

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • OCTOBER 2018 • ISSUE 78




## Shining a light on West Dean

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### Also in this issue

Capturing an Ensign • New ACRs • A new pest



# TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

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OCTOBER 2018 Issue 78



## From the Editor

Icon member Malcolm Gillespie, who died on 3 August at the age of seventy-four, is not someone you would have met at any Icon conferences or events and he was not a conservator, although he was awarded a lifetime membership of Icon in 2011. But the

readership of Icon News will all know his work because he has designed every issue of the magazine since the very beginning – seventy five issues in all – until his last illness finally defeated him.

I could not have had a better collaborator over the thirteen years that we have worked together. He was always helpful and patient, never expressing exasperation when I changed something and then changed it back again or asked for the impossible. Icon News has seen many changes over those years but thanks to Malcolm its distinctive look has always felt the same. He was a lovely man and Jane Eagan has written a fitting tribute to him on page 13.

**Lynette Gill**



## 2 NEWS

From the CEO, Group news, Icon19, policy update, furniture conservation education

## 11 PEOPLE

## 15 SIZE MATTERS

Conserving an enormous ensign captured by Nelson

## 19 VISITING WEST DEAN

Learning about the college and its students' end-of-term activities

## 25 AROUND AND ABOUT

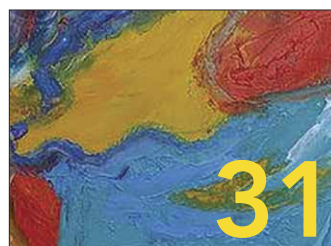
Prehistoric stones and dangerous watches

## 27 REVIEWS

Horror stories, an emerging conservators' conference, textiles & nature, decorative techniques on ceramics, historical bole

## 33 IN PRACTICE

A new pest found in the UK and two **emerging conservators** learn lessons on a dig in Tanzania



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Cover photo  
Students from West Dean College of Arts and Conservation clean a Champagne Standard Lamp designed by Salvador Dali and Edward James. Photo: The Edward James Foundation

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### Deadlines for adverts and editorial

For the December 2018 issue  
Monday 1 October 2018

For the February 2019 issue  
Friday 30 November

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# professional update

## From The Chief Executive

### SUMMING UP



#### **Alison Richmond ACR FIIC looks at Icon now and in the future**

This is my last CEO column, so it seems apt to reflect on where I think we are as an organisation and some of the main challenges that I see ahead.

If I had to use one word to define Icon today, the word that comes to mind is 'resilient'. When I became Chief Executive of Icon in 2010, we were already the very fortunate recipient of two

major grants, from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run the Training Bursary Scheme and from The Clothworkers' Foundation to fund the CEO post. When those grants, which were fundamental to our leadership roles in training and advocacy, came to a natural end, the obvious question was would we be able to continue without them?

The answer has been a resounding 'yes'. I am very proud that the Professional Development team, working with hosts and funders, have been able to continue to provide work-based training of the high standard that everyone now associates with an 'Icon Internship'. The CEO's salary and costs are now fully covered by other income, so the profession will have the leadership it needs to thrive in an ever more challenging advocacy and funding environment. Good business planning and financial management have been key to this and we are very fortunate to have an experienced finance team, including our Business Manager, specialist charity accountants and auditors.

A primary source of this resilience is you, the membership. Members do not need reminding of the challenging economic circumstances in which you have made the commitment to support Icon, thus ensuring that our numbers and our income remain stable year on year. Last year, membership showed a small increase, a development that is very rewarding for our Membership team who work hard to support our members and attract new ones.

Trustees, staff and members have all worked together to put the building blocks in place for an effective professional membership body and charity. Examples are our Code of Conduct, Complaints Procedure, and mechanisms for good governance. With some additional key pieces of development work underway - ethical guidance for members, Groups review, register of Accredited Members, and workforce research - we are continuing to strengthen Icon's ability to support and promote professional standards of conservation.

We also have a very good fundraising track record. We have excellent ongoing relationships with our funders and we

successfully return to the same ones for further grants.

We have a strong staff team that is collaborative, experienced and loyal. This is complemented by an engaged Board of Trustees who not only provide strategic direction but also share their considerable knowledge and experience of conservation and other sectors. Icon is also very fortunate to have an exceptionally large force of volunteer members who serve in formal roles (475 - well above the average across professional bodies).

We have at long last begun to see evidence of greater recognition on the part of governments and public that Icon is the authoritative voice for the conservation of heritage and collections such as invitations to represent the UK in China and the appearance of our members on programmes like 'Fake or Fortune?'.

So what are the biggest challenges that lie ahead for the next CEO? I would summarise this under the heading of 'growth'.

We will need to grow our membership in a number of different ways, so that we are sustainable and engage more members of the public in our work. This will involve finding ways to reach out to people who may wish to support us but who are not conservators themselves, such as allied professionals, volunteers, and owners of heritage. We will need to think more about how we can expand our offer to members abroad. The challenge that all professional bodies face is how to be relevant to younger generation professionals who may not see the benefits of membership. We will also need to encourage more Associate Members to convert to Accredited Members to ensure the high quality of skills needed for the future.

Raising Icon's profile and the profile of the conservation professional has been recognised by the Trustees as the most important challenge for Icon's advocacy. This includes not only promoting the work of conservators but also underlining how it relates to people's lives and connects to major challenges in society. Keying into government priorities, such as climate change and the digital agenda, offers ready opportunities to evidence the value of our profession. Our messages should be based on hard evidence and as a sector we need to get better at measuring our impact on society.

We will need to increase our engagement with and be more representative of a wider section of society. The roles in conservation are still invisible to many and seen as exclusive and "not for me" by others. We need to make our profession more accessible. Apprenticeships have potential and we are investing in those. We must also understand the many different barriers and how they can be overcome. Tackling diversity in our profession is a big challenge and also a chance for us to demonstrate our relevance.

I firmly believe that Icon is poised for a terrific future!

On a personal note, I would like to thank the Chairs with whom I have worked so closely, the Trustees who have been such effective guides for Icon, and all of the staff, past and present, who have made working at Icon so rewarding, the members who are the lifeblood of Icon, and all of our funders, for without your generous support we would not be where we are today.

## POLICY BRIEF

### A Policy Milestone

This summer marked a major milestone in Icon's policy work – the establishment of the Policy Advisory Panel! In June, I invited Icon members to join a new forum for collectively promoting the value of conservation to all decisionmakers. The purpose of the Policy Advisory Panel is to enable members to contribute to the development of Icon's messages and to influence policies affecting conservation and heritage science.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Members replied pledging support for Icon's policy aims, volunteering to join the Panel, and actively suggesting issues for the Panel to engage with. The Panel consists of members across specialisms, from both the UK and abroad and at different stages of their careers and lives.

The Panel's first achievements included responses to consultations on the Heritage Lottery Fund's Policy Directions and the government's Loneliness Strategy. The former argued for HLF to actively encourage standards across the heritage sector through its funding decisions, while the latter highlighted the positive impact that conservation has on health and wellbeing. You can read the full submissions on the policy page of the Icon website.

The formation of the Panel was timely, as the summer has been eventful in terms of consultations, with government teams actively consulting the sector while Ministers are on holiday. As I write this article, I am receiving insightful feedback and suggestions from Panel members on Scotland's Culture Strategy and on proposed reforms to society lotteries.

Thank you to the Policy Advisory Panel for your enthusiasm and your dedication. I am delighted to be working with you and look forward to continuing to do so as we move into the Autumn!

### Soft Power

We have some exciting meetings with government in the pipeline to discuss the connection between conservation and soft power. As the UK prepares to leave the European Union, soft power – the ability to shape preferences through attractive resources such as culture – has become a national priority.

Conservation plays a vital role in soft power. It preserves and makes accessible our heritage, which is a key resource from which the UK has derived its top position on the global Soft Power 30 ranking. The profession's expertise, skills and knowledge are internationally renowned and sought after. Furthermore, the sector's democratic vision of custodianship and cultural and knowledge exchange is underpinned by principles of



Anni Mantyniemi

democracy, diversity and freedom of expression – values that make the UK attractive.

Our Chief Executive Alison Richmond and I have recently met with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Heritage Minister Michael Ellis to highlight these points and to share Icon's work in fostering collaboration between the UK and Chinese conservation sectors. We will discuss our 'The Golden Age' report on China and describe the significant potential to increase the sector's work in this region. We are also arranging meetings with the Scottish and Welsh governments to introduce Icon's activities and to explore collaboration in relation to their international agendas.

Soft power represents a considerable opportunity to demonstrate the impact that conservation and heritage science have across society and to drive support for the sector. The values that the government seeks to promote abroad must be backed and protected at home for the UK's soft power ranking to be maintained. Lack of political support and funding challenge the conservation profession's ability to contribute to cultural exchange. Soft power is an opportune moment to call on decisionmakers to more vocally support a sustainable and highly-skilled conservation workforce. Only then can the sector's achievements abroad be ensured.

**Anni Mantyniemi**

Icon's Policy Advisor

## CONFERENCE NEWS

Those of you who were on top of your inboxes this August or perused that month's Iconnect will have seen the momentous news – the Call for Papers for #Icon19 is now live!

The triennial event will be taking us to Belfast, Northern Ireland over several days in June 2019. Taking into account feedback from our last triennial conference in Birmingham, there are several changes this time:

- Provision of a speakers' rate
- Provision of a day rate
- Single submissions point for all abstracts
- Greater variety of extra networking events

Full details can be found on the website at [icon.org.uk/icon-19](http://icon.org.uk/icon-19).

### The conference theme

This time we'll be exploring *New Perspectives: Contemporary Conservation Thinking and Practice* - taking in the latest research, innovative thinking and cross-disciplinary approaches across the sector.

All the conservation specialisms will be represented in some form. As you will see, putting the latest research into practice and piloting new and fruitful collaborative approaches inside and outside our sector are a highlight of the many prospective themes that papers can address. And as for any ideas you might have which are not represented by this suite - the sky's the limit!!

Have something to contribute? Get to #Icon19 on the speaker's rate – head to the website and submit your abstract!!

### Events and networking opportunities

Taking on feedback from our last conference, the full agenda for #Icon19 is set to provide more opportunities to network than previous conferences.

Recognising that 20% of Icon members are based abroad, this will be our first-ever conference to welcome international delegates with a dedicated International Delegates Reception the day before our usual conference tours (Tuesday 11 June 2019).

The Conference Tours themselves on Wednesday 12 June 2019 will feature a full day of several parallel tracks to choose from, taking in the local conservation scene in the city centre and in its vicinity.

Our smart-casual Opening Reception on Wednesday 12 June will provide the chance to see who else is about and make new connections to take you through the rest of the proceedings and beyond.

The formal Conference Dinner on Thursday night (13 June 2019) will take in the opulence of Belfast City Hall – and it is open to friends and family members!

And while you are in the second day of #Icon19 sessions, any friends or family who joined us for the conference dinner will be

kept well engaged on a day of local tours for friends and family.

After the final plenary session on Friday 14 June 2019, we will be unwinding in style at Icon's first-ever Steam Jazz Night – and taking an informal chug up local railway lines to Whitehead Railway Museum in a steam train with a cash-bar and jazz band aboard. There will be plenty of chances to get out and dance along the way!

Following this, if you wanted to make a weekend of it and set off for an Irish coastal getaway – your next move from here will be clear.

With such a diverse programme of events shaping up, #Icon19 is set to be a notable evolution from previous triennial conferences. Take the first step – and submit your abstract now!

**Michael Nelles**  
Membership Manager

### PACR: END OF AN ERA!

After five years as Chair of Icon's Accreditation Committee (AC) Katy Lithgow has passed on the baton to Sarah Peek who was recently appointed to take up the role for the next three years (see Icon News issue 77).

The last AC meeting chaired by Katy took place on 12 July when we also celebrated the immense dedication she has given to PACR over her sixteen years on the Committee, moving through the ranks as an ordinary AC member representing the specialism of wall paintings for three years, then as vice chair for eight years before becoming the Chair.

Katy has been admired for her effectiveness and ability to multi-task by providing new thinking, influencing process, and taking notes all at once. With an eye for detail especially when reviewing applications and assessment reports; her ability to address every point in all aspects of her role; her no-nonsense approach in directing the Committee to reach a firm agreement on outcomes; focusing debate about each candidate; and to finish on time no matter how complicated the discussions - all this just illustrates her amazing ability to manage information and lead the Committee. Most importantly Katy has guided the AC to show a 'duty of care' towards all applicants to make sure feedback from the AC was fair and consistent to the professional standards.

In her thanks to the AC Katy noted: 'the fabulous opportunity that PACR affords specialists to learn about what is common to, and distinctive about, other specialisms and the profession in general. Not only that, but the Accreditation Committee enables you to work with a wonderful group of people, brought together by their expertise and commitment to the profession, which makes chairing the AC far easier, I imagine, than many other committees'.

Alison Richmond applauded Katy for her true commitment to the profession and highlighted the potential for PACR to bring the profession together and make the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

**Susan Bradshaw**  
Head of Professional Development

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The Accreditation Committee and others bid farewell to Katy Lithgow (standing 6th from the right)

## THE JOURNAL: CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* is Icon's peer-reviewed publication and its aims reflect those of Icon: to advance knowledge and education in conservation and promote the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in all their forms. The Journal provides a collective identity for conservators; it promotes and supports both the profession and professionalism across the globe, and with your support and contributions it continues to be a leading resource for the heritage sector.

The Journal's specific aims are to:

- promote research, knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage conservation through its history, practice and theory
- provide an international forum to enable and disseminate advances in research, knowledge and understanding relating to conservation and heritage
- champion and support professional standards of heritage conservation in the UK and internationally
- provide a permanent record of issues and developments relating to conservation and heritage

To meet these aims, the Journal invites contributions from all those involved in the conservation of cultural heritage and related activities. Submissions from mid-career and emerging professionals are especially welcome.

Areas of interest include:

- understanding cultural heritage materials and their degradation
- subject reviews and histories of cultural heritage materials and conservation treatments
- new, innovative or improved approaches to conservation and collections care theory, practice, communication, management and training

- case studies demonstrating new, innovative or improved approaches;
- conservation in its wider context

The Journal primarily publishes work in the form of full articles (up to c.10,000 words inclusive of notes etc) or shorter notices (c.3000 words). We are interested in comprehensive literature reviews on specific topics and book reviews are also welcome.

If you would like to discuss a potential article please contact me at [journal@icon.org.uk](mailto:journal@icon.org.uk).

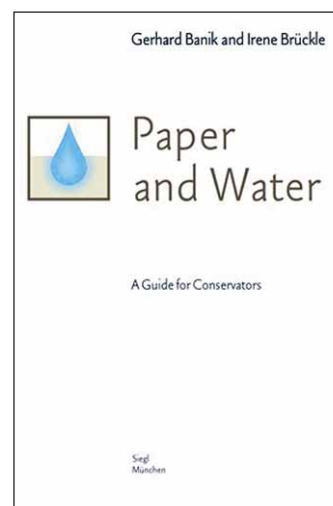
**Dr Jonathan Kemp, Editor**  
Journal of the Institute of Conservation

## PUBLICATION NEWS

Conservation professionals, especially book and paper conservators, will be interested to learn that the magisterial compendium *Paper and Water: A Guide for Conservators* by Gerhard Banik and Irene Brückle has recently been re-published in a revised and expanded second edition.

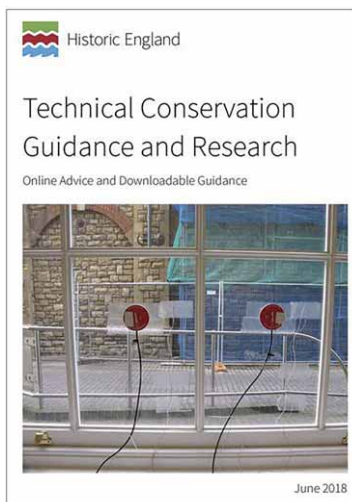
Originally brought out in 2011 after a decade of close cooperation with ICCROM, the Institute of Paper Conservation / Icon and IADA, this new edition is published by Anton Siegl in Munich, Germany. The global team of expert authors explain the principal interactions between paper and water, a topic of primary importance for every conservator working with paper artifacts and other cellulose-based materials. The work integrates knowledge from the different disciplines of paper engineering, conservation science and conservation practice.

Graphics and video clips have been improved, and existing chapters now reflect recent research and development as well as new bibliographical material. A newly-added chapter discusses options for analytical characterization of cellulose and paper: underlying



## Recent Journal covers





conservation forest, readers will be interested to learn of Historic England's new *Technical Conservation Guidance Brochure*.

This new brochure gives an overview of the range of Historic England's online and downloadable technical conservation guidance and research reports. You can find it at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/technical-conservation-guidance/>

If you click on a thumbnail in the brochure it will take you to the online publication. The brochure also guides you on where to find guidance and reports on Historic England's web pages.

For more information please contact [conservation@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:conservation@HistoricEngland.org.uk)

## FURNITURE CONSERVATION EDUCATION

In common with other academic conservation courses, the teaching of furniture conservation and restoration has come under threat over the last few years. Courses are expensive to run because student numbers are small and teacher/student ratios are necessarily high. Where furniture-making courses have survived, they are often subsumed within a broader product design degree, and furniture craft skills have been elbowed out in favour of designing digitally on a screen.

In 2014 Buckinghamshire New University in High Wycombe cut all their furniture courses. Similarly, London Metropolitan University's BSc degree in Conservation and Restoration of Furniture was cut a few years ago and its associated MA has now also gone. The two-year, full time Furniture Restoration HND has also been axed. The University still teaches craft furniture-making skills though a foundation degree in furniture but teaching how to conserve and restore furniture is now limited to a ten-week evening class.

While academic furniture courses are disappearing, the demand for hands-on practical tuition is, if anything, on the increase and enterprising grass roots organisations like the School of Stuff in East London and the Wooburn Craft School in Buckinghamshire, have set up workshops and hired ex-university tutors to meet demand.

The School of Stuff was set up in 2011 by Amanda Girling-Budd,

principles and interpretational relevance in relation to ageing patterns influenced by water.

For more information and how to purchase a copy, visit the publisher's website ([www.siegl.de](http://www.siegl.de)). The book will also be available at the Icon Book & Paper Group Conference *Unexpected Fame: Conservation approaches to the Preparatory Object*, 1-3 October 2018 in Oxford.

In another part of the

an alumna of the London Metropolitan University's Restoration and Conservation degree and a former tutor on the Met's Furniture Restoration HND. The School offers courses in just about everything furniture-related and is now looking to broaden the range of skills and techniques that students can learn. Along with advanced woodworking, the restoration of marquetry, and gilding and lacquering techniques, study topics in the second year of the furniture restoration course will include the restoration of marquetry and boudlework, the conservation and restoration of picture and looking glass frames, mould making for restoration, the restoration of gilded surfaces, and Oriental and European lacquer.

For students who see themselves working small-scale outside the mainstream furniture industry the new craft schools' relatively low-cost workshop-based training, with its concentration on traditional craft hand skills, may be the best option. Perhaps the universities' loss is craft schools' gain.

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### Archaeology Group

The Group's 2018 Annual General Meeting was held at the Museum of London Docklands and centred around their temporary exhibition, *Roman Dead*, which features burial practice and beliefs in Roman London. It included a talk from the exhibition's curator as well as a look around the exhibition itself. Thank you to committee members Helen Ganiaris, Bronwen Faulkner and Ellie Rowley-Conwy for organising the event and to Meriel Jeater for the interesting and thought-provoking talk.

At our most recent committee meeting at the Leeds Discovery Centre Icon AG elected three new executive officers: Helen Ganiaris – Chair, Ellie Rowley-Conwy – Treasurer and Pieta

### Furniture Restoration and Conservation at The School of Stuff





## MUSEUM WORKSHOP

### object mounts

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

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Greaves – Secretary. Thank you to Emma Bowron, Conservator at Leeds City Council, for accommodating the meeting and showing us around their facilities.

Icon AG are pleased to announce a conference in Birmingham on 6 December on archaeological objects found by members of the public. There will be a number of presentations and the day will include tours of the Museum Collection Centre or Staffordshire Hoard display. We are looking forward to a potential joint meeting with the Historical Metallurgy group as well as a possible future event on X-radiography. Icon AG members have also been involved in organising a session of the next European Association of Archaeologists conference held in September in Barcelona.

Archaeology Group committee members continue to attend meetings of The Archaeology Forum (TAFF), the British Archaeological Trust (RESCUE), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and the All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group (APAGG) and report back at our committee meetings, which are held four times a year. Suggestions for future events and workshops are always welcome. Watch Iconnect, Twitter (@ICONArchaeology), Facebook and the website for further announcements.

**Charlotte Wilkinson**  
Icon AG Communications Rep

### Book & Paper Group

#### Chairs' Update

Summer has been quite quiet for us, although the Events & Training subcommittee have been working tremendously hard on the finishing touches for the upcoming conference. As of the time of writing (beginning of August) we have sold 157 out of

198 tickets, so hurry if you haven't already got yours! We have also secured the additional support of Conservation by Design and Tru Vue as sponsors, alongside the Clare Hampson Fund – thank you all for your generosity!

We are looking forward to seeing many of you very soon at our second Book & Paper Group Conference in Oxford, 1-3 October. For those of you unable to attend, we hope to produce post-prints so please watch this space for further news.

The next round of CPD bursaries will be announced very soon, keep an eye out for Iconnects in October to give you the deadlines. These bursaries have got increasingly popular since their introduction in 2016 and we have given out fifteen equating to £2400! If you feel there is an area of your CPD that you are missing out on, I urge to apply. This round the bursaries are for £200 and are open to any Icon BPG member.

Remember to follow us for deadline updates and news through our social media accounts:-

Facebook: @ICONBookPaper.  
Twitter: @ICONBook\_Paper  
Instagram: @iconbookandpaper

**Liz Ralph**  
(Chair, Book & Paper Group)

### Events and Training Sub-committee

As Liz mentioned, we at the Events and Training Subcommittee have been busy getting ready for the upcoming Book and Paper Group Conference and we are looking forward to welcoming many of you to Oxford in October.

In the meantime, we have welcomed three new members to the committee and I would like to introduce you to Jillian Gregory, Sarah O'Donoghue and Mito Matsumaru. It is great to have

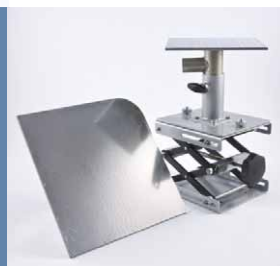
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them on board. As always we welcome your suggestions for events of training you would like to see.

We already have our sights on some exciting events to run once the conference has ended, including an Islamic Papermaking workshop, an online conservation science course and a made-to-measure book cradles workshop. Please keep your eye on our Facebook page, Twitter and Iconnects for further announcements and details of how to book.

**Fiona McLees & Holly Smith**

(Co-chair, Book & Paper Group Events and Training Subcommittee)

### Ceramics and Glass Group

#### Visit to the Crafts Study Centre

Save the date: 17 November 2018. Group members are invited to join us for an exciting day in Farnham starting with a guided tour of the Crafts Study Centre (CSC) led by its Professor Simon Olding. Afterwards the AGM will be held. Crafts Study Centre is a specialist university museum and research centre with an outstanding collection of objects and archive material from Bernard Leach, Hans Coper, Dame Lucie Rie and other leading studio potters of the 20th century studio crafts movement in Britain.

The day has been planned to coincide with the 22nd Art in Clay Pottery and Ceramics Festival at Farnham Maltings. At this contemporary ceramics show visitors will have an opportunity to meet and buy ceramics directly from the artists and attend various talks and demonstrations. A small fee for this event is payable at the door.

There will be no charge for the morning tour of the CSC but

registration is essential as the number of places for visiting the archives is limited.

Full details including an agenda for the AGM and a link to book your free place will be emailed to members via Iconnect and will be available on Group pages of the Icon website.

### Heritage Science Group

#### AGM

On 27 June 2018, Matija Strlic hosted the Group's AGM, invited Guest Lecture, and reception at University College London. Thank you to all those who attended. Highlights from 2017-18 include:

- A highly successful HSG Photo competition. Social media led to a significant increase in entries this year. Congratulations again to the winner Nigel Larkin and runner-up Angela Middleton. Details about their winning photographs were published in *Icon News* 77.
- The HSG Member's Survey. Final results were announced at the AGM and will inform the committee's activities over the coming years. Thanks again to all who participated.
- The production of a Guidelines on Ethical Sampling document. The draft guidelines were opened for consultation with the wider Icon membership via an Iconnect Special on 27 June 2018. The finalised guidelines will be released later this year on our Group webpages.
- A significant increase in our audience engagement. This has been achieved in line with the HSG Communication's Strategy, through regular Icon News and Iconnect communications, the launch of the Heritage Science Blog, update and additions to our webpages (doubling its size!)

and regular postings to our twitter account.

- Six events were held over the year including: the HSG AGM, the HSG invited guest lecture by Professor Roman Kozlowski on sustainable indoor environmental management; training events in colour measurement and portable X-ray fluorescence; and a seminar covering conservation science at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. Increased attendance was helped through social media advertisement and all costs were covered through careful arrangement of venues and catering.
- Heritage Science Advocacy on a national level e.g. through working with NHSF and contributing to formal documents such as the Heritage Alliance's proposal for Heritage Science to be an independent strand of the heritage industry sector within the UK Government's Industrial Strategy (Nov 2017).

All AGM reports can be found on our 'Resources' webpage.

The next committee meeting is hosted by Eleanor Schofield at the Mary Rose Trust on 1 October 2018.

### New Committee

Following a series of announcements at the AGM and via Iconnect we can confirm that:

- Matija Strlic has stood down as HSG Chair and committee member Eleanor Schofield is his successor. During his time as Chair, Matija has significantly increased the Group's activities and engagement within the HSG and wider Icon and Heritage Science communities. We thank Matija for his hard work, vision, and support of the committee members during this time and look forward to continuing to work with him in his role as committee member. We also congratulate Eleanor on her new appointment and look forward to seeing where her leadership will take the Group.
- After ten years of service Nigel Blades ACR is moving on from the committee. We thank Nigel for his hard work and dedication which has seen the Group hosting increasing levels of events during his time as Events Coordinator. We wish him the best of luck in his future activities.

The Heritage Science Group Committee June 2018



- After a highly successful year as Social Media Officer, Paula Moore has sadly had to move on from the committee. Paula has transformed the Group's social media presence and her work continues to achieve increasing levels of audience engagement. We thank Paula for her advice, time and enthusiasm and wish her the best in her new endeavours.
- Congratulations to Lucia Pereira-Pardo and Hayley Simon who were the successful candidates in the ballot for committee membership. Lucia is a conservation scientist at Historic Royal Palaces and Research Fellow at the British Museum and joins us as our Assistant Training Coordinator. Hayley is a PhD student at UCL Institute of Archaeology and will be our new Social Media Officer. Thank you to all of the candidates, all of whom gave strong applications for joining the committee, and thank you to those who voted.

### Keeping in touch

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

#### Helen Wilson ACR

HSG Communications Officer

### Photographic Materials Group

The Group held two successful July events with Debra Hess Norris. *Here, There and Everywhere: The Preservation of Photographic Collections* was a three-day practical workshop focussing on the identification and treatment of traditional photographic materials, and *I've Just Seen a Face: The Preservation of our Global Photographic Heritage* was an evening lecture introducing the fundamental properties and care of photographic print and negative collections. Debra is Professor of Photograph Conservation at the University of Delaware and has taught and practised photograph conservation all over the world, and the opportunity to study with her in London proved very popular.

To see a review of these events and read our interview with Debra, visit our blog: <https://iconphmgblog.wordpress.com/>

More events are being planned for the coming months, including a repeat of our popular round table discussion, which will invite speakers to present on topics of interest in photographic conservation.

### Icon Scotland Group

#### Training and events

Our most recent training event was a three-day practical gilding course, which ran from 3-5 September at the Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History in Glasgow. The course was taught by Tim Ritson, Head of Frames Conservation at the Royal Museums Greenwich, and the participants were delighted with the practical components of the course, including the preparation of a gilded frame which they were able to take away.

We also supported the *Passive Aggressive - Changing the Climate in Archival and Museum Storage* conference on 20 September, which was delivered by National Conservation



Service in partnership with National Galleries Scotland. Similar conferences have been held in London and Aberystwyth, and the conference provided a fantastic opportunity for conservators in Scotland to engage with other professionals working in the heritage sector, such as architects and M&E engineers.

Our next event is *The Secret of Surfaces*, a training course on Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) which is being given in Stirling on 28 September by Marta Pilarska from Historic Environment Scotland. This will show how RTI can be used very simply to create 3D effect images of a range of objects and materials. Tickets are priced at £10/£8 and were still available through Eventbrite at the time of writing.

Towards the end of the year we are running a two-day course on parchment conservation, taught by Lara Artemis ACR and Mariluz Beltran de Guevara ACR, which is fully booked with a waiting list. And then, as always, the highlight of the Scottish conservation calendar will be the Harold Plenderleith Memorial Lecture! This year's speaker is David Saunders, presenting 'A clearer view: new thinking on lighting in museums and galleries'. The lecture will be held at Discovery Point in Dundee on 29 November 2018 at 6pm, with a drinks reception to follow, and tickets are still available.

### Committee

We have recently had a great influx of enthusiastic new committee members, but more roles need to be filled to help with aspects of our work such as the 2019 events programme. If you are keen to get involved further in the conservation profession in Scotland we want to hear from you, whatever your work situation, discipline, location or experience level. To explore this further please contact our chair, Rob Thomson ([scotland@icon.org.uk](mailto:scotland@icon.org.uk)).

### Contact and keep in touch

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

### Textile Group

The first Textile Committee meeting since the May Forum and AGM was held in July and was attended by the new Chair, Ann French, and the Outgoing Chair, Alison Lister. We also welcomed three new committee members, Emily Austin, Viola Nicastro and Maria Pardos, who form the Events team. Many thanks to Kim Tourret, who has been the Student Rep for the last year. Alison was presented with a gift voucher for a visit to Bath Spa on behalf of the Textile Group.

The Committee members voted on the submissions for the new Student Rep and have selected a candidate, with details to follow on the Textile Group webpage. This role will be re-titled as 'Emerging Professional', with the option of either a one or two year tenure which will allow the member to continue on the

committee beyond their training.

### Icon Textile Group Events

The events team of the committee is currently trying to organise several courses and workshops for the remainder of 2018 and into 2019. Details will be added to the Icon Textile Group webpages as they are confirmed.

### In this issue

Emma Smith has reviewed the Forum and AGM and freelance conservator Lindsay Blackmore has produced her account of conserving a French naval ensign (captured by Lord Admiral Nelson) for an exhibition at Norwich Castle Museum.

### Icon Triennial Conference

The Icon triennial conference, *New Perspectives: Contemporary Conservation Thinking and Practice*, will be held in Belfast, 12-14 June 2019. It will feature multiple parallel sessions across the specialisms. It is expected that the Textile Group will join with another of the Groups to co-host a session. Booking opens on 1 November. <https://icon.org.uk/icon-conference-2019>

### Other News

The postprints from the 2017 forum *From Boxes to Buildings*, held in Bath, have been added to the webpage and are free for all members of the Group to access.

A one-day symposium on the *Conservation of Barkcloth Material* is being held Friday 7 December 2018 at the Lady Lisa Sainsbury Lecture Theatre, Jodrell Laboratory, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London. Case studies of conservation, storage, transport and display of barkcloth, the material science of dyes, pigments and various bast-fibres and the collaborative working among museums, conservators, artists and community, will be some of the topics covered. For further details: <https://tapa.gla.ac.uk/news/?ndisp=single>

Due to publication deadlines, it is not always possible to mention all events so please check the Icon website, Facebook page, Twitter feed and Iconnects for details. If you have anything that you would like mentioned in our communications please contact [nadine.wilson@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:nadine.wilson@nationaltrust.org.uk).

The Textile Group Committee members (l-r): Viola Nicastro (Events), Ann French (Chair), Alison Lister (Outgoing Chair), Katy Smith (Secretary), Maria Pardos (Events), Freya Gabbutt (Web Editor), Kim Thüsing (Treasurer) and Emily Austin (Events).



## Appointments



**Elizabeth Neville** ACR has been appointed the new Head of School of Conservation at West Dean College of Arts and Conservation. Although Lizzie came to conservation via an early career in archaeology, she has over thirty years' experience as a book conservator, interspersed with teaching conservation to Graduate and Masters students.

She taught on the MA in Paper Conservation at Camberwell School of Arts and Craft in 1996-7 and is no stranger to West Dean, having taught there on the Graduate Diploma in Books and Library Materials and the MA Conservation Studies courses from 2004 to 2010. She returns there after eight years in the private sector running Heritage Lottery funded, work-based traineeships for junior professionals in book and archive conservation.

Lizzie Neville has made significant input to the work of Icon and before that the Institute of Paper Conservation with a strong emphasis on training and professional development. She is also a V&A assessor for the level 4, Conservation and Collections Care Technicians Diploma. Research interests are conservation ethics and decision-making, work-based learning, and artists' books.



**Catt Thompson-Baum** ACR, formerly Senior Conservation Manager for Digitisation at The National Archives left TNA in September after eight years to become an Independent Collections Consultant and Project Manager. Catt graduated from Camberwell in 2007 and worked at the Wellcome and British Libraries and Trinity College Dublin, before being appointed at TNA to their first position specifically focussed on managing digitisation projects. She grew the team, set up a new studio and devised most of the processes and standards now used at TNA and other institutions under her advice.

Catt became an accredited Conservation Manager in 2015. As an independent consultant, she is now working with a range of institutions and companies providing a variety of services including, but not limited to, collection advice and surveys, project tenders, project set up and management, personnel recruitment and management, and client and contractor management, as well as using her considerable expertise in digitisation projects.

She can be contacted at [ctbheritage@gmail.com](mailto:ctbheritage@gmail.com).

## Retirements



**Ksytia Marko** ACR, a well-known and loved figure in the textile conservation profession, retired over the summer. Ksytia had been the National Trust's Textile Conservation Advisor since 1995 and was also the Manager of the Trust's Textile Conservation Studio from 1991-2016. In 2016 Ksytia was awarded the Plowden Medal by The Royal Warrant Holders Association for her outstanding contribution to conservation.

To mark her retirement a summer party was held at the Studio in Norfolk in early August to celebrate Ksytia's work and retirement. She was joined by National Trust and textile conservation colleagues and friends, who spent the afternoon reminiscing and catching up.

Ksytia will be greatly missed by her colleagues at the Studio and the National Trust properties but, as always, she is welcome to pop in for tea and cake!

**National Trust Textile Conservation Studio**

## Icon staff



Welcome to **Gina Murphy** who is the new Professional Development Officer at Icon, working across all professional development activities but with particular responsibility for the administration of the PACR pathway, CPD recall, and mentoring. She has a Masters in Interpretation, Representation and Heritage and has formerly worked in curatorial support and project roles at the National Trust, the British Museum and the Emery Walker Trust, before moving into training and events in her previous position at the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Gina's work days are Monday to Wednesday and she can be contacted on [gmurphy@icon.org.uk](mailto:gmurphy@icon.org.uk)

## New ACRS

**The Accreditation Committee approved the accreditation of the following conservator-restorers at its meeting in July 2018**

Congratulations to all these new ACRs!

**Lora Angelova**

Conservation Science, The National Archives

**Lucy Angus**

Archives, Paper & Preventive, Library of Birmingham

**Dr Christian Baars**

Preventive, National Museum Cardiff

**Jonathan Clark**

Objects (Organic Material), Norfolk Museum Service / Conservation & Design Service

**Abigail Granville**

Easel Paintings, The National Portrait Gallery

**Jannicke Kionig Langfeldt**

Conservation Management, Science Museum

**Anna Peck**

Textiles, May Berkouwer Textile Conservation Studio

**Jane Smith**

Textiles, The National Trust

**Lydia Stirling**

Archive & Library, Conservation Management, Glamorgan Archives

**Dr Helen Wilson**

Conservation Science and Preventive, The National Archives

**Paul Wooles**

Stone & Plaster, Freelance

## Awards

The **June Baker Trust** is pleased to announce the awards that it has been able to give out this year as part of its 'Awards for Conservators in Scotland' grants:

**Anna O'Regan**

a student at the University of Northumbria, was awarded £350 towards the cost of travelling to locations in the UK and Ireland to look at print rooms with prints pasted to the walls for her dissertation research.

**Kirsten Dunne**

of the National Galleries of Scotland was awarded £300 towards the cost of attending a two week summer school at the Rijksmuseum.

**Nicole Devereux**

from the University of Edinburgh Collections Research Centre was awarded £300 towards the cost of attending the Icon photographic workshop run by Debbie Hess Norris at the National Archives at Kew.

**Rebecca Doonan**

a textile conservation student at the University of Glasgow, was awarded £100 towards the cost of travelling to the National Museums of Scotland to study the storage of hats for her dissertation research.

**Susan Heys**

frame conservator with the Fine Arts Society, Edinburgh, was awarded £340 towards the cost of attending Icon's Historic Bole workshop in London.

The June Baker Trust was set up in 1990 to help individuals working in the conservation of historic and artistic artefacts in Scotland, or training with the intention to do so.

The 'Awards for Conservators in Scotland' are available to assist with funding travel, attendance at conferences and on short courses, purchase of equipment, or other suitable projects for conservators with a

strong Scottish connection. These awards are made once a year, with the deadline for applications being 31 May.

The Trust can be contacted by email at:

junebakertrust@gmail.com

## Welcome to these new members

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

**Tjeerd Bakker**

Royal Collection Trust Associate

**Jason Brauer**

Kenton Brauer Stained Glass Associate

**David Browne**

John Hogg Organisational Supporter

**Bretony Colville**

Student

**Celine Delattre**

Bodleian Library Associate

**Agata Durkiewicz**

Supporter

**Sam Flynn**

Student

**Echo Godfrey**

University of Glasgow Student

**Alexandrea Harrison**

Supporter

**Luca Hoare**

Cardiff University Student

**Lauren Paige Isaacs**

Flying Pig Art Conservation LLC Associate

**Thomas Jackson**

Cambridge Clocks Ltd Associate

**Johanne Keiding**

Bodleian Libraries Associate

**Paige Kenton**

Kenton Brauer Stained Glass Associate

**Victoria Kerrigan**

Supporter

**Sally Kilby**

Student

**Naoko Koseki**

Tokyo National Museum Associate

**Aoife Larkin**

Student



## In memory

**Pauline Marion-Andres**  
Student

**Husung Marlene**  
Student

**Muzart Marya**  
Camberwell College of the  
Arts  
Student

**Fiona McLaughlan**  
Toitu Otago Settlers Museum  
Associate

**Isha Mukherjee**  
City and Guilds of London Art  
School  
Student

**Gina Murphy**  
Icon Staff

**Yuka Ohkawa**  
Tohoku University of Art and  
Design  
Student

**Alina Ohriniuc**  
UCL  
Student

**Paola Ricciardi**  
The Fitzwilliam Museum  
Supporter

**Michael Rieveley**  
Associate

**Jennifer Sainato**  
Center for Jewish History  
Associate

**Richard Speechley**  
Supporter

**Sorcha St John**  
Supporter

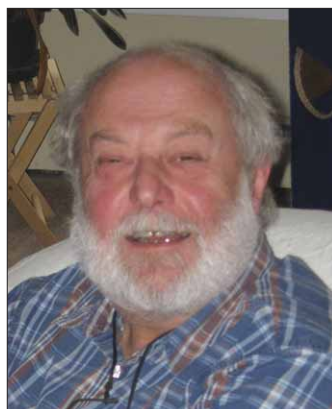
**Michael Stanley**  
Geodiversity  
Supporter

**Rowan Taylor**  
Associate

**Ben Thompson**  
Northumbria University  
Student

**YuShu Tseng**  
Associate

**Alison Wain**  
University of Canberra  
Associate



The quality and look of our *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* (JIC) is largely due to the somewhat unsung work of production designer **Malcolm Gillespie**, who sadly died on 3 August 2018. Malcolm worked for the family-run firm L&S Printing Company Ltd, which from 1980 to 2007 printed the Institute of Paper Conservation's journal *The Paper Conservator* (TPC), only stopping when the newly created JIC moved to the academic publisher Taylor and Francis in 2008. In the heyday of TPC, Malcolm worked with then editor Nancy Bell, and designer Michael Gullick to improve the layout of *The Paper Conservator* to handle increasingly complex conservation articles. Together they shaped TPC into the beautiful journal that it was, with a style that can still be discerned in the *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*. Malcolm was justifiably proud of his work on the journal and the contribution he made to the conservation profession, and we are grateful to him.

As editor of *The Paper Conservator* from 2002-2007, I worked closely with Malcolm as he laid out and designed each issue meticulously. He loved working on the journal and was disappointed when it moved to Taylor and Francis in 2008, but he and L&S had already been snapped up for *Icon News* by Lynette Gill, and

by IIC for *News in Conservation*. It was a pleasure to see Malcolm on the masthead of *Icon News*, when his many years of work on *The Paper Conservator* went relatively unnoticed.

I have many memories of Malcolm and the hard work that we shared, there were frequent phone calls, umpteen sets of corrected proofs posted back and forth, and on his side, an impeccable sense of graphic design, and an endless striving for quality. Luckily, we both had the tenacity needed to get the job done!

One memory is how hard Malcolm worked on the Asian-themed issue (TPC v.30 2007) to get the Chinese summaries right. It was the first time that the journal had included summaries in Chinese, and Malcolm was heroic in making sure they were correct. In the end, I felt guilty for his struggle and sent him a bottle of champagne, he responded by email: 'Surprised, not necessary, unexpected, amazed, loved, will be enjoyed, it's such a nice box for paints. What can I possibly say?'

Malcolm was an artist, and a very keen painter, participating in arts festivals and open houses, and sitting on the deciding committee for local public art competitions ([malcolmgillespie.co.uk/](http://malcolmgillespie.co.uk/)). He fitted in travel as well, visiting Venice in 2011, when he declared himself 'museumed out' after comparing Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, Max Ernst, Picasso, amongst others! Our email exchanges were usually business-like, but about his Venice trip he sent a long report, ending with 'I like Tintoretto, his work is amazingly loose, much more painterly, it cannot be appreciated from reproductions which I have never realised before'.

I also have a lovely email about a knotty design problem where Malcolm says, 'I have done something you may well say, *Oh no! We don't want anything like that.* I hope in sending this to you that I will get – *that's not right, it has to be like this.*' The fact is, Malcolm pretty much always got it right!

**Jane Eagan** ACR FIIC  
Oxford Conservation  
Consortium

Africa Inspired (Oil on Canvas) by Malcolm Gillespie



# NIGEL WILLIAMS PRIZE 2019

Call for applications  
deadline 4 February 2019



For more info  
please visit Icon's Ceramics&Glass group pages  
or email [nwp@icon.org.uk](mailto:nwp@icon.org.uk)



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 14th Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Conservation will be held on Thursday 22nd November 2018 at 5.00 p.m. at the St. Bride Foundation, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 8EQ, to consider the following business:

**Ordinary Resolution 1:** To receive the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2018.

**Ordinary Resolution 2:** To authorise the Trustees to appoint the auditors to serve until the end of the next Annual General Meeting and to authorise the Trustees to decide the remuneration to be paid to the auditors.

A member of the Institute of Conservation who is entitled to attend and vote at the meeting (being a paid up Accredited, Associate, Student and Emeritus Member) is entitled to appoint a proxy, who need not be a member of the Institute of Conservation, to attend and vote instead of them. Proxies may be appointed via the web portal or to the registered office so long as they are received before 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 22nd November 2018. Those received later will not be counted.

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

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

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

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

**Simon Green, Company Secretary**

1st October 2018

# SIZE MATTERS

Lindsay Blackmore ACR gives a personal view of the Tricolour Ensign of the French warship *Le Généreux* and its conservation for the Norfolk Museums Service.

*'I am a Norfolk man and glory in being so'*  
Horatio Lord Nelson

## THE ENSIGN

Last summer's exhibition, *Nelson and Norfolk* at Norwich Castle Museum was a long-awaited opportunity to display a unique textile which had not been on public view for one hundred years. The exhibition was an ambitious project, curated, designed, conservation supported and installed in-house by Norfolk Museum Service, which showcased their significant Nelson collections alongside loans from Royal Museums Greenwich and the Royal Collection Trust.

*Le Généreux*, a seventy-four gun warship, was captured by Nelson's flagship in 1800, two years after its escape from the Battle of the Nile. The ensign was made in 1794 and is one of the earliest representations of the French Tricolour in its final design, the work of Jacques-Louis David. A warship's ensign, also known as the colours, was hoisted to indicate its readiness to engage in battle. When the crew of *Le Généreux*

struck (lowered) their ensign as a signal of surrender, it was folded on deck and sent to the Mayor of Norwich; a sign of respect for the city.

*Le Généreux* was completed in 1785 at Le Rochefort Dockyard. Each dockyard had a Sail and Colour Loft as one of its many specialist departments. An example of such a Loft at Chatham Historic Dockyard in Kent shows the specially constructed roof, designed to provide a large floor space, uninterrupted by supporting pillars.

As with most flags dating before the 20th century, the ensign is constructed from narrow strips of fabric in the several colours and assembled to the required design. Maritime flags used woollen bunting, a narrow fabric of light and open-weave worsted wool, fitting its purpose on board. Wool resists the absorption of water, while the open weave gives the flag lift in the wind. When the domestically produced cloth arrived at the Loft, its strength was tested for haulage of 100lbs.

The 35cm. wide bunting strips of the ensign are hand sewn together in a rough and ready way. Some of the bunting in this case has evidently been re-used from an earlier flag and holes repaired with bunting patches, either during its making or by the Sail Maker who was part of the crew.

The full ensign on the floor of St Andrew's Hall





The ensign has a rope sleeve of linen or jute along the blue end, containing a plaited sisal rope complete with toggle, strop and loop. The flag and sleeve are gathered and stitched to the rope at irregular intervals. The sleeve is very damaged.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the ensign was proudly displayed in Norwich, for one hundred years at Andrew's Hall and then the Castle Museum Keep.

The repair treatment was probably undertaken when it was moved in around 1900. The three coloured sections were separated and each given a dyed cotton support with stitched repairs to damaged areas. This did much to preserve the flag. However, the mordant used to dye the dark lining for the blue section virtually destroyed the cotton.

## CONSERVATION

With the imperative to include the ensign in the exhibition and the short preparation time available, much thought was given to conservation priorities and display methods. The flag is massive, measuring 16 by 8.3 metres, equal to one third of the length of the warship itself. It is still complete, mainly thanks to the earlier repair treatment, but is weak in parts and scattered with tears and holes. The main holes, measuring up to 30 sq.cms, are the scars of battle. Sadly, its flying days are over.

My own connection with the ensign began in 1998, when it was taken out of its long-term storage box and clouds of black dust filled the room. Luckily the dust was not from the flag itself but the shredded black support lining. The loose sections of this lining were removed and the flag was measured, documented and vacuum-cleaned before being more suitably stored. The dust removed from the ensign itself includes sea salt, gunpowder, sand and splinters of wood.

In 2001, I examined the flag more thoroughly to assess its condition. During my forty year career as a textile conservator, I have worked on many fascinating objects. All have been domestic and decorative in nature. The ensign, with its functional, active and masculine nature really caught my imagination. The romance of the object influenced my approach throughout the tribulations of the conservation process.

In October 2016 the ensign was laid out for the first time in St. Andrew's Hall, the only space in Norwich large enough. The twenty or so people present to see the flag revealed that day gasped at the presence of its sheer size and historic resonance. The dark patina of age masked the brightness of the original colour, but still visible was the patchwork of subtle variation of shade caused by the several dye-lots of bunting. It looked like a Jasper Johns flag painting.

The treatment plan was concerned mainly with giving the blue section a new support lining with stitched repairs as necessary, leaving the existing linings of the white and red sections in place at this stage. Sixty metres of cotton mull were dyed as the support for the blue lining. The colour needed was very subtle, in order to blend in with the various tones of the bunting.

The team of staff and volunteers from the Conservation Department of the Museum were asked to carry out an extraordinary task in limited time, involving both muscle power and precision stitching.

Once the flag left the accommodating space of St Andrew's Hall, its sheer scale dominated every move. It was rolled from its shortest side onto an 11 metre roller constructed from plastic drainage pipes and transported by lorry to the building containing our temporary work space. The only way into the building was through the window on the ground floor.

In the workspace, office desks were assembled to make up a table large enough to lay out most of the blue section, extended forward from the roller placed at the back of the work table. A second roller held the support fabric which was hand-stitched into one piece matching the blue section. As the flag was mounted section by section onto the support fabric and conservation stitching was complete, it was rolled onto a third roller below the front edge of the table.

During a typical day, a team of three or four people could be manoeuvring up to 133 square metres of textile as well as focusing in for the conservation stitching. Many times we felt completely overwhelmed by the physical task. But each time a spark of ingenuity was struck. As we had no lifting gear, we improvised with carpet storage blocks on furniture wheels, coat stand pegs for turning rollers and an adapted car jack to support the middle of the roller. The heavy front rollers had to be replaced by lighter cardboard and wadding rollers as they both needed to be lifted frequently by only two or three people.

Unlike working on a frame, we had no easy access to the reverse of the textile. Correct laying-out and tensioning of the lining and the flag as we worked through each section was

Carpet storage blocks holding the back roller





The process of aligning the flag on the support fabric

problematic. It took a while to establish a working method, a process of continual adaptation of the original treatment plan. The success of the treatment was only possible due to working with a team of colleagues with a variety of expertise.

To set up each section for stitching, the front of the flag was lifted and the lining smoothed and taped to the table. The next section of the flag was then positioned over the lining and held in place with weights. Builders' scale tape measures and set squares helped to align the grain of flag and lining. Wrapped 2kg bags of sugar augmented the lead shot and rice weights that had been prepared to hold textile under tension. By a continual process of re-assessment we arrived at a process that worked.

At each stage, the earlier herringbone repair stitching was removed, and then the flag seams were re-stitched through to the support. Areas needing stitching were humidified with cloths dampened with de-ionised water to help straighten the bunting prior to stitching. Every hole and weak area was stitched to the support with laid couching or darning stitches. Further support lines were stitched between damaged areas. The flag is not flat, due to the unevenness of the original seaming, so care was taken to place the areas of stitching true to the grain of the support, leaving the rest of the bunting to settle as it needed.

The damaged fabric of the rope sleeve was realigned and encased in dyed conservation net without disturbing the holding stitches.

On completion of the support of the blue section, some time remained to work through the white and red sections. All the seams were re-stitched and some repair stitching and

patching were carried out, leaving the early repair stitches in place. The furthest red corner, which would have hung nearest the sea, was found to be very crisp and weak with sea salt.

It is the special privilege of the conservator to get very close to the object so that they get to understand it in every aspect. We have seen in detail how the flag was made and the threads it is made of, which holes may be the result of battle shot and which of moth, along with evidence of the way the ensign was used during its active life and any changes made since. Samples were taken of the threads, fibres, and debris for any future research.

## DISPLAY

It was not possible to transport the flag to the Castle Museum on a rigid roller as access was limited. Instead, it was rolled like a bale on a poly-wadding pad the height of the flag, with the rope sleeve end outermost.

If laid out in full, the ensign would more than fill the floor of the main exhibition gallery at the Castle Museum, leaving no space for public access. It was decided to display it on a slope at the optimum angle to allow support and by necessity would show two thirds of its height with the remainder on a roller at the front edge of the slope.

Twenty four spruce plywood boards were stabilised to prevent off-gassing and covered with bump and cotton duck. These formed the display surface when laid on a massive wood structure which had to be assembled in situ by a specialist joinery company.

With members of the team ranged up the slope in non-slip



The Museum Conservation team installing the completed flag

socks, the rope sleeve end was aligned to the left side of the slope and the ensign unrolled across the display surface. It was only necessary to pin the flag to the padded boards in a few places along the leading and top edges to keep it in place. The fullness in the flag was allowed to fall in natural ripples to recall its nature in flight.

## STORAGE

Now off display, the ensign has been folded to be kept in a custom built box, suitable both for its long-term storage and transport, with a transparent side on the box for future display. It is folded into blocks of the three colours properly aligned with the rope visible. Now that the flag is more accessible, it will be possible to display it in a permanent gallery or to loan it to other museums for short-term exhibition. It will also be possible to show it to members of the public on tours of the Norwich Castle Study Centre stores.

*Lindsay Blackmore ACR is a freelance Textile Conservator working in Norfolk with a long association with the National Trust Textile Conservation Studio*

Grateful thanks go to The Nelson Society which funded all the dyeing.

## Acknowledgements

Norfolk Museum Service [www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk)

Ruth Battersby-Tooke, Senior Curator of Textiles, Norfolk Museum Service.

[Ruth.Battersbytooke@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:Ruth.Battersbytooke@norfolk.gov.uk)

Lisa Little, Manager of Sheringham Museum at The Mo Museum and collections.

For those interested please see :

*'Nelson, the Essential Hero'* Ernle Bradford 1977

*'Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson'* Cambridge Library Collection

*'Nelson's Navy'* Brian Lavery Conway Maritime Press 1989



# MID-SUMMER'S DAY DOWN AT THE HOUSE

## Icon's Fiona Brandt learns about West Dean College of Arts and Conservation and preventive conservation

### GOING BACK TO COLLEGE

Part of my new role as Icon's Marketing and Development Officer is to foster partnerships with our Higher Education conservation course providers. With this in mind, I spent mid-summer's day at the very beautiful Edward James House (home to West Dean College near Chichester in West Sussex). The College is part of The Edward James Foundation, a registered charity which also comprises West Dean Gardens, West Dean Estate and West Dean Tapestry Studios.

I had been kindly invited by Mandy Ross, who is the Group Head of Marketing of both the College and The Edward James Foundation, so that we could discuss ways in which we could work together to increase the profile of conservation as a career and for me as a 'conservation outsider' to get a feel for the experience of studying at West Dean, its ethos, atmosphere and people.

As I arrived, the scene was set beautifully – on the longest day of the year the sun was shining, the sheep grazing on the gently sloping lawns in front of the House, tractors whirled in the background. It was a stark contrast to the municipal student buildings of my own university years.

### BACKGROUND

In preparation for my day at the College, I had done some research. The West Dean Estate is mentioned in the Domesday book as a manor, forest and hunting park. Over the centuries it passed through various owners including one who rebuilt the manor house in 1738, creating the core of the flint mansion that exists today. The estate came into possession of the James family in 1891 and between this time and 1964 the house was extended and all but rebuilt.

Postcard showing The House at West Dean in 1817



Image: The Edward James Foundation



Photo: The Edward James Foundation

Edward James as a young man. circa 1920s

Edward James himself was born in 1907 (d.1984) to socialites William James and Evelyn Forbes. He inherited the property when he was twenty-five years old. In 1964 he gave the estate to a charitable educational trust - The Edward James Foundation - and West Dean College was opened in 1971 as a centre for education and training in conservation and the visual and applied arts.

Edward James found fame as a poet and as a keen supporter of the Surrealist movement. He was great friends with Salvador Dali and sponsored him for the whole of 1938. He was also great friends with René Magritte and appeared in two of his paintings. Indeed, the Surrealist influence is heavily felt throughout the House which has been beautifully maintained and is filled to the brim with visual splendour, including immense tapestries, paintings, furnishings, artefacts and mementoes.



Students surveying and cataloguing the manuscripts

## END OF TERM!

On arrival I found an atmosphere which was both relaxed and energised, because only the week previously the formal learning and assessments of the year had finished and the end-of-term feeling in the air was palpable. Added to this was the excitement revolving around the upcoming Emerging Conservators Conference which was to take place the following week (see review on page 30) and much talk of moths on account of the Preventive Conservation Project that was underway at the House.

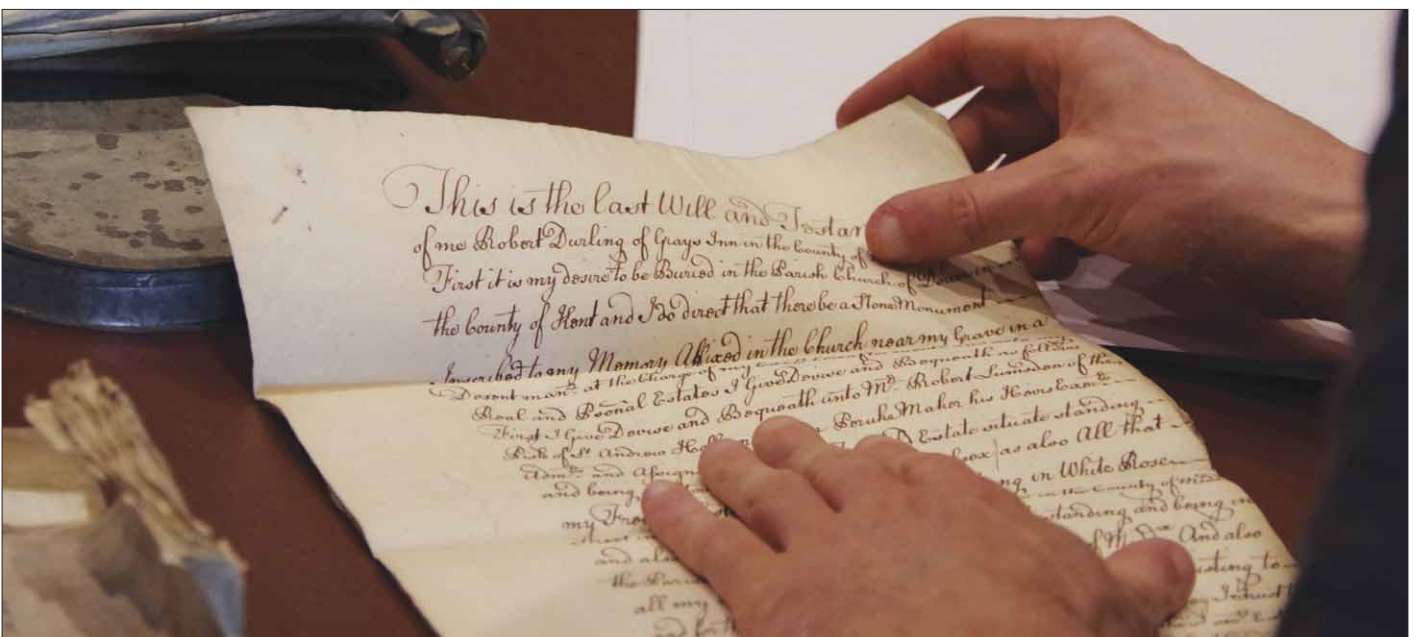
The Preventive Conservation Project involves objects from

both West Dean's collection and its archive and it takes place over a two week period. The nature and scope of the task being (as I understood it) to clean, photograph, catalogue and, where necessary, re-package the items in conservation grade boxes.

## CATALOGUE ISSUES

The objects and artefacts had all been catalogued before but not for some time. One student explained to me that the cataloguing may exist only in handwritten form and may not give as much detail as required. For instance, a packet of

Students surveying and cataloguing the manuscripts





mixed buttons were catalogued as 'a packet of buttons' where they really need to be listed and described individually. The archival inventories date back to the 1800s while the present-day catalogue is an industry-standard electronic collections and archive management system. The collection catalogue is updated continuously with condition reports and conservation work, which is increasingly provided by the students, supervised by the School of Conservation.

West Dean have recently begun working towards producing a full list of items from the collection and archive. Subject to funding, the end product will be an online searchable catalogue which can be linked to UK archive networks and portals - a crucial first step in transforming much of the Foundation's archive collection into a usable resource for research and teaching.

## IMPROVING STORAGE AND ACCESS

I was lucky enough to be introduced to Emma O'Driscoll who is the Collections Manager at West Dean and responsible for the collection and archives. Emma answered many of my questions about the Project - and there were many, as I am a laywoman to collection care and conservation. I wanted to understand why there was so much in storage and not on display. Emma explained: 'It's not an unusual situation for a collection to be partly in storage; it's an essential part of

collections management, as you can't or shouldn't display everything for an unlimited time. For example, very fragile objects would not be able to cope with the stresses imposed by being on display full time. This is why we encourage students to get experience in this area, they will undoubtedly need these skills when they go on to working in museums and galleries as conservators.'

There is also the issue of space. The organising of the collections has evolved alongside the College and, as the College has grown, the available space for the collections has changed. This, coupled with the fact that standards and knowledge have evolved and improved for collections care, has meant that plans have been put in place to improve storage and display environments within the House. This will be supported in the future with a permanent exhibition space and a new Library and Archive facility. This is all part of the College's ten-year strategy.

These plans are imperative as the archive will be increasingly used for research, both by West Dean students and eventually students at other institutions. Emma informed me that the College (as part of the Edward James Foundation): 'is increasingly collaborating with partners and other organisations, including lending objects for exhibitions. This, of course, will have to be managed appropriately so that the College can continue to prolong the lives of objects and

A bundle of manuscripts dated 1828 pertaining to the Edward James estate.

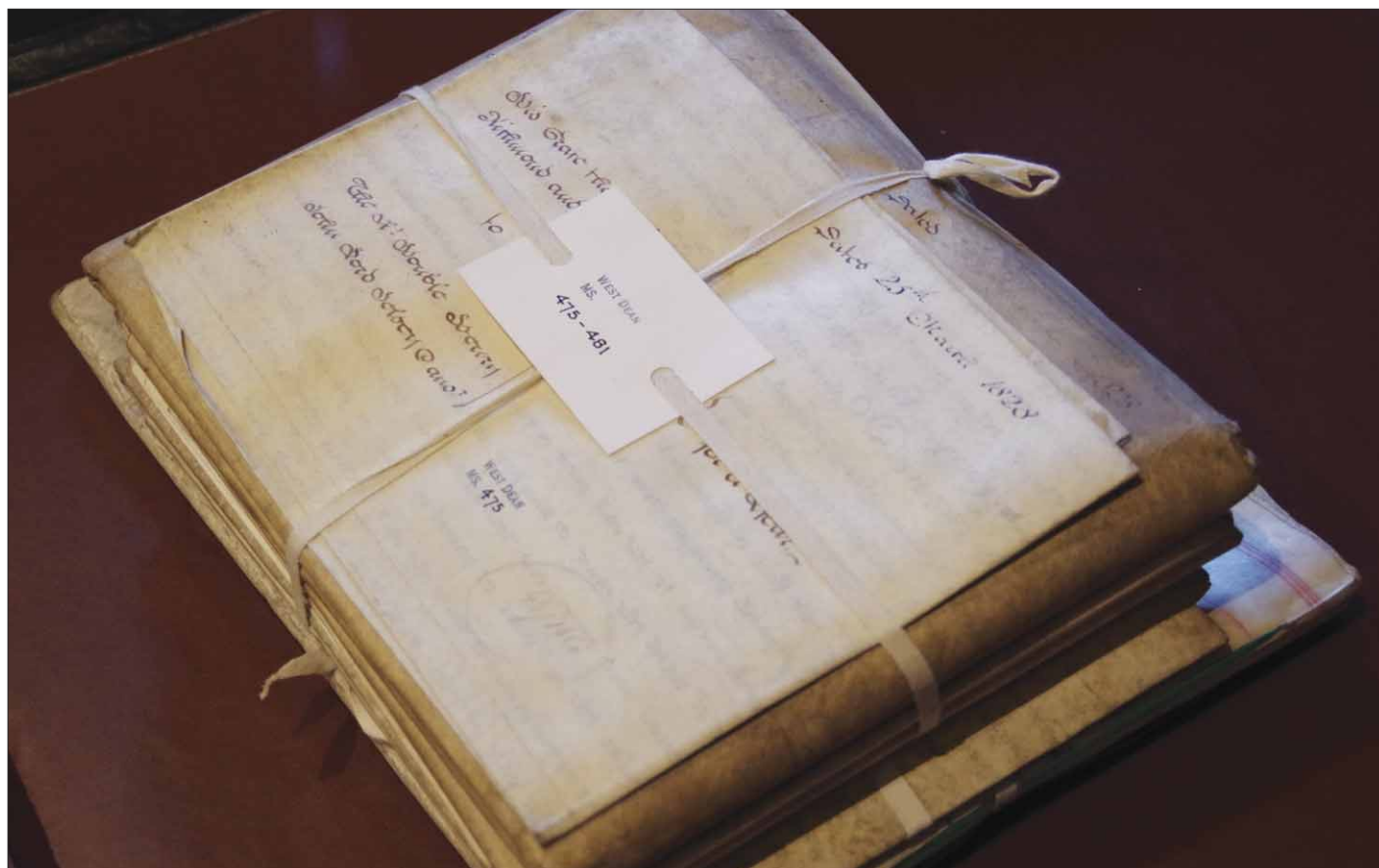


Photo: The Edward James Foundation



archives for our future students and generations!’

‘To assist in increasing our public access to the collection, the College has engaged in some successful national and international loans and exhibitions over the last few years. Students have assisted us in many aspects from planning and making transportation packaging for archives to preparing condition reports on objects, plus attending the exhibitions and meeting with curators and conservators.’

## OTHER PROJECT TASKS

The Preventive Projects that had taken place in the past have ranged from working on individual items, for example the exquisite dolls’ house (made by Vivien Greene, wife of Graham Greene, – it’s worth a visit to West Dean, just to see this) to improving collections storage spaces or setting up systems and processes to help manage environmental conditions for collections care.

For the project being undertaken when I visited, the students were divided into groups including at least one conservation student from each discipline. This was useful as objects often have different material components. Emma explains that

students are encouraged to work outside of their disciplines on these projects, whilst supported by staff and conservators. Certainly, it is a most conducive environment to encounter new skills and approaches. Indeed, this was the fourth year of these Preventive Conservation Projects and the students have made significant progress on both the collection and archive during this time.

On this particular mid-summer’s day, the students were excited to have uncovered Edward James’ gas mask, the very one that he is wearing in a photograph taken at his London residence in 1939 and now displayed in one of the hallways of the House. It was the first time the students had uncovered the mask or indeed even knew of its existence. Familiar as they were with the image of the mask, it was a significant find.

The students were also cleaning a Champagne Standard Lamp, which was a collaboration between Salvador Dalí and Edward James. The lamp was carefully reassembled from its many parts and surfaced cleaned.

Researching this lamp after my visit, I find that there are in fact two pairs of these lamps and as recently as June this year one of the pairs was making the news. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport reports that Arts Minister Michael

Packing one of the pair of Champagne Standard Lamps by Salvador Dali and Edward James





Photo: The Edward James Foundation

These three images show the students cleaning the Dali and James Champagne Standard Lamps

Ellis had placed a temporary export ban on them. The other pair, still owned by the Edward James Foundation, is what the students were working on at the House.

Meanwhile, the book and paper conservation students were going through the considerable task of cataloguing the

manuscripts pertaining to the estate. The students tell me that some of these date back as early as the 13th century. They were packaged together in neat little bundles.

I feel very fortunate to have been able to see this summer's Preventive Project live. It really highlighted the uniqueness of



Photo: The Edward James Foundation



Photo: The Edward James Foundation





Champagne Standard Lamps in parts

As they look assembled: the Champagne Standard Lamps by Salvador Dalí and Edward James



studying conservation in the context of a college that is in a historic house with its own working collection of objects and artefacts as well as an incredible archive. I was so impressed by the way that the projects are student-led and the interdisciplinary nature of study, not only this Preventive Conservation Project but in terms of the Emerging Conservators Conference too.

#### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mandy Ross, Zoe Beeston and Emma O'Driscoll who took the time to meet with me on the day and imparted lots of information. Needless to say, any errors are all my own! I would also like to thank MA students Emily Thomas and Holly Dawes known to me through Icon membership and their work on the Ceramics and Glass Group Committee, who gave me an insight into student life and let me watch them at their fascinating work in the Ceramics and Glass studio.

I urge you to experience West Dean for yourself. The gardens are open to the public throughout the year and are amongst the greatest restored gardens open to the public in England. For those of you interested in doing a short course, the new programme runs October 2018 – March 2019 and is available from the West Dean website. There are also Open Days for their degree courses on Friday 7 December 2018 or Saturday 9 February 2019.



# around and about

## The Calderstones

Orbis Conservation recently began a new important project on the Calderstones. This is a scheduled ancient monument in Liverpool comprising six Cheshire bed sandstone megaliths inscribed with prehistoric markings. They were originally part of a megalithic tomb dated to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age (c. 2800 – 2000 BC). The stones were probably part of a burial mound with a roofed passage leading to a simple chamber, like the passage tombs at Bryn Celli Ddu and Barclodiad y Gawres in Anglesey. They were moved in 1845 by the then owner of Calderstones Mansion who arranged them as a 'stone circle'.

They were moved again in 1954 to a Liverpool Corporation depot where they underwent cleaning before being placed in a purpose built glasshouse – known as Harthill Vestibule - in 1964 where they are today. The glasshouse was part of the Liverpool Botanical Gardens which were demolished during the 1980s. The stones have been locked away in this glasshouse with minimal interpretation resources, bad public access and a poorly controlled environment which is leading to their deterioration.

The Reader, a charity which pioneers the use of shared reading to improve well-being across different groups, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and Liverpool City Council, has commissioned this project with the local community in mind. They are transforming the historic Calderstones Mansion into a new centre which will host a number of enterprises including a café, theatre and gallery, with any income generated supporting the sustainability of



Image: Orbis Conservation

At work on the Calderstones

the project for years to come.

Orbis Conservation will manage the de-installation, conservation and re-display of these magnificent objects in a secure area at the rear of Calderstones Mansion House right in the heart of the park. The aim is to carry out a thorough conservation treatment and create a more suitable home for The Calderstones, which will encourage the engagement of visitors with their heritage and make them as accessible as possible to the public.

The stones 'arranged in a circle' in a glasshouse



Image: Orbis Conservation

Phase one is laser scanning and the team at Orbis Conservation have just completed this first phase; it involved 3D laser scanning each of the Calderstones on site in Liverpool prior to moving them to their studio in Greenwich. The laser scanning will provide a thorough record of their current condition and also a means for assessing their stability in the future. In addition it is hoped that the scans might be used to produce replica sections of the important Neolithic carvings, which will aid with visitor understanding in their new display. 3D laser scanning captures the physical form and measurements of an area or structure as a cloud of millions of data points. This density enables structures to be represented in very high detail, and importantly the process is non-invasive.

Watch this space for news of Phase Two of the work!

## Watches beware!

Preventive and collection care conservators do not need educating in the potential hazards lurking in their stores but some recent research from the University of Northampton and Kingston University is a timely reminder of the need for vigilance.

According to this new research, wristwatches of the sort given to servicemen during the Second World War can emit radiation far above safe levels. The paints used to make their dials glow in the dark are known to emit radon gas, and radon exposure is a leading cause of lung cancer deaths. The fear is the families of ex-servicemen or collectors might be at risk from such time pieces.

In the study, a collection of thirty antique, radium-dial watches gave rise to radon concentrations 134 times greater than the UK's recommended 'safe' level when kept in a space the size of a typical box-room. Three of the watches were in such a poor condition that they individually gave rise to radon concentrations - when kept in the same poorly ventilated room - well in excess of the threshold where Public Health

A radioluminescent altimeter from a WWII Spitfire



Image: Gavin Gillmore



Image: Gavin Gillmore

A Swiss-made, UK military Buren pocket watch from the 1930s, sold as surplus after WWII examined as part of the study

England would recommend remediation.

The authors of the study warn that these levels are high enough to be dangerous even in much larger spaces, such as whole houses. Dr Robin Crockett of the University of Northampton noted concern 'because in addition to military watches being particularly prized by collectors, many individual radium-dial watches are kept as mementoes by ex-servicemen and their descendants. They have the potential to pose a significant health hazard to themselves and their families. Smokers are particularly at risk'.

Professor Gavin Gillmore, who is Head of Energy at Kingston University, added that due to the age and condition of many of the watches in this study, opening up such watches without taking appropriate precautions is not recommended. 'Loose paint fragments will contain radium particles which could be ingested,' he said. 'As this is a strong alpha emitter there is a potentially serious health risk for those who do this.'

Other potential sources of radon gas within the household, such as granite kitchen worktops, were all found to be within safe levels. However, the dials on bedside clocks, compasses, and airplane instruments from the period will all be radioactive, if they were manufactured using radio-luminescent paint. Dr Crockett commented 'The watches tested were a mix of British, Swiss and American-made items, manufactured between the nineteen twenties and sixties, but we know these sort of paints were used into the seventies'.

The study is published as part of a recently released volume from the Geological Society\* and is the culmination of a five year global project funded by UNESCO, the International Union of Geological Sciences, and the International Geoscience Programme.

\* Radon, Health and Natural Hazards Edited by: G. K. Gillmore, Kingston University, UK, F. E. Perrier, University Paris Diderot, France and R. G. M. Crockett, University of Northampton, UK Geological Society, London, Special Publications, 451, NP, 28 March 2018.  
<https://doi.org/10.1144/SP451>



## WORKSHOPS

### GILDING AND METALLIC SURFACES ON CERAMICS

Icon Ceramics and Glass Group  
London 26 May 2018

This workshop with **Judy Wetherall** and **Pete David** was a wonderful glimpse into the history and conservation of two beautiful decorative techniques. The day began with Judy's introduction to gilding, followed by a presentation showing many objects that have been restored using her techniques. After this, we were able to practise oil/mordant gilding and verre églomisé, or reverse glass gilding, with Judy's guidance. Her demonstration and our experimentation showed that working with gold leaf is an art that requires much practice.

In the afternoon, Pete gave a presentation on the history, science, and restoration of lustreware. He showed many examples of his work, explaining the importance of customizing the techniques and materials used to suit each object. It was fascinating to see what finishes can realistically be achieved. Pete highlighted that ultimately managing the client's expectations and planning for the environment the object will be displayed in are just as important as the restoration itself.

Both Judy and Pete emphasised the benefits of being open to new ideas and alternative methods to achieve the desired finish. Both



Samples of historic gilding materials

instructors brought samples and tests demonstrating the flexibility and range of finishes possible with these materials. By showing many examples and possible applications, we were able to see how methods could be adapted to a variety of objects and situations. Overall, the workshop has inspired us to test and play with these materials ourselves.

Judy and Pete are clearly experts in their fields, and their interactive explanations encouraged discussion among the group. As students on the Graduate Diploma programme at West Dean College, we are both new to working with gilding and lustres. This workshop has helped us greatly in understanding how to work with these

difficult materials, and I think it is fair to say that everyone left the workshop with some new tricks up their sleeves.

**Derrin Compton & Rosie Blay**

West Dean College,  
Conservation of Ceramics & Related Materials

### HISTORICAL BOLE

Icon Gilding & Decorative Surfaces Group  
London Guildhall Art Gallery  
18 – 20 June 2018

This three day workshop focused on the techniques used in production, application and finish of Historical Bole colours used in the preparation of gilded surfaces. The course tutor was **Rhian Kanduth** (Oil & Water gilding specialist and tutor at City & Guilds Art School). The course provided the opportunity to make a test panel with an array of colours, both traditional and bespoke from a variety of bole suppliers. It was also a chance to learn about colours used during particular periods in decorative art history and the countries that favoured them.

Bole is coloured pipe clay that is applied to a gesso substrate before gold leaf is applied. The platelet structure of the clay used, combined with a cushioning gesso layer, enables gold leaf to be burnished to a high shine. One of the key aims of this course was to experiment using different bole colours under different shades and thicknesses of gold leaf and how the finish can differ when burnished or distressed. It is key to understand the subtleties of gold leaf, the underlying bole colour as well as the finishing method applied, particularly if these are to be used to create invisible repairs to decorative surfaces using these techniques.

The course began by preparing a dry bole from a London based stockist, AS Handovers. These dry boles require grating

### Learning about decorative techniques for ceramics







Using a glass muller and mixing slab to grind the pigment particles suspended in pipe clay

and soaking in a small quantity of distilled or deionised water, preferably overnight, to soften them. At this stage, the soft clay (a walnut sized amount) can then be mullered to ensure that the pigment particles are as fine as possible. The resulting paste can be blended with blood warm rabbit skin size 1:12 (rabbit skin glue granules: water) to make a solution that is approximately the consistency of milk. The well-blended mixture is then strained to remove any remaining lumps or larger particles – fine nylon stockings are perfect for this.

Once the warm rabbit skin size has been added to the pigment/clay paste, a minimal amount of heat may be applied in order to keep the bole liquid (sitting the jar of prepared bole in warm water is enough to prevent the size from gelling). Overheating can cause the protein molecules to lose their original properties, preventing the bole from functioning as it should and causing the finished gilding to deteriorate over time.

A selection from the range of colours made



The bole is applied with a soft, sable brush and as the coats build up, so do the layers of pigment and size creating a smooth opaque finish. Black bole shades often require more layers of application as the pigment particles are not as opaque. Four to six coats should be ample depending on the colour being used, and the desired effect.

Yellow and red are the most commonly used clay bole colours; they were used by the Ancient Egyptians, the Romans, and Victorians yet are still commonly used today. Red provides a distinct effect when the gold leaf is distressed and shades of yellow are commonly used as an initial base primarily as the similarity in colour to gold assists with the gilding process because skips or losses are more difficult to see which makes gilding complex shapes and ornament much easier.

Several traditional shades of red and yellow were made during the workshop, followed by a range of bespoke colours which were created by using carefully measured blends of the traditional shades. For example - 'Georgian Orange' - a combination of Sinopia Yellow and Spanish Red. The two bespoke shades of grey would most likely have been seen in the English Regency Period and the pastel colours that were made (particularly the Adam's Green/Blue and Pink) would commonly be used during the Georgian Period. Darker colours, such as Plum and Black are seen regularly beneath the burnished and distressed water gilding of the Victorian Period.

Once the layers of bole are dry, its surface must be prepared, with any rough edges taken down, either by lightly rubbing the surface with fine grade sandpaper or using bristle brushes that have been cut flat have a similar effect. With the bole layer ready, the gold leaf can be applied. I tested three gilding water solutions at the workshop. One was London Dry Gin or similar inexpensive supermarket own brand gin and the other two were mixes of water, rabbit skin size and IMS in different ratios

The gin worked the most effectively! For my test panel I trialled two types of gold leaf over each bole sample, one of them extra thick, which is particularly useful for gilding a slightly rough or complex surface,

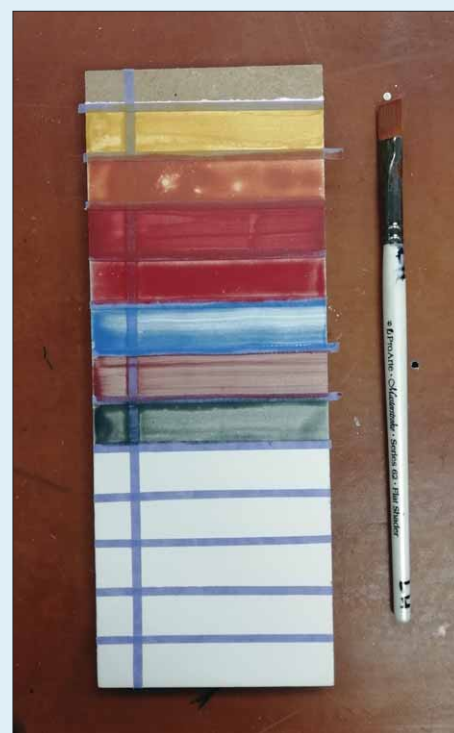
as it moulds around the surface textures more readily. The two colours sampled were almost identical in tone, however the handling of the two types of leaf was quite different. The thicker gold is 'heavier' and so is much quicker to attract to the size water and it distresses fractionally slower.

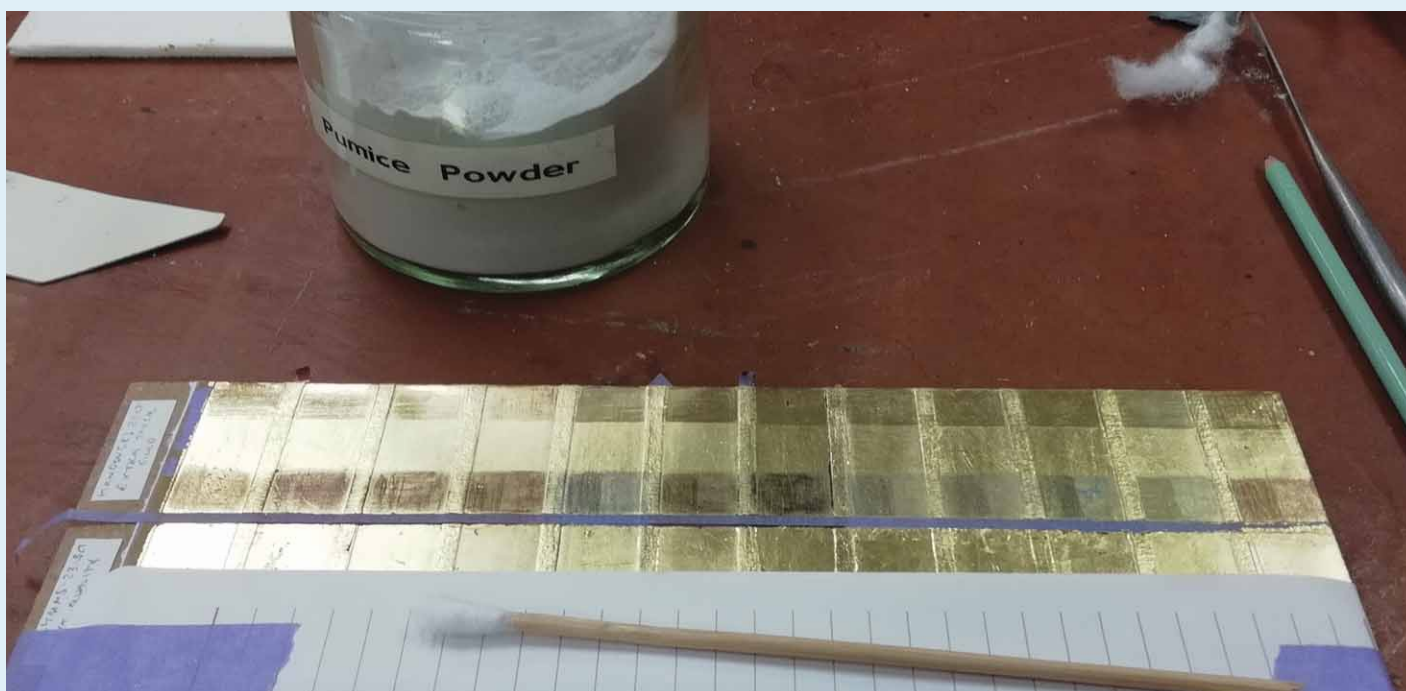
Overall, the two types of gilding trialled both burnished really well on all of the bole colours sampled, although I felt that the more successful burnish was achieved with the standard weight leaf. In relation to specific bole colours, by far the greater burnish occurred on the two Sinopia colours, yellow and black. An extremely fine, high shine finish was achieved here.

Distressing the gilding was an important stage of the workshop. This is where the surface of the gold can be lightly worn back to reveal the underlying bole colour. Here we used very small amounts of dry pumice powder and small cotton wool swabs lightly brushed over the surface in a circular motion. Alternative distressing techniques are entirely dependent on the desired effect. Another dry method would be to use Micromesh fine abrasive sheets which are available in several different grades. Wet methods can also be used – such as swabs with saliva or very weak rabbit skin size – but these methods are slightly more difficult to control, so should be approached with caution.

In summary, this workshop was so enlightening. It provided an opportunity to make and test a variety of bole colours that I would rarely get to use, and compare and

Building up layers of several shades of bole





Distressing the water gilding using cotton wool and pumice powder



The reviewer's completed test panel with twelve colours and two types of gold leaf. Each sample has a burnished area, a matt area and a distressed area to show how each colour performs.

contrast their performance. It was also an opportunity to meet like-minded individuals working in the field (predominantly frame and furniture conservators but also architectural and metals conservators) to discuss alternative techniques and methods for surface preparation, gilding, burnishing and distressing. I am looking forward to using my knowledge on future frame projects at the NPG and investigating some of the new products that we used further.

**Claire Irvine**, Frame Conservator  
The National Portrait Gallery

## CONFERENCES

### THE NATURE OF TEXTILES

**Icon Textile Group**  
London 21 May 2018

After completing my first year at the Centre for Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow, I was looking forward to attending

my first Icon Textile Group forum. The day saw around one hundred and thirty delegates converge at the Museum of London. The subject was 'The Nature of Textiles', with papers interpreting this theme in a number of ways – from the conservation of natural materials, to improving sustainable practices in conservation.

After an introduction by Chair of the committee, **Alison Lister**, the day kicked off with a paper by **Deborah Phipps**, discussing treatment of feathered objects in the Norwich Castle Museum. Feathers are not a material I have had any experience conserving, and so the paper acted as a good introduction to the types of damage that can be sustained, and how these can be conserved.

This was followed by **Lauren Osmond** and 'Distorted iridescence, investigating the microstructural changes in jewel beetle elytra on textiles'. It was interesting learning about another material I have not had experience with, and how desiccation of the structure of

the beetle wings can cause an alteration in colour. I recently visited the 'Fashioned from Nature' exhibition at the V&A, which has a dress decorated with beetle wings on display – an obvious green to purple colour change could be seen on a number of the beetle wings on the dress. Having heard the talk only served to make this more interesting after understanding the mechanism for this degradation.

The final talk of the session was a paper written by **Camille Myers Breeze** and delivered by Megan Mary Creamer, on the methodologies used to conserve a number of classroom charts created by Orra White Hitchcock. Alongside some beautiful images of the charts, the talk included details of the innovative methods used to conserve them; for example due to the paper-like texture of the sized cotton medium, filed down acid free board was used to create a paper pulp which was placed in holes to disguise the shiny nature of the adhesive used to apply the support lining.

In the second session **Chelsea McKibbin's** paper was a good follow-up to Deborah's, discussing the conservation of a number of taxidermy bird specimens in the Natural History Museum. Here it was good to see how methodology used in object conservation can be relevant to fashion and textile objects. Moving from feathers to fur, **Rachel Rhodes** then spoke on the redisplay of the Royal Funerary Effigies in Westminster Abbey, which have been conserved by Zenzie Tinker's studio. She particularly focussed on the fur elements, and how fake fur was used to make a mock ermine for infilling missing areas in many of the cloaks and trims.

**Sarah Glenn** and **Roisin Morris** delivered an exciting presentation 'Inspired by Nature, Fabrics of the Future,' linked to the 'Fashioned from Nature' exhibition at the V&A. They highlighted some of the new textiles that they encountered with this exhibition and that we all may come across





Textile Group members exploring the Linnean Society's treasures

in the future. They also discussed biomimetic materials, and their possible uses in conservation – for example a fabric mimicking gecko skin to hang textiles. Finally **Edwina Ehrman**, Curator of 'Fashioned from Nature', detailed her reasoning behind many of the display choices. The issue of sustainability plays a major role in the exhibition, as the textile industry is the second most polluting industry in the world. The inclusion of an albatross hide partly prepared for use as a muff really got across the message of the impact the textile industry has had, and is still having, on nature.

The lunch break gave everyone a chance to catch up and view the posters, which covered the forum's theme in a variety of ways, from the conservation of common natural materials such as silk, to the not-so-common, such as seal gut and pineapple fibre. **Jacquelyn Peterson**, a student on the Winterthur programme at the University of Delaware, received the best poster prize for 'Colourful Quillwork and Cleaning Compromises: The Treatment of an Oglala Vest'. This detailed the conservation of a child's vest from the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Timothy Long**, curator of the Pleasure Gardens redisplay at the Museum of London gave a lunchtime talk on the project, which was partly crowd-funded. It was encouraging to hear how interested the public were in all aspects of conservation whilst the social media campaign was taking place. The Textile Group AGM was led by outgoing Group Chair Alison Lister, and featured a tribute to the late Karen Finch by **Frances Lennard**.

The afternoon session began with a paper by **Misa Tamura**, on the conservation of a Tahitian Tiputa barkcloth held at the Economic Botany Collection at Kew. She described her innovative storage solution to protect the fragile piece, but allow access for study, which I found particularly interesting.

**Cecelia Aguirre** then spoke on her use of natural dye extracts for colouring support materials in textile conservation. This echoed points raised in Edwina Ehrman's

presentation on how damaging the textiles industry is to the environment and raised issues of sustainability. Further testing is needed to assess fastness and how mordants can be used to create shading, but the results look promising and Cecelia showcased a number of projects in which she has used natural dyes.

**Charlotte Holzer** then presented a particularly terrifying fibre to the textile conservation crowd: glass fibre. Charlotte is undertaking a PhD on the topic in order to aid the conservation of a glass fibre dress at the Deutsches Museum in Munich.

The final session began with a presentation by **Frances Hartog** on various methodologies that can be employed in the wet cleaning of knotted carpets; a summary of her Clothworkers' funded research fellowship undertaken at the V&A. It was interesting to contrast this with the next paper by **Emmanuelle Garcin** on whether it may be possible to use supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> (CO<sub>2</sub> held above 31°C and at 73atm to give it properties between a liquid and gas) to dry clean textiles, as a less resource-intensive alternative. Though this is unlikely to be a method that can be used on some of the large carpets shown by Frances, it could be used on a number of the textiles we traditionally wet clean. Although in its very early stages initial testing looks to show that textiles are being cleaned without sustaining damage.

The final paper by **Viola Nicastro** focussed on conserving the Queen Anne Throne Canopy for Historic Royal Palaces, notably areas of metal thread embroidery. A video of the installation of the canopy ended the day well.

The event felt truly international, with speakers and poster authors from the UK, France, Germany, Canada, Qatar and the US. A lot was packed into the day, with no time for post-session questioning but there was plenty of time in the tea breaks and lunch to catch up with colleagues and ask questions of the paper authors. I would like to thank the organisers for co-ordinating such an enjoyable event, and of course the speakers and authors of posters for filling the day with such interesting material.

Organised to coincide with the forum were a number of tours for delegates. On the day before, this included entry to the V&A's exhibition 'Fashioned from Nature'. On the day after, this included tours of the British Museum Organics Conservation studio and the Linnean Society. At the former we ran a morning and afternoon tour showcasing some of the textiles being conserved for the newly opening Islamic galleries, the Japanese galleries, as well as a Tahitian mourners costume for a Cook display later in the year.

**Emma Smith**, Student, Centre for Textile Conservation (CTC)

University of Glasgow

**Andrea Goldstein** (CTC student): reports on the Linnean Society Tour:-  
As the world's oldest biological society, it has a long history of studying and discussing research about natural history and evolution, including the 1858 papers of Charles Darwin suggesting natural selection. We were greeted and introduced to the establishment in the main meeting room. We were shown the impressive library, the office of the senior conservator, and lastly the collection of Carl Linnaeus where we viewed some of his original specimen samples and scientific recordings. This tour was exciting for anyone who enjoys natural history and observing for oneself the many ways nature has been a source of academic and artistic inspiration for many centuries.

## TRANSITIONING: Emerging Professionals & Cross-Disciplinary Conservation Student Conference

West Dean, Sussex 27 June 2018

West Dean College of Arts and Conservation hosted its inaugural student conference organised by conservation students for conservation students. The themes selected for this conference were organised around the transition from being a student conservator to becoming a working conservator, and the skills likely to be required during this process. The day included sessions from both emerging and established conservators, along with professionals whose roles tie in closely with conservation work.

The conference was opened by West Dean's Director of Education **Francine Norris**, who introduced the broad themes of the event by speaking about topics such as the traditional scope of conservation versus recent trends, and the challenges and opportunities presented by these changes.

The morning was taken up by presentations from three emerging conservators giving well-chosen insights gained from recent work/work placement experiences. **Margot Murray** of National Museums Scotland presented well-grounded guidance on





The organisers of West Dean's emerging professionals conference

identifying transferable skills gained from material-specific conservation training, and how to adapt these skills to general conservation job applications. Related subject matter included valuable advice on how to analyse job specifications more generally, dealing with competency tests, portfolio suggestions and interview tips and tricks.

**Libby Ireland** reflected on various aspects of the conservation of contemporary and modern art via the vehicle of experience gained during a five-month internship at Tate's Sculpture and Installation Department. One of the points that particularly emerged

from Libby's presentation was differences in approaches to decision-making within and between conservation training institutions, museums and private practice, and how contrasting aspects of objects may be ascribed disparate values at different times and places – with potentially significant effect for the conservation approach taken.

Finally, **Marina Herriges** rounded out the morning sessions recounting her experiences at the Carmen Miranda Museum in Rio de Janeiro. Marina's involvement with the conservation of Carmen Miranda's costumes provided her with great material to speak about the wide

range of skills involved in your first conservation job, as well as a number of practical tips about learning how to manage yourself, the importance of clear communication and the difference a mentor can make.

After a delicious lunch, a different format consisting of two panel sessions was followed. A 'Linked Professionals' panel was the first of these sessions, with the panel consisting of **Duncan Walker** (Curator – Russell Cotes Museum), **James Stratton** (Director – Clocks Department, Bonhams) and **Emma O'Driscoll** (Collections Manager – West Dean College of Arts and Conservation). Each of the linked professionals started by giving a brief overview of their roles, how these involve conservators, good/bad experiences with conservators and what they look for when choosing a conservator.

This section of the session alone provided great insights into each of these professionals' typical working practices, budgetary restrictions on conservation and their expectations of conservators. The session then moved into a discussion/question and answer format, with questions coming from audience members

A break in proceedings in West Dean College's splendid surroundings



and being discussed between panel members as well as the audience. Topics covered ranged from charging structures through the realities of life in modern museums/collections care, volunteer management, condition reporting preferences, business development, expectation management and current developments in the roles of conservators.

The 'Emerging and Emerged Conservators' panel was the final session of the day. Members of this panel included **Margot Murray, Johan ten Hoeve** (Conservator in Residence – The Clockworks Museum) and **Katrina Redman** (Conservator – Hall Conservation). Each of the panellists introduced themselves by speaking about their career path (how they found different positions, differences between workplaces), key skills (which skills they have found most important in their various roles) and the types of work they have done/currently carry out (what they actually spend most of their time doing!). As for the 'Linked Professionals', the second part of the session was built around panel responses to audience questions. Panellists ranged from one to ten years' experience and have worked across private conservation businesses and public institutions, so a wide variety of experiences and insights were outlined during the session. However some common themes emerged. These included the necessity of not undervaluing your work when first starting out, how networking can lead to good opportunities, top tips when applying for conservation roles, learning how to construct fee estimates, the usefulness of social media, how to handle difficult customers and an array of other points.

Overall, the day was a good reflection of its themes, with lots of practical information being made available to attendees about the transition from student to working conservator. This was accompanied by tips on how to be more effective after that transition by learning more about the linked professionals with whom we may well be working in the future. More widely, there was also consideration of the changing nature of the conservation industry in terms of the roles of conservators, objects we work with and resources available to us. One of the final thoughts of the day was that although conservation as a profession seems to be undergoing significant change at the current time, and that can be very challenging, it also means there is space to shape and define our roles as conservators which otherwise may not have been available without that change – possibly a topic to be explored further at next year's conference.

**Kate Jennings**, MA Conservation Studies Student

West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

## TALKS

### 'CONSERVATION CONFIDENTIAL' Independent Paper Conservators' Group London May 2018

On a warm May evening, The Grand Robing Room in the Free Mason's Hall in central London was the fine backdrop for Deborah Bates's exposé of the dark world of Prints and Drawings Conservation nightmares.

'Being in our world is like being in The Mafia, there are certain things no one can talk about.' Deborah was brave enough to do exactly that and talk about some of those taboos in front of a large audience of Independent Conservators.

Deborah started her long career by training at Camberwell. After qualifying in 1980 she started her own private conservation studio, in Battersea, with Camilla Baskomb. How brave, we all thought. Indeed I remember how, from the start, they would invite us, their Camberwell peers, to evening meetings in the studio, where we would share our experiences and knowledge (and horror stories). I remember then being overwhelmed at witnessing the volume of work that was in the studio. The pressure of turning around quantities of Victorian watercolours for just one relentlessly demanding dealer and for very little money. Working that hard did however allow Bates and Baskomb to amass a wealth of experience on the job, and as if they didn't have enough on their blotting paper plates, Deborah became a founder member and one of five trustees of 'European Art Conservation Trust' (EACT).

In 1996 Deborah not only bought out her partner but also built the Wyer Art Gallery at her studio premises. Hanging large format 'raw' works of art is a conservator's nightmare, but 'artist's wishes are paramount'. The value of working with living artists added yet another important dimension to Deborah's career.

It is with this varied career path that Deborah felt confident about discussing her experiences with Free Ports and their iniquitous practices, where names are withheld and important art 'disappears' for commercial gain. As with auction houses, some practices are seemingly unregulated.

Now working in Kent with her partner Jane, the pressures of running an independent studio are ever the same. Unreasonable clients, lack of financial resources, space (you can NEVER have enough of it), having time for admin and keeping up with scientific theory etc., all add to the stress levels of your average Independent Conservator. Having employees is never easy on many levels.

The time constraints placed by clients are always a problem and unlike one institution

that gave six conservators eighteen months to restore a pastel, most of our private clients would probably not afford us that luxury. Other challenges like Chine Collé prints - should you lift and replace, how invisible should repairs be, the ethics of fakery/ deception - are issues which are never clear cut and always open to further debate.

Deborah concluded her dynamic and thought-provoking talk by asking us what we liked about our jobs. It is always good to remind ourselves, even when we are having a bit of a moan. Informing and educating was a popular theme. The last thing I wrote in my notebook was 'know when to say no'. After a career of over forty fascinating years as an Independent Conservator with a fine reputation, Deborah can!

**Sarah Bull ACR**

Conservator of Prints & Drawings  
Gloucestershire

*The Independent Paper Conservators' Group, IPCG, was set up seventeen years ago to create better contact between conservators who work independently or alone. IPCG is a completely independent body and there are no charges for being a member. Meetings and workshops are mostly midweek evenings in and around London but we have also had day trips to institutions, studios and manufacturers. Contact Laila Hackforth-Jones if you wish to have more information about the group at [laila.hj@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:laila.hj@blueyonder.co.uk)*

### Deborah Bates spills the beans





## ANOTHER SILVERFISH THREAT

**Diana McCormack, Senior Conservator (Historic Ships) at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, and Letty Steer, Collections Care Conservator, Museum of London, report on yet another species of silverfish identified in the British Isles**

In Issue 69 of Icon News (March 2017), Abby Moore and Letty Steer of the Museum of London Collections Care team wrote about 'a new silverfish threat in the UK and Europe'. The article described the discovery of the Grey Silverfish *Ctenolepisma longicaudata* at the Museum of London, and the new risk to the collection this represents, as this species can survive and damage objects at mid-range levels of relative humidity, unlike the more common *Lepisma saccharina* species.

This obviously has implications for collections care all across the British Isles, as this species was previously unknown here, though it has since been identified at other sites across the country.

Prompted by the article, the Historic Ships Conservation team at the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) redoubled efforts to catch a specimen of silverfish known to be present in the timber stores, but up to that point not found in the traps. The team were aware that the silverfish were unusually large and dark-coloured, and suspected that we may in fact also be hosting this newly-found species.

On finally capturing an intact specimen, NMRN conservators got in touch with colleagues at the Museum of London, and it soon became clear that this was not in fact the *longicaudata* species, but something different again.

With specialist help to identify this new pest from Integrated Pest Management (IPM) specialist David Pinniger, and Darren Mann, of the Oxford Museum of Natural History, it was confirmed in March 2018 that we had another kind of silverfish here at NMRN. This was the four-lined silverfish *Ctenolepisma lineata*, and once again, the species was unknown in the British Isles, though known to be present across much of continental Europe.

It is known to be a cellulose-feeder and was found in the first instance on wooden pallets in the store, and seemed to be attracted to the gluey residues on the joints. On further inspection, a large number of insects were found living on stacks of timber of both teak and elm, that had no surface treatments and were not palletised.

The timber store is heated over the winter months but otherwise has no environmental control, and consequently the data shows that the Relative Humidity can range between 35-85% over the course of a year. Some work now needs to be done to establish and to communicate what the likely risks to collections from this species may be. These findings will be published by the IPM group later on in the year.

At this point, we would like to reinforce the message behind that first Icon News article and encourage an awareness of the need for accurate species identification in pest management.

We would also like to extol the benefits of open collaboration and information sharing between organisations, which has uncovered another potential pest risk for collections in the UK. As a large objects conservation team here at NMRN, it was invaluable to have the support and skills of colleagues to help in identifying this pest, and it has highlighted an area for skills development within our team. It is also worth noting that social media has been a very useful tool in quickly spreading the word among conservation and museum professionals about this new find.

The *Ctenolepisma lineata*



Image: National Museum of the Royal Navy



# the emerging conservator

## POA POA!

**Abigail Duckor and Jan Dariusz Cutajar reflect on their experiences conserving archaeological stone and organic artefacts in Tanzania**

### THE EXPERIENCE

In the summer of 2015, Abigail Duckor and Jan Dariusz Cutajar undertook work experience, supported by the Zibby Garnett Travel Fellowship, in Oldupai Gorge, Tanzania, with the Oldupai Geochronology and Archaeology Project (OGAP). The Oldupai Gorge is a UNESCO site made famous by Mary Leakey.

This project excavated artefacts dating from 1.79 to 1.15 million years ago, a critical time period in which there were many changes in the fauna, climate and hominin technology in this geographic area. In light of this, the OGAP project, and the adjoined conservation team led by Head of Conservation Dr Renata F. Peters, was geared towards understanding the development of the Olduwan hominin group into the Acheulean hominin group in Oldupai.

Under the direction, guidance and tutelage of Dr Peters, the conservation team for OGAP has become a leader in conservation practice for field archaeology. As part of this team, we conserved stone and fossilised finds on-site to ready them for academic research, on-site storage and transportation. The 2015 season encompassed conservation tasks involving the repair of broken or fractured finds, the

cleaning of surfaces to reveal significant markings and the stabilisation of as many excavated artefacts as possible. This was in combination with in situ training sessions with Tanzanian and international students attending the OGAP field school and excavation workers on the practice of contemporary conservation.

### DAILY LIFE

Oldupai Gorge is a remote location in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in northern Tanzania. We worked and lived in the Leakey camp, once the very home of the renowned archaeologists Mary and Louis Leakey. Resources were extremely limited at the camp as there was no running water and only limited generator-powered electricity. The conservation 'lab' was very minimal (with its very own bat!), but we were just happy to have space to work.

Life at the camp was far from rich in luxuries. It was, however, very abundant in world-leading researchers, stunning surroundings and nourishing food. These attributes made for a very fulfilling experience. Indeed, within this milieu, we also forged strong and amiable relationships with both the friendly Tanzanian students and professionals as well as the noble Maasai with whom we constantly collaborated and who furthermore took very good care of us.

### LAB LIFE

Every day, the lab would receive around ten to thirty freshly excavated objects. With this many objects coming in, we

Abigail and Jan working in the Laetoli lab



Photo: E. Diaz Pila



Jan making preparations for in situ consolidation in a disused trench in the field

needed to be very organised and efficient with resources, space and time management. On an average day, we would each be working on three to five objects simultaneously. As the season progressed, we increased our efficient output and performance, carrying out batch treatments and optimising other treatments according to need.

## FIELDWORK

When we were not in the lab, we were in the field. We were required to go to the excavation trenches whenever there were particularly fragile, abundant, or large objects that required stabilisation. The crumbly soils we encountered made lifting impossible and so instead, we would micro-excavate finds in order for them to be then professionally lifted by the archaeologists.

With particularly fragile finds, we were trained to use alkane consolidants to temporarily stabilise objects so as to guarantee secure transportation to the lab where finer conservation work could be carried out. This was particularly challenging due to strong winds which rendered it difficult to have a steady heat source to prepare the consolidants. The wind also complicated the application of the consolidant as often it would harden before we even got the brush to the artefact! Needless to say, working around these problems required creative solutions.

## OBJECT WORK

The majority of artefacts we worked on were stone tools and fossilized bones, with each object being given a unique conservation treatment requiring bespoke decision-making. Conservation-grade materials were selected as much as possible with respect to our context, which featured high temperatures and a lack of museum-grade facilities. OGAP project members were always welcomed into the lab – by informing our colleagues of the reasoning behind our conservation decisions, everyone felt involved as part of the conservation process and was encouraged to help in the conservation effort.

## A HARD-EARNED SKILL-SET

Throughout this experience we accrued:

- Professional capacities conserving fossilised bones and

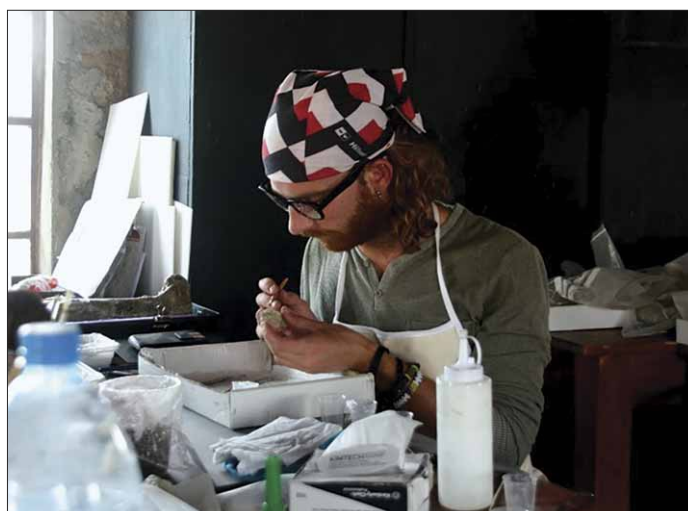
stone tools;

- Knowledge on conservation techniques particular to fieldwork;
- Practical skills in running a conservation programme on an archaeological site;
- Adaptivity to achieving conservation aims with highly limited resources;
- Experience communicating conservation techniques to various audiences;
- Work experience with diverse groups of people founded on a sustainable knowledge exchange;
- Travel experience in Tanzania, featuring a broadened understanding of Tanzanian and East African culture.

Abigail treating an object in the lab



Jan finishing up a treatment in the lab







Watching the sunset just outside Leakey Camp in the Ngorongoro savannah

## MAKING MEMORIES

Our entire experience in Tanzania, with the OGAP team and whilst exploring the rich, diverse landscapes of the country afterwards, was coloured by the fantastic variety of people we met along the way. Having lived and laughed with, toiled hard and shared aplenty with Tanzanians from all corners of the nation, we were fortunate to discover the local flavours of Tanganyika and Zanzibar with them, adventuring all the way from Arusha in the north down to the chaotic Dar es Salaam and as far as the solitary but splendid island of Pemba! These are people and memories to carry with us for many years to come.

## A PLATFORM TO PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The skills described above have come into play in our professional roles in more ways than could have been foreseen. After graduating in 2016 from UCL's MSc

A taste of Tanzania: clockwise from top left, flying on a delta plane to Pemba; jumping off the magnetic sand dunes near Naibor Soit (photo by M. Gümrükçü); sunset over Stone Town harbour on Unguja; the bustling market streets of Dar es-Salaam



Photos: J. Cutajar

Conservation programme, we have taken slightly differing paths in the conservation profession. Abigail is currently an Assistant Objects Conservator at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art whilst Jan has entered private practice as a freelancer in the UK, accomplishing projects in objects and furniture conservation with UCL, National Trust, the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology in Cairo and other private clients.

Despite the differences between the institutional and self-employed spheres, our ZGTF experiences have permitted us to develop the adaptability to address these very differences which render the conservation profession a dynamic and demanding field.

Working in Oldupai has served to build a strong foundation from which we could confidently tackle conservation outreach and engagement, project management (from leading on large-scale conservation projects to planning treatments within a tight schedule), multidisciplinary decision-making, grant applications, research-based strategies, complex treatment solutions and other aspects of our work. Working with OGAP, its directors and the diversified team in a completely challenging context provided us with the flexibility, enthusiasm and readiness to constructively, and comfortably assess the conservation challenges that we now face on a daily basis.

Thanks to this one-of-a-kind experience, we are confident that in our forthcoming projects, we shall have the further opportunity to develop these transferable skills and implement them in our conservation practice and conservation-based research. Needless to say, we would both recommend any prospective applicants for the Zibby Garnett Travel Fellowship to make the most of this enriching opportunity.

*This experience was funded by the Zibby Garnett Travel Fellowship and UCL Hubbub.*



The one we'll be talking about for years to come...!

#Icon19

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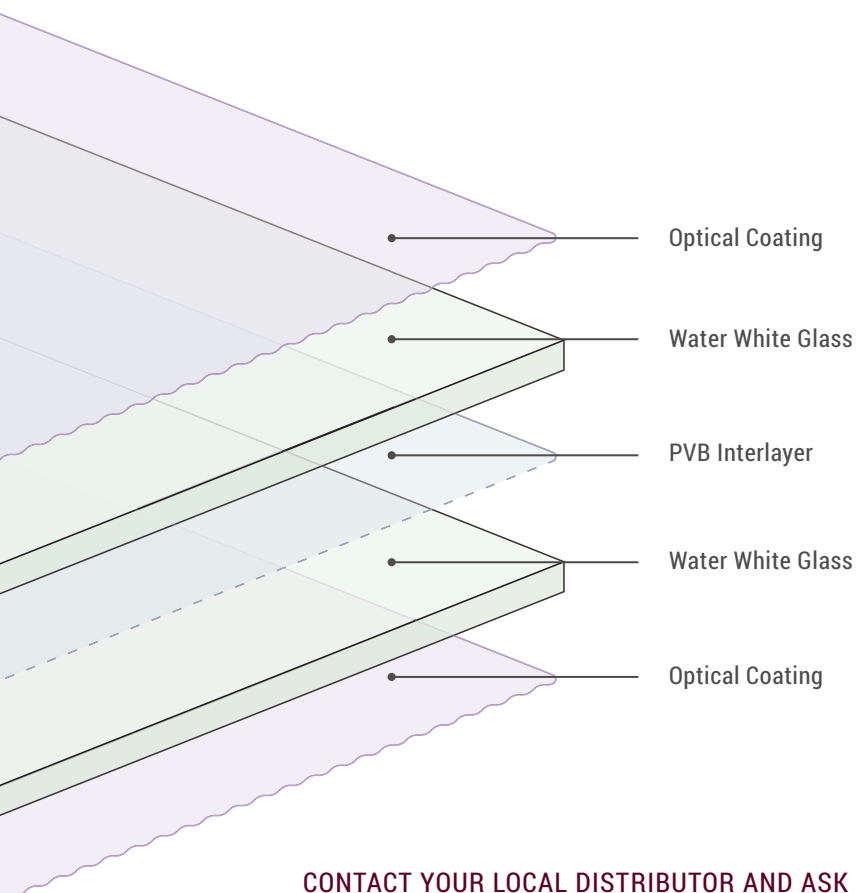
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