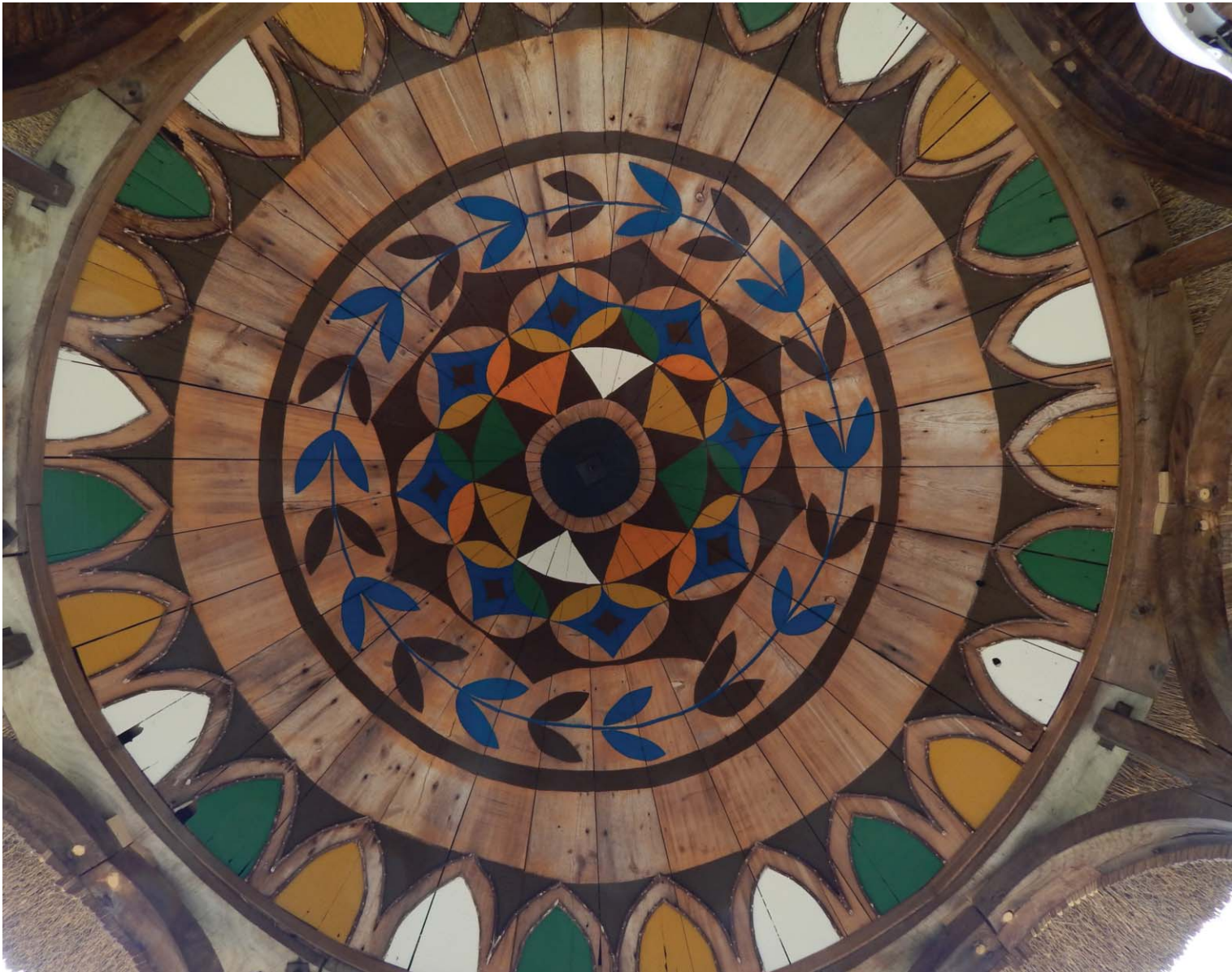


Icon NEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • JANUARY 2015 • ISSUE 56



Recovering a rare Regency garden

Also in this issue

Hosting a student placement

New trustees come on Board

Behind the scenes of *Mr Turner*

conservation register

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THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

JANUARY 2015 Issue 56



From the Editor

Our first issue of 2015 is jam-packed: from our retiring Chair's thoughtful reflections on Icon past and present, to news from the National Heritage Science Forum, in which Icon members play a full part. You can meet all the new trustees who took up their posts following the AGM at the beginning of

December and welcome new members, too. Reading Rob Payton's article, I was immensely impressed by the thought and care that goes into hosting a student placement at the Museum of London and in a lighter mood I enjoyed the glimpse into the world of film-making which Jacqueline Riding gives us in the piece about her role in the making of Mike Leigh's *Mr Turner*.

And there is lots more besides. So my thanks go to all those of you over the past year who sent me news of things to include in the magazine or put pen to paper themselves to write articles. And if you haven't yet done so, why not have a go? You are bound to have something interesting to write about because that is the nature of conservation.

Happy New Year to you all!

Lynette Gill



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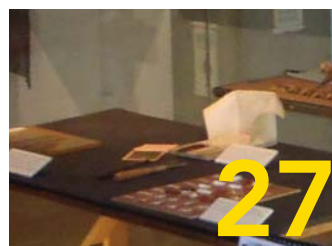
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After conservation work by Crick
Smith – the University of Lincoln: the
ceiling of the Indian Kiosk, one of
several romantic little buildings and
structures in the recently restored
Regency Swiss Garden in
Bedfordshire. Photo: Phillipa
McDonnell 2014

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professional update

From our recent Chair

THOUGHTS ON HANDING OVER THE REINS

Photo: Matt Wreford



In a change from our normal CEO column, Juergen Vervoorst, until just recently Chair of Icon's Board of Trustees, reflects on his time on the Board, Icon's history and the recent Annual General Meeting

After two and a half years as Acting Chair and Chair of Icon and six years as Trustee, December 1 was my last day as Board member and obviously as Chair. Not necessarily because I wanted to, but because after two

terms as Trustee I had to stand down; this is good, because the Board and the organisation thrive on that change. It stops us from being stagnant and it stops Trustees – and Chairs for that matter – from taking personal ownership of an organisation that they are only supposed to guide and to lead.

These six years have been an incredible journey for me personally and professionally, and I believe for Icon as well. When I first joined the Board in 2008, Icon was only three years old. In management speak we were probably still in our 'forming phase', procedures still to be established, direction to be found and defined, purpose to be understood, various predecessor organisations still to be brought closer together and as a new Trustee, I struggled to understand my role and how I could usefully contribute.

At the time we were just about to enter the 'storming phase'. We acquired a new Chief Executive and, as it turned out, relationships broke down between different parts of the organisation and external friends of Icon. Our financial situation was not healthy either. Fortunately, we'd elected Amber Xavier-Rowe as new Chair and Alison Richmond was then appointed as Icon's new Chief Executive (CEO). To support the CEO position, we'd received a three-year grant from the Clothworkers' Foundation, which proved to be invaluable. It was Amber and Alison who held it together at that difficult time, along with a few strong, loyal and hard working Trustees who held their nerve. To them we are deeply indebted that Icon still exists.

My role as Chair was an easier one, well, kind of. I only had to see us through the 'norming phase', as we had already started to work better together, and over the last two and a half to three years we have achieved a tremendous amount.

Financially, as you can see from our Annual Accounts, we are a reasonably healthy organisation. We have managed to build up our financial reserves to almost the amount that we would need to run the organisation for half a year, even if there wasn't any income at all, and that despite the fact that by now the Clothworkers' funding for the CEO's post has run out. This

is simply because as an organisation we are trusted again, and funders invest and invest repeatedly in us. I say simply, but really that is Alison's and her team's success, through instilling the confidence funders need to have in us and by delivering what we promised to deliver. The recent new relationship with our corporate sponsor of the Conservation Awards, which has been made possible through Ian Clark ACR, is just another example of how we go from strength to strength.

We have had a significant and complicated re-structuring of our office, and I strongly believe that the service now provided to our membership and the public is outstanding, from membership relationship management to accreditation, from business management to our Education and Skills Strategy, from fundraising to conferences, from publishing our Journal to running Icon News and Iconnect.

We have strengthened our standing as the voice for conservation on various occasions. Just last year we have been heard at the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) on the *English Heritage New Model Consultation*; English Heritage consultation on *National Heritage Protection Plan*; joint consultation on the *Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland* and the *Merger of Historic Scotland and Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland*; *Historic Environment Scotland Bill* call for written evidence by the Scottish Government Department of Education and Culture; and *Heritage Bill Wales*.

We have worked on a new Code of Conduct for and owned by Icon, something which, as a professional body, we have been in urgent need of, and which just recently has been overwhelmingly endorsed by our members. I want to use this opportunity to thank Lizzie Neville and her working group for their incredible commitment and their phenomenal amount of work to bring this together.

But we have also had very stormy waters to manoeuvre. Closing down the Chantry Library was, and still is, a very difficult decision and process, one that the Board of Trustees didn't take lightly and one that continues to be strongly contested by parts of the membership. Alison is still looking for the best solution for its future, and you will be kept informed of the outcome, but we simply couldn't sustain the library in the future in its previous format.

Reviewing our Journal caused a lot of concern, and I can only thank Lara Artemis and her Task and Finish Group for their outstanding work. We need to wait for the outcome of a business case review and should soon be ready to enter negotiations for a new format of a journal that will be fit for purpose for years to come and will meet our membership's expectations and raise the journal's profile at the same time.

I think Icon is now in the strongest position it ever has been. Two years ago I set out to improve Icon's governance structure and, with the help of Carole Milner (former Trustee), Alison Richmond (CEO), Simon Green (Icon's Business Manager), and Francis Downing (Chair of Group Chairs) and the Board's support, we have significantly reformed the way we operate. We have much clearer structures in place, relationships are better defined and strengthened; procedures are simplified and don't get so much in the way of

what we actually want and need to do; responsibilities of individual parts of the organisation are well defined and allow for much improved performance and we have improved transparency significantly.

But there is still, and always will be, a lot of work to do. The AGM and some of the passionate discussions we had there demonstrated that it is time to take a fresh look at our membership needs and this is underway. We always need to improve communication with our members. Changing Icon's website will be a major step in that direction and plans for that are progressing well.

We are now approaching the end of our current Strategic Plan – a plan with many weaknesses, and a plan that was the result of discussions at a very difficult time for Icon – and now is the time to think again very carefully about what Icon should focus on in future and how it can best achieve what we set out to do in alignment with our charitable purpose.

Our achievements to date – I can only recommend that you read our Annual Report and follow updates in Iconnect and Icon News or on our social media to see the breadth of these – are remarkable and have only been possible with a formidable Board, where trust is at the forefront, an excellent office team and a dedicated and committed membership, which is willing to participate and volunteer.

We have created an organisation that works with integrity, is inclusive, is forward and outward looking, is ambitious, collaborative and generous, and, to get back to my management allegory, is now, at last, really ready to enter the 'Performing Phase'. It will still be challenging, there are and always will be different expectations of our organisation amongst our members, but let's do that together, as membership, Groups, office and Board. Let's have open, honest and respectful discussions and let us work together on building mutual trust. Icon is too small a body to be disjointed, and we mustn't let our passion for conservation get in the way of working constructively. Icon needs to pull in one direction and then we will be strong for our members, for the public, for the cultural heritage sector – for conservation.

I have very much enjoyed working on the Board over the last six years and I can only encourage members to think about standing for the Board or for Chair. It's a rewarding experience and it allows one not only to understand how Icon works, but also to make a difference.

I would like to thank Alison, her team, the Board and the Groups and the numerous volunteers from across the organisation for all the work we have been able to achieve together over the last few years and I would like to thank all of you for the trust you have put in the Board and me. And finally, I would like to wish all of you and Icon the very best for the future: it should be bright!

THE AGM

Icon's Annual General Meeting on 1 December last year was a lively affair attended by close on a hundred members. As well as the formal business of the day and the Chief Executive's report on the events and activities of 2013/14, there was

spirited discussion about the needs of members, especially those in the independent sector; the setting and enforcement of salary guidelines and the need to revisit Icon's Strategic Plan. In his last act as Chair of the Board of Trustees, Juergen Vervoort gave a thoughtful and wide-ranging speech, much of which is echoed in his article above.

The evening concluded with a personal account of last year's fire and its aftermath at the Glasgow School of Art, given by David Mitchell, Director of Conservation at Historic Scotland. Despite the terrible subject matter, David's talk was fascinating, illuminated not just by the photographs but also by the vivid word pictures, conjuring up in telling detail the reality of the scene: the aggression of the fire, the tangible humidity, the thumping headaches generated by off-gassing foams and plastics, the dripping plastic light fittings, the purchase of every plastic box in Ikea, the superiority of tissue over bubble wrap ('spawn of Satan') for protection of objects, the Mackintosh collection store hanging in the air as the floor was burned out...

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that the talk was so lively: David is, after all, the son of Jim Mitchell, who wrote our Paisley Fountain serial last year. We hope that David too will find time to write up his experiences: the many lessons learned from the catastrophe need to be recorded for the benefit of anyone else unfortunate enough to have to cope with such a disaster.

NEW JOINT CHAIRS FOR ICON

Following a recruitment process for the post of Chair of Icon's Board of Trustees, the Board Nominations Committee was unable to recommend anyone to be appointed, although the process was felt to be sound. The Board agreed that the approach should be reviewed so that a second round would be successful and this would take time. So in the meantime, the Board agreed that Vice Chairs Nigel Dacre and Caroline Peach should be appointed as interim Joint Chairs until the end of June 2015.

Caroline Peach



Nigel Dacre



OUR NEW CODE OF CONDUCT

The membership approved the new Code of Conduct in a ballot of all Full and Accredited Members of Icon in October. From 1 January 2015 the new Code will come into force and the ECCO Guidelines will no longer apply. The new Code is a positive step for Icon and a benefit to members. It provides a clear statement about what constitutes professional behaviour. In situations where there is a dispute, the code of conduct allows both parties to see clearly whether the principles of the code have been met or not. The Code of Conduct is more visibly aligned with the Professional Standards, which are now adjusted to be read alongside the Code.

Currently the Icon Disciplinary Code (which is the current complaints procedure, not to be confused with the new Code of Conduct) is being reviewed by the Professional Standards and Development Committee. The purpose of the review is to create a clearer process that will allow for resources to be used more effectively. We have been advised by our lawyer that the new Code can be used with the current disciplinary process until such time as we have a new process in place. The new process should be agreed and implemented in the Spring.

All three documents, the new Code of Conduct, the Disciplinary Code and the Professional Standards are available on our website at <http://icon.org.uk>. Go to About Icon and look under Formal Documents.

ICON CONSERVATION AWARDS 2015

Did you know that you can send in an expression of interest without any commitment to apply? You can do this easily through the 'contact us' page on the website. <http://conservationawards.org.uk/contact-us/>

We are very keen to hear from you if you are thinking about applying. We are also very keen to follow some of the projects as they develop to generate interest from the public.

The Awards website will also give you all the information you need to find out which of the six awards is the right one for you to apply for (you can only apply for one!). Don't forget that the deadline for applications is 15 May 2015. <http://conservationawards.org.uk>

THE NEW MEMBERSHIP YEAR 2015–16 New initiatives

The next renewal cycle is just around the corner, and we've been working on a number of improvements. Here's what to look out for!

This Year's Routine

This year, your renewal package will be dispatched via post in mid-February. This will consist of a letter and invoice for those of you paying by cheque or credit card, while those of you paying by Direct Debit will receive a letter, invoice and payment confirmation document. We will be sending out a special Iconnect bulletin to let you know when packages have been mailed so you can keep an eye on the post. Once



Michael Nelles
Membership Manager

renewal fees are received (or when payment dates are confirmed, in the case of Direct Debit payers), you will automatically be sent a receipt in the post with your 2015–16 Icon Membership Card.

The Return of Membership Cards

Yes! That's right – we're bringing back annual Membership Cards!

Once again it will be easy to provide proof of membership status at Icon lectures and conferences – or to show off to friends and colleagues. Each year's card will feature a different background so it will be easy to tell the cards apart from year to year. As the cards will be issued annually upon receipt of renewal fees, they will also provide confirmation of current Icon membership to employers or grant funding bodies where this might be applicable.

An obvious next step is now to expand the benefits of the membership card beyond our own organisational borders – watch this space!

Clarity in membership status

We have conducted a review of membership categories informed by data from the Professional Associations Research Network, leading to one small change in the current structure. From 1 April 2015, Full Members will be known as Associate Members. This will bring Icon more closely into line with membership structures in similar organisations. The change also underscores the fact that the existing Accredited, Full, Graduate and Student membership categories already have 'full' benefits, meaning they receive all our publications and can vote at our Annual General Meetings.

Reaching out to new audiences

The revised 'Supporter' category

There is good news for Supporters as well. This year, we have made substantial revisions to the 'Supporter' category in a bid to attract new audiences – those interested in conservation who may not actually be conservators themselves.

Benefits for the Supporters category have been revised in line with legal definitions in the Companies Act, which states that 'Supporters' are an affiliate group but not technically members, as membership denotes voting rights. From 1 April, the subscription rate for Supporters will be reduced to just £50, for which Supporters will receive Icon News and our Iconnect e-Bulletins, but not our weekly e-Bulletin Icon Jobs. Supporters will receive Supporter Cards and will continue to qualify for discounted admission to Icon events, but they will still not be eligible to vote at Icon's AGMs. Because of the steep fee reduction, the concessionary rate for Supporter category has been discontinued.

If you are currently on the Supporter rate and would like to upgrade to 'Associate' Membership – now is the time! Simply get in touch with the membership team to discuss your options.

The New Membership Listing

A public service

With our expanding membership, we have recognised the need to provide an easy way for members of the public to confirm the veracity of claims made by service providers. This has been underscored by one or two recent cases in which we have discovered individuals professing to be PACR-Accredited who were not even Icon members!

How can the public confirm who is among us and who is not? Soon, they'll be able to go online. On 1 April 2015, we will be publishing a complete list of Icon Members and Supporters, giving name and membership type – but not contact details – in simple format on our website:

Example

DARLINGTON, Robert	Supporter
JONES, Sally	Associate Member
MARTINSIDE, Caroline	Accredited Member
PARTRIDGE, Keith	Graduate
SMITH, Ricky	Student Member

The listing will be updated regularly and this feature will also be included in the new website, which you may recall is set to launch on 1 June.

If you would not like your name published on our membership listing, please let me know via email at mnelles@icon.org.uk. There will be a further chance to opt-out in an Iconnect Special Bulletin that will be dispatched in February.

New benefits for members

Other new benefits are also in the works. At the moment, we are working on a project that will provide Associate and Accredited Members with access to a certain level of free annual HR (human resources) and legal consulting advice, included with your Icon Membership. We are hoping to have more details on this soon.

We are also working to expand our knowledge about our broader membership and supporter base with a full membership survey, set to take place this winter. It will be the first exercise of its kind since 2008, when Icon was a much different organisation. We will be interested to hear your views so we can continue to make improvements to existing practice and identify new ways to enhance the value of Icon memberships and subscriptions alike. You will be sent a link to complete the survey so please do keep an eye out!

It is set to be an exciting year ahead, so don't be the last on the block – look out for your Renewal documents!

Michael Nelles, Membership Manager

NEW SCOTTISH GRANTS SCHEME

The June Baker Trust has announced a new grants scheme dedicated to helping Scottish conservators at an early stage in their careers to make a smooth transition from education to

the workplace and establish themselves in the profession.

The scheme has been made possible thanks to the generosity of the Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust. It will run for three years alongside the existing June Baker Trust Conservation Awards scheme, with the first awards of up to £1,000 per applicant being made in May 2015.

The Scottish Emerging Conservators Grants Scheme will give grants to support conservators who are between six months and three years of qualifying and in the process of gaining their early workplace experience. Applicants need to be gaining practical experience in a Scottish conservation workplace, or can otherwise demonstrate a strong Scottish connection and commitment to conservation in Scotland.

Application forms and Guidance for Applicants are available from the Scotland Group pages on Icon's website: www.icon.org.uk/. The first closing date for applications will be **28 February 2015** with subsequent deadlines in February 2016 and 2017.

JOURNAL UPDATE

Six years and still going strong!

2014 has been a year of continuity but with the prospect of change for the *Journal*. The *Journal* itself has continued to



publish a diverse and interesting range of articles, from historic spider preparation to 1970s' rubberised garments, and including articles from Icon's PF13 conference in 2013. As articles are now published online throughout the year, there are no longer hard and fast deadlines for authors to meet for publication in a specific issue – I am open to offers from authors all year round!

In 2015, the *Journal* will continue in its current format, with the next issue in March containing articles relating to book and paper conservation (although keep your eyes open in January for electronic versions of the articles to be available online). The September issue will be the last in the *Journal's* current format, as our publishing agreement with Taylor and Francis ends in December 2015 after seven years. Therefore, early in the New Year, Icon will be tendering for a new contract for the *Journal*.

The past two years have been spent gathering information on what the *Journal* should be in the future, how it can be sustainable, vibrant, interesting, interactive and useful. The Journal Task and Finish Group set up in 2013 produced a wishlist, which was agreed in principle by the Board of Trustees and will be taken forward for discussion with publishers tendering for the *Journal's* publishing contract.

We don't know at this stage how the *Journal* will change exactly, as this will depend partly on what exciting things publishers may be able to offer. However, there are some things that we know you want from it, and these are our immovables – we want an all-colour journal, we want it online and in print, we want members to be able to access and interact with articles online easily, and we want to retain and grow the wealth and diversity of articles and authors. We will be working hard to ensure that our new publishing agreement meets the needs of our members both now and into the future.

The September 2015 issue will be the last in the current format after seven years. How has conservation changed in those seven years? Has there been a sea change in conservation philosophy? How have worldwide legislation changes affected the range of treatment (and non-treatment) options available in your area of practice? Is the sustainability agenda reaching far enough into conservation and heritage practice? What are the trends developing into the next seven years? And would you like to write an article about it!? If you would like to discuss a potential article, please contact me on journal@icon.org.uk Although the contract with our current publisher will end in December 2015, the *Journal* will continue to accept articles throughout the year. Any articles that are not published by December 2015 will be taken over into a new publishing agreement, so please continue to send your articles!

Janet Berry

Editor, Journal of the Institute of Conservation

NATIONAL HERITAGE SCIENCE FORUM

Celebrating a year of achievement

The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) held its first evening event for members and friends on 11 November. Over forty people gathered in the prestigious surroundings of the new World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre at the British Museum to celebrate the Forum's first successful year.

The NHSF was established in 2013 to advance understanding of the heritage through the application of science, and foster collaboration between the producers and users of heritage science research. Setting up the Forum was part of the follow-up to a 2006 report from the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology, alongside the development of a national strategy for heritage science and the Science and Heritage research programme.

Forum members and friends were welcomed by David Saunders, Keeper of Conservation and Scientific Research at The British Museum, who drew parallels between the new Centre and the NHSF. Both had developed over a seven-year timespan. Both had a similar ethos in regarding science as an integral part of cultural heritage, and had collaboration at their heart. The Centre represented a major investment in conservation and scientific research with a generous three thousand square metres of space designed to promote 'conversations around objects'.

Baroness Sharp of Guildford, Honorary President of NHSF,

praised the encouraging progress made in response to the report of the Select Committee, which she chaired. The Committee's aim was to encourage all the diverse elements involved in heritage science to come together, and it was pleasing to see a firm structure emerging that would enable this to happen. The next five years would not be easy for heritage science and the sector generally, whichever Government came into power in 2015. Continuing pressure on budgets had to be expected.

She noted that in a period of economic austerity, however, it was vital to remind decision-makers of the importance of heritage to the tourism industry, which accounted for around 8–10% of GDP. Most visitors to the UK were attracted by our museums, galleries and historic buildings, but these would not survive for future generations to enjoy without the research carried out by heritage scientists and put into practice through conservation and preservation. She hailed the advances made so far in establishing partnerships and speaking for heritage science at national level, and encouraged the Forum members to meet the challenges ahead through concerted action 'to sing the same song and keep on singing it!'

Nancy Bell, NHSF Deputy Chair, reviewing the first year of the Forum's work, said a great deal had been achieved since gaining registration as a charity. It had been a successful and busy year. She paid tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of the Trustees, and especially to Sarah Staniforth, who had announced during the AGM held earlier that she was standing down as Chair following her retirement from the National Trust. Nancy highlighted the swift increase in membership to include seventeen organisations, including universities, professional bodies and heritage institutions.

Other noteworthy achievements included: speaking for heritage science with one voice in responding to national consultations; taking the lead in developing a network of public, independent and charitable organisations; launching the NHSF Kit-Catalogue initiative to provide a register of equipment for members, and actively communicating with the membership and the wider world through the new website and newsletter, as well as social media. There had been a strong focus on exchanging research evidence and using it to inform policy. An example was the work carried out by Simon Cane on the potential impact of HS2 on the moveable heritage. Looking ahead, Nancy saw the Forum building on the progress made so far by identifying topics with an impact on cultural heritage and sharing more widely its passion for the subject.

Sarah Staniforth, outgoing Chair and former Museums and Collections Director of The National Trust, gave the keynote speech *Glancing back and looking forward: heritage science in 2020*. She paid tribute to Lady Sharp, who had lent weight to the campaign for a clearer focus for heritage science not just throughout the original Inquiry but through all the developments since the Select Committee's report was published. She also thanked David Saunders for his support and for hosting the event.

Sarah noted that her research into the early history of

collection care showed that scientific evidence had been used to support prevention and conservation from an early date. A lesson for the present was to respect the wisdom of our predecessors. She highlighted the role played by Parliament since the 1830s in placing science at the heart of reports on conservation and management of cultural heritage. Following in this notable tradition, the Lords Select Committee report had laid the groundwork for the current focus on heritage science, including the adoption of the Science and Heritage Strategy and the establishment of the Forum.

Looking to the future, her hopes for 2020 covered six areas:

Research

A promising start had been made with the research councils agreeing to fund projects bridging the humanities and sciences. The Science and Heritage programme has been ground-breaking in bringing together the 'users and doers' of heritage science – that is, museums and heritage organisations with universities. A recent achievement was the setting up of the EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Science and Engineering in Arts, Heritage and Archaeology (SEAHA), an eight-year initiative (2014–2022) to establish an infrastructure to meet challenges set by the heritage sector, industry and government. Support will be provided for at least sixty interdisciplinary students working on exciting projects in collaboration with heritage institutions and scientific, engineering and industrial partners.

Publications

The increasing appetite for publishing papers on heritage science will require more journal capacity to disseminate research outcomes in future. Two recent developments have pointed the way: an increase in editions of *Studies in Conservation* from four to six per year, and the launch of the on-line open access *Journal of Heritage Science*, which has already published nearly sixty papers.

International

At present, membership of the Forum is rightly limited to the UK, but a hope for 2020 would be for an international network of practitioners and researchers in heritage science collaborating to share resources. An astonishing statistic emerged from the 2013 ICCROM Conservation Science Forum: three hundred new museums a year are being built in China for the next seven years, with many of the larger museums being equipped with state of the art scientific laboratories. It will be important to keep in close touch with developments overseas.

Capacity

A balance needs to be maintained between the number of students educated, whether at graduate or postgraduate level, and the capacity of society to absorb them into relevant work. One far-reaching effect of the SEAHA programme will be to expand the number of PhD level heritage scientists. Increasing the capacity to employ them within the museum and heritage sector will be crucial, and the NHSF is already playing a part in securing investment in heritage science.

Training and education

The NHSF training group has begun to look at the training and education of professionals coming into museums and heritage organisations at entry level. The training opportunities and career development in heritage science webpages went live on the NHSF website on 10 November. These pages include five inspiring case-studies from trainee heritage scientists and will carry advertisements for training opportunities in the UK and overseas.

Public awareness

Continuing support for heritage science will only be given if public awareness is constantly raised through imaginative publicity for the use of science in, for example, conserving damaged paintings or identifying archaeological finds. Looking more broadly, Sarah hoped for a greater focus by 2020 on the relevance of heritage science to wider global issues such as climate change.

'There is much to celebrate today', Sarah concluded, 'with progress made in the past ten years, but much to do in the next five years and beyond.' She wished the NHSF very good luck in all it would do in the future.

The evening ended with an opportunity to network over a convivial glass of wine.

The Forum's membership represents seventeen major UK institutions which make a significant contribution to heritage science: Birmingham Museums Trust, British Library, British Museum, Cardiff University, English Heritage, Historic Royal Palaces, Historic Scotland, Icon, National Galleries Scotland, National Museum Wales, National Trust, Natural History Museum, Oxford University (Bodleian Libraries), Royal Armouries, Tate, The National Archives, University College London.

Further information

NHSF website: www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk

Contact: Caroline Peach at
heritagescienceforum@outlook.com

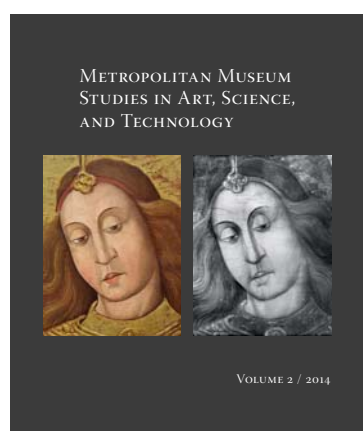
MORE NHSF NEWS

In further news from the National Heritage Science Forum, the Board of Trustees has agreed to the creation of a new role of 'Development Director', responsible for supporting the Board on the implementation of their three-year strategic plan, and overseeing the communications and operational delivery aspects of NHSF's work. The role will be filled by Caroline Peach from January 2015.

A number of other changes took place following November's AGM. Sarah Staniforth (previously National Trust) stepped down as Chair and was replaced by Nancy Bell (The National Archives) and Professor May Cassar (Institute of Sustainable Heritage, UCL) as Co-Chairs. Retiring from the Board of Trustees were Simon Cane (Birmingham Museums Trust) and

David Saunders (British Museum). Appointed to the Board of Trustees were Mary Davis, (National Museums Wales), Christina Duffy, (British Library), Edward Impey (Royal Armouries), Katy Lithgow, (National Trust), and David Watkinson (Cardiff University). Existing trustees Gill Campbell (English Heritage), David Howell (Oxford University), Ewan Hyslop (Historic Scotland), John Jackson (Natural History Museum), Pip Laurenson (Tate), Alison Richmond (Icon), Jacqueline Ridge (National Galleries of Scotland) and Constantina Vlachou (Historic Royal Palaces) were re-appointed as trustees.

MMA PUBLICATION



Icon readers will be interested to know that The Metropolitan Museum of Art has just published the second issue of its technical periodical devoted to the exploration of the reciprocal relationship between physical nature and aesthetics in the visual arts.

Metropolitan Museum Studies in Art, Science, and Technology is a full colour, peer-reviewed publication, featuring new research on

topics such as artists' materials and their aging properties, techniques and technologies used in the manufacture of works of art, and conservation theory and history.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Book & Paper Group

Adapt & Evolve: East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation

8–10 April 2015, Brunei Gallery, SOAS, London
<http://adaptandevolve2015.wordpress.com>

This is just a quick reminder not to forget to book your tickets to our upcoming conference in April. Over three days of events, we will look at the introduction, formalisation, and evolution of East Asian materials and techniques that have become part of paper conservation practice across the globe.

The conference begins on Wednesday 8 April with a day of pre-bookable tours at a variety of fascinating institutions in and around London. That evening we have a fantastic drinks reception planned, with an opening welcome from Icon's CEO, Alison Richmond, and the Chair of Arts Council England, Sir Peter Bazalgette.

On 9 and 10 April the conference continues at the Brunei Gallery at SOAS in central London, with a wide variety of speakers and demonstrators from around the world. We have prepared an outstanding conference programme, which will be accompanied by a superb range of demonstrations and workshops. There will also be another drinks reception on the

evening of 9 April at the conference site, so you can really catch up with old friends and make new ones!

Following on from the conference, we have also arranged several fantastic practical courses linked to the main conference theme. Please see the conference website for more details.

This is not simply a conference but more like a festival! Come along and join the fun!

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Amy Junker Heslip Conference Chair

Ceramics and Glass Group

The Icon Ceramics and Glass Group are delighted to announce that bookings for their next conference '**From pottery to porcelain, production and preservation in the heart of England**' will open on Monday 2 February. This two day conference will take place in Worcester from 15–16 May 2015.

Booking Forms and the full programme are available on our group's pages on the Icon website:

<http://tinyurl.com/c2lammn>

Rachel Sharples

Ceramics and Glass Group Chair

Furniture and Wood Group

2014 was a good year for the Furniture and Wood Group with a series of events for our members. A new programme of events and workshops is being planned for the new year. In March we had a study day at Wilton House in Salisbury with a focus on recent furniture conservation efforts and discussions ranging from leather conservation (with Yvette Fletcher) to Chippendale furniture (with Dr Ernest Riall). Bucks New University hosted a one day workshop on the use of synthetic resins for varnishes and retouching, led by Tristram Bainbridge. With the event fully booked there are plans to hold another course in 2015.

A study day at the National Trust's Knowle House in Surrey gave the Group an opportunity to explore rooms that are not usually open to the public and to examine the methods of lifting historic timber floors. Ideas and options for conservation treatment of the floors were discussed with the tour leaders Siobhan Barrett (National Trust) and Graham Marley (furniture conservator in private practice). At the bi-annual Stichting Ebeniste Furniture Conference in Amsterdam, Paul Tear and Ernest Riall organized a supplementary day tour of the Rijksmuseum's conservation studio and Amsterdam Museum stores.

We are busy planning a Furniture and Wood symposium to be held in May at Dr Johnson's House, London and have issued a call for papers. In March we will have a Chippendale themed event at Temple Newsam House, Leeds and in autumn 2015 it is hoped that the Cutty Sark will host a maritime themed event, and we are seeking contributors. We will also be holding workshops in carving and traditional

French upholstery techniques. Keep a look out for more details in Iconnect.

Tristram Bainbridge

Paintings Group

The Group's first evening talk of 2015 will be given by Jacob Simon, Research Fellow at the National Portrait Gallery in London, who will talk on the history of conservation at the NPG, on 23 February.

This will be followed by Vernon Rapley, Head of Security and Visitor Services at the Victoria and Albert Museum, talking on forgery and art crime on 15 April. As usual, talks are scheduled to be held at Freemasons' Hall in London.

The Paintings Group Committee would also like to thank all the speakers and attendees at our annual conference, 'Modern Conservation: What's New?', held on 10 October at the Wallace Collection. We have had a lot of positive feedback and it appears to have been a big success! Publication of the conference papers is scheduled for May 2015.

The Icon Paintings Group

icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com

Photographic Materials Group

The executive committee of the Photographic Materials Group met over the summer months to begin planning this year's activities. A number of options were discussed and planning is under way. Look out for further announcements soon.

As part of our effort to publicize photographic conservation and discussion we will also be launching our blog in the near future. Watch this space, our Icon webpages, our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ICONPhMG> and our twitter: @ICONPhMG for further updates.

As ever, we are eager to hear what kind of support and activities you would like the Photographic Materials Group to provide. Please send comments and ideas to the forums above or email Louisa Coles at l.j.coles@abdn.ac.uk

Stained Glass Group

The Group met in York on Saturday, 27 September 2014. The AGM was attended by seventeen Icon members and discussion at the meeting ranged widely over future conference plans, timing and venue for meetings, topics for future lectures and discussion groups, the problems of maintaining lead blood-testing regimes and how to attract new and younger members to the Group. Newly joined members were especially active in suggesting new directions for the Group and we benefitted from the participation of Michael Nelles, national Membership Manager, and Francis Downing, chairman of the Group Chairs. Chris Chesney gave a valedictory address as outgoing chairman and the new committee was elected. The committee subsequently elected its officers, so that we can now report the new Group line-up: Chair: **Sarah Brown** (sarah.brown@york.ac.uk)

Secretary: **Léonie Seliger** ACR

Assistant Secretary and News Co-ordinator: **Laura Tempest** (co-opted 2014–15; (laura.tempest@york.ac.uk))

Treasurer: **Peter Campling** ACR

Early Career Liaison: **Lizzy Hippisley-Cox** (co-opted 2014–15; elizabeth.hippisley.cox@googlemail.com)

Keith Barley ACR

Bob Holloway ACR

Marie-Luise Stumpf ACR (co-opted 2014–15)

Following a convivial buffet lunch, the lecture, which attracted additional attendees from the wider conservation community, was delivered by Professor Ian Freestone, Professor of Archaeological Materials and Technology and Manager of the Wolfson Archaeological Science Laboratories, Institute of Archaeology, University College, London on the topic 'Composition, Technology and the Deterioration of Medieval Stained Glass'. While many of us have heard Ian speak before on aspects of this subject, yet again he demonstrated both his capacity to pull more research rabbits out of his hat, and his outstanding abilities as a communicator.

Since the meeting we have started working to ensure that the Group is active in making the voice of our discipline heard more clearly. Laura Tempest, already known to many as news editor of the on-line magazine Vidimus, has come on board to co-ordinate communication and news across the Group, so if you have any news, updates or views that you would like to see aired, please get in touch with Laura. The co-opting of Lizzy Hippisley-Cox is something of a new departure for the Group.

Lizzy writes: 'I am a former Icon intern, and a graduate of the University of York MA course in Stained Glass Conservation. At the moment I am completing an apprenticeship with the York Glaziers Trust, and undertaking the Icon Conservation Technician Qualification (CTQ). Members who attended the AGM in September will know that I am keen to ensure that the Group embraces members in the early stages of their career, whether they be student, trainee, graduate, unemployed, self employed, or at any point in the first ten years of the career – a group that has grown considerably in recent years. To train in our field requires a great deal of investment in time, money and effort, and I think the wider profession has a responsibility to support and protect these individuals particularly in their formative years. To this end, I am delighted that the Group has decided to appoint an 'Early Career Representative'. In particular I would like to encourage 'early career' conservators to join Icon in general, and the Stained Glass Group in particular, ensuring that your voice is heard.'

Finally, we can report that we have already begun to organise the next AGM, which will span two days and, courtesy of colleagues at Glasgow Life, will be hosted at the Burrell Collection, in Glasgow. Save these dates!: Thursday and Friday, 17–18 September 2015.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact us on the email addresses shown above.

Conservation Research Fellowship

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

During the sabbatical their post will be covered by an externally recruited junior conservator. The grant will meet the salary and on-costs of the junior conservator and the project costs of the work undertaken by the senior conservator.

Closing date: 6 March 2015

Further details and application form:
foundation.clothworkers.co.uk/fellowship



Kate Aughey, student 18th Century Italian pier glass, The Wallace Collection

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Stone and Wall Painting Group

The Icon Stone and Wall Painting Group Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 19 March 2015 at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford from 12 to 4 pm. The afternoon will include lunch and a tour, either of the Oxford Rock Breakdown Laboratory or the Pre-Raphaelite wall paintings in the Oxford Union Library. Please check the Icon website events page for both further information and registration details.

Textile Group

Thank you to everyone who has submitted abstracts for our Spring Forum to be held at Birkbeck College on Monday April 13. We would like to include a handy hints and tips section as part of the day. This would be a sharing of ideas in two to five minute slots, perhaps on an improved way of working, a new material or technique. So, have a think and come on the day with any information you'd like to share with the Group.

An 'Understanding Tapestry' course will be held at the Heritage Skills Centre in Lincoln on the 23 & 24 March, led by Caron Penny.

On Thursday 14 & Friday 15 May a Back to Basics on plastics will take place at the V&A Clothworkers Study Centre. The first day will be led by Brenda Keneghan, conservation scientist at the V&A. It will cover the history of plastics, object identification and the conservation of plastic objects. On Friday there is a trip to the Tate stores with a discussion about their policy and treatment of plastics.

Further details of these events will be in the Iconnects and on the website.

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Is conservation a 'craft'? Why or why not?

Corinne Julius, Chair of the Critics' Circle Visual Arts & Architecture Section, makes the case



'Craft generates £3.4 billion for the UK economy, with 150,000 people employed in businesses driven by craft skills, in engineering, science, design, architecture, fashion and film. Making contributes to cognitive development and fosters wellbeing. It develops creativity, inventiveness and problem-solving.' Such was the beginning of a recent (published) letter to *The Times*, of which I was one of nearly a hundred signatories.

This view of craft may come as a surprise to many who retain a rather 19th century view that craft is something pursued by the artisan or lower orders, who use their hands, rather than their intellect. This view of craft being without an intellectual hinterland is now thoroughly discredited. Even the Government has come to appreciate the contribution of craft to the economy and to the development of professional and academic studies.

In 2013 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport reviewed its definition and classification of craft and craft occupations. It concluded that the contribution craft makes to the economy is much bigger than previously thought with the research showing that craft skills are contributing;

- £745 million to the economy through the craft sector
- £243 million to the economy through creative industries such as fashion, film and architecture
- £2.4 billion to the wider economy in industries such as bio-medicine, science and engineering.

Ed Vaizey, Minister of State for Culture and the Digital Economy, said of the recently published *Measuring the Craft Economy*: 'The UK's Creative Industries are a veritable powerhouse and contribute more than £8 million an hour to the national economy. This report highlights the key role that craft plays in this remarkable success story, and demonstrates the huge range of occupations through which craft skills are contributing to the phenomenal growth of the creative industries.'

Taking this broader understanding of craft further, a recent Crafts Council conference MAKE SHIFT put making at the very heart of intellectual practice for those working in traditional 'craft' fields, but also for those working at the cutting edges of science, medicine and architecture. Understanding materials in a practical way is a prerequisite of advancing ideas. Material scientists are increasingly turning to craft practitioners to help them develop new materials, surgeons are working collaboratively with craft makers to develop new materials and medical approaches, as are architects. They do not consider makers to have less rigour or intellectual ability than themselves.

What do you think? Is conservation a 'craft'? Join the debate @Conservators_uk – use #craftdebate



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Learning in practical settings

The need for students on formal training courses to be exposed to real-life conservation experiences has long been accepted by the profession. It is understood that most training courses are challenged in providing enough time to teach all the skills needed to make a well-rounded conservator. Icon's National Conservation Education and Skills Strategy Forum agreed that it would be useful to have a series of articles showing how placement locations are important in providing add-on value to the education and skills learnt on a training course. In the first of these examples the Museum of London shows how it is able to provide high quality placements for students and interns.

Hosting a placement at the Museum of London

by Rob Payton, Head of Conservation and Collection Care at the Museum of London

The Museum of London's Conservation and Collection Care department is proud of its track record of providing quality training opportunities for student placements, internships and more recently volunteers. Over the years these have developed from exclusively practical work placements of students from a variety of UK and international courses to a more focussed training to meet the demands of modern day institutions and private practice. Along the way the Museum of London has won a number of awards for its students and volunteer training. However, far from being complacent we are always reviewing and improving our training offer.

The evolution of our scheme

Nomenclature is very important for hosts - any student coming to us from a training course is called a 'student placement'. A person who has finished their training course, is receiving a bursary or grant and is then placed with us within the context of a detailed learning experience is called an 'intern'. Loose use of these terms has caused problems within organisations in the past and should be tightened up by hosts and courses alike. We also take volunteers, from a variety of backgrounds, but only after they have participated in one of our training courses.

We recognise that a fulfilling placement can only come from a significant amount of input from the hosts and supervisors and as a result we will only take a placement if we have the capacity to do so. However, we have found that by resolving the following issues the capacity factor can be managed. In the past we received ad hoc requests direct from students from a large amount of courses from within the UK and abroad. It was strongly felt that the 'first come first serve' approach that ensued was neither fair nor effective. We have therefore introduced two measures to manage this. We insist that we will only respond to requests from course tutors, who will be the ones to filter requests and ensure that they are the ones making the appropriate match of student and placement.

Secondly, we have had to make the difficult decision to limit the number of courses from which we are able to take placements. 'Fewer and better' has been our institutional

higher education approach - taking placements each year from a smaller group of courses than we used to. This does have the advantage for us of being able to develop closer links with the courses and understand their needs and they ours. It also has the significant advantage that we can manage our business plans knowing when students will be placed with us and who will be available to supervise them. This does not automatically exclude requests from a range of other courses, providing we have the capacity, but this would be the exception rather than the rule. We do not distinguish between undergraduate and post graduate courses, as we consider that they are both valid professional training levels; though for us, the masters level courses and especially internships do allow a longer and more engaging experience.

Over the last few years we have therefore developed close links with the following courses (specialisations and likely numbers /year given).

- UCL (10 month placement x1) in archaeology conservation
- Durham (10 month placement x1) in applied arts conservation
- Cardiff (4-6 week placement x1) in archaeology conservation
- City and Guilds (4 week placements x2) in applied arts conservation
- Camberwell (1 day/week over 2 months x3) in paper and archives
- Glasgow (2 – 3 months placement) in textiles conservation

For these placements alone this equates to approximately 105 weeks' placement time per year. For a department of fourteen staff, some part time, this is a significant commitment.

Additionally we have taken over recent years :

- Icon internships (12 month x1) in collection care.
- London Metropolitan (placement) in collection care.
- Northumbria (placement) in collection care.

The placement offer

Prior to starting we usually expect to meet up with the chosen student and their course tutor to discuss their expectations and what the host organisation will be offering. It is also a useful forum for any concerns to be aired in advance of the placement starting. Information on the department and Health & Safety protocols are also sent out in advance. For long term students we carry out DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, as they will be involved with access to children (see later). In return we receive placement or internship agreements to agree and sign. This usually includes information on how the placement will be monitored, especially for longer term placements and internships, where formal visits and reports are expected. This extra assessment



Abby Moore (Durham) on the left providing support for a Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) event to schoolchildren

time needs to be considered when evaluating likely input for placements/internships.

Each placement is assigned a supervisor for managing the placement, but increasingly we have spread the day-to-day training role over the whole department. – good for staff CPD and it takes the pressure off a single supervisor.

The experiences we provide for students

We are proud that we provide a well-rounded placement for all our students. We like to think that our students leave us with not just a better knowledge of their subject, but also of many collection care and management issues needed in the 'real' world. As such, traditional bench-working experience is only part of what we offer and this is made plain to the student before they start. For example we embed all placements and interns within the department and they attend our departmental meetings and sometimes even museum project or planning meetings to get a flavour of how an organisation operates. All placements and interns are expected to be involved with actual Integrated Pest Management and environmental work, collections emergency planning (eg helping to deal with leaks), cooperating with others to oversee good storage of the collections as well as regular gallery maintenance.

We also like to get all students involved with events. We are keen that students develop good communication skills with the public and are able to promote conservation to the wider world. Typically we encourage students from different courses to work together to create a gallery activity that they can run, e.g. in evening or holiday events; or even outside of the museum, e.g. in shopping centres, where the students promote a particular project with a conservation angle. Students appreciate these opportunities and the trust that we put in them.

When supervising the students we encourage them to challenge pre-conceived ideas and ask them to justify why they have chosen a certain course of action – e.g. a treatment, or a resin they are using. As employers, we are ultimately looking for an employee who is able to use their independent judgement. For this reason, over the years, we have developed a number of learning exercises that help students build their own reasoning ability, e.g. the characteristics of a resin to be used, or the impact of using various cleaning



Abby Moore (Durham) and Kate Becker (UCL) working together on conserving Olympic opening ceremony costumes

methods. A conversation that needs to be carefully handled is when we are emphasising that there is often more than one way of treating an object than the one they may have been taught on their course.

All students and interns work on real objects and, wherever possible, for a meaningful purpose. It could be objects for a latest exhibition, or a gallery display; equally it could be important work on stored collections. Additionally, we find that placements give us an opportunity to work 'by proxy' on items that we as staff would not have the time to work on ourselves. For larger projects we do encourage the students in different labs to work together; this helps build up team and communication skills in a non-competitive environment. We also find that it is helpful for students to exchange experiences from their respective courses.

We provide long-term placements and internships experience of working on a loan from start to finish. This gives them an excellent understanding of procedures, including conservation, documentation, transport and installation, as well as exposing them to the larger museum world.

Finally, one useful briefing at the end of their placement is how to apply for jobs. For many students and interns the time with us is one when they are not only building up their skills but also looking to the future for jobs. As employers at the receiving end of job applications we are in a good position to provide some good tips.

Why do we do it ?

So what is in it for us, as hosts? We feel that it is part of our remit to contribute to the ongoing skills of the profession. However, with longer placements or internships we do get some quality conservation or collection care work out of the students and interns in return. We also like to think that the experience of hosting a placement or internship keeps the department on its toes and fresh. As a result of our closer collaborations with some of the courses we are also able to access scientific research that would ordinarily be difficult to source. Finally, there is also an immense sense of pride when 'our' students do well in their results, or go on to win student conservation awards, or get their first job.

Meet the New Trustees



Penny Bendall is a ceramics conservator with twenty five years' experience working on national and international collections for museums and private clients. She is a Royal Warrant Holder.

As a Trustee of the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust, Penny's involvement in development and fund-raising led to a doubling of the number of scholarships that could be given each year. She is also Development Consultant for the Zibby Garnett Travel Fellowship, a Plowden Medal Trustee and is on the executive committee of the Lord Mayor of the City of London's Cultural Scholarship Scheme. In this capacity she obtained a placement for a student at Buckingham Palace for 2014.

Keen to promote the importance of conservation ethics in the broader art world, Penny is involved in teaching and organizing conferences on conservation ethics to Art Business, Art History and Art Law post graduates and the art world generally, including Sotheby's, Christies and financial institutions.



Sarah Cove is an Accredited Paintings Conservator, Technical Art Historian and an Accredited NADFAS Lecturer. She is a Fellow of IIC and BAPCR and Deputy Chair of BAPCR. Following a BA(Hons) in Art History, she trained at the Courtauld Institute, V&A and the National Portrait Gallery. Based in London, and having recently expanded into the South-West, she has always worked freelance for heritage and private clients, specialising in British paintings, especially portraiture, landscape and oil sketches on paper and board.

In 1986 she established the Constable Research Project to study Constable's oil painting materials and techniques and she is now the recognised authority, having published widely in the fields of conservation and Constable scholarship. In 2014 she appeared on BBC1's 'Fake or Fortune?' and was instrumental in the discovery of two paintings. She is a Member of the Steering Group of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site.



Angela Currie has over twenty five years of advisory experience gained through public service, private practice and in-house legal roles in both the financial services and the arts sectors. She has worked at Goldman Sachs, UBS and also at Christie's as their interim global head of ethics and compliance.

She has undertaken pro bono work with the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and is a member of the Lawyers' Committee for Cultural Heritage Preservation. Angela has also lectured as an adjunct professor for Pepperdine University's School of Law London programme.

She is currently a non-executive director of Forex Capital Markets Limited and FXCM Securities Limited, global providers of foreign exchange trading and related services regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, and on the audit committee of the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art.



Megan de Silva studied the Conservation of Objects for Museums and Archaeology at Cardiff University and then worked with the National Trust before securing a temporary post of Social History Conservator at St Fagans National History Museum in Cardiff. She was then fortunate to work at the National Museum of Scotland on the redevelopment of the Royal Museum before returning to Wales for her current post of Conservator for Monmouthshire Museums Service.

Megan recently completed a part time Masters degree in Professional Conservation and Collections Care at Cardiff University and sits on the Heritage Lottery Fund's Committee for Wales, as part of the panel which makes decisions on a broad range of grant programmes. She is also part of the stewardship group of the Federation of Welsh Museums helping to organise the biannual Conservation Matters in Wales Conference. Her professional interests include sustainability and community participation in conservation practice.

New icon staff



David Howell worked in the sugar industry for three years after graduating in Chemistry. He then returned to academia and graduated in English Mediaeval studies.

David then spent twenty years at Historic Royal Palaces working mainly in textile conservation science. While there, he also co-founded Hanwell Monitors and was Principal Investigator on the European funded tapestry research project *Monitoring of Damage in Historic Tapestries*.

David joined Bodleian libraries eleven years ago and for the last two years has been Head of Conservation Research. His main interest is non-destructive, non-invasive methods of revealing information from library material and he is currently writing a book on this subject.



Charlotte Lester began her career in UK heritage, working on the British Museum's Africa Programme, after training in archaeology and conservation at Cardiff University. After completing her contract at the British Museum, Charlotte moved into higher education research management and policy working for Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield.

During her time in HE research management and policy, Charlotte has worked on a variety of projects, including interdisciplinary research initiatives, the creation of a new research institute and UK wide survey and digital projects. This involved delivering international conferences, exhibitions and profile raising launch events. She now works in higher education policy and her main interests lie in higher education research, learning and teaching and the student experience.



Jenny Williamson is an Accredited Freelance Paintings Conservator at the National Library of Wales and Lecturer at Aberystwyth University. After graduating from Cambridge University she trained in the Conservation of Easel Paintings at the Courtauld Institute of Art.

She moved to Wales in 1989 to work as Paintings Conservator at the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea. Whilst there she co-organised several conservation exhibitions, and served on the former UKIC paintings section committee.

Moving to Aberystwyth in 1999, she established the first painting conservation studio in the National Library of Wales, and began teaching conservation issues to fine art and art history students at the University. She organised Sharing Conservation Decisions conferences in 2011 and 2013 at NLW.



Welcome back to **Joanna Baden Morgan**, who is not exactly new to Icon, as she tells us:-

I have recently returned to Icon as Membership Officer. I previously served as Training Officer, and as Membership Officer under a short-term contract. I'm really looking forward to working for Icon again and supporting the membership team.

My previous work experience was Department Administrator for the Royal College of Art/Victoria & Albert Museum Conservation course, where I worked for nearly nine years. I am delighted to be able to continue working in an administrative role in the sector.

I will be working at the Icon office in London two half days a week until the end of June 2015.

Moves



Congratulations to **Simon Cane** on his appointment as the new Director of Public and Cultural Engagement at University College London (UCL).

The department of Public and Cultural Engagement was formed in 2013 by merging UCL's many museums and collections (including the Grant Museum of Zoology and the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology) with the Bloomsbury Theatre and the UCL Public Engagement Unit. The department's role is to use these cultural and strategic assets to support UCL's teaching and research and to contribute to the wider community.

Simon moves to his new post from his role as Deputy Director at Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT), where he was also the lead for Birmingham on the ground-breaking Staffordshire Hoard project. From his original training as a conservator he has moved into wider collections management and leadership roles in local authority and trust museums and is a keen advocate of public engagement particularly around bridging arts, humanities and sciences. Amongst many other roles he was, of course, the Chair of Icon's Board of Trustees from 2006 to 2008.

Welcome to new members!

In the first of a new, regular feature here at Icon News, we'd like to extend a very warm welcome to the new members who joined us in October and November:

Michelle Adams
Full Member

Rachel Altpetes
Student

Caroline Berry
Student

Kenneth Blyth
Full Member

Antoinette Brown
Full Member

Sahra Campbell
Student

Fernando Cortes-Pizano
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Alexandra May Oxford
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Student

Marianne de Bovis
Full Member

Jasdeep Singh Dhillon
Student

David Dunscombe
Full Member

George Grigonis
Full Member

John Hainsworth
Supporter

Lauren Healy
Student

Anita Hollinshead
Full Member

**International Platform for Art
Research and Conservation**
(IPARC)
Organisation

Stephanie Jamieson
Student

Mira Karttila
HLF Intern

Tomoko Kawamura
Yamaryo Art Conservation
Studio, Tokyo
Full Member

Janna King
Student

Michael Kramer
The Gilders' Studio Inc.
Full Member

Kevin Legg
Student

Gwendoline Lemee
PZ Conservation
Student

Suzie Li Wan Po
Student

Lauren Martin
Full Member

Solange Masher
PZ Conservation
Student

Emily Marie Kristin Mueller
Student

Annie Mulholland
Full Member

David Parker
Full Member

Wendy Richardson
Full Member

Carina Rosas
Student

Rosemary Sandiford
Student

Aislinn Smalling
Student

Nigel Spender
Hampshire Cultural Trust
Full Member

Martha Swabey
Full Member

Mylene Vigneron
Student

Elizabeth Webb
Student

Charlotte Wilkinson
Student

Late news!

Congratulations to **Sarah Staniforth**, who has been appointed CBE (Commander of the British Empire) in the New Year Honours for her services to National Heritage. Sarah retired last year from her post as Museums and Collections Director at the National Trust.

We're glad to have you all with us. Hope to see you at an Icon event soon!

The Swiss Garden

In the first part of this article Lee R. Bilson of Eura Conservation Ltd describes the conservation of the historic metalwork in a secret garden. The second part takes us to a different part of the garden

Nestled behind the aerodrome and hangars of the internationally renowned Shuttleworth Collection of Vintage Aircraft, is a secret garden. Formerly a brickfield, the Swiss Garden stands as a rare survival of Regency landscape design, originally contrived by Lord Robert Ongley (1803-77) in the early 1830s and extensively restored and built upon by the Shuttleworths in the late 19th Century.

It is a garden insular in nature. Lord Ongley's use of a series of mounds and depressions, bounded by a wooded landscape created a self-contained, unique and heterogeneous semblance of alpine utopia. It exemplifies the shift from the great open landscapes of the 18th century, to a landscape more befitting of the style popularised by John Nash and his cottages ornées.

In 2009 it was placed on the English Heritage at Risk Register with a need for extensive investment to help secure the future of this nationally important garden. This came in November 2012 when it received a Heritage Lottery Fund grant and further funding from the Central Bedfordshire Council, Country Houses Foundation and many others. The aim of the project, carried out under the watchful eye of conservation architect Chris Garrand, was to, in his words, 'recapture the spirit of the garden' in the late 19th century, whilst ensuring the survival of its underlying regency design.

As part of this vast project Eura Conservation were appointed to conserve the many Swiss Garden ironworks. This work comprised the conservation and repair of a mix of traditional cast and wrought ironwork, including three grade II* listed bridges; two grade II listed rose bowers; a splendidly large

floral arch; the original entrance gates and screens and the vaulted wings and dome of the magnificent and unique grade II* listed Grotto-Fernery.

As the various listing statuses suggest, the need to choose a suitable method of cleaning the ironworks was paramount. This was particularly the case with the Grotto-Fernery's extremely slender and precise wrought iron glazing bars which had largely survived intact since their fabrication in the early 1830s by the Northampton firm, Barwell & Hagger. This



The conserved Pond Cascade Bridge

Strengthening and repair works being carried out to the grotto-fernery's dome.



The grotto-fernery prior to works





The restored grotto-ferney in its finery

survival prompted the specification of an advanced modern two-pack epoxy and polyurethane paint system, ensuring a high degree of protection and reducing the future maintenance demands required by traditional paint systems.

To allow the paint system to be applied, the ironworks had to be cleaned to bare metal. This was done onsite using Eura's in-house Ultra High Pressure (UHP) water jet cleaning equipment, applying water to the surface of the metal at a pressure of approximately 40,000 psi or 275 MPa. This attained a cleaning standard of W2; the equivalent of Sa2.5 achieved with the often more intrusive grit-blasting methods.

Over the last five years Eura have promoted and developed the use of UHP cleaning for historic metals, since, when handled by an experienced conservator, it can effectively remove biological growth, old paint coatings and corrosion deposits whilst leaving patterns, details and foundry marks intact. And in the case of historic wrought iron, it does not remove the mill scale which offers some protection against corrosion, unlike other standard cleaning techniques.

Cleaning the Swiss Garden ironworks revealed their true state and the need for repairs. Whilst the historic cast iron bridges and bowers were largely in good condition, the state of the wrought iron glazing bars necessitated extensive work. To ensure that the rebates would provide a suitable platform for the glazing, extensive filling, fettling and finishing was required, alongside further work to fettle areas obstructed by previous and poorly executed weld repairs. Some of the bars had suffered extensive corrosion to their ends or had become badly distorted, so a number were removed, repaired and re-rolled.

Throughout the project Chris Garrand was keen to follow strict conservation guidelines, which complemented our usual approach, to retain as much historic material as possible. Renewal was only undertaken on the basis of compelling evidence, thus it was a pleasing result that there were only three instances where new glazing bars were introduced to the grotto-ferney, having been traditionally forged in wrought iron.

Carrying out this work as part of the HLF funded project to secure the future of the Gardens also enabled us to further analyse the UHP cleaning system both on and offsite, enhancing techniques, standards and knowledge of the equipment's capabilities. This has subsequently led to the realisation of an innovative use of the UHP method that the company had long contemplated: it consists of an adaptation of the output nozzle of the UHP, designed and developed by Eura's conservators, allowing the trial removal of heritage glazing from iron casements with a retention rate of approximately 90-95% - although to discuss this fully would need an entire article in itself!

Eura were privileged to be part of such a prestigious project. If you would like to find out more about the works and the gardens please refer to Chris Garrand's excellent article in the SPAB's Summer 2014 Magazine or visit the website: www.theswissgarden.org

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Chris Garrand for his assistance and for his and the Shuttleworth Trust's permission to write this piece as part of my Masters Course in Building History

IN ANOTHER PART OF THE GARDEN

Within the Swiss Garden, the Swiss Cottage was the focus of another conservation project to celebrate a noteworthy anniversary

2014 saw the fortieth anniversary of conservation teaching in the City of Lincoln. The subject was started at the Lincoln School of Art, the University's oldest predecessor institution, in 1974, and the conservation department now sits within purpose-built facilities in the new £11 million Art and Design Building on the University's main campus.

The anniversary was marked by a student-centred project to repair and protect the ornamental Cottage at the centre of the Garden. The University team included students and graduates working alongside Crick Smith, the University's historic materials conservation consultancy and it was one of several conservation teams taking part in various aspects of a major programme to revive this hidden gem of a garden.

The Lincoln team was tasked with reinstating the ornate decoration of the cottage, which includes unique patterns created by bark and Monterey pine cones and decorative panels of intricate paintwork. When exploring the origins of these panels, the team was able to prove that some had been



Phillipa McDonnell 2014

The Swiss Cottage ceiling before conservation work

taken from the London Coliseum in Regent's Park, a majestic building established to house an enormous panorama of London in the 1820s, before being demolished in 1874.

The team's work also involved developing a technique to cut the pine cones, to ensure that the replacements accurately represented the decoration installed in the 1820s. Henning Schulze, the University's Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Conservation and Restoration, specialises in wooden object conservation and he discovered that it was essential for the environment to remain at a certain humidity and temperature prior to cutting, so that the cones remain closed. Henning said: 'Our research effectively reverse engineered the process used to prepare the cone slices for the decoration of the

The Swiss Cottage ceiling after conservation



Phillipa McDonnell 2014



The pinecone work on the ceiling; shown in detail in the images above



cottage, using our knowledge of the material and what hand tools would have been available at the time. Obviously, the architects and designers of the cottage would not have had access to any machinery, and it was important that we fully understood the historic techniques used, so that we could create authentic reproductions'.

Phillipa McDonnell was one of the students involved in the project, as a Crick Smith intern funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council. Phillipa says of the experience:

'Being part of the Swiss Garden project has given me the opportunity to learn skills that I would otherwise have not encountered on my course and my confidence and ability in general woodworking skills grew throughout the project.

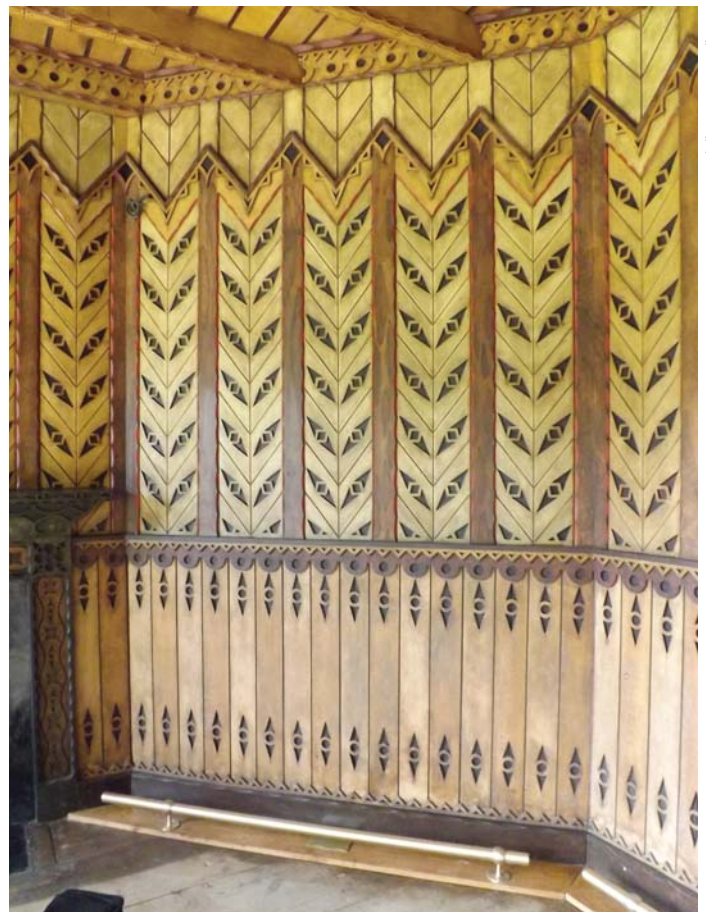
It was an extremely rewarding experience, and I have gained a more thorough understanding of, and appreciation for, the intricacies and attention to detail needed when applying rustic decoration. I have also gained specific knowledge that

few other conservators have practical experience of.

Working on site was an excellent learning experience, both in terms of understanding the practicalities and being taught how to take into consideration the differences of site based conservation rather than laboratory based conservation. This included understanding the importance of planning and preparation of materials and techniques, adhering to site hours and rules, and taking environmental conditions into consideration, particularly light and temperature.

Working on the project also allowed me to understand the various roles of people involved in a complex onsite project. It gave me awareness of professional conduct and working around other contractors and as part of a team, under a site manager. Experience also was gained in observing how site managers work with the architect to come to mutual decisions

Interior wall of the Swiss Cottage





The completed Cottage

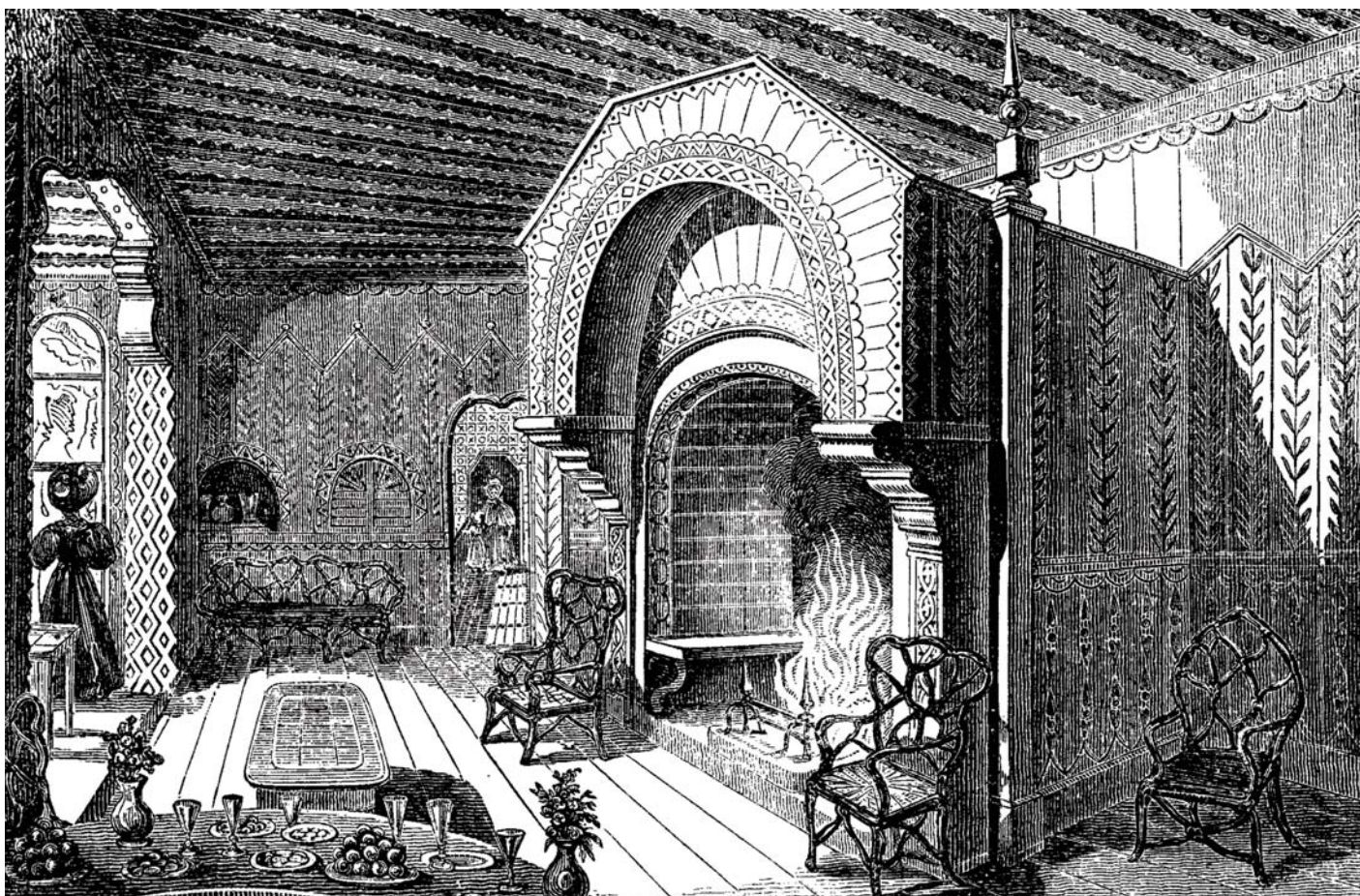
concerning the conservation work to be undertaken.

The Swiss Gardens project also gave me experience in giving a television interview for the BBC. In particular I learnt how to explain processes to a non-conservation audience, answer questions on demand, 'mock-up' situations, and ensure

relevant information was covered.

Finally, assisting in writing a conservation report for a commercial client rather than for an academic context was a valuable insight into understanding the differences in contextual emphasis and level of explanation.'

'Swiss Cottage interior, Colosseum, Regent's Park' as depicted in *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, Vol. 19, Issue 544, April 28, 1832



Recreating Mr Turner's life and times

Impressed with the historical accuracy of Mike Leigh's recent film, *Mr Turner*, Clare Finn ACR tracked down the historical consultant behind it, art historian and author Jacqueline Riding. These extracts from their conversation give a glimpse behind the scenes

Clare starts the ball rolling: *Mike Leigh's Mr Turner incorporates so much detail in its characters, scenes and overall themes, yet Jacqueline Riding, the project's researcher, says that what you see is only the tip of the iceberg of what went into it. A lot of people were doing research; the amount is much bigger than the one person assigned to it. Jacqueline, herself, said she hadn't appreciated how much went into a film.*

THE EARLY STAGES

It's not obvious until you realise that a lot of research hasn't been done by the script writer, who would normally do a huge amount to produce a detailed script. But there was no script! The dialogue was developed gradually with improvisations. We were doing that at the same time as doing the sets and so on.

In the beginning there was an advert in *The Guardian* for an experienced researcher to work on a Turner film, as simple as that; no mention of Mike, although it soon became obvious. He and his director of photography, Dick Pope, had thought about the project for a long time. They both really wanted to do it. This was really early days. They got some backing from Channel 4 for the research and development, so they could afford to bring in a researcher to get the ball rolling. I was the first staff member to be assigned. Originally it was just Mike and myself; I'm a museum and historic buildings person so I had contacts and experience in the art world, the theory, the history and art history. But, as you can probably tell, the film required someone who could not simply spout about Turner but who knew a vast amount of other things.

Initially, I would just leave things in Mike's in tray. If, the next time I went in, it had gone I presumed he was reading it. So I kept feeding him information as casually as that. Then, as other teams joined – props, costume, make up, hair and design – I assisted them. We were in the old Central School of Art and Design in London's Holborn. Everyone took over this temporary space; first the rehearsal team – four people marshalling all the actors – then gradually other departments started appearing and taking over floors.

GATHERING THE PROPS

The props store was on the top floor and was absolutely incredible to see. They accumulated props for the settings of Davis Place, Cheyne Walk, Margate, The Royal Academy and so on. You would see these sections with little pieces and this thing would start to build up. The set for Turner's painting room was choc-a-bloc, full of things: you would just go 'wow!' They were predominantly the work of the production designer. A lot of the items were original, some bought in auction or picked up on eBay. They are not high value, just quite everyday bits and pieces. Many came from professional props companies that provide this sort of thing. With specialist items, like the medical equipment used by Turner's doctor Dr. Price, there's a specific place where you can hire them. Some pieces are moveable: if you have a nice bit of porcelain it can move around a bit. A fun bit of watching the film is spotting pieces that pop up in different places, not just the paintings.

SPOTTING THE ERRORS

I would see the set for the first time with Mike, just before we started rehearsing. We'd walk onto set and think this is amazing! Look at this, tiny little pill bottles! Mike would say 'any notes?' That would mean 'any comments?' Initially I was quite reticent, then I'd think 'hang on my job is to snoop'. In Hannah Danby's tiny little room I noticed one of the bottles had a guy with a full beard on it. So I said 'I'm not sure that's period; beards don't really come in until later. Would it be picked up by the camera or does anyone care?' But Charlotte Watts, in charge of props, said 'no, that's great, we'll change that!' They wanted to get it right.

HOW WE USED THE PAINTINGS

As for Turner's paintings – we had hundreds and hundreds. We had the agreement of all the museums and galleries to reproduce them free of charge, otherwise it would have been impossible. We had a finite, not a Hollywood budget! So the Royal Academy and Turner's private gallery, where there are three hundred paintings, couldn't have been reproduced without that generosity.

With Turner's Queen Anne Street gallery we swapped paintings in and out so that it wasn't always the same ones on the walls. It was twenty-five years of his life and during those years he wouldn't always hang things he had just

painted, promoting his most recent work to potential patrons and buyers. He was exhibiting at the British Institution [for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom 1805–1867] and the Royal Academy and in his fifties he started thinking about his legacy and buying back paintings from his early career, so that he could present a survey of his work to the nation. We thought it logical that he might have hung them in his gallery. It does change, becoming scruffier as the years go on. But we were also thinking about what was on the wall to show that time had moved on.



©Simon Mein and Thin Man films

Timothy Spall at work on a copy of the JMW Turner painting *Helvoetsluys*

ACCURACY VERSUS DRAMATIC LICENCE

There were also aesthetic reasons for changing the hang, and anachronisms – conscious mistakes. Sometimes we introduced a painting that would never have been there. The director of photography might want a light painting to balance the shot, because it is as much a movie as an authentic representation. He has to balance things from a light and dark view point. That might cause us to introduce a perfectly good painting, not too late to hang there but Turner might not have owned it at that point. I remember one, a gorgeous little picture from the Soane Museum, which was commissioned and immediately went into Soane's collection.

But in the film it is in Turner's gallery! I fretted about that for a bit but thought 'no, it's there to balance the room, there are sound reasons why it is there'. If you were pedantic you could go through the movie and say what's that doing there? In a way that was what I was doing. But it is a movie not a documentary. If you got it wrong in a documentary you should be shot!

When it came to the narrative overall we shot chronologically. So when you see Turner painting something it was shot in order. But for dramatic effect certain scenes were swapped: *Rain, Steam and Speed* [1844] ought to come after *The Fighting Temeraire* [1839]. But I think we can be allowed a bit of wiggle room when creating a film. It would be a howler if we had a painting from the late 1840s sitting in his gallery when it is supposed to be the 1820s or 30s, because it is so visibly different from his earlier work. Part of my job was looking at shots and working out whether a painting had been used before. If so, was it in shot? Would you notice it again? If you watch closely you see certain paintings move around. But that is just practicalities. At least I was trying to rein that in!

PAINTINGS-INSPIRED IMPROVISATION

When the character Mary Somerville visits the Queen Anne Street Gallery I suggested that we hang *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps at the far end*, along with ships and a little oil sketch of Trafalgar. We knew from the research that Mary's father was a Vice-Admiral, and three-fifths of Turner's output is seascape or coastal related. So when they were improvising we thought that Lesley Manville, playing Somerville, could look at some seascapes in the gallery. It could remind her of her father. With the sketch of Trafalgar, Timothy Spall [who played Turner] could ask 'Was your father at Trafalgar?' 'No, he was at Camperdown.' Improvisations were teased out by objects in the gallery. As a natural philosopher Somerville is going to love the sea and be interested in the power of nature, so we hung *The Fall of an Avalanche in the Grisons* on one side, and I thought *Hannibal and his Army crossing the Alps* would be interesting to have there. So it's my fault it was there! The Turner Society criticised its being on the wall but it was in his collection and he gave it to the nation. We thought it was feasible.

With discussions in front of a painting, you don't know where it's going, but detailed information is vital to the formation of the character. During the improvisations standing in front of *Hannibal*, as they stepped out of character they said 'There's lots behind this painting isn't there?' And I said 'Yes, there's a wonderful painting by David [Jacques-Louis David 1748-1825] of Napoleon crossing the Alps on a rearing horse [*Napoleon at the Saint Bernard Pass*], a real heroic show-off portrait, where Hannibal is mentioned on a little rock. Turner saw it in David's studio in the Louvre in 1803 after the Peace of Amiens. Then, in 1812, Napoleon was defeated more by a Russian winter than by the Russian army and Turner produces *Hannibal* in 1812. Mike asked me to reduce the whole conversation to one word - hubris?



Timothy Spall as Turner in the Old Library at Petworth – a recreation of the Turner painting *An Artist and his Admirers*

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE CHARACTER

Famously, over the two and a half years before we got to set, Tim learnt to paint. But at the same time he was learning about Alexander Pope and classical and ancient history, all the things an artist of that age would have known from his boots up. I was putting books under his nose. It was really a total immersion; everyone did it but Tim more than anyone. It's like a different way of practising art history, like reconstructional archaeology. You suddenly realise the gaps in art history and in biographies, when you try to animate someone, get them to walk, talk and think. That is what Tim's work was - trying to make sense of Turner. I just supplied the information. The character you see on screen was arrived at through a huge amount of thought and work.

RECREATING THE ROYAL ACADEMY

We filmed at Petworth but my main assistance was with things like the Royal Academy 1832 Summer Exhibition Varnishing Day. I don't think anyone had tried to reconstruct a frame to frame - hundreds of paintings - dense hang in the great room. It was reconstructed in Wentworth Woodhouse, in Yorkshire, in their great marble hall. The building provided both the space to build the complete set within the room and also a beautiful marble floor and a fantastic staircase, which is obviously bigger than the one at the Courtauld but its wonderful sweep up into that room gives a hint of that original Somerset House Academy on a slightly grander scale.

I helped establish a relationship with the Royal Academy archives, introducing the design department to them. Once, we went through original tickets for 1838 looking at their design, the detail was that fine. I was thrilled when I saw the twinkle of excitement in a production crew at little details they wouldn't have noticed a year ago. But for me, walking into that reconstructed Royal Academy, I suddenly realised how it worked. Even in its original location at Somerset House it was

fabricated with fake walls to get that slant. I didn't know that. But the design department found the records of the wood and materials they originally brought in, so they knew how big and the exact level of rake.

UNDERSTANDING THE PAINTINGS HANG

You see images of it: a dense hang. And walking into that room I was worried about things like the little dog painting at the very top. I thought if it's going to end up there what's the point? But actually you can read it, even if it's not what an artist might really want. But I had thought you might just ask for your painting back and take it home! It wouldn't sell, it wouldn't show off your technique. Okay, you'd rather be on the lower level, but I was surprised how tiny little pictures right up there are pretty readable, bigger pictures more so.

As art historians we talk about the jostling for position but when you finally see the effect of cheek by jowl hanging you realise how important varnishing day would be; adding that red splot to animate your picture because you wouldn't know what was hanging around you until the darn thing is on the wall. So, of course, you'd spend those five days tarding it up a bit. It finally made sense: it wasn't just faffing or varnishing. They cleaned their paintings. Some had been in store for months. You see them with their rags cleaning the frames. They want them to look as good as possible. That was a revelation.

The National Trust's Petworth House in West Sussex is hosting an exhibition inspired by the film. It runs from 10 January to 11 March 2015 and will show artworks by Turner and his personal possessions, along with props and costumes from the film.

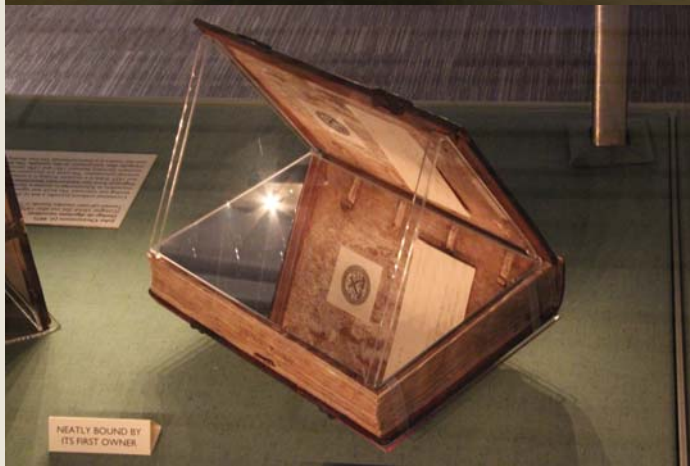
around and about

The private lives of print

The development of the printing press in Mainz in the 1450s made a monumental impact upon contemporary society, heralding a communication revolution akin to the birth of the internet. Over the past twenty-five years researchers have focussed increasingly on the marks left by early readers, as a means of assessing how their books were used, how and where they moved, their trade, impact and audience.

An exhibition at Cambridge University Library on this theme looks likely to interest Icon News readers. It celebrates the conclusion of a five-year project, funded by the Andrew W.

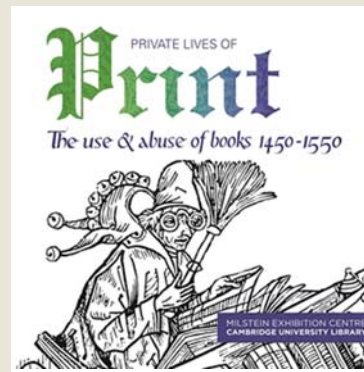
Displaying the incunabula.



Mellon Foundation, to catalogue the Library's world-class collection of incunabula – books printed before 1501. Annotations, ownership markings, bindings and decoration all show the ways books were used and abused in the first hundred years of print. From the Gutenberg Bible to William Caxton, from the Holy Land to Cambridge, and from wonderfully illuminated volumes to unique fragments of single sheets, the exhibition gives unexpected and fascinating insights into the private lives of these beautiful early books and their users.

The University Library has also put together a nice video discussing the process of staging the exhibition from a conservation point of view. It can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD2DmPO7Ogk (Preview)

The exhibition runs until 11 April 2015.



Collaboration, Conservation and Research

A new conservation display can be caught at the Wallace Collection in London to celebrate the return of four great tables to display in the Great Gallery after conservation treatment.

The two pairs of monumental tables have been on display in the Great Gallery for more than a century. A recent project to refurbish the Gallery provided the perfect opportunity for all four tables to undergo full cleaning and conservation treatment. To this end, the Wallace Collection teamed up with Buckingham New University, City and Guilds of London Art School and West Dean College and several students undertook the work as an integral part of their degree course. Now, some two years later, the tables have returned from treatment and look stunning in their former locations, much as they would have looked in Sir Richard Wallace's day.

During the course of their treatment conservators and curators were able to analyse the tables forensically, discovering, for example, that the two in the centre of the gallery are not in fact a pair, instead one is a later copy of the other. The display in the Conservation Gallery documents fascinating insights into the treatment, findings and techniques used in the conservation process.

Recent MA graduate at West Dean College, Kate Aughey worked on one of a pair of the tables. She noted: 'Initial condition assessments established that the tables were structurally sound with little repair needed to the poplar substrate. A thick dirt layer had significantly darkened both tables and all surfaces of gilding and Verde Antico marble required extensive cleaning. The decorative carvings suffered damage in particularly vulnerable areas and localised sections



Newly conserved and back on display at the Wallace Collection

of gilding were chipped, revealing the surprisingly crude carving below.

One of the most substantial losses to the West Dean table was the central bucranium (an ox skull decorative motif), missing from the proper right side, which was re-carved in lime, gilded and toned to match before being reinstated. In the case of the West Dean table the cleaning of all gilt surfaces was undertaken with gels while at City & Guilds of London Art School [where the table's pair was treated] laser cleaning was utilized with very similar results.

The consolidation of unstable areas of water gilding was achieved with a 10% solution of rabbit skin glue and any

One of the newly conserved tables takes centre stage at an event



substantial areas of loss were rebuilt with gesso putty before being in-gilded and toned to match with watercolours. With the exception of the small epoxy additions, traditional materials were used throughout and so detailed photographic loss mapping ensured that all gilded gesso repairs could be identified as such in the future.'

The exhibition runs until Sunday 27 September 2015 and a series of talks has been taking place in the Conservation Gallery. The next ones are:

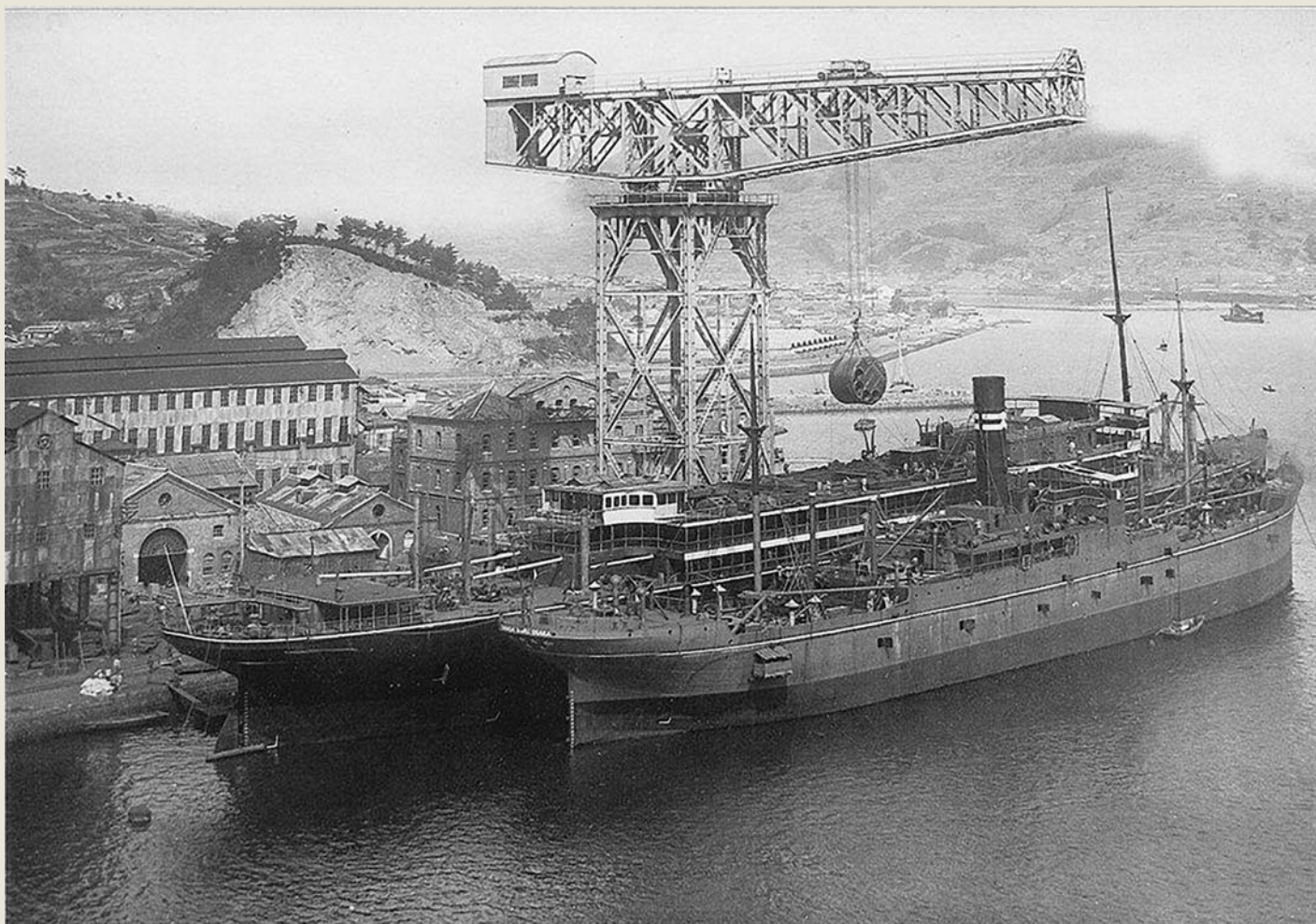
10 February: Matthew Read Programme Leader, West Dean, title: 'Conservation Projects and Insights at West Dean College'

20 March: Jon Slight, Bucks New University, title: 'When is a pair not a pair?'

30 April: Matthew Read, Programme Leader, West Dean, title: 'Conservation Projects and Insights at West Dean College'

The tenth choice for the Scottish Ten

Over the years we have followed the progress of the Scottish Ten – a project to digitally document Scotland's five UNESCO World Heritage Sites along with five other international heritage sites. It is a collaboration between specialists at Historic Scotland, experts in 3D visualisation at The Glasgow School of Art's Digital Design Studio, and not-for-profit digital heritage organisation CyArk.



The Giant Cantilever Crane in Mitsubishi's shipyard in Nagasaki, shortly after it was built and erected by the Motherwell Bridge Company in 1909. This view shows a water-tube boiler being loaded for installation within a ship.

The five Scottish sites to be completed are New Lanark, St Kilda, Edinburgh's Old and New Towns, the Antonine Wall and Neolithic Orkney. The international sites laser-scanned and recorded to date are: Mount Rushmore in the USA, China's Eastern Qing Tombs, Rani ki Vav (Queens Stepwell) in Gujarat, India and Sydney Opera House. These are now joined by the final choice of site, which was digitally recorded late last year, the Scottish designed and built Nagasaki Giant Cantilever Crane in Japan.

The iconic crane, which was built in 1909, is still regularly used today by the Mitsubishi group, and is a major landmark within Nagasaki Harbour. Its links to Scotland are strong: the crane was ordered on the advice of Fraserburgh-born Thomas Blake Glover, who is regarded as a key figure in the industrialisation of Japan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was designed by the Glasgow Electric Crane and Hoist Company and was constructed by the Motherwell Bridge Company. Giant cantilever cranes were state-of-the-art structures designed to lift, with the utmost accuracy, the heaviest and most valuable components into the hulls of ships under construction, being re-fitted or undergoing repair.

Now the crane, which is only one of eleven of its kind known to survive, including the 'Titan' Crane in Clydebank, has had every part of the structure recorded to an accuracy of 6 millimetres. The information gathered by the Scottish team will be used to aid the conservation and management of the structure as well as acting as a valuable education and



Designed and built on the Clyde, Mitsubishi's Giant Cantilever Crane is still used every day and has been included in Japan's recent World Heritage nomination, 'The Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution'.

interpretation resource for the crane's owners. The data will also be used to enable 'virtual access' to the crane, making up for the fact that public access is not possible because of its live function as an operating structure.

Data from the Scottish Ten project is archived alongside other notable heritage sites such as Pompeii, Chichen Itza and ancient Babylon and the data is made available freely to the public via the CyArk website (www.cyark.org)

BOOKS

CONSERVING CONTEXT: relating object treatment to collections and settings

Gerry Alabone, ed.

Archetype Publications 2014

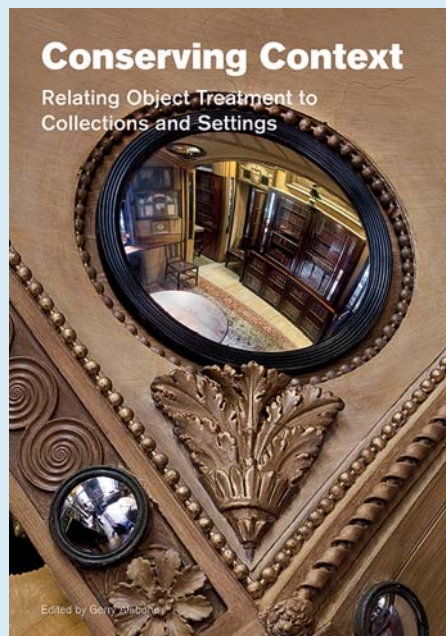
ISBN: 9781909492196 110pp

A twenty two carat conference is now a twenty two carat book! Last May I attended the Icon Gilding and Decorative Surfaces Group conference and sang its praises in Icon News (issue 47, pp 28–29). And so I was delighted to receive a copy of these conference post prints published recently. The Group's committee members deserve praise for obtaining sponsorship from NADFAS and Mylands to organise a successful event and then pushing on to produce a permanent, published record of the excellent papers presented on the day. Of course, the physical context of the original conference is lost, in this case the glimmering interiors and collections of the Wallace Collection, but what is gained is a lavishly illustrated and well written record of seven highly innovative and carefully thought out projects.

The first paper provides an excellent introduction to the concept of context. In 'Context and understanding in country house collections' **Christopher Ridgeway** offers a candid and insightful examination of the significant changes in disciplinary dominances within the heritage sector which have occurred during the last fifty years. The development of the new conceptual framework for conservation during this period is lucidly discussed with reference to the changes in the presentation of country houses and their collections. Ridgeway's spirited presentation survives in his written paper, beginning with his discussion of who the 'stakeholders' of country houses are, regardless of who actually owns the sites and objects.

'Now that country houses are visited by millions of visitors', he argues, 'a shift in interpretation is required – art histories have yielded to social histories'. In the past decisions were made by 'a narrow priesthood of connoisseurship'. Now there is a new democracy and the country house embraces the 'impedimenta of everyday life'. Visitors are no longer expected to show 'somewhat uncomprehending or uninformed reverential appreciation'. Today, country houses and objects can generate many stories and this diversity, Ridgeway argues, offers a far richer understanding of the country house, not just as a 'treasures house, but as a story house'. The public are attracted by the 'dwelt-in quality' of country houses which museums, the refuge of 'fugitive objects' cannot. As Ridgeway concludes: 'context is everything.'

Many of these themes were developed in the other papers, which are all case-studies illustrating the importance of understanding



contexts and object biographies to inform conservation decisions. Houses and collections are not fixed in time and the glossy recreations of 'the high point' in their history may be an interpretation which closes down interesting discussions of evolution and change. In their joint paper 'Attingham, Park, Picture Gallery and Grand Staircase; to gild or not to gild', **Sarah Kay** and **Catriona Hughes** explain how the project team's evident dilemma was shared with the visiting public who were invited to give their opinion.

By contrast, at the Sir John Soane Museum, as **Jane Wilkinson** explained ('Making Mrs Soane's Morning Room 'Permanently Magical'), the choices about presentation were more proscribed, but still determined democratically, in this case by the 1833 Act of Parliament which stipulated that the house and collection should be kept 'as nearly as possible in the state' it would be at the time of Soane's death. But this decree is open to interpretation, and final decisions were informed by a painstaking investigation of documentary and physical evidence, which resulted in several changes of plan about conservation treatments, as details of histories and context emerged.

In 'The decorative surface within the working royal palace', **David Wheeler** examines the chequered but extremely well-documented biographies of several pieces of furniture which have been in continuous royal possession. This intriguing paper benefits from lavish colour illustrations of historic views and close-up details of exquisite lacquer and gilded decorations. These pieces of furniture have to function whilst maintaining royal magnificence, viewing by the public and being examples of exemplary conservation treatments.

Ann Katrin Koster and **Laura Houlston** of English Heritage explained what happened to returned 'fugitive objects', when two Robert Adam designed benches, sold in 1922, were returned to their original location in Kenwood House. They were at first considered to be in an un-displayable condition. It was finally decided to carefully conserve the best preserved bench and keep it in long term storage while the other

was dismantled, stripped and fully restored for display. The paper is illustrated with useful details of the reconstruction process.

Where objects have been removed from their original context and placed in museums with more open agendas, the options for presentation are more varied. And if there are matching pairs of furniture, celebrating two phases of their history is less problematic. **Zoe Allen** and **Lea Wegwitz**, explained ('The two make a pair') how a pair of gilded and upholstered stools from the same suite underwent two different conservation treatments. Again the paper is enriched by close up details of cleaning trials and cross-sections. **Alastair Johnson** ('Re-altering the glazing alterations of a Burne-Jones frame') provides an interesting account of developments in glazing policies in the UK during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and asks us to consider whether a particular treatment was 'a regressive step', possibly at odds with the Tate's general acceptance of the evolution of glazing and the gallery's long-standing policy of display context. And finally **Deborah Cane's** paper 'Working with complex collections; The Staffordshire Hoard' is problematic in terms of a discussion of context. The hoard is unique and lacks context, 'the hoard is its own context' and Cane observed that this lack, the air of mystery surrounding the hoard – why and when it was buried – helped increase the public's engagement with the find.

The wide ranging papers provide a clear reminder that 'a treatment' is only the final stage of the wider conservation process, which requires a transparent consideration of all options and associated consequences. The conservator is not only the implementer of the treatment, but one of the orchestrators and negotiators of this dialogue. As all of the interiors and objects discussed are on public display, these papers offer excellent study notes for conservation students and their tutors, I would recommend this publication as a valuable addition to college reading lists.

Helen Hughes ACR FIIC

Historic Interiors Research & Conservation

WORKSHOPS

DISPLAY AND DEGRADATION OF LIGHT-SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Icon Book & Paper Group Co-operative Training Register

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

13–15 October 2014

The Book & Paper Group CTR and The Fitzwilliam Museum hosted this three-day workshop in October 2014. **Christel Pesme**, who led the workshop, also presented a more concise, although no less enthusiastic, overview of her research to a broader



Demonstration at the Book and Paper Group workshop

audience at the Cambridge University Library on the evening of 14 October.

The workshop, and indeed the presentation, were underpinned by the concept that damage is a loss of value and that optimisation of light exposure is the optimisation of the value of an artefact and its access in a specific timeframe (the 'preservation target').

Christel explained this idea with an example: in 1890 Van Gogh painted *Almond Blossom* in oil on canvas. The red lake of this painting, held in the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, is now totally faded, leaving the once pink blossom white, but clearly visible. The painting has therefore suffered some loss of value. Now compare a hypothetical letter, written entirely in the same red lake, and penned by the artist at the same time as *Almond Blossom* was painted. Today, with the same light-induced deterioration process, this letter would appear entirely blank to the eye. It would have suffered a much larger value loss despite being subject to the same deterioration process. So damage (defined as loss of value) is not synonymous with deterioration, an interesting concept to bear in mind when considering display.

The first day of the workshop took an in-depth look at how the human eye works to see light and colour. A pertinent reminder was the fact that the eye and the way we see deteriorates significantly with age. Under the standard 50 lux restrictions we impose as conservators, those of us into middle age see less than those with younger eyes. The workshop also explored perception and appearance, delving deeply into how we see, and gave us the reminder that an object illuminated at, say, 50 lux is not seen by the viewer at 50 lux. This is easy enough to measure, just by turning the light meter's sensor around!

The theoretical content was supplemented by a good dose of practical work. On the first day this was a walk through the galleries with staff from the Fitzwilliam, discussing the challenges of lighting within this historic

building. On days two and three the practical work involved using a spectrophotometer and micro-fader to assess the light sensitivity of objects/pigments. By inducing light fading of micro-spots below the threshold of human perception, empirical data can be recorded on light sensitivity of different pigments in paintings, etc. without visibly marking the objects. Calculated light sensitivity can then feed into assessments of display frequency, lighting levels, etc. There remain limitations and challenges. For example, light sensitivity of materials that fluoresce could not be reasonably calculated. Micro-fader units are commercially available and are being evaluated, used and developed in a number of heritage contexts.

Within paper conservation, there is a real use for micro-fading testing. There is increasing pressure to allow works on paper to be exhibited for longer periods of time, often to save money by staging fewer exhibitions per year. Being able to test the light sensitivity of works that are frequently requested for display can enable conservators and curators to agree what visible damage is acceptable and determine a specific 'light budget' for each work. That is, determination of the number of lux hours for which a particular work can be displayed before perceptible colour change occurs, allows exposure to be rationed over a set period of time. Facts, figures and graphs will always be far more powerful than mere opinion, however well informed. Some organisations are already embracing this technology – such as the National Galleries of Scotland – and perhaps soon the micro-fader will become more common, another tool in the conservator's kit.

The ten places on this course were taken within a day of being advertised, highlighting the hunger for more in-depth understanding of how we can best assess light sensitivity of materials. This was a challenging, informative, and thoroughly useful course which explored some fundamental aspects of light, vision and deterioration and proposed novel ways of considering display in relation to light

sensitivity, perception, and the definition of damage.

Thanks to the Book & Paper CTR committee for organising the workshop, the Clare Hampson Fund for their generous financial support, and particularly to Françoise Richard, the staff at the Fitzwilliam and to Christel for her energetic delivery. Thanks also to Cambridge University Library for hosting Christel's evening lecture.

Duncan Slarke, Preventive Conservator
Norwegian Armed Forces Museum, Oslo
Emily O'Reilly, Principal Conservator, Paper
Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum
Wales

CONFERENCES

MODERN CONSERVATION: What's New? Icon Paintings Group Conference London 10 October 2014

The Wallace Collection provided the setting for this event hosted by Icon's Paintings Group. It was organised to discuss various aspects of modern conservation through presentations on research into different areas and on case studies.

Bronwyn Ormsby presented recent research from a collaborative project aimed at increasing the range and efficacy of wet surface cleaning options for modern unvarnished painted surfaces. Ormsby discussed use of surfactants and microemulsions and illustrated it with case studies from Tate's collection.

Next, **Line Blomsterberg Anderson** and **Ida Antonia Tank Bronken** explored the issue of dripping oil paint in works by the artists Tal-R and van Hemert. Anderson shared the treatment decisions made for Tal-R works with dripping white paint alongside video demonstrations of tests conducted and treatment methods. She highlighted the importance of collaboration with living artists in treatment decisions. Bronken presented analysis of paint from works by both artists, conducted to understand the cause behind the softening and dripping, and shared promising results in treatments to stabilise the paint.

Jim Diamond presented two case studies using Lascaux Medium for Consolidation 4176 and Lascaux 498 HV as consolidants on works by artists Whistler and Davie. Diamond highlighted how the use of the adhesives in conjunction best incorporated the tricky parameters of the paintings' flaking issues, while generally assessing acrylic consolidants used by conservators.

Donald Sale explored the various synthetic polymers found in plastic painting supports and presented a range of adhesives used to address their complex conservation problems. Sale presented methods to assess the materials and encouraged conservators to re-visit previously dismissed adhesives.

Sophie Reddington spoke on the range of varnishes available and suggested a greater use of Larapol A81 after the production of MS2A resin ceased. The speaker promoted openness by sharing her experience and encouraging discussion about varnish recipes and use.

Anna Krez explored how a material used in sports medicine, Kinesio tape, could be used as a temporary measure in the structural conservation of canvas paintings, including merging the edges of a tear. She provided technical information about one type of tape, presented tests on adhesion and residues, and explained how to apply and use the tape with case studies.

Laura Hinde outlined the range of boards and adhesives available for the production of rigid stretcher insert systems and presented examples of systems used by different institutions. She promoted the use of solid inserts as an affordable preventative conservation approach to reduce vibration in canvas supports.

Mirosław Wachowiak spoke about the division of a Rafał Bujnowski painting into four parts as an artistic action ordered by the Azorro Group and conducted by conservators. The talk explored issues of authenticity and integrity of artwork, the aesthetic value of fragments, ownership versus authorship, and the ethics of the engagement of the conservator.

The question session brought up the issue of some materials becoming unavailable for purchase in small quantities. Also discussed was the increase in health and safety restrictions related to the use of solvents and varnishes. The need for improved contact between paint manufacturers and artists was introduced and the generally poor communication between manufacturers and conservators for technical information was frequently mentioned.

Overall the conference provided excellent materials, techniques and information to expand the conservator's toolkit. Many of the talks demonstrated that often a perfect material for a treatment does not exist but instead materials need to be adapted to suit the situation.

Joana Devesa & Kristina Mandy
Interns, Hamilton Kerr Institute

HIDDEN LIBRARIES: Making Historical Libraries Accessible
Utrecht Network Summer School
University of Graz, Austria
30 June – 11 July 2014

Many historical libraries in European countries and beyond are not accessible at all or not sufficiently accessible to the scientific community or to the public. In the first week of July last year, thirty four people came together for two weeks of summer school in the city of Graz, Austria. The main



The Hidden Libraries summer school at St. Lambrecht's Abbey

task for the organizers was to create a sensitivity for so-called 'hidden libraries'. The goal was to raise awareness of questions connected with such collections in order to better preserve this kind of heritage and finally provide broader access to such libraries.

The summer school started with short presentations by each participant, where it became clear that the event brought people together from many different disciplines connected to the world of books. This review introduces what a hidden library is and then explains it in more depth with an overview of the different lectures given by the speakers during the two weeks.

What is a 'Hidden Library'? This question was answered on the first day of lectures. Prof Dr **Erich Renhart**, the main organiser of the summer school, and head of Vestigia (The Manuscript Research Centre of the University of Graz) came up with thirteen reasons for a collection to be hidden. To name a few: books that have been stolen or travelling books that sometimes stay hidden for centuries, censored books, libri abligati, private libraries and collections.

Dr **Theresa Zammit Lupi**, a freelance conservator from Malta and co-organiser, presented the idea of 'hidden' in two different forms. 'Hidden' as a verb, meaning not easy to find or not accessible to view, which could be interpreted as unintentional, and 'hidden' as an adjective, when something is secret, camouflaged or disguised and therefore is intentionally hidden, like a hidden collection.

In the broadest sense of the word, a collection is hidden when it is not known or accessible by the 'general' public. The lectures were given by nineteen speakers who came from a number of European universities and institutions including Austria, Malta, The Vatican City, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Romania, U.S.A., Syria, Albania and Italy, who all had their different views and approaches to the subject.

A brief overview of the subjects presented during the course gives an idea of the breadth of the summer school. *Hidden*

Libraries and The Movement of Books started with a presentation about a case study of a hidden manuscript collection. This case study showed us how to make a neglected collection visible to the general public. Next, we got an insight into the library of censored books and the Bibliotheca Palatina of the Vatican. *Materials and Codicology* were lectures to make the participants understand the inner and outer 'hidden' structures of books. The two next presentations were about the degradation of paper, parchment and leather.

Cataloguing, Metadata and Digitization made us aware of the difficulties and challenges which institutions face with this subject. The presentations included the programmes used, the preparation for digitizing and how such programmes are developed.

Philosophical and Historical Matters gave us a perspective on who enters a library and the history of reading. As one of the speakers quoted: 'Perhaps the garden of paradise is nothing else than a library' (Borges). Other topics covered included fragments in books, which discussed the idea of manuscript waste material and the concept of recycling material in the making of books. To give an idea of this concept: The Special Collections Department of the University Library of Graz have already registered more than four hundred parchment fragments.

As a Special Item, grey literature was presented, which can be seen as 'texts that are not studied or analysed for profit-making, those that have less bibliographic control and are difficult to identify and obtain'. We had the great pleasure of listening to two people with interesting backgrounds. First, **Sokol Cunga** discussed the collection of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine manuscripts in Tirana, and how these manuscripts were rescued during the atheist regime in post WWII in Albania. The second speaker, Dr. **Ephrem Ishac**, spoke about libraries in times of war, in which he discussed the situation in Syria where, besides people's lives, their cultural heritage is also at risk.

The subject *Conservation and Preservation* was presented in two different parts highlighting both the theoretical side as well as the practical side. For instance, different kinds of storage and packaging were discussed.

The last day of the summer school ended with the heavy subject *Law and Restitution*. Dr. **Monica Vlad** gave a presentation in which she explained how the law could demolish and hide information for the general public. The last presentation was given by a duo who started a project with books that were stolen by the Nazis during WWII to return to their rightful owner.

Workshops took place at Graz University, mainly about the research that has been carried out on digitizing watermarks and parchment fragments and the equipment developed for this task. At the end of the first week the group visited the Benedictine monastery, St Lambrecht's Abbey. The group of participants and lecturers worked together to bring different elements of the library into the light, such as the bindings, systematics of books and shelves (catalogues etc.), annotations and fragments.

Next to the high-level educational programme of the summer school, the interaction between the participants during our free time was also informative. Although the participants and lecturers spoke thirty different languages between them, a united group could be formed. All brought their knowledge and resources, which allowed us to rethink how we look at hidden collections. We also learned how we, in our own individual way, could improve, encourage and enhance our skills and those of others when it comes to the preservation and study of library collections.

We hope and encourage similar programmes to be repeated in the future. It was truly an enriching and special time for all!

Linde Akkerman & Annelies Van den Wijngaert

Students of paper and photographic materials conservation
University of Antwerp, Belgium

TALKS

WHEN YOU SEE ME YOU WILL KNOW ME: Likeness and authenticity in the portraits of the Tudor dynasty

Icon Paintings Group
Freemason's Hall, London
29 September 2014

To complement the opening of the National Portrait Gallery's *Real Tudors: Kings and Queens Rediscovered* exhibition on 12 September, Project Curator **Charlotte Bolland** spoke to Icon members about the socio-political process of making the

artworks on show in the gallery and new research into representations of one of the most dynamic dynasties in history.

The Tudor monarchs are amongst the most familiar faces at the National Portrait Gallery and five hundred years on they are ingrained into popular imagery. Iconic representations of the Tudors, like the shrewd expression of Henry VII and the eternal, youthful magnificence of Elizabeth I, call into question what constitutes a true portrait of a monarch, especially given that 15th and 16th century artists were rarely afforded the opportunity to draw their sitter from life. Art Historians are often unable to identify the hand from the many Tudor painters who painted royal portraits from patterns. Even when archival records show that an artist did make portraits from life, there is no way of knowing whether the resulting painting portrays a true likeness.

The exhibition begins with the earliest painting in the NPG's collection, a remarkable portrait of the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, who defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. Henry's first act as king was to unite the warring dynasties of York and Lancaster and bring an end to the Wars of the Roses through his diplomatic marriage to Elizabeth of York. However, when Elizabeth died in 1503 Henry looked abroad to remarry and this portrait is thought to have been painted in 1505 as part of his unsuccessful marriage negotiations with Margaret of Austria. Recent X-rays brought to light changes that were made before Henry approved the painting for public consumption, including alterations to the cuffs and the face. Taking into account that patrons paid artists to represent them as they wished to be seen, Tudor portraits perhaps represent how we would expect a monarch to look rather than offering a true likeness. While it is impossible to know how well the portrait captured Henry VII's appearance, this majestic version of his portrait became the standardised image that artists have continued to copy for centuries.

Before the Tudor reign, portraits were generally commissioned to record a person's likeness or, like the Henry VII painting, to secure a dynastic alliance. From the early 16th century, however, British portraits were more commonly commissioned to show political allegiances, loyalty to the crown, and, perhaps most intriguingly, as propaganda images. One of the portraits in the NPG's exhibition, depicting Edward VI at the age of nine, was originally painted with his legs further apart, possibly to make him appear more regal and also echoing his father Henry VIII's manly stance in the widely publicised Whitehall cartoon. X-rays have now revealed that during the painting process the artist altered Edward's stance so that the portrait looked more natural but

retained some of the padding so that the young king appeared larger than life. This portrait was produced for wider circulation and was intended to illustrate Edward's capability to rule.

When considering whether the portraits are accurate depictions of the Tudor monarchs it is worth bearing in mind that many have altered over time. The tendency for pigments to change chemically means that some colours are different from when they were painted. In some portraits Elizabeth I's iconic pale pallor may be the result of the red pigment in the oil paint fading rather than a severe make-up regime. Elizabeth I's enduring youthfulness in her later portraits, however, is more likely due to her vanity than her court painters' wishes to record her likeness for posterity.

The exhibition is the most complete presentation of portraits of Tudor monarchs ever brought together and is the culmination of a seven-year research project into making art in Tudor Britain. The artworks are drawn from both public and private collections and will form the core of the exhibition *Les Vrais Tudors* at the Musée du Luxembourg in March 2015. A special programme of events relating to *The Real Tudors* including talks, tours and workshops will take place at the NPG in January and February 2015 and a fantastic resource is accessible online: www.npg.org.uk/whatson/realtudors/display.php

The exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, London, continues until 1 March 2015

Natalie Patel

Assistant Curator, Harley Gallery

CREATING CONSERVATION

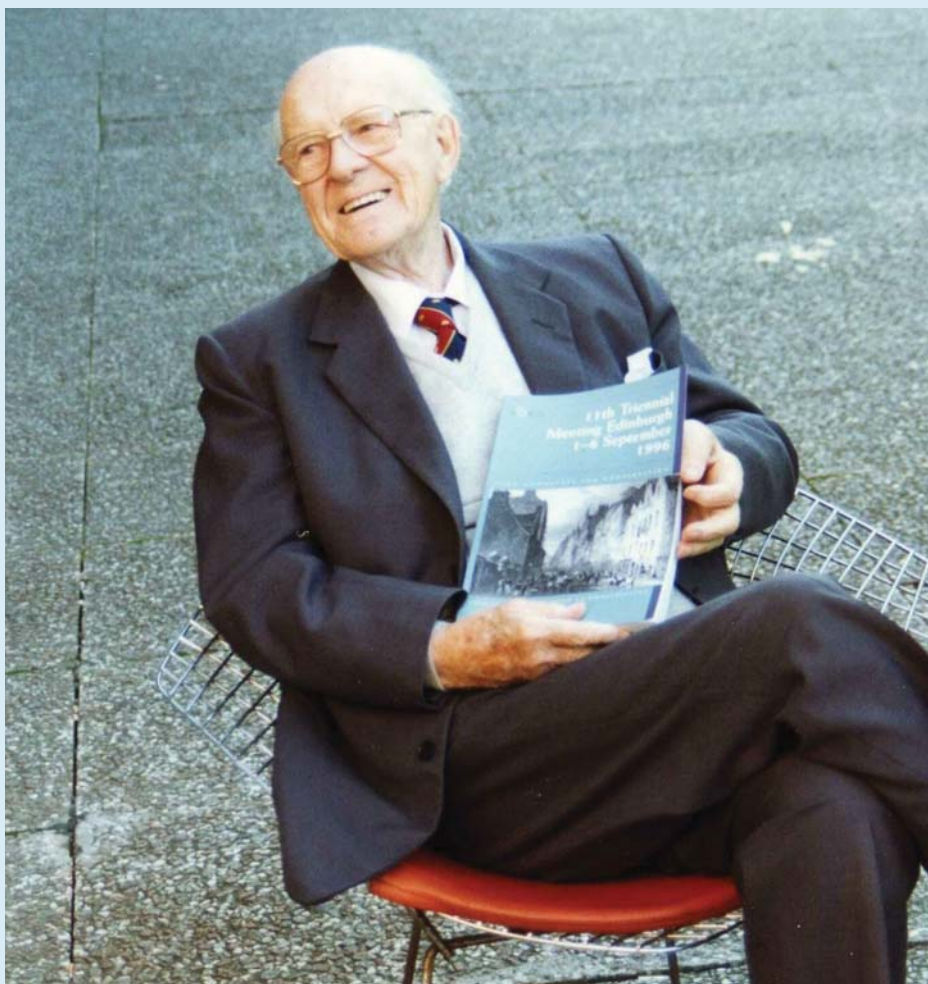
The 17th Annual Plenderleith Memorial Lecture

Edinburgh 27 November 2014

Every year the Icon Scotland Group hosts a lecture in honour of Dr Harold Plenderleith. But who exactly is Plenderleith and what does he have to do with conservation in Scotland? That was the subject of this year's illuminating lecture, 'Creating Conservation – Harold Plenderleith's Life and Legacy', by **Gaël de Guichen**.

De Guichen travelled from Rome to present his reflections on the influence of Dr Harold Plenderleith, a man considered to have pioneered the conservator's approach to conservation. De Guichen (Adviser to the Director General of ICCROM) began his career in conservation with an internship under the supervision of Plenderleith in the 1960s and the two remained friends until his death, so he was ideally placed to discuss his mentor's impact in the conservation field.

Plenderleith was born in Coatbridge, Lanarkshire in 1898. He read science at St Andrews University and gained a PhD from



Harold Plenderleith

Dundee University in 1923. In 1924, he was recruited by the British Museum to investigate the causes of the deterioration of museum objects during wartime storage. During this time he was involved in many projects that were to shape his future conservation

principles. For example, he led the scientific analysis of objects from the tomb of Tutankhamun and he was instrumental in the moving of paintings from the National Gallery in London to the Manod quarry in Wales during the Second World War.

Delivering the Plenderleith Lecture



De Guichen states that projects such as these confirmed Plenderleith's belief that historic objects are happiest in stable conditions of temperature and humidity. This became a core value of his popular book *The Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art* (first published in 1956) which was read worldwide and regarded as a conservation bible at the time. He became Keeper of the British Museum Research Laboratory in 1949 and ten years later he became the first director of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property in Rome (now known as ICCROM). During this time his international reputation grew and he attained celebrity status in the conservation world. In the presentation, various letters to him were shown from many different countries, which highlight his cult-like status. In these he was described as a 'pope' and 'titan' of conservation, as well as a 'kind of god'

As well as his successful professional life, de Guichen gave us an insight into what type of man Plenderleith was. He told many stories demonstrating his humour, generosity and warmth. We were shown a 'tongue-in-cheek' birthday card in the form of a condition report made by Plenderleith for his secretary and told how he helped various interns working at ICCROM.

The lecture was a huge success and an excellent way to get to know one of the founding fathers of conservation better. Plenderleith's contribution to conservation in his lifetime was vast and through these annual lectures, his legacy of education lives on.

Emily Hick Project Conservator
Lothian Health Services Archive

VACUUM PACKING OF WET BOOKS

by Isobel Griffin ACR, Collections Care Manager, and Claire Thomson, Conservator of books and paper, at the National Library of Scotland

Vacuum packing or vacuum sealing is a technique which can be used to seal books inside a vacuum, or to dry out wet books by interleaving the book with an absorbent material and then applying the vacuum. Vacuum packing was used extensively to treat items damaged by the flooding in Prague in 2002, using a procedure known as 'squelch drying' devised by Stuart Welch from the UK company Conservation by Design¹.

The Collections Care division at the National Library of Scotland is responsible for recovering and conserving wet collection items in the event of flooding, and the occurrence of several floods over recent years has prompted us to investigate options for processing large volumes of wet material. We have a vacuum packing machine which we have only used infrequently, so we decided to run some tests to investigate the potential of the technique.

We found the machine to be relatively quick and easy to use. To dry out wet books we cut sheets of blotter slightly larger than the book and interleaved the pages with blotter, inserting around ten sheets per book at regular intervals through the book. In situations where this might have distorted the book, an alternative approach was to place several sheets of blotter on the outside of the front and back boards. The book was placed in a vacuum bag which was sealed in the vacuum packing machine. The bag could then be cut open immediately to remove the wet blotter and replace it with dry sheets, before repeating the process. After three or four cycles the book was virtually dry, and it only needed a day or two of air-drying before it could be re-shelved. The procedure took less than five minutes per book, and in the event of a flood a production line system could be



Preparing a book for vacuum packing

set up. A further advantage of this drying method was that the dried books were much less distorted than books which had only been air dried.

Some of the wet books were left inside their sealed bags to see if the bags would prevent mould growth from occurring. We found that mould growth began after around fourteen days, meaning that the procedure had bought us some time, since mould can develop on untreated wet paper items 'within forty eight hours'². We were only using the 'low barrier' vacuum bags, and it seems likely that with high barrier bags the mould growth would be delayed for longer.

A further use of vacuum packing is to prepare wet books for freezing. Books packed in this way take up less space and are much easier to handle than if they are loosely bagged. Hence another option after a major flood might be to vacuum pack and freeze everything, and then remove the material from the freezer in batches for drying out. All in all we feel that the technique will be very useful in the event of another flood, though of course we'd be happier if it were never needed!

1. Conservation by Design, Timecare Magazine, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 6-7.

2. Child, R.E., 'Mould', leaflet produced by the Preservation Advisory Centre, 2011.

Placing an interleaved book inside the vacuum packing machine



Books which were successfully dried by vacuum packing



AN HLF INTERN AT BMAG

Natasha Hall relates her experience at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

I was the Icon/HLF Fine Metals intern based at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG), which is part of Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT). My placement (2013-2014) was funded through the collaboration between The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Institute of Conservation (Icon) and Job Centre Plus.

BMT is a nine site organisation, and as well as working at BMAG I undertook work for the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter (MJQ), a museum in a typical jewellery workshop that closed in 1981. MJQ is currently staging an exhibition coinciding with and paying homage to the 100th anniversary of World War One. The exhibition looks at adaptations which the jewellery industry made to support the war effort and the bravery of the workers who chose to serve. As part of the exhibition a group of badges was selected for display from the BMT collection, this was one of my projects while at BMAG.

Analysing the objects

The collection of eight badges was constructed of multiple different materials including enamel, shell, copper alloys, iron, and printed paper. Each piece tells its own individual tale of rank, homecoming or even celebrating the end of The Great War itself.

Before any conservation treatment began, a detailed analysis of each object was carried out including determining its materials and composition. This investigation informed the treatment proposal and also provided a trail of documentation from the beginning of the analysis of the objects to the eventual display.

All of the badges and pins were analysed in the conservation department's Bruker Mistral X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF). The XRF was used for in-depth material analysis and identification of the alloys and their compositions. The chosen sample areas, which were representative of the whole object, were arranged in the machine. The principle behind XRF analysis is that the surface of the sample area is excited by x-rays from the XRF. The electrons on the surface of the sample then change locations and energy levels, the differences in the energy levels are emitted as characteristic x-rays which are then picked up by the XRF's detector.

The emitted energy allows the XRF to estimate both the element and the quantities contained in the predetermined surface area. As part of the internship I was very interested to use and understand the use of analytical techniques and how they can be applied to objects and their treatments. It is important that the material identification and analysis is done to ensure that the correct treatment is applied based on the conservation needs, history and display needs of each object.



Natasha at work

Condition issues

The badges and pins were slightly discoloured with tarnish, dirt and grease; some of the badges showed areas of iron and blue/green copper corrosion products. It was observed that all mechanisms were in working order and there are no visible cracks, loose or missing components. It was felt that the most appropriate way to display the objects was to have the objects look as close to the original appearance as possible, taking into account their history, use, wear and any deterioration of the materials that had taken place. This decision was taken with the curator and was felt to be the most appropriate choice as they were relatively modern materials. All the badges were therefore cleaned for display.

Treating one of the badges

For this article I thought I would just show one of my favourite badges, this is the Royal Warwickshire badge with the regimental symbol of an antelope in silver.

The first task was to establish if the body of the badge was tortoise shell or a plastic substitute. To confirm the type of material I consulted with Deborah Cane (Conservation Manager BMT) for her expert opinion. Using the Meiji microscope she was able to say that it was tortoise shell as the composition showed evidence of naturally refracted layering and gradual and gradient colour fluctuations throughout, which distinguishes it from a plastic.



Example of a badge before (left) and after conservation

The results of this meant that a sensitive conservation treatment had to be selected. As tortoise shell is naturally porous, too much exposure to liquids could cause a permanent clouding of the tortoise shell, meaning that the incorrect treatment would have caused irreversible damage. It was decided to simply lightly clean the surface with cotton wool on a cocktail stick.

The XRF was used to establish that the antelope was a silver/copper alloy and it was cleaned with precipitated calcium carbonate and acetone, applied on a cocktail stick to lightly remove the tarnish, ensuring that it did not touch the delicate surface of the tortoise shell.

Working on just this one badge helped me to appreciate the complexity of conservation decisions for what appears to be a simple object. Taking into account the condition of the object

along with the physical requirements and the curator's display wishes, the conservation method selected was not the one I had at first expected to use.

Reflecting on the internship

Before I began this internship I had a background in jewellery making; being at BMAG has allowed me to see and learn new techniques from my colleagues at the museum. I have also had the opportunity to participate in conferences and visit other interns and conservation professionals outside of Birmingham.

As well as the badges project I have had the opportunity to work on important Arts and Crafts jewellery, a button collection and a contemporary silver collection and to participate in gallery installs. Although this internship is a fine metals internship, other members of the BMAG staff have allowed me accompany them to different sites and locations that make up the body of Birmingham Museums Trust. This included a visit to ThinkTank at Millennium Point to investigate the Giant Irish deer skeleton. I was also able to get a deeper look at the way exhibits are displayed and the many factors that come into play when thinking up their design.

I am grateful for this internship and all that I have learnt and the people whom I have met, and I hope to continue with conservation in the future.

The Royal Warwickshire badge



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