

Icon NEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • JULY 2006 • ISSUE 5



The British Library's new display policy

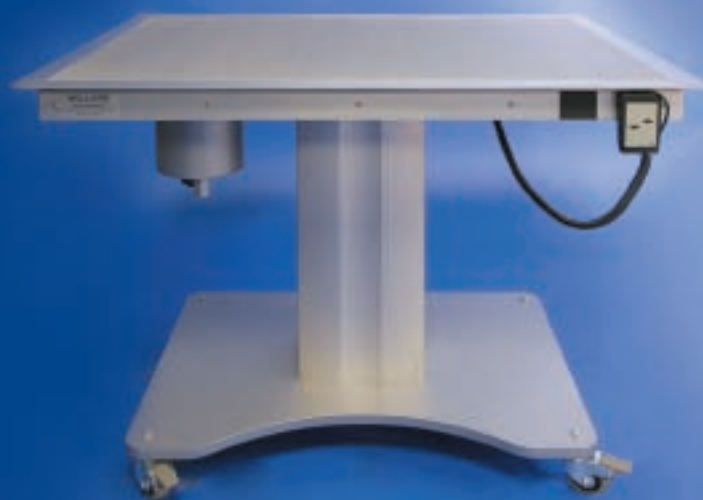
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JULY 2006

Issue 5

It's all too easy in the heritage world to see the glass half-full: pathetic acquisitions budgets for museums; the devaluation of scholarship; budgets likely to tighten further as funding for sports increases with the Olympics drawing near. All of these stories have featured in the media in recent months and it's not difficult to think of plenty more reasons for dismay even closer to home: low salaries which don't reflect conservators' skills and training; the ever reducing number of salaried posts....

And yet... it does seem as though there is a growing awareness of conservation as something worthwhile and a source of interesting stories. Why else would the House of Lords spend so much time considering the subject of conservation science? Why else would the world's media be fascinated by the cleaning of Nelson's Column? Our news round-up this time around brings you a host of stories from the half of the glass which is full: new conservation-related exhibitions opening, conservators on the radio and new conservation centres planned or opening. Not to mention keeping tabs on our man (or in this case woman) in the Antarctic. It is good once in a while to be able to reflect back to you, the profession, news which shows us in a dynamic and positive light.

And if too much cheerfulness is not to your taste, there is, as always, plenty of sober, helpful and excellent reading matter here.

Lynette Gill, Editor



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ISSN 1749-8988

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Cover picture:
Facsimile of the Lindisfarne Gospels used as part of the display during the six months that the Gospels are off exhibition. Courtesy of the British Library

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Deadlines:
for September 2006 issue

Editorial: 1 August

Adverts: 17 August

around & about

Antartic blog

When Icon News 2 reported on Nicola Dunn's appointment as objects conservator at Scott Base in Antarctica, we thought that was the last we would hear of her until her return this autumn. Happily, communications are more sophisticated than expected and Nicola has been in touch to tell us that we can keep track of her and the project generally through the Antarctic conservation blog. The blog can be found on the Natural History Museum's website: www.nhm.ac.uk/antarctica-blog. It makes for a great read and an opportunity to count your blessings as you consider the joys of working in permanent night-time at minus 50°C, and having to use whatever materials are to hand, with no flights in to bring forgotten items or fresh supplies. Nicola appears to be remarkably sanguine, cheerful indeed, as you follow her progress.

This is the first time conservation has taken place through the winter months. The conservation team is three-strong: Nicola and two Australian colleagues. They are working on artefacts in Cape Royds hut, left behind by Ernest Shackleton after his 1908 attempt to reach the South Pole. The expedition turned back just 156 km from the Pole –

the furthest south anyone had reached at that time – but the team was the first to ascend the world's southernmost active volcano, Mount Erebus.

The hut still houses the equipment and many personal possessions, such as clothing, books and food. If the blog is anything to go by, conserving cans of food seems to be Nicola's main preoccupation at the moment. Undamaged they are conserved intact but if the tin is punctured or damaged it is opened up, with some trepidation. The blog shows some evocative images of the cans of the era and some interesting pictures of their contents: still pink cod's roe and a desiccated whole cow's tongue.

The project is the vision of the Antarctic Heritage Trust, a New Zealand based charity founded in 1987 to care for the heritage of the huts in the Ross Sea region on behalf of the international community.

But it's not all hard work. Conservation lab tours are laid on every two weeks for a nearby American base, which also provides friendly competition for regular quiz nights and ten-pin bowling. And they've just had all their mid-winter celebrations, so they know they are heading back to the light.

Mount Erebus in gloom



Scott Base from the ice





Scott Base Over-winter team

Covering Nelson's Column

Trafalgar Square with Nelson's Column and flanking lions at its centre is a major London landmark and focal point for many historic celebrations and gatherings. Perhaps that explains the immense media interest in the conservation work on the column which has been taking place over the past three months. The story has been covered by all the

A familiar landmark shrouded in scaffolding



major national newspapers - Guardian, Times, Telegraph, Independent, Mirror -, London's Evening Standard, ITV London, BBC tv, including Blue Peter, and BBC radio, including the arts programme Front Row and BBC World Services. And once Associated Press had picked up on the story it turned up around the world from the Gulf states to India and South Africa.

The Grade 1 listed monument was erected between 1839 and 1843 and the statue of Nelson on top of the column has been cleaned on several occasions. But the whole monument has only undergone treatment on two occasions: in 1968 and 1986. In charge of the work overall is David Ball Restoration Ltd, which has carried out many similar conservation projects around London. An unusual feature of the project is the support of a corporate sponsor - the insurance company Zurich. It is believed to be the first instance of sponsorship for this kind of restoration work in the UK, although it happens more regularly in other European cities. The work is being done with minimal disruption to the normal activities in the area and to a strict timetable for completion in July by the start of

Lion tamer Iain McLean of Antique Bronze Ltd



James O. Jenkins

more around & about



James O Jenkins

A nip and tuck for Nelson

the annual summer events programme in the Square. These include a Stone Masons' trade event on 21 July.

The work involved includes local repairs to the stonework and the cleaning of the granite column and sandstone statue. The remaining decorative elements of the monument are in bronze: the lions, a set of reliefs depicting Nelson's victories at the base of the column and a surround of acanthus leaves at the base of the statue itself. And the cleaning and protection of this bronzework has been subcontracted to Antique Bronze Ltd, responsible for the work on Cleopatra's Needle, described in Icon News 1. Icon members Lucy Branch and Iain McLean escorted Icon News up the 250 steps and 25 scaffold levels which surround the tower to explain the work involved.

Lucy also told the story of her father, in the business before her, having been hired to inspect the monument for bomb damage after the war. Making his ascent with the help of rope and ladder, as he approached the top overhang, he reached the conclusion that he had not demanded a big enough fee for the job. No sum on earth would be great enough to tempt Icon News to climb Nelson's Column by those means.

Prizes galore

In earlier issues we have followed the countdown to the award of the Gulbenkian Prize and were delighted to learn that the ss Great Britain, the world's first great ocean liner, has won the £100,000 award for museums and galleries in this, Brunel's bicentenary year. The conservation team of David Watkinson, Matthew Tanner, Robert Turner and Mark Lewis are to be congratulated for this success. Our first issue carried the story of the project and the team's



©1999-2006 Papplewick Pumping Station Association

Papplewick pumping station across the cooling pond

underlying research is published in the just-released issue of *The Conservator*.

But this is not the end of the story. The ss Great Britain also picked up accolades in the 2006 Museums and Heritage Awards for Excellence, created by the Museums and Heritage Show and supported by the Independent newspaper. Ss Great Britain won both the Permanent Exhibition category award and the Restoration/Conservation award. Two other projects in this latter category were commended: (1) Historic Scotland's Whithorn Priory Museum and (2) Papplewick Pumping Station – Restoration and Development. With its ornate architecture, Papplewick is an outstanding example of a complete and working Victorian water pumping station with two unique Watts beam engines.

'Mission impossible?'

Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge 1 July – 24 September 2006

The Fitzwilliam's new exhibition, *Mission impossible? Ethics and choices in conservation*, invites the visitor to think about some of the issues that confront all conservators when trying to find the appropriate course of action for an object, so that it is not only preserved but also made as accessible as possible. Examples are drawn from across the Museum's collections of fine art, antiquities, coins and medals, applied arts, manuscripts and printed books.

Mission Impossible? begins by looking at the implications of intervention for objects that have never been treated, for example, Frans Snyder's painting *The Larder*: its structure essentially untouched since it was created in the mid-17th century, but now in frail condition. What are the options and what factors influence the decisions? After this, the elements that make up a hostile environment are



Restored statuette of Apollo(?)
 Roman, probably 1st century AD, based on one or more original
 Greek works of around 500 – 480 BC
 Given by Dr. J. Disney
 The restorations of head, limbs, quiver and plinth were carried out
 by John Flaxman and Antonio d'Este in Rome in 1793.

considered, followed by examples of irreversible damage that present the conservator with few options, such as the ravages caused by iron gall ink and the self-destructing character of 'crizzled' glass. Historical restorations and their status today are considered through a look at the questions posed by pastiches and by objects such as a figure of Apollo, on which the 'recreations' are arguably now of greater importance than the original statue. Also, at this point, we consider the thorny issue in modern conservation practice of how to determine the level of restoration appropriate for a particular object. A Roman-Egyptian mummy portrait and a 17th century Spanish triptych, compromised by earlier repairs, are used to explore the importance of history and context to these decisions. A group of harps that could be restored to playable condition introduces the question of original state

versus function. Pests - microbiological, insect, animal and human come next, followed by the problems of preserving conservation documentation.

The final section contains a series of working models. These enable the visitor to see degradation, such as the fading of a red lake and the opening of splits in a panel, happening before their eyes. This section has been designed as a travelling exhibition. From 2007, with the aid of Renaissance East of England, it will tour to other museums in the region where it will be shown with objects from each host collection.

A programme of related talks and courses runs throughout the summer. Details can be found at www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

And yes, the Chinese vases do feature in the exhibition....

'Keeping it together'

at The Manchester Museum
 17 June – 28 August,

Not another conservation exhibition! Well, actually, it is worth reminding visitors (and other museum professionals) who it is that cares for collections on their behalf and how they (we) do it. Our experience of public conservation events at the Museum has shown that audiences want to learn what conservators do and what goes on behind the scenes.

Rather than employ the authorial voice of Conservation, this exhibition seeks to reflect the work of the conservation team at The Manchester Museum and the makeup of its collections. Displays address topics such as agents of deterioration, scientific research and the ethical dimensions of conservation work, and the exhibition

Publicity for Keeping it Together



more around & about

includes a comprehensive programme of activities throughout the summer. To broaden the scope of the exhibition ten evening talks on different aspects of conservation have been organised, presenting specialisms ranging from natural history to furniture conservation. In addition to these, there are interactive weekend events, gallery tours from a conservation perspective and a working Gallery Bench two afternoons a week. The main display is in the Museum's third floor gallery with additional 'interventions', spot lights on conservation topics, scattered throughout the permanent galleries.

Museums are now under pressure to make their collections more accessible and conservators are well placed to support this trend without compromising museum objects. Making objects more accessible has always been part of conservation work; we must now be proactive in creating opportunities to demonstrate this and show our work as a whole. People are interested in the technical side of conservation; they also want to know 'why' and 'what for'. Making the public party to our deliberations will encourage an acceptance of low light levels in galleries and restrictions on handling. Showing them the work that goes towards attaining the delicate equilibrium required for the current and future use of each and every object, and collections as a whole, will help the public understand the challenges of "keeping it together".

Details of programmes can be found on The Manchester Museum's website: www.manchester.ac.uk/museum

Any queries or comments can be directed to **Irit Narkiss**, the exhibition co-ordinator: irit.narkiss@manchester.ac.uk

It's a hot summer for conservation in the North West; with The Manchester Museum's "Keeping it Together" exhibition, Manchester City Gallery's public conservation of Etty's "The Sirens and Ulysses" (www.manchestergalleries.org. See Icon News issue 3), and the opening of the Liverpool Conservation Centre's new permanent exhibition (www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/conservation).

Liverpool's conservation centre reopens

The newly refurbished Conservation Centre in Liverpool re-opened to the public on 16 June 2006. The £1 million redevelopment features a brand new permanent exhibition *Reveal – The Hidden Story of Objects*, with a working science laboratory at its heart, a new temporary exhibition space and a dedicated learning resource suite.



Conservation staff at work in public view in the new Reveal Laboratory

The Reveal gallery explores the memories that objects contain, shows how science reveals how they were made, and how we can conserve them for the future. With an analytical laboratory at its centre, scientists and conservators interact with the public as they work, demonstrating techniques including X-radiography, light microscopy and scanning electron microscopy.

Visitors are invited to experience objects with the latest technology, including CT scanning and X-rays of a mummy, techniques for examining and dating paintings, laser cleaning of weathered marble, and haptic interaction (touching by computer) with virtual sculptures.

An area with microscopes, databases, interactives and a bank of objects representing everyday public conservation enquiries will allow visitors to explore the themes of the exhibition through connections with everyday objects. There is a dedicated area for visitors to bring in their own objects for advice on how to look after them, and microscopes with digital cameras can be used to examine them and explain their condition.

The temporary exhibition programme was launched with *Street Life*, a photographic exhibition of fashion on Liverpool's streets. A display of future fabrics and smart materials illustrates the technology of modern fabrics, characterised using scanning electron micrographs.

The Conservation Centre has reopened as National Conservation Centre. This reflects National Museums Liverpool's status as a national museums group and will be a prime attraction for 2008 when Liverpool becomes European Capital of Culture. The *Reveal* exhibition has been made possible through a grant of £570,466 from the ReDiscover fund, a renewal fund for science centres and museums across the UK funded by the Millennium Commission, the Wolfson Foundation and the Wellcome Trust.



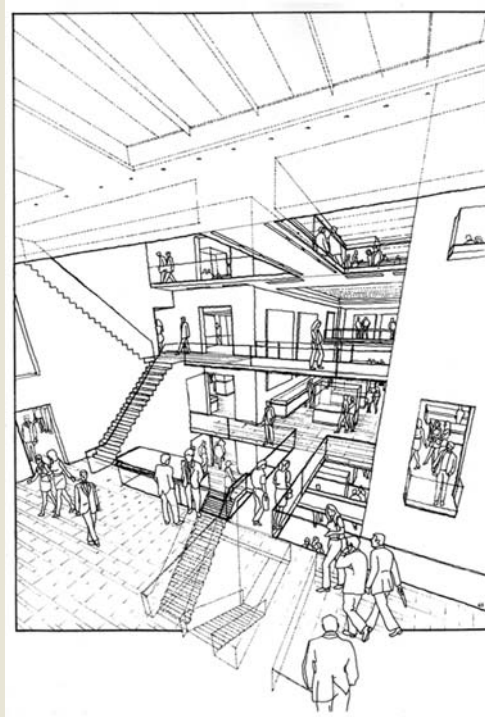
Stirrings at the Ashmolean!

Despite being the oldest public museum in Britain, with a conservation history that extends back to its foundation in 1683, the Ashmolean has only had a Department of Conservation since 1999 when the seven conservators, who until then had worked in separate curatorial areas, were transferred into a new department whose remit was to deliver interventive and preventive conservation across the museum's nationally designated collections.

Since then, much has happened. With funding from the DCMS Designated Challenge Fund and the Ashmolean, the Department opened a new paper conservation studio in 2004 – a development which marked the beginning of our programme of upgrading conservation facilities in the museum. However, in 2005, confirmation of the award of a grant of £15m to the Ashmolean from the Heritage Lottery Fund and a highly successful fundraising campaign meant that detailed planning for a far bigger project became its main priority. In brief, the Ashmolean has embarked upon a £50m scheme to replace much of its building with a new climate-controlled development which will provide a 100% increase in public galleries along with new education facilities. Most importantly, though, there will also be new Objects and Textile conservation laboratories, including flexible space to allow for some future expansion into paintings conservation should funding become available. So, for the past two years, the conservators have been working closely with architects, mechanical engineers, designers, project managers, and museum colleagues to develop appropriate environmental systems, showcase and storage specifications, and trouble-shoot and fine-tune plans. At the same time, a team of about 20 people, led by seconded Conservation Dept staff, has bar-coded, databased, digitally imaged, and packed over 180,000 items in under 12 months to prepare large parts of the collections for storage during the project.

The design concept for the Ashmolean's new displays is based upon accessibility for all and will feature key orientation galleries that illustrate how different cultures have interacted over time. There will also be a dedicated Conservation Gallery that will tell the unique story of the conservation of the Ashmolean's collections from the early

Architect's
impressions by
Rick Mather
Architects



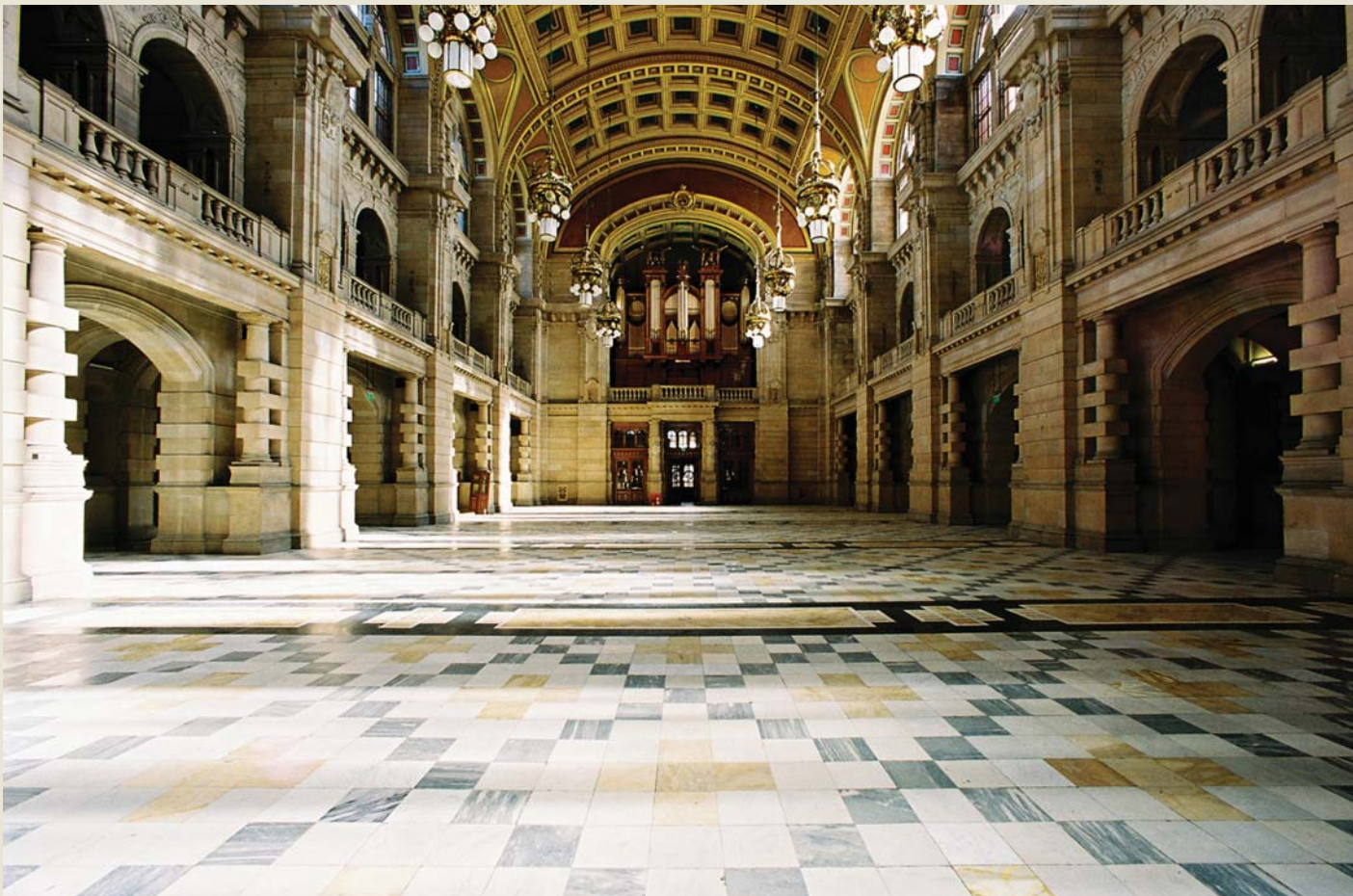
17th century to the present – a story that can be told nowhere else! And, as this gallery will be adjacent to the Education Department, it will also relate directly to key stages in the national curriculum. There will be also be links to conservation in the main 'cultural' galleries where the impact that investigative conservation can make on the better understanding of particular objects will be exploited, demonstrating the productive synergy that exists between object, conservator, and curator.

Finally, the Department is actively looking for funding to develop training opportunities for conservators. It has traditionally hosted conservation students, both on vacation placements and also for up to a year as part of M.A. courses - we will continue with this but also plan to introduce advanced post-graduate internships and develop CPD training opportunities in close cooperation with our professional body if funding can be secured.

The project is scheduled for completion in early 2009 – watch this space!

Mark Norman

more around & about



© Glasgow City Council (Museums)

Kelvingrove: the main hall

Glasgow masterpiece reopens

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, the most visited museum in the UK outside London, reopens on 11 July after a £27m refurbishment.

Over 25 conservation staff worked on the project—assessing objects and deciding what treatments they might need, advising on packing materials, commenting on gallery designs, restoring paintings, sourcing new frames, working on the arms and armour, natural history and other collections. There have been some exciting new discoveries, such as finding a second work hidden under a lining to Guercino's *St Francis Leaning to the Left*, and discovering the figure of an old lady in the 17th-century Dutch painting *A Musical Party* by M Naiveu when old varnish was removed.

The Conservation team have also been involved in research into monitoring systems and materials for Kelvingrove. Conservators and the Collections Management team also played a major role in the Decant operation, which planned and organised the removal of

200,000 objects, 20,000 library books, equipment from workshops and the contents from over 60 office spaces in Kelvingrove to Glasgow Museums Resource Centre and other museum sites. From suits of armour to fossils and minerals, every object had its own 'passport' – a document holding key details about it so that it could be easily traced, as it was packed, labelled and transported.

The philosophy behind the new-look Kelvingrove has shifted from the approach of its Victorian creators to a 21st century view that is object-based, visitor-centred, interdisciplinary and intent on telling the most interesting stories about the objects on display.

Conservators broadcast

The radio is many a conservator's best friend and, happily, conservators are returning the favour. Dana Goodburn Brown, site conservator, metals technologist and educator, was interviewed on Radio Kent recently, whilst Radio 4's afternoon series 'Making History' featured Dinah Eastop (of the Textile Conservation Centre and our Intervention

contributor in this issue) talking about the deliberate concealment of garments in buildings. *Hidden House History* – the exhibition of the Deliberately Concealed Garments Project – has been a great success and moves to its final destination of Fareham shortly. Yet to come, Chris Daniels, Lecturer in Architectural Conservation at Weymouth College, will be waxing lyrical about the benefits of Portland stone for a radio show called 'Men of Stone' to be broadcast on five consecutive Sundays from 30 June onwards (Radio 4 after Gardener's Question Time!)

TV also got a look in on Friday June 23 when 'Kew Palace Revealed' on BBC 2 devoted an hour to describing the 10 year programme of research and conservation which has gone into restoring this little Royal Palace located in the famous botanical gardens. Several Icon members were featured, including a sparkling performance from Board member Allyson McDermott.

Don't forget to let Icon know if you are going to feature in media events, so that they can get the word out to colleagues.

Serving Constable

Sarah Cove, Easel Paintings Conservator and ACR, has also been widely quoted in the media recently as the exhibition at Tate Britain, 'Constable's Great Landscapes' opened to great acclaim. As a student of Constable's techniques and materials, through the Constable Research Project founded in 1986, Sarah has been heavily involved with the exhibition since its inception, carrying out technical examination of many of the paintings and collaborating with colleagues from the Tate, as well as other British and US lending institutions, to collate all existing technical and scientific data on the 'six-footers'. The results of these examinations substantially directed the eventual exhibition and catalogue content. She also contributed a 20-page essay to the exhibition catalogue on 'The Painting Techniques of Constable's 'Six-Footers'.

In the previews and during the opening week of the exhibition (1 June) she was widely quoted in the national press (including the Guardian, Independent, Independent on Sunday, Sunday Telegraph) and the Brighton 'Argus', and appeared on Channel 4's evening News, saying among other things that the 19th century viewing public would have been shocked to see the hugely radical six-foot sketches and would have thought Constable was 'bonkers' for painting like that!

New courses at the TCC

Major developments are underway at Southampton University's Textile Conservation Centre, where new courses are coming on stream over the next two academic years.

At undergraduate level, October 2007 will see the introduction of a BA in Heritage Studies: Museums and Galleries. This will join the Centre's existing Museum and Galleries Masters course, which is itself expanding from October 2006 to provide three further pathways through the programme: access and learning; archives in museums and interpreting historic interiors.

At the post-graduate level, this October also sees the introduction of a new Masters degree by research: MRes Science and Heritage. This specialist conservation science course will develop students' understanding of cultural heritage alongside their specialist knowledge of analytical technology. And from October 2007, a new two-year MA is being offered in Organics Conservation. It will focus on paper, leather and textiles and should interest those who want to work on a wider range of materials than the Centre's traditional focus on textile conservation.

Further information about the Centre and these courses can be obtained from www.textileconservationcentre.soton.ac.uk or tel + 44 (0) 23 8059 7100

TCC grant success

In another development, the Textile Conservation Centre has just heard that it has been successful with its grant application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding to study the application of engineering methodologies to textile conservation problems. This will allow Frances Lennard and Dinah Eastop to continue work with colleagues from the School of Engineering Sciences at the University of Southampton on the monitoring of strain in tapestries. This award is not just excellent news for the TCC but also benefits the whole conservation sector.

The project, which will involve collaboration with English Heritage, the Historic Royal Palaces Agency and the National Trust (and will complement the recently completed E-U funded MOHDT project), aims to find out whether it is possible to quantify the strain imposed on different areas of a tapestry, and whether it is possible to identify areas at risk of imminent damage before it is visible. This will help to ensure that tapestry conservation resources are targeted effectively. The funding is for 3 years and will cover the costs of a PhD studentship and a

more around & about



HRH The Princess Royal at the TCC reception

post-doctoral research assistant, as well as other costs such as equipment and conference attendance. The results of the pilot project included a dissemination event held at the University of Southampton in May 2005 and two publications to date: a chapter on mechanical testing and its role in the condition assessment of tapestries, in the recent publication *Tapestry Conservation: Principles and Practice* and a paper on the use of engineering techniques for the inspection of damage in works of art, in *Reviews in Conservation 2005*.

Royal praise for the TCC

We finishing this TCC news round up in celebrity magazine style, with news that HRH the Princess Royal, the TCC's Patron, recently attended a reception to celebrate the work of the Centre at Aspley House in London. The Princess said that she found the work of the Centre both fascinating and important and she noted the Centre's international reputation. Hosted by the Marquess of Douro, Chairman of the TCC Foundation, the event was

attended by luminaries of Southampton University, of which the TCC is part, along with Masters and past Masters of the Clothworkers, Merchant Taylors, Drapers, Dyers and many other City Livery Companies. Many trusts and foundations were also represented as were some of the TCC's clients, including English Heritage and the National Trust.

Government news 1

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, gave his backing to the Cultural Leadership Programme, a two-year, £12 million initiative to promote excellence in management and leadership within the cultural sector launched on 19 June at EMI Group headquarters in West London.

Initiated by the Chancellor in last year's Budget statement, the programme is being delivered by three sector partners working in collaboration: Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills (Sector Skills Council) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). The two-year

programme will contribute to :

- More diverse and representative leadership
- A higher profile for the sector with stronger links across the economy
- A step change in the impact of the cultural sector

Also at the launch event, Tessa Jowell MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, said:

'The Cultural Leadership Programme will encourage leaders from a wide range of backgrounds to reflect the diversity that has made Britain a cultural powerhouse. In economic terms, the cultural sectors account for over five per cent of the nation's GDP (gross domestic product) and for the last decade the sector has grown at twice the rate of the economy as a whole.

To maintain this position we must continue to invest in the people who will be its future. This £12 million initiative aims to provide a strategic approach to embed a strong leadership culture that will make Britain's creative sectors more successful – and more accessible – than ever.'

It is anticipated that, between 2006 and 2008, around 2,000 people working in the cultural sector will benefit directly from leadership development opportunities through this programme. Icon members are already taking advantage of the leadership programmes, as reported in Icon News 4 and again in this issue.

The publication *Introducing the Cultural Leadership Programme* is available from www.artscouncil.org.uk or from Marston Book Services, tel: 01235 465500

Government news 2

Tessa Jowell has also announced recently that the division of money between sport, arts, film and heritage good causes for the period 2009–19 will remain unchanged, after an extensive public consultation showed strong support for the present distribution.

Let us give thanks

Government news 3

Although millions of people in the UK are involved in some sort of volunteer work, in the past, some people may have been put off from so doing because they've been worried that it might affect their benefit. The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland have now produced a booklet to help volunteers and volunteer managers combine the two.

The basic rules are that you can volunteer for as many hours as you want, as long as you still meet the conditions to get benefits or tax credit. The old rule that you could only volunteer for 16 hours a week no longer applies. Secondly, volunteers can generally be refunded for expenses by the organisation they are volunteering for without it affecting their benefit or credit.

If volunteers are getting an income-related benefit, like Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit, then they must declare any payment, payments in kind, or expenses received for doing voluntary work. Receipts, to back up claims, should be retained by the volunteer.

For the leaflet itself, which is an off-putting 49 pages long, see www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2006/volunteering/

Government news 4

The National Archives and the Office of Public Sector Information are to merge under the joint name of The National Archives. Government Ministers announced that 'The combined organisation will lead on information policy and support effective delivery of records and information management across government and the wider public sector. This merger will take effect in October 2006.'

Values and Vision

On 8 June, the National Museum Directors' Conference, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the Arts Council launched *Values and Vision: The Contribution of Culture*, which calls for a new settlement with government so that Britain can maintain its position as a world-class culture. With the Government spending plans in mind, the arts, museum, library and archive sectors have set out their values and core principles. They demonstrate the contribution that the cultural sector has made to life in Britain in the past 10 years – in order to ensure that it can make a similar contribution in the next.

This is the first time that the cultural sector has come together in this way to set out its joint values and vision. The document celebrates the sector's achievements over the last decade but acknowledges that there is still a great deal more to be done to fully realise its contribution to public life. The leaflet sets out the elements of the vision – that public participation in cultural activity will be one of the country's outstanding successes by 2015. Backing this up with key statistics 'More people take part in cultural activity than vote' and with international comparisons, it then goes on to ask for the tools to deliver a world class

culture to welcome the Olympic Games in 2012. . 'To ensure the success of the Games and beyond, it is essential that there must be sustained support for the cultural sector and recognition of the value of investment in culture'.

The Values and Vision document is available at:
www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/values_and_vision.html

Demonstrating public value

Bolton residents value their museums, libraries and archives at £10.4m according to an innovative study commissioned by Bolton Metropolitan Council and MLA North West. The study, undertaken by economics experts, questioned both users and non-users and demonstrated that every £1 of public funding received by the services generated £1.60 of value for the Bolton economy. The project is planned to be the first of a number of similar studies in the North West and nationally and a toolkit is available to enable other local authorities to carry out similar evaluations. The report can be found on www.mlanorthwest.org.uk

More bargains to be had?

The National Archives wishes to dispose of

1 x 30" x 20" Interwood Hydraulic Press
1 x Harrild Standing Press
1 x Furnival Standing Press

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Appointments to view the equipment should be made through Carlo Roberto (020 8392 5330 ext 2485 or 2335) carlo.roberto@nationalarchives.gov.uk), but bids should be submitted to Sandy Flatman sandy.flatman@nationalarchives.gov.uk. The deadline for bids is 31 July 2006.
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

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Telephone booking is essential at this point in time:
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professional matters

THE CONSERVATION AWARDS 2007

The next round of the Conservation Awards, again generously sponsored by Sir Paul McCartney, will be launched later this year. It is not too early to start thinking now about whether any of your recent projects would be suitable for entry. Short-listed projects attract valuable local and national publicity – and there is the chance to win up to £15,000 for your company or institution!

The closing date for entries for the Award for Conservation and the Collections Care Award will be 15 December 2006. The deadline for the Student Conservator and Anna Plowden Awards will be 28 February 2007. The presentation of the Awards will be held in London in September 2007.

Further details will be publicised in the September Icon News and on the website.

If you would like to speak to someone before deciding whether to apply, please contact the Awards Administrator Susan Hughes, e-mail admin@awards.icon.org.uk tel. 020 7326 0995.

PACR EVENTS

If you were inspired by the article in May's Icon News profiling our latest accredited members, then you may be thinking about taking the plunge yourself. You will find details of the next Introductory sessions, which provide an overview of the PACR scheme, in Listings. These also include two events for those thinking of doing the new Conservation Management route.

For those who've already decided to give it a go, several clinics at different venues around the country are being held in October. Details, again, can be found in Listings. These clinics are for potential candidates who are working towards their application: we aim to support you with your application, address any queries and provide a useful insight into the accreditation process.

Book and Paper Group's International Conference in Edinburgh

I am also holding a 'one off' clinic at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre on 28 July from 13.15 to 14.00 with a further hour available to those not attending the afternoon session of the conference.

Please note that it is available to all Icon members.

You don't have to be attending the conference to attend this session. But you will need to bring your Icon membership card to gain admission. Booking is essential prior to the conference – even for those who have booked as delegates. Like all these events, it is free. To reserve a

place, you need to complete the PACR event form to be found on www.pacr.org.uk or contact Diane Copley by telephone on 0207 785 3805

Susan Bradshaw

PACR Accreditation Manager

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT ROUTE

Update and Consultation

Three meetings have been held since February by the working group developing the new conservation management route to accreditation. Meetings were held jointly with the Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation with a view to developing a route to accreditation which would be accessible to some IHBC members in the future as well as to Icon members.

The reason for needing to create this new route is that currently the PACR scheme requires candidates to provide detailed evidence of carrying out conservation treatments or preventive conservation measures. While this evidence can come from past work, it is still difficult or impossible for some conservation professionals to meet the requirements for accreditation. Many capable and highly-respected members of the profession are effectively debarred from accreditation because their roles do not allow them to meet the PACR requirements in the way envisaged.

This situation needs to be changed for two reasons. Now accreditation is more widely recognised it is increasingly being expected of project leaders, heads of firms, and those with overall responsibility for grant-aided work, not only those who carry out conservation treatments. Secondly, as the professional qualification in conservation, it makes little sense to limit it to people in hands-on roles when bona fide conservation professionals occupy a much wider range of roles.

The conclusions of the working group are currently out for consultation with the PACR Accreditation Committee and our current assessors, as well as with the Icon Board and the Chairs of our membership groups. Once responses come in from consultees we expect to be able to take forward the pilot of the new route for January 2007.

Responding to the call in the last edition of Icon News for expressions of interest from people who wished to apply for the pilot, six have already expressed an interest and a PACR clinic will be held on 11 July for these and others who come forward.

CONSERVATION REGISTER

May has seen another big jump in use of the Conservation Register; the average of 1,497 searches a month for the January to April period increased to 1,941 in May. Further increases are expected as a result of the Register's inclusion in the Collections Care pages of the new Collections Link website which is to be promoted heavily to the Museums, Libraries and Archives community over forthcoming months. Added to this we have just reprinted 10,000 of the Conservation Register leaflets and continue to distribute them widely, 3,000 having just been circulated through the NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies) 'Heritage Volunteer' network.

New applications from businesses are welcomed, and can normally be processed within two months. Application information (including the benefits of inclusion such as discounted insurance with Heath Lambert) is available in hard copy from Caroline Saye at Icon or in the 'Members' section of www.conservationregister.com.

Caroline Saye csaye@icon.org.uk

ACRS WANTED

Icon is establishing a register of ACRs willing to hear complaints against Icon members and appeals against disciplinary decisions. If complaints are received against members, those on the register will be contacted and asked if they will deal with the case.

If you are willing to serve on such a panel please contact Charlotte Cowin on ccowin@icon.org.uk

LEADING ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS

Icon News 4 reported on the leadership development programme intended to encourage people working in museums and archives to move into leadership positions. Sally Ann Yates of National Museums Liverpool described her experience of the pilot programme for the Heads of Service level.

It is very encouraging to be able to report that another four Icon nominees have been given places on these courses. Two of them have attended the 'Senior Managers' level and two more took part in the 'Future Leaders' course. Here, Andy Holbrook gives us a flavour of the latter. Andy is Collections Care Officer at the Museum of London but is currently Acting Collections Care Manager at the Imperial War Museum, London.

'A colleague and I attended from IWM, and found it to be a great course. In fact, the whole package was great – the accommodation and food at Warwick University was top class, the trainers were knowledgeable and enthusiastic



Andy Holbrook

and there was a very positive group (which often makes or breaks this kind of training for me). The training itself was useful – there is an awful lot to take in – and we both found the process pretty tiring. However, the number of ideas meant that you could pick and choose what suits you. It was also reassuring to be in an environment where we were strangers, but on the same path. This meant that we were able to be honest about the sector we work in and the challenges we all face. Interestingly, we were the only conservators on the course, yet the problems of management and leadership were inevitably similar. The therapy value of the course could not be underestimated! This is one of those courses where things fall into place in your mind over time. It has been a couple of months now, and some of the methods used are finding a way into my work. Unlike, say, learning a foreign language, this kind of learning is quite subtle.'

OUT NOW: THE CONSERVATOR ISSUE 29

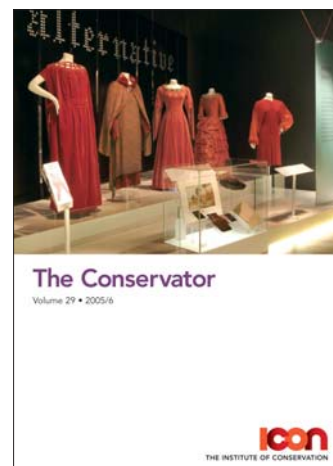
The first issue of The Conservator to appear under the banner of the Institute of Conservation is now out. It has undergone a make-over and is now printed by L&S Printing, who produce both Icon News and The Paper Conservator.

The contents reflect the broad professional interests of the conservation community, and many of the articles will be interesting and useful to conservators across specialisations. Although altered in layout, standards are intact; in keeping with the aim of The Conservator to forward the profession.

There are new Guidelines for Contributors, which can be found at the back of Issue 29 and in full on the Icon website (www.icon.org.uk). They are there to help guide authors in writing original, well researched articles to improve the practice of conservation.

The editorial Board accepts article proposals all year round so that we can keep a steady flow to progress towards publication. We are happy to consider shorter articles as well.

The Board recently met and has already started pulling together Issue 30, which is due to appear in March 2007.



The contents of The Conservator, Volume 29, 2005/6:

Gail Gali Beiner and Ticca M.A. Ogilvie

Thermal methods of pest eradication: their effect on museum objects

David Thickett, Frances David and Naomi Luxford

Air Exchange Rate – the Dominant Parameter for Preventive Conservation?

Catherine Nightingale

Designing an Exhibition to Minimise Risks to Costume on Open Display

William Lindsay

Time perspectives: what 'the future' means to museum professionals in collections-care

Jane Henderson

Influence: The Impact of Language, Credibility and Gender

David Watkinson, Matthew Tanner, Robert Turner and Mark Lewis

ss Great Britain: teamwork as a platform for innovative conservation

Robert Lewis

Interpretation in Conservation: A rare leather find from an early historic crannog

Vincent Daniels

The characteristics of modern and old barkcloth (tapa)

Sarah Houlbrooke

A Study of the materials and techniques of 13th century tomb of Aveline, Countess of Lancaster, in Westminster Abbey

For further information please contact:

Istvan Kecskemeti, Head of Paper Conservation Education
EVTEK University of Applied Sciences
Institute of Art and Design
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01300 Vantaa
Finland
+358 20 7553435
Fax: +358 9 8237489
Email: istvan.kecskemeti@evtek.fi

AWARDS

AXA GRANT FOR TATE

Tate has won a grant from AXA Art Insurance to find ways in which modern paint artworks can be conserved in the future, in many cases before the signs of ageing become apparent. With appropriate techniques currently limited, the Tate AXA Art Modern Paints Project aims to redress this conservation concern and to explore preventative measures which art owners can employ to prolong the life of their works. The grant enables Tate to undertake the second phase of this research project which started in 2002 and which was also funded by AXA.

Acrylic paints and primers have been widely used by artists since the early 1960s. They account for round 50% of paint sales over the past 30 years and are the most common priming medium for modern canvases. It is estimated that acrylic materials are present in 30% of the Tate's collection of modern and contemporary paintings. Dr Tom Learner, Senior Conservation Scientist at Tate, said ' This is the

Test cleaning acrylic paints



Courtesy of Tate

PAPER ID DATABASE

EVTEK University of Applied Sciences in Finland has created a Paper Identification Database to collect data regarding the characterization and identification of historic papers. This includes information from water marks; details of laid and chain lines; paper sizing; colour and acidity measurements; fibre morphology; pulp types; and the characteristics of handmade rag papers.

The database has been up and running since January 2006 and is currently in need of donors to add new samples. The use of the database is free of charge, and information can be added by selecting the 'partner' user category. The Paper Identification Database can be found at URL:<http://conservation.evtek.fi>

It is hoped that this database will find an audience in conservation students; conservation professionals; and those who care for paper based objects.

most in-depth modern paints conservation research being carried out internationally and there is a real need for it. Tate's research will be available for public and private collections around the world on how best to conserve modern paint artworks in the future.'

In support of the project, David Hockney said ' Oil paint has been used by artists for 600 years, so modern conservators have six centuries of experience to draw on and develop. Acrylics, on the other hand, are little more than half a century old. It is extremely important that Tate's research into the future conservation of these relatively new materials is being done now to ensure these artworks will be kept in good condition for centuries to come'.

Tom Learner can be contacted at: tom.learner@tate.org.uk for more information

JAMES BLACK WINNER OF THE 2006 PLOWDEN MEDAL

James Black, who has played a major role in the preservation of cultural heritage internationally through conservation training and publication, has been awarded the Royal Warrant Holders Association 2006 Plowden Medal. He was presented with it by the Lord Mayor of the City of London at the Royal Warrant Holders Association lunch in London on 6 June.

The award is in recognition of his dedication to the profession over many years, including his work in the field of international academic projects, with the creation of professional programmes, including distance learning and training advice. Alongside this, through Archetype Publications Ltd, he has published a great many works of considerable importance to conservators, which otherwise would not have been available.

Although he began his career as a metallurgist, he soon switched to become an archaeologist and conservator. A participant of many excavations from Afghanistan to Syria, he also became a lecturer in conservation at London University's Institute of Archaeology, worked as a consultant and wallpainting conservator and has lectured around the world, including on UNESCO and ICCROM courses. In 1983 he founded the Institute of Archaeology Summer Schools offering short specialised courses in the conservation of art and antiquities - an early instance of CPD for conservators. These led him to the creation of an educational charity - International Academic Projects - for which he continues to act as co-ordinator. IAP runs a professional development programme of short courses in the UK and throughout the world, as well as a distance learning programme.

Through Archetype Publications Ltd James Black has

produced a substantial body of work on art, antiquities, preservation and related topics, which are directly useful to conservators and fundamental to current practice. Many publications, often of a technical and scientific nature, have been published in conjunction with other organisations ranging from the British Museum to UNESCO.

The Plowden Gold Medal, inaugurated in 1999, is awarded by the Royal Warrant Holders Association in memory of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE, the leading conservator who was Vice-President of the Association at the time of her death in 1997. The Medal is presented annually to the individual who has made the most significant recent contribution to the advancement of the conservation profession. It can also be awarded to recognise a lifetime of commitment and achievement.

2006 Plowden Medal winner James Black, with the President of the Royal Warrant Holders Association, Anton Mosimann, when he received his award at the Royal Warrant holders Lunch on 6 June



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Icon Scotland Summer Ceilidh

Date: 27 July

Venue: Mansfield Traquair
Centre, Edinburgh.

8 pm until late, doors open 7.30 pm.

Open to all and timed to coincide with the Book and Paper Group International Conference, why not join Icon Scotland Group members to celebrate the summer with a ceilidh – a fun and vibrant evening of traditional Scottish music and dance.

**Dress is informal,
however all tartans are welcome**

**No previous Ceilidh experience is
required!**



With thanks to the Trustees of the Mansfield Traquair Trust, this year the Ceilidh will be held at the Mansfield Traquair Centre, Edinburgh. Built in 1885, the venue is a former Catholic Apostolic Church located on the edge of Edinburgh's historic New Town. Designed by the prominent nineteenth-century architect Sir Robert Anderson, the most outstanding feature of the church is the vast scheme of mural decoration painted by Scotland's leading Arts and Craft Artist Phoebe Anna Traquair in the 1890's, recently conserved and restored. Described as Edinburgh's Sistine Chapel, this is a truly unique venue and provides the perfect setting for the event.

Tickets cost £10 and are available, along with further information, from Kirsten Elliott, email: kelliott@nationalgalleries.org, Tel: 0131 624 6351. Book soon to avoid disappointment!

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David Leigh, Institute of Conservation

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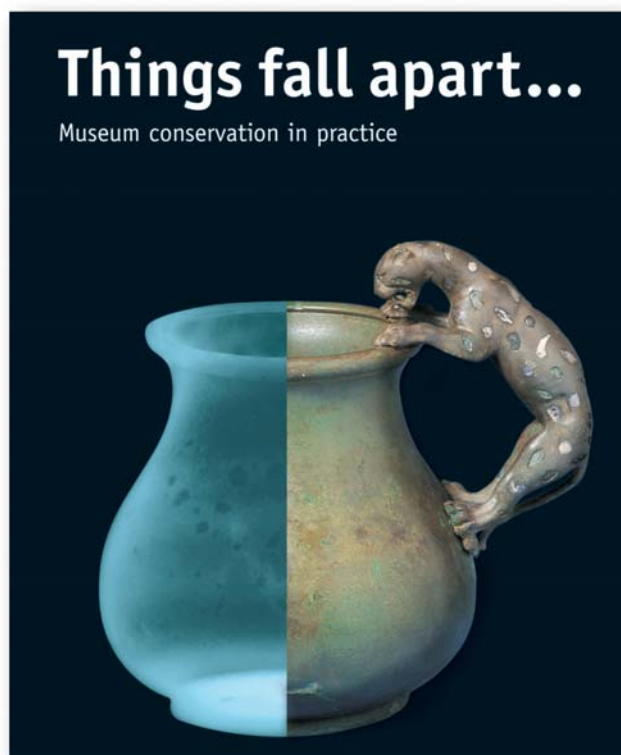
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institute briefing

FROM THE CHAIR

The new Icon Board is now half-way through its first year, and this seems an appropriate point to offer a summary of what we have achieved so far. Before turning to Board business however, I want to pick out a few of the high points of our achievement in recent months as I believe they show how we are already reaping the benefits of working as a united community.

Firstly, Icon has given oral evidence to a House of Lords committee on conservation and conservation science. As far as I am aware no invitation to give evidence was ever extended to any of our predecessor bodies; nor could any of them have spoken with authority on behalf of conservation as a whole. The fact that Icon was invited signals clearly that we now have that recognition in the public realm, and that is an achievement on which we must capitalise in future years. Secondly, a sixth body has now voted for convergence, and probably by the time the September issue of Icon News reaches you, the integration of the Institute of Conservation Science with Icon will be complete. Both of these items are discussed in detail in this issue so I will simply say how delighted I am that within the first year of our existence we have two such encouraging signs that we are on the right track.

Turning now to Board affairs, the role of the Icon Board is somewhat different to that of the various executive bodies of the old organisations, and this means that the way it works is somewhat different as well. As trustees of the charity, Board members are responsible for ensuring that Icon continues to meet its charitable objective of providing public benefit. As directors of the limited company, Board members set and monitor the strategic direction of the organisation.

As envisaged in the blue book, we felt that it was important for us to have an injection of high-level and specialist skills from outside the membership on our Board, and in recent months three external Board members have been co-opted – Lynne Thomas, who has a particular brief to ensure that we develop appropriate strategic risk management; AnnMarie Newbigin, who has considerable experience at a senior level of a wide range of human resource issues, and Philip Young as Honorary Treasurer. We are very grateful to all three for giving so generously of their time and we are enjoying the considerable benefits of their collective expertise.

Since our first meeting in February we have established a number of specialist panels and committees to work in detail and report on priority areas of work. Two major reports have been commissioned; one from Diane Gwilt on how we deliver public benefit, and the other from AnnMarie Newbigin on how we ensure that Icon develops

appropriate diversity strategies. The management of our HLF bursary scheme, together with overseeing our other initiatives in education, training and professional standards, comes under the remit of our new Professional Standards Development Committee, chaired by Chris Woods. The Membership Affairs Review Panel, with Allyson McDermott in the chair, will be looking at how we best deliver the benefits our members need. Simon Cane chairs our advocacy group, which has responsibility for developing Icon's responses to consultations and major public policy initiatives.

Lastly, we appointed a Governance Review Panel to report on some of the questions which surfaced as a result of last year's election process. You will find a summary of the panel's report, which the Board accepted, below. One recommendation we accepted which is of particular personal relevance to me is that we have now determined that the term of office for the Chair should be two years. Succession planning starts now, therefore, as this means that in a year's time I will be preparing to handover to a successor.

One third of our serving Board will stand down at the end of this year and elections for those seats will take place in September. If you believe you have a contribution to make at Board level I very much encourage you to consider seeking nomination as a candidate. No previous experience as a trustee is necessary, and I want to emphasise in particular that Board membership does not equate to professional seniority – we are not, nor do we seek to be, 'the great and the good' of the conservation community. We do however ask that everyone on the Board undertake to think strategically about the future of our organisation and our profession. In this context I would also like to pay tribute to our excellent and very committed executive team. Ably and energetically led by Alastair, they have enabled the board to lead in this way and have worked with imagination and loyalty to ensure that Icon is achieving its objectives.

It is both a privilege and a pleasure to work with so many committed and bright people on a Board and staff – and it is not without its challenges! If you are interested in joining us, and would like to talk to me or to any of the existing Board members about the role and the work, please do feel free to contact us.

If you are one of those who cast a vote for convergence in 2004 then I hope you will feel, as I do, that some of the gains we looked for in convergence are starting to be realised. If you are one of the hundreds of new members who have joined Icon in recent months then I trust that you too will feel that we have made a vigorous start on an exciting journey which remains full of promise.

Anna Southall

EDINBURGH OFFICE OPENS

Icon is pleased to confirm its presence North of the Border by opening an office in Edinburgh. The Scottish office will deal with training issues on a UK basis and will serve as the focus for the running of the Heritage Lottery Fund – supported Bursaries project. Carol Brown, Training



The Edinburgh office

Gillian Drybrough



Development Manager, and new appointee Gillian Drybrough, Administrator for the HLF Scheme, are based within the offices of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE), in prime position in the centre of the City. We are very pleased to have linked up with the RSE, who are an educational charity working to provide public benefit in Scotland by promoting science, research and development and international communications. The office will also provide support and a meeting place for the Icon Scotland Group. Contact details are: Icon, 22–26 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PQ, tel. 0131 240 5032/8, or e-mail training@icon.org.uk.

NOW WE ARE SIX

In 2004 five organisations voted to merge into Icon, and we are now delighted to welcome a sixth – The Institute of Conservation Science. The Institute of Conservation Science was founded in 2000 to bring together conservation scientists from different disciplines and it has focused its work latterly on tasks such as the research assessment exercise for UK universities 2004–8 and the development of an EU-wide post-graduate programme for conservation science. The emergence of Icon as a unified and authoritative voice for the conservation community promoted ICS members to take stock of whether their aims could more usefully be pursued as a distinctive group within a larger organisation.

At its Annual General Meeting on 5 June the membership of the Institute of Conservation Science voted 88% in favour of convergence with Icon. This brings to fruition ongoing discussions over the last year and builds on the effective joint advocacy of the two organisations in their recent evidence to the House of Lords Committee on Science and Technology. The two bodies plan to complete convergence within two months.

Alastair McCapra, Icon Chief Executive, said "This result brings the wider conservation community more closely together and builds a strong platform for us to articulate the needs and interests of conservation science."

ICS Chair, Joyce Townsend said "The ICS has successfully reinforced the identity of UK conservation science over the six years of its existence, and the time is now right for us to work together productively, and to gain from the impact which Icon is now making and the membership services it can provide to present ICS members."

Joyce Townsend will now be in discussion with Icon Conservation Science Group interim chair Jim Tate over the coming weeks in order to plan the transition which will see the new Group fully operational by the end of the summer.

WRITING THE RULES:

New Byelaws for Icon

Icon's first Board elections took place in 2005. During the course of these elections a number of issues came up which needed to be resolved before we could hold our second elections later this year. In February the Icon Board asked our Honorary Treasurer Philip Young to chair a working group called the Governance Review Panel to look into these questions and make recommendations. The panel consisted of Board members Philip Young, Velson Horie, Rose Briskman and Diane Gwilt. They were joined by the last member of the panel, Mike Caudrey of Blue Spark Consulting, who had worked with us on the convergence process.

On 24 May the Board considered and accepted the recommendations of this panel, the main points of which are summarised below. These recommendations have now been put into effect in our byelaws.

1 Should the Chair be elected by the membership or by the Board?

The task was to find a balance between the responsibility of the Board on the one hand to ensure leadership, direction, effective performance and risk management; and on the other, the clear desire by large sections of the membership to elect their Chair. The solution was a modified version of the system formerly used by IPC.

In future elections for the Chair, the Board will elect a candidate. Other candidates will then be invited to stand. If other candidates come forward, there will be an election by the full membership. If no other candidates come forward the Board candidate will become Chair.

2 Should the Chair should serve a fixed term of office?

Anna Southall, our current Chair, is to serve until the 2007 AGM. Future Chairs will serve a fixed two-year term.

3 Should the Board be reduced in size at the 2006 elections?

The Icon Board currently has fifteen elected members, which is somewhat larger than was envisaged during the convergence process. The 2006 elections would be our first opportunity to reduce the size of the Board. However the existing number is needed to undertake the work in hand on various committees. It also allows capacity for new and less experienced Board members to develop their understanding of the organisation and their role on the Board.

On this basis the Board is to stay at its current size (five serving members stand down and five seats are open to

election in 2006). The Board will review this again before the 2007 elections to determine whether a smaller number would be appropriate at that time.

4 Should all elected members of the Board be ACRs?

This would be contrary to the spirit of the convergence prospectus, which describes Icon as 'a wholly inclusive new body'. It has been a key part of the convergence process to make Icon representative of the conservation community in the broadest sense and it would be difficult to reconcile this intention with a proposal to restrict Board membership to ACRs. This proposal was therefore rejected.

5 Should only ACRs be eligible to stand as candidates for the Chair?

The same principles apply to this as to the previous question. This proposal was also rejected.

6 Should the reserved seats for England Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland be abolished?

The England seat is to be abolished when the current holder, Alison Richmond, next comes up for election (2007 or 2008). The seats for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be retained. However if no candidate stands for these seats they will not be filled by co-option from the relevant country, but opened up to candidates from the general membership. The Board has also agreed to review these arrangements in 2008 to see whether they are working satisfactorily.

ICON GIVES EVIDENCE

House of Lords Science and Heritage Sub-Committee of the Select Committee on Science and Technology

The committee looking into the role of science in conservation of the UK's cultural heritage has now finished gathering evidence and the interviewing of witnesses. They completed this phase of their work with a visit to National Museums Liverpool.

Transcripts are now available of all the witness sessions on the parliamentary website, www.parliament.uk but here is our first-hand experience of the session when Icon representatives were interviewed.

The event took place on 16 May. Chaired by Baroness Sharp of Guildford, and with special adviser May Cassar in attendance, the session was in two parts. In the first David Saunders and Neil MacGregor (BM), Leslie Carlyle and Alex Beard (Tate) and Jim Tate (National Museums of Scotland) were quizzed, and in the second session Joyce Townsend, on this occasion representing the Institute of Conservation Science, sat alongside Alastair McCapra and David Leigh of Icon.

Their Lordships were prepared with some carefully-wrought questions, arising in part from the evidence already presented. Inevitably it was not possible to say everything we would have liked in the short time available, so we had to be selective, and focus on the main points. These were:

- We should like to see DCMS giving some recognition to conservation science as a priority.
- We were sorry to see the minimal reference to conservation, and none to science, in the MLAs operational plan for 2005/06.
- We agree that greater coordination is required and recommend the establishment of a post for a national conservation science coordinator, a post which Icon would be happy to host.
- We believe that the forthcoming merger of ICS with Icon will help in the creation of a more strategic approach to conservation science in the UK.
- The pressures on conservators in the regions militate against their being able to dedicate time to the scientific research which they know ought to underlie their work, as shown in their CPD records, an essential component of accreditation. The evidence is that the regional MLAs and the Renaissance Hubs give this low priority.
- We agree that there is potential for conservation to engender greater public support, and see conservation science as an essential tool in improving the quality of access.

Since the hearing Icon has provided supplementary evidence, reporting to the sub-committee on the establishing of a MRes Degree at Winchester, and on the vote for the merger of ICS and Icon. We also drew their attention to the recent award of the Gulbenkian Prize for Museums and Galleries to ss Great Britain as an example of how scientific research relates closely to conservation practice and impacts directly on improved public access.

Looking back, the amount of time and energy devoted to exploration of this aspect of conservation and at this level is remarkable. Apart from the extensive written evidence, the range of witnesses interviewed over the months of this inquiry is impressive. The conservation and conservation science community has acquitted itself well. We await the sub-committee's report, expected in late July, with the hope that it will offer substantive and achievable recommendations that will provide a fresh impetus for conservation science in this country.

David Leigh

HLF BURSARY SCHEME UPDATE

Regional Co-ordinators appointed

Icon's internship scheme is well underway – ahead of most of the parallel schemes funded by HLF! Seventeen interns are due to start mid-September this year. The response to adverts for the placements was excellent and interviews are taking place in July and August at our host venues. We hope to profile the selected Interns in the next edition of Icon News.

A team of three Regional Co-ordinators was appointed in June to manage the assessment of interns and to support supervisors and interns on the scheme. Icon has assembled an excellent team who will work to link up all regions of the UK and make a significant contribution to the success of the scheme for the next four years.

Susan Bradshaw – well known to many of you as PACR Manager for Icon – will cover Wales and the West. Lorna Calcutt, Tutor in the Ceramics Conservation programme at West Dean College will deal with London and the East, while Alison Fraser – an experienced textile conservator based in Angus – will work across the North, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Icon is still interested to receive expressions of interest from host organisations or workshops who are keen to offer internship placements over the period 2007-2010. We would also like to work with other providers across the UK, so do get in touch with the Edinburgh staff if your institution provides supported or non-funded internship or student placements.

FIND A PARTNER IN BRACKNELL

Our webmaster Dana Goodburn Brown was finding some fairly exotic – not to say downright illegal – material appearing on the Icon web discussion forum in recent weeks. The culprits are bots – web spiders which range across the internet looking for unprotected sites to colonise with links to sites specialising in pornography, gambling, low-interest loans and timeshares.

In our rather naïve way we had underestimated the sheer volume of these intruders and had hoped that an occasional scan over the forum logs would allow us to weed out anyone unsuitable. Sadly things have moved on at exponential speed since anyone in the Icon office last managed a discussion forum and trying to weed out penis extensions, breast enhancement and discount viagra was just becoming a full-time job. We have therefore decided, with great regret, to close the discussion forum on the public-access area of the website. Members can still log into the members' only area, where the bots can't go. Each Icon group has its own discussion area behind the

more institute briefing

password wall so I hope you will all take the opportunity to pursue more edifying discussions there.

I meanwhile will be searching for a bride in the Ukraine while paying poker all night long.

Alastair McCapra

FROM THE LIBRARY

While we specialise in paper conservation, there is also technical information on preservation, analytical techniques, materials research, disaster planning, pest management, environmental conditions, plus works on specific materials and techniques, such as textiles, pictures frames, pigments and dyes and many other subjects that may be of interest. **Please feel free to come and use this growing collection.**

We are also very pleased to announce that as a new service to Icon members photocopies of articles will be available free of charge during this trial year to those quoting their membership number.

We welcome all donations from members' personal collections of professional literature. Please contact the librarian who would be happy to hear from you.

Librarian	Catherine Scutt
Email	chantrylibrary@icon.org.uk
Telephone	+ 44 (0) 1865 251 303
Address	The Chantry Library, Grove Cottage, St. Cross Road, Oxford, OX1 3TX, United Kingdom
Website	http://www.lib.ox.ac.uk/ipc-chantry/

Recent acquisitions:

Bookbinders at work: their roles and method by Mirjam Foot, 2006

The restoration of engravings, drawings, books, and other works of art on paper by Max Schweidler, translated, edited and with an appendix by Roy Perkinson, 2006

The care of books: an essay on the development of libraries and their fittings, from the earliest times to the end of the eighteenth century by John Willis Clark, 1901, reprinted 2005

Glossary of conservation I, II, & III by Mireia Xarrié, 2006

Recently published articles

Creating long-lasting inkjet prints by Monique C. Fischer
WAAC Newsletter vol.28; no.1 January 2006

The restoration programme of the Chinese Palace, Oranienbaum, St Petersburg by Zoe Allen

The ethics of conservation practice: a look from within by Titika Malkogeorgou

Treasures of Fairford [being two 16th century stained glass panels] by Paul Williamson and Kathrin Rahfoth

The development of English black japanning, 1620–1820 by Katja Tovar Azuero

V&A Conservation Journal, no. 52, Spring 2006

Techniques and traditions of Japanese Lacquer Conservation by Suzanna Shaw in *AICCM (Australian Institute of the Conservation of Cultural Material) National Newsletter*, no. 98, March 2006

Vellum over boards by Peter Verheyen

Mending paper by Christine Smith

Techniques in decorating leather by S.A. Neff, Jr.

An early medieval binding structure by Jiri Vnousek
Guild of Book Workers Journal, vol. 39, no. 1 (Spring 2004)

The Cleveland restoration project of the Army Medical Library by Tom Conroy in *Guild of Book Workers Newsletter*, no. 164, February 2006

A method for the aqueous deacidification of oxidized paper by John Bogaard, Hannah R. Morris, and Paul M. Whitmore

Evaluation of appearance and fading of daylight fluorescent watercolors by Sandra A. Connors-Rowe, Hannah R. Morris, and Paul M. Whitmore

Original patents as an aid to the study of the history and composition of semisynthetic plastics by Silvia Garcia Fernandez-Villa and Margarita San Andres Moya

Plutarch's report on the blue patina of bronze statues at Delphi: a scientific explanation by Walter A. Franke and Magda Mircea

Funori: overview of a 300-year-old consolidant by Joseph R. Swider and Martha Smith

An integrated approach to risk assessments and condition surveys by Joel Taylor

Journal of the American Institute for Conservation, Summer 2005, Vol. 44, No. 2

These publications are available to consult at the Library; copies available on request, subject to copyright restrictions. Please contact the librarian who would be happy to provide you with any relevant conservation literature to help you in your work.

JOHN FIDLER LEAVES ENGLISH HERITAGE

Icon member and English Heritage's Conservation Director, John Fidler leaves the organisation this month after 22 years to live and work in the USA.

An architect by training, John has worked for nearly 30 years in the public sector specialising in building conservation. His early career was spent with the Greater



London Council's Historic Buildings Division where he developed expertise in the repair of faience and terracotta. This interest has stood him in good stead, for example in the 1980s, when he worked with the Ironbridge Institute and others to save one of the country's few manufacturers, Hatherware Ceramics.

He joined the City of London Corporation in 1983 as its first Historic Buildings Architect, setting

standards of conservation for the many phased refurbishment of the Mansion House. In his spare time he helped found the Association of Conservation Officers (ACO), which ultimately became the Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation (IHBC). For many years he served on the ACO's executive and on a whole string of other building conservation bodies such as the Technical Committee of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the executive of the North American Association for Preservation Technology. The Royal Institute of British Architects also called on his services and he was elected a national councillor before establishing the RIBA's first conservation committee which continues today.

If all of that didn't keep him fully occupied, for 10 years he was part-time architectural editor of *Traditional Homes* magazine, teaching home-owners how to have intelligent conversations with builders, architects, conservators and planners over the cleaning, repair and maintenance of historic dwellings. At its peak in the late 1980s, it had the largest professional and technical readership of any coffee table 'life-style' magazine.

On joining English Heritage, John became the country's first Conservation Officer for Buildings at Risk and was instrumental in saving Brodsworth House near Doncaster for the nation. Later in his EH career, he developed the campaign against plastic windows and established the organisation's pioneering conservation training centre at

Fort Brockhurst near Gosport in Hampshire. In the 1990s, Fidler established the English Heritage Research Transactions series and with his Building Conservation and Research Team developed strong links with UKIC, delivering *Preserving the Painted Past*; *Architectural Ceramics and Monuments* and the Millennium as joint conferences and published proceedings.

At an academic level, John is well known on the teaching circuit serving on academic advisory committees; as a Masters course validator; faculty member and as Vice President for Programmes on the managing council of ICCROM (the intergovernmental International Centre for Studies of the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property in Rome).

John was a great supporter of the moves towards accreditation and merger over several years. He acted as one of the client interests for the development of the accreditation process; helped support UKIC for English Heritage grant aid for membership developmental work; and of course assisted with the Conservation Awards. Most recently his teams have again liaised over labour market studies of architectural conservators, just published.

John's links with the US were formed early from a series of travelling studentships. He now knows the place, the field and the profession's leading figures well. With an American wife, who is the Associate Director of the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, he has decided that enough is enough: with a journey of 15 hours each way and jet lag getting worse, it is time to be in the same home from one week to the next. John has won a Getty Scholarship in open competition to work in Southern California for 6 months on research and a publication about training architects in conservation. Thereafter he intends to consult internationally.

'I shall miss England, English Heritage, my colleagues, friends and the work here – but the world is a very small place and I hope to consult widely in future: always an excuse to return occasionally....'

You can keep in touch with John as he embarks on this new chapter in his life on Fidlerja@aol.com

PETER WINSOR

Collections Link Project Director

As noted in Icon News 4, MDA has appointed Peter Winsor to the post of Project Director for Collections Link, the national collections management advisory service funded through Renaissance in the Regions. Peter joins the team at MDA from his post of Senior Collections Adviser at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). His responsibilities as Project Director will include managing



service delivery, building strategic partnerships and commissioning new content and resources for Collections Link.

Nick Poole, MDA Director, commented, 'I'm delighted to welcome Peter to the team at MDA. He has considerable experience in national collections strategy and is well known and respected across the community. He understands the challenges and opportunities facing the

sector and is ideally suited to lead the development of Collections Link.'

Collections Link is a national partnership of more than 15 professional groups and associations, led jointly by the MDA, Icon and the National Preservation Office. The service will provide online and telephone access to advice and best practice in 16 management disciplines, from collection care to emergency planning and project management. Icon's Conservation Register is one of its most important components. Collections Link is currently being evaluated prior to a full launch later in 2006.

RINGING THE CHANGES AT YAT

Jim Spriggs, Head of Conservation at York Archaeological Trust is moving on after 34 years with YAT. Jim says 'It's been a tremendous experience working in such a dynamic organisation as YAT and a real privilege to excavate, conserve and care for such amazing collections of finds.

Jim Spriggs (left) and Ian Panter in front of a freeze-drying chamber in the York Archaeological Wood Centre



And, strange as it might seem, waterlogged wood still gives me a buzz....but I really do need a change!'. He is succeeded by Ian Panter, ex- English Heritage Archaeological Science Advisor for Yorkshire region. Also leaving the YAT conservation team are Julie Jones and Erica Paterson, Conservators for 27 and 15 years respectively. Mags Felter (ex UCL MSc student) has recently taken up the post of Assistant Conservator, and it is hoped that other appointments will be made soon.

The laboratory will also soon be 'on the move', from Galmanhoe Lane, York, where it has been since 1981, to join the rest of the YAT organisation in newly renovated premises at 47 Aldwark, York. Despite many changes, it seems certain that York will continue to be a major focus for archaeological conservation in the UK .

MUSEUM MOVES

Recent museum appointments include a new director for the National Museum of Science and Industry, Martin Earwicker, a scientist whose background is in the management of government science and defence institutions rather than that of museums. Five NMSI institutions will come under his command: the Science Museum; the National Railway Museum; Locomotion; the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television and the collections centre at Wroughton.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the National Maritime Museum have announced the appointment of Martyn Heighton to lead the National Historic Ships Unit as Head of Secretariat to the newly-created Historic Ships Advisory Committee. The Committee's task is to provide independent advice to the Secretary of State at DCMS on national ship preservation and funding priorities. Martyn Heighton has extensive experience in the maritime heritage field as a former Chief Executive of the Mary Rose Trust and earlier maritime related posts in Bristol and Liverpool. He has also served on the Management Board of the National Trust and has most recently been championing projects to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's birthday.

DOCTORAL SUCCESS

Congratulations to Andrea Pataki for gaining her doctorate from the State Academy of Art and Design Stuttgart, Faculty of Conservation Technology /Art history (Kunsttechnologie / Kunstgeschichte) in co-operation with the Research Centre Karlsruhe, Institute of Instrumental Analysis (Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe, Institut für Instrumentelle Analytik). It is the first doctorate that has been awarded by the State Academy of Art and Design Stuttgart since the introduction of doctoral awards in 2002.



Andrea has been Head of the Conservation Studio since 1998 and supervises students during their five year book and paper conservation course at the State Academy of Art and Design Stuttgart (www.sabk.de).

Andrea's thesis, 'The Appearance of Powdery Pigments during Consolidation with Aerosols', investigated colour changes following the consolidation of pigmented surfaces with aqueous and solvent based consolidants, applied with the aid of a specially adapted aerosol. Changes to the appearance of the powdery surface were analysed in relation to aerosol particle size, the viscosity and the refractive index of six consolidants. These were gelatine, methylcellulose, isinglass, funori, JunFunori® and Klucel®. The colour and the gloss of the adhesive film samples were measured. Changes to the surface of three different selected pigments were analysed by means of UV/VIS-Spectroscopy. The reflectance spectra and the colourimetric data enabled a comparative discussion.

As consolidants are not removable after their applications, the ethical aspect of such treatments were also discussed.

Using the results of the analytical investigations, three works were consolidated. An installation by Ross Sinclair at the Hamburger Kunsthalle / Galerie der Moderne, two watercolours by Erich Mendelsohn at the Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and a black pastel drawing by Peter Ulli were successfully treated.

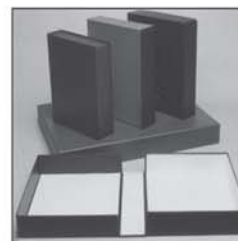
Andrea's thesis will be published in German by the Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe, under the title, "Einflussgrößen auf den Farbeindruck von pudernden Malschichten beim Konsolidieren mit Aerosolen". Further information can be provided by Andrea (a.r.pataki@sabk.de)

GLYNIS EDWARDS

We are sorry to report the sudden death of Glynis Edwards, well known in the field of archaeological conservation. An appreciation of Glynis will appear in Icon News in due course.

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G. Ryder & Co. Ltd. have been making boxes for archivists and paper conservators throughout the United Kingdom and Europe for many years.



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Rotating the treasures on display in the British Library

Helen Shenton, Head of Collection Care at the British Library, discusses the factors underpinning the Library's new display policy

The British Library has introduced a programmed rotation of the Treasures in the Sir John Ritblat Gallery, whereby items are removed from public display for a period of six months every two years. The rotation started on 3 April 2006 when the Lindisfarne Gospels were taken off display for six months. The volume will be put back on display on 2 October 2006 for 18 months, and then taken off for six months and so on. This exquisite pinnacle of Anglo Saxon manuscript illumination had previously been on display as one of the iconic items in the British Library virtually uninterrupted since the opening of the new BL building in 1998, and for considerable periods before that – since the exhibition of printed books and manuscripts opened in the British Museum in 1857. The openings of the 'carpet pages' at the beginning of each of the Gospels represent high points of illuminated art, and had been disproportionately frequently on display.

Fig 1 New display of the Magna Carta and associated material

Figure 2 Display about the Lindisfarne Gospels during the six months they are off display



Photograph reproduced courtesy British Library

Also on 3 April, the redisplay of the Magna Carta and associated material opened in the Sir John Ritblat Gallery (fig 1). They will remain on display for 18 months before being taken off display for six months, and then put back on for 18 months and so on.

The redisplay of these two highly significant manuscripts represents the beginning of the new rotation policy. In the rotation programme there is an 'event' every three months, whereby an item is removed or returned. This policy and programme came about through a convergence of multiple factors including conservation, curatorship, public programmes, marketing, restitution and politics.

The current galleries were opened in 1998 when the British Library left the British Museum and moved two km north to its first purpose-built home at St Pancras. There are three galleries. The **Sir John Ritblat Gallery** is a permanent show case for the treasures of the BL. The 250+ items on display represent the range of the BL's holdings, from the Codex Sinaiticus (the earliest copy of the New Testament in the world) to the earliest manuscript of Beowulf, from Jane Austen's manuscript novels to Alice in Wonderland, from the Golden Haggadah to the manuscripts of the Beatles' lyrics. The **Pearson gallery** houses temporary exhibitions, currently 'Hold the Front Page' which is a very interactive celebration of 100 years of British Newspapers and which invites visitors to create their own newspaper; next year there will be a major exhibition centring on three faiths – Christianity, Islam and Judaism. There is also a **workshop gallery** for demonstrations, and other exhibition areas throughout the building in which heritage items are displayed. All the galleries have controlled environmental conditions (18–20°C and 45–60%RH). In the Sir John Ritblat Gallery the freestanding cases have their own air conditioning units and the fibre optic lighting in the cases ensures less than 50 lux levels on the surface of collection items (and less than 10 microwatts per lumen UV).

The rotation policy and schedule came about due to a number of factors – some related to the conservation of the objects, some with a political dimension, some related to the programming and marketing of events for the public.

The conservation element was that many of the

manuscripts, codices, books, maps and prints had been on display for varying amounts of time, and, whilst there had been some substitution of items, many had been on continuous display for years. As Head of Collection Care I wanted to see a rotation programme to minimise damage to the pigment or media and substrate from cumulative light exposure, minimise damage to binding structures from prolonged display and so forth. Notwithstanding the need to make them accessible, I was concerned that the most 'valuable' items are on display the most. There was a secondary conservation consideration, in that the new BL Centre for Conservation is due to open on the St Pancras site in 2007. It will have behind-the-scenes tours for the public and a modest visitor display centre, which will link to the Exhibition Galleries, so that when an item is off display for conservation reasons, the rotation can be explained by linking to the new Conservation Centre.

The political element relates to the sensitive subject of cultural restitution. There is a campaign by, amongst others, a number of local councils in the north east of England, requesting the Lindisfarne Gospels be located in Northumbria. There is currently an Early Day Motion calling for the 'Return of the Lindisfarne Gospels to Durham Cathedral' that has, at the time of writing, been signed by 42 Members of Parliament.

When a further request to borrow the Lindisfarne Gospels was received by the BL, the Conservation Department carried out an examination of the manuscript, assessing the risk of damage of five scenarios:

- (1) multiple, long-term loans
- (2) single loan
- (3) status quo (ie permanent display in the gallery)
- (4) periodic removal from display into storage
- (5) permanent removal from display into storage

The risk of severity and probability of damage to the different components of the manuscript was assessed from handling, from movement and from the environment. The risk assessment was peer-reviewed by Trinity College Dublin, whose stewardship of the Book of Kells has involved its loan to, most recently, the National Library of Australia.

The Lindisfarne Gospels, one of Britain's greatest art treasures, was probably made on Holy Island in Northumbria in the early 8th century. Although the main text is written in Latin, the manuscript contains the oldest surviving translation of the Gospels into English, which was added between the lines of Latin text in the second half of the 10th century.

The original manuscript is not currently on display. It has been taken off exhibition temporarily, for six months, to minimise any potential damage caused by its being on display continuously for extended periods.

The British Library has a duty to care for its collections. The continued survival of items of world heritage status such as those you can see in this gallery depends upon such care. Our highly skilled conservators are world experts in paper and book preservation and conservation, and train others to ensure such skills are passed on to future generations.

While the original manuscript is off display, you have the opportunity to leaf through the pages of this facsimile and to see the magnificent Gospels onscreen in our interactive Turning the Pages™ display.

The Lindisfarne Gospels is scheduled to return to this gallery on Monday 2 October 2006. We hope you will come back to see it.

the other assessment methodologies used in the BL. David, Mark Barnard and Kumiko Matsuoka assessed the items and produced priorities for rotation based on a hierarchy of condition. A draft programme was drawn up whereby an item came off display at three monthly intervals for a six month period before returning for 18 months.

The concept of six months off display within a two year period was a combination of conservation theory, exhibition best practice, pragmatism and access. It combined:

- 1 The need to make the items available to the public.
- 2 Recommendations in BS5454-2000 and other standards for the display of (largely) organic collection material
- 3 The concept of 'Just Noticeable Fade' and the light exposure work at institutions such as the V&A that had already been applied to the BL's collections on display
- 4 The BL Board's desire for rotation of all the Treasures in the light of the Lindisfarne Gospels
- 5 The achievability of a rotation programme given the resources in Exhibitions, Conservation, Marketing

On top of the first draft rotation plan based on condition, the exhibition and public programme was overlaid to identify all interdependencies with major events, launches etc. For example, Bibles and Korans all need to be on display during the major exhibition about three faiths next year; the Codex Sinaiticus needs to be on display during events in the BL with the St Catherine's Foundation and so forth.

Curatorial input further overlaid what were iconic individual items that could not be substituted, and iconic categories of material that could be substituted with similar material. So, works by Jane Austen, William Wordsworth or Lawrence Sterne comprise iconic categories that can be continuously represented by a series of individual items by those authors; the Tyndale Bible or Codex Alexandrinus are iconic items that cannot be substituted by other items and so will be off display periodically.

The BL's Press Office, Marketing and Public Programmes were very supportive of the rotation concept and of a rotation programme, because taking objects on and off display creates an 'event', which is a useful hook for publicising the BL and the individual item, accompanying gallery talks about the item etc.

The programme has been drawn up for the next five years and will no doubt be subject to some changes along the way. It has been disseminated via the BL website, information in the gallery (fig 3), in the gallery guides and so on. It will be reviewed after a year.

This was a complex, interdisciplinary initiative that combined public access, reputational considerations, curatorial expertise, marketing and stewardship. It has been a mixture of high-minded conservation principles, conservation pragmatism, marketing, press and public programmes needs, all balanced with the right of the public to see items not only of national importance but in many cases important to world heritage.

Photograph reproduced courtesy British Library



Fig 3 Top: text in the gallery explains the rotation of the Lindisfarne Gospels, displayed (below) in facsimile for six months.

In the light of the risk assessment, the recommendation was put to the British Library Board that the Gospels should be periodically removed from display to minimise damage from, for example, light exposure balanced against making it available to the public. When off display, it would be replaced with a special exhibition about the Gospels (fig 2) together with a facsimile and the award-winning digital 'Turning the Pages' version (that can also be seen at www.bl.uk/turningthepages.)

Once the BL Board had agreed this rotation policy for the Lindisfarne Gospels, the logical next step was to produce a rotation policy and programme for the other 250+ items also on display in the Sir John Ritblat Gallery. This necessitated research into how long each item had been on display. Then, in order to produce the first draft of a rotation programme based on conservation considerations, the condition of the items needed to be known. It was not feasible in the time available to carry out risk assessments of all the items. Therefore the pragmatic decision was taken in the first phase to assess those items that had been on display for five years and over, which captured the seminal BL items.

Vicki Humphrey and David Jacobs designed an assessment form that could be carried out quickly, and that linked to

NOTICE OF BOARD ELECTIONS

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

One Reserved Seat for Northern Ireland and Four Open Seats

In accordance with Icon's Articles of Association one third of the serving Board of Trustees will stand down at the end of 2006 and their seats are now open to election. The Board is Icon's governing body, and nominations are invited from eligible members who wish to serve as Board members. All Ordinary and Accredited Members of The Institute of Conservation may stand for election.

What is Involved?

- Job descriptions for both Chair and elected Board members will be published on the website at www.icon.org.uk. There will be 4 Board meetings in 2007, most of which will be held in London.
- Board members are also asked to serve on at least one committee or panel, but some of these conduct much of their business electronically. For this reason only people with email access will be able to function effectively as Board members.
- Members should note that travel expenses are subject to an upper limit of £150 per Board meeting.

How does the election work?

- There are five seats open to election in 2006. Four of these are open to nominations from all Accredited Members and Ordinary Members of Icon.
- The fifth seat is reserved seat for Northern Ireland. This means that nominations for this seat will only be accepted from Accredited or Ordinary members who have a primary address in Northern Ireland.
- To stand for election, complete and return the nomination form (available on the website) before midnight on Friday 18 August. Ballot papers will be sent out to members together with the September issue of Icon news. The results will be announced to members at our AGM on 30 November in Edinburgh.

If you wish to discuss running for election on an informal and confidential basis, please contact the Chief Executive, Alastair McCapra at

amccapra@icon.org.uk

or (+44) (0)20 7785 3803

Private work in the Public Eye

Brian Cardy, of Brian Cardy Conservation, describes health and safety issues arising in the final stages of work on the Wallpaintings at Chatsworth House, home of the Dukes of Devonshire.

This year has seen the completion of a project to conserve the eighteenth century Louis Laguerre wallpaintings on the walls of the Painted Hall at Chatsworth House

In 1936, the Painted Hall ceiling was found to be in danger of collapse through failure of the main supporting beams in the roof due to extensive attack by death watch beetle and this needed major structural work to reattach the lath and plaster. The restoration was undertaken by Mr Constantine, Technical Assistant at Sheffield City Art Galleries with help from the Mr Arthur Hicks, Master plasterer at Chatsworth. The damaged ceiling paintings were extensively 'reconstructed' and fully restored and the walls underwent partial cleaning, waxing and varnishing. The ceiling painting was then partially cleaned in 1996 by Pauline Plummer and her team, during her extensive treatment of the wallpaintings at Chatsworth between 1984 and 2001.

In January and February 2005 I took up the baton with a team of six conservators and we cleaned as much of the East Wall as possible in the time available when the House was closed.

This year, the 12th Duke of Devonshire took up residence in the House and began an ambitious and imaginative rehang of the State Rooms. In a departure from the normal policy of completing conservation work during the closed season, the Duke decided to extend the schedule into March and April to enable visitors to the House to watch

us at work and to let them see how their entrance fees were being spent.

The main thrust of this year's work was dewaxing, and dirt and varnish removal with solvents. Numerous meetings were held with Curatorial staff, the Clerk of Works, Safety Officer and scaffolders to resolve all the difficulties of working whilst the public were in the building – problems such as safe access in a room containing scaffolding and the risks associated with the use of solvents. At this point it was decided to commission a specialist firm, Environmental and Management Services Limited, to carry out tests to determine the concentration levels of solvent fumes in public areas and this would be done in two stages before and after the House opened to visitors.

A temporary solvent store was provided in an outside marquee in the adjacent quadrangle with easy access for decanting from bulk.

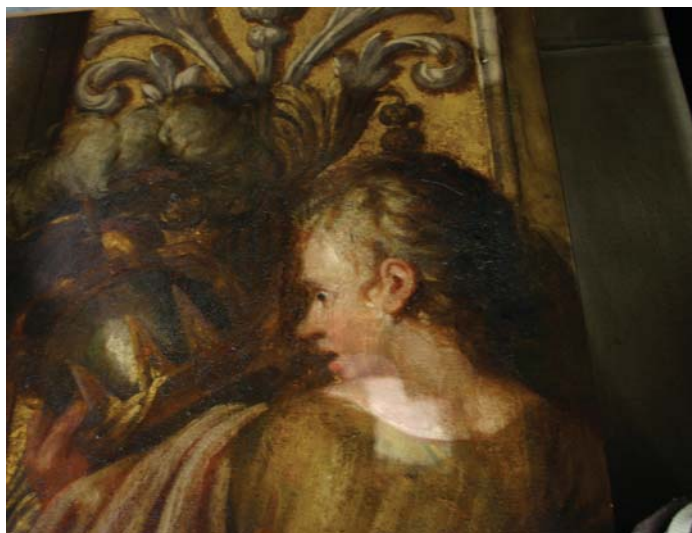
A portable Nederman extraction system was installed to capture fumes at source and exhaust them to atmosphere via trunking through the windows. Three N16 fan units each with two capture hoods provided adequate local extraction for six conservators. I have employed this system successfully for ten years and it has the advantages of being mobile and very flexible; it is reasonably quiet, easy to install and very efficient when positioned for individual use, close to the conservator.

- Atmospheric monitoring was carried out for toluene, using NIOSH method 1500 which involved pumping air through a specific carbon tube and analysis by Gas Liquid Chromatography.
- Ammonia was analysed to OSHA method ID 188, which involved bubbling a volume of air through a dilute solution of hydrochloric acid and analysing for ammonium using a selective electrode.
- Volatile Organic Compounds were measured using a Toxic Vapour Analyser equipped with Flame Ionisation Detector and Photo Ionisation Detector.

Results of these tests showed that there was no danger of exposure for the general public. Wardens and Guides were briefed so that they could allay any fears about safety. Further explanations were posted on information boards for visitors to read.

The front of the scaffold was netted over, in compliance

Detail from Death of Caesar showing test cleaning





Testing for VOCs with a Toxic Vapour Analyser



Testing for VOCs during cleaning



Portable extraction system

with Health and Safety regulations, to prevent a risk from falling objects, and this and the height at which we were working meant that it was not easy to see the work properly. In view of this, a short video was commissioned and this was shown on a large screen television at ground level, to allow visitors a close up view of conservators at work. This was useful at weekends when we were not working.

The feedback received from the public via the House Guides and Wardens was very positive. They were better informed, very interested in the work and enjoyed being able to see it in progress.

Everyone involved in the project thought that it was a very good public relations exercise, which emphasised just how much expertise is involved in conserving a painting.

Notes

Our extraction equipment was supplied by Nederman Ltd, 91 Walton Summit, Bamber Bridge, Preston

Environmental monitoring carried out by Dr Stephen Daley, Environmental and Management Services Ltd, Huddersfield

Thanks to all members of the team including Wilma Day, Andrea Kirkham, Greg Howarth, Susannah Penrose, Christine Kirkwood, Stig Evans, Sarah Livermore, Hugo Platt and Rachel Witt

Testing for levels of ammonia gas



Extraction system in use during cleaning



news from the groups

BOOK AND PAPER GROUP

The Book and Paper Group committee would like to congratulate Helen Lindsay, our Chair, on her forthcoming adoption of baby Elizabeth. As Helen will be going on leave over the coming months could I ask members to contact me, Rose Briskman, with any queries or comments for the Chair (email address below). I will be standing in for Helen with help from fellow committee members.

Before mentioning further news about the committee, I would like to draw your attention to the deadline for submissions for the **2007 Conservation Awards** set out on page 14. If any of you are working on a piece of work which you think would be appropriate for submission, or if you know of colleagues who are involved with an exciting project, please think about nominating, or encouraging colleagues to nominate, the work for an award. The Conservation Awards are a wonderful opportunity for us to raise the profile of Book and Paper Conservation beyond our own profession. For information about the Conservation Awards please go to the Icon website www.icon.org.uk

We are happy to have a new committee member joining us: Edward Cheese will be taking up the role of **Treasurer** from July. Christine McNair, who has done a wonderful job getting to grips with the Institute's new finance systems, will be returning to Canada to work. In the last Icon News we announced that Liz Bowerman would be joining the committee but she has since had to withdraw due to work commitments.

As mentioned in the May issue of Icon News, the **Chantry Library** has been bequeathed a staggering £210,000 from the Chantry estate. The money is restricted, which means it can only be used for the purposes of developing the Chantry Library: it ensures the future of the Library as a valuable conservation resource. As a new service to Icon members, photocopies will be available free of charge during this trial year to those quoting their membership number. For further information about the Library and its services please visit the Library website, <http://www.lib.ox.ac.uk/ipc-chantry/> where the collection can be browsed on-line.

I look forward to seeing many colleagues at the 5th IPC International Conference later this month in Edinburgh, hopefully the first of many for the Icon Book and Paper Group.

Rose Briskman, acting Chair.
rbriskman@museumoflondon.org.uk

Don't miss Karen Vidler's request for help in this issue with her research into leather bookbinding decay

CERAMICS AND GLASS GROUP

The entry closing date for the Nigel Williams prize was 1 June. The award is for the best conservation/restoration of an object or of a project in ceramic, glass or a related material, which has to have been completed within four years prior to each award year. Brett James, the Nigel Williams Prize Co-ordinator, has confirmed this year's judging panel as Ms Sandra Smith (Head of Conservation at the Victoria and Albert Museum); Mr Errol Manners, BADA (British Antique Dealers Association) member, current BADA adviser to West Dean College, established dealer and author of antique ceramics based in Kensington Church Street, London; and thirdly Mrs Judith Pinkham who is Head of Conservation of Applied Art at the National Museum, Cardiff. Thank you to all those who applied. The prize winner will be announced at our Autumn 2006 Meeting, Ethical Considerations In Ceramics Conservation 14 October 2006, London. Please see the listings section of this magazine, or the Ceramic and Glass Group's webpage in the Groups section of the Icon website, for more conference details.

Amy Drago (a.drago@ucl.ac.uk) is the Ceramics and Glass Group Contact for contributions to Icon News and the Website Co-ordinator

PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS GROUP

The one-day open meeting and AGM takes place on 21 July at the Icon office building in the Large Lecture Room. The breadth of papers and posters offered encompass the birth of photography right up to the latest digital debate and it will be a very worthwhile day. As ever there will be very good lunch and of course our customary Quiz with a small prize. The cost, including lunch, is £26 for members and £32 for non-members. You can register or find further information on the Group's webpage on the Icon website (www.icon.org.uk). Or contact Angela Moor on iamoor@cpc-moor.com; telephone 0208-690 3678; fax 0208-314 1940 or write c/o 233 Stanstead Road, London SE 23 1HU.

The list of speakers is as follows:

- The Father of Photography: William Henry Fox Talbot – The CPC Archive
- Conservation & Photography – 21st Century Challenge – Chris Woods, Head of Conservation & Collection Care, Bodleian Library
- My Road to Damascus: The Witt & Conway Photographic Libraries and Negative Collections – Barbara Thompson, The Witt Librarian at the Courtauld Institute of Art
- An investigation into the digitisation of historical photograph collections – Veronica Davis Perkins, Curator and Researcher

- A photograph of Alice and the great albumen print debate! – Ian L. Moor, The Centre for Photographic Conservation
- Famous throughout the world; James Valentine (1815-1879) of Dundee – Pamela Cranston, St Andrews University Library
- The Albumen Layer: A Black and White Issue? Analysis by Three-Letter Acronyms: SEM and XPS...and an 'ESP' (Educated Scientific Proposal) – Dr. Simon Bloxam, Royal College of Art

Poster Presentations will be given by:

Nicholas Burnet, Museum Conservation Services and
Angela Moor CPC Archive: The Union Case

CPC Archive: The Pencil of Nature

Rowena Jameson, Paper Conservator, National Library of Australia: Pixels and Preservation

Anita Bools, The National Trust: A Study of the Salted Paper Print Process and the Imagery of William Henry Fox Talbot

The principal business of the AGM will be the election results and the installation of the new Group Committee

SCOTLAND GROUP

The Committee continues to focus on the events programme for the Scotland Group, having enjoyed recent success by holding a stand at the Glasgow Arts Fair to promote Icon and conservation in Scotland, and by hosting the Icon Conservation Science Group meeting in April. Work now concentrates on forthcoming activities to include a July ceilidh to coincide with the Icon Book and Paper Group conference in Edinburgh, and the annual Dr Harold Plenderleith Memorial Lecture in November. We are also hosting the Icon AGM in Edinburgh at the end of the year. All details of future events will be released when finalised. Other Committee functions have evolved and small working groups established to formulate the Group's strategic plan and develop the Group's role in political lobbying. Brian McLaughlin has now replaced Mark Bambrough as Acting Chair and we thank Mark for his hard work during the early transitional period for the Group.

The next Scotland Group Committee meeting will be held at the National Archives of Scotland, General Register House, 2 Princes Street, Edinburgh (entry via the side door in the adjacent small cobbled car park) on 13 June 2006, 6.00-8.00pm. If you are an Icon member and wish to join the Committee, please send your contact details in advance to the Chair (brian.mclaughlin@gmail.com).

A mailing list for all Icon members interested in receiving information about Scotland Group activities has now been established. If you haven't received recent emails, and you

would like to join this list, please contact David Leigh. Ruth Honeybone (r_honeybone@yahoo.com) is the Scotland Group contact for contributions to Icon News.

STONE AND WALLPAINTING GROUP

Should never have been dug out of the ground!

A one day conference of presentations and discussion on a selection of problematic building and decorative stones is planned for November 2006. The venue has yet to be confirmed, but is likely to be in London. Presentations will be from a broad cross-section of the conservation community and will cover historic use, petrography, decay, conservation, and the future prospects for numerous stones which have perplexed the conservation profession, including clunch, Kentish ragstone, Polyphant, magnesian limestone and Purbeck. For further information please contact Clara Willett clara.willett@english-heritage.org.uk

A review of the Natural Stone and Building Conservation Conference 2006, held in London 14-16 March this year can be found on the Group's webpage.

TEXTILE GROUP

...over and out.

I must admit to some ambivalence towards our professional body when, nearly eight years ago, I was asked if I would stand as an ordinary member of the then UKIC Textile Section Committee. Now as I step down as Chair of the Icon Textile Group I wonder what changed my mind.

Today the Textile Group of Icon can stand proudly amongst the remarkable diversity of groups that converged last year to form The Institute of Conservation – a welcome and some may say, long overdue bringing together of conservators to form one voice. Now, most of us are members of many Icon groups thus stretching our horizons and just as no single textile can ever be regarded in isolation for its conservation needs, textile conservators need more than just the Textile Group.

That said, the Textile Group continues to get things done thanks to the foundations laid by the first members of the UKIC Textile Section committee and which have stood the Icon Textile Group in good stead. Tried and tested events, workshops and visits continue to be organised, often by Group members, rather than just the committee. Many events are repeated to allow more to participate where numbers have had to be limited. I was delighted that an amazing 145 delegates attended the forum 'Tapestry Conservation – maintaining the woven picture' in April this year. The annual forum has become a certainty in the diary and if one is to attend one meeting a year under the cloak of CPD this has become the one of choice for textile conservators.

more news from the groups

Despite our enthusiastic embracing of those broader horizons we have, I am afraid, and with apologies to the male members of Icon Textile Group, been described as a bit of a "Sisterhood". But this is no bad thing – most of us trained together, we followed internships, so built further friendships, and thanks (and I never thought I would say that) to short term contracts have worked with many different colleagues – we are bound to have close ties which we need to maintain and we use the annual forum to do so. We talk, we chat, catch up with old friends and of course discuss the minutiae of textile conservation technique.

It has been an honour to serve as Chair for the last three years, made all the easier by a hard working committee. I hand over to Sarah Howard who with her level head and good humour should guide the Textile Group through a period of consolidation. I wish her and the new committee luck and much fun. And remember to bring the biscuits.

Clare Stoughton-Harris

GRADUATE VOICE

Don't forget that the graduate liaison sub-committee would like to hear from you if you are a student, graduate, newly qualified or otherwise in training.

Your involvement is important if Icon News is to reflect your views and interests and provide an informal means of communication and networking for all conservators in the making, no matter what your discipline or specialism.

All kinds of contribution would be welcome – views, reviews, helpful hints, sources of advice and information.... – or help behind the scenes.

Contact **Heather Marshall** (heatherx.marshall@bl.uk)

THE BEER MEETINGS

I'm hoping that the Prince Arthur (80–82 Eversholt Street, the street that runs along the East side of Euston Station, NW1, 0871 984 1679) is a pub that will be basking in the evening sun on Tuesday 25 July. If not, it has a very nice inside with lots of lovely Thai food to keep us warm and content. I will be there from 5.30 onwards: see you there!

If you have any queries you can contact me at this email address: imogen.herford@bl.uk and you can find a map with an arrow pointing to the pub by going to www.streetmap.co.uk and typing in the postcode NW1 1BX.

CONSERVATION register

**The register of conservation businesses
in the UK and Ireland**

- Accredited conservators
 - Detailed information on each business including descriptions of recent projects
 - Online links to a business's website and email
 - Free to use – searchable by specialism and location
 - Guidance on caring for possessions and collections for owners
 - Member's section of website providing news, information and statistics on use
 - 10% discount with one of the sector's leading insurance brokers
- (conditions apply, see website)

**For further information, including
how to join:**

www.conservationregister.com

info@conservationregister.com

Tel. +44 (0)207 785 3804

The Conservation Register is owned by the Institute of Conservation, a registered charity (No. 1108380)

reviews

CONFERENCES

TO DUST OR NOT TO DUST?

Care of Collections Group Dust Study Morning

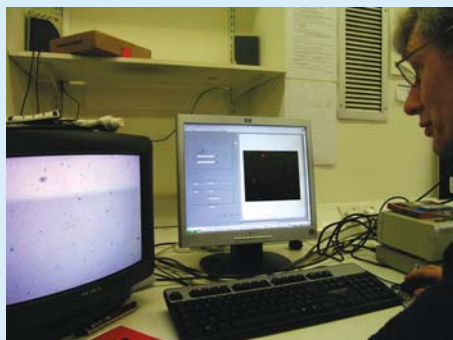
Hampton Court Palace 15 May 2006

Run in conjunction with the National Trust, English Heritage and Historic Royal Palaces, the aim of the Dust Study Morning was to provide an update on the results of the Leverhulme-funded research project 'Controls on "irreversible soiling"; minimising damage to indoor artefacts' and to gain some practical advice on dust monitoring and mitigation within the historic environment.

The morning provided an overview of the Leverhulme dust project and explanation of the 'dust bug' prototype by Helen Lloyd, Deputy Head Conservator and Preventive Conservation advisor for the National Trust, as well as presentations on dust monitoring and mitigation at English Heritage and Historic Royal Palaces. It included practical demonstrations of the dust monitoring equipment available, both 'low tech' solutions and more advanced scientific approaches. It was also interesting to see that the conclusions of the research project were already helping to shape the dust mitigation policies of large heritage organisations.

Presentations about the dust mitigation policies at English Heritage and Historic Royal Palaces highlighted some interesting points. At Apsley House, for example, dust monitoring had allowed conservation staff to show that over a 24 hour period with the windows open, the amount of dust and pollutants collected was equal to that of 180 days keeping the windows closed, and at Kenwood House the gravel laid outside was in fact responsible for 75% of the dust collected inside. A dust monitoring project at Hampton Court Palace during their

Ian Gibb demonstrates the automated dust monitoring equipment in use at Hampton Court Palace



High level cleaning at Kensington Palace

annual music festival, an event that can see up to 800 people dining in one evening in various locations throughout the Palace, running over a 2 week period, was able to provide evidence to show that increased dust accumulation was a direct result of the increased activity, particularly due to the large amount of equipment being moved around the Palace. In such a large, open site like this, mitigation techniques can be as simple as using tac mats, placing barriers that reach shoulder height and vacuuming floors and flat surfaces as opposed to dry mopping. Although these are usually simple measures, carrying out dust monitoring not only raises awareness but provides evidence that can in turn affect policy change.

As part of the research project, the National Trust, with the support of its other partners, is creating a 'low tech' dust monitoring pack that could be used by any institution, large or small. Delegates were given the chance to look at the 'sticky slides,' that are already

being trialled at many National Trust properties, and to give feed back about their potential effectiveness. Essentially, the dust monitoring is carried out using cardboard slide mounts with a sticky surface to collect the dust. The slides themselves seemed a very simple and effective tool, but deciding how to 'measure' the amount of dust on the slide was slightly more problematic as with too little magnification it was sometimes hard to determine the level of soiling. The pack will contain a small hand lens and full instructions along with further information about dust monitoring, and in development is a form of grey scale to measure the dustiness of the slide and give it a rating. This will be a very valuable tool to aid the implementation of a simple dust-monitoring project at any site.

As well as the 'low tech' dust monitoring, there was also a demonstration of the automated dust counting technique, equipment used at Historic Royal Palaces.

Glass slides are used to collect the dust samples, which are then viewed through a microscope. The automated dust counting, which uses the software National Instruments, LabVIEW, takes 50 measurements per slide and values for average % area of dust coverage and average numbers of particles are obtained. The technique offered a very accurate way of measuring the build up of dust and is most useful where monitoring for a specific reason, for example the impact of the Hampton Court Music festival.

The National Trust, in partnership with English Heritage and Historic Royal Palaces, has funded the development of an automated dust monitoring device or 'dust-bug'. Now in its third stage of design the dust bug aims to monitor the accumulation of coarse dust and fibres. It is essentially a video microscope that takes images of a plain glass surface at timed intervals as the dust builds up. This then provides a picture of the dust accumulation over time. It is currently being redesigned to be a much smaller, compact device. It is hoped that it will be useful in measuring dust generation of cleaning techniques, show how dust redistribution occurs and the impact of visitors activity in a room.

Full details of the Leverhulme research project and its partners can be found on the National Trust website, and further information about the Dust Study Morning, including all relevant references will be available on the Care of Collections Group web page. The dust study morning highlighted some of the most interesting conclusions of the research project that anyone setting up a dust-monitoring programme of any size should consider:

The Leverhulme research project's dusty conclusions!

- For every 50cm further away from the visitor route the amount of dust collected halved.
- Having good entrance mats can collect as much as 80% of dust before it enters the building.
- There are two main types of dust, smaller particles mainly from the floor, and much larger particles, mainly textile fibres coming from people.
- Dust in historic interiors contains much less 'dead skin' than dust in the home – as people don't tend to undress in our properties!
- The more twists and turns in the visitor routes, the more dust was collected.
- The majority of dust deposited was at hip and shoulder height
- Dust sticks most readily to silk, wool and synthetic fibres.

- Humidity as low as 35% can cause the cementation of dust to the surface of objects

Holly Dawes

Historic Royal Palaces

CONSERVATION MATTERS IN WALES

**National Museums and Galleries of Wales
Cynon Valley Museum and Gallery 7
December 2005**

This annual conference was a great chance for conservators in Wales (plus a few who snuck across the border from Bristol) to catch up and share their experiences over the last year. The presentations were given by conservators with varying degrees of experience, ranging from students and the newly qualified to more experienced professionals, and covered a wide range of subjects. This meant that the people attending could learn from subject areas that they may otherwise not have a chance to, and hopefully come away with some ideas and attitudes that may be transferred to their respective fields.

The conference began with a short introduction from Bob Child who, as anyone who knows him might expect, started the proceedings with a couple of anecdotes that had all of those attending in fits of laughter. This was followed by the first of the presentations: an update on the recently completed conservation of the famous leatherback turtle held at the NMGW. Julian Carter highlighted some of the problems encountered with old conservation treatments including gap fills and in-painting that had created an inaccurate representation. He then discussed the treatments which replaced those that had been problematic.

Nadia Tsatsouli proved it was possible to carry out conservation in the field with minimum resources and a limited budget in her appropriately titled presentation 'Conservation from a suitcase'. This was an account of a short amount of time spent in Egypt for conservation alongside a dig run by Cardiff University. With weight restrictions on luggage, a certain amount of improvisation was inevitable and clever solutions for tools and equipment that would otherwise be used in a lab were demonstrated using everyday objects.

Volatile organic compounds are a major problem in museums both for objects and the people working around them. Victoria Purewal discussed her analysis of pesticides used in the past on paper holding pressed flowers and the possible health and safety implications of handling these.



The Conference venue

Following this were two presentations concerning the treatments of human remains and the ethical implications. Jennifer Mulrooney discussed a number of informative, (if slightly daunting) guidelines, and then related them to her current work on a burial urn. Adding a context to the guidelines made them easier to understand and less intimidating to a conservator who may not have worked with human remains before. Phil Parkes then presented an example of conservation of a 23rd Dynasty mummy and sarcophagus. He gave a detailed account of the reasoning behind the choices made during the conservation process, again relating to the ethical considerations of such an object. He also showed that it is possible to have analysis carried out on such a large object by approaching hospitals, which generated much interest from staff and patients alike. These presentations were particularly relevant due to the recent changes in the guidelines to handling and treatments of archaeological human remains.

It is always useful to hear of advances in environmental controls for museums, which is why the final presentation given by Jon Horton and Patrick Treves of ORLA Solutions Ltd was of interest to many attending the conference. This was a demonstration of a new product; the Active Foam Filtration System for the reduction of pollutants in showcases.

The conference was rounded off with a buffet lunch giving those attending time to interact which for the students present was a good experience.

Anna Barnes

Student, BSc Conservation of Objects in Museums and Archaeology
Cardiff University

CHALLENGES IN CONSERVATION

**Ceramics and Glass Group meeting
24 – 26 March 2006, Cardiff**

The Ceramics and Glass Group held its Spring Conference – 'Challenges in Conservation' – and annual meeting in Cardiff, Wales. Saturday was dedicated to visits. During the morning, delegates were given tours of Cardiff Castle with its splendid William Burges interiors. The afternoon was spent at National Museum Cardiff, part of Amgueddfa Cymru/National Museum Wales and home to the Welsh national collection of fine and applied art, as well as collections of geology, archaeology, and natural history. In alternating groups,

the delegates were given comprehensive tours of both the Welsh Galleries, including the impressive collections of European and Welsh ceramics, and the Applied Arts conservation laboratories and collection storage areas. Sunday consisted of lectures and the AGM. After a brief introduction by CGG Chair Ros Hodges, the day commenced with a talk by Oliver Fairclough, Keeper of Art, National Museum Cardiff, addressing the challenges for conservators and curators in the acquisition and preservation of contemporary art and new media. Andrew Renton, Head of Applied Art, National Museum Cardiff, then presented several case studies which illustrated the relationship between exhibition-related decisions and the concomitant impact on conservation/restoration decisions. After the AGM, Sarah Peek, a conservator in private practice, outlined a particularly challenging treatment of a large Minton sculpture. Judi Pinkham, Senior Conservator of Applied Arts, National Museum Cardiff, discussed the protocol of treating a large collection of silver and gilt objects and its ancillary benefit in the service of treating ceramics and other composite materials. Finally, Peter David, a conservator in private practice, shared a number of his personal solutions to the perennially complicated issue of restoring tile panels and lustre ceramics. There were two trade stands: Conservation Resources Ltd., represented by Mark Vine and Addington Studio represented by Pamela Warner. Full details of the meeting appear on the Icon Website.

Rachel Sabino-Gunaratna

Membership Secretary

EXPLORING HYOSO:

the Art of Japanese Scroll Mounting
Hirayama Studio, British Museum
10 May 2006

The British Museum's Hirayama Studio, in association with the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, organized this event to discuss the complexities in selecting and preparing silks for the art of Hyoso (Japanese scroll mounting). The workshop was the fruit of connections which Sara Burdett, Head of the Hirayama Studio, established during her placement at the Oka Bokkodo Co. Ltd., in Kyoto, where she was introduced to Yukio Yamamoto.

Mr. Yamamoto was invited to share his expert knowledge, acquired during fifty two years of work in this field, with conservators from the British Museum, Bodleian Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, British Library, Courtauld Institute, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, as well as students from

Lustre dish before treatment from Peter's talk at Cardiff. A full report of his talk will soon be available on the CGG webpage



Camberwell College of Arts and the School of Oriental and African Studies. Mr. Yamamoto, son of a hyogushi (mounter and repairer of art works), was trained at the Oka Bokkodo Co. Ltd and, in 1962, opened his studio, Yokodo Co. Ltd, in Kyoto. Besides many positions of honour, in 2005 he was awarded the title of Contemporary Master Artisan by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

After introducing himself, with the help of Tim Clark, Curator of Japanese Antiquities at the British Museum, Yukio Yamamoto led us through the sophisticated art of hyoso. He illustrated the careful choice of fabrics of different colours and patterns to create an appropriate and beautiful surrounding for the honshi (art work to be mounted), taking into consideration its nature, understanding its content, its artist, the age it was produced, the season and the time of the day when it is displayed. We shared our thoughts with him selecting the textiles for the assembling of a kakejiku (hanging scroll), respecting the balance and harmony of its parts and observing how different choices can change dramatically the perception of the honshi.

Developing from an older Chinese tradition, the art of hyoso has been practised for many centuries in Japan, evolving a wide range of styles and silk textiles as a result of many cultural, historical and aesthetic

influences. It combines technical knowledge and a deep aesthetic sense; the interweaving of which became immediately apparent.

During the day, all our senses were involved in understanding the qualities of the materials, the tools and the execution of different techniques. Our eyes were fascinated by the fabrics: monra (silk gauze with complex patterns), kinsha (silk with gold gilt thread), kinran (gold brocade), ginran (silver brocade), donsū (satin damask) and nanako (basket-weave fabric).

Our sense of touch felt the distinctive characteristics of washi (traditional Japanese paper): minogami (a strong paper made from kozo, paper mulberry, used for the first lining); misugami (soft paper dried in the sun on wooden boards made from kozo and gofun, calcium carbonate obtained from oyster shells, used for intermediate lining); and udagami (paper with a smooth surface and a close and tight structure, made from kozo and white clay, used for the final lining) (fig.1).

Our sense of smell could distinguish between shinnori, new wheat starch paste and furunori, aged paste obtained from fermented shinnori, after being stored in a dark cold place for 7–10 years becoming a weak adhesive with a pervasive smell, the preparation and properties of which play a vital part.

Figure 1



Copyright Bodleian Library

Figure 2



Copyright British Museum

Copyright Bodleian Library



Mr Yamamoto watched by Dr. David Saunders, Keeper of Conservation, British Museum, Sara Burdett, Head of the Hirayama Studio (standing, right to left) and Professor Marie Conte-Helm, Director General of the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation (standing, centre).

Our ears learnt to understand the meaning of sounds produced by executing a variety of techniques. During the hada urauchi (first lining), the fabric was squared on the table, the urauchi gami (lining paper) was prepared with thick shinnori and then removed from the table to let it rest for a while on felt to take away the excess of humidity and finally it was applied on to the textile with the help of a nadebake (a smoothing brush). The mashi urauchi (second lining) was also performed. The perfection of Mr Yamamoto's movements produced distinct sounds: the light brushing sound of the nadebake followed by the deep sound of the uchibake (pounding brush), so that the first and second lining papers adhere well (fig 2). Even the sound of the knife blade when tapped revealed the hardness of the steel. Each tool and material is fundamental in reaching the final result of perfection and equilibrium.

Mr Yamamoto dedicated part of the workshop to show his collection of old textile fragments and an intact robe with marvellous patterns. Copying the design of these historic remnants, he tries to create fabrics, woven for him by expert artisans, suitable for his kakejiku (figs. 3 & 4).

During this invaluable day, he impressed all the participants with his enthusiasm for the beauty of the art of hyoso, which has a profound influence in the paper conservation field, and contributed to deepening the understanding of curators and conservators responsible for the care of Japanese paintings belonging to western collections.

Robert Minte, ACR and Marinita Stiglitz

Conservation & Collection Care
Oxford University Library Services
Bodleian Library, Oxford



Figure 3

Figure 4



CVMA GUIDELINES

Stained Glass Group Seminar

The King's Manor Conference Centre, York,
27 April 2006

The Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi (or CVMA) is an international research project dedicated to the publication of medieval stained glass. Founded in 1949, the CVMA has national committees in fourteen countries and over sixty-five volumes have been published so far detailing descriptions and locations of medieval stained glass. The International Committee of the Corpus Vitrearum for the Conservation of Stained Glass in association with the Stained Glass Committee of ICOMOS first established a set of guidelines for the conservation of stained glass in 1989. The second edition of these guidelines, ratified in 2004, reached a wide audience of stained glass conservators through its publication in Conservation News and placement on the CVMA's website (<http://www.cvma.ac.uk>).

After a year of living with the new guidelines, the Stained Glass Group of Icon felt that the time had come to create a forum for the discussion of the practical application of these principles. The well-attended event was organized to explore the updated guidelines by presenting case studies from practising conservators, and by discussing the theory behind their evolution. Eight speakers from Belgium, England, Germany, Scotland, Poland and the United States presented examples of the very best in current conservation techniques, together with some sobering examples of what not to do.

The morning session was hosted by the chairman of the stained glass section, Mr. Chris Chesney ACR. The first speaker, Dr. Sebastian Strobl, Professor for Stained Glass Conservation at the University of Applied Science in Erfurt, gave a paper entitled 'The New CVMA Conservation Guidelines: Background', which he presented as a member of the committee responsible for drafting the new guidance; he also outlined the history of the revision and the ethical underpinnings of the text.

The second speaker was Keith Barley FMGP ACR, with a slide presentation: 'Practical problems and solutions associated with Isothermal Glazing'. The paper illustrated examples of early international efforts to develop viable isothermal techniques for conserving stained glass, some of which were more successful than others. The next speaker was Drew Anderson, Associate Conservator in the Sherman Fairchild Center for Objects Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, where he is responsible for the museum's collection of



European and American stained glass. His digital presentation paper was entitled, 'Applying the new conservation guidelines in a Museum setting: examples from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.'

Alfred Fisher FMGP FRSA was the last speaker of the morning session. His paper was entitled 'Protect or perish – the only way?' Never afraid to speak his mind, Alf Fisher set out to kick the hornet's nest with his provocative paper. His talk gave credit to

The conference venue



the CVMA committee for the careful consideration they gave to drafting the guidelines, but clearly signalled his concern with their perceived bias towards non-intervention.

Needless to say, his perspective received a mixed response from the audience and was the source of much interesting debate over the ensuing lunch break.

The afternoon session was chaired by Derek Hunt ACR, who had also organised the event. The first speaker was Prof. Joost Caen FICC, senior professor of glass conservation-restoration at the Hogeschool Antwerpen (Assoc. University of Antwerp) in Flanders, Belgium. His talk 'Preventive and passive conservation of stained glass in monuments. The new Corpus Vitrearum Guidelines and the need for a no nonsense approach concerning protective glazing' emphasized the role of protective glazing as a crucial and reversible part of preventive conservation. Chris Chesney then provided some light relief in his talk entitled 'Guidelines! Who Needs 'Em?' which identified the underlying contractual factors that still lead to sub-standard interventions on historic stained glass.

The next speaker of the afternoon was Slawomir Oleszczuk, a Works of Art conservator and stained glass maker who is part of the technical committee of the CVMA. His lecture, 'Fillings in antique stained glass', gave an interesting and detailed insight into the application of the CVMA guidelines to infills of lacunae both of glass and of painted decoration.

The final speaker of the day was Susan Bradbury FMGP FRSA, stained glass conservator and partner of Stained Glass Design Partnership. Her paper was on 'The Application of the CVMA Guidelines to the conservation of the Stained Glass at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh'. She pointed out the usefulness of the new guidelines as an arguing tool in discussions with clients, giving the individual conservator the backing of an international community of conservation professionals.

The conference concluded with a short question and answer session from the audience and was then followed by the Stained Glass Group's AGM. The most pressing issue brought to light was the need for the election of a new secretary for the group. Any member of the Group interested in taking on this position should please get in touch with the chairman, Mr Chris Chesney, at iona_art_glass@lineone.net

A full account of the individual papers can be found in the stained glass group section of the Icon website: www.icon.org.uk.

Derek Hunt, ACR

WORKING WITH A JAPANESE ARMS AND ARMOUR COLLECTION

The Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds.17 August 2005.

Japanese arms and armour are present in many museum collections world wide and the quality of craftsmanship balanced with its utilitarian nature makes it an ever-popular material for display. However the different materials and surfaces used in each piece create inherent problems of care for these works of art. Although this is a huge subject area, there is a clear lack of material printed in English specifically aimed at the conservator or museum professional. The seminar held by the Royal Armouries was a much-welcomed insight into how such an establishment works with a significant Japanese arms and armour collection.

Thom Richardson (Keeper of European Armour and Oriental Arms and Armour) began the day with a summary of the types of armour and weapons and their characteristic forms. The talk condensed over 1500 years of Japanese arms and armour development by identifying the most common styles and trends that might be encountered and made positive identification of an object a far less daunting

Figure 2





Figure 1

prospect. Thom also gave an introduction to the specific terminology given to the armour and weapons of Japan.

Suzanne Kitto (Head of Conservation) discussed how the different materials encountered in Japanese arms and armour react and interact when used in conjunction with each other, their variety often creating a complex problem for the conservator. Suzanne described the varying ways that environmental conditions can affect specific materials. An example of this is lacquer, which is susceptible to UV light damage. If lacquer begins to deteriorate the danger is that the surface below can be affected by environmental fluctuations, which then allows further damage to occur. Often iron and leather are used as a base to which lacquer is applied. In the case of iron, if corrosion products begin to form they can push the lacquer from the metal surface. Similarly, fluctuations in relative humidity and temperature can cause lacquered leather to swell having the same adverse effect.

These problems can be avoided through appropriate storage and display. Suzanne described how the Royal Armouries developed a display stand specifically for Japanese armour. The display system is based around the traditional style although importantly can be adjusted to more effectively support all aspects of the object. Perspex is used in conjunction with wood to create a modern mount that is still

traditional in appearance (fig 1). In extreme cases armour that has been badly supported during display has been known to tear itself apart from the strains exerted on a specific area. The shoulder straps of the cuirass and the tassels are particularly

vulnerable. Subtle supports can evenly distribute the weight over the entirety of an object if they are positioned correctly. For example a lip on to which the bottom lame of the cuirass rests removes stress from the vulnerable shoulder straps.

Figure 3

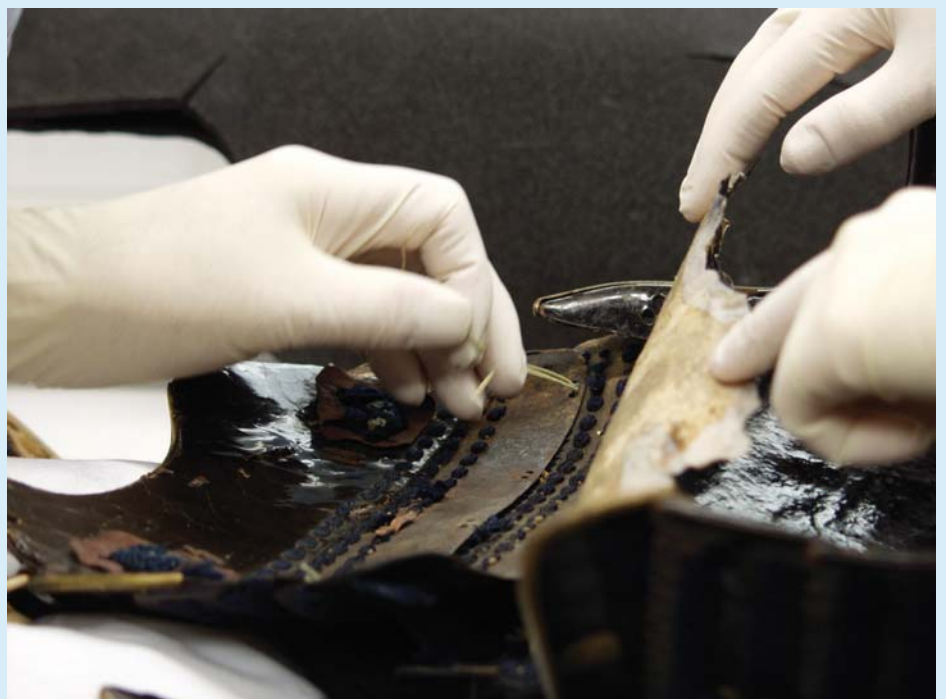




Figure 4

Problems also arise with far more modern materials, as plastics can be encountered on more modern Japanese arms. On the handles of some swords produced towards the end of the Second World War a casein-based plastic was used to recreate a sharkskin effect.

Emma Schmuecker, Conservator at the Royal Armouries, outlined conservation treatments carried out on two helmets. The first was a folding helmet that would have been issued to lower rank foot soldiers. It had not been displayed for some time and the treatments included iron oxide corrosion removal and lacquer consolidation. The second case study concerned an impressive but extensively damaged red lacquered helmet with a removable gold crest. The helmet had been in store for some time and it was uncertain whether the crest, which had become detached, actually belonged to the helmet. However Emma managed to prove that the helmet and the crest were part of the same object. After removing a layer of bronze paint from the crest, which had been crudely applied in the past, underlying layers of gold lacquer were

revealed. Fortunately the gold lacquer clearly matched a surviving surface on the helmet bowl. A crude previous repair to the crest had caused further damage over time and this was carefully removed. However the surface deterioration was such that any further treatment was avoided. The Royal Armouries display department produced a mount that not only supported the fragile original section but also allowed the silhouette of the crest to be maintained (fig 2).

Emma had done some extensive research and cleaning tests on lacquer. A simple test to determine the effect UV light has had on lacquer is to test its pH level. Stable lacquer has a pH reading of 4.5 whereas the red lacquer on the helmet bowl ranged from 4.4 to 3.9. Cleaning tests with deionised water were shown to remove lacquer from the deteriorated surface. The used swabs fluoresced under a UV lamp indicating that lacquer was present. Members of the Royal Armouries conservation department are currently carrying out further research into lacquer cleaning.

Fiona Cahill, Conservator at the Royal Armouries, highlighted the difficulties of conserving an object with a variety of surfaces. After a brief history of a Sakakibara family armour dating from about 1600, Fiona emphasised the problems of removing corrosion products from metals that are attached to or directly next to fragile textiles. Fabrics were used in conjunction with metals to give more manoeuvrability to the wearer whilst being decorative. Interestingly, the deterioration of the lacquered leather lining of the cuirass (do) allowed structural repairs to be carried out far more effectively. Supportive ties that had broken could be replaced using Dacron and then reattached to specific lames (fig 3). Originally these supportive ties were made from thin leather strips and are found on the interior of the cuirass to hold it rigid. Although it can seem as if the silk braid found on many do is load-bearing it is actually these interior ties that provide support to the rows of armoured plates. It is extremely important, therefore, for the structural stability of the object that these are repaired when broken. Detached ties can mean the plates move in relation to each other damaging both the lacquer and the silk lacing. Some ties carry more load than others and are therefore far more vulnerable and prone to damage. The area most at risk is the Mune Ita plate, the uppermost lame of the breastplate to which the shoulder straps fasten. If necessary these ties can be strengthened or replaced quite easily. A particularly effective yet simple treatment is to pass strong thread such as Dacron through the existing holes in the lames (fig 4).

Ian Bottomley (Senior Curator) finished the day with an intriguing talk on how to read Japanese inscriptions. Many Japanese craftsmen signed and dated their work and deciphering these can teach us much about an object's history and provenance. His talk was accompanied with a short booklet highlighting 'signpost symbols', which allow you to work out a number of significant features from an inscription.

The balance between a solid base of knowledge provided by curators and the insights into conservation practice gave a fascinating look into working with a Japanese arms and armour collection. With a paper to follow the talk and a further seminar planned, the Royal Armouries are exploring the conservation and care issues of an area which has been neglected for far too long.

Jamie Hood

Third Year Student, BA Conservation and Restoration, University of Lincoln.

in practice

NADFAS Heritage Volunteers

by Caroline Saye, Icon Development Manager

Alongside this issue of Icon News is a leaflet outlining the activities of NADFAS Heritage Volunteers. NADFAS (the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies) works towards promoting and preserving the arts – for example through voluntary work in historic buildings, museum and galleries etc, recording churches and their contents and offering lecture programmes and tours for members.

As we all know, volunteers can be a valuable resource, particularly for preventive conservation and collections care projects (as was demonstrated at the 2005 Conservation Awards) but careful supervision and training are necessary to ensure that their enthusiasm reaps the greatest rewards. NADFAS has a long history of providing volunteers and now has well established procedures for setting up and running these projects. For conservation projects this includes the training and supervision of volunteers by an Accredited Conservator.

Nicola Gentle has long been involved with one such project and here describes her experiences over a period of ten years...

'In 1996 I was approached by the Representative of Teignbridge Society NADFAS Heritage Volunteers who was keen to organise a conservation project at Ugbrooke House, Devon. The owners, Lord and Lady Clifford, showed us a selection of textiles including a fine set of Bed Hangings embroidered in the mid-18th century by Mary Howard, Duchess of Norfolk, sister of the 3rd Lady Clifford.

As these fragile textiles were soon to be displayed and funding for professional work was not available, I thought that we should see whether the Volunteers could carry out the conservation. My initial brief was to give two training days covering general principles of handling, documentation, cleaning and stitching techniques, to order equipment and materials and to provide written instructions. I would set up each stage of the project and visit every so often to monitor progress.

It soon became clear to everyone involved that more constant supervision was required and the Cliffords agreed that I could attend each time the Volunteers met. From a changing core of around ten to twelve people, a rota is arranged for three to four Volunteers to work every two weeks for three to four hours. Progress is necessarily slow: Volunteers cannot be expected to work at the pace of a trained conservator and much of my time is spent answering questions a fellow professional would not need to ask. After ten years we are now nearing completion.



Bedhanging at Ugbrooke

Ugbrooke bedhanging detail



Perhaps this is not the type of conservation usually entrusted to untrained workers and the situation certainly was not ideal, but I felt the treatment I proposed was manageable. However, I was relieved once it was agreed I could have more professional involvement. Overall, I have been impressed with the skills shown by the Volunteers (I have only felt it necessary to unpick stitching not up to standard on a handful of occasions) and, above all, with their loyalty to the project.

The Bed Hangings are central to the collection at Ugbrooke House. Without the collaboration of NADFAS Heritage Volunteers with an accredited Conservator, these textiles would have been redisplayed in a very vulnerable state.'

Nowadays most projects are restricted to preventive work and risk assessments are carried out in advance to ensure that potential problems are identified before a project starts. But as Nicola's experience demonstrates, collaboration and communication can deliver great results in sometimes less than perfect situations – not only in terms of the conservation outcome but also for the lead conservator who builds valuable skills in volunteer management within the supportive environment and guidelines provided by NADFAS.

Packing Chain Mail Armour: A simple solution for gaining space and maximizing support

by Tamar Maor, UCL Conservation Intern, Horniman Museum and Dylan Cox, Conservation Officer, Horniman Museum

In March 2006 a student project was initiated to repack chain mail which was being stored on a shelf in a less than ideal manner at the Study Collections Centre, the storage facility of the Horniman Museum. The shelf had three pieces of chain mail that could not be identified (Figure 1). They had been rolled around and nailed to a wooden support, which was most likely at one point used as a hanger for display purposes. All three were wrapped in polythene sheeting which was stapled at both ends. This had lost its transparency due to corrosion products and dust which had gathered on both the interior and exterior of the bag. The chain mail had interlinked because of this storage method and it was quite difficult to unpack the pieces and to identify the objects as three chain mail jackets. The jackets are all steel, two of which are corroded. The objects vary in provenance but date from c.18 – 19th century. A method of repacking these jackets was necessary in order to document and photograph them, better



Figure 1

support them, avoid interlinking, ease accessibility, and ideally reduce the space that they were consuming.

The following steps describe the process used to repack the chain mail with a simple and effective storage technique. A risk assessment was done and for health and safety reasons as well as ease of handling, two people were needed throughout the process to carry and move the chain mail, which is typically quite heavy. Each object was initially carefully unfolded and laid flat on a Tyvek coated table, and the wooden supports were removed. The supports were causing points of tension where the chain mail had been wired to the wood. These have been kept but are most likely not original.

Step 1: Thin Plastazote® sheets were cut to be inserted into the torso, the lower third of the jacket, and each sleeve (Figure 2). These sheets were inserted by one

Figure 2





Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

person carefully lifting and supporting the top area of chain mail, while a second person slid the Plastazote® between the layers (see Figure 3). This provides support for the object as well as separating the layers of chain mail, thus preventing them from interlinking.

Step 2: A sheet of acid free tissue was placed on the torso of the jacket, and the sleeves as well as the lower half of the jacket were folded over into the centre of the jacket. The object is now compact enough to fit in a box, but all the layers of the chain mail are still separated as well as supported. (Figure 4)

Step 3: After cutting a piece of plastazote to line the bottom of an archival box of adequate size, two people can carefully lift the object (this is quite easy due to the central piece of Plastazote® supporting the torso) and place it into the box. (Figure 5)

At this point, another piece of Plastazote® can be placed over this object, and the next jacket can be packed and layered on top. Using this technique, the three jackets were placed in the same box. The heaviest object was placed at the bottom. The box was also packed with the more corroded objects on the bottom, and the least at the top. This prevents corrosion products from falling onto other less corroded objects. The metal is not actively corroding and is stored in a climate-controlled room. The box is still able to be lifted by two people. This packaging method was cost effective and time efficient (taking only 3 hours). It maximized support for the objects while minimizing damage and releasing more storage space.

For further information on this method, please contact Tamar Maor (tmaor@horniman.ac.uk) or Dylan Cox (dc Cox@museumoflondon.org.uk).

The Joy of Pipe Lagging

by R. M. Entwistle ACR, with Louisa Di Capite

Whilst reading the new edition of the National Trust Manual of Housekeeping, I noticed on page 850 that they still advise a rather traditional method of making a padded hanger. Padded hangers are necessary for the safe storage

of hanging costumes as they reduce the pull of the weight on the costume; thus preventing possible damage. The National Trust recommends encasing plastic hangers in Terylene wadding and sewing this in place, they then advise that the wadding be enclosed in cream cotton sateen such as curtain lining fabric.

No doubt this would produce the 'king' of padded



hangers and be a thing of beauty in itself. However, we work in a local museum that has over 500 hanging costumes. To make padded hangers for all these items in the National Trust fashion would have taken an amazing amount of time.

Some years ago because of a lack of time, staff and let's say it, sewing skills, I hit on a quick way of making padded hangers. The idea was to bulk out the hanger with thick foam pipe lagging instead of the wadding.

The pipe lagging comes as a tube with a split down one side, and can be easily placed over the top of the hanger and a hole made for the hook; the lagging is held with knotted linen tape. Tyvek or acid free tissue can then be placed over it as a separator, we do that out of force of habit rather than real need; the pipe lagging, is inert (it is a form of polyethylene foam and we had it tested by a friendly chemist), but it is grey and although it is doubtful that the colour could transfer itself, I am a fan of belt and braces.

Hey presto, a quick padded hanger in a few minutes. See pictures of one I made earlier. The lagging comes in a variety of thicknesses and density and so can be tailored to suit the costume. For costumes with a high collar we put a slice of the lagging around the extended hook of the hanger. We have also used it to pad the arms of boxed costume.

Louisa Di Capite, a student in conservation, who is working on our fan collection, recently had an idea for storing open fans attached to acid free board using the pipe lagging. The pipe was first wrapped in acid free tissue paper (for looks). Then it was slid along the bottom edge of the board thus enabling fans to be stored stacked in boxes, head to foot, without touching each other. The fans can be displayed on the same mounts by just sliding off the lagging. This again takes only moments to do and saves storage space.

We also had a sturgeon, a large fish, which recently paid a

visit to the lab. The sturgeon had a rather fragile tail. To make sure that the tail would not accidentally hit the deck when he is unpacked we wrapped the ubiquitous lagging around it and tied it with linen tape.

Besides being very useful and safe the lagging is also very cheap.

Robert Entwistle is Conservation Officer at Ipswich Museums Service and Louisa Di Capite is a conservation student at Camberwell College

Towards an assessment system for bookbinding leather deterioration

by Karen Vidler, Institute of Archaeology.

Karen outlines her PhD research and invites your input

Introduction

The longevity of recorded information in written and illustrated form is in part determined by the structure or housing in which it is surrounded. In many cases that protective structure is the bookbinding. This includes sewing the leaves together, so that they do not become separated; lining the spine so the pages will 'throw-out' in a particular way for reading, writing or drawing on; the board attachment, that provides a protective layer on the front and back of the leaves and the covering material which can reflect the preferred decorative style of the day. The binding itself can offer significant social, economic and cultural evidence of the time in which it was manufactured.

Since the early 19th century librarians, bookbinders and other custodians of the book have struggled with the premature decay of books bound in vegetable tanned leather. 'Red rot' is an example of an acid induced or acid decay in vegetable tanned leathers. There is a characteristic weakening and eventual loss to the integrity of the leather fibre structure that over time reduces the fibres to a fine powder. This leads to weakness and loss to the leather over the spine, joint and corners areas and the binding can almost self-destruct even if left undisturbed on the shelf. (Fig.1)

During the 19th century the more common hydrolysable tannins used to tan bookbinding leathers included sumac and myrabolam, which produce yellow-green or yellow-brown tanning liquor. At the same time there was an increased use of the condensed tannins such as mimosa and quebracho, which resulted in a red-brown tanning liquor. 'Red rot' is a term commonly used to describe acidic leather decay of the condensed tanned leathers as they





Figure 1 Acid decay of large 19th century ledger bindings, Art and Design Archive, National Art Library, London



Figure 2 The main reading room of The Literary and Philosophical Society Library, Newcastle

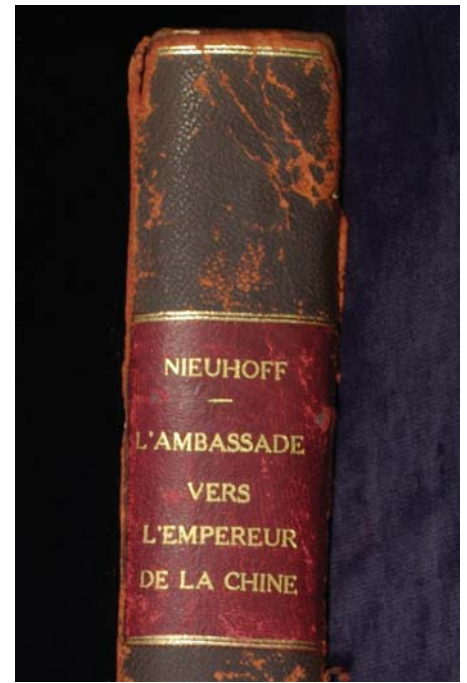


Figure 3 Location of sampled leather for SEM imaging

revert to a distinct reddish tinge in the decayed areas. Consequently not all acidic leathers turn red as the decay proceeds.

Collections of 'Red rot' damaged bindings can be seen in libraries, archives, museums, historical houses, and private collections – a variety of locations. This type of leather decay has been found in large national collections such as the British Library and The National Archives, Kew. Many books collected by Societies, Institutes and private libraries which historically preferred their books bound in full or half leather also suffer from leather decay.

The problem for the conservator often begins when the book is handled. The custodian or reader is confronted with the powdery decay of the leather transferring to their hands and clothing. This is usually when the book is brought to the attention of conservation staff. On one level the book has become uncomfortable to handle, but it indicates the beginning of a more expensive and time-consuming problem. Acid decay offers a visual sign and catalyst for the deterioration of the binding structure. This can cause problems for both display and handling as well as decreased protection of the manuscript or printed contents of the book.

Some important considerations when faced with the problem of acid decay include:

- **cosmetic:** the powdery leather leaves unsightly, coloured deposits on library shelves and when handling
- **structural:** acid decay seems to begin along the spine and outer joint areas of the binding -these being the most mechanically stressed areas of the book. One observable consequence is eventual detachment of the spine and the boards, with the binding no longer performing its protective function

- **health and safety:** the powdery grain layer can become an air-borne irritant for some people when it is disturbed
- **financial:** if left untreated the structural damage requires costly repairs.

This PhD research was prompted by my own experiences when treating acid decay as a practising conservator. Since first coming across this type of leather decay I have become increasingly frustrated by the limited practical information available through the literature on this type of deterioration and the limited suitability of current conservation treatments.

The first part of this research seeks to improve the identification of the stages of acidic leather deterioration in 19th and 20th century bookbinding leathers, while part two will focus on improved selection of the appropriate conservation treatment.

There are some specific questions I am seeking to answer during part one of this research:

- What exactly is acidic decay in bookbinding leather?
- Can the deterioration be described and measured?
- Can an assessment scheme be applied for improved condition assessment?

Within these key questions are other issues that have been raised in conversation or via email with practising conservators. So far, the two issues that stand out are the possibility of acid decayed leather being harmful to human health and the need for simple bench tests for more accurate assessment of the chemical state of the leathers before deciding on the conservation treatment.

One way of increasing understanding of acidic leather decay is to develop methods for describing and measuring the various stages as the decay proceeds. This is currently

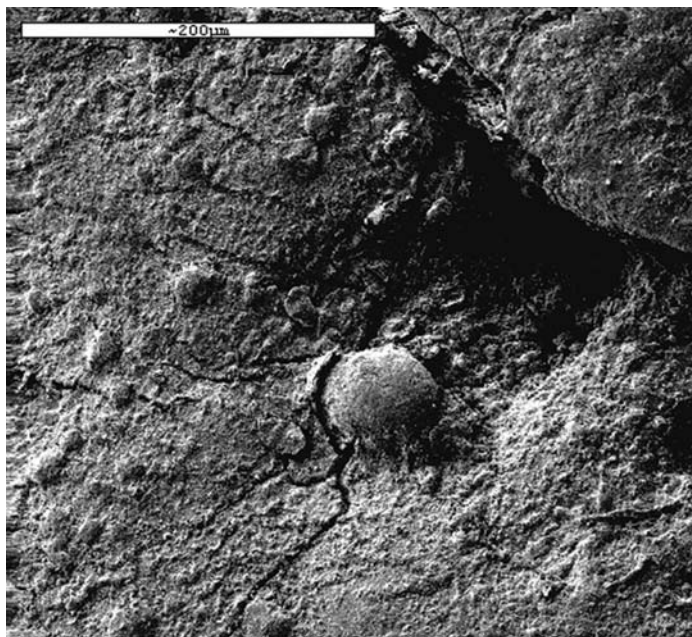


Figure.4 SEM imaging showing bubbling of the grain layer

being investigated using simple visual examination and small sample analysis of naturally aged leather samples. Results from all techniques are being verified using more complex analysis available within The University College London and other institutions.

Visual examination

The visual examination began with a pilot survey of leather bindings held within various collections such as The Literary and Philosophical Society Library, Newcastle (Fig. 2). This collection was chosen because, during the historic literature review, a very early description of 19th century acid decayed binding leathers was recorded as coming from this library. The Society's Librarian, Mr Thornhill (Librarian c.1833-1863) describes one particular book that had been missing from the library since 1818 and when returned was found to be in good condition, but the leather on the books bound at the same time were suffering with acid decay. This is a documented example of leathers manufactured quite early in the 19th century that went on to suffer from acid decay.

The visual examination is part of a condition survey that relies on quickly establishing key information about the leather before deciding on the final condition ranking. This includes information about the animal species, decoration, colour change, texture change and structural failure as decay proceeds. All this information assists in building an overall picture of the condition of each leather binding to make general observations on their condition without access to more accurate chemical analysis.

Small sample analysis

During the 1990's The STEP* Leather Project confirmed that the acidity in bookbinding leather is greatly influenced by exposure to acidic atmospheric pollutants such as sulphur dioxide. When more specific information is required about the acidity of the leather then small sample chemical analysis can be conducted. The validity of each test for determining acidic chemical change will be verified using more complex analysis such as ion chromatography.

There is a relationship between acidic chemical changes in the leather and the degree of physical deterioration. Some physical changes cannot be easily seen during direct observation or under light microscope examination. Complex analysis such as Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) requires a sample size much larger than a few fibres. However, the technique allows the detection of changes over a much wider surface area. Investigation of a larger surface area can reveal surface irregularities such as the swelling or bubbling of the grain layer (Figs.3 & 4) as the increased magnification reveals a more profound change to the surface morphology. This will be compared with chemical analysis to bring together a clearer relationship between increased acidity and the structural changes within the fibre network as decay proceeds.

Assessment tool kit

The data resulting from the physical and chemical analysis will be used to create a set of tools for condition assessment. The assessment tools will include data sheets of common combinations of animal species, tannage and chemical and physical characteristics found during survey and analysis. The data sheets can only act as a guide for condition assessment as leather is a complex material; similar tools exist for assessing iron gall ink damage.

A set of simple bench tests will also result from the analytical work. Returning to standard scientific equipment and reagent suppliers and suppliers from related disciplines, simple chemical assessment techniques for gaining information on the acidity of the leathers under examination will be identified.

Observation

One significant observation so far during the analysis of a set of late 19th century leather spines has made me aware of the importance of identifying acidic decay during its early stages. The leathers in question showed no obvious visual signs of aggressive physical or chemical change. There is some mechanical wear at the head and tail caps and along the joint areas where the spines had become detached – but no other indication. Chemical and physical analysis revealed leathers with a high pH, high sulphur content and bubbling and cracking of the surface as

observed under SEM analysis. These seemingly sound leathers represent a group of leathers that are 'time bombs' waiting to go off. They may very well benefit from early detection and conservation treatment to slow the rate of deterioration before irreversible physical damage to the fibre structure occurs.

Conservator Input

I am seeking assistance from the conservation community in order to complete this research and ensure it remains relevant to the practising conservator. First, access to collections for piloting and refining the condition survey currently being created. Access is required to collections of bindings bound in leathers of different animal species, tannage, decoration, and storage conditions – all factors that can impact on the rate of decay.

This research focuses on the analysis of naturally aged bookbinding leathers so a reference collection of leathers for analysis is being created. Specifically I am looking for sets of book boards and spines in a full or half leather covering style. Often the leather on the board is one stage less degraded than the spine and is useful for comparison.

Finally, I am asking for volunteers to trial the bench tests for determining the acidity of the leathers. A test kit is under development for use in a small conservation studio with training and documentation provided. This user group will be the 'guinea pigs' to decide if the test methods are reproducible and useful in assisting in condition assessment and determining conservation needs.

If you are interested in contributing to this research project please contact:

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Email: k.vidler@ucl.ac.uk

*(Larsen, R. STEP Leather Project. Protection and Conservation of European Cultural Heritage: Research Report No.1. Copenhagen, 1994.)

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the ongoing advice from my supervisors Professor Clifford Price, Dean Sully and Christopher Calnan. Much thanks to Phillippa Jones (Archives Conservator, Royal Library, Windsor) and Tony Bish (Private conservator) for contributing samples for analysis and several conservators in private and institutional practice who have offered sound advice and support for this research project.

The Chantry Library

the resource centre for Icon members and for non members with an interest in conservation



the library has an extensive collection of literature on conservation, with particular strengths in art on paper, library and archive materials

check out the
Chantry Library at
www.icon.org.uk

The collection

The collection includes over 150 major conservation periodicals, new conference preprints, foreign language publications, and conservation research documents.

Services

A comfortable space for study is provided as well as use of the computer with direct links for all Oxford University web services. Photocopies of articles may be obtained. This service is free of charge for Icon members upon quoting their membership number.

Visit the library

The library is open every Monday, Tuesday 9.00–5.00, and Wednesday afternoon 2.00–5.00. Appointments outside these hours may be arranged in advance with the librarian. Readers are advised to contact the librarian before visiting, in case of changes to opening hours.

Contact

Address	The Chantry Library, Grove Cottage, St. Cross Road Oxford OX1 3TX, United Kingdom
Website	www.icon.org.uk
Email	chantrylibrary@icon.org.uk
Telephone	+ 44 (0) 1865 251 303
Fax	+ 44 (0) 1865 251 303

listings

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.icon.org.uk
FOR FULL DETAILS OF ALL EVENTS.

The Wallace Collection Events Lunchtime Lectures

10 July (1pm), Lecture Theatre

All That Glitters: Gilding at the Wallace Collection
Furniture Conservator Jürgen Huber will reveal the many techniques used to gild the various materials represented in the Wallace Collection.

15 August (1pm), Lecture Theatre: Fighting Against Time!
Conserving Arms and Armour. Conservator Deborah Lee will provide a glimpse into the world of Arms and Armour conservation.

Until 28 August – Special Conservation Display: A Chinese Mandarin's Robes. These magnificent, delicate and fragile woven silk brocade robes have recently been conserved and re-mounted at the Textile Conservation Centre in Winchester, a fascinating process documented in this display

All events listed are free of charge.

The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Manchester Square, London W1U 3BN. Tel: 020 7563 9500

AHRC Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textile Studies

3rd Annual Conference: Textiles and Text: Re-establishing the links between archival and object-based research

11–13 July, Winchester

See issue 4, Icon News or visit: www.icon.org.uk for more details

ICON PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS GROUP

One Day Conference

21 July, London

Venue: Icon Offices, 3rd Floor, Downstream Building, 1 London Bridge.

A day of papers on the conservation and preservation of photographic materials. The day will also include the introduction of the new committee.

Further details and booking information can be found on the Icon website shortly and mailed to photographic materials group members separately.

ICON BOOK AND PAPER GROUP

IPC 5th International Conference

26–29 July, Edinburgh

A celebration of 30 years of achievement in conservation with a programme that will include 36 illustrated talks from speakers in leading institutions and private practice worldwide. The conference is attracting a large international audience and booking is essential to guarantee a place.

Booking forms and full details on the conference, venue and recommended hotels can be found on the Icon website. All further enquiries to The Institute of Paper Conservation, Conference secretariat, PO Box 143, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 9AT. Tel: +44 (0) 1435 883659 or email: bpgconference@icon.org.uk

The Research Institute of Paper History and Carriage House Paper Expedition to China – A Papermaker's Tour of China

16 August – 2 September, China

See issue 4, Icon News or visit: www.icon.org.uk for more details

IIC international Congress The Object in Context: Crossing Conservation Boundaries

28 August – 1 September, Munich

See: www.icon.org.uk for more details

Northumbria University and AIC Printed on Paper: The Techniques, History and Conservation of Printed Media

5–7 September, Newcastle upon Tyne

Venue: Sage Centre

Aiming to bring together a wide range of experience and expertise to expand the vocabulary on the broad subject of printed ink on paper – imagery and text, historic and modern.

More detailed information can be found by following the links from the events listings at www.icon.org.uk

3rd Triennial Conservation Conference at Northumbria University The Alum Meeting

11–13 September, Newcastle upon Tyne

Venue: Northumbria University.

See issue 1

Contact Jean E. Brown Senior Lecturer Conservation, Burt Hall, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST. Tel: 0191 227 3331, fax: 0191 227 3250, email: jean.brown@unn.ac.uk

ICON

Welsh Launch for Icon

12 September, Cardiff

Venue: National Museum Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff.
A chance within Wales to celebrate the formation of the Institute of Conservation and the considerable achievements of the organisation since its launch last year. Further details to follow shortly. Contact Heather Perry, Cynon Valley Museum and Gallery, Depot Road, Gadlys, Aberdare CF44 8DL, email: heather.perry@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk.

European Heritage Association The Best in Heritage

21–23 September, Dubrovnik

See issue 4, Icon News or visit: www.icon.org.uk for more details

British Association of Paper Historians Annual Conference

27–29 September, France

Venue: Hotel Bretagne, Saint Omer.
Including visits to Maison du Papier, a paper museum, and Cascades Blendecques Mill, one of Europe's largest manufacturers of corrugated board and white liner.
Speakers will include:
Peter Bower – Real or Fake, the investigation of papers used for a series of cartoons after The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci.
Louis Michell Gohell – history and renovation of an old papermill in Normandy.
Nigel Vellam – stampers and hand papermaking in France.
Ian Hendry – papermaking in the 1950s.
Jos de Gelas – the history of Belgian stamps.
Other discussions, including conservation, will also be organised and the food promises to be rewarding.
For further details please contact Ian Hendry on tel: 01665 577988, or email: ifhendry@macunlimited.net

ICON BOOK AND PAPER GROUP

Wallpaper Conservation at Wrest Park

3 October (6pm), London

Venue: October Gallery, Londonia House, 24 Old Gloucester Street, Bloomsbury, London WC1N 3AL.
An overview of the conservation of three rooms of historic wallpaper, two Chinese and one French.
Speaker: Mark Sandiford of Sandiford and Mapes – private wallpaper conservators.
Cost: £6 (students £3, with card) – correct money at the door please.
For further information on this lecture and other Icon Book and Paper Group lectures please contact Joanna Payne on email: jw@joannapayne.com.
She would also be interested to hear from speakers who might have a subject that would interest our members, also ideas & venues for workshops.

Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society (TACS) Church Ceramics Conference

6–7 October, Coalbrookdale

This groundbreaking two-day conference will examine the use of decorative tiles, mosaic and terracotta in the church from the mid nineteenth century to the present day, and will also consider the problems of recording and conserving tilework. The conference is for all those interested in the architectural and social history of the church, decorative arts, ceramic history, church recording and conservation.

Cost: Friday or Saturday only, £60 per day Both days £100.

Further information can be found on the Icon website or contact Elaine Godina, TACS Conference Co-ordinator, 27 Spurn Lane, Diggle, Oldham, Lancashire OL3 5QP or Tel: (01457) 870587, email: elainegodina@gmail.com.

ICON CERAMICS AND GLASS GROUP

Ethical Considerations In Ceramics Conservation

14 October, London

Venue: Victoria and Albert Museum.
A fascinating day of lectures on fakes, forgeries and other ethical considerations for conservators. Subjects to be covered include:
The discovery of composite objects and how to handle their conservation once their nature is discovered;
The question of fakes – what do we consider to be fakes and forgeries? How do we correctly identify these and detail them in our documentation to the client.
Tainted objects and how to avoid being put in the position of working on them.

Call for Papers

This meeting covers the subject of conserving fakes and forgeries and the legal position of the conservator handling 'tainted' objects. We have already contacted some eminent conservators who will be giving lectures but would like to hear from others who may have material to offer in order to make this day as varied and exciting as possible.

Please contact roshodges@waitrose.com if you feel that you would be interested in participating at this meeting. Full details of the meeting are available from roshodges@waitrose.com or from Alex Patchett-Joyce on APatchett9@aol.com

ICON STONE AND WALL PAINTINGS GROUP AND HISTORIC INTERIORS GROUP

Problem Arising? Scaffold/access issues in and to historic buildings

19 October, London

Venue: Wren and Hawksmoor Rooms, RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London W1.
Joint meeting to discuss the issues associated with the provision of access to historic buildings, internally and externally. Despite the importance of the historic fabric, the means of access is often unspecified, undesigned and

can have significant influence on tenders. Speakers will include representatives of major clients and architects, conservators, scaffold designers and those with expertise in the contractual side. The seminar is directed towards sharing good advice and gathering information on current technology, good practice, commercial management and specification. If you would like to contribute please contact David Odgers on david@odgersconservation.co.uk by the end of July. To register for the event, please go to www.icon.org.uk and download the form.

Museums Association

Annual Conference and Exhibition

23–25 October, Bournemouth

Venue: Bournemouth International Centre
Conference 2006 will cover a wide variety of topics and will include sessions on: the dynamic collection; the entrepreneurial museum; the right to culture; the local agenda.

Visit the Icon website for further details and a link to the Museums Association website or contact Conference Office, Museums Association, 24 Calvin Street, London E1 6NW, tel: 020 7426 6940.

ICON TEXTILE GROUP

Study Trip to India

November

There are a few places left for the trip to India. For details, or to reserve a place, contact Janie Lightfoot, Textile Conservation Restoration Studio, 21 Park Parade, London NW10 4JG. Tel: 0208 963 1532, Fax: 0208 963 1623, email: janie@janielightfoot.co.uk.

7th Indoor Air Quality 2006 Meeting (IAQ2006)

15–17 November, Germany

Venue: Fraunhofer Wilhelm-Klauditz-Institute (WKI), Braunschweig.

The conference is to set the state-of-the-art in the field of pollutants in museums and archives, especially research on pollutants, their sources and their effects both on collections and on human health. Other topics are interacting forms of indoor air pollution, deterioration mechanisms, the development of assessment methods, control strategies as well as national and international regulations.

Cost: Before 31 July – € 150, after 31 July – € 200.

Visit the events listings at www.icon.org.uk for more information, or contact: Alexandra Schieweck, email: schieweck@wki.fhg.de

Stichting Ebenist

8th International Symposium on Wood and Furniture Conservation, "Empire Furniture"

17–18 November, Netherlands

Venue: Felix Meritis, Amsterdam.

Topics of interest include: Case studies of restoration/conservation projects; Material studies on for instance mahogany, gilt mounts, textiles; Early 19th-century construction techniques, upholstery methods; Art historical and socio-historical research on the products, its makers, designers and clients.

Call for papers

Deadline: 15 July, submit a provisional title and an abstract of approximately 250 words to the address below.

For more on the organisation, previous programs, publications etc., please follow the link on the Icon website or contact Stichting Ebenist, P.O. box 15902, 1001 NK Amsterdam, email: info@ebenist.org

ICOM-CC-Wood, Furniture and Lacquer

International Conference: Naqada and Qus – Past and Present

January 22–28, 2007, Egypt

Presenting research that deals with the history and society of Naqada and Qus, its geography, its archaeology and associated scientific methods and conservation programs, its art and architecture, its literature, and its industries. Papers may deal with any time period from Pre-Historic and Early Dynastic through to the present time, with comparative studies with similar regions, areas, sites, monuments, cases from Egypt and from around the world in the conference themes and items.

For further information see the Icon website or contact the conference chair: Dr. Hany Hanna, Elected Coordinator, ICOM-CC-Wood, Furniture and Lacquer, Professor, Institute for Coptic Studies in Cairo. email: hnnnc@yahoo.com

ICON CERAMICS AND GLASS GROUP

Spring Meeting: The Use and Manipulation of Materials

23–25 March 2007, Sussex

The aim of this meeting is to explore new techniques and materials in Ceramics and Glass Conservation and to widen the knowledge base within the profession.

Call for Papers:

We are seeking speakers from the museum sector, private practice, college students, graduates or conservation scientists who will give conservation lectures and also use the extensive facilities at West Dean College to set up practical demonstrations. We are especially interested in new ways of using existing materials and the experiences of conservators using experimental substances.

Please email roshodges@waitrose.com if you feel that you would be interested in participating at this meeting.

TRAINING

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION FOR CONSERVATOR-RESTORERS (PACR) EVENTS

Introduction to PACR

11 July, London (Conservation Management route applicants only)

14 November, London

29 November, Edinburgh

This workshop is aimed at those who would like to find out about the PACR accreditation scheme – the programme includes: Everything you need to know about the PACR Accreditation scheme; What is PACR accreditation?; How does the PACR scheme work?; The professional standards and the application process; The assessment process; The assessment visit; Continuing Professional Development.

PACR clinic

28 July, Edinburgh (at the Icon Book and Paper Group conference – open to all Icon members, including non conference delegates. Booking is essential)

5 October, London (Conservation Management route applicants only)

10 October, London

17 October, Bristol

19 October, Preston

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

Bookings: Please use the PACR events booking form available from www.pacr.org.uk

and return to Diane Copley admin@icon.org.uk

Next PACR application deadline: 30 January 2007

10% DISCOUNT TO ICON MEMBERS

West Dean College – Conservation Short Courses

July– September

18–21 July: The Conservation of Plastics (PC5609).
Cost £315

11–14 September: Specialised Techniques for Polychromed and Gilded Surfaces (PC6701). Cost £315
For further information contact Liz Campbell at West Dean College, Tel: 01243 818219 or
email: bcm@westdean.org.uk.

Montefiascone Project

Summer School Programme 2006

Montefiascone is a medieval walled city situated on a huge lake, about half way between Rome and Siena. Each summer, conservators, librarians, archivists, art historians and others interested in the history and the structure of the book, meet to participate in classes, which are held within the city walls. There are four week-long courses with different themes:

31 July–4 August: Re-creating the medieval Palette.

7–11 August: Medieval Limp Vellum Book Structures:

A North European Style.

14–17 August: Archival and Account Book Bindings:

History, structure, materials and decoration.

21–25 August: Syriac Bookbinding.

Cost: £345 per week. Tuition is in English.

For further information please contact Cheryl Porter at: cheryl@caporter.co.uk or 7 Venice Lodge, 55 Maida Vale, London W9 1SD, England.

Workshops on Historic Bindings

Venue: Monastery of Saint John the Theologian, Patmos (Greece)

9–12 August: A practical introduction to Byzantine Binding.

A series of practical demonstrations to give an initial understanding of the construction of a Byzantine binding, including sewing, board preparation, endbands, covering with leather and embellishment. Cost € 500

16–19 August: A “flexible” conservation binding based on medieval techniques.

Focussing on the construction of a “flexible” binding structure which can be used in conservation. This structure is based on sound medieval craft techniques developed with contemporary ideas of book conservation, flexibility, reversibility and the use of the appropriate archival materials. Cost: € 500

Further details can be found on the Icon website or contact Nikolas Sarris, Book Conservator, email: sarris1@otenet.gr to join the course.

Deadline for applications: July 14.

UCL and English Heritage Short Course Programme

30 August-1 September, Kenwood House, London – Light and Humidity

27 September, UCL, London – You've Monitored the Environment, Now What?

7-9 November, Walmer Castle, Kent – Surviving a Disaster

23-25 January 2007, Audley End House, Essex – Conservation Housekeeping

For further details tel: 020 7679 5903 or email: sustainableheritage@ucl.ac.

National Museums Liverpool An Introduction to Laser Cleaning in Conservation

11-12 September or 20-21 November
National Conservation Centre, Liverpool.

This 2-day course provides an introduction to the use of laser cleaning in conservation. It is aimed at conservators with no or very little experience of this technique.

Numbers are restricted to 5 per course, allowing a significant amount of practical work. By the end of the course, the conservator will have a good understanding of how laser cleaning works, the type of work to which it is suited and the practical aspects of working with a laser.

National Museums Liverpool An Introduction to Laser Scanning in the Heritage field

9 October, National Conservation Centre, Liverpool.
Laser scanning is becoming more widely used within the heritage field. It allows fast, accurate 3D digitisation of artefacts (from small archaeological pieces to complete buildings) for a wide range of applications, including: Documentation; Non-contact replication; Visualisation for museum displays; Education; Erosion monitoring; Virtual restoration; Research.

This 1-day course provides an introduction to the use of laser scanning in the heritage field and comprises a series of lectures, practical demonstrations, case studies and opportunity for discussion. It is aimed at all those working within the heritage field who would like to develop a basic understanding of laser scanning and its uses, including: museum curators, conservators, conservation officers, archaeologists, virtual reality providers, exhibition designers, surveyors and other commissioners of 3D recording work. Cost: £75 (+vat).

For more information on either course contact Martin Cooper, Conservation Technologies, National Conservation Centre, National Museums Liverpool, Whitechapel, Liverpool L1 6HZ
tel: +44 (0)151 478 4916, email: conservationtechnologies@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk or visit the Icon website.

Florence Art Gilding and Decorative Painting Courses

Classes are held in a restoration studio in the old artisan district in the centre of Florence, Italy, or at the Villa of Maiano overlooking Florence.

Autumn 2006

23-29 September: Six day Intro gilding plus intro decorative painting combination course at the Villa of Maiano, €1490 (full days including accommodation)
For more information see www.florenceart.net/courses or tel: +390 557 879 097 See: www.icon.org.uk for more details

IADA Conservation of Transparent Paper

28-29 September, Berlin

Places are available for 6 participants to attend a seminar presented by Hildegard Homburger. (German language version to be held 21-21 September). Cost: € 270,00, € 230,00 for members of IADA.

Contact: Hildegard Homburger, Krefelder Str.17, 10555 Berlin, Germany. Tel/Fax: +49-30-3912503, email: hombu@freenet.de

ICCROM Course on Conservation of Built Heritage 2007

1 February – 30 March 2007, Rome, Italy

The course aims at serving a wide range of conservation practitioners and decision makers by placing technical issues within the broader conservation context in order to link them to planning and management concerns. The first part of the course will consist of an overview of the different approaches and of key concepts in built heritage conservation. The second part, focusing on an integrated approach to conservation and management of heritage, will provide an opportunity for the participants to view conservation concerns within a broader strategic and planning framework capturing not only technical but also the cultural, environmental and sustainability issues. Finally, a portion of the course will be allocated to looking at technical aspects of conservation interventions. Course fee: € 900

Applications should reach ICCROM by 31 July 2006 to ensure inclusion in our selection process. Visit the Icon website for more information and a link to the course website, or contact ICCROM – Sites Unit, Via di San Michele 13, I-00153, Rome, ITALY, Tel: +39 06 58553 1, email: builtheritage07@iccrom.org .

intervention

Conservation as social and material

Dinah Eastop, Senior Lecturer, Textile Conservation Centre, University of Southampton, and Associate Director of the AHRC Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textile Studies

The physical environment and its effects on objects, collections and sites are now well understood within conservation. The characterisation of materials is widespread and material changes are understood; chemical markers of deterioration are well on the way to being characterised and refined for diagnostic purposes. Studies in Conservation demonstrates this huge knowledge base.

What is lacking is an equivalent understanding of the dynamic social environment. Conservation works within and is part of social life and its dynamics. The dearth of publications on the social dynamics of conservation and its effects on conservation practice is in marked contrast to the wealth of literature on the material properties of collections. Notable exceptions include the work of Miriam Clavir (2002) and Nancy Odegaard (2000) who have described the way conservation practices are influenced by 'first nation' use of collections.

The forthcoming IIC congress Conservation in Context may be a start in redressing the balance. It promises a cross-disciplinary discussion of 'context' by examining "the way that the context in which an object was conceived and created, and in which it has been kept or displayed, affects conservation decisions."

(www.iiconservation.org/conference/munich)

Conservation is a response to both the changing physical and social environment: the physical properties of objects and the uses to which the objects are put. The chemical and physical properties of an object will change over time, and its use (role) and meanings will also change. The conservator, faced with how to conserve an object, has to address the relations between the object's current and probable future physical state and its current and probable future social meaning. The study of the social meaning and use of objects, 'material culture studies', provides a way conservators can investigate and participate in the social aspects of their discipline.

Material culture studies are concerned with why things matter. The word 'matter' encompasses two important connotations. As a noun it refers to forms of materiality, as in the three states of matter (solid, liquid and gas). As a verb it refers to importance or significance. Material culture studies are concerned with integrating both these aspects, the material and the social/symbolic aspects of things. In material culture studies, the focus on the social role of things leads to analysis of the materials, technology and circumstances of an object's making (production), its use

(or consumption) and its disposal. Measures taken to ensure the preservation of an object may be viewed as new stages of consumption. Why things matter and how they come to be attributed significance demands an understanding of how and why significance is attributed by persons to things.

"The extent to which museums can or should share control over the meaning of objects with others remains a highly contentious issue. Museums need to engage more actively with this debate and work out its implications for the way their collections are presented" (Museum Association 2005: 5). Conservation also needs to engage more actively with this debate and to analyse the way that their/our collections are presented, investigated and preserved. Laura Drysdale's (1999) analysis of the language of conservation texts provides an excellent example of the way often 'taken for granted' assumptions are expressed in the terms chosen to report conservation work.

As a means of integrating understanding of both the social and physical properties of objects, collections and sites, material culture studies have proved very effective in the education of conservators and curators. For example, a twelve-week unit on material culture studies has been shared by the MA Textile Conservation and MA Museum and Gallery Studies programmes, University of Southampton, since 1999.

Material culture studies make it clear that conservation is part of a much larger 'heritage sector', and it helps in understanding the changing role of conservation within this larger sector.

Dinah Eastop is author of 'Conservation as Material Culture'. In: C. Tilley, W. Keane, S. Küchler, M. Rowlands and P. Spyer (Eds). *Handbook of Material Culture*. London: Sage, 516–33

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