections an audit may be needed to ensure that all the items can be found. The quality of the catalogue records will also need to be checked and improved if necessary, because they will be used to create the metadata that goes alongside the digital images. The creation of the metadata may be undertaken before or after capture, but it will not generally be possible to make the digital images accessible to the public without having the metadata in place.

The physicality of the collection must be investigated, first to check for condition issues which may require conservation treatment before the item can be captured, and secondly to note issues which may affect the capture process, such as the size of the items and the presence of fold-outs or uncut bolts. The conservation treatments identified are usually undertaken prior to capture, although there may be situations, for example if the sewing structure of a bound volume is completely broken, where the decision is taken to capture the item without treating it, and to carry out treatment afterwards if it is then deemed necessary.

Different organisations have different workflows for the movement of collections from the stores to the capture location and back again but the tracking of the items is always important to ensure that nothing goes astray. After capture



Flexible, magnetic weights used for pressing repairs

the condition of the items may be checked again and the items may be returned to their original storage location or moved elsewhere. Some organisations move items to long-term high density storage once they have been digitised and do not issue them to readers, but in our library we generally make both the physical and the digital versions available.

The final stage is to link the digital images up with the metadata and upload them to their agreed location, with a user-friendly interface if they are to be made available to the public.

RESOURCING THE CONSERVATION WORK

In an ideal world conservators would assess every item before capture and undertake treatments as necessary. They would assist with the handling of fragile items during capture, and they might even operate the capture equipment. However, resources may not always permit this level of conservator involvement. In our library we have one dedicated digitisation conservator, who acts as a central point of contact for all conservation input into the Library's digitisation programme and undertakes most of the assessments and treatments to prepare items for digitisation. Additionally, there is a small team of other conservators who can each give a few hours a month to assist with treatments. We therefore have to be pragmatic in deciding where this conservation resource is needed most, and we have developed our approach in consultation with more experienced colleagues from the British Library and The National Archives.

CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The digitisation conservator undertakes a scoping overview assessment of every collection scheduled for digitization. The purpose is to get a handle on the size, format and general condition of the collection. If it is predominantly in very good condition, which usually means it is also modern, the conservator will advise that the assessment of individual items can be undertaken by non-conservators, either by the staff who create the metadata prior to capture, or the staff who 'feed' the items to the camera operators. These non-conservators have been trained to flag up the type of damage which is deemed to require conservation treatment prior to capture. However, if the collection appears likely to contain more than a handful of items in poorer condition, the digitisation conservator will conduct a survey of every item herself.

Surveying for digitisation looks at the overall physical condition of an item, focusing on damage that is likely to be exacerbated during the capture process. It also takes into consideration factors such as the risks to items during transit, the equipment limitations and the legibility of content. Hence the condition assessment becomes a working risk statement. The potential impact of further damage and the likelihood of this occurring are bound up with overall 'value' judgements at collection and/or item level, and the correct course of action is determined using a digitisation treatment matrix.

The digitisation treatment matrix removes subjectivity or treatment bias at item level by laying out strict criteria and methodologies for any remedial treatment. The standard

template is adapted for each project depending on its logistics and objectives. For example, detached boards might not be reattached for a project with capture on site, but would probably be reattached if items were being sent to an external contractor, to reduce the risk of disassociation. We are also mindful that the opportunity to treat items more extensively is unlikely to arise in the near future, so we try to ensure that our treatments are robust enough to last for several years. Organisations which remove digitised items from circulation may choose to take a 'lighter touch' approach and implement very temporary repairs.

The digitisation conservator records her survey results directly into an Excel spreadsheet, where she notes the condition of each item and ticks columns to show what treatment(s) will be required. This system allows her to survey an item in between thirty seconds and five minutes, depending on the complexity and ease of access of the items; boxed items and large maps take longer to survey than books on an open shelf, for example. The spreadsheet is used to provide estimates for the treatment times needed, and hence to predict the total treatment time for the project. The survey form also doubles as the treatment record and it can be exported automatically into our conservation records database, removing the need for duplicate data entry and maximising efficiency.

The Library is currently developing a tracking database which will record the progress of items through the various stages of the digitization process. It will show when items have been checked and treated if necessary, and will flag up issues which the capture staff need to be aware of and instances when items need to return to conservation for a further check or treatment after capture. This database will replace various manual tracking systems, such as the conservation tracking slips.

CONSERVATION TREATMENT

If the treatments required are extremely minimal, or can be standardized for uniform formats, such as extensive runs of octavo volumes, it may be feasible to undertake them in the storage area. However, most collections will be transferred to the conservation studio in weekly or monthly batches.

Materials for repair are standardized as far as possible for efficiency and consistency. The survey data allows treatment types to be grouped so that items can be repaired in batches. Paper repairs are largely carried out with remoistenable tissues which are prepared in a few different thicknesses and a range of twelve pre-toned colours, and hinges for repair are pre-cut in large quantities on a board chopper. Flexible, magnetic weights are used for pressing repairs, because they fit inside bindings and allow pressed materials to be stacked safely. As discussed previously, an appropriate treatment approach is defined for each collection.

SELECTION OF CAPTURE EQUIPMENT

There is a huge and constantly developing range of capture equipment available. Different styles of equipment suit different formats of collection item, and it is crucial that the

conservators assessing and treating items prior to capture understand the capabilities and limitations of the equipment available, both within their organisation and as provided by external companies.

At the Library we have a variety of digitisation equipment, much of which is modular to allow for adaptations according to individual item or project needs. Where certain equipment functions are usually automated, such as the raising of a glass plate, we make sure they can be operated manually for unusual or particularly fragile items. We do not employ automatic page turning functions or other fully automated functions, although we recognise that they may be appropriate for very modern collections.

The majority of our bound volumes are captured using dual camera V-shaped cradle workstations with a pressure adjustable glass plate, which are suited to high-throughput projects while being sympathetic to tight bindings. We also have overhead desktop and freestanding systems with adjustable flatbed supports, which are used for volumes that open completely flat and loose leaf items. Where necessary these systems can operate minus the glass plate and with the addition of tailor-made bespoke book cradles, facilitating the

A dual camera V-shaped cradle workstation



© NLS



© NLS

The bespoke book cradle designed for large fold-outs

capture of foldouts from within bound volumes and other awkward items.

Finally, we have sheet-fed scanners that we use for robust, modern, single sheet material. Lightweight sheets can be fed through inside polyester pockets to provide additional support. And we have self-service quick scanning kiosks for readers to scan small sections of modern material.

RECENT PROJECTS

The three projects described below illustrate the differing approaches to conservation treatment and capture that were taken for three very different collections.

The 'ABS shelfmark' Rare Book collection

This collection was one of the first whole shelfmarks to be digitised at the Library. The collection consists of 14,800 books which were published in Scotland, or have a Scottish connection. The volumes vary in subject, size, language and binding style, dating from the 17th to the 20th century.

Throughout the course of this project many logistical aspects of the digitization process were developed and refined. For example, an automated system for requesting books from the catalogue in batches rather than individually was created, reducing administrative time. The conservation treatments undertaken were initially quite extensive, but as the project progressed and our understanding of the capture process increased, the digitisation treatment matrix was honed and became less interventive.

The capture was undertaken by an external company working on Library premises with V-shaped cradle workstations, and we were able to negotiate modifications to the operating procedure to suit the needs of the collection, such as a reduction in the pressure applied by the overlying glass plate. The experience gained during this project assisted with

defining selection criteria when we recently procured new equipment for capturing bound volumes.

The House of Lords papers

This digitisation project was initiated by an external company. It posed some challenging conservation questions because the bound volumes exhibited severe and extensive damage and deterioration, including heavy surface dirt, staining from a previous mould infestation, loose pages, detaching or missing spines and boards and red rot on the leather covers. However, the timescale for preparing the collection was tight and the funding available for conservation work was relatively modest.

The conservation was outsourced to two experienced freelance conservators, who decided that the top priority was to survey every item, undertaking surface cleaning and minor consolidation of the leather covers at the same time. This

The House of Lords volumes before treatment



© NLS

survey identified items requiring further treatment, plus a handful which were too badly damaged to be captured, and it also flagged up the challenging fold-outs in some items, paving the way for a discussion about their capture. The second tranche of prioritised treatments included reattaching loose pages and detaching sections of spines which might otherwise become lost, and tying temporary boards onto volumes without boards, to protect the text blocks during transit. These measures ensured that the majority of the volumes could be transported and captured safely.

The Sweetheart Breviary

This was a boutique digitisation project undertaken in response to a loan request. The Breviary is a manuscript volume with a tight, fragile binding and, as well as having severely cockled pages, its small size causes significant curvature of the pages and makes the text in the gutters difficult to read. It was important that any conservation treatment would not compromise the authenticity of the binding, but it was decided that very minimal inner joint hinge repairs were necessary to strengthen the weakened binding joints and prevent damage during capture.

An innovative capture method was required, because the volume was too small to be adequately supported on our standard V-shaped cradle. We designed a bespoke cradle to reduce the curvature and cockling as much as possible, consisting of adjustable wedges to support the volume in a 110° opening, Bondina®-lined cotton tapes to hold the pages down and a sheet of toughened glass to create a flat focal field. The glass was supported on blocks so that it just touched the page without pressing down heavily. Additionally, a conservator assisted the camera operator with strapping the volume into position. It was accepted that this made for a slow capture process, particularly since the gilt illuminations required careful imaging and page by page adjustment of the lighting.

The bespoke book cradle designed for the Sweetheart Breviary



A broken paper hinge over an external joint

TRAINING FOR CAMERA OPERATORS

Our camera operators are digital imaging experts and come with experience of a wide range of professional photographic fields. The digitisation conservator gives handling training to all new operators, to teach best practice and establish good communications whereby staff feel comfortable about asking for ad hoc advice and support. We also have generic handling guidelines which may be supplemented for individual projects with specific handling or capture requirements, and our tracking systems allow issues for individual items to be flagged up to the operators.

DAMAGE CAUSED DURING CAPTURE

All handling and transportation carries the risk of damaging collection items, and the capture process increases that risk. We aim to mitigate the likelihood of damage as far as possible, but with hundreds of thousands of items being digitised, it is almost inevitable that some damage will occur.

Good communication between the camera operators and the conservation team is key, so that when damage is noticed it is dealt with appropriately. The digitisation conservator will assess the item and decide whether conservation treatment is required, either before capture continues, if it has been halted, or afterwards. Minor damage that does not hinder capture or compromise the consultation of the item by readers will probably not be repaired, although this depends on the significance of the item or collection. To avoid holding up the capture the digitisation conservator undertakes repairs on the spot wherever possible, using a mobile repair trolley.

We have also refined our treatment methods based on our observations of the types of damage that occur during capture. For example, the application of paper hinges to external joints is no longer carried out prior to digitization, because it was noted that the hinges often break or peel off during capture. More robust repairs to the inner joints only are carried out to ensure that the boards remain well attached.

CONCLUSIONS

The developments of the past few years have prompted us to develop strategies for caring for collections during the digitization process, and we anticipate that our approach will continue to evolve as we embark upon new projects and encounter different equipment and workflows. However, the requirement for an objective, risk-based framework to underpin our decision-making will not change, and we will continue to collect statistical data to inform our assessment of risks and assist with project planning.

the emerging conservator

A CROSS-CONTINENTAL INTERNSHIP

Libby Ireland and Claire Taggart share an internship with Tate's Sculpture and Installation Conservation Department

In February 2018, we both arrived at Tate Sculpture and Installation Conservation department: Claire from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) in Delaware, USA, and Libby from the Institute of Archaeology at University College London. We were both undertaking the placement as a required part of the final year of our postgraduate conservation courses. Over the next six months, we spent a lot of time getting to know one another, as well as Tate's collection, whilst experiencing a range of conservation roles. The department was extremely welcoming and we learnt a great deal from the experienced conservators at Tate, as well as one another.

Although we were based at Tate Britain, we worked across Tate's sites and gained experience in many areas including loan and exhibition preparation, exhibition installation, pre-acquisition reporting, maintenance, research and treatment. As we both studied on broader object conservation courses, the placement was a valuable opportunity to work with contemporary and modern art – a specialism we are both very interested in. It was also an opportunity to appreciate the workings of a large institution, allowing us to gain an understanding of the logistics and planning that is involved in the extensive exhibition and loan programmes at Tate.



© Tate 2018

Claire helping Principal Conservation Scientist Bronwyn Ormsby take samples to identify materials present on a work being acquired by Tate

WORKING TOGETHER

While many of our treatments were undertaken collaboratively, we also each identified individual projects to research in-depth. Claire explored the manufacture and degradation mechanisms of an injection-moulded polypropylene chair from the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden; this research resulted in the thoughtful cleaning of the 1970s era plastic. Libby spent time investigating the break behaviour of poly-methyl methacrylate (PMMA), testing adhesives to inform the repair of a PMMA artwork. In hindsight, we can also see our individual interests

'Juniper Tree' (1976, reconstructed 1994) by Joan Jonas. Image courtesy of the artist and Tate



© Tate 2018

highlighted through other projects we undertook. Tate staff were supportive in allowing us to develop skills in our areas of interest, nurturing Claire's desire to work with conservation science and Libby's interest in project planning and artist interviews.

Working together has been a great opportunity to connect over the similarities and differences in our educational experiences. We found this a useful way of filling knowledge gaps, as well as learning from one another's approaches to problem-solving.

PRE-ACQUISITION WORK

An interesting part of our internships was participating in Tate's active acquisition programme. This involved creating reports for the acquisition of four artworks. It was a rich learning experience as we were able to collaborate with the conservation science team and engage with the curator overseeing the purchase. This was an exercise in thinking about the long-term life of the work, as we had to consider future issues that the materials might present. We also worked with the senior technician and supervising conservators to understand packing needs and resource implications of moving the work into the collection, an area we had little experience in.

INSTALLING A JOAN JONAS EXHIBITION

Near the beginning of our internships, we helped on the installation of an exhibition of work by Joan Jonas at Tate

Claire and Libby undertaking repairs and stabilisation of a component of 'Juniper Tree' by Joan Jonas. Image courtesy of the artist and Tate



Modern. Jonas is a pioneer of performance and video art and the exhibition gives a comprehensive overview of her career, including seminal pieces from the 1960s alongside current work. Particularly, we focussed on 'Juniper Tree' (1976, reconstructed 1994), an installation created from a series of performance pieces based around a Brothers Grimm fairy-tale by the same name. This work presents the stage as though the performance has just finished, complete with stage-lights, alongside documentation from previous performances.

Our work included condition checking all objects, overseeing installation and undertaking a minor treatment on one element of the work. As this exhibition will travel to further venues following its display at Tate Modern, it was important that condition reports be easy to read and that changes in condition could easily be identified by those unfamiliar with the work.

When one element - a pile of branches - was unpacked, it was found to be in poor condition. The twigs had become dehydrated and brittle, and many fractures and breaks were present. Before completing treatment, we were able to speak briefly with the artist to confirm that the current condition was not intended. We could then complete repairs to the objects, applying Japanese tissue tinted with acrylic paints using pH neutral polyvinyl acetate to support and re-attach loose elements. As this treatment was undertaken during installation, it had to be done quickly and within the space available.

Working on this installation allowed us to gain an understanding of how conservation is planned into exhibitions within such a large-scale institution. We learnt to work collaboratively with the art handlers and curators, to make sure that all staff could undertake the tasks they needed to complete. It was also interesting to see how artworks are prepared to be part of touring exhibitions, with conservators having to understand the resources needed to transport and display the work - including packing and electrical issues.

DEVELOPING THE ARTIST INTERVIEW TOOL

During our placements, we were able to gain some experience in interviewing artists - creating questionnaires to be sent by email and taking part in face-to-face interviews. We also used this method of research more widely, getting in touch with fabricators to understand artworks. One such instance was aiding preparation for the display of 'Asleep in the Deep' by Anna Lena Vaney.

This artwork consists of a number of audio pieces stored on forty vinyl records and mini-discs. The work was inspired by a manga character named 'Ann Lee' whom artists Pierre Huyghe and Phillippe Parreno bought the copyright for and commissioned others to make work around. Other works created as part of this process completed the display in which 'Asleep in the Deep' was to be shown.

The Time-Based Media department at Tate has transferred the audio to a digital format which is used for display, and the Sculpture and Installations department care for the physical



A record from 'Asleep in the Deep' (2002) by Anna Lena Vaney. Image courtesy of the artist and Tate

records. When the records were unpacked for condition-checking, we found that the poly vinyl chloride (PVC) outer sleeves were becoming slightly sticky and distorted. This was partly due to migration of the plasticiser, which is causing the stickiness and reduced flexibility of the material, and exacerbated by poor packaging which was putting stress on the corner of the sleeves. We were worried that the degradation of the PVC would only continue, causing further deformation and stickiness. In the future this could begin to disrupt the printed design, and cause problems with handling and access.

'Asleep in the Deep' (2002) by Anna Lena Vaney on display at Tate Modern. Image courtesy of the artist and Tate



This initial assessment bought up a number of issues, among some already existing queries. We were unsure how this work should be displayed, and it was unclear how important it is for the records and mini-discs to be playable in the future. Additionally, there was a worry that separating the parts could cause issues with re-uniting them in the future.

Luckily, the artist was available to speak with us during installation and we were able to discuss how the piece was made, the concepts around the work, and how it should be displayed. Vaney made it clear that she liked the tactility of the vinyl records, and the idea of visitors handling them whilst listening to the audio. She wasn't so keen on them being displayed in a vitrine, but also assigned the final decision to the curator. In the end, the artist bought her own copies of the records, which were tethered to a table for display.

We were also able to discuss the degradation of the work, and the possibility of creating replicas came up: The artist was happy for us to get in touch with further questions around storage and replication. Unfortunately, a subsequent email including a questionnaire has gone unanswered, showing that face-to-face discussions can be much more engaging than email exchanges.

Interviewing artists as a conservation tool was something we both had little experience in, and it was great to learn from conservators with such knowledge around using this tool. We were first encouraged to work with questionnaires, enabling



Libby applying wax to 'River Form' (1965) by Dame Barbara Hepworth with Sculpture Conservator Gates Sofer

us to draw together our ideas into open questions that were written in an accessible way. This then readied us for meeting artists face-to-face, where it is important not to ask leading questions, and to give room for the artist to think and talk through their ideas.

MAINTENANCE WORK IN ST IVES

In May 2018, we were excited to spend a sunny week in St Ives, Cornwall, at the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, the home and studio of the British sculptor Barbara Hepworth until her death in 1975. Every spring a team of conservators travels down to St Ives to perform annual maintenance of the artworks and Barbara Hepworth's studio – which has recently undergone amazing conservation research and treatment. We were able to help with care of the outdoor sculptures, which are exposed to the harsh, fluctuating coastal environment all year round. The garden holds bronze and stone sculptures, while the conservatory displays patterns created from plaster and metal, from which bronze works were later cast.

The maintenance schedule includes condition checking all works and undertaking treatments where necessary. Bronze works were cleaned with a mild surfactant in water before application of wax if needed. Depending on the patination layer, areas of the bronze were either cold waxed to impart surface protection only, or hot waxed when saturation of the original rich patinas was desired.

OVERVIEW

Interning at Tate has been an excellent opportunity to immerse ourselves in all aspects of modern and contemporary art conservation. Alongside our placement, we enjoyed travelling together to attend workshops and conferences, which complemented our projects and the knowledge we gained from colleagues. It is with these new skills, experiences




Libby and Claire consolidating 'Sea From (Porthmeor)' (1958) by Dame Barbara Hepworth

and contacts, that we make our way into the field of conservation, excited for the next step.

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