

Icon NEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • NOVEMBER 2006 • ISSUE 7



Redisplaying the Fitzwilliam Egyptian collection

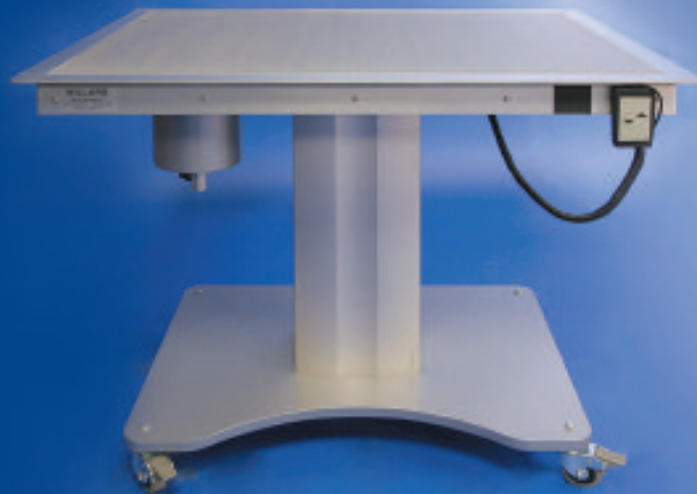
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New interns and new ACRs

A pilgrimage to Canterbury

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NOVEMBER 2006

Issue 7

This has turned into a people issue, where we celebrate new-comers and old hands, prize winners and award winners, movers and shakers on the move and, indeed, those just getting on with their jobs. So, welcome to those just starting their Icon internships thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and congratulations to the latest batch of ACRs and those whose accomplishments have resulted in scholarships and fellowships, prizes and accolades and interesting new jobs.

Perhaps I shouldn't let this issue go out without noting that, with it, we embark on our second year of publication. My thanks go to all those who have contributed so far and to the rest of you my message is why not give it a go? It's your magazine, so keep those articles, news items, practical ideas and success stories flowing. Indeed, even tales of uncertainty or failure have something to teach us all so why not share them, too?

Lynette Gill, Editor



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Horus bird (hawk) (11cm w x 9.5cm h). Detail from the papyrus Book of the Dead of Ramose currently undergoing conservation in The Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge. The section of the papyrus in which it appears can be seen on page 33. Photograph ©The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

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Deadlines:
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Adverts: 14 December

Icon in Wales

Rather than toasting the formation of the Institute of Conservation, guests at the Welsh launch of Icon instead found themselves celebrating the remarkable achievements that have been made in the short time since its creation last year. Gathering at the National Museum Cardiff on 12 September, conservators from across the country were joined by a wide and interesting selection of colleagues from the Welsh arts and heritage establishment, including representatives from National Museum Wales, Arts Council Wales, National Trust, HLF Wales, the National Library of Wales and from museums, libraries and archives both large and small.

Events kicked off in the afternoon with a training session on the subject of digital preservation – a topic which had proved to be very popular at the Icon AGM in Birmingham last year. Lyn Lewis Dafis, Metadata Manager and Dr Paul Bevan, DAMS Implementation Manager, both from the National Library of Wales, did a double act to look at the technical issues surrounding digital preservation, covering matters such as best practice relating to metadata, keeping up to date with technology and format specifications. They spoke about the challenges faced at the National Library, a large institution with vast amounts of data that need to be made accessible to members of staff and the public alike. In comparison Major Martin Everett, curator at the South Wales Borderers Museum, Brecon, then provided an insight into issues faced in a smaller museum. Describing a project carried out by volunteers to digitise their image archive, he explained how the work had improved research and access to the collection and gave practical advice to the group.

Nick Poole, Director of the Museum Documentation Association, having flown in from Gothenburg especially for the event, concluded the afternoon by talking about Collections Link – the national advisory service for collections management. Managed by the MDA in



Anna Southall

partnership with the Institute of Conservation and the National Preservation Office, Collections Link provides fast, easy access to current best practice. Those present were encouraged to make use of the information available free of charge through the website (www.collectionslink.org.uk) and telephone enquiry line.

In the evening over a hundred guests mingled in the magnificent surroundings of the reception hall at the museum. Having given everyone the chance to charge their glasses and sample the nibbles on offer, Dr Eurwyn Wiliam, Deputy Director General, National Museum Wales, welcomed everyone to the Museum. Speaking of the importance of caring for our cultural heritage, Dr Wiliam underlined the significance given to the care of collections in the National Museum during a period of re-invention and refurbishment.

Mary Ellis, Head of Collections, Standards and Training for CyMAL (Museums Archives and Libraries Wales) spoke

Carol Brown from Icon's Training Office in Edinburgh



Diane Gwilt





(l to r) Iwan M. Jones, Head of Collection Care, National Library of Wales; Liz Bowerman, Collections Advisor, CyMAL, Chris Woods of Tate and Icon Board member, Mary Ellis, Head of Collections, Standards and Training, CyMAL



Mary Ellis, Head of Collections, Standards and Training, CyMAL

next. She welcomed the formation of the Institute of Conservation saying how much staff at CyMAL were looking forward to working in partnership with Icon in the future. She also emphasised the commitment to the preservation of cultural heritage in Wales – highlighting the multi-million pound investment made in museums, libraries and archives by the Welsh Assembly Government, nearly £400,000 of which has gone into the care and conservation of collections.

As a former Director of National Museums and Galleries of Wales the next speaker, Icon Chair Anna Southall, found herself in familiar surroundings. Explaining how the Institute had come into existence, she said the benefits of having one unified voice for conservation were already being reaped. Citing examples such as Icon being called to give evidence before a House of Lords inquiry (one of many instances of advocacy work), collaboration on the Collections Link project and the success of a million pound HLF grant bid for training bursaries, it was clear the remarkable amount of progress that has been made in such a short space of time.

At this point Carol Brown, Icon Training Officer, took the stage to expand on the training bursary scheme. With the aim of addressing conservation skills shortages, money has been received to put interns (some with a conservation background and others without) into work-based training

placements in a range of disciplines over a four year period. This year's intake of seventeen interns has been selected and all will have started working by the end of September *.

The final word went once again to Nick Poole. Speaking about the creation of Collections Link, he told guests that when Icon was first approached about becoming involved it had only just come into existence. He admitted he had not had high expectations about the level of support he could expect to get from such a new organisation – however, praising Icon staff Nick went on to tell the gathering that he had been greatly impressed by the professional, organised and helpful response received.

With these compliments ringing in their ears, guests returned to the serious business of chatting to one another and sampling the culinary delights available to them. The launch was a great success – bringing together those interested in Welsh cultural heritage and raising Icon's profile within the museum, library and archive world and beyond. The event was generously supported by CyMAL, Welsh Assembly Government and National Museum Wales.

* (You can read about the training bursary scheme and the new interns on page 22)

Nick Poole



Dr Euwyn Wiliam, Deputy Director General, National Museum Wales



around & about

Wales Identity Day

It is fitting that we report on the Welsh celebration of Icon in this issue, given that 24 November is Wales Identity Day – an annual celebration of heritage and identity in Wales organised by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This year HLF wants to find out what makes people's local heritage unique via an on-line survey. The results will be released on the day and incorporated into an external mural in Newport that will depict the whole of Wales. To take part visit the hlf website: www.hlf.org.uk

Worldwide wisdom

After reading Richard McCoy's post 'Wikipedia and conservation' on a recent DistList, I found myself logging on for a browse. Wikipedia, for those unaware of its existence, is a free on-line encyclopaedia that enables you to expand, improve and comment upon the entries.

On Richard's suggestion I first searched for 'Art Conservation' and 'Restoration'. I found interesting definitions and good links to related websites and other Wikipedia entries. This led me to search further. I was amused by the definition of conservator, and further conservation-related searches led to my reading about the Young Conservatives in the UK, and Canadian Marijuana Party candidates!

To see for yourself, go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page, create an account and start searching. I passed an amusing few hours seeing what my sensible searches came up with, but for those who would like to take this a little more seriously: this could be another arena for some gentle self promotion.

Sharon Oldale ACR

Barns and back to backs

In certain parts of the countryside, one cannot fail to be aware that the meanest of farm sheds are being converted into housing at the drop of a deerstalker. In fact, in England a third of listed farm buildings have been converted, 90% of them to residential use. Concern that insensitive conversions are fast eroding the character of the countryside has led to the drawing up of detailed guidance by English Heritage on how to achieve high quality conversions. The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice is downloadable from www.helm.org.uk/ruraldevelopment or free in hard copy from English Heritage on 0870 333 1181.

In the city meanwhile, a victory for the back to back was won in the High Court when a judge ruled that a

compulsory purchase order, which would have swept away 500 homes in Liverpool, was unjustified and a breach of human rights legislation. Thousands of terraced homes in the Midlands and the North are being demolished in the name of regeneration, regardless of the condition of the housing and the social health of the communities involved.

UCL alumni day

September 28 provided a rare opportunity for a behind-the-scenes visit to St Paul's Cathedral. This treat, organised by Ecclesiastical Insurance, took in the recent internal cleaning and conservation programme as well as visits to the Model Aisle, Library and the Trophy Room. The visit formed part of a day organised for Ecclesiastical-sponsored students on the MSc Sustainable Heritage course at the Centre for Sustainable Heritage at UCL. It provided an opportunity for the four existing students supported by Ecclesiastical to share their experiences of the course with the two students joining the 2006 intake.

The MSc Sustainable Heritage, launched in 2004, brings together all aspects of cultural heritage – historic buildings, collections, sites and landscapes combined with the best preventive conservation policies, projects, methodologies and practices. It is designed to create leaders who apply the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development within cultural heritage projects. One of its strengths is its interdisciplinary approach, both in terms of the teachers who are leading international professionals in their field, and in the participants in the course which this year includes conservators, architects, archaeologists, surveyors and curators from all over the world.

Dana Goodburn-Brown, Archaeological Conservator, Accredited Icon member and recipient of an Ecclesiastical bursary for 2006–08 (for part-time study over two years), said she was 'delighted to have been given a bursary to do such a wonderful course which will enable wider perspectives and new opportunities to do great things in the future'.

UCL students past and present: l – r Terence Quinn (current), Debbie Williams (new), Wilma Bouwmeester (current), Dana Goodburn-Brown (new), Nick Barnfield (past)



UCL website

The Centre has just relaunched its website with much more information for the heritage sector. Fifty pages of new content with links includes a growing list of publications to download, free downloadable software tools, information on events and guest lectures, information on research projects as well as application forms for the MSc courses and short course booking information. See www.ucl.ac.uk/sustainableheritage

French falls and living wills

According to The Art Newspaper, the Pompidou Centre in Paris has accepted responsibility for breakages to two works borrowed from New York and Los Angeles for its Spring exhibition. In separate incidents the works, by Peter Alexander (1971) and Craig Kauffman (1967), fell from the gallery wall and smashed. The Pompidou is adamant that it followed the lenders' handling conditions exactly: Alexander had emailed the gallery with precise instructions on how to hang the work whilst the Los Angeles museum sent its conservator to oversee the installation of the Kauffman.

Whether an artist might re-make a piece in such circumstances or whether it should be restored raises interesting questions of authenticity fuelled by the news that Damien Hirst may be discussing with its current owner the replacement of the rotting shark in his famous piece. The Art Newspaper (October issue) also reports a trend to video interviews with artists with an eye on conservation issues in the future, particularly where modern materials are involved. Not all artists think that this is a good idea. In the same issue of the Newspaper, Richard Wilson, currently exhibiting work in London, comments 'I have every wish that my work will be conserved after my death ... But I wouldn't want to commit my wishes to a medium like videotape because this record then becomes the work of art instead of the piece itself'.

eBay and PAS

The British Museum and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) have formed a partnership with eBay, the on-line auction site, to ensure that antiquities found in the UK are being sold legally on the site. Up until now eBay has required proof that an object is stolen or illegally obtained before agreeing to remove the listing from the site. Under the new agreement, the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS, which is managed by the British Museum on behalf of the MLA) has set up a team to monitor antiquities sold on eBay.co.uk and to ensure that

sellers have the right to trade them. Where the listing looks suspect, PAS will report it to the Art and Antiques Unit of the Metropolitan Police and eBay. The latter will ask the seller to provide evidence of provenance and if this is unsatisfactory will remove the listing from the site. eBay is the first website to reach an agreement with the BM and the MLA banning the illegal sale of treasure over its trading platform. In many cases sellers innocently trade items on the web unaware that they have a legal obligation to report finds. A guide to buying and selling antiquities safely on the site with advice about reporting obligations has been drawn up and can be found at <http://pages.ebay.co.uk/buy/guides/antiquities/>

Lebanese war damage

Unesco is undertaking a survey of Lebanese archaeological sites to assess the damage to the country's heritage following the recent conflict. The head of the Unesco mission said that the most severe damage had been seen at the World Heritage Sites of Byblos and Tyre. At Tyre some of the finest examples of imperial Roman architecture in the world have been damaged, whilst at Byblos Venetian and Crusader remains have become oil-stained from spillage from a near-by bombed depot.

Volunteering in museums

A new report *Exhibiting Support: developing volunteering in museums* has been published by the Institute for Volunteering Research. It sets out the key lessons learned from a programme, funded by the Baring Foundation, which provided grants to three museums to enhance the involvement of volunteers. The three institutions were The Egypt Centre at the University of Wales in Swansea, Fairfax House owned by the York Civic Trust and Preston City Council's Harris Museum and Art Gallery. Some of the key issues facing the museums and their volunteer programmes are diversity, the management of volunteers and the sustainability of programmes. The report can be downloaded from www.ivr.org.uk or www.baringfoundation.org.uk/ExhibitingSupport.pdf

Why do people volunteer?

A report from the Economic and Social Research Council *Doing one's duty: why people volunteer in a deprived community* finds that the Government's view of volunteering as a way back into the labour market is too narrow a focus; many volunteers are outside the scope of the labour market because of age, disability or care responsibilities. So concentrating on volunteering as

more around & about

training for the labour market risks excluding and discouraging those who are unable to work. The research identifies four main motives for volunteering: mutual aid within a community; philanthropy; getting on (volunteering as a way to develop new skills and experiences for the cv) and getting by (volunteering to meet a personal need such as coping with retirement or bereavement). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the study found that volunteering enhances levels of community spirit and active citizenship and, at the individual level, develops self-confidence and a sense of meaning and identity. More detail can be found at www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk.

Saving threatened archives

Researchers throughout the world will benefit greatly from the Endangered Archives Programme, which has awarded grants of over £470,000 this year through sponsorship by the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund. Nineteen projects are covered by the latest round of funding by the Programme, preserving photographic archives, Islamic manuscripts, endangered musical collections and endangered court records from Africa, Asia, Russia, Latin America and Europe.

The major research projects will take between one to two years to complete and the host institutions undertaking the work come from around the world. A sample of the wide variety of topics includes:

- Reconstruction of sound materials of endangered languages in the Russian Federation for sound archives in St Petersburg – a two-year, £50,000 project hosted by the Isaac Massa Foundation in The Netherlands
- Collecting and preserving the records of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania in Moshi, Tanzania, a 12-month project awarded £27,500 and hosted by Leipzig University
- Tuvalu National Archives major project hosted by Australian National University awarded £29,000 for 21 months
- Archiving a Cameroonian photographic studio hosted by the University of Kent – a 15 month project awarded nearly £37,000

Further awards are for 'Digitising Islamic manuscripts of Indonesian Pondok Pesantren'; 'Preservation of historic and rare Nepali monographs and periodicals'; 'The Golha radio programmes (Flowers of Persian Song and Poetry)'; 'Voiceless choirs. Serbian musical collections from Zemun in 19th and early 20th centuries'; 'The digital documentation of manuscripts of Drametse and Ogyen Choling'; 'Endangered ethnographic archive, Sofia, Bulgaria' and the 'Preservation and digitisation of Yi

archives in public and private collections in Yunnan, China'. Eight further pilot projects have been awarded smaller grants, covering a range of material from the archiving of Buddhist photographs in Laos to a survey of endangered court records of Nevis, West Indies.

A Wellcome return

It is not often that a conservator has the opportunity to design and build a new conservation studio, but the team at the Wellcome Library in London has done just that. 183 Euston Road will open its doors to the public in the summer of next year, and house the 'Wellcome Collection' – a major public venue exploring the connections between medicine, life and art. As part of this exciting new venue, the new state of the art conservation studio will be used to maintain and preserve the Wellcome Library's manuscripts, printed books, prints and drawings, photographs and paintings.

A noted entrepreneur and philanthropist, Sir Henry Wellcome (1853–1936) was also an avid collector who amassed one of the 20th century's least known but most extraordinary collections. His passionate interest in

A Tantric figure showing Chakras in the body (Ms.Indic 511)





A portrait of Sir Henry Wellcome 1902

medicine and its history, as well as ethnography and anthropology, led him to gather more than a million objects, including a lock of George III's hair, human tattoos, Nelson's razor and Napoleon's toothbrush, plus thousands of pictures, manuscripts and books, from cultures all around the world.

The building will house both permanent and temporary exhibitions, which will additionally include the 'Forum', a new public events space for workshops and debates, also a café and bookshop. The Wellcome Library will be modernised and expanded, bringing all of its collections into one space.

The Library's collections will be migrated to their new purpose built stores between October and February 2007, and the conservation studio relocated in January. The building itself will open in the Summer of 2007.

Watch Icon News for open days and events and www.wellcome.com

Caroline Checkley-Scott, Senior Conservator, Wellcome Library

SPECTRUM makeover

SPECTRUM, the UK and international industry standard for documentation and documentation practice, is to be updated to reflect current best practice in the heritage sector. First published in 1994, it has been adopted widely

throughout the museum community and incorporated into a variety of collections management systems. The new version will be available in January 2007 and will represent a significant update on the 3rd edition which was published in March 2005.

The revised standard will:

- reflect new legislation and practice
- enable the capture of collections information to support diversity and inclusion
- take into account the forthcoming work of the Museums Association on disposal
- improve the operation of knowledge management systems by including material from 'SPECTRUM Knowledge'

In addition it will be published for the first time using XML technology. This will provide the standard in a variety of paper and digital formats.

The online version of SPECTRUM is freely available for non-commercial use from www.mda.org.uk/spectrum.htm

icon or icons?

ICONS – A portrait of England is an interactive website launched by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport at the beginning of the year. In response to public votes twenty institutions such as fish and chips, Sherlock Holmes and the parish church have been identified as national icons. See for yourself at www.icons.org.uk but don't miss out that vital letter s or you'll be on the rather more heavyweight and informative website of our very own Institute.

Museums – a measure of quality

New rules introduced by the Audit Commission this summer see museums included in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of local authority services throughout England. Under the rules, museums accredited by the MLA (the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) which are run by a local authority or receive at least 20% of their funding from a local authority are to be included in the culture service assessment. At a time when many museums are under increasing financial pressure, the move to adopt accreditation as a performance indicator may help to provide some protection to museum services which are otherwise a discretionary service all too liable to severe budget cuts and marginalisation.



Clavell Tower as it stands on a crumbling cliff face

Landmark Trust news

The Landmark Trust has just embarked on one of its most novel solutions yet to its mission of conserving endangered buildings which, for whatever reason, would otherwise fall through the net into oblivion. In the case of Clavell Tower that fall would literally be into the sea, as it stands on a crumbling cliff face above Kimmeridge Bay in Dorset. Painstaking work has instead begun on its dismantling and re-erection 30 metres back from the eroding cliff edge. Each stone is being numbered and recorded so that it can be re-built as accurately as possible to its original design. In addition to moving the building, services such as electricity and water will need to be brought in and new stone will be carved to replace the missing sections. The project cost, of over £700,000, includes training for students from a local college in traditional stone masonry skills, an education programme with four local primary schools and the production of information boards.

The Trust received welcome news in early October of a significant grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards its rescue work; with both planning permission and listed building consent granted, it is hoped that the Tower will be unveiled in its new position during the course of next year.

One small but important task was to tell the UK Hydrographic Office that the Tower, a land-based navigation mark, would be disappearing and reappearing, so that charts of the English Channel could be adjusted accordingly.

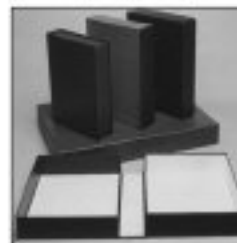
The Trust's contribution to rescuing historic buildings was given European recognition last year when it received a European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra award 'For forty years of a well-rounded and sustainable approach to the preservation of an eclectic collection of derelict buildings, and for imaginative vision in their revival for domestic use'.

The 22nd edition of the Landmark Handbook has just become available; in addition to details of all 184 properties in its care, it also includes case studies and information about the historical context of selected properties. www.landmarktrust.org.uk.

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Further information, and a short briefing document, can be downloaded from our website www.heritagecouncil.ie or contact

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Closing date for the current round is Friday 19th January 2007

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professional matters

CONSERVATION REGISTER GROWS

It's good to see a steady increase in the number of businesses applying to join the Register. Recent additions include businesses working on Paintings, Gilding & Decorative Surfaces, Textiles, and Stone. They come from all over the country too – from Staffordshire, Somerset, Powys and London, and I hope that they all quickly benefit from their inclusion in the Register.

And from the figures we're recording, this should soon be the case as use of the Conservation Register continues to increase. 'Specialism searches' (where people search by type of object or material) are up from an average of 1,497 to 1,787 a month and the average number of website hits per month has increased from one four month period to the next by 104% (from 147,666 to 301,126 per month). Businesses included in the Register can monitor their use once logged in to the 'Members' section of the website www.conservationregister.com (not the same as the Icon login I'm afraid, please get in touch if you need a username).

Many different factors combine to achieve these results. A recent boost to the Register, and one that will continue to raise its profile amongst museums, libraries and archives, is the key role that Icon plays in partnering MDA and NPO in the new national advisory service for collections management, Collections Link (www.collectionslink.org.uk). This service is being heavily promoted to museums, libraries and archives; it is currently funded by MLA and Icon sits on the Steering Group and is contributing information such as the 'Care and conservation' guidance available on the Conservation Register website plus, of course, links to the 'Find a conservator' search facilities. Add to this the distribution of over 10,000 Conservation Register leaflets in six months, attendance at events such as Collect, advertising in catalogues of the Fine Art Auction Group, and promotion of the Conservation Register on the recently printed guidance leaflets and it is no surprise that the service is becoming much better known.

Are you missing out?

I am concerned that a number of people have requested application forms but not yet returned them. Can I help? Is there anything in particular stopping you from completing them?

And for those of you in private practice (or working for institutions with a commercial remit) who haven't yet joined – what's stopping you?

Comments I have heard include being put-off by the length of the application form, and not wanting to trouble clients with the referencing process. I hope I can reassure

you that the form is not as bad as it might look! Whilst it does cover several pages, most of it is in 'tick box' format – and most importantly, we are not collecting the information randomly, it forms the business entry that is available to potential clients. The detail that we make available on each business is the unique strength of the Conservation Register. It can be difficult to persuade people to trust their valued possessions to someone they don't know – particularly when they might not know much about 'conservation' itself. Professional accreditation has done much to reassure people, but the referenced project descriptions which are shown as part of each business's entry are invaluable in helping people to build up a picture of the services on offer. As for the referencing process itself – we have a standard form which consists of six 'yes/no' questions for return in a prepaid, preaddressed envelope – so we really do try to make the whole process as painless as possible (though it does help if you warn clients that we will be approaching them). Details of the clients themselves are of course kept confidential unless a public institution.

But perhaps there are other worries? Please let me know your thoughts, as we are always looking at ways in which we can improve the service and make it more user-friendly whilst maintaining its standards.

Caroline Saye, csaye@icon.org.uk, 020 7785 3804

THE TREATMENT OF SACRED OBJECTS

Those dealing with objects which have sacred associations will be interested to learn that The Association of Art Museum Directors has issued guidance on the acquisition, loan, handling, treatment and interpretation of sacred objects. The Guidelines have been approved by the association's members but are not binding.

The report recognises the difficulty of defining a 'sacred object' and restricts the term to items created for use in ritual or ceremonial practice of a traditional religion. This distinguishes the term from works of art, which express religious feelings, values or ideas, although in some cases the distinction might be difficult to draw in reality. The report emphasises the importance of consulting with indigenous groups to determine what objects might fall into the sacred category and to accommodate the wishes of these groups as far as possible in displaying, conserving and even discussing the objects in labelling and catalogues.

The report can be found on the AAMD website: <http://www.aamd.org/papers/>

The screenshot shows a software window titled 'Conservation Database'. It contains a table with the following columns: Item ID, Item Reference, Item Title, Item Description, Item Date, Item Quantity, and Item Status. The table is populated with numerous rows of data, including item numbers, references, titles, descriptions, dates, quantities, and status indicators. The interface also includes a search bar at the top and a status bar at the bottom.

RECORDING THE CONSERVATION OF PUBLIC RECORDS

The National Digital Archive of Datasets has recently made available a new record series: Conservation database 1989–2003 (CRDA/71) is a series of eight datasets recording the conservation actions carried out on public records stored in The National Archives [formerly The Public Record Office (PRO)], between 1978 and 2003.

The work of the Conservation Section is divided into two main areas: collection conservation, providing remedial care to a large volume of records; and the conservation of individual items, particularly those in an unfit condition to be consulted, and those of intrinsic importance.

Conservation records provide a detailed overview of the physical condition and subsequent conservation needs of items deposited at The National Archives. They also document the treatments performed, adding to the history of the object and providing a point of reference for the future, should any treatments need to be reversed, or the object require further conservation.

From 1882–1984 all conservation actions at the PRO/TNA were recorded by hand in bound registers, after this time information was recorded on an automated system. The original bound registers (of which 24 volumes are held by TNA in Series PRO 12) provide a detailed record of conservation and binding work, and from September 1957 they also give information about materials used in the process.

The datasets transferred to the National Digital Archive of Datasets comprise automated versions of these registers, and this series is evidence of the use of such automation in the department from 1989 to 2003. The earliest dataset in the series contains information dating back to 1978.

These records are of particular interest to conservators and those studying conservation.

For further details see the Series Catalogue <http://www.ndad.nationalarchives.gov.uk/CRDA/71/detail.html>

AWARDS

THE CONSERVATION AWARDS 2007

Rewarding excellence in conservation, collections care, conservation research and digital preservation, and celebrating the skills of those who care for the cultural heritage.

A reminder that the 2007 round of the Conservation Awards has now been launched and entries are invited for the five Awards offered this year. The new website: www.conservationawards.org.uk, has all the details, including online application forms for each Award.

Full guidance is given on the website on the judging criteria and the material that applicants are asked to submit, but if you have any queries, please e-mail me on admin@conservationawards.co.uk or give me a ring on 020 7326 0995.

This year's deadlines are:

- **The Award for Conservation:** 15 December 2006
- **The Award for Care of Collections:** 15 December 2006
- **The Student Conservator of the Year Award:** 28 February 2007
- **The Anna Plowden Trust Award for Research and Innovation:** 31 March 2007
- **The Digital Preservation Award:** 31 March 2007

The short-lists will be announced in May 2007, and the judges will visit all short-listed projects in June and July. The Awards will be presented on 27 September 2007 at the British Museum.

Susan Hughes

Administrator, Conservation Awards 2007

NOMINATIONS INVITED FOR ROYAL WARRANT HOLDERS ASSOCIATION PLOWDEN MEDAL 2007

To commemorate the life and work of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE who died in 1997, The Royal Warrant Holders Association endowed a Gold Medal, which is awarded annually to the individual who has made the most significant recent contribution to the advancement of the conservation profession.

Nominations for the 2007 Plowden Medal are now invited. A selection board drawn from the conservation community and the Council of the Royal Warrant Holders Association will consider nominations in March 2007.

more professional matters

Nominations (**closing date Friday 16 February 2007**) must be made on a form which may be obtained from: The Secretary, The Royal Warrant Holders Association, No. 1 Buckingham Place, London SW1E 6HR. 020 7828 2268

QEST AWARD

Tracy Holmes from York, has won an £8,000 Queen Elizabeth Scholarship to study for an MA in Conservation Studies (Historic Buildings and Places) at York University, as a stepping stone to her ambition of becoming a fully accredited stained glass conservator.

After graduating in Theology and Religion from York's St John College, Tracy became a trainee conservator at the York Glaziers' Trust where she has been for over two years. Here she works on the stained glass of York Minster as well as outside projects as one of a team of nine.

Tracy believes the skills she gains on the course will be of great value in future projects planned by the Dean and Chapter – particularly conservation of the Great East Window for which funding is currently being raised. 'I love working at the Minster which combines all my interests – theology, religion and conservation – and I am really looking forward to the challenge of my MA studies'.

Tracy Holmes



QEST, the charitable arm of the Royal Warrant Holders Association, was set up in 1990 with money contributed by its members, to mark the 90th birthday of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Association.

The Trustees look for well thought out projects, which will contribute to the pool of talent in the UK and reflect the excellence of British craftsmanship as symbolised by the Royal Warrant of Appointment. Application forms for Scholarships (**closing date for Spring 2007 Scholarships – 19 January 2007**) may be obtained by sending an SAE (50p) to: The Secretary, The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust, No. 1 Buckingham Place, London SW1E 6HR. Application forms can also be downloaded from the QEST website: www.qest.org.uk

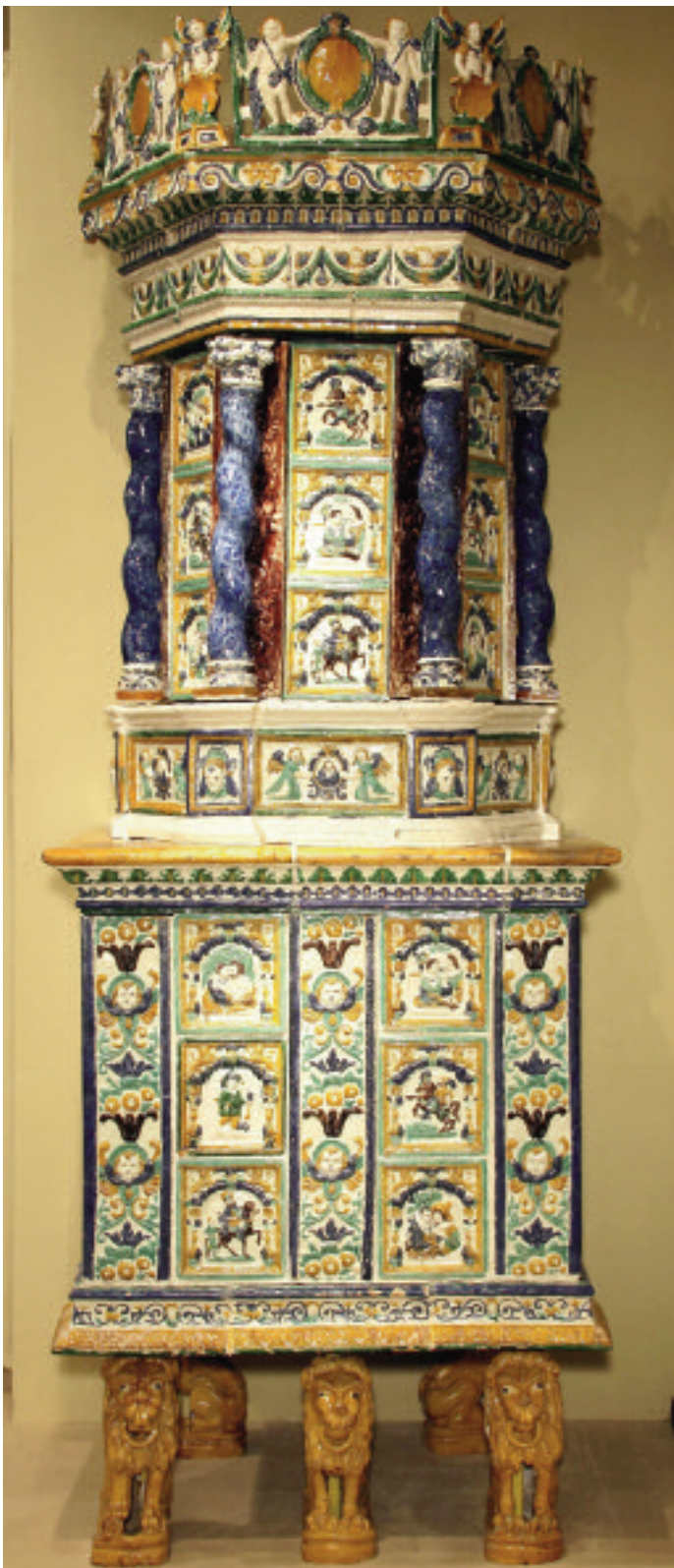
THE NIGEL WILLIAMS PRIZE

The Ceramic and Glass Group is proud to announce that the winner of The Nigel Williams Prize 2006 is Alex Patchett-Joyce.

Hers was a highly professional submission surrounding the project management of reconstructing a 17th Century Tyrolean Tiled Stove. The stove was made up of over 200 tin-glazed earthenware polychrome tiles and had to have a light yet durable weight bearing frame created that could be dismantled and transported with ease. This involved a considerable team of various professionals ranging from ceramic conservators, structural engineers, blacksmiths to boat builders. The judges were particularly impressed with her innovative solutions, extensive research on original technology and excellent project management skills in order to overcome the structural and ethical problems that arose within this fascinating project. The completed stove stands at over three metres tall and has been exhibited at The Maastricht and Grosvenor House Antique Fairs as well as being featured on the BBC South 6 o'clock News.

Alex completed an MA in Conservation at West Dean College with the University of Sussex in 2005. She is a ceramic and glass conservator, and a professional manager with wide experience of marketing, business and project management – skills that have been put to good use in her freelance Project Conservator work for the National Trust and her current position as Conference Organiser for the Ceramic & Glass Committee. She continues to work in private conservation practice from a purpose built studio at her home and works on projects such as the conservation of pier glass mirrors for The Royal Palaces at Hampton Court.

The judges awarded a Highly Commended Certificate to Monik Lefebvre, for her project on the 'Cleaning and



The prize-winning project

Restoration of a 19th Century White Carrara Marble Bust', a material with which she was not familiar. This was a well presented project involving technical research and scientific knowledge with numerous samples and testing indicating a thorough and ethical approach to conservation practice. Monik's research, material testing, advice on future care of the object to the owner and above all results were an example to all conservators working within the private sector.

Monik has been working as an independent ceramic conservator since 1998 in her own workshop based in



Mr and Mrs Derek Ward, Nigel's stepfather and supporter of the Prize with Nigel's daughter Matty Mitford

Genval, Belgium. She has been a member of Icon (and UKIC) and the IIC since 1995 and recently joined the Afmb (Association Francophone des Musees de Belgique) and Icom. She continues to pursue professional development by attending numerous workshops/conferences worldwide.

The presentation of the Prize Certificates and winner's cheque for £500 was made at the Ceramics and Glass Group's autumn conference – 'Fakes, Forgeries and Tainted Goods' – held at the Victoria and Albert Museum on 14 October. Ms Judi Pinkham a member of the judging panel and Head of Conservation Applied Arts, National Museums Cardiff made the presentation.

The judges had an extremely difficult task this year as the overall standard was so high. Sadly, the purpose-made Trophy, a copy of the Portland vase made in black basalt and gilded with 23 carat gold, which Wedgwood generously donated, was unable to travel down for the presentation as it is on loan to The Conservation Centre, National Museums Liverpool. The Committee will arrange to have Alex photographed whilst being presented with the Trophy in Liverpool at a later date.

On behalf of the Judges and committee I would like to congratulate both Alex and Monik for their outstanding work and the other entrants on what has been the most competitive Nigel Williams Prize to date. We hope that the current winners and future entrants of the Prize continue to set the standards of excellence as a fitting tribute to Nigel's life, work and legacy.

Brett James

Nigel Williams Prize Co-ordinator.

Nigel's daughter Matty Mitford (centre) with the two winners, Alex Patchett-Joyce (left) and Monik Lefebvre (right)



institute briefing

CHAIR'S FAREWELL

Dear Fellow Members

In the January edition of Icon News I was introducing myself to you as your new Chair – and here I am in November saying farewell. Having given an account of my reasons for moving on in the last edition I won't rehearse them again but, as is customary, I would like to say some valedictory words before my departure.

You have a full and eloquent account of what has been achieved in the last year in the 2005–2006 Annual Review which accompanies this magazine. The level of activity has been quite astonishing, and would do credit to an organisation which had been established and on its feet for many years. That we have had the confidence to attempt all that we have in these few months is a great credit to our profession, and the very considerable achievements have been dependent on an enormous amount of unpaid work by Icon members. I can now admit that one of my concerns for our first year was that a number of members would hold back and take a 'wait and see' attitude towards involvement with Icon. For an organisation so dependent on the knowledge, dedication and sheer hard work of its members, this would have seriously held us back. I am delighted to report that we have seen no evidence of half-heartedness or lack of commitment in the last year.

My main message to Icon members is that I feel able to stand down now as Chair because it is safe for me to do so. If I had concerns about our stability, our organisation or our activities, I would have put my own plans on hold to see through the responsibilities of being your Chair. Everything I see around me however tells me that Icon is an organisation in rude health, working productively, recruiting new members, and having a significant impact on the world around us.

My intention, a year ago, was to act as Chair while Icon went through a critical period of transition and established itself on a solid footing. Then, having played my part in the hard bit, I would hand over to the next Chair who would, I hoped, have a relatively easier life. It has been something of a relief that the transition has been considerably less painful and protracted than I, for one, believed it might be. In most key respects it is now over and we are free to grow and develop without being held back by unfinished business from our predecessor organisations. There are, to be sure, a few areas where we have not yet properly picked up where a predecessor left off – graduate liaison is the principal one which comes to mind. Nevertheless we now have the frameworks in place for tackling these matters, and I am confident that under the leadership of

our new Chair, Simon Cane, we can expect great things of Icon in the future.

My thanks to all who have worked with me for the last year – particularly my fellow Board members, the Chief Executive and staff, and all of you who have been in contact with me over the last year with suggestions, proposals, complaints and, occasionally, messages of goodwill. It has been an inspiring year for me personally and I hope that you all feel able to share my confidence for our future.

Anna Southall

ICON'S NEXT CHAIR

Following the announcement that Simon Cane is to follow Anna as the next Chair of Icon, readers may be interested to learn a little bit about him.

Simon started work in conservation as a trainee with Hampshire County Council Museum Service. He then moved on to study at Lincoln, became an ACR in 1999 and then followed this up with a part-time MA in Museum Studies at Southampton University. After his Lincoln course, he spent six years at York Castle Museum, where one notable achievement was his involvement in an exhibition on conservation called 'Stop the Rot'. For this he and Mary Brooks won the International Institute for Conservation (IIC) Keck Award for communicating conservation. From York Simon moved across the Pennines to Manchester to spend nine years at the Museum of Science and Industry as the Collections Services Officer. Here one of his major projects was to develop and deliver 'The Collections Centre', a purpose-built collections and archives access facility which was short-listed for the 2002 Conservation Awards.

His most recent move was to Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery where he has been Head of Collections Care since 2003. Here, in addition to the normal roles and responsibilities which come with a senior managerial post, he has refurbished the conservation studios with Renaissance funding, developed a renaissance funded regional training programme 'Renaissance at Work' (RAW), which has won plaudits as best practice, and was a key member of the team that moved a quarter of a million collection items to a new 'access' storage facility.

Throughout his career in conservation, Simon has thrown himself energetically into professional activities as an active advocate for conservation. A long time member of UKIC, he joined the Icon Board last year as one of its Vice Chairs, and was until recently Chair of the Icon Metals Group. He is also co-ordinator of the ICOM-CC Task Force on Public Engagement in Conservation. Until last year he was on the editorial board of *The Conservator*. Over the years he has

been a member of, or advisor to, numerous bodies including English Heritage, MDA, Museums and Galleries Commission, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the International Institute for Conservation, to which he was elected as a fellow in 1999. In the spare moments left over from all this activity he has published numerous articles and papers on a range of subjects including collections care, storage, access and inclusion and conservation ethics.

CARING FOR OUR COLLECTIONS

Icon has been invited by the House of Commons Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport to give oral evidence in a new enquiry into the care of collections in public institutions. The date has not yet been fixed but the evidence session will probably have taken place by the time this issue of Icon News goes to press.

The enquiry asked about:

- Funding, with particular reference to the adequacy of the budget for museums, galleries and archives, and the impact of the London 2012 Olympics on Lottery funding
- Acquisition and disposal policies
- The remit and effectiveness of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and other relevant organisations in representing cultural interests inside and outside Government

The Icon Public Policy Panel drafted and submitted a piece of written evidence in September, and this document, including our recommendations for the future, has been published on the policy area of our website.

The enquiry came about because nearly a year ago the Committee looked into the Built Heritage, and many of the answers they received on that topic (including one from Icon) prompted them to realise that there was an equivalent need for them to hear evidence about collections in museums, libraries, galleries and archives.

NEW LEAFLETS

Of the twenty two 'Care and conservation...' titles recently made available on the Conservation Register website www.conservationregister.com, nine of the most popular have just been put into print. The leaflets have been produced under the Icon brand and are already proving extremely popular at promotional events. Although we have only been able to produce a small print run in the first instance we are keen to make these leaflets much more widely available and in far greater quantities – we are looking for partner organisations to help us achieve this.



Icon Leaflets

The first print run covers furniture, carpets and rugs, silver and plate, archaeological materials, costume and textiles, ceramic and glass, clocks, oil paintings, and photographic materials. Earlier in the year we also updated the 'Mounting and framing of works of art on paper' leaflet which can be found in the 'Guidance' section of the Conservation Register website.

We are keen to put more of the series into print, and again hope to work in partnership with other organisations on this. The leaflets support the work that Icon does in promoting public access and understanding of the importance of caring for our shared cultural heritage. They also contribute to the promotion of high standards in the care of objects and collections by highlighting when it is best to consult a conservator, drawing attention to accreditation and directing people to the Conservation Register when they need to find a conservator. I hope in the future that we will be able to make these available to Icon members for their own distribution in the same way that the Conservation Register leaflets are freely available.

Caroline Saye, csaye@icon.org.uk

PRIVATE PRACTICE

Standard contract, terms and conditions

At the AGM last year a contact group of conservators in private practice was established, and in recent months this group has been working on the development of a standard contract, terms and conditions for conservators to use with their clients. The need for these was identified as a key priority by private conservators when Icon was first formed.

Several private conservators offered their own contracts to the group for review, and the particular needs of people in particular areas of practice were also identified. The result was a document on which our lawyers then gave advice to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

The standard contract, terms and conditions are intended to provide a basic level of agreement for those working as sole traders and dealing with small private clients. They cannot allow for every different kind of client or project, and for this reason individual members may wish to modify

them in some respects to suit their own specific needs. Members are free to do this, but our advice to members doing this is to take legal advice before doing so.

The contract, terms and conditions will be available in the members-only area of the Icon website, and we are also planning to produce them in hard copy in due course. For further details please contact membership@icon.org.uk

ACCREDITATION

What do employers think of it?

A quick glance through any edition of the jobs supplement in Icon News suggests that while some employers are very supportive of PACR accreditation, others show no indication of realising it exists. In August this year Icon undertook a piece of research to find out what employers' attitudes towards accreditation really are. Details were collected on employers who had advertised jobs in Icon News, including whether or not they had indicated a preference for accredited candidates. Relevant employers were contacted to find out what their attitude to accreditation is. The outcome was very interesting.

Every employer contacted said that they supported accreditation and valued it – none expressed any reservations about it whatsoever. There were two basic reasons for their not always making this clear in job advertisements. Some of them had simply not related their support for accreditation to their recruitment processes and were very happy to do this in future. A second group of employers were reluctant to specify PACR accreditation in case this restricted the pool of applicants.

'What I learned from this research is that a lot of employers mistakenly think that accreditation is an 'all or nothing' matter' comments Chief Executive Alastair McCapra. 'They often saw it as a question of putting 'ACRs only need apply' on their advertisements, or else putting nothing at all. There are some jobs where it would be absolutely appropriate to put a firm statement, but for the most part we are asking employers to show a clear preference for accredited conservators, not to dismiss applications from anyone else. We would like employers to use a phrase such as 'We support PACR accreditation and encourage applications from candidates who are already accredited or working towards accreditation.'

The star employer is The National Trust, which not only supports accreditation, but says so in every job advertisement. Icon is very grateful to Sarah Allen who did the data gathering work for this research on a voluntary basis.

CAREERS ADVICE AND WORK PLACEMENT

Icon has been invited to join the steering group of an English initiative to encourage young people, particularly from minority backgrounds, to consider a career in museums, libraries and archives. Convened by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), the Steering Group brings together three MLA regions, two Sector Skills Councils (Lifelong Learning UK and Creative and Cultural Skills) and the relevant professional bodies – the Museums Association, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the Society of Archivists and Icon.

The aim of the initiative is to achieve a positive shift in the attitude of young people and their families and careers advisers about working in museums, libraries and archives. For Icon, the more specific aim is to ensure that good guidance on conservation careers is included. To try and develop conservation-specific careers guidance in isolation from a general heritage sector effort would not be productive, and we will work to much better effect by stimulating specific interest in conservation as part of a more general promotion of heritage careers.

Research undertaken for MLA has shown that many young people have never considered working in the heritage sector as a possible future for themselves, although around 20% say they would be interested in learning more about it.

The project is being led by Lifelong Learning UK, and will focus on pre-16 work placements and careers advice. Three pilots will be undertaken in three regions in the summer of 2007, with individual work placements in museums, libraries and archives. Work will also be undertaken on improving careers literature to give a more positive view of working in the heritage sector. The objectives of the programme are to

- Develop advice and information that meets young people's needs and promotes a positive view of the sector, including conservation
- Work with careers advisers to improve the advice they give and ensure that they promote a positive view of the sector
- Develop and promote structured placements as a career taster
- Develop a sustainable way of working that employers, careers advisers and placement coordinators can deliver outside the pilot regions

Potential hosts for placements will be invited to join the scheme in early 2007.

PRESERVE AS FOUND

7 November meeting

The May issue of Icon News reported the publication of a report on the training of architectural conservators, published jointly by English Heritage and Icon. The report highlighted a lack of guidance to colleges and other tuition providers to help prepare the next generation of architectural conservators. It called for greater collaboration and sector-wide involvement to better define and map career paths, provide more detailed careers information and raise awareness of architectural conservation within the wider built heritage sector.

On 7 November Icon will be chairing a meeting with English Heritage, Creative and Cultural Skills, conservation employers and tuition providers to map out a way forward. Icon's intention is to encourage tuition providers to use our professional standards as a reference for course development, and to help ensure that students completing courses have a clearer idea of what the next steps are for them in their learning development. A full report will appear in the January edition of Icon News.

FROM THE LIBRARY

Our new librarian

Librarian Catherine Scutt bids a fond farewell to Icon after a successful year establishing the Chantry Library as a valuable resource for Icon members. She moves up to Liverpool Hope University to pursue her library and information career and to return to her northern roots. The Chantry Library is lucky to welcome in her place librarian James Andrews to continue to meet all members' information needs. James has just completed his MA in Librarianship from the University of Sheffield, writing his final dissertation on the marketing of / access to special collections in public libraries. He brings to the Chantry Library experience of caring for rare books from his time at Christ Church Library, Oxford, with manuscript and early

The new librarian James Andrews



NEW TITLES

The Chantry Library recently acquired these new titles available for consultation to all Icon members:

Grzywacz, C.M. *Monitoring for gaseous pollutants in museum environments* (Tools for conservation series) Getty Conservation Institute, 2006

Oosten, Thea van et al. *Plastics in art: history, technology, preservation* (Kolner Beitrage zur Restaurierung und Konservierung von Kunst- und Kulturgut ;Bd.15) Siegl, 2002

Museums and Galleries Commission:

Working to safeguard and promote the interests of all museums

Code of practice on archives for museums and galleries in the United Kingdom, Rev. ed. 1996

Managing your museum environment, 1994

Working with contractors : guidelines on environmental and security protection during construction work in museums, 1998

Effective exhibitions : guidelines for good practice, 1998

Conservation Forum, *Guidelines for the commissioning and undertaking of conservation work*, 1998

printed music of particular interest to him. As the first person to be appointed as Chantry Librarian on a full-time basis James will be taking forward library projects such as redesign of the website, the development of links with other national conservation resource centres, and the expansion of services for Icon members.

Although the Library specialises in book and 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 also supply photocopies of chapters from books or journal articles and conference papers which we can send to you free of charge on quoting your Icon membership number.

Introductory tours of the library for yourself or your group can be arranged. We welcome all donations from members' personal collections of professional literature. James would be happy to hear from you about any of these issues.

Recently published articles

We are very pleased to announce that from this Autumn's issue the Ephemera Society will be sending the Chantry Library its fascinating publication, *The Ephemérist*.

A list of recently published articles that may be of interest to Icon members has been put on the Library section of the Icon website. Here is a small selection.

From *Studies in Conservation*, vol. 51, no. 2, 2006

Re-evaluation and retreatment: the reconstruction and remounting of an English court mantua by Marion Kite and Albertina Cogam

Preservation of burned bones: an investigation of the effects of temperature and pH on hardness by Nicoline Kalsbeek and Jane Richter

Capillary electrophoresis: an alternative to chromatography for analysis of natural organic binders by Michael Mazanek et al.

From *ICCROM Newsletter*, no. 32, June 2006

Building a risk management learning community by Isabelle Verger and Catherine Antomarchi

From *V&A Conservation Journal*, no. 53, Summer 2006

Planning the packaging for a touring exhibition by Richard Ashridge

Pigment analysis of a Persian album page by Lucia Burgio et al.

From *Restaurator* vol. 27, no. 2, 2006

The role of neutral rosin-alum size in the production of permanent paper by Altaf H. Basta et al.

Fourier transform infrared analysis of some Japanese papers by Paolo Calvini et al

From *CCI Newsletter*, no. 37, Spring 2006

On-site infrared spectroscopic analysis by R. Scott Williams

In *IDP News*, no. 27, Spring 2006

A study of the silk braids on Stein Chinese scrolls by Yasuhiko Ogawa.

From *Papier Restaurierung* vol. 7, no. 2, June 2006

Paper materials after fire: degradation, mould and emission by John Havermans

A morphology of the tear: a first approach towards general terminology by Bas van Velzen

A symbiosis of paper and silk: case study of the conservation and remounting of a 14th century Chinese painting on silk mounted as hanging scroll by Uta Landwehr

From *BAPH Quarterly*, no. 59, July 2006

The miracle of paper: some thoughts after 50 years in paper by Ian Hendry

Bookbinders' boards by J.F. Briggs

Also articles in

- *AICCM National Newsletter*, no. 99, June 2006
- *Art Business Today* no. 4, August 2006
- *BAPH Quarterly*, no. 58, April 2006
- *Conservation Bulletin*, no. 52, Summer 2006
- *ICOM News*, vol. 59, no. 2, 2006
- *JAIC*, vol. 4, no. 3, Fall/Winter 2005
- *Print Quarterly* vol. 23, no. 2, June 2006

You can consult these publications at the Library or request copies, subject to copyright restrictions.

CONTACT

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Address The Chantry Library, Grove Cottage,
St. Cross Road, Oxford, OX1 3TX,
United Kingdom
Website www.icon.org.uk

A CHANGE IS AS GOOD AS A REST

After 28 years as Keeper of Conservation Velson Horie is leaving The Manchester Museum. But he is not planning to rest on his laurels. His next move is to the post of Research Project Manager at the British Library. This is a new post created in the wake of the generous grant from the Mellon Foundation to fund library and archive conservation research at the BL (see Icon News 3, p. 2).

Velson originally studied chemistry before going on to train in archaeological conservation at the Institute of Archaeology. His first post was that of archaeological conservator with the North of England Museums Service before he moved to Manchester and began his long association with the University's Museum. He leaves on a high note, having recently completed a £21 million lottery-funded redevelopment of the Museum, which has won Civic Trust and RIBA awards and considerable improvements in public access and care for collections. Velson also acts as a consultant to other museums and institutions and since 1998 has been curatorial advisor to the New Mills Heritage Centre.

Velson has carried out conservation, research and professional coordination primarily with organic materials such as polymers, preserved animal skin, movie film and degraded wood. Many Icon members will be familiar with the distance learning course Chemistry for Conservators and his book Materials for Conservation. He has recently

been involved with the design and delivery of a course Adhesives for Conservation for the American Institute for Conservation. In fact, he has upwards of eighty publications to his name and is also active in getting others published through his many editorial activities, including his current membership of the editorial board of The Conservator. Velson is an ACR and was instrumental in the development and implementation of the standards for professional accreditation. He is also a Fellow of the Museums Association and the International Institute of Conservation. And, of course, he is a Board Member of Icon.

WHEN IN ROME

Congratulations to Helen Hughes of English Heritage and member of the Historic Interiors Group for being accepted on the international course, currently running in Rome, on Sharing Conservation Decisions. The course is run by ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) in collaboration with other leading institutions and Helen is one of twenty participants from all over the world and representing a range of heritage and conservation professions. Competition for places was fierce and only one applicant per country was accepted so Helen is very conscious that she is representing the UK in this international forum.

The happy graduates: Velson Horie with class mates from the Institute of Archaeology Birgul Birtkmir and Kathy Walker Tubb





Sharon Oldale

ACCREDITATION BRINGS ITS OWN REWARDS?

Congratulations, too, to Sharon Oldale who has recently been appointed to the post of Head of Conservation at Liverpool Record Office. She starts work at the beginning of December after a period of maternity leave, when she nevertheless managed to achieve her accreditation (See Icon News 4).

CHANGE OF COURSE

Dr Nigel Blades has taken over as Course Director for the MSc Sustainable Heritage at the Centre for Sustainable Heritage at UCL for 2006–2007 whilst Janet Berry is on maternity leave. Dr Blades has been with the Centre since its inception in 2001 and has taught on the course since 2004. He enjoys the interdisciplinary learning environment of the course and the focus it gives to the application of scientific methods to heritage. Dr Blades' recent research interests have concentrated on the effect of climate change on the built heritage and the development of methodologies to study how climate change may affect the fabric and indoor environment of buildings using tools such as building simulation software.

Nigel Blades



Elizabeth Reissner

CAROLINE VILLERS RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Elizabeth Reissner has been selected by the trustees of the Courtauld Institute of Art to receive the first research fellowship, established in memory of Caroline Villers (1948–2004). The aim of the Fellowship is to promote research in the interdisciplinary field of technical art history and Elizabeth's topic is the study of the materials, technique and historical context of nine paintings by Cézanne at the Courtauld. She will also collaborate with the National Gallery in London to ensure that a comprehensive range of the artist's works are included.

Elizabeth studied History of Art at Manchester University and then took the three-year postgraduate Conservation of Easel Paintings course at the Courtauld. She held a fellowship in painting conservation in San Diego and was the J.Paul Getty Advanced Intern in conservation at the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem in The Netherlands. She has since combined work for a number of institutions, including Tate, with her own art practice.

ON THE MOVE

Tom Learner, currently Senior Conservation Scientist at Tate, will be taking up a new post at the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) in Los Angeles as a Senior Scientist for Contemporary Art Research in January 2007. The position was created following GCI's recent decision to expand their commitment to research into the conservation concerns of modern and contemporary art, having recognized that this area is increasingly becoming a priority in the field.

Having studied chemistry and the conservation of easel

paintings, Tom arrived at Tate in 1992, initially as a Fellow, working on the development of analytical methods for the identification of synthetic painting materials, for which he earned a PhD in 1997. He has established an extensive knowledge of the chemistry, properties and uses of modern and contemporary artists' materials, as well as their conservation, from working on Tate's new acquisitions of 20th century paintings.

Since 2002, Tom has been working closely with other museums and research institutions, in particular GCI and the National Gallery of Art (Washington DC), on the Modern Paints project to improve analytical methods for the identification of modern painting materials, to investigate the physical properties of modern paints, and to assess the effects of conservation treatments on acrylic paintings. He has been particularly active in raising the necessary funding to equip the Tate's organic analysis laboratory with state of the art instrumentation and a number of 2–3 year fellowships. He has published extensively, including two books: *The Impact of Modern Paints* in 2000 (with Jo Crook) and *Analysis of Modern Paints* in 2004.

In his new role at GCI, Tom will be advising on appropriate research projects and objectives in the conservation of contemporary art. Whilst initially focusing on modern painting materials, it is envisaged that the scope of the role will expand to include the conservation concerns of contemporary art in its broader sense.

Tom Learner



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)

New faces – Icon's HLF Bursary scheme gets underway

October 2 saw the start of a great new training opportunity for each the seventeen people appointed to Icon's work-based training scheme in July and August this year. Icon's new interns are based with experienced conservator-supervisors in the public and private sectors across the UK for periods from 6 to 24 months. While in place, interns will be guided to develop their experience and skills using Icon's unique training methodology – linked to PACR standards – which ensures they make the very best use of their placement time and bursaries. Our team of Regional Co-ordinators will be acting as mentors and facilitators to support interns' learning and development – as well as lending a listening ear to supervisors!

Icon's scheme aims to increase the fund of conservation skills available for use in conservation projects and collections care across the UK. There are also two particular benefits for the profession. Newly-graduated conservators can use these internships as a valuable bridge between learning and the world of work – ensuring a faster track towards competence and accreditation. In addition, half of the scheme's places are made available to applicants without conservation qualifications who have found it difficult to gain entry to the profession. The scheme helps broaden the intake to the profession, particularly in those disciplines where there is little or no conservation training and where there is an untapped fund of candidates with excellent crafts, scientific and preventive skills.

Icon is grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the funds to enable us to carry out this flagship scheme – a real first for the profession – and to the Pilgrim Trust who are supporting the Stained Glass placement in Glasgow. The programme is a considerable responsibility as well: Icon recognises that many of the new interns have committed themselves to a change of career direction as well as to moving house and home. We extend a warm welcome to them all, and hope that Icon members will make contact with the new intake whenever the opportunity arises.

We have profiled a few of the new interns below. The Icon website also carries more details of each. If you are inspired to offer Interns work on projects, or additional training – if you simply want to get in touch – then do call the Edinburgh office and we will give you contact details.

Marie Le Saux trained at Marseille's Ecole des Beaux Arts in her native France, and went on to study theatre design in London. She has worked as stage technician, art director

and props maker, especially modelling and making large constructions and casts. Marie joins Eura for 12 months working with supervisor Robert Turner on a wide variety of objects and major projects. Eura are a private practice of conservators specialising in macro conservation, acting as consultants, conservators and contractors for cultural heritage work.

Back in the 90s, Jeremy Uden was himself an Historic Scotland Intern in ethnographic conservation. Now, based at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, he gets the chance to turn the tables by supervising Charlotte Ridley for 6 months. Exeter has an internationally important World Cultures collection and welcomes significant Designated Challenge funding for improvements over the next two years; Charlotte expects to be conserving a selection of items not previously displayed for temporary exhibition. We interviewed Charlotte over the phone while she was in the US – she had obtained a work placement at the Museum of the American Indian after completing her degree at Lincoln University. Its good to meet her in person!

Three new interns met up for the first time in early October in Edinburgh at the 'Dust Day', organised by Icon's Care of Collections Group. Ethnographic intern Victoria Brown came down from Aberdeen with supervisor Margot Wright. Fellow Scot Victoria trained at Lincoln and was delighted to be able to use the internship to follow up an interest she had developed on her course. Sarah Rainbow travelled from her new place of work in Manchester to attend as well. Sarah is based with Amanda Wallace at Manchester City Museums for six months, working in collections care. Her background is in frames conservation but Sarah is keen to use the internship to find work in the broader collections and preventive field. Also at the event was Sarah Lambarth, travelling up with supervisor Dave Thickett from English Heritage, who was helping present the course. Sarah's background is in archaeology and she is embarking on 12 months' training and experience in preventive conservation science across the range of English Heritage's properties.

Zoe Finlay has taken a big leap – giving up a career as an administrator based in Leeds, and committing to two years' work-based training at Oxford University Library Service's Collection Care and Conservation department. Zoe will be working within a wider team of fifty staff providing support services for OULS collections, from



From the left
Charlotte Ridley at Royal Albert
Memorial Museum
Zoe Finlay at Oxford's Bodleian
Library
Marie Le Saux at Eura
Conservation

Our full list

Claire Armstrong – Archives – at Devon Record Office with Deborah Philips

Victoria Brown – Ethnographic artefacts – with Margot Wright at University of Aberdeen

Konstantinos Chatziantoniou – Textiles – based with Annabel Wylie and Poppy Singer, near Colchester

Agnieszka Depta – Preventive Conservation – with Val Blyth at the V&A

Zoe Finlay – Books – based at Oxford University Library Services with Robert Minte

Carolyn Halcrow – Pilgrim Trust internship in Stained Glass – based with Mark Bambrough in Glasgow

Suzanne Hill – Natural History – based with Bob Entwistle at Ipswich Museum

Sarah Lambarth – Preventive Conservation Science – with David Thickett of English Heritage

Rose Lees – Metal – based at the Royal Armouries in Leeds with Suzanne Kitto

Marie Le Saux – Metals/Large objects – based with Robert Turner of Eura Conservation, Telford

Richard Moizer – Stone – based with Heather Newton at Canterbury Cathedral Workshop (see page 29)

Jackie Perkins – Stone – with Nicolas Boyes in Edinburgh

Sarah Rainbow – Collections Care – based with Amanda Wallace at Manchester City Museums

Charlotte Ridley – Ethnographic Materials – based at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter with Jeremy Uden

Rachel Swift – Ceramics – based at Conservation Centre, Liverpool with Lynne Edge

Jane Taylor – Textiles – with Mel Penrhys-Jones at Bristol Museums

Janet Wilson – Ceramics – based at National Museum Wales with Judi Pinkham

faculty lending libraries to the Bodleian, which houses material dating from several centuries BC to the present. Under the supervision of Robert Minte, Zoe looks forward to a fantastic opportunity to learn essential skills in the care and conservation treatment of books.

What's next?

Are you interested in joining the programme as an intern or host? Icon will be working to develop next year's programme of up to fifteen placements at the end of this year, and planning to put out an advert in April or May 2007. Look out for updates on the Icon website, through Iconnect and Icon News. You can find out more about becoming a host or supervisor on the Icon website and there are also tips for those who want to apply in forthcoming years – remember that the HLF scheme runs for four years up to 2010.

Do you operate an interns programme or act as host for conservation students?

The Icon Training Office would like to get in touch with those of you advertising internships or studentship – funded or not – in conservation across the UK. Icon's Internship methodology can be applied to any work-based training programme and our staff and management facilities can be rolled out to free your staff from the usual

administrative burdens associated with setting up and monitoring studentships and placements. We can also help you in applying for funding for internships and other work-based placements. Contact Carol Brown at the Edinburgh office on 0131 240 5032 hlfbs@icon.org.uk to find out more.

Icon Training Office

22–26 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PQ
0131 240 5038/2
training@icon.org.uk

L to R – Interns Sarah Lambarth, Sarah Rainbow and Victoria Brown at the 'Dust Day' in Edinburgh.



New ACRs to celebrate

From the first round of applications in 2006 we are pleased to learn that there are sixteen newly accredited conservators to congratulate. A wide variety of specialisms are covered by them together with a wealth of experience. Here they are, with some of their reasons why accreditation is important to them.



Matthew Beesley ACR

Stone Conservator, Fairhaven of Anglesey Abbey

Matthew studied initially in fine art painting/printmaking followed by ten years of training in stone carving, letter cutting and masonry, then a PG diploma in architecture/sculpture conservation. Over the subsequent sixteen years he has trained at institutions in a range of microscopy/analytical methods, and painting/printmaking techniques of European, Indo-Persian, Asian/Far Eastern traditions, integrating art, technology and science, within the architecture/stone/sculpture sectors.

He writes 'I saw accreditation as the means to reappraise my conservation knowledge, ethics in particular; guidance from sponsors and organisers alike was exemplary, to whom I give many thanks.'

Susan Bradbury ACR

Stained Glass Conservator, Stained Glass Design Partnership

Penelope Caldwell ACR

Porcelain Conservator, Private Practice

Brian Hall ACR

Metalwork Conservator, Conserve-Europe

Brian apprenticed to Andrew and Janet Naylor at Naylor Conservation (1987–1993), then worked as Senior Metals Conservator on large metalwork projects and sculpture for Plowden and Smith Ltd (1993–1997) and subsequently as a freelance senior conservator, consultant and project manager (1997–2005), working on many varied projects.

In 2005 he was a founding partner of Conserve-Europe: they work on all fine arts, decorative arts and architectural projects of any scale nationally and internationally.

He writes 'Competitive tendering drives clients to accept the lowest bid rather than the best conservation. Accreditation and the promotion of conservation excellence is essential to uphold standards and maintain professional conservation.'



Rowena Hill ACR

Ethnographic Conservator, Chepstow Museum

Rowena started her career as an ethnographic conservator in the late 1970s at the British Museum when materials conservation was still a young discipline. In the 1980s she took up the challenge to work overseas and gained experience as Head of Conservation at the National Museum of Papua New Guinea and Senior Conservator at the Queensland Museum, Australia which involved a variety of interesting projects such as running preventive conservation workshops with local Aboriginal groups setting up their own cultural centres.

She is a member of AICCM, (Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material) which made her aware of the benefits of achieving Professional Membership status (a similar scheme to Accreditation here). On her return to the UK, although eligible for the 'fast track' route, she missed out on the opportunity due to maternity leave and the workplace / toddler-caring juggling act.

Rowena writes 'This year, with the children at school, I was still determined to go through the Accreditation process. It is crucial for my income generation work with

Monmouthshire County Council, most of my clients being other museums, and the grant-awarding body in Wales (CyMAL) prefer to fund projects where an Accredited conservator is involved.

It was strange being an 'older' candidate – I felt I had even more to prove, as there were so many years-worth of conservation experience to be judged on. However, I found the assessment day very stimulating – the choice of primary and secondary assessors was well balanced; they complemented each other well in their experience and expertise. Overall, I found the whole assessment process interesting, thought-provoking, and enabling reflection on every aspect of one's conservation work, past and present. It also helped to focus on future career developments.'



Dan Humphries ACR
Stained Glass Conservator, Holy Well Glass

Dan gained his degree in Architectural Stained Glass in 1997 and then began working in conservation and restoration at Holy Well Glass under his mentor Steve Clare.

He writes 'My practice evolved through on the job learning and mentoring, self education, conferences etc with no planned structure on my part. I thought that accreditation and CPD would be the ideal vehicle for assessment of my practice and, more importantly, carefully controlling its development.

Completion of the assessment and CPD forms alone was very informative and I was delighted at the peer review and validation of my current practice (Holy Well are the first UK glass conservation specialists with two ACRs).

I would urge anybody who is considering the accreditation process to begin CPD now! I have found it invaluable for setting both short and long term goals and bringing direction to my professional future.'

Shulla Jacques ACR
Works of Art on Paper Conservator, Private Practice

Shulla trained for the MA in Conservation of Works of Art on Paper at Camberwell College of Arts, having found a profession that could combine an interest in art history with practical skills. The daughter of a chartered mechanical engineer, the recognition of a professional approach to work was instilled at an early age.

She writes 'Joining the IPC Committee just as all the hard work of instigating the PACR scheme had been done, it was clear that much thought had gone into its completion, and I was encouraged to apply. Being accredited is not to be taken lightly but I am very glad to have gone through the process.'

Deborah Mecklenburgh ACR
Textiles Conservator, National Trust

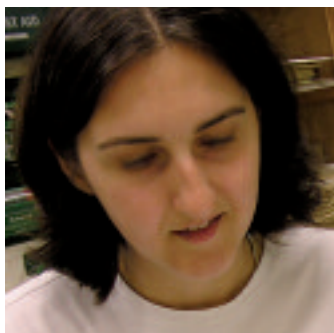
Nicola Newman ACR
Decorative Surfaces, British Museum



Lisa Nilsen ACR
Preventive Conservation Manager, Historic Royal Palaces

Lisa followed the example of one of her colleagues and felt that she, too, was ready to apply for accreditation. During the application process she got a new job that meant a move from Glasgow to London. She was concerned that this would affect her assessment. What happened was that she was assessed at her new place of work to show current projects and used good documentation and photographs of work carried out in Scotland. Lisa felt that this gave her the opportunity to draw useful parallels between two jobs.

She writes 'I enjoyed the accreditation process thoroughly, both the written parts and the day with the assessors. It made me reflect about my development during my nine years in the profession.'



Emily O'Reilly ACR

Paper Conservator, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (NMW)

Emily graduated from Camberwell College of Arts in 1995 and has gained experience in private studios and public institutions in Australia and the UK.

She writes 'Gaining accreditation was for me as much a personal decision as a professional one. I now have the satisfaction of being recognised for my skills and abilities as a conservator by my colleagues and peers. I was also fortunate that my employer recognises the importance of accreditation and has fully supported me in my application.'



Sarah Peek ACR

Ceramics, Glass and Enamels Conservator, Private practice

Sarah originally trained at West Dean College and over the past eleven years has worked on a variety of increasingly prestigious and high-value objects. Most recently she has built a bespoke studio which provides an ideal working environment and a high level of security for objects.

She writes 'I find the field of ceramics, glass and enamel exciting and stimulating. Objects increasingly demand new ways of thinking and problem-solving to achieve the best possible conservation results.'

Accreditation has provided an opportunity to reflect on my career to date and has given me a renewed focus for the future.

I look forward to being an active member of Icon and helping to shape how our professional body can reflect conservators' needs and best promote our field in the future.'

Leonie Seliger ACR

Stained Glass Conservator, Canterbury Cathedral Studios (see page 28)

Marineta Stiglitz ACR

Book and Paper Conservator, Bodleian Library

Rachel Turnbull ACR

Paintings Conservator, National Museum of Wales



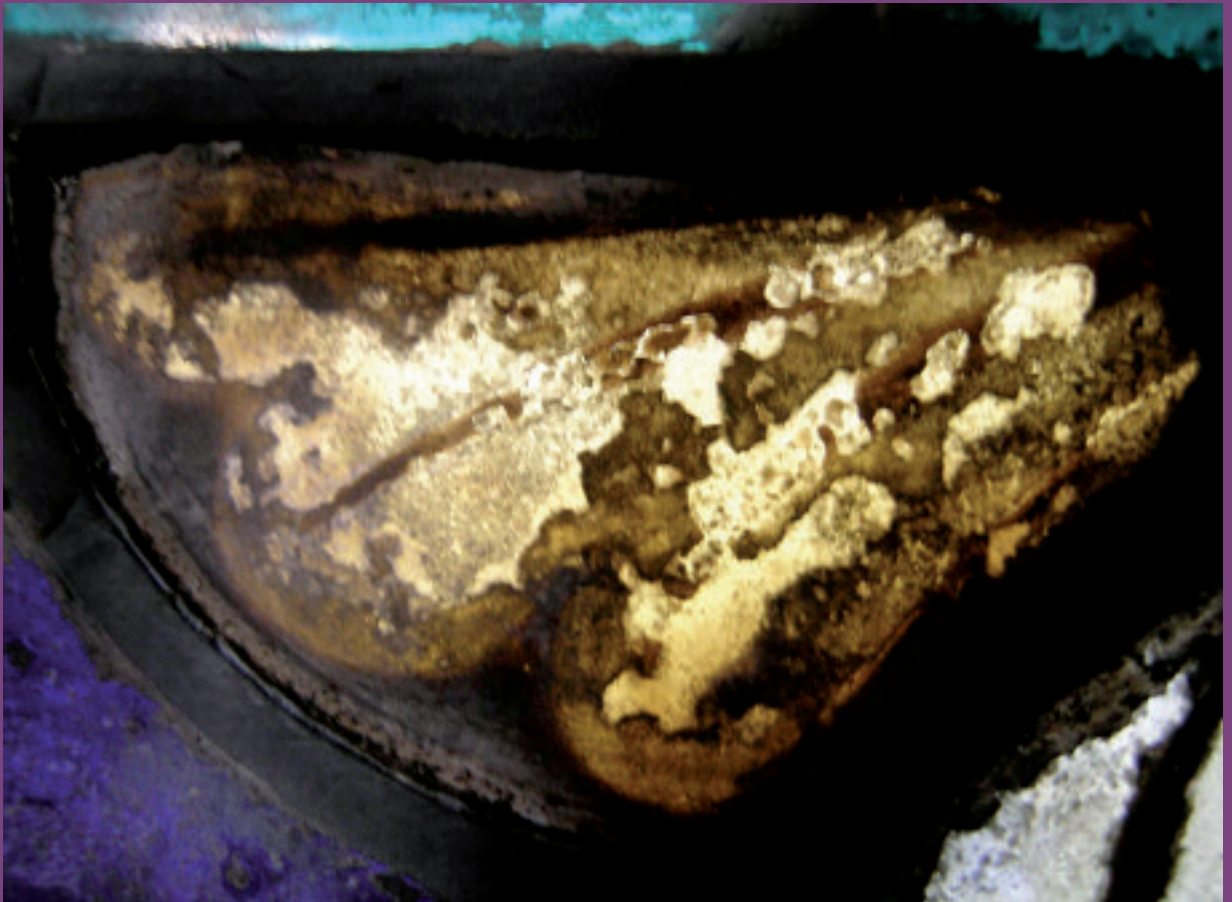
John Wyn-Griffiths ACR

Furniture Conservator, Peter Hall & Son

John has been in the profession for twenty three years with his initial apprenticeship in furniture restoration.

He writes 'The lack of any formal conservation training meant I felt slightly under-qualified and there was room for further professional development. This and the need to remain on the Conservation Register were what spurred me to apply for accreditation. The application form was at first daunting but once I got started, it became an interesting opportunity to examine where I stood professionally. The assessment day itself was intense but enjoyable in a strange way! The assessors were supportive and very thorough. I'm extremely pleased to be accredited, it gives me professional status in my field and I feel more confident as a result. On a wider note it can only be good that conservators are given recognition as professionals working to a code of ethics and standards'

Close-up of
corrosion on
stained glass



Canterbury Cathedral

A Canterbury tale

Icon News made a pilgrimage recently to Canterbury Cathedral in the company of the national press, radio and TV and various local Kent papers. The occasion was the launch of a campaign to raise £50 million over the next five years to rescue the Cathedral's threatened fabric.

The press conference was held to coincide with the Cathedral's annual open day, when the various craftsmen and women who work there come out from behind the scenes and set up displays within the Cathedral to demonstrate their skills to the many visitors. So the event was both informative and interesting and the Cathedral was, of course, beautiful and awe-inspiring. And over and above these aspects, it was also an occasion when conservation played a starring role.



Canterbury Cathedral

Decaying stonework on the North side of the Cathedral

'England in stone' was how writer and former politician the Rt. Hon. Roy Hattersley described the Cathedral. He spoke in support of the campaign, despite being a self-confessed 'practising atheist', because of his view that 'this is not just a cathedral, it is a matter for the whole nation'. His poetic response to the building formed a stark contrast to the reality of what needs to be done in this complex structure. Built in different eras and of different types of stone – limestone from Caen in northern France and Kentish ragstone being just two examples – the problems are exacerbated by the building's height and the sheer quantity of the materials involved, such as the acres of lead and wood in the roof. And it became clear from the presentations that inadequate repairs after fireball damage during the Second World War and the failure of earlier 19th and 20th century restoration work have also contributed to the present condition. It has been the task of the Surveyor to the Fabric, John Burton, to draw up an integrated conservation plan which addresses the priority areas, ensures that the work is done in a logical sequence and delivers good value for money. The work has started this year with a target completion date of 2016. John Burton is an architect who specialises in the care of historic buildings and it was a moment of light relief to learn that when, six years ago, he was also appointed Surveyor of the Fabric of Westminster Abbey, this was the first time since 1396 that one person has held both posts together.

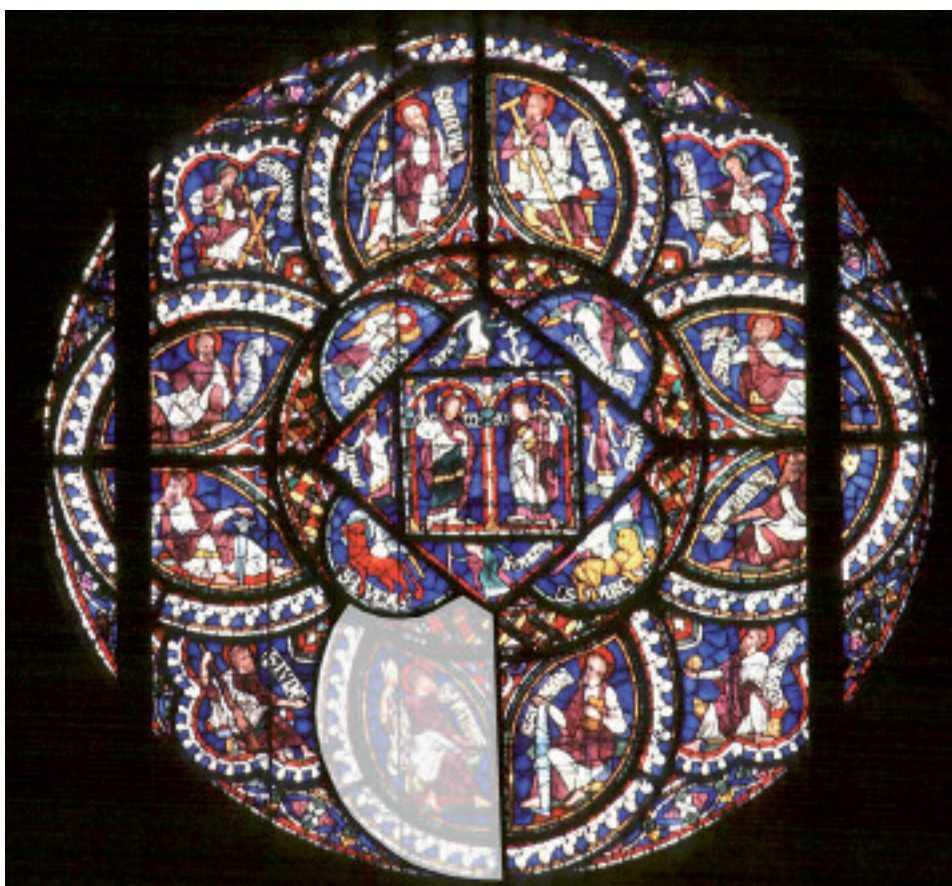
Of the £50m needed, £30m is for conservation work on the building's fabric and if action is not taken now the rate of decay will increase dramatically. Parts of the roof are already leaking, elements of the masonry are crumbling and the longer the stained glass is left untreated, the more immense the conservation challenge will be.

It is here that Icon members Heather Newton and Leonie Seliger will be playing their part, as they did on the day: talking to visitors and giving interviews whilst maintaining their good humour and enthusiasm, despite the obtrusive clicking and whirring of press cameras, as they explained their work and showed samples of decay and conservation. Visitors were astonished by the view of stained glass under the microscope which Leonie had set up on her stand; to the naked eye it looked like a perfectly good piece of stained glass but in close-up the damaging effects of pollution and time brought home the reality and scale of the tasks ahead.

Leonie trained and worked in stained glass manufacture in Germany until 1991 when she joined Canterbury's stained glass conservation team – The Cathedral Studios, which was established in 1973. In addition to her conservation

Leonie Seliger talks to press representatives





South oculus window with monitoring area

training at Canterbury, and whilst still working there, from 1999 to 2001 she also undertook a Masters degree in the conservation of historic buildings at York University. This year has been a good one for Leonie: she has just successfully gained her Accreditation and has been made head of the Cathedral Studios. The team of seven conservators not only work on the Canterbury glass but also undertake work for other churches, whilst Leonie herself also advises the Diocese of Rochester on restoration and conservation issues and other bodies as far afield as Florence. And an important aspect of her work is passing on skills and techniques by training students on placements at the Studio.

£2 million has been earmarked for the glass conservation and although many of the windows have already been conserved and protected in recent years, much remains to be done, not least of which is the late 12th century Oculus window in the South-East Transept.

£16 million is required for the conservation of the external masonry – a mammoth task of repairing or replacing stones and cleaning to remove chemical deposits. This is where Heather Newton, ACR, comes into the picture. Heather originally trained at art school but in the mid-1980s decided to pursue further training in stonemasonry, graduating in due course from the Weymouth College course in the conservation of stone and plaster. She joined Canterbury Cathedral in 1988 and ten years on was asked to head up the stone conservation unit. She has been the Cathedral's Advisor on the subject since 1996 and later appointed to similar duties for Rochester Cathedral. She obtained her Accreditation in 2000 and was made Head of Stone Conservation at Canterbury this year. The next big project, that of the Corona, will be the first that Heather



Heather Newton in front of the lift being erected to access the scaffolding around the Corona

has had the complete management of – something she is very excited about.

Since 2000, Heather has been involved in the formation and development of the Cathedral Crafts Fellowship, a forum involved in the training of all Cathedral masonry apprentices. Heather's commitment to training was evident at the open day, where even the intern she supervises was playing his part with verve and the whole of three weeks' experience behind him! Robert Moizer is the recipient of one of Icon's Lottery-funded bursaries and comes to the world of stone conservation from an art school and sculpture background. His year's placement has started high up a scaffolding repointing the stone work – replacing inappropriate 19th century cement with a more sympathetic lime-based mortar.

A day to remember and a day on which to feel a sense of pride that Icon members are at the heart of the work to come.

Richard Moizer in front of the scaffolding on which he is working



Conserving Ancient Egypt in Cambridge

Julie Dawson is Senior Assistant Keeper (Conservation) in the Department of Antiquities at Fitzwilliam Museum, part of Cambridge University. Here she describes the refitting of the Museum's Egyptian galleries: the design issues, the related research and the public awareness programme.

In the mid-1960s the colossal pink granite sarcophagus lid of Ramesses III was raised to a standing position and a suite of wooden display cases with formica trim was installed around it to house the Egyptian collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum. By the turn of the new millennium Ramesses was still secure, dominating the vista along the galleries, but the cases were, quite literally, collapsing around the objects (fig. 1). Thanks to the generous support of many charitable funds, corporate bodies and private donors, a complete refit accompanied by programmes of conservation, research and outreach has now been undertaken. After a nineteen-month closure, the galleries re-opened on 24 May 2006.

THE GALLERIES

Most notable for its funerary material, the Egyptian collection of the Fitzwilliam contains some 17,000 objects and is part of the Department of Antiquities. In the new

arrangement, the first room with the Ramesses III coffin lid at its centre, presents a chronological introduction from the Pre-Dynastic Period to the early Islamic rulers. The second room is thematic, showing aspects of Egyptian life such as religion, magic and ritual, craftsmanship and personal adornment. In the centre of this room are the coffins of Nespawershefy, which are densely painted with scenes of the afterlife. The third room is devoted entirely to funerary customs (fig. 2 & 3).

In addition to fulfilling curatorial aims for the display, the new design had to respect and, if possible, enhance the ornate neo-classical architecture of this part of the Fitzwilliam Museum, deal with the environmental difficulties that the building presents and provide safe and easily accessible support for some very large, fragile and/or heavy objects.

The Egyptian Galleries occupy the north-west ground-floor corner of the Grade I listed, mid-nineteenth century building and are fitted with large windows. The Conservation Engineer Bob Hayes advised on modifications we might make to improve and stabilise the environment and, whilst we were not able to implement all his recommendations, at least the winter heating control is now humidistat led (with a temperature 'comfort' mode so that we do not freeze too many primary school parties solid during the coldest months).

Much of the material is environmentally sensitive and also we need to keep the use of the cases as flexible as possible. It was therefore decided to opt for cases of sufficiently air-tight specification to allow internal buffering with conditioned silica gel to be manageably effective.

The case manufacturers were given a very detailed specification drawn up by the architect in close collaboration with the curatorial and conservation team. After many months of discussion of the design, a prototype was built in an adjacent gallery. The finished cases have still presented a few problems and harboured a few unwelcome surprises, but having the prototype to test from every aspect over several months was certainly the most important factor in ensuring that we came close to achieving the sort of case we wanted.

Fig. 1 First Egyptian Gallery before refurbishment





Figs. 2 & 3 Views of the Egyptian Galleries after refurbishment (light levels raised for photography)



The carcasses are made of epoxy-powder coated steel and glass. Seeking a strong but non-polluting material for dress panels, we asked the case makers to devise a commercial version of a corrugated plastic sheet/Plastazote/archival board 'sandwich' that we had previously made in-house for cases in the Museum's medieval gallery. Their solution was a 20mm thick sheet of hard Ethafoam 900 plank. The case lining fabric is stretched around the plank and a moulded aluminium sheet is then attached to the back of the plank with screws. Small objects, such as jewellery, can be pinned onto this but Perspex supports for heavier objects or restraining brackets for large pieces can also be screwed securely into the foam (and through the aluminium backing if this is thought necessary for extra 'bite').

In order to retain some natural light and a sense of the gardens beyond, open-weave blinds are used on the north-facing windows (with a pale black-out blind behind on the west-facing window) leading the visitor from the chronological gallery where very little light sensitive material is displayed into gradually darker spaces, finishing

in the funerary gallery where all natural light has been blocked and low levels of artificial light are maintained.

The greatest design challenge was devising cases for the display of the coffins, especially the 'nested' sets of Nespawersheft (mummy cover, inner and outer coffins) and Pa-Kepu (inner and outer coffins). In the 1960s arrangement, the coffins had been almost literally 'built-in' to narrow cases (shown in fig. 1) with access only from the short ends and barely adequate support of the individual elements. Over the years modifications had been made to improve the situation, but it remained highly unsatisfactory. However, after months of trying to reconcile maximum visibility with ease of access and secure support, we had considerable sympathy for the 1960s designers and their solution! The new arrangements for Pa-Kepu and Nespawersheft are shown in figs. 3 and 4. Vertical steel 'trees' with horizontal branches (fitted with fibre-optic tails to light the coffin box interiors) support glass shelves on which the coffins rest. The lids are supported by Plastazote-covered Perspex blocks (to accommodate the original tenons which project down from the edges). The

Fig. 4 The coffin set of Nespawersheft (10th century BC).



Fig. 6 The back of a severely deteriorated coffin panel from Abydos. Sophie Rowe using a Laponite poultice to swell and soften bookbinder's paste on the canvas strips that hold the fragments together.



glass doors are wider than the length of the longest coffin and there is sufficient access in and around the 'trees' to allow a team of people to manoeuvre the coffin parts straight in with minimal danger to the fragile structures. The lower part of the outer coffin rests on a fabric-covered Hexlite board, to the back of which a thin Teflon sheet is attached, allowing the heavy box to be slid easily onto the fabric-covered baseboard of the case. This system was adopted and adapted for every large and awkward object displayed on the baseboard of a case.

THE CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

A generous grant from the Getty Foundation has enabled us to undertake the investigation and conservation programme of the refurbishment project, with additional funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Isaac Newton Trust and the Aurelius Charitable Trust helping us to upgrade our facilities and equipment.

The Fitzwilliam's collection was acquired partly as the result of excavations carried out under the auspices of the Egypt Exploration Fund in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and partly by gift, bequest and purchase. As usual with a collection of this age and history, the conservation problems derive as much from former treatments as from instability in the original materials.

A key focus of the project has been the wooden coffins and coffin fragments. The inaccessibility of these in the old displays and poor condition of many of those in reserve

Fig. 5 Termite damage on a coffin panel from Beni Hasan.



(not to mention lack of staff and resources) mean that this project has provided the first real opportunity ever to examine and conserve this material. Extensive x-radiography has produced a wealth of information on original choice and re-use of materials, solutions chosen by the makers to resolve constructional difficulties, deterioration mechanisms and historical attempts at repair and restoration. This has been supplemented by UV and IR photography and pigment and plaster analysis, all undertaken with assistance from the Hamilton Kerr Institute (the Museum's paintings conservation department) and from the Forensic Science Department of Anglia Ruskin University. Dr Caroline Cartwright and Dr Rebecca Stacey of the British Museum are identifying, respectively, the woods and the original resins and varnishes found in the construction of the coffins. All the information on technology and condition will be included in a catalogue of the Fitzwilliam's coffins that is currently being prepared.

Many of the coffins came to the Museum directly from the excavations of the Middle Kingdom (2046–1794 BC) cemeteries at Beni Hasan in 1903 and from Abydos in 1900. They exhibit a range of deterioration phenomena from splitting and warping of the wood and delamination of plaster and paint layers to microbiological attack and severe tunnelling by termites (fig. 5). In addition, the excavators attempted to stabilise the coffins by pasting canvas strips across the joins and fractures with liberal quantities of animal glue or bookbinder's paste (wheatstarch paste and animal glue). Shrinkage of these repairs has caused additional distortion. Coffins that entered the collection by a less direct route, not surprisingly, tend to have suffered more intensive structural



Fig. 9 A section of the Ramose Book of the Dead (H 39cm) during conservation and reconstruction

alteration and restoration. The Nespawershefyt coffins, for example, contain a fine set of early nineteenth-century nails and a completely restored and over-painted wig on the inner coffin.

Conservation of the coffins has centred on removal, where possible and appropriate, of old repairs if these are damaging or disfiguring, stabilisation of paint layers and plaster and the application of structural support (fig. 6). This has included integral fills (generally of macerated Japanese tissue impregnated with Klucel G), but has concentrated on the casting of light structures against losses to hold the separate elements in the correct alignment by completely external means.

Fig. 7 Christina Rozeik mounting the 10th century BC funerary 'bouquet' (a spring bulb and garlic cloves threaded onto split palm leaves) of Nakhtefmut.



As well as wooden coffins, the collection encompasses the full range of media found within ancient Egyptian culture, principally: ceramics and unbaked clay and mud, faience and glass, stone, painted wall-plaster and moulded plaster, precious metals, copper alloys and iron, cartonnage, mummified material, ivory and bone, leather, papyrus, textiles, basketry and other plant materials (fig 7). In addition to conservators employed by the project and five interns for varying periods, a number of collaborations were set up to enhance our ability to deal with this wide range of objects. For example, a conservator from the USA (Julie Unruh) joined the team for five weeks as a Visiting Scholar. The four Roman-Egyptian encaustic mummy portraits gave an intern (Lucy Wrapson) at the Hamilton Kerr Institute the opportunity to deal with some complex paintings' conservation problems, but within the different requirements and constraints of the treatment of archaeological material. An 'exchange of skills' was arranged in which Barbara Wills, a Senior Conservator of Organic Artefacts and specialist in basketry conservation from the British Museum spent two months in the Fitzwilliam working with staff and students on the Egyptian baskets and devising training that could be offered to other museums. The return part of the exchange will take place in 2007.

Another strand of the project is conservation of the Museum's collection of papyri. The first part of this, to be concluded in March 2007, has focussed on just one document, the 13th century BC Book of the Dead of Ramose, which was discovered in thousands of pieces in a tomb at Sedment in 1922. Almost 20 metres long when complete and rich in painted and gilded vignettes of great delicacy, it is considered to be an exceptionally fine



Fig. 8 Papyrologist Dr Imtraut Munro and Papyrus Conservator Renée Waltham sorting some of the fragments of Ramose's Book of the Dead

example but has been virtually inaccessible up to now because of its condition (figs. 8 and 9).

Comparison of the fragments kept in 60 folders in the Fitzwilliam basement for more than eighty years with two sections that were reconstructed and put on display (probably in the 1960s) provides a striking illustration of the light-induced alteration of orpiment and realgar pigments and of the papyrus itself. We anticipate considerable public and scholarly interest in this document once conservation is complete. However, to preserve the pristine condition of the paintings, it has been agreed not to show any part of it in the 'permanent' displays. Instead, it will be fully illustrated and explained through publication, on the Museum's web-site, in special study days and occasional exhibitions. The first of these, which will focus also on the technological study and conservation, will take place from June–September 2007.

THE CONSERVATION PROJECT AND THE PUBLIC

Throughout the project, we have sought to bring the conservation project to the attention of the public. In addition to talks and 'behind-the-scenes' tours, drop-in sessions as part of the Department's 'Meet the Antiquities' (fig. 10) series have been presented by the conservators, as well as half-day seminars to allow small groups a closer look at, for example, the technology, investigation and treatment of a coffin.

The architecture of the spaces limits the amount of information that can be put out in the galleries. Two large 'banners' (visible in fig. 2) currently present a summary and illustrations of the conservation project and direct visitors to the web-site (www.fitzmuseum.ac.uk) for more detailed information. There, progress has been recorded in a month-by-month web diary and a series of more in-depth case studies is now being added. Keeping up to date with the diary through the busiest periods of the project has been quite a struggle (and not always achieved!) but it has generated a lot of interest, so is definitely worth considering as an accompaniment to this type of venture.

Half-term week in May (immediately after the opening) saw

an intensive week of gallery talks, demonstrations and workshops for adults and children. We are currently in the second round of educational activities based on the investigation and treatment of the collection, 'Secrets of the Ancient Egyptian Craftsman'.

Now that the galleries are finished, we are preparing objects for future rotation into the displays, continuing with technical studies for the coffin catalogue, monitoring the performance of the galleries and the cases as we enter the winter-heating season, devising a study day about the project to share our good and bad experiences, planning a conference – and, of course, starting to mull over ideas for the next gallery refurbishment.....

Photographs ©The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

Acknowledgements

As will be clear from this brief account, far more people than I have space to acknowledge here have contributed to this project, so I hope they will forgive me if I mention only the project conservators and interns: Nichole Doub, Bryony Finn, Carmen Li, Tom Riddolls, Sophie Rowe, Christina Rozeik, Lucy Skinner, Julie Unruh, Renée Waltham, Deborah Walton, Lucy Wrapson and (on loan) Barbara Wills and record also our thanks to Dr David Saunders for the immense amount of help that we have received from the Department of Conservation, Documentation and Science of the British Museum.

Fig. 10 Barbara Wills explaining basketry conservation to members of the public during a 'Meet the Antiquities' session



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news from the groups

BOOK AND PAPER GROUP

Helen Lindsay has confirmed that she will be returning as **Chair of the Book and Paper Group**, for a further year, at the group's 2007 spring general meeting. Helen took leave from the committee following the adoption of baby Elizabeth last summer. Every autumn the group will be holding elections for new committee members – as is taking place presently. Next year's elections will include the election of a new Chair of the group. The term of office for the B&PG Chair will be 2 years with a possibility of standing for a second consecutive term. Tony Bish, Deputy Chair, has taken over from Rose Briskman as B&PG Acting Chair until Helen returns. Tony was Head of Preservation and Conservation at the Wellcome Trust for over 20 years and is currently working independently as a book conservator. He can be contacted by email; a.bish@btinternet.com

Keep an eye on Icon News events listings and Iconnect emails for news of our **evening lectures planned for 2007**. The first of these is to be given by Helene Donnelly, on January 23, at the October Gallery, on 'Coaching and mentoring individuals through fires and floods'. There are plans afoot for future events including a re-run of the lining workshop at the V&A, pulp dyeing for use on suction tables and a re-run of Sara Burdett's popular session on paste making. We will, as usual, give you plenty of notice of these meetings. If you have any ideas for workshops, which you would like to see organised in the future, please contact Joanna Payne; jw@joannapayne.com

As part of Icon's work to integrate its new database with its website, there are plans to create a **membership directory on-line**. This facility will replace the directory produced in hard copy by IPC and it is intended to be up and running on the members' pages of the website in the spring of 2007. This on-line version will allow members to input their own details and to keep them up to date.

Now available in the '**Caring for**' section of the conservation register website www.conservationregister.com are 22 titles in the 'Care and Conservation of...' series of leaflets and nine other titles are available in the '**Guidance**' section of the website which include a leaflet on 'Mounting and framing works of art on paper'. Any feedback on book and paper related titles can be sent to Penny Jenkins and Caroline Saye; phpj@btinternet.com and csaye@icon.org.uk

Thank you

Ann-Marie Miller and Rose Briskman both retired from the committee at the end of September. We would like to thank them for their work on the committee over the past three and a half years. We would also like to thank Amy Junker Heslip for her work to start up the Clare Hampson Scholarship Fund.

CARE OF COLLECTIONS GROUP

November 21 & 22 in Birmingham: don't forget the joint conference with **Metals Group** about dealing with hazardous materials in collections. See Listings for full details

Advance notice: CCG will hold its first AGM since convergence at Tate Britain on Wednesday April 25 next year, along with a day conference examining how to achieve sustainable collections care in the face of climate change. Enquiries to cathy.proudlove@btinternet.com

HISTORIC INTERIORS GROUP

Following on from our successful conference held in Cambridge during May, we are already in the early stages of planning next year's conference, which we hope will be held in Stratford upon Avon in collaboration with the Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust. The subject will be painted cloths and include a variety of items from stage scenes to floor cloths.

We continue with our programme of day visits to places where recent treatment of interiors has taken place. The National Trust were kind enough to agree to a visit to Stourhead in October, where we were shown around the Library. The Library has been subject to a great deal of research prior to the recent representation and is now considered one of the finest and most carefully restored National Trust interiors in Britain.

We welcome new members and encourage active participation in the group. If any member has items which they would like to contribute either to the conference, as a suggested day visit, or for publication please do not hesitate to contact the following members of the committee. Membership enquiries should be addressed to the membership secretary.

Email: Janedavies@hotmail.com, editor

Email: mdehamel@btinternet.com, events organiser

Email: lisa.oestreicher@virgin.net, group secretary

Email: Claire.fry@english-heritage.org.uk, membership secretary

TEXTILE GROUP

The committee is in the process of organising the Forum and programme of events for 2007. Thanks to the questionnaire that Ksynia Marko organised at this year's Forum we have plenty of your ideas to help choose a wide variety of workshops and studio visits and so there should be something to please everyone! More details will be given in the January mailing.

Second Call for Papers for the 2007 Forum

Costume has been chosen as the theme for the 2007 Forum. We plan to have the usual one-day conference with the option of a second day to take a behind-the-scenes tour of a major costume exhibit and textile conservation studio.

We invite you to submit brief abstracts for papers on the theme of costume and dress including, but not limited to, accessories, costume for theatre and cinema, ethnographic textiles, issues of mixed media and preventive and interventive conservation. Please submit your abstracts to Deborah Phipps, Group Secretary, at general.textiles@nationaltrust.org.uk by 4 December 2006.

Textile Conservation Centre University of Southampton

The MA Textile Conservation students who graduated this year worked on an interesting range of topics for their final project, the dissertation. The titles are given below. The abstracts are available on both the Icon website and the Textile Conservation Centre website (www.wsa.soton.ac.uk/conservationandmuseums). The dissertations can be consulted at the TCC, along with those from previous years' students and final year projects from the former Postgraduate Diploma programme. To consult them please make an appointment with Frances Lennard (023 8059 7100). Unfortunately we are not able to make copies of the dissertations.

The current second year students submitted their dissertations in September 2006; these will be available next spring. The subjects they have covered range from object-based projects to investigations into conservation techniques such as spot bleaching treatments, the possible effect of anionic and non-ionic surfactants on the rate of dye bleeding and an investigation into the use of Vinamul 3252; and more general surveys such as an analysis of Persian velvet fabrics, an investigation into methods of compensating for loss in canvas-work seat covers and the use of surgical fabric in textile conservation. The objects studied range from a communion table carpet from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, to a pair of Indian shoes and an epitaphio: a Greek ecclesiastical textile.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped the students with their dissertations, as well as those who act as placement hosts. The students often develop ideas for their dissertations during their work placements, which helps to ensure that they are investigating issues of interest to the wider conservation community.

Frances Lennard

Programme Leader, MA Textile Conservation
Textile Conservation Centre



MA Textile conservation students from the 2003–05 cohort graduating in July 2006

Latest TCC Dissertation Titles

Rosemary Baker

The use of reflected visible light spectra to analyse dyed fabrics: The highs and lows of synthetic dyes

Janine Darby-Gibson

To investigate how long acid free tissue is acid free and what the effects and implications are for conservators, museums, heritage organisations and collectors

Sally Davies

Reflections of patent leather: an initial investigation into the degradation of linseed oil and polyurethane finishes, in relation to preventive storage techniques.

Sun Young Kim

Textile conservation in Korea: an analysis of past practices and future prospects

Vicky Loosemoore

Screen printing techniques, dyes and pigments and their suitability for producing coloured supports in textile conservation

Sarah McNett

Communicating textile conservation: what are the positive outcomes of promoting public and financial support?

Bernice Morris

The ethics and practice of conserving Jewish ceremonial textiles

Cheryl Osborne

An investigation into plant moth deterrents, including conkers, traditionally used to protect textiles and their potential for protecting textiles on open display in historic houses

Branwen Roberts

An investigation into the development and feasibility of an image-centric documentation framework to document textile artefacts

Jane Taylor

Crossing the Channel: A comparative study of the textile conservation profession in England and France

THE BEER MEETING

The November Icon beer meeting will be on Tuesday 21 at the Skinner's Arms, 114 Judd Street, WC1H 9HT, 0207 837 6521. The nearest tube and train station is Kings Cross but Euston and Russell Square are not far. Coming out of King's Cross, cross over the Euston Road to the South side and then, walking west along it, Judd Street will appear on your left. I will not be able to attend this meeting however Sophie Laubin will be taking my place. She will be there from 5.30 and if you need anymore information please contact her on sophie.laubin@bl.uk

As an Icon Member, you will **NOT GET:**

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EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

John Price's letter in the last issue of Icon News about promoting widespread conservation education to the public serves as a useful prompt to me to bring members up to date with what Icon is doing.

Members will read elsewhere in this issue about the work we are doing with MLA and other partners on improving careers guidance and on work placements for teenagers. Icon has also been in discussion with the OCR Examination Board, which is piloting a new GCSE syllabus in History and Heritage from next year. This incorporates a vocational element into a traditional academic syllabus, and gives students the opportunity of taking a work placement as part of their study programme. Icon is working with OCR to ensure that as many good conservation placements as possible are available for students following this syllabus. (Details at www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/GCSEHistoryPilot.html). If any members think they would be interested in hosting a GCSE work placement for a couple of weeks, please contact me on amccapra@icon.org.uk

For the broader public, Icon has just produced a suite of 22 guidance leaflets for public information on how to care for objects they own. These can be found on the Conservation Register website. 13 of these exist only in electronic form at the moment, and 9 of the most popular have been printed in hard copy as well. Icon does not have the resources to print large numbers of these but we are discussing plans with other bodies to co-brand and print special runs of these leaflets for them to distribute more widely through their own channels. If anyone is interested in printing 1–5000 for their own organisation's use, please contact Caroline Saye on csaye@icon.org.uk

John makes a more general point about Icon's charitable status and our duty to 'advance the education of the public'. There was a lot of discussion about the obligations of charitable status during the process leading to the formation of Icon, and it is helpful to recall that 'the public' does include some people who are very 'close to home' – students, trainees, and indeed professional conservators themselves, since educational activities such as producing our journals and holding conferences fall within our charitable remit. The most important public beyond this for us to target are those who work in the heritage sector – curators, owners of historic houses, agencies such as Historic Scotland, Cymal and MLA – basically those who control the funds and make the decisions about conservation work. If we are not effective in educating them then we will just be whistling in the wind if we focus on schoolchildren. As we develop, we will no doubt find new opportunities to engage with the wider public, and we shall always maintain a balance between our efforts to educate the various different publics with whom we engage.

Alastair McCapra
Chief Executive



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This is the first announcement for applications for entry to the programme in the academic year 2007/2008. Deadlines for applications will be 22 January 2007.

MA studentships

MA studentships run for two years full-time. We have offered MAs in disciplines such as Textiles, Ethnographic Materials, Sculpture, Social History Objects, Furniture, Natural History Collections, and Conservation Science. The specific areas of study for the forthcoming academic year will be announced later

in the year, via the Conservation Distlist and our website. We also offer in-post MA's for conservation professionals; please see our website for details.

Research studentships

MPhil research programmes are for a minimum of two years full-time, or the equivalent part-time. PhD research programmes are for a minimum of three-years full-time, or the equivalent part-time.

RCA/V&A Conservation aims to support research in three broad subject areas. We welcome enquiries about these and will also consider novel research proposals from individuals.

- Materials and practice in art
- Historical, social, and artistic contexts for conservation
- Decision contexts for conservation

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the Programme:

Joanna Baden
RCA/V&A Conservation
Department Administrator

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7590 4532
Email: conservation@rca.ac.uk
Website: <http://www.rca.ac.uk/>



reviews

BOOKS

THINGS FALL APART...MUSEUM CONSERVATION IN PRACTICE

Caroline Buttler & Mary Davis, eds.
National Museum Wales Books 2006
ISBN: 0720005590 198 pages £24.99

THE MAYA VASE CONSERVATION PROJECT

Lynn A. Grant with Elin C. Danien
University of Pennsylvania 2006
ISBN: 1931707871 128 pages + CD-ROM
\$29.95



Conservation literature tends to be aimed at one of three groups, the practising professional, the student of conservation, and finally publications designed to introduce the subject to the uninitiated. While this is not a foolproof method of categorisation it is a convenient one, allowing people an instant understanding of what they might expect from a book in terms of depth of information, style and approach.

This review concerns two books, both offering to give the reader an insight into the behind-the-scenes world of conservation and are, on initial inspection, pitched at the non-professional.

Things fall apart... Museum conservation in practice has multiple contributors from the diverse National Museum of Wales staff. One of the first things the reader notices about this book is its stylish appearance. It is packed full of high quality glossy images all well chosen and presented. The format makes it appear a little as a 'coffee table book' designed primarily for the non-professional, however closer investigation proves that this book has substance as well as style.

After an initial introduction it consists of nineteen case studies covering a wide range of topics from looking after an open air

museum to the replication of an Iron Age firedog. The case studies have been divided into sections covering preventative and remedial conservation projects, the re-treatment of previously conserved objects and the production of replicas. The diversity of topics covered is a real strength. The book quite literally tours the collections. Natural sciences, art, archaeology, social history and industrial heritage are all represented in a way which highlights the multifaceted nature of conservation today.

As a result of the number of different contributors involved, each case study has a slightly different written style and approach. Some case studies are a general summary of a conservation problem or process, whereas others take a more academic approach and give a more scientific or in-depth analysis of an object or problem. The case studies are necessarily compact yet care has been taken to raise relevant conservation issues. While these are not exhaustively discussed they are clearly presented and their relevance to the conservation decision-making process is explained. Despite the wide range of topics covered, the same message comes across consistently throughout, namely the importance of considered and informed conservation practice as the cornerstone of research, interpretation and education within the heritage sector.

Where more explanation may be required, in order to appreciate a particular topic or issue, text boxes appear containing information-rich summaries. Often the subjects are scientific in nature, such as the chemical mechanism of pyrite decay or an explanation of X-ray diffraction, but there are other equally useful sections covering areas such as the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Treasure Act. These concentrated areas of information add hugely to the value of the book. In addition to being excellent introductions for the layperson I suspect these concise summaries would be useful to many practising conservators.

Things fall apart... is a book that will offer the most to the interested layperson or the student of conservation providing as it does an accessible and highly readable collection of diverse case studies which introduce the multiple issues and dilemmas faced by the practising conservator today, yet the depth of information ensures that there is 'food for thought' for the practising conservator as well.

Where *Things Fall Apart* succeeds *The Maya Vase Conservation Project* unfortunately fails. The book sets out to give a step by step review of the conservation of nineteen Maya polychrome vessels from Chama, Guatemala. The conservation process is

described in lay terms and is designed to introduce conservation to those with a general, as opposed to professional, interest in the subject.

The book begins with an introduction presenting the history of this group of important ceramics including their excavation and early conservation by Robert Burkitt. The rest of it consists of an overview and summary of the treatment undertaken and also includes a section on multispectral imaging of the ceramics. The book comes complete with a CD containing a PDF document presenting summaries of the treatment of each individual vessel complete with large before and after images.

First impressions are that this book suffers from a lack of orderly presentation: images and text compete with each other and there is no fixed format or style. The fluid layout means that the reader often finds themselves searching the page for where the text continues or reading one of the many large image captions by mistake. This is largely due to poor editing. Some of the images are simply not of publication standard and yet, with over one hundred figures appearing in less than one hundred pages, it would have been easy to be more selective and still have a visually rich publication. In contrast the PDF summaries included on the CD are well presented and it is a shame that the care evident here cannot be seen in the main body of work.

Given that the book is intended to showcase conservation to the general public, I had hoped that the treatment approach taken with these objects would be innovative, or at the very least, up to date. While I would not describe the treatment of these objects as old fashioned the approach taken is 'traditional'. The description of the treatment is very general, which is understandable given the nature of the publication, but in being too general one can end up saying nothing at all. Writing for a non-specialist audience can be very hard and finding the correct balance between accessibility and information can be fraught with difficulty. Unfortunately this book goes too far and not enough time is spent fully explaining the concepts involved. While I am sure that the author is a capable practitioner with many years of experience she does herself and her potential readership a disservice by describing consolidation as,

'working like an overall adhesive, gluing the crumbs of the sherds together'

Likewise the following, being either a result of poor understanding or poor writing, should not have been allowed to slip through the net,

'I also used the immersion process to remove surface grime. The murkiness of this water is a testament to the amount of "museum" (as opposed to "ethnographic") dirt present.'

It is highly probable that many of the problems I encountered while reading this text are the result of a well intentioned 'dumbing down' of the subject by the author. Unfortunately some concepts are raised and tackled in such a way as to make me question if the author herself is entirely comfortable with the mechanisms involved, for example, the section concerning soluble salts and the desalination of some of the vessels is particularly worrying.

I appreciate that this book is aimed at the non professional but the lack of solid discussion regarding the treatment of these objects, not to mention the robust treatment approach taken, left me feeling uneasy. In short, it is the possibility that the non-professional might take what is presented here as current best practice that I find most worrying about this book.

Rather than inform the uninitiated about the complex multi-disciplinary subject of modern conservation this book, covering the issues and treatments involved with such brevity, is more likely to leave readers with the impression that conservation is fundamentally a straightforward process requiring little more than manual dexterity and patience.

James Hales

Teaching Fellow in Conservation
Institute of Archaeology, UCL

CONFERENCES

THE OBJECT IN CONTEXT: CROSSING CONSERVATION BOUNDARIES

IIC International Congress

Munich, 28 August – 1 September 2006

.....

This was an extremely enjoyable and well organised conference. Against my natural instincts I took copious notes throughout all of the papers and deliberately avoided reading the preprints until afterwards. In this way I could evaluate the usefulness of actually being there. I will not play Simon Cowell¹ by evaluating each paper in turn, but instead will highlight what I gained from being there; after all, you can all read the preprints.

One thing that won't be possible to get the experience of is Gael de Guichens' Forbes Prize Lecture. Gael is a well known performer of many years standing and knows how to please a crowd, and this time he involved the audience by allowing us to

vote on various issues with red or green papers. The main 'topic' of his talk was conservation language and defining the relationship between conservation and restoration, but in truth the content was almost less important than the delivery: an excellent warm up to the conference.

'Context' was interpreted in many different ways. I was moved by a paper describing the conservation of scraps of material excavated from First World War battlefields.² The contexts here were the connection with real people who had died in these battles, and the context of being filmed for television which was sometimes in conflict with conservation ethics. Another paper described a more general context in which conservation has somewhat been taken over by 'Collections Care', and warned of the possible loss of conservators 'hands-on' skills.³ Another described the difficulties of caring for a large and important painting by Chagall in the context of an opera house with no environmental control and where it was even difficult to prevent the public smoking.⁴

There was a wonderful contrast between two papers. The first described in detail a piece of modern sculpture composed of forty four pillared basalt blocks with textile elements for which a conservation strategy was required.⁵ The build up of the presentation seemed to indicate the need for remedial conservation, but sensitivities to the artist's intent dictated a preventive strategy instead. Conversely, the preventive strategy for the conservation of a Maori eel trap⁶ was 'rejected' by the traditional owners of the object who wanted it to be made stable for display (and the display has been very successful). There were several other examples of the context of religious or sacred art leading conservation practice.

From a very personal point of view, I was fascinated by two papers on the Chinese terracotta army of Emperor Qin Shihuang (died 210 BC); both interesting in their content, but implicitly interesting because these figures are awesome in quality, quantity and age.^{7,8}

One paper described the survival of objects in the context of an extremely hostile environment (the preprints do not show the image of the painting covered with ice crystals!)⁹, while another dramatically demonstrated the extremely short 'life' of supposedly stable modern materials and the need for further research in this area.¹⁰

There did seem to be quite a number of presentations on pigments. The one that most caught my attention was of three copies of an artist's note book containing samples of pigments in varying degrees of

preservation.¹¹ I have asked curators here in Oxford if we have anything similar to research.

I apologise to all of the authors who I haven't mentioned, but there were forty six presentations (just to prove I was there and attentive you will see there are forty seven papers in the preprints; one speaker didn't make it!) and there was no way I could comment on each one. The event ended on a high point with the presentation of the Keck award to Eric Schindelholz representing the team involved with the conservation of the USS Monitor and the work they had put into publicising the project. They have a very good web site at <http://www.mariner.org/>.

Now, for the second part of my review, 'Bier Kellers in Munich'. The best by far was... Word count exceeded... end of document!

David Howell,

Acting Head of Conservation and
Collections Care
Oxford University Library Service

1 Simon Cowell is one of the judges in a talent show series on UK TV called 'The X Factor'

2 Preprints p.12 Finding the fallen: conservation and the First World War, Renata Peters and Dean Sully

3 p.30 The conservator in context: crossing curatorial boundaries, Caroline Buttler and Mary Davis

4 p. 56 Commedia dell'Arte: when Chagall went to Frankfurt, Snejanka Bauer and Maria Kokkori

5 p. 69 Asking for the context: conservation strategy for Joseph Beuys' 'The End of the Twentieth Century', Maïke Grun

6 p. 128 Conservation of a Maori eel trap: practical and ethical issues, Catherine Smith and Heike Winkelbauer

7 p. 170 Stone armour 2200 years ago: early mass production methods in China, Sandra Bucher Fiuza, Duan Qingbo, and Wang Dongfeng

8 p. 177 A colourful world for the emperor's soul: the polychromy of the terracotta sculptures at Qin Shihuang's burial complex, Catharina Blansdorf and Xia Yin

9 p. 249 Skolloster Castle and its environment, Jan Holmberg, Bengt Kylsberg and Per Nelander

10 p.273 Applique stained glass: the conflict between conservation and context, Norman H. Tennent

11 p.254 Nomenclature et species colorum miniatae picturae: researching seventeenth-century pigments in Sweden, Cecilia Ronnerstam and Lars Halldahl

Munich could arguably be regarded as the birthplace of the modern discipline of conservation, since its passion for scientific research into artists' materials dates back to an exhibition devoted to the study of painting materials held there in 1893. Indeed it was from these early roots that the present day Doerner Institute eventually sprang. It was therefore a truly fitting choice of venue for the 21st IIC congress, held at the Technische Hochschule under the

auspices of the Doerner Institute in late August this year.

The Forbes Prize lecture which opened the congress was given by Gael de Guichon who took as his theme the long-running verbal confusion arising from our indiscriminate use of the words 'conservation' and 'restoration'. He pleaded earnestly for the conservation profession to recognise the importance of resolving this linguistic muddle in order to get our professional aims and objectives across to the public. His hilarious efforts to get a clear vote out of his audience on this issue provided a lot of amusement and got the conference off to a light-hearted start.

The theme of the conference 'The Object in Context' allowed for a wide interpretation, so most specialist areas of conservation were represented in the programme, although fine art and ethnographic objects drew more coverage than paper, metal and stone conservation. I had thought we would be hearing mainly about applying good conservation measures to overcome restraints imposed by the historic physical location of an object. Instead the message that came across most strongly was the need to ensure that the treatment of an object addressed not only its immediate physical needs, but also its cultural and spiritual significance. Whether the object under discussion be a decorative painting by Chagall for an opera house foyer, a Membres burial bowl, a Buddhist tsa tsa or a Maori eel trap, the original creative context needs always to be taken into account when making any conservation decision. As David Leigh summed it up in his closing speech to the conference, our long-held Western conservation ideal of attempting to maintain the completeness or the original appearance of an object needs now to be tempered by the knowledge that other cultures may not hold this to be necessary and that other criteria may have to take precedence for the correct interpretation of an object.

So this conference was not so much about the choice of materials and methods used in conservation treatments, as about how far a treatment should be taken and for what reasons. This had the refreshing effect of limiting confrontational questioning of individual speakers, which has sometimes been a difficulty at previous congresses, and of reducing the occurrence of the 'dreaded' graph, thereby enabling the less scientifically-minded members of the audience to stay awake through the afternoon sessions!

The meeting was beautifully organised; the lecture hall spacious and well-equipped. An efficient simultaneous translation facility was

provided for both English and German contributions and the speakers kept perfectly to time, ably assisted by a combination of good chairing and excellent technical support. The diverse display of conference posters was well-positioned adjacent to the refreshment area so there was plenty of opportunity to view them during the breaks. The traditional half-day tours to nearby cultural sites and the conference dinner accompanied by a Bavarian band and local beer were also well-organised and much appreciated by the delegates.

All in all an excellent conference, my only regret being that there was not enough time available to visit all of Munich's wonderful museum collections or to explore the various Doerner Institute 'Wissenspeicher' conservation exhibitions taking place throughout the city, to highlight the importance of conservation for the preservation of our cultural heritage.

The conference proceedings including details of the posters are available in both paperback and CD formats and may be ordered from IIC on-line.

Kate Lowry

Head of Paintings Conservation
National Museum of Wales

USING ARTEFACTS: IS CONSERVATION COMPROMISED?

AIC 34th Annual Meeting

Providence, Rhode Island June 16-19 2006

The American Institute of Conservation Annual meeting brings together conservators in all disciplines from all over the United States. The latest meeting totalled ten papers and ten speciality group sessions. It kicked off with a day of tours to local museums, collections or conservation labs and a series of workshops. An international presence was provided by delegates from Latin America, Europe, Hong Kong and Australia. The Latin American/Caribbean Scholarship program funded by a grant from the Getty Foundation enabled many conservators from these regions to attend the conference. This was felt especially in the poster session, where current projects, research and the work of many institutions were highlighted and available for discussion.

The general session began with the Keynote address given by Dr. Amarendra Galla, Professor at both the Australian National University and the University of Queensland, who fought his jetlag to deliver his paper 'Shifting the Paradigm of conservation from 'as if it were' to the present'. The paper asked us to consider conservation as a part

of heritage management and sustainable development and was illustrated by a variety of projects in South Africa, Belize, Vietnam, India, the Netherlands and Australia, where heritage management has been used as a way to support communities in their struggle for economic development and identity.

The following two papers continued the theme of conservation in the context of support to communities in sustainable development. Renata Peter's paper detailed a collaborative project to conserve Khipu at San Cristobal de Rapaz, Peru. A Khipu is an object made from cords of wool and cotton, used in the Inka Empire for bureaucratic recording and communication. This one is unique as one of only two known collections still in use and kept in its original location. Further details of this project were published in Icon News issue 4. An interesting point that arose from the paper was the community's desire to have the Khipu housed in a glass showcase within the Kaha Wayi. Julia Brennan continued the theme, discussing her experience of working to preserve religious and living textile relics in Bhutan at the request of the Bhutanese Royal family. Julia's approach included training the monks in preventive conservation whilst accommodating the religious use of the textiles, as well as interventive treatment.

The role of conservation in monitoring the condition of the Kennewick Man during scientific research of the remains was outlined by Vicki Cassman. These remains were found in the banks of the Columbia River in Washington State, USA in 1996, and identified to be 9,200 yrs old. A ten year legal battle over their future has been fought between Native American tribes of the Columbia River region, scientists who hope to research the remains and the State. Vicki's paper, indicative of the conservator's role in this emotive and highly charged legal wrangle, concentrated on the methods employed to reduce the impact of multiple campaigns of research and monitoring of damage to the remains.

Jane Klinger's paper told of the specific challenges facing conservation at the US Holocaust Museum. She likened the role of conservation to that of a mediator: representing the concerns for the preservation of the object while gaining an understanding of the goals of its use. Examples where the emotive and specific personal stories of objects called for their repetitive and diverse use included a beautifully constructed model made of the Lodz ghetto, Poland, by one of its residents. Having been exhibited at the museum for ten years, the model was removed from

display due to preservation concerns. This required demand for the use of the object to be satisfied in different ways. The family of the maker who came regularly to visit the model naturally had to be granted access. Furthermore, the education department used the object for a webcast and commissioned a 3D scan of the model, which unfortunately was never able to be used.

Other papers from the general session included Pamela Hatchfield's interesting discussion of the debate around the re-striking of Paul Revere's engraved copper printing plate of the Massacre on State Street, Boston 1770, by the Massachusetts State Archives, which was undertaken in order to raise money for the Commonwealth Museum. The re-printing raised questions about what constituted the artefact – the plate or the print itself, the level of damage to the plates by the re-printing process and culminated in discussion of AIC's role in providing guidance on such matters. Katherine Singley's talk told of the unique issues presented by the Bremner Historic District, an historic area preserving evidence of the gold mining industry in Eastern Alaska. This site, spread over 136,940 acres, includes sixteen buildings and twenty one structures that have been left in the landscape for the visitors (mainly hikers) to 'discover' them and contemplate the reason for their presence. Katherine described the preventive strategies adopted by the Parks Service to discourage visitors from removing objects from the site because of the perception that they could look after them better themselves, whilst maintaining the desired appearance of benign neglect.

Robin D. Campbell of New York State Bureau of Historic Works considered the use of the social history objects in the collections as narratives and the preservation implications of creating a 'just stepped out' feel. Richard L Kerschner from the Shelburne Museum told of the shift in presentation of the museum collections that staff had to negotiate to enliven the visitor experience by increasing access. The 1950s house was of particular interest, here visitors are encouraged to completely interact with the artefacts, sit on the couch, and open the fridge and so on. In the final paper of the general session, Malcolm Collum described the role of the conservator as 'arbitrator of consumptive use' when considering the system used by the Henry Ford Museum to decide whether to operate individual vehicles in the collection on a case by case basis. The system involves ranking the vehicle 1–4, where 1= sacred, no operation (Quadricycle Henry Ford's first race car) to

4=unrestricted use (model T Fords used to transport visitors around the park). The rank is determined by historical significance, rarity, monetary value, as well as the specific reason for use and benefit to the museum.

The papers given at the AIC conference presented diverse and interesting problems that face conservators in the course of the use of artefacts. Each paper reinforced the importance of problem solving and the willingness to reconcile preservation with access in conjunction with communities, visitors, institutions, directors, and curators. The innovative and creative solutions to the use and presentation of artefacts were inspiring.

Anna Hodson

Andrew W Mellon Fellow at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian Member of the Icon Ethnography Group.

BOOK AND PAPER GROUP FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE /IPC FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE Edinburgh 26-29 July 2006

The First and Fifth, but not Final

For this participant at least, the Fifth and Final International Conference of the Institute of Paper Conservation and the First Icon Book and Paper Group was slightly less exuberant than past meetings, probably due to tenuous global politics, the absence of a few popular book/paper personalities, the aging of the profession, not to mention its conservators, and an oppressive heat wave. Nonetheless, the conference more than fulfilled IPC's tradition of providing important international forums for discussion. As one whose career has spanned IPC meetings in Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester and London, I am grateful for the many longstanding bonds of friendship and respect these meetings have fostered. Planning for the fifth event began three years ago before Icon was a reality; Kate Colleran was then at the helm of IPC with Helen Lindsay as her successor. They, the Selection Committee and Conference Organizers are to be sincerely thanked for their diligence in planning a conference during a difficult administrative transition. Icon, in turn, admirably assumed its role as co-host.

The program opened with Anna Southall, Chair of Icon, who crisply asserted the advantages of the newly converged Icon and declared the conservation profession 'mature, and confident, and forward looking'. Three days later, Alistair McCapra, Chief Executive of Icon, having heard several self-searching presentations, closed the meeting in a more restrained but still upbeat manner by suggesting that we

'make a case for the quiet things as loudly as we can'.

Thirty-three official presentations representing twelve countries were augmented by a few unscheduled talks. Supplementing the oral presentations was an impressive poster display wherein top-notch visuals illustrated a broad range of topics, including many Asian materials. An array of pre-conference tours, an elegant opening reception in the National Gallery of Scotland, a buffet dinner in the impressive hall of the National Museums of Scotland and some ethnic dancing in a deconsecrated church nave guaranteed that participants were busy.

The papers fell into five broad and overlapping categories – Advocacy and Conservation Awareness; Treatments/Project Management; Artifacts of Tragedy; Research/Preservation Strategies; Technical Studies. Each talk made its point in a professional well-organized fashion, however, at the end of the conference some nagging questions remained unanswered. More confrontational ones went unasked.

Advocacy and Conservation Awareness

Launched by keynote speaker Helen Shenton (Not 'either...or' but 'both'. The life cycle of collections at the British Library), a number of presentations, at least seven by my count, emphasized what we need to do as professionals to insure that book and paper conservation is validated by government and institutional recognition. Without broad-based support of administrations, the preservation of the originals may be shunted aside in favor of a 'virtual world library' dominated by 'people of the screen' where 'copies of isolated books bound between inert covers, soon won't mean much.'¹ With an emphasis on communication, cooperation, and openness, the buzzword in these talks was 'interdisciplinary', whether applied to preventive conservation,² research,³ institutional policy,⁴ or treatment.⁵ Several recommendations were made on how we can win the race to save the originals and none involved improving our treatment skills.

Treatments/Project Management

It seemed paradoxical, therefore, that the audience was most rapt and responsive during the presentations describing specific treatment procedures and outcomes. By far the most popular presentation was 'A million brown spots after conservation; untangling the cause-effect chain'. The authors are to be commended on their courage in discussing a treatment gone awry. The ever-popular Clarkson illustrated the 'workmanship of risk' in medieval bookbinding, recalling the meaning of

craftsmanship according to David Pye.⁶ Transparent papers and iron gall ink continued to bedevil conservators as was apparent by the audience's close attention to recommendations for stabilizing them.⁷ As in the posters, descriptions of Asian conservation procedures generated significant interest.⁸

While eleven papers discussed treatments, project management was frequently their real focus due to the large number of items involved. For example, the Swarthmore manuscripts amounted to over 1,400 letters and accounts; the Ruskin watercolors added up to over four hundred.⁹ One wonders if some treatments were catalyzed by digitization projects, which have thrown by the wayside the conservation surveys so earnestly endorsed in past conferences. At least one 'The conservation of a seventeenth-century Persian Shanama' was instigated by a digitization project. How many less fortunate tightly bound books are being forced open on flatbed scanners in the name of preservation and access?

Artifacts of Tragedy

Four presentations discussed the transmutation of books and paper to sacred relics as a result of horrific acts of aggression, catastrophe or human folly. For example, a diary retrieved from the Colombia Shuttle crash becomes a talisman for the Jewish nation,¹⁰ and a hospital's missing persons notice board from 9/11 becomes a museum piece.¹¹ Both artifacts are lavished with huge amounts of expensive care and attention by institutions presumably owning objects of equal, but less politically explicit, consequence, which languish in their storerooms. Presentations such as these are particularly provocative because, first of all, they are more frequent, but, secondly, because of the questions they raise. One can argue that, in the case of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, its collection by definition is historically significant and thus is allocated scarce resources more evenhandedly.¹² But in the case of a museum not dedicated to commemoration, what percentage of its budget should be directed to 'accidental' artifacts as opposed to those waiting at the top of the condition survey list? Like digitization projects, politics can interrupt the best-laid plans for the well-being of a collection.

Research/ Preservation Strategies

Three presentations had to do with on-going research, not surprisingly dealing with the nagging problems of deteriorating papers, deacidification and iron-gall ink.¹³ Clearly, there still do not exist clear-cut solutions to these problems. So it is worrisome indeed that there appears to be



Blind tooling the edges of the leather onlays

less conservation research being undertaken in general.

Technical Studies

Eight presentations provided valuable in-depth studies of the materials and techniques of books and paper from medieval times, 'The medieval girdle book project', to today, 'Plastics in paper: history of synthetic polymers in paper'.¹⁴ The audience responded with an audible gasp to the suggestion that YUPO, a 100% polypropylene paper, might transmit water vapor like Goretex, proving that, at the end of the day, or make that three days, information that could be directly applied to treatments still held sway.

Margaret Holben Ellis

Director, Thaw Conservation Center
Morgan Library & Museum

1 Kelly, Kevin, "What will Happen to Books?" *New York Times Magazine*, May 14, 2006, p. 71.

2 *Professionalizing preventive conservation*, Bradshaw, Lindsay.

3 *Powerful connections: interdisciplinary collaboration in the investigation and discovery of works of art on paper*, Bower.

4 *From parchment to plastics: conservation research at the National Archives UK*, Bell; *The perceived shift from conservation to preservation; does it exist?* Pavelka, Hammeke.

5 *What makes good conservation practice?*, Brückle, Pataki, Banik; *Twentieth century book production and book conservation*, Gibbs.

6 *Three medieval bookbinding techniques: their relevance to conservation and rebinding today*, Clarkson. Pye, David. *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1968.

7 *A new method of tear repair of transparent paper*, Gasser, Flamm, Baatz; *Treatment trees for iron-gall ink*, Biggs.

8 "Dry" backing removal used for Japanese paintings, Oka.

9 Other talks involving large numbers of items included: *The drawings of Frank Lloyd Wright*, McClintock; *A case study: the treatment, display and handling of a loan of large posters*, Huxtable, Wheeler, Sandiford, Webber; *The conservation of drawings by Jean and François Clouet*, Caylux, Menei; *The conservation of the Swarthmore manuscripts*, Neville, Vidler; *The conservation and mounting of watercolours and drawings by John Ruskin*, Hawkes.

10 *The conservation of a diary recovered from the*

Colombia Shuttle crash, Maggen.

11 *Preservation of New York's Bellevue Wall of Prayers*, Newman.

12 *The importance of the provenance of damage*, Klinger, originally presented in 1997 (AIC, San Diego) 1997, her observations remain chillingly germane.

13 *Five Years' experience in paper deacidification in the Swiss National Library*, Blüher, Grossenbacher; *Optimizing ink corrosion treatment protocols at the Library of Congress*, Connelly-Ryan, Eusman, Krueger, Morenus, Wanser; *A new method for the assessment of deteriorated paper documents*, Okayama, Sato.

14 *A technical study of Joseph Pennell's pastels and charcoals*, Morenus, Blood; *The discovery of a fixative on graphite drawings by John Constable*, Slavin; *Pigment, extender or adulterant: a discussion on artists' white watercolour pigments in the early twentieth century*, Colbourne; *Understanding early photographic processes: controlled pressure scanning electron microscopy of paper*, Tate; *Tibetan manuscripts*, Helman-Wazny; *Keeping the learning curve flexible: conserving a collection of unique experimental abstract-surrealist prints by Tajima Hiroyuki, Norville-Day* (originally scheduled for the IIC 2002 Congress, a presentation most joyfully received!).

WORKSHOPS

ONLAYS WORKSHOP

Victoria and Albert Museum

For those unfamiliar with the term onlay, it is a method of decorating a leather binding by means of thin, variously colored pieces of leather, which are attached by means of paste or P.V.A. to the surface of the covering leather, giving it a mosaic effect. The pieces of leather are usually, but not necessarily, but of the same type of leather as that covering the book but of a different colour. The onlay was certainly in use in England by the 17th century and was also a technique occasionally adapted to publisher's cloth bindings between 1840 and 1860, with onlays sometimes made of paper.

The recent Icon-arranged onlays workshop hosted by the Victoria and Albert Museum was an excellent event. Run by designer bookbinder Tracey Rowledge, it was a well-planned, fun, educational day. With the six places taken up by students from the postgraduate diploma course at



PLACEMENT REPORT

Camberwell and conservators from the British Library, the V&A and the London Metropolitan Archives, there was a mix of different levels of experience but everyone learned a lot.

Tracey had gone to a lot of trouble to create a simple design, that allowed for practice on different kinds of shapes, and had cut and pared down leather for us to use, arranged into a tasteful array of shades. Additionally she had prepared notes for us to take away so that there is something to refer back to when tackling the technique without her guidance.

A list of tools to bring had been sent out prior to the class and the generous folks at the V&A supplied extra items, as there was a strong practical element to the day. This was invaluable as it consolidated Tracey's demonstrations and gave us a feel for the materials. There were also samples of Tracey's own work there for us to look at as a reference, and to see the flexibility of the technique in terms of the different ways onlays can be used.

Starting with instructions on how to make a template from the design drawing and use it to prepare the leather, we then had guidance on how to cut the shapes out with the scalpel blade at the correct angle (not easy!). Following this, we were taught how to paste and stick down the leather piece, and then tool the edges. Lastly, we had a small paring session to practise feathering the edges of onlay pieces for a different effect. This was all followed up by a review of our work.

The day was very well organised with the stages of the process divided up well to space them out throughout the day, and this almost military precision worked perfectly to give us exactly the right amount of theory and practice. These kinds of workshops are essential for learning traditional skills that are essential to our profession. Workshops such as these are quite rare, and with a different learning system now than in the days of apprenticeships, there are fewer and fewer people who have this knowledge to pass on. As conservators who have not necessarily come from a bookbinding background, this workshop was an invaluable experience, and it was great to learn from someone so accomplished.

Catt Baum

Camberwell MA student

SOME COMMENTS ON A 6 MONTH PAPER CONSERVATION SABBATICAL IN BERLIN

Conservation is not a career you choose for the money, or the prestige. What drew me to the profession, and what still holds my interest ten years later, is always the development of an understanding and a feel for the physical artworks themselves. I enjoy the subtle differences of each object, with its own problems and limitations, and taking this into account with any treatments. There is always the danger, however, that the way you work can settle too much into a pattern and this motivated me to spend several months on a sabbatical to interrupt this pattern and broaden my way of thinking. Germany has a great tradition in the graphic arts and was an obvious choice for a sabbatical. In the east and the west, conservation practices have evolved differently over the last 50 years, and Berlin, with the merging of many of its institutions, is an ideal place to see what new techniques have evolved out of the dialogue between the two approaches.

My sabbatical has been based with Albrecht Henkys and Katharina Plate in the paper conservation workshops, here at the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin. The museum's collections are a marvellously eclectic range of objects from a Trabant car, to 3-D theatrical models, to tombstones. The collections are arranged in thirteen separate museums devoted to different aspects of the history of Berlin. These museums in former times were located in both the east and the west, and include the Nikolaikirche, one of the oldest buildings in Berlin, and the Ephraim Palais, an 18th century Rococo palace housing the Print Room collection of works of art on paper, particularly rich in 19th century art. There is a busy programme of loans and exhibitions, which is facilitated by conservators of

painted wood, metals, textiles, easel paintings and paper.

Albrecht Henkys and Katharina Plate do a fantastic job with the wide variety of paper and parchment objects that pass through their studio. They work hard to raise the profile of the unique collections of the Stadtmuseum, (the reconstruction of the Nikolakirche with its displays of artefacts and religious art from the middle ages is Albrecht's particular passion) and they encourage many students and interns of paper conservation to work with them. Verena Hammer has worked there for the last nine months gaining the additional experience she needed to achieve a place on the diploma at Cologne. German conservation training is so thorough that Verena's position of having spent a year with a bookbinders and two years in museum and archives before sitting her diploma entrance exam is not unusual. Other paper conservation diplomas are run in Stuttgart and Hildesheim, and here in Berlin there is a course in the conservation of photographs and film.

I too have learnt a lot from Albrecht and Katharina. Part of my time has been spent researching and carrying out a particular project, and part of my time gathering information and sharing ideas about different materials and techniques. Albrecht has a special interest in drawings, particularly pastels, and has taught and published widely on this subject. He encouraged me to work on four discoloured, degraded chalk drawings by the 19th century Berlin artist, Franz Krüger. It was a pleasure for me, being removed from exhibition deadlines with plenty of time to experiment with and finish a treatment well. New to me was a method of washing paper using a capillary fleece material, originally developed for rapidly channelling away moisture when laying asphalt for roadworks. It took much trial and error, overcome largely due to Katharina's wealth of advice and



Albrecht Henkys, Alice Powell, and Verena Hammer with an early test for washing paper with a capillary fleece, in the paper conservation wet room at the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin.



Works framed-up, ready for exhibition, in the mounting and framing room of the Stadtmuseum.

suggestions, to get a balance between the fleece carrying water effectively under a drawing, and the paper and media not becoming too wet. It proved quite effective for washing a graphite drawing with white gouache highlights, and this method is a promising new addition to the limited possibilities for washing works containing vulnerable media.

Berlin is a thriving cultural capital with, it feels to me, many more public galleries, museums, concert halls and dance spaces than London.

Exhibitions are beautifully presented, with simply designed spaces and a minimal hang of artworks. With few distractions and discreet labelling, viewing a work of art is quite an intimate experience, and careful lighting shows up every nuance of a piece of sculpture or a drawing but will, of course, also show every fault or damage. There is a wide network of paper conservators working in museums, libraries, archives and private studios in Berlin and Potsdam. Information is shared through a newsletter published in German and English, by IADA (Internationalen Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Archiv-, Bibliotheks- und Graphikrestauratoren), and once a month, initiated by Albrecht Henkys, a Restauratorenstammtisch evening takes place for informal talks, visits and discussion. Through this I received invitations to visit other studios, attend exhibition openings and met old Camberwell colleagues.

One particularly interesting visit for me was to the papermaking workshops of Gangolf Ulbricht. Gangolf has worked with artists and

conservators to develop special handmade papers using antique paper moulds, beaten flax, and pure cotton and linen rags. His Gossamer tissue, made from kozo and mitsumata fibres grown in northern Japan, is extremely thin (2 gsm) with considerable strength. When pasted onto a repair it is nothing short of invisible. His largest handmade paper developed for relief printing is a staggering 1½ x 4½ metres, and next year there are plans to make one 2 x 5 metres.

In the Orangerie, in the lakeside gardens of Frederick the Great in Potsdam, there is currently an excellent exhibition 'Marmor, Stein und Eisen bricht'. This has been put together by the conservators of the Schloss Sanssouci about their work with the art and artefacts found in the houses and gardens of the royal palaces. After the exhibition, we visited Irene Hesselbarth and Wibke Schneider and were able to see how everything needed for their paper conservation studio had been fitted creatively into the small rooms of an 18th century listed building, the Neues Palais at Sanssouci. Particularly innovative was their modification of washing sinks with showers and drainage to allow continual rinsing of an object after bleaching. The Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin is housed on two sites, one on Potsdamer Straße, and one on Unter den Linden, where Julia Bispinck, the chief conservator, showed me around the conservation studios. I was shown some of the fine work they have been doing with their rare and valuable books and in particular restoring and housing both Beethoven's and

Mozart's musical manuscripts.

I was fortunate enough also to be invited to spend a few weeks in two private conservation studios, with Kerstin Häussermann, and with Gesine Siedler and Gemma Caney at Papierrestaurierung Schröder Caney Siedler. Kerstin's studio is in a beautiful, high-ceilinged, grand Kreuzberg flat, with large bench tops for pressing and a balcony for sun bleaching. There was enough space in the studios to also accommodate two students completing their final diploma projects. Kerstin specialises in contemporary works of art on paper as well as drawings and watercolours and had some choice objects to work on. Gesine and Gemma specialise in oversize works, particularly wallpapers and paintings in churches and great houses. They have a modern studio designed to be flexible to accommodate large objects, and a plethora of advice about solutions to complex problems.

It has been a fascinating six months in the wonderful city of Berlin, and I would like to thank everyone who has helped me to achieve this. In particular I thank my two hosts, Albrecht Henkys and Katharina Plate, for sharing their enthusiasm and knowledge and for their generous hospitality. I would also like to thank the Anna Plowden Trust for their assistance and Guildhall Library for granting me the time to take up this offer of a sabbatical.

Alice Powell works both half-time for the Tate and freelance for the Royal Academy, National Portrait Gallery, and Bristol City Museums and Art Gallery.

in practice

DIARY OF THE LONG MARCH TOWARDS BETTER CARE FOR SHEFFIELD PLATE

by **Dominique Rogers ACR, preventive conservator, and Ben Corcoran, Conservation Student, London Metropolitan University.**

October 2005: 'We want it cleaned and repaired to put it on display and we want it now'. This note, arriving with a crate of tea caddies, ostrich eggs and feather boas, does not give the leisure to get away from 'tried & tested' methods of treatment. We did not have a t & t method for the Sheffield plate candlestick, which was part of the lot. A search of the web and literature did not provide a solution either. So the quest started.

Sheffield Plate was invented in the mid 18th century as a silver substitute and was made by fusing sterling silver to copper. The material was then formed into a sheet and made up into a variety of objects. Subsequently a variant with silver on both sides of the copper was developed, so that objects with visible interiors, such as bowls, could be made. Later, the discovery of the electroplating process, though often called Sheffield plate, signalled the end of the genuine article.

The candlestick had reached the point where the copper is showing through just enough that you know it is Sheffield. The standard policy at the museum for cleaning silver is Silver Dip, as we do not usually worry about preserving the 'patina'. We sometimes use Autosol' or Pre-lim' on cotton buds and rinse it with white spirit. Goddard Foam' is efficient and kind to the patina (as long as you rinse well; all these mild abrasives do leave a residue that eventually clogs fine details). But before doing any of that, I follow the wisdom of Plenderleith, Sotheby's and others who advise that 'all you need to clean silver is soap and water' and do just that with a drop of Synperonic S7, rinsing thoroughly in warm water and drying very well. (If it is an intricate piece, dry a few minutes in an oven at about 40°C with the door open and then polish with soft paper towels.)

1 November 2005 The Sheffield piece still sits in the lab as it is quite tarnished and I am reluctant to do any abrasive polishing or silver dip (it is possible to control it, but can be tricky). I see an ad for Silver Plater in one of the catalogues that seem endlessly to hit my doorstep and order some in case of emergency, I could apply it only over the remaining silver and it is surely possible to remove it by polishing with Autosol' or Pre-lim', i.e. it must be reversible.

3 November 2005 Posted a message on ConsdistList, just in case somebody comes up with a good idea or a justified: 'do not do it'. The 'plater' arrives and I try to get the Safety Data Sheets from the sellers, with no success.

November/ December 2005 The List produces a stream of very sound advice on cleaning and storage but nothing on the original query.

The company that had sold me the plater still cannot supply the SDS despite phone calls and e-mails. A look on the web at www.alldatasheet.com does not yield anything;

February 2006 Washing the candlestick with detergent has worked well, so I forget the plater approach.

April 2006 In addition to the candlestick, I am responsible elsewhere for some Sheffield meat covers, which are suffering from similar problems: any more polishing would be too much. I go to inspect them. Horror and malediction! Something has gone very wrong with the air filtering system. All the covers, whether waxed or unwaxed, have gone a sickly iridescent yellow, despite the fact that they have nestled all winter in acid free tissue and Tyvek as per the four previous years when no tarnish appeared whatsoever. I do, seriously now, have to find a solution. I could store them in charcoal cloth bags for the winter at a cost of roughly £500. I must make sure that it is worth it. The other problem is: even if it is protecting the covers during the winter, it is not going to do anything while they are on open display, if the pollution prevention system really has packed up. Also, the yellow tinge is just the herald of the black tarnish and I have to make them bright and beautiful again. I hope when I come back in July I will have sorted out the plater or something else.

13 April 2006 Ben Corcoran, a student in conservation who volunteers at Ipswich museum, offers to do tests with the plater. I am concerned about the lack of SDS but decide that gloves and goggles should be ok, as the box states that it is water based, non-toxic, non-flammable, made without solvents, phosphate or ammonia and advises protecting hands and clothing with plastic against stains and spillage.



Brass strip before and after treatment with Silver Plater



Ben's notes

The 'method of use' from the instruction booklet was followed, using cotton wool in place of the sponge provided in the kit, which comes also with a fluffy duster. It seems that the sponge would be more wasteful of the product than cotton wool. It was applied pressing firmly and using tight circular motions with the ball of cotton wool.

Three objects were chosen to serve as tests: a copper pipe, a clean brass strip and a very corroded Thai 900 standard silver box lent by the owner for the tests. All the objects were degreased with IMS.

- After three applications of the silver plater a good layer of silver was achieved on the brass sample.
- Six applications were necessary on the copper sample.
- Three applications with cotton, gave a good layer of silver over the patterned surface of the lid of the silver box.
- Only one application on the flat surface of the box was necessary.

While it is easy to apply the silver plater using the cotton wool swabs, it is difficult to control exactly where the silver goes on the surface, as the plater spreads around.

The application of the plater was easier to control when using a brush than it was when using cotton swabs. However it was more difficult to cover all of the areas of dark tarnish within the recesses in the surface.

In order to achieve a good, solid layer of silver over the surface with the brush being moved in circular motions, four applications of the silver plater were required. This was probably due to not being able to apply as much pressure as when using the cotton swabs.

With the swabs, a small amount of white residue was left around the edges of the treated area. When using the brush, a thin layer of white residue was left over most of the cleaned surface.

The majority of the residue was easily removed by buffing firmly with a dry cloth. Any residue that was left in the recesses of the patterned surface of the box lid was removed by rinsing the lid in distilled water and brushing the area lightly with a short sable brush.

Removing Silver Plater

The layer of silver could be removed from the copper and brass objects by using Autosol' applied with cotton swabs with moderate pressure being applied.

All sounds good to me.

12 June 2006 I contact David Edge at the Wallace Collection to get some advice on charcoal cloth. After many years of experience, he does not have a very high opinion of it: it works with some items but doesn't with others, especially when there is a mixture of metals. Now, I understand, the policy at the Wallace is to lacquer everything. You clean it off every 10 years and it keeps everything shiny. I have always been afraid of lacquer as if it is not perfectly applied the risk of preferential corrosion is great and I do not have spraying facilities. The Wallace kindly invite me to a crash course on lacquering with a brush. Great!

23 June I post my query on plater on the General Metal Group Forum on the Icon website that I have just discovered.

24 June Simon Moore, ACR has posted a useful answer to my question: 'This was manufactured some years ago (1980s) by a firm called Sheffco and it uses a chemical

electro-deposition method of depositing silver on suitable clean metal surfaces. You can also build up layers but each layer is extremely thin so that after 25 applications you will only have a layer about 0.3 microns thick!

Once it tarnishes and is cleaned with a rouge-based silver polish the layer is often partly or totally removed and needs re-application.'

Good, no great scream of horror at the idea. It also allows me to find the product somewhere else that will probably be able to produce safety data sheets. It confirms the tests Ben has been carrying out except that the product must have improved subsequently since one application does the job on flat silver surfaces.

7 July The Icon Metal Group forum comes up trumps again with another reassuring message from Simon Harris, BEng (Hons) in Materials Science and Technology: 'With the caveat that I am speaking from a background of working as a metallurgist in precious metals, I would say that your solution is the best way forward.'

Copper pipe before and after treatment with Silver Plater





Thai box before and after partial treatment with Silver Plater:
Treated areas are shown boxed

As you are probably aware, the "Silver Plater" solutions and their equivalent products are far inferior to commercial silver plating – inferior here refers to the thickness of silver deposited and the tenacity of the bond with the surface. Commercial plating deposits a layer several microns thick on the object using a cyanide based process. The solutions for home use are much less toxic (!) and rely on the natural electrochemical cell set up between the base metal and the silver to reduce a layer of silver ions on the surface back to metallic silver. Once a layer only a few atoms thick is created then there is no electrochemical effect and the plating process stops.

BUT, for your purposes, given the wishes of your client to have shiny objects on display, then it should prove sufficient. Any attempt to remove the newly plated layer

with silver polish is almost certainly going to remove microscopic amounts of the original metals, but again, given your client's requirements, the only other solution is to strip and re-plate the complete item, which is definitely the more destructive option.'

1 August Back to the meat covers and I decide to apply the plater treatment.

With the help of keen conservation assistant, Linda Kearns, we dismount the handles, remove the wax from the waxed covers with Stoddard solvent and wash them in warm water and synperonic. We degrease the unwaxed ones just with IMS. Dry everything with paper towels.

Linda applies the plater only on the flat surfaces, as the recessed areas of the mouldings can remain tarnished without affecting the overall brilliance of the objects.

It all worked marvellously. We used about 50 ml of product and it took 90 minutes per cover. I revisited the covers a month later and they were still shining happily.

For various reasons I have not yet had my crash course in lacquering. I will see how the covers behave during the winter to determine what to do next.

The plater does seem to be an acceptable solution rather than removing more metal by polishing. Now, if anybody out there has another opinion.....



Sheffield meat cover before and after treatment with Silver Plater



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zoe@museumsassociation.org, tel 020 7426 6969

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

Modern Materials in Collections: Scotland (MMiC:S) Network Launch

9 November, St.Andrews.

Venue: University of St Andrews.

Hosted by: Museums, Galleries and Collections Institute,
School of Art History

Do you have any plastics, nylon, acrylics, rubber, CDs, DVDs or synthetics in your collections? Are you thinking about collecting a contemporary sculpture made from perspex? Or acquiring a large donation of Irn Bru cans? If so, a new subject specialist network focusing on modern materials in collections will interest you. The MMiC:S Network is open to all and will cover issues of particular interest to people who manage and develop collections, including volunteers, curators and conservators.

The launch meeting will include a keynote speaker and several case studies, illustrating modern materials and the issues they raise in different collections.

There will also be opportunity for participants to discuss and exchange views

The MMiC:S Network aims to share interdisciplinary, cross-sector experience and knowledge to:

- Raise awareness of modern materials
- Improve confidence in collecting, handling, display and storage
- Inform decision-making for acquisition, care and disposal

The launch meeting is your opportunity to shape the network's development and contribute to these highly topical areas.

If you are interested in attending or wish for more information, please contact Dr Anita Quye

(email: a.quye@nms.ac.uk, tel: 0131 247 4376) or

Emma Roodhouse (email:

emma.roodhouse@falkirk.gov.uk, tel. 01324 504689).

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: B 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.

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

ICON CARE OF COLLECTIONS GROUP AND METALS GROUP CONFERENCE

Don't Panic: Dealing with Hazardous Materials in Collections

21–22 November, Birmingham.

Venue: Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

Are objects bad for your health? What lurks in your store room? Do you know what to do with an unexploded bomb? This two day conference will highlight issues of risk, solutions to storage, transport, display and disposal. The days will be focusing on organic and inorganic materials, covering everything from radiation, asbestos, lead, mercury, medical collections, explosives and emergency planning.

There will be speakers from the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Science Museum, Royal Armouries, National Museums of Scotland, Imperial War Museum, Private Conservators, English Heritage, National Museums of Wales, Plus Care of Collections and Metals Group.

Cost: 2 days @ £150.00, 1 day @ £75.00.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Emma Roodhouse, Falkirk Museum Workshop & Store, 7–11 Abbotsinch Road, Abbotsinch Industrial Estate, Grangemouth, FK3 9UX, Tel: 01324 504689, email: emma.roodhouse@falkirk.gov.uk

AHRC AND CCLRC

Looking Forward to the Past: Science and Heritage

28 November, London

Venue: Tate Modern.

The aim of the meeting is to stimulate collaborations between those researching the materials of our cultural heritage in art, archaeology, the built environment and conservation.

Visit the Icon website for a link to further information.

3rd Symposium Preserving Archaeological Remains in situ (PARIS3)

7–9 December, Amsterdam.

Venue: The Institute for Geo- and Bioarchaeology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Preserving Archaeological Remains in situ is emerging as a new discipline in archaeology since the Valletta treaty called for "the conservation and maintenance of the archaeological heritage, preferably in situ". This means that archaeological sites should be actively taken care of instead of being left to the burial environment.

Topics for discussion will include:

Degradation Processes, Site Preservation and the Burial Environment, Preservation in Context – the Regional, National and International Setting, Two Decades of PARIS.

For further information follow the link on the icon website or contact Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, IGBA – PARIS3, De Boelelaan 1085, 1081 HV Amsterdam, e-mail: paris2006@falw.vu.nl

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 Co-ordinator, ICOM-CC-Wood, Furniture and Lacquer, Professor, Institute for Coptic Studies in Cairo. email: hhnnc@yahoo.com

ICON BOOK & PAPER GROUP

Why Coaching and Mentoring Individuals through Fires and Floods is important

23 January (6pm), London.

Venue: The October Gallery, Londonia House, 24 Old Gloucester Street, Bloomsbury, London WC1N 3AL.

Speaker: Helene Donnelly – Forensic paper conservator, founder and director of Data and Archival Damage Control Centre, London.

Helene has been involved in over 1500 disaster related incidents. She believes that too often we save the paper and the books from the flood but damage the people in the process. We have coaches for football and tennis, and for just about everything else in life. People are now turning to Helene to coach and mentor them through their disaster incident. She will explain what happens to individuals when there is no-one to help them. Cost: £6 (students £3, with card) – correct money at the door please.

Dates of Forthcoming Evening Lectures in 2007

15 May – Architectural Drawings – Speaker: Dr. Aeli Roberts.

16 October – Photographic Conservation – Speaker: Susie Clark.

Full details and titles of lectures to be announced shortly. Put the dates in your diaries now !

For further information on this lecture and other Icon Book & Paper Group lectures please contact Joanna Payne on email: jw@joannapayne.com

ICON STONE & WALL PAINTINGS GROUP

Problem Stone Day

Venue: New Armouries, HM Tower of London

This will be a formal conference, with the intention of a publication to follow. The stones to be covered are Clunch, Purbeck, Magnesium limestone, Reigate and Septaria. Although some of these stones have had individual days dedicated to them previously, this meeting will bring together a selection of professionals (geologists, scientists, conservators, architects, etc) who would be interested in learning about them and sharing the dilemmas of their conservation – all with a view to outlining future potential research topics.

Further details will follow..

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.

Conservation Science 2007

10–11 May 2007, Italy.

Venue: the Politecnico di Milano.

The Institute of Conservation Science, in collaboration with the Centre for Conservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage of the Politecnico di Milano and the Department of Food Science, Technology and Microbiology (DiSTAM) of the University of Milan, is organising an international conference, building on the earlier ICS conference held at the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, Conservation Science 2002.

Conservation science is an international discipline which involves a great deal of international collaboration among scientists coming from all over the world. The venue has been chosen to reflect the links between the sciences and the humanities and between architects and scientists. The Conference will open with a plenary session 'From science laboratory to conservation practice'. The discussion on what defines conservation science will be key to the programme, and the opening session will include several short, invited presentations.

Registration and an informal reception will take place on 9 May, at the University of Milan at 6:30 pm.

A post-conference conservation visit in the area is planned, in addition to a post-conference tour of the spring scenery round nearby Lake Como.

ICON ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP AND THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Decorated Surfaces on Ancient Egyptian Objects: Technology, Deterioration and Conservation

6–8 September 2007, Cambridge

The main focus of this conference will be Ancient Egyptian decorated surfaces on any substrate. The conference will be held on 7–8 September, preceded on 6 September by a day of small-group workshops and practical seminars.

Call for Papers

Papers and posters on aspects of technology, deterioration and conservation are invited and could include also broader issues of preservation, storage and display. We are particularly keen to include review papers on some of the complex problems posed by these materials.

For further details please contact Julie Dawson (jd110@cam.ac.uk) or Susi Pancaldo (spancaldo@museumoflondon.org.uk)

11th IADA Congress – 50th Anniversary of IADA

17–21 September 2007, Vienna, Austria.

Focusing on the latest developments in the profession such as collection risk management, outcomes of scientific research projects, art technology and ethical considerations in conservation.

The sixth biennial North American Textile Conservation Conference (NATCC) will focus on theory and practice of preventive conservation.

Provisional title
Details and Call for Papers later

TRAINING

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION FOR CONSERVATOR-RESTORERS (PACR) EVENTS

Introduction to PACR

14 November, London

30 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.

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

UCL and English Heritage Short Course Programme

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

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.

6–9 November Conservation and repair of stone masonry

27–30 November Conservation and repair of timber

4–6 December The historic interior: commissioning and managing conservation research

22–25 January Conservation of stone surfaces and detail

5–8 February Specifying conservation works

5–8 March Conservation and repair of architectural metalwork

19–22 March Conservation and repair of brick, terracotta, and flint masonry

6–9 November Conservation Skills: sharpening edge tools

18–25 February An introduction to the conservation of transport collections

26–30 March Art and object Handling

For more information contact The Admissions Office, West Dean College, West Dean, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0QZ, tel: 01243 811301, email: bcm@westdean.org.uk

Venue: Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte and São Paulo.

At the end of the course, participants will be able to recognize all the materials and media in their audiovisual collections, to identify risks, and make informed choices for preservation and access. They will have improved their skills to communicate effectively across disciplines and to work in a team.

Application deadline: 10 January 2007. A maximum of 20 participants will be selected. Cost: £900 (travel and accommodation not included). Please visit the Icon website for more details and a link to the application form.

intervention

A COMPROMISING PROFESSION?

Professional 'ethics' and contemporary conservation

Edward Cheese, Book Conservator at Cambridge Colleges' Library Conservation Consortium

The E.C.C.O. professional guidelines contain the following decisive statement:

'Conservation-Restoration is distinct from related fields (eg art and crafts) in that its primary aim is the preservation of cultural heritage, as opposed to the creation of new objects or maintaining or repairing objects *in a functional sense*.' [Italics mine.]

In one sentence, book conservation at least (my own field) is neatly defined out of existence: those of us who spend our time repairing books so that they can function mechanically in a safe way are breaking the 'ethical' code, despite the fact that restoration includes the idea of repair – see the *OED* definition. Indeed, one starts to wonder which object that has no function whatever – not only in its original sense, but in its very existence as a piece of 'cultural heritage' – is ever conserved. One could argue that the very act of conserving any object implies that it has function which needs to be maintained, not only in the mechanical sense as with books.

It is not difficult to see how this problematic situation came into being, as those reacting to the excesses of restoration in the nineteenth century needed a manifesto to rally to, but it is a grave mistake to cling on to it. 'Conservation', the young profession, has made the mistake of defining itself in predominantly negative terms, by setting itself against the nineteenth-century trade practices of restoration. The most breathtakingly thoughtless example of this trend can be found in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (Getty Conservation Institute, 1996) where the editors explain that they 'use the word conservation (and its related terms, conservator, etc.) when modern practice is being described, and [...] retain the word restoration (and its related terms) when used in texts referring to earlier practice [...]' (When, one wonders, did modernity begin? Yesterday? At 11:42am on the 12 June, 1972? In 1300?) Although one can sympathise with the desire to distance the profession from the worst excesses of heavy-handed restorations in any age, to discount repair/restoration out of hand leaves conservation as a purely hypothetical subject, and leads to the sort of critically worthless, non-thinking attitude quoted above in the texts which purport to set themselves up as the seminal articles of a profession. Restoration has become a

pejorative term: it would be a courageous Accredited Conservator-Restorer who advertised him/herself as a Restorer rather than a Conservator!

The current definition of 'Conservation' seems to be shackling together diametrically opposed ideas. On the one hand the definition of the word has been narrowed to its purest sense – 'to conserve' in the sense of maintaining the status quo of the object without actually interfering with it – while on the other it has been broadened to cover all the interventions and treatments, from consolidation through to full-scale restoration, that, no matter how carefully carried out, compromise the value of the object as a historical document. The only part of the *OED* definition that the two positions share is the 'view to later use'. The conservator is always something of a frustrated idealist, as conservation-restoration treatments are always a compromise between conflicting needs.

But the Ethical guidelines do not allow for compromise or debate, which must be the life-blood of conservation, and threaten to compromise those who carry out bench work at all. If conservators decide that they cannot work within the confines of the rigid principles, their professionalism is implicitly called into question; if they continue to carry out their repair/restoration work (for that is what conservation treatments are) while signed up to the Ethical principles, they compromise their professional integrity, that of the conservation field itself, and make a nonsense of the idea of professionalism in doing so. I suggest that the Ethical guidelines are no longer helpful to Conservation, and that we would do better to have the confidence to replace them by a statement of guiding ideals which also acknowledge the need for compromise, and work hard to formulate a list of questions, a critical framework, for conservators to use in their decision-making processes which will encourage energising debate and the rigorous critical judgement inherent to true professionalism, rather than borrowing the assumed authority of formulaic directions.

This article draws on ideas developed in an extended essay written as part of the Postgraduate Diploma in the Conservation-Restoration of Books and Library Materials at West Dean College, UK.



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