

# Icon NEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • NOVEMBER 2011 • ISSUE 37

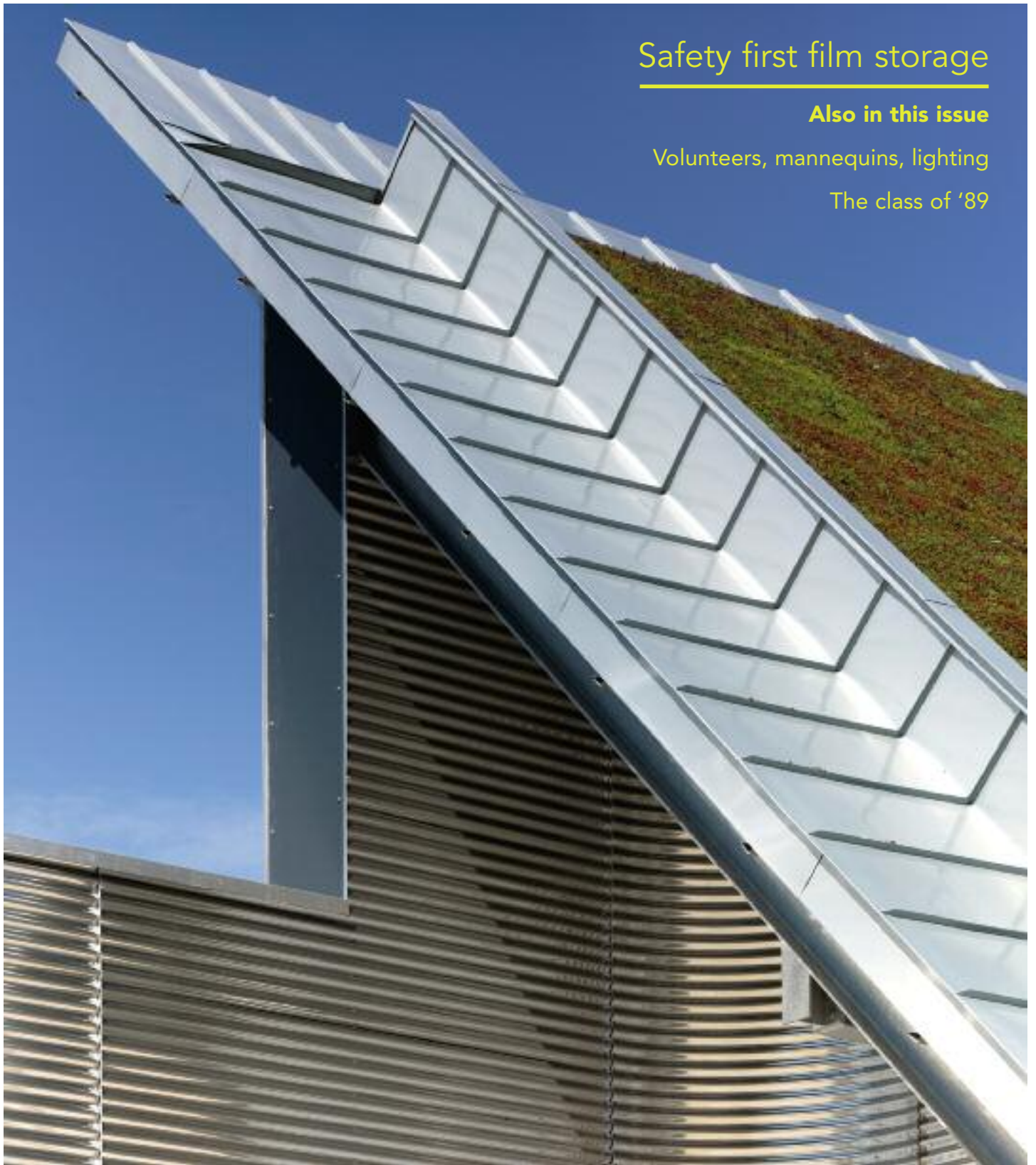
## Safety first film storage

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### Also in this issue

Volunteers, mannequins, lighting

The class of '89



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## NOVEMBER 2011

### Issue 37

The article about heritage volunteers in this issue may upset those who believe that volunteer input puts 'real' conservators out of business. Such assertions are often rather difficult to pin down, however, and I wonder if the greater threat to the profession does not come from conservators who cannot be bothered to belong to their professional association. Icon members, by contrast, clearly care about wider issues such as standards in training and practice and having a voice in debates about cultural heritage.

So, what this is leading up to is that I hope I will meet lots of you at the AGM in Birmingham later this month. Apart from your support for and input to the business of the day, there is a talk beforehand about the Staffordshire Hoard to be given by the Hoard Conservation Project Manager Deborah Cane, whose interesting reflections on her continuing professional development can be found on page 11. An intern who worked on the Hoard over the summer also tells us about her experiences – see page 25 – and, of course, there is the exhibition itself to be seen.

**Lynette Gill**, Editor



### 2 NEWS

Zimbabwe and Sarajevo, replica whisky and saving a paper mill

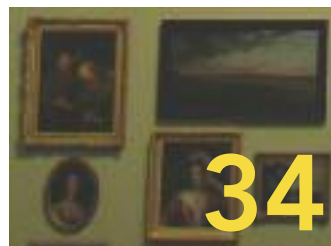


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Cover photo:  
Detail of the entrance to the British Film Institute's newly completed Master Film Store in Warwickshire, showing part of the green roof.  
Photograph by Edmund Sumner © BFI

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# around & about

## Ambassadors, bazaars, Cruz and dromedaries

...and this is just a start in the A-Z of life at Heritage Without Borders. July's Icon News brought HWB to your notice – a new organisation dedicated to working with local communities in developing countries to build skills capacity, support conservation projects and provide valuable work experience for students and professionals in the heritage sector. The first two, very different projects – in Sarajevo and

Merv (Turkmenistan) – have now been completed and the team is full of enthusiasm about their experiences, the outcomes of their work and the lessons to be learned for the next round. When they have had time to recover and reflect, we will be bringing you an account of their experiences in a later issue. In the meantime, you can catch their blog at [heritagewithoutborders.org](http://heritagewithoutborders.org) where you will see that lots of hard work came into it and it wasn't all dining with ambassadors, enjoying bazaars, bumping into Penelope Cruz being filmed and encountering dromedaries.....



The conservation team at Merv: Mags Felter, Stefanie White, and Kelly Caldwell

Those camels!



HWB volunteers (left to right) Nicola Harrison and Dominica D'Arcangelo on 'The Old Bridge' in Mostar.

A group dinner at a Bosnian restaurant.





Antarctic Heritage Trust staff start the long journey transporting the whisky back to New Zealand and then Scotland



The crates of whisky in situ at Shackleton's hut in the Antarctic



Dr Vijay Mallya transported the precious Mackinlay's bottles from New Zealand to Scotland in his private jet. He is pictured with Richard Paterson discussing the replica process



One of the original bottles of Mackinlay's hidden under the Antarctic ice for more than 100 years



The Mackinlay replica bottle and packaging inspired by the original Shackleton whisky. The glass manufacturer had to switch off all 'quality controls' to make the bottle as imperfect as the original

## Shackleton replica

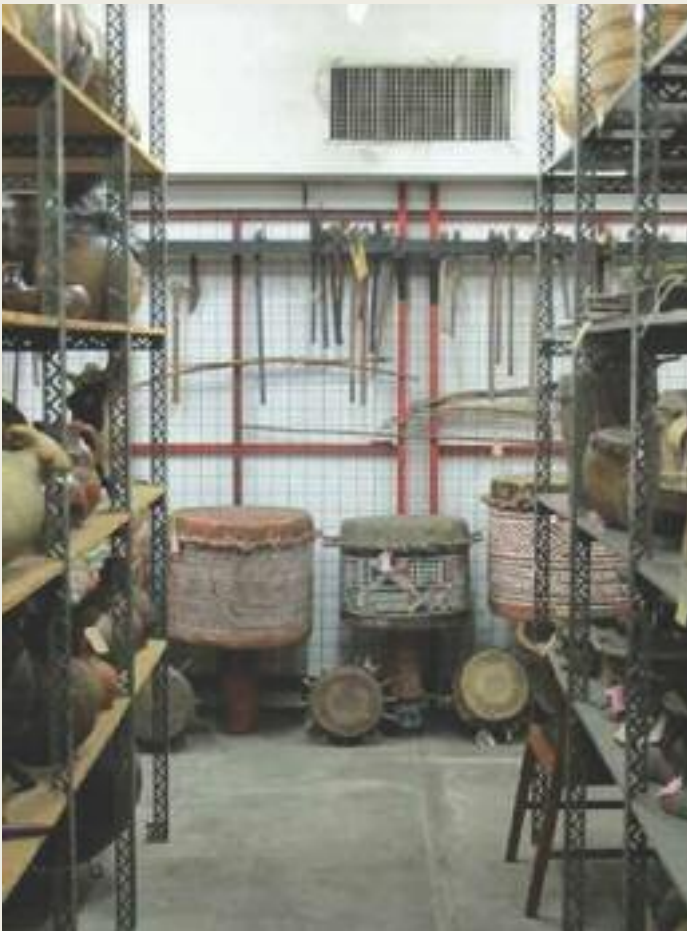
We all know that creating replicas is a good way of giving access to artefacts too precious or fragile to handle or display but the latest example to come our way is not quite in the normal run of things. The story starts when the New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust found several cases of spirits lodged in the ice under Shackleton's hut. Three of the cases were found to contain Chas Mackinlay & Co's whisky and last year one of the crates was flown back to New Zealand to be painstakingly thawed out by conservators at the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch.

Eleven bottles were found in the crate (one can have a good guess at what happened to the twelfth) and the normal sort of conservation work – condition assessment and treatment – got underway, except in the case of three of the bottles.

These were flown to Scotland at the beginning of this year, travelling in style by private jet, with a view to analysing and recreating the contents.

The original historic brand, Mackinlay's Rare Old Highland Malt, is now owned by Whyte & Mackay and the company's master blender set about analysing the whisky after extracting small samples from the bottles with a syringe. He has now recreated the century-old drink, marrying and blending a range of malts to get an exact replica. The original bottles have been returned to New Zealand to be restored to their resting place in the ice underneath Shackleton's hut, while Whyte & Mackay have brought out a tribute bottling of Mackinlay's at the same strength as the original (47.3%).

The replica is a limited edition of 50,000 bottles and 5% of the proceeds of each sale are to be donated to the Antarctic Heritage Trust. This is expected to raise £250,000 for the trust.



Spotless stores

## Treasures in Waiting

Most of us probably don't know very much, if anything at all, about the art galleries, collections, artists and current artistic production in Zimbabwe. Perhaps this is not surprising given the sensitive political situation restricting the exposure of Zimbabwean art and artists outside of the country. Earlier this year however, two members of staff at Tate had the opportunity to remedy their ignorance when they spent time in the National Galleries of Zimbabwe (NGZ), thanks to funding from the World Collections Programme.

Their role was to carry out an initial conservation assessment of the collections and give workshops on collections care issues. What they found was a thriving contemporary art scene. Not only does NGZ have a strong exhibitions

### Running a workshop



Contemporary sculpture

programme enhanced by regular talks, workshops and discussions, but they also have an impressive education programme featuring arts clubs, art lessons and inter school competitions. This year for the first time the work of four Zimbabwean artists is being exhibited within the Zimbabwe Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Alongside this vibrant art scene is a huge thirst for knowledge among artists, curators and museum professionals across the NGZ.

The artistic hub of Zimbabwe centres around the NGZ in Harare, with branches in both Bulawayo and Mutare. The NGZ in Harare is home to a collection of European and African works and objects from the 16th century onwards. Most of the collection is kept in the gallery stores, with the work on display revolving primarily around contemporary artworks. The collection store was spotlessly clean, highly organised and systematic in its arrangement of the objects chronologically by artist. The paintings themselves were stored in a rack system sourced from South Africa, a source of pride and great achievement within the gallery.

The workshop organised in the NGZ in Harare was attended



Contemporary painting

by an impressive number of museum professionals from the district, who formed an attentive audience and were also able to try some of the techniques shown to them that could be used to increase the lifespan of an object. The workshop also covered aspects of conservation theory, preventive conservation and documentation procedures.

In Bulawayo, the newly refurbished Douslin House accommodates the Art Gallery, comprising both contemporary and traditional artworks, and is also home to seventeen practising artists in its studios. Their paintings, sculptures, prints, batiks and ceramics are displayed in the gallery alongside other contemporary art works. The workshop here took a different form, with an audience of artists intent on learning more about the use of materials and the way materials available to them could be used and adapted for their purposes and used to substitute unavailable materials.

With well kept and organised collections, a dedicated team of staff, a thriving contemporary art scene and some paintings of considerable value it would seem that Zimbabwe has now been firmly put on the cultural map, and a lot more of us will be aware of, and interested in following the progress of Zimbabwe's up and coming art scene.

## Storing up dreams and memories

An invitation to a mystery destination that does not even have a postcode is not one to be turned down and, a coach trip later, Icon News arrived in the depths of Warwickshire. Here



Photograph by Edmund Sumner © BFI

The back of the building houses the refrigeration and other plant

amidst birdsong and crumbling military bunkers from the Cold War era rises up a building worthy of a sci-fi villain's HQ – all corrugated stainless steel and concrete with a green camouflaged roof.

This is, in fact, the British Film Institute's new National Film Archive, a state of the art storage facility which will house the nation's film and television heritage: Hammer horror films, Hollywood blockbusters, Ealing comedies, Hitchcock.... Nor is the collection confined to filmed material, it also comprises stills, posters, scripts and related ephemera. From the earliest material in 1895 to *The King's Speech*, it is possibly the largest and certainly the most significant film archive in the world. Two of the key collections have been added to the UNESCO Memory of the World register: the pioneering documentary films of the GPO Film Unit 1933–1940 and the films of Mitchell & Kenyon from c.1900–1912.

Digitisation and copying are, of course, important techniques in the preservation strategy for this heritage but it is difficult to keep up with demand and, quite simply, the original film stock provides by far the best images. However, as Icon's Photographic Materials Group can testify, old film is exceedingly hazardous. Nitrate film, which was in use up into the 1950s, is immensely flammable and both nitrate and the acetate film which followed it, known as 'safety film', deteriorate rapidly unless kept cool, dry and stable. Indeed, BFI estimate that without this new store over a third of the collection was at serious risk of decay within a decade.

Under the sloping roof the front of the building houses offices and services



Photograph by Edmund Sumner © BFI



Inside one of the acetate film stores

So the guiding principles behind the design of the new building have been fire prevention and maintaining the temperature at  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  and a low relative humidity of 35%. To achieve these aims the building envelope has been heavily engineered but in so doing, sustainability and environmental awareness have not been forgotten. The badgers, bats and greater crested newts on the site have been accommodated; the green roof grows sedum and lots of wildflowers, the building materials are designed for long life and low maintenance and the energy use is rated very low.

Inside, there is capacity on twenty seven kilometres of shelving for 250,000 cans of acetate film and 160,000 of nitrate. The former is stored in six cells, each capable for



The functionality of the corridors

holding 60,000 cans and fitted with a gas suppression system in the event of fire. The nitrate film is kept in thirty cells with only 6,000 reels to each cell. Nitrate film cannot be extinguished once it has caught fire and without adequate oxygen to burn out cyanide gas is produced. These cells are ranged along the external walls of the building and in the event of fire in one of them, a 1.2 tonne pressure relief, blast door will drop open to allow the fire to burn cleanly and vent out into the open air. The internal doors are suitably massive and fire-rated to ensure that the fire cannot get into the corridor and spread.

The completion of the storage is only one facet of this new era for Britain's film archives, going under the banner of *Screen Heritage UK*. Other aspects include projects to revitalise England's nine regional film collections with collections care, cataloguing and access work, whilst *Search Your Film Archives* is a new cataloguing and on-line access drive which will give the public free access to information about film archives across the UK. Britain's film history should now be safe for the future.

The nitrate film is in cells along both sides of the building. Each cell has an outer blast door framed by projecting concrete edges. In the event of a fire the door will drop down to release the fire storm. The ground in front is a no-go area



## Hard Times

These are difficult times in the industrial and built heritage world with company after company going out of business. The Linford Group, long established specialists in the business of building restoration, has ceased trading and this has taken with it Dorothea Restorations, provider of specialist metalwork services, and Trumpers with its one hundred and fifty years of experience in specialist and traditional plasterwork. Trumpers' work can be seen at Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, Canons Ashby in Northamptonshire and many Midlands and Welsh border properties.

Restoration and conservation specialist Stonewest (recently worked on St Paul's cathedral and St Pancras) has been sold out of administration saving many jobs but other companies in the group, including the hundred year old Rattee & Kett (stone masons for Cambridge colleges and Ely cathedral) have not been rescued with the loss of sixty jobs.

In mid-October construction specialists founded in 1882 Holloway White Allom went into administration with the loss of 170 jobs. HWA won a conservation award last year for their work on The Medieval & Renaissance Galleries at the V&A Museum. Finally, administrators were also appointed in October for George Jackson & Sons, famed for the design, manufacture and installation of classical fibrous plaster since 1780. The company holds over 11000 boxwood moulds used for decorative composition and traditional plaster moulds as well as an extensive library of historical books and documents, some dating back to the age of Robert Adam.

It is to be obviously to be hoped that individual craftsmen and women will be able to continue work in some shape or form so that their skills survive. But the loss of major players in

Even Michael Drewsen, founder of the paper mill and later the town, is protesting



A group of volunteers starting papermaking at the museum in 2004

these fields will affect the historic houses and heritage bodies who employ them and will also impact upon the conservation companies to whom they subcontract specialist work.

### Some better news

A year ago book and paper conservators may remember signing a petition to protest about the threatened closure of the Papirmuseet Bikuben, Silkeborg in Denmark. The good news is that the museum has been saved at the last minute and will carry on with a small budget and as part of the cultural museum, Silkeborg Museum.

The town of Silkeborg was founded on the basis of its papermill, which was known for the very high quality of its paper, up to the finest of all paper products: banknotes. For almost a century it was the one of the largest centres of hand papermaking in Scandinavia. The mill itself closed in 2000 but the museum opened in 2004 to keep the story, and indeed the craft, alive. The museum is grateful for all the support received in its fight against closure, which seems to have had the desired effect in the end!

## The Scottish Ten

The Scottish Ten is an ambitious joint venture between Historic Scotland and Glasgow School of Art's Digital Design Studio to document all five of Scotland's world heritage sites using 3D digital scanning in order to better conserve and manage them. Five international sites will also be recorded. The project is taking place over five years and is well under way with three of the Scottish sites already completed – the Heart of Neolithic Orkney, New Lanark Mill Village and St Kilda – and work on The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh underway. The team will then begin work to record the Antonine Wall which marks the most Northern Frontier of the Roman Empire.

Of the five international sites, Mount Rushmore has already been completed and recording the Rani Ki Vav Stepwell is in progress. This monument in Gujarat, northern India, dates back to 1050. It is made up of stepped terraces descending into the ground and is adorned with around four hundred sculptures representing a range of Hindu themes. As one of the most important step wells in India, Rani Ki Vav has only been fully excavated in the last fifty years and is currently on the UNESCO tentative list to be considered for World



This image of Charlotte Square in Edinburgh was created by a team of experts using laser scanners to record every inch. For lots more information about all the projects visit [www.scottishten.org](http://www.scottishten.org)

Heritage Site status. The digital documentation should bring the site to a much wider national and international audience.

The third international site, announced in September, is The Eastern Qing Tombs in China where work will begin next year. David Mitchell, Head of Conservation for Historic Scotland said: 'It's a huge privilege to be digitally recording this fascinating site. Each site in the Scottish 10 project poses unique challenges in terms of the terrain, climate and geography of the site. Having experienced extremes of both temperature and climate as well as the logistics of conducting laser scanning several hundred feet up in previous projects,

Scanner image of houses in Village Bay, St Kilda




Dr Lyn Wilson scanning houses in St Kilda



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our team are well versed to operating in different climates. We are very much looking forward to working with our Chinese partners on the site'.

Two further sites in Japan and another country still to be decided have yet to be announced. All of the images created will be shared with the American not-for-profit organisation CyArk, founded by Ben Kacyra, inventor of the laser scanner. It is collecting the data from five hundred world heritage landmarks to hold in a freely accessible global archive.

The team from Historic Scotland, Glasgow School of Art, non-profit organisation Cyark and partners from the Archaeological Survey of India prepare to laser scan the stepwell in Gujarat.



# professional update

## FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I recently attended two very different conferences where I was inspired to think about Icon differently.

The first was the excellent Student and Emerging Conservator Conference 'Conservation: Futures and Responsibilities', the brainchild of a student at UCL, Adam Klups, and organised by students themselves under the auspices of IIC. The conference was broadcast on the web and. I was one of the established conservators and scientists who were invited to speak about their careers. Audience and speakers were encouraged to debate questions submitted from the floor, and via Twitter and Blog.

The biggest message that came through loud and clear was: the world that graduates and recently qualified conservators are emerging into is very different from the one that many of the invited speakers had entered. From the questions posed, I highlight a few key ones:

How can we develop the skills and knowledge we need on courses that are subject to the vagaries of the economic climate, increasing their student numbers while reducing the number of contact hours?

How can we get the work-based learning that we need during and after our education? We are often expected to volunteer, whereas we need internships that come with financial support, so that at the very least we do not add further to the financial burden that we are carrying as a result of our undergraduate and graduate education. How will employers be able to provide work-based learning opportunities for the increasing numbers of graduates from the programmes when staff time to train is being accounted for but not charged for and therefore squeezed? How can we ethically take up volunteer positions in organisations where conservators are losing their jobs?

How can we support ourselves in a career in conservation when there are few permanent jobs, and we are expected to be much more mobile, moving from contract to short-term contract. Many of us have to work in other jobs at the same time (like actors). How can we maintain our skills when out of work and short courses are expensive?

How can we compete for jobs that do exist when there are many more experienced conservators looking for work, and our European peers are receiving a much longer conservation education, including pre-university craft-based apprenticeships?

We accept that accreditation is our goal, but in the context of short-term contracts, mobility, and fewer jobs, how are we to gain the experience, training and development needed to prepare for accreditation?

Listening to these students and conservators clearly articulate their concerns about the professional world that they are joining brings to the fore the urgent need for us to address these issues strategically by means of a National Conservation

Education Strategy. A top priority is to commission research that will provide the underpinning evidence about the current workforce, the skills that employers are looking for, and the education and training provision for developing those skills, and to provide information and guidance to those considering a career in conservation as well as those already on a career path. The CPD and Career pages of the Icon website have just been expanded to include this guidance. Among the many practical suggestions made by speakers and members of the audience, and one that Icon would certainly support, was to hold something like this conference every year for students and graduates.

Icon had a stand at the Museums Association Conference held in Brighton and I was able to attend the first day of the conference. Highlights of the first day included the Setting the Scene session that looked to the future. **Clare Cooper**, Director and Co-founder of Mission Models Money, described as a 'creative adhocracy', believes we are in a 'change of age' where strengths will be our ability to see larger systems, to recognise interdependence and, rather than reacting, to take an active role in creating the future. However, she sees weaknesses in the over-extension and under-capitalization of our sector, and risks in collaboration for the sake of it.

In this creative future, networks are powerful tools. They are innovative, efficient and good at getting stuff done. They are fluid, flexible and adaptive, and help us cope with change. You can think about your own organisation in terms of a network, nurture your external networks and pay attention to the edges of networks, where creativity and innovation happen. These were some of the messages from **John Holden**, Visiting Professor at City University and formerly Head of Culture at Demos. Icon is a network with lots of smaller networks, specialist groups, board, committees, working groups, that all have links to other networks. By understanding how networks work and learning to enhance the effectiveness of these networks, we will be able to tackle the big challenges that our profession faces now and in the future.

*Alison Richmond*

## ARE YOU DYSLEXIC?

### **Do you think you might be dyslexic? How can you help staff and colleagues who are dyslexic?**

You are in good company! Stephen Spielberg, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Lord Richard Rogers, Richard Branson, Agatha Christie and Einstein are (or were) all dyslexic. If you are lucky then this may have been identified while you were at school but for older members or members from countries who are less dyslexia aware then this may not have occurred.

10% of the British population are dyslexic, 4% seriously so. In conservation where there is an emphasis on practical work the percentage is likely to be higher.

Icon and the ARA (Archives and Records Association) have

# more professional update

agreed to look into training support for dyslexic members and for trainers, educators and assessors who are in a position to support staff, students and candidates with dyslexia or other Specific Learning Difficulties.

At this stage we are undertaking a scoping study to estimate training needs. Please email [eneville@pzconservation.org.uk](mailto:eneville@pzconservation.org.uk) if you want to do some training. Include your contact details and briefly outline whether -

- you think you have dyslexia or a related difficulty
- you work with people with dyslexia on committees
- you are a trainer
- you are a supervisor
- you are an assessor

You don't have to wait though for your professional organisation to get to grips with this, the British Dyslexia Association website [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/) provides some free advice for students, workers and trainers and there is even an *Adult Checklist* to help you identify if you might be dyslexic [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/adults-and-business/i-think-i-might-be-dyslexic.html](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/adults-and-business/i-think-i-might-be-dyslexic.html)

This is about empowering yourself and your colleagues, so do contact us.

**Lizzie Neville** ACR, Chair PACR Management Board

## TRAINING NEWS

### Icon News – Interns edition

Plans are afoot to compile a special edition of Icon News in Spring 2012 to mark the end of the HLF training bursaries scheme and the work of Icon's Training Office in Edinburgh. We are planning to have an Intern-focussed bumper edition with plenty of articles, features and news from interns past and present – watch this space!

### Fellowship in Conservation Science

Icon welcomes Paul Lankester into the Icon Fellowship placement at English Heritage, based with David Thickett and starting this October. Paul has a background in Forensic Science and Conservation and is just completing a PhD at the University of East Anglia titled *Preparing Heritage Collections for Climate Change*. Paul has a long-term interest in developing a career as a conservation scientist and feels that work on the MEMORI project will open opportunities to continue heritage research.

### Fitzwilliam Internship

During November Icon will be interviewing for a new six-month internship in Examination and Conservation of Egyptian Coffins, based at the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge and supervised by Julie Dawson ACR. The placement is generously funded by the Museum's Marlay Group. The Internship focuses on the coffins and coffin parts from the Museum's world-class collection of ancient Egyptian material –

and we were pleased to receive thirty applications despite a relatively short advertising period. More news on the successful candidate in a later Icon News or in our e-Bulletin!

### The Technician Qualification in 2012 - want to get involved?

Icon is aware of the current interest from employers and candidates alike for its Technician Qualification (CTQ), so Icon staff have been carrying out a scoping study to work out the level of demand for the next financial year. Previous partner-employers have been contacted already but Icon is now seeking expressions of interest from any other employer who thinks they might want to put candidates forward for the qualification. You can find outlines of how the CTQ works on the Technician Qualification page of the Icon website – please do get in touch with the Training Office by Christmas on 0131 556 2289 or [hlfbs@icon.org.uk](mailto:hlfbs@icon.org.uk) for information or preferably with numbers of candidates you predict you might be able to put through the CTQ over the next couple of years.

### Interns Bulletin

Icon's new Interns Bulletin has been circulating on a monthly basis by e-mail since June this year – it's a short four-article-format e-newsletter with updates from current or recent interns and some reflections from others involved in running the scheme. If you do not receive it and you are an Icon member – do check if Icon has your correct email address. Email [membership@icon.org.uk](mailto:membership@icon.org.uk) to make sure yours is correct and spread the word!

### Brighton MA conference

Staff and volunteers made Icon's presence felt with a display stand in the Trade Exhibition at the recent annual Museums Association conference in Brighton. Posters were on show outlining the work of twenty four interns over the last year, alongside Conservation Register and Icon membership information. Thanks are due to volunteers who helped out

The Icon stand at the MA Conference in Brighton





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### **RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP**

A grant of up to £80,000 is available to a UK public institution to enable an experienced conservator (employed by that institution) to pursue a research project for two years.

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Closing date: Friday 2nd March 2012.

Full details and application form:  
[www.clothworkers.co.uk](http://www.clothworkers.co.uk)



Deborah Cane

### **CAREER PLANNING AND CPD**

Having recently completed my CPD recall it gave me a chance to review where I am in the profession and how I have changed and expanded my skills portfolio. What dawned on me while

reviewing the last five years or so is that I have started to learn more through other routes rather than from specifically attending conferences or specific training courses; I have also been more proactive in funding myself in wider learning programmes, not just conservation.

One of the areas I have moved into is managing staff and managing cross disciplinary projects (i.e. dismantling galleries, store moves and air conditioning upgrades) all of which require understanding of wider priorities, other people's perspectives and the realisation that they don't necessarily understand the conservation needs. Although I did attend courses on team working and project management etc, this does not teach you how to build a relationship with an air conditioning engineer or a dyed-in-the-wool city council building manager. All these skills were learnt by talking to colleagues, asking for their opinion and help in dealing with various situations. Advice was free-flowing from whoever I asked and I expanded my search out of the conservation profession to get wider perspectives on whether I was asking the right questions to get the information I required to move a project forward. A few years ago I would not have put this down as CPD but have subsequently realised that this is a big area of learning that a lot of conservators overlook.

Having taken on the management of the Conservation of the Staffordshire Hoard I find myself working with field archaeologists, finds specialists, curators, researchers and of course a range of conservators and conservation scientists. All of this is a big learning curve as all areas come with their own agendas to the project and don't necessarily understand the conservation role (a bit of a shock in this day and age). However there are huge amounts of information to glean from working alongside all these professions, sometimes it is 'what not to do' and at other times enlightening information. All of which, again, is CPD.

So what I would say to conservation professionals and students out there is: remember that CPD is not just attending conferences, it's about the wider aspects of learning and developing, and not just of your conservation skills but your interpersonal skills too. You also never know when a new skill will come in handy. For example, four years ago I was tasked with the storage of the jewellery collection. I went to Jo Whalley at the Victoria and Albert Museum metals department for advice and found that Jo was a qualified gemmologist and that the gems were as important to understand as the metal mounts. I found her advice

over the two days and to interns for completing their posters on time for the event – several had been in their placements for less than six months! Note that all interns posters from 2006 up to and including 2011 are available to view on the Icon website under the Internship pages – Poster Gallery.

#### **New career guidance**

Icon has added new guidance pages to its website specifically for those who are already embarked on a career in conservation. If you are seeking ideas for development and further training, wondering how to move towards accreditation perhaps, then visit the website and look at the *Career Planning* tag in the front-page menu.

*Carol E Brown*

# more professional update

fascinating and it inspired me to undertake a gemmology qualification at the Jewellery School in Birmingham. Who would have thought that, four year later, that knowledge would come in handy for the garnet element of the Staffordshire Hoard? So once again I would say keep your options open and never turn down advice or a training opportunity.

**Deborah Cane**

*Deborah Cane is the Hoard Conservation Project Manager and Collections Care Officer in the Collections Care and Conservation Department of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. She will be talking about the Staffordshire Hoard at Icon's AGM in Birmingham on 28 November*

## By way of a footnote

As Carol Brown has mentioned above, some new guidance on career planning and development can be found on the Icon website under the Career Planning tab. It has been put together by Icon's Career Planning and CPD working party and takes the form of a 'Development Route Map for Conservators'. CPD is necessary for everyone who wishes to improve their practice and achieve personal and professional goals. By identifying your strengths and weaknesses it is possible to plan ahead. Whatever your level of expertise, using the tools offered here will help you to focus on your own progress and to identify and meet your goals.

**Susan Bradshaw** Accreditation Manager

## THE ANNA PLOWDEN TRUST

### CPD Awards for 2012

The Anna Plowden Trust is seeking applications from established conservators for grants towards the cost of attending either a short specialist course or a major conference during 2012. In both cases the Trust will consider funding up to 50% of the cost.

The Trust has been awarding grants since 1999 and normally between ten and twelve are given each year. The courses attended have covered a wide range of subjects, including Islamic binding structures, the preservation of photographic materials and medieval books, basketry conservation and pest management as well as collection care issues. The Trust also funds attendance at conferences, both in the UK and abroad, often helping to finance participants who are giving a paper. In the past two years it has helped conservators to attend conferences or courses in the Netherlands, Italy, Mexico, France, Portugal, Belgium and the USA.

The Trust particularly welcomes applications from those teaching conservation and from conservators working in the private sector. Preference will also be given to applicants who work in a team, either public or private, where the skills they



acquire with the help of an Anna Plowden Trust grant can be passed on to others.

Those applying should have more than five years' experience since completing their training. The closing dates for applications are March 14, June 13 and September 12, 2012. Application forms can be obtained from the Trust's website, which is [annaplowdentrust.org.uk](http://annaplowdentrust.org.uk) or applicants can e-mail Penelope Plowden at [penelopecpowden@btinternet.com](mailto:penelopecpowden@btinternet.com).

## RADCLIFFE TRUST UPDATE

July's Icon News highlighted the work of the Radcliffe Trust and drew attention to the role the Trust has played over the past fifteen months bringing together funding bodies, potential beneficiaries and other groups with an interest in the heritage and crafts sector. First, a Round Table discussion took place in July 2010 to open up a dialogue between funders and grant beneficiaries, then a follow-up event was organised in March 2011 in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund. Under the heading *Heritage and Crafts: working together to develop skills and sustain the sector*, the event was attended by one hundred and twenty organisations and useful summary notes of all the sessions have now been put on the Trust's website, along with other material from the day. You can find them at [www.theradcliffetrust.org/round-table.php](http://www.theradcliffetrust.org/round-table.php)

## LIBRARY NEWS

### Bibliographies

Following on from the excellent presentation about Dust Management by Caroline Bendix (Adviser on Libraries Conservation, The National Trust) at Magdalen College for the Oxford Conservators' Group on 28 July 2011, the bibliography of recommended references to accompany the presentation can be found on the Chantry Library website here:

[www.icon.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1675&Itemid=0](http://www.icon.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1675&Itemid=0)

Please note that this page is still under development (there's a lot more to add) – so if you have any recommendations for further topic bibliographies, or maybe have some you would like to see featured, please let me know.

The first two in a series of Icon Chantry Library Subject Bibliographies, on the *Conservation of Japanese Prints* and the *Conservation of Photographs*, are now completed. They will be published very soon on the Chantry Library web pages – so watch this space !

### Photocopies

Don't forget that Icon members can claim **ten** free photocopies a year of items from the Chantry Library collection, be it journal articles, chapters from books or conference papers. Quote your membership number with your requests. Articles can be provided either as scanned pages or in hard copy. Email the Librarian Ros Buck at

chantrylibrary@icon.org.uk or complete and send the copyright form available on the Chantry Library web pages [www.chantrylibrary.org.uk](http://www.chantrylibrary.org.uk) (Library Services).

**New books: recent additions include:**

**Stone Conservation: Principles and Practice** edited by Alison Henry, Donhead Publishing Ltd., Donhead St Mary, Shaftesbury, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-873394-78-6

**American Painters on Technique: the Colonial Period to 1860** by Lance Mayer and Gay Myers, Getty Publications, Los Angeles, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-60606-077-3

**Managing and Growing a Cultural Heritage Web Presence: a Strategic Guide** by Mike Ellis, Facet Publishing, London, 2011 ISBN: 978-1-85604-710-4

**Looking at Prints, Drawings and Watercolours: A Guide to Technical Terms** (second edition) by Paul Goldman, The British Museum Press, London, in association with the J. Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2006, ISBN: 978-0-89236-681-6

**Looking at Photographs: A Guide to Technical Terms** (revised edition), by Gordon Baldwin and Martin Jürgens, Getty Publications, Los Angeles, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-89296-971-3

**Looking at Paintings: A Guide to Technical Terms** (revised edition) by Tiarna Doherty and Anne T. Woollett, Getty Publications, Los Angeles, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-89236-972-0

**New Journal exchange**

Chantry Library is pleased to announce that there has been a new journal exchange agreed between our Library and the St. Bride Library (St. Bride Foundation, London). Our collection now has all back issues of ULTRaBOLD – The Journal of the St Bride Library – which provides articles about printing techniques and history, typography, visual communication and much more. Further details at: <http://stbride.org/friends/publications/ultrabold>

**Journals recently received include:**

- Journal of Paper Conservation (IADA), Vol.12, No.3, 2011
- The New Bookbinder, Vol.31, 2011 (Journal of the Designer Bookbinders)
- The Picture Restorer, No.39, Autumn 2011
- Print Quarterly, Vol.28, No.3, September 2011
- Print Quarterly, Vol.28, No.4, December 2011
- Restaurator, Vol.32. No.3, 2011

**The Library blog**

More detail about the books and journals listed above can be found on the *Chantry Library News* blog at <http://chantrylibrary.wordpress.com/>. This will give you lots of additional material about recently received material, such as a description of a book's subject and coverage and a full listing of all the articles within the journals mentioned above, including abstracts in some cases.

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

# Are you the 2012 winner?

Entries are now being invited for the Nigel Williams Prize 2012

**£750 for the winning entry**

The award recognises and rewards excellence in contemporary conservation practice

The winning project will focus on the conservation/restoration of ceramics, glass or a directly related material completed within the last 4 years

Individuals, collaborations and students are eligible

Find further information at [www.icon.org.uk](http://www.icon.org.uk) or contact the Prize co-ordinator Ronald Pile [ronaldpile37@btinternet.com](mailto:ronaldpile37@btinternet.com) (01223 365006)



# more professional update

## Invitation to the 7th Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Conservation

The Waterhall  
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery  
Chamberlain Square  
Birmingham B3 3DH

**2.30pm – Talks**

**3.30pm – Refreshments**

**4.00pm – AGM**

Preceding the AGM at 2.30pm, members of the Conservation staff at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery will give a presentation about the Staffordshire Hoard; *The Staffordshire Hoard – Conservation in the Spotlight*.



Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

Some of the Hoard will also be on display in the main museum in Gallery 12

After a short break for refreshments, the Icon AGM will start at 4.00pm.

In order for us to estimate numbers for catering, please let us know if you are planning to attend by emailing the Icon office [admin@icon.org.uk](mailto:admin@icon.org.uk)

The Waterhall can be found by walking northeast on Chamberlain Square towards Edmund Street, the entrance will be on the right. The Waterhall has a purpose built lift for visitors and guests with mobility requirements. Parking is available in the city centre, for further details please email [parking@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:parking@birmingham.gov.uk)

## Clare Hampson Scholarship Fund Publication Grant

Clare Hampson was a founding member and Secretary of the Institute of Paper Conservation for over twenty years before her untimely death in 2002. She was deeply committed to promoting professional development opportunities as demonstrated by her generous legacy 'to provide for an annual scholarship for the study of paper conservation'.



To support this aim, an innovative programme encourages individuals engaged in the field of book or paper conservation, or in related activities, to enable them to complete an article or a chapter of a book to peer reviewed publication standard.

Applications are invited by authors with advanced drafts based on completed research. Funding can be sought to support time away from work, travel, subsistence, translation and/or illustration costs. The award panel is keen to support individuals who have not yet published and to facilitate this, editorial support and mentoring may be provided to successful candidates. Grants can be sought up to £3,000.

Further information and application forms can be downloaded from [www.icon.org.uk](http://www.icon.org.uk) and returned electronically to [sophie@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:sophie@zedat.fu-berlin.de) by **31 December 2011**.

Successful applicant(s) will be informed by **1 March 2012**.

**If you have any questions please contact Sonja Schwoil**  
[sophie@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:sophie@zedat.fu-berlin.de).

# people

## CLASS OF '89

### Caroline Checkley-Scott, Chair of the Book and Paper Group, catches up:

'Whilst attending *New Approaches in Book Conservation* in Horn, Austria, in May with Cheryl Porter and Stefania Signorello, Cheryl bumped into an old student friend Michaela Brand from Camberwell. Listening to them speak of old times and old friends I thought it would be nice to see the career path to date of some ex Camberwellians and what they have done (the photos are quite interesting too!). In these difficult times where work may be hard to come by, it is interesting to see the varied roads that conservators take in order to continue to be conservators. We are committed folk indeed! It is through dedication and commitment that we find work, keep up to date and continue to keep conservation at the forefront of our consciousness. Welcome to the class of '89. Who will be the next class to be featured?'

### Michaela Brand

Since 1990 I have been employed at the German Historical Museum in Berlin as a Book Conservator and hence was involved in about 140 exhibitions. This post involves all typical museum tasks such as condition reports, cradle making, show-case work, with both loans and collection objects. Although hands on conservation is only a minor part of my work now and although time schedules for the exhibitions are often tight I still today, however, enjoy my job where I feel privileged to work in a very experienced team of not only specialised conservators but also highly professional staff like registrars, exhibitions architects, curators, historians etc.



Michaela Brand

### Annette Low-Lange

### Annette Low-Lange

Annette was born in June, 1964 in Hamburg, Germany and died in November 2010 in Zurich, after years of serious suffering.

From 1992 to 1995 she was employed at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London where she was working on the Heals Sample Books and on the



Charles Dickens' Manuscripts.

With her family she spent three years in Hong Kong and again eight years in London which she mostly dedicated to the upbringing of their two daughters. In 2006 the family moved to Switzerland where Annette found further employment at the Staatsarchiv Zurich where she was still working four days before she sadly died.

### Eva Wortmann

Returning to Germany after completion of the HND course I joined the conservation department of the University Library in Göttingen to work on a map conservation program in September 1990. In July 1991 I joined a collaboration project with the German Foreign Office to establish a conservation department at the Assad Library in Damascus, Syria. This was unfortunately cut short by the Gulf War in 1992 after which I left Göttingen for the Regional Conservation Centre set up by the LWL Museumsamt, which is part of regional government in Western Germany. After the birth of my second daughter in 1997 I left my job with the conservation centre and in 1999 I set up my studio as a freelance conservator for paper and leather objects.



Eva Wortmann

I have since been involved with a variety of collections in the North West of Germany, in museums as well as private collections and art galleries. Apart from standard paper conservation practice my specialization is contemporary art on paper and consultation for collections on subjects such as storage, mounting and framing, transport and planning conservation concepts for collections

### Cheryl Porter

### Cheryl Porter

I have been Director of the Montefiascone Project since its inception in 1988. After graduating from Camberwell I worked at University College London Paintings Analysis Unit, analysing the use of pigments in paintings and manuscripts. From 1992–2006 I worked as a freelance conservator, mostly for universities and learned





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Contact Patrick Jackson at Vindon for more details: [patj@vindon.co.uk](mailto:patj@vindon.co.uk)

# 'What is NADFAS?'

Caroline Egan, Chair of the NADFAS Heritage Volunteers from May 2008 to May 2011, explains

## WHO WE ARE

I have been the Chairman of NADFAS Heritage Volunteers for three years and worked as a volunteer for many years before that. Within the volunteering sector NADFAS both acts as a facilitator and encourages its members to become volunteers. NADFAS understands that artefacts need protection and that conservators are better employed doing the specialist tasks. The pressure on conservators will become greater in the current financial climate and there are areas where an organisation like NADFAS can be of assistance. Volunteers provide the manpower to complete those tasks that would remain on wish lists. They also, according to one curator, as well as 'conserving the collection, give moral and physical support to the paid staff'.

Clutching leaflets and magazines, you knock on a door and ask to see the curator or conservator and say, 'I come from the local NADFAS Society and we are offering to volunteer. How can we help?' I and many others have done this over the years and the response has been 'What is NADFAS?' It has been one of my aims to help raise the profile of NADFAS and our willing force of volunteers.

In 1966 Patricia Fay set up the Chiltern Antiques Group so that she and friends could learn more about decorative and fine arts. It was so popular that by 1969 when there were twenty eight groups it was decided to adopt the name Decorative and Fine Arts Societies and the national body was set up: hence NADFAS – the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies. Patricia Fay and Helen

Replica costumes made by NADFAS volunteers at Polesden Lacey in Surrey. Former House Manager Paul Dearn said of the work 'Everyone ...has been interested in this costume project. It has set a standard for future projects between the National Trust and like-minded organisations; for me personally it's been a wonderful experience.'





Dusting statues at Edinburgh School of Art

Lowenthal wished to be able to 'form a volunteer group to give practical help'. 'It would not be a group of dilettante housewives filling in their time, but a serious organisation with first class lectures and study groups so that in due course the members would be able to serve the community'. Her idea was that 'in fifty years' time we shall be judged not by our numbers of members and lecturers, but by what we have achieved in the houses and museums'.

I believe Patricia Fay would be delighted at how far NADFAS has come. There are over 340 societies across the whole country as well as societies in Australia, New Zealand and mainland Europe. In addition to the lecture programmes that all societies run many of them support the other volunteering arms of NADFAS.

## WHAT WE DO

NADFAS and its affiliated societies fund Young Arts projects in schools, hospitals and young offender institutions. They provide bursaries for students, set up exhibitions or fund artists to work with young people.

There are Church Recorders who make extremely detailed inventories of the furnishings inside a church. The records are sent to the Victoria and Albert Museum, the church itself, the county record office, the Church Buildings Council and the National Monuments Record or the equivalent organisations in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

Heritage Volunteers are far less easy to classify. They work in art galleries, museums, historic houses, archives, record offices, libraries and gardens, from some of the biggest national organisations to small local ones where they turn their hands to many tasks. The only stipulation is that there must be reasonable public access to a collection. In our handbook we state that our principal aim is to 'aid the preservation of national artistic heritage for the benefit of the public'.

Training and supervision of volunteers is vital both for the protection of the artefacts and the wellbeing of the volunteers. NADFAS run some basic training courses for would-be volunteers in basic textile handling and in care of books. We recognise that there is always need for further training on site and the curator or collections manager must always be the final arbiter when making decisions about the care of a collection.



Making archival boxes at Ipswich Record Office

NADFAS Heritage Volunteers have been working with organisations such as the National Archives at Kew for many years. Alongside other volunteers they have done a great many tasks. Amy-Kate Tufnell of the Department of Collection Care said 'It would be impossible adequately to show our appreciation of our volunteers'.

In Surrey volunteers are happily making safe negatives, putting them into conservation grade envelopes and boxes. Another of those essential tasks for the preservation of artefacts that needs the input of highly specialised staff to train the volunteers. Then there should be robust systems in place that mean the volunteers can work with a low level of supervision.

However there are ways volunteers can help which require less supervision. Many NADFAS members are highly skilled needlewomen. At the most basic level of skills they can make padded hangers, formers and bags to aid the preservation of costume and textiles. But if more than that is wanted they make a great many replica costumes. These are all researched to make sure the style is right and the material used looks authentic. I say 'looks' as mostly these garments need to be easily cleaned as well as being in flexible sizes! I think this is not a task that most museums could ever have used their staff for. Other societies have made much simpler costumes such as aprons and overalls for children to wear when visiting, for example for the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service.

Cleaning brass lamps at Stansted Park, Hampshire





Looking after books at Stansted Park, Hampshire

Many volunteers work as guides and stewards. At the launch of The Lightbox's exhibition 'Essential Accessories – Handbags and Heels' in Woking, the Chairman of the Trustees said 'Without the help of our staff and volunteers we would never have been able to put on this exhibition'. Many of the volunteers are NADFAS members.

When I ask volunteers why they volunteer there is a variety of responses with underlying common themes. 'I feel I am giving back to society' and 'It was a fascinating task, which throughout I felt to be worthwhile and fun'. One young woman simply said 'They asked'. These days it can be as a means of entry to a job 'I came here at a cross roads in my life and career ..... My voluntary work has taught me many .... skills that will no doubt be beneficial in my future endeavours' (a young volunteer at the Westminster City Archives where NADFAS has some volunteers).

Volunteers have become a somewhat contentious issue recently but I am glad to say that mostly we are welcomed. I believe volunteers are of great value to organisations and that they give far more than they take. They enable many more people to have access to a collection whether for research or out of a desire to learn. Volunteers have an appreciation of our amazing heritage and a wish to get involved. There is a perception among some curators that volunteers may wish to usurp the positions of paid staff and in the current economic climate when many posts have been lost it may be difficult to see how to fit in volunteering. I feel this is mistaken.

For our volunteers there is not usually the driving motive of the need for employment. But there is a strong sense of duty and understanding of the responsibility to their hosts and the public and the desire to learn. 'I find myself constantly learning new skills and gaining knowledge.' The manager of Stansted Park House said 'NADFAS volunteers are people willing to take on new skills'.

There is one other extremely good reason to use volunteers and that is that their hours of work can be factored in as match funding when applying for grants. What more could you want!

'We leave at the end with the feeling we have made a useful contribution'. And that is surely the main point.

NADFAS comes recommended by the Archives and Records Association as a source for possible volunteers.\* We aim to complement the work of professionals, to enable them to work more effectively. For curators and collections managers this is an ambition which can be met with understanding on



A group of NADFAS Heritage Volunteers

both sides and a willingness to welcome volunteers into your environment.

To see if NADFAS can aid your organisation please contact them on [www.nadfas.org.uk](http://www.nadfas.org.uk) or [volunteering@nadfas.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@nadfas.org.uk)

\* Archives & Records Association UK & Ireland 'Volunteering in Collections Care – Best Practice Guide 2011'. This document and other accompanying material can be downloaded at [www.archives.org.uk/ara-in-action/best-practice-guidelines.html](http://www.archives.org.uk/ara-in-action/best-practice-guidelines.html)

Making replica costumes at Sizbergh Castle



# news from the groups

## ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

This year's AGM was held alongside a visit to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery to see the Staffordshire Hoard. Our thanks to Deborah Cane, Deborah Magnoler and Cymbeline Storey of the hoard conservation team who gave fascinating presentations about their latest findings and tours of the lab to see some of the hoard up close. Please see our group webpage for reports from the AGM.

There have been a number of changes to the committee with new members and individuals undertaking specific roles. These include an events team, student liaison, professional development and communication representatives. Details on how to contact them are on our webpage. We also continue to have co-opted committee members who invaluable represent the group on a number of archaeological committees and groups including *Rescue*, *The Archaeological Forum*, *The Archaeological Archives Forum*, *The Archaeological Training Forum* and *The Society for Museum Archaeologists*.

### Archaeology Group committee

Chair:	Karla Graham
Secretary:	Mags Felter
Treasurer:	Sharon Penton
Student liaison officer:	Nyssa Mildwaters
Communications:	Rob Lewis
Events:	Claire Woodhead, Evelyne Godfrey, Beth Werrett and Stefanie White
Publications:	Angela Karsten
Professional development:	Karla Graham
Committee Member:	Christina Rozeik
Co-Opted Members:	Liz Barham, Claire Heywood, John Price, Jim Spriggs and Kathy Tubb

We are aware that the current economic climate will have implications for posts and ways of working. *Rescue* (The British Archaeological Trust) are monitoring the cuts to heritage services, including conservation, through their website: [www.rescue-archaeology.org.uk](http://www.rescue-archaeology.org.uk). We therefore encourage members to contact both *Rescue* and the committee if you know of any such cuts.

### Events

Suggestions for workshops and seminars are welcome, especially to address specific CPD requirements.

November 10/11 saw the seminar *'Imaging in Conservation – looking at artefacts under new light'* take place. If you were not able to attend, look out for the seminar report in the next issue of *Icon News*. The intention is to publish the papers in 2012, details to follow.

Our popular Christmas event is being held jointly with the Ceramics and Glass group on 7 December, for more details

please see the news entry below or visit our webpage. The booking deadline is **5 December**.

This year saw AG committee member Evelyne Godfrey running a successful session on archaeological iron at the IfA conference and the AG sponsoring another CPD session on finds run by Dr Andrew Jones and Ian Panter. For the 2012 IfA conference we would like to run our own AG session. The conference theme is *'Partnership Working – creating effective networks throughout the historic, natural and built environments to maximise resources, increase public benefit and build a stronger sector.'* If you are interested in participating in this session, please get in touch with the events team.

*Karla Graham*, Archaeology Group chair

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND CERAMICS AND GLASS GROUPS

The CGG and Archaeology Group Joint Christmas Meeting and Party Wednesday 7 December 2011

'Ghosts of Conservation Past'

Meeting Venue: Roberts Building, University College London, Torrington Place, London WC1E 7JE

Party Venue: The Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 31–34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY

An informal meeting and Christmas party where we will be reviewing old conservation techniques and materials and reporting on any new findings about their failings or, possibly, arguments for their revival and continued use.

If you would like to offer a brief contribution on this topic, please contact either Jim Spriggs (AG) on [spriggs.conserve.co.uk](http://spriggs.conserve.co.uk), or Kathleen Magill (CGG) on [kmagillcgg@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kmagillcgg@hotmail.co.uk).

Further information and booking details are on the Group web pages. Icon Members £5 for meeting and £5 for after party.

There are ten free student places available for the meeting only, these will be allocated on a first come first served basis and we will contact you to confirm a free place or request payment.

## BOOK AND PAPER GROUP

It has been a very productive year for the Book and Paper Group, with committee members working to develop the programme and delivery mechanisms for the Co-operative Training Register (CTR) and resulting in very positive and encouraging outcomes. A key purpose has been to consult members and identify areas, both in terms of subject and location, where training is needed the most. Using the information you have submitted, we have developed a programme of training courses which we hope will appeal to a wide cross section of members' interests and specialisms. It is important to the success of the CTR that we shift our focus away from events being run solely in the London and South East region. Therefore, we have set up a network of host

institutions not only in London but also across the UK which are keen to support our training programmes. The generosity of these institutions and individuals has been particularly gratifying and the committee warmly thanks all those involved for their enthusiastic backing of this new initiative.

So far, the CTR has organised two training courses for October, *Information Skills for Conservators* and *Recreating the Medieval Palette*. Due to demand, we aim to repeat both courses in locations outside London. The free lecture relating to the Medieval Palette course, *Pigments and Organic Colours used in Manuscripts from Armenia and Egypt* is now fully booked. This core-course-and-related-lecture format is also one of the tenets of the CTR to maximise member benefit from our training. We hope to tie in courses with the programme of evening lectures that the Book and Paper Group have successfully arranged so far, such as the recent well-received lecture on Van de Velde Drawings and the forthcoming lecture on David Smith and Modern Paints.

There are many more training initiatives in the pipeline for 2012. These include the CTR poll-winner, a three-day training session on adhesives which, again, we hope to hold in a regional venue, as well as a preservation workshop to include issues such as the effect of dust on collections and practical information on book moves and possibly a parchment analysis course, to name but a few. In this last, we are working closely with the Science Group to develop a programme of training which will benefit Icon members across both groups. It is a very apt subject to highlight as the forthcoming special interest issue of the Journal will be a 20th Anniversary edition of the Vellum and Parchment issue, due to be published in autumn 2012, and it would be useful to form a series of training events and lectures with speakers and input on an international level to complement this. The consultation process with members is ongoing, so please do continue to submit your training ideas via the online forms. These are accessible via the Book and Paper Group website pages.

For the CTR and other Book and Paper Group initiatives to succeed we need to have more volunteers on board. There are many roles to fulfil, such as stewarding an event, manning a trade stand or helping to source further venues, depending on your time commitment. If you are interested in registering as a volunteer please contact the committee's volunteer co-ordinator Kath Knowles at [ksnail51@hotmail.com](mailto:ksnail51@hotmail.com).

All of this progress has come about from the work of the Book and Paper Group Committee. The committee is about to undergo a change in personnel with several key positions coming up for election, as our Chair and Treasurer are stepping down after several years of dedication to the committee. If you would like to be part of the ongoing work of our Group and shape its development then please consider putting yourself forward for nomination. A separate Book and Paper Group Iconnect will go out in November to call for nominations and giving more details and notice of the elections.

*The Book and Paper Group Committee*

## CERAMICS AND GLASS GROUP

### Practical Workshop

On 17 September we ran our first practical workshop 'Colour Filling with Epoxy resin'. This workshop was taught by Sarah Peek ACR and Beky Davies at The Organic Artefacts Conservation (wood) Studio of the British Museum. It was fully booked and thoroughly enjoyed by all. A review will be available in the next issue of Icon News; however, photographs of the day are now available on our new Icon CGG Facebook page! [www.facebook.com/ICONCGG](http://www.facebook.com/ICONCGG). Please 'like' this page as it will boost our ratings on Google and is another place to visit for further information about past and upcoming events.

### Christmas Party

This year we will be holding a joint Christmas party with the Archaeology Group. See the notice on the previous page for details. The theme for this year's bash is 'Ghosts of Conservation Past' and I can promise you there will be some amusing and possibly disturbing tales! Further details are available on our group web pages.

### Liverpool 2012

There is still time to send in your abstracts for 'Soft, strong and how long? Materials for ceramics and glass conservation' the two day conference and AGM to be held in Liverpool on 15 & 16 June 2012. Continuing the celebration of diversity within our profession, this event will focus on the materials which we use and will be divided into three sessions: low-fired ceramics, high-fired ceramics and glass. Have new health and safety laws and awareness of 'green' issues altered the way you work or prompted you to think of new solutions? Whether it is a standard treatment given a personal twist or a new product that you have discovered we would like to invite you to share your experience with us. Further information can be viewed on our group's web pages but ideas can be bounced off Nancy Sharpe ([sharpe.restoration@fsmail.net](mailto:sharpe.restoration@fsmail.net)) or Liesa Brierley ([liesa.brierley@googlemail.com](mailto:liesa.brierley@googlemail.com)). The deadline for these submissions is the 16 December 2011. Remember, speakers attend this conference for free!

### Nigel Williams

During this two day event we will be awarding The Nigel Williams Prize. The award is given to the best conservation/restoration of an object or of a project in ceramic, glass or a related material, which has to have been completed within four years prior to each award year. This is your chance for 2012. Please refer to the advert in this Icon News or contact Ronald Pile- ([ronaldpile37@btinternet.com](mailto:ronaldpile37@btinternet.com)). First prize is £750 with two runners up receiving £150 each. The deadline for submissions is 31 March 2012.

*Kathleen Magill*

## ETHNOGRAPHY GROUP

### 'Conservation and Source Communities: Research, Objects and Treatments'

Our Seminar on conservation and source communities is being held at the Pitt Rivers Museum on 16 November 2011, more or less as Icon News is published. Papers will be given by national and international conservators and it will be an excellent chance to see recent conservation projects that have been undertaken using community consultation. If there is still time to register for a place then please visit the Icon website where registration forms can be found on the Ethnography Group page. Send completed forms to [ethnoreg2011@gmail.com](mailto:ethnoreg2011@gmail.com)

### Call for Chair Candidates

At the end of the month Arianna Bernucci will be stepping down as Chair for the Ethnography Group. We're pleased that Arianna will continue to be part of the committee and would like to thank her for the incredible amount of hard work she has put in as Chair.

## SCOTLAND GROUP

### Recruiting new committee members

The Scotland Group is pleased to announce its intention to recruit new members to the committee. Our group is multi-disciplinary and we are keen to welcome people working in a diverse range of disciplines in the conservation field. The committee meets four times per year and each member has an active role to play throughout the year.

The roles available are: Chair, Vice Chair, Publicity & Publications and Events team members. Please send notes of interest to [scotland@icon.org.uk](mailto:scotland@icon.org.uk)

We would like to give special thanks to Linda Ramsay who has been the Chair of the committee for five years. Linda took on the role at a challenging time. Her clear focus on establishing Icon Scotland and her practical approach to getting things done moved the group to reform and play the active role it now enjoys. We would like to acknowledge all the hard work and commitment she has given over the years and her instrumental role in the continuing success of the committee. We would like to offer our sincere thanks and wish her the very best of luck in her future endeavours.

### Events

Visit to the Riverside Museum: Scotland's Museum of Transport and Travel. Friday 2 December 2011, 2pm. Cost: £3. Contact: Helen Creasy on [info@scottishconservationstudio.co.uk](mailto:info@scottishconservationstudio.co.uk) or 0131 331 5875. Tea and biscuits will be provided.

Glasgow's well-loved Museum of Transport has relocated to this spectacular waterfront landmark that was designed by internationally-renowned architect, Zaha Hadid. The Riverside Museum is her first major public building in the UK. At Riverside Museum there are over 3,000 objects on display, compared with 1,300 objects at the previous Museum of

Transport. These include some old favourites along with some new exhibits to the Collection. One of the new exhibits is the recently acquired South African locomotive, Glasgow Museums' largest object. The visit will start with a talk by conservators of various disciplines who have been involved with the project, and will cover the Design process, Conservation, and Installation of the objects in the new Riverside Museum. This will be followed by a behind the scenes tour led by the conservators.

Contact Helen Creasy to book a place and to receive details of how to get there.

### Future events

We have a number of events in the pipeline for the remainder of the year and into 2012. Visits to the newly opened National Museum of Scotland and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery are planned for early 2012.

For more information on our events please refer to the Scotland page of the Icon website and look out for regular e-bulletins from our group.

### Interns

We would like to warmly welcome the three Icon interns currently on placements in Scotland this year. **Margaret Smith** is working jointly with the National Museums Scotland and the University of Glasgow on a Conservation Science Project. Margaret's internship is for a period of twelve months and is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). **Anna Starkey** is currently based with the National Trust for Scotland in Edinburgh and is carrying out a preventive conservation placement. Anna's internship is for twelve months and has been funded by the Bute Memorial Fund. **Hal Jacob** is based with the National Museums Scotland and is carrying out an engineering and mechanical artefacts conservation internship. Hal's internship is also for a twelve month period and is funded by the Clothworkers' Foundation.

### New Conservation Posts in Scotland

After the sad news of the closure of Dundee University's Paper Conservation Studio things are looking up for the sector in Scotland. Three new posts are being created at the University of Aberdeen's new University Library, Special Collections and Conservation Centre. The Glucksman Conservation Centre will be a state-of-the-art facility for the conservation of the University's extensive collections of rare books, manuscripts and archives. After the appointment of a Senior Conservator, a Paper Conservator and a Book Conservator are currently being recruited.

There is more good news in Aberdeen, as a new Museum Conservator has recently joined the team at Marischal College after the retirement of Margot Wright. Meanwhile work is well underway at Abbotsford, near Melrose, where Joanna Cook has taken up her post as Project Conservator. Jo is managing the packing, storage and conservation of the collection while the House is undergoing major renovations. The McManus Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum in Dundee are also seeking to fill their vacated conservation post.

## TEXTILE GROUP

### Call for Papers

The Icon Textile Group invites abstracts for papers and posters for the Forum **'Taking the Rough with the Smooth: issues and solutions for decorated surfaces'**, which will be held in April 2012 in London.

The forum will explore the treatment, handling and display of textiles with decorated surfaces. Topics should include, but are not limited to, challenging or innovative conservation projects of painted, embroidered, printed and embellished textile surfaces, examining the issues faced and solutions found to deliver these projects. Papers highlighting ethical, display and handling issues are also encouraged, as well as papers from colleagues in related disciplines such as paintings or conservation science.

Please email abstracts of no more than 250 words by 30 November 2011 to Lynn McClean at [l.mcclean@nms.ac.uk](mailto:l.mcclean@nms.ac.uk). Abstracts should include the purpose or aim of the project, the methodology, the principal findings and a conclusion. Please ensure the names, addresses and contact details of all authors are included, and indicate who the main contact and speaker(s) will be.

### Events

The workshop 'Back to Basics – Taking Patterns from Historic Costume' (10/11 November) is fully booked. The course will be repeated in 2012 in Edinburgh and further details will be announced on the website.

### Report on Upholstery Workshop

The second of the Upholstery Workshops led by Lesley Wilson was held on 22 & 23 September at Burghley House and was as big a success as the first one, writes Sophie Downes. The first day was held in the new teaching room of the Brewhouse complex and consisted of a romp through the historical forms of upholstery with helpful advice on materials and dating. This was enhanced by contributions from furniture conservators Anthony Beech and Rupert Stevens, who gave an interesting perspective on frames and the role that they play within the conservation of an upholstered object. After lunch was a practical session which helped with the do's and don'ts of tack, nail and staple removal and webbing along with tours of the furniture and textile conservation workshops in the stable courtyard.

Day two was mostly spent in Burghley House having an in-depth look at some upholstered objects within the collection. Some stood up to the scrutiny better than others, but at least this raised some interesting points at discussion time. Finally there was a run through of some past treatments by Lesley as well as a presentation by Rupert and Alison Fairhurst (event organiser) about joint projects between the two workshops and the requirements of each. This basic look at upholstery has given an excellent grounding and the confidence to go away and approach treatment with less shaky hands.

### Research into treating mould on textiles

Sophie Downes writes: As an extension of my undergraduate dissertation, for which many of you filled out a questionnaire, I am continuing along my quest to find a successful strategy for treating mould in textiles. My current experiments have thrown up some worrying results in that the common treatments being used on mould infested textiles have no real effect when the object is returned to the same environment. This is a big worry for objects that are being returned to historic houses, ecclesiastical buildings or collections without environmental controls.

I am continuing this research to doctoral level so would be very keen to hear from anyone who has a specific problem within their collection or who feels that they are treating infected objects with success. Please contact me at [sophie\\_downes87@hotmail.com](mailto:sophie_downes87@hotmail.com)

### A Visual Technical Archive

A new site, under the auspices of The Landi Company and using the Wikimedia format, is being launched as a collecting point for the kind of information about objects often gathered by conservators during a conservation intervention, but which is not obvious to the general observer.

It will be a Visual Technical Archive for Identification and Interpretation of Decorative Arts Objects which are principally made from or include Textiles and Wood.

Information like this usually remains in the institutional archive and the memory of the conservator, where it forms part of their personal experience because it is very difficult indeed to pass it on. I have often thought of trying to establish some kind of repository where details of construction, artefacts and style could be made generally available. Until now no suitable vehicle has presented itself, but under the umbrella of the Wiki world this dream has become possible.

Essentially a detailed photograph, plus most particularly the date of the original object and country of origin if known, is required with a short description of the object and its significance. There will be no need to provide information as to the source of the example in order to avoid any problem with data protection legislation.

Because the field could be so wide we have decided to make a start by limiting the information sought to our own expertise (textiles) together with that covered by The Furniture Conservation and Restoration studio run by Anthony Beech. Together we will seed the site with examples from our own photographic records under the broad headings: Artefacts, Style, Process: methods of manufacture and Process: Old repairs and Alterations, but once launched it will be open to anyone with examples of interest to add them to the site.

More details will be available as soon as the site ([www.VTArchive.com](http://www.VTArchive.com)) has been fully set up.

*Sheila Landi*

# Graduate Voice

## A SUMMER INTERNSHIP WITH THE STAFFORDSHIRE HOARD

**Ellen Promise, graduate fellow from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation, shares her experience interning with the Hoard conservation team at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery**

The Placement Programme set up by the Staffordshire Hoard conservation team creates a valuable information exchange that is beneficial for the project as well as the student and professional participants. As a graduate student from the United States, I had the incredible opportunity to intern with the Staffordshire Hoard from June to August 2011. During this time period, I engaged with other visiting conservators from the nearby British Museum and from more distant locales such as Norway and Canada. This commitment to education and collaboration is, I believe, a core principle contributing to the continued success of the project. The nine weeks I spent in Birmingham afforded me an inside look at how the project is managed and what steps are necessary to preserve the artifacts and shed light on their historical context.

Treatment of an artifact, including proper documentation, can occupy a few hours to a few weeks, depending on the size and complexity of the object. The most intricate piece that I conserved is a gold lentoid plate with filigree borders and a cloisonné framework containing over two hundred garnets. Other notable features of the object include an extant rivet and a large central cell with a patterned gold foil, which was likely once set with a garnet or a piece of glass. The treatment

K843 lentoid plate after treatment



Ellen Promise examining an object under magnification

of this object took approximately sixty five hours. Because the work is so delicate, it is carried out under high powered magnification using tools such as a soft bristle brush and a natural thorn held in a pin vice.

The artifacts require appropriate housings for storage and transit. Creating a custom housing for an object is usually the final step in the treatment process. The Hoard comprises at least 3000 individual fragments and artifacts however, meaning that it will take significant time for the conservation team to treat all of these items. Certain fragile artifacts are in need of upgraded housings now. For example, there are hundreds of small patterned silver foil fragments in the collection. One of my projects was to develop a procedure for creating efficient and reproducible housings for these fragments using simple materials that are already widely used in the lab.

Everything removed from the objects during treatment is saved for potential future analysis, and in many cases, corrosion products or tiny metal fragments are preserved in situ. I treated a twisted gold strip with a cloisonné framework that, surprisingly, contained no garnets - a discovery made during the cleaning process. Instead, many of the cells were filled with a compact green residue. I carefully excavated the dirt from the cells, leaving the residue in place. This material was later sampled by one of the conservation scientists from the British Museum, where it will be analyzed using Raman Spectroscopy.

In addition to analysis of the objects' compositions, research is ongoing into the fabrication methods and historical context of the objects. I was privileged to learn more about the Hoard from curators at Birmingham Museum and the Stoke-on-Trent Potteries Museum. With curatorial input, several exciting discoveries were made by members of the conservation team.



BMAG

Sampling green residue from K682 cloisonné strip

Establishing connections amongst different artifacts provides clues to their original function.

Approximately fifty important pieces from the Staffordshire Hoard were selected for an exhibition featuring in the towns of Stafford, Lichfield, and Tamworth. I had the opportunity to participate in the deinstallation of the exhibition from its first stop in Stafford and the subsequent installation at Lichfield Cathedral. This process involves carefully checking each piece against a condition report to ensure that the object has not been damaged during display or transit and properly positioning the objects on custom-made mounts. It was a pleasure to see so many of the objects together in these lovely settings.

During my time in the lab, I chronicled my projects and experiences through written and filmed blogs, which were posted on the Staffordshire Hoard website. The Hoard team's laudable commitment to public outreach is one of the key

#### Filming for National Geographic



BMAG



BMAG

Ellen Promise installing an artifact in a case at Lichfield Cathedral

impressions I will take away with me. In addition to blogging, the team leads monthly public tours and a number of special tours for various groups. People were invariably enthusiastic about the project and happy to see the objects close-up. The public is also informed about the project through media coverage. In my first week as an intern, we had a film crew from National Geographic in the lab and we were later interviewed by journalists from a local newspaper.

The vibrant atmosphere in the conservation lab made it an exciting place to work. I appreciated the chance to participate in the many disparate conservation activities that help to stabilize an artifact and bring it to the attention of researchers and the public. I would like to thank all of the individuals involved with the project for their time and expertise. In particular, conservators Cymbeline Storey and Deborah Magnoler and Hoard Conservation Project Manager Deborah Cane were wonderful mentors. Their conscientious approach will ensure that the Hoard objects are preserved for the future and enjoyed by many.

# reviews

## BOOKS

### CHANGING VIEWS OF TEXTILE CONSERVATION

**Mary M Brooks & Dinah D Eastop, eds.**  
*Readings in Conservation*, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles 2011  
ISBN 978 1 60606 048 3 pbk 680 pages

This handsome volume, with its attractive cover, brings together papers spanning over fifty years and in so doing contextualises the developments in ideas and practice that have occurred in textile conservation. The strength and success of this anthology is that it has brought together papers from nineteen countries, translating those previously not in the English language and thereby giving access to the thinking and development across a much broader spectrum. However, even with its eighty one readings and 650 pages, the editors have had to be selective and acknowledge that the task has been difficult and will not satisfy every reader. Nevertheless Brooks and Eastop's selection is both engaging and wide ranging, satisfying their intention for the book to be a 'tool for thinking', and will be of value to both professionals and students.

The structure of the book is clear, divided into six parts covering the history, debates and principles of practice, materials as well as the context of textiles. The index is comprehensive, allowing the reader to cross reference easily, and each reading is contextualised by having the date of its original publication at the end of the title. I particularly enjoyed this aspect. The major debates of textile conservation are

represented by a careful selection of papers, from stitch or stick, to clean or not to clean, the reversibility of treatments and the ethics of interventive practice. The debates are then illustrated with case history readings illustrating the use and development of adhesives and of cleaning techniques, the use of different materials to support textiles, of mounting and displaying objects. My only regret is that the debate on open display versus showcases is not well represented particularly as Ballard's paper on *Climate and Conservation* illustrated some of the many problems. At a time when the demand for open display in museums, as well as historic houses, is high on the agenda (costume as well as furnishings), this will be one of the profession's future challenges.

The passion of our predecessors is well represented in the first section 'Beginnings' where their task was to save their textile heritage, often in dire condition. Their energy and determination are wonderfully chronicled. These include papers from Russia, Sweden and the Netherlands and have their foundations in the Aesthetic movement. This passion to save is then translated into 'how to' and the next selection of readings covers the debates of pioneering practice, some of which show their passion in the written word! Clearly our profession has never been shy of debate or of honesty in trying to safeguard the objects and preserve them in perpetuity.

I found the readings chosen for *Understanding Materials* particularly interesting and useful, bringing together information and findings on the physical properties of textile fibres, dyes and the value of creasing. This section also highlights some of the dangers associated with conserving textiles previously treated with harmful chemicals such as naphthalene and mercury.

The title of this anthology, *Changing Views of Textile Conservation*, might imply that the profession has altered its thinking as well as treatments. It does indeed illustrate the developments in textile conservation in terms of techniques and materials but it also amply demonstrates that the passion of conservators remains central to this development. Conservators have never been willing to accept the status quo and it is this that has pushed the profession forward, using both their talents as problem solvers as well as scientific analysis. Ultimately, the materials and techniques have changed and expanded in the last 120 years but the wish to find the best conservation treatment has not.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, finding papers I had never come across and those I had read years ago but had forgotten the details. With its global perspective, I found it thought provoking and useful and it should

be a book in everyone's library, to refer it and stimulate further research and discussion.

*Maria Jordan* ACR

### FALMOUTH FRAMEWORKS

**Brian Stewart, Lynn Roberts and Paul Mitchell.**

*Sansom & Company*, Bristol 2011  
ISBN 978-1-906593-75-9 208 pages hdbk

This beautifully produced book is the result of a long project by Falmouth Art Gallery to look at the conservation of paintings and frames in tandem. As it progressed, funding was gained from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the three-year Falmouth Frameworks Project was set up. Completed in 2011, it set out a number of key aims including: conserving and cataloguing all artist designed frames, replacing unsuitable frames, and mounting a 'before' and 'after' exhibition. It also encouraged both contemporary artists and younger visitors to engage with frames in new ways.

An essay by Lynn Roberts at the beginning introduces the books that originally inspired Brian Stewart's interest in frames:

*Frameworks: Form, Function and Ornament in European Frames and A History of European Picture Frames*, both by Paul Mitchell and herself. She goes on to discuss the development of the picture frame throughout the centuries, with reference to works in the Falmouth collection. An interesting short piece by Pete Hambrook and Lynn Blake discusses the history of the Falmouth framemaker Sully's, first established in 1921 and now run by Pete. Research like this into framemaking history is always useful and enlightening for those involved with frames and their origins.

The main body of the book consists of a selection of works from the collection listed alphabetically by artist. Each work is illustrated on one page with information on the facing page about the artist, painting and frame. The works have been chosen to illustrate the artist's relationship with the frame over the last 250 or so years. In some cases this leads to some interesting material on artists' choices, such as John Singer Sargent's preferred framemakers and styles and the possibility that a particular frame for a portrait of Charles Napier Hemy may have been chosen by the sitter, and Ben Nicholson's admirable instructions to the Tate, 'under no circumstances should original frames be removed from my work.' In others, due to the all too usual lack of evidence, the link between artist and frame is less definite, and so the frames are used to illustrate more general points of frame history, like the 'typically Victorian stock frame' around *The Cottage* by James Charles and the rise of such composition frames in the nineteenth century.



However, often the frame shown is a replica made by Paul Mitchell Ltd and whilst these appear to be aesthetically attractive and well made, the point made by the inclusion of these works is slightly more blurred. Whilst I enthusiastically agree with sensitive reframing of unsuitably framed paintings, unless there is rigorous discussion of the reasoning behind the choice of a new design there is little academic merit in its inclusion here. Is it enough to think the painting simply looks better in its new frame or should there be a stronger connection? The academic reader may want this book to have discussed the ethics and decision-making processes of reframing further. In spite of this criticism, Falmouth Art Gallery is to be applauded for drawing the public's attention to the beauty and importance of frames, and I hope that many more galleries are likewise inspired.

**Caroline Oliver** ACR  
Lead Frames Conservator  
Guildhall Art Gallery

## WORKSHOPS

### IRON GALL INKS – Approaches to Conservation in Scotland Dundee 22 July 2011

Thirty conservators from Scotland and all over Europe turned out for the last ever workshop held by the Dundee Book and Paper Studio, organised by Erica Kotze. The aim was to discuss emerging as well as current methods of treating iron gall ink in paper-based collections. The date of the seminar was planned to coincide with the date of the 'farewell fling' party at the Studio, to allow many of the Studio's past interns to attend. It was impressive – and entirely in character – that the seminar was so effectively planned and hosted so well despite the on-going stress and hard work of packing up the Studio.

The day began with **Erica Kotze** from the Book and Paper Studio giving us a reminder of how iron gall ink chemically degrades paper with visual examples. Erica and **Elizabeth Courtney** also gave us a live demonstration of how iron gall ink is traditionally made. Having started the day looking at aged brown iron gall ink artefacts it was very enlightening to see the dark black purple colour the ink actually produces when it is freshly made.

**Eliza Jacobi** then took the floor. Eliza has a PhD from RCE Amsterdam and she has carried out extensive research into the treatments used for iron gall ink. Eliza was kind enough to share some of her findings with the group which included looking at the long-term effect of accepted aqueous treatments for the removal of ferrous (II) (III) ions and adhesives used to repair paper



Elizabeth Courtney making iron gall ink

corroded by iron gall ink such as gelatine B, klucel G and wheat starch paste. Indeed her research questioned many of the treatments commonly used by conservators today. The use of remoistenable tissue was generally promoted as well as non-interventive methods such as placing papers affected by iron gall ink in a stable environment to prevent further deterioration. More details of her vanguard research can be found in articles in the *Journal of Paper Conservation*.\*

The second speaker was the Dundee Studio's own book conservator **Emma Fraser**. Emma shared her experiences in some challenging case studies starting with an album of Italian architectural drawings in iron gall ink. The drawings were numerous and there were areas of dense ink which had burned through the paper causing it to weaken structurally and chemically. The second artefact was a wonderful book from the recently-opened Robert Burns Birthplace Museum with an ink inscription by Burns himself. Emma talked through her treatment methods and the difficulties she faced with the iron gall ink. The treatment carried out by Emma and the results achieved were very impressive.

The last speaker **Louise Robertson** spoke about the conservation treatment of 18th and 19th century medical papers by William Cullen and John Thomson. Her work at Glasgow University Library involves doing a

### Book & Paper Conservation Studio Final Fling!



Louise Robertson presenting her work at the University of Glasgow



Delegates at the iron gall ink meeting

condition report and stabilising more than 15,000 iron gall affected artefacts within a year. Louise spoke about how she had developed a simple but effective system of administering condition reports and treatments (when necessary). Louise highlighted the problem of working with a very large number of iron gall ink papers within set time constraints. The sheer volume of work she has already conserved is remarkable.

The workshop finished with a question and answer session for the speakers. The rest of the group was then invited to talk about their own observations and experiences of this difficult media. The relatively small size of the group and the warm and friendly ambience made this session very lively, informative, and enjoyable, with lots of open and honest discussion about people's experiences and concerns about treating iron gall ink.

The rest of the day was devoted to a 'final



Conservators learn how to keep fit



fling', a good-bye party for the staff and friends of the Dundee Book and Paper Studio. We are all so sad to see the closure of this studio which has been well respected and has achieved so much. The party was hosted in great style, and with surprising merriment! It only remains for us to thank the staff at Dundee for a great day but also to wish them all the very best for the future.

**Sylvia Steven, Tizzy Hepher and Helen Creasy**

\*The Journal of Paper Conservation, Vol 12, No 2, 2011.

Eliza Jacobi, Birgit Reissland, Claire Phan Tan Luu, Bas van Velzen, Frank Ligterink 'Rendering the Invisible Visible – Preventing Solvent-Induced Migration During Local Repairs on Iron Gall Ink' pp. 25–34. Available from the Chantry Library

Eliza can be contacted for purchasing 'The Dutch Fe-Migration Test Paper' and *How To* packages for making remoistenable tissue and doing local repairs on iron gall ink.

Please email: [eliza@practice-in-conservation.com](mailto:eliza@practice-in-conservation.com)

### KEEPING FIT FOR CONSERVATION

#### Icon Book and Paper Group

London 26 May 2011

There are four questions to ask yourself:

1. How often do I wake up stiff and cranky?
2. How often is some part of my body grumbling about constant standing, bending, neck craning, prolonged sitting, prolonged concentration, and shallow breathing?
3. What can I do about it?
4. Where in the day can I find time to reduce the stress on my body induced by work?

On Thursday 26 May a group of conservators from various disciplines, of all ages, including one student and a pregnant woman met at a church hall in Chiswick to address these questions at an evening organised by **Joanna Payne** (ACR Works of Art on paper) on behalf of the Meetings and Development Group.(Book and Paper Group). We were split into two groups for the evening, which was informal and friendly. Looking elegant and professional in our 'loose clothing' and

armed with a mat and a rolled up hand towel, we were much encouraged by the sight of wine and nibbles waiting for us at half time!

**Anna Schick** – physiotherapist and Pilates instructor, (having visited Joanna's studio to review a typical conservation setup and discuss the types of problems conservators deal with), gave a really useful presentation, taking us through various problems; neck, spine, wrists and headaches, with advice on how to prevent, alleviate or manage these problems both at work and in our home surroundings.

These included props including supportive shoes, gel insoles, and sports wristbands, and a reminder about adjusting heights and angles of worktop, chairs, lighting etc **every time you set about a new task.** (It only takes a few seconds to change your shoes, tip the chair, move the easel up or down). She also gave general advice on mattresses, number of pillows (one), anti-inflammatory creams (Voltarol is good), hot showers etc. We need to get into the habit of asking ourselves at the beginning of each task 'am I set up the best way to reduce straining my muscles and joints?' The effects of bad practice are cumulative so it is worth getting into good habits early.

**Joanna Ketley** – Personal trainer, who had also visited Joanna's studio, gave us a set of helpful stretches to loosen and mobilise strained or tight muscles – starting with gentle neck stretches and working down to our ankles, with particular attention to the neck, upper back, shoulder joints and hips. She also stressed the importance of strong abdominal muscles and good posture. These exercises were simple and easy to remember, especially if you worked your way down in order. The words she repeated often were 'gently' and 'just whenever you can'.

In the questions and discussions that came up during and after the sessions with Anna and Jo, it became obvious that although the exercises and tips were helpful and simple, we all have one big stumbling block – **remembering to do them!**

Anna's tips, like keeping a pair of supportive

shoes at work, wearing sports bands to support wrists, and having an abdominal support for heavy lifting, make it easier to remember – buy them, **put them somewhere accessible and visible** and then use them appropriately.

Jo's exercises/stretchers were equally simple, taking ten to fifteen minutes from top to toe in a perfect world. However it was good to be reminded that, although each part of our body is connected to and affects the rest and that loosening up before work is as important as stretching afterwards, one minute's exercise is better than none. You can rotate your ankles while on the phone, mobilise your wrists while waiting for the kettle to boil, and stretch your neck from side to side while at the bus stop. (Who cares if you look like a weirdo? You might get more space on the bus!)

It is tempting to feel that exercise (whether an hour at the gym or five minutes of stretches) counts as 'taking time off', that it is reducing one's productivity and precious work time but, as Jo and Anna reminded us, it should be high on our 'list of things to do' as we organise our work day – along with: clean, conserve, present, meet client, receive and log in work, record, photograph, phone six people, re-order stocks.....

The truth is that being in pain slows us down and reduces productivity and concentration far more than taking time to look after oneself and with Anna and Jo's helpful advice we realised that this need take far less time than we thought. On leaving, we were each given a folder containing diagrams of exercises and useful information to remind us of what we had learnt.

Thank you Joanna, Anna and Jo, keeping fit for conservation seems much less burdensome after this meeting. Thanks also to Katharine Lockett who heated up sausage rolls and poured the wine, took the photos, and despite being seven months pregnant did most of the stretches!

**Jenny Sanderson** Independent Conservator of paintings



Enjoying the perfect breakfast

## VISITS

### BREAKFAST AT THE REFORM CLUB

Icon Historic Interiors Group  
London 22 June 2011

The members of the Historic Interiors Group could get used to the style and comfort of a gentleman's club – crisp napkins, gleaming cutlery, perfect coffee, attentive waiters and kedgeree! On 22 June this year they assembled at the Reform Club, 104 Pall Mall, at 8.45am, smartly dressed of course, to enjoy the perfect breakfast before reviewing the extensive conservation of the interiors currently being undertaken in the Grand Hall by International Fine Art Conservation Services (IFACS). The Group continues to offer its members unique opportunities to explore and enjoy historic interiors in the

The Grand Hall of the Reform Club built in 1842



company of highly experienced, like-minded specialists. The diversity of the expertise of the members of the group is remarkable

**Clare Heard** of IFACS set the scene outlining the creation of the club-house and the current conservation project. The Reform Club was built in 1842 for the Whig Party – advocates of electoral reform. The initial plan was expanded, almost doubling the original costs, to include the covering over of the central courtyard to create the existing Grand Hall. One of the glories of this space is the scagliola decoration – which imitates twelve different types of marble. Over 150 years of continuous use the interior had acquired a 'caramel brown colour' and the brilliance of the porphyry, verde antica, and sienna 'marbles' had been lost under layers of dust, smoke from open fires, and food vapours. A layer of 'Brylcreem' staining ran around the wall above the seating. The scheme had also suffered mechanical damage which, combined with ground vibrations and dramatic heat changes caused by the glass ceiling, presented IFACS with a range of conservation issues. The portraits of the founding members,



Club life goes on around the scaffolding



Detail of Scagliola repair to the base of a column in the Grand Hall

marafaged onto the walls had also suffered from structural movement and water ingress and required treatment.

The consolidation and cleaning took place in full view of the club members who took an active interest in the project. The members did not want 'to see the changes' or be left with an interior which was 'too new and bright'. IFACS staff rose to the challenges of working within a very traditional and vibrant environment but nerves were occasionally frayed when scaffolding had to be removed for functions and weddings. And members did not always observe H&S signage. Large screens printed with images of the paintings were used to mask work areas and signs indicating 'Route to Bar' were very useful.

Clare Heard leads a discussion with Group members



On the completion of the project, IFACS will provide a full record of the project for the members and very detailed house-keeping advice.

Historic Interiors Group members were given generous access to the Grand Hall and were free to wander around the main reception rooms. We chatted with the conservators as they worked on the scaffolding and everyone benefited from the multi-disciplinary exchange of our members.

Tickets were limited and this event sold out very quickly. By the time this is published, the next outing of the Historic Interiors Group will have taken place: a visit to the Kitchens of Hampton Court in mid-October – further specialist visits to be announced (book early!).

*Helen Hughes* ACR

## THE ROBERT BURNS BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM

Icon Scotland Group

Alloway, Ayr 7 September 2011

The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum (RBBM) officially opened in January 2011 and is run by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS). The new building houses the world's most important collection of the poet's life and works, but the RBBM also includes the refurbished Burns Cottage where the poet was born, the Burns Monument, Brig O'Doon and the Auld Kirk – historic landmarks which relate to Burn's life and legacy.

Our visit was hosted by NTS Conservators **Suzie Lamb** and **Sylvia Kraus** (who now works for Glasgow Museums) and Curator **Amy Miller**. This was a great opportunity to hear first-hand about the project and to see behind the scenes.

Our afternoon started with coffee and introductions while we were gathering in the welcoming education room. Suzie and Sylvia then gave two informative and interesting presentations about the project and the conservation work involved to deliver it from start to finish. We were shown pictures of the old Museum, which has now been transformed into an education facility. The problems with this building included high light levels and poor environmental conditions, as well as lack of adequate display space. Much of the collection was in permanent storage and not accessible. Because the old Museum building is listed an extension could not be considered. Therefore it was decided to build a completely new museum.

The new Museum – designed by Edinburgh based Architects Simpson & Brown – is arranged around a central exhibition gallery where many of the artefacts in the Museum's collection are now on display. The building also has a café opening onto the beautiful



The Burns Museum visit

mature gardens inherited from the old Tam O'Shanter Experience, a gift shop and two stores to house the remaining collections and with room for growth. It was decided early on in the project that the building should have as many ecological features as viable. This has been achieved through a combination of sophisticated passive environmental systems, a ground source heat pump and by maximizing the use of natural, minimally processed materials.

The conservator's contribution over the course of the project was wide ranging and varied. It included planning the decant from the old Museum and the various store locations by carrying out condition surveys of the collections, estimating the resources needed for treatment, but also packing and transport. Furthermore there was involvement in drawing up display case specifications, helping with the development of lighting strategies, input into the new storage facilities and the design of the new displays. A huge task with over 5,000 objects! Another significant body of work was the cleaning and packing of objects for storage which had to be carried out in temporary accommodation and using the help of many volunteers. The cleaning of the Burns Cottage had conservation input. A temporary display of the collection and a touring exhibition had to be organised. And finally all the different specialist treatments had to be contracted out. Anyone who has been involved in a large capital project can truly understand the challenges the conservators faced and appreciate the outcome of their work.

After hearing the excellent presentations, we were given a tour of the Museum led by Curator Amy Miller. We saw the two new stores where all the objects in the collection can be stored in one location rather than being dispersed around different sites. A project is now underway to carry out a full inventory of the collection using the database Adlib.

We were then able to go out onto the green roof. This really was a wonderful experience and we were lucky to be out during a dry spell. The roof is covered with succulent

flowering sedum plants. They are low maintenance as they do not require mowing and they store water, thus helping with the drainage. On the roof, one could really appreciate the architectural design of the Museum with two interlocking squares and the sweeping curves which make the building so attractive.

We then went into the gallery where we were able to look around at our own pace. This has been designed as an open plan black box which offers absolute control over the light levels and the way the objects are presented to the visitors. The openness of the plan will allow NTS to re-model the exhibition at a later date. In the current arrangement one can follow one's own route of discovery about the man and the poet. We did not have enough time to absorb everything – there was so much to see and read about. There were plenty of interactives to keep us interested and engaged, and they all worked.

Towards the end of our visit some of us walked over to the Burns Cottage and the old Museum Building. The walkway has been enhanced with the addition of interpretative installations including a large-scale bronze mouse statue and weather vanes.

Burns Cottage has been restored with four rooms as they would have been to accommodate both people and animals. The items on display are all non-collection items and there is plenty of interpretation to show how each room would have been used. To the rear there is a lovely small vegetable garden which would have provided the family with some food.

This visit was a great experience and I for one will certainly come back to see the exhibition in more detail and to have lunch in the wonderful looking café.

Thanks go to NTS for hosting us, to Suzie and Sylvia for their interesting presentations and to Amy for the opportunity to see the stores and the wonderful roof. Thanks also to Helen Creasy for organising the day.

*Marie Stumpff*  
Glasgow Museums

# in practice

## THE HUNT FOR THE PERFECT MANNEQUIN

by Miriam Langford, Treatment Conservation Manager at Historic Royal Palaces

The Historic Royal Palaces' conservators have been working for the past four years to develop, fabricate or source an elegant and visually discrete, conservation-sound (not to mention affordable) mannequin, for a new style of display for costumes from our Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection. We are finally nearing our goal, with a plan to use 'cut-away' acrylic dress supports for the *'Victoria Revealed'* exhibition opening at Kensington Palace in March next year.

In 2008 the hugely successful *'Last Debutantes'* exhibition at Kensington Palace included a collection of 1950s' loan dresses displayed as if floating without support. To achieve this look while fully supporting the dresses, our team of costume conservators collaborated with our conservation scientists to test commercially available dress stand materials. Elements that failed the Oddy test for long term use were removed and

the forms were then cut to shape, adding armatures for straps and sleeves. The results, when padded up to exactly fit and support each dress, were visually striking; meeting all the needs for this particular open-display exhibition but not yet satisfying all our requirements for a conservation-sound mannequin that was safe for the longer-term display of historic and vulnerable garments inside closed display cases.

This 'cut-away' look captured the imagination of the curators and designers who are working towards the four exhibitions that will be part of the programme of the re-presented Kensington Palace, opening in March 2012. We, the textiles conservators, suddenly had a style brief and ... a deadline!

Since 2009 we have often worked with exhibition designers, most notably in the current *Enchanted Palace* exhibition where we have made dresses appear, without any visible support, to dance and even fly! All the technical solutions for these amazing creations continue to come from the creativity of our textile conservators, including giving the impression of

Commercially available dress-stand being shaped for a Debutante dress.





Princess Margaret's 1951 Hartnell lace cocktail dress 'dancing' in the 'Enchanted Palace' exhibition at Kensington Palace in 2010

movement to static displays and supporting both historic and contemporary dresses in fantastical contexts while retaining our necessary conservation standards. When historic dresses were displayed in this way inside display cases, we worked with our curatorial colleagues to identify rotation pieces for the duration of the exhibition so that any materials that had partially failed Oddy testing could not build up vapour concentrations and harm the dresses in their closed display environments.

By early 2010 we had identified suitable materials for our new mannequins but did not have the capability in-house to produce them. One of our textile conservation interns was able to dedicate her research project to investigating what is being used by conservators elsewhere, the restrictions they have to meet and whether there already was a suitable method that met all our needs. This useful scoping study allowed us to establish that, within our budget and in-house time restrictions, what we wanted had not so far been discovered or created by anyone else. It did however identify the range of mannequins commonly used, either fabricated or commissioned by conservators or available commercially, who we could contact and which two lines of investigation we should pursue in partnership with external mount-makers. These were altering (cutting back and padding up) commercially made Ethafoam™ mannequins and working with a mount-maker who could make bespoke Perspex™ forms to fit our costume pieces.

We now have less than a year to create twenty five mannequins for four exhibitions but we also now have an



Dress displayed on 'cut-away' stand for the 'Last Debutantes' Exhibition at Kensington Palace in 2008

exact design brief for the first of the 2012 exhibitions. We have made contact with a mount-maker, Roy Mandeville, ([www.themuseumworkshop.com](http://www.themuseumworkshop.com)) who is one step ahead of us, having already developed a technique for making Perspex™ forms, working in conjunction with the Bowes Museum and, in fact with one of our Senior conservators, Janet Wood, to create historic bust forms. Since our study in early 2010 Roy has expanded his repertoire of techniques and we now have the opportunity to use both the forms he and Janet developed for the Bowes Museum as well as creating new shapes for our 2012 exhibitions. Working together we are nearing our goal of creating mounts that safely display our historic costumes on invisible supports, made from entirely conservation-sound materials; all achievable within our exhibition time-plans and budgets.

Vivian Westwood's 1992 dress 'flying' down the Kings Stairs in the 'Enchanted Palace' exhibition at Kensington Palace in 2010



## NEW LIGHTING FOR REFURBISHED PICTURE GALLERIES IN THE BOWES MUSEUM

by Jon Old, Conservation Manager of the Bowes Museum

The Bowes Museum is a Grade 1 listed French Chateau, built in the market town of Barnard Castle, County Durham in the late 19th century. It is a large building with a designated collection of fine and decorative arts on three floors, including three large picture galleries on the top floor.

The final part of the museum's 2000 – 2010 capital redevelopment programme was to refurbish the picture galleries. An initial project plan was developed to architectural Stage B by a full project team but lack of funding meant that the museum carried forward a modified scheme with an in-house team, the most challenging task being to upgrade the lighting, which fell to the Conservation department.

The picture galleries are 16 metres (52 feet) high, and natural light comes through an external atrium and then through horizontal lay light glazing in the centre of the gallery, covering approximately half the ceiling area. This was supplemented with wall mounted, metal halide spotlights

Laylight with old glazing and filter



around the edges of the gallery at a high cornice level, some 8.5 metres (27½ feet) high. (See picture on page 36.) Control was by a lux and U.V. filter laid on the lay lights, and a sensor to turn the lights off when the light levels got too high at peak summer time. The system had worked well enough for twenty years but the lamp fittings were failing and this left the galleries with very low light levels on winter afternoons, although U.V. was low, approximately 35 mW/lumen.

The brief was to allow more natural light to come through the lay lights to allow visitors to see further up into the roof structure, emphasising the height and architecture in the galleries. A new suspended lighting system was to be installed to provide an even wall wash of 200 lux with as little U.V. as possible so that the paintings and sculptures could be appreciated. This was important as the wall hanging height was to be raised by 2.5 metres from 4 to 6.5 metres high. Reaching a balance between the artificial light, natural light, architecture and needs of the collections proved difficult.

The only documentation on the existing light filtering film was that it was installed in 2002, it was not possible to physically remove a sample. Monitoring showed it was very effective at blocking out U.V. and kept the galleries quite cool in summer.

The existing glazing in the lay lights had to be removed to bring it up to modern safety regulations. A laminated glass called Optilam, manufactured by Pilkingtons, was chosen as it reduced light levels by approximately 40% and limited U.V. to 1%. It looked good, was safe and had passed conservation planning requirements. There were no details on how long the U.V. filtering would last however, nor any guarantee that the glass really would reduce light levels enough. So a second strategy was developed in combination with the new lighting.

The new gallery lighting system was developed with the help of Philips Lighting using their newly designed StyliD LEDs. The museum tested them in the galleries and they were found

The new system. Twin wall with film attached in atrium space





Glass atrium

to be more than satisfactory. The lamps gave a good throw of light, a range of colour temperatures and the lamp fittings were quite elegant and not too bulky. A warm colour temperature of 3000k was chosen and computerised modelling showed that the scheme would be able to achieve a general wall wash of up to 200 lux. The lighting would have all the other advantages of using LEDs; the lamps have a minimum fifteen year life, use a quarter of the energy of an equivalent tungsten halogen (24 watts as opposed to 100) and emit no U.V. Dimmable track was available but it was decided to keep the system as simple as possible and have standard three circuit track. If desired, light levels could be altered by moving and angling the lamp fittings.

The new lighting system used suspended track, although it proved to be difficult to install due to the lack of load bearing in the roof structure. Special clips were designed to fit the metal cross supports. The track and lamps were set as high as possible but still allowed access by either tower scaffold or mobile access platform.

Detailed monitoring of light and U.V. levels was carried out to decide on the solar film required for the laylights. Light levels were measured in existing galleries and compared with outside levels. This was repeated when the laylight glazing was removed and then after the new Optilam glass was fitted. The structure of the building also affected the amount of light

New laylights with new filter and LED lighting





The old lighting system in the Centre Picture Gallery

coming into the gallery – the light has to come through the external atrium, then the laylights and finally the curved ceilings bounce the light down onto the walls below. At the same time the existing film was retrieved and examined. It proved to be a very thick film that had a U.V. filter and solar reflecting coating. It had become very dirty and wrinkled as it was only fixed with tabs of Duct Tape.

Initial tests for the Optilam showed that it did not reduce lux or U.V. levels enough. So a solution was developed to reduce light levels to an acceptable level, look aesthetically pleasing, eliminate all U.V., reflect as much solar energy as possible, be easy to fit, 'reasonably' priced and easy to reverse. The following option was chosen: Solar film with a U.V. filter was laid on polycarbonate sheeting which in turn lay on top of the Optilam – and this could be done during the refurbishment (when all the galleries were fully scaffolded) and replaced from outside at a later date (by using inspection hatches and removing thin sections of glazing). It would sit happily between the original glazing bars and the twin wall would have the added benefit of offering some insulation. (See picture on page 34.)

A great number of samples of window film had been acquired and tested in the conservation studio, using the existing film as a benchmark. The results were then compared to the light readings taken in and outside the galleries at specific dates and differing outside conditions. The final film chosen was Cool Kote Exterior 3. Its light transmission is 17% and combined with the Optilam gave an overall figure of 10%, close to the last film used. U.V. filtration (both A and B) was 99% and combined with the Optilam gave an overall figure of 100%. Solar energy reflection was 82%. It looked good



New laylights with new filter and LED lighting

aesthetically and could be installed easily by a local glazing firm onto the twin wall polycarbonate. Significantly it was also guaranteed for eight years in outside conditions so would last well in the protected space of the Atrium. It was also reasonably priced, important for a project with a very tight budget!

Only the first gallery had the filtering installed externally. The rest were done internally for speed and ease. Each sheet of polycarbonate has a plastic loop fitted so it can be attached to an extension pole and removed when necessary.

As a back up there is a lighting sensor that will turn the LED lighting off at 350 lux, leaving 200 to 175 of natural light on the paintings. It is calculated that this will occur only several times at peak time in the summer during the start of the afternoon. Initial results show that at peak times the U.V. level is 0 and light levels ranged to a maximum of 250 lux for short periods in June, no more than several hours. The LED lights work very well giving good illumination, a warm colour and lux levels of 175 – 200 lux as required.

What is nice is that you are also aware, in a small way, of the weather conditions changing outside, giving a flavour of what the lighting was like originally.

If you would like any further information on the project, please contact Jon Old at [jon.old@thebowesmuseum.org.uk](mailto:jon.old@thebowesmuseum.org.uk)



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