

Showing off the Cheapside Hoard

Also in this issue

Jousting with an Emperor

Learning about Japanese paper

New trustees and new ACRs

The life of a globe-trotting graduate





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MARCH 2014 Issue 51



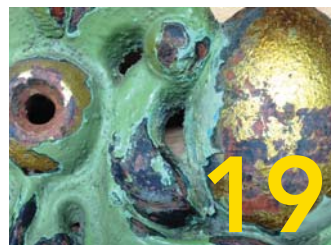
From the Editor

I didn't think I was all that interested in jewellery and precious stones until I saw the pictures for our feature on the Cheapside Hoard. It reminded me all over again how lucky we conservators are to get up close and personal with so many stunning, interesting or moving artefacts. I've probably said that

before in this column but as someone who is not now hands on (other than on the keyboard), I feel the need to remind you not to get blasé about your work or take it for granted. The rest of us are bowled over by it. Another object with that same magic is the piece of armour belonging to a great figure from European history in In Practice.

As well as the stories, this issue is not short of material and opinions to make you think: try the CEO column or our Strategy Skills Manager's challenging views on Icon and conservation. And behind the good-humoured account of a year in enviably warm and exotic places, there is another reminder of the difficulties facing the recent graduate in the workplace. On a less sombre note, congratulations to all the new ACRs and good luck to all the new Trustees!

Lynette Gill



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Cover photo:
A pearl cage from the Cheapside Hoard now on display at the Museum of London until 27 April. Research suggest that the Hoard was buried in the second half of the seventeenth century. Image © Museum of London

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professional update

From the Chief Executive

MONUMENTAL REWARDS



Photo: Matt Wreford

By the time you read this, the film *The Monuments Men* will have opened in the UK. The movie follows the story of the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives programme, an Allied group given the task of saving works of art and other culturally important items before their destruction by the Nazis during WWII. The film focuses on an Allied squad of soldiers who in civilian life were conservators, curators, art historians and museum directors. They entered

Germany with the Allied forces, during the closing stages of the war, to rescue artworks plundered by the Nazis, saving them from destruction or damage, and returning them to their owners.

The jury is still out on the quality of the film. The Guardian reviewer called it 'an action movie without much action; a caper movie without much caper'

Nevertheless, the film is a timely reminder of the origins of modern conservation and of the fact that our profession has a heritage of its own.

In the film, George Clooney plays Lt Frank Stokes, a character loosely based on George Leslie Stout (1897–1978), an American art conservator and leading light in the early history of conservation in the United States. After the war, Stout was instrumental in founding the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC). The devastation of a war on an unprecedented scale had highlighted the need for an international organisation that 'would seek improvement in the knowledge and the working

standards necessary to protect, preserve and maintain the integrity of cultural holdings'.

Icon is the direct descendent of IIC which was founded in 1950. The mother organisation soon gave birth to many offspring: regional groups spread across the world to bring like-minded people together. By the early 1980s, IIC-UK had become so large and active that it split off from IIC with a new name, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation. Within UKIC specialist groups emerged. One grew to such a scale that it too broke away to become the independent Institute of Paper Conservation.

By the 1990s, there was a plethora of conservation bodies in the UK and many in the conservation community recognised the need for a single voice for conservation. If government or arms length bodies were to talk to conservators they needed to know they were speaking to the representative organisation and vice versa. Eleven individual bodies came together in a forum called the National Council for Conservation-Restoration. The forum began to work on the formation of a single UK body. The task proved to be more challenging than anyone expected and, in 2005, five of the eleven converged to become Icon: Care of Collections Forum, Institute of Paper Conservation, Photographic Materials Conservation Group, Scottish Society for Conservation and Restoration, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation. No one should underestimate the achievement of successfully bringing people together, whether it was in 2005 or in 1950.

Earlier in this article I said the film is 'a timely reminder of our heritage'. This is because, in 2015, Icon will be celebrating its 10th anniversary. How better to do this than by holding another round of Conservation Awards. With the help of our new corporate sponsor, Beko, and their marketing team we have a fantastic opportunity to bring conservation to new audiences. One of the ways we are doing this is by developing a new award that will showcase the work that conservators do to help communities of volunteers preserve the things they care about. The idea is that these will provide stories that can be followed in the media and social media during the run up to the presentation event. Now, if we could just get George Clooney to present the Awards.....

THE CONSERVATION AWARDS

We hope you all saw the special Iconnect which went out in mid-February with more news about the Conservation Awards planned for 2015. In case you did not catch it or take it in, here are the main points.

Our new corporate sponsor is Beko plc, one of the world's largest suppliers of household appliances. As well as generously agreeing to support the next round of the Awards, Beko is also putting their name to a new Award for Conservation in the Community. In addition, a new partner, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE), has joined us with two new awards for the conservation of engineering heritage and our old friend The Anna Plowden Trust continues as a partner in the Awards, sponsoring their Award

for Research and Innovation in Conservation.

So in total there will be six awards:

- Award for Conservation
- Beko Award for Conservation in the Community
- Student of the Year Award
- Award for the Conservation of an Industrial Heritage Artefact
- Award for Volunteering in the Conservation of an Industrial Heritage Artefact
- Anna Plowden Trust Award for Research & Innovation in Conservation

The ceremony will take place in October 2015 and the year was chosen because it will be Icon's 10th anniversary and Beko's 25th year in the UK. The event will be held at the

Institution of Mechanical Engineers in Westminster, London.

There will be more information and application details to come in May this year when a press launch for the Awards will take place.

On a final note, we should thank Ian Clark ACR for his role in securing the funding for these Awards. He seems to be making a (most welcome) habit of it, as he was also instrumental in sourcing the funding for previous Awards rounds (see p.10 of January's Icon News People section).

MEMBERSHIP MANAGER UPDATE

With a small team like Icon's the loss of a member of staff always places a heavy burden on those remaining, so it is good to report that the process for filling the Membership Manager post is well underway. The job was advertised in February and interviews are taking place as you read this. So fingers crossed for a speedy appointment and the new Manager starting in the next month or two.

THE PATHWAY

Going from strength to strength!

Icon's PACR Pathway continues to gain momentum and there are now one hundred and fifty four full members enrolled on the Pathway – a really positive sign that accreditation is a key part of a member's professional development. This incentive offers members support towards accreditation to help address the needs at an individual level, with an Icon mentor for each Pathway member, as well as collectively with specific bulletins and opportunities to network.

The PACR Management Board and Icon's Professional Standards and Development (PSD) Committee have agreed that any full member looking to do accreditation – no matter how many years away that maybe – should be automatically enrolled on the Pathway – so that no one misses out. Of course you need to maintain your membership subscription in order to stay on the Pathway.

All of this cannot be achieved without the commitment of accredited members who train to be mentors to provide guidance for the mentored member. Of course, this also benefits their own professional development opportunities so it is a two-way gain for all those involved.

We do need more mentors to balance the demand and extra training sessions have been organised to increase the pool of mentors. The next mentor training day for those looking to be part of this initiative will be held in London on 30 April. Please go to the Accreditation section of the Icon website for further details.

Congratulations to Lizzie Neville, Icon Trustee and Director of PZ Conservation, who has successfully bid for Heritage Lottery Fund money to run eight traineeships in book and archive conservation over the next five years. Each post will have an eighteen month duration and the trainees will be registered for the Icon CTQ (Conservation Technician Qualification). Look out for more details on the Icon website.



Photo: Matt Wreford

Anna Zwagerman, HLF intern with National Trust Scotland 2012–13

MOVING AHEAD WITH INTERNSHIPS

It is Year 9 of the Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) project for internships. The final tranche of interns are currently being recruited, attracting nearly three hundred applicants for the twelve placements available. Specialisms include horology, modern materials, furniture and gilding, textiles, botanical materials, archives, books and preventive conservation. Hosts range from a single practitioner to a large museum setting – all providing support and a variety of opportunities to maintain skills and knowledge within the areas of their work.

We will be celebrating the work of those interns who completed their placements in October 2013 and April 2014 at an event in Manchester on 10 April. A full report will follow on the Icon website, via the Interns Bulletin and in Icon News.

Internships managed by Icon are also funded from other sources and these are fondly known as externally funded

Charlotte Gamper, EFP intern with Historic Royal Palaces 2012–13



Photo: Matt Wreford

placements (EFPs). These internships may be supported by grants from funders such as The Clothworkers' Foundation; some host organisations resource their own funded placements, whilst others build the opportunity for a conservation internship into an HLF project bid.

All of Icon's internships are modelled and managed in the same way – creating an ongoing legacy for our initial HLF project. Icon will continue to provide an internship programme and more detailed guidance will be available by early summer.

If you are at a stage in preparing a funding application and have the potential to include a paid internship placement, or need to discuss possible options to offer a placement opportunity – then please contact Susan Bradshaw, Professional Development Officer, sbradshaw@icon.org.uk

CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who sent in their responses to Icon's proposed new Code of Conduct, (See November's volume 1 of Iconnect) These responses kick-started the discussion at Icon's AGM, where further comments and concerns were raised. Your feedback has helped us to hone and improve the code and we have listened to you and taken on board that some changes need to be made, to add clarity and diffuse the overall tone of the code. Anyone wishing to catch up on the members' responses can do so by logging onto the members' section of the Icon website: www.icon.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2246

The ensuing revised draft of the code and member's declaration is now having a final read through by Icon's solicitor Steven Kempster of TaylorWessing and we hope that he will consider the changes we have made to be appropriate.

In June, once any adjustments have been made in the light of the solicitor's comments, we will seek sign off of the code and the declaration by the Icon Board of Trustees. The code and declaration will then be put online and members will be asked to vote on whether they approve the code or not. If approved, all members will be asked to sign the declaration, agreeing to abide by the code, at their next membership renewal in 2015.

Lizzie Neville, Chair, Code of Conduct working group

NEW ACRS

The Accreditation Committee approved the accreditation of fourteen new conservator-restorers at its meeting in February 2014

Congratulations to the following new ACRs:

Nigel Blades, preventive conservator

Julie Fleming Bon, preventive conservator

Sayaka Fukuda, book and archive conservator

Paul Gardener, paintings conservator

Claire-Louise Golbourn, textile conservator

Mel Houston, preventive conservator

Lynne Humphries, sculpture and architecture conservator

Frances Lunn, paper conservator

Alice Tate-Harte, paintings conservator

Andor Vince, collection care

Constantina Vlachou-Mogire, conservation scientist

Rosamund Jill Weatherall, textile conservator

Victoria West, book conservator

Constanze Zimmer, textile conservator

JOURNAL NEWS

As you will know if you have been reading Icon News diligently, over the past year a Task and Finish Group has been reviewing our sister publication the *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*.

The Group was set up by Icon's Board of Trustees in late 2012 to review the future development of the Journal in a way that will ensure its sustainability over the next five years and beyond. The time frame for the Group's work was defined by the need for the Board to decide by the end of this year (2014) whether to extend the contract with the Journal's current publishers.

The terms of reference of the Group can be found on the Icon website at icon.org.uk (then go to 'About Icon' and scroll to the bottom of the Committees page). The members of the Group were:

Lara Artemis, Chair of the Group and an Icon Trustee

Ylva Dahnsjö, Icon Trustee

Francis Downing, Paintings Group Chair & Groups Chair

Isabelle Egan, Book & Paper Group Chair

Heather Ravenberg, Book & Paper Group

Kostas Ntanos, Science Group Chair

Dr. Matija Strlic, Academic Advisor to the Group

Janet Berry, Editor of the *Journal*

In the course of its work the Task and Finish Group has reviewed the current workings of the Journal, how the Journal is used and viewed in the conservation profession, the rapidly changing publishing landscape, and exciting new developments in publishing. The Group met six times over the year, with four quorum meetings and two catch-ups on research needs.

Various streams of work were undertaken: you may remember the interesting analysis of the Journal's performance and content provided by its Editor Janet Berry in the September 2013 issue of Icon News. A survey of the membership on their use of conservation journals was also conducted and a very successful 'sounding-board' one-day workshop was held, which gave the Group the chance to discuss some of the research and gauge views from a selected group of Icon members and non-members. Other aspects examined were online and hard copy access and evaluating academic viability and authors' needs.

From all this work and more, a list of options for an improved, sustainable and 'fit for purpose' Journal service was developed with their attached risks and benefits, from which emerged a preferred option for consideration by Icon's Board of Trustees last December. Examining the viability of the proposal is now in process. This will involve investigating the financial viability, discussing potential changes to the Journal with members and with Icon Groups via their Group Chairs, and producing an action plan to take the Journal forward. In the meantime, the Journal will continue in its current format, with the next issue due out in March 2014.

INFORMATION FOR BENEFICIARIES

A valuable table of basic information about sources of funding for the heritage and crafts sector has been put together by the Heritage & Crafts Funders' Network (HCFN). This body brings together over twenty independent trusts and foundations which provide grants to the Heritage and Crafts sector; other types of funding bodies are also associated with it. Its activities are co-ordinated by Carole Milner, Adviser to the Radcliffe Trust, under whose aegis the Network was set up in 2011. As many of you will know, Carole also has deep roots in the world of conservation and is a co-opted Trustee of Icon.

Aware of the difficulties many organisations, particularly the smaller ones, face in fund-raising, HCFN is keen to improve grant-giving practice and support to the sector. It is with this mind that the table of information about each of the Network's members has been compiled. It covers such points as the total amount awarded each year, the size of the average grant, application deadlines and the specific area of giving. As such it provides a very useful first port of call for those seeking funding. A copy of the table can be found on the Icon website.

MANUSCRIPT CONSERVATION GRANTS

Deadline 1 April 2014

The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust offers grants for the conservation and preservation of manuscripts and archives. Since 1990 the grants have helped to make previously inaccessible collections available for study and research.

The next deadline for the submission of applications is **1 April 2014** and the results will be announced in July. If you want to plan ahead, the deadline after that is **1 October 2014**.

The NMCT welcomes grant applications from Record Offices, Museums, University Archives or Special Collections sections, Cathedral Archives and Libraries, as well as owners of manuscripts that are exempt from capital taxation or owned by a charitable trust. Grants can cover conservation, binding and other preservation measures, including digitisation (providing it is part of a wider conservation project). The significance of the collection that is the subject of a grant application and also the proposed conservation treatment are considered in detail. The National Archives provides an expert

opinion on all applications and this informs the Trustees' considerations.

Current recipients of NMCT grants include: Universities of Southampton, Glasgow and Edinburgh; Cornwall Record Office, Wisbech Museum, the East London Mosque Trust, Worcestershire Record Office, Flintshire Record Office, The Archives and Records Council of Wales and the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

Applications must be submitted on the NMCT application form, which you can download at www.nmct.co.uk. If, having consulted the website, you have any queries about whether your project is eligible etc please do contact Mrs Nell Hoare, who manages the Trust. You can contact her either through the NMCT website or at info@nmct.co.uk.

CONFERENCE FUNDING

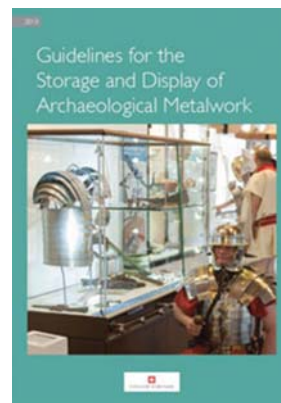
The Gabo Trust for sculpture conservation is currently offering bursaries for conservators to attend two international conferences:

- The ICOM-CC 17th Triennial Conference in Melbourne (15–19 Sept 2014). For further information, please see www.icom-cc2014.org. The application deadline is **30 June**.
- The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) Congress in Hong Kong (22–26 Sept 2014), on the theme *An Unbroken History: Conserving East Asian Works of Art and Heritage*. For further information, please see www.iiconservation.org/congress/2014hongkong. The application deadline is **7 July**.

All the relevant information can be found on the Gabo Trust website at www.gabotrust.org/scholarships/. No application will be considered from candidates who have been in receipt of a Gabo Trust grant within two years of the start date of the event.

EH PUBLICATIONS

A recent publication from English Heritage will be of interest to members: *Guidelines for the Storage and Display of Archaeological Metalwork* is available as a free pdf downloadable from www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/guidelines-storage-display-archaeological-metalwork/



The guidelines present strategies for preventive conservation and are intended for anyone involved in the storage and display of archaeological metals, including conservators, curators, archaeologists and museum assistants.

The publication includes an introduction to the reasons why metal objects require particular storage conditions, with detail on

the specific problems faced by each metal, based on the latest research. The guide also provides helpful advice for designing and implementing appropriate environmental controls when planning new storage or displays. A link is provided to the EH webpages where case studies illustrate the principles of the guide in action. A list of suppliers and sources of further information is similarly provided. With an authorship and advisory panel of Icon luminaries you can be sure its advice is expert and trustworthy.

It may also be timely to remind readers of a slightly older EH publication first written in 2004 and revised in 2010: *Flooding and Historic Buildings*. Also a free download, the guidance is designed to assist those who live in, own or manage historic buildings that together with their historic fixtures and fittings are threatened by periodic flooding. Advice is provided on preventative measures to minimise flood damage as well as on the inspection, conservation and repair of historic buildings after flooding. Sources of further information and advice are listed at the end of the guidance.

CALL FOR INFORMATION

IPAD and Condition Reports

Recently Historic Royal Palaces has decided to investigate the use of IPAD tablets to conduct on site condition reports. We have completed trials using one of the State beds in the collection but we think that we may be able to develop the concept for a range of objects on permanent display.

After an initial study, we elected to use AutoCAD 360 software to run our trials but we also are interested in knowing if other organizations are using IPAD and tablets and which programmes might be working for them.

We would like to discuss our findings with other institutions who are also looking at (or already using) these technologies and would be interested to hear about your experiences of digital reporting tools.

Please contact me or Karen Ayers on 020 3166 6463 with any comments, or email rebecca.schult@hrp.org.uk

Rebecca Schult

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Concerning the decision by Icon to close down the Chantry Library I wanted to let you know that I was appalled by the announcement and what it tells us about the values of an organisation supposedly dedicated to preservation, by the implied disrespect for scholarship and the memory of an eminent conservator. Whenever I have made use of the library, I have found it accessible, friendly and a serene working environment. Because the library offers photocopying and scanning, it often isn't even necessary to visit in person, although that is always a pleasure.

Since its inauguration I always had in mind to offer my own collection of conservation literature, which includes some rare, valuable and foreign language publications, to the library, when I no longer have need of it. I saw this as a way of

extending the library's holdings further into the area of paintings conservation, and as a way of reciprocating the generosity of making Judith Chantry's own collection available to us all. Clearly, neither I nor anyone else will feel inclined to do this if there is no evidence of a commitment on the part of our professional organisation to maintain the library's existence into the future.

I await further developments with interest.

Ruth Bubb ACR

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Book & Paper Group

I write as the incoming Chair of the committee, but many of you will know me from my former roles on the committee, first as Student Liaison Officer and then as Sub-editor. Under my new 'hat', the committee will be meeting for the first time this year to discuss past issues and future challenges, by planning strategy and brainstorming ideas for new ways to represent the professional needs of our Group members. It does not, of course, only have to be the committee that sets the agenda for these discussions: Book & Paper Group members are always welcome to contact us with ideas, suggestions, rants and moans. I am happy to take your emails at isabelle.egan@ntlworld.com and look forward to hearing from you.

We have two committee members leaving us in this month. Victoria Stevens, our outgoing Deputy Chair, was also the first Chair of our Co-operative Training Register (CTR), and steered the CTR through its successful beginnings. Victoria also organised and hosted the superb Book & Paper Group sessions for the 'Positive Futures 2013' conference.

Sadly, we will also be losing our present Interim CTR Chair, Amelia Rampton, who, among many other courses, was latterly responsible for the hugely successful recent course, 'Innovations in Conservation Mounting of Works on Paper'. Due to a generous donation from the Clare Hampson Fund, the Group was able to offer this three-day course for an amazing price.

Anna Johnson, who has been providing maternity cover for the post of committee Secretary, will be moving into the post of Sub-editor. Anna can be contacted at annalouisejohnson@gmail.com and will be happy to discuss proposals for book and paper contributions to Icon News or The Gathering.

We will shortly be issuing a call for applications for the posts of Secretary, CTR Chair, IT Officer and Special Projects Officer. Elections will take place in March, and the results will be announced at the B&PG AGM on 31 March or shortly after. If you are interested or would like to discuss any of these roles prior to application, please feel free to contact me at the same email address above.

Isabelle Egan

Book & Paper Group Chair

Don't forget the Nigel Williams Prize 2014!

Deadline for all entries 30 April 2014

For all details regarding the prize, conditions and how to apply please see the Icon website www.icon.org.uk (Under: Groups/Ceramic&Glass/Nigel Williams Prize)

Or contact the Co-ordinator:
ronaldpile37@btinternet.com



Co-operative Training Register update

The Co-operative Training Register (CTR) continues with a very active programme of lectures and workshops, and we are very pleased to welcome two new members to our sub-committee: Maartje Schalkx and Sarai Vardi, who are joining a dynamic team made up of Amy Junker Heslip, Fiona McLees, Francesca Whymark, Françoise Richard, Melissa Lewis and Sayaka Fukuda.

Our winter season has been very busy, with four short workshops led by Annika Erikson on the use of Artcheck, an app created to facilitate condition-reporting of art works. We have also organised a five-day workshop at the British Library, 'Recreating the Mediaeval Palette', led by Cheryl Porter, and there will be a review of this in the May edition of Icon News.

There is also a very full programme ahead.

The Group's next AGM is on 31 March and it will feature the Clare Hampson Memorial Lecture, sponsored by the Clare Hampson Scholarship Trust. The aim of this lecture series is to showcase significant science research projects in conservation, and our guest speaker will be Dr Matija Strlič, Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Sustainable Heritage at University College London. Matija's topic will be 'The Sweet Smell of Decay', and the lecture starts at **6:00pm** at the Art Workers' Guild in Central London (please note the change of time). There will be a drinks reception afterwards and everyone is welcome. If you would like to come, please register via iconbpgctr@gmail.com (registration is required for catering purposes).

On 2-3 April, there will be a workshop at Camberwell School of Arts Conservation Studios on 'The Use of Vacuum in Paper Conservation' led by Alan Buchanan. This workshop ran last year and we are holding it again by popular demand.

We are also organising several other events: 'Light and Display: Colour Change and Light Sensitivity', a two-day workshop and a lecture in Cambridge, presented by Christel Pesme; and 'Removal of Pressure Sensitive Tapes and Tape Stains', led by Linda Stiber Morenus and Elissa O'Loughlin. Details about these courses will be available soon on The Gathering (www.thebookandpapergathering.org) and via Iconnect.

Under Amy Junker Heslip's leadership, we are also moving ahead with the organisation of a two-day international conference for the spring of 2015 entitled: 'Adapt & Evolve: East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Paper Conservation'. We'll be putting out a call for contributions, papers and posters in due course, so do keep an eye out for this!

As I have mentioned before, if you would like us to organise an event on a topic that you are interested in, we will be more than happy to discuss it with you. Please also do remember that you can either request training, or indeed offer to deliver training, via the Book & Paper Group section of the Icon website site, under 'Training (CTR)'.

Finally, as I am stepping down as Interim chair of the CTR, I would like to thank both the members of the Book & Paper

Group committee and the Group members more generally for making my time on the committee an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Amelia Rampton ACR, MSc
Interim CTR Chair

Ceramics and Glass Group York 16-17 May 2014

'Tape and pillage. Interventive treatments in a preventive climate': You can still book your place on our next two day conference! It will be held in one of England's most beautiful and historically rich cities. The conference aims to reveal in the variety of interventive treatments and the ethical decisions that accompany these within our profession, regardless of whether we work alone, in private practice or in large institutions.

Tours of various historically significant buildings and collections are planned for Friday 16 May, including the National Trust's Treasurer's House – a town house with a 2,000 year history, a behind the scenes look at York Art Gallery and York Glaziers Trust and a walking tour. This will be followed by a conference dinner and then a full day of talks and posters on Saturday 17 May.

The cost for Icon Members is £125, for Student Members £90 and for non-members £200. Please visit our group page on the Icon website for further details, the programme and booking form. Hurry as booking closes on April 11.

Nigel Williams Prize

This year's Nigel Williams Prize will be awarded at the conference dinner on Friday 16 May.

The bi-annual Prize is the result of the collaboration between Nigel Williams' family and the Icon Ceramics and Glass Group. It was created to serve both as a memorial to Nigel's work and to encourage continuing high standards within the profession generally. The Winner receives £1000, together with a 'virtual' presentation of a gilded ceramic copy of the Portland Vase (kindly donated by Wedgwood and kept on permanent display in the Wedgwood Museum).

In addition, and at the judges' discretion, a Secondary Prize of £400 may be awarded to any application considered to be a close runner-up.

For an application completed while the applicant is still a full-time student, a Student Prize worth £250 has recently been made available.

The application deadline for the award is Monday 14 April 2014. For further details refer to our group page on the Icon website or contact the Nigel Williams Prize Co-ordinator Ronald Pile by email ronaldpile37@btinternet.com

AGM

Our AGM will be held during the York conference and all papers relating to this will be available on our Group page two weeks prior to the event. There will be some changes to our committee. I will be stepping down after almost six years on the committee and we will also be welcoming in a new Secretary, Treasurer and Student Graduate Representative.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have been on the committee with me over the last six years – it has been a real pleasure and our yearly conference and workshops would not have been possible without the enthusiastic and tireless help from those who volunteer their time to work on this committee. I hope to see you all again in the near future.

Kathleen Swales

Metals Group

The Metals Group Committee welcomes a new member: Sue Renault, Chief Conservator, History & Archaeology, at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.

Our November 2013 conference, '*Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoats: Protective Surface Finishes for Metals*', was very well attended and received positive feedback from delegates. Thank you to our speakers and delegates for making it such a success! Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for announcements about upcoming events.

At our autumn AGM our Chair, Frances Keating, stepped down and Nicola Emmerson was elected as her successor.

The following message is from Fran:

It is with a tangible sense of melancholy that after eight years of involvement with the Icon Metals Group, two and a half of those as Chair, I am now taking my bow and stepping down from the committee. It's been a truly wonderful experience that has been immensely enjoyable and rewarding. I'll undoubtedly miss the involvement in organising events, conferences and study days, but equally I will very much miss my fellow committee members, past and present, who I have had the privilege to sit alongside. You know who you are and how highly I think of you all! An incredibly sincere thank you is extended to you for the friendship you have shown me over the years.

As I resign the chairmanship of the Metals Group I am very pleased to announce that committee member Nicola Emmerson was elected to replace me as Chair at the recent AGM. Nicola is a fully qualified, experienced conservator

currently undertaking PhD research in collaboration with Historic Scotland at the University of Cardiff, whilst also being a distance learning tutor for the 'Chemistry for Conservators' course. She also regularly presents papers at all the major conservation conferences. The Metals Group will undoubtedly benefit from her wealth of knowledge and I'm sure she will make a fantastic Chair.

All the very best to the Metals Group members for all your support of both our events and me personally over the last few years. I'm genuinely grateful, and I look forward to seeing you all at future events from the 'punter's' side of proceedings. Step aside, Elvis, so Franny can leave the building!

Frances Keating
Outgoing Chair

Paintings Group

We would like to remind everybody of the Call For Papers issued for the upcoming Paintings Group Annual Conference, to be held on Friday 10 October 2014 at the Wallace Collection in London. The title is '*Modern Conservation: What's New?*'. We are seeking papers that address research, professional standards and materials testing in relation to modern conservation issues. The deadline for the receipt of abstracts is 31 March; full details are to be found under the Events section on the Icon website.

Our next Paintings Group evening talk will be on the evening of Wednesday 16 April 2014. Rica Jones, Paintings Conservator in private practice, will discuss the techniques and practices of the 18th century British artist Allan Ramsay. This event will take place in our usual venue of Freemason's Hall, 60 Great Queen St, London. Please see the Events page on the Icon website for further information and details of how to book.

Paintings conservators Michael Correia (MA, Northumbria University 2007) and Jemma Edwards (MA, Northumbria University 2012) have both recently become involved with the Paintings Group Committee, and subject to voting at the AGM held on the 27 February, they will be joining the Information And Publicity Sub-Committee.

Please feel free to email the Icon Paintings Group with any ideas or suggestions.

The Icon Paintings Group
icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com

Textile Group

The committee are looking forward to seeing many of you at the Forum, 'Joined up Thinking: Textiles and the Historic Interior' held at Birkbeck College on 31 March.

The day after, 1 April, there is a visit to Proportion London Mannequin makers. This is an exciting opportunity to view their factory and showroom.

Looking ahead, two back to basics workshops are being planned for later in the year on plastics and upholstery. Details will be on the website and Iconnect as soon as they are finalised.



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Helen Hughes

17- 20 November

For more information on all the courses in the programme
please contact: Course Organiser, West Dean College,
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CHARTERED STATUS FOR IFA

Congratulations to the Institute for Archaeologists! The Institute's petition for a Royal Charter was granted at a meeting of the Privy Council last month. Although many formalities have yet to be completed, the decision is a great endorsement of the role of archaeologists.

IfA successfully made the case to the Privy Council that archaeology is a clear and distinct discipline working in the public interest by establishing that its accredited members subscribe to an ethical code of conduct, have demonstrated their competence and made a commitment to developing their skills through Continuing Professional Development, and are subject to the oversight of their peers. IfA was also able to demonstrate that it has robust and fair processes for accrediting individuals and organisations, for measuring compliance with standards and for investigating allegations of unprofessional practice.

We wish the Institute well with its new status and hope that it brings strengthened influence and, in the words of its Chief Executive, 'the best possible opportunity to increase the effectiveness of our campaign to enhance the status of archaeology and archaeologists, to raise standards of archaeological practice and so to give yet better service to clients and the public'.

CXD NEWS

Conservation By Design (CXD) has recently acquired the Archival Aids brand, a range of specialist products for the treatment, repair and preservation of paper, manuscripts, books, leather and metals. CXD will continue to stock the full range of Archival Aids materials and treatment equipment and, according to the company's Managing Director, is 'looking forward to developing the product range further to meet the needs of archivists and conservators around the world'.

FLOOD ALERT!

A timely product has come our way, which is advertising in Icon News for the first time in this issue. Thermocable, a Bradford-based company, has devised a remote, wire free module which can detect escaping water and send out an alert. So you can be anywhere in the world and receive a text message from the Thermocable module, via a Cloud platform, advising you that water or steam is escaping at a specific location and enabling you to take action to prevent or to minimise resultant damage.

This was the experience of a North Cheshire primary school recently when its boiler gave trouble over the weekend. The module detected steam coming from overheating water at the school and immediately sent a text alert to seven staff members, enabling the faulty boiler to be turned off. The early warning not only averted a flood risk but also prevented scalding hot water pouring through the school's taps on the following Monday morning.

The high-tech device has a twelve month battery life working

round the clock and it can be placed almost anywhere and re-located at will. Work is now in hand at Thermocable to make the system even more pro-active so that, if required, it can communicate with a wireless solenoid valve to switch off a flow of water.

The possible application to property or assets in locations such as galleries, museums and historic houses are clear and the device is being used by the Institute of Education at the University of London to protect valuable archive materials from the risk of water damage.

SCULPTURE CONSERVATION AWARD

Amongst the several sculpture awards sponsored annually by the Marsh Christian Trust and administered by the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association (PMSA) is the Marsh Award for Excellence in Conservation of a Public Sculpture or Fountain.

The award is offered for the conservation treatment or repair of an existing work in a public place within the last two years. It is intended to commend craft and professional skills, reflecting a core activity of the PMSA and an essential aspect of guardianship.

The deadline for receiving nominations is **30 April** and the application form can be downloaded from the PMSA website: www.pmsa.org.uk/marsh-award/marsh-awards-2014/. The award may be won outright or shared and will be presented at a ceremony in London in November.

Inside the tent

Kenneth Aitchison, Icon's Skills Strategy Manager and a non-conservator, reflects on two years of working for Icon



Photo: Matt Wireford

I was appointed as an Icon employee at the start of 2012; while my background is in cultural heritage and I previously worked for another professional association, despite owning a copy of *First Aid for Finds* since 1994, I am not and have never been a conservator.

Thinking about conservation

Let me generalise. Conservators are lovely. They are welcoming and positively minded people, who sincerely believe that their work is 'a

good thing'. However, because they have been appointed by their peers, the social patterns of the group are reinforced by like appointing like. With conservation being such a small sector, this has resulted in conservators being drawn from a very narrow social spectrum – let's call it 'middle class'.

A very small pool of Higher Education Institutions produce graduates who then become conservators and, despite more than token efforts, this is still the only significant route in. And the kind of student sponsors – let's call them 'parents' – who are likely to encourage and support young people in following what is fundamentally a liberal arts academic path are, again, from a very limited social spectrum. So – conservators come from one social background and have shared worldviews; this can lead to solidarity of approach, but it can also become a groupthink mindset which makes it difficult for the sector to identify potential external disruptions before they have had adverse effects.

Thinking about Icon

What does Icon want to be? As a registered charity, with all its associated benefits (access to particular funding streams, exemption from corporation tax etc.), the Institute has a fine set of charitable objects but they are not those of a professional association; they are pretty close to the generic objects of a learned society. With these legally binding objects the organisation has to focus on finding ways to advance the education of the public and to preserve and conserve items. So the primary target cannot actually be to promote conservation as a profession (acting as a professional association). This can be done as a roundabout way to meet the charitable objectives, but it is not the 'prime directive'.

What do we want from a professional association? In a blog from 2006 Nina Simon* thinks that 'there are three basic reasons to be part of a professional association: to learn, to network, and to get a job'. Icon offers learning opportunities, best of all those focussed on career progression, such as the PACR Pathway. And for many members the status conferred by accreditation is a way to get or retain a job, as many posts require accreditation.

While conservators might be good at networking, Icon isn't actually very strong in terms of providing networking opportunities. Some Groups do provide good,

specialist-focussed opportunities to meet other conservators with common interests but Icon's full, national conference only lasts for two days and only takes place every three years; and, like Nina Simon, many conservators will want to have an opportunity to 'feel that I am getting a deeper, more substantive learning experience than just swapping war stories'.

Icon operates in a difficult environment. There is a lack of shared corporate culture and still some lingering hangovers from pre-convergence, such as Groups that still operate separate bank accounts. And, unfortunately, there is a lack of clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of members, committees, trustees and staff, and how all of these parts of the organisation interact and report. This can lead to design and micromanagement by committee, so that Icon is not agile and is risk-averse.

Lastly, we are not very good at communicating our message. While Icon News is splendid, the website is not. The Conservation Register is and should be central, but it is not easily used, accessed or applied – a steady stream of enquirers, who do not (or cannot) use the site, phone the Icon office to ask how they can find a conservator.

Conclusions

The first, best thing about Icon is the number of individuals who are members. Most professional conservators are members and so, therefore, the sector values the Institute. Together we are strong. Or rather, we could be strong.

The biggest weakness of conservation is that conservators don't charge enough for their services. If clients don't want to pay more, then that work won't get done, will it ...? Undercharging leads to undervaluing conservators' work and under-rewarding professionals. To improve the way that conservation can charge will require better management, and that's a nettle that individuals and Icon need to grasp. Unfortunately, with such a small market for conservation services there is little competition and therefore less of a driver for better quality management; building the market by promoting the value of professionally skilled and qualified conservators would be a route to increased competition and so to better management.

Icon does deliver against its charitable objectives and can continue to provide a continuously improving service to the public and to its members. Icon can strengthen and support conservation and conservators by building on what we already have to ensure that conservation gets done by qualified and accredited conservators. Icon can still deliver everything it is already doing with a degree of refocusing to become a central information hub or portal for conservation: the vital reference point for finding out information about how to become a conservator (entry level learning), how to conserve cultural heritage (continuing professional development) and how to procure the services of a suitable conservator, who can then charge appropriately (building the market).

*<http://museumtwo.blogspot.co.uk/2006/12/professional-associations-where-are.html>

The new trustees



Iain Boyd has been a Guardian and Trustee on the Executive of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) for the last four years. In that time he has served on the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee and was part of the team responsible for recruiting the Director and other senior posts. He is currently also Chair of the SPAB's Communications and Advisory Group which has been responsible for the relaunch of the Society's Magazine as well as a drive into online media. He holds other trustee and governance positions in education and with the Samaritans.

Iain holds a first degree in Psychology and a MSc in Conservation of the Historic Environment. He originally worked in banking followed by a career in advertising and television, working for J Walter Thompson and independently for Channel 4. From 1996, he worked in emerging new media, founding and developing several new media businesses including Intermedia UK and publishing group C-stream. Following the sale of principal title Global Treasury News in 2006, he removed himself from the everyday running of business to concentrate on voluntary roles and the heritage and conservation sector in particular.



Nigel Dacre is a digital entrepreneur, TV journalist and broadcast executive and has worked at board level in a number of companies and organisations. His television career started as a BBC News Trainee, followed by two years as a regional journalist in Bristol. From 1996 to 2002, he was the Editor of ITV News, in charge of news programmes such as News at Ten and the ITN News Channel.

From 2003 to 2007, he worked with Ten Alps plc, as the founder CEO of Teachers TV, a Non-Executive Director of Education Digital Ltd, the launch director of Kent TV, and the Managing Director of Ten Alps Digital.

He is the CEO and owner of Inclusive Digital, which he founded in 2007. The company specialises in video production and website development. He is also Director of its subsidiary Local Digital News, and a Non-Executive Director of Notts TV – a local TV Freeview channel, which is launching in Nottingham next month.

Nigel has a long standing interest in UK history, and is currently Editor of the First World War Centenary News website.



Caroline Peach gained an MA in paper conservation from Camberwell College of Arts and completed an internship in the Care of Collections based at London Metropolitan Archives, followed by work in conservation and collection care at Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Oxford.

In 2002 she joined the UK Institute for Conservation (UKIC) to re-develop the Conservation Register. She transferred to the newly created 'Icon' to work in roles involving communication and awareness-raising until 2008. She acted as Icon's interim Chief Executive for six months in 2008.

Caroline joined the British Library in 2009 as Head of the Preservation Advisory Centre where she re-developed the training programme and guidance information, and updated the five-year overview of the state of preservation in libraries and archives across the UK and Ireland. In August 2013 she set up her own consultancy business and now works with a range of organisations focusing on long-term policy and planning issues. Caroline is a member of the recently established Archive Accreditation Committee and a member of the Scottish Council on Archives preservation and conservation working group.



Pierrette Squires ACR is the Conservator for Bolton Library and Museum Service. She also acts as an accreditation and CTQ mentor and an intern supervisor. She is actively involved with the Green Museums Group and runs the North West Conservators Group. After university graduation, Pierrette pursued conservation training on UCL's three year MA & MSc programme at the Institute of Archaeology, including a year with Oxford University Museums – the Pitt Rivers and the Ashmolean. She took up the post of Conservation Technician at Bolton Museum in 2004 and was appointed to the post of Conservator in 2006.

Her special interests include sustainability, preventive conservation, conservation ethics and collections management. Originally specialising in the ethical care of human remains, whilst at the Pitt Rivers she contributed to work advising on the government White Paper on the Care of Human Remains. Outside of conservation she is passionate about the environment and usually works with Glastonbury festival's recycling team, combining her love of music with sustainability. She also Morris dances and skates with a local Roller Derby team.



Chris Sutton has a background in finance with over twenty years' experience in investment. Chris graduated from the University of Kent with a degree in Actuarial Science and qualified as a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries in 1993. He worked for fourteen years in the investment division of Barclays where he was responsible for global fund management teams, the capital markets business and latterly was Chief Executive of iShares plc. Chris then joined Towers Watson as senior investment consultant working on risk management and starting their global funds business.

Chris is currently studying Theology at the South-East Institute for Theological Education in Southwark prior to becoming an ordained minister in the Church of England. He is a founder member of the FTSE4good Policy Committee, a keen birdwatcher and lifelong West Ham United fan.



Adam Webster ACR studied English and Related Literature at the University of York, and after working as a conservation technician at the Wallace Collection, trained as an easel paintings conservator at the Courtauld Institute of Art. He has since worked at English Heritage, the Victoria and Albert Museum and in private studios as a paintings conservator. Moving to Wales in 2010 he became Chief Conservator, Art, at National Museum Wales, and Chief Conservator, Art and Natural Sciences, in 2013.

He has been a mentor and assessor for PACR for several years and has enjoyed working with numerous conservation students and recent graduates on a wide range of projects in the studios he has managed.

Adam became a member of Icon's Professional Standards and Development Committee (PSD) in 2013 and has been a member of the Conservation Awards Screening Panel and Conservation Register Advisory Board in the past. He is particularly interested in the development of practical conservation skills in the workplace.

The Cheapside Hoard

An amazing jewellery collection, buried in the seventeenth century, is prepared for exhibition by Catherine Nightingale, Conservator of Applied Arts at the Museum of London

Just over one hundred years ago, during the demolition of a late 17th century building on Cheapside a few hundred metres from St Paul's and a short walk from the current Museum of London, workmen digging through a cellar floor discovered what would turn out to be the most important cache of Elizabethan and Jacobean gems and jewellery ever found. Through a convoluted series of events and influence from several key figures, the majority of what came to be known as the Cheapside Hoard was passed to the then London Museum.

Mystery continues to surround the hoard; the fact that the property it was found in was known to be a goldsmith's in the late 16th/early 17th century suggests that the objects were a jeweller's stock-in-trade, but why it was buried and never retrieved can only be guessed at. Recent research by the curator would imply that it was buried sometime between 1640 and the Great Fire but whether the owner was a victim of the plague, the Civil War, the Fire, or simply returning abroad is a matter for speculation.

The current exhibition at the Museum of London presents the hoard in its entirety for the first time since its initial unveiling to the public in 1914, including pieces which were given to the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. The full range of objects can be appreciated, from rings to rock crystal vessels, cameos to long chains, loose gems to fan holders. There are groups of very similar objects, such as the fifteen emerald rings; others are unique, such as the watch set in a single emerald or the bejewelled scent bottle. The gems, many unset, come from all over the world; emeralds from Columbia, moonstones and sapphires from Sri Lanka, diamonds and garnets from India, to name but a few. One of

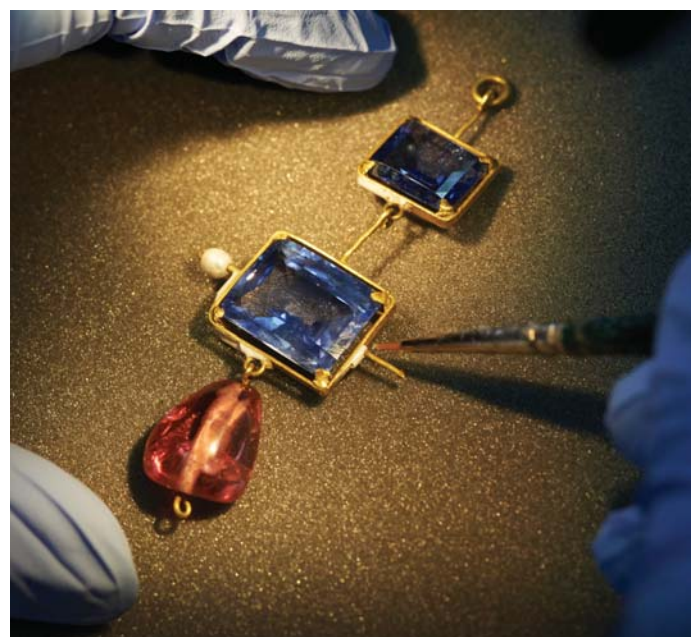
the features of the jewellery in the hoard is the very delicate and detailed enamel work, often originally covering most of the gold settings.

Conservation

Many of the key pieces had been previously on display in the Museum and had, therefore, been conserved in the past. Most of the rest had obviously been cleaned to a certain extent and some had signs of repairs, although there are frustratingly no records of any treatments in the hoard's early life post discovery. It was known at the start of the conservation process that there was likely to be an increase in the handling of the collection, both by internal curatorial staff and by invited researchers and experts. In addition, many 'exclusive access' press and sponsor events were planned in the build-up to the opening, involving showing a range of the objects. Although these were strictly controlled by the Conservation and Collection Care department, it was felt that there would still be an increased risk of damage to the objects which had to be considered when choosing suitable treatments.

The initial part of the conservation process involved ensuring that each object had its own individual polystyrene ('Crystal') box with Plastazote cut-out or acid-free tissue support to minimise contact with it during viewing.

Consolidation of the enamel coating



© Museum of London

Some rings from the Cheapside Hoard



© Museum of London



© Museum of London

Chains from the Hoard showing delicate enamel work

Cleaning

Some further cleaning was carried out to remove remaining soil obscuring details and gems, but the decision was made to retain small areas of soil in crevices to leave some sense of the history of the objects. Cleaning was done under a microscope with fine brushes or tiny swabs, made slightly damp with deionised water.

Cleaning of all the cut gem stones was carried out to remove numerous fingerprints; some of the cuts of the stones are remarkable and can be much better appreciated with better light reflection on the objects. This was achieved easily with barely damp swabs using a mixture of deionised water and a little IMS. However, the process was very time-consuming and raises the question of whether the benefit of wearing gloves outweighs the slight loss in sensitivity during handling compared to bare fingers.

Consolidation

The main conservation concern with most objects was the fragility of the enamel. Most of the vitreous material appeared chemically stable but physically was very vulnerable to damage. It is probable that many of the losses visible on the pieces occurred during burial, but small chips were still becoming detached during handling, especially where the underlying gold had distorted or where the nature of the objects meant that handling was difficult; some of the chains segments are over two metres long.

Consolidation of most of the more damaged enamel was

Installing one of the emerald grape pendants



© Museum of London



Steel hoop with hanging pendants

undertaken as it was felt that the risk of further damage during research and installation was quite high. Generally a 5% solution of Paraloid B72 in acetone was used, applied by capillary action to cracks and break edges. This has proved to be successful; during the complicated mounting processes no further enamel losses occurred.

Consolidation was also deemed necessary for many of the surviving pearls as they were in a very fragile state having degraded quite severely during burial, resulting in a laminating, chalky appearance typical of degraded specimens. Many had not survived at all; on one chain, the curator calculated that where only five seed pearls remain, there are settings for over three hundred. Most of the pearl pendant cages have several remaining pearls and, in each

Tying a chain to its mount



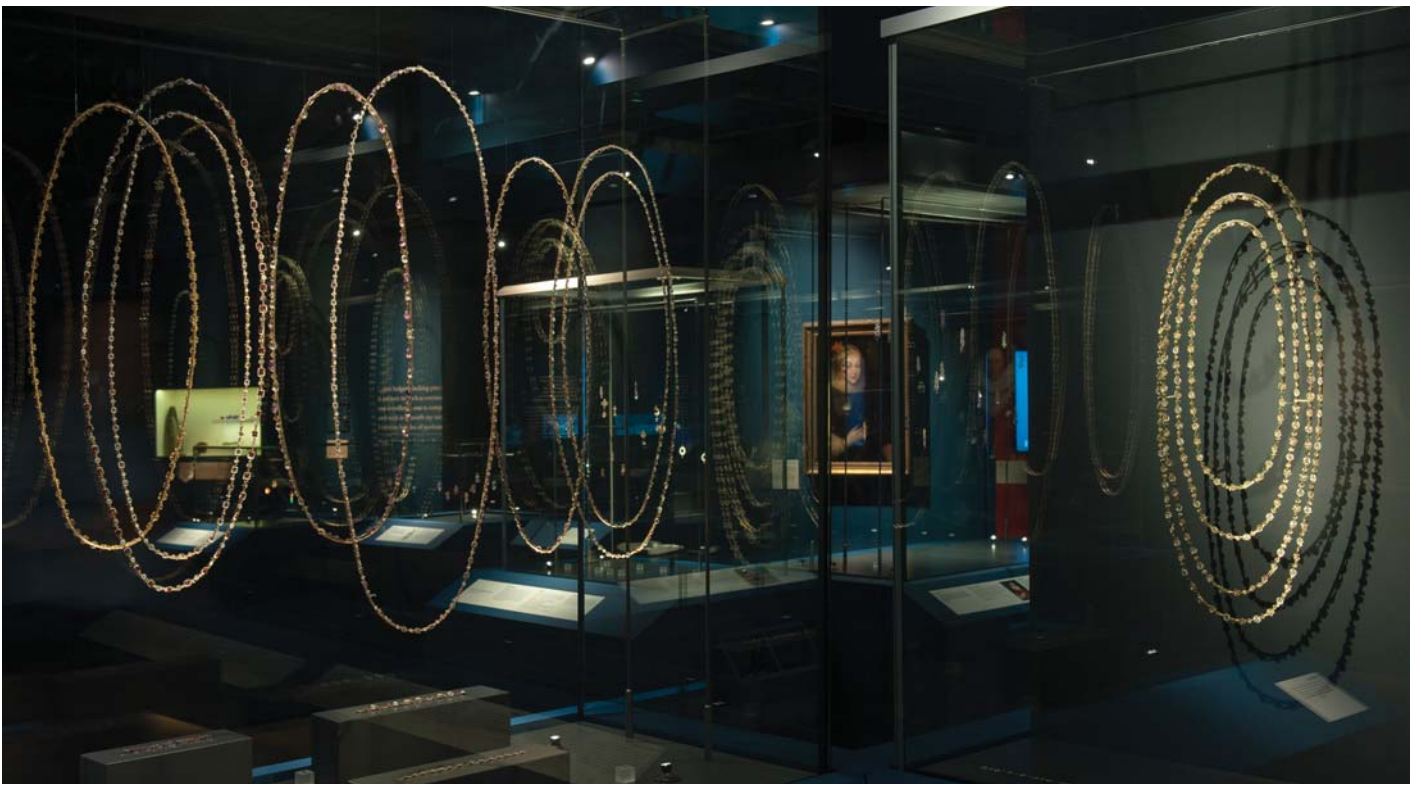
case, one or two were left untreated to facilitate any future analysis.

Mounting

From the initial planning meetings of the project, we stressed the importance of devising mounts and supports for the objects which would not detract from the minute detail and evident skilled craftsmanship, but which would provide adequate support for very fragile items. The small scale of the objects made this a real challenge, creating the risk that the mount would become more dominant than the object.

The curator was keen that, as far as possible, the objects should be displayed in the way in which they were thought to have been worn. This led to the decision to try to suspend as many of the pendant-style objects as possible in a manner which one of the Museum curators had noted in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden. In their *Archaeology of the Netherlands* gallery, they had used nylon fishing wire to hang objects in rows from metal bars spanning the width of the case, in some instances with several rows in one case. Since the original suspension loops on most of the Cheapside objects are robust, it was agreed that this would be a suitable method for display as it would also avoid putting pressure on parts of the object which may be more delicate.

Prototypes were created during which it was discovered that a double thread of wire – passing the thread through the loop and hanging from both ends, as opposed to tying a knot above the object and suspending from a single thread – was effective at preventing the objects from spinning. Any slight movement was advantageous as it helped the light catch the facets of the cut stones. Orientation of objects with a distinguishable front and back was achieved by passing the nylon thread through holes drilled in the steel suspension bar or, alternatively, by winding the thread round the bar, depending on whether the object's top suspension loop was perpendicular to the bar or parallel. A double surgeon's knot



Some of the chains suspended on display

was used to secure the nylon thread at the top.

This method of display has proved to be extremely effective, especially for groups of similar objects such as the amethyst and emerald grape pendants. Suspended in rows at varying heights, the visitor is given the idea of duplicate objects which the hoard contains, whilst at the same time being able to see the details on the objects. With successful lighting, the objects appear to float in mid-air. However, the installation was time-consuming and painstaking, requiring pairs of conservators – one to hold the object while the other threaded the wire through the hole in the suspension bar and tied the knot. The potential limited life span of nylon, particularly under bright light, was not felt to be an issue for a short-term display.

Chains

The chains in the Hoard posed particular problems due to their length and fragility. We wanted to find a way of echoing the suspended objects elsewhere, as well as giving an idea of how they would have been worn whilst still enabling the craftsmanship (often just as fine on the reverse) to be seen. Thick brass wire was cut to the same length as each chain, coated with shrink wrap plastic sleeving and soldered into a loop. The chains were then attached by tying at regular intervals through the links and round the wire using cotton thread, slightly paler in colour than the gold of the object. The mounted objects could then be hung from the steel bars by tying with nylon fishing wire at two points either side of the loop.

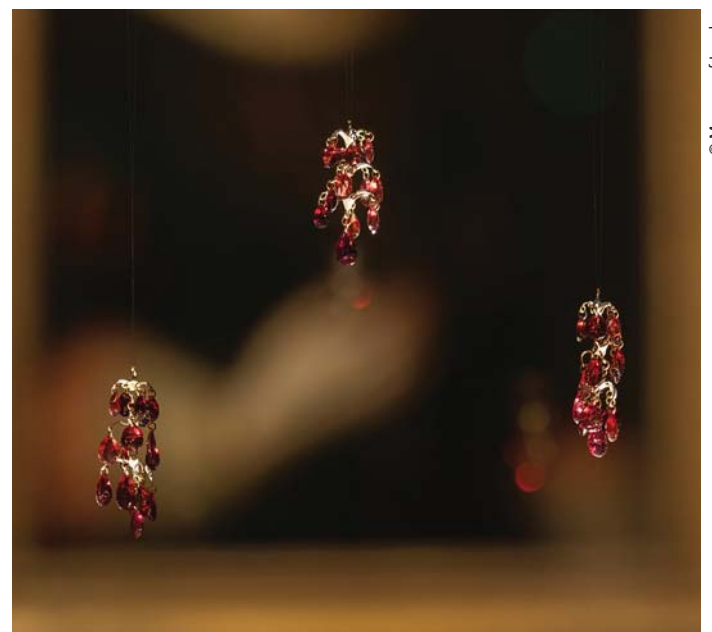
Each of the sixteen chains took a conservator around two day's work to attach to the supports, with several days to suspend the mounted objects in the cases. The longer chains required double or triple loops of wire, often needing additional supports between the wires. The result is very effective and was a very controllable way of mounting the objects; each could be done in the conservation lab under a microscope and, once attached to the wire, was much easier

to handle avoiding the risk of damage to the enamel through folds in the chain. It has also enabled the reverse of some of the chains to be seen, revealing the detailed enamel work.

The Cheapside Hoard, London's Lost Jewels is on display at the Museum of London until 27 April 2014.

The Cheapside Hoard: London's Lost Jewels by Hazel Forsyth (ISBN 9871781 300206) is available through the Museum website (www.museumoflondon.org.uk) where you can also view parts of the exhibition on the YouTube video of the exhibition opening.

Garnet pendants



Paisley's Grand Fountain

As the project continues, Jim Mitchell ACR gives us a lesson in iron corrosion, casting and coating (and some geology for good measure)

Work on the Paisley Fountain has now entered an interesting and informative phase – not without its problems, however. The castings date from 1867 and some of those which have stood immersed in water or soil have suffered deep moisture penetration. More will be said on this later.

When coatings have failed or the detail has become heavily obscured by many layers of failing paint on external cast iron structures, there is little alternative to cleaning back to bare metal. There is much debate about the best way to clean and, as important, seal the bared cast iron. New 19th century iron castings were often doused when very hot with linseed oil, which was drawn into the surface of the iron and prevented gingering or flash rusting before it could be painted. This was in fact a layer of polymerised fat; just as you would get by seasoning a raw cast iron skillet. Any gingering (hematite) was converted to black rust or magnetite. As the paints were then largely linseed oil based, the first coat of red lead suffused

nicely with the oiled iron surface. This practice fell out of favour as coatings became more 'sophisticated.'

Nowadays when coatings are removed by blasting we are exposing the iron in the same way as it came out of the mould after casting but we rarely fill and seal the iron as effectively or as quickly – or it might be argued, as wisely. The porosity in iron is down to tiny gas bubbles rising to the surface as the iron cools, leaving a way in for moisture and its entrapment under subsequent coatings. Many modern coatings for external use are sophisticated and specialised; formulated for use on steel which does not have any significant porosity issues. The loss of that 'flexible' saturation coat at conservation has meant that moisture is more readily trapped under a very hard layer but the key to the surface is less tenacious. Many coatings manufacturers see all ferrous metals as the same thing, so beware!

The Grand Fountain, about thirty years into its life. The original finish is dulling but still rich. Note the translucent effect on the columns





New corrosion erupting after dry blast cleaning. Note the black spots

Going back to our fountain parts: after rigorous paint sampling the parts have been blast-cleaned dry, using crushed garnet. Certain parts such as the bowls, which had stood saturated for many years often with soil build up, were dry blast-cleaned and placed in a dry environment, ready to coat. Some light gingering is to be expected due to ambient moisture, especially in older castings but is easily removed before coating using a fine crushed glass blast.

However we found that black spots began to erupt after a short time. These spots are magnetite, suspended in deoxygenated water and reappearing after each attempt to remove them. It is known that magnetite has passive corrosion properties. It is a stabilising oxide, almost the opposite to hematite (manifested as red rust), but to entrap any moisture-laden medium beneath a coating would be ill-advised.

Interestingly, much of the iron smelted in central Scotland at the time was from good quality local 'black band ironstone'. (In fact this is the reason that iron smelting and founding proliferated in the area, and the high phosphorus content of the iron was ideal for fine ornamental work.) These banded iron formations are often found in Precambrian sedimentary rocks. The structures consist of repeated thin layers of iron oxides, either magnetite (Fe_3O_4) or hematite (Fe_2O_3), alternating with bands of iron-poor shale coals and chert. However this iron consistently contained high levels of phosphorous which could be as much as 1% in some cases. This allowed the iron to flow better but did result in increased porosity. A good example is to hydraulically pressure test a vessel made in this way. Unless the phosphorous content is c0.05% or less, the test water will follow the porosity and 'sweat' on the outside.

Rather than over-clean the parts, (excess blasting has the effect of 'peening' the iron; in effect trapping the moisture inside), we decided that proper drying was necessary and, as the parts were blasted they were placed in an oven built for the job from a shipping container. (There are a lot of large parts.) A system whereby moisture vapour rose through a funnel then condensed to run down a cooler outer skin was devised and the temperature was brought up to c.150° centigrade. That was sustained for approximately five hours to ensure full heat saturation in the parts, with the worst affected pieces having to be fired twice more until the magnetite-bearing 'sweat' stopped erupting from the cooling iron.

As with any coating procedure, the old adage of it 'all being in the preparation' is pivotal with cast iron. Doff and wet blast on cast iron is often used, as are inappropriate blast mediums, such as iron silicates, (which studies have shown can embed corrodible particles in the surface). This can also happen with



In this image from the fountain organic varnish glazes have turned black

any media if it is not properly cleaned when recycled.

This experience has confirmed to us that the iron must be dry blasted then warmed and dried diligently, rather than forcing further moisture into the surface of most probably porous iron.

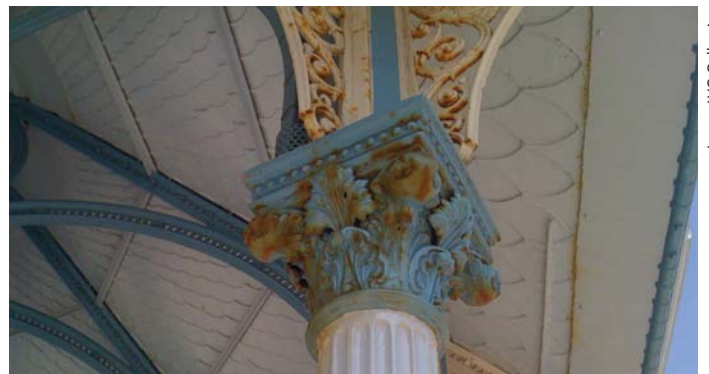
Many coatings manufacturers specify a temperature range within which products should be applied but seldom refer to humidity levels. Treatment of bare iron in an uncontrolled environment in a British winter defies any chance of long term success. Day to day temperature and hygro % changes exacerbate this as the iron, through its mass, lags behind ambient changes, promoting condensation. That is why we almost always specify dismantling and removal to a controlled workshop environment. Unless humidity and temperature can be controlled accurately both in preparation and application, modern epoxy coatings are susceptible to failure.

Recent work on the Tay and Forth bridges, particularly the former where assemblies of steel, wrought and cast iron are not uncommon, has demonstrated this. Here, small sections at a time were tightly encapsulated using a proprietary system. The area was blast cleaned, then warmed and dehumidified to the optimum level and then coated. Only in these circumstances will such systems be effective for long periods.

On the Grand Fountain we have to achieve a complex finish and colour scheme. Due to the prohibitive repeat cost of short-life traditional coatings, particularly glazes that degenerate quickly in UV light, it has been agreed that we achieve the original effect using modern systems, but which? More on this next time.

Acknowledgements to JT&E castings for demonstration and advice

A structure where the corrosion is coming through about eighteen months after its conservation by others. The treatment is known to have failed due to misinformed preparation and coating



JAPANESE PAPER IS THE FOCUS OF THE TWO FOLLOWING ITEMS WITH A VISIT TO JAPAN AND THE FIRST STEPS OF A RESEARCH PROJECT INTO JAPANESE PAPER IN THE WEST

Discovering the secrets of Japanese Paper Conservation

Emma Le Cornu, paper conservator at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, describes a visit to Japan to learn about Japanese paper conservation

For three weeks in August to September 2013, I had the opportunity to attend the International Course on the Conservation of Japanese Paper in Tokyo, Japan. This annual course is organized by ICCROM (The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) and hosted by the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, in Tokyo.

THE COURSE

The course has been running every year since 1992 and invites conservators from all over the world to study Japanese paper conservation in Japan. The aim is to give an insight into traditional paper mounting materials and techniques to non-Japanese conservators, providing a greater understanding of how to care for Japanese paper artefacts in their own collections. It also creates an opportunity for an exchange of ideas and techniques between Japanese and western traditions. Ten conservators, each from a different country, were my classmates. We had two weeks of intensive practical work in Tokyo and a week study trip to visit the papermaking district of Mino and the traditional material and tool suppliers of Kyoto.

PAPER CONSERVATION

Japanese paper conservation techniques and materials have a long history and are now used extensively in western paper conservation. Traditionally Japanese scroll mounters will train for ten years to develop the skills and understanding of the materials and techniques involved in the construction of a scroll. To give us a taste of these processes we each made a

Demonstration of lining techniques for scroll mounting



Tear repair to the artwork before lining

traditional Japanese hand scroll from start to finish. The practical work involved an intensive daily programme of demonstrations and translated instructions of each stage, which we then carried out on our own scrolls. Our tutors were all very accomplished and experienced conservators working in various studios in Tokyo and Kyoto. The practical work was supplemented with lectures by the tutors describing their current research activities.

PAPERMAKING

Japanese paper is used in almost all areas of paper conservation. It has qualities that make it suitable for conservation; it is very pure so it does not degrade, it is strong due to the long fibres and it can be made in extremely thin sheets. We were taken to a traditional Japanese papermaking mill to see how these sheets of paper are made. The traditional technique and equipment are still used today and sheets are handmade, one by one, on a bamboo screen. The bark of the mulberry tree, Kōzo, is processed to make a pulp, with the only additive being the mucilage from the root of the hibiscus plant. Japanese Kōzo is a hybrid of *broussonetia kazinoki* (China) and *broussonetia papyrifera* (SE Asia). This creates an extremely pure and high quality sheet of paper. These special papers are used in Japan specifically for

Hasegawa Washi Kobo, traditional papermaking studio in Mino, Japan. The raw materials for the paper; Kozo bark, in various states of preparation.





The papermaking studio in Mino. Forming the sheet from the paper pulp.

conservation and exported to conservation studios internationally.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

We were also taken to a number of traditional tool and materials suppliers. The adhesives, pigments and tools such as brushes and knives also have a long heritage. Many of the adhesives and pigments are natural and plant derived materials such as wheat starch and seaweed. The specialist brushes and knives are still handmade by family run businesses that have been passed down through the generations.

CONSERVATION STUDIOS

Japanese conservation studios differ greatly from the western counterpart. It is traditional to work on the floor on low tables, without shoes. Traditional materials are still used, such as ten year aged paste, which is stored in large clay pots underground for a total of ten years before it is ready to use. Scrolls are often completely taken apart and re-mounted whereas in a western studio we would be more likely to keep and conserve all of the original materials. These different working methods made for interesting discussions and comparisons of Japanese and western techniques.

Many of the skills I learned have made it back into my work here and I have a much greater understanding of the complex construction of Japanese artworks and the Japanese materials we use on a daily basis. I also learnt a great deal from the exchange created by bringing together a diverse group of conservators, in an unfamiliar and inspiring environment.

Japanese Papers Re-Visited

Sayaka Fukuda ACR wants to get beneath the surface of Japanese papermaking practice and improve the information available

Japanese paper has been proven to have versatility in Western conservation and it is not limited to paper based objects. As a book conservator myself, probably not a single day goes by without my using Japanese paper in my practice. I use it not only to repair papers but also to repair parts made of leather, parchment, cloth and so on.

In the last few years, I have had opportunities to exchange information on the current state of conservation practice, the materials we use and their availability with some Japanese paper makers and conservators working in Japan. It is limited to our own experience and I do not say that I am a conservator with a great deal of experience; still, this exchange has made me realise how little I know about modern Japanese paper in general and the Japanese papers I have been using.

I naively believed that all Japanese papers, especially the hand made ones, are still made in a traditional manner and suitable for conservation work. However, it sounds otherwise. When it comes to the specifications of papers, I discovered that we have much less information compared to that available for western papers. I understand that when you purchase a sheet of Japanese paper from a merchant in Japan, they can specify a mill and a particular product. This applies to western papers available in the UK but not to Japanese papers. Although I understand that there may be logistical problems, nevertheless I would welcome more information about what I buy and better traceability of products.

It prompted me to undertake some research into the current situation of Japanese papermaking, distribution of products and historical Japanese papers. In 2012, I arranged visits to seven different paper mills and a paper testing centre in Kochi, where Tosa paper originated. I have reported on my visit in the Society of Bookbinders' latest journal. The article is available on www.bookobscura.co.uk/?page_id=690. Although the article mainly discusses the brief history of paper making in Kochi and the current practice I saw, it also touches briefly on the result of informal testing carried out by the Kochi paper testing centre and the potential problems that end users can face.

For the foreseeable future, I have two main research topics. First, I intend to carry on the above research by contacting and visiting Japanese papermakers all over Japan. At this stage my research may be rather limited but as I accumulate information and make it available I hope it will come to have increasing meaning and value for conservators in the future. There are some studies on Japanese papers from the Middle Ages (mid 12th to late 16thC), which I would like to translate into English in the near future as a part of this research project.

Secondly, I would like to carry out physical testing on Japanese papers for book conservation, e.g. how different processes in fibre preparation, sheet formation and drying affect the strength of papers, in particular with the opening and closing movement of book covers.

This will be a long-term project in my spare time but I would be grateful to receive comments or an exchange of opinions and information. I hope this project will lead to increased availability in types of Japanese papers and their product information in the future.

I can be contacted on sayaka@bookobscura.co.uk

around and about

Conservation in the spotlight

At Tate Britain a long-standing partnership with BP has resulted in a series of regularly changing displays called the BP Spotlights. These displays offer more depth on specific artists or themes or highlight new research. How nice to be able to report that one such Spotlight has, for the first time, taken conservation as its theme.

The subject is Sir Joshua Reynolds' popular image of childhood *The Age of Innocence*. The display celebrates its cleaning and restoration, which was carried out by Rica Jones in Tate's Conservation Department, while the recipient of a fellowship from The Clothworkers' Company.

The painting dates to the 1780s and has always been much admired but conservation records at Tate dating back to 1859 indicate longstanding problems. By 2011 it had not been on display for decades on account of its poor condition. It was obscured by many coats of old varnish and dirt, and the paint was badly cracked and flaking.

During the process of conservation, many discoveries were made about the painting and the display, curated by Rica Jones herself, explores these under several wide-ranging headings: the painting and its technical examination; cleaning 2011–12; versions and copies; prints after the painting and their significance; and ephemera inspired by the painting.

Perhaps now that a precedent has been set, conservation will be the focus of more such displays. This one continues at Tate Britain until the end of the month and more information and images can be found on the website at [www.tate.org.uk/search/The Age of Innocence](http://www.tate.org.uk/search/The_Age_of_Innocence).

Recording the nation's sculpture

These pages have often sung the praises of the Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF) and its mammoth undertaking of recording all the oil paintings in public ownership (see www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/). Now the PCF is turning its attention to sculpture and has just signed a partnership agreement with the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association (PMSA) to collaborate on a project to digitise public sculpture across the UK.

The two charities will work together to create one comprehensive, searchable, digital database of sculpture in the UK from the eleventh century onwards, which will be freely available to the public online. The project – which will be subject to funding – will be entitled 'Your Sculpture'.

The PMSA champions sculpture nationwide and, amongst its many activities (which include helping to set up the Fourth Plinth Project in Trafalgar Square), one key initiative is the National Recording Project (NRP). Set up in 1997, this is a survey of outdoor post-medieval British public sculpture and



Public sculpture, often ignored in the bustle of daily life

monuments, undertaken together with many cultural and academic institutions, which has created a unique online database of over 10,000 entries.

In this new partnership the PMSA will build on that expertise to take responsibility for outdoor sculpture in the public realm. While the PCF will have responsibility for indoor sculpture in public museums and public collections.

Funding permitting, the digitisation project is expected to take about four years to complete. There will be a heavy emphasis on education, involving schoolchildren and students, and attracting and engaging with new audiences from a wide spectrum of the population.



© Paul Ratfery

The installation of Roskilde 6 at the British Museum

The Vikings are here!

The Vikings exhibition has arrived at the British Museum from Denmark (see Icon News March 2013) and will be here until 22 June. Those who can't get to it will have the opportunity of an escorted tour in a live broadcast at cinemas around the country on 24 April.

At the centre of the exhibition are the surviving timbers – about 20% – of a 37 metre long oak warship known as Roskilde 6, excavated in Denmark in 1997 and subsequently painstakingly conserved and analysed by the National Museum of Denmark. Conservators from the museum working with experts from the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde have constructed a stainless steel frame that reconstructs the full size and shape of the original. It must have been a terrifying sight appearing over the horizon.

A footnote to the Cheapside Hoard

Staying with the Public Catalogue Foundation, its database proved its worth to the curators at the Museum of London in their quest for material to accompany the Cheapside Hoard exhibition. They were able to do a national search for portraits both of people involved in the story and to show how jewellery was worn at the time. Their quest and its findings are described in the PCF's February Newsletter (thepcf.org.uk).

Unusual objects from the Cheapside Hoard, possibly fan holders or maybe aigrettes (a spray of jewels)

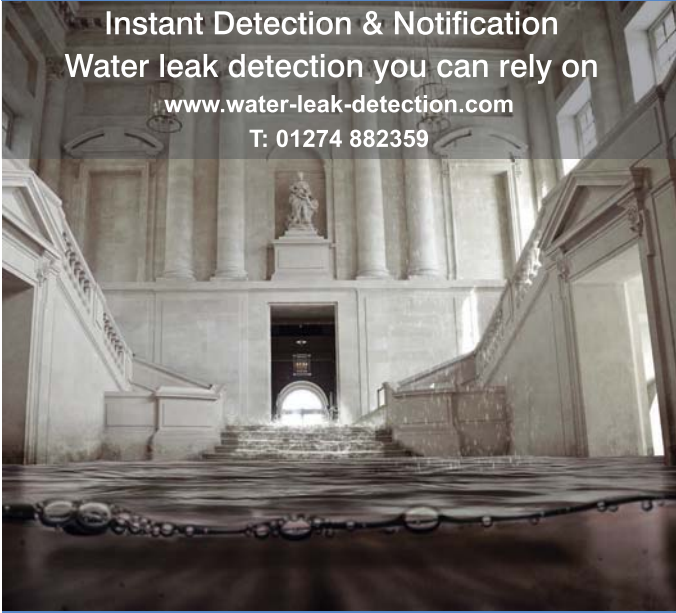


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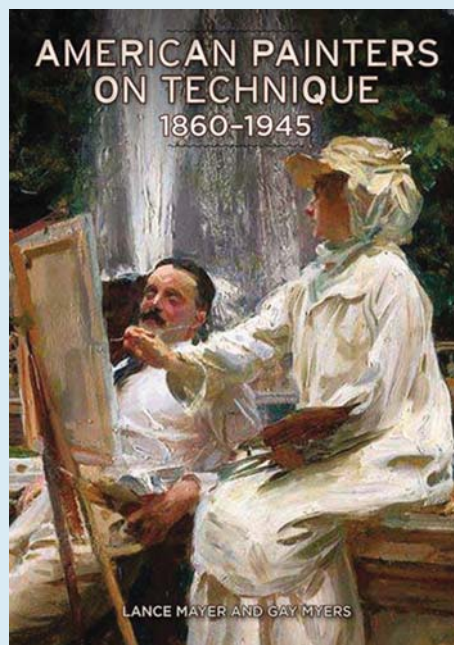


BOOKS

AMERICAN PAINTERS ON TECHNIQUE: 1860 TO 1945

Lance Mayer & Gay Myers
Getty Publications 2013
ISBN: 978-1606061350 276pp

Authors, Lance Mayer and Gay Myers are independent paintings conservators and consultants for collections with an emphasis on American art from the 18th through 20th century. In 1999 they were awarded a Winterthur Advanced Research Fellowship to study American painters' techniques. In 2003 they were guest scholars at the Getty Research Institute. This is the second book*



resulting from their extensive research into a rich and broad set of first hand sources ranging from diaries, notebooks and letters to manuals, suppliers' literature and interviews.

Chapters devoted to the methods and materials of single artists number only four in this volume, looking at William Page (America's Reynolds), George Inness, James McNeil Whistler and John Singer Sargent. The remainder of the book is structured by looking more generally at the periods 1860–1910 and then 1910–1945.

Inevitably those chapters on single artists might be a more engaging read for scholars studying those individuals. The first notable technical story of interest is described by the authors as bridging a gap between pre- and post-1860. It is William Page, who is established firmly as an experimenter, evidence being drawn from his own notes and obsession with the methods of Titian,

* The earlier volume was reviewed in Icon News issue 38 January 2012 p.25

and comments from contemporaries. Documentation is presented on his palette, paint application and media including the use of Megilp and wax (giving him his association with Reynolds). His reputation is charted and an acknowledgement made of the absence of many of his works, which were lost when the artist dropped out of favour. A great many American painters during this time valued historic and contemporary European methods most highly and the focus on Page introduces this as a common theme in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In contrast the next chapter is a survey. *Eclectic Materials and Methods, 1860–1910* provides the social and economic setting of artists' lives in America at this time. Variations arrived partly due to the mixed diasporas of the New World; artists increasingly travelled to Europe to study with a plethora of masters and 'schools'. Detailed paragraphs on materials, from support and grounds to pigments, media and varnishes, are provided. This structure makes the book useful as a reference style piece. Working on any artists of these time periods would be well supported by the reading of specific areas. Methods such as scraping, cutting and sanding are covered and any individual artist's quirks can still easily be noted by reference to the index. Shifts in taste are examined too, via discussions such as those on whether to varnish or not.

No doubt the resources required to relate each artist chapter to paintings already examined would have presented another ten years' work. With the next chapter on George Inness there is useful discussion about changes to the artist's technique mid-career, which have created distinctive pitfalls for conservators. Such practical observations are welcome and the written sources no doubt provide invaluable evidence for those wishing to make comparisons with and understand real surfaces. There is also some reflection on the nature of the sources and validity of their content. Where a contemporary describes the speed at which Inness virtually completes a painting in one day, the authors caution the reader to take note of the 'virtually'. Much information in the book does require careful contextualisation, with many sources not necessarily best understood as fact, but often containing an element of fiction. Inness, it turns out, may have been speedy to start with, but his paintings were often endlessly altered. In discussing Inness' late style we also learn of issues with forgeries and condition.

The chapter on Whistler discusses his technique by layer from support to varnish but first with an acknowledgement of how difficult accounts of his methods are to date and their propensity to be contradictory. He is also identified as another experimenter and evidence from analysis in the form of

cross-sections is introduced, highlighting the complexities of his layers' structures and discussing defects (cracking and sinking) as well as ageing of materials. Problems for conservators are emphasised once more, by mention of the regrettable removal on some occasions of his butterfly signature due to prior lack of knowledge of his use of thin layers and the adding of varnishes to his medium.

Like Whistler, Sargent is another artist who fits by location and status across both sides of the pond and sources turn to identifying and praising the advantages and safety of using simple (non-experimental) materials. His early talent and training in the studio of Carolus-Duran are described with a wonderful quote from Sargent followed by many contemporaries and students who perfectly describe his 'alla prima' techniques. The sources available broaden; many from his sitters providing another texture to the evidence. This chapter references technical examinations carried out on specific paintings including evidence from collections that have had the chance to carry out such research already, providing a well rounded view.

The book broadens out to a general chapter of the period 1910–1945 where again the social and economic context of materials and techniques is established through discussion of advances in manufacturing and the effects of two World Wars and the Depression on trade. The Ashcan Painters, Maratta system and the American Modernists form a focus. Then a tempera revival emerges. Mirrored by trends in Europe with artists looking back at earlier materials and techniques Titian is left behind and medieval techniques are lauded. Arguments within artistic circles about commercial versus home-made paints are well illustrated providing an overview of the era, which again contrasts those who stayed safe and those who experimented. The attendant problems with longevity, paint defects and issues for conservators and the long term preservation of works are discussed.

The book concludes with an epilogue on the contributions that publications of the 1930s and 40s were still making decades after their publication. Recent observations and analyses from conservators and conservation science of the last fifty years have identified some of the 'real' techniques of the Old Masters and the authors conclude with observations on the cyclical nature of American artists' fascination with past techniques and tendency to experiment ebbing and flowing across decades and through different 'schools'.

American Painters on Techniques 1860–1945 is an ambitious volume providing endless hints, sources and observations on American artists. It is a vast subject dealt with in different ways in the one book. The reader

must bear in mind it is based on observations largely from written sources, from which point it is a valuable overview and introduction to the published and unpublished comments and guides on materials and techniques of the era.

Rebecca Hellen

Tate Paintings Conservator

SETTING THE SCENE: European Painted Cloths from the Fourteenth Century to the Twentieth-First Century

Nicola Costaras & Christina Young, eds.

Archetype Publications 2013

ISBN: 978-1-904982-90-6 Pbk 122pp

Setting the Scene: European Painted Cloths from the Fourteenth Century to the Twentieth-First Century is the resulting publication from a two-day conference held at the Courtauld Institute of Art entitled 'European Painted Cloths C14th–C21st: Pageantry, Ceremony, Theatre and the Domestic Interior' in June 2012. The book includes sixteen short essays of the eighteen talks presented at the conference. Curatorial, archival, conservation, contemporary practice and academic aspects are brought together to enable dissemination of the significance of painted cloth from the late medieval period to the twenty-first century. The essays cover four themed areas regarding their use and function, making the book useful when thinking about how painted cloths have emerged over the last seven hundred years in Europe.

Several essays explore the religious and



secular settings of painted cloths. Nicola Costaras, Victoria and Albert Museum, explains the ownership and function of such cloths in late medieval England. She explains the use of painted cloth in supplying imagery and literary subject matters using

published wills and probate inventories as her main sources. She highlights the high versatility of these objects and the fact that they served a purpose in an elite context but were commissioned by all ranks of medieval society.

The essays move on to the domestic interior where Jorien Jas, Gelderland Trust, The Netherlands, explores the history and conservation of a Chinese room in Huis Verwolde, the first neo-classical private house built in the province of Gelderland. The Chinese room, embellished with painted wall hangings executed in the late eighteenth century, displays the work produced in the workshop of Jan Hendrik Troost van Groenendoelen, Amsterdam. Deterioration patterns, previous restoration and conservation work conducted several years ago is discussed and well illustrated. As a contrast in this section of the domestic interior, Sylvia Houghteling's essay, Yale University, reports on the British uses and changing significance of Indian chintz c.1700. She explains its developing use for interior walls and clothing and the contribution chintz made to the development of domesticity of Britain.

The third section illustrates pageantry and ceremony where Sarah Kleiner, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, writes about the technical investigation of a rare double-sided processional banner by Spinello Aretino, c.1395-1400. The banner belongs to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Although the format of the banner changed in the late nineteenth century, all involved with its conservation agreed that both sides would be preserved, as the images depicted on either side were equally important for appropriate interpretation. Excellent illustrations show both its sides and the essay demonstrates the challenges in preserving the ephemeral connotation of such objects. The fine materials used to execute the banner challenge the ephemeral aspects of the object and the alterations made after its inception emphasize the anticipation to prolong the life of the object. This was a personal favourite of all the essays in the publication.

Hilary Vernon-Smith, Royal National Theatre London, starts the final section of the book on scenic art, reporting on her developing role as a scenic artist herself and the changing practice of scene painters in England within recent history. There is a useful section on the recipes used for priming (including the disasters of getting it wrong). The applicability of this section of the essay is wide ranging in terms of thinking about the conservation of painted textiles in general. Christina Young, Courtauld Institute of Art, UK, encompasses a broad approach of the changing role and status of scenic artists in England. Young covers the work of thirteenth century pageant banner-makers right up to twenty-first century scenic art

practitioners, emphasising the breadth of contributions made by both painters of cloth and ones who stained cloth.

Overall, the book is simple, well presented and interesting and helps to establish painted cloths as more than ephemeral objects. The diverse set of essays highlight the longevity and value expected of painted cloths despite their rarity. The book presents the current practice of using paint media and textile substrates, underlining the fact that painted textiles will continue to be part of current and future society.

Leanne C Tonkin

Mellon Fellow in Textile Conservation
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio.

WORKSHOPS

DON'T JUST PUT IT IN A BOX! Improving communications between conservators and librarians

Middle Temple Library, 27 January 2014

This workshop brought together two groups of people with common interests but different languages and experiences: book conservators and librarians. It was a new event organized by conservator Sonja Schwoll and librarian Erica Foden-Lenahan, with support from Arlis (Art Libraries Society), Icon's Book and Paper Group, and the Historic Libraries Forum (HLF).

Because of a lack of conservation training for librarians, those who work in smaller libraries without on-site conservation departments can be daunted by the prospects of finding a conservator, choosing one with appropriate technical skill and reliability, and knowing how much different treatment options should cost. The workshop aimed to set out topics for discussion with a series of presenters, then opened up the floor to discussion amongst the participants. A resource sheet with suggested questions to think about for both conservators and librarians was passed out to guide discussion and is available from the organizers.

Helen Lindsay (Collections Care Consultant), spoke about how conservators gather information and use that information to judge a collection's condition and treatment needs. She advised conservators to consider a long list of criteria when conducting surveys, including the size of the collection relative to the available resources, usage pattern, shelving and labelling issues, homogeneity, and current and historical conditions. She reminded participants that having figures like what proportion of the collection suffers what type of damage, even if it is just a fast number count of visibly damaged books on a shelf, and prioritizing high-risk items, can help an institution source funds for the repairs.



Workshop speaker Icon trustee Lara Artemis

Lara Artemis (Collections Care Manager and Exhibitions Loans Registrar, Parliamentary Archives) talked about coming to Parliament and changing the structure of collections care, particularly how conservators can be useful to other colleagues beyond practical bench treatments; she also noted that librarians and conservators can help each other find parity and respect within the larger institution. She spoke of the advantages of working at Parliament (direct access to law-makers—best conservation advocacy potential!) and how all of us should be making friends with the people who can become the champions of conservation, pointing out that by helping them achieve their goals we can meet ours.

Renaë Satterley (Middle Temple Senior Librarian) explained the book sponsorship programme she created at Middle Temple, which has the only surviving, mostly original collection of all four Inns of Court but no on-staff conservators and no conservation budget. The programme runs by advertising

in-need books to the barristers and accepting their generous donations for necessary repairs. She advised similarly-placed librarians not to be afraid to ask for help, to learn the vocabulary of bookbinding and conservation (the ABC for Book Collectors is available free online, (www.ilab.org/eng/documentation/29-abc_for_book_collectors.html), to be clear about your knowledge and its limits as well as your expectations for the treatment, and to keep detailed records before and after.

Lizzie Neville ACR (Independent Conservator, Director of PZ Conservation CIC) also talked about the need for conservators to do more than bench work conservation and the difference they can make to heritage and people and communities. Starting a social enterprise company helped her secure HLF funding for internships, which in turn helped get matching grants for projects with community engagement.

Caroline Peach (Consultant, Preservation Matters Ltd) advised librarians on where to go to find a conservator, reminding them that beyond treatment, conservators can help get language right for funding applications, write project briefs and train supervising staff and volunteers. For building understanding of conservation she recommended leaflets from the British Library Preservation Advisory Centre (www.bl.uk/blpac), Icon Care and Conservation of Books (www.icon.org.uk), NEDCC (www.nedcc.org/free-resources/overview), AIC (www.conservation-us.org), and Collections Link (www.collectionslink.org.uk). She suggested factors for deciding on a conservator, such as whether he/she has accreditation, and

recommended the Conservation Register (www.conservationregister.com) as a reliable database of available conservators in private practice.

Ros Buck (Chantry Librarian, Icon) talked about her work at the Chantry Library and services offered to Icon members, and the idea of the librarian who has a mostly modern library but conservators as patrons. She founded the Conservation Librarians Group and noted that the CLG would be keeping conservation student dissertations on record as well as providing research and study guidance, supporting the location of key sources of information and conservation resources.

The discussion that followed the speakers' presentations highlighted some of the problems of librarians, such as how much money to request from potential funders for treatments without having any experience working with conservators. (The conservators present suggested looking at the Conservation Register, talking to a few conservators, and choosing one to do an initial survey which would outline the damage, priorities, and costs of repairs). Some of the librarians in the room who had worked with conservators in the past had clearly had some bad experiences with them, either with the quality of their work or with it not being delivered on time or as promised. This highlighted the need for opening the lines of communication and providing better guidance, whether as professionals or in library school, on conservation and preservation topics. Some of the conservators had worked with librarians who were more concerned with the content of the book than the object itself and who were, frustratingly, unwilling to engage with conservators. More than anything this workshop pointed out the need for further work with these two groups, to provide resources for each to work more effectively with the other towards a common goal: protecting our written heritage.

Abigail Bainbridge

ARTICHECK – CONDITION REPORTING APP

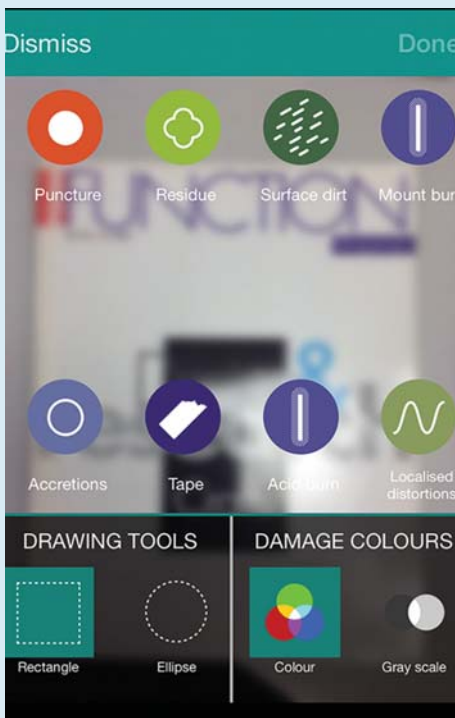
Icon Book and Paper Group

Art Workers' Guild, London 23 January 2014

This was the first of four workshops exploring the Artichек app developed by paper conservator **Annika Erikson**. The three goals for the app are to make the condition reporting process faster, allowing more time for bench work; to create global industry standards (with a translation tool in the pipeline); and to maximise the quality of observation of the items/objects. Artichек was originally launched for test-users for feedback in June 2013 and a more robust and fine-tuned app was released at the end of January 2014. Artichек is currently only available on Mac operating system iOS7 with

Conservators and librarians: common goals





A fraction of the symbols for documenting different damage types within the Articheck app

a promise of an Android version this year.

Getting familiar with the app was quite intuitive. It has been put together to suit different media types and by giving options for 'simple' or 'complex' reporting at the start of the process. Once the desired choices have been made, the app takes you through the relevant fields to fill in with the opportunity to add photographs of the item to the report. The photographs are marked for damage using the symbols for different damage types, of which there are over seventy in the newest version of the app. The photograph can be annotated further by attaching detailed images to the parent image, creating a clear hierarchical system of documentation. Within the app, there are other helpful options such as auto-populate for relevant fields to help speed up the process when dealing with batches of materials, and voice-recording your report automatically transferring it to typed text with the help of Siri.

While the mobility of using an app for condition reporting is something to aspire to, I came away from the workshop thinking that sharing detailed reports could get problematic. There was talk of the app allowing you to email reports to third parties by saving them as PDF files. But aside from that, it was not clear how sharing would take place if the recipient was not a subscribed member and had already used their thirty-day free trial, as the idea of the app relies on your contacts/clients etc being paying customers.

Within our group of people, there were also concerns raised over the security of the reports and what would happen to the data should a subscription be discontinued. Annika assured us that all information stored by Articheck has bank-level security. Should an individual/institution leave their subscription at any point, their data would

be 'given back' to them and would therefore not be lost. Customising Articheck to further suit your needs is also possible but would naturally come with an added cost.

From experimenting with Articheck for a few hours, using an iPad for the app felt better than trying to manage with the significantly smaller screen of the iPhone. Naturally the app is dependent on the quality of the built-in camera of the iPad/iPhone and I found sometimes camera shake was an issue in getting a clear close-up image – particularly with the iPad – in the absence of a tripod (though these are available). It is difficult to say more about the functions of the app at this stage as the version the workshop utilised had some issues to be ironed out prior to the new version launch.

For more information on Articheck, visit <http://articheck.co.uk>.

Sirpa Kutilainen

Preservation and Digital Resource
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University of Brighton Design Archives

TALKS

THE DECEITFUL ATTRACTION OF ART – 'Theft & forgery', thieves and scoundrels Icon Paintings Group London, 26 November 2013

In the wake of the Gurlitt's treasure troves unearthed in Munich and Salzburg **Jim Kilmartin's** talk was particularly pertinent. Kilmartin, Security Advisor to the National Trust for Yorkshire and the North East, and **Francis Downing**, Forensic Conservator and Chair of Icon's Paintings Group, spoke of an investigative chase through the underworld of art.

The statistics are disturbing. Art crime costs the public circa £500 million per year but only 5% is recovered. For the thief, art and antiques are readily convertible and easily disposable and, value wise, second only to drugs. Millers Price Guides are the most pilfered books from public libraries. An unpublished recent police survey says:

- The UK Fine Art and Antiques market is a £2.2 billion industry
- 30% of 10,200 fine art and antiques businesses suffered art crime last year;
- 45% of 12,000 private collectors had thefts from their homes;
- 55% of stolen art and antiques come from domestic burglaries, of which in the UK last year there were 27,600 valued at £415 million.

'Paintings conservators are the frontline in identifying forgeries' said Downing. 'One's experience of painting, how surface grime or varnish is affected, you can tell immediately when 'something is not quite right'.'

The artist Bessie Bamber (British, active

c.1900–1924) was the foundation for the Kilmartin-Downing collaboration in 1989. An anonymous letter, an Irish Times clip about false signatures and two forged Bamber paintings precipitated an investigation into the art dealer Major Gordon Butler-Wright, 'The Major', who had previous convictions in the 1970s for altering and adding 'JF Herring' signatures to paintings but since had evaded police attention. Downing who inspected paintings uncovered during the investigation, found those on canvas to be original artists' but with signatures added and those on panel, (Bamber's), to be approximately 5–15 years old, thus forgeries. Armed with this evidence, a raid on the Major's home revealed all the evidence the police required of a faker's system: panel paintings in various stages of production, old varnishes, stains, nails oxidising in tins, old and stained tapes, framers labels (removed, photocopied and reproduced) along with the Major's meticulous records of every client, order and sale.

The forger's criminal profile is generally of a loner who only reveals him or herself to their partner. However, with over £1 million in the bank, clients and addresses across Europe, 'the Major' bucked the trend. Kilmartin believed it was not in dealers' interests to expose him as a forger; besides, they all liked him. Seen at every important auction, the Major never bought a signed painting but only ever sold signed versions. The audience heard that the art market not only turns a blind eye, but can be obstructive when faced with exposure. In 1983 Downing traced a forged naïve seascape to a Lincoln auction house that point blank refused assistance. Only when faced with professional embarrassment by Downing's proposal to put the original auction sale photograph and details from July 1977 in the local paper asking for information did the auctioneer hand over details of the seller of the painting at that auction.

Both speakers felt art crime's impact on its victims was underestimated. One can readily acknowledge the trauma suffered by York Art Gallery's staff subjected to an armed robbery in 1999, but despair over investments in forgeries or personal loss of a family heirloom are often overlooked and what of reputations pilloried in the defence of authenticity? Attempts were made to discredit Downing's professionalism throughout the Butler-Wright investigation. Only by presenting incontrovertible evidence of forgery to Christies and Sotheby's did he receive support from the art and antiques market he was trying to protect.

Proving items are stolen and given false provenances is problematic for the police. Kilmartin and Downing explained how forgers create provenances by entering their painting into an auction and insisting on a set reserved price. They must pay the auctioneer's premium but are rewarded with a published auction catalogue record with

glossy photograph and price. Forgery techniques have become so sophisticated that auctioneers and dealers are simply unable to spot them and it is really left to the conservators to detect. Clare Finn concluded the evening's presentation saying that conservators could not have an encyclopaedic knowledge of all artists but that should Mr Kilmartin come looking for hard evidence, good conservation practice requires all work be recorded and photographed before, during and after every treatment.

Disturbingly Kilmartin told the audience he thought it likely we had all dealt with stolen property. Legally, under the Theft Act 1968, proof of dishonesty is an essential element required for a charge of handling stolen goods. An unsuspecting conservator innocently treating an object, which later turns out to be stolen, would not have committed a criminal offence. Only if you knew or believed the object was stolen could you be accused of dishonestly assisting in its retention, removal, disposal or realisation for the benefit of another person, pursuant to section 22 of the Act. If convicted the maximum sentence for handling stolen goods is fourteen years imprisonment. Happily, despite the high value of stolen art and forgeries, experts were rarely found to conspire with art criminals.

The overall impression from this lively presentation was that the conservator has become essential in the detection and prevention of art crime. Watch out Thomas Crown, Kilmartin and Downing are in town!

Emma Lowe Conservator and former Criminal Barrister

'THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY' Icon Archaeology Group Christmas Event Birmingham 13 December 2013

The event started off with a welcoming cup of coffee with mince pies. A small and select gathering of speakers and listeners met in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery AV-room and the afternoon got underway.

Alex Cantrill kicked off with a very interesting account of the treatment of the Nimrud Ivories and a Congolese Nkisi figure in her talk entitled 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. The beautiful Nimrud Ivories were indeed 'Good' while the Nkisi figure may be described by some as being rather more 'Ugly', although very interesting in that cavities were often hidden within such figures to allow ritual materials to be placed inside.

Clare Ward, talking about the conservation of objects from the British Museum's Ice Age Art exhibition, and **Misa Tamura's** paper 'I 'fill' it in my bones' both described how some 'Ugly' (or perhaps 'Bad?') previous gap-fills and repairs, which were disfiguring or even obscuring ancient art works, could be removed, after careful consideration, to



The Archaeology Group Christmas event

reveal previously hidden original features and details.

Graham Morgan gave us a fascinating description of some of the wonderful finds from the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Wolverton including beads of different materials and mineral preserved organic material such as leather and linen textile unusually found on copper alloy items.

Theo Sturge wowed us with a description and insight into the manufacture of gilt leather and shared with us some horror stories of what can happen if the practice of 'oiling' decorative gilt leather is undertaken; an irreversible and extremely damaging treatment which has unfortunately been widely applied, especially in the Netherlands.

We were very pleased to welcome three conservation students to the meeting:

Jerrod Seifert and **Anna O'Neill**, both from the MSc in Conservation Practice at Cardiff University and **Sara Brown** doing the BSc in Archaeological Conservation, also at Cardiff.

Jerrod took us through some often tricky decision-making steps in the treatment of a ceramic vessel excavated in 1934 and reconstructed at the time using a combination of gap-fills, tape and a rather fabulous (if 'Ugly?') wire support.

Anna talked to us about different stages of treatment and decision-making while treating a pair of ornamental slippers which had deteriorated badly in store. She shared with us the process of trying to bring back the 'wow'-factor they would normally have had in the form of shiny threads and sequins.

Sara talked about the very interesting impressions objects can have on conservators and how it changes during the conservation process. She shared with us her changing emotional response to the Pedlar doll she had been treating and how this was brought to the fore when removing surface dirt and revealing the face of the doll.

During the post-talks visit to the labs **Pieta Greaves**, **Alex Cantrill** and **Deb Magnoler** described the various pieces of equipment available at Birmingham Museum, as well as a number of objects that had recently been conserved or were under conservation. This included the beautiful Nimrud ivories that had previously been described in Alex's morning presentation, a number of samurai

suits of armour and a variety of objects from the Staffordshire Hoard illustrating the Anglo-Saxons impressive achievements in gold filigree and garnet cloisonné work.

The day finished off with drinks, nibbles and a chat in the conservation department (thank you, Deborah Cane, for lending us your office!).

Many thanks to all those who attended on the day, especially the speakers for their interesting and varied talks and Birmingham Museum Trust for the space, and time that was made available to us.

Mags Felter and **Deborah Magnoler**
Archaeology Group Committee

CONFERENCE

CONSERVING MODERNITY: The Articulation of Innovation The 9th Biennial North American Textile Conservation Conference California, November 12-15 2013

The focus of this conference was the conservation of modern materials and it was, appropriately enough, hosted by the M. H. deYoung Museum in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. The new deYoung Museum building is a fine example of a cutting-edge, modern museum. The programme consisted of fourteen presentations and eleven posters representing nine countries. The attendees were also from all over the world but with most coming from the United States, Mexico and Canada. As is usual with NATCC events all papers were simultaneously translated into French, Spanish and English.

The conference began with a keynote address by **Jill Sterrett**, Director of Collections and Conservation at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, about the changing role of conservation in the treatment of contemporary art. She discussed the involvement of living artists in the ongoing treatment and care of their works, the impact of scale, and the choice of materials in the longevity of artworks. The presentation sparked a lively discussion between the speaker, moderator and audience on the role of the conservator and several problematic examples of art made with modern materials were cited and considered.

The papers were grouped together into themed blocks where possible, beginning with those discussing the materiality of both the artworks to be conserved and the materials used. The first of them 'Care of Highly Problematic 20th Century Textiles: Identification, Cleaning, Storage and Exhibition' was presented by **Dr. Kelly Reddy-Best** and provided a ground for the entire conference. This thorough literature review of textile science textbooks, conservation references and, most importantly, professional dry-cleaning

literature, served to highlight the problems encountered with a typical collection of modern clothing and accessories. The second paper by **Robert M. Kelly** was perhaps slightly off topic for the conference but none the less interesting as it explained the replacement of an embossed and gilded leather wall covering in a company boardroom using both traditional and modern methods and materials.

Next, 'Viscose Rayon: An absorbing Problem' was a summary by **Charlotte Gamper** of her M Phil research dissertation for the University of Glasgow. She explored the wet strength of various naturally aged samples of viscose rayon, and any resulting loss of strength after wet cleaning and drying. Her results suggest that it is appropriate to wet clean viscose rayon apart from older more degraded types. This was an excellent, practical piece of research and will prove valuable to the field. The following presentation by **Anne Peranteau** of Te Papa Tongarewa in New Zealand on 'Gellan Gum as a Material for Local Stain Reduction' concerned the use of carbohydrate gel for the localized cleaning of Maori cloaks made from plant materials. While the materials being cleaned were not modern, Anne's approach was and her results were most encouraging.

The next two presentations concerned nylon – as a conservation material and as an art material. **Renee Dancause** of CCI presented 'Lessons Learned: The use of 20 Denier Nylon Net in the Treatment of Two Oversized Flags' in which she described the detailed technical analysis of the nylon bobbin-net so frequently used in textile treatments. Finally in this section of the conference, a cross-disciplinary team from the Netherlands discussed the deterioration and possible stabilization of nylon stockings used in artworks. And while the paper was specific to one particular object, their findings about the use of UV resistant finishes to stabilize nylon has much wider implications.

The next session of the conference explored the decision-making process when choosing to restore or conserve a deteriorated piece of modern textile art. These papers led into a panel discussion moderated by textile curator, **Jill D'Allessandro** of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. This panel, which included the views of curator, conservator and artist, was particularly focussed on the choice between striving to preserve a work and allowing it to decay, if that was the artist's intent.

The final session concluded with four papers about the particular problems of plastics and rubber in garments. I presented the first of these – an overview of the key plastics and other modern technology found in the V&A's extensive shoe collection and the consequences for storage and conservation. The paper by **Pia Christensson** of the

Kulturmagasinet/Helsingborg Museums, Sweden, then followed the accessioning of a large archive of rubber boots and galoshes and their subsequent damage due to choice of padding materials for storage. This useful, and honest, account of the resulting damage mitigation, included extensive investigations into the causes of the problem and the reshaping and rehousing of the boots was one of the highlights of the conference. Next came **Jane Wild** of the National Gallery of Australia with an exploration of the problems encountered with inflatable PVC sculptures and garments. She covered the testing of adhesives and tapes to repair leaks and holes in this type of object.

The last paper of the conference came from the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC. **Susan Heald's** talk on 'Rubberized Flannel in Contemporary Beaded Powwow Regalia', outlined the potential problems faced after the discovery that a significant proportion of their collection of beadwork was made using a rubberized substrate rather than the hide or fabric that one would expect. As ever with papers from NMIA, the opinions of the Native American community and their artists were taken into consideration during their investigations.

Posters were available to view throughout the entire conference and the Preprints of all papers and posters are available via the NATCC website.

Joanne Hackett, Senior Textile Conservator, V&A

VISIT

THE LEATHER CONSERVATION CENTRE Icon Textile Group Northampton 11 October 2013

As soon as I began my taxi journey from the station to the Leather Conservation Centre it was made clear to me why the Centre had to be located in Northampton, historically an important shoe making and leather working town. The driver had worked as a clipper, cutting leather pieces to form shoe uppers until the decline of the industry in the 1980s and his mother had spent her entire working life stitching shoes. On the way we passed the sites of former tanneries, now 21st century depots and supermarkets, in the town whose football club is known as the Cobblers. Pride in this heritage extends to the remaining high end manufacturers, such as Church's and Crockett and Jones, and in the care taken in buying a pair of tasselled slip-on shoes today.

We were warmly welcomed by **Yvette Fletcher**, Head of Conservation, who gave us a condensed introduction to the LCC, the properties of leather, its preparation, identification, deterioration and issues of conservation. The LCC, founded in 1978, has



Two chicken feet and a horn-backed lizard skin at the Leather Conservation Centre

good relationships with neighbours the Leather Institute of Technology and the British Leather Confederation. The current building, dating from 1996, supported by the Worshipful Company of Leather Sellers, gains from the security offered by a manned university campus and access to the LIT spray booth.

The Leather Conservation Centre has charitable status for its work in training, through internships and courses run at West Dean, and research. The Centre is funded by its commercial conservation work. Clients include national and international museums, historic houses, heritage organisations, institutions and private clients. Work is carried out in the leather conservation studios, a book and archive studio and in situ.

After the presentation we had a tour of parts of the centre, including the large workshop with north facing windows and double doors that allow historic vehicles to enter and leave the building. Here we viewed objects being conserved by the centre, the reference collection of leather chairs and a wonderful selection of leathers, from tanned chicken feet, elephant ears and a variety of reptiles given by HMRC after seizure at airports and ports. They also had a good range of leather support material from main supplier J Hewit & Son Ltd.

The Centre is not currently involved in large-scale academic research and has converted the scientific laboratory into a book studio. Research is now largely confined to object conservation testing of adhesives and materials to identify the most appropriate option for that particular treatment. Group discussion with Yvette was particularly interesting when viewing the objects laid out including a shagreen covered box and an intriguing military protective suit. It was good to visit a well-designed purpose-built conservation centre and get an overview of the fascinating projects that are worked on there. One client of the Centre, Northampton Museum, unsurprisingly has a fabulous collection of shoes that some were able to visit. The displays are slightly dated but the impact of the sheer range and number of shoes is impressive. The visit to the Centre and town made for a fascinating and rewarding day.

Morwena Stephens

Textile and Ethnographic Artefact Conservator

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

A JOUSTING REINFORCEMENT

The conservation of a piece of armour which belonged to Emperor Maximilian the 1st is discussed by Suzanne Dalewicz-Kitto ACR, Conservation Manager, and Alex Cantrill, former Conservator at Royal Armouries, Conservation Department, Leeds

A passion for jousting and armour

In 1500 Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I was Europe's most powerful ruler and a famous jousting tournament competitor. So keen was he on the sport that his court invented new forms of jousting and he employed many of the best armourers of the time.

Maximilian had a great passion for armour, not only as equipment for battle or tournament but as an art form. The style of armour that became popular during the second half of his reign featured elaborate fluting and metalworking and, indeed, became known as Maximilian armour. Maximilian armour emphasised the details in the shaping of the metal itself, rather than the etched or gilded designs popular in the Milanese style.

In October 1952 the Royal Armouries, with the aid of The Art Fund & The Pilgrim Trust, purchased a jousting armour that

The armour (II.167) seen from the rear



The front of the Maximilian armour (Object number II.167)

was formerly in the William Randolph Hearst collection based at St. Donat's Castle, Glamorganshire. The piece dates from about 1500 and was made for the court of Emperor Maximilian 1. It was made either for the Holy Roman Emperor himself or for one of his immediate court for the *Scharfrennen*, a particular version of jousting perfected at Maximilian's court. This style of armour was being made in southern Germany: Augsburg, Landshut or Innsbruck. This one is more like those from Augsburg by Lorenz Helmschmid, albeit a composite.

Condition issues

The armour was brought into the Royal Armouries Conservation Department in Leeds as part of a refurbishment of the Tournament Gallery in Spring 2010. It had previously been displayed in its own individual case and would be going back into it once the building work was complete.

While the main metal elements of the armour were in good condition, the jousting reinforce or *renntartsche* (a very large shield covering much of the wearer's body) was in a fairly fragile state. The leather had split and cracked and was lifting away from the shield's frame. Where the edges had split, frass and debris were gathering. There was great concern about the fragility of the piece especially as, on moving the armour as a whole, a certain amount of strain on the shoulder shield was unavoidable.

Testing adhesives

A great deal of consolidation was required on the shield. This would involve consolidating and adhering areas of leather to leather and leather to wood. The shield was given an initial dry clean using a soft brush and a museum vacuum to remove any dust that may get trapped in the consolidation adhesive.



A rare survival: a combination tool for armour II.167. It is used to tighten up all the parts that attach to form the full defence of the armour)

Tests were carried out on a selection of adhesives that are regularly used in the conservation of leather¹. These were: Lascaux 498HV, Lascaux 360HV, Evacon R, Vinamul 3252 and Beva 371 Gel, which was activated with a heated spatula. An old leather belt was used as a test material as this resembled the thickness and density of the leather covering the shield.

The qualities we were looking for were as follows:

- strength, in order to hold the stiff, dense leather.

The leather covered reinforce – a large body covering shield



Cracked and lifting leather

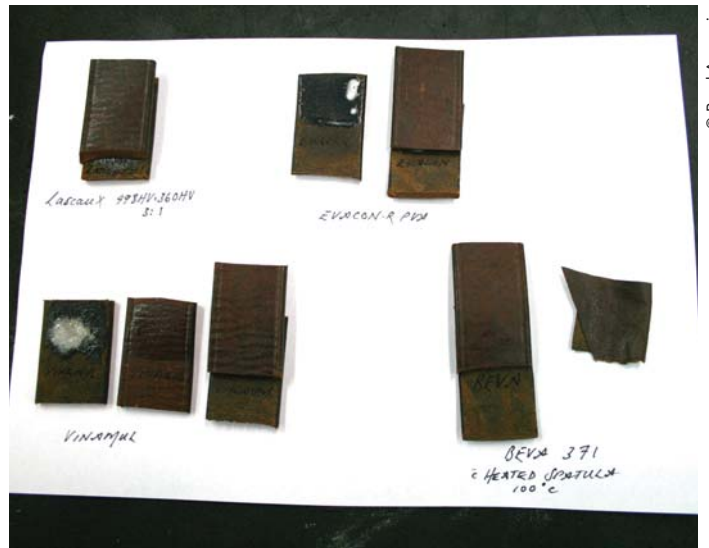
- flexibility, allowing the leather some movement, especially in areas where it had become brittle.
- ease of application, as there were going to be some awkward areas where access was extremely limited or where large amounts of adhesive would be required. The consistency of the adhesive would be a large contributory factor towards this.
- good length of working time, so the adhesive would not harden before it was in the required position.
- minimal darkening, as it was important that no form of yellowing or pigmentation change occurred in either the leather or the adhesive itself to disfigure the look of the piece after conservation.
- finally, we required good ageing resistance, pH neutrality, and reversibility, should we need to remove the adhesive at a later date.

Results

Both Lascaux dispersions offered a good bond and could be easily applied to large areas or into relatively large cracks. They offer a good length of working time, are colourless when cured and claim to be ageing resistant.

Vinamul 3252 offered good adhesion but the consistency was

The adhesive tests on an old leather belt





The leather being held in position whilst the adhesive cures

far too fluid, making it potentially very messy to use. Further investigation into the adhesive also suggested that the dry film has a tendency to become acidic with age and so potentially harmful to pH sensitive material such as leather.

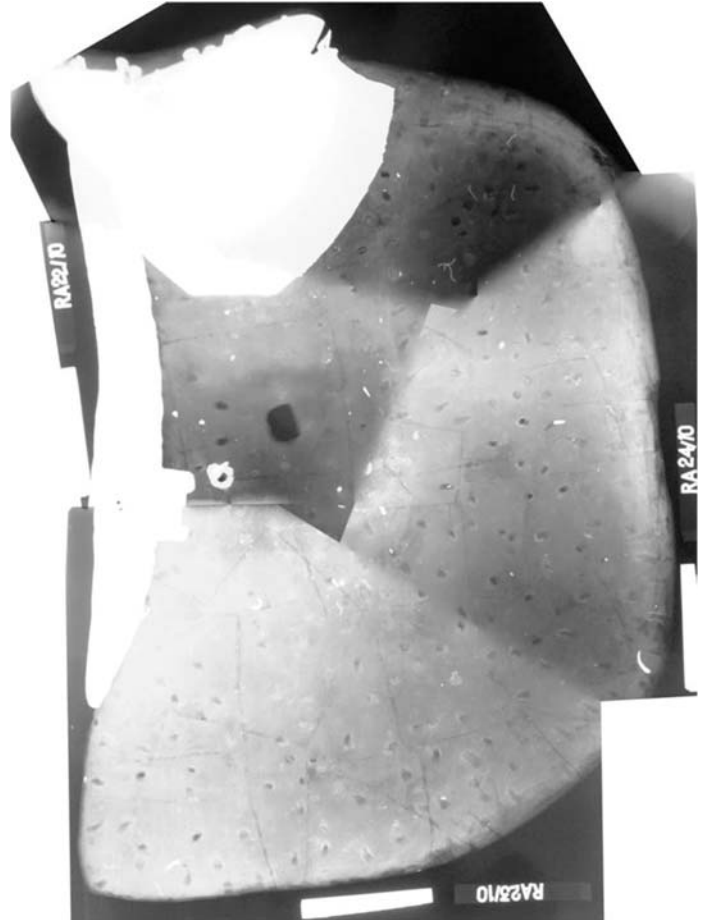
Evacon R also offered good adhesion but similarly to Vinamul 3252 was quite fluid. However it is pH neutral.

Beva 371 Gel, on the other hand, was far too solid. Application was difficult and a little clumsy and activation with a heated spatula through the belt leather required a temperature of 100C. This heat application ruled Beva out as a viable option

For the purpose of consolidation, Lascaux acrylic dispersion adhesive 360 HV was first chosen. Lascaux is a butyl methacrylate copolymer thickened with acrylic butyl ester. Its creamy consistency and low tack allows for easy repositioning throughout the repair process. This was selected over the 498HV as Lascaux 360 HV has more flexibility in its dry state than Lascaux 498HV, which cures to a tougher resin.

First treatment

Thin Melinex (polyester sheet) tabs were used to carefully slide the adhesive through the cracks and underneath the leather to where the adhesive was required. It was then clamped in place and left for several hours. When the clamps were removed the consolidation appeared to have been successful but after a few days the repairs began to fail and



X-ray of the reinforce

the leather lifted once more.

The awkward spaces the adhesive needed to reach could have been a contributing factor to the failure of the consolidation and repair, as this is an adhesive that works better when a good, flat, even coat is applied to both surfaces to be bonded. Given the nature of repairs needed here, that was something which was simply not possible. More tests were needed.

Revised treatment

A 3:1 mixture of Lascaux 498HV (3 parts) and Lascaux 360HV (1 part) was ultimately used in order to increase the strength of the bond whilst still retaining a good level of flexibility. Melinex tabs were again used to slide the adhesive into position and the leather gently clamped into position. In areas of extremely restricted access, however, Evacon R was syringed into place in small amounts and the areas were gently clamped or weighted while it cured. The repairs were left for 24 hours before the clamps and weights were removed. The reinforce was then left for another 48 hours to allow the repairs to settle. After several days unsupported, the repairs held true.

The shield was systematically worked around, carrying out repairs one area at a time. Once complete, each area would be clamped and weighted for 24 hours and then left to settle for another 48 hours before starting the next area. Once all the repairs had been done and allowed to settle the shield was dry cleaned a second time using a soft brush and museum vacuum. It was then given a coating of Renaissance microcrystalline wax. This is a synthetic wax developed by the



Images from the 'Triumph of the Emperor Maximilian I' of knights at the Scharfrennen joust; armour parts fly dramatically into the air⁴

British Museum laboratories in the early 1950s. It does not become acidic with age so over time it will not attack the leather in the way a natural wax would.

Making discoveries

Whilst cleaning the underside of the shield, what looked to be the edge of a metal plate underneath where an area of leather had lifted, was spotted. Being aware that shoulder shields of this type are generally made of wood and leather this seemed unusual and so the decision was made to take an x-ray.

The X-ray showed the internal construction to be made up of lots of odd shaped wooden pieces and with a rather strange metal framework. The collar seems to be entirely reinforced with metal and a metal strip runs down the full length of the proper right hand side. Most unusual of all, however, is what looks very much like a metal hinge half way down this metal strip on the right hand side. The external surface of the shield is entirely encased in thick leather and so there is no apparent use for a hinge of any kind. Hinges, however, at this period were used with a removable pin as a form of attachment rather than to move a piece around a pivot.

Canny recycling?

Two possible theories have been raised about what this structure tells us about the reinforce. One is that it could be the product of some early recycling. Perhaps it needed to be made in a hurry and the usual construction materials were not available at such short notice, or maybe the manufacturer was just shrewd with his use of materials. This is not uncommon, for example on a study of sixteenth century duplex armours, x-rays showed a number to be triplex. This internal layer was made from reused armour components such as a pikeman's tassets.²

Or an exploding shield?

The second theory is that this could originally have been an exploding shield designed to fly off when hit correctly just like the vamplate (the hand shield on a lance) and brow plates are



known to do with this armour. This is illustrated in the pamphlet 'The Triumph of Maximilian I'³. Dictated by The Holy Roman Emperor himself to his secretary, this is an elaborate, commemorative work of his own name, dynasty and achievements. Carried out in the form of miniature paintings and woodcuts executed by some of the most important artists in the German realm at the time, it is a depiction of Maximilian's pleasures and amusements, his adventures in territorial expansion, his fondest political schemes and important events in his life. The pictures show real people: courtiers, the Emperor's servants, his soldiers, hunters, jesters and so on – all arrayed in the most opulent costumes of the day.

Evidence for the second theory

Within these images are several of his knights, dressed for the joust. The armours bear a very strong resemblance to our

'Maximilian armour (Il.167)' and they are also carrying the correct pointed lances for the *Scharfrennen* form of the joust. We then have an image of some knights where the theatrical pieces are demonstrated with the plates flying up above them as if they have been forced off. Shards of vamplate and brow plates fly dramatically into the air, and then in the next few images we have grand-guards and reinforces, very similar in shape and form, that again very much resemble this piece.

With such a reliable source, dictated personally by the Emperor himself, it makes the second theory a particularly viable one. Despite the construction being unlike anything our curators have seen before, it would also explain the hinge-like structure as part of the mechanism that allowed the piece to spring off when hit correctly with the opponent's lance.

Already a treasure of the Royal Armouries' collection, this armour is a grand and imposing one. The thought of the pieces flying off dramatically on impact at the height of the joust would truly be a great sight to behold. The potential secrets and surprises that this reinforce appears to hold, no matter how theoretical, can do nothing other than add to the majestic presence of the armour and seems a fitting one for a man such as Emperor Maximilian. This very special and unique armour was certainly a pleasure to work on.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Thom Richardson, Keeper of Oriental and European Armour and Karen Watts, Curator of Historic Armour, Royal Armouries.

1. Kite, M. & Thompson, R., 2006. Conservation of Leather and related materials, (London: Butterworth-Heinemann), p126-7
2. de Reuck, A., Starley, D., Richardson, T. Edge, E. (2005), Duplex armour: an unrecognised mode of construction. In Arms and Armour, Volume 2, No 1 (Leeds: Royal Armouries) 20, (whole article 5-26)
3. Aspland, A., ed., 1873. Triumph of the Emperor Maximilian I by Hans Burgkmair, (London - Holbein Society)
4. As above.

Image top left: plate 52, '*Scheibenrennen*, five men on horseback in good order, with beavers to their helmets and semicircular lance guards'

Image top right: plate 51, '*Geshiffrennen*, five men on horseback in good order, with shields that jump up into the air in pieces'

Image lower right: Plate 50, '*Bundrennen*, five men in good order, with shields that jump up over their heads'.

A Year in the Life of an Emerging Conservator

Ciarán Lavelle on a year playing in the sand (and the ice of Birmingham)

I am writing from my temporary home in rural Qatar where I am currently spending my third season as the lead conservator on an archaeological excavation run by the University of Wales and University of Copenhagen. I am a freelance objects conservator with over five years' experience. I am writing to give you an insight into the world of a conservator in 2013. After scaling the daunting academic cliff-face that is a Master's degree (at Cardiff University in September 2012) with the majority of my limbs and sanity intact, I embarked on my next challenge – to find paid employment in my field during the worst economic depression in modern memory.

January to March 2013

The Staffordshire Hoard, Birmingham

It was not until December of 2012 that my hunt produced its first kill; an ever elusive paid contract. The job was a three-month position at the Birmingham Museum to work on the Staffordshire Hoard. I settled quickly into a great team at work and with a great set of housemates. The Staffordshire Hoard is a collection of Anglo-Saxon gold discovered in 2009. The team consisted of myself, another short-contract staff member, a new conservation manager plus the two-fulltime conservators.

The project was exciting as artefacts were put straight on display from the excavation, only being removed to undergo conservation, analysis and documentation. This allowed for public viewings before, during and after conservation. I worked on both the Birmingham exhibition and the one in the Stoke-on-Trent Museum, co-owners of the hoard. This project afforded me the chance to engage more with the general public through tours and social media as well as with volunteers and museum staff. I was given the opportunity to author and publish blogs on all aspects of the conservation process so as to keep the public informed of our progress.

March to May 2013

Ruwayda, Qatar

Throughout my time in Birmingham my search for full-time employment continued unabated, eventually resulting in the final week with a position on an excavation in Qatar. The timing was perfect, leaving me with two days between the end of one contract and the start of the next.

I flew from London to Doha, my first journey beyond the borders of Europe, to undertake my biggest career challenge to date – as the lead conservator on an excavation run by the University of Wales in partnership with the University of Copenhagen and the Qatar Museums Association. I was nervous; for this was not just my first time out of Europe it was also the most responsibility I had ever undertaken.



Ciarán teaching basic conservation theory to the heritage park staff at Merv

My first impression of Doha was one of a building site intersected with crazy driving, the latter being a reoccurring theme during my stay. I was warmly welcomed onto the 'Welsh' team, all living in a group of shared 'villas' – which turned out to be prefab 1970s' concrete boxes. Ours proved to be a basic, comfortable home but an inadequate workspace.

My role was to set up and run a conservation laboratory on tight restrictions. I conserved the metal objects excavated at Rubayqa and Ruwayda. Rubayqa is a large settlement with a fortress dating from circa 17th/18th century. Ruwayda is a settlement site with evidence of a mosque, a number of courtyard houses and a small fort. The equipment and resources at my disposal were extremely limited, requiring me to borrow from other excavations such as the world heritage site, Al Zubarah, as well as UCL's conservation department in Doha. Our free-time included early morning trips to the fish and vegetable market in Doha, visits to local museums, attending lectures and taking entertaining boat trips in stormy weather.

May to June 2013

Merv, Turkmenistan

I left Qatar a week early as I was to join a Cultural Heritage Without Borders (CHWB) team at Merv, Turkmenistan. HWB works in developing countries to support heritage projects, to train workers and to provide professional expertise in areas of conflict, disaster and poverty. The World Heritage Site at Merv was an important city on the Silk Roads of Central Asia. It was founded around the 6th century BCE, flourishing as an administrative, trading, military and religious centre.

Our team of twenty-two flew to the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat, arriving at 4am and placed in waiting cars for the six hour journey to Merv. The roads, or lack of, were an eye opener. Sleep was impossible as our driver drove across craterlike potholes like a seasoned rally racer. Our home was an 'L' shaped building with eight bedrooms, a kitchen and dining room. Two wonderful local women plus our trusty driver joined us. With limited access to Internet and mobiles I found being disconnected from the world a strange relief from modern life. Our first night at Merv was spent participating in a time-honoured tradition: gin and tonics on the highest turret of the oldest defensive wall in the city.



Photograph: Gaigysyz Jorayev

The UCL and CHWB teams on a trip to visit the stunningly mysterious Kiz Kala at Merv Heritage Park

Work happened in a purpose built room at the Merv Park Office. Our HWB team consisted of three conservators and a translator. We also had four interns from UCL Qatar. Our role was to conserve the artefacts from Merv, to mentor the conservation students and to devise and run a teaching program for local Merv Park staff, teaching basic conservation theory and practice. The training provided by HWB was the only formal conservation training available to the Park staff, who were responsible for the conservation and care of Merv.

Working alongside the Park staff was an inspiration; they were welcoming, friendly and eager to learn. We came to learn a lot from each of the Turkmen we met, even being invited by a local family to their home one weekend where they generously hosted and fed all twenty-three of us. Our free time was spent visiting the local towns, cities and points of historical interest. Our director organised games between us and the locals, needless to say it did not end well for team UCL! Our last days in the country were spent in the capital Ashgabat where we were able to sightsee and relax after the hectic month.

July to September 2013

Methone, Greece

My next job was at an excavation of the ancient city of Methone in Peira, Greece. The site dates back to the Final Neolithic period, with significant remains in the Bronze and Early Iron Age. By the 8th century BC it was a colony of Eritrea; the city was sacked and destroyed in 354 BC by the armies of Philip II of Macedon. Since 2003 the site has been excavated by the Greek Ministry of Culture and the material from these excavations is being studied for publication by a team from the government and the University of California, Los Angeles.

I joined the UCLA team a month after returning from Turkmenistan. Our team consisted of archaeologists, a photographer, two conservators, a conservation intern and numerous visiting professionals. We all lived in a hotel in Makrigialos, a picturesque coastal village surrounded by history and mussel farms. Our diet was dominated by fresh seafood, so it took me awhile before I could face seafood again after we left.

Our base was in the region's archaeological centre, known as an Apotheke, where the region's archaeological, museum and



Our first day at Merv on top of the Erk Kala walls

conservation professionals are based. We were limited in space and equipment but were able to acquire the essential conservation equipment needed. On this project we had the opportunity to work and learn alongside the Greek conservation staff onsite. It was a great opportunity to share knowledge, skills and experiences as well as to build new friendships. During our short weekends we relaxed by the beach and were taken on fascinating day trips around Northern Greece. We had the opportunity to attend a local traditional music festival and were invited to the opening of an exhibition on the inscriptions from Methone at the Thessaloniki museum, and enjoyed the rising of a blood red moon from the cliff top remains of the medieval city of Pydna.

November to December 2013

Ruwayda, Qatar – Take 2

After a month's break I returned to Ruwayda for the winter and spring seasons. I have the added responsibility of designing and implementing a series of field archaeological conservation schools to teach UCL Qatar students and involvement in the design, preparation and implementation of an exhibition on the two sites from the last five years at the Virginia Commonwealth University campus in Qatar.

Challenges and Opportunities

In an age where we all need to be economically and environmentally aware I have made some Godzilla-sized carbon footprints across half of the great continent of Eurasia. This last year has been one of amazing change: with new experiences, new countries, new friendships and fantastic career opportunities. I would like to highlight some of the challenges I have faced along the way, for discussion.

During my first time in Qatar I was invited to interview for a position in a national museum in the UK. I really wanted to attend but with only a week's notice and the expense of travel, I was not able to and my suggestion of a Skype and/or phone alternative was rejected. Emerging professionals such

as myself have to take whatever contracts are available to build our CV but many of these positions are short-term and we may be posted worldwide. So job-hunting candidates may be required to travel large distances when invited for interviews. Since many institutions cannot afford to pay travel expenses and many candidates are equally unable, should not these institutions utilise modern technology such as video conferencing and Skype?

Two of the positions I held over this year were as a volunteer and for both of them the costs were covered by the host organisation. Such positions can often be ideal for boosting careers but the funding is not always available nor living costs covered. If a position is voluntary and carries professional responsibility should the funds not be provided to help with travel and living costs which at least reflect the experience level and education of the volunteer?

The road for an emerging conservator is a difficult one in the current economic climate with heritage institutes seeming to be the worst hit by budgetary cuts. And this may mean that conservators will have to move far from home to gain that first volunteer position or job as I have. Of course, this has its benefits as it leads to travel, to meeting interesting people and the chance for exciting new experiences.

For me it has been a difficult journey, although on the whole it has been worth it as I get to be a conservator and have amazing experiences – but one day I would like to settle down have job security.

I'm writing this to give an honest view of what the job market can be for those recently graduated, or heading towards graduation. It is important to keep going, take what contracts you can find and build up your CV. And most importantly don't give up. I have found myself increasingly living by an age-old Irish mantra my friend Aoibheann keeps telling me when I hit a difficult period: 'what's for you won't pass you'. I am going into 2014 with the continuation of my current short contract in Qatar and the hope that this year will bring more experience and better (longer) contracts.

From beetles to The Beatles



Entomology Products (Pages 71-75)



Phonograph Record Storage Sleeves (Page 27)

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