OPENING UP OPEN DISPLAY

Joint Forum of UKIC Textile and Historic Interiors Sections

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29th March 2004

Clothworkers' Hall, London

Edited by Albertina Cogram and Maria Jordan

UKIC
UNITED KINGDOM INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS

TEXTILE section

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Foreword

Most textiles, apart from costume and accessories, are related to interior decoration in some form so it was natural that a joint forum of the Textile and Historic Interiors sections of UKIC should take place. The forum was held on 29th April 2004 at The Clothworkers' Hall, London, itself a noteworthy interior holding a significant display of tapestries on the grand staircase. The papers, presented at *Opening Up Open Display*, and published in these post-prints show how close the links between the Textile and Historic Interiors sections are, and how textiles can rarely be regarded in isolation.

The most significant aspect of open display compared to a showcase museum environment, is the effect of the visitor, increased access and events. The increasing pressure to make money from some of the most vulnerable interiors has encouraged conservators to be innovative in presenting objects for display. Conservators have often been labelled as the profession who said no - no to vulnerable objects on open display, no to access, no to events. The forum went some way in challenging these notions of restrictive open display, the risks have been identified, but also presented are methods used to monitor damage and the scientifically calculated restrictions that essentially can be used to allow increased access.

My thanks go to all the contributors and speakers on the day and special thanks are given to Albertina Cogram and Maria Jordan for such careful editing. The post-prints presented here should provide an innovative resource to anyone faced with presenting textiles in less than environmentally ideal historic interiors.

Clare Stoughton-Harris
Chair – UKIC Textile Section
March 2005

The Need to Touch

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1. Introduction

It is not difficult to understand why Museums have at times had a reputation as intimidating and unfriendly places. It is an exaggerated view, based on a perception - not entirely misplaced - of how museums were a couple of decades ago, with dwindling visitor numbers, waning public enthusiasm and an often uninspired presentation of their collections. The traditional way of presenting collections had been to focus simply on the best way for them to be observed – the best way to help them be understood with our eyes. Passive contemplation was encouraged. Look; but don't touch.

We might even draw a comparison with the decline in church attendance. Museums were also treated as 'holy' places for quiet and serious meditation. They were formal places. The object was treated carefully, with respect and with awe. There was a right and a wrong way to behave - and touching, sniffing, poking, and questioning were not part of that etiquette. Interpretative text panels were becoming increasingly dense and fewer people could understand them, or had the attention span to take it all in. The perception is that the audiences that remained loyal to these dusty institutions were becoming more and more specialised; even cranky. Outside of those in the know, more and more people held the belief that museums were not for them.

2. Engaging with Objects

As designers, of course we understand that touching is not compatible with the requirements of conservation (the warning signs are everywhere). But in spite of this - and there are ways round it, as we have found at the British Galleries at the V&A - touch is a valuable and powerful sense through which much can be understood and appreciated, that cannot be understood, examined, or loved through the eyes alone. Elsewhere, outside of the Museum world, in places like the John Lewis fabric department, or clothes shops – people are frantically and instinctively feeling, rubbing and stroking. Their senses are hungry for nourishment. Taking full advantage of this phenomenon, retailers are placing their price labels, deliberately concealed, on the bases of glassware, china and whatever else to get us to pick things up and hold them. They know that the point of engagement in a direct relationship with the object can make an instant impression on our minds and souls – accelerating the possibility of making a sale.

However, back in the Museum our natural instinct for exploration through touch has, until recent times, not been welcome. Our curiosity has been suppressed, and as a result, so has our natural excitement and engagement. Sheets of glass were erected between us and our heritage, and as a result between us and the possibility of getting closer and understanding more.

In general our natural desire to touch the displays in front of us has to be discouraged, and understandably so. Our collections have been protected, looked after and saved for the benefit of our generation, and

mathematical, physical...) and that we tend to remember better the things we have experimented with. In creating spaces for manual activities in museums, such as the BGs at the V&A, we increase the visitor's interest in these displays, and help to cement the knowledge in their memory. If we feed more of the senses at once - offering opportunities to touch, to play games, to hear sound - then we appeal directly to more people, in more ways.

The challenge museums are facing up to is in targeting the senses directly wherever possible, to invoke a human response. A first hand encounter through the fingertips has an instant appeal that can take hold in our minds and instantly make a visit memorable. Mention the Science Museum to anyone who hasn't visited for thirty years and they are sure to remember the Vandergraaff Generator, and the tingling sensation in their fingertips while their hair stood on end.

For that reason, contemporary museums are offering areas where we can find samples to touch, tools to reproduce the processes used to create the work, and an ever greater range of devices that give more information in a practical and an entertaining way. Advancing technologies have enabled the production of new kinds of high-tech interfaces for the visitor, and developments behind the scenes have also brought about valuable new opportunities for displays. Progress in air conditioning systems for example, have provided stable gallery environments where objects, particularly textiles, have for the first time in decades been allowed to venture outside of showcases, and shake the dust off themselves. While interactivity brings its own difficulties (most obviously when they don't work), amidst fears of 'dumbing down', museums are becoming legitimately 'great days out' in an increasingly competitive market for our time, money, attention and stimulus for our senses.

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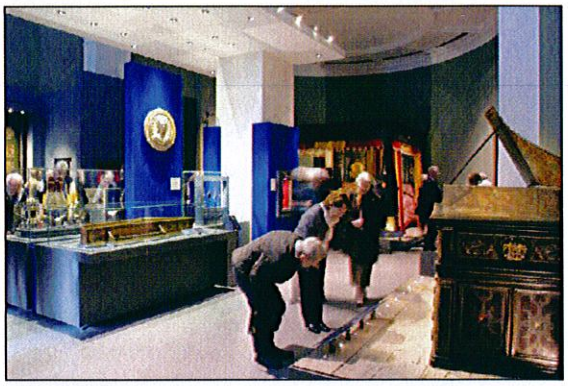
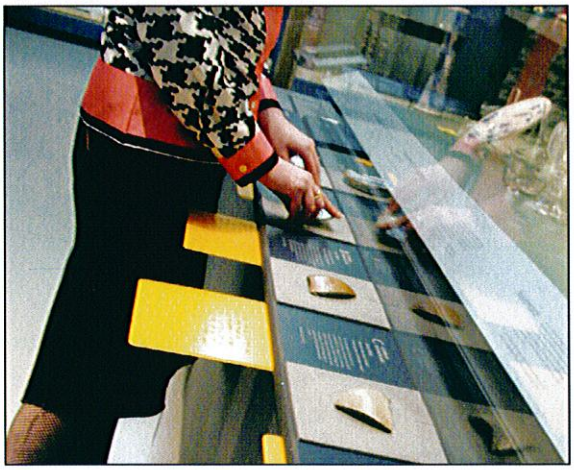
[1] Casson Mann are exhibition, museum and interior designers.

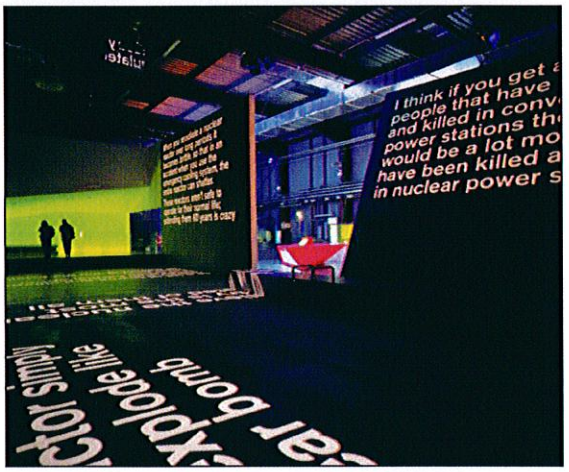
British Galleries. Sculpture Plinth



British Galleries



British Galleries. Handling Area



Sparkling Reaction Exhibition © Casson Mann

How Open Can You Get and Sustain It?

Clare Stoughton-Harris
Textile Conservator
National Museums and Galleries of Wales

Textiles on open display at The Museum of Welsh Life.

1. Introduction

The Museum of Welsh Life is one of eight museums of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales and celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1998. It is a museum that not only illustrates but also demonstrates the social and cultural history of Wales, where the notions of open display and access have been taken to extremes, which is a constant challenge to conservators. Since 2001 admission to the museum has been free and this has had a major impact on the stewardship of the collections. It is now the second most visited open-air museum in Europe and receives over twice the number of visitors of any other UK open-air site (Gwyn 2003).

1.1 Historical Background

Plans to create an open-air museum in Wales were in discussion in the early part of the 20th century but it was not until 1946 that plans could really be forwarded when The Earl of Plymouth offered St. Fagans Castle and its eighteen acres of gardens and grounds to the National Museum as a centre for The Welsh Folk Museum. An additional area of parkland of some eighty acres was also acquired. The

Welsh Folk Museum was to follow a tradition of open-air folk museums founded in Scandinavia, such as Skansen in Sweden and was opened to the public on 1st July 1948. Significantly an admission fee of one shilling was charged. It's only exhibits were St Fagans castle, which had been restored as a house to illustrate the life of the nobility in Wales, its gardens and grounds and a wood turner working in one of the castle outbuildings.

The Museum has since developed into two distinct parts as identified by Iowerth Peate, the first Curator of the Museum (Peate 1971). The first is the open-air museum where buildings representative of the Welsh tradition are re-erected and the second a purpose built museum housing galleries and storage areas for the national collection for social and cultural history (including a significant costume and textile collection).

The first historic buildings re-erected were a timber-framed barn and a woollen mill, Esgair Moel from Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys, where the craft of woollen manufacture could be demonstrated. Central to the theme of the museum was the need not only to show buildings, but also demonstrate the crafts of Wales such as wood turning, as well as the craft of building. During the 1950s more buildings were dismantled from various parts of Wales and re-erected on the site. Further buildings have continued to arrive at St. Fagans so that today there are some 40 historic buildings at the museum.

The museum has never purchased a building – they are generally buildings under threat and are collected if they are deemed to be of significant curatorial, cultural and social value. All buildings are accessioned into the collections. Two buildings currently in the process of construction at the Museum are a 17th century cow shed and a 13th century church which is being rebuilt to c.1520 in order to include the series of wall paintings uncovered during the dismantling process.

1.2 Setting the scene

The domestic buildings are furnished to illustrate how the people of Wales lived, worked and spent their leisure time using items from the already existent national collections – vernacular furniture, small domestic objects and textiles. Abernodwydd Farmhouse, from Powys, originally built in 1678, was re-erected at St. Fagans in 1955. The thatched timber-framed structure has floors of beaten earth and, once re-built on the St. Fagans site, it was furnished with predominantly 17th century material including "quilts...of traditional type" (NMGW 1968). The bedcover illustrated in the 1968 handbook was one of the early linen quilts from the collection.

Kennixton Farmhouse, also originally 17th century, from the Gower peninsula, was also rebuilt in 1955. It is painted red to ward off evil spirits and was furnished with items principally from Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire. The beds were dressed with textiles from the collection; "all the quilts shown are traditional" (NMGW 1968).

All the domestic interiors were displayed with their open fires burning and the furniture was "used" by the warder (museum assistant) who was responsible for security and explaining the buildings to the public. At this stage there had been little separation of form from function in the displays despite the furniture being unique specimens of the Welsh vernacular tradition – the buildings and their contents were very much used and demonstrated.

Until the 1980s all the buildings moved to St. Fagans reflected the rural economy of Wales – predominantly agricultural buildings, farmhouses and village community centres such as the school and chapel. Nothing represented the 20th century and little of the 19th was re-built on the site. The removal of a row of

ironworkers' houses from Merthyr Tydfil in the 1980s marked a change in direction. Now the museum was entering industrial Wales and soon after changed its English name from the Welsh Folk Museum to the Museum of Welsh Life to reflect the inclusion of all aspects of Welsh culture. The terrace of 6 cottages, originally built in about 1800, was re-built on site to display different periods of its history – starting with the first cottage at 1805, and finishing with a 1985 interior.

Following the acquisition of the Rhyd-y-car row of ironworker's cottages, more commercial building types were added to the collection such as the tailor's shop, a post office and general stores. The arrival of the Type B2 Prefab from north Cardiff in 2001 provided the conservation department with another challenging building to be put on open display.

2. Environment

The buildings re-erected on site do not provide an ideal environment for the display of museum collections. Most do not have electricity – the main form of heating being the open fire. The fires create huge diurnal fluctuations in temperature and therefore humidity as the fires cannot be left burning over night and the fires also emit the inevitable soot and dust. The fires are fuelled with either wood or coal to reflect the date of the building, and add to their interpretation. Despite the fires, the building interiors often mimic the exterior environment such as Abernodwydd farmhouse where the windows are not glazed, protection from rain being given by wooden shutters only. The doors are constantly open to let the visitors in and out.

The ethos of the museum has been to make the visitor feel that the interiors they are seeing are real and physical access has been the forte of the museum. Very few restrictions have been placed on the visitor and the friendly welcome that they traditionally receive has been a strong feature of the museum's attraction. Many visitors returned on regular basis and openly proclaimed their sense of pride and ownership. The cosiness of the real fires on cold winter afternoons meant that it became commonplace to find small groups of visitors settled next to the fire warming their toes whilst chatting with the museum assistant of bygone days (Renault 2004).

Everything was not as idyllic as it seemed and the cracks quite literally began to show as years of handling and display in uncontrolled environments, began to take their toll on the individual objects.

3. Non-accessioned collections

What has the Museum done to safeguard the collections in these uncontrollable environments with such open access? From the 1960s onwards the museum sought to find a solution by removing what were thought to be the more vulnerable items – predominantly textiles and paper items and placing them in store. Arguably more robust items, such as the oak furniture, have been left in situ, but the bed covers have been replaced – in the case of Abernodwydd, blankets woven in the woollen mill replaced the early linen quilt.

The same occurred in Kennixton Farmhouse. Here the beds had been dressed in what was available from the collections but these items were removed and replaced by non-accessioned bed covers and blankets. A set of chintz bed hangings had been altered to fit windows in Kennixton for display purposes in the 1950s and are now in a sorry state in store. The mattresses remained in the houses; they were a mixture of more modern mattresses to achieve some height, plus new feather mattresses that had to be turned on a weekly basis to maintain their shape. However, it remains a challenge to prevent the visitors testing out the beds and to keep pests at bay.

Many of the buildings displayed original rag rugs from the accessioned collections that were walked on by visitors and literally wore out. Some had to be de-accessioned and disposed of as they were regarded as beyond repair, a sad situation as surviving examples of such utilitarian objects are few and far between. Contemporary non-accessioned rugs that can be walked on and renewed as necessary are now used.

When the row of Rhyd-y-car cottages was re-built it was realised that the museum collections did not contain enough items to fill the proposed interiors. A huge collecting drive was begun and when the cottages were finally opened the displays included a mixture of accessioned (mainly furniture) and non-accessioned (mainly textiles and paper) items. The reserve-accessioned collections also saw an increase in their holdings to mirror what was now marked "for use". Access to these interiors was immediate so the decision to use "sacrificial objects" was seen as a pragmatic approach – although the furniture on which the non-accessioned chenille tablecloth lay came from the reserve collection.

The collection of non-accessioned items had become so great that a dedicated store was created and a housekeeper employed to look after these non-accessioned items.

The quilts were numbered and allocated to particular buildings by their date and style, and were then used for display and "set dressing" and could be sent to the dry cleaners on a regular basis. Running repairs and alterations could be made to this collection of textiles but, when they wore out or started to look worn, they could be replaced.

The Museum of Welsh Life is offered objects for the collections on a daily basis – 90% of which are turned down. A large number of textiles are also offered often with the comment "I'd like this quilt to go into one of the cottages, not in some store never to be seen". The consequences of display in the open environments are explained to the donor, but if the item is deemed significant and relevant, it will be accepted for accessioning and placed in the reserve collection away from open display. However, many items have no provenance, duplicate what is already in the reserve collection and may not be in such good condition. These items are collected for use.

The issue of non-accessioned items being used for such open display is an interesting one. There is the relief that items from the national collections are not being put at risk by displaying them in less than ideal environmental conditions and in areas of real open access. The display of accessioned costume and textiles is now restricted to the air-conditioned gallery or behind barriers in St. Fagans Castle where the environment can be regulated.

The open displays in the re-erected buildings are full and furnished and the visitor can get a feel for the period of that particular house. However a blurred line is created for conservation of the non-accessioned items if preservation of evidence is one of the

prime functions of a museum. At the museum these issues are now under scrutiny. At a purely functional level, should resources be put into looking after objects that are only going to be thrown away when they wear out? Is the function of a museum to create "an image" in its displays or to display its collections in their ambient surroundings? The displays contain items that are visual evidence rather than actual proven material evidence next to items of furniture from the accessioned collections. Storage space needs to be provided twice over as even non-accessioned items will need to be maintained at a visual level at least. The availability of such items is not endless and a ready supply of objects that fit into the display requirements cannot be relied upon. The non- accessioned collection is mainly late 19th and 20th Century material hence the earlier interiors are relatively empty. But perhaps the most important point is that by displaying non-accessioned objects, an acceptance is given that first, the

environment cannot be brought to a standard adequate for the safety of vulnerable objects and second, the levels of access cannot be controlled.

4. Preventive Conservation

The Museum of Welsh Life took a pragmatic approach when it realised that the environments were not sustainable for the display of textiles; it removed and replaced them with something that was expendable. However, as already illustrated, this has created a blurred line between preservation of material evidence and creation of a visitor experience. Practices elsewhere might aim to improve the environment and restricting access. So what are the alternatives to an acceptance of the original environment, if care of collections is one of the primary functions of a museum?

The introduction of free entry and subsequent increase in visitor numbers to the museum alerted the conservation team. It had been recognised that the level of care within the buildings was not what it should be despite having good intentions –a telemetric system of environmental monitoring was in place, the cleaners were receiving training and the museum assistants were encouraged *not* to sit on the furniture. What was lacking was an actual policy for preventive conservation. Through consultation, a preventive conservation policy has been produced which is for all employees of the museum to be aware of. The central message is that conservation is not just the responsibility of the conservators – but should include the warding staff, curators and education officers. Housekeeping for preventive conservation, doormats, careful use of vacuum cleaners and an integrated pest management system have become priorities. The emphasis is less on the remedial care and replacement of the non-accessioned objects.

The control of RH and temperature in the buildings is a challenging area particularly in the buildings without electricity. The problems with the open fires have already been mentioned and physically there have been few solutions found to improve the environment. However, gradually the site is being supplied with electricity to avoid the necessity to use a generator just to operate a vacuum cleaner, and the use of dehumidifiers and low level heating is becoming easier.

Since the early 1990s, re-erected buildings have been supplied with electricity as a matter of course. This is mainly due to their date – they have been 20th century buildings so it has been possible to install some form of controlled heating. For instance, in the tailors shop night storage heaters were installed and in the prefab under-floor heating was incorporated during the re-building. Prefabs were notoriously damp, the windows always having condensation and a pool of water on the windowsill. With low-level heating it has been possible to maintain a fairly constant temperature and humidity inside.

Pollution and dirt does not just concern itself with smoke from the fires and mud from visitor's shoes, one building is displayed with gas lighting. In Llywn-yr-eos farmhouse a pair of reproduction curtains, in the dining room, only lasted 10 years on display in this environment before disintegrating. An increase in ventilation has been possible but the pollution is too much for sensitive materials.

The control of light is not such a problem in the older houses as they have generally quite dark interiors with small windows, but light control plans are being introduced so that blinds and UV film (where the windows are glazed) have been installed where possible. However, the museum is open 362 days a year from 10-5 so the cumulative hours exposure are high. In no 4 Rhyd-y-car the front door is open all day long to allow public access and the light damage is obvious.

In the tailor's shop window, non-accessioned objects are displayed and later discarded once the light damage has become too visible despite the use of UV film. Due to the vulnerability of the shop

contents (textiles) a more rigorous conservation regime has been implemented in this building since its completion in 1992, and it is only open from April to November even though most of the contents are non-accessioned.

5. Access

With the small improvements to the environment, might it be possible to reduce the number of non-accessioned items on display and use provenanced material? The environment is just half the story the other half is access. The accessibility of the displayed interiors has been the museum's strong point and attraction to visitors. In the Rhyd-y-car terrace the fires were lit and the atmosphere cosy and they have become a huge visitor attraction. Even before free admission to the museum and the associated increase in visitor numbers the wear and tear was palpable. Surely this type of display could not be sustained, even though the vulnerable items were non-accessioned and therefore expendable.

The museum has no closed season, no time to catch its breath and is open every day of the year bar three days over Christmas. Free admission to the museum exacerbated an already unsustainable situation, although the increase in annual visitor numbers from about 350,000 to 700,000 in the first year was regarded as a huge success.

The use of barriers and signs within the museum is generally unwelcome – apart from in St. Fagans Castle, whose displays are not really within the remit of this paper. Barriers make the interiors into a "museum" – looking in on an atmosphere and not "experiencing" it. But is it really possible to experience a time and place wearing trainers and a Calvin Klein sweat shirt with 12 other similarly dressed onlookers in 1855 ironworker's cottage?

The Rhyd-yr-car terraced cottages are very small. They were displayed without barriers (until about 5 years ago when barriers were placed across the entrance to the bedrooms and pantry areas). An exception was made in the 1955 house where on rainy days a barrier prevents the public dripping their wet coats all over the displays – ironically this was because this interior had the greatest number of textiles – but it was all non-accessioned material.

When the Prefab was opened, the bedrooms were cordoned off with wooden barriers.

The bedrooms were furnished as fully as possible and you certainly get the idea that the occupants have left the house. It has been therefore been possible to protect the vulnerable floor coverings – Congoleum, an Axminster Carpet and a Rag Rug made by a police constable from Barry in the early 1950s. The living room was kept open; the carpet was non-accessioned and wore out pretty quickly, to be replaced by a reproduction of a typical 1950s carpet. The majority of objects put on display were accessioned apart from the textiles, and because of the familiarity of the interior, touching and handling has been a real problem.

A decision has now been made to cordon off the sitting room as well, so that it can be viewed from the hall. More items can be put on display; they won't be touched and damaged. Could this be regarded as increased access to the collections?

Restricting the number of visitors entering the museum is not an option, although house capacities have been established for each building – based on safety, ease of movement, and the number of museum assistants stationed in each building. However, when the site might take up to 12,000 people on any one day, it can be very difficult to be constantly turning visitors away from buildings and asking them to wait. The museum may need to look at opening buildings for limited periods within the day – but this will not stop the visitors arriving on site.

6. Re-interpretation Project

In addition to the preventive conservation policy, an extensive project to re-interpret the site and the interiors is now underway; this is a combined project between curators, conservators, education officers (i.e. anyone with an interest in the historic interiors on display) to look at the story the museum is trying to tell about the buildings and the lives of people who lived in them, and incorporating conservation matters into plans for the new displays. Some work has already been done in examining how visitors react in different environments. For instance in St Fagans Castle, a building for the upper classes with roped off display areas, the visitors tend to be on best behaviour and for no apparent reason start whispering. In the early domestic interiors there is an attitude of curiosity, and yet in more recent buildings such as the Prefab there is a feeling of familiarity and the displays are not regarded as precious; "we've got one of these" is often heard. The more recognisable objects are to the visitor, the more likely they are to handle them.

7. Reproductions and Replicas

The use of researched reproductions is gradually finding a place within the museum interiors – where the collections do not contain objects of the correct date and as an alternative to non-accessioned objects. For instance the 17th century Kennixton bed has now been dressed with reproduction hangings of vegetable dyed *Dornix* fabric and the mattresses have been replaced by inert material (down proof, polyester and ethafoam). With this now in situ, barriers are to be introduced this year, ironically to protect not only the accessioned items of furniture but also the replicas. Using good replicas is expensive and they are just as vulnerable to wear and tear.

8. Conclusions

At the Museum of Welsh Life it is not just a question of resources and choosing one of two routes – either improve the environment, restrict access and use accessioned and reproduction objects, or leave the environment as it is and use non-accessioned objects. This ignores the issue of atmosphere, experience and expectation from an up until now loyal visitor. Is it inconceivable that the museum would totally change its method of display for which it is well known and reputed. The use of non-accessioned objects has not proved to be the final answer to the problem, it can only be a temporary measure until environmental and access issues are fully addressed – but any change must not be detrimental to the original ethos of "make yourself at home". It has to be a compromise.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my colleague Sue Renault whose paper "Make yourself at home" is soon to be published. This formed the basis for this contribution. Thank you to NMGW for permission to publish and to Christine Stevens for information on the early years at the Museum of Welsh Life.

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Negotiating For Equilibrium: Balancing Commercial Drivers With Conservation Duties

Helen Smith
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1. Introduction.

It can be difficult to balance the different objectives of an organisation that has goals including financial sustainability, education and access as well as conservation. As a preventive conservator working in a large and complex scheduled monument, with multiple uses and most of it's collections on permanent open display, the aim is to ensure the palaces interiors and contents survive well into the future. As a manager within a large and complex organisational structure, for a self-funded business spread over six historic sites, it is essential to appreciate that without a sustainable business base there would be no money available to pay for conservation, and ultimately no jobs for conservators at the Historic Royal Palaces!

Activities such as functions, filming, concerts and maintenance can pose a variety of risks to historic objects, particularly if the items are on open display. Physical safeguarding measures can be very effective to protect collections from activities around them, as can managing the behaviour of the people carrying out the activities. Events at the Historic Royal Palaces are numerous and often complex. This means that for long term conservation it is as important to influence the total events programme as it is to plan good conservation measures for a particular activity.

Preventive conservators at Historic Royal Palaces have been working with non-conservation colleagues to create a balance across the aims of the organisation - between the conservation, management and education principles embodied in our Charter and Purpose. We work closely with staff from other departments and with visiting contractors, location managers and suppliers to suggest and recommend ways in which activities can be held at lowest risk to the displays. Often the most effective way to achieve a desired conservation outcome is to approach non-conservator colleagues on their terms - in other words turning a conservation issue into a business one.

2. Background.

The Historic Royal Palaces Agency was set up in 1989 to manage the five unoccupied palaces in London. In 1998 it became a charitable trust, with a Royal Charter and a separate trading company. Prior to 1989, the palaces were run by the then Department of the Environment. The palaces in the care of Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) today are the Tower of London; Hampton Court Palace; Kensington Palace State Apartments, Royal Court Dress Collection and recently Princess Margaret's apartments; The Banqueting House at Whitehall; and Kew Palace, with Queen Charlotte's Cottage – both in Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.

Historic Royal Palaces has a statement of purpose: To manage, conserve, and improve the historic buildings and sites in our care to a standard consistent with their royal and historic status. To educate the public about these historic buildings and sites and about the skills required for their conservation. Our Vision is that we will be the world leader in the care, management and presentation of historic buildings, contents and grounds.

HRP is completely self-funding, receiving no money from the government or public funds. It is a "conservation organisation", which undertakes commercial activities in order to be able to fulfil its conservation duties.

Most of the palaces are open year-round, closing for only three days over Christmas. They receive between them a total of around 2.5 million day visitors per year, plus those who come for evening functions and events. The majority visit the Tower, followed by Hampton Court and Kensington Palaces. During July 2002 the Tower of London saw over 250,000 visitors in a month, and Hampton Court Palace just under 80,000.

As with many historic houses, the core collection contains items with a direct link or provenance to the building, resulting in a generally static collection. Very little is held in store, and most object movement is directly related to loans. There is a policy of continuous display, as objects are shown within their original settings. There is also an operational assumption in favour of keeping all the display areas available to view while the palaces are open. In practical terms this means that we do not have the luxury of a schedule of gallery closures.

Many of the objects, including many tapestries, carpets, state beds and upholstered furniture are shown in their original room settings, on open display. They are separated from the visitor by ropes and stanchions in most areas. In temporary exhibition spaces, and the Royal Court Dress Collection, display cases (some whole rooms) are used. Often ownership of the objects lies with a third party (the major one being the Royal Collection), while the duty of care rests with HRP conservators. External conditions imposed include those of the government indemnity scheme, and our agreement with the Royal Household – embodied in a Memorandum of Understanding.

3. The Impact of Events and Activities

All of the palaces cater for more than simple day visits. Activities and events are diverse in both type and scale and may include the following.

3.1 Costumed Guides

As part of the regular offer for our day visitors, guides in historic costume lead tours and presentations. They also provide a major element of the schools education programme, while there is an emphasis on providing additional activities during school holidays. The costumes can be bulky, requiring more space than modern clothes. Some activities involve large amounts of movement such as dancing, or audience participation, which may greatly increase the quantity and deposition of dust.

3.2 Commercial functions and events

Dinners and receptions for commercial clients form a major revenue stream for the organisation. They are often held in the State Rooms, where tapestries and other textiles remain on display.

3.3 Non-commercial or promotional events

There are also many events which take place within the State Rooms, which are held for purposes other than commercial gain. They may have a similar format to a commercial event but often also involve a greater number of unpredictable elements. These events include community projects as part of the outreach programme; state events; exhibition openings and events to promote HRP's facilities.

3.4 Filming – large and small-scale

As famous landmarks and historic buildings, the palaces attract many film and radio crews involving anything from a single cameraman to a major feature film crew. The palaces have been used as location for a variety of TV documentaries and news stories, both in the UK and abroad. The Tower of London was the setting for the major TV series "Restoration", while Hampton Court has acted as locations for films including "To Kill a King" (2000), "Vanity Fair" and "Stage Beauty"(2004). We must also accommodate our own needs for postcards, photography for guidebooks, building surveys etc.

3.5 Major revenue initiatives:

As a fully self-funding organisation, HRP constantly seeks opportunities for major events which will bring in commercial revenue. Among this type of event are the Hampton Court Flower Show and the Ice Rink at Hampton Court.

3.6 Theatrical performances:

The annual Hampton Court Music Festival has now been running for more than a decade, with an auditorium built in one of the inner courtyards and copious corporate entertaining in the State rooms. There are smaller concerts held at Kensington Palace, the Banqueting House and occasionally at Hampton Court. This year a major anniversary has led to summer performances of Shakespeare at Hampton Court Palace. Our outreach programme often results in a wide variety of performance based activities for groups who would otherwise be unlikely to visit the palaces.

4. Potential Risks

All of these events and activities may take place within the display areas of the palaces, which include furnished interiors, some with decorative painted walls and ceilings. There are canopies of state, state beds and upholstered furniture plus tapestries carpets and numerous other objects of various materials. Although many materials are on open display, the textiles are generally the most sensitive to additional hazards from activities. Particular hazards in this context are dust, light and physical damage.

Of the group of Historic Royal Palaces, Hampton Court Palace has the greatest number of interiors with textiles on open display and is also seen as having the greatest potential for activities over and above the daytime offer. Hampton Court's main buildings cover over eight acres, with more than 70 display rooms in six defined visitor "routes". During 2003, Hampton Court Palace hosted three feature film location shoots and around 20 smaller filming or photography events; approximately 45 corporate functions; one music festival lasting two weeks with corporate hospitality each night; one flower show; one floral display in the state rooms over Mothers Day; Costumed activities including kids treasure trails, historic cookery and Tudor dancing over each school holiday period; the opening of two new exhibitions – one temporary and one permanent.

While the principle of conservation is embodied in the purpose of the organisation, HRP conservators may need to negotiate for certain conservation measures where there is room for debate about the levels of risk involved or there are multiple options to manage the risks. The conservators take a different approach to negotiating for conservation measures according to the scale and complexity of the event or activity proposed. The broad parameters for events and activites at the Historic Royal Palaces are fixed by a memorandum of understanding between HRP and the Royal Household. The

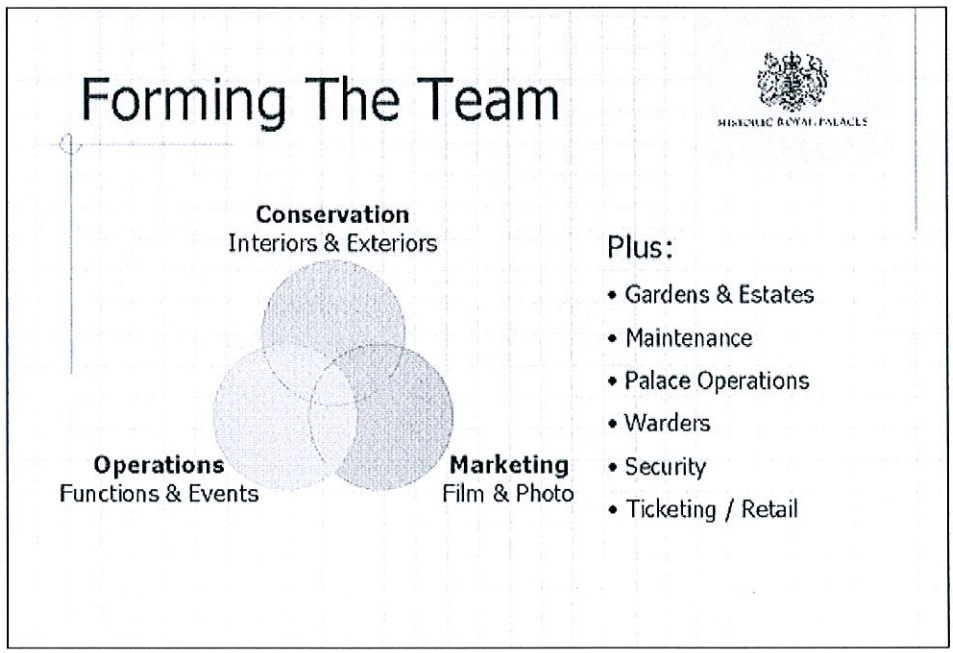
memo defines the relationship between the two organisations, including the type and location of permitted events. There are also externally imposed conditions for rooms containing loan objects covered by the government indemnity scheme. Beyond these conditions HRP is free to make decisions about events, within the remit of it's charter and purpose.

Many events have a routine format, or will be generally very low-key. In these cases, HRP conservators produce and distribute operational guidelines to cover "predictable" situations. These are combined with 1:1 communication with key contacts in other departments. Conservators also provide direct supervision of contractors working in sensitive display areas. These may include caterers, florists or maintenance contractors "Unusual" risks from this type of event are identified on a case-by-case basis, with a combined planned and reactive approach.

5. Negotiating to minimise risk

While many events can be managed as routine, with predictable formats, others are larger and altogether more complicated. Each event is unique, with a high potential for revenue. There are also high potential risks to the collection. A useful approach is to use risk analysis to define and describe conservation risks. Because this approach is routinely used to manage health and safety, formalised through legislation, it is easily understood by managers of all disciplines.

Most events are originated by the Conservation or more commonly the Marketing or Operations departments. Some do originate directly from the Chief Executive Officer(CEO) or the trustees, particularly state events. It has been increasingly recognised across HRP that there is a need for an agreed process for decision-making and managing events. There is a perception of continuously "reinventing the wheel" and there is little consistency regarding which staff across the organisation are involved in each event proposal. HRP conservators are also concerned to achieve influence over the full "portfolio" of activities. Given this frustrating situation, the conservators took the initiative to form a cross-departmental working group to agree a new strategy for deciding upon, planning and managing all types of events within the palaces.



We already spent significant energy negotiating directly with key members of these three teams, and making recommendations on a case-by-case basis. Usually the assumption was that the event would proceed, and that we would manage it. Now the assumption is that small-scale events will proceed if they meet agreed criteria. For larger scale events Conservation, Operations and Marketing departments will produce joint recommendations that are then put to their three directors – or to the full executive board for a decision.

6. Building the Team

An existing HRP training opportunity was used to get the initial team together, from which point a business case for a project was written and presented to the directors for approval.

Our agreed project purpose is for HRP to

- Be able to consistently respond to and make decisions about proposals for unusual / large-scale / high impact events.
- Effectively plan and manage such events.
- Establish safeguards ensuring all appropriate parties are involved.

So far the team have produced a draft process for deciding on event proposals. A consistent "core" team, with representatives from each key department, will receive all event requests and assess their suitability for the organisation against pre-agreed principles. If the event appears feasible at this stage, case-specific business & conservation risks are then assessed and recommendations for accepting or rejecting the proposal are presented by the three departments in a joint document to the directors for a decision to be made.

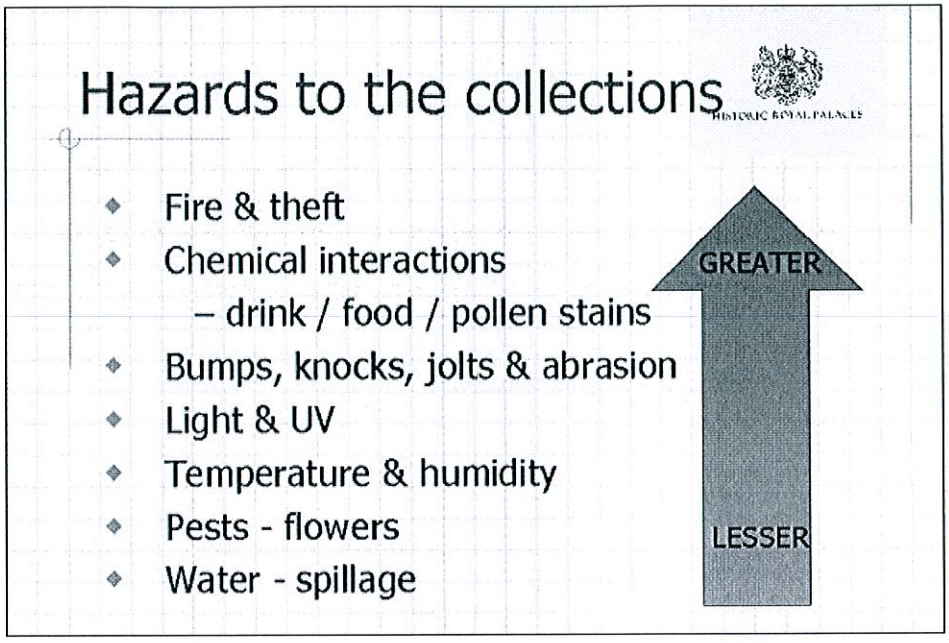
Once an event is accepted it will need to be well planned and managed. The project involves mapping a process for planning events and activities at the palaces. A larger team than the initial "core" team, involving specialists from all departments are involved at key stages as needed according to the event type. The project team are responsible for agreeing and defining roles and responsibilities throughout the process. There has been unanimous agreement that in addition to the traditional "wash-up" meeting after a major event, it is vital that any decisions and lessons from that meeting are recorded centrally to avoid the pitfalls of staff turnover across the organisation.

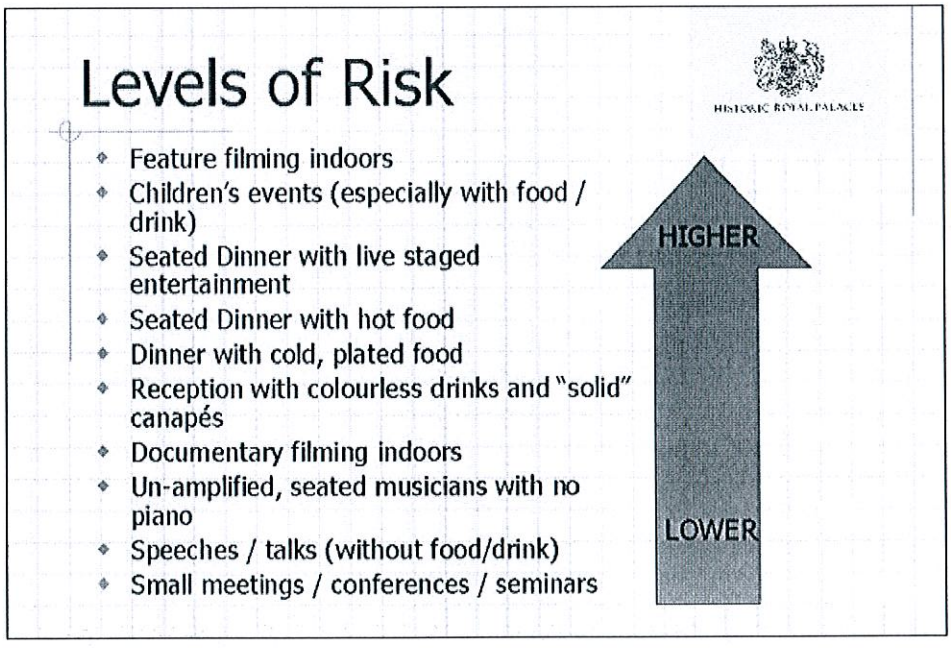
As mentioned earlier, in order to establish safeguards, the risk analysis model is used. Different activities present different hazards and have different levels of risk of damage. For example the logistics of the space or room used will affect the level of risk e.g. its size, ease of access etc. Also the nature of historic contents will influence the risk level, e.g. whether items are on open display, are made of vulnerable materials, or have a high "value". The aim is always first to avoid risks and if this is not possible to reduce them.

7. Avoiding hazards and risks

Examples of hazards to the collections may be listed in relation to each other according to how great their impact would be:

In a similar way, different types of activity may be shown in such a way that the overall risk of damage (from one or more of the above hazards) is shown in relation to each other.





Having assessed the hazards and risks posed by various event types, we were able to formulate recommendations for the necessary expansion of the functions and events business. Our recommendations included the following:

- Develop exterior function events
- Hold larger, but fewer events as these are well planned
- Hold events in "empty" rooms, with tours to "display-rich" rooms
- Ensure safeguarding measures are in place

- Extend conservation responsibilities to front of house staff
- Explore opportunities to expand conference facilities.

8. Conclusion

To date this new cross-departmental approach has been successful. By ensuring that conservators are included in the earliest planning stages of an event it is easier to influence the development of the activity to manage potential risks to the collections. Through the use of a risk-analysis model, conservation concerns may be quantified in ways that are meaningful to non-conservators. Identifying activity types by their overall impact on the collection and describing objects or rooms according to their sensitivity to those activities enables a consistent approach from each conservator in the team when considering a potential event. Ideally, through negotiation, high-risk elements of an activity can be completely avoided. Protection measures, either physical or procedural may also be planned to safeguard the objects and interiors without the need to remove them from display.

Heat And Dust: George II's Travelling Bed Traumas.

Maria Jordan
Textile Conservator
Historic Royal Palaces

1. Introduction

Opening up Hampton Court Palace was the brainchild of Queen Victoria. In November 1838 the new Queen ordered the "Palace should be thrown open to all her subjects without restriction, and without fee or gratuity of any kind" (Law 1891:350). There were gloomy forebodings from the residents of the Palace and from those in charge of the buildings and contents "if the general public were admitted without some restriction, neither the Palace nor its contents would any longer be safe... (with) visions of an insulting rabble.... marching through the State Apartments, tearing down tapestries, wrecking the furniture, and carrying off the pictures." It was felt that this could only be negated if the contents of the Palace were safeguarded by "an army of warders and guardians" (Law 1891:351). Fortunately, "access for all" turned out to be less harmful than expected and the contents of the Palace remain intact!

Nevertheless, the Palace and its contents have now been on open display for over 150 years with a steady stream of visitors[1].

Year	Numbers of Visitors	Source
1839	115,971	Law 1891: 361
1840	122,339	Law 1891: 361
1841	147,740	Law 1891: 361
1842	179,743	Law 1891: 361
1851	350,848	Law 1891: 362
1862	369,162	Law 1891: 362
1889	239,000	Law 1891: 363
1995	584,914	HRP
1999	678,583	HRP
2003	511,432	HRP

The contents of the Palace have therefore been subject to:

- Visitors, in increasing numbers
- Dust and dirt generated by the visitors
- Handling from moving the contents to different locations when displays were altered
- Changes in the environmental conditions, such as those associated with the installation of heating systems or lighting systems.

[1] Before the beginning of the railway to Hampton Court in 1849, the number of visitors ranged from 150,000 to 180,000 per year. The average for the subsequent two decades was about 220,000 with a disproportionate increase during the Exhibition years of 1851 and 1862. The summer was, in the early years, the most popular period to visit, whereas today it is the Easter period.

2. Different Displays of George II's Travelling Bed.

This is the last remaining royal travelling bed with all its original hangings, which are in a red damask of large, foliate design. As such, it is now unique and considered an extremely important piece of furniture in the Collection, although when the Court was at Hampton Court Palace in the 18th Century over 30 such beds are known to have been in use.

It is not documented when this bed originally went on display. However, there is photographic evidence of the bed in various different locations around the Palace: in the Queen's private dining room in her private Apartments in 1889; displayed along side Queen Caroline's State Bed and Queen Anne's State Bed; pre-1920 in the Queen's Private Apartments; again in another room of the Queen's private apartments in the 1970s; and finally, today in the Tudor part of the Palace in the Cumberland Suite, in the Green room.

The effects of these moves, the visitor numbers and the dust inevitable from open display have taken their toll on the textiles. The damask is no longer the robust, lustrous fabric of the 1720s, though its colour and pattern is still distinct and offers the visitor an appealing and engaging view of a royal travelling bed. The damask has been patched and reused over the years to prolong the life and look of the bed.

Over the years of display, the damask has been supported with stitching and adhesive techniques and it is due to this care that the bed remains one of the few beds that can boast that it has all its original hangings.

3. Past and Present Conservation Treatments

At each stage, the textile specialists have tried to find the best way of supporting the increasingly fragile damask and, through careful observations and documentation, the previous treatments can be discerned. The stitching technique applied, from the beginning of the 20th Century, to most of the furnishings at Hampton Court Palace was "diaper couching". This consisted of a lattice of laid threads caught down at the intersections of the threads. This technique proved very effective in stabilising the textile but the thread and needles used were intrusive and ultimately damaging. The holes left by this technique can be seen clearly on the viewing right head curtain of the travelling bed.

By the 1960s, the damask was in need of further support. During this period, adhesives were beginning to be used by the textile conservation profession as an alternative for supporting fragile textiles. The curtains were sandwiched between dyed adhesive (polyvinyl acetate) coated net. A report in the Glasgow Herald of 1971 reviews this treatment "the results, however are disappointing: the fabric hangs stiffly and is not wearing well".

By 1983 this treatment was beginning to fail. The bed had been moved several times and with the handling and environmental changes, the adhesive bonds had begun to fail. This treatment was therefore reversed and a new thermoplastic treatment was carried out, this time with a dyed net coated in Mowilith DMC2, a copolymer of vinyl acetate and dibutyl maleate, on the obverse face and a silk crepeline, similarly coated on the reverse face. Twenty years later, the curtains were again in need of support as the adhesive was failing.

Method

Samples, measuring 13.5cm x 4.5 cm, of the support fabric overlaid with damask fragments were stitched in a long strip to ensure the tension of the stitching was as similar as possible to the curtains. Similarly, the net was laid over the strip and stitched in grid lines. Running stitches were worked around the outer edges to stop the net flapping in the Xenotest®.

The samples were cut to required size using a template of the Xenotest® sample holder. In total 12 stitched samples were made, two as controls and ten to be aged.

Two samples were to be aged to the same date, so that reading of colour change and changes in tensile strength could be compared and averaged as appropriate. Each age period would have Sample A and Sample B.

The length of time needed for each sample to be aged to 25years, 40 years, 60 years, 80 years and 100 years was calculated and a time line established.

To age a sample to 100 years, 350 hours would be required if the sample sites rotated but only 175 hours if the sample sites remained fixed. As the Xenotest® was available for one week[6], it was decided that only ten samples would be tested (10 stitched samples) for up to 100 years rather than 20 samples (10 stitched and 10 adhered) for only 50 years.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Colour Change

Using a Spectrophotometer Minolta CM508i, readings of each sample were taken before ageing and after ageing. It was set to take readings of L*, a* and b* so that "E could be calculated.

The net and the silk support were dyed using Ciba Geigy dyes. The smooth silk dupion was scoured in the washing machine at 30°C and then dyed with Lanaset dyes

Bordeaux b 1.04
Brown g 1.04 with a 2.08 depth of shade

While the net was also scoured in the washing machine at 30°C and then dyed with Lanaset dyes:

Red g 1.18
Bordeaux b 0.66
Grey g 0.033 with a 1.873 depth of shade

As the samples aged,

- The samples became lighter and the L* function rose
- The a* function (the red to green axis) fell, representing the loss of red and move towards the green
- The b* function (the yellow to blue axis) fell for the damask, representing the loss of yellow and move towards the blue.
- The b* function rose for the support silk, representing a loss of blue and move towards the yellow.

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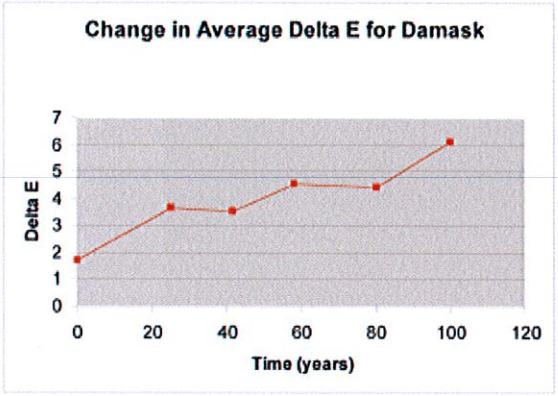
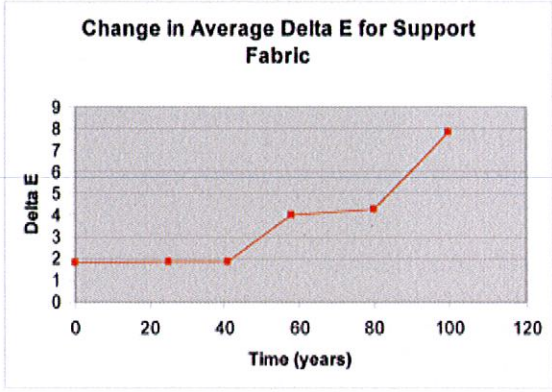
6 from 22nd January to 29th January 2004

The overall result was a gradual lightening of the samples to 100 years but the net, fragment, silk monofilament thread and support appear to have faded relative to each other. This is borne out in the change of ΔE (Graphs 1 &2) for the damask and the silk support[7].



Graph 1



Graph 2

The graphs show that the fading of the support is more pronounced which is to be expected as it is a newer fabric. Nevertheless the dyes are stable for the first 40 years where no change is seen. The first change is between 40 and 60 years and a more dramatic one between 80 and 100 years; a total of 6 ΔE. The damask's fading is more gradual over the light exposure equivalent to100 years; a total of 4 ΔE.

Despite this, at 100 years, the solid fragments and the loose weft fragments have aged in line with the support.

4.4.2 Stitching

Visually, the stitching remained intact to 100 years on the composite samples. On all the samples, the monofilament thread held the fragments and fibres in place.

The A samples were taken apart, removing the net to look more closely at the fibres and the stitching thread. After tensile strength testing, under a microscope (x 400), the monofilament silk thread was found to have broken at an angle for the 25 year aged sample but straight across when aged to the light exposure equivalent of 100 years.

4.4.3 Tensile Strength Test

A preliminary test was made of the support fabric, unaged, alone and it was found to be very strong and tore in a very unusual way. It was therefore decided to cut the A samples into three and test each sample and take an average reading.

Initially, the strength of the composite sample lay in the support fabric and as the jaws of the tensile strength test pulled apart, the extension of the support silk and net was very similar. In only one case did the net break with the silk support. This is undoubtedly due to the weave structure of the net as the amount of stretch in the net is considerable. However once it is distorted and it will not regain its previous shape. (Figure 1)

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[7] A change of 1 to 2 ΔE equates with a just perceptible colour change to the naked eye.

2. On –site Survey

2.1 Star Chamber

Research within the Little Castle began on the ground floor of the castle where the principal reception rooms had been fully fitted with fairly ornate oak panelling. It was relatively simple to establish the original and later painted schemes which had been applied to these rooms. However it proved much more difficult to unravel the original decoration of the grander rooms on the first floor.

The Star Chamber would have been the 'Great Chamber' of the Little Castle and as such would have been the grandest public room in the building. The window walls of the Star Chamber are lined with extremely ornate panelling which is inset with figurative painting, while the inner walls are lined with very plain panelling, giving the room a very unbalanced appearance. This arrangement had led to speculation that sections of the original panelling, which matched that on the window wall, had been removed from the Little Castle. The existing plain panelling was thought to have been fitted by the Rev Hamilton Gray, the local vicar who occupied the Little Castle from 1835-1883.5 Examination of an inventory drawn up in 1676 revealed that at that date the room had been hung with *'4 peces of hangings'.6* These had presumably hung on the inner walls of the room, so perhaps the inner walls had not been originally fitted with panelling.

Surveys of various royal palaces drawn up after the Civil War c1650 contain detailed descriptions of their interiors after the furniture and hangings had been removed. The survey of Theobalds Palace provides a fascinating room by room tour of the building. It reveals that while rooms such as the Long Gallery and the Presence Chamber were fully fitted with panelling the more important rooms such as the King's withdrawing room and the King' Bechamber were only partially fitted with panelling, *'One room called the Kings Bechamber part of it very well wainscotted with special work, the rest of the room fitted for hangings ... '7* Was the fitting out of the Star Chamber following this established convention? Was the panelling on the inner walls indeed a later addition.?

However examination of paint samples removed from the panelling revealed traces of a utilitarian grey paint found elsewhere within the castle and known to date from the early seventeenth century, proving that the panelling was part of the original fitting out of the room. Perhaps the addition of plain oak panelling, behind the original hangings, at Bolsover was an added refinement to provide additional insulation.8

And so it was finally established that the Star Chamber had been originally partially hung with expensive hangings. The plain oak panelling which was not intended to be viewed had been painted using a cheap grey paint. Paint research also established that the ceiling of the Star Chamber had been painted blue and gilded, the cornice had been decorated in an expensive copper resinate glaze and the ornate panelling on the window wall had been grained and gilded. It was discovered that some elements within the room retained their original early seventeenth-century decorative finishes. English Heritage decided to re-present the room to its original c1620 appearance. This involved careful conservation to remove overpaint from certain elements (the frieze and dado panels) and recreating historic finishes on other others elements (the ceiling). The vital element missing from this recreation of the original scheme was of course the original hangings. It was not part of the current presentation policy for the Little Castle to furnish any of the rooms (and we could not afford expensive tapestries) and so it was

decided to paint the oak panelling using the original cheap grey paint which was never intended to be seen, hidden as it was behind the hangings.

And so today the Star Chamber still presents the visitor with an unbalanced but certainly more informed appearance. It is explained to visitors that the most important decorative feature of the room, four large tapestries, have been lost.

2.2 The Marble Closet

Investigation of the small room off the Star Chamber - the Marble Closet - proved to be as equally perplexing. Originally fitted with a flat plaster ceiling and conventional window c1616, the room had been refitted c1619 with a distinctive black and white marble vaulting, chimneypiece and chequered floor. The original window had been replaced with a balcony accessed through a French window. These radical alterations brought the Little Castle abreast of the latest Italianate fashions being introduced to the London Court by Inigo Jones after 1615. Fortunately, a design proposal for the scheme drawn up by the architect John Smythson has survived which suggests that the walls of the closet were intended to be covered with hangings.9

The walls are lined with softwood and again it had been assumed that this had been added during the nineteenth century by Rev.Hamilton Gray. However, examination of the panelling revealed that it bore traces of an expensive green copper resinate glaze, a decorative finish which became obsolete after the eighteenth century, suggesting that the softwood panelling was in fact part of the c1619 fitting out of the room.

Here again the surveys of the royal palaces carried out by Cromwell's agents provided useful contextual information. The survey of Wimbeldon House carried out by John Caley in 1649 revealed that like Theobalds, all of the finer rooms hung with tapestries were partially fitted with oak panelling, with the exception of one room – *'the lord's chamber'*. This was described by Caley as *' a room intended for hangings and for the purpose set around with slit deale* (softwood).10 This suggests that the King's Chamber room was fully lined with softwood like the Marble Closet at Bolsover. Could this mean that the Marble Closet had originally been fitted with hangings? The 1676 inventory records that the room was fitted with a *'sett of cremson taffetie hangings'*. Had these hangings been based on those depicted in Smythson drawing 11

Closer examination of the softwood panelling revealed that the green glaze had only been applied to specific areas of the panelling – less than 20% of the total surface area. This suggested that the room had been fitted with hangings which had exposed sections of the softwood panelling, such as the areas flanking the chimneypiece, the window wall.

English Heritage commissioned Annabel Westman12 to assist in determining the design of the original hanging of the textiles. It was discovered that the upper members of the panel frames had been replaced in 1976 and all evidence of the original fixing holes had been lost. But by careful examination of the original Smythsons drawing and the placement of the green glaze, it was possible to suggest how these hangings would have been arranged within the closet. They were probably suspended on rings hung on metal poles between the corbels. Full scale trials on site demonstrated how the fabric naturally fell below the corbels exposing those areas that had been painted with the green glaze. As Westman allowed the fabric to fall the length of the panelling we all felt we were watching the Smythson drawing coming to life.

2.3 Original Hangings

Documentation suggests that the original tapesties and hangings within the Little Castle were retained into the eighteenth-century. An inventory taken in 1717 lists vast amounts of rotting fabrics and furnishings, creating a rather dismal picture of decayed grandeur: *'thirty eight cusheons moth eaten... two moth eaten feather beds... three old ragged curtains four rotten feather beds .. '13* The hangings in the Star Chamber and the Marble Closet, if they had not been discarded before, were certainly removed by the time the Little Castle was refurbished by the Countess of Oxford c1750. The Countess painted the plain oak panelling in the Star Chamber in a light blue paint, and applied the same colour to the ceiling to create a more unified scheme. As a replacement for the discarded tapestries she hung the portraits of the twelve Caesars to decorate the expanse of plain panelling.

The removal of the worn hangings from the Marble Closet would have revealed the partially painted softwood panelling. The room would have looked extremely unfinished. The Countess of Oxford painted the softwood panelling in the same light blue paint which she had used in the adjacent Star Chamber.

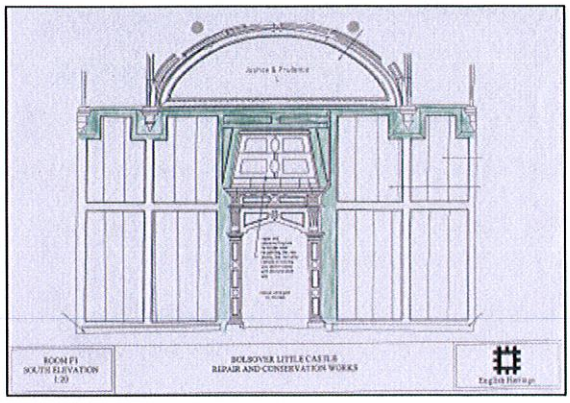
If English Heritage wished to recreate the c1619 scheme in the Marble Closet it faced a dilemma. It was agreed that it would be extremely problematic to present the partially painted softwood panels without hangings. The decision was made – a slight revision of the original policy - to attempt to recreate the '*cremson taffetie hangings'*. A cheaper silk was selected rather than an expensive taffeta, and it was understood that these hangings would be sacrificial as they would not doubt suffer some degree of handling by the public.

3. Conclusion

The completed schemes have been in place now for two years and English Heritage may now evaluate the success of the chosen presentation options. Visitors to the Little Castle who choose not to listen to the audio guide, which provides a explanation of the room presentation, may still be perplexed by the lop-sided appearance of the Star Chamber. Perhaps an illustration, placed in the room which gives some suggestion of the impact of four large pieces of tapestry on the inner walls, may improve understanding to the original scheme. The crimson hangings in the Marble Closet certainly bring the room to life (and provide a wonderful hiding place for children). But without the *'2 backt Chares; 2 couches with taffity quilts; 1 picttur; 2 stands & 1 table; 1 looking Glas'14* which also furnished the room c 1619, the hangings have an undue prominence within the room.

English Heritage may choose at some future date to alter the presentation of these rooms, taking care of course to preserve the surviving decorative finishes and respecting all the archaeological evidence of subsequent periods. At the moment it is investigating the possibility of reinstating the original French window in the Marble Closet. The research we carried out has without doubt improved our understanding of the Little Castle. Before we were in a state of blissful ignorance but now that we are more informed we can begin to mourn for the lost hangings which until recently we did not know we had lost.

Annabel Westman determining original hanging method of the textiles in the Marble Closet.



Elevation indicating location of green paint.

Exterior of the Little Castle Bolsover.

North Wall. Ornate panelling.

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- The Attingham Summer School of 1995 played an important part in my enlightenment, special thanks to Annabel Westman, Deborah Trupin and Lynn Sorge. I decided to tag on to the end of a group of textile conservators who were sprinting through Hardwick Hall with uncontained excitement to see Bess of Hardwick's embroideries and was converted.
- Beard (1997):1
- Harrison(1887)
- Shirley(1869),pp347-78
- Girouard(1983):22n.20
- BL additional MS 70500 fols 110r – 111 v n d, inventories and accounts fo Bolsover Castle.
- PRO E317 Herts No.26, Parliamentary Survey 1650, Public Record Office
- William Cavendish the owner of Bolsover wrote a poem in which he describes how his servents complained of the cold, "An Epigram on a cold – My Householde hates to liue att Bolsore, NUL PwV 25 fol. 151.v
- RIBA Smythson 111/1 (2)
- Caley (1649):406
- BL Additional MS 70500 fols110r – 111v n d., inventories and accounts for Bolsover Castle. The fact that the fabrics in the Marble Closet were described as a "sett" while those in the Star Chamber called "peeces" may be significant. The term "sett" may suggest a more fitted or tailored arrangement.
- Annabel Westman is a textile historian.
- MS NA DD 4P.39.55, "Inventory of valuation of goods of John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, 1717.
- BL Additional MS 70500 fols110r – 111v n d., inventories and accounts for Bolsover Castle.

Tyntesfield – Open to All.

An approach to conservation projects.
Mary Greenacre, FIIC, AMUKIC.
Historic Property Co-ordinator,
Tyntesfield Estate,
The National Trust.

© National Trust

"In the course of a few weeks, Tyntesfield has become the most famous Victorian house in the country."[1]

1. Introduction

Following the unexpected death of Lord Wraxall in July 2001, the Tyntesfield estate was formally put on the market the following April. It was announced that the contents would be sold by public auction in September 2002. The National Trust rapidly assessed the importance of the estate taking advice from experts and decided to attempt it's purchase. The National Trust had fifty days to raise the funds and to reach a very complex agreement with the executors acting on behalf of the nineteen heirs and beneficiaries. Thanks to amazing and generous support of public and private benefactors the required funds were raised within the time allowed and Tyntesfield and its contents, were saved for the nation.[2]

The extraordinary value of Tyntesfield as a document chronicling the Victorian and Edwardian age is recognised by many. The house, extended and embellished by architect, John Norton

from 1864, reflects the spirit of patronage and enterprise of its builder, William Gibbs. Only four generations of the Gibbs family lived at Tyntesfield. However, remarkably little was lost or changed from generation to generation. It is the tout ensemble *that reflects the true significance of Tyntesfield. This ranges from fabulous seat furniture and carpets by Crace, dresses by Worth to humble servants' linens and the contents of the blacksmiths and carpenters workshops. It is estimated that there are at least 40,000 chattels. The house is listed Grade One as is the garden and park which impacts on the Grade Two listing of the remaining buildings.*

In the past, at Calke Abbey or Chastleton House for example, a new property was closed, emptied of contents, capital repairs were made including re-servicing, research carried out and decisions agreed on the decoration and presentation of the show rooms and conservation of the chattels. Contents were then reinstated and the house reopened, usually three to five years later, with a flourish. It is an effective albeit 'closed' method of management with little identifiable use of the project as a learning tool or giving benefit to any others. It can be argued that this approach might be both cost effective and perhaps the speediest and least frustrating, in view of what we now know at Tyntesfield.

From the start John McVerry, the Tyntesfield Project Director and former Curator for the Wessex Region, and the National Trust trustees saw that Tyntesfield, in its raw state, offered a unique opportunity. The estate could not only be a source of delight to visitors but could also engage with a new audience. This dream of inclusion was feasible due to the relatively good condition of the estate, it's buildings and the majority of the contents and also because of the proximity of a large urban complex. Bristol and its satellites lie within eight miles of Tyntesfield.

The National Trust is determined to involve the public, as well as experts, in the excitement of discovery and in the challenges of conservation. Wherever possible, it is hoped to involve the wider public in the processes necessary to bring the house back to life; for Tyntesfield can not only entertain and inspire, it can offer life-enhancing opportunities to learn without forgetting the National Trust's core purpose of preservation. Tyntesfield as one major project, broken down into interlinking smaller tasks, is similar to the National Trust's past experience. The greatest difference is that there is no identifiable finish date, the project is open-ended.

The aim is to include as many people as possible in the presentation and management of a country estate and historic house using Tyntesfield as an educational opportunity par excellence. *Each step and process of preservation and management is to be examined to make sure that reasonable opportunity is taken to share in the process.*

2. The First Steps

As proof of this commitment, within ten weeks of acquisition, Tyntesfield was open for business, shown 'as found' or perhaps 'as left' by the auction house who had been entrusted with the sale of the contents, with only two official members of dedicated staff and a number of volunteers.

As a public relations exercise this early opening was a huge success. By the time the house closed mid-December 2002, 3,000 people had visited the house. Staff involved with the property were on the point of total exhaustion though elated by having begun the work of making Tyntesfield open and accessible.

In the first full year, from the end March to November to 25,000 visitors came to Tyntesfield. In addition to this assessments were made of the urgent conservation needs of the property. Estimates

were made for the cost of condition reports for the chattels, surveys made of the estate cottage and of initial work necessary to the woodlands and gardens.

3. "A task completed is an opportunity lost"

What we are doing at Tyntesfield is not entirely new. Many museums and galleries have trainees or internships, offering work experience. Some make use of partners to offer a positive experience to people who have been out of the workplace through illness or other reasons. What is different is that from the start each task is examined to understand its potential. A positive culture of inclusion and sharing is at the heart of the project.

Partnerships are being actively sought with a number of agencies as well as local schools and universities. Value added tendering will be used for building projects on the estate. Our vision for Tyntesfield, and it is an achievable one, is that the 19th century estate for the 21st century will be conserved for everyone, that it should be enjoyed and visited, be inspirational and potentially a pivotal experience for changing lives and perceptions.

4. Risk Management

Each project, whether it is the repair of the roof, the restoration of the decorative planting scheme in the Pleasure Grounds, the inventory project or the examination of the condition of the chattels, is subject to scrutiny. Emergency repairs have been carried out to ensure the safety of the property and the visitors.[3] Other tasks are examined and assessed for potential within the vision.[4] A simple form is completed as tasks are identified and if it is agreed that the project will go forward, a more complicated form is used to identify the leader, the person specification for participants and the skills or training which might be necessary to have or provide. A method statement is written at this time and is only as long and detailed as the task requires. Targets are identified and a method of evaluating the programme is agreed. The risk and opportunities are noted as well as the costs and sources of funding. At the end of the project there is a strategic objective monitoring form with simple tick boxes to identify the targets, both internal and those linked to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This ensures that everyone thinks hard about the tasks or projects they undertake and allows for a realistic assessment of the outcome.

The commitment to training and education as a core purpose of the National Trust at Tyntesfield has been the inclusion of an Access and Outreach Officer as part of the team writing the HLF Bid. Such posts are relatively common in museums, however this position has enabled us to ensure that each task is examined for opportunities. However, the final part of the funding depends on the success of a bid to the HLF. This will ensure the long term preservation and management of the estate. A condition of the grant is an embedded commitment to education and inclusion, timely and politicised buzz words in today's heritage industry. The real aim is to preserve and protect Tyntesfield for the future.

5. Conclusion

Tyntesfield has given the National Trust an extraordinary canvas to work upon and the opportunity to plan and put into effect a different way of working and the means to target a new audience as well as entertain and inform the traditional visitors to historic houses. This wish to provide active access to the site is driven by the National Trust's New Strategic Plan, which places learning at the heart of the

organisation. In Tyntesfield the National Trust has the opportunity to share excellence and give real life skills to a huge number of people.

The estate will not be a quasi-living history experience but a contemporary estate, championing the acquisition of skills that can be taken back into the wider community. The back bone of the workforce who will undertake much of the conservation and repair work over the coming years will come as either paid or volunteer staff. This vision is far reaching and ambitious, but broken down into projects to be spread over many years, there is no reason why it should not be realised.

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1 Country Life 4th April 2002.

2 Individual donations amount to £9.45m collected in two appeals. The National Art Collection Fund donated £0.10m for the purchase of the moveable contents of the Chapel. English Heritage granted £1.6m and the National Trust 1.57m, the National Heritage Memorial Fund gave £17.43m for the purchase of the estate. The National Trust is seeking a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £20.0m to carry out capital repairs and fund projects.

When the Trust decided to attempt to rescue Tyntesfield it is perhaps appropriate that it turned to the National Heritage Memorial Fund amongst others. The National Heritage Memorial Fund was created as a result of the loss, through lack of public funding, of another Victorian assemblage, Mentmore, which was sold and it's contents dispersed in 1977. Both Tyntesfield and Mentmore were named by Mark Girouard as Victorian houses "at risk" and worthy of preservation.

3 To prove necessity, an analysis must be completed giving justification in one or more of the following categories: efficiency, H&S staff/visitors, conservation, vision, business, legal requirements, access to the project.

4 The National Trust holds one of the greatest and most diverse collections of material of both national and international importance. It has built on traditional methods for the preventative conservation within houses and has published extensively on environmental control, the dangers of wear and tear and more recently on visitor's perception of presentation and on dust. Careful monitoring of the contents of historic properties takes place. The Trust is continually assessing the risk of open display. At the same time the Trust is also looking at the perceptions and feelings of the visitors remembering the houses should be presented "as if a friend has called in on a summer's day". The perilous balance between preservation and access, the latter impossible without the former is a continuous concern.

Poster: Queen Victoria's Travelling Saloon at the National Railway Museum

Irene Greenslade

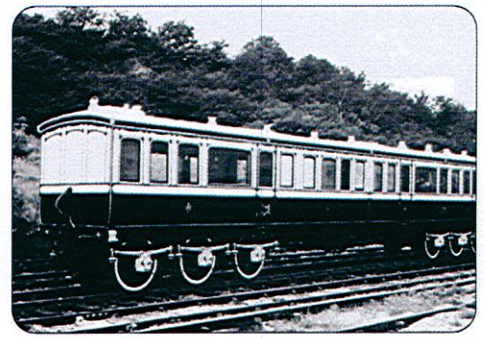
See overleaf

Conserving Queen Victoria's Saloon

on open display at the National Railway Museum (NRM)

CHOO-CHOO!

Each time we arrived on site we had to stop the atmospheric noises and information overload from the tannoy and sound guides



The saloon was built in 1868 as two separate vehicles. In 1895 it was modernised and rebuilt as one vehicle measuring 60' feet in length.

7'10"'

4'

Power for light and tools was on the wrong side of the track

The NRM recorded 73,481 visitors in July 2003. 8000 in one day

Studio Space

Visitor Space

Mind the gap!

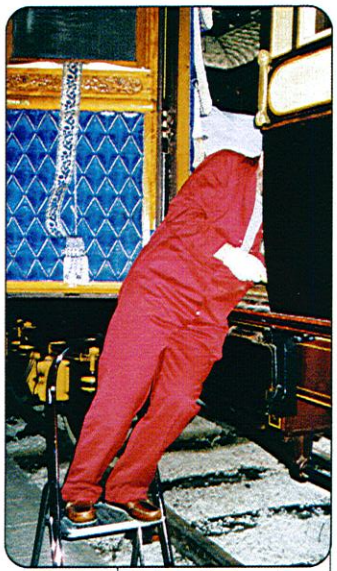
Size

4'

8'

3.5'

Power



The best position is not always the most comfortable

Got it!

Surrounded by fragile textiles

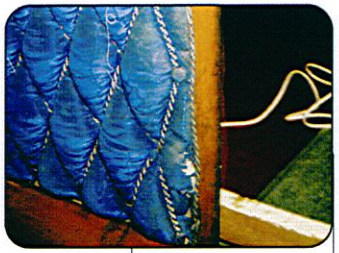
Day Saloon, working on the sofa which was too big to remove

Day Saloon blind bar hanging by a thread before conservation

Ladies Withdrawing room wall by the door before conservation

Day Saloon area above the door before conservation

To facilitate the conservation treatment fixtures and fittings were removed from the carriage.
All 158 items carried through the door and over the gap.



Day Saloon fragile area near door before conservation

The studio

Platform showing area of studio and roped off area

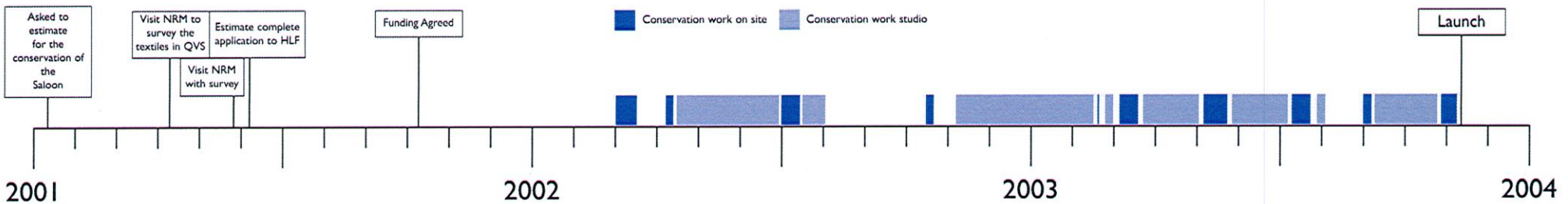
Surface cleaning carpet

Steam cleaning carpet

The visitors were encouraged to talk to the conservators working on site and this proved to be a positive and enlightening experience. It was however distracting and time consuming.

Some visitors required more input than others.

Timeline of conservation



Irene M Greenslade. Accredited Member of UKIC
Textile Conservation Partnership. March 2004