

Icon NEWS

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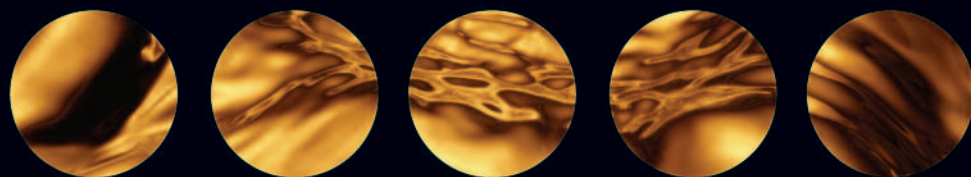
Issues with Japanese urushi lacquer

Also in this issue

Changing roles at the Ashmolean

The Levantine Foundation's work

Accreditation advice from new ACRs



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Email: tdudson@heathlambert.com

Matthew Costin
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Email: mcostin@heathlambert.com

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MARCH 2011

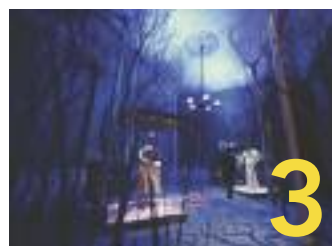
Issue 33

Welcome back to textile conservation teaching and research in the UK! The new facility in Glasgow was formally opened by Princess Anne last month and we hope that, in Scotland's care, the subject now has an enduring and settled home.

Training is also the theme of several accounts in this issue: The Levantine Foundation's work in Egypt, a trip to Palestine and one to the renowned Montefiascone summer school. Much of the focus of conservation education is rightly about teaching the next generation of conservators the complex skills of interventive treatment of objects, so it is interesting to encounter discussion, as in *In Practice*, where *not* to treat is the outcome of consideration of an object's care.

Knowing when not to intervene is the kind of judgment call and ethical issue which may be tested in the course of the accreditation process and this month we start a series of articles, put together with the help of recently accredited conservators, to give you the benefit of their experience. In the first instalment they cover getting started; in May they advise on filling in the forms and in July preparing for the assessment day. Are you up for the challenge?

Lynette Gill, Editor



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Institute of Conservation
1.5, Lafone House,
The Leathermarket,
Weston Street
London SE1 3ER

T +44(0)20 3142 6799

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

Chief Executive
Alison Richmond
arichmond@icon.org.uk

Conservation Register
info@conservationregister.com
www.conservationregister.com

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Icon News
Editor
Lynette Gill
news@icon.org.uk

Listings editor
Mike Howden
mike.howden@lineone.net

Production designer
Malcolm Gillespie
icon@ls-printing.com

Printers
L&S Printing Company Limited
www.ls-printing.com

Design
Rufus Leonard
enquiries@rufusleonard.com

Advertising
Society Media Sales Ltd
T 0117 923 2951
F 0117 923 2467
sales@societymediasales.co.uk

Cover photo: Detail of an 18th century commode attributed to René Dubois, showing black spot corrosion on the gilt-metal mounts and the fine decoration. Image: © By kind permission of the Trustees of the Wallace Collection

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Deadlines:
For May 2011 issue
Editorial: 4 April
Event listings: 4 April
Adverts: 15 April

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around & about

Notes from Nablus

David Odgers spent a week running a course on 'Materials and Methods of Stone Repair and Conservation' in Nablus in Palestine. This is part of a programme, financed by UNESCO and the Welfare Association (www.welfareassociation.org), that started with the Old City of Jerusalem Revitalisation project, to renovate and restore major Arab historic and residential sites. It is now being extended to other cities of importance on the West Bank, like Nablus and Hebron.

Nablus is a wonderfully vibrant, often chaotic, city which is rarely visited and the only other Europeans are likely to be working for the UN or an NGO. It has little tourist infrastructure and yet it has a wealth of fascinating buildings, many of which were badly damaged both in an earthquake in 1927 and then in the Israeli invasion in 2002. The Old City has a vivid array of narrow streets, arches, mosques and markets; all of these are made from the local limestone and feature a range of styles that trace the development of the City back through Ottoman, Byzantine, Christian and Roman civilisations.

The course was for seventeen architects and surveyors and involved lectures, demonstrations and some site work. Although a couple of days were devoted to the use of lime mortars, there was also some broader study of the ethical and practical factors that underpin the considerable amount of restoration work that is being done in the City. It is only in the last couple of years that the curfew has been lifted and free movement within the City has been permitted. Continuing restrictions mean that materials are often hard (and very expensive) to come by. Fortunately, there is a supply of lime putty locally which means that it is one third of the price of hydraulic lime. As a result, the contractors have embraced the use of putty lime and pozzolans with some enthusiasm.

The participants seemed to really enjoy the course,

One of the participants learning the use of lime mortar



David Odgers with some of the participants on the roof of a recently restored building

particularly the practical elements; their friendliness and welcome was overwhelming. There is still a curfew mentality so that by 5.30pm everything is quiet and you can wander the streets and witness the mix of history, poverty, destruction and quiet determination that seems evident at every corner. And the kunafa (a Nablus speciality consisting of shredded pastry, soft cheese and sweet syrup) is simply delicious.

NT & HRP: common concerns

National Trust and Historic Royal Palaces held a joint meeting at Kensington Palace last year to discuss common issues related to the conservation of their collections.

Preparing for emergency situations is an important part of working in an historic property. Both HRP and NT encourage properties to have a thorough emergency plan and take part in regular training exercises. There are opportunities for collaboration between the two bodies, beginning with property and advisory staff from NT taking part in the HRP training exercise and vice versa, in order to learn from each other's approaches.

NT and HRP are introducing new ways to interpret their collections and use them to tell a story about the property. This can involve interactive exhibits such as letters to read, chairs to sit on. It can be difficult to make the distinction for visitors between robust or replica objects which are suitable for handling and objects that are fragile and should not be touched. HRP have redesigned their barriers to make them more a part of the display and part of the story. Both organisations think it is important to carefully select objects for use, depending on their significance and fragility.

Engagement through conservation is a real priority for HRP and NT. HRP have an 'ask the conservators' initiative where visitors can see the conservation work taking place and talk to the conservators. They are now perceived as adding real value to the visitor experience. Media training was provided to help with this and the conservators work as a team mentoring new



The Banqueting House in Whitehall (HRP) set up for a corporate dinner

staff in communicating with the public. At NT there are 'conservation in action' sessions organised by staff at the properties. Advisers, freelance conservators and conservation students undertaking conservation in the houses factor in time in the projects to discuss the work they are doing with the public.

Functions and events are a big part of life at HRP with many weddings, corporate receptions, dinners and feature filming. They have recently published a booklet with instructions

Conservator Jonathan Scott talking to visitors at the Tower of London about HRP's conservation work at the annual archaeology weekend.



Conservator Maria Jordan mounting an exhibit for Enchanted Palace at Kensington Palace

about how to safely hold events such as this.* NT property events are mainly filming or wedding based, and follow a set of guidelines embodied in formal contracts. Large events tend to employ freelance conservators, as the staffing structure at NT involves one conservator looking after a portfolio of properties.

Both organisations have set key performance indicators (KPI) relating to RH and light. At HRP these are used at an organisational wide level, whilst in the NT they are used to help evaluate property performance in collections conservation, particularly with regard to managing the impact of increasingly long open seasons and daily opening hours. In addition, HRP have a KPI for dust accumulation which is in development. Both are concerned about what level of vibration is acceptable and are hoping to do further research into this in the future.

The joint meeting identified many areas of common ground between the two organisations and gave rise to a fruitful and lively discussion, which we hope to have the opportunity to repeat in future. We identified several ways in which we can share specific areas of knowledge, especially relating to emergency planning.

Lynda Skipper (Assistant Conservator, NT) and **Kathryn Hallett** (Preventive Conservation Manager, HRP).

*The Show Must Go On!, available from the HRP online shop www.historicroyalpalaces.com/ for £9.99

Conservator working in situ on the Pope's Cabinet and its restoration at Stourhead, Wiltshire



Historic House Collections

Continuing the theme of caring for historic houses, late last year English Heritage published some guidance notes *Historic House Collections: Drawing up a Collections Management Plan*. The guidance focuses on collections in historic houses, rather than material for display and study in the museum environment, and it is invaluable reading for owners of such houses and anyone else responsible for looking after works of art, antiques and other artefacts in a home setting. It is intended to help plan both day-to-day and long-term care of furnishings and contents to ensure that they are preserved for the future.

It is a dense read with a lot of wisdom distilled into a mere ten pages of text. The helpful advice on the proper use of conservators may owe something to the fact that the joint authors include Icon's Chair of the Board of Trustees, Amber Xavier-Rowe.

The document can be downloaded as a pdf from the EH website (www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications) or is available in hard copy from EH on Tel. 0870 333 1181 or email: customers@english-heritage.org.uk



Digitisation at Tatton Hall

A team from The University of Manchester's John Rylands Library recently captured a unique record of a turbulent period in British history kept at Cheshire's historic Tatton Hall. Using cutting edge camera technology, the team photographed the diary of Nehemiah Wallington, which contained passages on his attitudes to life, religion, the civil war and the witchcraft trials of the period.

Nehemiah Wallington was an ordinary working man who lived from 1598 to 1658 during a period where plague, fire and religious oppression were constant threats. An eloquent and well-read writer, Wallington filled fifty notebooks in which he documented his own philosophies on life, and one of these handwritten notebooks is kept at Tatton.

This is the latest project to be undertaken by the John Rylands' Centre for Heritage Imaging and Collection Care (CHICC) team funded by JISC. The team have also digitised five other manuscripts from the Tatton Hall collection – four manuscript volumes containing the music of Henry Purcell and a Persian manuscript. The four Purcell volumes contain anthems, odes, operas and other pieces, transcribed from the composer's original manuscript by Oxford Professor Philip Hayes in the 1780s. One volume contains a piece of music entitled 'The noise of foreign wars' which is the earliest and only transcript from the original in existence.

The Centre for Heritage Imaging and Collection Care takes an object-centred approach to digitisation. All staff working on the project have been trained in the handling of historical objects and conservators and photographers work in collaboration to ensure the material to be digitised is not damaged by the imaging process. Before the Tatton Hall manuscripts were photographed each volume was assessed by a conservator. This involved checking that the manuscript was in a suitable condition to digitise and that the digitisation process would not damage the volume.

To be suitable for digitisation a volume needs to open to an angle of 90 degrees without straining the binding – this minimum 90-degree angle enables the photographers to capture a satisfactory image of each page. The distance between the text and the gutter also needs to be considered: text or illumination close to the gutter is difficult to photograph. A report was prepared for each volume describing the binding, the materials used in its construction and its condition. Each report outlined any specific handling requirements, detailed how the binding should be supported and recommended the environmental conditions that should be maintained during photography.

The manuscripts imaged at Tatton vary in style; the four Purcell volumes are bound in the same style, each sewn on five cords and covered with vellum and leather. The Wallington diary is covered in marbled paper with a leather spine and corner pieces and the Persian manuscript has a



Digitisation underway at Tatton Hall

lacquer-work binding and is illustrated with intricate miniatures.

At Tatton Hall the Purcell volumes are kept in the music room and the Wallington and Persian manuscripts in the library. The digitisation took place in a bedroom currently being used by the National Trust for temporary projects and exhibitions. Temperature and relative humidity readings were taken in these different locations to ensure that the manuscripts were not put at risk by sudden changes in temperature and RH.

During its photography each volume was supported on a bespoke, portable cradle, the cradle folds into a travel case facilitating the CHICC team's off-site work. The cradle is fitted with two lighting armatures; these use LEDs to light the object to be photographed, keeping radiated heat to a minimum.

'The Wallington manuscript' photographed by the CHICC team

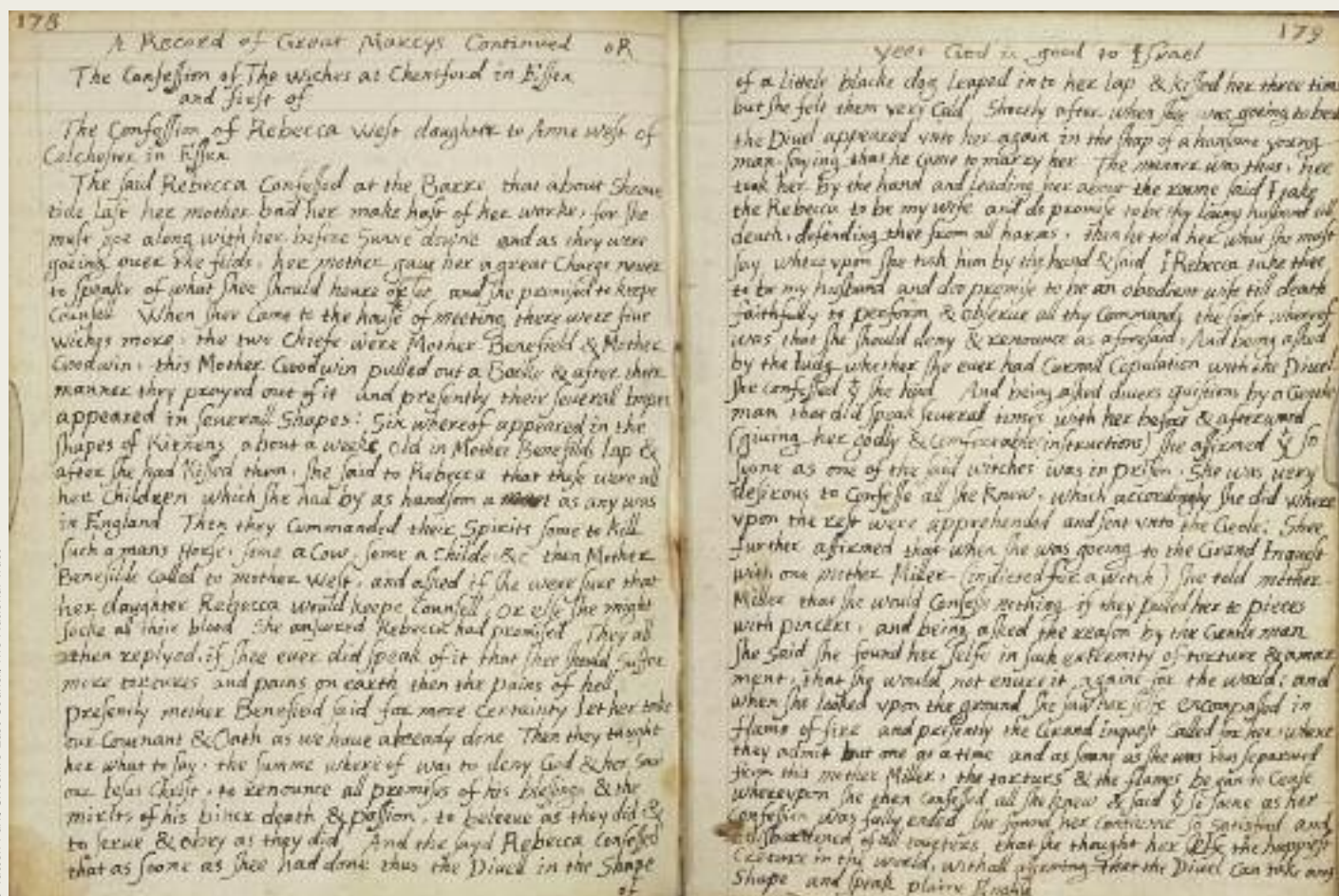
They are also covered with ultraviolet filters protecting the objects from unnecessary exposure to heat and UV light.

While working at Tatton the team used a kit containing a range of tools and materials including: a Temperature and Relative Humidity monitor to assess the environmental conditions; Teflon tools to help turn fragile pages; and plastazote foam to help support the bindings. The tool kit evolves each time the team works off-site as new challenges are encountered with each project.

The CHICC team are currently involved in the digitisation of a collection of fifty incunabula and are working on the methodology for the digitisation of a very large Islamic manuscript volume.

You can follow CHICC's work on its blog at: <http://chiccmanchester.wordpress.com/>, where you will also find contact details for the team.

Elaine Sheldon, Conservation Intern
Centre of Heritage Imaging and Collection Care, The University of Manchester, The John Rylands University Library (Special Collections),



Researchers at the North West Film Archive at Manchester Metropolitan University have exposed a potential threat to the archive of British life on film. Fungal mould can cultivate and eventually consume home cine film, videos, TV and film archive if not stored correctly.

The British Library have stored their valuable film archive in Vindon's 5°C 35%RH heritage suite, increasing the P.I. of film from 63 years to 488 years whilst reducing the natural age rate from moderate to very slow.

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professional update

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

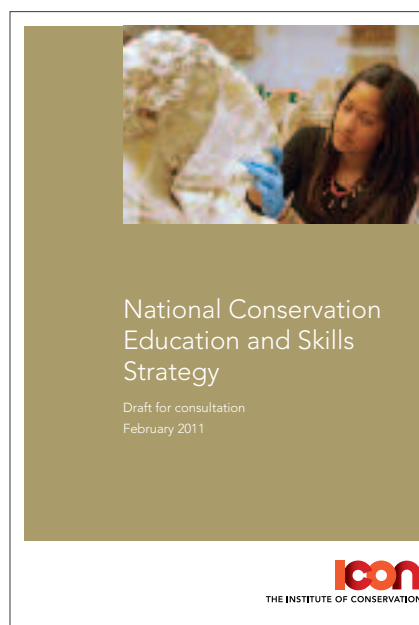
Icon, quo vadis?

Icon has been doing quite a lot of strategic thinking over the last few months. The staff and Trustees have together drafted a five-year strategy that we think will strengthen the heritage conservation sector and leave Icon a stronger organisation. We will soon be posting the strategy on the website for comment. The National Conservation Education & Skills Strategy has just been sent out for second stage consultation to a wider group of stakeholders that includes Icon members, funders, major heritage and cultural organizations, and government agencies. I look forward to receiving your feedback. Now that we have the strategies, we can get down to the doing.

It has been estimated that depending on where you are in the cultural sector, you will be experiencing anywhere from 8 to 40% cuts over the next three years*. Most of us will probably never have experienced anything like this in our lifetimes. Such conditions require a step-change for all of us.

- Thinking creatively and being versatile in making the most of opportunities
- Working co-operatively to provide support where needed and at reasonable cost, as well as with the lowest possible impact on the environment
- Staying ahead of the game

Most of all it requires proactive engagement within and beyond our profession. This is where Icon can provide an arena for action. You can support your profession through fiscally challenging times and build resilience so that we can come out at the other end of the next three to four difficult years with the knowledge, understanding and skills that are needed in place.



Icon's five-year strategy rests on three pillars: championing professional standards; strengthening partnerships; and building a sustainable organisation. In these times of uncertainty, with public sector workers moving out into the private sector and consultancy, accreditation will be more powerful than ever as an indicator of

competence, the quality mark of the industry. We recognise that we cannot be successful at promoting the benefit of heritage conservation and heritage science alone and need to work with our partners to build commitment. The survival of Icon is by no means guaranteed. We all have to work hard at it. The key to this is an active membership. We need to maintain, increase and broaden membership of Icon. Everyone who could be a member of Icon, should be a member of Icon. Icon has sixteen specialist groups that deliver education and CPD to members and others. An active programme will attract more members: more activity – more members; more members – more activity – a virtuous circle.

It has never been a better time to invest in education and skills and to approach this in a structured way. Icon was charged with taking the lead back in 2009. Our education and skills strategy includes all those with an interest or potential interest in conserving our cultural heritage and a broad church of heritage professionals. Everyone needs to work together to ensure the continued availability of conservation and heritage science as subjects of study. Conservation Education UK is highly regarded throughout the world, but provision is haphazard, does not link together well, and there are certain subject areas that are not covered anywhere. Most of all it is extremely vulnerable. Of utmost urgency is the need to address the current and pending skills gap, the loss of knowledge and expertise that will go with the retirement of the baby boomers. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity. My generation are leaving the workforce right now and right now we need to facilitate knowledge transfer and skills sharing in both formal and informal ways. We also need to rely on co-operation between public and private sectors, so that skills are shared and passed on. One Icon group is using its funds to support unemployed members by encouraging skills sharing. Other ideas include establishing skills banks, and funding emeritus positions to capture expertise before colleagues retire.

Icon is starting up a new group, called the Education & Skills Group, to contribute to delivery of the strategy. While only Icon members will be able to formally join the group, anyone with an interest will be welcomed to take part. You will be able to sign up for the group in the next round of membership renewals on 1 April.

With membership renewals coming up, you will be thinking about whether you will be renewing your membership this year. As you can see, there is a lot to do and we need your support to translate vision into action.

Alison Richmond, Chief Executive

1 March 2011

* Simon Cane, Head of Operations, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Roundtable discussion, Changing Times, Changing Strategies, Conference, Impact: Redefining the Measurement of Collection Care, 15 February 2011, Preservation Advisory Centre, The British Library.



HRH is introduced to MPhil textile conservation students by Nick Pearce

GLASGOW CELEBRATIONS

'Let's face it', said the Marquess of Douro, 'it was a wake'. That was how the Chairman of the Textile Conservation Centre Foundation described the last time such a gathering of luminaries celebrated textile conservation at an event to mark the passing of Southampton University's Textile Conservation Centre. This was 2009, and the Centre had been closed by the University in spite of a high-profile campaign which focussed first on saving the Centre, and later, when every avenue had reached a dead end, on raising awareness of the vulnerability of conservation education at large (one result of which was the Demos report 'It's a Material World'). This time, the atmosphere was one of jubilation; all the years of hard work and careful negotiations had at last paid off with the official opening of the *Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History* at the University of Glasgow on 9 February in the presence of HRH The Princess Royal, Patron of the TCC Foundation.

What had brought this happy outcome to pass, Professor Sir Kenneth Calman, Chancellor of the University of Glasgow, told us was the university's enlightened policy that encourages co-operation across departments. 'The textile conservation course had finally found a home, and what a home!' Professor Nick Pearce, Head of the School of Culture and Creative Arts, had attended 'the wake' and recognised



HRH talking to Linda Ramsay, Chair of Icon Scotland Group (2nd r.), with Icon's CEO Alison Richmond (r.)

the potential in bringing textile conservation to Glasgow University, where there is a well-established department of art history. The Textile Conservation programme, led by Frances Lennard, is now firmly embedded in the School, sharing the Centre and studio accommodation with the Technical Art History programme run by Dr. Erma Hermens.

Leading up to this day were years of intensive negotiations with a number of other universities and institutions. When the University of Glasgow expressed interest the Trustees and the TCC Foundation quickly saw that it offered the best possible home and future for the education and research work of the former TCC. In the vanguard of supporters is Peter Longman, Deputy Chairman of the TCC Foundation, who had led the negotiations. But I would wager that no one was happier than Nell Hoare, former Director of the TCC, whose vision kept what the TCC stood for alive. Nell worked with Peter and also undertook fundraising for the new Centre. Lord Douro thanked the long list of funders that included The Clothworkers' Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Monument Trust and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

As Lord Douro made clear, this new venture is NOT the TCC mark 3 but a new and exciting development that both continues and significantly extends the work of the former TCC. The potential for future development is truly exciting.

The TCC Foundation has been very fortunate in their Patron HRH The Princess Royal. She has been a well-informed and enthusiastic champion of textile conservation. Before the reception, HRH visited the new studios and spoke to each student individually and later spoke eloquently about the need for cross-disciplinary university education and research in conservation.

The Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History has now taken up residence in bespoke accommodation at the University of Glasgow and guests at the reception were given a tour of the premises. But when the new course started in September the studios were not yet ready and the TCC equipment was still in storage. 'The support of staff at Glasgow museums was fantastic' said Frances Lennard 'they went out of their way to help us, providing space for the students' practical work as well as objects for them to work on'. Thus it was communal effort that breathed life into this course in Glasgow. Congratulations to everyone who made it happen!

Alison Richmond

Ref EFP11/02

Icon Internship – funded by
Clothworkers Foundation**Conservation of Taxidermy****12 months internship, June 2011–June 2012**

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The Horniman Museum is offering an excellent opportunity for an enthusiastic individual seeking to develop their skills in the conservation of natural history taxidermy specimens.

Information on this placement, application guidance and details of eligibility can be found on the Icon website at www.icon.org.uk. Interviews for short-listed applicants will be held in **April 2011** and the successful candidate will start in **June 2011**.

Apply using the form available on the website.
www.icon.org.uk

We request you use electronic format for all enquiries and applications.

Icon, the Glasite Meeting House, 33 Barony Street,
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Closing date for applications: 25 March 2011**Welcome to new Heritage Lottery Fund interns:**

Lindsay Gibson (the National Archives – Book & Paper Conservation)

Lucie Graham (Lancashire Conservation Centre, Natural History)

Margaret Smith (Glasgow University – Conservation Science)

Robin Gibson and **Gemma Thorns** (National Museums Liverpool, Ships and historic models)

Melanie Keable (British Museum – Conservation Science)

Rebecca Chisholm (V&A, Preventive Conservation)

John Sullivan (Plowden & Smith, Exhibitions Installation)

Jessica Burgess (Alison Lister's studio, Textile Conservation)

Jenny Halling – Intern in archives conservation at North Yorkshire Record Office

Future placements

Icon will continue to provide internships in partnership with other funders and employers beyond the end of the HLF scheme. In the next Icon News we expect to advertise placements in Conservation of Books and Paintings, as well as Preventive Conservation. See our current advert also for a unique 12-month placement in Conservation of Taxidermy at the Horniman Museum – thanks to generous support from the Clothworkers Foundation.

**EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRATEGY**

One of the legacies of the TCC is Icon's National Strategy for Conservation Education & Skills. In 2009 Icon was charged with the strategic lead in strengthening conservation education and skills in the UK. Following a series of consultations throughout 2010, Icon has drafted a strategy and action plan. This has recently been distributed for a second stage of consultation to garner the views of a wider group of stakeholders that includes funders, major heritage and cultural organizations, government agencies, and everyone who has an interest in the conservation of cultural heritage.

Your contribution is welcomed at any stage of the development and implementation of this strategy. You will find the consultation document on the Icon website (www.icon.org.uk) and you are invited to email your response to the questions asked on page 2 of the paper and to make any additional comments by **31 March 2011**.

PACR FEES

The PACR application and assessment fees are increasing from 1 April 2011. The increase is in line with inflation. These fees were not increased last year and the Finance Committee agreed that as from 1 April the Register of Intention (Rol) fee will be £95 (non refundable) and the application and assessment fee will be £480.

If you have not submitted a Rol form yet and you are planning on submitting an application form for the 16 June 2011 deadline, the next Rol deadline is 21 April, but you can still pay £80 with your Rol form if submitted to pacr@icon.org.uk before 1 April 2011. Please go to www.icon.org.uk <Accreditation/CPD> for new applicants to download the form.

ICON'S NEW ADDRESS

Please note a slight change to Icon's new address as given in January's Iconnect and Icon News. Here is the amended – and much more concise – version for your address books:

1.5 Lafone House
The Leathermarket
Weston Street
London SE1 3ER

TRAINING NEWS**Even more Interns....**

Icon's HLF training bursaries project is due to finish in March 2012. We have squeezed in nine more 12-month interns, all starting about the time that Icon News is landing on your desk. The training office was more busy than usual over Christmas and the New Year! It was an interesting round of interviews, with a surprisingly strong field of budding conservation scientists, model-makers and technicians, natural history specialists and paper and textile conservators to choose from.



Louise Joynton, Intern in textiles conservation at Historic Royal Palaces

Technician Qualification Update

The qualification's second Pilot finished at the end of 2010.

The latest CTQ recipients include: **Linda Scandrett** from Bowes Museum, **Graham Taylor** and **Jamie Mitchell** from National Galleries of Scotland,

and **Karen Monkman** from the National Trust. Congratulations to all. Icon hopes to be announcing good news about a re-launch of the qualification very soon. Please continue to contact the Training Office training@icon.org.uk as a potential employer-partner or candidate for 2011 and beyond.

Twitter

Join Conservators_Uk on Twitter by signing up yourself and going to http://twitter.com/Conservators_uk. It's a great way of getting to the news, events, opinions and even jobs first. There are few UK conservators tweeting at the moment but many heritage organisations, cultural heritage journalists and politicians who are keen to pick up your views. Take a look!

WORK PLACEMENT AWARDS

The Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass is pleased to announce that once again they will offer an **Award for Excellence** and two **Ashton Hill Awards** for the year **2011–12**. These are work placement Awards. **The deadline for entry is 1 April**, with interviewing on 12 April 2011.

Application details and more information can be found on the Glaziers' website: www.worshipfulglaziers.com

CPD HELP FOR 2011

Pursuing professional development can be expensive but look at the help available with the costs.

Looming up is the deadline – 31 March – for the **Zibby Garnet Travelling Fellowship**, which funds study trips for conservation students who are training in the United Kingdom and wish to widen their practical skills overseas.

With two further deadlines this year – June 13 and September 12 – the **Anna Plowden Trust** will fund up to 50% of the cost of a short course or major conference for conservators with over five years' experience since completing training.

Qualified conservators can apply at any time to the **Clothworkers' Foundation** for a Conservation Bursary to attend a conference, seminar or other event of benefit to current work or future career. Up to £1,000 may be awarded with applicants or their employers contributing at least 50% of the cost.

More details, applications forms etc from:

- www.zibbygarnett.org
- annaplowdentrust.org.uk or e-mail Penelope Plowden at penelopeplowden@btinternet.com
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- Enhanced data on website usage generated for each business
- User results continue to be listed fairly

MANUSCRIPT CONSERVATION GRANTS

The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust offers grants for the conservation and preservation of manuscripts and archives. Since 1990 these grants have helped to make previously inaccessible collections available for study and research. Thanks to a generous grant, over three years, from the Pilgrim Trust the NMCT has more grant funds available than ever before.

The next deadline for the submission of applications is **1 April 2011**; results will be announced in June. If you want to plan ahead, the deadline after that is 1 October.

The Trust welcomes applications from any record office, library and owners of manuscripts that are exempt from capital taxation or owned by a charitable trust. Grants can cover conservation, binding and other preservation measures, including digitisation. They are normally for no more than 50% of the project cost. Current recipients include: The Fitzwilliam Museum, The Wellcome Library, the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, Carmarthenshire Archives Service and many others.

Applications must be submitted on the Trust's application form, which you can download at www.nmct.co.uk. If, having consulted the website, you have any queries about whether your project is eligible, please do contact Nell Hoare (formerly Director of the TCC), who now manages the Trust under the aegis of The Trust Partnership. You can contact her either through the NMCT website or at nmct@thetrustpartnership.co.uk.

THE EARLY BIRD....

...catches the pest. Don't miss the early bird rate, booking now, for the international conference on pests to be held on 26-28 October in London.

A Pest Odyssey 2011: Ten Years Later is a follow up to the highly successful conference of the same name held in 2001. The event is being hosted by the British Museum and organised by Icon's Care of Collections Group in partnership with the BM and a wide range of other institutions, including English Heritage, Historic Royal Palaces, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, the V&A, the Museum of London, the Horniman and Tate.

This new conference will:

- look at how Integrated Pest Management (IPM) has developed over the past ten years to deal with the increasing threat pest attacks poses to collections and buildings
- share new understanding about pest species and the risks they pose
- be a platform for showing how successful training programmes have raised the profile of IPM both within the heritage sector and beyond.
- present case studies covering a variety of practical control strategies and how these can work in both the traditional museum setting and the wider heritage context.
- formulate a set of guidelines and priorities for future work and research to make IPM even more effective.
- enable people to share and discuss their problems and successes

Speakers are coming from far and wide – Japan, Australia, the US, Europe – and include David Pinniger and Tom Strang. There will be posters galore and the conference proceedings will be published in December in hard copy and as a CD.

Delegates will be given the opportunity to attend evening events at the prestigious London venues of both Kensington Palace State Apartments and The Natural History Museum.

For more information and detail on booking please visit <http://www.pestodyssey.org>. And book soon....before that early bird flies away.

MORE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Science of Objects and Collections

This is title of a conservation research conference at the British Library Conference Centre on 11 April 2011. It will explore two linked themes: understanding the nature of objects, and understanding the nature of collections. Topics to be covered include the use of spectroscopy and multi-spectral imaging to reveal more about the nature of objects, statistical methods for understanding the nature of collections, and the influences of the environment on collections. The complete programme can be found here: www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/ccare/



Carving a wallpaper block

[events/programme110411.pdf](#)

For further details and bookings, please contact Teresa Harrington – Teresa.Harrington@bl.uk

And coming up in September two short courses at **West Dean College:**

The Conservation of Historic Wallpaper with Allyson McDermott, which will look at the history, identification, conservation and recreation of wallpapers through visits, seminars, practical workshops and case studies.

The Anthropology of Cloth and Clothing with Dinah Eastop. The course investigates the material and social aspects of cloth and clothing and aims to inform the care, conservation and curation of collections through the prism of social anthropology.

To book either of these, contact West Dean's CPD Coordinator Liz Campbell on cpd@westdean.co.uk

The Society of Bookbinders' biennial conference

The Society's next Education and Training Conference will be held at the University of Warwick from 25–28 August 2011 and will include demonstrations and lectures on bookbinding and artists' books by expert speakers from around the world. For details see website www.societyofbookbinders.com or contact the Conference Organiser by email:

conf.organiser@societyofbookbinders.com.

Cloth and clothing are important in many collections but often taken for granted





Dubravka Vuckcevic (l) with Mary Bustin at the Listed Property Show

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Conservation Register Manager, Dubravka Vuckcevic, attended the Listed Property Show at London's Olympia exhibition centre last month to promote Icon and the Conservation Register. The show was very busy, even more so than last year, so Dubravka was very grateful to paintings conservator Mary Bustin ACR, who volunteered her time to help on the Saturday, and to the Camberwell College students who helped on the Sunday. Thanks go to their tutor Mark Sandy for organising this.

DIGITAL COSTS

A new report produced by the Collections Trust on behalf of the European Commission has estimated the cost of digitising the Collections of Europe's museums, archives and libraries at 100bn Euro, or 10bn Euro per year over the next decade.

Other key findings from the report include:

- European libraries hold between 59m and 95m unique titles
- Significant cost-savings can be achieved where cultural organisations work in partnership with private-sector providers
- European museums contain more than 265m man-made artefacts and 221m natural artefacts

Speaking about the report, Collections Trust CEO Nick Poole said, 'Digitisation is one important way of opening these collections up so that everyone can enjoy and learn from them, but only if it can be done on an economically sustainable basis. For the first time, thanks to this research, we have a good idea of the overall level of the investment required, which will help us to inform policy at both a national and European level'.

The full report can be downloaded from the European Commission website at: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/doc/refgroup/annexes/digiti_report.pdf

NEW ONLINE LIBRARY SERVICE

The Chantry Library will soon be launching a new service to aid conservators with their research. In conjunction with leading specialists in conservation disciplines, the library is compiling a series of select annotated subject bibliographies



to be published on the library website from Spring 2011.

Just imagine – up-to-date listings of citations to books, articles, and documents selected by specialist conservators with a short descriptive summary and evaluation of each source – to help guide, inform and ultimately inspire all Chantry Library users, no matter where you are located.

Project Aims

This exciting new project will support the work of Icon members, by providing an up-to-date list of the most relevant source material on a topic in conservation with annotations giving information about the relevance, accuracy and quality of the sources cited, making it easier to evaluate the literature on a given subject.

Bibliographies at your fingertips

Each listing will provide immediate access to resources to help you with your work and research, whether you are currently studying, working on your internship, interested in enhancing your CPD learning, or have already qualified within the conservation profession.

Or, perhaps you may just be curious to find out more about another topic and wish to explore further.

The references chosen for each bibliography are to be selected by subject specialists, all of whom excel in their own area of conservation work, and the compilations will be prepared in collaboration with the Chantry Librarian. A key feature will be that each reference will be annotated – thus providing brief, informative and evaluative descriptions of all the documents included in the bibliography. The annotations will enable conservators to identify and access the references of most interest and relevance to their work, quickly and efficiently.

It is proposed that the first two bibliographies will focus on the following topics – **Conservation of Japanese prints**, and the **Conservation of photographs**.

Because the available literature on Japanese prints is very diverse and photographic literature highly specialised, professional input and advice from the specialists will be essential in helping the librarian successfully shape each bibliography.

Another considerable advantage of the bibliographies is that, as far as possible, the references will be available for access either electronically, or in hard copy, via the Chantry Library where original documents will be held.



Japanese woodblock print.
The Courtesan Yosooi by Eisho,
Chokosai (late 1790s)

If you would like to find out more about the **Online Bibliographies Project**, please contact the Librarian Ros Buck on email chantrylibrary@icon.org.uk or tel: 01865 251303

MORE LIBRARY NEWS

Photocopies of journal articles

A quick reminder that we supply photocopies of journal articles, chapters from books and conference papers, which are held in the Chantry Library collection. Icon members are entitled to claim **ten free** articles each year, so please quote your membership number with your requests. Articles can be provided either as scanned pages, or in hard copy.

Books: recent additions include:

For the Love of the Binding: Studies in Bookbinding History Presented to Mirjam Foot edited by David Pearson, The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2000, 378pp. ISBN: 0-73123-4714-3

The British Museum Technical Research Bulletin, Volume 4, 2010, edited by David Saunders, Archetype Publications in association with The British Museum, 2010, 101pp

Care and conservation of manuscripts 11: Proceedings of the eleventh international seminar held at the University of Copenhagen 24th–25th April 2008, edited by Matthew James Driscoll and Ragnheiour Mosesdottir, Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2009

Early Printed Books as Material Objects (Proceedings of the Conference organized by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, Munich, 19–21 August 2009), edited by Bettina Wagner and Marcia Reed, IFLA Publications 149, De Gruyter Saur, Berlin/New York, 2010, ISBN: 978-3-11-025324-5. For Table of Contents: <http://www.degruyter.de/files/pdf/9783110253245Contents.pdf>

Recently acquired journals

These include

Journal of the American Institute for Conservation, Vol.49, No.1, Spring/Summer 2010

Note: JAIC Articles are online for Vols. 16–44, 1977–2005, at: <http://cool.conservation-us.org/coolaic/jaic/tocvol.html>
The Chantry Library collection holds hard copies from 1977–2010

Restaurator, Vol. 31, No. 3-4, December 2010

Note: Contents page and abstracts available at: <http://www.reference-global.com/toc/rest/2010/31/3-4>

Studies in Conservation, Vol.55, No.4, December 2010
60 Years of IIC 1950–2010

Note: www.iiconservations.org/publications/sic/sic.php
(Indexes of back issues to 1999; Searchable database for

Studies in Conservation article abstracts.)

WAAC (Western Association for Art Conservation) Newsletter, Vol.32, No.3, September 2010

Note: Articles online up until January 2010 at: <http://cool.conservation-us.org/waac/wn/>

For full details of new resources and a full listing of all journal articles received over past two months, check out the library blog 'Library News' at: <http://chantrylibrary.wordpress.com/>

You can also subscribe to our RSS feed, and track new books and journals at the Library in real time. More details on how to do this can be found at <http://chantrylibrary.wordpress.com/feed/>

IF ONLY I'D KNOWN THEN....

.... what I know now about PACR, what would I have done differently?

New ACRs reflect on their own experience of the PACR process for the benefit of potential applicants. This is the first of four articles where they offer some insight and advice into putting a PACR application together and how to prepare for an assessment.

Getting started proved to be an initial barrier for some: 'I had envisaged applying for accreditation for some time but the thought of actually doing it was a little daunting', 'I don't enjoy form filling', were common and familiar admissions. But overcome because 'every professional can see a necessity for doing professional accreditation as it is required in many places and it is recognized as a big step in a professional career.'

Making the decision: 'A couple of years ago I was thinking that it is a complicated and very formal examination. It didn't put me off because as every conservator I like challenges. However I have to reveal that the decision making process about which projects will be adequate for my application form took me a few years. After closer examination the conservation strategies looked like a very useful work system ... in general very similar to my own every day practice, just formulated better and more precisely. That conclusion finally encouraged me to apply.'

And when you do decide to start thinking seriously about it, the challenge then is selecting projects as was the case here: 'I realised that instead of not having many things to use, I had too many, so I then had to decide which to eliminate. Sometimes it's the smaller everyday jobs that can highlight the professional standards that you cover.'

'The paperwork looks daunting when you first encounter it, but it really isn't that bad. I found the most difficult part of the process was to stick to one page per project, so give yourself plenty of time to work out the key aspects of each project and remember you don't need to cover all criteria in each one.'

Some have struggled to work to the identified application

deadline and said, 'I advise applicants not to apply for accreditation prematurely, but to wait until they have gained sufficient evidence and experience to support their application.' And 'I worked several years putting together my portfolio, which was a long and arduous exercise. I paid my Register of Intention twice, before committing.'

And the advice is 'I would build up a folder of good examples of work and projects worked on from day one once one becomes a qualified conservator, building up a warranted portfolio for the assessment day' and 'I would write the application well in advance of the deadline, one project at a time and allow time for your mentor to have a read through and help edit where necessary.'

Planning and preparation

Thinking ahead and building up a folder of work by taking good quality 'before' and 'after' treatment photographs as you go along, '... would have saved a lot of time trawling through the collections, recalling items to photograph for the assessment!' Keeping good records and organising project files can help greatly. 'Preparing for accreditation was a great opportunity to revisit closely past experiences – good and bad – and to think about lessons learnt and new projects.'

'I found that looking through my email threads for each project was a good reminder of the complexity of [them]. Some of the dilemmas that I otherwise would have forgotten about were apparent in my email communications with curators and mount-makers regarding housing and storage etc. I printed out the relevant emails and kept them on file to prompt me to remember the details when I was presenting the projects to the assessors.'

'I have been employed with a number of museums on temporary contracts; therefore the accreditation process was a challenging experience. I was concerned that I would not have enough evidence of work to support my application. It is difficult to obtain a permanent post in conservation, so I advise potential applicants to keep good photographic and treatment records of all their work'

Support

'Use a mentor'. It certainly paid dividends for these new ACRs!

'I found it very helpful to have a mentor to bounce ideas off, in particular a mentor who had been through the accreditation process herself. In my case she wasn't of my discipline, which I found useful as it made me look at my projects a bit more objectively.'

'It was a very useful exercise; it helped me structure my reports tying up topics in a paragraph, instead of over three paragraphs in an ad hoc manner.'

It's normal to feel apprehensive: 'I was bit scared of contacting

my mentor, partly because at the beginning of the process, I was worried that he would tell me lots of things I didn't want to hear. I wish I had had more of an ongoing dialogue with a mentor from the beginning of the process as this would have highlighted my weaknesses. Talking about your work with a mentor can also help boost [your] confidence as you verbalise your inner thoughts and begin to plan for the assessment visit itself.'

Attending the 'Introduction to PACR' event 'will determine whether you are indeed ready for the process. It will either spur you on to apply or it will give you the impetus to start preparing and seeking suitable projects. Icon is very supportive throughout the process and is indeed very efficient in its administration – so do make use of them. Once you have your projects, it is essential that you attend the PACR clinic. It is your opportunity to raise any questions or doubts that you may have about the suitability of your projects and to pitch your queries to those who have already gone through the process.'

'I believe that without the help of accredited colleagues and the PACR clinic I couldn't fill in the application form correctly and personally that was the hardest part for me. I think every applicant should allow some additional time for this process and do not hesitate to consult other accredited conservators or seek help during PACR clinics.'

There is a lot of information on the Icon website under the Accreditation/CPD tab> for new applicants. 'I found the examples on Icon's website and reading through a few colleagues' application forms hugely helpful in steering me towards writing up my projects with confidence. A practical, sensible description of both conservation, exhibition, as well as research examples, but with an approach which keeps PACR themes in mind, seemed to bring success.'

The feedback will continue in Icon News' issues through to September but in case you cannot wait that long the full article can be accessed via www.icon.org.uk and go to the <Accreditation/CPD> For new applicants page. There is also a new FAQs section to consult.

With thanks to the contributors:

Richard Aitken ACR, Felicity Bolton ACR, Emma Bowron ACR, Jackie Coppen Adamick ACR, Julie Eklund ACR, Liz Goodman ACR, Lien Gyles ACR, Alexandra Gent ACR, Sophie Godfraind ACR, Sarah Hamlyn ACR, Lea Havelock ACR, Rebecca Hellen ACR, Zofia Noga ACR, Hanneke Ramakers ACR, Laura Ratcliffe ACR, Sophie Sarkodie ACR, Kristie Short-Traxler ACR, Rachel Thomas ACR, Rachel Wales ACR



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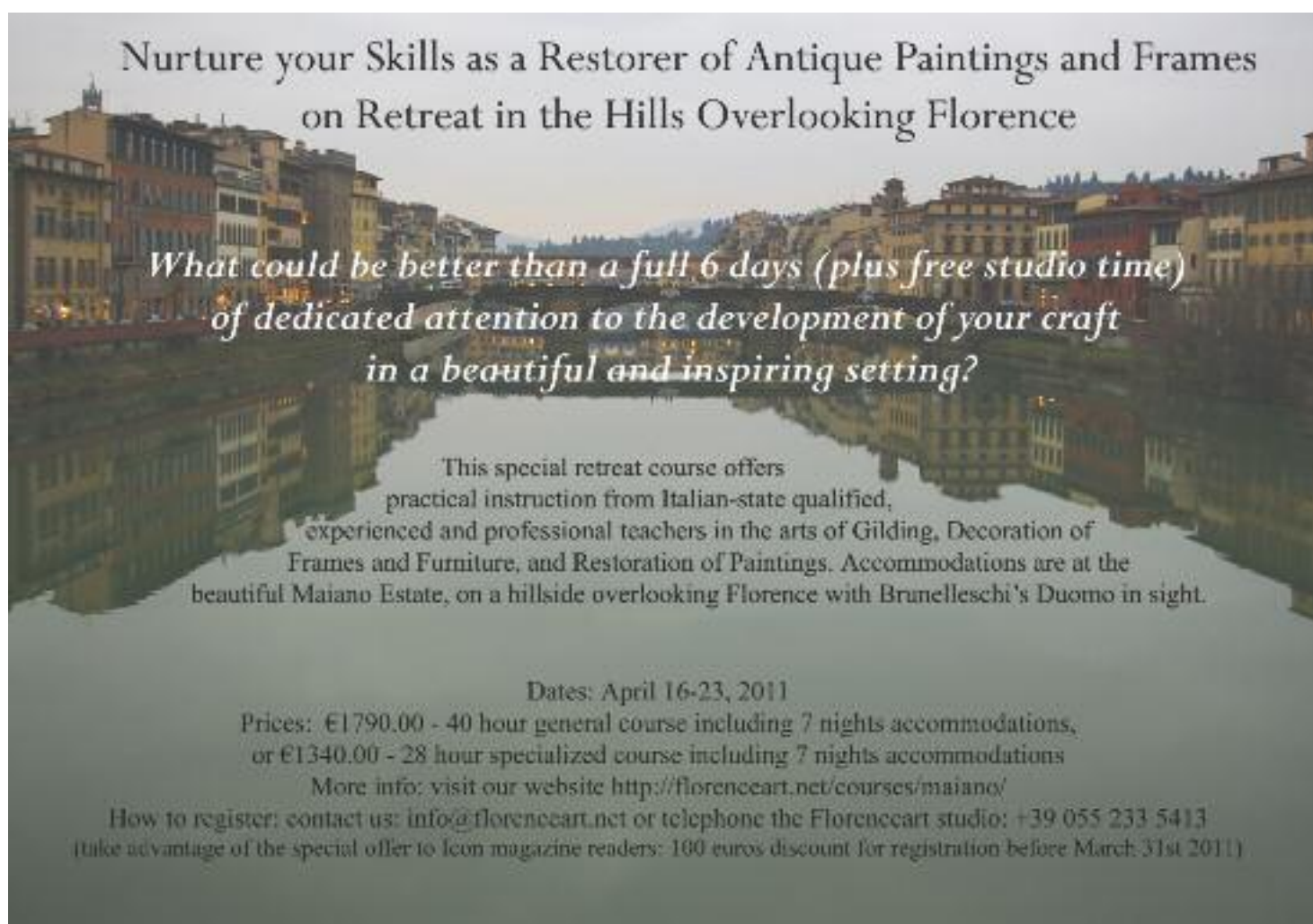
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(take advantage of the special offer to Icon magazine readers: 100 euros discount for registration before March 31st 2011)

All change at the Ashmolean!

Mark Norman, Head of Conservation at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, describes the sea changes in the work of the conservation department following the museum's acclaimed redevelopment

In July 2006, Icon News published an article which outlined the ambitious redevelopment project that the Ashmolean had recently embarked upon – the demolition of much of its existing building and its replacement with thirty nine new galleries, an education centre and, most importantly for the collections, custom-built conservation facilities. At the same time, the fabric of the original Neo-classical building was largely re-roofed, extensively overhauled, and most of the 'old' galleries completely refurbished. So, a year after the completion of an exhausting £62 million project, which promised social and intellectual access for all, we thought it might be interesting to review how effectively it has delivered its original vision.

In the past twelve months, the Ashmolean has won a number of architectural and construction awards, was second in the Art Fund Prize (and actually won the public vote), was shortlisted for the Stirling Prize and has seen visitor numbers quadruple to 1.2 million. There is little sign that the numbers of visitors coming through the doors each day are tailing off, so for those of us who work there it is not only the institution that has been transformed: what we do, where, and how we do it has changed fundamentally as well.

NEW STUDIOS AND GALLERIES

Eleven years after the formation of the Ashmolean's first Conservation Department in its 328 year history, it finally has facilities which do justice to the collections. 263 square metres of new studios and laboratories house a growing library and environmental monitoring and records management space, as well as north-lit studios for objects, paintings and textiles conservation. Although not part of the original design, a paintings studio was added following the appointment of a conservator funded by 'Renaissance in the Regions' in 2008. Directly accessed by a 4 tonne goods lift, the studios build on the many lessons learned during the design of new paper conservation facilities back in 2004 and, quite simply, have revolutionised the way in which the conservators work. This is not only because the physical space has massively expanded the range of practical options that can now be considered but, equally importantly, through the synergy that is produced when a range of specialists are working closely together with a shared aim.

Apart from having new studio facilities, the Ashmolean also has permanent galleries dedicated to the history of conservation and the work of the conservator. 'Restoring the Past' shows how the contemporary approach to conservation evolved from simple utilitarian repair in ancient times, through restoration from the Renaissance onwards, into contemporary

practice based upon scientific and ethical principles. The gallery illustrates how the same simple techniques were used across cultures and millennia, and the importance of recycling in the ancient world and its relevance today, before documenting the development of restoration and conservation in the modern period. Drawing on the Ashmolean's collections and long history, it explores important ethical questions connected with the care of objects by looking at the evolution of conservation as a discipline and contrasting eastern and western approaches to treatment.

'Conserving the Past' complements this gallery and reflects contemporary conservation practice. Displays and interactives focusing on decay, investigation and treatment bring conservation into the public eye and demonstrate how science helps the conservator to understand, interpret and care for museum objects. It aims to demystify our work by encouraging enquiry, investigation and debate amongst visitors, rather than simply presenting objects for them to look at. Conservators come from a combined arts and science background so it has always had cross-over appeal between these disciplines but has lacked 'windows' through which to present itself to the wider public. 'Conserving the Past' provides a perfect opportunity to do this by sharing with our visitors that thrill that all conservators experience when getting up close to an object, making discoveries, and explaining typical decisions that have to be made during treatment in easily accessible language.

The conservation galleries fit into the overall 'Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time' (CCCT) design concept for the new Ashmolean, which uses the collections to demonstrate how cultures have interacted over time and is designed to encourage visitors to think about the material world of the past and its relation to their present lives. In the conservation galleries, it capitalises on the curiosity inherent in the work of the museum conservator to illustrate the ethical debates which are so much part of our work. These galleries join the few of their kind anywhere. They explain and emphasise the critical role that science and technology play in the contemporary museum and have been designed to have a far-reaching educational impact by inspiring and fostering a cross-generational interest in science and museum conservation. This represents a very public and entirely new direction for the Ashmolean which, by opening up this hitherto behind-the-scenes activity to its visitors, has dramatically increased the general awareness of conservation science. More importantly, though, they provide a unique 'window' in a museum of art and archaeology for teaching new elements of the national curriculum which is already



Langley Academy students, with one of their teachers, learning how to use a light meter before comparing conditions in artificially and daylight galleries in the new Ashmolean building

having a direct impact on teachers and students.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

It is a combination of the opportunities presented by both studios and galleries that has had the most impact upon the work of the Ashmolean's conservators. Although we have continued to focus on preventive and interventive collections care over the past twelve months, as well as H.M the Queen, professional colleagues, students, classes, and interns, we have also welcomed well over one hundred other visitors who have passed through the studios on public tours, often linked to national events like 'Science and Engineering Week' or the 'Festival of Archaeology'. However, far more radical for us has been our engagement with the school curriculum, and secondary students in particular, since we re-opened. The recent pieces in Icon News about the project undertaken by a group of GCSE students at the V&A and the 'Preservation Box' developed at the National Maritime Museum were therefore of great interest because we had by then already taken many of these ideas one step further.

Led by Christopher Parkin (of Oxford University's Museum of the History of Science), conservation and education colleagues from within the Ashmolean, working with teachers and students from Langley Academy in Slough, have developed an innovative new programme. Called 'The Science of Museum Conservation' it brings students into the museum where they participate in a range of hands-on and other activities during the day. Having been introduced to the work of the conservator, topics that they consider are contaminants (problems caused by pollution); ceramic repair (properties of adhesives); paper (properties and deterioration); heat and moisture (temperature and relative humidity); metals (corrosion); paints and pigments and solvents and cleaning – so making connections with their everyday lives and experiences. They also work on preparing a short condition report and, having been shown round the conservation studios by the conservators who each explain their work, the students also go out into galleries to measure light levels using a simple lux meter. Finally, in the Conservation Galleries, they undertake an exercise, based around the displays, where they apply many of the concepts that they have learned about in the previous activities.

Piloted in the summer of 2010, we welcomed eighty students and their tutors to the Ashmolean in October. For the conservators it was a demanding and stimulating day as we were called upon to explain often complex issues in easily accessible language. At the same time, the students gained



Three students work on the condition assessment of a printed textile, whilst behind them others use a microscope to get the conservator's privileged perspective on the objects they are working on

an entirely new understanding of the work that goes on in museums. The feedback has been entirely positive and encouraging – as one of them said afterwards, '*Instead of just looking around, we were actually involved*'. From their teachers' perspective, the day's programme offered 'a case study for applied science; supporting work-related learning'. So we're now looking forward to building on this encouraging beginning.

CONCLUSION

The galleries that were the inspiration for this project are amongst the few public spaces devoted to museum conservation anywhere, and the UK's only permanent installation dealing with both the historical and contemporary aspects of conservation. Now firmly embedded in many of the Ashmolean's public programmes, the range of activities that we are now able to offer is built around access to both conservation galleries and studios. They focus on, and showcase, the work of the Ashmolean's conservators, and we hope they will serve as a benchmark development for the museum community.

In its 2008 report '*It's a material world, caring for the public realm*' the Demos think-tank recommended that

- Policy makers, cultural professionals and conservators should collaborate in communicating the importance of caring for the material world and its social benefits to a wider public
- Conservators should build on existing practice in public engagement and engage their practice to a wider agenda
- Conservators should extend their existing involvement in social innovation as they can provide a logic that reinforces a less throw-away society

That this is exactly what we had always set out to do is something of a coincidence since, when these recommendations were published in 2008, the new Ashmolean was already well past its detailed design stage! As an essential component of an imaginative outreach programme, the Ashmolean's use of its galleries and studios provides a pioneering model that conservators and curators are increasingly referring to when considering new ways of engaging with their visitors – by any standard, the project is a success but none of it could have been achieved without the Ashmolean's unwavering commitment to access for all.



Chris Parkin (Oxford University Museums) & Suzie Parr (Langley Academy)

Steph Ward explains the problems of conserving a silver foil scroll to three students during their visit to the new studios. Here they were able to discuss issues associated with objects from across the Ashmolean's collections and gain a real insight into the conservators' work

Jo Rice, the Ashmolean's Head of Education, places the new programme within the wider context of the museum's learning programmes and sets out her plans for the future

The Ashmolean offers a diverse and vibrant programme for secondary and post-16 groups. Since reopening we have welcomed over 18,000 secondary students to the Museum to take part in our learning programmes.

The new 'Science of Conservation' programme was launched to support GCSE Science and offers an active hands-on experience for Key Stage 4 students, using museum conservation as a focus for learning. The project extends our offer beyond the arts and humanities curriculum, encouraging students and teachers to look at the collections in a different way and using a modular programme that can expand or contract depending on the size and needs of the group. The four key elements are: practical conservation experiments in the Ashmolean Education studio; object investigations and discussion in the Conservation galleries; practical investigations in the galleries focusing on issues related to environmental control; and behind-the-scenes visits to the Ashmolean Conservation studios to meet conservators and see real conservation work in action. The new Conservation galleries on the lower ground floor of the Museum were the inspiration for this schools programme.

The 'Science of Conservation' sessions were piloted with students from Langley Academy, currently the only secondary school in the country which has museum learning at the heart of the curriculum. They wanted to explore ways in which museums could support the science curriculum.

The programme is now part of our general offer to all schools. In the future we plan to develop on-line GCSE Science resources to support the conservation sessions in the Museum. We also plan to develop and offer training for teachers and student teachers on 'The Science of Conservation' as well as continuing to explore the potential for science teaching in museums and galleries – particularly looking at the 'hidden' science in art galleries and 'non-science' museums. The use of student volunteers to support

this programme is also being considered as we have an extensive team of volunteers supporting education across all the University Museums.

This is a pioneering project that supports the Ashmolean's commitment to opening up its collections to a wider audience. We are very fortunate to have a team of conservators here who see the benefits of communicating what they do, engaging with people, and highlighting the hidden work of the Museum

Students reconstruct a broken ceramic from the museum's handling collections as part of an exercise designed to explore not only the properties of materials but also hand/eye coordination and team working



Chris Parkin (Oxford University Museums) & Suzie Parr (Langley Academy)

The Levantine Foundation's work in Egypt

In the September 2009 issue of Icon News (no.24), we published an article by Mother Antonia, a Coptic Orthodox nun of the Monastery of Saint Demiana in Egypt, recording her enthusiastic introduction to the world of book conservation at a symposium organised by the Levantine Foundation in Cairo.

The Levantine Foundation is leading a collaboration with the National Library and Archives, the Coptic Museum, the Cairo Museum, the Supreme Council of Antiquities and Leiden University to offer training in conservation and museology to local museum staff in Egypt. The first programme led by Elizabeth Sobczynski and a team of European academics was delivered in April/May last year and was a resounding success. Over a hundred participants received hands-on training. They will return for a second course of training to deepen their skills in the spring of this year. Both these courses are funded by a grant to The Levantine Foundation from the Sawiris Fund for Social Development and Al Ahram Beverages. The overall aim is to boost the supply of skilled conservators of Egyptian

origin who will be able to care for their own cultural treasures in the long term.

Mother Antonia was one of a group of monks and nuns from other religious establishments who also attended the course. They care for collections held within their own organisations. It was the first time that representatives from different religious organisations were able to meet and discuss matters of common interest in Egypt. This cross fertilisation is a major achievement from the training course. Mother Antonia describes her own experience of the training course below.

Any conservator wishing to know more about the Levantine Foundation's conservation work in Egypt should contact:

Elizabeth Sobczynski
Chief Executive
The Levantine Foundation
Email: es.aicp@btinternet.com
Telephone: 020 7928 6094

FROM LITTLE THINGS BIG THINGS GROW

by Mother Antonia St Demiana

This expression has indeed held true for the Levantine Foundation's outstanding work in preserving cultural heritage in the Near East. The Foundation has been a pioneer of sorts, being the first organisation to launch training in Egypt with a focus on educating librarians and custodians of manuscripts in Egyptian museums and monasteries. The Pilot Programme at the Coptic Museum in March 2009 was successful in its own right, however, the Spring programme of 2010 by far outclassed its predecessor.

It was at the Museology and Conservation Pilot Programme when I first came to learn of the Levantine Foundation, and its work and goals. It was then also when I first met Elizabeth Sobczynski who has since become a close friend and mentor. Last year's Spring Programme was conducted by the Levantine Foundation in partnership with Leiden University the Netherlands, the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, and the National Library and Archives of Egypt; and was supported by the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development and Al Ahram Beverages Company. Needless to say, when such great forces unite, success is predictably guaranteed.

The three-week programme was attended by over 120 conservators, librarians, custodians, employees and students from a diversity of museums and colleges across Egypt. Also

in attendance were Coptic monks and nuns who manage collections in Egyptian Coptic monasteries. I attended the programme with Mother Nardin who is another nun from my monastery – the Monastery of Saint Demiana in Egypt's

A five day workshop run by Dr. Luitgards Mols at the National Library & Archives in April 2010 on Display of Mss and Different Stages in Preparing of an Exhibition; Preparation of a small imaginary exhibition: themes, angles, and object information; Display of objects.





At the National Library & Archives May 2010: a 3 day workshop on 'Preservation Enclosures for Paper and Parchment Artefacts – Making a Two Piece Phase Box for Parchment Codices'



From Dr Mols workshop: students were divided into small groups and asked to prepare/design an exhibition on the basis of material selected for this purpose.

Northern Delta region. The course comprised of a fast-paced programme filled with informative lectures, fascinating excursions, and practical hands-on training through which we all learned immensely about the study, preservation, and restoration of Christian and Islamic collections.

In the first week, the cancellation of flights from Europe due to the ash cloud from the volcano eruption in Iceland meant that Professor Bas ter Haar Romney and Dr Mat Immerzeel could not attend. But this obstacle paved the way for rare opportunities to visit the conservation studios of selected Egyptian museums. Of the museums visited, the new National Museum and Archives was the highlight. Without a doubt, this place is an institution of national pride and we were fortunate to have been given a guided tour through its breathtaking interior. In the conservation studio there, the conservators generously shared their expertise and provided thorough information about the conservation techniques and materials which they use to restore manuscripts. This was also the case at the Grand Egyptian Museum.

The lectures throughout the program were also great sources of learning. Professor Jan Just Witkam's lectures about the history of codicology and the architecture of the handwritten Middle Eastern book were particularly informative. So too were Dr Luitgrad Mols' lectures on how to catalogue and make physical descriptions of manuscripts. Robert Child's lectures taught us about the importance of monitoring the museum environment in which manuscripts are stored, and how to minimise the causes and effects of deterioration of historical materials. Freda Matassa and Mark Hunt provided valuable information about the fundamentals of collection management. And finally, Bridget Mitchell discussed the aspects of ensuring safe housing for manuscripts and archival materials.

Apart from being meticulous in the knowledge of their topics, the lecturers were all so pleasant and patiently answered all of our questions. On a humorous note, just as Egyptian names are not easy on western tongues, so too are western names difficult for Egyptians to pronounce. So it was not long before Professor Witkam became Professor Victim, Freda became Dr Farida (a common Egyptian name), Mark became Mr Mark, and Bridget became Dr Bridge.

In the third and final week of the programme, there were separate workshops for conservators and librarians. This was

to ensure that we received specialised training in our specific areas of work. In the workshops for conservators, Bridget taught us how to make our own phase boxes and archival envelopes. This is a very important skill to have in Egypt since archival boxes and envelopes are not available here. In Dr Luit's workshops, we learned how to prepare an exhibition by setting up our own virtual exhibition of Middle Eastern objects. In Mark's workshop we examined packaging materials and were taught how to make paper nests in which to transport delicate pieces.

I have presented only the highlights of the Spring Programme, since I would probably require several more pages to mention everything else. But as is evident from my humble report, the course was a tremendous success. As conservators, I believe it is important to fully understand every aspect of the manuscripts in our collections and know how to adequately care and preserve them for posterity. This second training programme has provided us with the knowledge to continue to do just that. I extend my sincere thanks to the Levantine Foundation for the invitation to attend the course, and I eagerly look forward to acquiring more skills and knowledge in the coming programme.

National Library & Archives, May 2010. Freda Matassa gave an Interactive lecture for fifty students on Fundamentals of Collection Management. Freda explained museum policy and described in detail the various strands of collection management including documentation, storage, inventory and acquisition. A five-day practical workshop on these topics followed.



The Textile Conservation Studio at the People's History Museum

The People's History Museum derives its origin from the Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative History Society and since 1990 has been based in Manchester. Amongst its many and varied social history collections and artefacts, the museum holds one of the largest collections of historic trade union and political banners in the world – over four hundred of them – and is the UK's leading authority on the conservation and study of banners.

The museum also holds the National Banner Survey, an inventory of historic banners in UK museums. The survey comprises 2,370 historic banners held in British museums,

by other bodies and by individuals and is available for consultation. One of the outcomes of the survey was the preparation of a useful booklet *Taking Care of Banners* which is available to download from the museum's website: www.phm.org.uk

Although originally set up principally with the museum's banner collection in mind, the Textile Conservation Studio also deals with a variety of other textiles, undertakes private commissions and offers an advisory service on all aspects of care of textiles. The Studio is included on the Conservation Register.

Vivian Lochhead, Senior Conservator, describes the new studio

The Textile Conservation Studio at the People's History Museum returned to public view in Spring 2010. The museum re-opened on 13 February 2010 following a £12.5 million redevelopment scheme, funded by a variety of organizations: £7.18 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), £2 million from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), £2 million from Manchester City Council (MCC), and with additional support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Unite, Clothworkers' Foundation, Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), Allied London, Department of Work and Pensions and DCMS/Wolfson Foundation.

Generous funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation

From the gallery looking into the studio. The screen in the foreground shows an image of a (massive) woolly bear, part of an interactive carousel of fabrics and pests to entertain and educate visitors



© David Lake Photography

facilitated moving the Textile Conservation Studio to the new build to stand alongside the main galleries in the iconic Cor-Ten clad building. Here it is a focal point on the second floor exhibition space, adjacent to Gallery level 2, just a few metres away from some of the largest and most spectacular banners in the collection. From this gallery, through a two metre wide window, visitors can see directly into the studio and watch conservation in progress. Simple interpretation on the window glass and well informed gallery staff help to explain some of the processes that can be seen. Information at the window is deliberately low-tech so that it can be quickly updated as conservation treatments progress.

Occupying 174 square metres, the suite of rooms comprises a main room with wet-cleaning area integrated into the floor surface, an office, a room equipped for dyeing and analysis and a small storeroom to accommodate tubes and wrappings from banners on display. A mechanical hoist is situated adjacent to the studio and main galleries to assist movement of banners between all levels.

The primary layout of the studio was lead by the structure of the build and financial considerations. Having planned the layout of the Princess Street studio and worked in it for nearly twenty years, the experience of what had functioned well and what could be improved upon was utilised. Accommodating three conservators working on large scale textiles and keeping the space adaptable were seen as key to its success. Despite being situated on the second floor above gallery level one, a washing surface and drain have been incorporated into the floor structure at one end of the main room. Colour corrected fluorescent tubes provide consistent overhead light. Natural light from an architecture feature



Inside the new studio

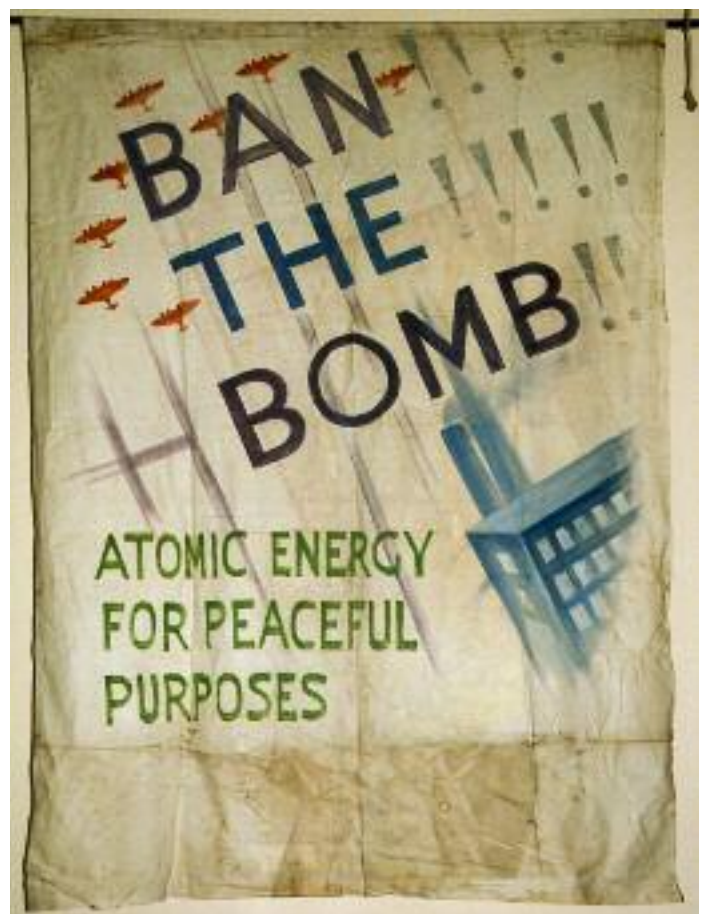
window-line that runs through the office, main room and the analysis room is used to advantage, whilst keeping the storage area beyond the window line in darkness. A Nederman local exhaust and ventilation system serves the main room, with a small self-contained unit in the adjoining analysis room.

As with the studio at Princess Street, the aim has been to keep the furniture and equipment easily moveable to allow reconfiguration of workstations as dictated by the objects being treated, so retaining maximum flexibility when working. The five metre high ceiling, which runs the length of the main room, accommodates a banner winch, necessary for photography and testing after conservation.

Now the Textile Conservation Studio is once more integrated into the visitor experience and more easily accessible, the possibility has returned for receiving group visits. A tour of the studio has already been established as a regular feature in the museum events programme. In addition, conservation related tours of banners currently on display are now much easier to facilitate. The museum learning team uses the window looking into the studio as an additional educational tool for all age groups and abilities.

Working in the spotlight with visitors peering intently from a couple of metres away and level with the conservator is distracting. The conservator is aware of being watched and frequently photographed. However there are major benefits to be gained from allowing the visitors to observe conservation in progress. Being able to see behind-the-scenes activities creates a more interesting and informative visitor experience. Providing an insight into the life of museum staff and fostering a deeper respect for the banners promotes both museum and conservation to a wider audience.

Ban The Bomb Banner early 1950s @ People's History Museum



news from the groups

BOOK AND PAPER GROUP

I must apologise that there has not been much news from the BPG for a while in this part of the magazine. This is by no means a reflection on what has been happening behind the scenes. The BPG Committee has been working on many new initiatives over the last few months. Have you checked out the BPG part of the website recently? Heather Ravenberg has been tirelessly adding and linking areas to make it a much more user friendly site. If you do not have your password contact Charlotte Cowin at the Icon Office and she will send it to you. We would like feedback. Heather has also developed a wordpress area aimed at encouraging dialogue between members and sharing information. This will be launched shortly.

Victoria Stevens has been coordinating both internal and external organisations to develop a much more comprehensive list of events that may be of interest to you. Please keep us posted of any events that you may be running or hear of.

A few positions for committee members will be coming up in the following months (the dates are shown on the relevant part of the website). Please contact either myself or any committee member to discuss the ins and outs of the role you may be interested in.

Mark Furness as the new regional co-ordinator for events has been looking at how we can supplement the existing offer for those members further afield. This will prove more important and crucial as training budgets are drastically cut or just if precious resources cannot be stretched that far. The BPG fully supports continuing professional development (CPD) and will work hard to make it possible for its members where it can. Please let Mark know if you would like to help arrange or host an event in your area or would like to see a topic covered at mark.furness@manchester.ac.uk

Perhaps you might just want to invite a couple of members along to your workspace if you are doing something new or need some advice. This all counts as CPD.

Unfortunately there has been some misunderstanding about which gallery and exhibition doors the Icon card will open. In order to send out the Iconnect the BPG went to great pains to make sure the people we spoke to understood it was Icon (using the phonetic alphabet where necessary!). I fear that there has been a misunderstanding despite our best efforts. We are now rechecking and looking for confirmation in writing. It is unfortunate that this situation came to light after the Iconnect went out, so sorry for any confusion.

As you all know, the cultural sector is in difficult times. The BPG would like to hear from you if you have any ideas about how we can share, collaborate or anything that can help us face this hard road. Once again I must remind you that all the work by the BPG Committee is voluntary and we always need help, even if you can only spare a small amount of time.

Caroline Checkley-Scott, Collection Care Manager,
The John Rylands University Library, Manchester

CERAMICS AND GLASS GROUP

Some important dates for your diary....

14 May 2011 is our one day Spring Meeting and AGM 'Losing Your Lustre' held at the V&A. Book now to avoid disappointment. The day promises to provide exciting insights into the history, production and conservation of both historic and contemporary lusterware and an opportunity to marvel at the technology and beauty of these objects. The analysis of Italian renaissance lusterware, a study of suitable retouching mediums and a case study of a De Morgan lustre dish will all be topics covered. Also included in the day will be a unique tour of the new V&A Ceramics Galleries conducted by Head of Ceramics **Reino Leifkes**.

The programme and booking form can be found on the Group web pages. Booking deadline is 8 April. Member fee is £42; student/low waged £24. If you have any questions please get in touch with organiser Nancy Sharpe (highfired@fsmail.net).

14 June 2011 will be the first 'Introduction to Conservation' event run by the Group. This event is aimed at both practising ceramic and glass conservators and conservators from other fields who would like a refresh or new information in this area of expertise. All speakers on the day will aim to specifically address the conservation approach, assessment and treatment options of ceramics and glass both in the studio and away from the bench. The day will also include a short session for those considering a PACR application. Any questions about this event please get in touch with organiser Liesa Brierley liesa.brierley@googlemail.com. Programme and further information is available on the Group web pages. Cost: £10.

We also have the first of our Practical Workshops lined up which will be a full day devoted to colour gap filling using epoxy resin. We are currently organising the venue and full details will be posted once finalised.

To highlight the work of Ceramics and Glass Group members we would encourage all members to submit any interesting projects, case studies or reviews for inclusion in future editions of Icon News. If you have any ideas you wish to discuss please contact Chair Rachel Swift rswiftcgg@hotmail.co.uk

The Ceramics and Glass Group Committee

Chair:	Rachel Swift
Treasurer:	Kathleen Magill
Secretary:	Kelly Abbott
Events co-ordinator:	Nancy Sharpe
News/Website Editor:	Beky Davies
Nigel Williams Prize Co-ordinator:	Ronald Pile
Student/graduate Representative:	Jennifer Whiting
Ordinary Members:	Liesa Brierley, Sarah Cheng

ETHNOGRAPHY GROUP

The Ethnography group celebrated the beginning of 2011 alongside the Archaeology group with a meeting at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL. The topic was 'Mistaken Identity' and three speakers gave talks on their own interpretation on the subject:

- **Jim Spriggs** from the York Archaeological Trust discussed whale products, their absence in archaeological sites and the type of objects manufactured from whale products that can be found in museum collections.
- **Pieta Greaves**, Senior Conservator at AOC Archaeology gave a talk on the recent finding of a Bronze Age cist in Forteviot, Perthshire and the treatment and identification of a dagger found in the stone coffin.
- **John Price** spoke about misidentification in its broader context and how conservators and curators need to be wary of jumping to conclusions when identifying objects.

Other discussions included the treatment of a tortoise shell hair piece that on further investigation turned out to be cellulose nitrate. Humorous anecdotes about object misidentification were also shared. The meeting finished with refreshments, food and a chance to catch up with friends and colleagues from across the two groups.

Spring is nearly here and plans are underway for another Ethnocrawl – this time it's heading north to Edinburgh! This event always has a good turn out and is a great chance to meet with fellow conservators, view unique museums and have a chat over a hearty lunch.

Planning has also started for the next group seminar which will be held later this year. Further information about both these events will be posted via the Icon website and in future Icon magazine publications.

PAINTINGS GROUP

The Icon Paintings Group Committee hope to see our members at the conference 'The Sticking Point: Adhesives and Consolidants in Paintings Conservation' at the National Portrait Gallery in May (see page 35 for listing).

We were really pleased that Viola Pemberton-Pigott's talk in November was so well attended (see review on page 28). Over fifty people came to hear her speak on Gainsborough, which made it our most popular talk to date. We are always looking for new speakers so please contact us with any ideas or suggestions.

The Osiris infrared camera training day is being organised and will be held in London. Those of you who expressed an interest in this will be contacted again shortly.

Look out for another Newsletter in the coming months. If you didn't receive one recently please make sure your email address is up to date and that you are registered as a member of the Icon Paintings Group.
Icon.paintingsgroup@gmail.com

The Paintings Group Committee

Chair: **Francis Downing**
Secretary: **Rhiannon Clarricoates**
Treasurer: **Rebecca Gregg**
Student Liaison Officer: **Helen Dowding**
Group Editor: **Morwenna Blewett**
Group News Officer: **Alexandra Gent**
Committee Members: **Ambrose Scott-Moncrief,**
Chantal Thuer and **Angelina Barros d'sa**
Co-opted: **Dr. Clare Finn**

SCOTLAND GROUP

We begin the year with lots of new events in the pipeline for 2011. The programme includes a one-day event in May at Glasgow School of Art to discuss the various aspects of their recent HLF-funded conservation project, and a visit to Dumfries House in August. There will be plenty more opportunities for CPD and a good get together over the next year – watch this space (and the website) for details once they are finalised.

2011 sees significant changes to the ISG Committee. Mo Bingham (ordinary committee member), Audrey Wilson (treasurer) and Kirsten Dunne (events team) have stepped down – we thank them for their hard work and wish them all the best in their future endeavours conservation and otherwise! Gill Keay, current vice treasurer, has assumed the role of Icon Board member for Scotland and Ruth Honeybone takes over as treasurer, leaving the publication and publicity team. We also welcome Nicole Stahl as minute secretary.

We are now working to ratify the job descriptions for all Committee members and will be holding a formal ballot later in the year. With so many changes in recent months we will be looking for volunteers to get involved and join us in working for the ISG membership.

Last but not least, the Committee would like to acknowledge the work and support of Margot Wright, Keeper of Conservation, Marischal College, University of Aberdeen, on her retirement.

The Icon Scotland Group Committee

Chair: **Linda Ramsay**
Minute Secretary **Nicole Stahl**
Treasurer: **Ruth Honeybone**
Vice Treasurer: **Gill Keay**
Events team: **Helen Creasy, Erica Kotze** and
Elizabeth Hephner
Ordinary Committee Member: **Sophie Younger**
Observers: **Carol Brown, Craig Kennedy** and
Clare Meredith

STONE AND WALL PAINTINGS GROUP

The Stone and Wall Paintings committee, as part of its continuing programme of day events, is now organising a

conference of two separate days of talks and presentations on the conservation of Architectural Plasterwork. Within the context of these presentations historic architectural plaster work is considered to include both plain and ornamental plasterwork applied to historic buildings (internally or externally) of architectural or historic significance.

This conference is neither primarily concerned with wall paintings nor the application of new plasters (except where these form an important part of the overall conservation process). Part 1 of this conference will be held at Ironbridge (a World Heritage site) in conjunction with the Building Limes Forum who are holding their annual conference at the same time. Icon members will be able to visit the Limes Forum 'Lime Fair' (various producers' stalls etc) and also see some demonstrations of plastering work. There will be chances for the two groups to interact over breaks in the day and also for members to move between conferences, subject to availability of space. The venue and date for Part 2 of the conference, to be held in spring 2012, will be announced shortly.

The committee is currently making a call for papers for this conference; full details are available on the Icon website or from swannsh@btinternet.com.

- Icon Members: £55.00 (Non Members: £70.00)
- Icon Student members: £25.00 (Students (non Icon members): £35.00)

Numbers are limited so ensure your place with an early registration at the conference.

The Stone and Wall Paintings Committee

Co-Chair: David Odgers
Co-Chair: Richard Lithgow
Treasurer: Peter Martindale
Secretary: Jez Fry
News Web Editor: Clara Willett
Events Web Editor: Berenice Humphreys

Ordinary members: Caroline Babington, Lynne Humphries
Sarah Pinchin, Vicki Roulinson and
Simon Swann

TEXTILE GROUP

The annual forum 'Incompatible Partners? Challenges of Composite objects' takes place at the beginning of April, and we look forward to seeing many of you there for a full day of talks and posters, ranging from the conservation of fans to treating wax objects in textile conservation. The event will also include the AGM and the announcement of the ballot for the position of Secretary, from which Karen Ayers is stepping down. The Committee wishes to thank Karen very much for her enthusiasm, efficiency and hard work in the role of Secretary.

The *Back to Basics* workshop series continues in 2011 with 'Upholstery – History and Techniques' again led by Lesley Wilson. The first upholstery workshop was a great success, and oversubscribed, so we are delighted to be able to offer it again, this time hosted by staff at Burghley House looking at the splendid furniture collection there. Please see Sally Jubb's report on the Hampton Court workshop on page 28.

Other events planned include a visit to the new labs at The Peoples History Museum in Manchester, and Vivien Lohead's report on page 21 will be sure to encourage you all to sign up. There is also a visit to three Savile Row tailors and the associated workshop 'Taking Patterns from Historic Costume' to look forward to. The Committee welcomes any ideas for workshops and visits, so please get in touch.

In order to take advantage of our programme please remember The Clothworkers' Foundation has a bursary scheme awarding up to £1,000 to help qualified conservators attend conferences, courses and events that are directly relevant to their discipline in support of CPD. All details of this, and our planned events, are available on the Icon website.

Graduate Voice

THE MONTEFIASCONI CONSERVATION SUMMER SCHOOL 2010

August 2010 marked the 24th anniversary of the internationally renowned Montefiascone Conservation Project in Lazio, Italy. The Project was set up following concerns over the derelict state of the town's seminary library which houses manuscripts, rare printed editions and the late medieval collection of Cardinal Barbarigo. Upon discovering the library, conservator Cheryl Porter invited Nicholas Barker from the British Library to appraise the collection and an international rescue effort was soon after established. In the years since the Project's inception, conservators, students and archivists have flocked to the historic *Seminario* to help preserve and

catalogue the collection. Now in its 19th year, the ever-popular Conservation Summer School has been successfully running in conjunction to help fund the costs of this essential conservation work.

As recipient of the Conservation by Design **Nicholas Hadgraft Scholarship**, which is offered each year in commemoration of this much loved and respected book conservator, I had the great privilege of attending two courses in the 2010 programme. The first course, **Recreating the Medieval Palette**, was led by leading pigment expert and Montefiascone Project founder Cheryl Porter. This intensive week-long course was attended by an international mix of conservators, artists, archivists, and art historians coming from



Cheryl Porter with participants from her pigments workshop

Scotland, Japan, the United States, Italy and Australia. In addition to superbly illustrated lectures on the art historical aspects of colour, participants carried out practical experiments to recreate a variety of pigments found in the Medieval Western and Islamic palettes. The lectures were well supported by afternoon trips to neighbouring Orvieto and Bolsena to view the composition and condition of the glorious medieval frescoes within the region's churches. During these sessions, Cheryl's in-depth understanding, passion, and familiarity with the region's artworks really shone through, bringing to life the story and history of the paintings being studied.

The second week's course, **Introduction to the Islamic Book Structure**, was led by experienced and energetic manuscript conservators John Mumford and Marco di Bella. Increasing interest in Islamic book structures led to this year's course being extremely popular and participants were led through a challenging week of practical bookbinding sessions and discussion about historical exemplars. The course was well attended by a variety of professionals including conservators, bookbinders, curators, and leading Islamic art historians. The variety of specialisms represented within the classroom promoted engaging debate about the various aspects of Islamic manuscript construction and the representation of books in Islamic art. One interesting discussion point concerned the position of the *lisan*, or envelope flap, which is generally designed to fit underneath the upper board in Islamic books. Manuscript paintings from Islamic lands often portray books with the *lisan* on top of the upper board, as depicted in this image. This discrepancy stimulated debate between book conservators and art historians about the possible reasons for this inconsistency.

The third week's course centred on the Biccherne of Siena led by Jennifer Storey, and the month was rounded off with Maria Fredericks' and Joan Weir's course on the decorated paper bindings of Montefiascone. Both courses were equally popular and exemplified the high standard of courses offered each year at Montefiascone.

It was a privilege and a great pleasure to attend the 2010 Montefiascone Conservation Summer School and I feel honoured to have received the scholarship in Nicholas Hadgraft's name. The combination of world class tutors,

enthusiastic participants, Italian sunshine, and Lazio's finest food and wine makes the programme at Montefiascone immensely enjoyable and worthwhile for everyone with an interest in manuscript studies. 2011 promises to be even more exciting and challenging with an expert-led programme covering topics on European and Islamic book structures. For further information on upcoming courses see <http://monteproject.co.uk/en/> or show your support on Facebook's *Montefiascone Conservation Project* pages. Details on Conservation by Design's generous Nicholas Hadgraft Scholarship can be found at http://conservation-by-design.co.uk/nicholas_hadgraft_monte_project.html.

Rachel Sawicki

Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

Irish Heritage Council Book Conservation Intern

Detail from CBL In 21.8 Tuti Nama c.1580 depicting a book seller in a bazaar. The *lisan* is on top of the upper board.



Image © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

PROFILE

Location

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Exhibition

Picasso in The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Time

April 27, 2010 – August 15, 2010

Glazing

Tru Vue® Optium Museum Acrylic®



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anti-static

abrasion resistant

UV protection

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Pablo Picasso, *At the Lapin Agile*, 1905, The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, Gift of Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg, 1992, (Bequest of Walter H. Annenberg, 2002 (1992-39)); *The Actor*, 1904-05, Gift of Thelma Chrysler Foy, 1950 (50.1793); *Saltimbanque in Profile*, 1905, Bequest of Scofield Thayer, 1982 (1984.433.269). All works from The Metropolitan Museum of Art. © 2010 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Don Pollard.

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reviews

WORKSHOP

UPHOLSTERY – HISTORY AND TECHNIQUES

Icon Textile Group

18-19 November 2010 Surrey

This two-day workshop, hosted by Hampton Court Palace, was led by **Lesley Wilson** a freelance upholstery conservator specialising in the historic developments of techniques and materials. It was attended by conservators from as far afield as America, Germany and Belgium.

We assembled in the Wren Studio and Lesley engaged us with an interesting meander through some case studies, introducing the history of furniture conservation and the importance of recognising profiles of chairs in relation to the century of their construction.

Later, we were privileged to be allowed behind the ropes in the Palace. We divided into four groups and, each led by a Hampton Court conservator on the course, visited two chambers each in the Queens and Kings apartments. We investigated the furniture, looked carefully beneath with torches, measured the overall size, noted the wood used and of course the textiles. Over tea and biscuits, back at the workshop, we discussed our findings.

Day two opened with us investigating the construction of the upholstery of four chairs, each from a different period, by removing tacks and staples. Everyone enjoyed the journey of discovery and a noisy time followed as we practised the art of webbing a chair seat.

We relished the detective work and felt privileged to go behind the scenes. Hands-on experience helped to ground the theory, giving a good balance of knowledge. The course was interesting and well planned. Picking up professional tips on how to approach this discipline was invaluable, and



instilled confidence for talking to a client or upholsterer. We are now in touch with a network of people to approach for advice, including suppliers of fixings and fillings.

Due to the interest in this course, discussions are in progress to repeat the two days next year at another venue.

Sally Jubb, Freelance Textile Conservator

TALK

GAINSBOROUGH AS MAGICIAN

Icon Paintings Group

16 November 2010 London

The Paintings Group welcomed the speaker **Viola Pemberton-Pigott**, former Senior Paintings Conservator at the Royal Collection and now retired, to a packed Freemasons' Hall, to discuss the particular aspects of the work of Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788) she finds most captivating.

The title of her talk 'Gainsborough as Magician', derived from remarks made by Gainsborough's contemporary and rival Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), who described as 'magick' the process by which 'odd scratches and marks' laid down by the artist 'assumed form', and gave the painted surface a mutable quality.

The talk illustrated how in Gainsborough's paintings, inspection under magnification reveals careful calculation under the apparent serendipity of a passage of paint. Drawing from examples of his work she knows well, the speaker highlighted Gainsborough's profound feeling for the optical values of pigments, the deceptive fragility of his glazes, and the interesting patterns of auto-fluorescence sometimes displayed after cleaning, under ultraviolet light.

Opening with two self-portraits and following with a series of paintings of female sitters including 'Mary, Countess Howe', painted 1763–4 and part of the Iveagh Bequest at Kenwood House, the speaker discussed the artist's virtuosity of technique

and innovative and intuitive approach to painting. Thin glazes laid down in the manner of watercolour washes over thicker paint appear reflective, whilst more opaque superimposed strokes impart a sumptuous quality to fabrics.

The artist's use of coloured grounds was clearly illustrated in the Royal Collection's head and shoulders portrait of James Quin, painted between 1760–3 during Gainsborough's Bath Period. A salmon-orange coloured ground is visible across the bottom third of the painting, which has not been worked up.

One painting the speaker holds in particular regard as exemplifying both Gainsborough's understanding of the optical and colouristic properties of pigments, and of his use of what she terms 'Gainsborough white', to describe characteristic wash-like whites of a semi-translucent appearance, is the privately owned 'Coastal Scene' c.1781.

In each element of the painting Gainsborough's experimental technique convincingly portrays the weather and resistance against the wind. A pearlescent white glaze laid on top of more opaque strokes, suggests the lapping of the waves. The artist has altered the tonality of the underlying layers of paint to show the troughs between waves, and laid semi-translucent whites upon impasto layers to give the impression of their tug and outward flow. Thick impasto paint has been dabbed onto wave peaks to create the appearance of foam, and dirty-wash glazes juxtaposed with patches of thicker paint have been applied to realize the sweeping gusts of gales. Coarse particles of ground are visible to the unaided eye. Some of the glazes are very liquid and on drying, have developed a broad craquelure.

The speaker went on to discuss Gainsborough's three portraits of Mrs. Robinson, mistress to the Prince of Wales and also the subject of paintings by Reynolds, Romney and Hoppner. The sketch in the Royal Collection, painted in 1782, the full-length at the Wallace Collection of 1781 and the head and shoulders portrait housed in the National Trust property Waddesdon Manor, c.1780, were examined and compared, and the sequence in which they were painted, discussed. The sitter was known as 'Perdita', the role she played when she first caught the eye of the seventeen-year-old Prince, and in the painting she holds a portrait miniature of this lost lover in her hand. Canvas adjustments to the Wallace Collection portrait have been made which incorporates a strip of canvas previously primed with the orange ground of his Bath period.

Cross section samples from different areas of the painting, taken and examined by Rica Jones at the Tate, show this orange ground



on canvas additions and a pale pinkish-grey ground on the main body of the canvas. The latter is characteristic of his London period, when this painting was completed. Last cleaned and relined in 1904, cleaning by Pemberton-Pigott revealed Perdita's dress not to be white, but a subtle pale pink. A tracing taken of the head and shoulders of the Wallace Collection portrait, when superimposed onto the Waddesdon portrait, reveals identical outlines. The speaker suggested that the Waddesdon study may have been completed 'ad vivum' and then used as a template for subsequent portraits. Gainsborough's lavish use of resin to dilute his paints was also commented on and may account for the curious patterns of absorption and reflection visible in this painting in ultra-violet light.

Questions were then taken which addressed possible explanations for the semi-translucent appearance of Gainsborough's thin white washes. The effects of particular mediums and pigments were discussed. The speaker then thanked several subjects of the paintings with whom she had illustrated the talk, and thus concluded a most illuminating and enjoyable evening.

Angelina Barros D'Sa
Paintings Group

CONFERENCE

MUSEUMS AND SOCIAL HARMONY ICOM

November 2010 Shanghai

The ICOM General Assembly and Conference, held in Shanghai last November on the theme *Museums and Social Harmony*, was attended by 3,350 professionals from 120 countries and took place at the Expo site. The International Conservation Committee is a member of the 'ICOM family' but is usually under-represented at the General Assembly because ICOM-CC, as the international committee with the largest membership, holds its own triennial conference.

Conservation had a presence at the General Assembly. It was the subject of Resolution 7: 'The General Assembly welcomes and endorses the clarification and definition of conservation terminology including "preventive conservation", "remedial conservation" and "restoration" as the preferred terms characterising the various forms of action to conserve the tangible cultural heritage which was adopted by ICOM-CC at its 15th Triennial Conference in New Delhi 22–26 September 2008.' The definitions will be posted on the Icom website. For the resolution on museums and cultural tourism, the word 'preservation' was added, so it now reads: 'The General



The power of everyday objects to evoke powerful memories.

Assembly commends all appropriate museum initiatives which make museums more attractive to the public and which enhance their ability to contribute to education, training, cultural understanding and preservation.'

ICOM-CC presentations

ICOM-CC organised a one-day study trip to the China National Silk Museum and the nearby regional conservation facility for the province of Hangzhou, and a half-day session of presentations, which are introduced here. <http://chinasilkmuseum.com>

Under the title *The Stuff of Life*, **Eve Graves**, University of the Arts Camberwell, demonstrated the power of everyday objects to evoke memories. She argued that it was essential for conservation students to appreciate the importance that objects have for people. She explained how her students are introduced to working with collections and the public from their first week of their conservation studies. Like the Demos report, *It's a Material World* (Jones and Holden 2008), she focused on the use of objects in collections rather than on the objects per se.

Professor **Debra Hess Norris**, Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation USA, considered *Recent advances and current challenges in education*. She summarised the Salzburg Global

Seminar of 2009 and referred to the Salzburg Declaration. She emphasised the importance of Faculty exchange and sustainability for conservation education. Like the Demos report she stressed the need to build excitement in and advocacy for conservation. <http://www.iiconervation.org/news/?p=703>
<http://www.salzburgglobal.org/2009/News.cfm?IDMedia=52858>

Evita Yeung So, Curator (Conservation) 3D, Hong Kong Heritage Museum, gave a detailed account of the rationale and plan to establish conservation education in Hong Kong. It was interesting to hear about the award-winning film *Echoes of the Rainbow* (2010 Alex Law) which led to a significant change in the decision to demolish the 1960s Wing Lee residential street in Hong Kong.

Lawrence Chin, Cindy Wong and Ahmad Mashadi, National University of Singapore, considered the leasing of a museum laboratory by a freelance conservator who worked privately and for the museum.

Laiming Wu of the Shanghai Museum gave a detailed introduction of environmental monitoring and control, and plans to develop a national quality management platform starting with 250 museums. He stressed the importance of developing a national standard (for China) of a modified form of the Oddy test.



The Kurdish Textile Museum is a hub where soldiers, Iraqi citizens and foreigners meet

Maniatis Nikolaos from the Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece, presented a multi-author paper on *The role of conservator in safeguarding cultural diversity and enhancing regional socio-economic sustainability*. He showed clips of interviews with elderly Greek villagers to find out more about the objects they have contributed to a museum newly established as part of a strategy to promote cultural tourism. The researchers were surprised how emotional some of the informants were when using and explaining the working tools in the museum.

Catherine Smith, Clothing and Textile Sciences University of Otago, New Zealand, discussed *Intangible heritage in New Zealand museums: what role for conservation?* She explored the specificities of conserving cultural heritage defined as taonga, a Māori term which may be translated as a cultural treasure which encompasses objects, plants, places, languages and rights. She explained that Māori view taonga as dynamic and part of contemporary relationships and not just a material inheritance. She stressed the importance of involving the Māori community in conservation decisions. Examples included the conservation of an eel trap with missing parts filled by netting made by a Māori weaver (Smith 2006), and a preservation workshop where sharing food and accommodation was fundamental to its success.

In *Conservation of living heritage, or can we adapt principles to local needs?* **Sabine Cotte**, Paintings Conservator, Melbourne, Australia developed her ideas on conservation in the Himalayas presented at the ICOM-CC meeting in New Delhi 2008. She emphasised the importance of establishing for what purpose the conservation intervention was required by the local communities and of sharing decision-making and intervention with local artists and other experts. Preventive conservation and maintenance were important and she introduced the *Handbook of Preventive Conservation for Dzongs and Lhakhangs* (Cotte and Nock 1998), developed for Bhutanese care takers. It can be downloaded from www.collasia2010.org As co-authors of the presentation *Cultural heritage conservation as a medium of social integrity after political, social and economic disruption in Iraqi Kurdistan*, with **Lolan Sipan**, Founding Director of the Kurdish Textile Museum we (**Deisser and Eastop**)



Conservation of the intangible heritage, transfer of knowledge at the Kurdish Textile Museum, Erbil, Iraq

provide an abstract of our paper: The Kurdish Textile Museum was set up in Erbil in 2004 to save important elements of this nomadic culture, textiles and their making. Preservation measures include: documentation of textiles and techniques of production; safe storage and display of the KTM textile collection; capacity-building courses for Iraqi museum staff from different institutions; knowledge-transfer of textile technologies to young Iraqi Kurds. This conservation work demonstrates the interdependence of conserving natural, tangible and intangible heritage, recognising the economic, political and social benefits of conservation, and the importance of multi-sector partnerships. Please contact us if you want an illustrated abstract in the four ICOM languages plus others. www.kurdishtextilemuseum.com

Iwona Szmelter of the Faculty of Conservation-Restoration of Works of Art, Poland, presented a paper entitled: *Sustainable development in museums in transformation context-complex*. She highlighted the complex interrelationship between conserving and curating contemporary art. For example, the reinstallation of a contemporary artwork can involve the conservator becoming the fabricator. She concluded by stressing the importance of understanding and analysing the specific mission of each museum. www.asp.poznan.pl/wykladowcy/bio/?id=szmelter

Hanneke van der Beek presented a paper she co-authored with **Agnes W. Brokerhof**, both from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, on the preliminary results of a protocol for assessing the *Effectiveness of virtual access to collections*. They explained the problem of terminology as regards virtual collections and the broad spectrum between real and virtual with degrees of variation. This promises to be a very useful piece of work. www.icn.nl

Anne-Marie Deisser, PhD Preventive Conservation Consultant Affiliated Conservator, Textile Kurdish Museum, Erbil, Iraq adeisser@gmail.com

Dinah Eastop, PhD, FIIC, ACR Clothworkers Research Fellow, The National Archives, UK D.D.Eastop@soton.ac.uk

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* Held in the Chantry Library

in practice

THE DUBOIS COMMODE AND ITS JAPANESE URUSHI LACQUER DECORATION

by Jürgen Huber, Senior Furniture Conservator at the Wallace Collection

SUMMARY

This article discusses the treatment considerations for an 18th-century commode attributed to René Dubois, and displayed at the Wallace Collection, London. The commode is decorated with Japanese urushi lacquer panels surmounted with finely cast and chased gilt-metal mounts. The gilt-metal mounts are presently disfigured with corrosion products colloquially known as 'black spot' corrosion, and the urushi decoration itself is quite dark and difficult to appreciate. The treatment of the mounts does not pose a problem since the Collection's in-house Conservation Department has many years of experience in the

treatment of gilt-metal. However, the treatment of the urushi panels is very complex and conservation may be problematic.

INTRODUCTION

The Wallace Collection possesses a small but nevertheless very important selection of urushi lacquer-decorated works of art, including small objects such as snuff boxes, incense burners, tea-boxes, inkstands, and six pieces of high-quality urushi lacquer furniture. The Dubois commode is a particularly fine example. This magnificent piece of furniture was made in Paris around 1765 by René Dubois (1737–1798, *maître* 1757). Lacquer had begun to be imported into Europe from the East in the late sixteenth century, and by the 1730s craftsmen in France were veneering Chinese and Japanese lacquer panels onto cabinet furniture. The Dubois commode is decorated with incredibly detailed urushi lacquer panels of the highest quality, framed and enhanced by jewel-like cast-and-chased fire-gilt mounts.



The commode's current condition, although perfectly stable, does not do justice to the excellence of the exquisite urushi lacquer decoration, nor to the fine quality of the gilt-metal mounts.

URUSHI ISSUES

According to the Collection's records (in particular the reports dating to 1931) and through visual examination, we know that shellac (the processed and refined resinous secretion of the lacca beetle) had been applied over the urushi lacquer panels. Soluble in alcohol, shellac has been used on its own, or mixed with other resins, for many centuries as a varnish or lacquer. Although this shellac layer over the surface of the Dubois commode has darkened over time, making it difficult to appreciate the fine detail of the urushi, it was probably applied originally in order to enhance the dulled appearance of the aged urushi surface. Urushi lacquer exposed to light over a long period of time will develop microscopic cracks in the very uppermost few microns, which in time increase in size. These micro-cracks change the refractive index of urushi and make the surface appear matt rather than shiny.

Furthermore, the physical and chemical properties of urushi exposed to excessive light will change with time as well, first affecting the surface and then the lower layers. With age, urushi can become very friable and can lose many of the extraordinary physical and chemical properties that it possessed when new. Objects made or covered with urushi can become physically very fragile and potentially could be destroyed if not treated in an appropriate way.

In Japan, where urushi is a national icon, both traditionally and even still today diluted urushi is commonly re-applied onto the surface of urushi objects and gently rubbed into micro-cracks. The re-application of urushi is regarded as essential, especially if the object is heavily used or exposed to the elements. The precise techniques and frequency involved in this re-application of urushi varies, taking into account the age, the use, as well as the financial and historical value of the object. Urushi objects in Western collections, however, have often been subjected to very different treatments because urushi was not available and there was in any case no knowledge of its proper application. This has resulted in the use of various other materials such as shellac, waxes, and mixtures of resins (and of course modern varnishes and conservation products), to either protect or enhance the surface appearance. These various treatments can cause considerable problems for urushi objects, sometimes only aesthetically, but unfortunately sometimes also physically.

The professional conservator today faces a tremendous challenge treating damaged or worn urushi works of art. There are many ethical considerations that must be taken into account; for example, there is a major school of thought in Japan which dictates that only urushi should ever be used for the treatment of damaged urushi. Urushi however, once set, is irreversible; more to the point, it can only be removed with



Detail of the central panel

very great difficulty. This is very different to the approach that Western conservators have become used to in their work. One of the main objectives in modern conservation is the 'reversibility of any treatment'. When talking about reversibility in conservation/restoration we generally actually mean 're-treatability' or removability. Total reversibility does not exist, and it is more a theoretical aim than a physical practicality. A perfectly reversible material can (and usually does) become irreversible through a particular form or process in its application, or through chemical change over time. Furthermore, depending on how far one likes to go in terms of magnitude, we will always find traces still remaining of removable materials or of a reversed action or treatment. Even putting Lego blocks together and pulling them apart again will leave traceable marks of the reversed action. We must continue to work hard to further develop treatments which impact as little as possible on the very fabric of an object, on the authenticity of its material structure, whilst ensuring that the work carried out does not cause damage to it over time, and whilst also permitting its re-treatment in the future.

We also have to remind ourselves again that the damage suffered by an object over time is irreversible, and that we can only restore it to our own impression of the original visual appearance, but not reverse the damage that has been done.

THE COMMODE

On first assessing the Dubois commode, therefore, I was advised to carry out substantial research before even considering undertaking any treatment of the Japanese urushi lacquer panels covering its front and sides. I had already benefited from an introduction to lacquer whilst studying conservation. Since first examining this piece I have also attended courses where I had the opportunity to actually make various objects and test panels using urushi and other related materials. I was very fortunate to have the extraordinary opportunity to participate in the Urushi Lacquer Seminar in Japan in 2005 and 2007 where the participants were able to see the whole process from initial harvest and collection of the raw material, the various stages of processing, and the final creation of urushi lacquer ware. Through this experience I was able to study and gain a deeper understanding of the material itself, the techniques of



processing and application, the causes of deterioration, and possible conservation treatments.

As already noted, Urushi is particularly sensitive to light. The light levels in our public galleries can vary greatly, with some windows facing full south, while others look onto a partially-shaded central courtyard. However, all windows have U.V. filters on their double-glazing, and are fitted with Holland blinds. Furthermore, the Gallery lights emit zero U.V. light radiation. All our galleries are air-conditioned (the air intakes being fitted with regularly changed carbon filters) and benefit from the action of humidifiers; we aim to maintain a stable environment with an R.H. of around 55% and a temperature of around 20°Celsius. However it has to be pointed out that Hertford House (the historic home of the Wallace Collection) was never a purpose-built museum and furthermore is increasingly obliged to lend itself to corporate entertaining. As with other similar institutions, the Wallace obtains part of its revenue through self-generated income such as events, and consequently environmental conditions are not always as easy to maintain as we would like. As we all know so well, it will always be a challenge and problematic to strike a balance between access or use of an object and its protection.

The treatment of the so-called 'black spot' corrosion on gilt-metal mounts is, in contrast to urushi, much easier to undertake. The causes of deterioration are better understood since they have been studied in great detail over past decades by many scholars. 'Black spot' corrosion can appear on fire-gilt mounts (i.e. those gilded by the gold/mercury amalgam process) which in the past have been exposed to a sulphur-rich environment. In the Wallace Collection this most probably arose due to the polluted London atmosphere during and after the Second World War, particularly exacerbated by the low quality of the coal used both industrially and domestically. Prior to the installation of air-conditioning in the 1980s, it was common to throw open all the windows for ventilation in the summer. The Conservation Department at the Wallace Collection has for many years been using EDTA (a 0.01 to 0.1 molar solution of ethylene diamine tetra-acetic acid disodium salt) to treat and successfully remove 'black spot' corrosion. EDTA is a molecule for complexing metal ions, and its acidity can be adjusted to nearly PH neutral. This highly complex treatment of gilt-metal mounts is relatively non-corrosive and therefore safe for the object.

CONCLUSION

Whilst, as we have seen, the treatment of the 'black spot' copper-sulphide corrosion on gilt-metal mounts does not

pose much of a problem, treating or 'restoring' the damaged urushi lacquer panels is indeed problematic. We need to question the wisdom of any treatment at all, if their current condition is stable and there is no evidence of any on-going damaging effect threatening their stability and appearance. As in so many instances, any assessment comes down in the end to a question of aesthetics. To clean the gilt-metal mounts would enhance the appearance of this piece tremendously, but at the same time this might potentially compromise the appearance of the lacquer panels. The visitor would perhaps have a distorted view of this commode, with the mounts cleaned and looking at their best but the urushi lacquer panels dark and lifeless. In fact, no decision on the treatment of the commode has yet been made, but as the research and collaboration of scientists and conservators from every part of the world continues, we will be looking further afield for advice and expertise on this question, particularly from our International Conservation Advisory Committee, drawn from experts across the world, which meets every two years at Hertford House to consider such issues.

To highlight the problems involved in assessing possible conservation treatments for urushi, and also to raise awareness of this wonderful material and the intricate art created during its centuries-old use, in 2007 the Conservation Department of the Wallace Collection mounted an exhibition entitled: 'Urushi: Painting from Nature's Palette'. This exhibition was enormously successful as a visitor attraction, for both the general public and conservation students.

Finally, I would like to thank the National Research Institute For Cultural Properties, ICCROM, Shayne Rivers, and the tutors on the short lacquer courses that I attended: Kiyomi Okukubo, Margaret Ballardie, Kagari Miyoshi and in particular Miho Kitagawa.

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Please see below a selection of sources that were consulted; many sources of information are now also available on the internet, although some should be treated with caution

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Impey Oliver: *Japanese Export Laquer: the Fine Period*.

Heckmann Guenter: *Urushi No Waza*

* Held in the Chantry Library

listings

Full details of all the events listed here can be found on the Icon website www.icon.org.uk

Icon Offices: Please note that small events and meetings can be held at the Icon Offices at 1.5, Lafone House, The Leathermarket, Weston Street, London SE1 3ER. The Icon website provides comprehensive directions on how to find the offices – from the home page, go to 'About Icon' and then to the 'Find us' page.

16 March

PACR Clinic

Venue: London

Clinics are aimed at potential PACR candidates who are working towards a PACR application deadline. This event will support candidates with their PACR application, address any queries and provide a useful insight to the accreditation process.

Please book via the Icon website

17 March, 6pm

Icon Book and Paper Group The Conservation of Lord Byron's Screen

Venue: The Wellcome Institute Conference Centre, 183 Euston Rd, London

Speaker: Graeme Storey

In an illustrated talk on the conservation of a four panel decoupage screen built by Lord Byron in the early nineteenth century, the speaker will describe the practical conservation and then focus on a consideration of the ethics of preserving the bonds between maker and object.

Cost: £10 (£15 non-members, £6 students)

Contact: register in advance with Joanna Payne on e: jw@joannapayne.com

17 March

PACR Clinic

Venue: Manchester

Clinics are aimed at potential PACR candidates who are working towards a PACR application deadline. This event will support candidates with their PACR application, address any queries and provide a useful insight to the accreditation process.

Please book via the Icon website

19 March

Heritage Crafts Association Spring Conference

Venue: V&A Museum, London

A number of heritage crafts may be in danger of decline, but this is a day to celebrate the ways in which craft workers contribute to the rich tapestry of British heritage, and are a significant part of tourism and the economy.

Cost: £30 (£25 – HCA Friends)

25 March

Icon Stone and Wall Paintings Group Going Beneath the Surface – Day 2

Venue: The Council Chamber, Stratford Old Town Hall, London.

Second instalment of the conference looking at the removal of unwanted deposits from decorative surfaces, focussing on laser cleaning, latex removal methods, poulticing, and removal of overpaint, mould growth and staining.

Cost: £45 (£60 non-members, £25 students)

Contact: register via Icon website – S&WP Group events page or e: swpconference@gmail.com

29 March

Icon Event

Health and Safety for Conservators

Venue: Museum of London

Features: Responsibilities, Risk Assessment, Hazards and how to deal with them.

Cost: £90 (£120 non members, £85 ACRs and Rols)

4 April

Icon Textile Group Annual Forum Incompatible Partners? Challenges of composite objects

Venue: Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Papers and posters selected range in topic from treating textiles and pearls to the conservation of fans and costume accessories constructed from wax. The Textile Group AGM will form part of the day. Further details via the Icon website

5 April

BSMGP Discussion Day Chris Chesney 'The Wonderful Worlds of Photoshop and Coral Draw'

Venue: The Art Workers Guild, 6 Queen Sq, London. WC1N 3AT

Cost: £18

Contact: Helen Robinson on e: lectures@bsmgp.org.uk

5 April 2011

Cold storage seminar and open day

Venue: Vindon Scientific Limited, John Boyd Dunlop Drive, Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale, OL16 4NG

This one-day seminar features presentations and discussion on aspects of cold storage with particular reference to the British Library's experience and research into cold storage for cellulose acetate film. The seminar and open day is generously hosted by Vindon Scientific Ltd. It offers a rare opportunity to tour the facilities and learn about the wider applications of cold storage at Vindon.

Cost: £95 + VAT

Contact: book via

www.bl.uk/blpac/cold.html

Or tel: +44(0)20 7412 7612

7 April

Icon Event

Health and Safety for Conservators

Venue: Dundee University Library

Features: Responsibilities, Risk Assessment, Hazards and how to deal with them.

Cost: £90 (£120 non members)

11 April

British Library

The Science of Objects and Collections

Venue: British Library Conference Centre

Exploring two linked themes: understanding the nature of objects, and understanding the nature of collections. What can we learn about the behaviour of whole collections by studying individual objects, and what can we learn about individual objects by studying whole collections?

Cost: £96 (£72 conc.)

Contact: Teresa Harrington on e:

Teresa.Harrington@bl.uk

Further details via the Icon website

13 April

PACR Clinic

Venue: Lincoln

Clinics are aimed at potential PACR candidates who are working towards a PACR application deadline. This event will support candidates with their PACR application, address any queries and provide a useful insight to the accreditation process.

Please book via the Icon website

13–15 April

Care and Conservation of Manuscripts

Venue: University of Copenhagen,
Denmark

Further details via the Icon website

15 April

Icon Historic Interiors Group

**Historic Interiors in Secular Buildings
1600–1700 (Elizabethan to Georgian)**

Venue: Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
Focussing on the radical transformation of
the interior which occurred during this
turbulent period in British history in terms
of structure, decoration, lighting, heating,
decoration, furnishing and function – and
relationship to the exterior, in grand and
vernacular houses.

Plus a tour of seventeenth-century
buildings in Cambridge.

Cost: £75.00 (£95.00 non-members)

Contact: Mette de Hamel on e:

mdehamel@btinternet.com or

t: 0207 6221620.

28 April, CANCELLED

Icon Book and Paper Group

Keeping Fit for Conservation – Part 2

Please note that, because of the Royal
Wedding holiday, this event will now be
held on 26 May (q.v.)

5 May

Icon Event

Health and Safety for Conservators

Venue: Cardiff University

Features: Responsibilities, Risk Assessment,
Hazards and how to deal with them.

Cost: £90 (£120 non members)

6 May

Icon Paintings Group Conference

**The Sticking Point: Adhesives and
Consolidants in Paintings Conservation**

Venue: National Portrait Gallery London
Addressing current research and materials
testing of adhesives and consolidants
used in paintings conservation and will
include case studies examining complex
issues relating to consolidation.

Cost: £70 (£90 non members, £40
students/conc.)

Contact:

icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com

9–10 May (repeated 6–7 June)

**Icon Gilding and Decorative Surfaces
Group**

Practical Wood Carving

Venue: Austrey, Warwickshire

Including tuition and demonstrations on
correct tool use and handling, chisel
sharpening, holding and fixing the carving
and the procedure for in-carving lost
elements to carved picture frames or
furniture. There will be a talk on reverse
boxwood moulds, which were used in the
manufacture of compo ornaments and a
demonstration on how they were carved.
The workshop will be very hands-on and
participants will have the opportunity to
put what they have learned into practice
by working at their own pace and level of
ability.

Cost: £150 (£170 non members, £110 icon
students members)

Further details via the Icon website

13 May

**Traditional Paint Forum 2011
Conference**

**Pigmented Perceptions: Historic
Colours in Practice**

Venue: Strawberry Hill, 268 Waldegrave
Rd, Twickenham TW1 4ST

This conference looks at traditional
pigments and how their unique qualities
contribute to the complex beauty of
historic colours.

Contact: info@traditionalpaintforum.org.uk

14 May

Icon Ceramics and Glass Group

**Losing Your Lustre, Spring Forum and
AGM**

Venue: Hochhauser Auditorium, V&A,
London.

The conservation and restoration of
lustred ceramic and glass surfaces
presents a unique problem which arises
with a variety of objects, whether in
response to conservation based priorities
or when working with approaches suited
to the private collector and the
commercial market.

Booking Deadline: 8 April.

Cost: £42 (non member: £80, student/low
waged £24)

Contact: Nancy Sharpe on

highfired@fsmail.net or Rachel Swift on

rswiftccg@hotmail.com

Further details via the Icon website

16–19 May

West Dean College

Conservation for Horologists

An Icon-approved course for professional
horologists aspiring to achieve PACR
qualification.

Contact: Liz Campbell on t: 01243-818219
or e: cpd@westdean.org.uk

23 May

Icon Textiles Group

**Visit to the new labs at the Peoples
History Museum, Manchester**

A one day event for up to 20 people
offering the opportunity to visit the new
labs and explore issues related to
conserving and displaying flags and
banners.

Cost: £50

Further details via the Icon website

26 May

Introduction to PACR

Venue: London

Aimed at those who would like to find out
about PACR – the programme includes
everything you need to know about the
PACR Accreditation – what is it, how does
it work, the professional standards and the
application process, the assessment
process, the assessment visit and
Continuing Professional Development.
Please book via the Icon website

26 May, 7.15pm

Icon Book and Paper Group

Keeping Fit for Conservation – Part 2

Venue: St. Michael's and All Angels Church
Hall, Bath Road, Chiswick, London W4.

Many conservators are afflicted by stiffness
in their backs, necks, arms and hands
caused by poor working positions. A
physiotherapist who teaches Pilates and a
trainer will work with the group to advise
and show them stretches and other
exercises which can be developed into a
simple daily routine. *Please note change
of date owing to Royal Wedding holiday.

Cost: £30

Contact: register in advance with Joanna
Payne on e: jw@joannapayne.com

7–8 June

**The Collections Trust – OpenCulture
2011**

**The Greatest Collections Management
Show on Earth**

Venue: The Custard Factory, Birmingham

A new international 2-day conference
covering all aspects of Collections
Management in museums, archives,
libraries, galleries and private collections.
Further details via the Icon website

14 June

Icon Ceramics and Glass Group
Introduction to Conservation

Venue: Conservation Meeting Room,
9 Montague Street, British Museum,
London

For both practising ceramic and glass conservators and conservators from other fields who would like a refresh or new information in this area of expertise.

Aimed to specifically address the conservation approach, assessment and treatment options of ceramics and glass both in the studio and away from the bench and including a short session for those considering a PACR application.

Cost: £10

Bookings: contact Shulla Jaques, PACR Administration on e: pacr@icon.org.uk
Further details via the Icon website or contact event organiser Liesa Brierley on e: liesa.brierley@googlemail.com

14 June, 6pm

Icon Book and Paper Group
Van de Velde Drawings at the National Maritime Museum: a Fine Art Conservation Approach

Venue: The Wellcome Institute Conference Centre, 183 Euston Road, London

Speaker: Clara de la Peña

The National Maritime Museum has funded a 5-month conservation project in which part of the collection has been examined and has undergone treatment.

These complex works of art combine papers and materials used by the artists themselves with later additions, backings and collectors' stamps. The talk will focus on how to treat compromised and damaged Van de Velde Master Drawings whilst preserving their historical evidence and visual integrity.

Cost: £10 (£15 non-members, £6 students)

Contact: register in advance with Joanna Payne on e: jw@joannapayne.com

June/July tbc

Icon Textiles Group
Visit to three Savile Row Tailors

The visit is planned to complement the workshop on taking patterns from historic costume. The tailors specialise in bespoke suits, livery, court dress and bespoke shirts.

Cost: £10

Further details via the Icon website

1 July

International Academic Projects
Picture Frames: Early and Modern

Speakers: Peter Schade, Head of Picture Framing, National Gallery,

Gerry Alabone, Head of Picture Framing, Tate Britain

Lectures and on-site gallery discussions at the National Gallery and Tate Britain in London examining the changing roles and history of picture frames from the earliest times up to today, giving an overview of the influences of the fashions of collectors and curators. Particular attention is given to the importance of the frame to the picture and how modern curators and conservators approach the display and conservation of picture frames.

Further details via the Icon website

25–28 August

The Society of Bookbinders
Education and Training Conference

Venue: University of Warwick

Including demonstrations and lectures on bookbinding and artists books by expert speakers from around the world.

Contact:

conf.organiser@societyofbookbinders.com

Further details via the Icon website

19–23 September

ICOM-CC 16th Triennial Conference

Venue: Lisbon, Portugal

Further details via the Icon website

22–23 September

Icon Textiles Group
Workshop: Upholstery – History and Techniques

Venue: Burghley House, Stamford, Lincolnshire

Speaker: Lesley Wilson, freelance conservator working on public and private collections, specialising in upholstery and the historic development of upholstery techniques and materials.

Cost: £130

Further details via the Icon website

23 September

Icon Stone and Wall Paintings Group
The Conservation of Architectural Plasterwork; Part 1. (Part 2 in spring 2012)

Venue: Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Ironbridge, Nr Telford.

Within the context of these presentations historic architectural plaster work is considered to include both plain and ornamental plasterwork applied to historic buildings (internally or externally) and requiring conservation. This conference is neither primarily concerned with wall paintings nor the application of new plasters (except where these form an important part of the overall conservation process).

Call for papers and other details on Icon website

Cost: £55.00 (non members: £70.00, icon student members: £25.00, students (non icon): £35.00))

Contact: Simon Swann on t. 01502 676044 or e: swannsh@btinternet.com

26–28 October

A Pest Odyssey 2011: Ten Years Later

Venue: The British Museum, London

Focussing on developments that have been made in the last ten years, highlighting international priorities and how these have changed. To include new understanding about pest species and the risk they pose to both collections and buildings and practical control strategies that work in the heritage context.

Early bird bookings close 1 July.

Further details via the Icon website

November tbc

Icon Textiles Group
Workshop: Taking Patterns from Historic Costume

Details are currently being finalised for the second Back to Basics workshop for 2011. Further details from the Icon website

- Visit www.icon.org.uk for more events and full details of all the entries listed here. There is also lots of information about short training and CPD courses available from a variety of providers. On the website Home page choose Events and Careers & Training and follow the links.
- More PACR information and booking forms are in the Accreditation/CPD section.



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