

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • DECEMBER 2017 • ISSUE 73



## A Bestiary reveals its secrets

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### Also in this issue

An intern's year • Apprenticeships in England • Scotland's Engine Shed

## Why expose light-sensitive artifacts to light when they are not being viewed?

0 Lux Behind SmartGlass



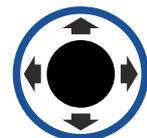
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DECEMBER 2017 Issue 73



## From the Editor

In this issue our CEO reflects on the many ways in which the digital world is important to the world of conservation. We also have a practical example of the intersection of the two with the article from Aberdeen University about the digitisation of its wonderful medieval bestiary. Author Louisa Coles provides plenty of useful advice, showing what a positive role a conservator can play in such a project. And isn't our front cover from the Bestiary just fabulous!

In Practice comes from Greece this time around. It is lovely to hear from readers and authors aboard and the internationalism of conservation is a theme identified by our Membership Manager in the latest episode of his travels.

Closer to home, in Scotland we welcome the advent of a new national building conservation centre which opened in the summer with a mission to foster understanding, education and training. And from England we bring you an update on what is happening with the development of conservation apprenticeships.

Finally, conferences are in the air. Look out for the latest on the Book and Paper Group event next year and Icon's triennial conference in 2019.

## Lynette Gill



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ISSN 1749-8988

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Cover photo  
An image from The Aberdeen Bestiary: f63, Of Bees. MS 24.  
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### Deadlines for adverts and editorial

For the February 2018 issue  
Thursday 30 November 2017

For the April 2018 issue  
Friday 2 February 2018

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# professional update

## From the Chief Executive

**Alison Richmond ACR FIIC on conservation, cultural connections and social media**



Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, John Glen, has called for the culture and technology sectors to work together to drive new forms of audience engagement, which is also a central theme of the #CultureisDigital project of the newly renamed Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

He calls for collaboration between the cultural sectors and technology sectors 'to

unleash the creative potential of technology and boost the capability of cultural organisations to support our future economy and the wellbeing of the country.' It is, as he says, revolutionizing the way we experience the world. There can be no doubt that digital technology is hugely important in increasing access to culture and heritage. Technologies are developing at an ever-accelerating rate and they need exciting and engaging content to appeal to current and future users.

Conservators and heritage scientists are in a privileged position to be able to provide just such stimulating content and to exploit the latest ways of getting the messages across to reach new audiences. To see this in practice we need look no further than Icon's first ever Twitter conference #IconTC that took place last month!

Managing shipwrecks, moving a mastodon, the meaning of craftsmanship, and the conservation challenges of a monster 'fatberg' were just some of the topics illustrating the huge diversity of research, skills and practice in our field – so many with public appeal. The brainchild of Pieta Greaves ACR, Linda Spurdle and Jenni Butterworth, the beauty of this conference was that it was open to anyone to follow and to engage with professional conservators and scientists in real time. If you were actually following the conference, you may have felt like me.... In a heightened state of awareness trying to grasp all of the ideas and images as they popped up on the screen – not to mention attempting to respond! But it was an invigorating experience and one that I hope will become a feature of the Icon calendar.

As Marshall McLuhan said back in 1964 'The medium is the message' and the 140-character format inspired really creative ways to convey serious messages and make them memorable. Jane Henderson's twitter paper was clearly intended to explain conservation to the lay person in straightforward language with highly engaging visuals, each tweet having the simplicity of a haiku. Cardiff Conservation used an unforgettable video of a moth playing the bongos to illustrate an infestation of a West African Drum collection. Donna Yates pushed the message home to conservators about their role in protecting heritage with watercolours by Joy Lynn Davis beautifully invoking the original locations of looted sculptures of Kathmandu.

I am very excited about the idea that this conference, with over two million 'impressions' (an impression is made every time a tweet is viewed), has travelled along networks and reached people who may not otherwise have come across our work. It is not possible with Icon's current technology to know exactly what the demographics are. We do know that people participated from all over the world, with approximately 20% from outside the UK. What we can say is that we are reaching well beyond our membership. Using the responses to our 2015 membership survey we can estimate that of our over eight thousand Twitter followers only about five hundred and fifty are members of Icon.

Collaboration and new technologies were also themes at the recent launch of the new University College London (UCL) BEAMS Heritage Science and Engineering Network. This new research network fosters collaboration between the faculties of the Built Environment, Engineering Sciences, Mathematical and Physical Sciences. The use of technology to engage people was highlighted in the keynote speech by Professor Stefan Simon, Director of Global Cultural Heritage Initiatives at the Yale's Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in his talk 'Sustainable Management of Change – The challenge to preserve our cultural heritage'. He said that 'conservation has to be about people who are connected to and have a degree of ownership of heritage'.

I firmly believe that this is our biggest challenge and that conservators and heritage scientists have a very important role to play in making these connections. Our Twitter conference has demonstrated that the conservation and heritage science professions have embraced social media. Let's keep working to extend our social networks by stimulating interest in and inspiring commitment to preserving our cultural heritage.



Belfast Lough

## THE ICON CONFERENCE 2019

You will all have heard the news by now that in 2019 Icon is heading to Belfast for our triennial international conference!

As the first fundamental detail to be sorted, the choice was an important one that was subject to careful consideration from a variety of different angles. Where are there local members? What distance and travel time would be acceptable for our delegates? Where could we stage a conference and ensure reasonable costs for accommodation? And underpinning it all, what were our broader objectives for the event, and what influence might the choice of location have on our ability to achieve these?

We knew we needed to underscore our commitment to regional diversity, while providing scope to engage our existing networks and consolidate new ones. We needed an attractive destination that would be fun to visit, where we could find a suitable conference venue, where there would be a wide range of options for tours and evening events, and places to stay in the city that were close to all the action.

The scales were carefully weighed, and in the end the answer was obvious – it was finally time for Icon to head to Belfast!

Belfast is well-connected and a short flight from major cities across the UK and, crunching the figures, we realised that many delegates had endured far longer train journeys at far greater expense to attend Icon's previous triennial conferences. We also realised that this would be in keeping with the rhythm we had established before, visiting a different home country each time. We also knew there was a vibrant

### The city of Belfast



local heritage and conservation scene – one we were keen to explore.

Over the next year, we will actively be engaging with our members and partners to work out the full programme and related events. It promises to be a very exciting time – watch this space!

**Michael Nelles**  
Membership Manager

## GOODBYE TO THE STANDARD CONTRACT

Icon has up to now offered the template for a standard contract to be used by members who would be able to adapt it to their particular needs and circumstances.

This standard contract was last reviewed in 2010, so we realised the time had come for a fresh look, and we took legal advice to make sure the standard contract was still safe for use by members. However, the review concluded that the standard contract is no longer fit for purpose.

One of our Trustees, Frances Graupner, a lawyer experienced in contract law, advised us that there are significant risks associated with template contracts because they are all too often used in their original form without appropriate customisation or with amendments that may create risks. Accordingly, the standard contract template has now been withdrawn and is no longer available on our website.

However, we recognise that the standard contract was a valuable resource for members. As an alternative to the provision of a standard contract, Icon will instead offer members a checklist that will help them to develop their own contracts by working as efficiently as possible with their own legal advisors.

By developing this checklist tool for members to use, members will be able to give thorough instructions to their legal advisers and therefore obtain a sound personalised template for themselves. This will ensure that Icon members will be in a better position to contend with any problems they might encounter with clients and reduce the risks associated with any complaint or lawsuit brought against them.

Frances is developing this checklist with the help of Dr Clare Finn ACR, who brings her long experience as an independent conservator trading with terms and conditions. The aim is to offer training and to review the checklist regularly so that members are kept up to date on developments in contract law.

An announcement will be made as soon as the checklist becomes available. In the meantime, please get in touch with me with any comments, questions or suggestions.

**Alison Richmond** CEO

## CONSERVATION APPRENTICESHIPS

### Latest Developments from the Working Group

In August, the Icon website featured an update on the development of trailblazer apprenticeships – the Government's review of work-based education programmes -

and the opportunities that this presented to the conservation profession. Since then much work has been taking place to bring these efforts to fruition.

### **The context**

The Government-led review of vocational training has resulted in significant development in the delivery of apprenticeships. Previously led by training *providers*, the focus now has been to encourage the development of *employer-led* groups to develop what are known as 'Standards', which effectively set the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of someone who is able to complete a particular job role. Off the back of these 'Standards', employers are then able to identify training providers to select the appropriate education and training programmes to enable their apprentices to complete the programmes and reach the required level.

### **Icon's role**

Icon has been working on the development of new Apprenticeship Standards for the conservation profession for the past two years. However, this ratcheted up a gear in April this year with the formation of the Conservation Trailblazer working group. The group includes representatives from across the conservation profession, from national institutions and regional museums as well as from the private sector. The role of the working group has been to identify and develop Standards which are then to be consulted on by the wider membership.

The working group have been focused on developing two Standards: one for the role of Conservation Technician at Level 4 (equivalent to the first year of university) and a Master's Degree Level Apprenticeship for the role of conservator (Level 7). Since August much work has been taking place to develop these Standards, aiming to ensure that both are ready to be delivered by September 2018.

### **Conservation Technician Standard**

In October, the proposal to develop this Standard was approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships (the government organisation tasked with developing and running Apprenticeships), and subsequently the Standard was then sent out for consultation to the Icon membership. At the time of writing the Standard has been submitted for final approval. All being well, it is hoped that final approval for it should be given in the new year. The group will then focus on developing the assessment plan which will set the criteria which a candidate must meet in order to be recognised as a trained Conservation Technician.

### **Conservator Standard**

This Standard is at a slightly earlier stage. The group have agreed that this should be a Degree Apprenticeship, meaning that as part of completing the apprenticeship candidates will receive a full Master's Degree. Aligning the level of the apprenticeship to recognised industry standards has been essential to ensure that those people completing apprenticeships are able to be competitive in the job market

and that employers are able to ensure that their staff receive the underpinning knowledge at the right level in order to perform at work effectively.

Given this approach, it is vital to ensure that higher education institutions (HEIs) are involved in the development of this Standard from the outset and we are currently identifying two HEIs to take part. The proposal for developing this Standard has been submitted for approval and, once granted, it will then be sent out for consultation amongst the Icon membership.

### **Funding issues**

More widely, the development of apprenticeships themselves has been taking place alongside radical changes to the funding system for apprenticeships, which were introduced in April. Large employers with a pay bill of more than £3 million / year have been paying the apprenticeship levy - a ring-fenced pot which can only be used to support apprenticeship training.

At the same time, all other employers which fall below this threshold (as many businesses in the conservation sector do) must make a 10% contribution to the overall delivery costs. In practice, this means these businesses could potentially contribute £500 towards a training programme costing £5,000 with the government providing the remaining funds.

As things progress we will continue to keep you up to date on the latest developments. Please do also look out for the consultations to ensure that you are able to input into the development of these Standards.

For further information on the development of the Trailblazer Apprenticeship, and to try and cut through some of the jargon please visit: <https://icon.org.uk/conservation/careers-training/trailblazer-apprenticeships>. For any other questions please contact [training@icon.org.uk](mailto:training@icon.org.uk).

*Patrick White*

Training & Development Manager

## **TRAVELS WITH THE MEMBERSHIP MANAGER: Autumn 2017**

### **Conservation Across Borders**

Over a busy summer chock-full of activity and an autumn laden with high-profile announcements, recent Icon events have taken in many of the usual places and then some - hitting Edinburgh, Sudbury, Sevenoaks, High Wycombe, Oxford and indeed London. One thing has caught my eye and been remarkably prevalent throughout all the recent events I've attended: the international dimensions of conservation and how our sector truly crosses borders nearly every day.

International engagement provides energy to maintain the momentum of our sector and is manifested in a variety of different ways. It stems from our engagement with counterpart bodies abroad, our involvement on a personal level with colleagues in other countries, and from the new



Ornate surroundings for the Ceramics & Glass Group conference lunch

platforms upon which we seek to make the most of our interconnected worlds. The challenge for us is to sustain these connections and find ways to work them into our fabric, to bring international ideas into our arenas and to export our own vision for conservation far and wide.

The most prominent international elements operate on a very immediate level when our events and conferences attract delegates from all over the world. This August, I was in Oxford with the Ceramics and Glass Group for their AGM and Conference. The programme was full and diverse, featuring many well-known Icon members and so it is no surprise that audiences came from far and wide to attend, and you can read a review of the event elsewhere in this issue. It attracted a strong international contingent who came not only to engage with Icon members but to present their own work as well. Amongst them was Ariel O'Connor, from the Smithsonian Museum in Washington; George Bailey discussed his experience dealing with radioactive glass and enamels at the Australian War Museum; and Dr Tatiana Shylkova presented her analysis of the results of a project to desalinate ancient ceramics at the Hermitage Museum in Moscow.

International connections also abounded in presentations at the recent 25th Anniversary conference staged by Icon



Michael Nelles  
Membership Manager

organisational member Conservation By Design (CxD). Speakers included many Icon members, and an international contingent travelled to the UK to attend the event and present their papers. Sidonie Lemeux-Fraitot and Cécile Bignon travelled from Montargis in France to discuss their experience coping with the 2016 Girodet Museum flood, and Paul Messier came from the United States to present his experience working to establish the Hermitage Department of Photograph

## CONSERVATION SHORT COURSES

Conservation of Leather  
11-14 December 2017

Art Handling, Disaster Planning and Salvage  
19-22 February 2018

Care of Sculpture in Galleries, Exhibitions and Collections  
26 February-1 March 2018

Conservation of Photographs  
19-22 March 2018

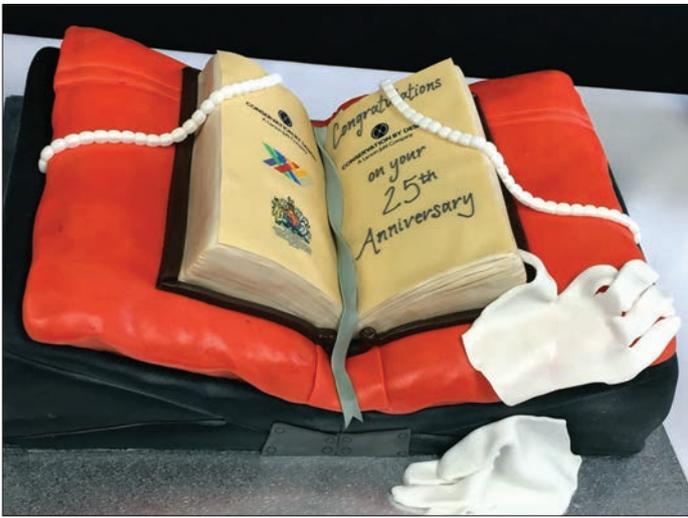


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Conservation in St Petersburg, with substantial international collaboration.

While international delegates travel to the UK to attend events, equally often Icon members go the distance to engage with international networks. At the same CxD event, Icon member Cheryl Porter presented a paper on the long-running project to conserve the historic library at the Seminario Barbarigo in Montefiascone, Italy. Established in 1998, the project sees conservators from all over the world spend a summer at the seminary, working with the built fabric and the collections. The project has also tried and tested new techniques such as vacuum packaging to dry out waterlogged materials, to the point that Montefiascone conservators jumped on a plane after disastrous floods damaged Prague's municipal library and archives in 2002, to lend a hand with their vacuum packaging machines in tow.

Similarly, this year's lecture at the Ethnography Group AGM focussed on the involvement of Icon member Alex Cantrill and colleague Helen Merrett with outreach group Heritage Across Borders (HWB). HWB work to rescue heritage affected by disasters and war, setting up projects to transfer skills and bring people together in areas emerging from troubled times such as Serbia. A key aim of the project was to engage conservators from opposite sides of previous conflicts, to build confidence and rapport between them, and demonstrate that they all work through daily practical challenges typical throughout the conservation world – underlining the commonalities that unite the diverse cultural backgrounds of conservation professionals.



Conservation by Design's anniversary cake

The movement of conservators across borders strongly underscores the complex linkages between the UK and conservation abroad, and in our increasingly interconnected world these dimensions take on a new significance. So how can we make the most of these networks and ensure that we harness all the opportunities for collaboration and engagement? We all know that international travel can be expensive, and it's not always possible to win funding from an institution or employer to cover the costs. So how do we link our national picture to the bigger scene and make sure that we are as outward-facing and ready to engage as we can be?

Some possible solutions are right on our doorstep and, indeed, already in our pockets. Our recent Twitter conference, #IconTC, featured fifty four 'speakers' over two parallel sessions, a full 32% of whom were based outside the UK. Organiser Pieta Greaves had to be mindful of this and skilfully scheduled speakers to ensure that their time slot matched their time zone. This clearly exemplifies the value of social media in providing ready, free platforms to sustain engagement with conservators across the globe: taking our perspective to the world, while importing new ideas from outside.

With the profusion of international connections, our forthcoming 2019 conference in Belfast will be another chance to play this hand as best we can. Nearly 20% of Icon members are resident outside the UK and, naturally, our objective is to ensure that all Icon members retain the advantage no matter where they are. In this way, Icon19 will be another chance to bring the sector together and foster engagement across the board. By carefully calibrating our plans to meet these objectives and working to mitigate barriers to engagement as best we can, we can look to ensure that we remain outward-facing and globally connected in a rapidly changing world, and more easily equip ourselves to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

*Michael Nelles*

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### Book & Paper Group

#### Chairs' Update

There is quite a lot to share this news cycle!

*Committee:* The Committee has signed off on updated Committee guidelines and these are now available on the website - we would welcome any feedback.

Elizabeth Ralph has agreed to take on the role of Co-Chair for the Group. Rebecca Goldie has likewise agreed to take on the Bursaries and Grants Officer position until the next AGM.

*Bursaries and Grants:* The CPD bursaries have been running for one year now and after some feedback from members we have raised the amount to £200 for the November round.

Also, please make sure to keep an eye out for details about the Frederick Bearman Research Grant which we are launching on 11 December. More information is available at: [icon.org.uk/groups/book-paper/fred-bearman-research-grant](http://icon.org.uk/groups/book-paper/fred-bearman-research-grant) and on page 11.

*Social Media:* Nicole Monjeau, our fantastic Social Media Officer, continues to forge ahead with the B&PG's online presence. We now have a Facebook page which can be found @ICONBookPaper.

*Michelle Stoddart and Liz Ralph*  
Co-Chairs, Book & Paper Group

#### BPG Conference 2018

The Icon Book & Paper Group is pleased to announce the theme for our 2018 conference, and to open the call for papers. Please see page 12 for further details of how you can submit an abstract for consideration by our review panel. A call for posters will follow in early 2018.

*Fiona McLees* Co-Chair  
Icon Book & Paper Group Events & Training

### Care of Collections Group

The Care of Collections Group is very pleased to welcome two new members to the committee: Samantha Archetti and Amy Crossman.

Samantha is currently working part-time with the Fitzwilliam Museum Collections Care team on a range of Collections Care projects, including IPM and Lighting. She recently graduated with a Distinction from an MA in Preventive Conservation at the University of Northumbria. She also works as Project Coordinator at the University of Cambridge, including social media, marketing and events management. Samantha previously worked for many years as a restorer and conservator of decorative arts, specialising in 18th and 19th century continental furniture, polychrome, tole, and lacquer.

Amy graduated with an MSc in the Care of Collections from Cardiff University in 2009 and a BA (Hons) Conservation and Restoration from the University of Lincoln in 2004. Amy enjoys working internationally and has worked as a Conservator on archaeological sites in the Middle East. She has developed

training resources in relation to pest management and archaeological conservation. She currently works as a Conservator at the British Library developing eLearning modules raising awareness of collections care within the Library and a Cultural Heritage Specialist Assessor for the British Council for the Cultural Protection Fund. Amy is also a member of the Pest Odyssey Group UK Steering Group.

### Ceramics and Glass Group

#### Conference and AGM

The conference was very successful this year due to the number of vibrant speakers and a fantastic setting. Based in Magdalen College's historic cloister, the delegates were also able to visit many of the college chapels across the city, which are well known for their wonderful stained glass windows. We were particularly fortunate to have presentations by conservators working in the UK, Germany, USA, Australia and Russia.

The AGM was held on September 8 during the conference in Oxford this year. Our committee saw a number of changes, most importantly that our Chair Rachel Sharples stepped down after seven years of dedicated volunteer work. The committee wishes her well in her new endeavours and is very grateful for all the time that has gone into chairing the Group and supporting events for the members.

We also welcomed our newest committee member, Holly Daws, who was elected Treasurer. Dana Norris ACR was elected Chair, Helen Warren Secretary, and Tiago Oliveira Nigel Williams Prize Coordinator. The Group is also fortunate to have continued support from Jasmina Vučković ACR and Ronald Pile as Events Coordinators.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the CGG Events Survey conducted during the summer. From the survey we were able to better understand what subjects our members are most interested in, a valuable asset in events planning. Responses were received from forty six Icon members. The results showed that tours of museum conservation departments were by far the most highly rated. The survey also indicated a high interest in visiting commercial conservation companies, galleries and artists' studios. When asked about potential speakers, Conservators were preferred for lectures and presentations, in comparison to professionals in related disciplines such as Art Historians and Scientists. A range of workshop topics were rated with Colour Gap Filling, Gilding and Stain Removal being the most popular. The committee will strive to plan 2018's CGG events with these results and those from the conference feedback forms in mind.

The conference booklet with abstracts from each presentation is available on the Group's webpage as a PDF under News and Upcoming Events. The conference posters will also be published on the Group page in due course. The committee is now planning events for 2018; the AGM will be held in Farnham and include a visit to the Crafts Study Centre.

**Dana E. Norris** ACR

Icon Ceramics and Glass Group Chair

## ENVIRONMENTAL MONITOR and LOGGER

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### Furniture and Wooden Objects Group

The summer was characterized by collaborations for the Furniture and Wooden Objects Group and September was spent largely at Knole House.

We got together with the Wooburn Craft School for a summer season of successful craft skills courses.

We worked with the Textiles Group to put on an incredibly successful (and very oversubscribed) upholstery conservation course led by Heather Porter. For those who missed out, we are currently working to bring members another opportunity to take this course in the spring – please keep an eye out for the relevant Iconnect. A write-up of the event by Gyril Horn can be found later in this very issue so do please take the time to check it out!

And finally, we worked with the Gilding and Decorative Surfaces Group to host a by all accounts wonderful day of studio tours and talks, again at Knole House. Our thanks to Gerry and his team for hosting us; as well as to the Gilding Group committee (who did most of the organizing!)

As we head into autumn and winter, one of our new committee members, Oliver White, is hoping to organize some smaller studio tour type events – we'll keep you posted.

However, the next scheduled event in our calendar is our AGM. We will once again be holding the event at the William Morris Society by the river in Hammersmith, London. This year the AGM will be held on Friday 23 February, from 6 to 9pm. We have again been lucky enough to secure an interesting speaker and hope that members of all special interest groups will take the time to come and join us for this free and enjoyable event.

The Group also hopes to ratify a set of regulations for the first time at the AGM. The proposed document is available to view on the Group's pages of the Icon website, under 'documents'. If you are a primary or secondary member of the Furniture Group please do take the time to have a look at the document – then please send any proposed amends, alterations or questions to [aowen.cons@gmail.com](mailto:aowen.cons@gmail.com) at least two weeks prior to the AGM.

And finally, the chair of the Group, Alex Owen, will be stepping down at the AGM. This means that elections will be held to find his replacement. If you are interested, please look out for the AGM notice Iconnect or contact Alex at [aowen.cons@gmail.com](mailto:aowen.cons@gmail.com) for more details.

### Heritage Science Group

In September we welcomed Paula Moore to the Heritage Science Group committee as our first Social Media Officer.

Paula currently delivers the social media content for West Dean College, part of the Edward James Foundation, founded by the legendary patron and collector of surrealist art, Edward James. Paula has an extensive background in broadcast media, digital innovation labs and higher education. She has always worked in the creative sector and is committed to #artsforall #artsmatter #heritagematters #craftmatters and supports the work of conservators with independent photography that changes 'dusty perceptions' to drive new engagement with this important work.

We thank Davina Kuh Jakobi for being a worthy contender in the recruitment process and also thank all of those who voted for their participation.

Since July, we've also held two highly successful events. The first, 'Building Conservation Science at Heriot Watt University' on Wednesday 16 August, was hosted by Craig Kennedy at the Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Building Design at Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh. A diverse mix of delegates and speakers participated, with the morning session featuring talks on a range of subjects from timber and glass, to building conservation and ongoing projects. In the afternoon delegates went to the new Lyall Centre, home of the British Geological Survey Building Stones Team, where they learned about stone decay and surveys, saw the stones collection, and saw first-hand the new Centre.

The second, 'Historic document analysis using p-XRF: Pitfalls and Possibilities' on Monday 11 September, was hosted by Helen Wilson and facilitated by Eric Nordgren, both from the HSG committee, at The National Archives, Kew. It was supported also by Icon's Book and Paper Group and is reviewed by Louise Garner later in this Icon News issue. Attendees included conservators and scientists with varying levels of knowledge and experience about the technique. Presentations on XRF theory, use, and training for conservation students explored challenges and potential solutions in the use of p-XRF on historic documents. These topics in addition to data interpretation were further explored in the afternoon's demonstrations. Information including the presentations from the day will be made publicly accessible



Paula Moore, the Heritage Science Group's Social Media Officer

on the HSG's past events page shortly.

Thanks go to all those who helped to organise the events and those who attended for their participation.

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

*Helen Wilson*

### Photographic Materials Group

The Group has recently gone through a few changes and received expressions of interest for the following vacant committee positions. The applicants have been temporarily assigned these roles until our first Annual General Meeting.

Chair: Jacqueline Moon

Secretary: Vanessa Torres

Events Coordinator: Marta Garcia Celma

Events Assistant: Ioannis Vasallos (elected)

Editor and Reporter: Boyce Keay

Communications Officer: Stephanie Jamieson

They join existing committee members:

Reporter: Louisa Coles

Treasurer: Dominic Wall

Social Media Officer: Lorraine Finch

See our blog, twitter feed and Facebook page for all things photographic. To get in touch with queries or content, please send emails to: [pmsg@icon.org](mailto:pmsg@icon.org).

The Colour Photographs Workshop advertised previously will now be held in February 2018. We are planning a range of other events that will be advertised here and through the Iconnect email bulletin, so watch this space!

### Icon Scotland Group

Due to popular demand, Icon Scotland Group hosted a one-day event on 27 October returning to some of the themes and presentations given in the Scotland and Care of Collections Group sessions at last year's popular Icon conference in Birmingham. The day comprised ten presentations from across the UK on a wide range of subjects, with plenty of time for networking. It was held at St. Augustine's Church in central Edinburgh, which proved to be a great venue which we'll be using again.

In mid-November we ran a repeat of the two-day workshop on Book Conservation Skills for Paper Conservators. This course booked up very quickly, so if you missed out but would like to attend a further repeat, please email our events team ([events@isg.co.uk](mailto:events@isg.co.uk)) and we'll try to organise something.

The 20th Annual Harold Plenderleith Memorial Lecture is



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](http://icon.org.uk/groups/book-paper)

**Applications open  
11th December 2017**

**Applications close  
9th February 2018**

coming up on 30 November, with Helen Shenton, the Librarian and College Archivist at Trinity College Dublin, speaking about 'Conservation+, personal reflections on a journey from conservator to director'. The lecture runs from 18.15 - 19.15, with a drinks reception to follow, and Icon Scotland Group's AGM beforehand from 17.30-18.00. Tickets are still available through Eventbrite.

We are currently working on our events programme for 2018, and further information about this will be available shortly.

### 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.

### Textile Group

#### Committee News

The Group's Icon webpage has continued to have postprints of the Textile Group Forums added (1993-2009 so far), which are free to download. The remainder will be added soon.

#### Social Media

The Textile Group is now on Twitter @ICON\_Textiles.

#### 2018 Forum & Call for Papers

Next year's Textile Forum will be held on 21 May (later in the

year than usual) at the Museum of London. The format will be similar to last year, with the morning dedicated to papers related to the theme of textiles and nature and the afternoon session with general papers on textile conservation. The Call for Papers is open and booking for the Forum will be available via Eventbrite in the new year. Please keep an eye out for further details in the Iconnect emails and on the webpage.

#### Events: past & upcoming

This issue of Icon News has a review of the ICOM-CC Triennial Conference, *Linking Past and Future*, which was held in Copenhagen in September. Maria Jordan, who presented a paper, has written about her experience at the conference, which hosted more than a thousand delegates from fifty eight countries around the world.

In early September, the Textile and Furniture Groups co-organised a workshop at Knole in Sevenoaks, Kent. Lead by Upholstery Conservator Heather Porter, the two-day workshop, *Approaching It Differently: Upholstery Conservation*, was well received by a mixture of delegates across textiles, furniture and upholstery, including practising and student conservators. With interest in the course outstripping demand, the course will be re-run in Spring 2018. Many thanks to Heather for delivering another excellent course for us, and to Knole for opening the doors to the showrooms and the fantastic new conservation studio.

Earlier in November, the Textile Group organised an Alexander Technique workshop at the British Library. Many thanks to teachers Victoria Walsh and Kate Fun for leading

the session and to Textile Conservator Liz Rose for providing a tour of the conservation studio.

If you have anything that you would like mentioned in our communications please contact [nadine.wilson@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:nadine.wilson@nationaltrust.org.uk).

## HEALTH, WELLBEING & CULTURAL HERITAGE

### Research, Evidence and Practice

On 12 September, the National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) ran a free early evening briefing session on health, wellbeing and cultural heritage research in collaboration with Collection Care Research at Tate Modern.

The contribution of arts and culture to health and wellbeing has received considerable attention over the last ten years from researchers, funders and government. NHSF held this event to ignite curiosity about how heritage science can contribute to this very active area of research and public policy interest – to underline the importance of arts, humanities and social science research to heritage science.

The NHSF event brought together a panel of four experts to present ‘state-of-the-art’ thinking on the different types of research and evidence used to investigate connections between health, wellbeing and cultural heritage. Dr Tony Munton spoke about cost-benefit analysis as a means of attributing value to activities, Professor Helen Chatterjee talked about the work of the National Alliance for Arts, Health and Wellbeing and experience of social prescribing, Professor Nick Barratt focused on the value of qualitative evidence and story-telling, and Dr Christina Buse presented her research on ‘Dementia and Dress’ in support of the value of tactile engagement.

The audience and panellists took part in a discussion session on the kind of evaluation and evidence that is needed to fill research gaps and strengthen the existing evidence base. Discussion topics included different methods of measuring the impact of cultural heritage on health and wellbeing, and

Professor Helen Chatterjee speaking at the Health Wellbeing and Cultural Heritage briefing session



how to use and present this information to influence social policies. Narratives and stories were agreed to be most convincing on a personal level, but big health data and quantitative data must also be used to support arguments.

You can find out more about the event, and speaker presentations on the NHSF website at: [www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/what-we-do/health-well-being-and-cultural-heritage](http://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/what-we-do/health-well-being-and-cultural-heritage)

*Caroline Peach*

National Heritage Science Forum

## SPREADING HERITAGE SCIENCE

The National Heritage Science Forum’s (NHSF) partnership with Wikimedia UK aims to increase public access to, and engagement with, heritage science research. To fulfil this aim, during 2017-18 the Forum is running a series of workshops around the UK to develop the skills to work with Wikimedia platforms and the heritage science content on those platforms.

On 28 September 2017, NHSF and Wikimedia UK held their second ‘How To Edit’ workshop at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. This focused on giving participants the skills and confidence to add their knowledge to Wikipedia, with a view to enhancing heritage science contributions.

After a short overview of Wikimedia UK and Wikipedia, the session began with an introduction to style, including encyclopaedic tone and Neutral Point of View. Basic writing and editing tools were then covered: adding content, linking, referencing, and discussion with other users. It turns out that referencing is the most important skill – if you can reference well, you can write Wikipedia!

This new knowledge was put to the test in a ‘free for all’ editing session. Participants selected topics from the GLAM/NHSF Project page and Wikimedia’s own Project page, Wikipedia:GLAM. ‘Improvements’ on Wikipedia covers a range of activities – adding citations, expanding content, correcting biased viewpoints and many, many more. As such, the session was rounded off with a particular focus: adding images – with open licences – to Wikipedia articles.

If you would like to have a go at editing yourself, why not check out the heritage science project page? You can find it from the NHSF webpage

<http://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/what-we-do/wikimedia>. Alternatively, if you find a page that needs editing, add it to the list. You can also tag us in any projects you’re working on using #NHSFwiki on Twitter.

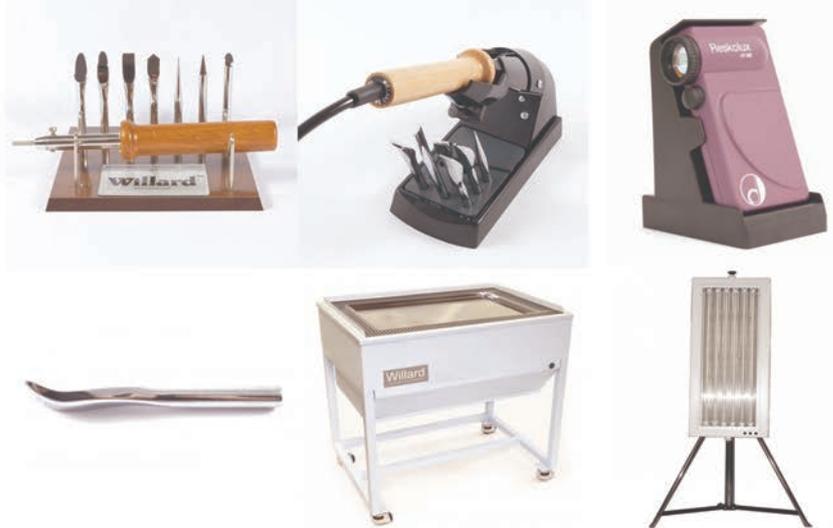
There will be another session in Oxford in early 2018. Sign up to the NHSF newsletter to hear when bookings open. ([www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/news](http://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/news)).

*Alex Leigh*, for the National Heritage Science Forum

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## COMMEMORATING FRED BEARMAN

The Frederick Bearman Research Grant has been set up by the Icon Book & Paper Group in response to suggestions from members who asked that we find a way to remember Fred and his contribution to the conservation profession.

In collaboration with those closest to Fred we are delighted to be able to offer a £1000 research bursary to help fund and encourage new research into the conservation of books, paper and archival materials. Applications are open from 11 December until early February 2018. The winner will be selected by an expert panel and will present their investigations at the Frederick Bearman Memorial Lecture in early December that same year.

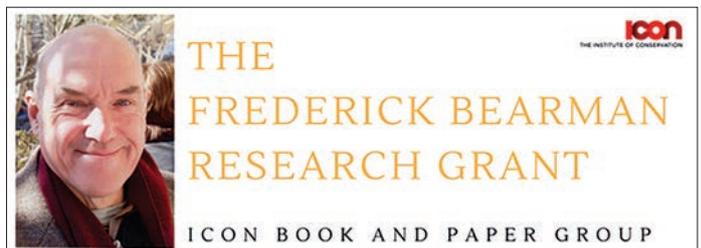
Frederick A. Bearman led a diverse international career as a distinguished conservator, educator and administrator in the field of rare books and archives. He spent twenty six years at The Public Record Office where, among numerous other projects, he was part of the team that rebound the Domesday Book for its 900th Anniversary. He later became Head of Conservation & Collections Care at Columbia University Libraries, New York, before returning to the UK as Preservation Librarian for University College London.

Fred was also a key figure in conservation education in the UK for many years. In 1997 he became Director of Conservation at Camberwell College of Arts, where he was course leader for both the BA and MA courses. After moving away from his post at Camberwell, he continued to be a strong supporter of the conservation courses there. Whilst Preservation Librarian

at UCL he hosted countless placements that enabled students to expand their practical experience, and helped to provide and advise on many final projects. The students benefited greatly from his vast knowledge and his animated lectures.

After joining UCL, Fred dedicated his time to researching the university's special collection of rare books, manuscripts and archives. His further studies of the practical aspects of the account binding provided his book and paper conservation colleagues across the world with valuable insights into the history and materiality of this common binding-style. He was widely loved and respected by colleagues across the profession.

The Book & Paper Group would like to celebrate Fred's memory by offering an annual grant of £1000 to support research into any aspect of book and paper conservation. Any Icon member can apply, and we welcome applications from members at all stages of their careers, either as individuals or collaborations.



We are looking for interesting and informative projects such as preliminary investigations into old and new materials, tools and techniques, or a study of a particular collection or binding style. Perhaps there is something you have been meaning to explore but haven't found the time or the funds? Perhaps it is something you have already started but haven't had the support to finish?

You may be a recent graduate who wants to expand on your MA research, or a seasoned conservator who needs funding to follow an idea. Even small discoveries that you have made

could have a big impact on the conservation community! This is wonderful opportunity to be part of an exciting and prestigious award and share your research with the book and paper conservation community.

For more information and further details on how to apply please visit [icon.org.uk/groups/book-paper/fred-bearman-research-grant](http://icon.org.uk/groups/book-paper/fred-bearman-research-grant).

We look forward to receiving your applications!

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## Unexpected fame: conservation approaches to the preparatory object 2nd Icon Book & Paper Group Conference Oxford, 1–3 October 2018

Objects such as artists' sketchbooks or authors' manuscripts were not necessarily created with posterity in mind. Their creators may not have anticipated a lifespan encompassing display, digitisation or heavy consultation. Indeed in some instances the producers of these objects may not have expected this part of their oeuvre to survive beyond its first use.

Do we therefore treat them differently to 'finished' works, which were always expected to have a wider audience and longer lifespan? How – and how far – do we preserve the evidence of working techniques and practices left by the author, artist, printer, publisher, or architect? Does their original function affect how we conserve, display and interpret these objects? If a maker has deliberately tried to obscure previous versions of a work, where does the remit of the conservator or researcher end when it comes to uncovering erasures or amendments? Do we alter the legacy of such objects with our interventions?

Abstracts are invited for thirty minute presentations on all aspects of conservation relevant to these issues, including scientific studies and PhD research.

Examples of possible topics include:

- Papers exploring the reconciliation of conservation needs with the desire to preserve evidence of the artist

or author's working practices (eg. intentionally torn pages; use of unsuitable materials such as sellotape)

- Conservation treatment or research that has uncovered deliberately obscured information, such as redacted text or evidence of working methods
- Innovative conservation treatments or display methods that take into account the particular nature of objects considered part of an artist, author or architect's preparatory body of work
- Conservation of preparatory works on/in paper or board such as artists' sketchbooks, sculpture maquettes, stage sets and models

Abstracts should be in English and 300–500 words in length. Please download and use the designated template available on the conference website\* or request a copy by emailing [iconbpg@gmail.com](mailto:iconbpg@gmail.com). Participation from students, new Icon members and professionals in allied fields is encouraged.

The deadline for abstracts is **31 January 2018**. A selection committee will review abstracts and notify speakers no later than March 2018.

\* [icon.org.uk/groups/book-paper/icon-book-paper-group-conference-2018](http://icon.org.uk/groups/book-paper/icon-book-paper-group-conference-2018)



# STUDY CONSERVATION AT CITY & GUILDS OF LONDON ART SCHOOL

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## Recent collaborations include:

Abbey of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice  
Black Culture Archives  
British Museum  
English Heritage  
Foundling Museum  
Knole House  
Museum of London  
National Maritime Museum  
National Portrait Gallery  
National Trust  
Natural History Museum  
Palace of Westminster  
Rochester Cathedral  
Royal Academy of Arts  
Royal Collection Trust  
Royal College of Physicians  
Royal Institute of British Architects  
Sir John Soane's Museum  
Southwark Cathedral  
St Paul's Cathedral  
Strawberry Hill House  
Tate Galleries  
Tsurumi University, Japan  
Victoria & Albert Museum  
Venice in Peril  
Wallace Collection  
Watts' Gallery  
Welbeck Abbey  
Westminster Abbey  
William Morris Gallery  
Winchester Cathedral

## Appointments



**Michelle Kirk** has been appointed Furniture Conservator at the Royal Household Craft Branch (also known as C-Branch), based at Windsor Castle.

Her new role involves care and maintenance for a working collection of furniture across the Royal sites, ensuring that pieces are stable and presented to a high standard in keeping with the historic interiors. In addition, the upcoming move into new workshops is also an exciting prospect.

A recent graduate from the MA Conservation programme at West Dean, Michelle's other vocational experiences include posts at the Brighton Pavilion, Knole House and five years as a museum technician at the V&A.

In her spare time, Michelle is also an active member of Icon's Furniture and Wooden Objects Group Committee, serving as Web and Social Media editor.



**West Dean College** has recently appointed two new Subject Leaders in the disciplines of metalwork and horology

**Maickel van Bellegem ACR**, is the new Subject Leader in Metalwork. He is a goldsmith and metals conservator who has worked both independently and in museums, notably the Rijksmuseum, the British Museum and the V&A. He comments 'Having supervised students during their placements at the British Museum previously I'm very much looking forward to working with students building their expertise in both craft skills and conservation techniques.'

Topics of publications include historical manufacturing techniques such as patination of alloys in 19th century Burmese lime boxes and their conservation, authentication, as well as developing conservation treatments.

Maickel is the lead tutor for the Graduate Diploma in Conservation of Metalwork and the Postgraduate Diploma in Conservation of Metalwork, leading to MA Conservation Studies.



**Malcolm Archer** is the new Subject Leader in Clocks and Related Objects. With extensive experience with private clients, as well as the museums and heritage sector, he also has an interest in new and innovative ways of applying conservation to mechanical objects.

A former Assistant Curator of Horology at the British Museum, Malcolm was more recently lead conservator on a major project with Temple Newsam House, Leeds Museum. Originally from an engineering background, Malcolm began his horological training at Hackney College in the 1990s. He followed this by entering into a business partnership and further developed his knowledge and skills as a student at West Dean in 2004–2006. He has continued to successfully run his own private practice and has taught at West Dean College in Clocks since 2010.

As well as an Icon member, Malcolm is a Fellow of the British Horological Institute and is the lead tutor for the Graduate Diploma in the Conservation of Clocks and the Postgraduate Diploma in Conservation of Clocks, leading to MA Conservation Studies.

## Moves



After three and half years in the USA and the last two at The Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York researching plastics, textile conservator **Leanne Tonkin** has returned to the United Kingdom to embark on a doctorate in electronic textiles and fashion at Nottingham Trent University.

Her PhD topic is *Practice-led integration of fashion and e-textile design informed by costume archives*. The project will be part of developing an exciting strategy for the diffusion of research into e-textiles, through closer integration with fashion (and textile) design, informed by historical costume archives. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Leanne will be working in partnership with the Nottingham Castle and City Galleries Costume and Textile Collections (based at Newstead Abbey) to inform the development of wearable technologies.

Leanne notes that she has lots to learn, not least about computer programming and polymer science, and that it will also be a challenge to keep her conservation skills honed at the same time!

## Icon staff



**Cynthia Iñesta** has just joined Icon to take up the exciting role of Digital Content Officer. She comes to us after half a decade of working in social media, communications, web and design, carrying plenty of ideas and enthusiasm to take Icon's digital presence forward. She says: 'On my second day in the role, I was introduced to the bright, dynamic world of conservation through Icon's first-ever Twitter conference. The amount of participation and engagement was unlike anything I'd experienced in any role before and it gave me some amazing insight into the sector and how passionate and active its community is. I'm really looking forward to working with all our members, groups and partners in creating new and vibrant content to bring them into the spotlight!'

Cynthia will be in the office Thursdays and Fridays, so don't hesitate to contact her with any and all ideas and queries on [cinesta@icon.org.uk](mailto:cinesta@icon.org.uk)

## Welcome to these new members

**We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all those who joined us in August and September 2017. We hope to see you at an Icon event soon!**

**Ralph Adron**  
Associate

**Jonathan Ball**  
Student

**Miranda Brain**  
Northumbria University  
Student

**Helena Carrington**  
Associate

**Evan Connon**  
Connon Studios Limited  
Associate

**Cassandra Crawford**  
Calibre Conservation  
Associate

**Robert Croudace**  
R.G Croudace Glass  
Associate

**Perrine de Fontenay**  
Student

**Cristina Prella Ros de Souza**  
University of Glasgow  
Student

**Alice Ferguson**  
Associate

**Dea Fischer**  
Cambridge Colleges  
Conservation Consortium  
Associate

**Georga Ann-May Giles-Evans**  
Heritage Project Contracts Ltd  
Associate

**Harriet Gillespie**  
Northumbria University  
Student

**Alessandro Girelli**  
Associate

**Emma Hayles**  
University of Melbourne  
Student

**Marina Herriges**  
Polytechnic University of  
Valencia  
Student

**Denise Inamoto**  
Associate

**Lisa Jones**  
Student

**Boyce Keay**  
Supporter

**Dawid Kudelski**  
Associate

**Robert Loomes** FBHI  
Loomes  
Associate

**Izabella Mckie**  
Student

**Lindsay McPherson**  
Northumbria University  
Student

**Mafalda Mendôça**  
Associate

**Kirsten Moffitt**  
Colonial Williamsburg  
Foundation  
Associate

**Paula Moore**  
Supporter

**Claire Nodder**  
Student

**Scott Nolley**  
Fine Art Conservation of  
Virginia  
Associate

**Lucy Odlin**  
Icon Intern

**Roberto Padoan**  
Rijksmuseum  
Associate

**Sylvia Plart**  
Associate

**Alexandra Pogost**  
Nasjonalmuseet  
Associate

**Toby Quartly-Watson**  
QW Conservation  
Associate

**Leyre Quevedo Bayona**  
Icon Intern

**Richard Rosko**  
Associate

**Carolyn Savage**  
Conservation Solutions ULC  
Associate

**Emma Smith**  
Textile Conservation Centre  
Student

**St Albans Museums**  
Organisational Subscriber

**Grainne Swann**  
Simon Swann Associates Ltd  
Associate

**Lucia Tarantola**  
Associate

**Jelizaveta Tsedenova**  
Associate

**Xuyue Wang**  
Camberwell College of Arts  
Student

**Ginny Wetherell**  
Articheck  
Supporter

# Pigments and Pixels

Revelations from the Aberdeen Bestiary Project are brought to us by Louisa Coles, Paper Conservator at the Library of the University of Aberdeen's Special Collections and Museums

## INTRODUCTION

This time last year, the Special Collections Centre (SCC) at the University of Aberdeen launched a website hosting newly captured, high resolution images of the pages of one of its treasures, the Aberdeen Bestiary.

The Aberdeen Bestiary (MS 24) is a beautiful, illuminated manuscript made around 1200. Its lavish images in gold, silver and richly coloured pigment depict tales of animals used to demonstrate essential moral beliefs.

The first known documentation of the book places it in the Royal Library at Westminster Palace in 1542, in the possession of Henry VIII. In 1625 it was bequeathed to Marischal College, one of the two founding Colleges of the University of Aberdeen, by Thomas Reid. Reid was a former regent of the College and the founder of the first public reference library in Scotland. He also served as Latin secretary to King James VI and I, and is said to have been given the book by his friend Patrick Young, son of the Royal Librarian to the King.

As the Aberdeen Bestiary is such an important item in the collection, images scanned from slides have been available via dedicated pages on the University of Aberdeen website since 1996. However, in the intervening years there have been vast improvements in web technology and the quality of reproduction achievable through digital imaging. Although the original website and its commentary remained popular, the earlier images were of limited value to serious scholars as an alternative for study of the pages themselves.

A team from across the University's Special Collections Centre, the History of Art Department and the IT department

The dove (MS 24, 27v): damage detail



Adam names the animals (MS 24, 5r)

worked together, along with the Centre for Heritage Imaging and Collection Care (CHICC) at the University of Manchester, to create new images and integrate them into a new website.

Coincidentally, at around the same time, the SCC was collaborating with a group of academics from the University of Durham who were using Multispectral Imaging and Raman Spectroscopy to investigate the use of ink and pigments in a sample of medieval manuscripts from across the UK. They were keen to include the Aberdeen Bestiary in their research, and as they were also looking at the Ashmole Bestiary which has always been very closely linked with our own, we were very interested in what the data could reveal.

Conservation staff were involved with both projects from the outset.



Lions (MS 24 f8r)

## CONSERVATOR INPUT

The Aberdeen Bestiary is considered to be one of the key treasures amongst the rich collections of the University of Aberdeen, and as a result, access is restricted. However, the availability of good quality digital images means that researchers, and those who simply wish to admire the workmanship of the manuscript, can be directed towards the digital facsimile. The argument that digitisation can reduce handling is, with good management, true. Nevertheless, the process of capturing those images is not without risk.

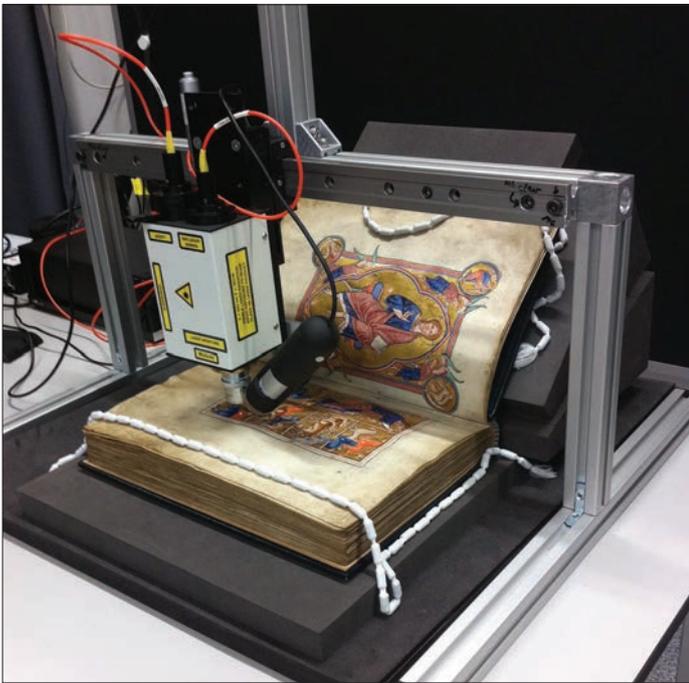
Similarly, there is a degree of risk introduced by the process of gathering data through Raman Spectroscopy and Multispectral Imaging. Wires and frames must be carefully negotiated when positioning the book, and the process itself involves light exposure and microscopic excitation of molecules within the area under investigation. However, having discussed the procedures, the excitation levels and implications of the examination techniques with the team from the University of Durham, we felt that the risks were minimal, while the benefits were potentially great. There is little known about the origins of this manuscript, and this examination could help to decipher the wider evidence. A better understanding of the composition of the media used would also be of value from a conservation and preservation point of view.

Prior to embarking on either project we carried out a full condition check of the manuscript. We particularly wanted to make sure we were aware of any areas of damage that may

be at risk from the handling required for the two procedures. The condition check was carried out page by page. The book had been rebound in 1932 at the British Museum, and fortunately the structure is strong, and not overly tight. There are one or two areas where details are lost within the gutter,

The set-up for multispectral imaging with Team Pigment – Andy Beeby, Kate Nicolson and Richard Gameson – and the Head of Special Collections at Aberdeen, Siobhán Convery. (It may look as if Richard Gameson is leaning on a medieval manuscript as he makes notes, but it is actually his facsimile of the Ashmole bestiary)





© University of Aberdeen

The set-up for Raman Spectroscopy

and the wider team were advised that full imaging of these would not be possible. This was understood and there was no request to disbind.

As might be expected of a book of this long history, there is some ingrained dirt, and there is historical damage to images as a result of pricking and pouncing as images were copied. There has been some loss of image areas arising from moisture damage, again, possibly as a result of the volume being a 'working copy' used to inform the creation of similar images. On a few pages, there are areas of cracking and associated small losses to the media, but on close examination we were happy that these were sufficiently well attached to withstand careful handling, with minimal risk of additional damage.

Areas of damage were recorded and a photographic record was taken of any areas of concern, both in order to advise on handling, and to be used for reference in post-procedure condition checks. Having considered the type and extent of handling that the manuscript would undergo during the digitisation and technical examination processes, it was felt that the damage was stable, and no pre-procedure treatment was required.

## DIGITISATION

The Centre for Heritage Imaging and Collection Care (CHICC) based at the University of Manchester was selected to carry out the digitisation. CHICC have a proven track record, and the information provided about their approach to care and preservation of objects was reassuring.

To avoid the added risks involved in transportation, we elected to have the digitisation carried out on site in Aberdeen. Our conservation centre includes a photographic studio area, and the CHICC photographer brought his mobile set-up to us. Although it could have been useful to have access to a wider range of equipment held in the Manchester studio to better facilitate last minute requests (e.g. the use of IR to pick up faded media) there were benefits to having the



Image reproduced courtesy of Team Pigment

A small beam identifies the spot – in the middle of the forearm - under investigation. It shows the size of the testing area

digitisation carried out on site. For example, although we were confident that CHICC's approach to handling items was good, it was also reassuring to be present during the digitisation process. The photographer was knowledgeable about risks, showed care in handling, was responsive to any requests for any adjustment, and understanding when any concerns were raised. From a practical point of view, we were able to review images as they were captured and if required request details/second shots in order to capture the areas of particular interest.

## TECHNICAL EXAMINATION

The team from Durham, known as Team Pigment to their colleagues, had developed a portable Raman and Multispectral Imaging lab, which meant that they could carry out their examination on site. This was an important factor when considering the potential impact of the proposed project on the manuscript. It meant that the risks associated with transport to a remote location were removed, and we were able to retain full control over access, environmental conditions, and handling. Like the CHICC photographer, Team Pigment were experienced in working with medieval manuscripts, showed sensitivity in handling and a willingness to make adjustments to their equipment should we have any cause for concern. The process was a fascinating one to observe; the steady stream of revelations as the team provided their initial interpretation of the data released was enthralling.

## RESULTS

The Raman/Multispectral Imaging has identified a range of pigments used in the Bestiary. Comparative investigations are ongoing, and implications yet to be fully reported, but initial findings have pointed to some significant observations.

Professor Jane Geddes, an art historian from the University of Aberdeen and a member of the project team, has been extremely happy with the information that close examination of the new images has revealed. She believes marks and annotations that were not previously visible point to the manuscript having been handpicked by scouts of King Henry VIII when they scoured monasteries for valuables, rather than



## Pard, continued. De pantera; the panther

Translation    Commentary

offspring are created, such as the mule and the burdon. Of the panther There is an animal called the panther, multi-coloured, very beautiful and extremely gentle. Physiologus says of it, that it has only the dragon as an enemy. When it has fed and is full, it hides in its den and sleeps. After three days it awakes from its sleep and gives a great roar, and from its mouth comes a very sweet odour, as if it were a mixture of every perfume. When other animals hear its voice, they follow wherever it goes, because of the sweetness of its scent. Only the dragon, hearing its voice, is seized by fear and flees into the caves beneath the earth. There, unable to bear the scent, it grows numbed within itself and remains motionless, as if dead. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, the true panther, descending from Heaven, snatched us from the power of the devil. And, through his incarnation, he united us to him as sons, taking everything, and 'leading captivity captive, gave gifts to men' (Ephesians, 4:8). The fact that the panther is a multi-coloured animal, signifies Christ, who is as Solomon said the wisdom of God the Father, an understanding spirit, a unique spirit, manifold, true, agreeable, fitting, compassionate, strong, steadfast, serene, all-powerful, all-seeing. The fact that the panther is a beautiful animal [signifies Christ as] David says of him:



### Transcription

partus creari, ut mulus et burdo.\ De pantera\ Est animal quod dicitur pantera, varium quidem colorem\ habens, et est speciosissimum nimis et mansuetum. Phis\iologus dicit de eo, quam inimicum habet solum draconem. Cum\ ergo comederit et satiatum fuerit, recondit se in spelunca sua\ et dormit. Post triduum exsurgit a sompno. Et emittit magnum rugitum, et ab ore eius odor suavissimus exit, velud om\nium aromatum. Cum autem audierint eius vocem cetera ani\malia propter suavitatem odoris sequuntur eam, quocumque ierit.\ Solus autem draco audiens eius

### Translation

offspring are created, such as the mule and the burdon. Of the panther There is an animal called the panther, multi-coloured, very beautiful and extremely gentle. Physiologus says of it, that it has only the dragon as an enemy. When it has fed and is full, it hides in its den and sleeps. After three days it awakes from its sleep and gives a great roar, and from its mouth comes a very sweet odour, as if it were a mixture of every perfume. When other animals hear its voice, they follow wherever it goes, because of the sweetness of its scent. Only the dragon, hearing its voice, is seized by fear and

Zoomed image on a sample page from the website

it being commissioned in the first place for a royal or high-ranking client.

'...tiny notes from those who created it still remain in the margins providing invaluable clues about its creation and provenance. Some were visible to the naked eye but digitisation has revealed many more which had simply looked like imperfections in the parchment. When we examine these in detail we can see clear evidence that it was produced in a busy scriptorium. There are sketches in the margin, newly visible with enhanced photography, which show the artist practising with models.

Many images also have prick marks all around them. This technique, called 'pouncing', was a way to transfer an image to another document. Often they damaged the illumination on the reverse of the page and this shows that when it was produced, the need to make copies was more important than keeping the book pristine.'

Professor Geddes' work is ongoing, as is the work of Team Pigment, and we look forward to hearing what else will be discovered about the Aberdeen Bestiary, the circumstances of its creation and use, and its relationship to other similar manuscripts.

## WHAT NEXT?

Thanks to some careful planning, and the understanding and cooperation of the teams involved in the photography and technical examination, the Bestiary showed no sign of

damage when its condition was reviewed after the procedures. However, in the same way as the high quality imaging highlights details of execution useful for academic study, it has also highlighted areas of possible concern from a conservation point of view: e.g. cracking or abrasion of media. These images will be helpful in monitoring for any deterioration, and will also provide a useful starting point in planning any future treatments. Having access to such images can reduce the degree of handling required by conservators as well as our readers.

The response to the new website has been overwhelming, and its popularity exceeded expectations. In the first week alone the site had over 75,000 views. The story relating to the release of the new digital images and website was picked up by national and international news sources from the mainstream BBC News, The Scotsman and the Daily Mail, to the Smithsonian Magazine, Buzzfeed and Twitter. So far, interest, both academic and incidental, appears to have been fulfilled by access to the new images alone.

For other conservators embarking on similar one-off large scale projects, the following tips and reflections could prove useful.

- Such projects often involve large multidisciplinary teams. Participate from the outset and make sure you do not get lost in the crowd.
- Even if you are not involved in all meetings, make sure you are aware of decisions being made. While care of the object will be of concern to everyone involved, for some it

musino ex capra & ariete. est autem dixit grec



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Cats, detail (MS 24, 23v)

- will not be their primary concern; implications of decisions on the object may not always be as obvious to other team members.
- Your input can be useful beyond the preservation and conservation role.
  - Many conservators will have a good understanding of technical examination techniques and what they can hope to tell us: this information can be useful to the wider project team when planning investigations.
  - Conservators will often get closer to the object than anyone else when carrying out condition checks. Can you gather information that will be of use to the wider team while carrying out this key task? With planning you can reduce handling, light exposure, and make more efficient use of time. For example, in addition to documenting damage, we noted locations of barely visible annotations and markings that might benefit from detail shots during the photography process.
  - Your professional understanding of the structure, support and media may be useful to the wider team and provide you with an opportunity to promote the role of the conservator beyond that of custodian and protector. Have you noticed an aspect of the object that could reveal something of its history? Then share it with the team.

- Don't be afraid to intervene if you have concerns about handling, or questions about risks of procedures. While the well-being of the object may not be the primary concern of others, equally they would not willingly harm it. It is to the benefit of all that potential risks are recognised and mitigated as soon as possible.
- What can the images do for you? Looking at high quality digital images of an object can often be more revealing than looking at the object itself. Magnification levels provide detail that can reveal information about media, condition, damage, and risks.

This was an exciting project: working with specialists from other institutions; getting close to the Bestiary's lavish, characterful images, and helping make the resource accessible to a wider audience. The project exceeded expectations in terms of raising the profile of the Aberdeen Bestiary, and the Special Collections Centre at the University of Aberdeen. It has also significantly progressed our academic understanding of the manuscript. I learnt a great deal working on the project and from the expertise of the team involved.

Future plans involve developing the website with additional images and an expanded commentary.

The Aberdeen Bestiary site is available at: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/>

# around and about

## The Engine Shed

**David Mitchell, Director of Conservation at Historic Environment Scotland, describes how Scotland leads the way in building conservation with the opening of a new national building conservation hub**

The Engine Shed, Scotland's new national building conservation centre, opened earlier this year and couples state-of-the-art technology and world-leading innovation for Scotland's historic buildings, with the aim of inspiring a new generation via interactive exhibits, augmented reality experience, tutorials and workshops.

The pioneering £11million learning and visitor resource provides a new central hub for professionals working within the conservation and heritage sector, and an opportunity for visitors to explore their built heritage

Based at Forthside Way in Stirling, Scotland, the Engine Shed is a key facility in providing understanding, education and training in protecting and preserving Scotland's 450,000 traditional buildings and demonstrates the continuing cultural and economic relevance of traditional buildings, materials and skills.

Open to everyone, the Engine Shed provides hands-on workshops, lectures, training and educational resources for those working within the conservation and heritage sector, but also the opportunity for members of the public to explore their built heritage via interactive exhibits and augmented reality experiences.

As part of its professional offering, the Engine Shed has launched an Advanced Diploma in Technical Building Conservation aimed at those with experience in the built heritage sector and interested in furthering their career within building conservation. The ten-month programme offers a unique proposition to students and is enhanced with hands-on craft demonstrations, laboratory work, studio exercises in 3D digital documentation techniques and regular field trips to active projects around the Historic Environment Scotland estate. Individual modules and day long seminars can also be taken as CPD (continuing professional development) to enhance knowledge of technical aspects of traditional materials, combined with learning around conservation science and the latest digital documentation techniques.

In addition to the Diploma, an outreach programme of events and activities will run throughout the year engaging schools, universities and colleges, families, interested members of the public and traditional homeowners.

The Engine Shed itself was a sustainable build, using traditional and natural materials in new and unique ways, with the refurbishment of a traditional building dating back to the 1800s and the addition of two modern extensions, which have been built using timber glu-laminated frames clad in light-weight zinc.

Formerly a munitions store for the Ministry of Defence, the project team made the most of local and natural materials, retaining as much of the fabric and character of the original



The Engine Shed: the old building and its new wings

building as possible whilst demonstrating a sustainable approach to construction with the new wings. In a purposefully contemporary setting, traditional skills and materials are blended with new technology showcased in a 4K 3D theatre and an augmented reality app used for people to explore buildings around Scotland.

The Engine Shed is not just about maintaining traditional buildings and materials, it is about marrying these together with new and advanced technologies to continue to conserve Scotland's heritage and adapt to our changing environment.

For further information on the Engine Shed, please visit [www.engineshed.org](http://www.engineshed.org)

Inside the Engine Shed. The main space features a large-scale map of Scotland compiled from high-res satellite images which can be accessed via iPads as an augmented reality device



## WORKSHOPS

**ABOUT TIME: Care of Clocks**  
**Icon Care of Collections Group**  
Museum of London 23 August 2017

This workshop day was led by **Matthew Read**, Programme Leader, Clocks and Related Objects at West Dean College. It was broken into four sessions covering identification of clock mechanisms and their vulnerabilities, development of maintenance schedules and collection care record keeping, packing, moving and handling clocks and discussion of a range of conservation case studies.

The workshop was a fascinating insight into clocks and the unique challenges they pose to those caring for them. The morning session included a general introduction to the component parts and different types of mechanisms and how to recognise them, which was very useful as most of the attendees had no horological experience. The vulnerability of clocks was then discussed in the second session. There is a broad expectation that clocks and automata should be running, however it is inevitable that when clocks run, the components become damaged and wear away. The risks involved in having clocks working was discussed and alternatives were looked at, such as not having all clocks running at all times, and 'resting' some to minimise wear. The importance of documentation and record keeping was discussed, as well as regular maintenance.

The session on packing, moving and handling started with an explanation of how to partly disassemble common types of pendulum controlled clocks. Matthew demonstrated a range of key principles by talking us through the disassembly of a longcase clock. Finally we were able to put



Dismanteling a longcase clock

into practice what we had learnt by dissembling a range of pendulum clocks for ourselves.

The final part of the day focussed on a number of clock conservation case studies, including a penny-driven automaton subject to many complex alterations over the years. The use of single board computers manufactured by open source computer hardware and software companies such as Raspberry Pi and Arduino were explored in this project. The aim was to programme the computer to control the automaton, replacing a range of complex and rather hazardous electronics currently in use. Single board computers are commonly used to teach basic computer science in schools, but in this case provided a good solution to the conservation of this dynamic object. The case studies initiated a number of interesting group discussions; the benefits of running clocks versus the inevitable, irreversible damage resulting from continuous operation, and the level of intervention required to maintain an operating clock was also discussed.

*Abby Moore and Katie Snow*

Course participants dismanteling pendulum clocks



Megumi Mizumura removing nodes from soaked bamboo as attendees decide on the shape of the tools they want to make

**MAKING MINI SPATULAS WITH BAMBOO**  
**Icon Book & Paper Group**  
Richmond 12 August 2017

**Megumi Mizumura** led two workshops, hosted by The National Archives at Kew, for ten people at each session. The event was structured into three parts: overview and uses, bamboo preparation and crafting our tools. Megumi walked us through an overview of bamboo. Out of 6000 species, we focused on three including moso, madake and tonkin. Moso is used as a structural material for floors, furniture and other building elements. Madake is used for baskets and cooking utensils. Tonkin, sourced from a specific region in China, is used for premier quality fishing rods because of its high fibre density.

During the second part of the workshop we reviewed how the bamboo is prepared. After at least three years of growth, the bamboo is harvested in October and November when there is reduced starch and fewer pests. The next step is to remove moisture either by heating or boiling. Both methods have benefits. Boiling bamboo pushes out caustic material that can cause problems in the future. Heating it creates a hydrophobic and stable material. The third step is to age the bamboo by storing it for months – or even years – before using it. The bamboo used for making tools goes through an additional step: it is smoked while being used as a ceiling material in rural Japanese houses. Smoked bamboo can become a beautiful colour ranging from red to very dark brown.

Before proceeding to working with our pieces of bamboo, we discussed creating tools from Teflon™ and Delrin™. Delrin, a similar material to Teflon, has a lower melting point. We talked through the risks of working with the two materials. One way to mitigate the toxicity of working with the material is to shape tools underwater. Since we did not have sinks or running water available in our room, we kept our samples for working on elsewhere.



Heather Porter demonstrating traditional upholstery methods

The third and necessarily longest part of the workshop was the making session. In her usual impressive style, Megumi prepared packets for us containing three grades of sandpaper including fine lapping film that most of the attendees in the morning session had never seen or used, along with a piece of mount board for a cutting surface. We each selected a dry piece of bamboo and two pieces of soaked bamboo of various sizes ready for us to work. We each chose a shape we wanted to work towards. Some of

us had a project for which we wanted a specific tool and some of us were left-handers who wanted a tool shaped to suit our specific work orientation.

Megumi finished prepping our chosen bamboo pieces by trimming off the projecting nodes before we set to work slicing, whittling and shaping our bamboo tools. The room gradually grew silent as our chat reduced and our focus on shaping our tools grew more concentrated. A few exclamations of disappointment arose when

the bamboo split but each time it resulted in a great new shape.

Two hours later, no tea break (by choice!) and tired hands, we had made a diverse assortment of tools.

**Meagen Smith** Archives Conservator, Parliamentary Archives

**APPROACHING IT DIFFERENTLY:  
Upholstery Conservation  
Icon Textile and Furniture & Wooden  
Objects Groups  
Sevenoaks 4-5 September 2017**

This two-day workshop, held at Knole House in Kent, was a joint workshop organized by the Textile Group and the Furniture and Wooden Objects Group. The objective of the event was two-fold: to provide a diverse group of participants with an introduction to the unique field of upholstery conservation and to promote an exchange of experiences between the participants who consisted of textile conservators, upholstery conservators, furniture conservators and conservation students.

**Heather Porter**, a senior upholstery conservator at the recently opened Conservation Studio at Knole House, tutored the course, sharing her extensive knowledge and experience from the UK and abroad. The course consisted of a mixture of lectures, case studies, discussion-based sessions and presentations by the participants themselves.

On the first day, we were introduced to traditional materials, tools and techniques used in the upholstery profession. This was followed by a review of the history of upholstery, where we were shown examples of how the materials and techniques used had changed from the 1600s to today. This gave participants a better understanding of how early upholstered furniture would have looked when created, and how later interventions such as re-upholstery might have altered their original appearance. A methodology for describing upholstered furniture was also presented, together with recommendations on source materials for

Workshop materials supplied included three grades of sandpaper including fine lapping film, two pieces of smaller soaked bamboo and one piece of longer dry bamboo



upholstery research.

The lecture was followed by a practical session, where different fixings were used to attach materials to a furniture frame. Strategies to remove these fixings were also demonstrated. These exercises illustrated the risk of damage that fixings can have on a furniture frame and set the stage for the discussions on the following day.

The second day covered a broad range of topics, from round table discussions on the purpose of upholstery conservation, to lectures on replacement materials, methods of examination and conservation documentation. Case studies, with high quality photo documentation, were used to gain insight into different treatment methods. Heather provided insight by organizing conservation issues according to problem-types and then presenting different solutions that she has employed over her career. The conservation issues addressed by the case studies ranged from the conservation of textiles and original materials, to dealing with incorrect historic interventions and the recreation of missing historic upholstery. The course participants also had the opportunity to present their own projects, which complemented this teaching approach in a very nice way.

Despite the wealth of information covered over the two days of the course, Heather did a fantastic job. Through the use of participant discussions and presentations, plus a visit to see current upholstery treatments at the Knole Conservation studio, the course was well balanced. As a student, the extensive use of case studies and the sharing by other participants of their experiences made this course an invaluable experience.

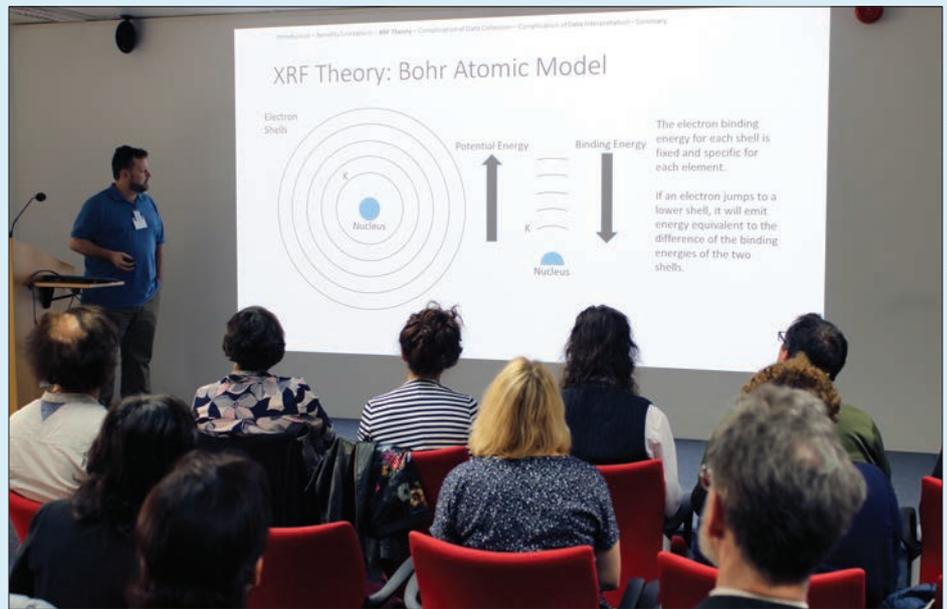
**Gyrl Grimsæth Horn**, Conservation student, City & Guilds of London Art School

## CONFERENCES

### HISTORIC DOCUMENT ANALYSIS USING p-XRF: pitfalls and possibilities Icon Heritage Science & Book and Paper Groups

The National Archives September 2017

A day conference at the National Archives in Kew saw twenty delegates converge to discuss and learn more about portable X-Ray fluorescence analysis (p-XRF) and its applications in examining historic documents. There was a complete range of people from diverse backgrounds – students and academics, scientists, and conservators from differing disciplines and of varying experience. The day was organised so that theory, background, and potential applications were heard in the morning, and a practical demonstration was seen in the afternoon.



Presentation by Chris Wilkins of Cardiff University on p-XRF analysis

**Chris Wilkins**, a PhD student from Cardiff University, gave us a great overview on the theory behind p-XRF, including the potentials and the pitfalls whilst **Paul Garside**, from the British Library, told us how p-XRF has been used in examining manuscripts and objects in their collection. **Helen Wilson**, the convener of the day, gave us an interesting paper on how she used p-XRF to try to determine the arsenic content of nineteenth century wallpapers, and **Abigail Bainbridge** from West Dean College presented ideas on how conservators and scientists might work more closely together on projects using p-XRF. The afternoon

demonstration afforded us an overview into how p-XRF is set up and works in the field and how data is obtained and interpreted.

The day had a workshop feel, contributions from the attendees were very much encouraged and the day felt like an ongoing learning conversation, which I personally found very beneficial. No question was too simple to be asked and those who had never used p-XRF before were just as welcome in the dialogue as the more experienced members of the group. Problems and niggles that can arise when interpreting p-XRF data (which we learned were many!)

Event organiser, Helen Wilson, during the data acquisition demonstration



were thrashed out in a supportive atmosphere.

All in all it was a very interesting day learning how p-XRF might be used and its strengths and limitations. There was a clear take-home message for me in my analysis of pigments in medieval manuscripts that p-XRF could be another useful tool in the toolbox, but that data obtained from the p-XRF systems is more useful when triangulated with other data from other sources too.

Information from the day, including presentation slides and abstracts, will be made available at the Icon Heritage Science Group's Past Events webpage shortly (<https://icon.org.uk/groups/heritage-science/past-events>).

**Louise Garner**, Leverhulme Doctoral Scholar, Durham University

[www.dur.ac.uk/cvac/members/pgstudents/garner/](http://www.dur.ac.uk/cvac/members/pgstudents/garner/)

### **BITE THE BULLET: Managing firearms and other tricky collections**

**Icon Care of Collections and Metals Groups Royal Armouries, Leeds 26 July 2017**

Firearms can naturally be perceived as difficult objects to hold in a collection, and for those with little or no experience of managing and working with weapons, this conference promised to provide skills, knowledge and confidence when approaching this specialist area of

collections. The one day event was set in a very appropriate location, and enough time was allocated to view the museum's exhibitions. Seeing how the collection is displayed helped put the information learned into context with materials and objects that were discussed during the presentations. The conference was delivered through a series of talks from staff employed by the Royal Armouries Museum, in Leeds.

The opening talk 'Collection Hazards: An Introduction' was delivered by **Laura Bell**, Head of Collections Services at the Royal Armouries (RA). We learned that there are around 150,000 objects in the RA collection, including firearms, explosives, edged weapons, asbestos and radioactive material. Laura gave us a clear and open explanation of the RA's rationale and key points, including risk management and mitigation of incidents when working with this collection. This was encouraging and gave a positive outlook on working with objects that are hazardous, and need special consideration both ethically and legally. This gave a solid introduction to the information that would follow through the day.

**Mark Murray-Flutter**, Curator of Weapons at the RA, followed with an in-depth presentation focusing on the legal responsibilities that museums have when acquiring and owning different classifications of firearm. During this talk, 'Firearms and Weapons: Key Considerations', we learned there are many categories which have very

different legalities associated with them. It was useful to learn that there are several firearms that can be owned by museums with no special licence, because of the classification of vintage weapons for example, and that licences can also be required for ammunition. Even though weapons such as nail guns, bolt shooters and line throwing devices may not need a licence, handling them is still to be undertaken with the same approach as those needing licences, since they are nevertheless hazardous objects.

An interesting concept that was presented to us was 3D printing, and how a template for a working firearm can be acquired and used. This means that new laws have to be made as technology advances, because it will still be a dangerous weapon once printed. We were introduced to the advantages of working closely and openly with your local police force Firearms Licensing Officer.

After lunch we were introduced to the 'Handling of Firearms/Weapons/Other Hazards'. This section really focused us on the safety considerations, which showed how confidence in and understanding of weapons mean that they are safe to handle when good safety procedures are followed. Whilst the idea of handling weapons is initially a great concern, Conservators **Lauren McGhee** and **Ellie Rowley-Conwy** clearly outlined key aspects, which demonstrated that it is ok to handle such

One of the displays at the Royal Armouries



Photo: Michelle Lisa Gayle



Presentation on handling by Lauren McGhee and Ellie Rowley-Conwy, Conservators at the Royal Armouries

collections with care and diligence. Sensible guidelines were given, including the important factor of never checking to see if a weapon is loaded by looking down the barrel. Handling an unstable and potentially dangerous weapon whilst looking directly at the area where ammunition is expelled will increase the risk of an accident, and possibly a fatal one. It was also useful to consider how to remove swords from their scabbards with minimum risk of damage from one or two very sharp edges. The Conservators highlighted that good collection care can be undertaken by museums with smaller budgets, and that good storage is very important.

The final talk of the day, 'Packing and Transport of Firearms/Weapons/Other Hazards', was presented by **Jen Kaines**, Registrar and Collections Manager at the RA. With good and clear planning, it was demonstrated that even the trickiest of objects can be moved from location to location a lot more easily than we would have possibly anticipated. Planning a route is essential, particularly when moving objects that pose a significant risk to the handler and anyone in the vicinity.

Being aware of how stable or unstable the object being transported is, and understanding the relevant legislation is crucial. A museum with a licence for a weapon needs to be certain that any potential loans are covered by a borrowing institution before it can receive an object which poses a hazard. This means that checking other institutions' licences is a responsibility of the weapon owner. Route planning was clearly highlighted as an important factor, including having spill kits to hand and considering if elements of the object should be separated for movement. Should these components be moved separately and do they need to be encapsulated or sealed?

The last section of the day was a scenarios exercise, which gave us an opportunity to consider the information we had received through the day, and apply it to various objects and materials. This was a great exercise, as many of us have much experience of collection management and handling, but are apprehensive about the

seemingly complex requirements of working with firearms. By the end of this section however, many of us were much clearer and more confident at suggesting solutions to concerns arising from loans, transportation and regulation of a variety of hazardous objects.

Overall, this conference was able to give those of us who work with mixed materials collections the chance to gain confidence when presented with a hazardous object. Clear guidelines and shared procedures meant that those of us who have not worked with live weapons, also often containing other hazardous material such as asbestos, will have the basic safety practices in mind. The order in which the presentations were delivered was appropriate and very helpful. Images and supporting paper handouts added to the day, with clear visual representation of subjects being shared and discussed.

**Michelle Lisa Gayle**, Curator at Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings

#### PEST ODYSSEY: 2017 UK Natural History Museum London 5 July 2017

**Claire Valentine**, Collections Leader, Life Sciences & Integrated Pest Management Champion at the Natural History Museum, welcomed forty to fifty attendees with excitement in regard to the diversity of national speakers and Austrian speaker **Pasqual Querner**, an independent IPM advisor from Vienna.

The major questions of the day were 'What are they?' and 'What do they do?' Two speakers who asked these questions about the Grey Silverfish were Querner and **Abby Moore** from the Museum of London. Querner noted that the Grey Silverfish had been spreading in Austria from 2001, however the first documented Grey Silverfish in the UK was in March 2015 at the Museum of London site, as reported by Moore. Very similar to the *Lepisma Saccharina* (Silverfish), the *Ctenolepisma longicaudata* (Grey Silverfish) proves why thorough and accurate IPM is necessary with the collaboration of professional entomologists if needs be. The extent of damage caused by the *Ctenolepisma longicaudata* on objects is

uncertain at this point but there is proof that it eats through acid free tissue. The other notable trait is that it is known to survive in ambient relative humidity of 40%–65%, which is very worrisome for most stores, as this falls within their RH range.

**David Pinniger** and **Tony Irvin** also spoke on the question of 'What are they?' in their analysis of the *Monopis Crocicapitelia* and the *Monopis Obviella*. Also seemingly similar at surface level but with the help of professional entomologists and the analysis of their genitalia the difference is clear. The *Crocicapitella Monopis* concerns the heritage field because it feeds off feathers, damp wool and felt. Pinniger also requested that if anyone comes across what they think could be *Crocicapitella Monopis* that they contact Irvin, as he is continuing his study of this little rascal.

Working with different sectors is vital to developments as **Chris Swindells** from Acheta Consulting Ltd pointed out. Although Swindells mainly focuses on the food industry, his work is relevant to the heritage sector and his presentation gave insight into a new pheromone monitor that has potential. The Biscuit Beetle, *Stegobium Paniceum*, produces a complex pheromone that is difficult to recreate. The Japanese Fuji Flavor Company created a trap with a mimic of the pheromone, which was tested in three different spaces – a bread factory, an animal food factory and a national herbarium collection. It came across as highly successful at luring the beetle as compared to the trap without the lure. More can be read here: [www.pestmagazine.co.uk/media/437981/issue-49\\_14-17-biscuit-beetle.pdf](http://www.pestmagazine.co.uk/media/437981/issue-49_14-17-biscuit-beetle.pdf)

New developments and new practices were also highlighted from the National Trust in regard to data collecting by **Hilary Jarvis** and **Dr. Nigel Blades**. Jarvis and Blades have put forward new metrics and methodologies for pest data analysis in order to gauge the 'background insect levels' in National Trust Houses. An important question for the National Trust, and one which interested the audience, is what impact a recent change in practice for their housekeepers' annual deep cleans may have. Collecting and analysing the data over future years will shed light on the new changes.

For HMS Belfast, **Andrew Calver**, **Jason Caswell** and **Martin Anthony**, of the Imperial War Museum, found that data collection continuity was of utmost importance, especially when there is some form of strategy change or responsibility change within the organisation. In their case, this had led to a loss of data. HMS Belfast is still trying to get to the source of their *Tineola Bisselliella* that has continued to crop up since 2006, asking for advice or insight into the webbing clothes moth. Data collection was a hotly debated topic in the

question and answer session, with everybody commenting on how much time is spent inputting data and then analysing it; all agreed that there is no point in data collection if there are no resources for its analysis.

We were lucky enough to have a stable Skype video from Sweden and **Lisa Nilsen** of the Swedish National Heritage Board advertised a call for contributions for the 4th international IPM conference in Stockholm, Sweden 21–23 May 2019.

The conference gave great insight into the complexities and diversity of IPM, there was a collaborative sense of open questioning from both speakers and audiences, with the aim of identifying best practice for specific circumstances under the IPM umbrella. Pest Odyssey is an important opportunity for IPM practitioners to contribute towards ongoing discussion with analytical critique and questioning. I would like to thank the Preventive Conservation Department at The British Museum for offering me the opportunity to attend during my research placement, as well as the Natural History Museum for hosting and organising the event.

**Pamela Murray**

British Museum Preventive Conservation Student  
Cardiff University MSc Conservation Practice

## CGG AGM AND CONFERENCE

**Icon Ceramics & Glass Group**  
Oxford 7–8 September 2017

The Ceramics and Glass Group held its 2017 conference and AGM at the prestigious Magdalen College, Oxford, with accompanying tours of the college's Iznik collection and Ashmolean Museum.

The conference explored a wide range of issues surrounding the treatment of ceramics and glass objects including the issues of conserving unfired clay and the future of 3D printing within conservation. The conference hosted talks by conservators globally, coming from as far afield as Australia and America.

The first day featured a number of tours highlighting the best of Oxford's ceramics and glass collections beginning with a tour of the Ashmolean conservation laboratories. This was an introduction to the refurbished space, which featured an enviable view over Oxford. A particular highlight was the discussion surrounding the museum's collection of coneiform tablets and the change in approach in treatment over time.

The conservation laboratory tour was then followed up with an enlightening tour of the Ashmolean's collection through the eyes of **Mark Norman**, the Head of Conservation at the museum until 2016. He highlighted objects that had become favourites during his time at the museum including Taharqa's

shrine which had seen the removal of a thick and obscuring consolidating layer of cellulose nitrate to reveal its original surface. Finally, **Lady Heather Clary** gave a tour of the Iznik collection at Magdalen College. It was such a huge privilege to have permission to see this beautiful collection since it is usually closed to the public.

A dinner at Pizza Express rounded off the day, which allowed delegates to catch up with colleagues and meet new faces to the industry in a relaxed environment.

The second day was a full schedule of enlightening talks combined with the AGM for the Ceramics and Glass Group. **Wendy Walker** from the Metropolitan Museum started with outlining the major conservation treatments performed on two Della Robbia Reliefs. The second of the objects, a tondo with a central representation of the virtue Prudence, was treated in preparation for loan. Dismantling the sections for remounting led to the discovery of a previously unknown numbering system and finger and hand marks in the clay revealing a significantly different arrangement of the surrounding garland. This interesting discovery led to the rearrangement of the sections to its original sequence.

**Tiago Oliveira** from TO Conservation described the conservation of the De Rijp whaling scene, a 113 Delft tile picture in preparation of the reopening of Queen's House in Greenwich. The removal of the heavy plaster and wire backing for rehanging led to the discovery that the scene actually contained tiles from two different time periods. Like the Della Robbia tondo the original tiles featured a numbering system; in the absence of good documentation detailing the original scene it was decided to preserve its current appearance with a few minor changes, such as resetting tiles with the wrong orientation to allow for a better interpretation of the scene.

A wide spectrum of material issues was also discussed during the day. **Ariel O'Connor** from the Smithsonian Museum spoke about her conservation of unfired clay artworks by the artist Kristin Morgin. Morgin's work is inherently fragile and the discarded appearance is part of the impact of the object. Damage during shipping for an exhibition led to the need to formulate a treatment plan. Of particular interest was the dialogue opened between the artist and the conservator with regards to decision-making surrounding stability of the work versus maintaining the discarded quality.

At the other end of the spectrum **David Huson**, a Senior Research Fellow at the University of the West of England, joined the conference to discuss the potential use of 3D printing of replacement parts. Printing in ceramics has previously proved difficult but new research, including his method of using porcelain powder and binder, is making 3D

printing a realistic option in ceramic conservation. The delegates were treated to seeing a 3D printer in action and a selection of 3D printed objects to handle.

The final talk of the day was about the conservation of a 13th century Kashan bowl by **Dana E. Norris** from Watt & Norris Conservation. The bowl had been highlighted to delegates during the collections tour of the Ashmolean and it was therefore fascinating to get a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding its authenticity. Removal of overpaint revealed inconsistencies in its inscription, pattern and glaze colour. Further analysis using a microscope and bench top XRF confirmed the bowl comprised of both original 13th century fragments and also fired restorations. It is now part of the fakes and forgeries case in the Islamic gallery.

Overall the conference offered a robust overview of issues surrounding the conservation of ceramic and glass through the careful selection of relevant speakers. A wide range of projects was discussed, highlighting not only the breadth of objects undertaken by ceramics and glass conservators but also the importance of their work in ensuring that these objects are available for future generations to enjoy.

**Holly Daws** Student, West Dean College  
Icon CGG Treasurer

## ICOM-CC 18TH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Copenhagen September 2017

Having booked my tickets for the 18th ICOM-CC triennial conference back in April, suddenly it was September and time to go to Copenhagen and experience my first triennial. It did not disappoint. Our Danish hosts had organised everything superbly, from choosing a well laid-out venue to organising visits and entertainments not only for the conference business but also to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the group. Being one of a thousand delegates from fifty-eight countries was an extraordinary experience, all gathered together for a week to discuss and exchange ideas. The conference illustrated so clearly the scope and impact of ICOM-CC across the world.

The programme was full, with one hundred and fifty papers, one hundred posters as well as six plenary sessions, so making a choice of what to see and learn was a little daunting. With the textile group papers concentrated over the first day and half, this left plenty of time to learn from other disciplines.

The first group of textile papers looked at research into identifying mordants and dyes in archaeological wool (**Annette Bruselius Scharff**) as well as a collection of Paracas textiles from Peru and Sweden (**Anna Javer**) and authenticating Turkey Red textiles (**Julie Wertz**). I found the papers on



Centre for Textile Conservation alumni at the ICOM-CC conference centre

dyes particularly useful, giving me a broader understanding of their impact on the degradation of fibres. The other textile papers ranged from looking at techniques of removing aged adhesives from textiles, one on a 16th century carpet (**Julia Carlson**) and another on a very fragile silk damask throne canopy (**Viola Nicastro**) to looking at the quality of the materials we use in conservation, specifically Japanese silk (**Mie Ishii**), to evaluating past South East Asian craft practices to establish their relevance today (**Julia Brennan**). All provided useful information.

One of the most interesting papers was **Yvonne Shashoua's** on sustainable future alternatives to petroleum-based polymeric conservation materials. The conclusion was that there are options but they are currently not economically viable; but it was good to hear that we should be able to move to vegetable based materials in the coming years. Other useful papers were one on setting microfading parameters to use in discussions with curators and designers for exhibitions (**Bruce Ford**), another one on the

latest research in evaluating the volatile organic compounds emitted from storage and display materials used in conservation (**Katherine Curran**) and finally looking at past treatments on a group of eight Frans Hals paintings (**Mireille te Marvelde**) where samples from the conservation treatments had been stored. Together these papers broadened my knowledge and my thinking; I shall be keeping samples from my treatments in the hope they will help conservators in the years to come!

The conference also reflected on the history of conservation and some of the key figures who have contributed to our practice and thinking. Being the 50th anniversary of the committee for conservation, **Kathleen Dardes's** plenary session celebrated the growth of the group from the initial one hundred members to the current membership of 2,800. Nevertheless she highlighted the challenges ahead from the dramatic impact of our changing climate patterns to the use of technology throughout the heritage sector from research to visitor engagement. For all its benefits, **Tannar Ruuben**, in his keynote

session entitled *Heritage, Museums, Conservation and the World Outside*, highlighted the competing demands that technology/worldwideweb can bring, demanding instant and constant updates in order to feed the insatiable desire for 'action' with conservation as a considered, painstaking occupation of detection, documentation, research and finally action.

A paper by **Jonathan Ashley Smith** questioning the use and need for a code of ethics/conduct was refreshing, challenging us to reconsider and prioritise the values placed on objects in an ever changing world. This was echoed by a paper by **Sarah Scaturro** looking at how the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art uses a material and value based approach to the conservation and display of fashion. Together these papers stimulated a good deal of debate amongst delegates – just what the conference was designed to do!

My horizons were broadened further by hearing about two objects I am unlikely to come across in my day-to-day job; one was a modern outdoor sculpture (**Nikki van Basten**) and the other a historic blue whale skeleton (**Arianna Barnucci**). The papers presented the challenges faced in conserving them; in the former, the research and decisions had to be made in conjunction with the living artist and in the latter, it was a matter of size and fragility. Although the National Trust's Textile Conservation Studio's expertise lies in conserving large, complex, fragile textiles, these were on another scale!

All in all it was a thoroughly enjoyable and stimulating week, meeting and making many new contacts as well as catching up with friends and colleagues. With the ICOM-CC preprints for the 16th, 17th and 18th Triennials now all on line without restriction, this information is available to all which is a fabulous resource. Thank you ICOM-CC!

Attending the conference was inspiring and it felt good to be part of the wider profession and understand the challenges faced in other parts of the world and in other disciplines. I would like to thank The Clothworkers' Foundation, the Anna Plowden Trust and ICOM UK for their very generous support which made my attendance possible.

**Maria Jordan** ACR, Studio Manager  
National Trust Textile Conservation Studio

### **CEROPLASTICS: Modelling the Flesh** International Congress on Wax Modelling London, September 1–3 2017

September 1–3 saw the first international wax conference of its kind in over forty years and I was lucky enough to be in attendance thanks to an Anna Plowden/Clothworkers' Foundation CPD Grant. I went to present one of the papers which was tremendously

The ICOM-CC conference main hall





Wax modelling being demonstrated by artist Eleanor Crook

nerve-racking for a budding public speaker but I was very glad of the opportunity.

The conference was held at the Gordon Museum of Pathology which astonished us all with its rarely seen medical collection. Being a multidisciplinary event on a relatively obscure subject this conference attracted a surprising variety of people: artists, art historians, curators, scientists, medical practitioners, students, and of course conservators. The congress ran many parallel sessions in the afternoon with a few core morning papers so ultimately I can only give you an idea of what I myself attended, but I sorely wished I could have duplicated myself for the duration of the conference just so I could see it all!

The first day was almost entirely dedicated to art history: the uses of wax throughout history and the fascinating medical museum collections held in Italy and Austria. We also got to see a glimpse of the rich wax collections held in the UK by both the Gordon Museum itself and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). The day was rounded off by a premiere screening of a short film called 'Bologna: Redemption Wax, Redemption Flesh' made by the University of Bologna and a private art exhibition in the Guy's Chapel Crypt.

Day two was largely dedicated to conservation (although one could opt for anatomical science and art history in the afternoon if so inclined): **Valerie Kaufmann**

started the day with a talk about treatment methods for anatomical figures, funeral effigies, and death masks. She also discussed how both FTIR spectroscopy and CT scanning has been helpful in revealing some of the mysteries of the wax objects she had worked with.

**Victoria Oakley** talked about the V&A wax collection and its many challenges, including a few treatment strategies and how many chemicals utilised for conservation in the past can no longer be used. Victoria also pointed out that there is no specialist group within Icon that deals with wax as a material and in fact within the V&A conservation department this group of objects has variously fallen to either paintings or ceramics conservators!

**Laura Speranza** from Italy talked us through a variety of conservation challenges and their practical solutions: from specialist mount-making for large wax statues to how to develop the knack to supporting extremely thin wax detailing during repairs. Florentine conservator **Chiara Gabbriellini** shared her experiences of restoring botanical models and the various cleaning methods, repair techniques, and support structures employed during their conservation.

**Johanna Lang** from Germany delighted us with a collection of travelling medical curios which displayed very different construction techniques and subsequent conservation issues. She also shared the sensitive process

of replacing their original travel boxes (whose off-gassing were causing trouble) with a conservation grade alternative that complemented the objects in a similar manner to the originals. **Martina Peters** talked about her work involving damage-mapping wax figures in Vienna. She took us through her process of identifying causes of decay and also how analytical work had helped inform future conservation work on the models.

Chemist **Moira Ambrosi** presented her team's paper on the degradation process of waxes in Italian collections, including the common occurrence of wax bloom and its composition and possible causes. It was a fascinating talk about what 'wax' can contain and how it behaves as it ages. **Sabina Carraro** from Switzerland discussed the common problems associated with moulages found in teaching collections and how preventive conservation is vital to their continued survival. She also shared some terrific examples of amateur restoration work throughout the centuries which left us all shivering in our boots!

Restorer **Shirin Afra** from Italy told us about oscillation problems in a wax skeleton of a giant and how constant movement had caused significant damage. A very clever Perspex exoskeleton was created to cradle the wax bones to allow continued display. Conservation scientist **Lora Angelova** talked us through storage solutions for wax seals found in archives. She also explained her 'puff pastry theory' regarding the delamination of seals and showed us some of her adhesive experiments.

**Nikki Harrison** and **Efstratia Verveniotou** presented a paper about conserving and storing larger-than-life insect models. Not only did we get an insight into more treatment techniques and clever box designs but we also learned that these critters are going online to be seen on social media (which delighted me).

My own paper was about the journey of discovery a conservator goes on when working with a new material: the problem-solving, the tactile experience, and the observations we make as we figure out a complex composite object (in my case a giant anatomical model of a frog).

The third and final day was a mixture of different themes: art, education, and material culture. I elected to attend primarily the art related talks out of pure fascination but I am endlessly curious about what went on in the other lecture theatre. Perhaps someone would like to swap notes?

Many thanks to the organisers for such a jam-packed and exciting event.

**Jenny Mathiasson** Conservator Clifton Conservation Service (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council) and The C Word: The Conservators' Podcast

## THE CONSERVATION OF MANUSCRIPT 68

Manuscript 68 (MS 68) belongs to the Special Collections of the Hellenic Parliament Library. Stella Daskalopoulou, Arietta Revithi and Ioanna Sasiakou of the Library's Department of Preservation & Conservation of Prints & Works of Art describe its conservation

### INTRODUCTION

A few years back an ambitious project of creating a survey for all the objects belonging to the Special Collections of the Hellenic Parliament Library was carried out by the Library's Conservation Department team in order to record and assess their condition. The survey divided the objects into three main categories: those in need of immediate conservation, those whose conservation could be postponed to a later date and the objects with no apparent need for treatment (fortunately the vast majority).

Choosing from the group of the most damaged objects, in immediate need for conservation, it was decided to treat MS 68, dating to the 18th century, written in Greek with carbon ink and containing various medical recipes.

### CONDITION ISSUES

MS 68 was kept in a custom-made box, probably made in the 1960s, with a leather back and small holes on the fore-edges, which were meant to keep the object sufficiently ventilated but which may have increased its exposure to superficial dirt, dust and insects.



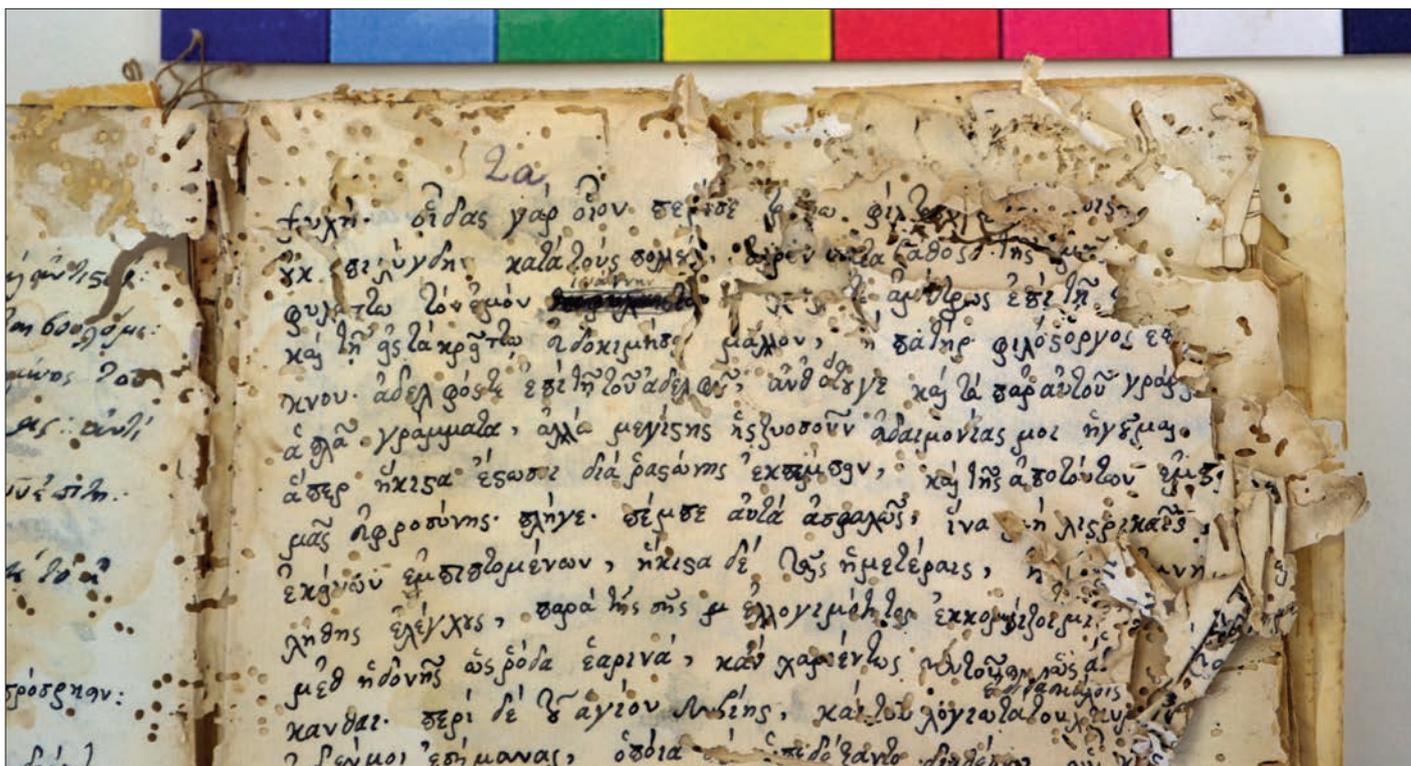
Initial housing of the manuscript

The entire cover was missing, a few remaining sewing threads kept the manuscript together very loosely, while the main cause of damage arose from extensive insect damage to the upper textblock that rendered the object extremely friable and difficult to handle. Other significant problems included tears, folds and creases, as well as superficial dirt.

During the preliminary recording of the manuscript's condition it was established that two separate texts, belonging to different manuscripts (written with a different handwriting and a different ink compared to the rest of the manuscript), were attached to the main body: one, consisting of three bifolia, was sewn as a front quire and a second quire, with one folio and one bifolio, was placed at the end of the textblock.

These findings are consistent with the information provided by the manuscripts catalogue (Lambrou, 1906<sup>1</sup>), where it specifically discusses the presence at the end of the textblock

Initial condition of MS68 showing the insect damage





View of the spine before treatment

of a separate text, with cooking recipes, written by an altogether different person in everyday language. It also notes that the numbering (1a to 10a) in pencil of the first ten leaves (top, right corner of the recto of each page) was added by the team of researchers who compiled the manuscripts catalogue, with pages 1a to 6a (the second separate text) being a collection of three epistles, with the last one giving examples of the conjugation of verbs. The main text of the manuscript (from folio 8a to the end) commences with the closing lines of an epistle (whose initial part is missing) subsequently continuing with the table of contents and finally the main text. At the end of the incomplete epistle there is a mention of a date (αψμζω εν μηνι Νοεμβριω εις Κωνσταντινουπολιν 1747, in the month of November in Constantinople).

## PRELIMINARY TESTS & DECISIONS

After discussing it with the curator responsible for the collection, it was decided that once the conservation treatments were completed, the additional texts would be sewn together with the rest of the textblock, interleaving blank quires in between, in order to differentiate them from the main text of the manuscript. The main textblock contained seventy two bifolia, divided into twenty quires, in addition to the two differentiated ones.

The pages were numbered in pencil, in order to make sure that the correct order would not be lost, the remaining threads of the sewing were removed and a careful dry cleaning with a chemical sponge was carried out through the textblock. The spot-tests showed that the text was very sensitive to water (immediate solubility), therefore a 'traditional' cleaning with water immersion was out of the question. By contrast, the inks seemed undamaged by ethanol.

However the severe degree of damage necessarily required some sort of aqueous treatment, not only in order to remove any acidity but also to help in the opening of the creases and the flattening of the pages. Several initial tests were carried out in order to decide the optimum concentration of ethanol/water, whilst it was decided to proceed with the help of the low pressure table, which would reduce the duration of the humidification to a minimum.

## TREATMENT GETS UNDERWAY

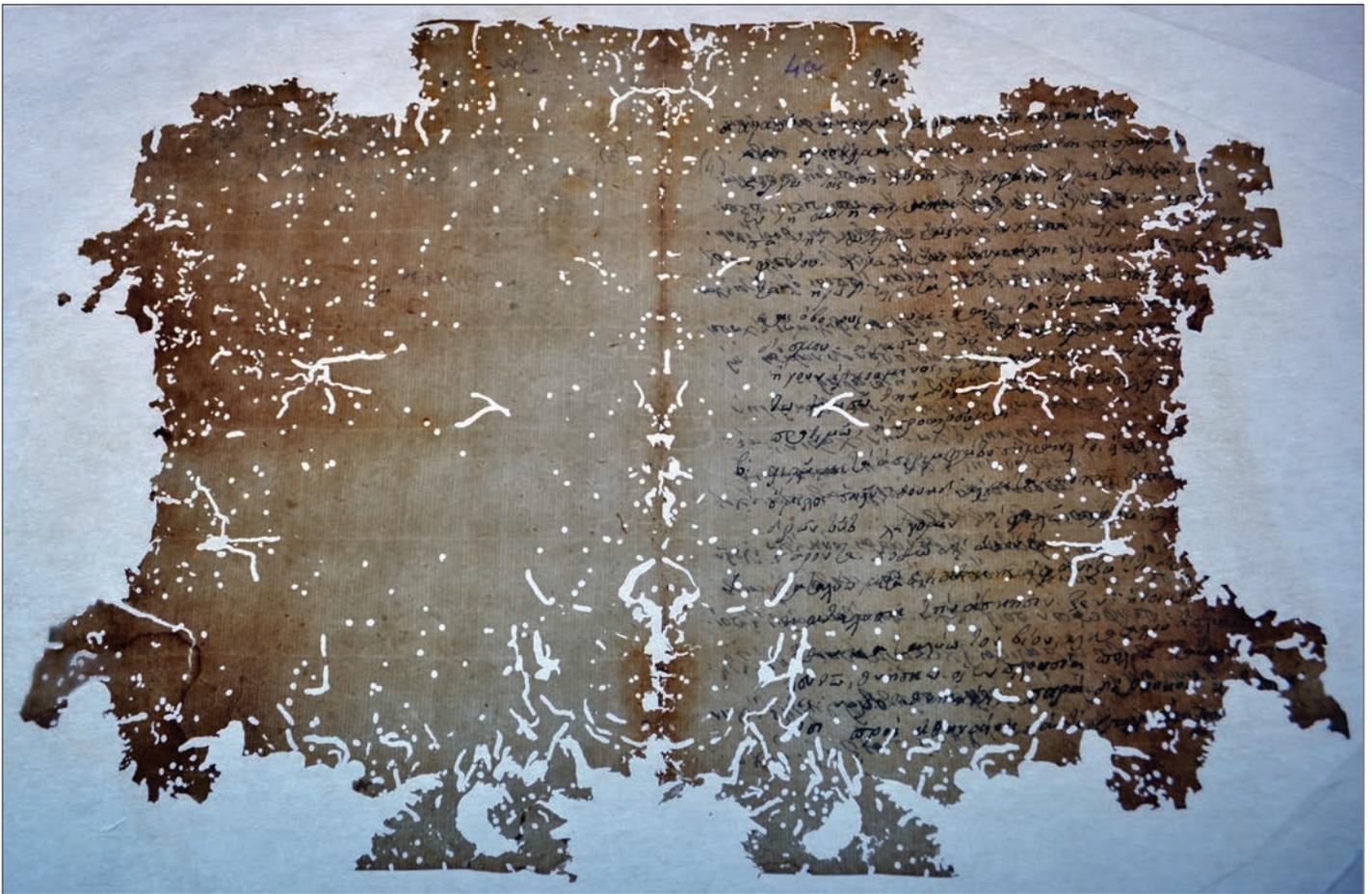
Each bifolio was placed on a bondina sheet, approximately 5cm larger than the object all around, allowing for safe and speedy removal if necessary.

After a few tests, it was decided to work on two bifolia at a time, placing them next to each other (limiting the vacuum to a specific area). The maximum absorbance power was used, so as to limit the humidity time to a minimum and the bifolia were sprayed over with a 7:3 solution of distilled water to ethanol.

This operation was carried out twice for each bifolio (treatment – drying on the table – spraying again). After the second spraying and before the objects were completely dry, it was thought preferable to proceed immediately to the lining of the entire bifolio surface using a 9gsm (cream) tengujo paper and a 20% CMC solution in water with the help of a soft Japanese brush. This was done so as to further minimize the duration of the process, thereby limiting the amount of humidity affecting the pages. This way the low pressure table served a double function: as a humidity control unit, which would also keep the pages steadily flat during all treatments.

Washing and subsequent lining of the bifolia on the low pressure table





Lined bifolio before the filling of the losses

Once lined, they were pressed, in order to achieve their final flattening. Bondina sheets underneath each one were an invaluable tool for their safe manipulation, however it was observed that after the pressing (regardless of how light it was), small circular marks from the suction table surface were emerging on the bondina. For this reason it was decided to replace the bondina sheet of the verso with a new one before each pressing in the nipping press.

Despite initial concern about potential bleeding of the inks (due to the movement of the brush) the whole procedure went extremely well, allowing the folios to flatten and dry under pressure.

The whole process took almost three weeks, and it was twice necessary to clean the entire surface of the suction table from adhesive residues, deriving from the lining process. It was also necessary to regularly change the treatment spots on the table due to the reduced absorbance power of an over-used location.

## TREATING LOSSES AND RE-ASSEMBLY

Once all the bifolia were finally lined, the slow process of filling the losses began. After some tests it was agreed that the best solution would be to proceed with the filling trying to include as many little holes as possible in one single piece of Japanese paper: that is grouping as many losses as possible in larger single fillings (obviously individual fillings were needed in areas of close proximity to the text, etc).

The head and tail margins were easier to treat, using long, single strips, following the general pattern of the loss, using a 23gsm kozo-shi Japanese paper

Once the filling of the losses was completed, the gatherings were regrouped according to the original structure and the textblock was left under pressure for approximately three weeks.

Immediately after the pressing and before its rebinding, the manuscript was digitised by the appropriate department, so that an easily accessible digital form of the text would significantly reduce any unnecessary future handling of the object, therefore minimizing any possible risk of structural damage. Of course, this digitisation, as well as the accessibility of the actual manuscript to researchers and readers alike, would never have been possible prior to its conservation.

The pages with the different handwriting were sewn at the beginning of the textblock, commencing with the bifolio and the single folio (first quire in the new binding), then a separation quire was made from a Japanese paper (Okawara 60gsm) quire (two bifolia), subsequently followed by the quire with the three bifolia, another Japanese paper separation quire and finally the main text:

- 1st quire: single folio + bifolio (recovered from different ms)
- 2nd quire: two (Japanese paper) bifolia
- 3rd quire: three bifolia (recovered from different ms)
- 4th quire: two (Japanese paper) bifolia
- 5th quire and subsequent quires: main text of ms

The textblock was sewn on a frame on three single cords made from hemp, with linen thread, with no endbands. Acid-free boards and brown calf leather were used for the manuscript's new binding. A custom-made dropback box was created to house the treated object, while the previous box will be kept in the collection's archive.



Reassembling the textblock after treatment. The difference in height noticeable in the front gatherings derives from the two different types of manuscripts included in the original structure



The new storage: a custom-made dropback box

## FINAL THOUGHTS

This project has been an invaluable lesson and a learning tool for our team. Despite the initial difficulties, and at times our standing in awe at the fragility of the material and at the extreme solubility of the inks, it now serves as a precedent for similar cases, teaching us how to respond efficiently to similar situations and what to possibly expect in terms of technical difficulties, time planning and the human resources needed to achieve the desired outcome. We are now systematically moving forward with the conservation of the rest of the

assessed objects, looking forward to rendering them once again accessible to the wider public.

1 Lambrou, Sp., 1906, "Κατάλογος των Κωδικών των εν Αθήναις βιβλιοθηκών πλην της Εθνικής", in: Νέον Ελληνομνήμονας, Athens, III, 447-473.

The manuscript after treatment



# the emerging conservator

## ONE YEAR OUT

**Hannah Sutherland, Tapestry Conservation Intern 2016–17, Historic Royal Palaces, completes a story she started in Icon News issue 67**

The publication of this article will coincide almost a year to the day that I graduated from the Centre for Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow. Around this time last year I wrote a column for the Emerging Conservator column looking at how my first few weeks as an intern had progressed, and what I hoped to achieve over the next year. Fast-forward to today and, although still very much an emerging conservator, my twelve-months as Tapestry Conservation Intern with Historic Royal Palaces (HRP), funded by The Clothworkers' Foundation and HRP, has come to a close.

Over the last year I have installed, de-installed, audited, surface-cleaned, photographed or conserved nineteen different tapestries, each with their own unique issues and treatment needs. Across two of the HRP Palaces I have experienced a range of activities above and beyond my initial assumptions of a 'tapestry' internship. From dusting Tudor antlers in the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace to moving the mattresses of Queen Charlotte's State Bed (and becoming a qualified scaffolder) my time with HRP has added a great breadth and depth to my conservation learning.

## IN THE BEGINNING

My training began with the completion of a tapestry sampler. Stitching samplers are designed to replicate the processes used on an object, but without the worry of stitching through a historic tapestry on your first day. For me, the sampler was also a chance to get back into stitching: having just completed my dissertation, it had been a few months since I had stitched an object.

## A TALE OF TWO TAPESTRIES

During my time at Hampton Court I carried out a small amount of conservation on a late 17th century Mortlake tapestry (*The Battle of Solebay – Fleets Lined Up*) and then carried out a full support treatment on an early 17th century Flemish tapestry (a *Verdure* scene). Moving from the sampler to the tapestries vastly improved how I adapted the stitches learnt to suit different situations. When I first unpacked the *Verdure* I was concerned about my ability to quickly and accurately condition-assess such a large object. Dealing with smaller objects in the past, I have noted down every single minor issue: when confronted with 12m<sup>2</sup> of tapestry, this is both difficult and ultimately not hugely helpful. The reality is that you cannot spot everything when the tapestry is flat on the table, and that is okay. Getting the tapestry on the loom was the real time for getting 'up close and personal' with it. Working out estimates per turn (one turn = 15cm of tapestry) was a brand new experience for me and it was a great relief to be told it was okay not to know exactly until a few turns in.

With each new issue I came across I was able to consider how to treat it, discuss complex areas with the tapestry team and



Stitching tapestry aprons onto *The Death of Hercules*

Historic Royal Palaces, 2017



Alice Young and the author work on the *Verdure* tapestry

Historic Royal Palaces, 2017



Undertaking an audit of 17th century Mortlake tapestries at Hampton Court Palace

Historic Royal Palaces, 2017

then execute a suitable series of stitches. Regular reflection, especially during the first few turns, allowed me to adapt and improve my stitching very quickly. Although originally intended to be completed after my internship was finished, the *Verdure* was subsequently required for display so a second conservator came on board and I was able to complete all elements of the conservation and lining. The *Verdure* tapestry was completed over five months, with over eight hundred hours of stitching between me and my HRP



Installing *Christ's Charge to St. Peter* at Hampton Court Palace. A joint project between the tapestry treatment and preventive conservation teams

colleague Alice Young, who was the previous The Clothworker's Foundation funded Icon Intern in Textile Conservation at HRP.

In comparing my treatment of these two tapestries, it has been interesting for me to reflect upon where complexity lies in conservation. The *Solebay*, a more complex tapestry due to its fineness and level of damage, was my first foray into tapestry conservation after finishing my sampler. Although carried out by me, my work on the *Solebay* was closely supervised by the project lead and I was not making any major conservation decisions. With the *Verdure* tapestry I was working solo or leading another conservator; ultimately making conservation decisions for the whole project. Project for project, the *Solebay* tapestry was much more complex than the *Verdure*, but my role on the *Verdure* was more complex than my role on the *Solebay*.

## GETTING THE BROADER PICTURE

Although my internship was based in the tapestry conservation team I have received a broad scope of further conservation training. Sometimes this has been a simple case of being nosy in the studios, other times I got stuck in and gave a hand where needed. Having completed my scaffolding training, I built a scaffold tower for the Furnishings Team, to allow them to safely carry out the audit of one of the palace's state beds. Being witness to this audit, and other Furnishings Team activities, has given me a much better understanding of state beds and throne canopies – furniture which can often be found in front of a tapestry! Getting to grips with the varied terminology for these complex pieces of furniture has been a welcome side-effect of working at HRP.

Working in-situ, often with the Preventive Conservation team, has given me a well-rounded view of how conservation sits within a historic house, especially one which is also a popular visitor attraction; the needs of both the visitor and the object have to be met. When you are 6m in the air vacuuming from a scaffold tower you, quite literally, get a different perspective on conservation. Being able to assist on different projects over the year made me feel like a useful part of the wider team, and gave me the opportunity to be exposed to other on-going conservation treatments. I am very grateful to all my colleagues for letting me get on board and ask lots of questions about these on-going works, which I often just saw a snapshot of.



Discussing tapestry conservation treatments with Doddington Hall's tapestry conservation intern Hannah Vickers

## OTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

In order to gain a more rounded insight into the array of condition issues presented by tapestries and the array of methods to treat them, I visited two different textile conservation studios during the year: Zenzie Tinker Conservation Ltd. in Brighton and Doddington Hall in Lincolnshire. In return I was able to welcome visitors from both of these teams, as well as the Victoria and Albert Museum, for a tour around the studios at Hampton Court Palace. In August I also attended a tapestry weaving course to understand how colour and shading are used to create shape in tapestry. The scale of HRP also meant that I was able to attend several welcome events, internal training sessions and related seminars.

## ROUNDING THINGS OFF

The final 'hurrahs' for my internship were wet-cleaning a small tapestry, ready for the next intern, and installing the *Verdure* at Kensington Palace. This installation formed part of a wider re-presentation of the King's Presence Chamber. Being able to work through all stages of the project, from removal from store, through full conservation, to final installation was a very proud moment for me.

## LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The internship has delivered above and beyond what I expected. Tapestries are large objects which take a long time to conserve. A year-long internship was never going to make me an instant expert, but it has definitely given me the ideal start and the confidence to approach these objects in the future. I can safely say that my fear of 'large objects' has been vanquished.

When I started I was asked to write a self-assessment to highlight the things I particularly wanted to achieve. These things can all be placed into one of three skill categories – professional, practical and personal. This internship has taught me all of these things in two ways. Firstly, I have been purposefully trained in tapestry conservation, and many other areas as noted above, but secondly, and importantly, the internship gave me opportunities and experiences in which I could practise and refine my craft. A year ago I would not have considered the 3x4m *Verdure* tapestry 'small', and I



The *Verdure* installed at Kensington Palace where it will be on display for the next two years

would not have remarked on it being a quick project – only eight hundred hours! When you are working daily alongside tapestries where the schedule is mapped out over years and not weeks, things get put into a different perspective.

I have benefitted hugely from the wisdom of those around me. The Tapestry Conservation team at HRP alone has over sixty five years of conservation experience between them and they have all been very open in sharing ideas and reasoning for different conservation activities taking place.

The chance to speak in team meetings and deliver in-house talks have made me a better public speaker, and I am actually not a bad as I thought I was. The team even encouraged me to submit a paper to the Icon Textile Spring Forum and cheered me on when I was speaking on the day. From one point of view the conservation of historic tapestries could be seen as a tight niche but, from another, it has given me innumerable transferable skills.

I have also learnt that layers are very important, especially when up scaffolding on a dark January morning. And that rooms in historic houses are never square...and neither are tapestries. My knowledge of 1980s' pop music has also flourished thanks to a daily dose of Radio 2's Popmaster – the ultimate soundtrack for tapestry conservation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have had a wonderful year with HRP and I would love to find myself back here again in the future. The people you work with really do make a job more enjoyable, so I would like to thank the whole of the Conservation and Collections Care Collections Management (CCC-CM) team at Hampton Court Palace, particularly my supervisors, Rebecca Bissonett, Emma Henni and Mika Takami. I leave HRP feeling encouraged and

Wet cleaning in progress



more confident and for this I am very grateful. Thanks to The Clothworker's Foundation and Historic Royal Palaces for funding the twelve-month Tapestry Internship programme. I cheerfully pass the baton to the 2017–18 intern and wish her the best of luck!



Arthur J. Gallagher

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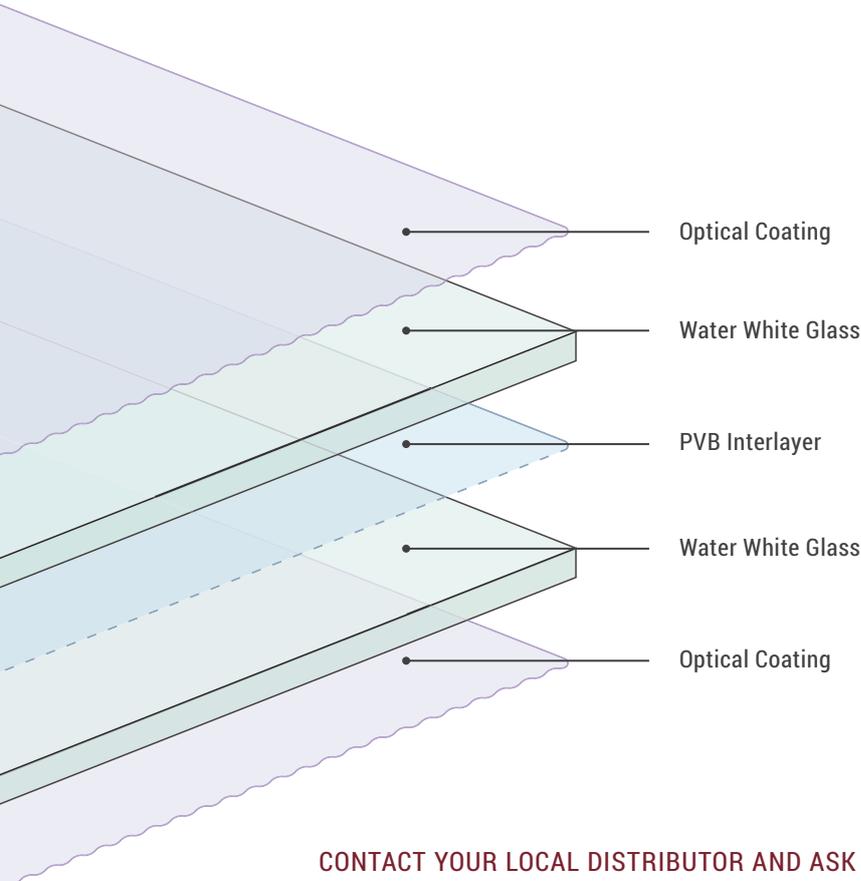
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